

DAILY STUDY

Lesson 47: Be Strong in the Lord

Passage: Read Ephesians 5 - 6

Verse: Ephesians 6:10-12

DAY 1 LET'S BEGIN:

1. Read Ephesians 5-6 several times this week. What parts of Ephesians 5-6 would you like to memorize?
2. To what does the word "therefore" relate to in Ephesians 5:1?
3. Whom should we imitate, and what does this mean? (Eph. 5:1-2) List qualities of God we should include.
4. What should not be true among believers? (Eph. 5:3-5)
5. Why does the wrath of God come on the sons of disobedience? (5:6)
6. How should we walk? (5:8)
7. What is the fruit of the light? (5:9-10)
8. What should we do with the unfruitful deeds of darkness? (5:11-12)
9. What does light do according to Ephesians 5:13-14?
10. How should we walk according to Ephesians 5:15-16?
11. What should we understand according to Ephesians 5:17, and what does this mean to you?
12. With what should we be filled? (5:18)

DAY 2 FIND the FACTS:

1. How can you carry out Ephesians 5:19-20?
2. How can you carry out Ephesians 5:21?
3. What does Ephesians 5:22-24 say to wives? Give an example.
4. What does Ephesians 5:25-30 say to husbands? Give an example.
5. What does Ephesians 5:31 say about becoming one? Give an example.
6. What does Ephesians 5:32-33 say about Christ and the church? Give an example.
7. What does Ephesians 6:1-3 say about children? Give an example.
8. What does Ephesians 6:4 say about fathers? Give an example.
9. What does Ephesians 6:5-8 say about servants? Give an example.
10. What does Ephesians 6:9 say about masters? Give an example.

PASSAGE THOUGHTS

Lesson 47: Be Strong in the Lord

Ephesians 5 begins with a "therefore" referring to the kindness, tender-heartedness and forgiveness of God who gave His only Son for us (end of Eph. 4). We should imitate these characteristics, especially the walking in love. This can only be done supernaturally with a new nature and the continuous power of the Holy Spirit flowing through us by obedience to God's Word, His love letter to us. Our ability to forgive shows the presence of love as does our ability to show how much we know we have been forgiven.

The pattern for living is Christ Himself and the way He sacrificially gave Himself for us while we were still sinners. Just before Jesus' death on the cross the disciples were debating about who was the greatest. Amidst that atmosphere Jesus began washing their feet as a servant would do (Jn. 13:12-17, 34-35).

Prior to Christ's death on the cross the offerings for sin and trespass (Lev. 4:1-26, 32-35; 5:1-19) were repulsive to God (2 Cor. 5:21). They represented God's turning His back on His Son. When Christ died and rose again, His great act of love became a fragrant aroma available to everyone who places himself under the grace of that sacrifice. Christians should be known for continual thankfulness.

A pattern of self-centered, lustful living and greed should not characterize any believer's life. Those who are characterized by immorality, impurity and covetousness (idolatry), habitually living in impurity, cannot be part of God's kingdom. They will experience the wrath of God. Sons of disobedience carry out patterns learned from their father, Satan, which is their nature.

A believer's former position was in darkness while his new position is in the light in the Lord as he should walk. This means living in goodness, righteousness and truth toward God and those around him with nothing to hide from the light. Paul warns believers not to participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness. When sin is revealed, it is seen for the ugliness it is. Paul calls those in spiritual darkness to repentance.

The natural man may accumulate vast knowledge apart from God, but spiritual understanding and divine wisdom elude him because he hates the truth of sin and salvation. True wisdom begins with the fear of the Lord (Pr. 1:7). It is not characterized by philosophy and endless spinning and discussion of theories with no bearing on God or practical living. Hypotheses and speculations do not demand recognition, acceptance and change the way truth does.

There is not a different set of values for the new believer versus the mature believer. Even new believers are urged to walk wisely. To be sad about sin and to hunger for righteousness is where we begin (Mt. 5:4, 6). It is a growth process. We grow practically in what we possess positionally beginning with salvation. To be careful means to look, examine and investigate with great care and alertness (Ps. 1, Pr. 2).

The Ephesian believers should redeem the time because of the evil days. Sadly, the Ephesian church did not heed his warning. Revelation 2:2, 4 says she left her first love even though God could praise her good works, perseverance and resistance to false teaching. This church disappeared during the second century and has not reappeared. We must heed the warnings with a sense of urgent obedience.

It is God's will for us that we be saved (1 Tm. 4:3), sanctified (1 Th. 4:3), submissive (1 Pt 2:13-14), suffering (1 Pt. 2:20) and thankful (1 Th. 5:18). To try to function apart from God's will is indeed foolish.

Paul contrasts drunkenness with the command to be filled with the Spirit, a continual process. To resist being filled and controlled by the Spirit is disobedience. If a believer's basic orientation is carnal, he needs to examine his heart to determine his true father. This filling includes the connotations of being carried along by the wind (as a sail on a ship), being permeated and under total control.

Being filled with the Spirit involves confession of sin, surrender of will and being, and the death of selfishness. Then the Spirit can produce the fruit of the Spirit in us. This is fulfilling the potential and capacity of life on earth as God's children. The Spirit-filled life produces music from the heart. When the Bible reentered the church during the Reformation, singing came with it. There are a variety of musical means for glorifying the Lord, including vocal and instrumental expressions. Music that honors God also blesses his people. Scripture records the benefit Saul received from David's music in 1 Samuel 16. A truly thankful heart will utter gratefulness genuinely, continually and in humility. This brings us to seek the welfare of others before our own in a spirit of submission.

Paul describes some of what the Spirit-filled life looks like among family members and in relation to the church. God's standards do not change. He will forgive, cleanse and restore repentant believers; however, He does not promise to remove the tragic consequences of disobedience.

Since the garden of Eden when God decreed the positions of man and woman after the fall, woman has had a sinful inclination to usurp man's authority. And man has had a sinful inclination to put woman under his feet. It takes grace in Christ and the filling of the Holy Spirit to restore the created order and harmony which existed before the fall.

This order and harmony cannot be achieved by changing or distorting the authority of God's inerrant Scripture. Allowing contemporary humanistic philosophy to have the "ultimate" authority leads to all sorts of confusion, disorder and dismay as each person pursues his own will (Jud. 21:25).

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PRAYER: *Father, help us learn what You want us to learn from the letter to the Ephesians.*



PREPARE to SHARE: Review the passage, and use the questions to help draw the passage together in order to strengthen your relationship with God, your family and others.



FOCUS: Therefore imitate God and His love as beloved children using His armor.

A. OBSERVE  :

1. Who are the main and other characters?
 2. Where is the action taking place, and what are the characters doing?
 3. What words or phrases: a. occur frequently; b. should be defined?
 - a.
 - b.
 4. What qualities, promises and/or commands of God do you see in this passage?
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B. SUMMARIZE  :

1. Into what 2-4 sections would you divide this passage? Label the sections.
 2. What information can be added by cross references?
 3. Make a summary statement of ten words or less, uniquely identifying the passage.
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C. APPLY  :

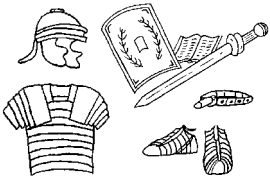
1. From this passage what can you:
 - a. praise God for?
 - b. thank God for?
 - c. pray for yourself, your family and others?
 2. To apply this passage you would:
 3. What applications can be made as questions?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
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D. SHARE  :

1. What important points do you want to communicate to others, and how?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
-

PASSAGE SUMMARY

Lesson 47: Be Strong in the Lord



Therefore imitate God as beloved children. Walk in love as Christ has loved you. He has given Himself for us as an offering and a sweetsmelling aroma.

It is not fitting for immorality, impurity or greed to be named among the saints. Give thanks. Immoral, impure, covetous and idolatrous people have no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Do not be deceived by empty words. The wrath of God comes on the sons of disobedience because of these things. Do not do these things.

You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of **light**. The fruit of the light is in goodness, righteousness and truth. Find out what pleases the Lord.

Instead of joining with unfruitful deeds of darkness, expose them. It is disgraceful even to talk about these things that are done in secret. Light exposes these things. Therefore wake up. Christ will give you light.

Be wise people, not fools. Make the most of your time because the days are evil. Understand what the will of the Lord is. Be filled with the Spirit, not drunk with wine. Speak to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual **songs**. Sing and make **melody** in your heart to the Lord. Always give thanks for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Submit to one another in the fear of God.

Wives, submit to your own husbands as if to the Lord. The husband is the head of the wife. This is like Christ being the head of the church. He is the Saviour of the body. Wives should be subject to their own husbands like the church is subject to Christ.

Husbands, love your wives the way Christ loves the church and gave Himself for her. Christ gave Himself for the church to sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the Word. He wants to present her holy and blameless as a glorious church without spot or wrinkle.

A husband should love his wife like he loves his own body. A man who loves his **wife** loves himself. No one hates his own flesh. Everyone nourishes and takes care of it the same way the Lord cares for the church. We are part of this body. Because of this a man should leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife. The two

shall be one flesh. This great mystery is about Christ and the church. A wife should be careful to respect her **husband**.

Children, **obey** your parents in the Lord because this is right. Honouring your father and mother is the first commandment with promise. The promise says "that it may be well with you and that you may live long on the earth."

Fathers, do not provoke your **children** to anger. Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Slaves, obey your masters in the flesh with fear and trembling. Have sincere hearts for Christ. Do not do eyeservice to please men. Be slaves of Christ. Do the will of God from the heart. Serve with good will to the Lord, not to men. Good things you do will be rewarded by the Lord whether you are a slave or a free man.

Masters, treat your slaves the same way Christ treats you. Stop threatening them. Think about your own **Master** in heaven where there is no partiality.

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armour of God to be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. Our struggle is not against flesh and blood. It is against rulers, powers, world forces of this darkness and spiritual forces of wickedness in heavenly places.


We must take up the full armour of God to resist and stand in the evil day, having done everything. Stand firm with your loins girded with truth, wearing the breastplate of righteousness and the preparation of the gospel of peace on your feet.

Take up the shield of faith to put out the flaming missiles of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. Always pray with petitions in the Spirit. Persevere and petition for all the saints.

Paul asked them to pray that he would have the words to say and would open his mouth boldly to make the mystery of the gospel known. Paul was in chains because he was an ambassador of the gospel. He wanted to be bold as he should be.

Faithful Tychicus would comfort their hearts by telling them more about Paul. Paul sent greetings to all the brothers with peace and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.


QUESTIONS: Why should we walk in love? What does walking in love look like?

BEGINNING:  Statement and/or activity to begin getting the children's attention.


Use a word puzzle/color page.

Spiritual Armor: Provide pieces of armor for touching and interaction with the children. Talk about what some of the armor does.

SAY: Welcome to Ephesus where the believers are reading a letter Paul wrote to them. This letter is now part of our Bibles.

TRANSITION:  Use one or two during the week, keep them simple, positive and fun.

Let's see what Paul (a soldier, father, mother, master) says to do next.


VERSE:  Locate it in the Bible. The goal is enjoyable association, participation and repetition.

Verse Scenario: Review the verse with the children. Have the children act out the practical usage of one or more parts of the armor of God.

SONGS and HYMNS:  Sing together.

"He Keeps Me Singing," "The Light of the World Is Jesus," "Jesus, Name Above All Names"

Say and Do: Let's sing praises to God who wants us to sing psalms and hymns and who provides complete armor to use. Provide parts of the spiritual armor for a child to wear. Talk about each part and what it does. You may want to use rhythm instruments as an emphasis for Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.

LARGE MUSCLE:  Use when it is time for some guided action.

Exercising Soldiers: Instruct the children in exercises that would be fitting for soldiers.

SAY: Paul says we need to use God's armor because we are in a spiritual warfare.

THINK and DO:  Look up, look around, look inside.

- **Children:** Do things that boys and girls like to do such as have a beanbag toss or use stickers to make a collage. List things that boys and girls like to do.
SAY: God made some to be boys and others to be girls.
- **Families:** Have the children share something they appreciate about one of their family members.
SAY: God established the first family of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden in the first book of the Bible named Genesis. Help them find this story in Genesis.
- **Salvation Review:** Talk about the essentials of salvation with the children.
SAY: Ask questions so you can find out what they understand. Try to help them understand a little more each time you talk with them.
- **Dark and Light:** Make an area that can be dark. Give the children flashlights to light up the darkness.
SAY: Jesus is the light of the world.

TODDLER ACTIVITIES:  Do one or more with each child some time during the week.

Toddlers Can: Try to say the name of some of Paul's letters, people mentioned, places visited, help you find a verse, deliver a letter, try on pieces of armor, listen as you tell about the armor, play with flashlights, listen as you review creation, Jesus' life, death and resurrection, match picture cards of Bible lessons, and more.

SNACK and SHARE:  Teacher's time to listen.

- **Snack:** Fruit; water. God gave Adam and Eve many good things to eat in the garden of Eden.
- **Questions:** What is a feast? What is a famine?

STOP and CONSIDER:  A time to think quietly.

Think about how God put us in families and how He loves us so much that He gave His only Son to die on the cross for us.

REVIEW:  An enjoyable time of remembering or practicing.

Concentration/Matching Game: Use picture cards of lessons for Paul's letters. Include a few important words from Ephesians such as "God," "Jesus Christ," and "Ephesus." Scramble and place pairs of the cards on the table or floor with the blank side up. Help the children take turns turning two over at a time. Help them talk about what they see. When a student makes a match, he or she can keep that pair of cards until the game is over. If all are collected before time is up, reshuffle and begin again.

Send a Newspaper: Use information from recent lessons to help the children make a newspaper to send to friends or relatives.

Lesson 44

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Paul describes the resurrection in relation to the sowing and growing of a seed which had to die before it could live again in a new form. He contrasts present bodies to resurrection bodies which will be imperishable, glorious, raised in power and spiritual. Death has no victory. They are to be steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding the work of the Lord - our toil is not in vain in the Lord (1 Cor. 15:58).

Paul ends by turning from eternal things to practical things such as giving and serving. He includes pithy principles for living. So long as they are in the world they have the opportunity and responsibility to honour and glorify God with their beings. Paul sends heartfelt greetings from the saints and signs the letter personally. He includes a final warning and an affirmation of love.

What is your response?

Lesson 47

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The most powerful tools a woman has are the inner adorning of humility, love, moral purity, kindness, respect, and a gentle, quiet spirit (1 Pt. 3:4) in the presence of the filling of the Spirit with its evident fruit. These are precious in the sight of God. God's plan is for the perfection and fulfillment of both man and woman as He ordained them to be.

As every new corruption appears, a new philosophy arises to justify it. Man is destined to go from bad to worse. Before the fall man was given headship of the woman and over creation, free from selfishness and self-will. They lived in perfect fulfillment of their created purpose and under God's perfect provision and care. Eve's sin was in disobeying God's specific command and in acting independently of Adam. Adam not only disobeyed God's command, but he also yielded to Eve's leadership.

Eve was cursed with pain in childbirth and a distorted desire to rule over her husband. Adam was cursed with toil, difficulty, frustration in obtaining sustenance from the land, and with conflict with his wife over her submission. Both were cursed with death as the penalty for their sin (Gn. 3:16-19). Their actions and subsequent curses corrupted marriage. God's way for successful marriage is based on what husbands and wives put into it, not what they get out of it.

Genesis records a variety of attacks on the sanctity and harmony of marriage and the family which are condoned and even lauded in today's society. For marriage to be what God intends, it takes the filling of the Holy Spirit by true believers. To weaken the home is to weaken all of society.

Christ's love for the church is the example to follow. It is sacrificial, purifying, caring and unbreakable. When Christian husbands and wives yield to the power of the Spirit, they bring much honour to God. Nevertheless, the divorce rate among Christians is almost as high as the rest of society. Just like a frog in cool water is oblivious to being heated to the boiling point without

noticing what is happening, families are gradually accepting lower and lower standards and are totally destroyed before they know what has happened.

While self-help books and child psychology studies and advice proliferate book shelves, Scripture remains clearly, concisely, continually and completely accurate. See Deuteronomy 6:4-7. It is God's plan that His Word be passed from one generation to the next primarily through the family.

Since the Fall the family has been bombarded with the sinful nature with which every individual is born. Along with man's sinful nature is Satan's diligent goal to undermine and destroy the family. One of the most pervasive tools is today's humanistic philosophy. Marxist socialism is still intent on liberating children from the home and making them wards of the state where they will not be taught counter productive standards and attitudes.

God's Word is timeless. No human philosophy is new or surprising to God. Scripture makes it clear that instead of children needing to be liberated from parents, they are to honour and obey parents, including attitudes and actions. The word for "right" indicates that which is correct, just and righteous. Proverbs is full of truths to guide parents in training their children and for children in learning to obey. Even though parents make mistakes, they are the child's primary God-given authority and source of training.

Children raised in Christian families are blessed with the spiritual fruit that was previously planted while it takes several generations to reverse the effects of one wicked generation of parents. Children grow the same way Jesus grew: intellectually, physically, socially and spiritually (Lk 2:51-52). Scripture exemplifies young people who were used by God: Samuel, David, King Josiah, Esther, Timothy.

Fathers should not provoke their children to wrath, but mothers are not excluded from danger here. One source of provocation would be repeated patterns of treatment that build up deep-seated anger that boils over in outward hostility. Children's wills can be guided (Scripture gives many ways of accomplishing this), but not controlled. Other dangers include favoritism, pushing achievement beyond reasonable bounds, continual discouragement, considering children to be an intrusion, conditional love, physical and verbal abuse and failing to point children to God.

Parents should train their children, which includes punishment, and put right attitudes and principles of behavior in their minds, including correction. All of this is to be "of the Lord."

Paul includes responsibilities for slaves and masters. The New Testament does not focus on reforming and restructuring human systems which is not the root cause of human problems. The wicked heart of man will corrupt the best of systems, and the righteous heart will improve the worst. Paul concentrates on spiritual issues which can take care of political, social and economic problems. Working people face economic intimidation that mirrors slavery in any system, thus including employers and employees today.

Paul calls slaves to behave properly, to recognize their position is temporary, to have the attitude of

respect and honour and to be genuine and thorough. He calls slaves to serve Christ, not to just be diligent under observation, but to serve God without compulsion. The reward comes from God. If they do not think they have been properly rewarded, then they should remember they are not home yet.

An employer should desire to obey and please the Lord within his position. The faithful Christian employer recognizes that he is an accountable fellow servant of Jesus Christ

Paul urges believers to use the whole armor of God. The Christian is in a spiritual warfare. Jesus' ministry began with a forty-day battle with Satan (Lk. 4:2) and ended with a battle in the Garden of Gethsemane (22:44) just before His crucifixion. Nowhere is the believer promised a life of ease. Even the holy angels face opposition when carrying out God's directives (Jude 9). Paul expected the attacks (Acts 20:29-30).

In Revelation the churches at Smyrna and Philadelphia have focused on evangelism under tribulation. Only these two churches did not have warnings and condemnations. Persecution and evangelism had the purifying effect of keeping the believers' attention properly focused on God and others.

Preparation begins with recognizing the source of our strength, the Lord and His might. We must be dependent on God, not ourselves (Rev. 3:8). God's armor is to be a lifelong companion. Believers are the ones through whom Satan, meaning "adversary," attacks God. Satan brought sin into the world, and the world is currently in his power (1 Jn. 5:19).

Repeatedly, Satan has seduced Israel into following him in spite of God's great power shown on her behalf.

Satan even provoked Israel's rejection and crucifixion of her Messiah. His final deception will be to persuade her that the antichrist is the Christ (Dan. 9:26-27).

Denial of Jesus' deity and His works is rampant. The enemy uses such things as liberal theology, psychology, mysticism and the occult to seduce believers into apathy towards God and the Scriptures.

The word for "struggle" connotes wrestling characterized by trickery and deception against a highly formidable supernatural enemy. We do not need to figure out the enemy, but we do need to use the spiritual armor we all have to purify the soul and leave no unclean place for demons to occupy (Jas. 4:7). When Satan attacks, we should report to the Commander and leave the defense in His hands (1 Jn. 4:4, Mt. 16:18). We should take up the armor, resist and stand firm.

As with Adam and Eve, Satan attacks man's greatest strength - that of trusting God. To distrust God is to doubt His will and motives. Satan paints God as the father of lies rather than the Father of truth that He is. There is an attack against the truthfulness and sufficiency of Scripture. Neglecting this resource gives room for Satan. Satan also attacks through tribulation, doctrinal confusion and falsehood, hindrance to service, divisiveness, temptation to resort to man's own power and temptation to lead hypocritical, disobedient, worldly lives. Believers must appropriate God's provision to meet these attacks.

We begin by being ready with truth or genuine commitment. The breastplate covered what was

considered to be the mind and will (the heart) and the seat of emotions and feelings (the bowels) two of Satan's favorite targets. To have our minds clouded with false doctrine, principles and information is indeed damaging. To laugh at sin rather than to mourn over it is a perversion of affections and allows us to indulge in it rather than bring it to God for forgiveness. It is intended for God's righteousness to surround us in moment-by-moment obedience to God. God supplies the standard and the power, but we supply the willingness to confront and forsake sin. Without practical righteousness there is fruitlessness, loss of reward and reproach on God's glory.

The gospel of peace refers to the good news that believers are at peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ. We need not fear any enemy. These first three pieces of armor were continually worn on the battlefield.

The last three pieces were in readiness for actual fighting. The shield was used as part of a wall of protection when set alongside the next soldier's shield as a protective wall at the battlefront. This is basic trust in God that appropriates salvation and is what we live by. Each of us trusts in something or someone. (When was the last you sat on a chair?) Trusting God has power because of the reliability of the object of that trust - God.

New Testament flaming missiles were arrows with tips wrapped in cloth soaked in pitch. When lit and shot the impact spattered burning bits several feet, igniting anything flammable. The metal or leather soaked shield was the best defense. Satan's missiles intend to cause believers to sin and distrust God, including tempting God's Son to distrust His Father (Mt. 4:3-9). Justifying sin degrades God's character and elevates Satan's.

The helmet of salvation protects from Satan's blows towards a believer's security and assurance in Christ. Two edges of the long, broad sword Satan wields are discouragement and doubt. God's armor is a constant necessity because the enemy will never lay down his sword on this earth. Believers are characterized as runners (1 Cor. 9:24), fighters (1 Cor. 9:26) and soldiers (2 Tm. 2:3) not onlookers.

Salvation has the past, present and future aspects of justification (accomplished at the moment we trust in Christ), sanctification (a growth process in finding some freedom from sin's mastery), and glorification (when we will finally and completely be removed from sin's presence, our ultimate hope).

Believers should use the sword of the Spirit - the Word of God. No matter who may try to discredit or undermine the authority of the Scripture, it is still powerful and effective to carry out what it intends to carry out. Scripture claims God as its author (2 Tm. 3:16), claims authority (Is. 1:2), completion (Rev. 22:18-19), effectiveness (Is. 55:11), perfection (Ps. 19:7-8) and sufficiency (2 Tm. 3:16-17). It offers growth (1 Pt. 2:2), power (Heb. 4:12), blessing (Ps. 1:1), guidance (Ps. 119:109) and comfort (Rm. 15:4) among other benefits.

When Satan tempted Jesus in the wilderness, he tried everything he thought might work, but each time Jesus responded with a precise contradiction

from Scripture (Mt. 4:4, 7, 10). Paul counseled Timothy to handle the Word of God accurately (2 Tm. 2:15). God's Word is both a defensive and an offensive weapon, but it is to be handled precisely. Satan's greatest offenses are aimed at God's Word because of its great power. The seed of God's Word can be snatched or forsaken for a variety of reasons. Good soil will bear and produce good fruit. We have the Holy Spirit as our teacher and guide. We can be like a bee which comes to a flower empty, sinks deep into the flower and leaves full.

What do you do in the face of hardship, criticism and tribulation? As a monk Martin Luther was in bondage to a system of works. Through the word of Scripture, he began to understand that the just shall live by faith. And just as powerfully as it affected his own life, he used it to fight twelve centuries of tradition.

Paul closes with a general instruction about prayer which is as necessary as the air a soldier breathes. Prayer can be carried out in a variety of ways as we live in God consciousness and perpetual communion with our heavenly Father.

What does Christ's death on the cross mean to you today? Who is your spiritual father? How do you exhibit self-centeredness, lust and greed? How would those around you characterize your life? How are you handling the family relationship position God has called you to fulfill right now? How are you like a slave or a master, and how are you handling that position? How are you redeeming the time? How are you appropriating the armor of God? How are you committed to prayer like a soldier is committed to the air he breathes?

Lesson 48

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The next section of Philippians 1 deals with four issues that might rob individuals of joy: trouble, detractors, death and the flesh. Paul is convinced that neither death nor sorrows in the flesh could rob him of joy. Paul's confidence is in God's Word (Job 13:16), prayer (Jam. 5:16), the power of the Holy Spirit (Jn. 14:16-17), hope in Christ (Rm. 12:1, 1 Cor. 6:19) and God's plan (Acts 20:24; 21:13). Paul mentions his conflict with the imminent hope of heaven and the present desire to encourage them in their progress and joy in the faith. Paul recognizes they are suffering for Christ's sake and urges them to stand firm and walk worthy of the gospel of Christ working together in unity no matter what.

Philippians 2 begins with a concise, practical teaching on unity. Paul includes the right motives, the right ingredients and the right means of achieving it. The conditional "if" statements have the implied meaning of "if this condition is true, and it is, then ..." Motivation is based on Christ's giving them the indwelling Spirit granted to sinners in the grace of salvation. Motivation is also based on the presence and work of the Holy Spirit, including sealing, power, spiritual gifts, fruit and intercession. Motivation is also based on Christ's affection and compassion.

Proper ingredients of unity include thinking the same things through walking according to the Spirit,

loving one another equally in word and deed, and having selfless harmony with other believers which is controlled by the Spirit for one purpose. This calls for selfless humility. It means taking proper care of ourselves, but not at the expense of helping others properly.

The example is Christ Jesus who gave up His rights to come to earth to live and die for our salvation. He gave up the rights of divine glory (Jn. 17:1, 5) and independent authority (Jn. 5:30). He voluntarily limited His attributes (Jn. 1:47; 2:25), gave up eternal riches (Mt. 20:28), and gave up His intimate relationship with His Father (Mt. 27:46). Jesus Christ not only gave up these things, he also took on the position of a slave, became a man and was considered to be a man. He voluntarily gave Himself up to death on the cross which was neither forced by the Father nor dictated by man.

Because of what the Son did, the Father exalted Him in resurrection (Acts 2:32), ascension (Jn. 20:17), coronation (1 Pt. 3:22) and intercession (Rm. 8:34). His name will be "King of kings and Lord of lords" (Rev. 19:16). To Him every knee will bow (Is. 45:22-23). This includes the holy angels and the saints, the redeemed believers of all ages. On earth both redeemed and unredeemed (even though unwillingly) will worship Him. Those under the earth include the fallen angels and the unredeemed dead (Rev. 20:11-13). The purpose of Jesus's exaltation is for the glory of God the Father.

The comment about "working out your salvation with fear and trembling" can be misunderstood. Ephesians 2:8-9 makes it clear that salvation is not by works. John 6:44 says the Father must draw individually to the Son. Acts 16:31 says to, "believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved." To reconcile every truth presented in Scripture is beyond the finite mind to achieve. On one extreme the believer is passive in sanctification with somewhat of a mystical focus on feelings. For this person to sin would be to deny complete surrender and to take himself out of the potter's hand. If this were possible, how could God be completely in control?

On the opposite extreme a pietist aggressively pursues correct doctrine and moral purity. There is a danger here is that of elevating legalism, moralism, self-righteousness, pride and/or hypocrisy. It can include a judgmental spirit.

Paul urges them have a reverential fear that comes from deep adoration and love. It is a cleansing fear. They are to persevere in faithful obedience to the end. Salvation has past, present and future aspects. Justification is in the past, sanctification is in the present and glorification is in the future when believers receive glorified bodies. Believers have been, are being and will be saved.

Then we have God's role in sanctification. We have His person (Jn. 3:16-17), His power (Col 1:29), His presence (Jn. 17:22-23), His purpose (Heb. 13:20-21; Eph. 2:8-10) and His pleasure (Lk. 12:32).

Paul tells the believers to stop grumbling and disputing, including emotional and intellectual aspects. We should not complain about what God calls us to do. Instead we are to be blameless and innocent for the sake of your own sake, for the sake of the unsaved and for spiritual leaders.