

Additional Lessons for Summer Time

ADDITIONAL SUMMER LESSONS FOR CHILDREN #1

THE DISCIPLES' PRAYER

Week 1	Pray, Then, Like This
Week 2	Our Father Who Is In The Heavens
Week 3	Let Your Name Be Sanctified
Week 4	Let Your Kingdom Come
Week 5	Let Your Will Be Done
Week 6	Give Us Today Our Daily Bread
Week 7	Forgive Us our Debts
Week 8	Do Not Bring Us Into Trial
Week 9	Deliver Us From The Evil One
Week 10	Yours Is The Kingdom, Power and Glory

Our God has come to earth and has revealed His desire and purpose to us through His Word and teachings. Both His desire and our needs are covered in the Model Prayer that the Lord Jesus taught His disciples to pray. As we spend this summer to delve into this Model of prayer we hope to inscribe an indelible impression upon the hearts and minds of the children each week so that these immortal words will be filled with meaning and understanding to them. May this understanding become a kind of vision to them concerning their life and purpose. Then may this vision inspire them to pray and even walk according to the Lord's desire.

THE DISCIPLES' PRAYER

Introduction

Our God has come to earth and has revealed His desire and purpose to us through His Word and teachings. Both His desire and our needs are covered in the model prayer that the Lord Jesus taught His disciples to pray. As we teach these ten lessons and delve into this model prayer we hope to inscribe an indelible impression upon the hearts and minds of the children each week so that these immortal words will be filled with meaning and understanding to them. May this understanding become a kind of vision to them concerning their life and purpose. Then may this vision inspire them to pray, and even more, to walk according to the Lord's desire.

Our Perspective In Teaching These Lessons To The Children

The Lord Jesus taught this model prayer to His disciples before they were regenerated. Although God was not yet their Father in the sense of the divine birth, they were the disciples of the Lord Jesus and would soon become the Father's sons through regeneration. In this same perspective we teach the children. Although many of them are not yet regenerated, they are the Lord's little disciples who we expect will one day be His children through regeneration. In the mean time we can teach them the Lord's will and ways as we lead them to put their trust in the Lord Jesus and receive Him as their Savior and Lord.

THE DISCIPLES' PRAYER

Lesson One

PRAY, THEN, LIKE THIS

Burden to Impart:

As the Lord's disciples one of our greatest privileges is to pray and know that our prayers are heard by Him.

Memory Verse: "Pray, then, like this..." (Matthew 6:9a).

Facts to Teach:

1. When the Lord Jesus walked on the earth His disciples observed that He would often spend time alone in prayer. They realized that He knew God in a very special way and had a very close relationship with Him.

2. Once, as the Lord Jesus was praying, His disciples realized that they did not know how to pray, so they asked Him to teach them how (Luke 11:1-4).

3. However, before teaching the disciples how to pray, the Lord firstly taught them two ways how they should NOT pray (Matt. 6:5-8).

4. We should not pray like the hypocrites (insincere actors) who love to pray so that others will see them and hear them. They pray only to draw attention to themselves and to glorify themselves.

5. Rather, we should sincerely pray to our Father from our heart, not so that others would see us, but realizing that He sees us. He very much desires to hear our prayers so He closely watches when we pray to Him. He so much desires us to pray that He will one day even reward us for every sincere prayer we have offered to Him.

6. We should not repeat empty words when we pray. This means we should not try to "pad" our prayers with extra "stuffing," (words). We should pray simply and to the point, realizing that our Father already knows what we need, but He wants us to come to Him and tell Him our need anyway so that we may have fellowship with Him.

THE DISCIPLES' PRAYER

Lesson Two

OUR FATHER WHO IS IN THE HEAVENS

Burden to Impart:

As the heavens are high above the earth, so our Father is over all the earth. He sees all things upon the earth and His ear is open to all of His dear children's prayers.

Memory Verse: "Pray, then, like this: Our Father Who is in the heavens..." (Matthew 6:9a).

Facts to Teach:

1. This prayer was given to us by the Lord Jesus to guide us and teach us how to pray; it was not given for us to merely repeat.

2. We are first taught about the One to whom we pray: our Father. Because God created us He is the source of our life and existence. In this sense God is the Father of every family in the heavens and on the earth, both angelic and human (Eph. 3:15).

3. More particularly, all those who believe in the Lord Jesus and receive Him are born of God and are the children of God (Jn. 1:12-13).

4. His Name: Father, means so much to us! He is not only our wise and powerful God, the Creator. He is intimately and lovingly related to us. He is our dearly beloved Father!

5. A farmer cares for his crops and a shepherd even more so his sheep. But, who can tell how much concern and love a father has toward his children? A good shepherd knows exactly how many sheep are under his care. If one out of a hundred is missing he will not rest until he finds it and brings it back home (Lk. 15:4-6). So great is our Father's knowledge and concern for us that even the very hairs of our head are all numbered (Matt. 10:30)! We are not merely an object of His creation, or a creature for His possession; we are His very own children, the "apple of His eye."

6. When we pray: "Our Father..." we are reminded that He is not only "my" Father alone. He is also the Father of every other child of God, and they are all my brothers and sisters. Not only I am particularly dear to Him, all of His children are equally dear and precious to Him, and should also be to me when I come before my Father to pray. We are all one divine family.

7. When we pray: "Who is in the heavens..." we are reminded that our Father is transcendent; He is far above all and fills all the heavens. As the entire earth is under the observation of the vast heavens above, so we are under the watchful eye of our Father who is in the heavens. As the earth receives all of its light and life from the heavens, we also depend absolutely upon our Father who is in the heavens so that we may live unto Him as His dear children upon the earth.

THE DISCIPLES' PRAYER

Lesson Three

LET YOUR NAME BE SANCTIFIED

Burden to Impart:

The name of Jesus has already been exalted and glorified in heaven (Phil. 2:9). Our prayer is that it will be known, loved, and glorified upon the earth also.

Memory Verse: "Our Father Who is in the heavens, let your name be sanctified...as in heaven, so on earth" (Matthew 6:9, 10b).

Facts to Teach:

1. The first desire of the Lord's disciples (followers) is for our heavenly Father's name to be sanctified on the earth.

2. When God came to the earth He took the name of Jesus (John 1:1,14; Matt. 1:21). His name has been given the highest place in the whole universe (Phil. 2:9). Although His name is exalted in heaven, it is still not "sanctified" in the earth. All the angels of heaven know and praise the name of Jesus, all the demons of Satan fear the name of Jesus. The only place where the name of Jesus is not sanctified is on the earth, the dwelling place of man.

3. When something is "sanctified" it is set apart from everything else. Whatever is sanctified is different, distinct, and special.

4. For the Father's name to be sanctified on the earth, His name must first be made known on the earth. His name is made known and manifested through the lives of those who believe in Him (Matt. 5:16; John 17:6). Also, the Father's name is sanctified when it is believed in and called upon. This can only happen if some will tell His name to others so they can believe in Him (Rom. 10:14).

5. As men, women and children call upon the Lord's name and experience His nearness (Psa. 145:18), His riches and His salvation (Rom. 10:9, 13) they will love Him more and more. Then, as they live in such a way that others can realize that He is the one that they live for and love, His name will be expressed and sanctified on the earth (Matt. 5:14-16).

6. One day in the future, when the Lord Jesus returns, His name will be known and honored in every nation and place upon the entire earth (Psa. 8:1). How blessed we are that we know, believe in, call upon and love His name today!

7. His name is sanctified more on the earth each day as we, His children, live for Him, speak of Him, pray to Him and meet in His name in the church meetings and home meetings.

THE DISCIPLES' PRAYER

Lesson Four

LET YOUR KINGDOM COME

Burden to Impart:

In order for God's kingdom of righteousness, peace and joy to come to this unrighteous, unpeaceful, and sad world, there must first be some who receive the King (the Lord Jesus) and allow Him to reign in their hearts and lives. We need to ask ourselves each day, Who is the King in my life, in my words, and in my actions? Is it the Lord Jesus? If it is, we will be assured by our heart being full of peace and joy.

Memory Verse: "Our Father Who is in the heavens...let your kingdom come...as in heaven, so on earth"
(Matthew 6:9a, 10a).

Facts to Teach:

1. The Lord Jesus taught His disciples to pray that God's kingdom would come to the earth, just as it is in the heavens.

2. This tells us that there is a great difference between the heavens and the earth. Our Father's kingdom is ruling in the heavens, but it has not yet come to the earth in full. For this reason we who believe in the Lord must pray that His kingdom would come to the earth.

3. The King in God's kingdom is the "Son of His love" (Col. 1:13), the Lord Jesus Christ. All of the millions of heaven's angels are perfectly subject to and obedient to the Lord Jesus. When He speaks a word, there is no need to argue or repeat His command two times. What He says, will immediately be done (Matt. 26:51).

4. However, it is not so on the earth. When the King came to the earth He was not welcome or even wanted. Rather, He was despised and rejected. The people refused to have Him rule over them (Luke 19:14).

5. Still today, the people on earth reject the heavenly King. This is why the earth has so many problems. Wherever people love and obey the Lord Jesus, God's kingdom is there.

6. We can know in which kingdom we are living by three unmistakable signs: righteousness, peace and joy (Rom. 14:17). Where these are, God's kingdom is. When we live according to God's Word we do what is "right," both toward God and toward man. We then have peace in our heart and conscience. Peace with God, peace with others, and peace within ourselves. Finally, we have joy. His peace and joy fill our hearts when we are right with Him and with others. This assures us that we are in fact living in God's kingdom, and that God's heavenly kingdom is reigning in us.

7. The first place God's kingdom must come on earth is in each one of our hearts. Each time we allow Him to rule in us and over us in so many decisions His kingdom comes a little more on earth. One day His kingdom will come in full and will fill the whole earth. Until then we want to allow His kingdom to come and to grow in our hearts.

THE DISCIPLES' PRAYER

Lesson Five

LET YOUR WILL BE DONE

Burden to Impart:

As the disciples of the Lord Jesus we should desire and pray for our Father's will to be done on earth, as it is in heaven. As human beings, God created us with a free will. We should use our free will to make the right choices. We should choose to live for God's perfect will to be done in our lives, and on this earth. We should never allow our will to be stubborn or rebellious. We should set our will on God's will, and make His choice our choice. His will, not ours, should be done on earth, as it is in heaven.

Memory Verse: "Our Father Who is in the heavens...let your will be done, as in heaven, so on earth" (Matthew 6:9a, 10b).

Facts to Teach:

1. Our heavenly Father has a desire and has a will. As His name is "sanctified" (set apart, made special, loved, and treasured) in us, we will spontaneously become submissive to His kingdom and authority. We will not "argue" with Him (or our parents, or anyone else who is in authority) any longer. We will allow His Kingdom to "come" in our hearts and lives. At that time His will can be done on earth (in us), as it is in heaven.

2. God created man with a free will. He did not create a pre-programmed robot. With our feelings we like certain things and dislike others. With our mind we can think about things, and with our will we choose what we decide we want. What we choose with our will is very important.

3. Most people do not know that God has a will, nor do they care. They only care to fulfill the desires of their own will. They feel that their will is the most important thing in their lives.

4. As Christians, as disciples of the Lord Jesus, we should realize that the most important thing is not what we will, nor what we want for ourselves. God's will is first and foremost. All things in this universe have been created because of His will (Rev. 4:11). Should we not set aside our will and choice and allow God's will and desire to be done in our lives?

5. A person who is self-willed is stubborn. They only care for their own will. If we always insist on having our own way and only care about doing our own will, how could God's will ever be done on earth as it is in heaven? The longer we allow our will to be stubborn, untamed, and rebellious, the longer we hinder God's will from being done on earth; especially in we ourselves.

6. Before the Lord Jesus went to the cross He prayed and said, "My Father...not as I will, but as You will" (Matt. 26:39). He prayed and lived for God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven.

THE DISCIPLES' PRAYER

Lesson Six

GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD

Burden to Impart:

As we pray for God's desire (His Name, kingdom and will to be done on earth), we should also pray to Him each day for our daily needs, especially our physical food. We should not worry about tomorrow, but should live by faith, trusting in God for each day's supply (Matt. 6:34).

Memory Verse: "Our Father who is in the heavens,...give us this day our daily bread" (Matthew 6:9, 11).

Facts to Teach:

1. The first concern in our prayer to the Father is for His interests: His Name, His kingdom, and His will. Man was created for God and our first concern and prayer must be for His desire. Then, we may pray for our primary need as human beings: our daily bread.

2. In most countries, some type of bread is one of the most important foods in the people's diet. The Spanish use tortillas, the Jews use matzos, etc. There are many other kinds of "bread" in other countries. In the United States, the farmers used to call bread the "staff of life," meaning that it was the most important thing to them of all the foods they ate.

3. "Bread" firstly speaks of our daily material needs, especially physical food.

4. We are to pray for our daily food or other needs each day. As God's beloved children we do not need to worry or pray about our needs for the next day or the next week. Our Father wants us to come to Him each day.

5. Two examples of how God provided for the daily needs of His people are when God caused manna to rain down from heaven to nourish His people in the desert. They were told to only gather enough manna for one day at a time (Exo. 16:12-21). Also, the Lord provided for His servant Elijah's need of food by sending the ravens to him with food each day (1 Kings 17:4-6).

6. The "bread" in this verse may also indicate spiritual food, just as the Lord Jesus said in John 6:36: I am the bread of life, he who comes to Me shall by no means hunger." We need to come to the Lord each day.

7. In Matthew 4:4 Jesus told Satan, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out through the mouth of God." This shows us that the Jesus took the Word of God as His daily bread.

8. As we pray for our "daily bread" each day we should remember that the Lord wants to supply our spiritual need as well as our physical need. We should thank Him each day for His generous supply and loving care for us.

THE DISCIPLES' PRAYER

Lesson Seven

FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS

Burden to Impart:

In order to keep ourselves in a good relationship and fellowship with God we must keep our conscience clear of any offense (Acts 24:16). We do this by confessing our sins, failures, and trespasses to God. God will freely forgive us for all of our "debts" if we confess them to Him (1 John 1:9). However, if we are hard-hearted and unwilling to forgive others their offenses and "debts" toward us, neither will God forgive us our debts (Matt. 6:14-15, 18:35). If we harbor iniquity in our heart He will not even hear our prayer (Psa. 66:18).

Memory Verse: "And forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors" (Matthew 6:12).

Facts to Teach:

1. As we seek to glorify our Father's Name, bring His kingdom to earth and do His will, we will discover that we have failures in our daily life. At times we commit sins against God and trespasses against others. For this reason the Lord taught us to pray concerning our "debts."

2. When we say or do things that are not proper toward others we offend them. They feel that we have mistreated them and that we "owe" them something. In this way we have a "debt" with them. We also fail the Lord in many ways and owe Him for our many "debts."

3. We build up many debts each day, some consciously and some unconsciously. It is like the dust on a window sill. The longer you wait to clean it, the dirtier it gets.

4. In order to keep a good relationship with our Father we need to confess our sins and failures to Him each day (1 John 1:9).

5. However, if we expect our Father to forgive our debts, we must be willing to forgive others their debts and offenses. Otherwise, our Father will not forgive us our debts (Matt. 6:15). By forgiving our debtors their debts we maintain peace between us and our brothers and sisters in God's family, and even with those who are not in the church. This is an exceedingly important lesson every believer must learn.

6. The Lord gave us an illustration about this in Matthew 18:21-35.

THE DISCIPLES' PRAYER

Lesson Eight

DO NOT BRING US INTO TRIAL

Burden to Impart:

While we live on earth for God's name, kingdom, and will, God's enemy, Satan, will try his hardest to discourage us and cause us to fall. We should not trust in ourselves to overcome him. Rather, we should realize that we are weak and should pray that we would not be brought into trial or temptation. The best way to overcome the enemy is by simply not being brought into temptation, by praying and watching.

Memory Verse: "And do not bring us into trial, but deliver us from the evil one" (Matthew 6:13a).

Facts to Teach:

1. The third matter we as God's children must pray for concerning our own need is that God would not bring us into trial, but would deliver us from the evil one, the Devil.

2. While we are standing with God for His interests (His name, His kingdom, and His will), Satan is standing against both God and us. Satan would like to give us a hard time to discourage us and cause us to turn away from God. Satan is God's enemy and Satan is our enemy. Because we are the ones God will use to stand against Satan and to defeat him he is constantly looking for a way to cause us harm and to make us stumble. He is like a hungry lion walking around looking for someone to devour (1 Pet. 5:8-9).

3. None of us are so strong. We should never trust in ourselves, in our own strength. The Bible warns us that pride and self-confidence goes before a fall (Prov. 16:18). When Adam and Eve were tempted by the evil one they both fell. When the Lord was tempted by the evil one in the wilderness He completely overcame him (Matt. 4:1-11). We, however, should pray to the Lord that He will keep us out of trials and temptations.

4. Peter was a self-confident disciple. He felt he was stronger than all the rest. He declared that even if all the other disciples forsook the Lord, he never would. He boasted that he would even die for the Lord (Matt. 26:31-35). However, all of his boasting and self-confidence meant nothing when the trial came. He became afraid, denied the Lord three times and miserably failed the test (Matt. 26:69-75).

5. The Lord tried to warn the disciples before the trial came. He told them to "watch and pray." They did not want to fail the Lord. They did not want to fall into the Devil's plot. Their spirit was indeed willing, but their (and our) flesh was weak (Matt. 26:41).

6. The best way to avoid falling into a well is to not walk around it. It would be helpful to the children to illustrate some temptations involving stealing, lying, disobeying, etc.

THE DISCIPLES' PRAYER

Lesson Nine

YOURS IS THE KINGDOM, AND THE POWER, AND THE GLORY

Burden to Impart:

The Lord taught us to declare and to praise God for His kingdom, His power, and His glory. We should never let Satan get us down and discouraged. We should never believe that Satan will win the battle, or that Satan has the power or will get the glory. NO! We are on the Lord's side so we praise Him and declare the facts to Satan. We will never be deceived or defeated by Satan, for we believe and declare that Jesus is the Lord!

Memory Verse: "For yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen" (Matt. 6:13).

Facts to Teach:

1. The first part of this model prayer is a three fold prayer unto God concerning His heart's desire - His Name, His kingdom, and His will taking their rightful place in the hearts and lives of men on this earth; that all the peoples on the earth would love and exalt Him (thus sanctifying His name), would submit to Him and live under His lordship (thus allowing His kingdom to come), and would fulfill all His desires and leading that His Spirit puts within their hearts (thus cooperating with Him so that His will can be done on the earth).

2. The second part of this model prayer is a threefold prayer unto God for our needs - our daily food supply (bread), forgiveness of our debts and sins (taking care of our relationship with God and others, and deliverance from temptation and Satan).

3. The third part of this model prayer is a threefold declaration and praise unto God because the kingdom, the power, and the glory are His, not Satan's.

4. A battle is raging over the earth between two kingdoms: the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan. Who will possess the earth? Under whose power will the earth be ruled? Who will be glorified upon this earth? God or Satan?

5. We do not need to wait to find out the answer, for we already know, for the Bible tells us. So we declare the answer and we give praise unto God. Because "His is the kingdom" we know that we will one day see the Lord Jesus reigning over all the earth. Because "His is the power" we know that one day soon Satan will be fully defeated and cast out from the earth and will bother us no more. Because "His is the glory" we know that one day we and all mankind will fully express our wonderful God, not the ugly, sinful self.

6. As we practice declaring these three wonderful facts and praising God according to them we will find that our heart is filled with faith and joy and strength. We will find that Satan and all of his bothering temptations are under our feet. We will find that all of our weaknesses are swallowed up by the Lord's strength! We will taste the reality that Jesus is Lord!

THE DISCIPLES' PRAYER

Lesson Ten

PRAYING IN THE LORD'S NAME

Burden to Impart:

As God's dear children we may pray in the Name of His Son, the Lord Jesus, concerning our every need and the needs of others (1 Tim. 2:1-4). Whatever we ask of God according to His will in the "Name of Jesus" (the highest name in the universe) will be heard by Him and answered, in His time, and according to His own wisdom.

Memory Verse: "And whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son" (John 14:13).

Facts to Teach:

1. The Lord Jesus encouraged us to make our needs and requests known to God (John 16:23-24). We express our faith in God through prayer.

2. God hears and answers our prayers only when they are "in the Name" of the Lord Jesus.

3. To pray in the Lord's Name means that we are one with Him; that is, we are in fellowship with Him. In order to be in fellowship with the Lord we must have a good conscience. Our conscience is kept clean and pure by confessing our sins to the Lord and allowing Him to forgive us and wash them away with His precious blood (Heb. 9:14; 1 John 1:7,9). If we do not sincerely confess any sin or offense that is bothering our conscience the Lord will not hear our prayer (Psa. 66:18).

4. To pray in the Lord's Name is to ask in the name of the highest One in the universe, the one to whom all authority is given and to whom every knee must bow and every tongue confess (Phil. 2:9-11).

5. His Name is like the key to open the door of heaven so our prayers will be heard and answered. The Father will always answer the prayer that is prayed in the Name of His Son.

6. The Lord showed His trust in us when He gave us authority to pray in His Name. This is like the trust a husband has in his wife. The wife has full authority to use the husband's name at the bank to withdraw money. Although she is not the husband, she can ask for all the money that he has in the bank, for she asks "in his name."

7. We may ask God for all our needs, as we saw in the disciples' prayer. Also we may ask for others' needs, for them to be saved, protected, and blessed.

8. Sometimes it seems that God does not hear or answer our prayers. He hears and answers every prayer, but oftentimes He answers in a different time or way than we expected so we don't even realize that He answered our prayer. For this reason when we pray we should also "watch" to see how God answers our prayers. Since we know He hears us we should always pray with "thanksgiving" (Phil. 4:7).

CHARACTER

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These lessons have been developed from the definitions and thoughts presented in the book entitled Character, by Witness Lee, published by the Living Stream Ministry in Anaheim, California.

CHARACTER

Lesson One

INTRODUCTION

Burden to Impart:

In this series of lessons we want to stress the matter of building up a proper character. Although we greatly desire the children to love the Lord and know His Word and His will, we also want to help them to be proper persons so that they may be useful to the Lord and serve Him to their greatest capacity. This depends on their character. The extent of their future usefulness to God depends on the extent of the building up within them of a usable character today.

Character is not mainly the disposition we receive by birth; it is even more the product of our acquired habits. What we daily and habitually practice eventually becomes our character. Therefore we should never neglect our daily living, for it is here that we build up both our habits and our character.

Memory Verse: "If therefore anyone cleanses himself from these, he will be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, useful to the master, prepared unto every good work"
(2 Timothy 2:21).

Facts to Teach:

1. The Bible tells us that God made man as a "vessel." God is the potter and we are the clay (Rom. 9:20-23). A useless lump of clay is not suddenly formed into a beautiful waterpot; it takes time, patience, and a lot of repetitive handling to produce a nice and useful shape. The clay goes around and around on the potter's wheel and is gradually shaped by his hand. So also our character is formed by our responses to God, our parents, and others.

2. While the clay is fresh and soft it can easily be shaped. As it sits out and gets dry it is harder to work with or shape. Once it is fired in the kiln its shape can never be changed; it can only be broken.

3. This is why the Bible tells us to love and remember our Creator in the days of our youth (Eccl. 12:1). While we are young we should allow the Lord to mold us and make us into a vessel of honor that can be useful to Him. As the years go by we develop old habits which are very hard to change. It is better to learn good habits, even the best habits, while we are young.

4. Most of the people that became very useful vessels to God began to have a good character shaped in them from their youth: Moses, Samuel, David, Daniel, Peter, John, Paul, Timothy, etc.

5. One example of a person who became useful to the Lord in His service is Timothy. Timothy's grandmother and mother (2 Tim. 1:5) taught him the Scriptures even while he was a babe (2 Tim. 3:15). Eventually he believed in the Lord Jesus and was saved. However, in

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CHARACTER

Lesson One (Continued)

order to become a man of God who was "complete, fully equipped for every good work" he needed much nourishment, as well as dealing, with his character by the Scriptures (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

6. Various types of vessels have various functions. But all vessels have one thing in common, they hold or contain something. God wants us to be persons who: 1) hold Him, 2) express Him to others, and 3) dispense Him to others.

- a. Hold Him--A proper vessel holds water (a paper cup). A useless vessel leaks water. (Punch a hole in the bottom of the cup with a pencil.) We should hold the Lord and the knowledge of His Word in our heart; like the prophet Samuel, who did not allow one word from the Lord to fall to the ground (1 Sam. 3:19); not like King Saul, who heard the Lord's word but later rejected it (1 Sam. 15:26).
- b. Express Him--A proper vessel expresses its contents (like a clear glass). A useless vessel gives a distorted expression (like tinted glass), or even worse, hides its contents completely (an opaque vessel).
- c. Dispense Him--A proper vessel has depth and a good spout (like a measuring cup). A useless vessel is shallow and cannot pour (like a flat plate).

CHARACTER

Lesson Two

GENUINE--BEING THE SAME WITHIN AND WITHOUT

Burden to Impart:

As Christians we should be the most genuine people in our character. On the one hand we should never be deceiving, dishonest, or false. On the other hand we should always be honest, true, and genuine. In ancient times the stage actors changed roles by changing their masks. By covering up their real face with a mask they could pretend they were someone else. These were called the "hypocrites." As God's children, we should not be false or liars; we should not be actors, hypocrites, or pretenders. We must practice to be sincere, honest, truthful, and the same within as what we express without. We should be genuine. In this way we will be persons who can make the reality of Christ know and believed by others.

Memory Verse: "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in Thy sight, Oh Lord, my strength, and my redeemer" (Psalm 19:14).

Facts to Teach:

1. As Christians we should be the most genuine people in our character. On the negative side, we should never be deceiving, dishonest, or false. On the positive side we should be genuine, honest, true, and real.

2. As Christians, we are testifying to all people that the Lord Jesus is real, that He rose from the dead, and He lives in us. In order for our testimony to be believed by others they must see that we are genuine in our faith. They will judge what we are on the inside by what they see on the outside, in our conduct.

3. In ancient times the stage actors would change their role by simply changing their mask. By covering up their real face with a mask they could pretend they were someone else. These were called "hypocrites."

4. When we cover up the truth in any way--by lying, pretending, deceiving, telling only part of the story, leaving out something that should not be left out, etc. we are not being genuine. We are being untrue, unreal, false, pretentious--a "hypocrite."

5. Everything and everyone that is not genuine will eventually be exposed, for they are not real. Time eventually causes what is on the inside to be seen, and what is on the outside to fall away. People who are not genuine may be well-liked at first, but later on they are not much respected. Counterfeit money is not usually discovered right away. Later on, however, it is found to be worth nothing and is thrown away or burned.

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CHARACTER

Lesson Two (Continued)

6. Everything and everyone that is genuine will eventually be proved by time. The passing of time never changes what is genuine. Rather, it shows its true nature. The gold-plated ring that is actually made of cheap brass looks pretty if you don't wear it. However, if you wear it, it will eventually wear off the gold-plating on the surface. Then the brass will turn your finger green.

7. As God's children, we should not be false or liars. We should not be actors, hypocrites, or pretenders. We must practice to be sincere, to be honest, to be truthful, to be the same within as what we express without. We should be genuine. In this way we will be persons who can make the reality of Christ known and believed on by others.

8. Some illustrations of genuineness and falsehood:

- a. Judas' kiss and friendship was not genuine (Matt. 26:49-50). Jesus' was.
- b. Ananias' and Sapphira's consecration was not genuine. Barnabas' was (Acts 4:34--5:5).

CHARACTER

Lesson Three

EXACT--BEING ABSOLUTELY ACCURATE

Burden to Impart:

The most basic area to build up in our character is genuineness, which includes honesty, sincerity, and truthfulness. The next area to build upon genuineness is exactness. It is very rare to find a person who is exact in his character. The degree of exactness we have in our character can be measured by the accuracy of our words, the quality of our work, and the degree of punctuality we practice. A person whose words are accurate is dependable; a person whose work is done with exactness is trustworthy; and a person who is punctual does not procrastinate.

Memory Verse: "A false balance is (an) abomination to the Lord,
but a just weight is His delight" (Proverbs 11:1).

Facts to Teach:

1. Being genuine, honest, and truthful is the most basic character that we should possess in order to be a vessel unto honor, one that can be usable to the Lord. In other words, in our daily life this is the area we should always be the most watchful over; never saying anything that is not true and genuine, never doing anything that is false or pretentious.

2. The next area of our character that must be built up is exactness. If we are not exact with respect to time, words, and our work we may cause others to even doubt if we are genuine, that is, honest, sincere, and real.

3. To be exact is very difficult and requires us to be absolutely accurate. This requires more carefulness and effort from us. For this reason most people take the easier, lazier way of doing things.

4. Three areas in which to build up exactness are:

- a. Time--If one is exact in his awareness of time he will be punctual. He will have things done on time. Most people are not careful managers of their time. This causes them to be late to appointments, meetings, etc. The only way to be exact in time (to be punctual) is to not procrastinate, that is, to not put off for later what we should do now. In order to be punctual, one must plan to be a little early.
- b. Words--Our words must be accurate. Although some people are not purposely lying or deceiving, they seem to be because their words are not accurate. Therefore they are not dependable. We must be careful with our words not to exaggerate (make something bigger or greater than it actually is). We must be especially careful with numbers.
- c. Work--Most people do not to an exact job when they work, therefore their work is not very trustworthy. They feel

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CHARACTER

Lesson Three (Continued)

that if they completed 90% of the job then that is good enough. They do things just good enough to get by. They do not do things carefully and thoroughly. This is due to carelessness and laziness. A good worker will do exactly what he is supposed to do. It will be done 100%

5. An illustration of exactness is the good shepherd who knew exactly how many sheep he had. He carefully counted and thus knew that one was missing. He went and searched for the lost sheep until he found it (Luke 15:4). Our Lord Jesus is very exact. He found each one of us.

CHARACTER

Lesson Four

STRICT--TAKING MATTERS SERIOUSLY

Burden to Impart:

In this lesson we see that we need to build up a character that is strict, with an attitude that takes matters seriously, not carelessly or loosely. We should not simply take the most convenient way of doing things. We should do things in the proper way, even though it may require more effort and carefulness. This requires strictness. Strictness is the secret of the best students. Strictness is the necessary character in every soldier if his army is to win the war. Because of looseness Samson told the secret of his great strength to Delilah and was then defeated by his enemies (Judg. 16:4-21). Because of strictness the Israelites were able to completely defeat their enemies and destroy the great walled city of Jericho (Josh. 6:1-5, 12-16, 20).

Heb 8:5 - "that you make all things according to the pattern that was shown to you in the mountain tabernacle"
Memory Verse: "Not in the way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers; but ^{the} as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from ^{mountain} the heart" (Ephesians 6:6).

Facts to Teach:

1. The secret of a strict person is that he takes things seriously. Anything we count as important and take seriously will not be handled in a careless, loose, or irresponsible way. It will be handled very carefully and strictly.

2. By nature we are "loose." By practice and training we may become tightened up in our character and in our way of doing things. Our shoestrings become loose with no effort. To keep them tied and tight requires strictness and watchfulness.

3. Without training people are "easy-going" and do things in whatever way seems to be the most convenient and easiest. Because they are loose, and not strict, they consider their convenience to be more important than the effort that is required to do their job in a strict way. Some hospitals require the surgeons to scrub their hands and forearms for ten minutes before surgery, even though they wear sterile gloves and gowns which cover their hands and arms during the operation. A good doctor is one who is strict, who does things properly. He would never scrub for nine minutes just to "save time." He would always scrub the full ten minutes to thoroughly remove all the germs from his hands and arms.

4. To fight a war, the soldiers must be trained to be strict in everything they do, from shining their shoes to not even saying one word concerning secret information they may know about. They must be trained to handle everything seriously, for many lives depend upon how seriously and strictly they do their job. Some examples are:

- a. The night guard must not become drowsy or sleep.

(Continued)

CHARACTER

Lesson Four (Continued)

- b. Those with top secret information must not speak a word about what they know to anyone, neither family, wife, or friend.
- c. Orders must be strictly followed.
- 5. The best student is not usually the smartest student in the class, it is the strictest student in the class.
 - a. They will study when they are supposed to and will stop when they have finished the assignment, not when they feel bored or tired.
 - b. A strict student will not consider that he has finished studying just because he finished the homework. He considers he has finished studying when he *understands* the subject thoroughly.
- 6. Some examples of looseness and strictness are:
 - a. Samson became loose and told the secret of his great strength to Delilah, the woman he loved (Judg. 16:421). After she discovered that his long hair was the secret to his strength, she cut his hair while he slept. His enemies then came, bound him, put out his eyes, and led him away captive.
 - b. The children of Israel were given very strict orders how to fight the strong walled city of Jericho. Due to their strictness they fought and defeated Jericho.

CHARACTER

Lesson Five

DILIGENT--NOT SLOTHFUL

Burden to Impart:

All those who love the Lord should exercise themselves to build up a diligent character, for diligence is the most important characteristic of a servant of the Lord. Because laziness issues from self-love and self-pity we should strongly stand against any laziness in our character or work. Laziness robs our time and leads us to poverty and begging (Prov. 20:4). We should learn from the bees and the ants in God's creation who work diligently each day and even store up something for tomorrow (Prov. 6:6-11) or to give to someone who is in need (Eph. 4:28). Diligence should be the characteristic that describes our way of life and work.

Memory Verse: "And we sent with them our brother, whom we have proved to be diligent in many things, many times...." (2 Corinthians 8:22).

Facts to Teach:

1. The most important characteristic of a servant of the Lord is diligence. Diligence is the word that describes the character of his service and work. Diligence includes earnestness, thoroughness, perseverance, and carefulness. When one does a task with his heart and interest in it, he will do it with diligence. In order to be useful to the Master every servant of the Lord must be diligent.

2. Laziness is the opposite of diligence. Laziness is condemned in the Bible. Laziness results from self-love and self-pity. The Bible puts laziness together with gluttony and sleep (Tit. 1:12) because this is all that the lazy person wants to do.

3. The lazy person finds any excuse not to work. "The sluggard (lazy person) will not plow by reason of the cold, therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing" (Prov. 20:4). Because of his desire to sleep and rest instead of work, the lazy person is brought to poverty (Prov. 6:10-11). This is often the reason people steal things, because they are too lazy to work for them. This is why the Apostle Paul said, "Let him who steals steal no more, but rather let him labor, working with his own hands that which is good, that he may have to share with him who has need" (Eph. 4:28).

4. Two examples of a diligent worker in the insect kingdom are the ant and the bee. Both the ant and the bee are hard workers. They are always going, moving, and working. They do not just work enough to feed themselves for each day. They work hard enough to get a little extra food. Then they carefully store it up in their home so that they can have something to eat when the cold winter comes. The Bible tells the lazy person to go to learn from the diligent ant (Prov. 6:6-11).

5. The diligent person will gradually prosper. "In all labor

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CHARACTER

Lesson Five (Continued)

there is profit" (Prov. 14:23). He will prosper in wealth, in knowledge and wisdom, and in spiritual riches as well, Diligence builds up a reserve.

6. The woman who lost one of her silver coins searched diligently until she found it (Luke 15:8). If she only looked for the lost coin in a lazy way she never would have found it. But she lit a lamp, swept, and looked diligently until she found it.

7. Joseph diligently stored up the extra grain in Egypt during the seven years of plenty. Then when the seven terrible years of drought and famine followed, none of the people in Egypt died of hunger. Neither did Joseph or his family, the Jews. The diligence of the younger brother saved his family's lives.

Ideas:

1. Have a treasure hunt.
2. Slothbusters--Have each child do at least one thing during the week without being told. This should be something he does not already do without being reminded.

CHARACTER

Lesson Six

BROAD--HAVING A WIDE PERSPECTIVE

Burden to Impart:

We need a broad heart that has a wide perspective. We need a heart that is as God's heart: broad, concerned for all people, regardless of their temperament, race, class, grade, or age. We should not respect some people and despise others. If the rich person "mocks the poor" he "reproaches his Maker" (Prov. 17:5). His heart is too narrow; he only appreciates those who are like himself, rich. As Christians, we should not "have the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ with respect of persons" (James 2:1). We should see the whole picture concerning people and things, not only the small view that concerns or benefits ourselves. We should not be like a frog sitting in a well who only sees a small, tiny sky. We should be like the eagle upon a mountain that beholds the whole earth. We should have a large heart and we should have a broad character.

Memory Verse: "And God gave Solomon...largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea shore" (1 Kings 4:29).

Facts to Teach:

1. If we are to become vessels that are "useful to the master, prepared unto every good work" (2 Tim. 2:21) we must be broad in our character. If we only know to be exact, strict, and diligent, we may possibly become a narrow person. We may become tight toward others, even selfish and stingy.

2. We need a wide perspective that can see the complete scenery, the whole situation around us. Then we can have largeness of heart like King Solomon had (1 Kings 4:29), who built the greatest temple for the Lord that has ever been built upon this earth. A narrow, petty person could never accomplish great works.

3. An example of a bird with a narrow view is the ostrich. The ostrich cannot fly at all. It always stays on the earth with its head toward the ground, looking for some berries or food. An example of a bird with a broad view is the eagle. The eagle soars high above the earth and makes its nest in the mountaintops so it can have a complete view of everything below.

4. Because God's heart is so broad His love is for ALL people. He sends His sunshine and rain on the good people as well as the evil. Man's heart and love are very narrow compared to God's. If we were in control, we would only send the sunshine and the rain to those people who treated us well and respected us. We would probably send darkness and drought to those who did not respect us, love us, and treat us well. Thank God for His broad heart!

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CHARACTER

Lesson Six (Continued)

5. Because God's heart is so broad it is open to people of every type: kind and unkind, selfish and generous, educated and uneducated, smart and ignorant, cultured and barbarians, young and old. Because He is willing to save all, He is called the "Savior of all men" (1 Tim. 4:10).

6. Because God's heart is so broad, He is concerned with the whole earth, the whole world. The Lord Jesus not only died for the sins of those who would believe in Him, but for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2). Although the Lord Jesus was a man of the Jewish race, He was not concerned only for His own race. He came to be the Savior to Jews, Greeks, Chinese, Americans, Mexicans, etc. He truly is "the Savior of the world" (John 4:42).

7. Although the Apostle Paul was a Jew and loved his fellow kinsmen so much that he would have liked to use all of his energy and life to reach all of them with the gospel (he would even have gladly died for them, Rom. 9:2-3), he spent most of his energy and even gave up his life to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, those who were not Jews. Because of Paul's faithfulness to God and broadness of character, the gospel has reached us, the Gentiles, today (see 1 Cor. 9:19-22).

8. We should have the same kind of heart as our God, a broad heart. Do we only appreciate those who are like us and avoid those who are different? Do we only have room in our heart for a few but no concern for the rest? Do we only play with "our own kind" and coldly reject others? Do we only like the strong and despise the weaker ones? Do we like the "smart" and have no respect for someone else who is not so smart?

9. If our heart is large, if our view and perspective is broad, we will have a loving concern and genuine interest for all, not just for a select few who please us and fit our taste. We will not just look at a part of the picture (that narrow part which our small, selfish eye can see), but at the whole picture. God's desire is that "all men should be saved and come to the full knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4). To cooperate with Him in His great plan we need to be very broad in our character. Our heart needs to be enlarged to embrace the entire earth and all men.

CHARACTER

Lesson Seven

FINE--NOT CARELESS OR NEGLIGENT

Burden to Impart:

We should practice in everything to build up a fine and careful character. A sloppy, careless, or negligent character will cause us to lose some benefit in everything we do. Although the Lord Jesus was broad in His character and generous to feed over 5,000 people, He was also fine and careful to afterward pick up the scraps and leftovers in 12 baskets (Matt. 14:14-21). He did not litter or waste. He was fine in everything He did. The Lord Jesus was fine in His care of people, even caring for the little children and babies (Matt. 19:13; Luke 18:15). Even after the greatest event that ever happened on this earth, His resurrection and victory over death, He carefully folded His grave clothes and placed them neatly in the tomb before leaving (John 20:7)! As the Lord's children and followers we must build up a fine and careful character so that we can be useful to Him.

Memory Verse: "That the word might be fulfilled which He spoke, Of those whom You have given Me, I have not lost one" (John 18:9).

Facts to Teach:

1. Although we should be broad in our character and see things with a wide perspective we must not be careless, negligent, or sloppy concerning any details. We must see the whole picture, yet we must not overlook any part of the picture. We must be broad and at the same time fine.

2. An example of this in nature is the eagle. The eagle flies high above the earth and makes its nest in the mountains. The eagle can see a very great view of all the earth beneath, yet it will not miss a tiny mouse running through a field far below. It has a broad view, yet a fine sight, at the same time.

3. By reading the Gospels we can see that the Lord Jesus was broad as well as fine. In everything the Lord Jesus handled, whether people or things, He handled them finely, not sloppily, carelessly, or negligently.

a. His feeding the hungry multitudes that followed Him showed His broadness and generosity. His gathering up of the scraps and leftovers into baskets shows His fineness (Matt. 14:14-21).

b. The disciples only paid attention to the adults and had no consideration for the young children. They were rough in their dealing with the Lord's followers. The Lord Jesus, however, cared not only for the adults, but for the little children (Matt. 19:13-15), and even for the babies (Luke 18:15)! The Lord Jesus is very fine and careful about all of His followers, not overlooking even the smallest ones.

c. After three long days in the tomb and a mighty, victorious resurrection, the Lord Jesus did not leave a sloppy pile

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CHARACTER

Lesson Seven (Continued)

of grave clothes in the cave in order to get out faster. The Scriptures record that: "the handkerchief which was on His head" was found "folded up in a place apart" (John 20:7).

4. When we clean things it is easy to do a general cleaning. To clean finely requires a careful character. When most children clean their room they don't clean under the bed. Rather, they sometimes hide things under the bed. When most people clean a floor they don't carefully clean the corners. The following story is a good illustration.

An elderly man had a very messy, dirty basement which needed cleaning. There was very little light in the basement. He hid a \$50 gold coin in the dirtiest corner under some junk. He then asked one young grandson to clean the basement and promised to pay him \$5. He told him that if he found anything particularly interesting or valuable to let him know. The grandson finished his job, though he did not do a very careful or fine job, and came for the promised \$5. When his grandfather asked him if he had found anything especially interesting or valuable he replied that he hadn't.

A short while later the grandfather offered \$5 to another grandson to clean the basement and gave him the same instructions as the first. This grandson did a very careful job of cleaning and straightening the basement. He even got a lamp so he could clean the dirty corners well. While he was cleaning he found the \$50 gold coin! When he completed his work he came to his grandfather and showed him the \$50 gold coin he had found in the corner. His grandfather smiled, for he knew that this grandson had truly done a careful and fine job. He gave him the \$5 he had promised and then told him, "You may keep the gold coin also. It is your reward for doing such a fine and careful job."

CHARACTER

Lesson Eight

STABLE--STEADY, NOT EASILY MOVED OR CHANGED AND NOT PANICKY

Burden to Impart:

In order to finish what we begin we must have a stable character. We must begin things based on a clear understanding, a proper decision, and a sure sense that we are doing what we should be doing, what God desires and wills. Then we will have the inner strength to not be moved or changed by difficulties or adversities in our environment. Sometimes circumstances are difficult; sometimes people may oppose or attempt to frustrate us; sometimes we feel downright discouraged. But we may develop stability in our character by continuing on to accomplish what we started. We have the examples of the Lord Jesus and the Apostle Paul before us to encourage us to "press on" (Phil. 3:14). Also, when we pray to the Lord and ask Him for His help, He will encourage us and strengthen us from within (Phil. 4:13).

Memory Verse: "...My beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord"
(1 Corinthians 15:58).

Facts to Teach:

1. A person who lightly makes decisions, then quickly changes their mind afterward or drops their decisions, is *fickle*. (We should not be fickle, 2 Cor. 1:17). A person who suddenly becomes very upset and emotionally excited over unexpected adversity or problems is *panicky*. A person is *stable* if they make their decisions only after adequate consideration and with a sure sense of God's will.

2. Because a steady person makes clear decisions they are not easily moved or changed. They move straight ahead in their actions regardless of difficulties, adversities, problems, or changes in the environment. This is because their action and direction is determined by a clear understanding and a firm decision. Such a person will be able to reach his goal eventually.

3. An example in nature of instability is the reed (Matt. 11:7). In whatever direction the wind blows, the reed bends. It constantly changes its position. It has no inward fiber or strength of its own (it is hollow) so it bends quickly according to its environment. The mountains, or the Rock of Gibraltar, are positive examples of something stable and immovable.

4. Some people are unchangeable in the wrong kind of way. Such a person is simply stubborn, obstinate, bull-headed, or stiff-necked. Their decision is not based on clear understanding and sound judgment. Rather, it is based on emotional feelings and a stubborn will. Such a person is not stable in the least. Rather, they are temperamental.

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CHARACTER

Lesson Eight (Continued)

5. The Lord Jesus was absolutely stable so He was able to fully carry out all the work His Father had prepared for Him to complete during the 3 1/2 years of His ministry. He never wasted time or veered off course.

When the time had come for the Lord to go up to Jerusalem he "steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem" (Luke 9:51). While the Lord journeyed toward Jerusalem some Pharisees threatened him, saying, "Get out and go from here, for Herod wants to kill you" (Luke 13:31). The Lord was not frightened or threatened. With unchanging stability He answered, "I must journey" (Luke 13:33).

6. The Apostle Paul was also an extremely stable and immovable person. Although many Jews persecuted him, beat him with rods, stoned him, and threatened to kill him, he would not be stopped from preaching about Christ. Neither could hunger, lack of food, nakedness, or even shipwrecks cause Paul to change his course. In chains and in prison Paul testified, "I am set for the defense of the gospel" (Phil. 1:16).

7. In all important matters of our life we must develop a stable, immovable character. Beginning while we are young we can build up this quality. Sometimes we may need help from our parents and others so we can make the proper decisions. Many times we need "help" from the Lord (His inward supply and strengthening) so we can carry out the decisions we make. In this way we can develop a stable character.

8. Completing what we begin helps develop stability, such as: household chores, projects, learning an instrument, and most of all, completing our education.

CHARACTER

Lesson Nine

DEEP--SEARCHING DOWNWARD AND DIGGING DEEPER, NOT BEING SUPERFICIAL

Burden to Impart:

In order to properly understand people, situations, and things we need a deep character. We should not know and judge people and things based upon their outward appearance, but rather by their inward condition. We should not be shallow people who can be easily deceived because we believe whatever we are told. In this world many people tell lies and try to deceive others. We should be deep in our character; we should look deeper than the surface of what people say or we can see; we should dig down, investigate, and research things carefully so we can make an accurate judgment. People who are shallow are easily fooled. People who are shallow only make superficial observations and therefore pass on inaccurate judgments and conclusions to others. The Lord Jesus warned His disciples not to be led astray by some false ones who would say, "I am the Christ" (Matt. 24:5). He also warned us to "beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but within are ravenous wolves" (Matt. 7:15). We must not be satisfied by what we see on the surface (the sheep's clothing). We must find out what is inside.

Memory Verse: "But the Lord said...Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature...For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7).

Facts to Teach:

1. To know the real nature of a matter one must look deeper than the surface. If we make an evaluation of something by only looking at it on the surface we will draw a wrong conclusion. Some examples are:

- a. Sometimes people try to sell a car that looks good on the outside, but has a bad motor on the inside.
- b. Sometimes a very good book (like the Bible) has an inexpensive and unattractive cover. Don't judge a book by its cover!
- c. A person with a speech impediment may sound stupid, but they may be a very intelligent person.

2. A person who is not deep in their character is shallow and makes superficial observations. Superficial observations lead to a wrong and foolish understanding. For example, if someone brought a piece of valuable looking jewelry to a jeweler in order to sell it to him, a wise jeweler would not believe that the item was genuine until he had carefully examined it, weighed it, and maybe even

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CHARACTER

Lesson Nine (Continued)

drilled a tiny hole into it to make sure it was solid gold, not just gold-plated. A foolish jeweler would just look at its beauty, believe the seller's word, and buy it.

3. We, as Christians, should be deep in our character, searching and investigating things carefully so that we will have proper discernment and accurate judgment.

a. The Lord Jesus told those who believe in Him that they should go on to know and abide in His word. Then they would know the truth and would truly be His disciples (John 8:31-32). We should not trust that we already know the truth. We should dig and search in God's Word to learn the truth.

b. The Lord Jesus warned us not to trust everyone or believe everyone's words. He said false prophets would come. They would pretend to be God's servants and pretend to speak God's Word from the Bible, but they would not really be Christians nor would they really be speaking God's Word. Rather, they would speak their own ideas and concepts. They would be like wolves who are hiding under sheep's clothing (Matt. 7:15). They would pretend to be God's people (sheep). Actually, they would be from the Devil (the wolf). They wouldn't come to feed God's people with His Word of truth, they would come to kill God's people with their lies and falsehood.

4. All young people should learn to be deep in their character. This will make them discerning in their observations and wise in their judgments. Many people are not truthful; many people are not honest; rather, they are deceitful and cheating. They must learn to not just believe people's words or trust in their outward appearance. They must learn to look closer at all of the facts, to listen closer to all of the details.

CHARACTER

Lesson Ten

PATIENT--BEING ABLE TO WAIT AND NOT BEING ANXIOUS

Burden to Impart:

Patience is necessary to gain the benefit of our endeavors. Patience is the ability to wait without anxiety for something you want now, or expect but do not as yet see or possess. The unseen factor of time is necessary for many things to be accomplished. A patient person is not anxious while waiting for what he desires. Neither is he idle or lazy. A patient person is diligently doing today what can be done today, and is calmly waiting for what will come later. Those whom God has been able to use to cooperate with Him to fulfill His purpose on earth have all been people of faith (believing His Word and promises) and patience (waiting for Him to fulfill what He has spoken).

Memory Verse: "That you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience are inheriting the promises" (Hebrews 6:12).

Facts to Teach:

1. In order to cultivate and develop the eight items of character that we have studied (being genuine, exact, strict, diligent, broad, fine, stable, and deep) we must have patience. Patience is the ability to calmly wait for something we want now or expect to come, but do not yet see or possess.

2. Patience takes into account the importance of one great factor--time. For a person to be patient does not imply that he is passive, lazy, or slow. A patient person, on the contrary, is a person who has a goal before him and is working steadfastly toward his goal. However, he realizes that anxiety, worry, haste, or excessive pressure will not help him reach his goal, for the time factor must be taken into account. Everything is not merely a matter of work and effort. In many cases time is an important factor to achieve the desired outcome.

3. An excellent example of patience is seen in the farmer. A farmer plows the soil, plants and waters the seed, and then waits. He patiently waits while time does its work. However, he does not wait in an idle way. He works diligently; weeding, fertilizing, spraying for insects, etc. He has much to do to nurture and protect his crop. But for the growth and maturity of the crop a certain amount of time is needed. For the farmer, waiting is normal.

4. One of the hardest "lessons" for a young person to learn is patience. A baby is the most impatient person. The moment the baby feels hunger he screams. To the baby who has only lived a few days, to wait five minutes seems like a long time. To a hundred-year-old man, however, even five hours is not very long, because he has lived through hundreds of thousands of hours.

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CHARACTER

Lesson Ten (Continued)

5. Those whom God has been able to use to fulfill His purpose have all been people who through faith and patience have cooperated with Him to inherit His promises (Heb. 6:12).

- a. Noah, being warned of a coming flood, labored diligently 120 years to build the ark. This required much patience, but finally the flood came.
- b. Abraham and Sarah waited patiently 25 years for God to fulfill the promise He had given them to have a son (Heb. 6:15).
- c. In order for the children of Israel to enter the promised land, Moses needed to patiently endure for 40 years while they wandered in the desert.

6. We learn patience when we must wait for something that we want to have right now but cannot have until later. In the meantime, we should learn to occupy ourselves with the things we should be doing now, instead of anxiously wasting the time we have to wait. Some examples are:

- a. If ice cream is served at 8:00 p.m., rather than anxiously watching the clock, it is better to do something to occupy oneself.
- b. If you cannot drive a car until 16 years of age, study the driver's manual and learn the rules and laws beforehand.
- c. If you want to have a new bicycle, start saving for it as you wait.

CHILDREN OF THE HEAVENLY FATHER

INTRODUCTION

The Overall Perspective

When the Lord taught His disciples the constitution of the kingdom of the heavens in Matthew 5-7, He spoke to them as though they were already regenerated sons of God. He taught them that God was their "Father" (Matt. 5:48; 6:1, 4, 6, 8, 9, 14-15, 18, 32; 7:11). According to time, however, they were not actually regenerated until after His resurrection, about three years later (John 20:17).

Although the children of the saints are "holy" (1 Cor. 9:14) positionally, they are still unsaved and unregenerated dispositionally until they receive the Lord Jesus as their personal Savior (John 20:31). We hope that through the teaching of the Word they will become "wise unto salvation" (2 Tim. 3:15).

As we teach each lesson, on the one hand we must impress the children in a positive way that God is their dear, loving, faithful, and trustworthy Father. This is to encourage them from the perspective of their position. On the other hand, we want to impress them with God's standard, requirement, and righteousness. This is to warn them, make them sober and aware of their need of Jesus as their Savior and Lord. This is from the perspective of their actual condition, for many of them may not yet be born again.

CHILDREN OF THE HEAVENLY FATHER

Lesson One

THE HAIRS OF YOUR HEAD ARE ALL NUMBERED

Burden to Impart:

Our heavenly Father values us more than we could ever imagine.

Memory Verse: "But even the hairs of your head are all numbered"
(Matthew 10:30).

Facts to Teach:

1. Since this is the first lesson of this series we must firstly teach the children about the Fatherhood of God.
 - a. Because God is the Creator, He is the source and origin of all life in the universe (Psa. 36:9; John 1:4).
 - b. Because God has given life to all intelligent beings--both heavenly (angelic) and earthly (human)--He is the "Father of every family in the heavens and on the earth" (Eph. 3:15).
 - c. When we receive God's Word and believe in God's Son (Rom. 10:8-9; John 1:12-13), we are born of Him and He becomes our Father in a very special way. Then God the Creator becomes our heavenly Father.
2. After teaching this first point the foundation is laid to infuse and impress the children with the objective of the lesson--the Father values us.
 - a. We always keep a careful account and a close watch on everything we value and love.
 - b. Although the shepherd has 100 sheep, he counts all of them (Luke 15:4-6) and knows all of them (John 10:14, 27).
 - c. Although a man may be very rich and could lose count of all of his riches and possessions, he could never forget the number of children he has, or their names.
 - d. Although there is a world full of people, our heavenly Father knows us, loves us, and values us to such an extent that even the hairs on your head are numbered.

Lesson dialogue:

How important are you? Do you know that you are very important? Who loves you the most? Your mother? No. Even your dearest, dearest friend--would he or she love you enough to count all the hairs of your head? No. It would take months to do. And then, would you count his or hers?

But our hairs are all numbered by our heavenly Father. And not only ours, but those of every one of His children. He cares for you from your head to your feet. Everything about you is important to Him, even every hair upon your head.

He also knows how many steps we take (Job 14:16). He is counting every step, waiting for us to come to Him. The most important steps we take in our whole life are the ones we take coming to our Father God. So our Father waits and counts every step we take.

CHILDREN OF THE HEAVENLY FATHER

Lesson Two

CONSIDER THE LILIES

Burden to Impart:

As children of the heavenly Father we should not worry or be anxious.

Memory Verse: "And why are you anxious concerning clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they do not toil, neither do they spin" (Matthew 6:28).

Facts to Teach:

1. As human beings, whether young or old, we all experience anxiety and worry. This is neither healthy nor pleasant. However, neither is it necessary. Anxiety comes from the human life. Because our human life is mortal, it also is fragile and causes us feelings of insecurity, uncertainty, and fear. This causes anxiety. Also, because our human life is unable to foresee or prevent outward circumstances that may arise to threaten us or harm us, we become anxious and worry.

2. However, because we are children of the heavenly Father, we actually do not need to worry (Matt. 6:26). We are of great value to Him. Not only did He give us our life, He maintains our life. He will take care of both our inward need (what we shall eat and drink) and our outward need (our clothing, etc.). The birds have neither the intelligence nor the ability to build barns to store up their food, yet after thousands and thousands of years they are still on the earth. The heavenly Father provides for their nourishment each day.

3. God does not even forget about the grass' need. The grass covers the dry ground but it is so ordinary and plain. God has provided the beautiful lilies to clothe the grass and beautify it. There are many lilies on the shores of Galilee. They are a common flower in Palestine, growing in the deep broad valleys (S.S. 2:1) and even in the thorny shrubs (2:2) and pastures of the desert (2:16; 6:3). Our Lord took note of these and compared them to the gorgeous robes of King Solomon. Therefore, many were brilliant in color (scarlet, as in Song of Songs 5:13). They did not toil, nor spin, yet they grew and were beautiful.

4. So, if our heavenly Father would take care of the life of the birds (which are not worth very much) and even clothe the ordinary grass of the fields (which is worth even less) with the beautiful lilies--how much more He would take care of us, His dear children, and all of our needs! To worry and to be anxious is an insult to Him. We should simply trust in Him.

5. A story illustrating the Father's care for us: There was once a poor Dutch widow who had four little children to care for, the oldest being a boy of eight years. One evening she had no bread to give them. They all knelt down while she prayed, for she

(Continued)

CHILDREN OF THE HEAVENLY FATHER

Lesson Two (Continued)

trusted in God. Then her 8-year-old boy said, "The Bible tells us that God sent ravens to take food to a good man." "Yes," answered the mother. Dirk said, "I'm going to open the door so they can fly in." So he did.

The bright light from the lamp shone out into the darkness. The Dutch magistrate saw the light and stopped to look in. He saw a very clean and tidy room with the little family. He said, "Why is your door open, since it is so late at night?"

The mother told him that her little Dirk had prayed that the ravens might fly in and bring some bread. Now, it just so happened that the magistrate was dressed all in black, with a black hat. The children said, "He is a big raven." "Yes," said the magistrate. He brought them a large supply of bread and food. They went to bed knowing that God cares for his own children.

CHILDREN OF THE HEAVENLY FATHER

Lesson Three

YOU ARE THE SALT OF THE EARTH

Burden to Impart:

As children of the heavenly Father, we are different than the worldly people.

Memory Verse: "You are the salt of the earth, but if the salt has become tasteless, with what shall it be salted? It is no longer good for anything but to be cast out and trampled underfoot by men" (Matthew 5:13).

Facts to Teach:

1. What is salt used for? Salt is mainly used for putting taste into food when it is cooked. Without salt, food is tasteless and cannot be enjoyed. Also, salt is used for preserving food so that it will not spoil and rot. Before the refrigerator was invented the most common way to preserve meat was to dry it out and heavily salt it.

2. Ever since Adam sinned, the whole world has begun to corrupt. All people sin and disobey God. They ignore God's Word and do whatever they want to, whether it is right or wrong. The more a person sins the more corrupt they become. In God's eyes they become rotten.

3. As children of the heavenly Father we are different. We are the salt of the earth. Just as the presence of salt prevents meat from rotting, we as God's children influence the world of people around us to help preserve the world from being totally corrupt and sinful.

4. Sometimes our friends and classmates want us to do something with them that is not right, or something that is not pleasing to God. At times they even want us to do something with them that is sinful. We should not go along with them. Rather, we should be different. Don't be afraid to be different! Don't be ashamed to be different! You are different! You are children of the heavenly Father; you are the salt of the earth.

5. Two scriptural examples are:

- a. A warning example of a woman who did not obey God's Word to forget the sinful world, not even to look back at it, is Lot's wife. When she looked back at Sodom (the very sinful city where she had come from and where all her friends, etc. were) she became a "pillar of salt"--she was good for nothing (Gen. 19:17, 26).
- b. A positive, inspiring example of some children being different than the rest are Daniel and his friends, who would not eat the meat sacrificed to idols (Dan. 1:8) nor bow down to the idols (Dan. 3:1-18). They were very different, even at the risk of their lives. But God was with them and preserved them. Dare to be a Daniel.

Song: Dare to Be a Daniel

CHILDREN OF THE HEAVENLY FATHER

Lesson Four

LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE BEFORE MEN

Burden to Impart:

As children of the heavenly Father we should let our life be a testimony.

Memory Verse: "You are the light of the world...Thus let your light shine before men, so that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in the heavens"
(Matthew 5:14a, 16).

Facts to Teach:

1. All the physical universe was at one time just darkness, until God said, "Let there be light" (Gen. 1:3). So all light comes from God. This is why He is called the "Father of the lights" (James 1:17). Darkness is just the absence of light. But light overcomes darkness.

2. In the same way that the physical universe was darkness until God created the light, all the world of mankind was in darkness until one day God came into the world as a man. The Lord Jesus once said, "I am the light of the world; he who follows me shall by no means walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12).

3. When we believe in the Lord Jesus and receive the Lord Jesus He begins to shine in us, to enlighten our understanding, and to change our way of thinking. Because we are children of the heavenly Father we are like His is, and we become the light of the world. Because we are not ignorant of God (Eph. 4:18), because we are the sons of light (1 Thes. 5:5), we think, feel, and act differently than the rest of the world, which is in darkness (Eph. 4:17).

4. Because the people around us are in darkness and do not know Christ, they do things that are wrong and sinful. They might not even care if what they do is right or wrong, good or bad. They only hope no one will catch them in it. They might even pretend that they are happy when they do these things. Actually, inside their hearts they are not happy, they are sad. But they do not know how to be different. They are in darkness. They are ignorant. They do not know God. They are not children of the heavenly Father.

5. We must let the light that is in us shine to them. By our actions, our words, our reactions, our attitudes, and our behavior--our "good works"--those around us will realize that we are children of the heavenly Father. As they see our "good works" they will give thanks and glory to our heavenly Father, for when people have the light shining they are happy and feel blessed. Surely that was a happy day when the time of darkness in the universe ended. Surely, when those around us who are in ignorance and darkness see the wonderful light of our heavenly Father shining out through the way we live and walk, it will be even a happier day for them!

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CHILDREN OF THE HEAVENLY FATHER

Lesson Four (Continued)

Song:

1. This little light of mine,
I'm gonna let it shine.
This little light of mine,
I'm gonna let it shine,
Let it shine, let it shine,
Let it shine.
2. I won't let Satan blow it out!
3. Hide it under a bushel--No!
4. I'll let it shine 'til Jesus comes.

CHILDREN OF THE HEAVENLY FATHER

Lesson Five

WHERE OUR TREASURE IS, OUR HEART IS ALSO

Burden to Impart:

As children of the heavenly Father, we must consider, what do we value?

Memory Verse: "For where you treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matthew 6:21).

Facts to Teach:

1. What is a "treasure?" A treasure is something of worth, deserving special value and attention. It is something very dear and precious to us. It is something that is so dear to us that we would not want to lose it for anything in the world.

2. For many centuries the greatest treasure of the people of this world was gold, silver, and jewels--diamonds, rubies, etc. The more treasure they had the richer they were. Many people today consider money, dollars, as their treasure. Some people consider their favorite things as treasures--their houses, cars, bikes, skateboards, toys, clothes, etc.

3. When things of this world become our treasures, then our heart will be very involved with them and consequently, with this world. Our heart is made up of our mind, emotion, will, and conscience. When something on this earth becomes a treasure to us, our heart (thoughts, feelings, and choices) becomes filled with concern for those things, even to the point of worrying about them. This makes our heart selfish, not wanting to share with others.

4. As children of the heavenly Father, what is our treasure? Where is our treasure? We can easily know, for where our treasure is, there is our heart also--our thoughts, desires, choices. The greatest treasure in the universe is the Lord Jesus. We should love Him above all things; with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength (Mark 12:30). Also, the Lord's Word is a great treasure. King David said that the Lord's Word was more to be desired than gold, even the finest gold (Psa. 19:10).

5. When the Lord is our treasure we will enjoy spending time to be with Him (in children's meeting, in the home meetings), to talk with Him (to pray), and to please Him (by doing the things that make Him happy and give us a good conscience). When the Lord's Word is our treasure we will enjoy reading the Bible and learning from the Word of God.

6. Lastly, the Lord's people are a "special treasure" to Him (Exo. 19:5) and should also be a treasure to us. We should treasure the church; all the brothers and sisters and children in the church. The Gentile churches showed their love and concern for the Jewish churches

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CHILDREN OF THE HEAVENLY FATHER

Lesson Five (Continued)

when they were very poor by sending them gifts and money (Rom. 15:26). Also, the brothers and sisters shared all their things with each other (Acts 2:45; 4:34-35).

7. As we give our time to the Lord to be with Him and to learn of Him, and as we share what He has given to us with His other children, we will begin to highly value both Him and them. Then the Lord and His people will become a treasure to us.

8. A story on the negative side, a warning:

There was a young man who was very diligent and hard working. He made a million dollars. The next year he made two million dollars. Each year his money increased until he had many millions of dollars. He had no love for the Lord and had no care for God's people. He used all of his "treasure" just for himself, for his own pleasure here on the earth. One day Death knocked on his door. "Wait," he said, "I'm not ready." Death said, "Come along," and took him. This man had no treasure stored up in heaven, for all of his heart's love was for his own richness here on the earth. He lost everything.

9. An illustration on the positive side, an incentive:

A person whose treasure was completely with the Lord is the poor widow who gave all her living to the Lord (Mark 12:41-44).

CHILDREN OF THE HEAVENLY FATHER

Lesson Six

DO NOT LOOK AT THE SPLINTER IN YOUR BROTHER'S EYE

Burden to Impart:

As children of the heavenly Father we should not criticize others.

Memory Verse: "And why do you look at the splinter in your brother's eye, but do not consider the log in your own eye?"
(Matthew 7:3).

Facts to Teach:

1. Since Adam disobeyed God in the garden, sinned, and fell, every human being began to have faults. We all have faults. Adam even told God that his wife was actually the cause of his failure, that Eve was really the one to blame. So we can see that we are not the first ones to see others' faults.

2. What is our attitude when we see some faults in another person? Do we desire to help them? Whenever we see someone's faults, shortcomings, or mistakes, we usually criticize him and tell him how wrong he is, or how bad a mistake he has made. Perhaps we don't realize or understand that we can hurt people by doing this. When we speak or criticize in a way that only exposes others we do not help them. We damage them.

3. Some people think they are very smart because they can see many faults in others. However, it is very easy to see other's faults, yet not see our own. I may judge someone for certain faults that he has without even realizing that I do the same things, and sometimes even worse. This is the reason the Lord spoke such a parable in Matthew 7:3. He wanted us to realize when we see the faults of another person, we may have even worse ones. Moreover, we must consider, what kind of concern do I really have? Is it to help my brother, or just to criticize him? If we are truly desirous of helping him we will first remove the log in our own eye (that is, we will first acknowledge our own shortcomings, faults, and failures). Otherwise we will only criticize others without helping them.

Song: John 13:34-35 (Hymns 1342)

A new commandment
I give unto you
That you love one another
As I have loved you.
By this shall all men
Know you are my disciples,
If you have love one to another.
(Repeat the last three lines)

CHILDREN OF THE HEAVENLY FATHER

Lesson Seven

DO NOT SOUND A TRUMPET BEFORE YOU

Burden to Impart:

We should not call attention to ourselves when we do good deeds. We should do them in secret to please our heavenly Father, not in public to glorify ourselves.

Memory Verse: "But take heed not to do your righteousness before men to be gazed at by them; otherwise you surely have no reward with your Father who is in the heavens" (Matthew 6:1).

Facts to Teach:

1. As children of the heavenly Father we will often be led to do some deeds of righteousness. Because our Father is compassionate toward others, we will also feel the desire to help others and do good toward them. One way we may help others and show kindness is by giving them a gift when they are in need. Another way might be by praying for them.

2. Our Father is in "secret." This is His nature. He is a God who hides Himself (Isa. 45:15). Although He watches over us so carefully and supplies all of our needs, we are almost unaware of Him, for He does it all secretly. He wants us to do our deeds of righteousness, love, and kindness in the same way, in secret. In this way the person who does the deed will not be glorified, but the One who led them to do it and supplied them to do it, the heavenly Father.

3. During Jesus' time some people would give alms to the poor, not because they cared for the poor but because they wanted everyone to see their good deeds and glorify them, perhaps saying, "My! What a godly man! How generous he is! How kind he is! He is truly wonderful!" In order to be sure that their deed would be noticed, they would have someone "sound the trumpet" just before they put some money into the beggar's cup. When all turned around to see why the trumpet sounded they would then give their gift. This was all just a show and they were like stage actors, the hypocrites. They only did their good deeds to glorify themselves, not God.

4. As the children of the heavenly Father, our desire is to glorify Him and express Him. In this way others will believe in Him, love Him, and follow Him also. However, we often find another kind of desire rises up whenever we are going to do some righteous deed, the desire to "show off" and glorify ourselves. Instead of doing the deed in secret so that the thanks and praise will go to God, we might purposely let it be known that we did it. Then we get the credit, the thanks, and the glory. This is just a vainglory, the glorifying of our flesh. Whatever we do in the way of glorifying ourselves will not be rewarded by God. But all those deeds of righteousness that we have done in secret will one day be rewarded by our heavenly Father who sees in secret; even giving a glass of cold water to a disciple (Matt. 10:42).

CHILDREN OF THE HEAVENLY FATHER

Lesson Eight

WATCH OUT FOR THE WOLVES IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING

Burden to Impart:

As God's children, though we are to be harmless and guileless, we must nevertheless be prudent (Matt. 10:16) so that others do not take advantage of us or harm us.

Memory Verse: "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but within are ravening wolves" (Matthew 7:15).

Facts to Teach:

1. The Lord Jesus told us that all those who believe in Him and follow Him are like sheep (John 10:27). Sheep are noted for their harmlessness, meekness, and innocence. Sheep have no claws to attack or harm. Nor are their teeth used for tearing flesh, only for chewing grass. Thus they are harmless. Sheep do not resist or fight if they are attacked. Even a flock of hundreds of sheep, if attacked by one vicious animal, will not resist. They will only try to run away. Thus they are meek. When sheep are led gently they will even go willingly to the slaughter (Acts 8:3). This shows their innocence. God wants all of His children to be like the sheep: harmless, meek, and innocent.

2. Most of the people in this world are not like sheep, they are more like the wolves. Wolves are not harmless, they are devouring. They are constantly on the search for a good meal, some animal that it can overpower, kill, and devour. They are not meek. They attack and hunt (Gen. 49:27). Wolves are not innocent. They use great skill and scheming to gradually wear down their victims until they finally are conquered. Wolves especially prey on animals that cannot defend themselves, such as lambs, deer, moose, elk, chickens, etc.

3. If we live as children of our heavenly Father we may become the target of those people in the world who are wolves. They will see that we will not attack them to harm them, nor will we resist and fight to defend ourselves. Because we will only try to run away, they might especially feel safe to trouble us or lead us into danger. So we must be on the alert!

4. Some wolves would be so crafty as to put on a sheepskin after killing it and use it as a disguise to be among the flock. Inside is a hungry wolf, outside it appears as an innocent sheep. The Lord Jesus told us to watch out for false disciples. They are like wolves. They may act nice and even pretend to be a friend, but they are actually an enemy! They like to lead others into wrong things that will eventually cause their destruction.

5. As the Father's dear children, we need to always be alert and always practice wisdom (Matt. 10:16) with those who want to be our friends or leaders. We need to consider, "Is this person a wolf or a sheep?" How can we know? By their "fruits" (Matt. 16-20). A real sheep

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CHILDREN OF THE HEAVENLY FATHER

Lesson Eight (Continued)

is innocent, meek, and harmless. A real sheep is gentle and peaceful. A real sheep would never oppose us when we want to do what is right and good. A real sheep would never discourage us from wanting to follow the Lord Jesus. We must be on the alert if anyone acts especially nice to us, or wants to be our friend or leader. We must try to know them by their "fruits," by the way of life they live. Even if we feel pretty sure, it is still a good idea to talk it over with our parents.

CHILDREN OF THE HEAVENLY FATHER

Lesson Nine

ENTER IN THROUGH THE NARROW GATE

Burden to Impart:

As children of the heavenly Father we should believe in Christ and follow Him according to His Word. We should ask ourselves, "Which path am I taking?"

Memory Verse: "Enter in through the narrow gate, for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter through it" (Matthew 7:13).

Facts to Teach:

1. The Lord Jesus told us that in the whole world there are only two paths. Everyone has to choose which gate they will enter, the narrow gate or the wide gate. Everyone must also choose which path they will walk on, the constricted path or the broad path. As children of the heavenly Father, which path are you taking?

2. What is the wide gate? What is the broad way? This is the way of life that the world has chosen. It is the "easy way," the loose, careless, undisciplined way. This is the way of life we were all born with. This is the way of life of all those who are not children of the heavenly Father. Those who walk on the broad way feel that they are the "boss," they are their own master, they can do whatever they decide to do. After all, they think they are in charge! They live according to themselves and do just what they want, what they like. They feel that their choice is "the" choice. They also feel that they are "all right" and "everything is just fine, for I am in control." Little do they know that everything is not all right. They are on the wrong path, a path that leads to ruin and destruction. One reason they feel that they are O.K. is because so many others are on the same broad path. They have a lot of company and friends who think and feel the same as they do! The broad path is the path of our own way. It is also the way that the world is walking. It is a life that is neither for God nor is according to God's will. (There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death. Prov. 14:12).

3. Now, what is the narrow gate? What is the constricted way? The Lord Jesus said: "I am the door" (John 10:7) and "I am the way" (John 14:6). Actually, in God's eyes there is only one door and one way, Christ. Only Christ is the true door and only Christ is the true way. Any other door, any other gate, is only a false one, a cheating one. Any other way does not lead to life, but to destruction.

4. We enter into Christ as the narrow gate by believing in Him. Only the Lord Jesus can save us from our sins today and from destruction tomorrow. God has provided only one Savior, His beloved Son, to die on the cross for us so that His precious blood could wash

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CHILDREN OF THE HEAVENLY FATHER

Lesson Nine (Continued)

away all of our sins and He could come to live within us. Have you believed in Him yet? Have you called upon Him yet and asked Him to be your own personal Savior? (Lord Jesus! Only You are my Savior! Save me today!)

5. By believing in Christ and receiving Him we enter the narrow gate. Then we must walk the constricted way. The constricted way is also Christ. He is now our Lord. We follow Him. We live according to him. What He wants is what we choose. What He says is what we will do. We live differently than the world, for Jesus is our Lord, not the world or we ourselves. This way is constricted. Not many people find it. But those who do find it, find that it leads to life.

6. Life is God Himself. To have God's presence and to have God living within us is life. This also fills our hearts and mind with peace and joy. Life also means that in the future we will enjoy the heavenly kingdom of Christ together with Him when He returns.

7. Example: The prodigal son in Luke 15 left his righteous father and his home to travel on the broad road of sin. Soon he lost everything. The wrong kind of friends stole all that he had--all but his life. He eventually had to live with the pigs and eat their food. By God's mercy, he came back to his father and the narrow way. More than he lost was restored to him and he experienced a new life. He would never travel the broad way again.

CHILDREN OF THE HEAVENLY FATHER

Lesson Ten

THE PRUDENT MAN BUILT HIS HOUSE UPON THE ROCK

Burden to Impart:

As children of the heavenly Father we should live our lives according to the Lord's solid Word. We must always ask ourselves this question, "What foundation am I building upon?"

Memory Verse: "Everyone therefore who hears these words of mine and does them shall be likened to a prudent man, who built his house on the rock" (Matthew 7:24).

Facts to Teach:

1. After telling His disciples how the children of the heavenly Father live and behave themselves, the Lord Jesus gave the two parables. Both parables were about men who had built themselves a house. The difference was not in the house, but in the foundation, what the house is built upon. Even though the houses may have appeared to be exactly the same, the foundation underneath the houses was very different, for one was sand, and the other was rock. Although the foundation cannot be seen, the builders know what they are made of.

2. In the first parable a wise man built his house on a rock. This is a very solid foundation. To do this he firstly had to work very hard to dig away all the dirt, mud, and sand until he found solid rock for his foundation. When the terrible storm later came it tested his building, especially the foundation. The rain poured down from heaven, the wind blasted from the air, and the floods pounded from the earth. (Some tests that come to us are from heaven--from God; some are from the "air"--from Satan; and some tests come from the earth--from men.) Although the stormy test was so terrible, the house was not moved, for it was built upon a solid, unshakeable foundation, a rock. The wise man and everyone in his house were saved. They passed through the stormy test safe and sound.

3. In the second parable a foolish man also built his house. However, he wanted to save some time and energy. He wanted to build it as easily and quickly as possible, so he took the "easy way." He used sand as his foundation (Luke 6:47-49). Later on a terrible storm arose (as they always do in life) and beat upon that house. What a test! He never expected that such a storm would ever come! The rains poured down like an ocean! The winds beat and pounded on the house and the rivers beat upon the house. Although the house of the foolish man looked very beautiful and strong, it could not stand up to such a test, for its foundation was only sand. The whole house crashed down to the ground and all were lost!

4. The Lord used these two parables to show us, His dear children, that we too are all building our own houses. We begin building our house as little children and continue for the rest of our lives. How are we "building" our house? We are building our house by the way we

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CHILDREN OF THE HEAVENLY FATHER

Lesson Ten

live and behave ourselves every single moment of every day. The solid rock upon which we should make our decisions and live our life is the Word of the Lord Jesus. He once told us that "heaven and earth will pass away, but His words will never pass away" (Matt. 24:35). His words are everlasting, unchanging, solid, and dependable. We should live by His words and behave ourselves according to His words. His words are truth and His words are life. They will enable us to endure and pass through any kind of test. This is why we learn His Word, memorize His Word, and hide it in our heart. We want to be wise children of the heavenly Father.

5. To ignore the Lord's Word, and to live and behave ourselves according to our own thoughts and ideas or the world's concepts and standards, is not wise. That is foolish. Man's ideas and concepts are like sand--something that changes, shifts, and moves according to the environment. They will only deceive us for a time. When the test comes, the result will destroy us. As children of the heavenly Father, WHAT FOUNDATION ARE YOU BUILDING ON?

6. Illustrations:

El Capitán in Yosemite is the largest single solid granite rock in the world. It towers above all else around it and is an example to us of our Rock, the Lord Jesus, and His unchanging Word.

Also, Gibraltar in the Mediterranean guards the entrance to two continents. It has been there for a very long time.

In contrast, some towns that have been built upon sand have been completely swallowed up by the shifting sand, and nothing is left!

Song: (to be sung with hand signs)

1. ///The wise man built his house upon the rock///
 And the house upon the rock stood firm.
2. ///The rains came down and the floods came up///
 And the house upon the rock stood firm.
3. ///The foolish man built his house upon the sand///
 And the house upon the sand went crash!
4. ///The rains came down and the floods came up///
 And the house upon the sand went crash!
5. ///I'll build my house upon the Word of the Lord///
 It will stand through every storm!

Children's Verse Sheet 1st – 6th Grade **Summer 2007**

Say on	Lesson	<p style="text-align: center;">All levels will say the same verse each week.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">These verses may not be the same as the verse that is in each week's lesson.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Lesson content is set in fellowship among the serving ones on each level & the coordinating brothers.</p>
5/27	1	<i>But even the hairs of your head are all numbered.</i> (Matthew 10:30)
6/3	2	<i>And why are you anxious concerning clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they do not toil; neither do they spin.</i> (Matthew 6:28)
6/10	3	<i>You are the salt of the earth, but if the salt has become tasteless, with what shall it be salted? It is no longer good for anything but to be cast out and trampled underfoot by men.</i> (Matthew 5:13)
6/17	4	<i>You are the light of the world... Thus let your light shine before men, so that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in the heavens.</i> (Matthew 5:14a, 16)
6/24	5	<i>For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.</i> (Matthew 6:21)
7/1	6	<i>And why do you look at the splinter in your brother's eye, but do not consider the log in your own eye?</i> (Matthew 7:3)
7/8	7	<i>But take heed not to do your righteousness before men to be gazed at by them; otherwise you surely have no reward with your Father who is in the heavens.</i> (Matthew 6:1)
7/15	8	<i>Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but within are ravening wolves.</i> (Matthew 7:15)
7/22	9	<i>Enter in through the narrow gate, for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter through it.</i> (Matthew 7:13)
7/29	10	<i>Everyone therefore who hears these words of mine and does them shall be likened to a prudent man, who built his house on the rock.</i> (Matthew 7:24)
8/5	11	<i>...My beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord</i> (1 st Corinthians 15:58)
8/12	12	<i>But the Lord said... Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature... For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.</i> (1 Samuel 16:7)
8/19	13	<i>That you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith are inheriting the promises.</i> (Hebrews 6:12)
8/26	14	<i>Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.</i> (Ephesian 6:1)