

ETS 4/11

Assignment Sheet

Date _____

Name _____

Topic A Survey of the Bible

Lesson The Promise to Abraham

Class _____

Lecture	Completed	
	Yes	No
Review "The Promise to Abraham"		
Bible Study		
Philippians 1		
PSMA		
Do 5 PSMA		
Reading		
Bible Reading Chart		
Pursuit of Holiness -- Chapter 11		
Evangelism/Follow-Up/Discipleship		
Pray for person to share "Bridge" with.		
Meet with your disciple.		
Pray for your disciple.		
Scripture Memory		
Write in 2 verses you memorized.		
Review all verses.		

THE PROMISE TO ABRAHAM

Introduction

Last session we discussed two of Abram's problems (land and seed), and how God dealt with them. God solved these problems by giving Abram land with the assurance that it would belong to him forever, and a son through Sarah with the assurance that his seed would be as numerous as the stars (Genesis 15:5). This session we will deal with Abram's final problem: his need of assurance that these things would indeed come to pass.

Let's open our Bibles and read Genesis 15:7-18.

And he said unto him, I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it. And he said, Lord God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it? And he said unto him, Take me an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon. And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another; but the birds divided he not. And when the fowls came down upon the carcasses, Abram drove them away. And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him. And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance. And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full. And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a

smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces. In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates.

Genesis 15:7-18

In verse 8, Abram asked God for a confirmation that he would inherit the land God had said He would give to him.

In verse 9, God told Abram to take a heifer, a goat, a ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon. He was to divide the four-footed beasts and lay each half on the ground.

In verse 12, God caused a great sleep to fall on Abram when the sun went down.

In verse 13, God said to Abram,

Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years.

So it was part of God's plan for His chosen to spend 400 years of bondage in Egypt.

In verse 17, God alone, in the form of a flame, moved through the divided animals. This is the way a promise or a covenant was confirmed in Abram's day. Both parties would move through the animals, and if one broke the agreement he was saying, "Let my blood be shed as the blood of these animals." God didn't allow Abram to move through the animals. So God was making an unconditional promise on His part. The promise was not conditional on anything Abram was to do.

In verse 18, God now extended the land from the river of Egypt unto the river Euphrates. Up to this time, the land of Canaan extended from Dan to Beersheba, 183 miles long by 25-52 miles wide, varying in width from the Mediterranean to the Jordan. This land was to belong to Abram and his seed forever.

Sarah's Folly

But Sarah was still barren. Then she came up with a plan for Abram to have children by her handmaiden, Hagar. Now God didn't need any help from Sarah playing Junior Holy Spirit to complete His promise. Out of this union Ishmael was born. Now Abram had a seed

God never intended. God then decided to make a nation from Ishmael because of His promise to Abram. Ishmael now became the father of the Arab peoples, who are still in great opposition to both Judaism and Christianity today.

God again came to Abram when he was ninety-nine years old and reaffirmed the promise. God now changed Abram's name to Abraham which means, "a father of many nations."

Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham, for a father of many nations have I made thee.

Genesis 17:5

And God said Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed, and thou shall call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him.

Genesis 17:19

God made it clear that Sarah was to have a son in her old age, and that Isaac was to inherit the promise, not Ishmael.

In Genesis 21, the Bible tells us:

For Sarah conceived and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him.

Genesis 21:2

Historical Overview

Isaac

When Isaac was grown, Abraham arranged for him to marry Rebekah. They had two sons, Esau and Jacob.

Jacob and Esau

Esau sold his birthright to Jacob and with it the privilege of the promise being fulfilled through his line.

Joseph

One of Jacob's favorite sons was Joseph whom his brothers hated because of his dream that they would worship him. So they sold him to some Egyptian traders. This was God's way of setting things up for His children to go into Egypt where He said they would go for 400 years.

Later, when Jacob joined Joseph in Egypt he reminded Joseph that God would be with them and bring them again into the land He had given to Abraham. Genesis 50:24 tells us that when Joseph was at the end of his life he reminded the Israelites again about the promise.

And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die: and God will surely visit you and bring you out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob.

Up to this point Abraham and his descendants had never possessed the land that God had promised them. They were now out of the land as God had prophesied.

While Abraham's seed was in bondage God multiplied them until they had become a great nation. The people cried out to God, and He heard them.

And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.

Exodus 2:24

Moses

At the end of the 400 years God came to a man by the name of Moses and reminded him of the promise He had made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and said in Exodus 6:8,

And I will bring you in unto the land concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for an heritage: I am the Lord.

So Moses went to Pharaoh and told him that God had commanded, "Let my people go." At first Pharaoh wouldn't let them go, but 10 plagues later Pharaoh decided to let them go. Moses led out 600,000 men plus women and children--about 2 1/2 to 3 million people in all. They passed through the Red Sea on dry ground while Pharaoh's army was drowned trying to follow. They went to Mount Sinai where the Law was given. From there they went to Kadesh-barnea where the spies were sent out into the Promised Land. The people refused to go in and possess the land which God had given them because the spies' report made them afraid, and they rebelled. So God said that every person over 20 would not enter the land, but only their children. So for 40 years they wandered in the wilderness and died. At this time God instructed them about the priesthood and the setting up of the tabernacle.

At the end of the 40 years, when all the elders had died, God was ready to bring them into the Promised Land.

In Deuteronomy 9:1-5, God told them, "This day you are to pass over Jordan and go in and to possess the nations."

At this point God drew the children of Israel into a covenant with Him.

We need to review again the promise that God made to Abraham concerning the land. Ownership was unconditional and eternal. But with this covenant that God made with the children of Israel, possession was to be based on obedience. In a very real way this is like salvation. It is a free gift of God, but the blessings of the Christian life are based on our obedience to the commandments.

In Deuteronomy chapter 28, we find the conditions of the covenant that God made with them through Moses.

Blessings

- If you hearken to my commandments:

Verse 1--I will set you on high above all nations.

2--Blessing shall come on your cities, fields, bodies and flocks.

7--Your enemies will be smitten.

9--You will be established as a holy people.

Curses

- If you will not hearken to the commandments:

Verse 16--I will curse your cities and fields.

18--I will curse the fruit of your body, the increase of your flocks.

22--I will smite thee with sickness.

25--You will be smitten by your enemies.

62--You will be few in number and not as the stars of Heaven.

63--You will be plucked from off the land you go to possess.

64--You will be scattered among all people and the whole world.

So God had Moses make this covenant with the people.

These are the words of the covenant, which the Lord commanded Moses to make with the children

of Israel in the land of Moab, beside the covenant which he made with them in Horeb.*

Deuteronomy 29:1

- * The covenant at Mt. Horeb was concerning the Ten Commandments.

So this Mosaic covenant now became a part of the promise which God made to Abraham. It didn't change any of the conditions since ownership is unconditional. It only means that possession was to be based on their being obedient to God.

Again in Deuteronomy 30:1-8, God reminded them that His blessings and curses are a matter of their choice. They were about to go into cities and nations which were wicked and filled with idolatry and rebellion to God. God's desire was that they remain true to Him and live as a real testimony for Him. If they would do this, the blessing of God would be on them.

Joshua was chosen to lead the people into the Promised Land. Moses, because of his sin, was not allowed to take the people into the Promised Land. God did allow him to climb Mount Nebo and to the top of Pisgah and look into the Promised Land. There Moses died and was buried by God.

This is the first five books of the Bible called "The Law." The rest of the Old Testament is the story of the people in the Promised Land; how they go in and possess it and lose it and possess it again, all on the basis of their obedience and disobedience to God.

Joshua's Conquest in the Land

Joshua led the Israelites over the Jordan on dry ground and moved against the fortress of Jericho. Joshua marched around the city seven times, and it fell. From there they went to Ai where they were defeated because of Achan's sin and had to make a new plan to take the city. Gibeon made a treaty with Israel to be slaves rather than to fight Joshua. The king of Jerusalem made a military alliance with the kings of Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon, and they moved against Gibeon. The Gibeonites called on Joshua who made a mighty march from Gilgal and caught the army by surprise. They fled in terror but were pursued by Joshua who took full vengeance on them. (This is where the sun stood still.) From then on they started on a systematic conquest of the southern part of the land. They took Libnah, Lachish, Eglon, Hebron and Debir. From there they moved south and made thrusts into the

Negeb as far south as the oasis of Kadesh-barnea. They also reached over toward Gaza to the sea coast. Then the rulers in the northern part of Canaan formed an alliance. The kings of Madon, Shimron-meron, Achshaph and tribes from the hill country on both sides of the Lake of Galilee gathered at the foot of Mt. Hermon near water of Merom. Joshua marched north and struck without warning, defeated the enemy and burned Hazor to the ground. Joshua took a good portion of the land, but some remained in the hands of the inhabitants.

Judges

Without a leader the people "did what was right in their own eyes." Their lifestyle was changing from that of nomads and shepherds to farmers and craftsmen. They were also being influenced by the Canaanites' religion and worship of Baal. Before long the people were in sin. Since possession of the land was based on their obedience, they began to lose some of the land. They were also facing invasion from nomadic people who were building cities along the Mediterranean Sea, like the Midianites and the Philistines and others from Asia Minor. At this time God raised up judges, called military leaders, to deliver the people from their enemies' hands and to help take the land or to regain it. Some of the more popular judges were Deborah and Barak who opened the plains of Jezreel so the tribes of Zebulun, Issachar and Naphtali were not cut off from their brothers in the south. This also gave them the important mountain passes of Taanach and Megiddo. Gideon pushed the Midianites back into Transjordan with his army of 300 in a surprising night raid.

Samson, a warrior of Mahaneh in the Shephelah, fought the Philistines for years until he was betrayed by Delilah, a Philistine woman.

This was one of Israel's darkest hours in history. The people were dissatisfied and called on Samuel to give them a king. Up to this time Israel had been ruled by God. Now they wanted a human king like all the rest of the people around them. God told Samuel to give them a king.

Saul

Saul, a son of Kish from Gibeath, was anointed king by Samuel. Saul gave much of his time trying to drive the Philistines out of the central mountain range of Canaan. Saul started well but didn't end well. He began to rebel against God through his pride and impatience. When he disobeyed God, Samuel was sent to tell him that God was going to remove him as king.

PHILIPPIANS 1

PRELIMINARY STUDY

Read the first chapter through two or three times to get an overall view.

Now read it slowly, meditating on each verse. Remember that scriptural meditation means prayerful reflection--in order to understand and apply. Make a list of possible verses for your application.

As you examine Chapter 1, consider what it contributes to the major theme of Philipppians.

WHAT DOES THE CHAPTER SAY?

As you read Philipppians 1 decide on the paragraph divisions. Write a brief title for each paragraph (as you did in I John 5) then summarize it. Or if you prefer, summarize the paragraphs first, then write titles. Try this for Chapter 1 on scratch paper before going over the divisions and titles given on the next page.

Suggested titles are given for three paragraphs of Philipppians 1. If you like your own titles better, write them in. Add your summaries of the paragraphs, again averaging 5-10 words per verse (150-300 words for the chapter, not including your paragraph titles).

(1:1,2)

Paul's affection and prayer for their progress (1:3-11) _____

Paul's consuming desire to further the Gospel and glorify God (1:12-21) _____

_____ (1:22-26)

Challenge to faithfulness, and courage in persecution (1:27-30)

PROBLEMS

As you go through the chapter, list below the problems which come to mind. Try to identify and state the problem clearly (see examples), not merely "What does this verse mean?"

Verse

1 Were all the Christians at Philippi considered saints?

10 How does one approve what is excellent?

CROSS REFERENCES

As in your study of I John you will find that cross references illuminate the passage and add to your understanding of it.

Find three or more cross references for some of the other outstanding verses in Philipppians 1--such as verses 12, 18, 27 and 29. First try to find them from Scripture passages you can think of that touch on the same subject or illustrate it. Use other helps if necessary.

Verse	Cross Reference	Key Thought
6	Jude 24	
9-11	Col. 1:9-11	Prayer for their understanding and walk.
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

WHAT DOES IT SAY TO ME?

The personal application section in these studies helps you take a portion of Scripture that speaks to your heart, meditate on it, and develop practical steps toward making it part of your life.

The following three steps outline the way to develop your application on the verse you choose. These steps are not new--they are basically a development of what you did in your study of I John.

1. State what the verse or verses say or imply is God's will for some area of a Christian's life.
2. Tell what your life is actually like in this area, giving a recent instance if possible.

3. Describe what you have already done or intend to do, to help bring your life into line with God's will in this portion of His Word.

Here is an example of an application from Philippians 1:14:

1. What should our lives be like? Verse 14 indicates that Christians should speak the Word boldly and without fear--even if it should result in suffering, as it did with Paul.
2. What is my life like? I often let fear stand in the way of speaking boldly of Christ. The wide open opportunity I missed last night especially comes to mind. I could have brought in my testimony while visiting with the new neighbors, when church-going was mentioned.
3. What can I do about it? Because of the challenge of this verse, I am praying that the Lord will give me boldness to use an opportunity to include my testimony in conversation with someone before the week is out. I am praying for three people in particular to whom I might have such an opportunity to witness.

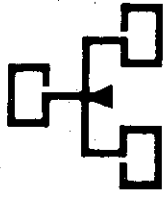
Now write your own three-point application.

Application verse chosen: _____

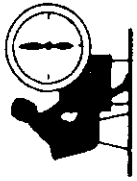
1. What should a Christian's life be like? _____

2. What is my life like? _____

3. What can I do about it? _____



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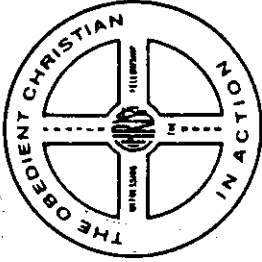


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BIBLE READING

BIBLE STUDY

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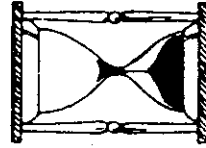
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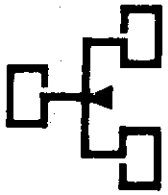
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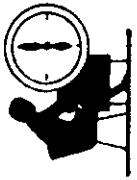
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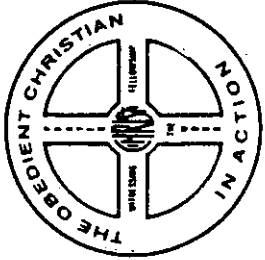
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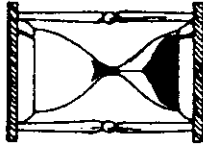
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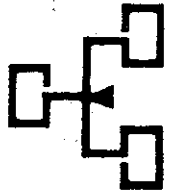
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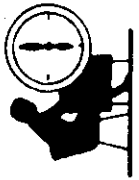
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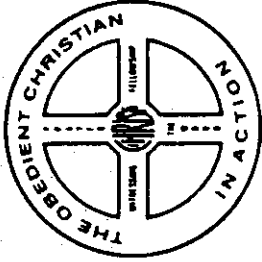
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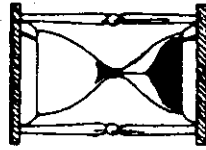
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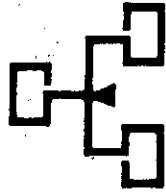
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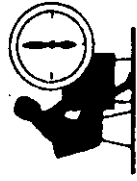
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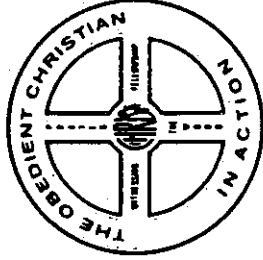
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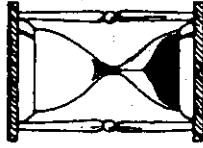
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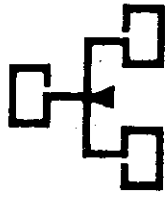
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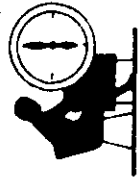
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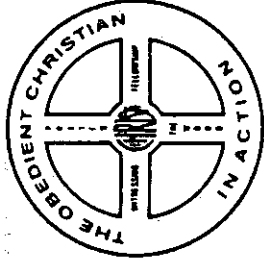
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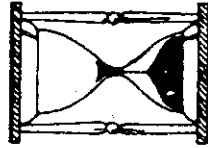
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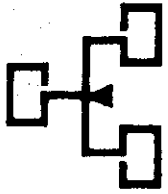
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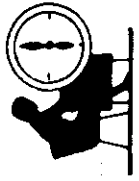
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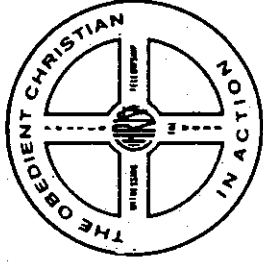
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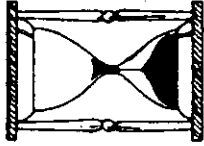
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Holiness in Body

No, I beat my body and
Make it my slave so that
After I have preached to
Others, I myself will not
Be disqualified for the
Prize.

I Corinthians 9:27

True holiness includes control over our physical bodies and appetites. If we are to pursue holiness, we must recognize our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit and that we are to glorify God with them.

Twentieth-century Christians, especially those in the Western world, have generally been found wanting in the area of holiness of body. Gluttony and laziness, for example, were regarded by earlier Christians as sin. Today we may look on these as weaknesses of the will, but certainly not sin. We even joke about our overeating and other indulgences instead of crying out to God in confession and repentance.

Our physical bodies and natural appetites were created by God and are not sinful in themselves. Nevertheless, if left uncontrolled, we will find our bodies becoming "instruments of wickedness" rather than "instruments of righteousness" (Romans 6:13). We will be pursuing the "cravings of sinful man" (I John 2:16) instead of holiness. If we watch ourselves closely, we can see how often we eat and drink just to satisfy physical desire; how often we lie in bed in the morning simply because we don't feel like getting up when we should; how often we give in to immoral looks and thoughts simply to satisfy the sin-tainted sex drive within us.

Michel Quoist in his book, The Christian Response says, "If your body makes all the decisions and gives all the orders, and if you obey, the physical can effectively destroy every other dimension of your personality. Your emotional life will be blunted and your spiritual life will be stifled and ultimately will become anemic."¹

Over 200 years ago Susannah Wesley wrote, "Whatever increases the strength and authority of your body over your mind--that is sin to you."²

The Apostle Paul emphasized the need to keep our natural appetites and desires under control. He spoke of his body as his adversary, as the instrument through which appetites and lusts, if left unchecked, would war against his soul (I Corinthians 9:27). He was determined that his body with these appetites would be his slave, not his master.

Paul further urges us to present our bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, and to not be conformed to this world (Romans 12:1-2). Quite possibly there is no greater conformity to the world among evangelical Christians today than the way in which we, instead of presenting our bodies as holy sacrifices, pamper and indulge them in defiance of our better judgment and our Christian purpose in life.

I am not here singling out those who have a so-called "weight problem." Those of us who can eat what we please without gaining weight may be more guilty of gluttony and indulging the appetites of the body than the person who struggles--often with failure--to control his appetite for food. On the other hand, the overweight person should not excuse his failure. We should all examine ourselves as to whether we eat and drink to the glory of God, recognizing that our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit.

The Mormon people are noted for their abstinence from tobacco, liquor, and all beverages containing caffeine. We Christians may shrug off their abstinence as legalistic and as one more group's list of prohibitions. But we should not miss the point that their actions are a practical response to their belief that their bodies are the temple of God. For the Christian, his body truly is the temple of God. How sad, then, that a false religion should be more diligent in this area than we Christians. Let me be emphatic: I am neither approving nor disapproving the Mormons' particular list of prohibitions. But we need to ask ourselves if our consumption of food and drink is controlled by an awareness that our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit.

Another reason we must closely govern our indulgence of food and drink is that the person who overindulges his body at this point will find it more and more difficult to mortify other sinful deeds of the body. The habit of always giving in to the desire for food or drink will extend to other areas. If we cannot say no to an indulgent appetite, we will be hard pressed to say no to lustful thoughts. There must be an attitude of diligent obedience in every area if we are to succeed in mortifying any one expression of sin. Thomas Boston wrote, "They that would keep themselves pure must have their bodies in subjection, and that may require, in some cases, a holy violence."³

Along with such sins of the body as sexual immorality, impurity, lust, and evil desires, Paul also mentions greed, which he says is idolatry (Colossians 3:5). While greed often manifests itself in its basic form--the sheer love of money for money's sake--it more often is seen in what we call materialism. Not many of us want to be extremely rich; we just want all the nice things the world around us considers important.

Materialism wars against our soul in a two-fold manner. First it makes us discontent and envious of others. Second, it leads us to pamper and indulge our bodies so that we become soft and lazy. As we become soft and lazy in our bodies, we tend to become soft and lazy spiritually. When Paul talked about making his body his slave, so that after having preached to others he himself would not be disquali-

fied, he was not thinking about physical disqualification, but spiritual. He knew well that physical softness inevitably leads to spiritual softness. When the body is pampered and indulged, the instincts and passions of the body tend to get the upper hand and dominate our thoughts and actions. We tend to do not what we should do, but what we want to do, as we follow the craving of our sinful nature.

There is no place for laziness and indulgence of the body in a disciplined pursuit of holiness. We have to learn to say no to the body instead of continually giving in to its momentary desires. We tend to act according to our feelings. The trouble is, we seldom "feel" like doing what we should do. We don't feel like getting out of bed to have our morning time with God, or doing Bible study, or praying, or anything else we should do. That is why we have to take control of our bodies and make them our servants instead of our masters.

The place to start controlling the cravings of our physical appetites is to reduce our exposure to temptation. Our sinful cravings are strengthened by temptation. When a suitable temptation is presented to us, our cravings seem to get new vigor and power. Paul had definite words of instruction for us on this subject. He told us, "Flee from the evil desires of youth" (II Timothy 2:22). Some temptations can best be overcome by fleeing. He also said, "Do not think about how to gratify the desires of your sinful nature" (Romans 13:14). Do not plan ahead or make provision for ways to indulge your bodily appetites.

Several years ago I realized I had developed a craving for ice cream. Now there is nothing wrong with ice cream itself; it was just that I had indulged myself so much that it had become a craving. When I shared this problem with my wife, she stopped keeping the ice cream in the freezer. She helped me stop making provision to fulfill that particular desire which, through overindulgence, had become sin for me. Several years ago I also cancelled my subscription to a popular magazine because I noticed many of the articles tended to stimulate impure thoughts in my mind.

We are to flee temptation and take positive steps to avoid it, and we are to avoid thinking how to gratify our sinful desires. "A prudent man sees evil and hides himself; the naive proceed to pay the penalty" (Proverbs 27:12).

We should also study our sinful desires and how they rise up against us. John Owen said, "To labor to be acquainted with the ways, wiles, methods, advantages, and occasions of the success of sin, is the beginning of this warfare."⁴ Consider beforehand. It is amazing how often we walk into known areas of temptation without any plan or resolution as to how we will react. If you have a weakness for sweets as I have, and you must go to the church pie social, plan beforehand what you will do. A number of years ago, a friend who was a new Christian was invited to a roller skating party with a Christian youth group. He decided not to go because before becoming a Christian, he had frequently made pick-ups at roller rinks. He felt that

at that time in his growth, to return to that environment would tend to stimulate his old lustful desires. So he decided to "flee," to "make no provision for the flesh." He was able to do this because he considered beforehand the possible consequences of going to a seemingly innocent roller skating party.

God expects us to assume our responsibilities for keeping the sinful desires of the body under control. It is true we cannot do this in our own strength. Our sinful desires, stimulated by all the temptations around us, are too strong for us. But though we cannot do it by ourselves, we can do it. As we set ourselves to the task in dependence upon the Holy Spirit, we will see Him at work in us. We will fail many times, but as we persevere, we will be able to say with Paul, "I can do everything through Him who gives me strength" (Philippians 4:13).

Footnotes

¹Michel Quoist, The Christian Response (Dublin: Gill and MacMillan, 1965), page 4.

²John Kirk, The Mother of the Wesleys (Cincinnati: Poe and Hitchcock, 1865), page 178.

³This quote from Thomas Boston is taken from an old magazine article in the author's files. Unfortunately, neither the title of the magazine nor the date of publication was listed on the clipping.

⁴John Owen, Temptation and Sin, page 31.

ETS 4/12

Assignment Sheet

Date _____

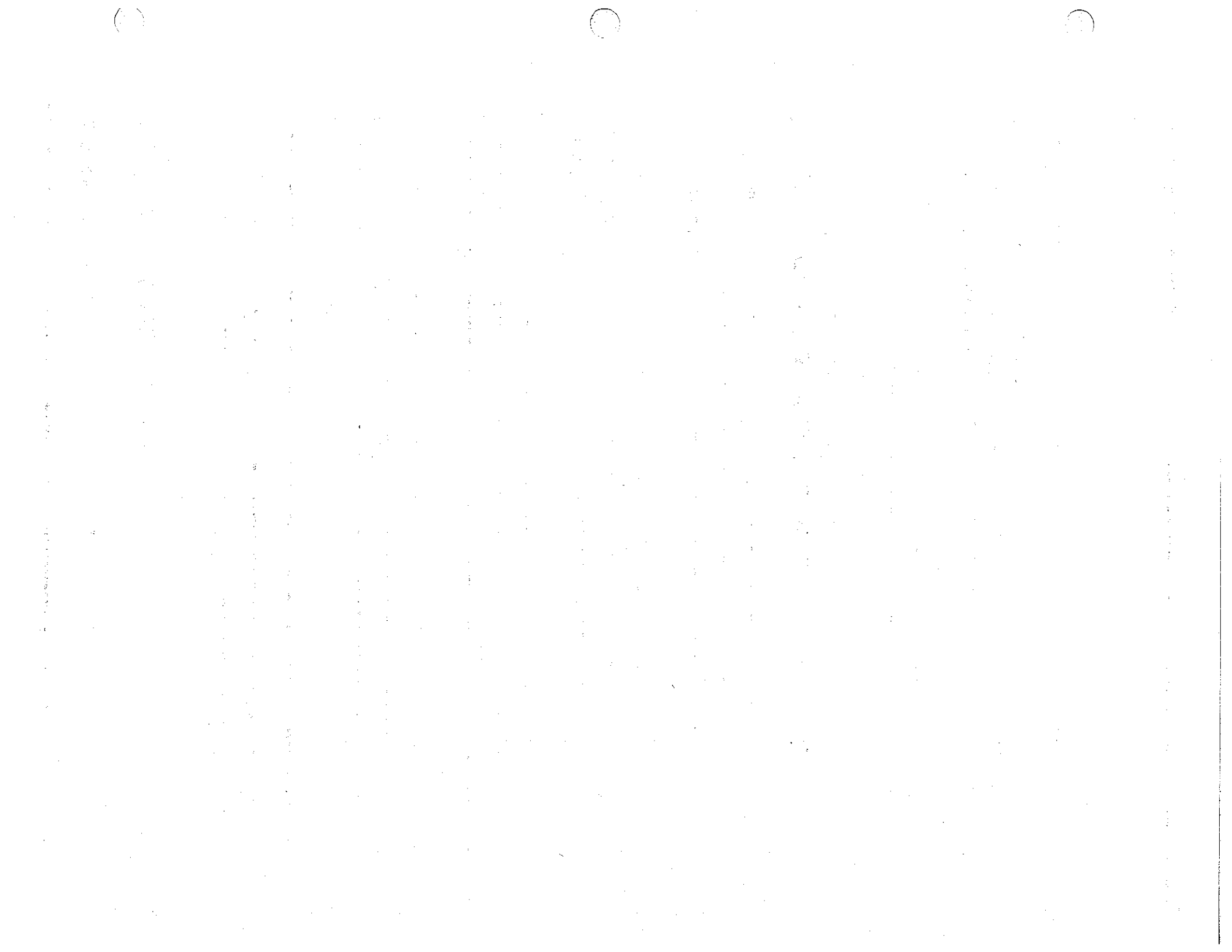
Name _____

Topic A Survey of the Bible

Lesson The Promise to David

Class _____

Lecture	Completed	
	Yes	No
Review "The Promise to David"		
Bible Study		
Philippians 2		
PSMA		
Do 5 PSMA		
Reading		
Bible Reading Chart		
Pursuit of Holiness--Chapter 12		
Evangelism/Follow-Up/Discipleship		
Share "Bridge" with non-Christian.		
Pray for your disciple.		
Meet with your disciple.		
Scripture Memory		
Write in 2 verses you memorized.		
Review previous verses.		



THE PROMISE TO DAVID

David Becomes King

When God removed Saul as the first monarch of Israel, He had Samuel anoint David, the son of Jesse, as the king of Israel. This is the man that Acts 12:23 tells us was "the man after God's own heart." Here we see God amplify through David and his descendants the seed portion of the promise He gave to Adam, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Possession

Under David's leadership the children of Israel took possession of the land that God had promised. Because God blessed them, the land prospered, and David was rich. He lived in a splendid palace, but it bothered him that God resided in a tabernacle made of curtains. David wanted to build God a magnificent Temple. But from II Samuel 7, we learn that God sent Nathan to David with another promise--the promise that God would establish David's house forever.

And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: But my mercy shall not depart away from him as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.

II Samuel 7:12-16

Promise

NOTES

Verse 12--I will set up thy seed after thee.

I will establish his kingdom.

13--I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever.

14--I will be his father, and he shall be my son.

16--And thine house and thy kingdom and throne shall be established for ever.

So God made these promises to David concerning:

- **House** --a dynasty, a ruling monarch future family, his seed.
- **Throne** --a place from where he was to rule, seat of government, thus his actual rule.
- **Kingdom** --sphere over which he ruled.

This promise did not guarantee an uninterrupted rule, but the right to rule would remain with David's house forever.

God did not allow David to build Him a house but promised David an eternal house. Solomon who followed David as king was allowed to build the Temple for God that David wanted to build.

Jesus Christ was and will be the ultimate fulfillment to this promise. He is going to return and sit on David's throne to rule according to some Bible scholars.

In Psalm 89 David spoke about this promise God gave to him.

- Verse 3--I have made a covenant with David my servant.
- 4--I will establish thy seed for ever and build up thy throne.
- 29--His seed will endure for ever and his throne as the days of heaven.
- 34-35--My covenant will I not break; I will not lie to David.
- 36--His seed shall endure for ever and his throne as the sun.

Qualifications for Fulfillment

When David died God gave his throne to Solomon, David's son. Solomon's sin caused the kingdom to be divided. However, David's throne was to be re-occupied by an eternal king, Jesus Christ.

- The person who fulfills this promise has to be David's seed.

The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

Matthew 1:1

- He has to be virgin born.

And he said, Hear ye now, O house of David; Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also? There the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

Isaiah 7:13-14

- He will establish the throne and the kingdom of David.

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

Isaiah 9:6-7

- He will restore the house of David and sit on his throne.

He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

Luke 1:32-33

When Jesus came to earth nearly 1,000 years later, David's house (or dynasty) had fallen. He came to restore the nation and sit on David's throne to rule. The religious leaders and many of the Jews rejected Jesus as their king. Here Bible interpreters diverge, with Premillennialists believing that when Jesus comes

again, He will rule literally from David's throne, while Amillennialists believe that the prophecy is fulfilled in the spiritual Kingdom over which Christ presently rules (see chapter The Promise Through Prophecy for details).

- Because of His rejection, Jesus will come again the second time and will rule.

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Matthew 23:37-39

He wanted to gather the people back to Israel as they were scattered because of their disobedience; He wanted to restore the desolate house of David, and He informed the Jews that they would not see Him till He came again the second time.

Second Coming of Christ

Proclamation

While the people were in exile the prophet proclaimed Christ's Second Coming.

Zechariah 14:4-9

Verse 4--And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst....*

5--The Lord my God shall come and all the saints with thee.

9--Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord.

* The geologists tell us that two major faults converge on the Mount of Olives, and one day the mountain will split in a major earthquake. Twenty-five hundred years ago when Zechariah prophesied, no one even knew what a fault was.

In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof: and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old.

Amos 9:11

Jeremiah 23:3-6

Verse 3--I will gather a remnant of my flock out of all the countries whither I have driven them.

5--I will raise unto David a righteous Branch and a King shall reign and prosper.

8--But the Lord liveth which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them: and they shall dwell in their own land.

Implications of the Promise

- Some believe that literal Israel will be preserved, while others apply that preservation to spiritual Israel, the Church.
- David's seed will return to the land of Palestine at a future date (subject to a variety of interpretations).
- Jesus will either be a literal king who will rule over David's kingdom, or He rules all the people of God of all the ages as their king.
- Jesus will either reign over a literal earthly kingdom, or he reigns over his people the Church in a spiritual lordship manner.

Historical Overview of the Period

David spent most of his life at war. He was successful in claiming all the land that Joshua had started to take. He ruled or controlled indirectly the whole landbridge of the Fertile Crescent from the Euphrates to the Isthmus of the Suez. This was the Promised Land God had given to Abraham.

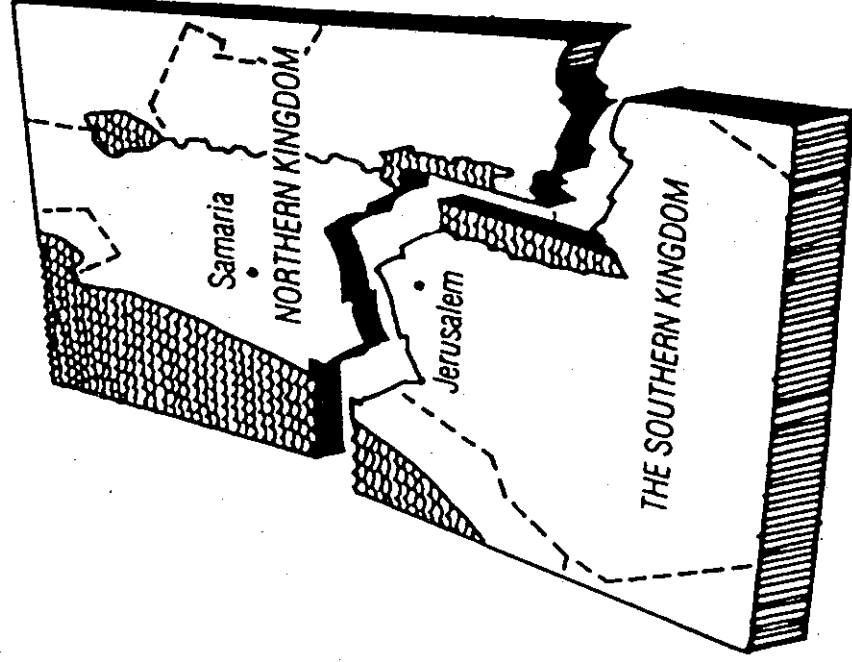
Because of David's sin with Bathsheba, he started a series of events which destroyed his own family. Amnon raped his half sister Tamar. Absalom killed Amnon and several years later engineered a rebellion and had himself declared king. David fled for his life. Joab rallied the army, and Absalom was subsequently killed by the soldiers in the battle.

Solomon

Solomon became king after David. He divided the land into twelve districts and ruled. He was a gifted administrator and wise in commerce. He used the power that David had won. He was a great builder who filled Israel with fortresses for defense, a magnificent Temple to worship God, imposing government buildings and a beautiful palace for himself. He was also known for his wisdom which God gave to him in answer to his prayer, but his love for power and wealth left the nation bankrupt. His 700 wives and 300 concubines turned his heart from the Lord. At the end of his life, Israel was in trouble.

The Divided Kingdom

After Solomon's death the kingdom was divided because his son, Rehoboam, refused to listen to the people. Ten tribes followed Jeroboam who became king of the northern part known as Israel. The two remaining tribes of Benjamin and Judah followed Rehoboam who led the southern part known as Judah.



Israel had nineteen kings in its short history. All of them were wicked. As a kingdom they only lasted 210 years. In 721 B.C. the Assyrian king, Sargon II, invaded and conquered Israel, and the whole population was sent to other parts of the Assyrian empire. Most of them intermarried and were lost from history. Below are the kings who ruled over Israel.

* Dates of reign are approximate.

The Kings of Israel (10 tribes of the North)

Name	* Date of Reign(B.C.)	Years	Char- acter	Reference	
				I Kings	II Chron.
Jeroboam	931-910	22	Bad	11:26- 14:20	9:29- 13:20
Nadab	910-909	2	"	15:25-28	
Baasha	909-886	24	"	15:27- 16:7	16:1-6
Elah	886-885	2	"	16:6-14	
Zimri	885	7 days	"	16:9-20	
Omri	885-874	12	"	16:15-28	
Ahab	874-853	22	"	16:28- 22:40	18:1-34
Ahaziah	853-852	2	"	22:40- II Kings 1:18	20:35-37
Jehoram	852-841	12	"	II Kings 3:1- 9:25	22:5-7
Jehu	841-814	28	"	9:1- 10:36	22:7-12
Jehoahaz	814-798	17	"	13:1-9	
Jehoash	798-782	16	"	13:10- 14:16	25:17-24
Jeroboam 2	782-753	41	"	14:23-29	
Zechariah	753-752	6 mo.	"	14:29- 15:12	
Shallum	752	1 mo.	"	15:10-15	
Menahem	752-742	10	"	15:14-22	
Pekahiah	742-740	2	"	15:22-26	
Pekah	740-731	20	"	15:27-31	28:5-8
Hoshea	731-722	9	"	15:30- 17:6	

Judah had nineteen kings and one queen, eight of which were good. They lasted for some 344 years before they were carried into captivity by the Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar, in 586 B.C. The cream of society was put in chains and marched 1,000 miles into exile. Below are the kings that ruled over Judah.

* Dates of reign are approximate.

The Kings of Judah (2 tribes of the South)

Name	* Date of Reign(B.C.)	Years	Char- acter	Reference	
				I Kings	II Chron.
Rehoboam	931-913	17	Bad	I Kings 11:42- 14:31	9:31- 12:16
Abijam	913-911	3	"	14:31-	13:1-22
Asa	911-870	41	Good	15:8 15:8-24	14:1- 16:14
Jehoshaphat	873-848	25	"	22:41-50	17:1- 20:37
Jehoram	853-841	8	Bad	II Kings 8:16-24	21:1-20
Azariah	841	1	"	8:24-	22:1-9
Athaliah	841-835	6	"	9:29 11:1-20	22:1- 23:21
Joash	835-796	40	Good	12:1- 12:21	22:10- 24:27
Anaziah	796-767	29	"	14:1-20	25:1-28
Azariah	792-740	52	"	15:1-7	26:1-23
Jotham	750-732	16	"	15:32-38	27:1-9
Ahaz	735-716	16	Bad	16:1-20	28:1-27
Hezekiah	716-697	29	Good	18:1- 20:21	29:1- 32:33
Manasseh	697-643	55	Bad	21:1-18	33:1-20
Amon	643-641	2	"	21:19-26	33:21-25
Josiah	641-609	31	Good	22:1- 23:30	34:1- 35:27
Jehoahaz	609	3 mo.	Bad	23:31-33	36:1-4
Jehoiakim	609-598	11	"	23:34- 24:5	36:5-7
Jehoiachin	598-597	3 mo.	"	24:6-16	36:8-10
Zedekiah	597-586	11	"	24:17- 25:30	36:11-21

Disobedience and Exile

It is interesting to observe that during this period God dealt with them on the basis of the promises that their fathers had made with God before they entered the Promised Land. In essence, the covenant promised:

If you obey me and keep my commandments I will bless you, and you will prosper in the land. If you rebel I will scatter you, and your enemy will possess your land.

Here we see how both Israel and Judah disobeyed God, and the land was taken from them. During those years God raised up prophets who warned the people of their doom. When they listened, God blessed them, but for the most part they did not obey.

It was during this time of the divided kingdoms that the prophets were active. God used them to warn the people to remain true to God. They are divided in the Bible into two groups: the major and the minor prophets. Some prophesied to the nation of Israel and others to Judah and still others to the Jews who returned from the exile.

Restoration Period

At the end of 70 years (536 B.C.) King Cyrus came to power and allowed the Jews in Babylonian exile to return to Jerusalem. Zerubbabel led some 50,000 back and rebuilt the Temple. In 458 B.C. Ezra, the priest, led a small company of 6,000 people back, bringing about a revival to the Jews. In 444, Nehemiah led the third and last return to Jerusalem. In 52 days he rebuilt the walls which were broken down. The Jews were now back in their land, but it was ruled by a foreign power. For some 2,500 years it remained this way, except for a brief period of independence under the Maccabees.

The Prophecy of Malachi

The Old Testament ends with Malachi prophesying about a fore-runner (Elijah) who would prepare the way for the coming Messiah. Then 400 years of silence followed, during which no Scriptural revelation was given. During this time (333 B.C.) Alexander the Great conquered the world. In 167 B.C. Judas Maccabee led a series of revolts in an effort to retake the land. In 63 B.C. the Romans conquered the known world.



PHILIPPIANS 2

PRELIMINARY STUDY

Review Philippians 1--from the Bible or from your summary outline. Consider how it fits into the teaching of the whole book and also how it relates to this chapter.

Read the second chapter two or three times to get an overall view of it. Follow this with careful verse-by-verse meditation through the chapter. As you do this, record the problems you find.

WHAT DOES THE CHAPTER SAY?

As in your previous study, decide on the paragraphs of this chapter and make your own summary outline, averaging 5-10 words per verse. Summarize the paragraphs and add titles, or title the paragraphs before you summarize them, whichever you can do best. If your Bible is paragraphed, consider its divisions, but don't be bound by them--make your own.

(2:1-)

Some problems will be answered as you continue to study the chapter and pray for understanding. For others, you may want to do extra research for answers--but wait till you have your week's study, in order not to become sidetracked or bogged down in problem study. However, be sure to look up definitions of words you don't understand as you come to them.

Suggestions for finding answers to problems:

- Check another translation.
- Use a concordance or "The Treasury of Scripture Knowledge"
- Put the passage in your own words, making a mental or written paraphrase of it.
- Consult Halley's Bible Handbook.
- Look up the passage in a commentary.

CROSS REFERENCES

In looking for cross references, select them for the thought of the verse you are cross referencing, not just for an identical word.

Verse	Cross Reference	Key Thought
-------	-----------------	-------------

3,4	Rom. 12:10	

WHAT DOES IT SAY TO ME?

List on scratch paper verses from which your application might come. Meditate on them and choose the one you feel the Lord wants you to apply. Review the instructions given previously and write an application in three steps.

Sample application from Philippians 2:3:

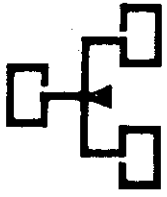
1. What is God's desire for a Christian? This verse teaches that a Christian should not do anything in a way that produces strife, nor to bring praise or attention to himself, but to actually put others first.
2. What is my life like? This brings painfully to mind how often I jockey myself into position to be recognized--often at the expense of someone else. I did this the other day in a conversation with our office manager when I dropped two or three hints about my past accomplishments, and subtly downgraded my co-workers.
3. What can be done about it? I see now for the first time that this is actually a sin in my life which must be confessed. And I now must seek opportunities to put others first. Perhaps I will have a chance to do this within the next week by letting Frank be the spokesman when we submit our joint project. I will make it a matter of prayer that the Lord will give me grace to do this, and will give me a genuine spirit of humility.

Application verse chosen _____

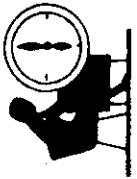
1. How should a Christian live? _____

2. What is my life like? _____

3. What shall I do about it? _____



PERSONAL & SPIRITUAL MANAGEMENT AID

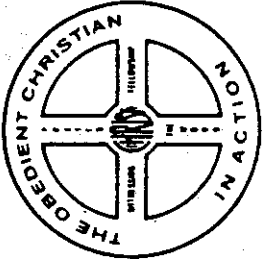


QUIET TIME

OBSERVATIONS

DATE _____

APPLICATION



BASICS

CHECK DESCRIPTION

SCRIPTURE
MEMORY

CURRENT REVIEW
BACK REVIEW

NEW VERSES

BIBLE READING

BIBLE STUDY

PRAYER

WITNESSING

FOLLOW UP

EXERCISE

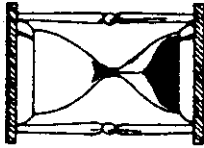
SLEEP

WAKE UP

MANAGEMENT

Do List

Priorities



WRITE

PHONE

SEE

6 AM

8

10

12 PM

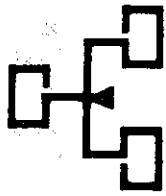
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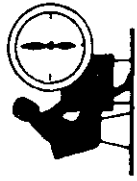
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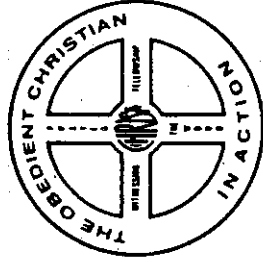
PERSONAL & SPIRITUAL MANAGEMENT AID



QUIET TIME
OBSERVATIONS

DATE _____

APPLICATION



BASICS

SCRIPTURE MEMORY	CURRENT REVIEW BACK REVIEW NEW VERSES	CHECK	DESCRIPTION
BIBLE READING			
BIBLE STUDY			
PRAYER			
WITNESSING			
FOLLOW UP			
EXERCISE			
SLEEP	WAKE UP		

MANAGEMENT

6 AM

Do List

8

10

12 PM

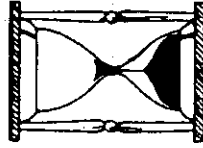
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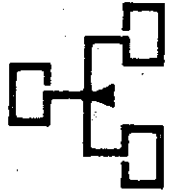
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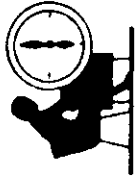
WRITE

PHONE

SEE



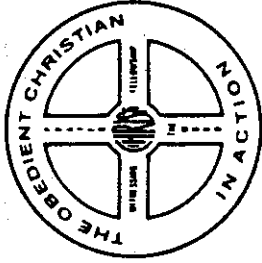
PERSONAL & SPIRITUAL MANAGEMENT AID



QUIET TIME
OBSERVATIONS

DATE

APPLICATION



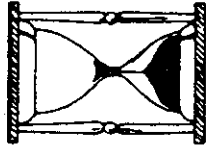
BASICS

SCRIPTURE MEMORY	CURRENT REVIEW BACK REVIEW NEW VERSES	CHECK	DESCRIPTION
BIBLE READING			
BIBLE STUDY			
PRAYER			
WITNESSING			
FOLLOW UP			
EXERCISE			
SLEEP	WAKE UP		

MANAGEMENT

Do List

Priorities



WRITE

PHONE

SEE

6 AM

8

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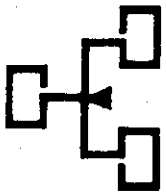
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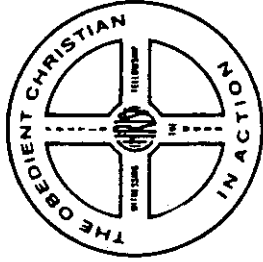
PERSONAL & SPIRITUAL MANAGEMENT AID



QUIET TIME
OBSERVATIONS

DATE _____

APPLICATION



BASICS

SCRIPTURE MEMORY	CURRENT REVIEW		CHECK	DESCRIPTION
	BACK REVIEW	NEW VERSES		
BIBLE READING				
BIBLE STUDY				
PRAYER				
WITNESSING				
FOLLOW UP				
EXERCISE				
SLEEP		WAKE UP		

MANAGEMENT

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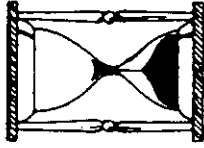
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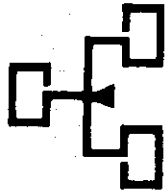
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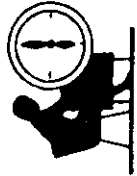
SEE



A diagram of a sandglass. The left bulb is white, and the right bulb is shaded black. The sand is shown flowing from the left bulb to the right bulb. The sandglass is held between two vertical bars.



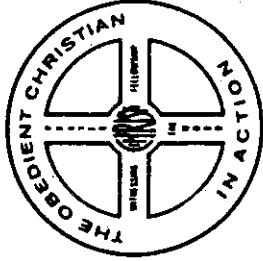
PERSONAL & SPIRITUAL MANAGEMENT AID



QUIET TIME
OBSERVATIONS

DATE _____

APPLICATION



BASICS

DESCRIPTION

CHECK

SCRIPTURE
MEMORY

CURRENT REVIEW
BACK REVIEW
NEW VERSES

BIBLE READING

BIBLE STUDY

PRAYER

WITNESSING

FOLLOW UP

EXERCISE

SLEEP

WAKE UP

MANAGEMENT

6 AM

Do List

Priorities

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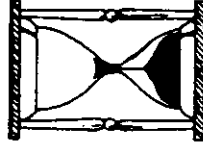
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WRITE

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SEE



Holiness in Spirit

Therefore, having these
Promises, beloved, let us
Cleanse ourselves from
All defilement of flesh
And spirit, perfecting
Holiness in the fear of
God.

II Corinthians 7:1 (NASB)

A number of years ago in campus evangelism we used an illustration calculated to make our collegiate audience vividly aware that they were personally sinners. We would say, "If I could flash on a screen before us tonight all of your thoughts of this past week, you would leave town." This remark not only made the point, but always drew a laugh. But for the Christian, such a charge is no laughing matter. Our thoughts are just as important to God as our actions, and are known to God as clearly as our actions (Psalm 139:1-4; I Samuel 16:7).

Jesus taught us in the Sermon on the Mount that God's commandments are intended not only to regulate outward conduct, but inner disposition as well. It is not enough that we do not kill; we must also not hate. It is not enough that we do not commit adultery; we must not even entertain lustful looks and thoughts.

Just as we must learn to bring the appetites of our bodies under control, so we must also learn to bring our thought lives under obedience to Jesus Christ. In fact, Paul warns us against misguided and wrongly motivated attempts to control the body that leave our thought lives unrestrained (Colossians 2:23). It is possible to curb the natural appetites of the body outwardly and yet be filled with all manner of inner defilement.

The Bible indicates that our thought lives ultimately determine our character. Solomon said, "For as he thinks within himself, so he is" (Proverbs 23:7). An old well-known verse puts it this way:

Sow a thought, reap an act;
Sow an act, reap a habit;
Sow a habit, reap a character.

It is because of the importance of our thought lives that Paul said, "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things" (Philippians 4:8).

As Christians we are no longer to be conformed to the pattern of this world but we are to be renewed in our minds (Romans 12:1-2); Ephesians 4:23, I Peter 1:14). Holiness begins in our minds and works out to our actions. This being true, what we allow to enter our minds is critically important.

The television programs we watch, the movies we may attend, the books and magazines we read, the music we listen to, and the conversations we have all affect our minds. We need to evaluate the effects of these avenues honestly, using Philippians 4:8 as a standard. Are the thoughts stimulated by these various avenues true? Are they pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, or praiseworthy?

The world around us constantly seeks to conform our minds to its sinful ways. It is earnest and pressing in its endeavors. It will entice and persuade us (Proverbs 1:10-14). When we resist, it will ridicule and abuse us as "old-fashioned" and "puritanical" (I Peter 4:4).

Too many Christians, instead of resisting, are more and more giving ground to the world's constant pressure. A few years ago sincere Christians were quite selective about the movies they attended, if they attended them at all. Today the same movies that were avoided are being shown on television in the livingrooms of Christians across the nation. A friend of mine told me of a young couple in full-time Christian work who came to him wanting to know if it was wrong to attend X-rated movies! That the question should even be entertained illustrated the degree to which the world has infected our minds.

The music we listen to often carries the message of the world, and the world uses the medium of music to squeeze us into its mold. And a Christian cannot help being gradually influenced if he continually listens to the world's music.

Perhaps it should go without saying that Christians are to abstain from indulging in or listening to suggestive stories and jokes. But Paul could not take this for granted among the early churches, and neither can we in the 20th century. Listen to Paul's clear warning on the subject: "But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving" (Ephesians 5:3-4). "Not even a hint of immorality" places any suggestive speech whatsoever outside the bounds of a holy walk.

Another stimulus to impure thoughts we must be alert for is what our eyes see. Jesus warned against the lustful look (Matthew 5:28). Job made a covenant with his eyes (Job 31:1). David's wanton look was almost fatal to his spiritual life (II Samuel 11:2). Not only must we guard our own eyes; we must be careful that we are not the source of temptation to others. For this reason, modesty of dress and actions is required among both men and women (I Timothy 2:9; 5:2).

But Philippians 4:8 speaks to more than just immoral and unclean thoughts. Our thoughts must not only be pure--they must be true, lovely, and praiseworthy. Just as we can commit adultery in our hearts (Matthew 5:28), so we can also commit murder in our hearts (Matthew 5:21-22).

In one of his letters Paul listed some acts of the sinful nature. These included defilements of the body--sexual immorality, debauchery, drunkenness, orgies, and the like. Others in the list defile the spirit: hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, and so on. We must purify ourselves not only from the gross sins of the body, but also from the more "acceptable" sins of the spirit.

Alas, here again we Christians have so often failed miserably. Focusing on our particular group's list of do's and don'ts, we neglect the inner life where envy, pride, bitterness, and a critical, unforgiving spirit may reign unchecked.

The elder brother in the story of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15) is a classic example of one who led an exemplary outward life but who was consumed by a spirit of envy and self-righteousness. He could claim never to have disobeyed his father's commandments; yet his jealousy and anger over his father's joy in the return of his prodigal brother marks him to this day as an example to be shunned rather than followed.

The spirit of envy was the root of King Saul's unrelenting warfare against David. Initially Saul was highly pleased with David and set him over his men of war. But one day Saul heard the women of Israel singing, "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands," (I Samuel 18:7). Saul was very angry that they had ascribed ten thousands to David and to him only thousands. And the Scripture says, "Saul looked at David with suspicion from that day on" (I Samuel 18:9). God has placed each one of us in the body of Christ as it has pleased Him (I Corinthians 12:18), and has assigned to each of us a place in life (I Corinthians 7:17). To some God has assigned a place of prominence, to others a place of obscurity; to some a place of wealth, to others a place of daily struggle to make ends meet. But regardless of our station in life or place in the Body, there is always the temptation to envy someone else. The elder brother would one day inherit all his father's possessions; yet he became jealous over a banquet to celebrate his brother's return. Saul was king over all Israel but could not stand someone else receiving more praise than he.

The cure for the sin of envy and jealousy is to find our contentment in God. Asaph in Psalm 73 was envious of the wicked as he saw their apparent prosperity (verse 3). He felt his pursuit of a holy life was in vain (verse 13). Only when he was enabled to say to God, "Besides Thee I desire nothing on earth" (verse 25), was he delivered from the spirit of envy.

Another defilement of spirit that has ship-wrecked many Christians is bitterness. Bitterness arises in our hearts when we do not trust in

the sovereign rule of God in our lives. If ever anyone had a reason to be bitter, it was Joseph. Sold by his jealous brothers into slavery, falsely accused by his master's immoral wife, and forgotten by one he had helped in prison, Joseph never lost sight of the fact that God was in control of all that happened to him. In the end he was able to say to his brothers, "You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive" (Genesis 50:20).

We can become bitter against God or against other people. Asaph was bitter against God because he felt God was not giving him a fair shake in life (Psalm 73:21). Job was bitter because he felt God was not recognizing his righteousness, and even came to the place where his attitude was described as "It profits man nothing when he is pleased with God" (Job 34:9).

Bitterness toward people is the result of an unforgiving spirit. Someone has wronged us, either apparently or actually, and we refuse to forgive that person. We refuse to forgive because we will not recognize that God has forgiven us of far, far greater wrongs. We are like the servant, who, having just been forgiven a debt of several million dollars, had a fellow servant thrown into a prison over a debt of a few dollars (Matthew 18:21-35).

Closely akin to bitterness is the spirit of retaliation. When we are wronged, the tendency is to retaliate--often in our minds if not in actions. When David was fleeing the insurrection of his son Absalom in Jerusalem, Shimei of the family of Saul came out to curse David and throw stones at him. One of David's men wanted to retaliate by killing Shimei, but David restrained him with these words: "Let him alone and let him curse, for the Lord has told him. Perhaps the Lord will look on my affliction and return good to me instead of his cursing this day" (II Samuel 16:11-12).

Paul wrote, "Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: It is mine to avenge, I will repay, says the Lord" (Romans 12:19). Peter said of our Lord, "When they hurled their insults at Him, He did not retaliate; when he suffered, He made no threats. Instead, He entrusted Himself to Him who judges justly" (I Peter 2:23). This is the way to cleanse ourselves from the defiling spirit of retaliation: to entrust ourselves to Him who judges justly and who said, "It is Mine to avenge, I will repay."

One of the most difficult defilements of spirit to deal with is the critical spirit. A critical spirit has its root in pride. Because of the "plank" of pride in our own eye we are not capable of dealing with the "speck" of need in someone else. We are often like the Pharisee who, completely unconscious of his own need, prayed, "God, I thank you that I am not like all other men" (Luke 18:11). We are quick to see--and to speak of--the faults of others, but slow to see our own needs. How sweetly we relish the opportunity to speak critically of someone else--even when we are unsure of the facts. We forget that "one who spread strife among brothers" by criticizing one to another is one of the "six things which the Lord hates" (Proverbs 6:16-19).

All of these attitudes--envy, jealousy, bitterness, an unforgiving and retaliatory spirit, and a crucial and gossiping spirit defile us and keep us from being holy before God. They are just as evil as immorality, drunkenness, and debauchery. Therefore, we must work diligently at rooting out these sinful attitudes from our minds. Often we are not even aware our attitudes are sinful. We cloak these defiling thoughts under the guise of justice and righteous indignation. But we need to pray daily for humility and honesty to see these sinful attitudes for what they really are, and then for grace and discipline to root them out of our minds and replace them with thoughts pleasing to God.

