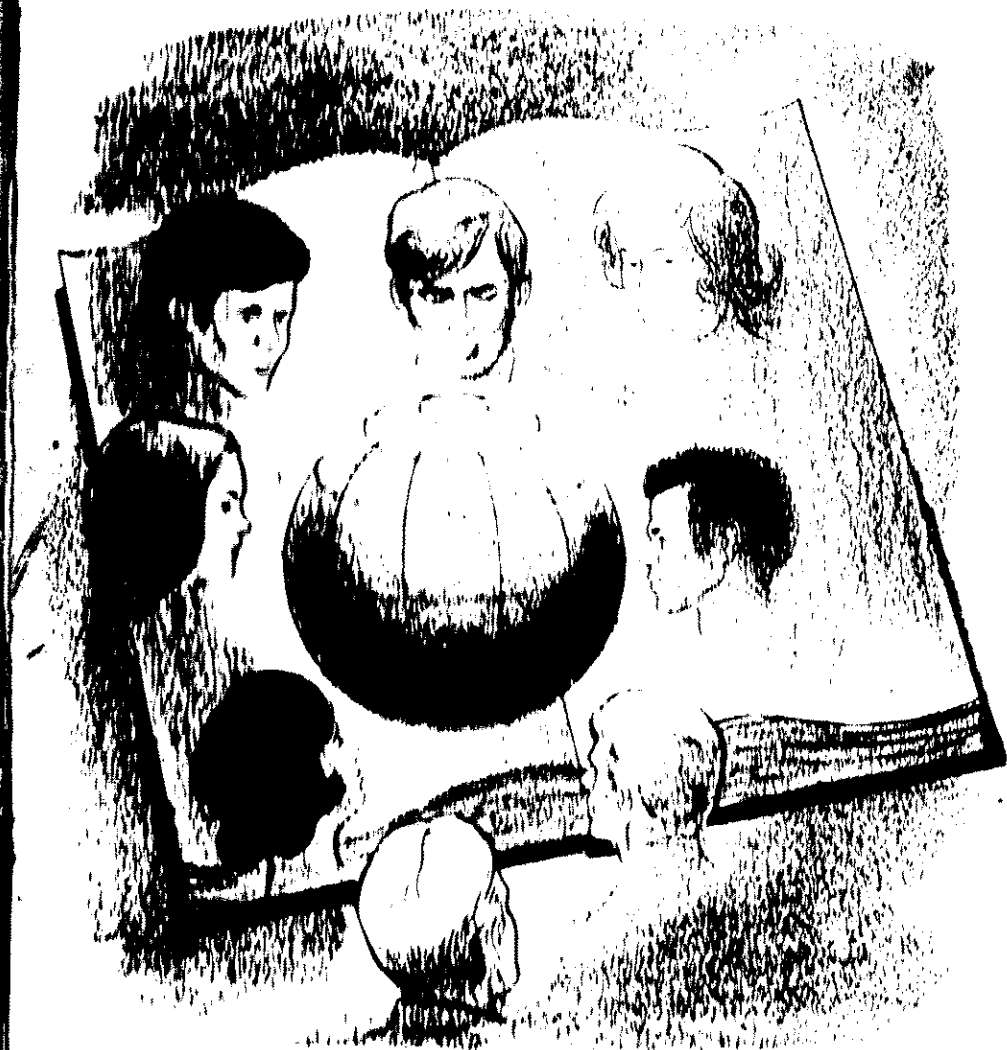


# BIBLE STUDY HELPS

for the SENIOR YOUTH



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Volume 65

Number 2

The **BIBLE STUDY HELPS for the Senior Youth** course is a five year Sabbath school curriculum for young people, beginning with grade ten and including the early college years. It is published quarterly by the Bible Advocate Press at 330 West 152nd Avenue, Broomfield, Colorado 80020, and is owned by the General Conference of the Church of God (Seventh Day). Second class postage paid at Broomfield, Colorado 80020.

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**"KEEP YOURSELVES UNSPOTTED"**

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**PREFACE**

"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this . . . to keep himself unspotted from the world" (James 1:26).

It is our hope in this series of lessons to convey to you how to remain unspotted from the world. What does it mean to be "in the world, but not of the world"? How do we handle Biblical truths mixed with pagan traditions such as Christmas and Easter? How can we justify being conscientious objectors when history tells of the many people who gave their lives for our freedom here in America? How can I, a youth contemplating marriage in the future, best prepare myself for a life long commitment? Why does the Church of God teach obedience to the principle of the clean and unclean?

Making your commitment to Christ is the first step on the journey to the Kingdom. You will be tried as gold in the fire and the world you live in is the testing ground. There are many false religious teachers who mix fact with fancy. Only by knowing what the Bible does teach are you able to spot a false teaching. Many young people have been led astray by the cunning words of a false teacher only to find out too late the real truth of God's Word.

Because He is our Creator, God knows the type of life that will bring a youth real joy and happiness. Trust Him for truly Jesus is the Captain of the winning team.

## “I PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE . . .”

**“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)” (II Corinthians 10:3, 4) .**

**SCRIPTURE READING:** Matthew 5:38-48.

**LESSON AIM:** *To know why Christians should not participate in military service.*

**BACKGROUND BIBLE READINGS:** I Chronicles 28:1-10; II Chronicles 7:12-22; James 4:1-7; Joshua 6:1-4, 17-21; I Samuel 11; I Samuel 18:1-9.

**LESSON PREPARATION:** *Study Doctrinal Belief No. 28.*

**INTRODUCTION:** It is an honor to live in a country such as ours. We enjoy freedoms that are unheard of in most countries of the world. But, like everything else in life, someone paid the price for the freedom we now enjoy. Our young men are expected to defend our country's freedom to the point of killing the enemy or the giving of their own lives. We want to pledge our allegiance — but to what extent?

Many wars were fought in the Old Testament, under the direction of God, while the sixth commandment was taught very rigidly among the Israelites. Was there a difference between the Israelites killing the enemy and Cain slaying Abel?

Jesus came teaching that we were to love our enemy. Can we love and kill at the same time? Wars among nations show man's greed in seeking always to conquer more. Jesus prophesied of wars and rumors of wars till the end time, so where does that leave the young man who is against taking the life of another? The alternative is, of course, taking a stand as a conscientious objector. There are many ways you CAN serve your country and keep your allegiance to the flag of our great land.

Our country far more needs strong men and women of peace than of war. Start in your little corner of our nation by giving your fellow countryman that peace in Christ which one day will fill the whole Earth.

## QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. Discuss the difference in Exodus 20:13 and 21:23. (NOTE: Death was a punishment for many sins in Old Testament days — yet the sixth commandment was not violated.)
  2. Read how God directed many of the wars of the Israelites and fought for them. Exodus 14:14, 25; Deuteronomy 1:30; 3:22; 20:4; Joshua 24:9, 10; 10:14. Has God fought for Israel in recent years? How about the future battle of Armageddon?
  3. What was the purpose for the wars of Israel? Did God fight for any other nation?
  4. What should be our attitude toward our enemies? Matthew 5:43, 44.
  5. What are the weapons of our warfare? II Corinthians 10:4, 5; Ephesians 6:11-17.
  6. Discuss some ways in which you would like to serve your country.
- SUMMARY:** *Inasmuch as Christians are to love their enemies and to work for their salvation, we must stand opposed to participation in carnal warfare. We cannot serve God and carnal man at the same time. Only God can give eternal life in return for an obedient life to Him.*

## WHAT ABOUT CHRISTMAS?

**“Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men” (Mark 7:7) .**

**SCRIPTURE READING:** Mark 7:1-13.

**LESSON AIM:** *To know that Christmas is unscriptural and not to be observed by Christians.*

**BACKGROUND BIBLE READINGS:** Isaiah 29:13-24; Jeremiah 10:1-6; II Timothy 3:1-7; II Timothy 4:1-5.

**LESSON PREPARATION:** *Read the tract on Christmas. Look up Christmas in an encyclopedia and see how it was adopted from paganism to Christianity.*

**INTRODUCTION:** “Careful” is the word when sifting fact from fancy. The story of the miraculous birth of our Saviour has been mixed with so much “fancy” that some sifting needs to be done to arrive with “the real thing.”

Since no one knows the actual date of Christ's birth, why December 25 and Christmas? Bishop Liberius of Rome, in A.D. 354 ordered the people to celebrate the birth of Jesus on December 25. The people of Rome already observed this day as the Feast of Saturn, celebrating the birth of the sun. Since Christians honored Christ as the Light of the World the two were combined.

Many pagan customs and symbols from former beliefs were brought into the Christmas celebration. Supposedly the people of Scandinavia once worshipped trees and when they became Christians they made the evergreen tree part of Christmas. There are several other stories as to the origin of the Christmas tree. The yule log burning was a custom of the Norse and Anglo-Saxons. They burned an oak log once a year to honor the god of thunder, Thor. The symbol of Santa Claus entering the house through the chimney came from an old Norse legend about a goddess, Hertha. All this, and more, has been mixed with the divine story of Jesus' birth.

In our sifting, let's be careful not to under-emphasize the miraculous birth of Christ. Because pagan customs are attached to something, that does not make the event itself wrong. Many customs for weddings and funerals of different countries are of pagan origin. Much of our architecture comes from pagan design.

The word “pagan” simply means a person who is not a Christian, or has no religion at all. They usually do have their own form of worship which usually involves an idol, or even devil worship. This is the area we need to completely avoid and keep ourselves unspotted from their gods.

## QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. Briefly discuss the origin of Christmas and from where some of the customs came.
2. When do you think Jesus may have been born? Consider Daniel 9:24-27 and Matthew 2:16. Also note Luke 1:5, 11, 24, 26, 27, 36, 42.
3. To what does Jeremiah 10:3-5 refer?
4. Discuss the great excitement and joy surrounding Jesus' birth. Luke 2:10-20.
5. What are the dangers of combining truth with fiction in a religious celebration?
6. Relate how not celebrating Christmas has affected you personally.

**SUMMARY:** *Many people admit that Jesus wasn't born on December 25, and some even admit that it's pagan. To enter the kingdom, we must be DOERS of the truth, not just hearers.*

## EASTER — TRUTH OR FICTION?

**“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils” (I Timothy 4:1)**

**SCRIPTURE READING:** Ezekiel 8:13-18.

**LESSON AIM:** *To prove that Easter is unscriptural.*

**BACKGROUND BIBLE READINGS:** II Thessalonians 2:1-12; II Timothy 3:10-17

**LESSON PREPARATION:** *Read the tract on Easter.*

**INTRODUCTION:** Hey — let's get one thing straight! We're not out to prove all other churches wrong except ours. Then why all the fuss about Easter? They are worshiping God aren't they?

Is it possible to worship God in vain? Sorry, but the answer is yes. Jesus rebuked the scribes and Pharisees in Mark 7:6, 7, for their vain worship of doctrines from the commandments of men. What is our guide for worship? In John 4:24 Jesus says this, “God is a spirit and they that worship Him **MUST** worship Him in spirit and truth.” Is Easter “truth”?

Each year Easter is celebrated in commemoration of Jesus' resurrection. The name itself is from Eostre, a Teutonic goddess of spring or from a Teutonic Festival of Spring called Eostur. Many customs connected with the Easter season come from pagan festivals of spring. The Easter egg supposedly represents new life that returns to nature in the spring. It is taught that the Easter bunny brings the eggs. Once again we see religion being mixed with pagan customs.

If Christ had been resurrected on Sunday morning, it stands to reason that the anniversary of that event would not always fall on the same day of the week. To worship our Father in truth we must search the scriptures to see whether or not we are instructed to observe the day of His resurrection. There is no such instruction. We are told to commemorate Christ's death, however, which we do each year at the Lord's Supper service.

True worship hangs on God's spirit in us and the truth of our beliefs.

## QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. Discuss the one place in the Bible where the word “Easter” is found. Acts 12:4. (Refer to our tract on Easter for the answer.)
2. What is the purpose of Easter and how much truth is there in the holiday?
3. How can we worship God in vain? Mark 7:6-9.
4. How can we make *sure* our worship is not in vain? John 4:23, 24; John 16:13.
5. What instruction is given in the Bible concerning Christ's crucifixion and resurrection?
6. Why were pagan customs incorporated into religious ceremonies? Refer to the Easter tract.

**SUMMARY:** *So much of the traditions regarding Christ's resurrection are entrenched in paganistic origins. Let us affirm the TRUTHS of Christ's death and glorious resurrection!*

## “TWIN SHALL BE ONE”

“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh” (Genesis 2:24) .

**SCRIPTURE READING:** Ephesians 5:22-33.

**LESSON AIM:** *To know that earthly marriage is a type of Christ and His church.*

**BACKGROUND BIBLE READINGS:** Titus 2:1-7; I Peter 3:1-7; I Corinthians 7:10-17; I Corinthians 7:32-40.

**LESSON PREPARATION:** *From your pastor or other source, secure a copy of some marriage vows to examine in class.*

**INTRODUCTION:** In a world that relates sex to everything from toothpaste to cars, the sacredness of the union between husband and wife has been lost as well as the relationship of Christ to His church.

It must be confusing to live in a world where on one hand adults will hand out birth control pills (with or without parental consent) and other adults will say no, it's wrong. Some authoritative psychologists will tell you that it's harmful to suppress your sexual desires and that there is nothing wrong with sexual freedom as long as no one gets hurt. *Someone always gets hurt* where sin is involved. Again, we need to do some sifting in a world that no longer recognizes God as the greatest authority.

The union between a man and a woman is intended to be in the bonds of marriage. Otherwise, it is considered fornication or adultery. This union is so sacred to God that it is compared with the relationship of Christ to His church. When two become one in marriage it is the same as our becoming one with Christ upon conversion. A sacred commitment has been given in both unions.

In these years of looking forward to marriage, undoubtedly at one time or another, you will be faced with the decision about sexual freedom. We live in a very permissive age that encourages total unrestraint. God's word has not changed, nor the results of sin.

## QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. How important is the bond of two becoming one in marriage? Mark 10:6-9.
2. What is said concerning the consequences of fornication in I Corinthians 6:16-18 and 10:8?
3. What kind of love is to accompany the union of two in marriage and the union of one to Christ? Ephesians 5:21-33.
4. Our churches remain as strong as the foundation of the homes represented. What is your main objective in looking forward to your own home?
5. How important is it to have a Christian mate? II Corinthians 6:14; Mark 3:25.
6. For what kind of bride will Christ return? Ephesians 5:27.

**SUMMARY:** *Many things in the Old Testament were types for things in the New Testament. Marriage was and still is a type that will be fulfilled only when Jesus comes for His bride, the church, and “marries” her — for all eternity.*

## “TILL DEATH DO US PART”

**“Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder” (Matthew 19:6) .**

**SCRIPTURE READING:** Matthew 19:3-9.

**LESSON AIM:** *To recognize the enduring qualities of the marriage vows and the enduring nature of a Christian marriage.*

**BACKGROUND BIBLE READINGS:** Deuteronomy 24:1-4; Matthew 5:27-32; Proverbs 6:23-33.

**LESSON PREPARATION:** *Try to find some divorce statistics and compare with those of 70 years ago.*

**INTRODUCTION:** If ever you “sign” your life away, you do so when signing your marriage certificate! So, great care should be taken when choosing your one and only for that lifetime commitment. It is a real pleasure in this day and age to honor those couples who have reached that 50 year mark in their marriage.

Since the man is to be the head of the wife as Christ is the Head of the church, the main responsibility lies with him. A blessed, harmonious marriage will result when: 1. the husband bestows the same love to his wife as Christ does to His church; 2. he will nourish and cherish her as the Lord does the church; 3. the wife will be submissive into her husband as unto the Lord. Nothing but *death* would ever separate this type of a union.

There is one cause given by Christ as reason for divorce, found in Matthew 5:32. That cause is fornication, whereby if there is an innocent party, he or she may divorce and remarry.

Christ gave us guidelines for happy marriages and homes. Happy marriages and homes, in turn, build strong churches, communities, states and countries. Determine now that, with God’s help, your marriage and home will stand for generations to come.

## QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. From the beginning what was God’s intention concerning marriage? Matthew 19:8, 9.

2. For how long is the marriage vow binding? Romans 7:2, 3; I Corinthians 7:39.

3. What responsibility does the husband have as “head of the wife”? I Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 5:23-31; Colossians 3:19; I Peter 3:7.

4. In an age when many wives work, how can they be submissive at home, aggressive in their careers, and still fulfill these scriptures? Colossians 3:18; Ephesians 5:22.

5. What one reason is cause for Biblical divorce? Matthew 5:32.

6. How can you best prepare yourself for the lifetime commitment of marriage?

**SUMMARY:** *Divorce is contrary to God’s plan for people. Why divorce? What is needed is not a change OF partners, but a change WITHIN partners. Thus will the words be fulfilled, “. . . till death do us part.”*



## THE CLEAN AND UNCLEAN

**“And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good” (Genesis 1:25) .**

**SCRIPTURE READING:** Genesis 7:1-10.

**LESSON AIM:** *To know that the food distinction was known and observed before the Mosaic law.*

**BACKGROUND BIBLE READINGS:** Genesis 1:24-31; Hebrews 11:1-13; Genesis 27:1-14; Deuteronomy 12:1-16; Leviticus 22:17-25; Genesis 15:1-10.

**LESSON PREPARATION:** *Read the tract “The Bible and Man’s Food.” List the different kinds of meats eaten in Patriarchal times.*

**INTRODUCTION:** Few things affect the body more than the food we eat. God has set forth a list of proper food for the body, and amazing enough pizzas, hamburgers, soda pop and French fries can all fall into the category of proper food for the body.

Some will contend today that we no longer need to worry about the distinction between clean and unclean animals. Is it conceivable in your mind that we would be allowed to eat *every living creature*?

The distinction of clean and unclean meats and herbs did not originate with Moses. From creation God gave specific diet instructions. Noah knew the difference between the clean and unclean animals, and there was never any doubt as to what type of animal was to be used as a sacrifice.

In our questions we will consider some oppositions to this stand — not for contention — but to be fully persuaded in our own minds and hearts.

## QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. Of what did the first diet consist? Genesis 1:29, 30.
2. When was the first sacrifice offered? Genesis 1:21; Hebrews 9:22b.
3. What were God’s instructions to Noah concerning the preservation of the animals through the flood? Genesis 7:2. What was the reason for this? Genesis 8:20.
4. What is the time period referred to in Isaiah 66:17?
5. Explain Jesus’ words in Mark 7:15, 18-20. Does this apply to clean and unclean meats?
6. Discuss Peter’s vision in Acts 10. Did this “cleanse” the unclean animals or change them in any way?

**SUMMARY:** *Our bodies are made from the dust of the earth and thus all our food comes directly or indirectly from the ground. Logic would tell us that not every living thing would be good for us — maggots? The best way of knowing what foods are good for our bodies is to read Leviticus 11.*

## INCLUDING YOU

**“That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:15) .**

**SCRIPTURE READING:** John 3:1-6.

**LESSON AIM:** *To know God has a plan for your life which begins with your salvation is completed in eternal life.*

**BACKGROUND BIBLE READINGS:** John 14:1-6; Matthew 5:3-12; Acts 17:24-30; Matthew 28:18-20.

**LESSON PREPARATION:** *Make a list of saintly people you have known who have left an impression on your life.*

**INTRODUCTION:** God's plan for the salvation of mankind covers from creation to Christ's second coming. Somewhere in this span of time fall the lives of you and me. Why are we here? Where are we going? How do we relate to Adam and to Abraham as well as to the national leaders of our time?

Salvation always has been, now is, and always will be available for all — including YOU. You may be just one in the countless number of people who have walked on this earth, but you *are one*. God's love knows no limit nor boundaries of number and time. It is His will that all men everywhere repent, believe in Jesus, and ultimately receive the promise of eternal life.

The fact that you are reading or listening to these words today should indicate God's great love for you personally. He can and does love each of us. It is as if you were the only one who exists. Jesus' love can fill your life wherever you are or in whatever you're doing. He heals your hurts and untangles any confusions. Most of all, you will understand your own priceless worth to God. Is there a greater sacrifice than that of giving Jesus your life so *you* might live? There is only one YOU, and no one else can stand in your place before Christ. Remember, “Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord *shall* be saved” (Acts 2:21). Whosoever is all-inclusive. You are included!

## QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. How can I know for sure that the plan of salvation includes me? II Peter 3:9; John 3:15, 16.
  2. What must I do to be saved? Acts 3:19; Romans 10:9; I John 1:9.
  3. What price was paid for our salvation? Revelation 13:8; I Peter 2:24, 25; Acts 20:28.
  4. What kind of life did Jesus face while here on earth? Isaiah 53:1-12.
  5. What happens upon repentance and conversion? II Corinthians 5:17.
  6. What are the fruits of a Christian life? Galatians 5:22-25.
- SUMMARY:** *Even though Jesus knew that His blood would be shed in vain for many, still He gave His life for the few who would accept the plan of salvation. Does that reveal God's love for you and you alone?*

## SECOND TIME AROUND

**“And unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation” (Hebrews 9:28) .**

**SCRIPTURE READING:** Revelation 1:4-8.

**LESSON AIM:** *To heighten your “RCQ,” (Return of Christ Quotient), so that His second coming becomes of significant concern in your life.*

**BACKGROUND BIBLE READINGS:** John 14:1-6; Matthew 25:1-13; Revelation 19:7-9; Matthew 24:3-14.

**LESSON PREPARATION:** *Compare Christ’s first coming with His second. How did He come the first time? How will He come the second time?*

**INTRODUCTION:** Christ’s second coming will be far different from His first. He will not appear as a babe in a manger but as a King ready to claim His own. Neither the day nor the hour of His return is known to any man. But we have been left with prophecies foretelling the world conditions prior to Jesus’ return.

In the questions for today we will learn some of the signs and results of Christ’s coming the second time.

Young person, in order to chart your course in life, you need to determine your destination. God already has determined a destiny for the end of this world as we know it. God reached out to you and me in love when He sent Jesus to the Earth the first time. Let Him reach into your heart today, giving to you the perfect path of happiness and joy. Then Christ’s appearing a second time will be a glorious one for you. You WILL know where you are headed and, more importantly, who’s going with you.

How does Christ’s second coming affect you personally? Can you talk about it with your closest friend? Has Christ’s second coming become a reality for you?

## QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. What important question was on the disciples’ minds (and on our minds today)? Matthew 24:3.
2. For what signs of Jesus’ return are we to watch? Matthew 24:4-14, 37-39.
3. How will Christ return? Acts 1:11; I Thessalonians 4:16; Matthew 24:27; 25:31; Zechariah 14:3, 4.
4. Why is Christ coming a second time? Hebrews 9:27, 28; Hebrews 10:36, 37.
5. What will be some of the results of Christ’s return? Matthew 16:27; I Corinthians 15:54, 55; Isaiah 65:17-25; Revelation 19:7-9.
6. Discuss your impressions of what life will be like in the new Jerusalem. Revelation 21:1-7, 10-27; Revelation 22:1-5.

**SUMMARY:** *What a glorious day that will be, when our Saviour we will see face to face!*

## WALKING AFTER THE SPIRIT

**“There is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Romans 8:1) .**

**SCRIPTURE READING:** Galatians 5:16-26.

**LESSON AIM:** *To know the difference between serving the Spirit and the flesh.*

**BACKGROUND BIBLE READINGS:** Romans 8:1-14; Galatians 6:7-16; Ephesians 2:1-10; II Peter 2:9-19.

**LESSON PREPARATION:** *Find a magazine story which tells the testimony of a person who has experienced a real conversion from a life of sin. (Old Guidepost magazines are good resources.)*

**INTRODUCTION:** Our walk through life will go one of two ways: either after the spirit of God to satisfy the soul, or after worldly things to satisfy the lust of the flesh and eyes. Let's consider both avenues.

First, let's talk about the avenue to the satisfying of the lust of the flesh and eyes. From the very beginning, Satan tempted Eve by appealing to her sense of sight and by promising her that she would be as a god. Does it have a familiar ring? When listening to and watching today's television commercials and reading newspaper and magazine ads, everything is made to appear appealing to the eyes, to the flesh (promises to make you have sex appeal), and is usually backed up with some sort of money-back guarantee. The commercial world rotates around volume in sales; thus depending upon their appeal to your senses. Let's understand and remember this one point: the flesh will *never* be satisfied, no matter how much or how long you try. If your walk through life is designed to satisfy YOU, you will be left empty inside when the thrills are over.

In opposite direction to walking after the flesh is walking after the Spirit. Because we were created in the image of God, it was meant that we would serve our Creator. There is a void in each person's life which only the Spirit of God can fill. Once we have accepted Christ into our hearts, the Spirit fills that void, giving us peace, its bountiful fruits, and direction to life. Walking after the Holy Spirit of God leaves no condemnation, but beautiful harmony with our Heavenly Father.

## QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. What is the difference between walking after the flesh and after the Spirit? Romans 8:5-10.
2. What are the works of the flesh? Galatians 5:19-21.
3. What are the fruits or evidences of the Spirit in a person's life? Galatians 5:22-25.
4. How can we avoid the lust of the flesh? Galatians 5:16, 17; Colossians 3:1-6.
5. What are the consequences of serving the world? I John 2:15-17; James 1:14, 15.
6. Why is it important to yield our life to the Spirit? I Corinthians 3:16, 17; I Corinthians 6:19, 20.
7. What is the secret to victorious living? Colossians 1:13; 3:2-5.

**SUMMARY:** *The lust of the flesh is constantly warring in our bodies. It must be overcome if we are to attain eternal life. The only way to overcome is to become converted and filled with the Holy Spirit. Are you filled with the Spirit?*

## APPLES OF GOLD

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

**SCRIPTURE READING:** James 3:1-13.

**LESSON AIM:** *To comprehend the impact of our words, whether good or bad.*

**BACKGROUND BIBLE READINGS:** Matthew 12:31-37; Psalm 19; I Peter 3:10-17; James 1:26.

**LESSON PREPARATION:** *Try to recall how many of your words this week were like “apples of gold.”*

**INTRODUCTION:** By merely speaking the wrong words, the national leaders of our world could bring on war, higher taxes, slavery, could abolish religious freedom, and otherwise make our lives a very hard task. The wrong words can cause broken homes, dissension in the church, offended brethren, heartbroken parents or children. The credibility gap widens every day between the government and the people because of promises unkept. The same is true within the framework of the family when promises are made between parents and children which are not kept. Can you get a picture of what the wrong words could bring? Someone wisely has said, “Chew your words carefully because someday you might have to eat them.”

Let's now go to the positive side of words. In the opposite direction, our words can bring about peace and harmony. What makes the difference? Jesus said in Matthew 12:34 that what we speak comes from the heart. The heart is the root of our words and actions. Can an evil man speak good things? As the heart sends forth the thoughts, the mouth speaks and by this we either are justified or condemned.

Your words always have an impact of some kind on the listener. Words cannot be recalled once spoken. A word spoken with love is truly like apples of gold in pictures framed with silver, warming the hearer's heart.

## QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. To what is the tongue compared? James 3:6, 8.
2. From where do our words originate? Matthew 12:34, 35.
3. Will we have to account for our words? Matthew 12:36, 37.
4. What does Psalm 19:14 mean to you?
5. How does “saying the right thing at the right time” affect our lives as the speakers of those words?
6. In this past week what words have you spoken that you feel helped to encourage someone else? What words do you feel you spoke that may have discouraged someone or “took the wind out of” another person's “sails”?

**SUMMARY:** *Our words reflect our thoughts and attitude. Let's choose them well, for we always have to account for our words. Let's also THINK them well. “Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh.”*

## THE PRIDE OF LIFE

**“For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” (I John 2:16) .**

**SCRIPTURE READING:** Romans 12:1-3.

**LESSON AIM:** *To recognize the pride that is displeasing to God.*

**BACKGROUND BIBLE READINGS:** II Timothy 3:1-7; Ephesians 4:25-32  
James 4:6-10; Matthew 18:3, 4.

**LESSON PREPARATION:** *Write down your definition for pride.*

**INTRODUCTION:** One would wonder after reading the memory verse, if there is anything good in this world at all. Is everything in this world sinful and to be avoided? Wasn't the world put here for us to inhabit and subdue?

Let's go back to the beginning. The problems began when man decided no longer to be subject to God's authority. He began to make the world a place for personal gain, a world that would satisfy his carnal lusts. Man's pride and greed led him to a never-ending drive toward power. The pride of life enters in when man's ambition surpasses his need for God's help. He becomes arrogant, conceited, haughty.

The pride in men's lives has created a world that appeals to the lust of the flesh: comfort, luxury, and glamor; after all, we deserve it all, don't we? The second appeal referred to by John is the lust of the eyes, an appeal designed to instill covetousness within us. After all, the most beautifully wrapped package always looks the most intriguing.

In the verse right before our memory verse, we are told not to love these things of the world. Why? Because they bring about sin and, we are assured, all these sinful vices of the world *will* pass away as well as the lust thereof. Jesus offered that we are in this world but not of this world. The more we center our lives in Christ, the less we are attracted to the transient tinsel of this world's glitter. We recognize that there is another world within this world, one which belongs to God. It we can enjoy; it glorifies God and uplifts God's creation.

## QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. What are the consequences of pride? Proverbs 16:18; 29:23; Matthew 23:12.
2. Read the parable recorded in Luke 12:16-21. How does pride relate?
3. Can we ever satisfy the lust of the flesh and the lust of eyes and the pride of life? Proverbs 27:20; Ecclesiastes 1:8.
4. How great should be our humility? Matthew 18:3, 4.
5. What are the dangers of coveting earthly possessions? Luke 12:15; I Timothy 6:6-10.
6. What should be our priority in life? Matthew 6:33, 19-21; Colossians 3:1, 2.

**SUMMARY:** *To take pride in the temporal things of earth creates a very false security.*

## TRY THE SPIRITS

**“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God” (I John 4:1a) .**

**SCRIPTURE READING:** I John 4:1-6.

**LESSON AIM:** *To learn how to discern the spirits.*

**BACKGROUND BIBLE READINGS:** Galatians 5:22-26; I John 4:13-16; 5:1-8; 4:3.

**LESSON PREPARATION:** *Define the word “spirit.”*

**INTRODUCTION:** What comes to your mind when you hear the word, “spirit”? Why are we admonished to “try the spirits”? Can certain spirits be dangerous? How can we know?

It is the spirit which is the power and influence of every living creature. There is the Holy Spirit of God, the spirit of man and the evil spirit of Satan. Submitting ourselves to the influences of any one of these spirits generally signals our direction in life.

As Christians we can know which influences come from God. This ability is important in keeping us from following after the wrong spirit.

The Holy Spirit reveals God to us, and we in turn live by that inspiration. When we speak, pray, or sing we may do so secure in the motivation of the Holy Spirit in our lives. When the Holy Spirit of God has control of our lives, we can do all things through this Power with boldness. There should be no timidity in a person whose life is filled with this, the supreme Power.

Without God’s Spirit in our lives, we can become subject to the entering of evil spirits. In our questions today we will discuss different spirits and their effects on our lives.

## QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. What are some of the spirits we are to avoid? Leviticus 19:31; Deuteronomy 18:10-12; I Samuel 15:23.

2. Discuss Saul’s encounter with the woman of Endor who had a familiar spirit. I Samuel 28:7-19.

3. Discuss modern day wizards, fortune tellers and witches. Do you suppose clairvoyants qualify here?

4. What two spirits are referred to in Romans 8:16?

5. How does God’s Spirit minister to us? I Corinthians 2:9-15; John 14:16, 17, 26.

6. What is the key in discernment of spirits? I John 4:1-6.

**SUMMARY:** *Discernment of spirits can be confusing in our day and time. Only by allowing God’s Holy Spirit to have full control of our lives can we overcome the influence of evil forces.*

## TIME, TALENTS AND MONEY

**“Moreover it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful” (I Corinthians 4:2) .**

**SCRIPTURE READING:** Luke 12:42-48.

**LESSON AIM:** *To realize the Source of our life, our talents, and our wealth, and our responsibilities in each of these areas.*

**BACKGROUND BIBLE READINGS:** Luke 16:1-13; Matthew 25:14-29; Matthew 16:24-26; Romans 14:7-12.

**LESSON PREPARATION:** *Account for one of your days this week.*

**INTRODUCTION:** The purpose for the creation of mankind was for him to dress and to keep the earth — to be stewards of God’s creation. Every person, past, present, future, has been given life, talent and the ability to earn money. We’ve all been given opportunities and someday we will all give the same account to our Heavenly Father for our own use of the time we’ve been allotted.

A good steward will make himself rich toward God. His allotted time will be lived in honor of his Creator, for it is the turn (responsibility) of each generation to dress and to keep God’s earth. Our time is NOW.

You *do* have talents, and you probably haven’t discovered all of them. The more we use our talents for the glorification of God the more He enables us to do. We are stewards of our talents and, as with our life, will give account of the use of our talents.

Money, money, money! So many hands reaching for our money! How will we spend our (God’s) money? Through how many hands has this world’s money gone? Yet over and over each generation slaves from day to day for monetary security, only to die and leave its riches to posterity. Remember, our allotted time, talents, and money only serve to prove what sort of stewards we really are.

## QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. From the parable of Matthew 25:14-30 discuss the profitable and unprofitable servants.
2. How can we rightly use our time, talent, and money? Matthew 25:34-45. I Corinthians 10:31b.
3. Do all of us have opportunities for service? Ecclesiastes 9:11.
4. What accounting will be given of our lives? Matthew 16:25-27; 13:47-50.
5. What are the dangers of wealth? Matthew 19:21-24; I Timothy 6:9, 10.
6. Why is faithful stewardship important? Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14; James 4:13, 14.

**SUMMARY:** *It is now our turn to utilize the gifts of God’s great earth, remembering that they are loaned to us to prove our stewardship.*