



**ERITREAN ORTHODOX TEWAHDO CHURCH  
DIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA**

Sunday School Curriculum  
for  
Grades 9 and 10

Compiled by the Educational Branch of the Eritrean Orthodox Church,  
Diocese of North America

Adopted from the Coptic Orthodox Church, Diocese of Southern USA

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# PREFACE

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In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God Amen.

The Children's Sunday School Program within our churches provides an opportunity to fulfill the command of our Lord Jesus Christ: "... *One day some parents brought their children to Jesus so he could touch and bless them. But the disciples scolded the parents for bothering him. When Jesus saw what was happening, he was angry with his disciples. He said to them, 'Let the children come to me. Don't stop them! For the Kingdom of God belongs to those who are like these children. I tell you the truth, anyone who doesn't receive the Kingdom of God like a child will never enter it.'* Then he took the children in his arms and placed his hands on their heads and blessed them" (Mark 10:13-16). It is a venue where they learn their Christian identity, enhance their Christian foundation, know their mother church, and acquire godly values through Biblical lessons. It allows children to learn on their level as many young children struggle to understand the word of God when it is taught during regular worship services. Children are divided into groups according to their age and educational grade levels so that they gain a better understanding of what is being taught. Hence, the Children's Sunday School Program is a part and parcel of the church's ministry with the objective of presenting the story of salvation, the christian moral values, the life of the church at the level of the young children, and engaging the kids in constructive conversations that could transform their lives forever.

In this endeavor, Sunday School servants are given the task of not only making the message comprehensible, attractive, and age appropriate for the younger children, but also to be a role model to the kids. Hence, a Christian upbringing is not just an educational curriculum to be taught, but rather it is a life that is acquired through exemplary actions and characteristics. Therefore, apart from the parents of the children, the role of teachers is second to none in achieving the objectives of Sunday School Program.

Besides, the role of textbooks developed under a well thought, planned and framed Sunday School curriculum is very crucial. However, considering the human expertise, the time and resources required to such tasks, it is more practical and efficient to begin the task by adapting the curricula and related resources of sister churches.

Previously, there were Children's Sunday School textbooks compiled by Eritrean Orthodox Tewahdo Church, Diocese of North America, based on

the materials prepared by the Coptic Orthodox Church. Since early 2016, a work has been undergoing to further refine and revise the contents of these textbooks. Much effort was exerted to revise the contents by going through each lesson and making modifications, and at time lesson substitutions whenever necessary. Besides, rearrangement of lessons were done to reflect the Church seasons as well as the flow of the lessons. Apart from making grammatical and spelling revisions, the team strive to put all the lessons in a common structure format. So far, the work has covered Grade 11-12, Grade 9-10, and Grade 6-8, in their respective order. It is the understanding of the team that the work is still a draft and has a lot of things to be done. However, the team believes that it could be used by Sunday School teachers in preparing their lessons.

God willing, the team has every intention to continue the work. It has the following short and long term plans:

1. Promote the textbooks to be used in the Sunday Schools of our churches.
2. Collect feedback from Sunday School servants and keep refining the already started grades.
3. Extend the work to the remaining lower grades.
4. Encourage and facilitate sharing of experiences, lessons, activities, video clips, and other resources among the Sunday School servants.
5. Create a web page within the church website <https://www.tewahdo.org/> for Sunday School related resources.

As the Lord has said in Matthew 9:37-38, “... *The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field,*” the team disparately needs supporting hands to join in the work. Anyone who is interest to join the team in the work, please contact Aboy Keshi Tesfalem Beraki using the address: Fr. Tesfalem Beraki, 8849 Fair Oaks Crossing # 2074, Dallas, TX 75243. Email: [frtesfalem@gmail.com](mailto:frtesfalem@gmail.com).

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, both now and always, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

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# Part I

## Lessons for the Month of September

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# Week 1

## The Holy Bible

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### Objectives:

- To give an overview of the Holy Bible.
- To appreciate the importance of the Bible in our life.
- To encourage students to read and meditate the bible everyday.

### References:

- The Holy Bible, Matthew 4:4, Jeremiah 15:16, John 14:15, Psalms 119, 2 Peter 1:20.

### Memory Verse:

*If any one keeps my word he shall never see death (John 8:51).*

## Introduction

Review with the students last weeks lesson and memory verse. There is a known wisdom saying “any day that passes without reading the Bible is not counted of our lives” Ask the students why is it important to read God’s word?

## Lesson Outline

- I. Why Do We Study The Holy Bible?
  - a. It gives us redemption and salvation: Through the Bible we learn about the great story of God’s love and sacrifice for me. The Father loves us and gave His Son for our salvation. The Son incarnate and became man to redeem us. The Holy Bible reveals all these things to us *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son*

*that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life*" (John 3:16). It is actually a personal story of my salvation from eternal death to eternal life.

- b. We listen to the voice of God: It also contains the instruction of God. Through it we listen to the Voice of God "Speak Lord, for Thy servant hears".
- c. We learn His commandments: We study the Holy Bible so that we may know our duty towards God. If I love God, then I must obey His commandments which are announced in the Bible. "*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind*" (Matthew 22:37). "*If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.*" (John 14:15).
- d. We get the Christian conduct: We study the Holy Bible so that we may know our duty towards the people and ourselves. In it we find the Ten Commandments, the sermon on the mountain and the parables that the Lord gave for Christian conduct. Through the Bible we know that all the people are brothers to us as we call the heavenly Father "Our Father"
- e. We learn how to love all the members of Christ's body: It explains to us the Christian man's obligations towards the family, fathers, sons, and sisters and towards one another. We find this in the words of the Lord and in the epistles of the holy apostles.
- f. We learn how to live in holiness: It refines humanity, refines instincts and honors the dignity of man, wherever the Bible is, there exists the enlightened humanity that respects and considers the truth, freedom, constitution and virtue.
- g. Our heavenly spiritual food: It is our spiritual food in our daily life. "*Jesus answered, "It is written: Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God"*" (Matthew 4:4).
  1. "Your words were found and I ate them".
  2. The Commandment is a lamp that gives us the sense of direction. "*Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.*" (Psalm 119:105). It is also the water that the Lord Jesus gives us, i.e. His word is the source of our life "each one who drinks of it never thirsts", as the Lord said to the Samaritan woman.

## II. How to Read the Holy Bible?

- a. With the spirit of need: Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied, but those who are proud are sent away without being given anything.
- b. With the spirit of respect and awe: It is the voice of God and God speaks to us through it so we have to give it awe (Study how awe was expressed when the Lord spoke to Moses in the Old Testament).
- c. With the spirit of prayer: It is a spiritual book and only spiritual people understand the demands of the Spirit of God but those concerned with the flesh do not understand.
- d. With the spirit of persistence: It is not enough to read the text once then to neglect reading for some days. We have to be persistent in studying and contemplating. Remember if we say it is our spiritual food, we can't skip a day without reading and meditating God's words.
- e. With the spirit of being ready to carry out: As of what use is reading if we don't apply it in our lives, infact, the words turn to judge us. (An example of obedience and practical carrying out - The great saint Abba Anthony).

III. Evidence of the Unity of the Bible: Although it contains 81 books, 54 (39 main books plus 15 Second Canonical books removed by Protestants) in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament and more than forty writers from all parts of the world over nearly two thousand years, yet we feel that it is one book as God inspires it. It contains a variety of writings, stories, tales, biographies, poems and proverbs, but as a whole it concentrates on one message from the beginning till the end and it is the message of salvation, carried out by our Lord Jesus Christ. We find the crimson line clear in all its books and we notice clearly how the wonderful Divine plan in the Old Testament prepared humanity for salvation and how the events and topics were symbols of the Lord and His work of expiation. The books are written by different writers, but the author of the bible is the Holy Spirit. “*Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things. 21 For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*” (2 Peter 1:20).

#### IV. The Main Division of Books

- The Books of Law: The first five books written by Moses called Torah.
- Historical Books: 12 Books including: Joshua, Judges, Ruth, First and Second Samuel, First and Second Kings, First and Second Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Tobias, Judith, and the Maccabees.
- The Poetic Books: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastics, Songs of Solomon, and Joshua, the Son of Serach.
- The Major Prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, and Daniel.
- The Minor Prophets: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi and Baruch.

#### V. The New Testament Can Be Divided Into the Following Main Parts

- The Four Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.
- Acts of the Apostles
- Paul's Epistles: Fourteen epistles: Romans, First and Second Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, First and Second Thessalonians, First and Second Timothy, Titus, Philemon and Hebrews.
- Catholic Epistles: Seven epistles written by St. Peter, James, John and Judas to the whole church (not to certain churches or to individuals) including: James, First and Second Peter, First, Second and Third John, and Jude.
- The Revelation: Written by St. John the apostle.

VI. Evidence of The Unity Of These Books: Review scientific books about the testimony of the Bible, history, archeology and science. You will find proofs of the truth and correct information of the Holy Bible. There is no misconstruction and there is no contradiction.

VII. The Importance of The Holy Bible in Our Private Life: To understand the importance of the Holy Bible in our private life, we must read and study the Bible at home, at school, at work and in every occasion possible. The Lord says: "*Apart from Me you can do nothing*" (Ephesians 6:12). For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Also in his epistle to the Ephesians, St. Paul says: "*Therefore*

*take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness”* (Ephesians 6:13-14). Take the sword of the spirit, which means the word of God. The Bible protects the youth from temptations, sanctifies his/her thoughts and tender feelings. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and life. They are the lamps that lights the road and a guide of life. Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, before the difficult days come, and the years draw near when you say, *“I have no pleasure in them”* (Ecclesiastes 12:1). Moreover, reading, memorizing, and meditating verses in the bible enables the youth to lead a life of righteousness and holiness. *“How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Your word.”* (Psalm 119:9).

VIII. Examples of the effectiveness of the Holy Bible in the life of people especially the leaders

- a. Prophet David: He meditated on the commandments day and night. He advised his son Solomon to keep the commandments of the Lord and walk in his way. When Solomon kept away from the commandments of God and married foreign women he deviated and lost his way.
- b. Daniel and the three young men: They refused to betray the commandment so the Lord sent his angel to Daniel to shut the mouths of the lions. He also protected the three young men in the furnace of fire.
- c. Joseph: Joseph is a good example of living in chastity, *“How then could I do such an immoral thing and sin against God.”* (Genesis 39:9).

## Conclusion

Religion does not mean lessons and exams, but it is essentially life, spirit and practice. Reading, meditating, and memorizing verses in the bible enables the youth to lead a pure life, the life that God desires (1 Thessalonians 4:3). Thus, it is important to set aside some time everyday to feed our spiritual hunger by reading the bible.

### Applications:

- One of the important matters is fixing a suitable period of time to be devoted for daily reading and prayer before and after reading the Bible. Emphasize the importance of regular study with open-mindedness and submission of the will and being prepared to obey the commandment. Let us encourage our children to study some verses to give them comfort during their study of the Word of God. This is a precious treasure that will benefit them, all their long life. Let reading of the Bible be a criterion through which man examines himself and confesses his sins to his father of confession.
- Encourage your students to set aside some time everyday dedicated for reading the bible. You can give the entire class a book or chapter from the bible to read, and reward those who are reading regularly. Remember, following up is very crucial for the success of such assignments.

**Exercises:**

1. The Servant follows up the process of studying the Holy Bible and its effect on the daily life of the students. He should encourage them and find out the verses that give them comfort. He should then pray for applying them and using them as exercises for the day. You can ask them the following questions:
2. Why do we read the bible?
3. How many major divisions are found in the bible?
4. How many books are comprised in the bible?
5. How should we read the bible?
6. What is the importance of reading the bible for an orthodox Christian youth?

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## Week 2

# Different Kinds of Soil

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### Objectives:

- To recognize hindrances to spiritual development.

### References:

- Matthew 13:3-22

### Memory Verse:

*He who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understand it, who indeed bear fruit and produces. (Matthew 13:23)*

## Introduction

Great crowds gathered about the Lord Jesus on the Beach of Galilee Sea. The Lord told them many things in parables. One of these parables is the parable of the Sower. A Sower went out to sow and as he sowed some seeds fell along the path, on the rocky ground and upon thorns and on the good soil which brought forth grain, some a hundred fold, some sixty, some thirty. Then His disciples came and said to Him “why do you speak to them in parables?” and He answered them “To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given”.

We wonder why was this preference. Was it because the disciples were more prepared to receive the word? Or because they were more ready to receive, comprehend and understand? Or because they were chosen? The Lord Jesus blessed their eyes because they saw and their ears because they heard and He said to them “Many prophets and righteous men longed to see what you see, and did not see it and to hear what you hear and did not hear it” (Notice that these verses are repeated and prayed by the Church in the Intercession of the Gospel to show us our status before God when we listen to the Holy Gospel and obey His word that He grants us.



## Lesson Outline

The Lord Jesus explained to His disciples the four types of soil. You can read the Gospel in Matthew (3:3-23) to study these types. It is of our benefit if we observe, measure and examine ourselves in the light of what the wisdom of God has given us in this parable (Read the text with the children and discuss every type with them). The Lord Jesus showed that the sown seeds are the words of God that never vanish (1 Peter 1:23). The sower is the Lord Jesus Christ, either in person or through His ministers. The people are the work of God and the ministers are working with God (1 Corinthians 3:9). Preaching the multitude is sowing seeds and the soil in which the seeds are sown is the hearts of men which vary according to their type.

- I. The Path: Why did the Lord Jesus call this soil the path? Why is this type of soil dangerous? When can our hearts be like the soil of the path? How can we cure our life if this type of soil appears? These questions are for you to answer in your contemplation and prayers during your study of this type of soil and remember that those who listen to the word of God without understanding or they listen but neglect it, the word gets out of the other ear without leaving any effect and become an easy prey for the devil who seizes every message thrown on this soil.

Did you notice that absent mindedness and the inability to concentrate and indifference deprives the word of God in the heart of due care and guard? If it is so, let us bow in worship and offer repentance and raise prayer out of the heart praying the Lord Jesus to surround the heart with a strong fence, strengthen the will, deepens care, concentrate, thinking so that we may say with David, *“I have laid up Your word in my heart, that I might not sin against You”* (Psalm 119:11).

- II. The Rocky Places: How can the hearts of flesh be like stones? When the materialistic spirit fills the heart and replaces mercy and kindness with cruelty and roughness and judgment of others. Here listening to the word does not lead us to heaven, even if we receive it with care and joy. It is not enough for the heart to be affected with the word at the moment but it is important that the heart dissolves with it. Starting the way is not the main goal. It is very important to continue, persist and bear patience as it is written, *“But he who endures to the end will be saved”* (Matthew 10:22). Let us ask ourselves: Do I have firm principles, strong determination, and ready will? If an affliction takes

place, do I refrain from worship, desert the spiritual atmosphere and complain against God?

If I discover that the soil of my heart is of the stony type; let me have and practice these exercises:

- Crush the stones and destroy pride through repentance, contrition, thanksgiving and endurance.
- Pouring tears of repentance to soften the cruel heart.
- Carefulness in all types of behavior through perpetual prayers and reading the Bible.
- Abstaining from listening to evil words, useless talk, seeing evil sights, perpetual confession so that the heart may be kept pure, alive and sensitive.

III. The Thorny Ground: Thorns grew up . . . this means that it was not in sight the time the grains were sown. It is thorns that choke the seeds. What are the choking thorns? Worries of life, increasing concerns, care and bitterness of heart, the conceit of the rich (Danger does not live in the wealth itself but it lies in the conceit of the wealthy man and dependence on the wealth and being deceived by it), desires for all things . . . If the Lord reveals to me that many thorns are there in the soil of my heart: Let me practice this exercise: Purify the heart and examine it, confess to the father of confession, confess every care, anxiety, concern, conceit, dependence on property or talents . . .

IV. The Good Soil: What distinguishes this ground from the others? Contemplate the Lord's saying, "By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples". Notice that this good ground was not free from stones or thorns. The same case is with the saints who are not free from the remains of sin, but they are only free of the domination and authority of sin. If saints differ in the extent of bearing fruit, let us aim at the maximum so that we may bring forth grain a hundredfold as the Scripture says, "*bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God*" (Colossians 1:10).

## Conclusion

We should always try to be fruitful in our life from every spiritual word we hear. We also ask God that He provides and blesses the fruits because he is the source and provider of every good in our life.

**Applications:**

- Read your Bible this week and bring to class questions about things that you did not understand next week.
- Evaluate yourself whenever you hear a sermon, how did you
- Try to study hymns and melodies about devoting and dedicating your life to the Lord.
- Show films about the parables of the Lord Christ.

**Exercises:**

1. Do we hear the word and understand it?
2. Do we obey the word in the spirit of modesty?
3. Does the word bear fruit in our life for the glory of God and the extension of his kingdom?

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## Week 3

# You shall have no other gods before Me

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### Objectives:

- Emphasizing the Worship of God alone and rejecting the idols of the present age.

### References:

- Luke 4:8, 1 Corinthians 16:25, Psalm 96:4-5, Philippians 2:11, Matthew 2:11, John 20:28, Philippians 2:9-11, Deuteronomy 5:7, Exodus 34:14, Matthew 10:28

### Memory Verse:

*You shall have no other gods before Me. (Ex 20:3)*

## Introduction

The Lord commanded Moses to go up to the mountain to receive the Law of God. He said to Moses, *“Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow. Take heed that you do not go up into the mountain or touch the border of it; whoever touches the mountain shall be put to death . . . And the Lord came down upon Mount Sinai . . . and the Lord called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up and God spoke all these words”* (Exodus 20).

We notice that these Ten Commandments, which were written with the finger of God, were a covenant with God, which is why the two tablets were called, “The Tables of the Covenant”. God made this covenant with us with great power so that we can feel the great value of the Covenant. The commandments are so important that God Himself wrote them. When Moses handed them over to the people, he took the blood of the offerings

and sprinkled it on the people so that they might be worthy to receive the commandments.

## Lesson Outline

- I. The First Commandment: *“I am the Lord your God which have brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage . . . You shall have no other gods before Me”* (Exodus 20:2-3).
- II. The Lord Reveals Himself:
  - The Lord calls Himself “The God of Abraham, and God of Isaac and God of Jacob”. He is a God not of the dead, but of the living.
  - When Moses asked the Lord about His name so that He might reveal the Divine name to Pharaoh, the Lord said, “Jehovah” [I Am That I Am].
  - The Lord revealed Himself and His name in various ways. He appeared to Abraham in the shape of three men and to Moses in the flame of fire out of the midst of a bush, and to the three young men in the shape of a person walking about with them in the blazing fire of the furnace.
  - *“But God who, at sundry times and in diverse manners spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken unto us by His Son”* (Hebrews 1:1-2).
  - Thus the Lord Jesus revealed the Heavenly Father in a very clear way: *“He who has seen Me has seen the Father . . . I am in the Father and the Father is in Me”* (John 14:9,10).
  - Christ’s revelation of the Father is characterized by attributes in the New Testament. These attributes are different from those in the Old Testament.
  - In the New Testament, Christ reveals to us the secrets of God and the secret of the Holy Trinity is an example.
  - In the New Testament, God did not reveal Himself as a mighty God giving Law on a mountain covered with smoke and fire, but He revealed Himself as a God who is loving, gentle and lowly in heart and who washes the feet of His disciples.

- In the New Testament God came with us, in us and not far away from us “*I in them and You in Me*” (John 17:23), “*And the word became flesh and dwelt among us*” (John 1:14). He became man, took our human nature and became like us in everything except sin.

III. Who brought you out of the Land of Egypt? God mentions His steadfast love and blessings to man. He does not mention His glory and greatness but He mentions His mercy and the works of His love. In the New testament God brought us out of darkness to light, and out of death to life. He gave us the gift to be born again with water and spirit. Crossing the Red Sea was a symbol of baptism, which we received through adoption (1 Corinthians 10). Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ always delivers us from all evil, for He who touches us touches the pupil of His eye “Behold, I have graven you on the palms of My hands”.

IV. You shall have no other gods before me:

- It is true that we worship One God; the Holy Trinity, but true worship is not the mere confession of one God, but it also involves practical behavior.
- Let us take heed to ourselves lest pride be a god to us . . . Many people are enslaved to themselves and to their selfishness and they see everything through themselves “He who loves his life loses it”.
- The World is another god and the apostle advises us by saying, “*Do not love the world or the things in the world*” (1 John 1:15). St. James the apostle says, “*Friendship with the world is enmity with God*” (James 4:4). St. Paul the apostle said that Demas was faithless to the message “*Demas, in love with this present world; has deserted me*” (2 Timothy 4:10).
- There is another god called The Flesh. Many young people are enslaved to their instincts, “*Their god is the belly, and they glory in their shame*” (Philippians 3:19). We have Esau as an example. He despised his birthright and sold it for a single meal of lentils.
- “Money” can also be a god. The Lord says, “*You cannot serve God and mammon*” (Matthew 6:24). It is the idol of misers and lovers of silver .The apostle says, “*For the love of money is the root of all evils*” (2 Timothy 6:10). He also says, “*Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: fornication, impurity, passion,*

*evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry*" (Colossians 3:5). This does not mean that we hate money, but it means that we must use money as a means of glorifying God. We have to be careful not to let money be our Master. We should spend it wisely and with spiritual guidance.

- Also there is another god among the people called "Gossip", so Many young people like to listen to people when they praise or curse one another. They like to know people's opinions and to listen to what they say. The apostle says, "How can you believe, who receive glory from one another, and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God?"

## Conclusion

So long as we believe in God, we have to perform our duty to Him. The Scripture refers to this duty by saying, "*You shall worship the Lord your God and Him only shall you serve*" (Matthew 4:10). Let's worship the Lord in spirit and truth, in faithfulness and fear all the days of our life.

### Applications:

- Examine yourself to identify others gods that you worship and develop means with the help of your father of confession to get rid of them.
- "I keep the Lord always before me, because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved". The following prayer may help you in your struggle against other gods:
- Prayer for the remainder of the week: "O Lord Jesus, you will be my companion in my life. You will help me in everything I do. I will submit to your commandments, because you are my Lord, my God and my Savior. Because You love me, You will help me in carrying out your commandments".
- Give one of the students a task to search and prepare a presentation about the second commandment for the next week.

### Exercises:

1. Who is the Atheist? (Ans. The atheist is the person who denies the existence of God and refuses to carry out the commandments of the Gospel as he considers them impractical.)

2. What are the differences between God's revelation of Himself in the Old Testament and in the New Testament?
3. When God reveals Himself, Salvation and Love accompany His revelation. Explain and give evidence.
4. What are the idols of the modern age?
5. What are your attitudes, as a young person, towards these idols? How can you reject being enslaved to them?
6. In this age of ours, atheism is not only denying the existence of God, but there is something else. What is it? How can you resist modern atheism?



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## Week 4

# You shall not make for yourself any Carved Image

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### Objectives:

- Emphasizing the Worship of God alone and rejecting the idols of the present age.
- Show that the icon in the church is not to be worshiped.

### References:

- Deuteronomy 4:23-24; 4:16-19

### Memory Verse:

*For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God. (Exodus 20:5)*

## Introduction

*“You shall not make for yourself a graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I, the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me” (Exodus 20:4-6).*

## Lesson Outline

- I. The aim of this commandment: Putting an end to the heathen worship and refraining from pagan beliefs and worshipping pictures or idols. This commandment does not mean that we should destroy pictures and statues because the Lord Himself commanded Moses to make two

cherubim of gold. Solomon's Temple was decorated with carved figures of winged creatures, palm trees and flowers.

## II. The Church honors icons: veneration of icon:

- An icon is a memorial to the history of important spiritual events. So when we honor an icon we honor those whom it represents.
- The icon stands for a person. When we venerate an icon, we venerate the person it stands for. When we look at the icon of the Lord Christ we feel that we are standing in the presence of God. Through the icon, we see the person it represents.
- Since the early ages, the Church has venerated and honored the icons. Icons were painted on the Sanctuary Veil and on many places. The Lord Jesus agreed to this veneration as He made many icons perform miraculous deeds. Icons of the churches have become a blessed domain for the presence of saints and the faith of the people.

## III. Benefits of icons in the Churches:

- a. Ecclesiastical Aim: The Church wants to teach us that those who departed are not absent. They still pray for us. They support us in our struggle. Thus, we are encouraged when we see their pictures. St Paul the Apostle says, *"Therefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which does so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us"* (Hebrews 12:1).
- b. Educational Aim: Icons motivate us by seeing victorious saints and remind us of the eternal life. They show us the world to which we shall go after our departure. They are, then, excellent means of illustration. They satisfy our feelings, raise the soul up to heaven, and encourage the worshippers to indulge themselves in the spiritual life. Icons teach the children, the illiterate, and simple people.
- c. Spiritual Aim: The word, whether written, uttered or illustrated in the form of pictures, affects us. It is food and life. Icons stand for deep spiritual symbols. We only need spiritual insight and spiritual maturity so that the Icons of the Church may become a source of inspiration and spiritual growth for our life. So, in the art of painting icons, the painter must have spiritual nature, to receive inspiration for this sort of work from the Lord so that with the light, which is in us, we may be able to see the light of the saints.

IV. We worship God only:

- Those who opposed venerating icons claim that using them in the church means the inclination into the idolatrous worship. This is wrong, as we do not worship wood or copper. We worship God only that is illustrated in the icon and we honor the saint whom the icon represents.
- There is a remarkable relationship between the mystery of incarnation and the veneration of the icon. The Logos incarnated and became man and revealed to us the Heavenly Father. The Lord Jesus became the Icon through whom we can see the Heavenly Father who is One with Him in Essence. That is why some of the fathers of the church see that incarnation is the basis of making icons. God the Spirit is everywhere and material things are not despised.

V. Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children: In ancient times, the curse did not affect the sinner alone, but it also affected his family and children, as what happened with Canaan the Son of Ham who sinned to his father Noah, but the Lord declared in the Book of Jeremiah, *“In those days they shall no longer say: ‘The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge’. But everyone shall die for his own sin; each man who eats sour grapes, his teeth shall be set on edge”* (Jeremiah 31:29,30). Although everyone dies for his own sin, yet, his sins may affect his children as when he suffers from a serious bodily or mental sickness. There is no doubt that the son who does not benefit from the experience of his father or the past event is mistaken.

## Conclusion

Thus we worship God only but we honor St. Mary and the saints. The true worship for God comes from a pure and loving heart to the Lord. The icons in the church are a reminder of the victorious path of the saints .

### Applications:

- Give one of the students a task to search and prepare a presentation about the third commandment for the next week.

### Exercises:

1. What do you think of or learn from the icons in church?
2. What message are the icons in church conveying?
3. Explain the statement “The person who opposes the icons and denies them resists the mystery of Incarnation”.
4. Explain the statement “The Lord visits the Iniquity of the fathers upon the children”. What does the Lord declare through Prophet Jeremiah?

## **Part II**

# **Lessons for the Month of October**

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## Week 1

# You shall not Take the Name of the Lord Your God in Vain

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### Objectives:

- To learn not to swear at all and honor the name of the Lord.

### References:

- Deuteronomy 5:10-11; Leviticus 19:12

### Memory Verse:

*You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain. (Exodus 20:7)*

## Introduction

Prove with examples that the Name of God was fearful and highly respected among the Jews in the Old Testament. What is Christ's preaching about swearing in His sermon on the mountain?

## Lesson Outline

- I. The Commandment in the Old Testament: The Lord says: If a man delivers to his neighbor a donkey or an ox or a sheep or any beast to keep, and it dies or is hurt or is driven away, without anyone seeing it, an oath "*by the Lord shall be between them both to see whether he has not put his hand to his neighbor's property*" (Exodus 22:10,11). This means that the Lord allowed an oath by the Lord when there were no witnesses. But the Lord drew the people's attention to the fact that it was dangerous to lie or to take the name of the Lord in vain.

WEEK 1. YOU SHALL NOT TAKE THE NAME OF THE LORD YOUR GOD IN VAIN

He allowed them to swear by his name so that they might not swear by the names of Pagan gods. In the Old Testament, the name of the Lord was fearful. When a Jew wrote the name of Jehovah, he purified himself and showed signs of submission.

II. The Commandment in the New Testament: In the Sermon on the Mountain, the Lord spoke about this commandment (Matthew 5:33-37). It is clear that the Lord does not allow us to swear by His name at all. We should venerate and honor His name. We should be honest with people when we speak to them and when we deal with them. Because when a Christian unites with the Lord Christ, he becomes a son of God, so he says the truth and does not need to emphasize what he says as the grace in him and the truth he lives to bear witness. The Lord says that swearing by anything means that the person owns that thing and because we own nothing not even ourselves, we have no right to swear by anything. God alone owns everything so He alone has the right to swear, *“The Lord has sworn and will not relent, You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek”* (Psalm 110:4). Thus the Heavenly Father swore to His Son that He would be a priest forever. It is His right to swear The Lord is Truth in Truth.

III. The Lord’s Name for the believers:

- The Lord’s Name is Light. This is a fact that never changes, *“I am the Light of the World”*. John 8:12
- The Lord’s Name is Love. It is the flame of love that is never quenched. Anyone who touches him is kindled with his love. 1 John 4:16
- His name is a power for worship and praise. Psalm 68:4
- Have a look at the Church hymns and you will feel how the church honors the Name of the Lord, sings it and praise its sweetness *“Your Name is sweet and blessed in the mouths of your saints, O My Lord Jesus Christ My good Savior”*.
- The Name of God is Holy, Great and Wonderful *“O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth: You whose glory above the heavens is chanted”* (Psalm 8:1-2).
- The Name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous man runs into it and is safe (Proverbs 18:10).
- The Name of the Lord causes terror to demons, *“Even the demons are subject to us in Your Name”* (Like 10:17).

- *“I charge you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her and it came out that very hour”* (Acts 16:18)

#### IV. Our duty concerning the Great Name of God:

- We should honor and venerate the Name of the Lord and the Name should be uttered with great respect and veneration.
- We have to glorify the Holy Name and give it due respect and glorification.
- The Name should be sweet in our mouth stimulating love.
- We have to use the Lord’s Name at the beginning of every prayer, in every meeting and in every work and also when we complete any work, as He is the Alpha and the Omega *“We love Your name O Lord. We meditate on Your Name all night long”* (from Midnight Prayer Vigil).
- I should never swear by the Holy Name whatever the circumstances may be. Some refuse to swear at Courts of Justice when they are asked to bear witness. Some of the fathers of the Church see that the vow here is not out of the personal will, but out of submission to the laws of the State. The Gospel demands that we should obey the laws of the State.

#### V. The Prayer of Jesus:

- The fathers of the church advise us to use the Holy Name in that Divine word *“Jesus”* since, *“Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved”* (Acts 4:12). And the psalm says, *“Save me, O God, by Your name”* (Psalm 54:1). When we start repeating this name, we feel that our thoughts are sanctified and united with the Lord. In this way we feel that our souls are healed *“If I may touch, but his clothes, I shall be whole”* (Mark 5:28, 6:56). But the exercise does not end at this point...We must continue, saying with Jacob, *“I will not let You go, unless You bless me”* so that we may feel His presence in our life and shout with Thomas, *“My Lord and my God”*.
- Repeating the prayer of Jesus does not mean neglecting the other ritual prayers...but we must use this prayer when our thoughts are dispersed, when we are fought by thoughts or vexed by people, when we feel indifferent in our life or when we fall in despair.



VI. How can I get rid of the sin of swearing? Always venerate and honor the name of the Lord in your prayer and in your daily life. At that time I fear to swear and I refrain completely from swearing. If the Holy Spirit works in me, He will forbid me. He will prevent me from swearing. If someone asks me to swear that my words are true I keep silent for some time so that I may not swear. I pray to the Lord to inspire my friend that my words are true and I say, "Believe me". The words "Believe me" characterize the Christian believer who refuses to swear.

## Conclusion

Using the Name of the Lord, then, is a blessed means of calm life dominated by the Spirit of God in the midst of worship, sanctification, joy and perpetual praise and thanksgiving "*I give thanks to thee, O Lord my God, with my whole heart, and I will glorify Your name forever*" (Psalm 86:12).

### Applications:

- What is our duty to the Holy Name of God? Open discussion
- How can you refrain from the habit of swearing? The servant should follow up with the children about an exercise to stop swearing.

### Exercises:

1. Why did the Lord allow people to swear in the Old Testament?
2. What are the conditions of swearing?
3. Why does the bible tell us not to swear at all with any name?

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## Week 2

# Remember That You Keep Holy the Sabbath Day

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### Objectives:

- To teach the students the importance of observing holy Sunday and devoting it to worship and service.
- If we cannot do that we need to choose another day.

### References:

- Deuteronomy 5:12-14, Leviticus 23:3

### Memory Verse:

*Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shall you labor, and do all your work; but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God; in it you shall not do any work. (Exodus 20:8-11)*

## Introduction

- The Lord had given this Commandment to the people before He wrote it in the Ten Commandments and the Lord Himself put it into practice before the other commandments saw light, “*So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it because on it God rested from all His work which He had done in creation*” (Genesis 2:3).
- The Lord emphasized the importance of this day when He said, “and He blessed it” and this shows that one calm day with the Lord is much better than all the things on earth.
- We also notice that when the Lord said, “on the Seventh day God rested from all His work”, He meant the true rest, which occurred to

the heart of the Lord when the Lord redeemed man from the sin on the cross. Accordingly, the Resurrection Day is the day of the Lord's true rest as the Lord did not feel tired when he created man but He suffered a lot in the work of salvation.

- In Hebrew the word "Sabbath" (Shabat) means "A day of rest". Its use is not restricted to the seventh day. Sometimes it was used to mean the day of rest whether it was the seventh day or not and at other times it was used to mean the whole week.

## Lesson Outline

### I. The Sabbath Commandment in the Old Testament:

- The Lord regarded it as a very important Commandment. Whoever did not keep it was to be put to death. "You shall keep my Sabbaths, for this is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that, you may know that I, the Lord, sanctify you. You shall keep the Sabbath because it is holy for you; everyone who profanes it shall be put to death; whoever does any work on it, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. . . whoever does any work on the Sabbath day shall be put to death" (Exodus 31:12-17)
- *"Everyone who keeps the Sabbath, and does not profane it and holds fast my Covenant these I will bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer"* (Isaiah 56:7).
- In the Book of Numbers, when the people were in the wilderness, they found a man gathering firewood on the Sabbath. They took him to Moses. The Lord said to Moses, *"This man must be put to death"* (Numbers 15:32). *"T*he Sabbath day was a day of rest for all: man and animal (Deuteronomy 5:14). Even the land itself was let to rest in the seventh year (Exodus 23:10-11).

### II. The Sabbath Commandment in the New Testament:

- Christianity did not destroy the Sabbath and substitute it with Sunday, but Christianity fulfilled the Sabbath in its divine spiritual meaning by devoting Sunday to rest and worship since as we have just said "Sabbath" means "rest" so Sunday is the day of true spiritual rest for the Lord and for all believers.

- In the past, “Sabbath” was a sign of circumcision. It was the sign of rest and it was substituted by Sunday, the soul’s rest instead of its ancient form, i.e. the bodily rest (Exodus 31:13).
- In the Old Testament, the Passover was called a Sabbath even if it happened to occur on any other day of the week. On the 15th day of the first month the Jews celebrated the feast of unleavened bread, and the day of atonement on which they did not work was celebrated on the 10th day of the seventh month and many other feasts were celebrated, as they happened to come, on any other day and they were called Sabbath (Leviticus 23). Thus Sunday could be regarded as Sabbath as many important events and occasions happened on Sunday. We take the following as examples: The Passover, the feast of the Tabernacles, the Day of Atonement; which is the resurrection of the Lord from the dead (Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24, John 20). Christ appeared many times after His resurrection on Sundays (John 20). Christ entered Jerusalem as a king on Sunday, and the coming of the Holy Spirit was on Sunday (Acts 2). St. John saw the new heaven and the New Earth on Sunday. Rev 1:10
- The Book of the Acts and St. Paul’s Epistles tell us that the Church made Sunday a day of rest (Sabbath) and worship. The Acts of the Apostles says, “*And upon the first day of the week when the disciples came together, to break bread, Paul preached unto them . . .*” (Acts 20:7). In another place we read, “*Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the Churches of Galatia, even so do you. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God has prospered him, that there be no gathering when I come*” (1 Corinthians 16:1-2).
- The Didascalia (the laws of the apostles) (Law No. 65 in the first book, and law No. 21 of the first group and law No. 45 of the second book) all of these laws emphasize the necessity of devoting Sunday to rest and worship inside the church. There are many other laws issued by local councils in 364 and 365 AD and these laws emphasize that Sunday is the day of rest and worship among Christians.

III. How to observe Sunday? Do not observe Sunday as the Phrases did or according to the way the Jews practiced in observing their Sabbath as they stuck to formalities and to the letter. Remember that the

Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. The Lord said that it is right to do good on Sabbath when He healed many people and allowed His disciples to pick ears of corn and eat the grain when they were hungry. All that happened on the Sabbath. The Lord showed them that they broke the Sabbath law to circumcise their sons. It is much better if they do works of kindness on the Sabbath day. We must observe the Lord's Day holy. We must not spend it in the cinema, theatre or playing grounds. That day should be devoted to prayers, Church education (Sunday School), serving the poor, visiting the sick and all kinds of works of mercy and worship.

## Conclusion

We spend time doing all other life activities, including studying, watching TV, talking and spending time with friends, participating in family activities ...etc. Then it is even more worthy to spend time with our Lord on the seventh day, remembering that He is the source of every good thing in our life.

### Applications:

- Try to spend a large proportion of the Lord's Day in worship and practicing works of mercy to please the heart of God.
- Encourage other students to devote Sunday to the Lord.
- How can you honor the Lord's Day?

### Exercises:

1. Why has the church chosen Sunday to be the day of rest and sanctification? Give evidence to show that the church creed is correct.
2. What is the evidence that shows that the Jews were strict in observing the Sabbath Day?
3. How did the Jews look at the Sabbath Law?
4. How was the Lord's opinion different from theirs concerning this topic?
5. The Sabbath was made for man not man for the Sabbath. Explain.

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## Week 3

# Honor Your Father and Your Mother

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### Objectives:

- Honoring our parents and showing respect to them.
- Rewarding them for their love to us.

### References:

- Colossians 3:20, Luke 14:26, Deuteronomy 5:16

### Memory Verse:

*Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land which the Lord your God gives you. (Exodus 20:12).*

## Introduction

We notice that this commandment is so important that it is mentioned before important commandments such as: “You shall not kill . . . You shall not commit adultery”. This means that the Lord regards this commandment to be very important and of great value. We also notice that it is the first commandment with a promise “*Honor your father and your mother which is the first commandment with promise*” (Ephesians 6:1-3).

## Lesson Outline

### I. The Commandment in the Old Testament:

- “*Whosoever strikes his father or his mother shall be put to death*” (Exodus 21:15-17, Leviticus 20:9).

- Solomon says, *“If one curses his father or his mother his lamp will be put out in utter darkness”* (Proverbs 20:20). He also says, *“The eye that mocks a father and scorns to obey a mother will be picked out by the ravens of the valley and eaten by vultures”* (Proverbs 30:17).
- We read in the Old Testament about those who disobeyed their fathers and how they were punished, as they never found rest or comfort. An example of those is Absalom the Son of King David. When the Lord caused Ahithophel’s Counsel, Absalom’s Counselor, to fail (2 Samuel 16:23).

## II. The Parent’s Status:

- In ancient times, the father was the priest of the family, her patron saint and mediator with God. The Lord authorized the blessing or the curse that a father gave.
- The Lord raised the rank of fatherhood when he called Himself our Father and He likened His kindness and love, to that of the mother *“Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you”* (Isaiah 49:15).
- Today the society celebrates the mother’s day and the family day to honor the parents who sacrifice all they have to bring their children up.

## III. How to honor our Parents:

- A Christian honors his parents in a way that greatly differs from the way used by a sociable polite normal person honoring his parents, not only in appearance and behavior, but also in essence and depth.
- The true Christians honor their parents for Christ, in Christ and with Christ. This means that they see Christ as the aim of the Commandment. They take Christ as the power and the way to practice the carrying out of the Commandment. Christ cared for His mother when He was on the cross when He said to the beloved St. John, *“This is your mother”*.

## IV. The most important aspects of honoring our parents:

- To love them: Our love to them stems from a pure heart. As believers we are supposed to love our enemies, how much more then

should we show our love to our parents and sacrifice everything for them and always pray for them.

- To obey them: Obedience here is not blind obedience but obedience of truth, accompanied with awareness and complete understanding. The Lord Jesus Christ gives an excellent example of the obedience of a son to His parents according to the flesh and Isaac offers a very nice example of obedience, as he was a symbol of Christ in the Old Testament Genesis 22:7-9 *“Hear my son, your father’s instruction, and reject not your mother’s teaching”* (Proverbs 1:8).
- To support them: Lord Jesus reproached the Scribes and the Pharisees who did not perform their duty towards their parents because of offering sacrifices to the Temple. The Lord said that honoring parents and supporting them and providing them with the money they need is more important than offering money as sacrifice to the temple. Our teacher St. Paul the Apostle says to his disciple Timothy, *“But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he has denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel”* (1 Timothy 5:8). When the Lord Jesus Christ was on the cross, He did not forget His mother and asked His disciple John to care for Her. John 19:26-27
- To respect them: We show respect to them during talking to them, in discussion, when we walk with them in the street, in sitting with guests, in buying what they need, in estimating their opinion and points of view so long as they are within the boundaries of truth.

#### V. When do we take precaution in obeying them?

- *“We ought to obey God rather than men”* (Acts 5:29).
- The Apostle says, *“Children, obey your parents in the Lord for this is right”* (Ephesians 6:1).
- When obedience to parents contradicts the Gospel, I prefer, with all calmness and modesty, to stick to truth rather than favoring them at the cost of pleasing the Lord Jesus. This demands firmness in attitude, strong faith, true modesty, clear self-denial, spiritual enlightenment and the advice of my father of Confession.
- Man should obey the Lord rather than his parents when he receives a call for dedication or monasticism. He finds that sources of material and spiritual provision are available for parents and



that he has performed his duty towards them. The Voice of God is clear in this respect and is not tied with the earthly feelings and relationships. This, of course, necessitates spiritual and wise advice and guiding.

- One of the most beautiful examples of taking precautions in obeying parents is the life of St. Barbara, and the life of St. Dimyana and Solomon's attitude towards his mother (1 Kings 2:19-24).
- There is, of course, the obedience that we must show to our spiritual fathers, priests and saints. This has its blessed dimensions.

## Conclusion

The person who honors his/her parents is blessed by God and respected by men. You will also be rewarded on earth and in heaven for honoring your parents.

### Applications:

- Active and conscious obedience to the fathers spiritually.
- Show your obedience and care for your parents all the time.

### Exercises:

1. It is the first Commandment with promise. Explain.
2. Why did the Lord demand that man should honor his parents? In what way should he honor them?
3. To what extent should a Christian obey his parents?
4. Who else should we honor other than our fathers according to flesh and how can that be?

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## Week 4

# You shall not Murder

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### Objectives:

- To introduce the students to the godliness of the heart and its purity of every hate.

### References:

- Matthew 5:21-26, Matthew 19:18, Proverb 28:17, Matthew 15:19, Galatians 5:21

### Memory Verse:

*You shall not murder. (Exodus 20:13)*

## Introduction

Why is “murder” a dangerous crime? Give the students time to answer. This sin is against God who created man in His image. The Lord says, “*Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed for God made man in His own image*” (Genesis 9:6). When man kills someone he completely destroys life, thus putting an end to a human life, which is a work that cannot be cured. Murder is a challenge to the Will of God in whose hands lies the fate of the people.

## Lesson Outline

### I. Kinds of Murder:

- a. Direct Murder: There are two types of direct murder: Individual murder or group murder. The individual murder occurs when people kill each other for one reason or another. Group murder takes place when a nation fights another nation, wages war or destroys

the other nation. The most dangerous thing in war is that it despises human life. In this century, wars are very dangerous as they make use of deadly destructive weapons, which can cause the death of thousands of people in a few seconds. Although the Lord said that wars represent one of the marks and signs of the last days, Christianity draws the attention of those in charge to the dangers of wars and asks them to resort to peace, and using humane methods in solving the international problems. During war, the church must do her best to comfort people so she calls for peace and insists on achieving it, she heals the wounds, supports the families of those who died in war.

b. Indirect Murder:

- Such as any means that kills the fetus (embryo) in the womb, abortion and castration.
- Killing by intention or thought. This sort of murder is regarded as a serious sin in Christianity as the Lord Jesus Christ in His Sermon on the Mountain said, *“You have heard that it was said by them of old time, You shall not kill; and whoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment. But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment”* (Matthew 5:21,22).
- The moral murder, that is, defaming the good reputation of people.

c. The Murder of the Soul:

- Killing the soul is more dangerous than killing the body. The Lord Jesus said, *“And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell”* (Matthew 10:28).
- Killing the soul means separating the soul from God and this is Satan’s task from the beginning, *“The devil was a murderer from the beginning”* (John 8:44).
- One of the best examples of the deeds that lead to the destruction of the soul is getting in touch with devils and magicians and the submission of the soul to them. That is why the Holy Bible warns us against dealing with them *“Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”* (James 4:7).
- There are people who believe in heresies specially those who deny the Divinity of Christ such as Jehovah’s Witnesses. All

who follow their false belief will be destroyed. There are factors that cause the destruction of the soul such as when the Shepherd neglects his people and when parents neglect their children (Ezekiel 33:7-10).

d. Suicide:

- His Holiness Pope Shenouda said suicide is a crime of murder, as people do not own their souls. The soul is the possession of Christ as He bought that soul by His blood. The greatest sin which man commits is despair of the mercies of the Lord and this state of despair leads to suicide as Judas, the son of perdition, did.
- There is also the slow suicide such as drinking, smoking and taking drugs. All these destroy the body and the soul, spoil the systems of the body and weaken the soul. This is called self-murder *“You have a name that you live and are dead”* (Revelation 3:1).
- Killing the time, which is more dangerous than true murder (Wasting time and life in vain).

II. When is murder allowed?

- The Lord allowed murder in olden times. Anyone who broke the Commandments was put to death. Moses ordered the people to stone the man who gathered firewood on the Sabbath day . . . that was an instructive lesson that could be clearly understood by the people. And about the murderer the Lord said, *“Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed”* (Genesis 9:6). And the Lord said to St. Peter, *“Put up again your sword into his place; for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword”* (Matthew 26:52). And about the governor and his authority to kill, Paul the Apostle says, *“For he is the minister of God to you for good . . . For he bears not the sword in vain; for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that does evil”* (Romans 13:4).
- In the past, the Lord allowed the people of Israel to fight and sometimes the wars were called wars for the Lord as what happened in the days of Gideon, but the Lord forbade all these wars and came to give peace to the world and all the earth is the Lord’s and Christ’s. That is why the idea of the Crusade and Religious wars was not according to the Lord’s desire. Christianity does

not agree to such an idea. But Christianity ensures the Christian soldier who defends his country does not kill but he obeys Caesar, and Caesar alone will be judged by the Lord for his deeds.

## Conclusion

The Lord demands that I should bear people no grudge nor should I be angry with anyone so that I may not be a murderer. O Lord, fill my heart with love for all so that I may not be the cause of destroying anyone. Let your life in me build, support and strengthen others. Remember, murder violates both the biggest laws in the bible "Loving God" and "loving your neighbor." By killing someone created in the image of God, we show that we don't love God. In the same way, if we murder, we don't have love to our neighbor. Thus, not only should we love our friends, we should also love our enemies. However, murder doesn't have to be physical. You can kill your brother/sister by damaging his/her reputation. Thus, refrain from insulting or defaming anyone. Remember, the bible says, "*Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, 'Raca,'[d] is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell.*" (Matthew 5:22).

### Applications:

- Compare what Jesus did on the cross to save us from eternal death and yoke of sin. How does murdering someone compare with that act of kindness? Do you think it is ok to kill or even insult anyone whom Jesus died on the cross to save? Wouldn't that be going against what Jesus did!!
- Abstain from killing the spirit of others with your words or actions.
- Pray to God everyday to give you grace to control your emotions and tongue so that you wouldn't upset anyone. Remember, always fight evil with good!!
- Be aware of what you allow into yourself through your senses. What type of movies do you watch? What type of games do you play? Who do you hangout with? Do they lead you into violence?

### Exercises:

1. "Murder is a challenge to the Will of God and a sign of degrading the dignity of man". Open discussion. How serious and dangerous is this sin?
2. Who is the first person to commit murder? What was the consequence of that sin? (Remember, Cain was not mentioned ever again in the bible as a result of that sin despite him being the oldest child of Adam and Eve. How Sad!!)
3. What did you learn from today's lesson?

## **Part III**

# **Lessons for the Month of November**

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## Week 1

# The Seventh and Tenth Commandments

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### Objectives:

- To learn purity of the soul, the body and thought and satisfaction in life.

### References:

- Matthew 5:27-30; Hebrews 13:4; 1 John 1:9; Proverbs 6:32; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Proverbs 1:10-15

### Memory Verse:

*You shall not commit adultery. (Genesis 20:14)*

*You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's. (Genesis 20:17)*

## Introduction

Ask your students if they can name people in the bible who committed adultery? Ask them what happened as a result of that sin? Sexual immorality (adultery) is different from all other sins in such a way that we commit it against our own body. *“Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a man can commit is outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body.”* (1 Corinthians 6:18). In today's world, the media encourages people to exercise lewd behaviours and resort to adultery. The source of adultery is lust. That is why our lord Jesus Christ said, *“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’[a] 28 But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with*



*her in his heart*" (Matthew 5:27-30). We should also not covet anything that is not ours.

## Lesson Outline

- I. Adultery in the Old Testament: It is regarded as treachery. It is the complete practice of adultery. It is abominable to God. When the Lord spoke about the evil deeds of the Children of Israel in the Old Testament, as when he spoke about their worship of idols or keeping away from Him, He said that they played the harlot after other gods (Judges 2:17, Jeremiah 3:8). The person who contemplates the Book of Hosea the Prophet feels that the Lord hates this sin of adultery. Let us take a lesson from the life of David to know the dangerous consequences of committing adultery (2 Samuel 11-18).
- II. Adultery in the New Testament:
  - It is committing adultery in mind and heart before it becomes a process of committing adultery (Matthew 5:27,28).
  - It is not only dangerous for a believer to defile his thoughts but he is also forbidden to keep the company of those who commit adultery (1Corinthians 5).
  - There are many commandments that draw our attention to the fact that Christianity considers adulterers and adulteresses as enemies of God (1 Corinthians 10:8, Colossians 3:5, James 4:4).
- III. Why is adultery dangerous?
  - It is breaking the commandment. The Lord says, "You shall not commit adultery". So if I commit adultery, I break the Commandment and I shall be judged because of disobedience.
  - Adultery also has another dangerous phase which St. Paul the Apostle refers to by saying, "*Flee fornication. Every sin that a man does is without the body; but he that commits fornication sins against his own body*" (1 Corinthians 6:18).
  - Because we do not possess our bodies, the sin of adultery is directed to the members of Christ "*Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of a harlot? God forbid . . . For you are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God*" (1 Corinthians 6:15-20).

- “If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy” (1 Corinthians 3:17). In this St. John the seer says, “But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable and murderers and whoremongers and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone: which is the second death” (Revelation 21:8).
- Committing adultery deprives man of the grace of baptism . . . Through baptism we put on the wedding dress and wear the light of eternity. Our bodies attain a great grace but if we use it for evil purposes we put light under a bushel and defile a pure dress and for this we shall be judged.
- Adultery hinders the psychological growth. The adulterer is a selfish, self-centered person who cannot love or give...as love means maturity, responsibility and commitment but the adulterer cannot bear responsibility or commit to anything good.

#### IV. Reasons for committing adultery:

- Need for affection and inner dissatisfaction: When man feels that he is not satisfied, he resorts to the desire of the flesh. The main cure lies in being filled with the Lord Jesus and enjoying the sweetness of the life of fellowship with him. When Christ fills my heart and my inner life I need nothing else and I do not resort to the desire of the flesh.
- The evil nature that lies in me drives me to death so if I do not crucify and mortify this nature everyday it will appear and dominate me and enslave me. The spiritual fathers spoke about many exercises such as the chastity of the senses (especially the sight), asceticism, fasting, public prayers, fear of God, remembering the day of judgment, contrition, perpetual worship and humbling oneself before God and keeping away from any stimulation that may cause one to sin.
- One of the main causes of committing adultery is pride “*Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall*” (Proverbs 16:18). So when man becomes humble before the Lord, he attains grace and the Lord defends and protects him. The haughty is separated from grace so he falls. The humble say, “*The snare is broken, and we have escaped*” (Psalm 124:7).
- There is another reason for committing adultery, that is luxury and enjoying the luxuries of life. The best example we have is

the Prophet David when he deserted his ascetic life and lived in luxury and laziness. He gave freedom to his senses and the result was his great fall. So, fasting, asceticism, activity in worship and spiritual vigilance are necessary for the believer to lead the life of chastity.

- V. Prayer: Lord, grant me the chastity of the senses, the purity of flesh, godliness of the heart and contrition of the soul so that I may lead a pure life for you. When the spiritual wars and defiled thoughts attack me, defend me and protect me, O Lord and give me the power to spend the whole night in true worship and grant me an honest and faithful heart.
- VI. You shall not covet your neighbor's goods: *"You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's"* (Exodus 20.17, Deuteronomy 5.21).
- VII. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin! Desire is the origin of every sin. Desire of possession is the cause of theft or stealing, the desire of the flesh is the cause of committing adultery, the desire of revenge is the cause of murder *"Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry"* (Colossians 3:5).
- VIII. Desire goes through many stages:
- Thinking -meditation -consideration -acceptance
  - Longing for it and repeated thoughts
  - Emotion
  - Practice, conation and performance
  - Repetition and enslavement
- IX. The dangerous role of the desire of the flesh in the life of a believer:
- The desires of the flesh are against the Spirit and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh. Those who follow the desires of the flesh are of the flesh and those who please the Spirit of God are the Children of God.
  - The desire of the flesh is never satisfied and the more we practice it, the greater our inclination to it; *"The eye is not satisfied with seeing nor the ear fined with hearing"* (Ecclesiastes 1:8).

- The desire of the flesh blinds person and does not give him a chance to think. We have three groups of people; each has its own way of dealing with the desire of the flesh:
  - a. The spiritual person lives according to the desire of the spirit rather than the desire of the flesh.
  - b. The person of the flesh is like an animal whose desire of the flesh overcomes his spiritual attitude.
  - c. The regular person who is desire of the flesh and desire of the spirit are in conflict.
- Sometimes person degrades himself to a standard less than the animal level when he is completely enslaved to the desire of the flesh, as the animal practices the desire of the flesh within the limits of the natural instincts and it cannot go beyond its confines and this desire is practiced in special seasons.

X. Examples to show that it is dangerous to be enslaved to the desires of the flesh:

- King David, the great king (2 Samuel 11)
- King Ahab and his submission to the covetousness of his wife Jezebel (1 Kings 21).
- King Solomon who said about himself, *“And whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them”* (Ecclesiastes 2:10).

XI. Covetousness is the basis of all desires:

- The person who covets the material things is a covetous person and a worshipper of idols.
- The person who covets good reputation and dignity wants to achieve a social status that is higher than their potentialities so they live a life of suffering and torment all their life.
- The person who desires the spiritual gifts and religious orders of priesthood loses his spiritual peace and perishes as he leads a life of envy and hatred . . . and the person who desires the gifts of others becomes strange to himself.

XII. Our attitude towards the desires of the flesh:

- *“So shun youthful passions”* (2 Timothy 2:22). Shunning the desires of the flesh is not a sign of weakness or cowardice but it is a sign of courage. To escape in such a situation means power, victory and courage (The example of Joseph).

- Resisting desires and passions by spiritual struggle, asceticism, fasting, prayers and perpetual worships is very effective (Examples: in the life history of our fathers, the saints and the monks).
- Our heart must be filled with Christ's love and Christ should be the desire of our hearts. In this way we love and think through Christ "*But we have the mind of Christ*" (1 Corinthians 2:16), "*It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me*" (Galatians 2:20).
- The feeling of being sojourners in this world, forsaking worldly pleasures, and that all is vanity and a striving after the wind. When we know that the world passes away, and the lust of it, all these develop in man the fear of God and hatred to the worldly pleasures.

## Conclusion

At last we say: love is the best cure of all sins, specially the sin of covetousness and adultery "*Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right*" (1 Corinthians 13:4-6). God's desire in our life is to resemble the likeness of his only son, our lord and saviour Jesus Christ. That's why he left us an example to follow. Here is what God desires in our life, "*For it is God's will that you should be holy: You must abstain from sexual immorality*" (1 Thessalonians 4:3). Thus, we should choose a life of holiness, not a life of sexual immorality.

### Applications:

- Guard against the moments of weakness. Pray for God's help "*Be pleased O God, to deliver me! O Lord, make haste to help me*".
- Keep away from leisure and control your thoughts and keep your mind pure by keeping away from evil thoughts.
- Guard yourself against despair, "*Rejoice not over me, O my enemy; when I fall I shall rise*" (Micah 7:8) so that your body will be pure.
- Write an essay about the life history of some saints who resisted the desire of the flesh in their life.

- Make a wall Chart and write on some of the life history of some saints, mention their struggle against the desire of the flesh and refer to their sayings about this topic.

**Exercises:**

1. What are the stages that the desire of the flesh passes through till it becomes an abominable habit?
2. “The eye is the lamp of the body”. Explain.
3. What are the consequences of the adultery sin in the life of Prophet David and what were the steps that led to those consequences?
4. Why is covetousness regarded as a bad habit in Christianity? How can you resist it in social and spiritual life?

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## Week 2

# The Eighth and Ninth Commandment

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### Objectives:

- Development of the Spirit of Christian honesty and faithfulness in action, deeds and words.

### References:

- Ephesians 4:28; Proverbs 10:2; 1 Timothy 6:10; Matthew 5:37

### Memory Verse:

*You shall not steal. (Exodus 20:15)*

*You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. (Exodus 20:16)*

## Introduction

Ask your students if they had anything stolen from them? Ask them how they felt about the situation? Ask your students if they have been lied before? Ask how they felt about it? Stealing and lying are condemned behaviours in any society. They cause an immense strife to the party who was lied to or stolen from. The bible also condemns both behaviours as they are not in line with the life of a Christian.

## Lesson Outline

- I. Stealing in the Old Testament: *“If a man steals an ox or a sheep, and kills it or sells it, he shall pay five oxen for an ox and four sheep for a sheep”* (Exodus 22:1). It is clear that God hates those who steal and demanded that thieves would be put to death (Exodus 21:16, Deuteronomy 24:7).

II. Stealing in the New Testament: It is one of the greatest sins like fornication, murder, and adultery. The Lord Jesus says, *“For out of the heart comes evil thoughts, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a man”* (Matthew 15:19-20).

III. Why do people steal?

- Because they do greed and wanting to take what is not theirs: *“and covetousness which is idolatry”* (Colossians 3:15).
- Because of not wanting to toil as the Lord demands, *“In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread”*. They want to eat in an easy comfortable way, *“Stolen water is sweet and bread eaten in secret is pleasant”* (Proverbs 9:17).
- Because of a person may not fearing God . . . If one feels the presence of God and that the Lord’s eyes penetrate darkness, how can one steal?
- One of the prominent examples of the corruption of those who steal is the Character of Judas Iscariot who carried the moneybag and would help himself from it. He was a thief and dishonest (John 12:6). Regardless of the reasons, stealing can’t be justified at all.

IV. Why does the Gospel demand that we should not steal?

- St. Paul the Apostle explains the true motive that makes a believer refrain from stealing by saying: *“For we are members one of another . . . Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his hands, so that he may be able to give to those in need”* (Ephesians 4:28). Love that gathers the believers makes them refrain from stealing; on the contrary, they labor to give those in need.
- Within the frame of brotherhood and family ties, we find that any Christian thief causes shame to all Christians; as if all the church had stolen *“But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief or a wrongdoer, or a mischief-maker; yet if one suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but under that name let him glorify God”* (1 Peter 4:15-16).
- Tertilianus the lawyer and the Christian defender said to the Emperor, *“If you found a Christian who killed, stole, committed adultery or was an evildoer, take us all and cut us into pieces”*.



This true Christian feeling filled the church in the apostolic age. For this reason, when Simon the magician wanted to attain the gifts of the Spirit by giving bribes, St. Peter cursed him (Acts 8: 18-20).

- Sometimes children steal because of deprivation so they resort to stealing which, in this case, is regarded as an illness that needs psychological and social cure. As for the church, if her members live for the heavenly things, you will not find a thief among them because grace protects the believer from theft.

V. Types of unnoticed stealing:

- Let us guard against thefts that go unnoticed and that may not move our conscience such as:
  - Getting into a bus or a train without paying the price of a ticket.
  - Using other things in their absence without permission.
  - Our attempt to know the secrets of others in their absence.
  - Taking advantage of the time devoted for something else such as an official doing his private work in the government office.
  - Cheating with tax claims/ cheating on tithe.
  - Calling sick at work or school when we are not sick
- Let us be honest in our work. Let us respect the time devoted for work. Let us keep our conscience awake so that we may be without blame before God in love.

VI. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor (Exodus 20:16, Deuteronomy 5:20) :

- The importance of this commandment: This commandment treats an important social and spiritual topic. Telling lies is known to all and is practiced all over the world so false witnesses always appear before opponents. When person bears false witness, he may cause the death of an innocent person.
- One of the most prominent evidences of bearing false witness in the Old Testament is the following: *“If a malicious witness rises against any person to accuse him of wrongdoing, then both parties to the dispute shall appear before the Lord, before the priests and the judges who are in office in those days; the judges shall inquire diligently, and if the witness is a false witness and has accused*

*his brother falsely, then you shall do to him as he had meant to do to his brother; so you shall purge the evil from the midst of you” (Deuteronomy 19:16-19).*

VII. The danger of bearing false witness:

- It is a sin of telling a lie. It is also a slander, “*You shall not go up and down as a slanderer among your people, and you shall not stand forth against the life of your neighbor: I am the Lord*” (Leviticus 19:16). It may cause injustice to an innocent person. The sin of telling lies denotes the darkness of the heart. That is why writers call the devil a liar and the father of the lies (John 8:44).
- It is a sign of cowardice and weak personality and the inability to shoulder responsibility.
- In the Old Testament, telling lies was regarded as denying the right of God and His authority over His people. Solomon the Wise says, “*There are six things which the Lord hates . . . haughty eyes, a lying tongue . . . false witness who breathes out lies*”(Proverbs 6:16-19).

VIII. Factors that drive person to bear false witness:

- “*Debates, envying, wrath, strife, back biting, whisperings, swellings, tumults*” (2 Corinthians 12:20).
- Bribe: “*And you shall take no bribe, for a bribe blinds the officials, and subverts the cause of those who are in the right*” (Exodus 23:8).
- Carelessness in all domains and listening to slanders, lies and rumors.
- Treachery and evil desire to hurt others.
- Flattery, partiality, hypocrisy and simulation.

IX. Examples of false witnesses against saints

- Joseph’s brothers lied to their father (Genesis 37:31)
- Jezebel and Ahab with Naboth of Jezreel (1 Kings 21:9,10)
- False witnesses against St. Stephen the Archdeacon (Acts 6:13)

X. The spread of lying in our modern society:

- Because of the spread of printing, the press, and different means of broadcasting, and because of the conflict between nations, parties, institutions and individuals and advertising, the means of deception spread everywhere. Few are those who commit themselves to truth and justice.
- One of the well-known types of lying is the cunning diplomacy, hiding some facts and revealing others and exaggeration in writing and talk.
- Silence in certain situations and concealing very important information sometimes, and revealing true facts at other times to achieve evil cunning purposes.

XI. Our duty towards this commandment:

- Carefulness in speaking and listening and resorting to original sources that are worthy of trust.
- Testing ourselves, specially when we judge other's deeds or bear witness about a person or a situation, so that the heart may not be polluted with self-motivation.
- Living according to truth so that all what we think of is true.
- Not to be rash on the plea of frankness as not everything known can be said.
- Don't believe all that is said and don't judge without testing.
- Be careful in your talk and don't exaggerate matters and do not listen to false accusations.
- It is not right to rely on what many witnesses say, but these witnesses should be good and sure of what they say.

## Conclusion

Lord, grant me the spirit of honesty that people may glorify you through my honesty. Teach me to care in using everything and performing every task and teach me to labor and toil so that others may be comforted, and not to enjoy rest at the cost of others. Remember, God sees what is in the heart, not just our deeds. Thus, we should refrain from the life of stealing and lying. A person who lies and steals have no value in the eyes of both God and men. Moreover, it is important that we stick to the truth, even if we think it hurts us. Remember, even if people are not watching or paying

attention, God is!! If you have integrity and live an honest life deprived of stealing, you have peace of mind free of guilt or shame. You have peace with God!!

**Applications:**

- Practice carefulness in giving opinion or judgment.
- Tell the truth when you talk and reject partiality and lying.
- Pray to God to help you avoid the urge to lie and/or steal.

**Exercises:**

1. What is Christian faithfulness? What is its source? How can we keep it?
2. What are the kinds of theft that man practices other than stealing money? How can we train ourselves on complete honesty?
3. This sin has many new forms in our modern society ... What are these forms and how can we encounter them?
4. What is our duty towards this commandment?
5. What did you learn from today's lesson?

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## Week 3

# The Christian Man and Violence

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### Objectives:

- To train the students to lead the life of Christian lowliness which is devoid of cowardliness, weakness and humiliation.

### References:

- Gospel of Matthew, Gospel of John

### Memory Verse:

*Take My yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. (Matthew 11:29)*

## Introduction

Many young people like violence, but Christians have their opinion concerning violence. This opinion is derived from the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. The Lord Christ refused violence (Matthew 5:9, Matthew 10:16). John Chrysostom said: “you can be a fierce wolf and you do not accept to be a lowly lamb, but you cannot be one of the subjects of Christ as He is the shepherd of lambs not a shepherd of wolves.” Paul the apostle wrote, “*Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men*” (Romans 12:17-18).

## Lesson Outline

- I. Jesus Refused Violence in His Life:

- Jesus refused violence in His teachings and in His life (Matthew 12:18-20, Luke 9:54-56, Matthew 21:4, Matthew 26:51-53).
- When questioned before the High Priest about His disciples and teachings, Jesus answered bravely that He was teaching in public *“And when He had said these things, one of the officers who stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, ‘Do You answer the high priest like that?’ Jesus answered him, ‘If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why do you strike me?’”* (John 18:22). Let us contemplate upon the Lord’s answer. Many people protest against the Lord’s teaching *“If anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also”* and they see in this a call for cowardice and servility and they forget the great spiritual power of it, but Jesus’ conduct on that occasion sheds light on the commandment and explains how to carry it out. Jesus here did not turn the other cheek and there was no trace of humiliation or servility in His behavior but He caused the man to stand still in awe and fear. His manner was a mixture of lowliness and manliness, awe and greatness.

II. Jesus Who Was Slapped Protested against this Soldier’s Conduct: This emphasizes that the lowliness of Christian man does not mean cowardice but it means to forgive when you are able to punish. In so doing man surpasses his weakness and overcome the nature of the flesh and sublimates his innate instincts. They were filled with spitefulness against Jesus so they nailed Him to the cross and He faced their great spite with His great love and their violence with lowliness and when and when He was on the cross He prayed for His murderers (Luke 23:34).

III. The Church of the Apostles is a Model of Lowliness:

- The early Christians behaved in lowliness and in doing so they obeyed the commandment (Matthew 11:29).
- They did not rebel against their persecutors but they achieved a spiritual revolution by offering the testimony of blood without any spite of envy. St. Stephen was stoned and as he was stoned the Bible said that *“He knelt down and cried out with a loud voice: Lord, do not charge them with this sin. And when he had said this, he fell asleep”* (Acts 7:60). The church raised earnest prayers for the rulers who persecuted her till Saul who threatened them was converted and became St. Paul the preacher and the chosen vessel.

IV. Why Does Christianity Rejects Violence:

- Violence refuses love as it looks to the other person as something that should be destroyed, and not as a person who can serve. Violence indicates weakness as it fears others and this fear drives it to attack others to avoid being attacked.
- Meekness is strength, love is strength and perfection- that is why Jesus is called the Commander of the law of perfection and it is He that planned the best law. Violence does not regard the humanity of man but Christianity confirms man and resists destroying others.

V. The Society Rejects Violence: Christianity rejects violence and urges people to be meek and to have a strong personality. Civilized Societies do not permit or allow violent actions as such actions are considered savage actions and the law was set to resist aggressions and to punish anyone who commits such irresponsible actions wherever he is.

VI. Christian Meekness implies real strength: Christian meekness does not mean indifference- it is not against firmness, as firmness is needed in situations of defending truth and what is right. Firmness is necessary sometimes to waken the stony conscience. Jesus was firm and strict without showing any grudge or hatred, in many situations (Matthew 17:7; Matthew 23:3; John 3:16). The true meekness does not mean servility; it implies insisting on bearing witness to truth whatever the difficulties may be. The meek would not destroy others but he offers himself as a sacrifice to save others if necessary.

## Conclusion

O young men and young women, if you have energy, enthusiasm, zeal and ambition let them all be ruled by the Holy Spirit. Let the violence you have be violence of love and bearing witness to truth. Even if you are perfectly meek you will still get opposition, as our Lord Jesus had faced a lot of oppositions. So, keep your meekness and overcome evil with good.

### Applications:

- Train the students to practice meekness in their life in the family and in the school.

- Train the students to favor meekness in our Lord's commandment: "Learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart".
- Encourage the students to hold brotherly relations and relations of love with Christian and non-Christian and to face any roughness in speech with gentleness and meekness not out of weakness but out of love.
- Pray for God to make you a meek and humble person like our Lord Jesus to win a lot of souls.

**Exercises:**

1. Have you ever been beaten or insulted because of your faith? What was your response? What would be our Lord Jesus' response?
2. How does being a firm and meek person work for you? Can you give another example of such kind of person from the bible?
3. How was meekness working on the God's people of the Old Testament?
4. Discuss Matthew 10:34-36 why Jesus said that?



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## Week 4

# The Acceptable Worship

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### Objectives:

- To train the students to practice the true worship with spirit and truth.

### References:

- 1 Corinthians 6:12, 9:24-27, 10:23.

### Memory Verse:

*God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.  
(John 4:4)*

## Introduction

The acceptable worship is the worship of the person acceptable before the Lord. Before we offer our worship to the Lord we have to examine our actions and ourselves. The Holy Spirit helps us to know ourselves. The welcome worship is the work of the Holy Spirit in us. The Spirit Himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words. We have to submit to the Spirit so that he may teach us how to pray. The Holy Spirit leads us to Christ, and Christ leads us to the Father and Christ puts our prayers and service in the sacrifice of Himself that has been welcomed by our heavenly Father.

For the prayer to be in the name of Christ it must be according to His will. Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well, i.e. the aim is the Glory of Christ, not self-interests.

## Lesson Outline

How Would Our Prayer in Jesus Christ Be Acceptable? The Holy Bible teaches us that the prayer should be:

- I. With faith “Ask and you will receive, that your joy may be full”.
- II. With persistence and trust in the gifts of God (e.g. the widow and the unrighteous Judge).
- III. With thanks - each prayer in the church begins with: “We thank the beneficent ...”
- IV. With submission and humility: Submission to the will of God. Thy will be done O Father, not our will. In this way man comes out from his prayer room and he is sure that in everything God works for good with those who love Him.
- V. In secret without showing off (the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector).
- VI. With a pure heart “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God”. The acceptable worship applies to both our prayers at home and in the church during the liturgy. We should involve God in every thing that is happening in our life whether it is trivial or major matter. He is our only helper and supporter in all times and in all situations. Prayer should be a simple and easy as a second nature to us.

## Conclusion

Let us worship the Lord by all our heart and he will welcome us in the prayers of our fathers the saints. Amen.

### Applications:

- Hold a weekly prayer meeting to practice praying in Spirit.
- Read some texts from the church prayer books and make a wall magazine.
- Study parts of the psalms and hourly prayers (Agpia) so that you may repeat them in all the situations of life.

### Exercises:

1. How can we examine our actions and ourselves before we offer our worship to the Lord?
2. Explain “the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with deep sighs too deep for words.”

WEEK 4. THE ACCEPTABLE WORSHIP

3. What can we do to aim to the glory of Christ, not our interests?
4. What is our role for our prayer in Jesus Christ to be acceptable?

## **Part IV**

# **Lessons for the Month of December**

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# Week 1

## The Value of Time

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### Objectives:

- To appreciate the value of time and the need to use it wisely
- To realize the importance of dedicating time to God daily.
- To realize that our life on earth is but for short time and will end soon, so we need to prepare for the after life.

### References:

- Ephesians 5:16-20; Malachi 3:7-10.

### Memory Verse:

*Redeeming the time because the days are evil. (Ephesians 5:16)*

## Introduction

Time is the best expression of equality between all humans since we all get the same share of time. All humans get 24 hours per day, 7 days a week and 365 days a year. Humans can vary in the amount of fortune, intelligence, happiness, beauty or even health but they are all equal in the amount of time they get. We also cannot save time; rather we can do more for the same time.

## Lesson Outline

Ask the students how do they spend their day? And how many hours they allocate for each activity? Time is a gift from God, but it is up to us to open that gift and use it, abuse it or even unused it. We all need to learn how to manage our time wisely and make the best of every minute in our

life because every minute counts. The organized person controls his time instead of time controlling him. So, how can we manage our time?

- I. Specify your goals according to God's will: Everyone needs to specify daily, weekly, monthly, yearly and even life long goals. Otherwise the days pass by aimlessly and wastefully. When specifying goals in our life we need to consult with God to show us His will in our life and the goals He has for us (Ephesians 5:15-20). Thus, we clearly need to spend time with God every day to consult with Him regarding our goals. We also ask Him to bless our time and our productivity.
- II. Specify the time to meet your goals: We have to put a schedule for ourselves to meet our goals. King Solomon says that to everything under the sun there is a time (Ecclesiastics 3:1-8). The most important thing is to be realistic in your time schedules. Thus, you do not get discouraged when you do not meet the schedule. But it is better to put time frame for your daily activities-even if you could not meet them- than having no time limits or time frame at all. When specifying time for each of your daily activities, we have to remember that God has asked us to give the Tithes from everything to get His blessing (Malachi 3:7-10). If we calculate the tithes of our day (24 hours), it comes to almost 2.5 hours. So, are we giving God the tithes from our time?
- III. Prioritize your goals according to God's will: We also need to give priorities to our daily tasks and activities. It is common that we do all our daily tasks and activities but at the end of the day we are very tired to pray or to read the Bible. Although the retreat time and the time out with God should have a priority in our daily schedule, we usually run out of time when it comes to God. A spiritual person would know to give the best of his time to God and know that he needs God not that God needs him. Thus, God becomes a priority in his daily schedule.
- IV. Make sure you meet your goals: There is nothing as satisfying as the feeling that you achieved your goals and completed your tasks for the day, the week or the month. So always keep focused on the goal until you achieve it. Do not get distracted and lose the time because you cannot retrieve the lost time. Make sure you do not look for excuses not to complete your tasks, rather work hard to fulfill them. The Lord said, *"Do you not say there are still four months and then comes the*

*harvest? Behold I say to you left up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest ...*” (John 4:34-36).

- V. The Blessing of giving the tithes from our time: God has promised “*I will open for you the windows of heaven, and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it*” (Malachi 3:10-12). Thus God will bless the nine tenth much more than we can do in all the day alone without His blessing. Remember that after all He is the one who gave you the 24 hours every day and He can take it from you any minute. So, let us use our time wisely to prepare to enter His Kingdom because time is our only treasure on this earth.

## Conclusion

May we be conscious of the value of time and the fact that every moment that passes it cannot be replaced. We have to always concentrate on the present time because that is the only time that is under our control.

### Applications:

- So .....When .....Where .....How .....and for How long do you want to meet with the Lord? These are all questions you need to answer for yourself and act on it today. Because today is the only thing you own and tomorrow is not yours yet.

### Exercises:

1. Prepare a plan for a week

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## Week 2

# Freedom and Discipline

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### Objectives:

- How to use my freedom not as an end in itself but as a means to glorify God?

### References:

- Holy Bible

### Memory Verse:

*If the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed. (John 8:36)*

## Introduction

### Lesson Outline

- I. Freedom and Control: The word freedom has been misused. People often do wrong in the name of freedom, and people often confuse between freedom and impudence. St. Paul the apostle set to us the limits and dimensions of Christian freedom. In his epistle to the Galatians he says, *“For, brethren, you have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; you shall love your neighbor as yourself. But if you bite and devour one another, take heed that you be not consumed one of another”* (Galatians 5:13-15).
- II. The life of freedom: This text calls for the life of freedom to the Christian. This freedom is one of the signs of God’s image in people. In His life on earth, the Lord Jesus showed us how He respected the freedom, which He created in man but the Lord Jesus incarnated and united with our nature and gave us the right to unite with Him. Hence



we could attain the power of true liberty, the inner freedom as freedom from sin and its authority, through our unity with Him *“If the Son, therefore, shall make you free, you shall be free indeed”* (John 8:36).

- III. A Christian carries in himself two conflicting natures: the first nature is the law of enslavement to lust and flesh or what the Scripture calls “The old corrupted man” and the second nature is the law of freedom, the law of the Spirit or what the Scripture calls *“The new nature”* (Galatians 5:17- 23). The top of freedom in the life of man is that the second nature completely overcomes the first nature. Paul expresses this when he said; *“The world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world”* (Galatians 6:14). St. Augustine explained this fact in one of his wise sayings: “I reached the top of the world (Complete freedom) when I feared nothing and desired nothing”. This means that Augustine believes that fear and desire are the enemies of true freedom. Let us apply this to the relationship between a young man and a young woman.
- IV. The danger of fear and suspicion: It is not good for a young man to be afraid of a young woman or a young woman to be afraid of a young man. Doubt and suspicion makes the image of the other sex a cause of falling. The true Christian has a pure eye and through this purity sees all persons as pure and righteousness.
- V. The danger of lust and Don Juanism: This group is imitating Don Juan who was a deviationist and also the deviation and this represents the opposite of the previous deviation (Fear and suspicion). This group is running after the satisfaction of instinct and the other sex and indulgence in sexual matters and enslavement to the desires of the flesh. Don Juanism is the desire to have a relationship with the other sex on a physical level and we know that the bodily passions do not satisfy man. The intercourse between two people without spiritual unity (in the mystery of marriage) causes separation, great hatred and enmity. The Holy Bible gives us a model of such a relationship: Ammon loved Tamar, Absalom’s sister but after *“he forced her and lay with her, he hated her with very great hatred, so that the hatred with which he hated her was greater than the love with which he had loved her”* (2 Samuel 13:15).

This explains the difference between the married person and the one who commits adultery. The adulterer and the adulteress meet on the flesh level only but the married people, as husband and wife are living

in the unity of deep love, loyalty and truth, commitment, responsibility and keeping the covenant.

VI. The Dimensions of the Relationship between a young man and a young woman:

- The other is a human being and not a thing: Within the limits of this outlook we heartily respect the other sex and we do not regard them as tools for amusement or satisfying the desire of the flesh.
- We must not cause the fall of the other: The Holy Bible shows that temptation to sins cause perils and woe to the one who causes temptation. The Christian love that fills the heart of the Christian makes him love the other and makes him try his best to keep him away from temptation. He never vexes him in any way. Here the virtue of chastity in Christianity combines with love and forms the basis of all Christian virtues.
- Christian Control, Sublimation and Reverence (Galatians 5:16-25): The true Christian lives according to the spirit and not according to the flesh. A Christian believes that the instincts of the flesh are out of control because of the inherited sin, and that the ancient man lies inside him. That is why he is keen to leave his instincts in Christ's possession and to let the Holy Spirit work in his heart and kindle it with love to the Lord as Christ alone is the cornerstone in the chastity life, He alone instructs the body, calms the nerves, kindle the spirit of giving and sacrifice and helps us to endure. Without the new nature man falls and degrades himself by being indulged in sexual affairs.
- The Christian youth, in his struggle to control his instinct, follows the advice of Paul the apostle to his disciple Timothy, "*So shun youthful passions and aim at righteousness, faith, love and peace along with those who call upon the Lord from pure heart*" (2 Timothy 2:22).
- In this way he perceives the excellent expression about spiritual struggle seeking the control of the instinct and sublimating it "*And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit*" (Galatians 5:24-25).

## Conclusion

The true Christian freedom is the ultimate path to happiness. It is freedom from every control of evil on the human being. It elevates us in our spiritual life to grow in the likeness of God. This is the original image of Adam when God gave him the freedom in the Garden of Eden to do everything he wanted and eat from every tree. But He also gave him the discipline of not eating from only two trees in the middle of the garden.

### Applications:

- Practice controlling the senses to keep the body pure.
- Recitation: Galatians 5:13.

### Exercises:

1. What is the difference between freedom and impudence?
2. What is the Christian concept of freedom?
3. What hinders the Christian's true freedom?
4. Show that it is necessary to resist the desires of the flesh within the limits of the spiritual struggle to enjoy true freedom.
5. How dangerous is suspicion and repression in sexual life?
6. How dangerous is Don Juanism (lust) in sexual life?
7. Define the dimension of the relationships between a young man and a young woman before marriage.

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## Week 3

# I am Responsible

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### Objectives:

- Discovery of our gifts and making use of them for the glory of God.

### References:

- The Parables of Jesus (Matthew 25:14-30, Luke 19:11-26)

### Memory Verse:

*I say to you to everyone who has will be given; and from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. (Luke 19:26)*

## Introduction

Freedom Involves Responsibility. God created Adam and gave him freedom. One of the prominent signs of freedom is responsibility, which God gave to him in keeping the commandment and working in Paradise. The more freedom man gets the more responsibility he has. The more talents he has the more commitments he has. In the parable of the five talents (Matthew 25:14-30) *“The Lord shows how each one of us is responsible for what he does and what he does not do.”*

## Lesson Outline

This parable shows that man is in a state of work. It explains the necessity of hard work in our service and responsibility. It urges us to give ourselves for the glory of God and the good of others. The Lord shows us that all that the people received have been received from the Lord. Of themselves they are nothing, they cannot pretend that they own anything. The purpose of our talents is that they are tools of service and sacrifice and for the glory of God *“As good stewards of God’s varied grace”* (1 Peter 4:10).

The Lord gave some people more talents and to the others less talents. This does not mean partiality as if He gave the owners of the little more talents, they would be a heavy burden for them and the Lord does not demand us to do more than we can do.

- I. Work is the Law of Life: The Lord created Adam and ordered him to work, and he who does not work must not eat. Work involves happiness because he who works with joy, satisfaction and hard work gets the fruit of his work. In the life on earth “what man sows, is that he reaps”. The same is in spiritual matters . . . what we sow of asceticism, struggle, godliness, love and sacrifice; we get it in the form of heavenly eternal rejoicing.
- II. The Behavior of the Three Servants:
  - Two of the servants did well, what aroused your admiration in their behavior?
  - Hard work and honesty.
  - Making use of their talents and enjoying their potentials.
  - When we apply this attitude in our practical life of what importance is hard work and honesty in studying, worship, sports, making use of our leisure in practicing hobbies and making use of our health and serve our families and the Church?
- III. The Reward: A great compliment “well done, good and faithful servant”, more authority, more responsibility and perpetual joy “Enter into the joy of your master”. How happy is the man who lives in perpetual happiness? Their characters were accepted, their services were accepted, and they received the eternal joy.
- IV. The Lazy Man: What annoyed you in his behavior? His laziness and negligence, his scorn of his talent, or his fear of work and the risk of trade . . . If we benefit from this subject in our spiritual life, why is laziness dangerous in worship, in studying, or in the Service? Despising our little talents is dangerous. Why? What is our duty toward what the Lord is given us of time, health, intelligence, knowledge . . . however little this is?
- V. Settle accounts with the lazy: Follow up how the accounts were settled with the lazy servant. We notice the following:
  - He gives excuses . . .

- His great confidence in his argument “Here you have what is yours”.
- Indifference to his sin “I hid your talent in the ground”.
- He judged his master “I knew you to be a hard man”.
- The Spirit of slavery and fear: “I was afraid”. Nothing hinders performing our duty towards God more than the Spirit of fear among servants fear is against perfect love. When the master wanted to settle accounts with the lazy servant he accused him of two charges:
- “You wicked and lazy servant”: He who does not do good deserves severe blame. That who lives for himself does not deserve to live. Refraining from doing good is sin that leads to judgment, and laziness paves the way to evil and when man sleeps the enemy sows thorns.
- Contradicting himself (No. 26,27): “You knew that I reap where I have not sowed . . . Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers”.
- On the Day of Judgment the evil lazy people will find no excuse . . . all false weak excuses will fade away and every mouth will be shut.

#### VI. Judging the Lazy Servant:

- The lazy servant was pronounced guilty.
- He was deprived of his talent (No. 28,29): “So take the talent from him, and give it to him who . . . For everyone who has more will be given, and he will have abundance . . . but from him who has not, even what he has will be taken away”.
- He was cast into the outer darkness, there men will weep and gnash thier teeth. This verdict shows us the dangerous results of laziness in life.

## Conclusion

We all have talents given to us from God to be used and multiplied and bear fruits. We need to discover our talents and start investing with them, so that we are ready to meet our Judge with the additional earning and fruit.

**Applications:**

- Hold up a debate to study the potentials of the members of the class and the different ways of making use of there in the domain of practical service.
- Recognize all the talents and try to invest them for the glory of God.
- Recitation Matthew 25:23.

**Exercises:**

1. What do “talents” mean?
2. What are the talents of young people of your age?
3. Why did the Lord give talents to man?
4. Why did the Lord distribute talents among people on different levels?
5. How were honest servants rewarded?
6. What was the charge against the lazy servant and why was he judged?

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## Week 4

# How to Begin a New Year

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### Objectives:

- To prepare the students to receive the new year in a spiritual manner.

### References:

- 1 Corinthians 6:12, 9:24-27, 10:23.

### Memory Verse:

*But You are the same and Your years will not fail. (Hebrews 1:12)*

## Introduction

Is the beginning from God or from man? God is the beginning and the end. He is the beginning and the end. He loved you before your birth. You were in His mind. Then He uttered and you were formed. His love to you made Him do that.

## Lesson Outline

- I. Remember the situations in which the Lord showed His love to man:
  - Read the story of the Lord and Jerusalem (Ezekiel 16:1-14), which indicates God's covenant with the human soul.
  - The word of God was dear in those days. In the days of Samuel, the Lord chose a little child. And the Lord appeared again at Shiloh, for the Lord revealed Himself to Samuel at Shiloh by the word of the Lord (1 Samuel 3:21).



- In Isaiah the Lord says, *“Come now, let us reason together; says the Lord: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool”* (Isaiah 1:18).

II. After the Exile the Lord began His work with the people:

- *“Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel. My way is hid from the Lord, and my right is disregarded by my God? He gives power to the faint and to him who has no might he increases strength”* (Isaiah 40:27-31).
- *“Behold, the Lord’s hand is not shortened that it cannot save”* (Isaiah 59:1).
- St. Paul the Apostle summarizes the whole topic in his Epistle to the Hebrews: *“In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets; but in these last days he has spoken to us by His Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world”* (Hebrews 1:1-2).

III. God then makes a Peace Initiative: The most important part of it is that it is a Peace Initiative with the enemies: that is, *“in Christ God was reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them”* (2 Corinthians 5:19).

IV. God also makes a peace Initiative for the Salvation of the Nations:

- *“For through your people Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will return”* (Isaiah 10:22, Romans 9:27).
- The Lord made the incarnation initiative and the initiative of the coming of the Holy Spirit.
- The Lord comes to you and wants you to go with Him. He is the beginning and the end.

V. Your own attitude:

- You may be wasting your time at the well with the Samaritan woman keeping away from the Salvation of yourself.
- You may be running away, living in the tombs and the burial caves of the Gerasenes with men.
- You may be walking in the way you think is right but the course may deviate with you as what happened to Saul.

- You may not see Christ, who is calling as you are completely indulged in your worries, grieves and tears like Mary Magdalene on the day of resurrection.
- But the Lord has methods to deal with all the souls. Christ is still searching for you.

VI. A sure start: There is no doubt that baptism is a chance for you to sow a spiritual seed in your heart. Your conscience may have not awakened you, you may have not understood the meaning of this initiative but be sure that you have already begun, but what you have to do is to go back to the covenant of baptism and test how the Lord deals with you.

VII. Stand by the roads: Thus says the Lord, *“Stand by the roads, and look and ask for the ancient paths where the good way is; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls”* (Jeremiah 6:16). Repentance is a private talk with oneself and counting the expenses.

Mar Ephraim the Syrian says:

- Those who spend a lot and have no income soon ruin themselves.
- Days quickly go by and our life today is not the same of our life yesterday. So repent now as death may come suddenly tonight.
- If you are prepared to do anything begin it now at this moment.
- If a good idea occurs to you, do not sleep. Do your work immediately?
- We should grieve as our life is worn out everyday. Days pass quickly to drive us out of the world and we do not hurry to do good or to give alms and this causes grief. Days go by and our sins increase.

St. Anthony says, “Labor and toil when you are young so that you may have rest when you are old. Let us toil for a short time and then we shall have comfort forever”.

VIII. Look and ask: This collection of the fathers’ sayings urging us to go back to the roads of our fathers and to examine ourselves and seek the salvation of our souls: Renaissance, sometimes, means going back to the old principles and ways of living. It does not always mean running after what is new and modern *“If you do not know, O fairest among women follow in the tracks of the flock, and pasture your kids*

*beside the shepherds' tents*" (The Song of Solomon 1: 8). Explain the meaning of the tracks of the flock.

IX. Signs of the sound start:

- Love of God
- Hate of evil deeds
- Love of people
- Deep peace of the heart

## Conclusion

The Lord made the initiation for me through your only begotten Son. Let me respond today and have a sound beginning. Help me to know the way and keep me firm in it so that I may not deviate to the left or to the right till I come to you. You are the Beginning and the End. You are the True Way leading to Life.

### Applications:

- A guide for examining oneself is to be distributed among young people
- You can examine yourself by several ways:
- First: Examine the sins of thought, saying and work (action).
- Second: Examine the sins of the souls (pride), and the heart (hatred, sinful passions) and the body (eye -tongue -feeling). Third Faith (is it practical or theoretical, in time of trouble or in time of joy).
- Hope: Does it last for the whole life long? Are there despair, negligence and perversion?
- Love: to God and is clear in prayers and spiritual longing towards your relatives and is shown in giving, service and forgiving those who insult you.

### Exercises:

1. As we conclude one year and begin another one, it is fitting that we focus on our calling as Christians to a life of holiness, a calling that is especially pronounced for us as servants.

2. We should ask ourselves in the New year “Is it my custom and regular habit to worship and pray to God? Or do I only bother with it when convenient—when nothing else is going on?”
3. Am I intimately involved in the worship services of the Church or am I bored, disinterested bystander?
4. Am I faithfully supporting the ministry of God’s holy Church through my sacrificial and extremely generous offering of my time, talents and treasures? Which, by the way, are not mine at all, but are God’s and belong to Him. And He’s only lending them to me to give me an opportunity to grow in faith and love towards Him and my neighbor.
5. Ask myself, “Who are the people in my life? Are we all rich and comfortable and insulated from the suffering of this world? Or do I regularly mingle with the poor, the brokenhearted, the captives, the blind and the oppressed?” Think about it.

## Part V

# Lessons for the Month of January

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## Week 1

# Effect of the Media

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### Objectives:

- To understand the effect of media on our life as Christian youth.
- To learn to be selective in what we expose our senses to.

### References:

- Holy Bible
- Corinthians 6:12, Psalm 89:47

### Memory Verse:

*All things are lawful for me but all things are not helpful. (1 Corinthians 6:12)*

## Introduction

The media has a great impact on our mind and behavior. It also influences our morals and personality. Unfortunately, the very basics of Christianity are sometimes completely ignored by the media. The freedom of media and speech in the west is a double-edged sword. Media can be a powerful tool for the devil to manipulate people. On the other hand, it can be efficiently used to glorify the name of the Lord and spread the word.

## Lesson Outline

Discuss with the students the forms of media that affects them most. Discuss also how much time every day they spend interacting with one or more forms of media, e.g. TV, Radio, Internet, movies, or music.

- I. Media as a Constructive Tool in Our Lives :

- Educational, e.g. History channel and discovery channel.
- Awareness to events around the world, e.g. News.
- Some Christian movies and religious messages are very helpful spiritually.
- We can take the example of some good characters, e.g. mother Teresa
- The Internet can be a source of very good Christian and educational information.

## II. Media as a Destructive Tool :

- Exposure to sex and violence, which destroys the purity of the mind and heart.
- Bombarding the hearing with dirty language.
- Justification of sins as the norms of the society, e.g. acceptance of homosexuality, adultery and abortion.
- Waste of valuable time of our life in non-constructive activity e.g. talk shows, browsing the Internet without an aim or for immoral web sites (Mark 4:24)
- Pre-occupation with celebrities, e.g. actors and singers.
- Many songs may encourage the youth to stay away from religion and God or actually may push others to commit suicide, e.g. rock and rap music(Gal.5:21).

## III. How Do We Avoid the Destructive Impact of the Media and the Internet?

- Fill your free time with God and His word.
- Watch how much time you are spending with God and how much are you spending in front of the TV or the Internet. David the king admits clearly that our lives are short so do not delay your meetings with the Lord (Psalm 89:47).
- We have to realize that every minute of our lives count towards our eternal life. Father Youstos El Antony was famous for frequently asking the question “What is the time?” to remind himself that he is continually getting closer to the last minute in his life and reminding others around him. This will make us appreciate the value of time and help us minimize the time wasted in front of the TV or on the Internet.

- Guard your senses of what they receive and protect your heart, soul and mind of the small offenses that gradually build up to ruin our purity.

## Conclusion

- So we have to manage our time wisely *“redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore, do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is”* (Ephesians 5:16-17).
- We must be selective for what is beneficial to our spiritual and mental growth and what is wasteful and unfruitful (1Corinthians 6:12).

### Applications:

- Limit the time you spend in front of the TV as a practice for this week and try to make this a habit.
- Investigate the effect of violence and media on the rate of crime in the western world.
- Pray for God to open your eyes to see what are time worth things we see on media and which the destructive ones.
- Try to have good Christian friends, and spend most of your free time with them

### Exercises:

1. What is the importance of media in your life?
2. Why do you think the very basics of Christianity are sometimes completely ignored by the media?
3. As a young person what are your favorite shows? Do these shows affect your Christian life?
4. Have you ever noticed a way Satan uses the media to destroy the life of the young people? Explain.



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## Week 2

# Rebellion

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### Objectives:

- To show that rebellion became wide spread in many areas: families, schools, society and even inside the church services.
- To learn that rebellion in this context is sinful.

### References:

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### Memory Verse:

*For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north.'* (Isaiah 14:13)

## Introduction

Rebellion is a state of dissatisfaction on the prevailing conditions. It has also has several other meanings: defiance, disobedience, insistence on one's opinion, resistance of every thought regardless of its validity.

## Lesson Outline

- I. Rebellion is an action started by Satan: Satan held one of the highest heavenly ranks. He fell and caused other Angels to fall with him, when he rebelled against God Himself. *"For you have said in your heart: I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north"* (Isaiah 14:13). It is clear from this verse that rebellion is a direction from the heart coming from pride and of course pride is

against God. Also, Adam and Eve having listened to Satan and fallen, they rebelled against God; *“Then the man said, ‘The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate’”* (Geneses 3:12). So Adam blamed God for his fall and could not say sorry or repent.

## II. Reasons for Rebellion:

- **Pride:** It was Satan’s pride that caused him to rebel against God. Also the humble individual will try to learn from people, communicate with them and in love deal with them.
- **Aggressive disciplining of children:** Very severe treatment of the children can lead them to rebel.
- **Lack of wisdom:** Lack of wisdom can lead to rebellion; therefore, one must think and consult with their father of confession before taking a position on an issue. For example, a youth who was born in a simple family with modest income; yet wishes he was born into a rich family. Consequently, he would rebel against his family, becomes depressed and therefore unable to function. This attitude is very hurtful and is not wise.
- **Comparing one’s self with others:** One should not compare himself or herself with others. There is no fair comparison. A person can rebel if he or she thought of people who are in much better shape than they are. *“For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith”* (Romans 12:3).
- **Bad friendships can spoil good characters.** This can cause rebellion.

## III. Symptoms of rebellion:

- When very young children say no too many times, usually it is not rebellion but for ease they say no.
- Youth in adolescent age: Clear signs of rebellion from some youth including: neglecting their studies causing noise, vandalism, rejecting any advice, aggressiveness, disobedience . . . etc.
- Rebellion of a husband against his wife and vice versa: This can happen for many reasons between the husband and his wife and it hurts the family badly.

## IV. Results of Rebellion:

- Defiance and war
- No progress in life
- Break-up of families. St. John Chrysostom said rebellion in a family is like a man driving a car through a donkey and horse. It cannot work.
- Rebellion against the church beliefs can lead to heresies. *“For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision”* (Titus 1:10).
- Rebellion leads to anger of God. *“For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, And stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He also has rejected you from being king”* (1 Sam 15:23).
- So Rebellion is like worshiping idols in a way. Also the righteous Job said *“May my enemy be like the wicked, and he who rises up against me like the unrighteous”*(Job 27:7).
- Rebellion is extremely hurtful to youth and can lead to total loss of career, spiritual life and social status.

## V. Examples from the Holy Bible about Rebellion (Please tell the following stories):

- Rebellion of King Saul against God (1 Sam 15:23)
- Rebellion of Absalom against his father David (2 Sam 15, 16)
- Rebellion of the older son against his father in the parable of the Prodigal son (Luke 15:11-30)

## Conclusion

Everyone must never lose the principle of discipleship to others who are more experienced than himself or herself. Let us all follow the Holy Bible in our daily live. For example what St. Peter said: *“Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing. For he who would love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips from speaking deceit. Let him turn away from evil and do good; Let him seek peace and pursue it”* (1 Peter 3:8-11).

**Applications:**

- Pray for God to give you humility, love and obedience.
- Avoid reaching the level of Rebellion in your life by any means.
- Accept yourself and whatever you have, and be thankful. Do not compare yourself with others, but rather spend your energy in prayers and working.

**Exercises:**

1.

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## Week 3

# Gambling

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### Objectives:

- To understand that gambling is a social disease, affects also spiritual values that leads to loss in temporal and eternal lives.

### References:

- 1 Timothy 6:9-10

### Memory Verse:

*You cannot serve God and mammon. (Matthew 6:24)*

## Introduction

Gambling is an easy way to get rich, with least effort. Many have dream to join the millionaires club over night. Persons who prefer gambling would rather cut corners and use every deceitful way, and refrain from hard honest work to gain money. These little moments in the spot light, ends in great loss, poverty and despair. Many look at the beginning and less people find out about the end of their stories.

## Lesson Outline

### I. Different ways of gambling: Concept of Gambling:

- There are different forms of gambling and society likes to accept under some other expressions. It can be in the form of lottery, most well known form, which is cards, or in general, betting on any game for financial gains, or raffle. Internet even made it easier to play poker with any one locally or globally and at your convenience, while staying at home.

- All of us have watched on TV or read on papers that someone has won millions of dollars, or have seen some billboards inviting people to a casino for guaranteed prizes.

## II. Understanding Gambling:

- Let us understand gambling in its simplest forms, which is raffle. There is a portable color TV that is retailed for \$95.00, and the cost of tickets and fliers is \$5.00, so total costs are \$100.00. And it was sold 150 tickets at \$1.00 each. On the assigned day a drawing was done and a winner was announced for the portable color TV. Now we have a winner who got a brand new TV for one dollar, and an owner who won net 50% profit, but we did not hear about 149 losers, who bought tickets for that TV.
- This story can be applied on casinos, lottery, and playing cards. Gambling casinos in their grand openings allow maximum of 5% goes toward prizes. Meaning for every \$100.00 spent, only \$5.00 for prizes. Rest of money is to subsidize free drinks and low cost rooms at the hotel. No one will reveal the number of loser next to happy winners.
- Gambling like any other vice, starts as an innocent play for fun, and grows by time till it matures and reaches addiction. So many families have been destroyed from gambling. A family member can bring down the family to bankruptcy. Please do some search and follow those who won the lottery and find out how their lives turned out after 3-5 years of winning the grand prizes. Some went back poorer than they were before, some filed for bankruptcy, and others lived normal with their same problems.
- Seeking fortune is a valid dream for any one, but not quick and easy ways to accumulate money. The saying 'Easy come easy go' is true. Hard work will build the future step by step, and grow normally.
- Why gambling is so appealing and all of us is attempted to try it, or put some efforts to avoid it? Gambling pretends to offer money, again gives you the illusion of having money, and in reality gambling takes your money. Look around you, and ask in the immediate family, neighborhood, or at school: How many successful gamblers do we know? How many people took advantage by betting, playing cards, or playing the lottery?

- Media is so good to put those winners in the spot light for a day or two, and we know little or none about their lives after such dramatic change. Adds for lottery sometimes brings old winners and portrays them as members of millionaires club, and invites you to join them in that club. The message is so simple and the cost of membership is so low, just pay one dollar. Yet winning a lottery, is a chance of one in a 4 million, you do the math. Added to that, those who won a large fortune were they ready to handle large amounts of money? The answer is negative; they keep their old habits of mismanagement and their end become worse. Many became victims of large prizes.
- Now Let us assume that a person who is always lucky, smart and takes calculated risks. This person is a good candidate for a successful gambler. Let us see his gains versus his losses through understanding of the following definitions:
  - a. Gains (Money and material gains): even money can be counted against him if he is unable to manage money. Easy money comes with management problem. Those who won are unable to budget and control their spending. So the person enjoys short time of temporary pleasure.
  - b. Losses (Controlled by money, not the other way around): Following the easy way of earning money and seeking money to gamble from family friends and acquainted ones will hurt all his relationships with people and with God.
  - c. Matthew 6:24 *“No man 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. You cannot serve God and mammon.”*
  - d. Mammon: A Chaldee or Syriac word meaning “wealth” or “riches”. In Luke 16:9-11, it also means personification or the god of riches.

III. Gambling is Against Christian Teaching: Christianity does not encourage easy way of living, as we mentioned in the raffle example one dollar bought a new color TV. On the other hand the Lord set an example for us. After fasting for forty days, He refused to use any easy way, and refused all Satan’s offerings as written in Matthew 4:2-10 *“And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterwards he hungry. Now when the tempter came to Him, he said: If thou be Son of God, command, that these stones become bread. But He answered and*

*said: It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him: If thou be Son of God throw Yourself down; for it is written, 'He shall give his angels charge concerning you, and in their hands they shall bear you up, lest dash your foot against a stone.' Jesus said to him: It is written again, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God.' Again the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world, and their glory, and said to Him: All these things will I give You if, You fall down, and worship me. Then Jesus said to him: Away with you Satan, for it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only alone shall serve.'"*

IV. Gambling is Selfishness; Not teamwork: It is "I" win and others lose by any means. It is the wide door and paved gate as it is written in Matthew 7:14 *"Because narrow is the gate, and difficult is the way, which leads unto life, and there are who find it."*

V. Love of money:

- The Lord rejected the rich man because of love of money. St. Paul also teaches us *"For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil: for which some strayed from the faith, in their greediness and pierced themselves through with many sorrows"* (1 Timothy 6:10).
- We all pass through many financial difficulties, and temptations press hard for quick and easy fix. This is the real challenge to stand up and resist the many causes of failure. It is normal to pass through many difficult times, but have to stand up and be watchful against such temptations. Money is a powerful weapon, and the source of many problems. Let me share this true story with you.
- A church in the US used to have its annual fund raising every August. One year the regular priest has to go to a different city for emergency. The other priest arrived on July and observed the preparation for festival. This festival lasts 3 days, which are Friday, Saturday and Sunday. The new priest made some dramatic changes in this festival:
  - a. On Friday only serving vegetarian food
  - b. No raffles or gold auctions



- c. Any one like to participate in raffles or gold auctions, can donate money in assigned boxes.

VI. Some members of congregation objected and warned that funds this year will drop dramatically. The priest stood firm and explained:

- How can an Orthodox Church serve beef on Friday, and does not observe fasting.
- How can we promote gambling inside the Church?
- Every one was convinced to a certain degree, but they became firm believers when they found out that fund raising this year exceeded last year, and no visitor objected vegetarian food. This congregation became more mature after this event, and they improvised in their festivals later on.

## Conclusion

- Please remember that gambling is a temptation, which may lead to addiction. When gambling controls a person, all his thoughts will be directed to getting money on the spot. This leads material thinking about current time, and forgets about eternal life. Christianity teaches us in the Creed to set our mind to the life of the age to come.
- Money is placed at the feet of the apostles, because it is a good servant. Having a normal job will put you in control for you can protect and manage your investment, which in turn makes money a blessing not a curse.
- May God help us all to overcome all temptations, and support us when we are subjected to financial problems?

### Applications:

- Free trips and coupons to casinos are early steps towards gambling. We are inquisitive and seek knowledge, and also like to have fun but let us know first our Bible as much as we would like to know about gambling.
- Control our vocabulary by eliminating the expression (You Bet), if you are sure, by just saying yes or no.

- Do not deceive yourself by having fun with gambling, even if the money is used for a gift or for food. This is the first step toward addiction.
- Search in the libraries or Internet about gamblers and what changes affected them in the long run.
- Casinos are established to gain huge profits, and they are not social welfare to give away money.

**Exercises:**

1. The bible tells us to work and earn money for our living, clearly indicating there is nothing wrong with earning. However, when does money become problematic/sin?
2. Why is gambling wrong beside it been a slippery road to addiction? Can it be because it's not an honest earning?
3. How high of a priority does money have in your mind/understanding/life?
4. How do you or plan to deal with gambling temptations you face? Perhaps having brethren to keep you accountable?

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## Week 4

# The Strong Personality

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### Objectives:

- To build strong personality in the students.

### References:

- Galatians 5:21-22

### Memory Verse:

*Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. (Ephesians 6:10)*

## Introduction

The human personality is the result of many powers working together in the life of man. Some are inherited and he is born with them. These are what we call innate motives such as instincts and general motives. Others are acquired and are called emotions, habits, tendencies, values and concepts. This is the result of interaction between man and his environment, family, school, church and external society.

## Lesson Outline

### I. Man is the Image of God:

- The scripture teaches us that man was created in the image of God and after His likeness in freedom, will, speech, holiness, perfection and creativity to be a blessed model of the Divine work.
- Man is distinguished by his mental power, will, confrontation, development and improvement . So the only civilization on earth is man's civilization and heritage, the fruit of his struggle and his various achievements.

- If this is the natural life of man, which is characterized by the ability to control instincts and to build up good habits, emotions and tendencies under the effect of the environment and good education, the imitation of high morale and practical examples, whether in the family or the external society, how much more do we find on the Christian level?
- We see a believer who is characterized by abilities above these ordinary natural abilities granted to every creature that has flesh. This is called the new nature . . . Christianity believes that through baptism and receiving the Divine Communion man can obtain a new life according to the Scripture (2 Corinthians 5:17).
- This new life does not end with the old corrupt nature we had before but it cancels its effect so long as the will of man is united with and responding to the will of God (Galatians 2:20).

## II. Potentials of the new nature:

- This new life does not end with the following nature or the ancient corrupt man in us but it cancels its effect so long as the will of man is united with and responding to the will of God (Galatians 2:20).
- The new nature goes through the soul, the self, the thought and the body. It supplies the Christian youth with miraculous potentialities. It provides them:
  - a. The ability to love - to overcome the self - to love even the enemies.
  - b. The ability to overcome desires.
  - c. The ability to be modest, humble and become more like Christ in this respect.
  - d. The power to overcome time and its challenges.
  - e. The ability to serve others and to surpass fanaticism and narrow mindedness.
  - f. The ability to accept themselves as they are with all their weakness and talents. (Ps.139)
  - g. A person with all these abilities has a strong personality from a Christian Point of view. Let us discuss these abilities in brief.

## III. The ability to sublime the motives and instincts:

- Grace gives the Christian youth the ability to surpass themselves, i.e. to crucify the desires of the flesh.
- They deal with their bodies as a temple for the Holy Spirit and look at the bodily motives as if they were domains and means to carry out the will of God in their life (Romans 14: 6-8).
- This process needs a continuous struggle and spiritual vigil . . . if they found that their will was weak towards the needs of the instinct, they would pray so that the Lord might grant them the ability to attain victory and triumph (2 Corinthians 12:9). The life of purity and chastity is a sign of the strong personality. Being enslaved to the desires of the flesh and the motives of the flesh is sure evidence of its collapse.

IV. The ability to show modest thinking and to seek wisdom:

- The first sin in the life of man is the desire to be treated as a god and his wish to have knowledge independent of God. Those who built the tower of Babylon thought highly of themselves (Genesis 1:4).
- The stubborn man, who does not accept any discussion and wants to impose his opinion on others, is a man of weak personality, but the lowly modest man accepts to bend his head before truth and he enjoys having a strong personality. This is the case with our fathers the holy apostles (1 Corinthians 2:16; 3:18, 2 Corinthians 10:5) .
- Solomon praises wisdom as the greatest source of the strong personality (proverbs 24:5; Ecclesiastes 9:16,17), but it is not the wisdom of the weak. It is the wisdom of those who stand firm in the truth and who are confident of the convincing proof of the power of God's Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:4).

V. Ability to persist and to show failure (2 Timothy 1:7):

- The Christian young man who enjoys the power of the new life does not fall into despair (Philippians 4:13). He becomes strong by the grace of Jesus Christ and takes part in enduring troubles as a good soldier serving Jesus Christ.
- He is not destroyed by his weaknesses but he prides himself in the grace of God, which reforms his defects and then the power of Christ will strengthen him (2 Corinthians 12:1). ( 2 Corinthians 12:9 ?)

- The great men of the world overcame the challenges they faced, such as Beethoven the deaf who offered wonderful pieces of music and Helen Keller who lost all her senses but she overcame all this and became the miracle of the 20th century. The children of God persist in their spiritual, scientific and social struggle and even if they stumble on the road, they rise quickly.
- Positiveness in the life of the children of God is a response to a Divine call (Ephesians 2:10).
- Positiveness is the building up of humanity, a sign of hope, a proof of practicing freedom and an indicator of a strong personality. He who loves Christ resists laziness, indifference, sympathizing with the self and is not afraid to take responsibilities.

#### VI. Ability to accept the self and enduring others:

- The strong personality accepts what is within her without complaining. It is a very difficult process because the image we have of ourselves is different from what we really are so when we face the self as what it really is we become upset and anxious. Man cannot make a real progress except when he accepts himself as he really is. When we accept ourselves as what we really are with our weak and strong aspects, we feel comforted and we have a strong motive to move forward . We begin from the reality and proceed for a wider horizon. If man cannot accept himself, he cannot accept others (Romans 15:7).
- Enduring others cannot be practiced by words but through life and suffering in the real situations of life. It is giving through love in its practical image - love's faith, hope and patience, love never fails (1 Corinthians 13:7; Songs 8:6-7). The powerful Christian personality is the fruit of the work of grace and the believer's struggle. It is characterized by lowliness without weakness or cowardliness, chastity without doubt, simplicity without ignorance, and liveliness without anxiety.
- It is a miracle and one of the Christian mysteries . . . The mystery of resurrection drives out fear . . . the mystery of hope removes anxiety . . . the mystery of love overcomes rejection . . . the mystery of faith gives victory.

## Conclusion

The Christian personality is a strong personality that sets example to others in their life. The strong personality in the Christian concept might be different than what the world expect but it is strong in itself and in the eyes of God.

### Applications:

- The servant and the students hold a discussion about the effect of sin on man.
- A discussion about how sin - when man is enslaved to it - makes man live with a weak personality - and how the Lord Jesus restored man's first image to us and renewed our potentialities to live with a strong personality in family, the church and the society.

### Exercises:

1. How is that man is the image of God?
2. How did become man can be strong in personality?
3. What are the abilities to accept the self and enduring others?
4. What is that mean Christian personality?

## **Part VI**

# **Lessons for the Month of February**



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# Week 1

## Proverbs

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### Objectives:

- To learn about the book of Proverbs, its aim and content.
- To guide the students to wisdom in their life even at a young age.

### References:

- Proverbs 19:20

### Memory Verse:

*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, But fools despise wisdom and instruction. (Proverbs 1:7)*

## Introduction

Wisdom writings frequently condemn laziness, praise honestly and promise a fuller and a nicer life to those who heed the wisdom words. These words sometimes wrap themselves in dramatic stories, such as the saga of job. More often, they appear as short descriptive sayings that make them, easy to remember. For example “*It’s better to live in a corner of the housetop than in a house shared with the contentious wife*” Proverbs 25:24, or “*Go to the ant, you lazybones, consider its ways and be wise*” (Proverbs 6:6) where a model for hard work can be found in one of the tiniest of earth creatures. Stories and saying such as these are compiled in books that become known as wisdom literature, which is represented, by the books of job, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes.

King Solomon composed proverbs and Ecclesiastes as 1 king 4:32 confirm that he wrote 3000 proverbs. However, some are attributed to some unknown people are Agur Proverbs 30:1 and King Lemuel Proverbs 31:1.

## Lesson Outline

The cornerstones of wisdom are outlines in the book of Proverbs. The simple, the ignorant and the young are especially in need of learning the ways of wisdom. Those who are already wise can increase their wisdom by contemplating *“The words of the wise and their riddles”* (Proverbs 1:6). Only the fools, who scorn and refuse wise instructions. *“The fear of the lord is the beginning of knowledge”* (Proverbs 1:7), and reverence to God is essential to all wisdom *“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and honor the Lord with your substance and with the first fruits of all your produce”* (Proverbs 3:5,9). Second is to listen to parents or elders *“my child, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments”* (Proverbs 3:1). Adherence to this advice will result in a long fruitful life, and once acquired, it will be an inoculation against evil and sinful ways.

- I. Self-discipline is a major part of wisdom teaching. *“A wise child loves discipline, but a scoffer does not listen to rebuke”* (Proverbs 13:1). Fools are not tempered and quick to reveal feelings, the wise are calm and restrained, one who is quick tempered acts foolishly, and the schemer is hated.
- II. Be righteous, as the *“human spirit is the lamp of the Lord; searching every inmost part”* (Proverbs 20:27). It searches and illuminates each part of the mind to determine proper behavior. *“The path of the righteous is like the light of dawn where as the way of the wicked is like deep darkness”* (Proverbs 4:18,19). The righteous are delivered from trouble, where as *“the wicked earn no real gain, but those who saw righteousness get a true reward”* (Proverbs 11:18).
- III. Marital fidelity and sexual continence are important parts of wisdom teaching. *“The lips of a loose woman drip honey but in the end she is better as wormwood”* (Proverbs 5:3-4), where as a true wife is as a lovely deer, a graceful doe (Proverbs 5:18). The fool follows the adulteress *“like an ox to a slaughter, a stag toward the trap or a bird rushing in to snare”* (Proverbs 7:22-23). Also, *“A seductress is dressed provocatively, like a prostitute, ready to prey on youthful innocence. She titillates him by kissing him and describing the perfumed bed in her home. Her husband is away on a trip, she says, and so she invites him to her house”* (Proverbs 7).

Chapter 6 lists 6 things the lord hates, seven that are an abomination to Him. *“Haughtily eyes, a lying tongue, hand that shed innocent blood,*

*a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that hurry to run to evil, a lying witness who testifies felony, and one who sows discord in a family” (Proverbs 6:16-19).*

The wise is encouraged to look around and learn from the small creatures. *“Four things on earth are small, yet they are exceedingly wise: The ants are a people without strength, yet they provide their food in summer; the badgers are a people without power, yet they make their homes in the rocks; the locusts have no kings, yet all of them march in rank; the lizard can be groped in the hand, yet it is found in the king’s palaces” (Proverbs 30:24-28).*

IV. Our duties to others are outlined in Chapter 31. *“Speak out for those who cannot speak; for the rights of all the destitute. Speak out, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy” (Proverbs 31:8-9).*

## Conclusion

The book of Proverbs is a great book for the young youth to guide them in the correct path of their life. It is a great asset in the Bible for immediate counseling whenever you need it that is available to us all the time.

### Applications:

- Pick one of 7 acts that God hates, and find other supporting verses from either the book of Proverbs or any book in the Bible for further research on it.
- Read 2 chapters every day of this book over the coming two weeks
- Form a 10 minute review and discussion of the students’ favorite verses in this book in two weeks time.

### Exercises:

1. What areas of your life needs discipline? For example: do you procrastinate? And how do you plan to correct your ways?
2. We learned that we shouldn’t be short tempered. However, as long as you’re a human being you will get angry at some point, how would you handle your anger/frustration?
3. Proverbs (31:8-9) tells us to speak out for others. Do you speak out when someone is being mistreated, bullied? What is holding you back if you don’t?

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## Week 2

# Jacob and Esau: Begging for Blessing

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### Objectives:

- Recognizing the value of the blessing.

### References:

- Genesis 25:-; 27:-.

### Memory Verse:

*Looking diligently lest anyone fall short of the grace of God. (Hebrews 12:15)*

## Introduction

The Servant checks the homework and the verse and sets the scene for the new lesson as follows:

- What is Abraham's most important characteristic?
- What is the name of Abraham's wife?
- Who is the son of both Abraham and Sarah?

## Lesson Outline

- I. We know that Abraham is Isaac's father. Isaac married Rebecca. Rebecca became pregnant and then gave birth to twin sons. The second was weak and slim. He was born holding tightly to the heel of Esau, the red son. The first was given the name Esau and the second was given the name of Jacob.

II. The two children grew up together but their ways of living were different. Esau became a hunter, but Jacob was a quiet man who stayed at home and bred animals. Isaac preferred Esau because he enjoyed eating the animals Esau killed and because Esau was his first-born son. But Rebecca preferred Jacob because he was quiet and dwelt in tents (Concentrate on the concept of birthright and its importance).

- The first born becomes a leader among his brothers.
- He inherits the blessing.
- The Spiritual heritage is his.
- Christ is descended from the first born . . .

III. So the birthright is a very good heritage. Esau did not care for birthright and he did not care for the blessing . . . He came in from hunting . . . he was hungry and tired . . . he asked Jacob to give him a pottage of lentils and declared that he was ready to sell him his birthright. Thus Esau despised his birthright and deprived himself of the blessing.

IV. Isaac Blesses Jacob:

- Read Genesis 27
- What did Jacob's mother do so that Jacob may receive the blessing?
- Where did Esau go at that time?

V. Jacob's characteristics and the promise . . . Jacob deserved the blessing . . . The story of Jacob and his mother and how he deceived his father . . . The blessing is Jacob's . . . We know why Isaac was convinced that Jacob was the son who deserved the blessing. Isaac ate the food Jacob offered him and gave him all the blessings . . . and then Esau came but there was no blessing left . . . This is a punishment for his recklessness and carelessness.

## Conclusion

You can be blessed like Jacob and you can get rid of Esau's defects when you lift your eyes sincerely and truthfully to the Lord Jesus, with your heart full of faith. Jesus will give you the new nature and the spiritual blessing through the Holy Spirit. Do not be in a hurry, be patient as the blessing is coming to you so long as you deserve it.

**Applications:**

- In your notebook write the words of blessing with which Isaac blessed his son Jacob (Genesis 27,28,29).
- Children act this story.
- Rearrange the words of the following verse and study it: God -so -of -to -grace -it- the -that -no one -obtain -to fail.

**Exercises:**

1. What are the names of Isaac's sons?
2. How were they like?
3. What are the advantages of birthright?
4. Compare between Esau and Jacob.
5. Why was Jacob accepted and Esau rejected?
6. What will Esau do when he knows what Jacob has done?

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## Week 3

# Nehemiah and the Rebuilding of the Walls of Jerusalem

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### Objectives:

- Jealousy for the glory of God and his church.

### References:

- The Book of Nehemiah

### Memory Verse:

*Come, let us build the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer be a reproach. (Nehemiah 2:17)*

## Introduction

## Lesson Outline

- I. Nehemiah was a servant in the Court of the King of Persia . . . He was the King's wine steward, i.e. he served him drinks. He was a pious man who loved God and God's people who were in Jerusalem . . . He heard that the people in Jerusalem were in difficulty because of their enemies and that the walls of Jerusalem were broken down and cannot protect the city. He was sad. He sat down and wept for the Holy City Jerusalem then he thought, "My tears for the city will not build her walls . . . The best thing to do is to pray to the Lord". So he prayed, "O Lord, we are sinners but we return to you . . . My Lord, listen to my prayers . . . and grant me mercy in the sight of the king".
- II. He waited for a suitable chance to ask the king to allow him to go back to Jerusalem. One day when Nehemiah was pouring wine in a

cup to give to the king, he felt that the king was watching him and they started this conversation:

- King: Why are you looking so sad, seeing you are not sick?
- Nehemiah: May your Majesty live forever. How can I help looking sad when the city where my ancestors are buried is in ruins and its gates have been destroyed by fire, and its walls need someone to build it?
- King: What is it that you want?
- Nehemiah prayed to God and said to the king; “Let me go to Jerusalem the city of my ancestors to rebuild it”.
- King: How long will you be gone?

III. Nehemiah felt secured and he thanked the Lord who granted him mercy in the eyes of the pagan king. Nehemiah told the king how long he would be gone. The king allowed him to travel and gave him letters to the governors of the provinces through which he would pass to help him in his mission. He also gave him a letter to deliver to the keeper of the royal forests instructing him to give Nehemiah timber needed for building and for the house he would live in. (The children can act actively the dialogue between the king and Nehemiah).

IV. Nehemiah happily went to Jerusalem. The king sent some army officers and a troop of horsemen with him . . . He arrived at the city . . . he took rest for three days. One moonly night he went out to have a look at the walls of the city. They were completely ruined. Even the doors were burnt with fire. The remains of the walls were only heaps of broken stones, dust and ashes. It was clear that nothing could protect the city from the enemies. He went back to the city. He called the elders of the people and said to them, “Come, let us build the wall of Jerusalem”. Some enemies stood against him but Nehemiah’s faith was deep and the Lord strengthened his heart. In a short time, all the people decided to build the wall. Although the enemies mocked him, the work continued and half the wall was built. When the enemies saw this, they decided to fight Nehemiah and his people. When Nehemiah knew their plots against him, he ordered his men to carry arms. He divided his men into two groups: The first group carried arms to guard them and the second group carried their swords and continued building the wall. Some men stood on the wall and others watched the enemies. Some of them blew trumpets when they saw the enemies drawing near. When the enemies knew that their plan



was known, they retreated. The men worked for fifty-two days from sunrise to sunset. The Lord blessed them and helped them in answer to Nehemiah's prayer. The wall was built at last and the city was well fortified and its inhabitants were secured and lived in peace inside it.

## Conclusion

We have to take care of our church and make sure that everything in it is in the best shape and condition. We have to be careful not to damage or destroy anything in the church.

### Applications:

- Tell the story in a lively way and pay attention to situations of strong feelings, describe them in detail . . . indulge yourself completely in the situation.
- When you meet anyone this week that troubles and annoys you, pray for him so that the Lord may turn him into a good man.

### Exercises:

1. How many days did it take people to build the wall?
2. Who took part in building the wall?
3. Who tried to fail the plan?
4. How can you overcome the devil?

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## Week 4

# Deborah the Judge

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### Objectives:

- To learn from the courage and strong faith of this judge.
- To encourage female students to participate actively in the church and the service.

### References:

- Judges 4

### Memory Verse:

*I, even I, will sing to the Lord. I will sing praise to the Lord God of Israel.  
(Judges 5:3)*

## Introduction

Open an introductory discussion asking the students about the role of women in our church and service. How are the functions of the males and females coordinated in our services? Finally ask them if they know of any female leaders in the Bible? And what was their role?

## Lesson Outline

- I. Deborah was the fourth Judge in the era of judges in Israel. The judge in the Old Testament was perceived as the person that God uses to lead His people to freedom and light. The Judge was supposed to help alleviate any oppression falling on his people from their enemies. The judge was also used by God to communicate with His people to help them overcome sin and face temptations. Thus he was their spiritual leader and guide.

- II. There were no special physical requirements or characteristics that God required in anyone who became a Judge. They could be rich or poor as Gideon, weak or strong as Samson, male or female as Deborah, right handed or left handed as Ehud, even when left handed people were considered disabled at that time. They were all human that had their slips and mistakes sometimes but they had a pure and strong heart and most importantly they were able to communicate with God and hear His voice clearly. God was able to overcome their weaknesses and use them to lead His people to repentance and triumph so that they may glorify the name of the Lord.
- III. After the death of Ehud, the Israelites were strayed away from God into the path of sin. So God allowed them to be overtaken and humiliated by the Canaanite. They were under the ruling of the Canaanite for 20 years till Deborah the prophetess prayed and asked the Lord to save her people from their oppression.
- IV. Deborah was a wise and faithful woman who cared very much for her people. She was able to judge between her people using the laws of God. Thus her people accepted all of her decisions and ruling. When she felt the suffering of her people under the Canaanite, she asked God to save them and liberate them. So, God instructed her on what to do and she carried the instruction to Barak. She told him that God has commanded Barak to take 10,000 of his troops and go to fight the Canaanite. Barak was worried and wanted to be sure that God's messenger is with him and that these instructions are truly from God. He asked Deborah to come with him to the fight and she surely did. However, she told Barak that you might lose the glory of the triumph because people will think that because Deborah, a prophetess, was with you won the war. She really was referring to the fact that Barak did not believe the promise of God through her and depended on her presence, a human, to assure him that he will win the war.
- V. Deborah, courageously, left her place under the trees where she used to judge between the people and went with Barak's troops to fight the Canaanites and God led them to victory. Then, Deborah and Barak sang a praise song to the Lord (Judges 6) to glorify Him and thank Him. The song was also to remind the sons of the Israelites with God's great salvation to them. This is a great example of how we should remind ourselves and talk to others about the great things God is doing for us each and every day of our life.

VI. God had chosen Deborah at that time because she was the right person for this great task. She was the only woman judge among 12 men judges for Israel.

## Conclusion

God can use a man or a woman for His great and wondrous work and service. He can use a woman to lead as long as her strength is the word and the promise of the Lord.

### Applications:

- In the light of this lesson, discuss with the students or give them a project to research why the Coptic Church does not allow women to priesthood.
- Invite all your students to participate equally in the service in the church and the community.

### Exercises:

1. Who/what is a judge? Tell the difference between the judges mentioned in the bible and judges of the world.
2. What were the good sides/requirements of the judges in the Bible? (No physical requirements/characteristics but a pure and strong heart and most importantly they were able to communicate with God and hear his voice clearly).
3. What was the role of judge Deborah when the Israelites were strayed away from God?
4. What do we learn from the courage of Deborah?
5. What was your takeaway from today's lesson?

## **Part VII**

# **Lessons for the Month of March**

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## Week 1

# Sin and Its Consequences

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### Objectives:

- To learn the meaning of a commandment.
- To learn the meaning of sin and its consequence.

### References:

- Genesis 3

### Memory Verse:

*But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, you shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die. (Genesis 3:3)*

## Introduction

In this way the Lord showed man His love and waited for his answer and man had to answer willingly: Love for love or to refuse the Divine love.

## Lesson Outline

- I. Man Was Created and Was Associated with The Lord: When man walked with the Lord he was associated with the life and enjoyed the joy of heaven. If he confined himself to his ego, he would separate it from the mystery of life and enclose himself in the prison of nothingness and death.
- II. The Meaning of Commandment: As the commandment was given to Adam, it was a covenant between God and man. If man walks with God, He will keep the source of his origin. It is a domain of showing

man's love for God. It is a proof and evidence of the freedom of man and his freedom in choosing the attitude.

- III. How Did Man Sin? Adam wanted to deify himself and to live with a power of his own independent of God and depending on the material world and that caused his fall. The tree of knowledge of good and evil - knowledge here means testing and not the mental knowledge alone, as Adam was able by his mind to distinguish between evil and good. The serpent, a creature, stands for evil. This means that evil is not everlasting as it has a beginning and it will have an end and the seed of the woman will bruise the head of the serpent. The devil had a role in the temptation as he envied man after the devil separated from the life in heaven. The sin entered by arousing suspicion in the heart of man towards God and His love for man.
- IV. The Consequences of Sin: Fear of God: as he separated himself from the Divine love. He left the Lord and depended on other creatures - he hid himself among the trees.
- V. The Destruction of Man: His unity with himself collapsed (His mind became dark - the instincts ruled over the will - the desire of the flesh). His unity with others collapsed (selfishness - spite - envy - hatred). His unity with the universe collapsed (earthquakes - disasters - wild animals - microbes).

## Conclusion

Every sin in its essence is disobedience to the will of God. It means that he refuses to be associated with Him as a son. The image of God has not been completely lost from man as he has kept in himself a mind and a will and tendency to do good - with the existence of contrast with evil things. The return of man to God is the realization of his loneliness and his reconciliation with himself, with people and with the universe.

### Applications:

- The servant discusses with his students the importance of the work of grace and the spirit in bringing man back to his first image.
- Ask the students what are the reasons that make us fall into sin.

**Exercises:** Discusses the following biblical verses in your group:

1. What is the meaning of Commandments?
2. What are the consequences of Sin?
3. What is the main issue that makes us sin?
4. Is every sin the result of disobedience?
5. Romans 6:23 *“The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”*
6. How about when the bible saying *“This is faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.”* (1Timothos 1:7)
7. What does it mean when the bible said this *“Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.”* (James 4:17)



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## Week 2

# Confession

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### Objectives:

- To elucidate the role of the mystery of Confession as a complete cure for the pains of man and its connection with repentance.

### References:

- The Bible, Mathew 3:1-12

### Memory Verse:

*For with the heart one believes to righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made to salvation. (Romans 10:10)*

## Introduction

## Lesson Outline

### I. Confessing the Sin is an Ancient Divine Plan:

- God asked Adam our father: "Where are you? Have you eaten of the tree?" That was the Divine Plan to bring man to confession and through confession he could have been forgiven.
- The Law of Moses states that the unfaithful should confess his sin (Deuteronomy 5:1-6; Numbers 5:6).
- Even David the prophet and King when he sinned he had to confess his sin before Nathan the priest (2 Samuel 12:13).
- In the days of John the Baptist many people came to him to be baptized in the Jordan and they confessed their sins (Matthew 3:5).

- In the New Testament, the Lord Christ designed the mystery of confession and gave it to His disciples (Matthew 3:6, 18:17,18; John 20:22-24).

II. To whom do you confess? Is it enough for a sinner to confess his sins directly to the Lord? Why did the Lord command us to confess before the priests? Here we count the blessings of confession and its beneficial effects on the self, body and the soul:

- Confession before the priest cures the problems of repression (Job 22:18-20).
- The human nature drives man to complain to others.
- The psychiatrists, the psychological clinic and modern psychiatry are a little point of a confession session. However, it doesn't give absolution of sin or listening to the word of God that proceeds from the mouth of the father of confession.
- Self-peace resulting from confession is reflected upon the health of the body.
- Forgiveness of sin by the priestly authority (Absolution) has many relieving effects on both the body and soul.
- The person who confesses acquires the habit of accuracy and self-examination (1 Corinthians 11:31).
- The person who confesses feels that his confessor is wise and kind father who shares with him, his feelings and pains (2 Corinthians 11:29).
- In confession, we benefit from the blessed instructions given by the experienced father of confession. The elders' advice is good. Remember the advices given by the elder and young men to Rehoboam the king, son of Solomon. Not listening to the elders' advice destroyed the whole kingdom.
- In confession, we share with the priest our thoughts that reveal the tricks and snares of the devil, and bring to light the weakness and defects of the self that may not be easily noticed by the person as he may be afflicted by the sin of pride, he may be in a state of despair or self-degradation.

III. How to Practice Confession Correctly?

- Examine yourself before you go to confession. This should be according to the commandments, which call us to be holy, and without blemish before the Lord and the People.

- Cast the self before the Lord with contrition and feeling of remissness, as Isaiah did when he saw the Glory of the Lord.
- Confess to our father the priest with reverence and tears. Confess your sin in detail . . . the time taken in doing it, how often you did it, and your feelings while doing it.
- The person who confesses must listen carefully to his father of confession and carry out his advice with great obedience and persistence.

IV. Shyness: When we offer true confession with a spirit of shyness, we taste the bitterness of sin and we do not go back to it. If shyness turns to stubbornness and refraining from confession before the priest, then it is a hidden pride (Sirach 4:26).

V. Fear that the secret may become known: We all should have trust in the priest who has been accustomed to listening to hundreds of confessions and who cannot reveal any secret.

VI. Some do not benefit from the father of confession's guidance: When people choose their father of confession, they must be sure that he is an experienced, wise, patient and spiritually advanced.

Note: The problem sometimes does not lie in the father of confession but it often lies in the person who confesses, as he does not obey the advice of the priest with earnestness and perseverance. You can change your father of confession when necessary but first take his permission to do so.

## Conclusion

There are multiple spiritual benefits to confession in the life of the youth. We must be aware of the blessing and grace of confession as through it man can wipe out all the dust of sin and remove its effects and then the Divine Icon appears. Confession is like a monitor of our spiritual growth and through it we can find spiritual guidance while we are living in the right path to salvation.

### Applications:

- Read some of the booklets about how to practice the mystery of confession among the students before they go to confession.

- Prayer meetings should be held for those who have repented and those who have not repented yet.
- Encourage your students to practice confession regularly.

**Exercises:**

1. Meet a Priest in your Church and ask him for advice
2. Remember any sin in you did and is still in your mind. Discuss about it with the father of confession.

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## Week 3

# The Forgiving Father

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### Objectives:

- To compare God's love with human love.
- To show God's mercy and love to Us
- To encourage a life of repentance and forgiveness

### References:

- Luke 15:11-33; Acts 3:19; Psalms 51:1-2, 1 John 1:9; John 3:16; Matthew 6:14; Psalms 136:2

### Memory Verse:

*In the shadow of Your wings I will rejoice. My soul will follow close behind you. (Psalm 63:7-8)*

## Introduction

Review with the students the Gospels of the lent. Read the parable of the prodigal son and open the door for the students to give their impressions from the story

## Lesson Outline

### I. The Bosoms of Love:

- The Lord Jesus told us a parable in which He explained the Bosoms of the Divine love. This is known as the Parable of the Lost Son. A young son deceived by the world attractions and the desires of young age. He saw happiness in being free from the traditions and strict rules of his family and saw enjoyment

in satisfying the desires of the flesh. He asked his father to give him his heritage to spend it as he wished. We wonder as we see his father answering his demand and giving him freedom to do, as he liked with his lot.

Why is the behavior of this son wrong? Why is the father's attitude regarded as an expression of extreme love and release of freedom?

- The younger son gathered everything and traveled to a far away place and there he became extravagant and spent all his money. Here we ask ourselves:

What is true freedom? What is true happiness? Is freedom the liberation from authority and control? Does happiness lie in satisfying one's lust and the desires of the flesh? Why is the sin of keeping away from the Divine fatherhood regarded as serious sin? Can we see the relation between Adam's sin in Paradise and the sin of the lost son when he deserted his father's house and rebelled against his family? What are the dangerous consequences of rebellion in our spiritual life? How important is obedience in the life of Christian virtue?

- How miserable is the man who lives far away from his father's house? He deprives himself of the bosom of fatherhood with all its riches, love and sacrifice. How miserable is man when he becomes self-centered and selfish! Is this case different from hell? to be far away from God, captured within myself. Aren't heaven and eternal happiness the freedom of the glory of the children of God and enjoying sonship with all its dimensions?

## II. Living in a far country:

- This young man thought that he could live a life of satisfaction and enjoy himself but now he began to see the bitter fact, which he could not see on that day. He became poor needy and unable to follow that life so he went and lived with one of the inhabitants of that country but the man sent him into his fields to feed swine. Feeding swine refers to the lowest degree of life which man lives when he keeps away from God. That country did not have any other work to give to the rebels who were attracted by the deceptive luxury of the world. Such people deserved that defiled humiliating work.
- The son could not endure the bitterness and cruelty of life. He came from a rich family. He remembered the blessings of his

father's house. He said, "How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare but I perish here with hunger?" Can the son forget the blessings of his father's house? The dew of grace falls upon the complaining heart to water it, soften it and refresh it and lead it to repentance. The grace of God does not desert the complaining heart. It will always seek to attract it with the ties of love. This is the work of the Holy Spirit. He moves the stubborn heart and drives it to regret and repentance and confession.

III. Are we to ask ourselves? Where are we? In our Father's house, in the membership of the Church that grants blessings and the gifts of the Spirit and the riches of sacraments and the goodness of grace, or have we deserted these bosoms and followed the Counsel of ourselves and our friends who are evil and deserted the spirit of obedience and resorted to rebellion, and false complaining.

IV. The Good Return:

- Repentance is not only regret; neither is it bowing under the heaviness of guilt. It does not mean a sense of guilt in bitter grief and heart agony; it means a new vision of the bosoms of fatherhood and a firm stand in directing oneself towards these bosoms. It is a hearty response to the movement of love. It is the response of the heart to the call of the Spirit working in us. The clever son rose, decided to return, he resisted all the difficult circumstances that surrounded him; he rose, left everything and went back to his father.
- Contemplate this type of repentance. Contemplate the repentance of Zacchaeus, Levi the tax Collector, Moses the Black, and Mary the sinful. Repentance is a change of form renewal of mind and heart, a change in the direction of life. Have I tested, in my life, that test that made me give my back to the world going forward to my beloved Jesus who is my way and my life? If I had not tested that life let me bow at the feet of the Lord and pray, praying for the test of true repentance with the Prodigal Son, with the sinful woman, with all those who gave true repentance without return or hesitation.

V. The Father's Rejoicing: He was waiting for a long time the return of his Son and his heart was filled with hope (Jesus was nailed to the cross to give us confidence. He is waiting our return and his heart will

never be closed before us). When he saw his son, the man hurried to meet him. How deep your love is O Lord. You are all mercy and kindness. You hurry to us, you always come to me but I did not even think of coming to you. O Lords grant me the grace that I feel your great love. He did not blame him...he did not reproach him. The son wanted to be a servant but the Father refused to listen. He only listened to the pulses of his heart which was full of joy. He kissed him. O Lord, how great your love is to all who come to you. What did his father do then? The best robe, the fatted calf, and the ring ... what do all these symbols stand for?

VI. The Envious brother: The brother should have rejoiced for the return of his brother. But the brother was angry and did not want to share the happiness of his father. In so doing he was like a stranger in his father's house ... the place of the man who lives with the spirit of the servant instead of the spirit of the loving son. That is why he feels the heaviness of service, he feels the need for the justification of his work and boasting over himself, "Lo these many years I have served you and I never disobeyed your command". How dangerous self-righteousness is and how fatal false religiousness is we should have shared the heavenly beings their rejoicing for the return of that who was away.

Do we welcome the return of the sinful young man or do we reject him when he enters the Church? Do we feel happy when we find that the young sinful man has received care from our teacher or the priest of the Church ... or do we become angry?

## Conclusion

Every day in our life is a new day and a new chance to go back to our Father's house if we ever stray away. Straying away does not have to be physically away from the church but could also be spiritual detachment from God even when we are in the church. Let us examine ourselves and ensure that we are abiding in the Father's and the church's bosom and enjoying the reaches of the Father's house.

### Applications:

- Proactive a life of repentance. The bible tells us, *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us*



*from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us” (1 John 1:9).*

- Invite the young people who are keeping away from the Church so that they may come back to the Church and heaven receive them with joy.
- Hold a prayer meeting with your brethren to bring the sinners back from far countries to the bosom of the father.
- Contemplate Luke 15:18-19

**Exercises:**

1. Show how the prodigal son did not understand the meaning of freedom.
2. What is meant by the concept of true repentance?
3. *“For if you forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you.”* What do you learn from this verse?
4. What do you think of the behavior of the elder brother? Why?
5. What did you learn from today’s lesson?

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## Week 4

# David's sins, results and repentance

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### Objectives:

- To contemplate on the causes and results of sinning and the acceptable repentance towards God.

### References:

- 2 Samuel 11, 2 Samuel 12

### Memory Verse:

*Against You, You only, have I sinned, And done [this] evil in Your sight.  
(Psalm. 51:4)*

## Introduction

David was chosen by God from among many brothers “*I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart*” Acts 13:22.

## Lesson Outline

- I. Causes of sinning to God: Oh, how did you fall, you, the tall structure?
- II. Sinning to God: Bad (thought) evil act (adultery), murder!
  - If David were during this time, living the life of continuous repentance and confession, examining every thought, then he would not have sinned. Yet, since he was relaxing too much, his spirituality started to deteriorate and he fell in the bigger sin, which started off by a thought or a bad desire.

WEEK 4. DAVID'S SINS, RESULTS AND REPENTANCE

David before becoming a king	David after becoming a king, prior to sinning
He was escaping from Saul. No place to rest and completely dependent on God.	He had established a kingdom and started to depend on his strength and power.
He was brave and courageous, based on his strong faith in God and always was in the front line fighting against the enemies of God. E.g. against Goliath, <i>"Today the Lord will deliver you into my hands ..."</i> (1Sam 17:46).	He started to worry about himself and stayed in his home while his people are fighting for him. He simply had nothing to do, he slept as much as he could and rested his body.
He was content with the little he had and thanking God in every thing. God was the source of his joy and happiness.	He had many wives, which was against the law of Moses. He started to indulge himself and seek temporary earthly pleasures.

- David stayed for a whole year not wanting to repent his sin. Instead he tried his best to cover it, which led him to commit a more dreadful sin.
- The nobleness of Uriah the Hittite, refusing even to go to his home to rest and be with his wife, Bathsheba, while the people of God are fighting. Instead of admiring his noble act, David made him carry a letter to Joab to simply get Uria killed in the battle and Bathsheba to be his wife. This is what sinning can do to us, it make us blind and self-centered.

III. Repentance: God revealed his sin. The parable that Nathan the prophet told to David. You are the man! Thus says the Lord . . . Why have you despised the commandment of the Lord?

- David's confession "I have sinned against God" And Nathan said to David, "The Lord also has put away your sin; you shall not die". That shows how merciful God is to the repentant soul. Even though God hates sin so much, but he is also so compassionate and loving. Nothing can stop the fountain of His love for the repentant soul. As soon as David confessed his sin, God granted him forgiveness, just as a loving father awaiting the return of His prodigal son.

- David wept bitterly, and wrote *“Against You, You only, have I sinned, And done [this] evil in Your sight . . . ”* (Psalm 51). David lived the rest of his life repenting his sins with a contrite heart, and left us a treasure of Psalms for the church and the whole world to benefit from. Perhaps the end of his life was stronger than the beginning.
- Oh, repentance, you have made a virgin out of an adulterous.

IV. Consequence of sin: The sin was forgiven, but the consequence of sinning must follow:

- The sword will not depart your home (Absalom’s treason)
- The son that is born to you will die
- God will take your wives and given them to others
- Evil will arise from your home
- Yet, God’s mercy to His repentant soul converts the results of sinning into a purifying fire. He would allow tribulations and sufferings so that the soul would be decorated and beautiful to be wed to her heavenly groom. Behold, you [are] fair, my love! (Song of Songs 4:1)

## Conclusion

If we feed our mind with Christ, the good deeds, where as, if we feed our minds with the evil worldly desires, the output is bad deeds.

### Applications:

- To be aware of our free time, and to try to occupy our selves and our mind with useful spiritual work (Any service to the church . . .). A vacant mind is a factory for the devil.
- To live the life of scrutiny. To examine every thought on a daily base and be very cautious about what hear or see. We should train our eyes to see the images of Christ on the Cross, as the good shepherd . . .etc., so that we would not allow our selves to see images of this world. Any thing evil that we get to see or hear gets stored in our mind and becomes copy righted to the devil. Thus, in any time of weakness or slumbers the devil replays those images to us, with modifications, so that we may fall in sin. Yet, if our minds are occupied with the

images of Christ on the Cross-and his life giving words, there will be no room for any worldly image or thought.

- To struggle against sin till bloodshed as St. Paul says, and not to feel sorry or find excuses to our selves. e.g. the martyr who was tied on a bed and an evil women was brought to him in order to try to make him fall in sin. Yet, he did not find anything to do except to cut off his tongue and to spit it on her face. For those saints, it was better to sacrifice their blood than to offend God.
- To live the live of continuous repentance.
- Nothing could stop the love of God to mankind. The only thing that could hurt the human soul is to keep the sin inside and not to confess them. The saints knew that repentance is what bring them close to God, so they lived their life repenting every sin, so that they enjoy the warmth of being in the bosom of the Father and taste the kingdom of heaven while still here on earth.

**Exercises:**

1. How do you define sin?
2. How do you define repentance?
3. David's confession "I have sinned against ....." And Nathan said to David, "The Lord also has put away your .....; you shall not ....."
4. Which chapter of the Psalms did David wept bitterly, and wrote "Against You, You only, have I sinned, And done [this] evil in Your sight ...?"
5. God love sinners, but hate sin (True/False).

## Part VIII

### Lessons for the Month of April

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## Week 1

# Sacrifices in the Old Testament Part I

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### Objectives:

- Link the Old Testament sacrifices to the sacrifice of the New Testament, our Lord Jesus Christ.

### References:

- Leviticus 3:1-17

### Memory Verse:

*Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! (John 1:29)*

## Introduction

Why the Blood? Since the first sin, man could not present himself before God because of his sins. So he had to have the blood in his hands as a passport to pass into His Holies. *“Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them”* (Genesis 3:21) .

The offering of sacrifices was passed from generation to generation, till God gave a precise description on how to offer the sacrifices, which in every aspect symbolizes the sacrifice of the Cross. In the fulfillment of time God sent His only begotten Son born of a virgin, to bring happiness to the whole creation through His sacrifice which saved from death and destruction, which fulfilled the law, and which showed His love.

## Lesson Outline

I. What is a sacrifice: It is what one gives up as an offering to God. It is supposed to:

- Constitute a covenant with God.
- Maintain a covenant with God.
- Please God.
- Thank God.
- Ask forgiveness from God.

II. Sacrifices before the law of Moses:

- *“Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them”* (Genesis 3:21). This shows God’s love. He sacrificed a sacrifice, made coats of skin for them to cover their nakedness.
- *“Then Noah built an altar to the Lord, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the Lord smelled a soothing aroma. Then the Lord said in His heart, ‘I will never again curse the ground for man’s sake”* (Genesis 8:20-21).
- Abraham also built an altar for God. (Genesis 12:8): and there he build an altar unto the Lord, and called upon the name of the Lord.
- But what is even greater about Abraham is the test that he went through regarding the sacrifice of his son. That was the first time that God would ask a sacrifice which is a human. And when He requested one, He defined in details to be the most precious that a man can offer “your only son whom you love.” The son of promise. Upon him where all the hopes of the present and future. Issac was the symbol of the great sacrifice of Christ. And when Abraham passed the exam, he deserved to hear for the God this great blessing: *“By Myself I have sworn, says the Lord, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son, blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice”* (Genesis 22:16-18).



- Also Isaac and Jacob, they offered sacrifices to God as their fathers did. (Genesis 26:25, 28:18, 31:54, 33:20, 35:7, 46:1).

III. Sacrifices in Moses time: God gave Moses instructions concerning the different sacrifices, which should be offered in the tabernacle

- Sacrifices offered as an offering burnt by fire, of a sweet aroma unto the Lord. These include burnt offering, meal offering, and peace offering.
- Sacrifices offered for sins of ignorance. These include sin offering and trespass offering.

IV. General characteristics of these sacrifices that pointed out to the sacrifice of Christ:

- The blood was the king's seal, where every thing is consecrated with it. And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission. (Hebrews 9:22). Thus we may appreciate the value of shedding the blood of our Lord as atonement for the life of the whole world.
- The sacrifice must be an animal without logic (Thoughtless). That is, it cannot sin or trespass and therefore it can substitute for the sinner. Being unable to sin is another symbol to Christ who is without sin. *"All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned, every one, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all"* (Isaiah 53:6). *"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world"* (John:1:29).
- The sacrifices need to be offered every day. Because of its corrupt nature, it has only a temporary effect, since it is the blood of bulls and of goats. Thus, it points out to the need of a permanent sacrifice, a sacrifice that can remain alive. *"Who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself"* (Hebrews 7:27). For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? (Hebrews 9:13).

- There are so many types of offerings mentioned in the book of Leviticus. This reflects the nature of sin and its complexity, which required many sacrifices and offerings. All these point out to the sacrifice of Christ which could not be completed with only one sacrifice.
- The continuous presence and smell of death, blood, fire in the tabernacle, exemplified to the Israelites the awfulness of sin and its consequences.

#### V. Types of animal used as sacrifices:

##### a. Animals: Cows, Sheep, and Goats:

- Must be clean: i.e. of the types of animals that were allowed to be eaten -symbol of eating from the body of Christ. Also the sacrifice can not be given from unclean animals, such as flesh-eating animals because they feed on the death of other animals, which can not symbolize Christ who gave Himself for others.
- Must be Pure: A symbol of Christ *“For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens”* (Hebrews 7:26).
- It has to be a domestic animal, which is not hunted, because the hunted animal runs away and is brought reluctantly to the slaughter, unlike the domestic animal that is submissive, obedient and surrendering. Thus symbolizing our good Savior. *“He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth. He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth”* (Isaiah 53:7).
- Without blemish: Or else it would be rejected. The priest used to examine every part very carefully, even after it is sacrificed, he would examine its bone, meat and the inside, until he is completely sure that it is without blemish, then he lights the offering. This is similar to Christ who is without sin. *“And when you offer the blind as a sacrifice, Is it not evil? And when you offer the lame and sick, Is it not evil? Offer it then to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you favorably?”* Says the Lord of hosts (Malachi 1:8).

##### b. Birds:

- Turtledove and young pigeons because old doves are better than the small doves and young pigeons are better than the old pigeons.
- Sparrows for the purification from leprosy.
- The sacrifice without blood white flour and wine.

## Conclusion

The idea of sacrificing to the Lord has been around for a very very long time. It is a sign to show love to the creator. It is also a character of the bond between man and God. Jesus Christ became our new bond between man and God.

### Applications:

- Sacrifice some of your time and effort for the sake of God or others.
- Search in Leviticus for the types of offerings in the Old Testament as a preparation for next week's lesson.

### Exercises:

1. What were the various sacrifices in the old Testament?
2. What is the difference between voluntary sacrifices and mandatory sacrifices?

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## Week 2

# Sacrifices in the Old Testament Part II

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### Objectives:

- Link the Old Testament sacrifices to the sacrifice of the New Testament, our Lord Jesus Christ.

### References:

- Leviticus 3:1-17

### Memory Verse:

*Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. (John 15:13)*

## Introduction

Review with the students the previous lesson to be able to continue the same topic. Ask them what was their personal benefit from the previous lesson.

## Lesson Outline

### I. Burnt offering:

- This Sacrifice is the first and most important one called in Hebrew: "Olah" = Ascending, because of its vapor which ascends upwards as a sweet aroma to the Lord. Also called in Hebrew "Kalil" = Whole, because it is offered all to the Lord.

- This sacrifice shows the most important aspect of the sacrifice of the cross, which is the complete obedience of the Son to God the Father. *“For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me”* (John 6:38). *“And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross”* (Philippians:2:8).
- St. John Chrysostom encourage us to offer our lives as a burnt offerings Martyrs have offered their souls and bodies as burnt offering, we may also be able to offer burnt offering to God, if we can offer our bodies as burnt offering with fire, we can do that by a different type of fire such as voluntary poverty, or crucifying our lusts.
- The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar; it shall never go out. This is a symbol to the sacrifice of Christ, which became a continuous burnt offering before God the Father at all times, so that He may have mercy on all His people.

#### II. Rites of the burnt offering:

- The person would bring the animal (a Bull, a male of lamb or a goat) to the door of the tabernacle. A symbol of Christ who came to the Jewish nation and they did not receive him.
- Put his hand over the head of the animal. A symbol that the sacrifice because a substitute for the person.
- Sacrifice the animal on the north side before God.
- The priest would collect the blood and sprinkle it around the altar that the sacrifice of Christ is atonement for the whole world.
- The burnt offering is then skinned and cut into pieces. The examination that our Lord went through regarding his deeds and words. And that Pilate did not find any guilt in Him.
- Aaron’s sons would arrange the pieces together with the head and the fat on the altar.
- Then they wash its entrails and legs (Unclean parts), and burn all on the altar as a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the Lord.
- The skin of the sacrifice was given to the priest who offered the sacrifice.

#### III. If the sacrifice is of birds:

- Who can't afford to offer animal sacrifice can offer birds: (turtledove and pigeons). Turtledove, symbol of fear of sin, also to, whereas the young pigeons are symbols of gentleness and simplicity, and also to the church the beautiful dove carrying the Holy Spirit of God.
- The priest would offer it on the altar and bring off the head.
- Drain the blood out on the side of the altar.
- Remove its crop and its feathers and cast it beside the altar on the East Side, into the place for ashes.
- Then he shall split it at its wings but do not divide it completely.
- Then the priest would burn it on the altar.

#### IV. Other Burnt offerings on behalf of the entire congregation:

- They are offered for the sanctification and consecration of the people.
- Daily Sacrifice: A continuous sacrifice, two lambs offered daily, one in the morning and the other evening.
- Consecration of priests: Bulls, rams and lambs.
- In certain days during the year and in feasts: on Saturdays: Extra lambs are offered other than the daily ones.
- In the beginning of the month, 2 bulls, a ram, and 7 lambs.
- Burnt offerings for purification: After giving birth, after healing from leprosy . . . etc.
- When either man or women shall separate themselves to vow a vow.
- Burnt offering, which accompanies the sin sacrifice, which offered by a poor person: young pigeon or turtledove.
- Burnt offering, which accompanies the sin sacrifice, which offered by a group which, sinned unintentionally: one bull.

#### V. Grain offering (Leviticus 2:1-10, 6:14-23):

- Flour offering: The person brings fine flour; pour oil on it, and put frankincense on it. Aaron's sons the priests take this and burn it upon the altar, to be an offering made by fire, of a sweet aroma unto the Lord.

- Grain offering baked in the oven: Unleavened cakes of fine flour mingled with oil, or unleavened wafers anointed with oil.
- Grain offering baked in a pan: Fine flour unleavened, mingled with oil. This is cut into pieces, and oil is poured on it.
- Grain offering baked in the frying pan: It shall be made of fine flour with oil. The grain offering was usually offered together with sacrifices.

VI. Symbols in this sacrifice

- Salt: protects from corruption, a symbol of covenant and promise. You are the salt of the earth (Matthew 5:13)
- No Leaven: (Leaven is a symbol of evil, wickedness, and hypocrisy) because He was sinless.
- No Honey: because it is a symbol of self-indulgence and sweet talk.
- Burning the grain offering: the sufferings of Christ during His life *“He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief”* (Isaiah 53:3).
- The Grain offering does not represent the Sacrifice of the bread and wine which we offer to our Lord on the altar, but it only symbolizes the life of Christ on earth and His service since he was baptized till prior to His crucifixion. Therefore our church, offer the sacrifice made of leaven bread because He carried our sins in His body to the Cross, and offered Himself a Sin sacrifice for us.

VII. Peace Sacrifice (also known as offering of completion): This is offered to God as an expression of Thanksgiving. It is the most sacrifice associated with joy and gladness, because it was allowed for the person and the priests to eat of it in presence of God of peace and reconciliation with God. The peace sacrifice was offered for thanksgiving to God, and the sacrament of the communion is called the sacrament of Eucharist = thanksgiving.

VIII. Three types of peace sacrifice:

- a. Sacrifice of thanksgiving: I will offer to you the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the Lord (Ps 116:17).
- b. Vow offering: Thy vows are upon me, O God: I will render praises unto thee (Psalm 56:12).

- c. Freewill offerings: The person would promise to give a specific sacrifice, if anything happened to the sacrifice, then the person offering it does not need to replace it.
- IX. Characteristics of the peace sacrifice: Cow, goat, or lamb is offered. Birds are not offered, because it is a sacrifice of fellowship. So it should be large enough for every one to be satisfied-Spiritual satisfaction that God came through His sacrifice. Laying of hands on the sacrifice was mainly to confess the good deeds and give thanks to God. Sacrificed on the door of the tabernacle, and the blood is sprinkled around the altar.
- X. The Sin sacrifice: In these sacrifices we see the Son of God carrying our sins to pay for our debts. The sin sacrifice is offered for the sinner person in general or unintentionally (A person has seen something and did not witness it, if a person touches any unclean thing, if a person swears and lies) while the trespass sacrifice is offered for a certain sin.
- XI. A sin sacrifice for a priest: A young bull without blemish is offered as a sin offering. The priest brings the bull to the door of the tabernacle of meeting before the Lord, lays his hand on the bull's head, confesses his sins and kills the bull before the Lord. Then the anointed priest shall take some of the bull's blood and bring it to the tabernacle of meeting. He dips his finger in the blood and sprinkles some of the blood seven times before the Lord, in front of the veil of the sanctuary and on the horns of the altar of sweet incense before the Lord. This is a symbol of his need to the intercession of the blood in front of God since he is the intercessor for the people. The fat is burnt on the altar, the rest is burnt outside and no body eats from it.
- XII. A sin sacrifice for the congregation: If the congregation sinned unintentionally to God, they offer this sacrifice. It is the same as above but the elders of the congregation lay their hands on the head of the bull before the Lord.
- XIII. A sin sacrifice for a ruler: An offspring of the goats, a male without blemish. He put his hand and confesses his sins. The priest puts some of the blood of the sin offering on the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and pours its blood at the base of the altar of burnt offering. The priest eats the meat of the sacrifice.
- XIV. A sin sacrifice for anyone of the common people: An offspring of the goats or a lamb, a female without blemish. Probably this was cheaper.



If the person cannot afford this, he can offer a couple of turtledove or pigeons. Same like the ruler

XV. The trespass sacrifice:

- a. Sin against holy things of the Lord: When a person forgets or does not know to give one of the offerings (first fruits, tithes ...) . A ram without blemish from the flocks. He gives the value of what he was supposed to give before plus one-fifth more to it.
- b. Sin against the neighbor: If a person lies to his neighbor about what was delivered to him for safekeeping or if he has found what was lost and lies concerning it, and swears. He restores what he has stolen, or what was delivered to him for safekeeping, or the lost thing which he found, full value, add one-fifth more to it, A ram without blemish from the flock.

## Conclusion

God cared for our salvation from the first moment after Adam sinned to you. God has sacrificed himself for us as the ultimate expression of love.

### Applications:

- Give-up 15 minutes of your TV time to spend with God reading the Bible throughout this week. Remember our Lord Jesus Christ gave up his blood and died for you.
- Give-up eating one thing you love for the coming week.
- Give something you like of your belongings to a brother, sister or a friend.

### Exercises:

1. Why did the Sacrificial system require a blood sacrifice?
2. What is the wave offering? (Exodus 29:19-28, Leviticus 14:12, Exodus 32, Numbers 3:12)
3. What is a drink offering? (Genesis 35:14, Exodus 29:40, Numbers 15:4-5, 15:10)
4. What is a grain offering? (Leviticus 2:1, 2:4-5, 2:10-11)

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## Week 3

# Knowing, Accepting and Sacrificing Oneself

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### Objectives:

- To show the value of the self in the light of Christ.

### References:

- Genesis 1:27, 1 Corinthians 6:19, John 3:16, Philippians 4:6

### Memory Verse:

*For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit which are God's (1Corinthians 6:20).*

## Introduction

Give some questions about how students define the self. The teenage period is a critical period when the youth become aware of the self especially the bodily looks. It is also a time where the dislikes about the self start to become their focus and they do enormous efforts to improve on their looks. Therefore it is important to refocus and appropriately evaluate ourselves.

## Lesson Outline

- I. Know Yourself: Seeing ourselves as we are in reality and truth is a matter of great importance. This is difficult as the world falsifies the self in the eyes of human beings. The family, school, friends as well as social and mental powers make man in alienation from himself. Therefore, the Greek philosopher said "Know yourself". However, it is impossible for a man to know himself by self-examination, self-knowledge, self-perception and self-awareness. It is impossible for a

man to have true, practical, and honest perception of ones self without first perceiving God as the Lord who created the self (soul) in His image and after His likeness, calmness, solitude and eternity. Man may go deep into his innate life to find out the beauty of his soul and the beauty of his talents. He can also perceive the ugliness of sin and how it deforms the godliness and purity of the soul. When man has a true knowledge of himself, the virtue of true lowliness became easy to apply, as the natural man is liable to fall in the temptation on the right or the left- the temptation of pride and boasting- the temptation of inferiority and despising ones self.

Man's self-knowledge is not only a psychological demand; it is also a spiritual demand. It is not knowledge that comes through the mind and the mental model only but it is a test that is guided by the spirit, the mind and also inspiration.

- II. Accept Yourself: The most difficult matter in the spiritual and psychological life is for man to accept himself after he knows it very well. Sometimes, the image we have about ourselves may be innaccurate, which leads us to get upset or confused. That is why a man/woman of the world keeps away from the prayer room and the confession seat. He also keeps away from the calm constructive criticism. He finds comfort in the friends who praise him and means of amusement and luxury that keep him away from his roots and depths. Some people may argue saying that if we accept ourselves as they are, all the struggles will collapse, as when we accept ourselves we feel comfort. The answer to this argument is that we need a powerful incentive to make progress beginning from the real and progressing to the wider horizon. If man does not accept himself, he cannot accept others as they are. He lives in his self-enslavement. He gets aggitated with those who oppose him and distances himself/herself away from those who do not agree with him. This is the reason behind the absence of unity among many people, and this is one of the main reasons for failed marriages.

If the Lord accepts us as we are, why don't we accept people as they are? If the Lord alone is able to change others, why do we rebel against the people around us and demand that they should be like us? In this, St. Paul the Apostle says: *"Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God"* (Romans 15:7).

This acceptance does not mean refraining from guidance, education, advice and instruction. These spiritual and educational processes cannot be achieved and their goals cannot be attained, unless we welcomes

those who direct and guide us. For Christ our Lord adopted our issue and bore our sin till death. He grants us instruction and a way of life.

### III. Sacrifice Yourself:

- Self-sacrifice means submitting your life to God and forgetting about our fears, our longings and the schemes for the future.
- Self-sacrifice is perpetual submission to the will of God in all the events that occur around us and also yielding completely to the Divine Plan.
- Self-sacrifice means offering the whole being to God, throwing oneself in the paternal bosom and forgetting about anxiety, fear or confusion. *“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”* (Philippians 4:6).
- Psychologists found that there is complete development, integration and achievement of the aims of life in self-sacrifice. The Lord called every soul that wants to offer earnest worship to desert everything, and accept the true oneself.
- Self-sacrifice is not practiced by words but by living and suffering the real situations of life.
- When we pray, we show contrition before the Lord and attain the power of sacrifice and the mystery of love.
- When we work, we forgive others their weakness, and we do not envy or grudge. We do not ask for what is theirs.
- In times of afflictions and pain, we offer thanks and show forbearance as an evidence of absolute submission.
- In this way, the self melts in the Divine crucible to become as beautiful as the moon, as the sun, or terrible as an army with banners.

## Conclusion

When the believer enters into his/her own depths to know himself/herself and accepts it as it is with all its powers and weaknesses, he/she then offers himself/herself to the Lord so that he/she may be able to sacrifice oneself,

love others and give others. Thus, the Divine words became true: “It is no longer I who live, but Christ Who lives in me.”

**Applications:**

- Examine yourself to discover your weaknesses and talents.
- Offer true repentance before your confessor and be sure of forgiveness and Divine acceptance after confessing and receiving the Holy Communion.
- Practice the works of sacrifice, giving and service with the spirit of meekness and lowliness as an echo of God’s love for us, so that God’s purpose is achieved in our life.
- Learn to accept ones self, and accept others. Allow the lord who loved you and died on the cross for you to live in you. But, this requires a choice and sacrifice for oneself.
- Remember, Adam and Eve fell from the grace of God, because they didn’t sacrifice their self to the glory of God. They wanted to be like God, and violated God’s commandments, which resulted in thier fall. We can’t be happy without sacrificing ourselves to the glory of Christ.

**Exercises:**

1. Are you living for yourself, or for Christ? Why?
2. Why are humans different from all other creatures? How were they created?
3. What did you learn from today’lesson?
4. *“For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit which are God’s”* (1Corinthians 6:20) What do you learn from this verse? How can we glorify God in our body and spirit?

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## Week 4

# The Holy Week

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### Objectives:

- How to live the church ritual with depth and simplicity to share Christ's pains?

### References:

- Isaiah 53; Exodus 12; Zechariah 11:12; 1 Peter 2:24-25; Mathew 27:39-42.

### Memory Verse:

*Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach.  
(Hebrew 13:13)*

## Introduction

Distribute the book of "The Pascha Prayer", so that the students may follow up the subject in the pages of the book. This subject should be introduced before the Holy Week begins.

## Lesson Outline

### I. The importance of the Holy Week:

- It is the most important week of the whole year. During this week we celebrate Christ's passion that led to our salvation. That is why the church has joined it to the Holy Lent since the time of Pope Demetrius XII (12).
- The church concentrates its ritual effort and also its dogmatic and spiritual effort during this week to make of it a spiritual source of blessing for the whole year. So we have to share the church,

earnestly and most of the time, her celebrations, so that we may taste the fellowship of the Savior's passions.

- The word "Pascha" is a Coptic word, which means "The Passover". So it is the week of the Passover from the authority of the devil to the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

II. Lazarus Saturday: On that day the church celebrates the miracle of raising Lazarus from death as an introduction to Christ's resurrection and our resurrection with Him. The church indicates that death has no authority over Christ whose death and Resurrection we shall celebrate. It is He that raised Lazarus after four days.

III. Palm Sunday: It is a great feast. The prayers of the church are performed in merry and bright tune. The procession of the cross is performed around the church on that day. During the procession, 12 passages of the Gospel are read before the different icons of the saints. It stands for the Jews receiving Christ as king when He entered Jerusalem. It is the day of enthroning the King and receiving Him with the hymn, logemenos.

IV. The Public Requiem: During the Holy Week the church concentrates on the passions and death of our Savior, so if one of the believers dies during this week the church does not pray the regular departed funeral prayer over them, as the church has no time to raise the ordinary requiem prayer or to raise incense. Therefore, the body attends an hour of the Pascha so that the departed may not be deprived of the blessing of the church,. This is why the church raises the prayers of a public requiem after the Sunday Mass, where prayers are said over the water and it is then sprinkled on the believers.

V. The Pascha Prayers:

- Prayers are raised in the second choir of the church as Christ suffered outside Jerusalem . . . the church also teaches us, through her rituals, that before the crucifixion and death of Christ for us, we had no right to enter heaven (the church sanctuary). The Paradise was closed and the Cherubim were placed to guard the way and prevent anyone from entering the Paradise.
- The church is dressed in black as a sign of protesting against the people's sin, which caused pains and shame to her kind and merciful Redeemer. We do not mourn for the passions and death

of the Savior as they gave us salvation but we mourn for our sins that caused these passions.

- Holy Liturgy is not performed on Monday, Tuesday or on Wednesday, and then it is performed on Thursday. In the Old Testament, people used to buy the Passover lamb on the 10th of Nissan, and it remained with them till the night of (the eve) the 14th day. On that day they slaughtered it. Christ entered Jerusalem on Sunday (10th of Nissan) and was kept there for three days, and then He offered Himself as a sacrifice on Thursday in the Mystical Supper (14th of Nissan) because Christ is our Passover.
- This week is rich in Biblical readings, and the fathers' preaching and their interpretations. Each prayer contains prophecies, psalm, gospel and interpretation. Some books of the Bible are wholly read during this week. On Tuesday St. Mathew's Gospel is read. On Wednesday, St. Mark's Gospel is read. On Thursday St. Luke's Gospel is read and St. John's Gospel is read on the Holy Saturday. The Book of the Lamentations is read at 12 o'clock on Good Friday, and the whole Book of Psalms after the prayers of Good Friday and the whole Book of Revelations is read on the eve of Holy Saturday. Some Christians read the book of Job on Wednesday.
- The day of the Pascha is divided into five-day prayers and five night prayers. These are the first hour, third hour, sixth hour, ninth hour, and the eleventh hour prayers. A new day begins at sunset. Each prayer is set in the following order:
  - a. Prophecies.
  - b. Passover Hymn (12 Times).
  - c. The Psalm in Coptic, with a sad tune.
  - d. The Gospel in Coptic then in Arabic or English, then the interpretation of the Gospel - a summary of it and contemplation.
  - e. The Intercession, the end and blessing.
- These prayers start from the beginning of 9 O'clock on Palm Sunday till 11 O'clock on the eve of Maundy Thursday, (i.e. 9th hour prayer and 11th hour prayer).

#### VI. Maundy Thursday:

- Maundy Thursday is the day Christ's mystical death. On that day He offered Himself as a sacrifice and established the sacra-



ment of Eucharist, which is the foundation and pillar of the church, and it is a great feast.

- The Sanctuary is opened because we, through receiving Communion from the Tree of Life, i.e. the Lord's Holy Body and Blood, obtain the everlasting life and the right to inherit the kingdom of heaven.
- In the early morning, the procession of reproaching Judas is performed and in it the church declares that she deposes Judas and those who are like him because he spurned her bridegroom's love.
- Prayers for sanctifying water (Lakan) are said and the priest washes the people's feet in memory of Jesus washing the disciples' feet.
- Before offering the Lamb, the hourly prayers are not used as usual, but we pray the Pascha prayers instead, "The third, the sixth and the ninth".
- Some hymns and passages are deleted from the mass. These are the ones that refer to salvation and reconciliation, as salvation is achieved through the Cross, and reconciliation is achieved through the Resurrection. That is why the Hymn "Soutis Amen" and the reconciliation prayers are not recited.
- Both the commemoration and Requiem prayers are deleted, i.e. they are not recited because before the cross, the righteous were taken to Hades . . . and there is no fellowship between the church and those who dwell in Hades, so the church does not pray for them in this Liturgy.

#### VII. The Rites of the Good Friday:

- Prayers are recited in the same order from Friday eve till the end of the third hour on Friday. Each prayer includes parts from the Gospels.
- The Savior was crucified at the sixth hour . . . The church knows that the cross is the royal throne and that this hour is decisive moment for the church to overcome the devil. So the church receives the Holy Christ as a victorious King crowned on His throne so she lights the candles and censers, the priest put on their priestly garments and raise incense and the hymn "O Monogenis" is recited. The lights are put out while the Gospel is being read as a sign of the darkness that took place when the Savior was crucified. Then the passage about the faithfulness of the robber is

recited and in it we take part in acknowledging the Godhead of the dead living.

- At 12 O'clock, the crucifixion Icon is brought down in memory of bringing down the Savior's Body to wrap him in linen . . . Then the Sanctuary door is opened as a sign of opening the Paradise gate when Christ died for us "Today you will be with Me in Paradise". Genuflexions are performed in all directions as practical acknowledgment of the Godhead and the everlasting life of the dead and that He exists everywhere in the whole universe and He cannot be confined in a grave. A procession is done by the Crucifixion Icon in all parts of the church with a merry tune, saying Lord have Mercy (Kiryelayson) as if we were declaring the happy news of salvation to the whole world.
- Then the Crucifixion Icon is buried in spices and aloes on the altar between two candle sticks, one at the east and the other at the west, as this was the way our Savior was buried in the tomb.

#### VIII. Holy Saturday:

- It is a night of Vigil and wakefulness in the church with our Savior in His tomb. The night is full of hymns, prayers, and readings and in it we read the Book of Revelation. The prayer rite is a mixture of the Pascha and annual prayers in a pleasant order as Christ's passions came to an end when He died for us.
- The Holy Liturgy is performed and prayers that denote salvation are recited but the prayers of reconciliation are not said. The commemoration prayer and the Requiem prayers are recited as after His death, Christ went down to Hades, led the host of captives and He gave gifts to men, liberated the holy men and sent them to Paradise so there is a fellowship between us and them. We pray for them and they pray for us.
- Holy Saturday is the only Saturday on which we fast all the day abstaining from any food.
- Genuflexions are allowed on that day as a memory of the burial of Christ in the tomb.

## Conclusion

The greatest spiritual benefit from this Holy week is through regular attendance of the church prayers and living all the events with the church. May

God give us the blessing to participate and appreciate the rituals of that week.

**Applications:**

- Attend the Pascha Prayers especially on Thursday and Friday and as much as you can of the prayers of the other days.
- Prepare a time line project of the events of this week in a creative fashion and bring it to the class.

**Exercises:**

1. What is the meaning of Pascha? And where does it come from the word?
2. What do you know about the Palm Sunday?
3. What are the Pascha's prayer?
4. Do Christians need to celebrate the holy week?

## Part IX

### Lessons for the Month of May

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## Week 1

# Our Bodies are for the Lord

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### Objectives:

- The Christians attitude towards the dignity of the body and the necessity of its sanctification.

### References:

- 1 Corinthians 6:19; 1 Thassalonians 4:3-5; Hebrew 12:14; 1 Peter 1:15-16; Romans 12:1

### Memory Verse:

*He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me and I in him.  
(John 6:56)*

## Introduction

Why did the Lord create the flesh? Let the students attempt to answer. The Lord created a body for man so as to make of him a unique creature that is different from angels and animals. Angels are spirits and the animals are flesh but man combines the two elements, the soul and the body. That is why the fathers said that man was a small universe (Microcosms). The body reacts with the soul and the soul reacts with the body and each of them feels the other and is affected by it. We observe that in practical life the spiritual life affects the body to a great extent.

## Lesson Outline

- I. The man who prays and fasts is different from the man who commits adultery. The saint's face differs from the face of the evil man. Each of them reflects an inner world, which is completely different. If we keep our inner life pure, the body will be pure and if we keep the body and

its organs in a state of chastity, the inner life increases in purity and depth. The Sound body helps its owner to fast, worship and spend the night in prayer. The opposite is the case of the weak body.

## II. The body is the Temple of the Holy Spirit:

- The body plays a very important role in the life of a Christian man. Since the Lord Jesus incarnated and became man, the human nature has become one with Christ. The man who has been marked with the Holy Spirit through the mystery of Confirmation (Chrism) has become bearer of Christ (Christophorus). Although the baptized and anointed with Chrism keeps the appearance and shape of his body without change yet in the inner depth of his body dwell the Divine light and the new life. Therefore the Bible regards the body as the temple of God *“Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a price. Therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s”* (1 Corinthians 6:19,20). In another place the Holy Bible says, *“Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never”* (1 Corinthians 6:15).
- When St. Paul the apostle says that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit, he means the real meaning of the words and does not use the words in a symbolic way. The fact that the Holy Bible emphasizes is that *“We are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones”* (Ephesians 5:30) and that He is the true vine and we are the branches and the branches are parts of the vine and not outside parts. John 15:5

III. The dignity of the body (The Christians outlook on the body): The sound Christian attitude is that all the parts of the body are honored because they all share in building up the temple of the Holy Spirit. There are no pure organs and defiled members in Christianity. It is impossible to imagine that God would create a temple with a defiled part. St. Paul the apostle explained the honor of the members of the body in detail, in his first epistle to the Corinthians and concentrated specially on what is called the inferior parts: *“On the contrary, the parts of the body which seem to be weaker are indispensable, and those parts of the body which we think less honorable we invest with the greater honor, and our un-presentable parts are treated with greater*

*modesty, which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior part, that there may be no discord in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another” (1 Corinthians 12:22-25). St. Clement of Alexandria says, “We must not be ashamed of the members which God created”.*

#### IV. The Body as a tool for achieving the Lord’s purpose:

- The apostle says to the Romans, *“I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect” (Romans 12:1-2).* This means that the flesh was not granted for enjoyment and selfishness but it is granted to be given and consumed for others. The person who refuses to use his body in deeds that glorify God is like the person who took the talent and buried it in the sand and when its owner came, he did not offer the benefits with the talent.
- One of the saints says, *“O Jesus I offer myself to you as a sacrifice. I sacrifice myself without asking anything for myself”.* The domains of sacrifice are wide before man. Through the works of his body he can give kindness, friendship, sacrifice, services and blessed works that glorify the Holy great name of God. The saints felt that they were in the world as the arms, hands and the legs, which carry out the blessed purposes of the Lord in the world. Each one of them seized the chance of his existence in the flesh to play the part appointed to him...waiting for the Divine Voice, *“Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord” (Matthew 25:21).*

#### V. Do not be conformed to this world:

- The Christian who perceives the honor of the body is always careful to renew the mind to test the complete perfect good will of God. Renewing the mind is achieved through repentance, true confession and by examining the soul. Spending a period in a solitary place every now and then to find out if anything of the works of darkness has penetrated into the inner part of the soul.

The renewal of mind enlightens it and increases its sensitivity and brightness and transparency and enables knowledge of the purpose of God, and His good will in every work performed.

- That is why the apostle's voice calls us nowadays: Are we conformed to this world in their aims and methods and the way they live or have we become a new creation inside and outside? The Christians who do not honor their bodies expose them to ill treatment and insults when they put on inappropriate clothes. They adorn themselves in a way that does not conform to the honor of the temple of God in which the Holy Spirit dwells.
- As the Lord entered the temple and drove out those who sold and bought and did not care for the holiness of the temple, the same will happen in His second coming when He drives out all those who did not honor their bodies and exposed their flesh to corruption and the work of the devil because it is written, *“Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God”* (2 Corinthians 6:14-16).

## Conclusion

We need to attempt to keep our bodies clean and suitable residence for the Holy Spirit in us. We keep our bodies from ungodly practices and from the lust of the world. Remember, we don't own our body, it is bought at a price (1 Corinthians 6:20). Always, desire to honor God with your body!! This is God's will in your life ” It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; 4 that each of you should learn to control your own body[a] in a way that is holy and honorable, 5 not in passionate lust like the pagans, who do not know God;” (1 Thassalonians 4:3-5).

### Applications:

- Performing spiritual and social services, making use of our bodies to achieve the Lord's purposes towards love.
- Offering services to comfort bodily sufferings of some people such as patients.



- Perpetual prayer: *“Keep my body to be a temple for your Spirit”*. We have to go to our father of confession when we feel that our mind or our members have been corrupted by any lust.

**Exercises:**

1. Why did the Logos (the Word) become flesh? (John 1:14)
2. What is the mutual relationship between the body and the soul in the spiritual life?
3. “The body is the temple of the Holy Spirit.” Explain.
4. How should a Christian regard his members, especially those that people consider of a low degree?
5. Do we own our body? If no, who does? So can sin and do whatever we want with our body? (Think about this in terms of tatooes, type of clothes, smoking...etc)? *“you were bought at a price. Therefore glorify God with your body.”* (1 Corinthians 6:20).
6. “Do not be conformed to this world in your life.” Explain.

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## Week 2

# The Glory of Our Salvation

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### Objectives:

- To evaluate the effectiveness of Nativity in our spiritual life.

### References:

- John 1

### Memory Verse:

*For my eyes have seen Your salvation which You have prepared before the face of all peoples. (Luke 2:30-31)*

## Introduction

Glory, Peace and Joy! This angelic song is very powerful. It is a splendid declaration of what happened the moment Jesus was born (Luke 2:13-14). It is very brief but expenses great joy. Thousands of heavenly angels sing this song on behalf of heaven and earth. For the first time in, their eternal history, the angels proclaimed and announced a new revolution in the universe on the Day of Nativity. They could not keep silent; inspired by the people's state of unconsciousness they started out singing a pleasant, sweet wonderful song, giving glory to God in the Highest, preached peace and announced pleasure for the people.

## Lesson Outline

- I. Glory to God in the Highest: Great is the glory of God. It appeared in the Creation and in Mount Sinai and later in the Transfiguration and in the resurrection. But today we are face to face with the glory of lowliness. It is the hidden glory and the top of emptiness. The son is the bright glory of the Father and the image of His essence (John

1:18). We liked Him to be glorified in the way of the sun that comes out to shine on the people, but the Lord appeared in the image of man and shared the nature of men (except sin). When the Lord incarnated and came to live among us, he made the angels and all the peoples of the world after that to worship the Lord and give Him glory and praise Him in the Highest: *“Holy, Holy, Holy the Lord of Host, His glory fills all the earth”* (Isaiah 6:3).

When we come near to Bethlehem and see the Son, we feel a great love for Him so we give glory to the Father who gave us His Son. The Son is the Divine Wisdom. He is the incarnate Logos. That is, why Christianity regards the weakness of the Lord as meekness and lowliness. The cross is glory (The Lord reigns on the Cross) and the manger is glory . . . but it is the glory of meekness.

II. Peace on earth: Why did the earth lose its peace? That was because of the sin which:

- Separated man from God.
- Deformed man’s spiritual beauty and made him live in conflict with himself.
- Corrupted the family system, man ruled over woman and the woman’s desire would be for her husband (Gene 3:16).
- Made people cruel e.g. Cain killed Abel.

This lost peace could not be restored except through the incarnate Christ. Christ is the Mediator between God and man (Rom 8:34, 1 Timothy 2:5). He removes the barrier between them so that man can see God the Father in Christ, and the Father can see in Him the image of the righteous man whom He created and wanted. Thus peace between God and man will be restored. He will also be a mediator between the heavenly and the earthly beings, He will establish peace between the hosts of angels and among the simple shepherds and among all who surround the manger in one song the first half of which is in Heaven (glory) and the second half is on earth (peace).

He makes peace between man and his brother. Peace here is different from the political concept of peace. It is peace within the frame of love and truth together. In this way Christ mends what sin corrupted inside the heart of man, and restores love and calmness to him and destroys the desires of the flesh inside him as *“There is no peace, says the Lord for the wicked”* (Isaiah 48:22, 57:21).

III. Good will towards men: It is a spiritual good will (Rom 12:2). In sacrificing for Him because He emptied Himself of His glory for the will of His Father, in praising His name with warm worship(Philip 2:6-11). God was pleased with the apostles who preached His name. He was pleased with the martyrs who endured the torments thankfully. He was pleased with the ascetics who sold everything and lived in asceticism and simplicity.

## Conclusion

Let us celebrate the nativity feast in a spiritual manner to receive our king into our hearts with reverence and honor. And we have to praise God and glorify his name every day by remembering our salvation. We have to live a holy-life, and taste the glory of God's salvation, just like the angels and the shepherd men. Lord Jesus promised us, the peace He gives us is not like what the world give, so let's despise everything, and follow him to achieve the maximum joy and overflowing happiness.

### Applications:

- Practice confession, receiving communion, and reconciliation with God.
- Reconcile between two friends who are not on good terms with each other so that the peace of the baby of Bethlehem may fill their hearts.
- Send gifts to the poor to please them. Pray with them in their houses.
- Study the delightful Nativity melodies.
- Remember the glory of your salvation and give thanks to God every day

### Exercises:

1. What is the primary reason the Son is born?
2. Have you ever experienced a joy and glory when you think about this wonderful salvation?
3. List some differences between life before the birth of Christ and after.
4. What do you learn from the life of Jesus Christ who was a king from the beginning, but he lived like a servant in this earth?

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## Week 3

# The Power of Resurrection

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### Objectives:

- To understand the power of resurrection as a revelation of the Divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ.

### References:

- Lucas 24

### Memory Verse:

*He is not here, but is risen. (Luke 24:6)*

## Introduction

Christ's resurrection differs from any other resurrection. He is called "The first fruits of them that slept". So we notice that:

- The Lord is only one who rose from the dead and his resurrection is followed by no death. He is living forever, and death did not and will not dominate Him.
- Christ is the Lord who rose from the dead by His own power without any prayer from His disciples or the intercessions of anyone . . . such as the case with Lazarus or the widow's son whom Elijah brought back to life.
- The Lord said, "I am the Resurrection and life". The power of resurrection was within Him and not outside Him . . . so the verse "God raised Him from the dead" does not mean that He rose by Himself with His own power, as He and the Father are one. The Father raised Him because He is His only begotten beloved Son and He did not leave Him in the Hades. He rose with His power and by the will of

the Father and the work of the Holy Spirit. The Three Hypostases are one essence as we said before “*and designated. Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by His resurrection from the dead*” (Romans 1:4). This means that the Holy Spirit performed the Resurrection, as He is the Spirit of Resurrection.

## Lesson Outline

### I. His Divinity and His Humanity: Never Parted:

- Godhead is the Divine Nature and manhood is our human nature that the Lord took from Virgin Mary. The Lord died on the cross and the human soul parted the flesh. Yet his Divinity and his Humanity never parted and he himself never parted his body or his soul.
- The body that was in the tomb was the body of the Son of God. The body did not decompose or suffer corruption although it remained in the tomb for three days. He rose with great power and an active body and healed wounds after the body had attained a new bright nature.
- When His soul went down into the Hades the devil did not arrest her. On the contrary, the Lord went down into the Hades, broke its iron gates and copper trenches . . . and raised Adam, his children and the prophets and brought them back to Paradise.
- The Lord was powerful even when He was in the grave. Death could not have power over Christ’s human soul that united with the Logos (the Word). Death could not enslave that soul neither corruption could humiliate him. Although death separated the human soul from the body yet corruption dares not approach any of both.

### II. The flesh of Resurrection:

- When the Lord rose, He was not weak. He did not need anyone to untie Him of His clothes as the case was with Lazarus, or eat to have power as the case was with Jairus’ daughter.
- But He rose and the stone put where it was the clothes were and the guards were standing. The Lord who entered the room while the doors were closed, can go out while the stone blocked the grave.

- The Lord rose with the same body He took from the Virgin Mary and the Holy Spirit but there was a difference . . . that body glorified after passing through death. So the body became a spiritual body that had powers and transparency the same as that which the believers will put on after death. So it was not a dim material body but it was a spiritual body radiating with light. Mary Magdalene could not touch that body as she used to do. In spite of this it was a real true body and it was not an image or a spirit. *“For a spirit have not flesh and bones as you see that I have . . . He took it and ate before them”* (Luke 24:39-43).

### III. Christ abolished death:

- The Lord Christ had to suffer all what the ordinary man suffers so He suffered death. Death was the natural destiny of man as Adam parted from the Lord. God was Adam’s life so when sin separated Adam from God, Adam had to die.
- What does the word “death” mean? It means anti-life, life means that man enjoys his unity with God (As the television set that functions well as it connects with an electric source). Death means that man keeps himself away from the light of God with all what that light radiates in him, warmth because of his existence in the presence of God. Death is the state of affliction, worry, suffering and distress. This is what the sinner has chosen for himself when he wanted to part from God “I took to myself the issues of death” (The Gregory Mass).
- What did the Lord do? The Logos united with manhood that is our human nature and He gave it what it had previously lost. He had to suffer death to redeem us from the consequence of sin “Through death He abolished death” and He granted those who were in the tombs the eternal life.

### IV. How to prove resurrection as a historical event:

- The gospel gives us the story of resurrection, the appearance of Christ. The gospel always tells the truth.
- Resurrection was the core of Peter’s sermon immediately after the coming of the Holy Spirit; his listeners witnessed that event. If the resurrection had not taken place many would have opposed the apostle but the opposite was what happened when they heard they asked St. Peter *“what must we do?”* (Acts 2:37).

- He left the shroud that stuck to His body because of the blood that came out of the wounds. He left the shroud arranged as it was in the tomb.
- This shroud is kept up till now in the Church of St. John the Baptist in Torrent in Italy. Scientists examined it and found the marks of the nails and wounds printed on the cloth (Refer to the Book “The Shroud Al Minya Diocese”).
- It had been a legend or a superstition, the disciples and the apostles would not have believed it and lost their life to prove it.

## Conclusion

Resurrection is rising up against sin and overcoming it *“Awake O Sleeper, and arise from the dead and Christ shall give you light”* (Ephesians 5:14). Lord, allow me to live with You in the victory of resurrection and give me the power to submit my desire and sin under your feet.

### Applications:

- Give proofs of the power of resurrection for unbelievers and quote some verses to support your proofs.
- Remember the power of resurrection in moments of weakness; despair, intellectual fights, fear, anxiety . . . . . Show films about the Shroud of Jesus Christ.

### Exercises:

1. What does the resurrection of Christ mean to us as His followers?
2. Read 1 Corinthians.15:19-20. What does this verse mean?
3. What is death? And how did it enter in to humanity?
4. What will our physical body look like after we rise from death in Jesus’ coming? 5. How does the resurrection give us power?



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## Week 4

# Pentecost and the Birth of the Church

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### Objectives:

- The work of the Holy Spirit in the Church.

### References:

- Acts 2:1-4

### Memory Verse:

*And there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them. (Acts 2:3)*

## Introduction

The disciples lived with Jesus and great hopes filled their mind. They were waiting for the day when Jesus would reign over the earth and establish an earthly kingdom. When they saw the multitude surrounding Him, they believed that their hopes would soon be achieved. The Palm Sunday witnessed the summit of their joy but soon their dreams faded when Jesus was taken from them to be judged, crucified, and to die on the cross. They were obliged, because of this, to escape and hide and when they wanted to meet, they met in secret in an upper room and in their grief and distress they forgot what Jesus used to say to them that he would leave the world but this did not mean the end of His work among the people. On the contrary it means the beginning of completing this work on sound basis, and that his going does not mean defeat but the beginning of victory for the kingdom of God in this world. They forgot that He had said, *“And I will pray to the Father, and He will give you another Counselor, to be with you for ever, but the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name,*

*He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you” (John 14:16,26).*

## Lesson Outline

I. The glorious Resurrection then Ascension: Then came the glorious resurrection, and Jesus appeared to them many times but He appeared in the glorified flesh of resurrection. The form and image is exactly the same but he entered their room when the doors were closed. He entered suddenly and disappeared suddenly. Later on they knew that their teacher was the Eternal Son of God. Their old feeling which was full of love and respect mingled with reverence, awe and worship. After forty days the disciples witnessed the departure of their beloved calmly. We expected a great grief and sadness, but after his ascension to heaven, they went back to Jerusalem in great happiness. They knew that although he went up to heaven, yet he would be with them forever.

II. The Day of the Pentecost:

- The Pentecost was near. It was a great feast in Israel. It came after fifty days from the Passover. It was also a harvest feast, which was celebrated with joy. Jerusalem was crowded with pilgrims coming from all parts of the world to share the joys of the feast. In the middle of these celebrations, there was a small group of men and women gathering in the upper room speaking of their memories and what happened in the near past and they were waiting for the promise of Jesus. They were praying all the time. The day of the Pentecost came and the small group was still in the upper room, and suddenly something splendid took place *“And suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them”* (Acts 2:2-4).
- The pilgrims gathered before the temple asking about the cause of the sound they heard. Among those people stood the disciples speaking to them about Jesus and giving proofs that he was the Messiah whom their fathers were waiting for. It was strange that each of them heard the disciple speaking his own language all the people wondered and said to one another, *“What does this*

*mean? But others mocking said: They are filled with the new wine” (Acts 2:12,13).*

- III. Three thousand believed: Here St. Peter stood up among the people. He was filled with courage and zeal (Acts 2:14-36). St. Peter who denied Christ seven weeks before and said to the maid “I do not know Him” stood now without fear before thousands of people announcing his faith in Christ and calling them to believe in him. This was the work of the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit that gave courage to him and it was he that gave the disciples the gift of speaking several languages. It is not St. Peter that spoke neither were the disciples. It was the Holy Spirit that spoke in them. That is why the speech was effective. The Scripture says, *“They were cut to the heart and said what shall we do? And Peter said to them, ‘Repent and be baptized and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. They received His word with joy and they were baptized and there were added that day about three thousand souls” (Acts 2:37-39).*
- IV. The fruits of the Holy Spirit: The day of Pentecost was a glorious day in the history of humanity. On that day the Holy Spirit rested on the disciples their eyes opened and they were filled with heavenly power that was not in them before. They no longer worked but the Spirit of God worked in them and with them.
- a. The Holy Spirit gave them courage: On the day when Lord Jesus was crucified, they were frightened, each one of them ran away and hid himself in a certain place. They met in secret far away from people but now they speak in public and face the multitude with courage and they held the people responsible for crucifying Christ. Was that a result of incidental courage? No, but God was there in them. The Holy Spirit worked in them and gave them the words they spoke to people, chiefs and kings. Wasn’t this what Jesus said to them? *“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses” (Acts 1:8).*
  - b. The Holy Spirit filled their hearts with love: Another change occurred to all believers. Love filled their hearts towards one another. Selfishness disappeared and they became one heart *“Now the company of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had everything in common” (Acts 4:32).* There were different people of all classes who joined the Church; rich and poor, educated

and ignorant but all those were filled with love and became one thing. The Holy Spirit filled their hearts so they loved one another. Those who gave and those who did not. No one thought of himself; each one thought of the others, *“There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them and laid at the apostles’ feet, and distribution was made to each as any had need”* (Acts 4:34-35).

- c. The Holy Spirit filled their life with joy: They were happy to have that new life of fellowship in the Holy Spirit who united them in one group *“And day by day, attending the temple together, and breaking bread in their homes, they partook of food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people”* (Acts 2:46-47). In fact, the day of Pentecost is a glorious day in the history of the Church. It was the church’s birthday indeed. The spirit worked, taught, established and supported *“And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved”* (Acts 2:47). The Holy Spirit inspired them with the Spirit of testimony, and preaching in the whole world. They bore witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus from the dead and called for repentance and preparing the hearts to receive the kingdom of God and waiting the second glorious coming of Christ.

## Conclusion

The spirit gave the disciples power in their service, warmth in preaching and effectiveness of preaching and that we are now in great need of the effectiveness of the Spirit. How can we attain this effectiveness? Through prayers, unity, obedience of the commandment, holiness, practicing the sacraments with the spirit of godliness . . . .

### Applications:

- We learned that Peter became courageous to share the gospel when he received the Holy Spirit visitation. How about you? Do you pray for God to give you courage to share the gospel with others?
- What specific things do you struggle with in your Christian journey that you know you need the help of the Holy Spirit with? Have you genuinely and constantly prayed about it?
- Who do you surround yourself with? Because remember, the disciples were praying together when the Pentecost occurred.

**Exercises:**

1. Try to choose verses, situations and evidence to show the following attributes of the Church of the Apostles that was established on the day of Pentecost.
  - a. It is a Church of prayer, fasting and worship.
  - b. It is a Church of fellowship, brotherhood and oneness of the heart.
  - c. It is a Church of rejoicing and peace.
  - d. It is a Church of Truth and righteousness.
  - e. It is a Church of suffering and persecutions.
2. Why do we call the day of Pentecost the Church birthday?
3. Why did the Holy Spirit, rest on the disciples fifty days after the resurrection?
4. Why didn't the day of Pentecost events take place every year up till our present day?
5. Why didn't people restore the one language all over the world as the case was before building the Tower of Babylon so that each one can understand the other in his language? Answer: Because the language of understanding between people is now the language of love, Love is the language spoken by all and understood by all.
6. Jesus had told His disciples about the heavenly power . . . the Holy Spirit that would rest on them and would teach them and strengthen them. Quote the following verses then put the word Jesus in one side and evidences on the other side: Acts 3:6-8, Acts 2:3-4, Acts 2:33, John 14:16-17, John 14:12-13, John 15:26. Just arrange the texts opposite to each other.

## Part X

### Lessons for the Month of June

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## Week 1

# The Holy Cross

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### Objectives:

- To know why the cross is considered the emblem of Christianity.
- To understand the significance of the cross in our life.

### References:

- Galatians 2:20, John 3:16, Romans 5:8, Hebrew 12:2, Colossians 2:14, Philippians 2:8, 1 Peter 2:24-25.

### Memory Verse:

*For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. (1Corinthians 1:18)*

## Introduction

Ask your students about the significance of the cross in their life? Why is the cross important for all Christians? The cross was the most horrible device of execution known in history among the Romans. It was used for degrading, despising and torturing criminals to death. Suddenly the cross became a symbol of dignity and pride. It was raised high over our churches, placed on the top of the church tower, the domes and on the veil of the temple. The cross is held in front of church processions. In general, the cross has become the sign, the emblem and the symbol of Christianity and Christians everywhere. What is the secret behind this change? And why does the church insist on lifting the cross up on the time before her children?

## Lesson Outline

- I. The Holy Cross with reference to history: How wonderful this story is! Its heroine was not a young girl or an ordinary woman among the

people, but she was an old woman above eighty years old. When she wanted to comfort herself after her son had been killed, she went to the place of the Holy Tomb enduring the troubles of travel to Jerusalem. She went to the Holy Land, motivated by a vision (a dream). She felt sad when she found out that the place had fallen into ruin as it was covered with a huge hill of garbage and dust on which pagan temple was built for the goddess Venus. Queen Helen ordered her servants to demolish (pull down) the temple and to remove the dust. She found three crosses among which was the Lord's cross. She saw the notice written by Pontius Pilate on that cross. Then she also found the place of the tomb. She also found the nails with which the Lord's hands were nailed to the cross. She sent these nails to her son Constantine who fixed one of them to his royal helmet, which he used in battles. It became a custom later on for Kings to put a piece of iron in the shape of a nail on their crowns. Queen Helen sent a piece of the Cross to the Emperor's Palace in Constantinople and the remainder was put in a silver box inside the Resurrection Church.

Queen Helen built a big church over the Holy Tomb and called it the New Jerusalem. She also built another church on the Cave of Nativity in Bethlehem, the modest place in which Christ was born and this church was as beautiful as the first one.

- II. A Cross appears in the sky: History tells us that the Genesis of the cross appeared in the sky several times as a pillar of light. The First Time: The Cross appeared in the sky to the Emperor Constantine together with his officers and soldiers to encourage him before starting the war. Late in the afternoon, Emperor Constantine saw the radiant Genesis of the cross above the sun in the sky. Inscribed upon it were the words, "By this Genesis you will conquer". That view had such a great effect on Constantine that he was converted to Christianity and waged a campaign against the tyrant Maxentius.

The cross appeared for another time as a pillar of light to all people in the sky of Jerusalem in 351 AD. It did not disappear quickly, but it remained visible for several hours. In that time it was more radiant than the sun. All the people of the city rushed out to see that sight. They were surprised and afraid but at the same time they were happy to see such a heavenly sight.

The Final Appearance will happen by the end of times when the Genesis of the cross covers the whole sky, east, west, north and south. At



that time all the kingdoms of the earth will submit themselves to the Lord Christ.

### III. The Cross with reference to the Christian Dogma:

- The Cross embodies the greatest and most important Christian creeds; because, our Lord Jesus Christ tasted death on it. This proves that He has true flesh, the same as that of all people. In other words, the Cross is a proof of the Incarnation Creed. The Incarnation creed describes our believe in which 'God became a man' when our lord Jesus Christ was born out of the Virgin Mary, mother of the Son of God. *"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."* (John 1:14). Moreover, Christ fulfilled Redemption with his propitiatory death on the Cross. So the Cross emphasized the second great Christian Creed; i.e. the Redemption Creed. When the faithful make the Genesis of the Cross, they state and confess their faith in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the One God. They declare their belief in the Creed of Trinity and One God, three hypostases and one essence (substance). Thus we see in the Cross the most important creeds of our holy faith.
- The reconciliation between God and man was fulfilled through the Cross. For this reason Christ was hung between the sky and the earth to be the way for man to come back to God. He stretched out his blessed hands to receive all those under the sky. He descended into Hades through the Cross to bring Adam and his children back to Paradise (1 Peter 3:18-19).
- We have also been justified through the Cross. We have become innocent of the charges directed to man (as a blasphemer and evildoer). These are the same charges that were directed to the Lord and he was innocent of them all (We are now justified with his blood).
- Through the Cross all our previous debts have been paid. The Law could not payoff these debts but it emphasized them instead: *"And you, who were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, having canceled the bond which stood against us with its legal demands; this He set aside, nailing it to the Cross"* (Colossians 2:13, 14).

#### IV. The Holy Cross with reference to its rite:

- In Baptism: The water is sanctified with the Genesis of the Cross in the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. St. John Chrysostom says, “Thus baptism is not only called a cross but the Cross also is called baptism” because the Cross is the baptism of blood and in baptism we die with Christ, and resurrect for a new life with Christ.
- In Chrism: All our organs are circumcised with the Genesis of the Cross 36 times (for all parts of the body).
- In the Sacrament of Confession (Penance): The Cross is placed on the Confessor’s head as a Genesis that his sins are forgiven with the blood of the Cross.
- In the Sacrament of the Holy Communion: This is the blood of the Cross and the Holy Body broken for us is incarnate before our eyes.
- In the Sacrament of the Unction of the Sick: Here the oil is first sanctified by crossing it with the Cross seven times during reading the seven appropriate texts from the Gospels and by lighting seven wicks.
- In the Sacrament of the Holy Orders: When the Cross is put on the head of the person chosen to receive the Holy Order, the person receives, through prayer and the power of the Cross, the ability to carry the Cross and to exercise the other sacraments. You may notice that the priest wears a cross and holds a cross in his hand. He puts a cross on the front of his clothes (his own cross) and a cross on the back of his clothes (the people cross).
- In the Sacrament of Marriage (Matrimony): The married life is a series of sacrifices starting from the moment when the Cross is put on the heads of the bride and the bridegroom and ending with the Crown of Victory and the glories of resurrection.

#### V. The Cross in our Life

- The Genesis of the Cross drives away demons as it reminds them of the Devil’s defeat at Golgotha.
- It is a cure for defiled lust and a power that quenches the flames of fire and the authority of sin.
- When we stretch our hands in the shape of the cross and cross our foreheads and chests, we become free from the authority of

death, and we go deep into the depth of the soul through prayer like a bird stretching its wings and flying high in the sky.

- The Cross is also a means of triumph over temptation and a Genesis of Salvation. The martyrs used to cross the cup offered to them with the Genesis of the Cross.
- The Cross was and will remain a pride, a beauty, a crown, a weapon and declaration of faith and the irresistible power of God.

## Conclusion

- “Through the Cross man can drive away all the deceits of the demons” (Athenasious the Apostolic).
- “The martyr did not drink the cup before furrowing it with the Genesis of the Cross which is the Genesis of salvation” (Theodoreit the Historian).
- “Our salvation is confirmed when we partake in the sacraments and their symbols. One of these symbols is the Genesis of the Cross” (St. Gregory of Nyssa).
- Therefore, it is important to understand the meaning of the cross to all Christians. It is the symbol of our salvation from sin and eternal death through our lord Jesus Christ. *“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”* (1 Corinthians 1:18).

### Applications:

- Make the Genesis of the cross before doing anything. This should be done with accuracy and repentance and lifting the heart to God.
- We put the cross on our churches, and homes. We perform the genesis of the cross before we eat or when we pray. Thus, it must be important. Understand the meaning of the cross for you. Understand why it matters to all Christians?
- The cross is significant in our lives as it signifies dying for our sins and to live a life of righteousness. *“He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.”*

(1 Peter 2:24-25). We should always ask ourselves 'Am I living a life worth for the price paid for me on the cross?'

- Each you see a cross or do the Genesis of the Cross, meditate on why it is important to you. It is the symbol of our salvation received through the death and resurrection of our lord Jesus Christ.
- Don't forget to kiss the cross every time you come to the church.

**Exercises:**

1. Write about symbols of the Cross in the Old Testament. Express this idea by drawing a picture of several scenes or write an essay about this topic in wall Chart.
2. Why is the cross important to you?
3. What did you learn from today's lesson?

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## Week 2

# The Final Judgment

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### Objectives:

- To learn how to behave in the midst of offenses.

### References:

- Matthew 13:24-30

### Memory Verse:

*Sweep me not away with sinners. (Psalm 26:9)*

## Introduction

Sometimes we ask ourselves: How was evil found and established in the world? Why do evil people exist? What is our attitude towards evil people? Must we resist them? Do we have to remove them from the world?

## Lesson Outline

The Lord Jesus in a simple parable answered these questions when he talked about the kingdom of God and how He compared it to a field that his owner wanted to sow good seeds in it. While people were asleep His enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. So when the plants came up and bore grain then the weeds appeared also, and the servants of the householder came and said to Him, “Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then has it weeds?” He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this’. The servants said to Him, “Then do you want us to go and gather them?” But He said “No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, ‘gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into My barn.’”

- I. How was evil found in the world? God did not create evil but he created man to live in eternal happiness. Evil is keeping away from God and resisting His will. Satan is the source of evil. Satan is the enemy of good, he is complaining against our brethren day and night. The devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour (1 Peter 5:8). It was he who envied man and tempted him to commit the sin of rebellion in Paradise. With the fall of man, sin came into the world through the envy of the devil (as the Church prays in the Divine Mass) -the enemy sowed the weeds -and the enemy is the devil as the Lord Jesus explained. But the sower of the good seeds is the Son of man, the Lord of Harvest who went up to heaven and gave gifts. The world is the field of Christ as the Father gave everything to Him. The good seeds are the children of kingdom and they bear good fruit for the glory of God. The weeds are the children of the evil and they are good for nothing, they destroy the good seeds and they creep into the fields of wheat (Matth 13:24-30).
- II. Why are the evil people found? The Lord allowed the existence of good and evil in this world. Good and evil mingle together. So the good people can do good with their free will and refrain from evil. The evil people suffer punishment and bear judgment with free will. God created us and gave us freedom. He gave us freedom of will either wheat or weeds. God does not want us as slaves but he wants us to be free sons. He does not want to drive us as sheep but to lead us as free people aware of His good will.
- III. What is our attitude towards the evil people? As our duty to resist them, what is our attitude? The existence of sins and offenses causes grief to the children of God. They also arouse God's wrath. But hindrances and temptations are these: good must mingle with evil, hypocrites with the faithful in the Church domain, etc. Our duty is not to neglect the field. Let us not forget the weeds so that they may not spread. The Son of Man came to deliver not to destroy. He is patient with people but when He comes everything will be put right and everybody will be judged (Revelation 20:12,13). Each one will be given according to his work. Angels will proceed to gather the weeds and all offenses . . . corrupt teachings and false worship will be burnt. All atheists, the greedy, murderers' idolaters and hypocrites will be destroyed . . . and all those who shared them their sins will share them their shame and suffering. All those who shared the saints in godliness will be glorified with them so that we may pray with David "*Sweep*

*me not away with sinners” (Psalm 26:9).*

- IV. What is Hell? Hell is a horrible place for those who despised God, it has unexplained pain in soul (Luk 16:19-23). It is the feeling of torture and torment that fills everyone who has refused God. In hell men will weep and gnash their teeth and suffer great pains. This is the fruit of the absence of the light and glory of God when the Lord come the evildoers will not complain or murmur against Him as they know that they chose that type of life out of their free will, and they resisted light, they loved darkness because their works were evil.
- V. What is the kingdom of God? The kingdom of God is the glory expected to be declared in the saints the children of God. Our teacher St. Paul the apostle said that Christ *“who will change our lowly body to be like His glorious body, by the power which enables Him even to subject all things to Himself”* (Philippians 3:21). St. John the Beloved emphasizes this by saying *“But we know that when He appears we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is”* (1 John 3:21).

St. Macarius the great says *“On the Day of Judgment the glory of the Holy Spirit will come out from within adorning and covering the bodies of saints with the glory that was hid in their souls. The bodies of saints will radiate with light and brightness after the resurrection.”*

St. John Chrysostom says *“The bodies of the saints that the spears of persecutors tore up and the swords cut will be raised by God and they will be given complete rest. Their heads which were cut off will wear crowns and their members which were cut off with saws will be adorned with glory and brightness, and will shine as the sun, giving light as the moon as righteousness will be like a white robe and holiness will make them bright and shiny. They will be washed with the blood of Christ in the best appearance.”*

## Conclusion

Let us be watchful for that moment that we depart from this world so that we are ready for the judgment day. Be vigilant in your spiritual growth every day in our lives on earth so that we can inherit the kingdom of God.

### Applications:

- Do a project about what did people think and imagine the judgment day.

- Be regular in your spiritual practices and evaluate your growth with your father of confession or spiritual guide.

**Exercises:**

1. Did God create evil?
2. How was evil found?
3. Why does the Lord allow evildoers to remain in the world?
4. What distinguishes the good from the evil here in this world?
5. What is the good believers' attitude towards the evil people?
6. How does God correct everything in the end?



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## Week 3

# Spiritual Time Out

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### Objectives:

- To understand the concept of “spiritual time out”.
- To appreciate the importance of the spiritual time out for our spiritual growth and continuous relationship with God.

### References:

- Job 4:12-17, Psalm 62:5-7

### Memory Verse:

*And He went to the Mount of Olives, as He was accustomed and His disciples also followed Him. (Luke 22:39)*

## Introduction

The meaning of spiritual time out is to take time away from everyday earthly activities and spend it with God. Usually our days are full, from the minute we wake up to the minute we go back to bed. We spend every minute of our days doing things useful or useless. The whole day may also be completely away from God and even when we intent to spend some time with God, the devil intervenes and reminds us of something else to do or convinces us that we are too busy and there is no time for God at the moment. The devil is clever in giving us the feeling that there are hundreds of things to do and that we need more than 24 hours a day to finish everything that needs to be done. This can continue day after day until we are gradually but completely separated from God.

## Lesson Outline

Spiritual time out is very important in the life of every Christian to build a relationship with God. It is essential for our spiritual growth and to maintain our inner peace. It gives us an opportunity to detach completely from the world and connect with heaven and God.

I. Bible Examples of Spiritual Time Out: Many of the prophets in the Old Testament needed spiritual time out to give them spiritual strength and a new dimension to their relationship with God. For example:

- Elijah went into a cave, fleeing from the threats of Jezebel, he was afraid and weak spiritually but the Lord talked to Him and strengthened him. Away from everything and in the silence of the cave, Elijah was able to hear the voice of the Lord (1 King 19:11-16).
- Jonah was not able to understand the wisdom and mercy of God towards Nineveh, until he went out of the city, then he experienced the lesson of the worm that ate the plant that was giving shade to his head (Jon 4:4-11).
- Job also was able to hear the voice of the spirit during the silence of the night (Job 4:12-17).
- Moses was in the wilderness for forty year as a long spiritual time out for him after killing the Egyptian, to replace his physical strength with spiritual strength.
- Jesus Christ Himself was accustomed to take time out to pray (Luke 22:39).

II. Form of Spiritual Time Out: Spiritual time out necessitates complete isolation from the world and its worries. Thus, it is important to be disconnected from friends, media, noise and any source of distraction, e.g. telephone calls, pager, TV, radio, computer, mobile phone . . . etc. This is basically a time to communicate with God and this requires a calm environment, a clear mind and an open heart. A spiritual time out can be done as an individual alone or for the family together; whichever is more beneficial for our spiritual growth. The time can be spent in prayer, meditation, Bible reading, self-evaluation, reflecting on God's dealings with man, and/or even in complete silence . . . *"I was mute with silence, I held my peace [even] from good; and my sorrow was stirred up. My heart was hot within me; while I was musing, the*

*fire burned. [Then] I spoke with my tongue: Lord, make me to know my end” (Psalm 39:2-7).*

- III. The Period of The Spiritual Time Out: This will definitely vary depending on the person and how much spiritual enjoyment we feel during this time with God. It is a time of rest and communication with the Creator, a time of relief from all the day’s worries and burdens, a time of spiritual pleasure. Since it is a pleasurable time, everybody would like it to last longer every day. You might start with as little as 10 minutes every day, and then increase it gradually.

## Conclusion

Listen to the Psalmist David during his spiritual time out: *“For God alone my soul waits in silence, for my hope is from Him. He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be shaken. On God rests my deliverance and my honor; my mighty rock, my refuge is in God. Trust in Him at all times O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us” (Psalm 62:5-7).*

### Applications:

- Start practicing a daily spiritual time out with God.
- Tell others about the value and benefit of the spiritual time out.
- Consider fasting during your spiritual time out

### Exercises:

1. How often do you practice spiritual timeout?
2. Why do people say time is one of the most precious things in the earth?
3. If you are given 24 hours to spend, for how long would you communicate with God?
4. List the difference spending time with God and with Friends?
5. Do you know our Lord Jesus can be your best friend (John 15:13-15)?

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## Week 4

# How Can I Benefit From the Summer Holiday

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### Objectives:

- To clarify the importance of activities in solving the problem of leisure during summer.

### References:

- 1 Kings 17

### Memory Verse:

*Remember how short my time is. (Psalm 89:47)*

## Introduction

Summer and Leisure: Before the summer holiday begins, we need to think of how to fill our summer time with productive activities. Youth have many suggestions in mind on how to make use of leisure? The way of solving the problem differs according to the different circumstances and the environment surrounding each youth. In front there is no problem so long as the heart is in a state of satisfaction and contains no emptiness, indifference, laziness or deviation. Summer is a double-edged sword. It either drives youth forward in the way of spiritual growth and personality integration or drives them backwards and casts him in the dilemma of leisure or deviant business.

## Lesson Outline

- I. Before the Beginning of the Summer Holiday:

- The Servant should ask each youth about to what extent is he/she connected with Christ? To what extent are his/her prayers and worship regular? This should be one of the summer activities: Growth in the love of Christ.
- To what extent does a young man understand the Old Testament? To what extent does he/she study the Books of the New Testament and persist on reading the Holy Bible? This should be one of the summer activities: To read and study the books of the Holy Bible.
- To what extent is he regular in practicing the church sacraments? This should be his/her desire in summer to practice the church sacraments with Satiating and love.
- The level of his education and recognition of the modern currents of thinking and the different shapes and types of culture and the church concept in the light of Christ. This should be his task during summer.
- In this way and through being calmly convinced of the need enthusiasm is established in the heart, the mind becomes enlightened and time becomes fruitful.

## II. Summer and Activities:

- Activity should aim at leading souls to Christ and concentrating the need for One. So activity removes and puts an end to boredom, sadness and the feeling of isolation from the hearts of youth, and unites in a holy, spiritual pattern far away from evil friendships. Here is some glimpses about some activities and their importance.
- Prayer: Satiates and fills the soul with delight.
- Individual service: leads to prayer, service and visiting others.
- Committees for making research and reading in libraries: These give new horizons in knowledge.
- Spiritual Retreat: This is a chance for up building, spiritual clarity and fraternal love.
- The summer club: This is a chance for common comfort and Spiritual amusement.
- The Party: This is a chance for taking part in celebrating feasts and the church occasions.

- The journey: This is a chance for getting acquainted with each others and with their servant and a way of finding out their psychological state.

### III. Liveliness of Summer Activities:

- The liveliness of the summer activity helps it to continue and achieve its goals. So we have to study the spirit of the age and its needs and offer suitable activities for students according to their position, as a living satiating food.
- This does not mean that the church encourages the spirit of the age, but it means that the activity should be lively. One of the fathers said: We have to satisfy the needs of the body according to the circumstances of the present world but by the spirit and struggle even to the shedding of blood, so that we may surpass its weaknesses and falls.
- Explore the role of the servant in being acquainted with the spirit of the age.

## Conclusion

- Summer Holiday is a great chance to build our relationship with Christ and others fellows who love Christ. It is a time to increase in knowledge and understanding of the Bible and the church. It is a time for fun with Godly friends. Understand the young man's social status and the number of his family members.
- Examine the level of his bodily health and his need for games and the obstacles if any.
- Understand his emotional growth and its effect on his life.
- Understand his emotional growth and his ability to think and the obstacles if any.
- The Servant then makes the young man take part in one of the church activities according to his abilities and needs (Club - Spiritual meeting - must offer the activity without fear or anxiety aiming at achieving one goal, that is the Salvation of the soul from corruption of the world and the dominion of sin, and the devil's temptation and the soul's entering into the regions of happiness and eternity through Christ Jesus, Glory be to Him forever. Amen.

**Applications:**

- During your summer vacations, read all 50 chapters of the books of Genesis and sketch (draw) different pictures from chapters of that book in your own imagination, then finally put colors to your sketches and document all your colorful drawing pictures in one binder.

**Exercises:**

1. List at least five very positive and productive activities you should suppose to spend your time during summer holidays.
2. Prepare a daily and weekly basis plans to do things for your summer holidays.
3. How do you define (explain) time?
4. Do we need to spend our holiday vacations in having fun only? If the answer is Yes/No, then explain why.
5. Prepare a one page report for your past two months summer holiday weeks and present it to your parents and to your spiritual Sunday school teacher and friends.

## Part XI

### Lessons for the Month of July



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# Week 1

## The Gospel of St. John

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### Objectives:

- To study St. John's Gospel: Chapter One "The Word became flesh".

### References:

- St. John's Gospel

### Memory Verse:

*In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. (John 1:1)*

## Introduction

### 1. Characteristics of the Gospel:

- a. The Gospel contains deep theological and spiritual interpretations. An explanation of the Incarnation of the Logos; the rebirth, the eternal life, the gift of God, the living water, Judgment, light and darkness, knowing the Truth, True worship, The relationship between the Father and the Son, etc.
- b. The Gospel presents Jesus as the God of the Hebrews who saved them from the land of bondage and Jehovah who spoke to Moses and fed them with manna in the wilderness.
- c. The Gospel is characterized by Christ revealing many blessed revelations about Himself: He is the Messiah (4:25) and the only Son who is in the bosoms of the Father (1:18), He is the bread of life (6:35) and the light of the world (8:12), He is the door of the sheep (10:7) and the good shepherd (10:11), He is the resurrection and the life (11:25), He is the way, and the truth and the life (14:6), and He is the true vine (15:1).

- d. The Gospel draws our attention to the Heavenly Father and to the fact that Christ's life was complete obedience and submission to the will of the Father and that the Father loves us as the Son loves us. No one can go to the Son unless the Father attracts him (John 4:24, 5:19, 6: 44, 16: 27).
- e. The Gospel also mentions the farewell talk to the disciples (John 13) and the prayer of intercession that the Son raised for His disciples and all the believers (John 17).

## 2. The Writer of the Gospel:

- a. He is John the Son of Zebedee and his father was a rich man (Mark 1:20). He lived in Galilee and owned a house in Jerusalem. He was a fisherman. His mother, Salomy, was among the women who ministered to him from their own money (Matthew 27:56).
- b. His brother, James was a disciple of Christ and he was the first apostle who was martyred. The Lord called these two brothers Boanerges (Mark 3: 17), because of their strong zeal.
- c. John the son of Zebedee was a disciple of John the Baptist and when he heard his witness to Jesus, he followed the Lord and became his disciple. Jesus loved that disciple and he was known as the disciple loved by Jesus. The Lord accompanied him together with Peter and James on special occasions. He attended the Lord's judgment and stood by the cross. It was he who took Virgin Mary to his house.
- d. The Lord reproached him three times (Luke 9:49-50, Luke 9:54-56, Mark 10:43-44).
- e. After the Pentecost he stayed in Jerusalem even after the Virgin's departure (death). He preached the Gospel in Asia Minor and established many churches there (Revelation 1:2). He was exiled in the island of Patmos where he wrote the Revelation (The Apocalypse) in A.D. 95, and he wrote his Gospel in A.D. 98 then he wrote his epistle in the last days of his life. He departed in peace when he was 90 years old and his departure was in the early years of the second century.

## Lesson Outline

- I. The First Chapter: The "Logos" (The Word)

- We must confess that the word of God is eternal and we have to imagine the existence of Christ before His incarnation and becoming man after His birth from the womb of the Virgin.
- The word of God is eternal *“In the beginning was the word”* (John 1:1).
- Through and by the word of every thing was created, *“All things were made through him”* (John 1:3).
- The word of God is the origin of life *“In Him was life”* (John 1:4).
- The Lord sent His Word to the prophets.
- The Lord sent his word to Moses, and then He wrote the word on a table of stone *“Written by the finger of God”*.
- *“In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets; but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son, whom He appointed the heir of all things, through whom also He created the world”* (Hebrews 1:1-2).

## II. The word became flesh:

- The word of God is eternal and it has been revealed to us in the fullness of time. Let us take the example of the radio and television to help us understand. Words and images are transmitted to other through different waves. These surround us everywhere and fill our houses but we cannot see neither can we feel by our senses but when we turn the set on we find that the word immediately incarnates and the image appears and what we could not perceive began to appear and, we were able to perceive . . .
- Although the simile is not of the standard yet it clarifies the whole thing in a way. The word of God is eternal but in the fullness of time, the word of God appeared to us in his body, which he took from the Virgin Mary.

## III. Why Christ incarnated and became man?

- Man could not ascend to God and it was easier for the Lord to descend to man. The pride of man, his ignorance and pride in his wisdom stood as an obstacle or as a veil so he could not understand the calm lowly God. The Lord is simple. He did not come to the philosophers alone. The Lord is modest. He did not come for the people of high status above. He was poor and did not come to the rich alone.

- simple, the black man and the white man, God loved the whole world.
- The incarnate God loved all and did not reject the sinners, so He spoke to the sinners.
- The Incarnate God was meek ...so the haughty Jews rejected him.
- The Incarnate God came to bear witness to Truth ...so the heretic Jews rejected him.
- The Incarnate God loved all people and hated fanaticism, so the Jews rejected him and crucified him.

#### IV. He took our flesh to deliver us and redeem us

- St. James the Sirougi says, “If you want to save a man from being drowned or to heal a sick man, it is useless to give him advice. You have to take off your clothes and put on the sea costume (which the drowned man wears) and after you jump into the sea you can drag him to the shore of safety”. So the commandments along and in itself are not enough. On the contrary the Law revealed man’s sin and judged his evil deed.
- In the same way, God the word descended and emptied Himself (He took our flesh) and came to us, we who are sitting in darkness and the shadows of death. He descended to the Hades through the cross to save those who were imprisoned. He came to take what is ours and give us what is His. He descended to our world to take us up to Him, *“and raised us up with Him, and made us sit with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus”* (Ephesians 2:6).
- When a king wants to save his people of their enemies who were stronger than them, this king must take off the kingly clothes and put on the clothes of his soldiers and live like them then he leads them in their fight against the enemy, he conquers the enemy and wins victory for his soldiers, they go back in triumph and the king brings his soldiers home in victory and glory. This is our Lord, *“He emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of man. And being found in human form He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross”* (Philippians 2:7-8).

#### V. He took our flesh to help those who are tempted:

- *“Therefore He had to be made like His brethren in every respect so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make expiation for the sins of the people . . . for because He Himself has suffered and been tempted, He is able to help those who are tempted”* (Hebrews 2:17-18).
- He was born in poverty. He was born in a manger. He became poor so that we may become rich *“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich”* (2 Corinthians 8:9).
- He humbled Himself to raise us up to Him, *“He exalted those of low degree”* (Luke 1:52).
- He came down to our earth to raise us up to His heaven; *“I will come again and will take you to Myself; that where I am you may be also”* (John 14:13).
- Although He was without sin, He stood in the company of sinners to be baptized by John the Baptist as He shared those sinners in their sins but in the flesh that was bearing sin. He was the Lamb of God who bore the sin of the whole world. After being baptized He fasted for us and with us so He shared us our hunger and fill us.

## VI. Is Repentance Enough?

- The words of repentance indicate the feelings of regret. They refer to past events but they do not solve the problem of the expected fall in the future.
- The motivation for sin exists inside man so people always return to sin and always regret.
- The problem of Adam was not the mere punishment of the Lord to him for his sin as when he repented the Lord was kind enough to raise punishment and forgive him . . . Adam’s problem lies in the fact that he introduced a strange element in his structure so his body was spoiled and the result was death. Will his repentance change his nature and uproot corruption from his body? If a boy threw a bottle and the bottle was broken, of what use would be the boy’s sorrow? If a girl tore her clothes and she was sorry for that, of what use would be her sorrow? What is needed is that the Maker and Creator of man would recreate man.

## Conclusion

The first chapter of the gospel of St. John is very accurate in delineating the idea of the incarnation of the Logos. Any change in any word of the gospel can change the whole faith. Thus we also need to read the Bible with the concentration and understanding to extract from the depth of the words and their meaning.

### Applications:

- Open your Gospel with the spirit of prayer. Read and listen to the voice of the Lord speaking to you. You must have a measure with which you can measure your life. Am I making progress in grace? Do I bear witness for Truth in my life? You cannot benefit from the Gospel of St. John unless the Spirit that wrote it works in you and guides you . . . through your relationship with the Lord in your prayer.

### Exercises:

- 1.

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## Week 2

# The Epistle to the Galatians

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### Objectives:

- To introduce the epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians as an encouragement to read the epistle.
- To learn from the main theme of this epistle: the true gospel versus the false gospel.

### References:

- Matthew 13:24-30

### Memory Verse:

*But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.  
(Galatians 6:14)*

## Introduction

Sometimes the youth has a difficulty keeping up with daily biblical readings. This could be contributed to the lack of knowledge about the book being read or the lack of divine guidance. First we need to do some research on the book we're about to read. For example, who is the author, which in some case is very obvious, why the book was written, to whom it was written, and the main theme of the book. If one prepares his/herself before reading a specific book, they would be able to better understand and hold more interest in continuing to read it. Secondly and most importantly, one needs to ask the Lord for help to understand the book and guide the person to what the Lord wants to send him or her as a message from that specific book. So through this lesson we would like to get some background information on the epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians. Hopefully through

this introduction, you will be able to better understand the epistle. Again, this would only be beneficial if we raise our hearts to the Lord before we open the bible and ask Him to guide us to our personal message. Let's begin.

## Lesson Outline

The Lord Jesus in a simple parable answered these questions when he talked about the kingdom of God and how He compared it to a field that his owner wanted to sow good seeds in it. While people were asleep His enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. So when the plants came up and bore grain then the weeds appeared also, and the servants of the householder came and said to Him, "Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then has it weeds?" He said to them, 'An enemy has done this'. The servants said to Him, "Then do you want us to go and gather them?" But He said "No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, 'gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into My barn.'"

- I. The author of this epistle is obviously St. Paul. Galatia was a province in Asia Minor; in this case St. Paul is addressing a number of churches, which are all in Galatia.
- II. The main theme of this epistle is the true gospel versus the false gospel.
- III. The false gospel refers to the teachings that were held in Galatia by the Jewish legalizers. This group of people believed that in order for somebody to be a true Christian, he/she must follow Jewish traditions first and then the Christian ones.
- IV. St. Paul asks the mislead Galatians to come back to "*the grace of Christ*" (Galatians 1:6).
- V. This epistle is often mistaken for saying that works has no significance in the New Testament. However, this though is inaccurate because St. Paul was focusing on solving the misunderstanding of the Galatians, which was the overemphasis on works just like the Pharisees did as Jews.
- VI. The Lord intends for works and faith to be distinguished but not separated. They both come hand in hand for a Christian and considered equally essential.



- VII. St. Paul is pointing out to us that being bound to something such as the act of baptism is different from being in bondage to it. For example, baptism as an act by itself is not sufficient for salvation, but it must be accompanied by faith, which in the case of our church it is the faith of the parents that the child's baptism is based on.
- VIII. Also we used to be in bondage to the law and the flesh before the salvation from Jesus Christ; now we are bound by our own free will to righteousness and the spirit.
- IX. We as Christians choose to be bound to spiritual discipline so we would be free of bondage. This is attained by being bound to God the Father, the Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. To be independent from the lusts of this world is the true freedom that God intended for us to have after the death of Jesus Christ on the cross.
- X. St. Paul also reminds us to take Christ as an example in that "we might be free in Him, justified by faith, to live fruitful and righteous lives, obeying the truth" (Study Bible Galatians 4:23). St. Paul thus tell us to "*not grow weary while doing good*" (Galatians 6:9) and to "*do good to all*" (Galatians 6:10).
- XI. Subthemes of this epistle include:
- St. Paul defending his authority from Christ (Galatians 1:1 - 2:21)
  - The fruit of the Holy Spirit and His role in the church (Galatians 5:1 - 6:18)
  - The cross of Christ (Galatians 6:11 - 15)
  - Living in faith (Galatians 2:15 - 4:7)

## Conclusion

We should try to read the epistles of St. Paul as personal messages to us, and we will see how beneficial these epistles could be. Many times we face the same issues in our lives that St. Paul addresses, and through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit we should take advantage of this advice for our spiritual growth. Whenever we are hitting a hard spot in our struggles, we should quickly bring our focus on the crucified Christ that He may give us strength.

**Applications:**

- Read this epistle during this week. The servant should also encourage the students to take side notes in their bibles to correspond the points mentioned in this lesson.
- Discuss the students' notes and questions about this epistle after their personal reading.

**Exercises:**

1. What Jewish legalizers believes ?
2. Why Jesus lord says to the servant the weed gathering at the end ?
3. Why we need to do some research on the book we are about to read ?  
And what we consider / Requires ?
4. What is the main theme of Galatia ?
5. Why St.Paul ask the mislead Galatians to come back to the grace of Christ on Galatians 1:6 ?

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## Week 3

# St. Philip

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### Objectives:

- Christianity preaching: Come and see.

### References:

- John 1:-, 6:-, Acts chapter 1 to chapter 8.

### Memory Verse:

*And we are His witnesses of these things, and the Holy Spirit also, which God has given to those that obey him. (Acts 5:32)*

## Introduction

There are seventy disciples to our Lord that preached to the whole world. And little we know about most of them. Even some of the twelve disciples are not known to most of us. St. Philip is not a common name in Coptic Church. Among the well known of the seventy disciples are St. Mark and St. Luke, because they wrote the Gospels. St. Philip is known mainly in Europe where he is patron to many churches, where he preached and died.

## Lesson Outline

- I. St. Philip has very little verses in the Gospel of John 1, 4, and in the book of Acts after massive persecution of Christians. St. Philip was among those who were scattered in Europe. He is a native of Bethsaida, on Lake Genesareth “the city of Andrew and Peter”. St. Philip is mentioned among the twelve disciples: He was number 5 in the list of disciples: *“And he appointed twelve that they might be with him, and that he might send them to preach . . . And he gave to Simon the surname of Peter; and James the son of Zebedee, and John the brother*

*of James, and he gave them the surname of Boanerges, that is, Sons of thunder; and Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariote, who also delivered him up” (Mark 3:14-19).*

- II. St. Philip was watching for the Messiah and as soon as he found Jesus Christ he went to Nathaniel to share with him the good news. He did not argue with Nathaniel, but invited him in his humble preaching: “Come and see.” Like other disciples, he had immediate response to the Lord’s invitation:
- III. John 2: When Jesus went to Galilee and found St. Philip, He said to him: “Follow me”. St. Philip immediately followed his master and became a new disciple
- IV. He showed total obedience, because he was one of John the Baptist disciples: We have found Him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.
- V. The Lord tested his behavior when he asked him about feeding the multitude: John 6:5 *“When Jesus then lifted up His eyes, and saw a great company come unto Him, He said unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat? And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do.”*
- VI. He seems to have held a prominent place among the apostle: John 14:8-9 *“Philip says to him, Lord, show us the Father and it suffices us. Jesus says to him, Am I so long a time with you, and thou hast not known me, Philip? He that has seen me has seen the Father; and how you say, Show us the Father?”*
- VII. The Book of Acts mentions how the Holy Spirit guided St. Philip to preach the Ethiopian eunuch Acts 8:26. He was also one of those who were “scattered abroad” by the persecution that arose on the death of Stephen. He went first to Samaria, where he labored as an evangelist with much success. While he was there he received a divine command to proceed toward the south, along the road leading from Jerusalem to Gaza. These towns were connected by two roads. The one Philip was directed to take was that which led through Hebron, and thence through a district little inhabited, and hence called “desert.” As he traveled along this road he was overtaken by a chariot in which sat a man of Ethiopia, the eunuch or chief officer of Queen Candace, who

was at that moment reading a portion of the prophecies of Isaiah, Philip entered into conversation with him, and expounded these verses, preaching to him the glad tidings of the Savior. The eunuch received the message and believed, and was forthwith baptized, and then “went on his way rejoicing.” Philip was instantly caught away by the Spirit after the baptism, and the eunuch saw him no more (St. Philip like some other disciples, was married and has three daughters as stated by Bishop Polycrates). The remains of St. Philip who was found in Hieropolis (city in Phrygia Asia “Turkey”) were later relocated to Constantinople and thence to the church of the Dodici Apostoli in Rome. The feast of the Apostle is celebrated in the Roman Church on May 1st (together with that of James the Younger), and in the Greek Church on 14th of May.

VIII. The Coptic Synaxarium shows that the Coptic Church celebrates his departure on November 27 (Hathor 18).

IX. In the year 80 A.D., St. Philip the Apostle, one of the Twelve Disciples, was martyred. He was to go to Africa and the surrounding regions. He went and preached there in the name of the Lord Jesus. There, he performed many miracles and wonders which astounded the people. After he led the people to the knowledge of God, confirming them in the faith, he went to Hieropolis where he also led the people to the knowledge of God.

X. In the sixth century A.D., his body was transferred to Rome. The Lord showed many great signs and wonders through the Saint’s body.

## Conclusion

Let us remember St. Philip, and have his love to our Lord, and invite our friends, neighbors, and acquainted to the church (Come and See). We are more privileged than St. Philip, we are borne Christians we have the Holy Spirit, and we partake weekly meal of the Holy Communion. So, do we share and show Jesus Christ to others.

### Applications:

- Talk this week to a friend who does not know the Lord about Jesus Christ and the Christian faith that is in you.

### Exercises:

1. St. Mark and St. Luke were among the 12 or seventy disciples? (70)
2. Did St. Paul team with St. Philip in any of his preaching journeys? No
3. What is the unique way of St. Philip of preaching? Come and see, and obey the guidance of the Holy Spirit
4. Was St. Philip a Jew or a Gentile? Was a Jew, he was borne in Bethsaida
5. How many epistles did St. Philip write? None
6. In which part of the continent did Philip scattered?
7. What is the meaning of eunuch, from the context?

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## Week 4

# The Good Samaritan

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### Objectives:

- To learn to love and serve others without discrimination.

### References:

- Luke 10:25-37

### Memory Verse:

*By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another. (John 13:35)*

## Introduction

The most difficult commandment in Christianity is to love those who hate us. It is a commandment that is above human nature, which can only understand the law of revenge, a quality that is also shared with other lower creatures like animals. It is very easy to hate and get angry. In essence, anger does not require self-control, whereas forgiveness and love are more difficult because they require self-control and an enormous spiritual strength. Hence, this commandment is really what distinguishes Christianity from any other religion or belief and cannot be accomplished without the Divine help. Therefore, it is very difficult for those who depend on themselves, and quite easy for those who depend and unite with the Lord Jesus and have communion with the Holy Spirit.

## Lesson Outline

- I. The Jews did not like the Samaritans and considered them of lower class. The Pharisees in several occasions accused the Lord Jesus of

being a Samaritan and that He was demon possessed. But the Lord denied that He had a demon without denying that He is a Samaritan.

- II. In the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jerusalem represents the city of the Lord; Jericho represents the world with its evilness that is surrounded by high walls, which prevent any one from escaping and returning to the city of the Lord. The man who was traveling represents any person whose faith was weak and was starting to go astray from the path of the Lord. The thieves represent Satan and his powers. The clothes that the man had on represent the robe of grace and righteousness, which was granted to us by the Lord Jesus and with which nothing would harm us. The wounds represent the iniquities and sins inflicted by Satan, only after the man was stripped from the robe of righteousness. The priest and the Levite represent the law and the prophets, who felt sorry for mankind but could not save it. Finally, the Good Samaritan is the Lord Jesus, the awaited Savior who saved mankind. On one occasion the Jews told Him that He was a Samaritan and that He had a demon, but the Lord denied that he had a demon and refused to deny that He is the Good Samaritan *“Then the Jews answered and said to Him, ‘Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?’ Jesus answered, ‘I do not have a demon; but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me’ ”* (John 8:48-49).
- III. Indeed the Good Samaritan who felt sorry for mankind and loved the sinners, bent on his knees and carried the wounded man, putting oil in his wounds to sooth his pains and suffering, adding wine to purify him from sins inflicted by Satan. He carried him to an inn which is His Church, spent the whole day and night caring for him until he restored to him the ring of sonship and righteousness. He later handed him to the owner of the hotel, the church servant, who continued to care for him, until He comes again in His second coming to take him to the place which He prepared for him and those who love His name.
- IV. It is a story of true love and giving. Many times we think that he who shares our nationality or religion is our neighbor, but the Lord has showed us that whoever shares human nature is our neighbor. Our love should be directed to everyone without prejudice, even to those who hate us *“By this all will know that you are My disciples”* (John 13:36).
  - Love requires endurance for the weakness of others ”Love bears all things”.



- The story of the Good Samaritan is also a story of courage. He rose beyond the limitations of the society and the boundaries of social hostility for the sake of saving a soul. The Samaritan sacrificed his comfort and his possessions to save a dying soul.
- V. I wonder how many people we pass by in our life and we ignore their needs just like the Levite and the priest. How many are being tormented by the wounds of sin while we watch them from a distance and dare not help them?
- VI. The attitude of the priest and the Levite in this story is actually a very common attitude. It is the "WHO CARES" attitude. These words are very frequently used in our society. It is the attitude of carelessness and laziness. When we see wrong and crooked ways around us and we close our eyes as if we do not see them and close our ears as if we do not hear them. It is adopted by those who are not willing to sacrifice for the sake of others and the sake of righteousness. It is a selfish behavior and a self-centered attitude. It is simply choosing the wide path instead of the narrow difficult path. The Lord teaches us to go the second mile with those who force us to walk the first mile *"If any one wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away . . . for if you love those who love you what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same"* (Matthew 5: 40-48).

## Conclusion

The story of the Good Samaritan is a story of love and sacrifice. We know that there is no greater love than the love of our Lord Jesus Christ who died for us. With the same love we should love others and sacrifice ourselves for them.

### Applications:

- To try to remember those who upset or bother you in your prayers and ask God to fill your heart with love towards them.
- Look for someone who needs an act of mercy from others and offer your help.

- Remember what the Lord, the good Samaritan, has done to us the sinners, likewise as His chosen disciples and followers, we ought to seek those who are away from the church, and preach those who do not know the Lord, bringing all through God's Grace to the church.

**Exercises:**

1. Help your neighbor for any task in his home
2. Help an elderly person in the street
3. Tell one of your classmates that you will help him at anytime

## Part XII

# Lessons for the Month of August

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# Week 1

## Church Fasts

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### Objectives:

- To introduce to the students to the meaning of Fasting.
- To describe to the students what are the Church Fasts? When? And Why?

### References:

- Mark 2: 16-19; Matthew 4:1-20; Isaiah 58; Matthew 6:16-18

### Memory Verse:

*The days will come, when the Bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in that day. (Mark 2:18)*

## Introduction

Fasting is a spiritual practice that strengthens the spirit of a Christian. It is an effective tool to weaken the desires of the flesh in an effort to strengthen our spiritual life. Several men of God like Moses, Daniel, David, and Jonah practiced a life of fasting. Even our lord and savior Jesus Christ fasted for 40 days and 40 nights (Matthew 4:1-20). When the pharisees asked Jesus why his disciples don't fast, he replied this "*How can the guests of the bridegroom mourn while he is with them? The time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; then they will fast.*" (Matthew 9:15). As a result, our Church has 7 fasts arranged in its calendar and encourages its members to practice a life of fasting.

## Lesson Outline

- I. Institution of Fasting:

- Moses fasted 40 days before going up Sinai Mountain to receive God's commandment
- Elijah fasted to get God's mercy
- Jonah fast and the people of Ninevah fast, so God may spare their life
- From the beginning, God allowed Adam and Eve to eat from the fruits of all trees in the paradise except one specific tree. The people were not eating animal's meat or dairy product for centuries till the time of Noah. The way we are fasting now is similar to what God asked the first couple to eat. Which means that the Church is trying to live, during fasts, in the same pure image of man when he was in the Paradise of Eden.
- The tradition of fasting was in the Jewish tradition at the time of Jesus Christ, Who mentioned that His disciples should fast after His ascension to heaven.(Mark 2:18)
- Our fathers, the apostles fast to prepare them selves for the great missionary work which they successfully did and convert the world to Christianity. By fasting and praying they casted demons and healed the sick. (Matthew 7:21)

## II. The Church Fasts:

- The Church is not asking her children to fast so they may suffer, but fasting is an exercise to control the human desire and behavior. When you will be able to better control your actions and reactions, you will make much less mistakes and make you closer to the image God wants to see.
- The Church Fathers organized the fasting periods, so all the Church members will be fasting at the same time, which give more strength to the fasting and to the unity of the Church members as the body of Jesus Christ. Meanwhile, if each person can fast when and how ever he/she wants, it may end up with no fasting at all.

## III. The Church Fasting are:

- a. Weekly: every Wednesday and Friday (excluding the Fifty days following the Feast of Resurrection. Wednesday is to remember the betrayal of Jesus by Judah, and Friday is to remember the Crucifixion.

- b. The Great Lent: total of 55 days before the Feast of Resurrection. The Fifty Five days are: The Holy week before resurrection (Pascha Week), 40 days before the Pascha week, which Jesus Christ fast in the wilderness and preparation week before these 40 days. The Great Lent makes us live -with Our Savior his passion and teachings until we celebrate His Resurrection
- c. The Nativity Fast: 43 days before The Feast of Nativity. It was 40 days only to make us ready to receive our Savior birth. The Church added three days in the Tenth century to remember the miracle of moving Mokatom mountain. The teacher can expand on this point and tell the students a brief summary of The story of moving this mountain which is in the suburb of Cairo city.
- d. The fast of the Apostles: its duration varies. It starts the day after Pentecost and end on July 12, the feast of the Apostles.
- e. The Holy Virgin Mary Fast: Starts on August 7 for 15 days till August 22 the Feast of Virgin Mary. In this feast, the Church celebrate the ascension of St. Mary's body to heaven
- f. The Fast of Jonah (Nenehev): For three days, when the Church remembers the time Jonah spent inside the whale's belly and how God saved him. It starts two weeks before the Great Lent. We also remember the three days of fasting by the people of Neneveh during this fast.
- g. The fast of Gehad: This is fasted the day before Epiphany.

## Conclusion

Fasting is important for us to grow spiritually. With the gradual and regular fasting the person will learn self-control and earn the inner peace.

### Applications:

- The teacher shall encourage the students to fast. He/she can't expect that the students will fast all these days. But it is important to make the students start gradually, even few days at a time with the ultimate goal of fasting all the Church fasting, which may take years to reach.
- Fasting is not harmful for health. Let the students search the internet for the items of healthy foods and compare them to what the church allow us to eat during the fasts. The teacher can mention to the students about the medical studies, which prove that Vegetarian food

is much healthier than beef and other animal products. God knows what is better for us.

**Exercises:**

1. List people who fasted in the bible.
2. Name the 7 church fasts along with reasons why we fast them? Have you fasted in any of these fasted before?
3. How should we fast? (Matthew 6:16-18, Isaiah 58)
4. What was today's memory verse?
5. What did you learn today?

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## Week 2

# The Titles of St. Mary

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### Objectives:

- Developing the attitude of intercession with St Mary in our everyday life.

### References:

- Holy Bible

### Memory Verse:

*Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb.  
(Luke 1: 42)*

## Introduction

St. Mary has been a special friend to all humanity who cares and intercedes in front of God in our behalf. She was the right and suitable person for the Lord to fulfill the promise of salvation through. We owe her a great favor and should honor her in our prayers.

## Lesson Outline

### I. The Mother of God (Theotokos) :

- The Lord Christ, the Incarnate God was born of her (The Divinity and humanity united in one in her womb). She did not give birth to manhood only but she gave birth to God the Son who appeared in the flesh “*Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and His name shall be called Emmanuel which means God with us*” (Matthew 1:23). Elizabeth said to her “*why is this granted me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me*” (Luke 1:43).



- Although she is His mother, she also worships Him *“Hear, O daughter, consider and incline your ear; forget your people and your father’s house, and the king will desire your beauty, since He is your Lord, bow to Him”* (Psalm 45:10-11). She said to the angel. *“Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. Let it be to me according to your word”* (Luke 1:38).

## II. Perpetual Virgin:

- We believe that Virgin Mary was of perpetual virginity before, during and after the Divine Conception and also after the birth of Christ. This is the miracle of the mystery of the Divine Incarnation *“The Lord Himself will give you a sign, behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call His name Emmanuel”* (Isaiah 7:14). In her virginity the Father chose her to conceive and give birth to the Logos, the Son of God. In her conception, and when the Holy Spirit rested on her, she was the virgin and the mother at the same time. When she bore Jesus Christ in the flesh. The conception showed her virginity.
- Ezekiel the prophet prophesied the sealed womb of Virgin Mary *“Then he brought me back to the outer gate of the sanctuary which faces east, and it was shut and he said to me: This gate shall remain shut; it shall not be opened, and no one shall enter by it, for the Lord, the God of Israel, has entered by it”* (Ezekiel 44:1-2). Ezekiel the prophet cries saying that he had seen a gate, which faced the east, marked with a wonderful seal. Only the Lord of hosts entered through it. He entered and went out but the door remained marked as it is . . . the door is the Virgin who bore our good Savior and she remained a Virgin even after giving birth to Him.
- Our teacher St. Luke says, *“And Joseph also went up from Galilee from the city of Nazareth to Judea to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed who was with Child”* (Luke 2:4-5). She was regarded as a wife to Joseph according to the angel, and she remained engaged to him and remained a Virgin all her life. That is why she wondered when she heard the angel as she intended to remain Virgin all the days of her life.
- As for Jesus’ brother whom the Bible mentioned, they are his cousins, his mother’s sister’s Sons. In the east they call the relatives brothers (Refer to Matthew 27:55, Mark 15:40, John 19:25).

They are the Sons of Mary the wife of Clopas and Mary's sister who was also called Mary after the name of her sister the Virgin who went to the temple as a Nazareth.

III. The Saint and Pure: She is a saint as the Holy Spirit sanctified her. She is holy as she was sanctified in heart, body, mind and spirit. She dedicated her life to the Lord. She gave birth to the Holy whom the angels praise "Holy, Holy, Holy, the Lord of Hosts".

IV. The Faithful Mediator:

- The Church believes that the Virgin has a special status. She is the Lord's mother and she is our mother so she deserved to be the Faithful Mediator, as she knew our needs and his intentions. We have no excuse for our sins. Through you we ask Him who was born of you. O Mother of God, the Virgin as your intercession is powerful and acceptable (Refer to the third Hour prayer). That is why Christians put her picture in their houses, and pray for her intercession before her only son. The Bible emphasizes the fact that Jesus is our only Mediator and Advocate "*We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous*" (Hebrews 7:25, 1 John 2:1). But this intercession is for the forgiveness of sins, but the intercessions of the Virgin and the angels are requests for God's mercies (Give examples from the Bible). One of the most prominent evidences of the Intercessions of Mary the Virgin is the miracle of turning water into wine at the wedding of Cana in Galilee (John 2:1-5). Her intercessions are mentioned in the daily melodies of the month of Kiahk and the prayers of the liturgies.
- There are many other titles for Mary which the children can pick up from the Bible and the prayers and hymns of the Church such as: The Mother of Light, The radiating unchanged flower, The Mother of Mercy and Salvation, The true Vine carrying the fruit of Life, The Fence of our Salvation, etc.

## Conclusion

Communicate effectively with St. Mary as a friend and as an intercessor. Remember she cares for you and would like to help you. This has been clear in all her apparitions in different parts of the world throughout the years.

**Applications:**

- Search the internet about St. Mary's apparitions in different countries.
- Quote from the New Testament the verses that emphasize the status of Virgin Mary.
- Who are the Lord's brothers? Study this subject and refer to the four Gospels.
- Write about the different types of intercessions. Give examples and quote verses.

**Exercises:**

1. What was the role of St. Mary in God's plan for salvation of human beings.
2. How do we venerate St. Mary.

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## Week 3

# Submit yourself to God

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### Objectives:

- Submitting our whole life to God (body, mind and feelings).

### References:

- Matthew 13:44-46; Psalm 119:133; Deuteronomy 13:4; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; 1 Corinthians 12:27; James 4:7-8

### Memory Verse:

*For where your treasure is there your heart will be also. (Luke 12:34)*

## Introduction

Each young man seeks happiness, seeks pleasure and seeks joy. Life should be successful. The Lord gave us two parables in this respect. He said: *“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, who, on finding one pearl of great value went and sold all that he had and bought it”* (Matthew 13:44-46). People imagine happiness in material matters . . . what are these things that the people seek and run after? (Money- health -status jobs -reputation) . . . All these things, as the Bible shows us are means not an end.

## Lesson Outline

We can deduce from the above mentioned parables that:

- I. Christ is the treasure and He is the precious pearl:

- The gospel says about Him, “*In whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*” (Colossians 2:3). He is the true happiness . . . anyone who possesses Him receives the true peace “*Since we are justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ*” (Romans 5:1).
- If the Lord Jesus is the treasure, what does the field in which the treasure is hidden refer to?
- Do you think that it indicates the Bible with its two testaments Old and New? Do you see that all those who search for the Savior through this Book unite with Him and get His complete and perfect peace? Or do you see that it refers to the Church, which is the vessel of faith and all members are those who enter it and join its lively membership and will soon discover her bridegroom and Savior in whom we find all fullness . . .
- If the case is thus, are we living members?
- Do we have this essential discovery in our spiritual life tests or are we still living in the superficial life far away from true fullness? The most precious treasures lie in the depth of the earth. So we cannot attain the treasure of grace, which is hid for us in Christ unless we go deep into life without applying the superficial look and reached the depth of prayer, the depth of the Church the depth of the Holy Bible, and there we will meet Him and there we shall sell every thing for Him.

## II. Necessary commitments:

- The parable of the treasure says: “In his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field”. The parable of the pearl says “On finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it”. Those who see the treasure in the field and those who see the valuable pearl must get them. This holy zeal is the fruit of spiritual discovery as David the prophet says, “*Let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice*” (Psalm 105:3). Since every process of buying must be accompanied by some commitments, the same is true to spiritual life, which necessitates true complete dedication and complete commitment to the greatest goals.
- The principle that says “A time for your heart and a time for your Lord” is dangerous. Why? If the Lord Christ is our true bridegroom, his bride must be completely dedicated to him. If

the Lord gave up Himself for us we must love Him as He loves us. As the Scripture says, *“That those who live might live no longer for themselves but for Him who for their sake died and was raised”* (2 Corinthians 5:15).

- We must get rid of our sexual and bodily desires.
- We must get rid of our defects, and weaknesses.
- We must get rid of our pride in our dignity and the pride of our thoughts, the haughtiness of our hearts and souls.
- We must get rid of our worries and cares, which are without number so that we may devote all our time to the Lord as Mary did and choose the good share.

III. Domains of True Dedication: Through prayers and offering your whole life to God you can recognize the following:

- Dedication of the body: *“Present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind”* (Romans 12:2). What must we do concerning instincts and bodily motives?
- Dedication of feelings: *“Love one another earnestly from the heart”* (1 Peter 1:22). What must we do concerning our feelings? How can our feelings be sanctified? Remember that St. Paul the apostle suffered this wonderful test *“For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified”* (1 Corinthians 2:2). He who sees Christ in all the people, how can't he love them? The body needs desire and anger but grace needs love without price.
- Dedication of the Mind: *“But we have the mind of Christ”* (1 Corinthians 2:16). How can we think through Christ? How can we overcome evil thoughts? Do we train ourselves on praying Jesus' prayer? Do we submit our will? Do we control our thoughts, senses and concentrate on what is pure? There is also the dedication of the will, time, future, and destiny. You can contemplate how can you offer all these to God.

## Conclusion

The real happiness is when we give it all to the Lord. When we love the Lord from all our soul, mind and might. He is the source of all these things

to us and we dedicate them all back to Him willingly. *“Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you.”* (James 4:7)

**Applications:**

- Raise a prayer and pray the Lord to grant you to be dedicated to the Lord and devote all that you have to God.
- Apply the previous Exercises and investigate them. Discuss these topics with your Confessor and. guide.
- Study the life of a monk or a preacher or a minister who dedicated all his life to the Lord and try to apply what you learned in your life.
- Take time to examine your life. Who is in control in your life? Is it you? Is it sin? Or is it our lord and saviour, Jesus Christ? Try to identify people, desires or addictions that are preventing you from fully submitting yourself to God and pray about them.

**Exercises:**

1. What is true happiness? How can we achieve it?
2. Why can't worldly pleasures satisfy man?
3. "He went and sold everything" What does it mean, explain? How can you apply this in your life?
4. Give examples from the Holy Bible and the History of the Church of people who sold/left everything and spent their life dedicated to God. Eg. Abram (Genesis 12); Paul the apostle; the apostles (Matthew 19:27).
5. Do you think it is easy to abandon everything we have and follow Jesus? Look at this example(Mark 10:22).
6. What did you learn from today's lesson?

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## Week 4

# Controlling Emotions

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### Objectives:

- To introduce the learners to self-control.
- To teach the learners how to correct behavior.

### References:

- 1 Corinthians 6:12, 9:24-27, 10:23.

### Memory Verse:

*All things are lawful for me but all things are not helpful. (1Corinthians 6:12)*

## Introduction

Ask the students if emotions should be controlled or fully expressed? What are the circumstances when they think they should be controlled and what are others when they should be expressed?

## Lesson Outline

- I. The Powers of the Human Self: There are three powers that conflict with each other within the human self. These are:
  1. Desires: These include all instinctive inclinations and all the tendencies that arise in the heart of man, whether these tendencies are good or bad.
  2. Will (ego): This is the power that controls desires as it allows some desires to see light while it prevents others from being released according to the power of the stimulus.



3. Conscience (Superego): This is the voice that God put in man. It grows through the work of the Holy Spirit although it is affected by many educational and social factors. It reproaches man when he sins.

These powers that conflict with each other within the human self have different results. For example, when the desire is strong and the will is weak, this desire sees light so conscience complains and rejects it. The opposite is true when the desires are good and the will let them appear. In this case conscience is satisfied.

- II. Types of outcomes: There are three different types of outcomes. These are:

1. Immorality: It means the release of all desires. However, this is socially, medically and biologically impossible.
  - a. Socially: for example the society does not allow us to respond freely to our sexual desires. Alternatively, a soldier may escape from a battlefield responding to life (Eros) instinct and any man may kill anyone who may annoy him.
  - b. Medically: Immorality is dangerous to both mental and physical health. Since satisfying the instinct creates more desires and more hunger as instincts are never satisfied. This destroys the physical and mental health of man.
  - c. Biologically: Immorality contradicts the natural law for example immorality contradicts marital loyalty as one spouse may deviate and be unfaithful saying that it is necessary for the desires to be released.
2. Repression: This is the outcome of so many desires being rejected by the will, therefore man lives as a prey to his suppressed desires and he tries to prevent them from seeing light so he becomes at a loss and suffers from tensions as there is a distance between what he wants to do and what he really does. If the case becomes more serious, the repressed vapor explodes and destroys the container of life and may lead to immorality with all its disadvantages or for psychiatric disorders.
3. Control: Control, as a Christian concept is another thing, as grace causes radical changes in the power of the human self.
  - a. Desires: The Holy Spirit weakens physical desires and fills the heart with other holy desires such as prayer, service and love for others.

- b. Will: The Holy Spirit supports the will *“God is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure”* (Philippians 2:13). The will does not feel the heaviness of the evil desires (because the Holy Spirit has weakened them) so there is no more repression, but there is easy control with the help of grace.
- c. Conscience: The Holy Spirit increases its sensitivity, but conscience becomes perfectly clear as life goes on in the right way and the forgiveness of sins are fulfilled by the blood of Christ. Thus Christianity gives us the chance to build up the good and sound personality. This is not the case with immorality and repression, which are destructive factors.

III. Domains of Inner Control: The young man must control himself in many domains, such as:

- He must not look for his own interest, but for the interest of others. He must not be selfish. (In brotherly love, have tender affection for one another. Take the lead in showing honor to one another).
- He sublimates his instincts with the help of grace so he directs the powers of his emotions into spiritual sacrificing love, and the combat instinct into struggle against sin and the energy of the life instinct to looking forward to eternity.
- He struggles against sin, in all its forms whether in his private life or in his relations with others. *“In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.”* (Hebrews 12:4)].
- He keeps the commandment.
- Pray constantly: Thessalonians 5:17
- Love one another: John 13:34
- Keep yourself pure: 1 Timothy 5:22
- Love your enemies: Matthew 5:44
- He labors in preaching and teaching service. To show the kingdom of God among men he should sacrifice his time, effort and money as much as he can.
- He practices the works of Christian asceticism, such as prayer, keeping awake, psalms and worship.

IV. Means of Inner Control: Going into retreat and examining oneself .

- Let a man examine himself. 1 Corinthians 11:28
- Take heed to yourself and to your teaching: 1 Timothy 4:16
- Regular, continuous and accurate confession controls the way of man.
- Reading the word of God and the Spiritual books enlightens the sides of inner life and the way of man.

## Conclusion

Self control and control of the desires is an important Christian concept that we should train ourselves to practice in our daily life. We should be great example and encourage others to practice self control.

### Applications:

- Practice control of one of your bad instincts this week.
- Go to a retreat to examine yourself then go to confession and confess your sins in a vital and effective way to save yourself.

### Exercises:

1. Name the three powers that exist within the human self?
2. As Christians how can someone keep their consciences clean or sensitive?
3. Name bible verses you can remember about controlling your emotions? Discuss it amongst yourselves?
4. “*Better a patient person than a warrior, one with self-control than one who takes a city*” (Prov 16:32). What does this verse mean?

**Part XIII**  
**Filler Lessons**

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## Week 1

# Jesus and the Samaritan Woman

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### Objectives:

- Christ forgives us our sins and gives us a new life, regardless of the magnitude or the type of our sins.

### References:

- John 4; Luke 7:36-50; Luke 15:11-32 ; 1 John 1:9-10; Luke 5:32; Mark 9:23; Matthew 7:7

### Memory Verse:

*The true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. (John 4:23)*

## Introduction

Read the story of the Samaritan woman ...then ask the students what are their impressions about this story. What is their impression about the woman and about Jesus Christ. Ask them what would they have done if they have met such a woman?

## Lesson Outline

- I. Let us contemplate Jesus when he sat down by the well:
  - He was tired out, and it was He who gave comfort to those who were tired.
  - He asked for water, and it was He who quenched the thirst of all the thirsty and out of Him wells of living water.

- He needed the other and it was He who satisfied the needs of the whole world.
- He lived as a sojourner and it is He who created all and is the King of Heaven and Earth.
- He was hungry, and it is He who gives eternal life to anyone who eats Him.

II. Contemplate the living water that the Lord gives:

- A well that never dries and it flows and will flow forever.
- He is dwelling your heart so do not seek Him outside your heart.
- Eternal . . . begins in time but goes into eternity.
- Gives water . . . you need nothing in the world but Him, you become satisfied, your heart is delighted, you need nothing and you rise over everything.
- The current is hindered and corrupted by pride, worries, and weak faith and resorting to cracked wells (sins and desires of the flesh).
- Its water increases and flows through repentance, perpetual thirst for forgiveness, sitting with oneself alone in a solitary place to contemplate the sweetness of the Savior, preaching and sacrifice and estimating anything you give to others.

III. Let us contemplate how the Lord treated and dealt with the Samaritan's problem:

- She was complaining of humiliation. He raised her humanity and destroyed the obstacles of sex, fanaticism, reputation, people's talk and he spoke with her.
- She was enslaved to the desire of the flesh and He gave her the living water.
- She was complaining of formal religiousness so He spoke to her about salvation and worship in Spirit and truth. He did not discuss with her the things she would not easily understand.
- In His service to the Samaritan woman, Jesus was a priest and a prophet . . . a priest praying for her and standing by her in her weakness, and a prophet revealing the darkness which is inside so that she might be free from enslavement.

- Jesus' service to the Samaritan Woman is a good example that should be followed in serving the souls that thirst for Salvation.

IV. Let us contemplate the Savior's talk about true worship:

- The place does not sanctify worship but it is the Spirit that sanctifies.
- The acceptable worship offered by the Pharisees hypocrites.
- True worship stems from within by the work of the Holy Spirit, in complete submission and love, we worship the Lord when we feel that we are weak before the glory of God (Isaiah 6) and when our souls see the Divine revelations (John 9:38) . . . and when we thank the Lord for a miraculous deed he performed to us (Luke 17:17).

V. The Samaritan Woman's Confession:

- She had to confess so that her sins would be forgiven (The importance of Confession before the Lord and before the priest).
- She abandoned sin when her heart was filled with Christ (She left her jar and went away as Levi who left the place of sin).

VI. Christ's Food and our food :

- What is Christ's true food? Why didn't the disciples understand the Lord's words when He said, "I have food to eat of which you do not know"?
- What does the Lord ask us to do to satisfy his heart and please him? "*If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.*" (John 14:15).

VII. Jesus heals an official's son:

- Notice that the people of Galilee accepted the Lord, that was not the case with his natives "A prophet is not respected in his own country".
- Notice the official's strong faith, he insisted that Christ would heal his son and believed the word that Jesus said; "*He himself believed and all his household*" (John 4:53). This effective faith relies on the Lord's promises. It does not depend on the circumstances of man and his feelings but on believing the word and that he, who is patient enough to wait, will attain power, victory and forgiveness.

## Conclusion

The greatest action of the Samaritan woman is that she hurried to call others to come to Christ (Let him who hears say, “Come”). *“It is no longer because of your words that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the World”* (John 4:42) [Christ’s private Test]. We also who had met with Christ in our life have a duty to go and tell others about Him. *“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”* (Matthew 28:19-20)

### Applications:

- Have a meeting with Lord Jesus; talk with Him as the Samaritan woman did. Reveal to him the secrets of your heart and confess all your sins to him and take living water from him.
- Let your faith be as strong as that of the King’s servant who believed the work and the miracle affected his son and the child was healed. May the Lord perform miraculous deeds with you so that you may overcome your sins, sadness and problems. *“...All things are possible to him who believes!”* (Mark 9:23).
- Take time to tell your friends or family members about Jesus Christ and what he did for on the cross. If someone is troubled tell them to pray and take time to pray for them (James 5:13).

### Exercises:

1. Was Jesus judgmental about the Samaritan lady? What do you learn from that? (Matthew 7:1)
2. You see Jesus defending the sinners (tax collectors, prostitutes..etc). What lesson does that teach us? Should we also be accepting others regardless of who they are? Have you ever stood for people who are bullied or humiliated?
3. What did you learn from today’s lesson?



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# Week 2

## Holy Zeal

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### Objectives:

- To differentiate between holy zeal and bad zeal.

### References:

- Luke 7:28-35, Nehemiah 2:-, James 3:13-17

### Memory Verse:

*Because zeal for your house has eaten me up. (Ps. 69:9)*

## Introduction

Zeal is the kindling of the heart and the will, as if with fire, to do what one believes to be good . . . . While there is a holy zeal, as the Psalmist talked about, “*Because zeal for your house has eaten me up*”(Ps 69:9), there is also a sinful zeal as in Gal 5:20, and “*jealousy as cruel as the grave*” (Songs 8:6). Therefore the Apostle said, “*But it is good to be zealous in a good thing always*” (Gal 4:18).

## Lesson Outline

- I. The Character of Holy Zeal: One of the main characteristics in the life of the Saints and the martyrs is “holy zeal”. St. James talked about the holy zeal and the bad zeal, “*Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above but is earthly, sensual, demonic. For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle,*

*willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.*” (James 3:13-17). The source of the holy zeal is the action of the Holy Spirit in the individual. The holy zeal is then based on Divine love without partiality. It is found in the fire about which the Lord said: I came to cast fire upon the earth so that the Divine love will drive man to be jealous for the Glory of God and the salvation of all people. The holy zeal accompanies him or her. Whereas the bad zeal comes from lack of love, lack of knowledge about the truth of things, personal desires and competition.

## II. Examples of the Holy Zeal:

- a. St. John the Baptist: Please read Mark 6:17-29 about the position that St. John the Baptist took towards King Herod. St. John the Baptist was then martyred and gained the heavenly crown.
- b. St. Paul the Apostle: His zeal is an excellent example for the holy zeal that all of us, as Christians, must have. Please read (Acts 20:17-34) and (Cor. 6: 4-8).
- c. Nehemiah from the Old Testament: Nehemiah is a model of the holy zeal that does not favor forces or fear people or enjoy the comfort of the palace but was ready to sacrifice his comfort for his zeal. Please read Nehemiah Chapter 2 (and tell the story). *“So I answered them, and said to them ‘the God of Heaven Himself will prosper us, therefore we His servants will arise and build, but you have no heritage or right or memorial in Jerusalem’”* (Nehemiah 2:20).

## III. The Character of Bad Zeal: One might become enthusiastic and taken over by zeal, for something wrong, like St. Paul when he said about his past, *“concerning zeal, persecuting the Church”* (Phil 3:6).

- One might ignorantly become zealous, enthusiastic to fight something without knowledge or investigation; without accuracy, just for what is heard, as Jesus said, *“Yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service”* (Jn. 16:2). This zeal is not associated with knowledge, like the zeal of Saul of Tarsus, about which he said, *“. . . but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief”* (1 Tim 1:13). Therefore, do not become zealous hastily, but mix your zeal with knowledge. Do not believe everything said to you about others’ faults or requirements of reform. Think, study and investigate everything, stick to the good attributes.

- Jealousy could be wrong in its means and way of expression. For example, Peter's zeal for the Lord, which made him raise his sword and cut off the ear of the slave. Also John and James who, when one of the Samaritan cities rejected the Lord, said to Him, "*Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from Heaven and consume them*" (Lk. 9:54)? One could be filled with zeal which makes one fall in abusing and defaming or hurting and bashing or rebelling and ruining. Such a person changes into a tool of destruction, ruining whatever stands in his way in a non-spiritual manner. This is also a kind of jealousy which is not according to knowledge because the person does not know the right spiritual way to express his zeal. It happened that forty Jewish persons vowed not to eat and drink, till they kill Paul.
- There is a wrong zeal which is mixed with selfishness and bias. An example of this is Joshua's zeal for the sake of Moses, when he saw two persons prophesying, "*Are you zealous for my sake? Oh, that all the Lord's people were prophets . . .*" (Num 11:29).

## Conclusion

The holy zeal, as a result of our true faith, must be shown in all our actions. We must be careful not to fall in the bad zeal that is always destructive.

### Applications:

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### Exercises:

- 1.

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## Week 3

# The Wedding at Cana

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### Objectives:

- To understand the limits of social participation.
- Wine and Christianity.

### References:

- John 2:1-12

### Memory Verse:

*Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit. (Ephesians 5: 18).*

## Introduction

This nice story has deep meanings. There were six jars of stone standing, for the Jewish rites of purification. The Jews considered the number of seven as the complete number. So number of six indicates incompleteness. Here is an indication that Jesus completed what the Old Testament was lacking in his first miracle thus declaring the beginning of the New Testament. The beloved John gives another comment. Each stone jar held twenty or thirty gallons of water. This means that Jesus offered the guests about one hundred and eighty gallons of wine. The guests of a simple rural party whatever their number was, could not consume this. Here is an indication of the rich and abundant grace of God.

## Lesson Outline

- I. Christ's Social Participation: Lord Jesus attended the wedding party at Cana in Galilee together with his disciples. He also accompanied

them to Lazarus's tomb (Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep). Christian participation is not a formal one neither is it a sort of social behavior but it is a response to a cordial call as it is participation within the frame of truth. A Christian man is not prepared to participate in the works of darkness but he reproaches them. May our hearts be gentle and decent and share all the people in their feelings, in deep love and in complete obedience to truth.

- II. Christ obeys his mother: He knew that his hour had not come yet "O woman what have you to do with me?" (This style does not mean that Christ despised his mother because it was he who demanded that we should honor our parents, so he could not despair his mother), the word "woman" here means "Lady" . . . She knew that He loved her and obeyed her "Do whatever He tells you". This reveals the importance of intercession of the Virgin Mary as she knew His will more than all other people and she was obedient to him so our prayers are acceptable when we ask for her intercession.
- III. The Problem of Wine at Cana in Galilee: The stone jars were empty indicating that the old rites of purification did not succeed in purifying man. In fact the word of God alone purifies man and when He said, "Fill the jars with water" the water brought people back to reason, as it was the word of God that worked and had its great effect on people. The word of God gave the water in the jars an abundant power. The wine, which Jesus gave, did not deprive people of their senses. The wine of Cana in Galilee refers to Christ's love "*For your love is better than wine*" (The Song of Solomon 1:2, 4:10).

The first miracle that Jesus Christ performed was turning the water into wine and the last miracle He performed was turning wine into his own blood. That marks the way of spiritual life that has now become clear . . . Water then wine then blood. This means that the normal natural life of the body (water) contacts with Christ in (wine) His love and this in its turn qualifies man to receive Christ's Holy Body (and Blood). The good wine, which Christ offered, refers to Christ's purification of the instincts of man in the mystery of marriage.

- IV. The Christian attitude towards wine: There is nothing defiled in Christianity concerning food and drinking "*Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man*" (Mathew 15:11). The problem lies in the sort of that thing and the way of using it. The good wine is used in the Church to be turned into the blood of Christ. "*Do not get drunk with wine, for*

*that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit*” (Ephesians 5: 18). Either we are comforted by the Spirit or enjoy the wine of this world and perish. Thus, a Christian man should consider their behavior towards wine, cinema and all social matters using the following principles as a guide:

- *“All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful”* (1 Corinthians 6:12, 10:23).
- *“All things are lawful for me but I will not be enslaved by anything”* (1 Corinthians 6:12).
- *“All things are lawful but not all things build up”* (1 Corinthians 10:23).
- *“If food is a cause of my brother’s falling, I will never eat meat”* (1 Corinthians 8:13).
- *“For zeal for Your house has consumed me”* (Psalm 69: 9). Jesus drove out all those who sold and bought twice; at the beginning of his ministry and at the end of his ministry.

## Conclusion

*“Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep”* (Romans 12:15). Your humane participation and help to those who are depressed and those who are happy, be careful that this participation should stem out of the heart.

### Applications:

- Making use of films or other media means available that illustrates this miracle.
- Make a wall Chart. Draw and explain the wedding at Cana in Galilee and the stages of this event.
- How did Jesus regard those who believed in His miraculous deeds? This chapter of the Gospel must be for your benefit. You should enjoy the following:
  - a. Cordial spiritual participation with man.
  - b. Enjoy the Holy wine of the Divine love.
  - c. Holy conscious enlightened zeal for the temple of God, inside and outside (i.e. your heart and your Church).

**Exercises:**

1. How do you explain social participation based on the Christians view?
2. List at least three instances in which our Lord Jesus Christ participated in social activities.
3. What are the social activities of darkness and mention few of them which a Christian should not participate in?
4. How do you explain the good and bad sides of wine?
5. What kind of wine did our Lord Jesus Christ in that particular Cana wedding?

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## Week 4

# Closing the Generations Gap

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### Objectives:

- How to treat your parents.

### References:

- Colossians 3:20-21

### Memory Verse:

*Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you. (Exodus 20:12)*

## Introduction

In Exodus 19 we see the children of Israel and Moses summoned at the foot of Mount Sinai to see God and to receive His law. God descends on the mountain in a thunderous storm with trumpets sounding and smoke and lightening covering the trembling mountain. God then speaks and delivers His commandments, the principle foundations for the Israeli's new way of life. Ten in all God delivers to Moses in the presence and in the hearing of the people of Israel. Only one of them carries a promise and an earthly reward. That is the commandment to honor your father and mother.

## Lesson Outline

- I. Who are parents? Why would God dedicate a whole commandment out of 10 to these "beings"? Why would he stress it enough that He even promises us with a reward for doing it?
  - a. Parents are a gift from God: No one can choose his parents. One is born with them. It is a hand dealt by God according to His



wisdom. If God is in control and His providence encompasses us then parents cannot be anything but God's gift to us. They are two people out of billions who are hand picked by God to be my parents.

- b. Parents love their children: In the animal kingdom breeding is a biologic chemical reflex to insure the survival of the species (ex. Female dog going into heat every cycle and male dog driven to impregnate her). There is multiple offspring to guarantee survival of a few. It is a chemical biological action void of any emotions or rational thinking. In human procreation is a rational decision made consciously driven by love to produce one unique child to care for. That love instilled by God is the same love that drove God to create human beings and love them despite their rebellion and their hardheartedness. That love is what keeps the parents awake all night to change the child's diaper, to work extra to guarantee a good life for the child, stay up late worried sick about the child when he is late, and it is the same love that makes parents wish their child turns up to be better than them (a quality can not be found in any other human being). If it was not true that parents always love their children then maybe one of the commandments should have been "Parents love your children". It seems it was not necessary for God to even mention such an obvious and spontaneous thing.

- II. What is the value of parents? *"When Jesus saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, 'Woman, behold your son!'. Then He said to the disciple, 'Behold your mother!' And from that hour that disciple took her to his own [home]"* (John 19:26). Jesus Christ knowing the importance of physical parents, while on the cross, instructed St. Mary to take care of St. John and vice versa. Jesus could the least have sent angels to cater for St. Mary and St. John till they both pass away but He knew no matter how many angels come to serve them they ultimately need a physical mother and a physical son.
- III. What is the value of "un-parents"? Statistics show that parents are very important in raising a child: "Children living with a single parent or adult report a higher prevalence of activity limitation and higher rates of disability. They are also more likely to be in fair or poor health and more likely to have been hospitalized (National Center for Health Statistics, 1997 <http://www.divorcereform.org/all.html> )."

Look at God's love; even if a family is not complete, God's grace never leaves a child wanting love, He will fly to him and surround him with his loving arms. *"I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you"* (John 14:18).

IV. How to treat your parents? Virtues needed for the commandment:

- a. Respect: To parents who even if are imperfect are still God's gift to me and are people who love me immensely. "Respect for parents derives from gratitude toward those who, by the gift of life, their love and their work, have brought their children into the world and enabled them to grow in stature, wisdom, and grace" (<http://www.scborromeo.org>). *"With all your heart honor your father, and do not forget the birth pangs of your mother. Remember that through your parents you were born; what can you give back to them that equals their gift to you?"* (Sirach 7:27-28).
- b. Respect is shown by obedience. *"My son, keep your father's commandment, and forsake not your mother's teaching . . . When you walk, they will lead you; when you lie down, they will watch over you; and when you awake, they will talk with you"* (Proverbs 13:1). *"A wise son hears his father's instruction, but a scoffer does not listen to rebuke"* (Proverbs 6:20-22).  
*"For the Lord honored the father above the children, and he confirmed the right of the mother over her sons. Whoever honors his father atones for sins, and whoever glorifies his mother is like one who lays up treasure. Whoever honors his father will be gladdened by his own children, and when he prays he will be heard. Whoever glorifies his father will have long life, and whoever obeys the Lord will refresh his mother"* ( Sirach 3:2-6).  
*"O son, help your father in his old age, and do not grieve him as long as he lives; even if he is lacking in understanding, show forbearance; in all your strength do not despise him . . . Whoever forsakes his father is like a blasphemer, and whoever angers his mother is cursed by the Lord"* (Sirach 3:12-13-16).
- c. Humility: To admit own limitations/ignorance, naivety/inexperience, and even prejudices and narrow-mindedness.
- d. Love: That drives one to open his heart to his parents and be frank with them in everything; love that drives one to contribute at home with the chores and the responsibilities; love that allows one to come close to them and close the gap between them and himself.

## Conclusion

Definition of “honor your father and mother”: “To a small child, honor means obedience. To an adolescent, it means respect. To an adult child, it means kindness, thoughtfulness, and care of parents” (<http://www.christians.org>). This commandment then does not end. Its application changes from obedience of a child to taking care of one’s elderly parents as an adult. No other creature takes care of its elderly besides human beings; it is a characteristic that sets us apart from animals.

This commandment is not as easy as it sounds and that is why God gave it as a commandment and will reward whoever applies it. Parents can be overprotective, overbearing, forever treating their sons/daughters as children, not communicating with their kids, and most importantly viewing life from a century old point of view. But it is easy to point the finger at others and stay idle ourselves. Children also dictate a big part of the relationship they have with their parents. Parents are people assigned to us by God to love us, guide us and guard us.

### Applications:

- What will you do on your part to make your relationship with your parents complete?
- Counsel children who are having difficulties in getting along with their parents. Help them to develop better understanding and relationships with their parents.

### Exercises:

1. Which number of the Ten Commandments tells about respecting your parents?
2. How do you interpret and explain that , parents are the gifts from God?
3. How do you interconnect the love of God to his beloved creatures and love of parents to their children?
4. What will be the negative side effects of children’s growing with lacking of their parents and parent’s love?
5. What are the very core responsibilities of parents to their children?

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## Week 5

# Elijah Restoring the Widow's Son to Life

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### Objectives:

- God's care for his children and people.

### References:

- 1 Kings 17

### Memory Verse:

*Ask, and it will be given to you; seek and you will find. (Luke 11:9)*

## Introduction

The picture: The Servant sets the scene by giving some questions about the previous lesson. The Servant then checks the children's notebooks to have a look at the previous week's homework and to encourage the children.

## Lesson Outline

- I. This is an example of one of the men of God whose name is Elijah . . . a friend of God, he loves the Lord and he obeys Him . . . During the famine, the Lord sent him food with the ravens, then the Lord said to him, "Now go to the town of Zarephath, near Sidon and stay there". The Lord commanded him to live with a poor widow at Zarephath. Who, of you, prays for the poor?
- II. Who, of you, prays for the poor? Elijah stayed with the widow. He stayed at the upper chamber (a small room at the top of the house when Elijah used to rest and to pray). The Lord sent them flour and

oil according to their needs ... The Lord blessed her home ... Elijah told those tales from the Bible.

- III. One day the widow's son was playing outside the house. When he came back he was very ill. The boy was crying because of pain. His mother ran to him ... took him and laid him in bed. She hoped that the boy would get better but the days passed and the boy's health did not improve ... his illness was serious ... his temperature rose up ... the boy died ... his mother wept bitterly ... he was her only son ... the verse came to her mind ... "Ask and it will be given to you". She stood up ... carried the boy and took him to Elijah the prophet and said, "My son has died ... I beg you to pray for him and I am sure that the Lord will answer your prayer and restore the boy to life".
- IV. Elijah was sad because the boy died. He took the boy from his mother's arms. He carried him to the upper room and laid him on the bed on which Elijah used to sleep. He bowed down to the earth ... then he raised his eyes and hands to heaven and prayed "O Lord, you said: Ask and it will be given to you. I implore You to bring this boy back to life". Elijah stretched himself out on the boy then bowed to the earth in prayer and repeated the same words three times ... The child started breathing again and revived ... the boy opened his eyes ... stood up ... wonderful! Who heard of a man who died and then came back to life? No one ... God cares for us ... and He said: "Ask and it will be given to you, seek, and you will find".
- V. Elijah carried the boy to his mother and said to her, look your son is alive... the woman was very happy ... she knelt down and worshipped God. She thanked God and said to Elijah, "Now I know that you are a man of God. I believe in God". The child chanted, "When I am ill ..." Elijah took courage because the Lord performed this miraculous deed by his hands.

## Conclusion

Elijah teaches us the following:

- Satisfaction: He lived on very small resources of a poor widow. Those resources were not enough for the daily needs.

- Patience and self-control in time of danger: When the widow said to him, “Have you come to me to bring my sin to remembrance, and to kill my son?” all he said was, “*Give me your son*” (1 Kings 17:18-19).
- Struggling in his solitary place: He took the boy from her arms, carried him upstairs to the room where he was staying, and laid him on the bed. Then he prayed aloud.
- Modesty: He stretched himself out on the boy three times and he did not lose hope.

**Applications:**

- Draw a picture of Elijah in a situation that stimulates your admiration.
- Read 2 Kings 19.

**Exercises:**

1. What is the name of God’s prophet?
2. Who fed Elijah during the famine?
3. Who sent him food?
4. Who can recite the verse?

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## Week 6

# Deal With My Brothers and Sisters

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### Objectives:

- Develop a loving and caring attitude between the students and his brothers and sisters.

### References:

- The Bible, 1 Chorinthians 13

### Memory Verse:

*We know that we have passed from death to life because we love the brethren.  
He who does not love his brother abides in death. (I John 3:14)*

## Introduction

Ask the students: what did you get for your brother or sister birthday gift? When were their birthdays?

- Let the student try to remember and actually answer this question
- The Love to brothers and sisters and caring for them is an important component of our life and is a great source of joy and happiness to us and to our brothers and sisters. The bible mentions multiple stories about brothers and sisters and gives multiple examples of the good and bad relationships between brothers and sisters.
- Can you remember any of these stories?

The brotherly love or the love of the brethren can be categorized into three categories:

- a. The family love i.e. loving your brothers and sisters
- b. The church family love i.e. loving the members of the church
- c. The wider human family love i.e. loving all humans because they were all created in the image of God like me so we are all brothers and sisters. Our father is God in heaven and our father in the flesh is Adam.

Our Lord Jesus Christ sanctified the human family and the brotherly love when we all became members of one body the body of Jesus Christ (Romans 12:4-5). Jesus Christ also called the disciples His brothers when He told Mary Magdalene to give the good news of the resurrection to them (John 20:17).

## Lesson Outline

Today we will concentrate mainly on the family love, which is the love between the brothers and sisters at home. What do we do to our brothers and sisters to show them our love? The love between brothers and sisters should have the following components:

- I. Care: Showing your love in action by caring for them and showing them tenderness. Good examples in the bible is when Joseph cared for his brothers and went to give them food to eat when they were out taking care of the sheep (Genesis 37:13-17). David similarly cared for his brothers and carried food to them when they were in the army against Goliath (2Samuel 17:17-18). Similarly Mary and Martha had sent to find and bring Jesus Christ to heal their brother Lazarus when he was sick (John 11:3)
- II. Support: Supporting our brothers and sisters in their school, duties or other important events for them is a Christian attitude that we all should show in the family. We certainly need to support them in the good actions and deeds but not in bad actions. Aaron was a great support to Moses in his service and mission from God (Genesis 4:15-16). They were both serving God side by side and Miriam their sister, who was a prophetess, was helping both of them. Also Maximos and Domadios as well as Kozman and Demyan were brothers that supported each other to excel in their spiritual life.
- III. Effort: It also takes effort to show love to our brothers and sisters. We cannot say we love them by word without actions to show this



love. This effort may be physical, mental, financial, or time. Miriam the sister of Moses ran after his basket when his mother placed it in the Nile river till she saw who picked it up. She then asked Pharaoh's daughter if she needs someone to feed the baby and she ran back again to her home to bring her mother.

- IV. Forgiveness: There might be sometimes disagreements or fights between the brothers and sisters but amazingly they resolve very quickly and soon forgotten. This is the essence of the brotherly love. There is no family that is devoid of some turbulence every now and then, however if we do not forgive each other the family ties will break very quickly. Joseph forgave his brothers of the great mistake they did with him when he saw them again in Egypt (Genesis 45:44). He actually brought them and his father into Egypt and provided them with all their needs during the time of starvation and famine.
- V. Salvation: The most important sign of the Christian brotherly love is to bring my brothers and sisters closer to Christ as I do with myself. This is what Andrew did with his brother Simon Peter to the Lord Jesus Christ and he told him that we found the Messiah (John 1:41). There are also brothers that were disciples to the Lord Jesus as were James and John the sons of Zebedee and James and Judas the sons of Colopas (Matthew 10:2-3). These brothers lead each other to Christ and served him for the rest of their lives.
- VI. Communication: Finally all the virtues of the love in the family are tied up together through good communication. We need to communicate effectively and politely with our brothers and sisters (Matthew 18:15). We also need to know enough about each other so we can say that we are living in the same house and his or her room is next to my room. Remember also the way we communicate with our brothers and sisters reflects if we are true Christians or not (Psalm 34:13). When Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because he married an Ethiopian and rebelled against him, God punished Miriam with leprosy. However, Moses prayed to God to heal her so God listened to Moses (Numbers 12).

## Conclusion

My duty towards my brothers and sisters are:

- To grow together in Christ (Ephesians 4:1-6)

- To encourage and support with a positive attitude (Mark 14:3-9)
- To correct his mistakes in the spirit of humbleness (Galatians 6:1-5)
- To tolerance without judgment (Matthew 18:21-35)

Finally God is above every human love and is the source of every love between the brothers and sisters in the family (Matthew 12:46-50)

**Applications:**

- Treat your brothers and sisters at home kindly
- Be a beloved brother or sister into the greater family in the church by showing love, care and tenderness to every one in the church

**Exercises:**

1. Spend time with your classmate in school and ask him about his life
2. Share books to read with your friends
3. Help your Mom or Dad at home

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## Week 7

# The Kingdom of God

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### Objectives:

- To understand some aspects of the Kingdom of God.

### References:

- John 3:1-17

### Memory Verse:

*I say to you, unless one is born again, he can not see the Kingdom of God.  
(John 3:3)*

## Introduction

As Christians, do we belong to the kingdom of sin, or the Kingdom of God?  
What is the kingdom of God?

## Lesson Outline

I. The Kingdom is the Work of the Lord Jesus, Glory be to Him:

- *“He went through every city and village, preaching and bringing the glad tidings of the Kingdom of God”* (Luke 8:1). And the multitude as they followed Him, *“He sent them to preach the Kingdom of God and to heal the sick”* (Luke 9:2). The Kingdom was the subject of His teachings and parables (Matthew 13). *“Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of God, and saying: The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the gospel”* (Mark 1 :14-15).

- When Jesus sent His disciples, He sent them for the sake of the Kingdom of God. He ordered them to say to the people “*The Kingdom of God has come near to you*” (Luke 10:9). Once, a person wanted to excuse himself to bury his father, then Jesus said to him “*Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the Kingdom of God*” (Luke 9:60). In the final 40 days which Jesus spent with His disciples after His resurrection “*He was speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God*” (Acts 1:3)
- The Apostles obeyed the Lord’s request and concentrated their preaching on the Kingdom of God. Philip was in Samaria “*as he preached the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized*” (Acts 8:12). Also, when St. Paul was in Rome he “*explained and solemnly testified of the Kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus from both the Law of Moses and the prophets, from morning till evening*” (Acts 28:23).

## II. What is the Kingdom of God that Jesus and the Apostles worked for?

- It is that the Lord rules over earth and what is on it so that it becomes for Him, “*For the Lord is earth in all its fullness*”. The Kingdom as well is that He reigns over all souls. He controls all the feelings, all thinking and all senses and desires.
- In the Apostolic age, people saw the Kingdom of God coming strongly not in words but in strength “*For the Kingdom of God is not in word but in power*” (1 Corinthians 4:20).
- The Kingdom of God was spreading very quickly and God was reigning over new souls every day, “*And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved*” (Acts 2:47).

## III. The Kingdom of God Must Start First Inside the Soul:

- Jesus said, “*For indeed the Kingdom of God is within you*” (Luke 17:21). There is something spiritual called by the saints “tasting the Kingdom”. The person who does not taste the kingdom here cannot enjoy it there (i.e. in heaven or after passing away). The Kingdom inside the heart must precede the heavenly Kingdom. Let us then examine the extent of God’s reigning over us. Are we in the hands of God or in the hands of the world? Who actually rules over us? If a certain sin has made me weak in front of it

and ruled over me, then the Lord is not ruling over me and the Kingdom of God is not inside me. With the dwelling of God in the hearts of the people, the Kingdom is spreading. St. Augustine said in his book *The City of God* that there were two cities: the city of the world and the city of God. Do we belong to the city of God? The heavenly city that God owns on earth and on it His will and His love are spread.

- The people who love the world are busy with the land, their lust and the life on earth. But the people who love God are busy working for His Kingdom. God wanted the Kingdom to be the subject that has the highest priority. He said, *“Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness”*.

#### IV. Without God’s Support we cannot be Part of His Kingdom:

- Jesus said to Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, *“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God . . . unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God”* (John 3:3-5).
- When we are baptized we separate ourselves from the old creation and are cleansed from the original sin. We are newly reborn in the Kingdom of God because we are reborn from water and the Holy Spirit. The only thing remaining is to struggle against the temptations of the devil who tries to pull us outside the Kingdom *“But in all things we commend ourselves as ministers of God in much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in fasting; by purity, by knowledge, by long suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left”* (2 Corinthians 6:4-7).

## Conclusion

Please ask the children to summarize what was talked about and give prizes. Let us examine ourselves, are we part of the Kingdom of God? Let us give this our utmost importance.

### Applications:

- Tell about the kingdom of God to family, relatives, friends, class mates whenever you get a chance and then report your witness to your Sunday school teacher.

**Exercises:**

1. What is the difference between kingdom of human beings and kingdom of God ?
2. God controls all the feelings, all thinking and all senses and desires all his creatures (True/False).
3. Explain “For indeed the Kingdom of God is within you.” How do you interpret this versus?
4. Mention some blessing which could follow you after seeking first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness.
5. Who was Nicodemus?