

ETS 4/3

Assignment Sheet

Date _____

Name _____ Topic Christian Character

Lesson Servanthood Class _____

Lecture	Completed	
	Yes	No
Review "Servanthood"		
Bible Study		
I Thessalonians 5		
Write Discussion Questions		
PSMA		
Do 5 PSMA		
Reading		
Bible Reading Chart		
Pursuit of Holiness -- Chapter 3		
Purity		
Evangelism/Follow-Up/Discipleship		
Pray for 1 person to win to Christ.		
Meet with your disciple.		
Pray for your disciple.		
Scripture Memory		
Write in 2 verses you memorized.		
Review verses.		

SERVANTHOOD

Introduction

As we examine the nature and character of God, we soon discover that He is a loving and serving God. If we are to walk in his footsteps as His disciples, we also must love others and be willing to serve them. As Jesus serves us, we must also be willing to serve Him by serving others.

Definitions of Servanthood

An English dictionary defines the word "servant" like this:

One who exerts himself for the benefit of another, specifically his master. One who performs labor for the benefit of another or at another's command. One who serves spiritually as shown by obedience, good works and love; as, the "servant of God".

In the Greek there are two words for the word servant.

- Diakonos--Deacon; a minister (This is the higher form of the word translated "servant" in English).

You will quickly recognize this as the word from which we derive the word deacon. Though a deacon is to be a servant to the church, we normally see the role of deacon as an elevated position in the Body of Christ. The second Greek word is different:

- Doulos--A bond slave; one whose will and capacities are wholly at the service of another.

Jesus Came as the Doulos of God

It is interesting to note that when Jesus came he did not come as the diakonos but in the lowly form of the doulos. Paul reminded the Philippians when he wrote to them:

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Philippians 2:5-8

Mark reminds us that Jesus' mission was to serve others rather than to have others serve Him.

For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Mark 10:45

During one of the last times when Jesus was personally with His disciples, He demonstrated vividly what He meant by being a servant. Jesus Christ, the Lord of Glory--the Messiah--rose from dinner, girded Himself with a towel and began to wash the feet of His disciples. When He had finished this very lowly and menial task He said:

Do you realize what I have just done to you: You call me your teacher and your Lord, and you are quite right, for I am your teacher and your Lord. But if I, your teacher and Lord have washed your feet, you must be ready to wash one another's feet--I have given you this as an example so that you may do as I have done. Believe the servant is not greater than his master and the messenger is not greater than the man who sent him. Once you have realized these things, you will find your happiness in doing them.

John 13:12-17 (JBP)

Jesus' Example

It is clear from the above passage (and from Jesus' entire life) that He came to serve. If I am His disciple and follow in His footsteps I must also serve the world. He served and died for me. My will and capacities must be His. I must be Christ's doulos.

Most of us don't like the idea of being a servant or bond slave. The work of a servant is considered low class and not prestigious. Serving rubs our pride

the wrong way. Most of us want to rise to the top so that others can serve us. When we are concentrating on being served rather than serving, it reveals that self is on the Throne of our life rather than Christ, for Christ's nature is that of a doulos.

Application

When you are alone and plan and dream about the future, what do you think about? Is your desire to serve others or do you aspire to a leadership position where you will have status, power, followers, and authority so that people serve you rather than you serving them?

In Matthew 20:20-28, the mother of James and John came to Jesus with a typical human request for power and position. She said, "Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand and the other on the left, in thy Kingdom." But Jesus explained that the way to greatness in God's eyes was a totally different procedure.

...Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant.

Matthew 20:25-27

Jesus said the way up is down!

Biblical Qualities of a Servant

Since serving is such an important part of living the Christian life, it is of little wonder that the Scriptures have so much to say about it.

You become a servant by choice

In Philippians Paul tells us that Jesus became a servant by choice.

But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men....

Philippians 2:7

Paul reminds the Corinthians that he chose to become a servant.

For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more.

I Corinthians 9:19

If you are ever to become a servant it will be because you choose to become one. From the world's point of view serving is to be avoided at all cost, and success is measured by the number of people who serve you.

Servanthood springs from humility

John the Baptist understood this and tried to help his disciples understand. They were upset when John's popularity decreased as Jesus began his public ministry.

He must increase, but I must decrease.

John 3:30

Job also understood this principle.

As a servant earnestly desireth the shadow, and as an hireling looketh for the reward of his work....

Job 7:2

Our focus must not be on ourselves but on Christ and how we can best serve others.

For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.

II Corinthians 4:5

If the world's children serve at all, they normally do it because of the recognition they will receive. If somehow they are overlooked for their serving, they are offended. They serve for what they can get rather than for what they can give.

A servant has observant eyes

In the old days a servant stood out of sight but was positioned so that he or she could see the hand of the master. With just a movement of the hand the master could beckon the servant who stood ready to carry out the master's wish.

Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that he have mercy upon us.

Psalms 123:2

Often the world is so wrapped up in its own need it can't see the needs of others. Most people have lost their sensitivity to those about them and are blind to what could be done.

A servant is willing and available

Isaiah is a shining example of this. One day he heard the Lord calling someone to do a task for Him.

Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying,
Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?
Then said I, Here am I; send me.

Isaiah 6:8

Often when we become aware of a need, we procrastinate hoping someone else will volunteer so that we don't have to serve. Our ability to out-fumble everyone else is amazing!

A servant is faithful in another man's interests

Jesus reminds us that a good servant is faithful to take care of the things of others. This is becoming a rare quality to find in the lives of people. Many fail to see that faithful service to another is a prerequisite to receiving more from God. Jesus said:

And if you are not trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own?

Luke 16:12 (JBP)

The world feels that if another person has something they need, he owes it to them to let them use it. They fail to understand why the owner gets upset when they abuse his property and return it in terrible condition--or not at all!

A servant is single-minded and loyal

Jesus teaches us that we can't serve the world and also do the will of God.

No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

Matthew 6:24

We live in a day and age in which it is commendable to "kill two birds with one stone." We are taught to straddle the fence and get the best of both worlds. We find it very hard to understand why we can't serve Christ while we accommodate the world at the same time.

A servant is a second-miler

A good servant always goes above and beyond the call of duty, knowing that the blessing of God only comes in the second mile. Two of the Gospel writers bear this out.

And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

Matthew 5:41

So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.

Luke 17:10

The world is always looking for the easiest way out. They do the bare minimum and stop at the earliest opportunity. They want to be known as a servant but resent anyone who treats them like one. They are willing to serve a little if it means they can be served a lot.

A servant has an eternal perspective

A wise servant knows that as he serves his master he is in reality serving God. This is what Paul was trying to communicate to the slaves at Colosse.

Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.

Colossians 3:22-24

Jesus also tried to communicate this same truth.

Then shall the righteous answer him saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

Matthew 25:37-40

The world often separates "spiritual" and "secular" activities, considering some acts of service more important to God than others. I may be willing to "serve" in teaching Bible studies, but not in cleaning the house. I lose perspective, forgetting that all of life is spiritual service to God.

A servant has a gentle spirit

The servant who pleases the heart of God, as well as the people he serves, is a gentle person. He doesn't get upset easily but takes everything in stride.

And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient.

II Timothy 2:24

The world often grows impatient and irritated in its service to others, critical of the faults of others and harsh in their teaching of others.

A servant serves all people

Both Jesus and Paul set their hearts to serve all people. This is a high standard and a worthy goal for all servants of Christ.

For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law....

I Corinthians 9:19-20

Often we are selective in our service. We choose very carefully whom we will serve so that our serving will prosper us.

Disciplemaking Means Training Servants

Dr. V. Raymond Edmond, late president of Wheaton College, once said:

Our job is to train servants. It is God's job to choose His leaders from among our servants.

Many people who are sharp, dynamic, aggressive and have great leadership potential, are never elevated in the Kingdom of God because they are unwilling to be a servant.

If we were to ask your friends about your servanthood, what would they say? Would they know someone that fits the description the Bible gives of a servant or would they say, "Wow, I don't know anyone like that!"

1 THESSALONIANS 5

PRELIMINARY STUDY

What would you do if you knew Christ would return soon? How would you encourage other Christians? How would you live? God wants us to be alert and ready--so in chapter five He gives some signs of Christ's return and many instructions on practical Christian living.

Before you begin this study, review your paraphrases of the first four chapters to tie in chapter five with the whole letter.

Read the chapter several times before you begin paraphrasing.

Number of times read _____

DEFINITIONS

Study the definitions given below. Then look up the remaining words in a dictionary and write their definitions.

Vs. 2 The day of
the Lord

The time of Christ's return, including surrounding events.

Vs. 3 Travail

Vs. 6 Watch

Be alert and discerning.

Vs. 6 Sober

Awake and walking wisely.

Vs. 11 Edify

Vs. 12 Admonish

Vs. 13 Esteem

WHAT THE CHAPTER SAYS

Now try paraphrasing the whole chapter by paragraphs, ignoring the verse divisions as you did for chapter 3 and 4. Make a clear, smooth paraphrase, after deciding the verses included in paragraphs 2, 3 and 4.

Paragraph No. 1--5:1-11

It's not necessary for me to write to you in detail about the time of Christ's return, for you well know that His day will come secretly, like a thief at night. At a time when men are saying, "Things are peaceful and safe," destruction will come upon them suddenly as labor pains come upon a woman, and there will be no escape.

Paragraph No. 2--5:12-

Paragraph No. 3--5:

Paragraph No. 4--5:

SUMMARY

Now try condensing paragraph 1--that is, summarize it--to about half the length it is in the Bible. Summarizing will be covered more thoroughly in the next Bible study. The first three verses are summarized for you.

5:1-11

I don't need to give you more details about Christ's return. You know that His day and its destruction will come secretly and suddenly when men don't expect it.

WHAT OTHER SCRIPTURES SAY

Look up each cross reference and fill in the key thought which connects it to the verse from this chapter. Also find cross references for one or two other important verses in I Thessalonians 5. Select them by thinking of other parts of the Bible where the same truth or principle is expressed (or perhaps a contrasting truth). First try finding cross references from verses you've memorized. If none come to mind, choose a cross reference from the margin of your Bible.

<u>Verse</u>	<u>Cross Reference</u>	<u>Key Thought</u>
2,3	II Peter 3:3,4	
2,3	II Peter 3:10	
6	Matt. 26:41	Be alert and pray against temptation.
7	Rom. 14:8	
10		

QUESTIONS

Vs. 6 What is the difference between the "sleep" mentioned here and that of verse 10? _____

Vs. 19 What do you think it means to "quench" the Spirit? _____

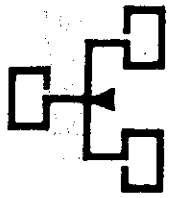
WHAT THE CHAPTER SAYS TO YOU

David said, "I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto Thy testimonies" (Psalm 119:59). David understood the principles of constantly measuring his habits of life against the teachings of the Word of God. He also knew the importance of practical application--of yielding to what the scriptures taught regarding his life.

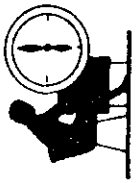
Read I Thessalonians 5 again prayerfully and list those verses which you could apply to some specific area of your life.

Verse Brief Statement of Application

Now choose one of these verses which best fits your need. Write two or three sentences indicating how you have applied it, or intend to.



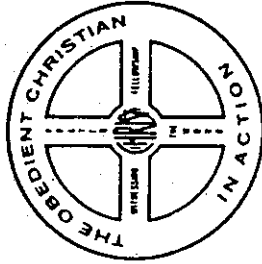
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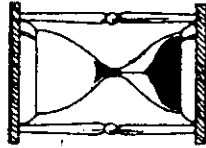
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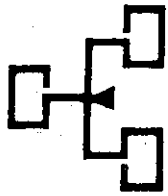
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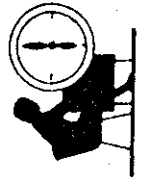
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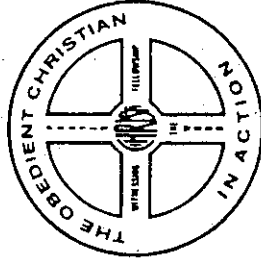
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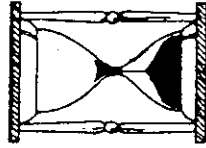
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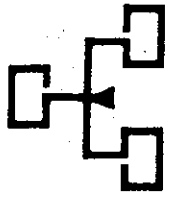
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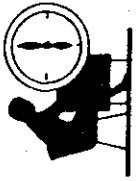
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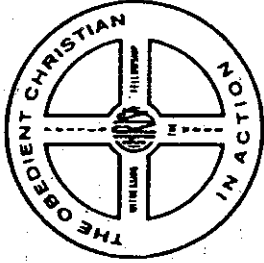


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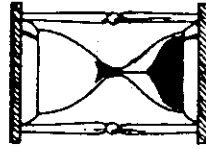
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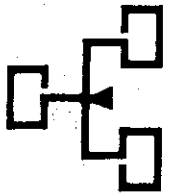
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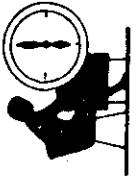
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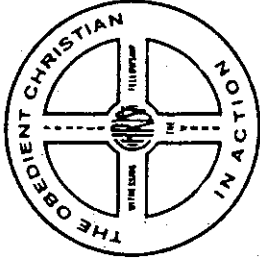


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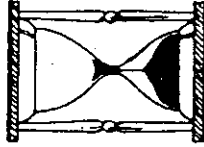
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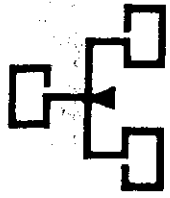
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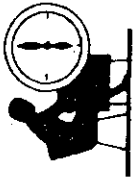
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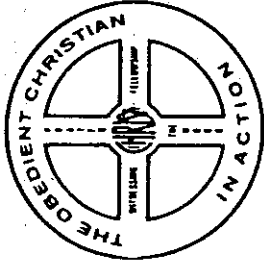


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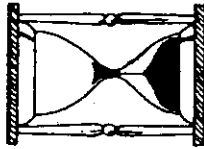
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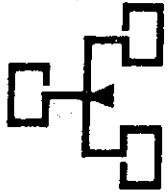
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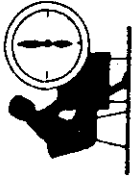
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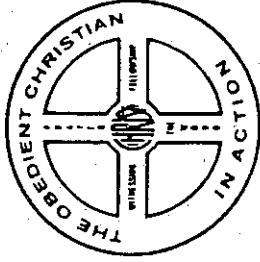
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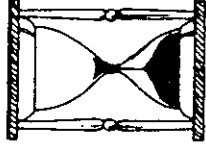
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Holiness Is Not an Option

Make every effort to live
In peace with all men and
To be holy; without
Holiness no one will see
The Lord.

Hebrews 12:14

Just what do these words, "without holiness no one will see the Lord" actually mean? Does our salvation in the final analysis depend to some degree on our attaining some level of personal holiness?

On this question the Scripture is clear on two points. First, the best Christians can never in themselves merit salvation through their personal holiness. Our righteous deeds are like filthy garments in the light of God's holy law (Isaiah 64:6). Our best works are stained and polluted with imperfection and sin. As one of the saints of several centuries ago put it, "Even our tears of repentance need to be washed in the blood of the lamb."

Second, Scripture repeatedly refers to the obedience and righteousness of Christ on our behalf. "For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous" (Romans 5:19). "For Christ died for your sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God" (I Peter 3:18). These two passages teach a twofold aspect of Christ's work on our behalf. They are often referred to as His active and His passive obedience.

Active obedience means Christ's sinless life here on earth, His perfect obedience and absolute holiness. This perfect life is credited to those who trust in Him for their salvation. His passive obedience refers to His death on the cross through which He fully paid the penalty for our sins and placated the wrath of God toward us. In Hebrews 10:5-9 we read that Christ came to do the will of the Father. Then the writer said, "And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Hebrews 10:10). So we see that our holiness before God depends entirely on the work of Jesus Christ for us, by God's will.

Does Hebrews 12:14 refer then to this holiness which we have in Christ? No, for at this point the writer speaks of a holiness which we are to strive after; we are to "make every effort...to be holy." And without this holiness, the writer says, no one will see the Lord.

Scripture speaks of both a holiness which we have in Christ before God, and a holiness which we are to strive after. These two aspects of holiness complement one another, for our salvation is a salvation to holiness: "For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life" (I Thessalonians 4:7). To the Corinthians Paul wrote "To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy" (I Corinthians 1:2). The word sanctified here means "made holy." That is, we are through Christ made holy in our standing before God, and called to be holy in our daily lives.

So the writer of Hebrews is telling us to take seriously the necessity of personal, practical holiness. When the Holy Spirit comes into our lives at our salvation, he comes to make us holy in practice. If there is not, then, at least a yearning in our hearts to live a holy life pleasing to God, we need to seriously question whether our faith in Christ is genuine.

It is true that this desire for holiness may be only a spark at the beginning. But that spark should grow till it becomes a flame--a desire to live a life wholly pleasing to God. True salvation brings with it a desire to be made holy. When God saves us through Christ, He not only saves us from the penalty of sin, but also from its domination. Bishop Ryle said, "I doubt, indeed, whether we have any warrant for saying that a man can possibly be converted without being consecrated to God. More consecrated he doubtless can be, and will be as his grace increases; but if he was not consecrated to God in the very day that he was converted and born again, I do not know what conversion means."¹

The whole purpose of our salvation is that we be "holy and blameless in His sight" (Ephesians 1:4). To continue to live in sin as a Christian is to go contrary to God's very purpose for our salvation. One of the writers of three centuries ago put it like this: "What a strange kind of salvation do they desire that care not for holiness... They would be saved by Christ and yet be out of Christ in a fleshly state... They would have their sins forgiven, not that they may walk with God in love, in time to come, but that they may practice their enmity against Him without any fear of punishment."²

Holiness, then, is not necessary as a condition of salvation--that would be salvation by works--but as a part of salvation that is received by faith in Christ. The angel said to Joseph, "You are to give him the name Jesus [which means 'Jehovah is salvation'], because He will save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21).

Therefore, we may say that no one can trust in Christ for true salvation unless he trusts in Him for holiness. This does not mean the desire for holiness must be a conscious desire at the time a person comes to Christ, but rather that the Holy Spirit who creates within us saving faith also creates within us the desire for holiness. He simply does not create one without the other.

Paul said, "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say 'No' to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled upright and godly lives in this present age" (Titus 2:11-12). The same grace that brings salvation teaches us to renounce ungodly living. We cannot receive half of God's grace. If we have experienced it at all, we will experience not only forgiveness of our sins but also freedom from sin's dominion.

This is the point James is making in his hard-to-understand passage on faith and works (James 2:14-26). He is simply telling us that a "faith" that does not result in works--in a holy life, in other words--is not a living faith but a dead one, no better than that which the demons possess.

God's nature demands holiness in the life of a Christian. When He calls us to salvation, He calls unto fellowship with Himself and His Son Jesus Christ (I John 1:3). But God is light; in Him is no darkness at all (I John 1:5). How then can we have fellowship with Him if we continue to walk in darkness?

Holiness then is required for fellowship with God. David asked the question, "O Lord, who may abide in Thy tent? Who may dwell on Thy holy hill?" (Psalm 15:1). That is to say, "Lord, who may live in fellowship with You?" The answer given in the next four verses may be summarized as "he who leads a holy life."

Prayer is a vital part of our fellowship with God; yet the Psalmist said, "If I regard wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear" (Psalm 66:18). To regard wickedness is to cherish some sin, to love it to the extent that I am not willing to part with it. I know it is there, yet I justify it in some way like the child who says, "Well, he hit me first." When we are holding on to some sin, we are not pursuing holiness and we cannot have fellowship with God.

God does not require a perfect, sinless life to have fellowship with Him, but He does require that we be serious about holiness, that we grieve over sin in our lives instead of justifying it, and that we earnestly pursue holiness as a way of life.

Holiness is also required for our own well-being. Scripture says, "The Lord disciplines those whom He loves, and He punishes everyone He accepts as a son" (Hebrews 12:6). This statement presupposes our need of discipline, for God is not capricious in administering it. He disciplines us because we need discipline.

To persist in disobedience is to increase our necessity for discipline. Some of the Corinthian Christians persisted in disobedience to the point where God had to take their lives (I Corinthians 11:30).

David described the discipline of the Lord this way: "When I kept silent about my sin, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night Thy hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was drained away as with the fever-heat of summer" (Psalm 32:3-4).

When God speaks to us about some sin, we need to heed and take action. To fail to deal with that sin is to risk incurring His hand of discipline. One icy morning as I was turning into the driveway of The Navigators headquarters where I work, my car skidded out of control into a corner fence post. Someone else in a similar predicament had already bent the post, and I only increased the angle. I said nothing to the property manager, despite several gentle proddings from God. Two weeks later I had another slight accident. After over 15 years of accident-free driving, I knew God was trying to get my attention, so I called the property manager, reported my first accident, and offered to pay for a new fence post. As Peter said, "Live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear" (I Peter 1:17). God is serious about holiness in the lives of His people, and He will discipline us to attain it.

Holiness is also necessary for effective service to God. Paul wrote to Timothy, "If a man cleanse himself from [ignoble purposes], he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work" (II Timothy 2:21). Holiness and usefulness are linked together. We cannot bring our service to God in an unclean vessel.

The One who makes our service effective and who empowers us for service is the Holy Spirit. Note well that He is called the Holy Spirit or the Spirit of Holiness. When we indulge our sinful natures and dwell in unholiness, the Spirit of God is grieved (Ephesians 4:30) and will not prosper our service. These are not times when we fall into temptation and immediately seek God's forgiveness and cleansing, but lives that are characterized by unholy living.

Holiness also is necessary for our assurance of salvation--not at the moment of salvation, but over the course of our lives. True faith will always show itself by its fruits. "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation" (II Corinthians 5:17).

I recall a young man, a fairly new Christian, whose father was visiting him. He had not seen his father for several years since he had become a Christian. He was eager to share his new-found faith with his dad, and we prayed together that he might be an effective witness to his father.

Several days later I asked him how it had gone with his witness. He told me that his dad had claimed to have trusted Christ as his Savior when he "went forward" at the age of 10 in an evangelistic meeting. I asked the young man, "In all these years you were growing up, did you ever see any evidence that your father was a Christian?" His answer was "No." What reason have we to put confidence in that man's salvation? He was almost 60 and had never once given his son any evidence that he was a Christian.

The only safe evidence that we are in Christ is a holy life. John said everyone who has within him the hope of eternal life purifies himself just as Christ is pure (I John 3:3). Paul said, "Those who

are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God" (Romans 8:14). If we know nothing of holiness, we may flatter ourselves that we are Christians but we do not have the Holy Spirit dwelling within us.

Everyone, then, who professes to be a Christian should ask himself, "Is there evidence of practical holiness in my life? Do I desire and strive after holiness? Do I grieve over my lack of it and earnestly seek the help of God to be holy?"

It is not those who profess to know Christ who will enter heaven, but those whose lives are holy. Even those who do "great Christian works" will not enter heaven unless they also do the will of God. Jesus said, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord', will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven.

"Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name drive out demons, and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from Me, you evildoers'" (Matthew 7:21-23).

Footnotes

1J. C. Ryle, Holiness, page xv.

2Walter Marshall, 1692, quoted in A. W. Pink, The Doctrine of Sanctification (Swengel, Pennsylvania: Bible Truth Depot, 1955), page 29.



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PURITY

Introduction

Leadership in the Body of Christ is contingent upon a certain moral standard which is set forth in Holy Scripture. Of supreme importance to God is that quality of character we call purity. Last week we saw how David's lack of purity brought destruction not only to his own house, but to his Kingdom as well. Therefore, if we are to be used of God to win and disciple the world for Jesus Christ, we must carefully heed what Scripture teaches on this very important subject.

Definitions of Purity

- Purity (dictionary)--Quality or state of being pure; cleanness; pure in thought and act; modest and decent in behavior and dress.
- Christian Purity-- Clean; free of defilement; chaste, free from sexual sin and guilt; inward moral purity expressed in outward modesty and discretion.

God demands moral purity as a characteristic of His disciples. Two of the Ten Commandments say:

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Exodus 20:14

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

Exodus 20:17

Jesus, in expounding the full meaning of these commandments, made it clear that God expects not only outward purity, but purity of thoughts.

Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: but I

say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

Matthew 5:27-28

Often a less discerning Christian will think it's acceptable to entertain sexual fantasies in his mind as long as he does not express them outwardly. That person fails to understand that this is the first of four steps which will lead to sin. The Bible says:

For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he:
Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee.

Proverbs 23:7

We need to guard our thoughts and bring them into captivity since this is where immorality starts. Paul warns us of this very thing.

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ....

II Corinthians 10:3-5

Why is God concerned about moral purity?

God Created Sex

Many Christians have the mistaken idea that God somehow frowns on the idea of sex. They consider sex to be one of the results of a fallen and sinful world. Nothing could be further from the truth! If we examine the creation story carefully, we see that long before sin ever entered the world God created sex as part of His original and perfect plan for man.

So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

Genesis 1:27-28

And God saw everything that He had made (including sex) and beheld, it was very good....

Genesis 1:31

Sex is a Vital Part of Marriage

Jesus taught His disciples about marriage.

But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

Mark 10:6-9

God placed sex within the protection of the marriage relationship. God intended that marriage and family should be the building blocks of His Kingdom and should illustrate the intimate relationship between God and the believer. Those who enter into a marriage covenant understand that it carries with it great responsibilities and great privileges. Sex is one of the privileges reserved for marriage alone!

God's Standard is Absolute

And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.

Mark 10:11-12

Because God knew the great power and potential of the sexual relationship, He protected its sacredness through an absolute standard of moral purity.

From the beginning of time, man has violated this standard. Sexual defilement is no new thing--it is one of the world's oldest sins. However, because it violates God's direct command, it carries with it grievous consequences and guilt.

... that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred

and twenty years. There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown. And God saw the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart, And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.

Genesis 6:2-7

God has not sanctioned situational ethics. Throughout time, God's standard has always been moral purity and sex only within the bonds of marriage.

What the Bible Teaches about Purity

Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.

Matthew 5:8

Let no man despise thy youth, but be thou an example of the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

I Timothy 4:12

Run from anything that gives you the evil thoughts that young men often have, but stay close to anything that makes you want to do right.

II Timothy 2:22 (LB)

Purify yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you.

Joshua 3:5

Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.

James 4:8

Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partakers of other men's sins: keep thyself pure.

I Timothy 5:22

Thou shall not commit adultery.

Exodus 20:14

For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication.

I Thessalonians 4:3

God hath not called us to uncleanness but unto holiness.

I Thessalonians 4:7

... abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul.

I Peter 2:11

Look carefully at the underlined words in the previous passages. They contain action verbs--commands that require aggressive application. Purity is not just a passive state of being that we should hope for, but a command that we must actively seek to obey.

How to Overcome Impurity

Realize that purity is for your own good

God is not out to deprive you of something exciting and wonderful. He wants to preserve sex for you until He gives it to you within the bonds of marriage.

For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory; no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.

Psalms 84:11

The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

John 10:10

God knows that sexual sin bring serious consequences to the individual and that immorality cannot satisfy our needs but can only deepen them.

But you cannot say that our physical body was made for sexual promiscuity; it was made for God, and God is the answer to our deepest longings ...avoid sexual looseness like the plague! Every other sin that a man commits is done outside his own body, but this is an offence against his own body....

I Corinthians 6:13-20 (JBP)

For a prostitute will bring a man to poverty and an adulteress may cost him his very life. Can a man hold fire against his chest and not be burned? Can he walk on hot coals and not blister his feet? So it is with the man who commits adultery...(he) is an utter fool for he destroys his own soul.

Proverbs 6:26-29 (LB)

Make up your mind to be pure

For the Lord God will help me. Therefore shall I not be confounded. Therefore have I set my face like a flint and I know that I shall not be ashamed.

Isaiah 50:7

I made a covenant with my eyes; why then should I look upon a maid?

Job 31:1

Avoid sexual arousal

Men are primarily aroused by what they see which stimulates their thoughts toward sex. Christian men must guard what books, magazines, and movies they allow their eyes to feed upon. Christian girls should help the men in this area by being careful as to how they dress, use their eyes, etc.

Girls are primarily aroused by touch. Therefore the apostle Paul advises in I Corinthians,

...It is a good principle for a man to have no physical contact with women.

I Corinthians 7:1 (JBP)

Casual kisses and petting can cause girls great sexual temptation and emotional trauma. Christian men should help the girls by being wise and discreet in their physical contact with them.

Romans 14:7-23 is a good passage to observe in this area. Both fellows and girls should try to conduct themselves in such a way that they:

- Let their conduct spring from faith (23).
- Work for things that edify the opposite sex (19).
- Live by conviction (13,22).
- Let not good be evil spoken of (16).
- Do not do anything that will cause their brother or sister to stumble (13,15,21).

Avoid dangerous situations

Can a man take fire in his bosom and his clothes not be burned? Can one go upon hot coals and his feet not be burned?

Proverbs 6:27-28

- Don't play with fire to see how far you can go without getting into trouble--as in petting or physical intimacy.
- Double-date or go to group functions more often than single-date. Plan ahead for healthy activities to do with your friends when going out.
- Don't frequent areas of the city where prostitutes are prevalent or where x-rated activity prevails. Girls should take care not to walk alone in dark areas or to go up in elevators alone with men. Travel alone only when it cannot be avoided!

Keep your track shoes on

Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

II Timothy 2:22

In many types of sin we are commanded to "stand fast" or to "resist" the enemy. But in this area we are told to run away from temptation and sin.

Be aware of pre-marital passion

Be aware and realistic about the tremendous power of pre-marital passion. Don't be deceived.

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

Jeremiah 17:9

Often Satan deceives Christians by making them think that the strong feelings they are experiencing toward a member of the opposite sex are agape love or Christian love, when really it is simply sexual passion (eros). Before they realize what has happened, they have fallen into sin. We must take care to realize that our hearts can deceive us with strong emotions that are difficult to distinguish when we are experiencing them.

Don't think you are an exception

Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

I Corinthians 10:12

So be careful if you are thinking, "Oh, I would never behave like that!" For you too may fall into sin.

Many Christians seem to think that simply because they are Christians, they are automatically immune from sexual sin. Some Christian husbands and wives do not pray for themselves and each other in this area of sexual temptation because they naively believe that because their spouse is a Christian, he or she would never be unfaithful. However, many Christians and Christian families have experienced tragic results because of sexual sin. We must remember that although we are Christian men and women, we are still men and women. We must be on guard to Satan and be as wise as serpents and as innocent (or pure) as doves. (Matthew 10:16)

Realize that purity is our best insurance against the future

You may feel that physical intimacy is all right because you are planning to be married. But we can never presume upon the future for we don't know God's sovereign plan.

How do you know what is going to happen tomorrow? For the length of your lives is as uncertain as the morning fog--now you see it; soon it is gone. What you ought to say is, "If the Lord wants us to, we shall live and do this or that."

James 4:14-15 (LB)

Summary

NOTES

Even the most elaborate and sincere marriage plans can be interrupted or stopped by events, illnesses or even death which are all beyond our control. If I allow myself to engage in premarital intimacy with my fiancée--only to discover later that God has overruled our marriage plans--I may have to live with a lifetime of regret and shame.

Impurity always brings forth guilt. Sometimes that guilt does not show up until years later and can inhibit sexual happiness after marriage. Therefore God exhorts us that all our relationships should be edifying so that whatever the outcome, we may look back with a clear conscience.



ETS 4/4

Assignment Sheet

Date _____

Name _____ Topic _____ Leadership _____

Lesson Leadership and Planning _____ Class _____

	Completed	
	Yes	No
Lecture		
Review "Leadership and Planning"		
Bible Study		
First Epistle of John Introduction		
PSMA		
Do 5 PSMA		
Reading		
Bible Reading Chart		
Pursuit of Holiness--Chapter 4		
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.		



LEADERSHIP AND PLANNING

Introduction

In the first two sessions on leadership (3/15 & 3/16) we covered a general introduction to the subject of leadership and an examination of the roles of the leader as revealed in the Bible. In the remaining weeks of this semester, we will be studying the tools that a leader uses. These tools make up the acrostic POLE.

- Planning
- Organizing
- Leading
- Evaluating

Today we will discuss the topic of Planning.

What is Planning?

Planning is the work we do to determine the course of action we must take to accomplish our objective. Planning is the vital first step of any accomplishment. It involves deciding in advance what to do, how to do it, when to do it, and who is to do it. It is the means by which we get from where we are, to where we want to go.

As Christians, we realize that God is the Master planner of the universe. All of creation, from the macrocosm to the microcosm, is evidence of the intricate planning of the Creator God. But even before the foundations of the world were laid, God had an even greater plan in motion. Ephesians 1:4-5 tells us that He had already chosen us to be redeemed and adopted into His family through the plan of salvation.

The prophet Jeremiah tells us that God also has a personal plan for every individual.

For I know the plans that I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for calamity, to give you a future and a hope.

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Jeremiah 29:11 (NAS)

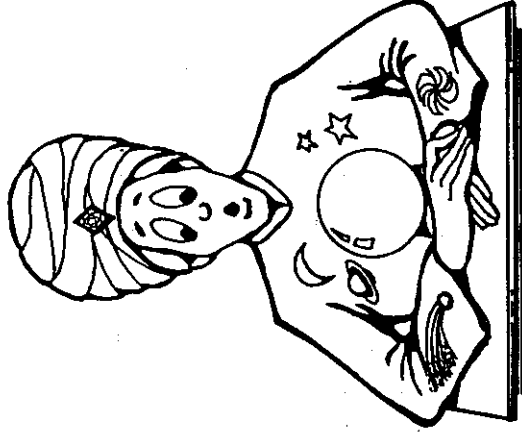
Planning, therefore, is an intricate and completely necessary principle in every objective of God and must be as intricately a part of ours.

Involved in this great principle are a variety of sub-components or skills. These are described in the following paragraphs.

Estimating

Estimating is determining what tomorrow will be like so that our planning will reflect reality. We live in a rapidly changing world, and our plans are only as good as our ability to analyze and estimate what tomorrow is going to be like.

To be effective in the area, a person must have a good grasp of what has happened in the field he is planning, what is happening now, and be updated on what experts in the field are projecting about what will happen tomorrow.



This has nothing to do with star gazing or trying to look into a crystal ball to second guess the future. It means staying current and doing research on what is going to be happening tomorrow.

Any enterprise built on wise planning, becomes strong through common sense, and profits wonderfully by keeping abreast of the facts.

Proverbs 24:3-4 (LB)

The skill comes in taking these factors into consideration and then making your projections. Since your plans are built on how you see tomorrow, it becomes apparent how important this step is and the need for a high degree of accuracy in this area.

The Bible tells us how Jesus realistically and objectively grasped the current situation and then projected the course of action necessary for the future.

Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.

Matthew 9:37-38

The Scriptures remind us that if we are alert in our estimation of certain situations, we will save ourselves a great deal of trouble.

The prudent man forseeeth the evil and hideth himself but the simple pass on and are punished.

Proverbs 22:3

A sound estimate of the past and present will lead to a realistic and successful plan for the future.

Establishing Objectives

It is crucial in planning to define and establish clear and measurable objectives. The objectives of any enterprise determines how and to what extent the organization will employ its resources. Objectives also largely determine what will be accomplished at the end of a given period of time.

Poor understanding, ambiguity, or confusion about objectives are the causes of much ineffective Christian endeavor today. Therefore, it requires great care and skill to set forth clear, understandable objectives which eliminate wasted effort and go to the heart of the issue at hand.

Good objectives state:

- The Intent
- The Activities involved in ~~in~~ accomplishing it
- A basis of Evaluation to determine if the intent has been met

The Scriptures are filled with well-written objectives which have motivated the Church throughout the ages. Consider the following:

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Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.

Matthew 28:19-20 (NAS)

- Intent "Go and make disciples of all nations..."
- Activities "Baptizing...teaching"
- Evaluation The intent here forms the basis for evaluation--"have all the nations been disciplined?"

So naturally we proclaim Christ! We warn everyone we meet and we teach everyone we can, all that we know about Him, so that we may bring every man up to his full maturity in Christ. This is what I am working at all the time, with all the strength that God gives me.

Colossians 1:28-29 (JBP)

- Intent "so that if possible we may bring every man up to his full maturity in Christ."
- Activities "we proclaim Christ... we warn everyone we meet, and we teach everyone we can... this is what I am working at all the time with all the strength God gives me."
- Evaluation Formed by the intent and the activities-- "Is every man mature in Christ?" "Am I warning and teaching everyone possible?" "Am I working at this all the time with all the strength God gives me?"

The essence of the Christian objective has been preserved through clear and measurable statements such as are found in the above passage. To those of us involved in determining objectives for ministries today, it becomes apparent that we must not dim the clarity of this goal by poorly-written statements that result in non-productive efforts.

Policies

Policies are standing answers for recurrent questions, situations, or problems. They can be very helpful in any organization when they are used as statements of understanding to guide the decision-making process. Good policies keep us from having to make the same decisions over and over again. Once the decision is made, it is communicated and everyone on the team knows what to do in that situation.

However, policies, if mishandled, can become stragulating to an organization. They can create unnecessary red tape, wasted time, and great delays in accomplishing the goal.

A vivid illustration of both the helpful as well as harmful potential of policies can be seen in the Jewish nation of the Old and New Testaments. In Exodus 20, God set forth the Ten Commandments--ten basic and broad guidelines for living. In the remainder of the Pentateuch, these broad guidelines or policies were defined and made quite specific to deal with almost all of the possible situations which could arise in relation to the Commandments. Up to this point, the policies were very helpful in guiding the Nation of Israel and in helping the leaders to be wise and fair with the people.

As time passed, however, the Oral or Scribal law arose out of the already specific Pentateuch.

William Barclay comments:

To these later Jews the great principles did not seem enough. They held that the Law was divine and that in it God had said His last word, that therefore everything must be in it...if not explicitly, it must be there implicitly. They argued that out of the Law it must be possible to deduce a rule and regulation for every possible situation in life. So there arose a race of men called the Scribes who made it the business of their lives to reduce the great principles of the Law into literally thousands upon thousands of rules and regulations.

When this Scribal law had been written down in the Mishnah and Talmud, over 72 volumes of several hundred pages each were the result. Barclay again says:

To the strict Jew, in the time of Jesus' religion, serving God was a matter of keeping thousands of legalistic rules and regulations... which they regarded as literally matters of life and death and eternal destiny.

It was through all this religious red tape that both Jesus and Paul made wide sweeping cuts. They saw the bondage that it had caused upon God's people and realized that unless the non-essentials were eliminated, they would literally strangle Israel.

Good policies, therefore, must be few and generic. The larger and older an organization becomes, the greater the need for skillfully written policies which guide and clear the issue rather than confuse it.

Programming

Programming is the determining of priorities and the sequence of activities necessary for accomplishing the objective. More effort is lost here than perhaps at any other point in planning. Programming insures a steady flow from start to finish on any project and coordinates various activities and short-range goals in an optimum way or the most efficient manner. Programming eliminates wasted effort by making sure that everything comes together according to plan.

Example of Bethlehem Steel

The famous story of the rise of Bethlehem Steel Company vividly depicts the importance of programming. Charles M. Schwab, who was then president of the young and struggling company, hired Ivy Lee, a management consultant, to help him make his company more efficient and productive. "Show me a way to get things done," challenged Schwab, "and I will pay you anything within reason--if it works."

Lee handed Schwab a piece of paper and told him to write down all the things he had to do tomorrow. Then he instructed him to number them in order of importance or priority. "Tomorrow," Lee said, "start working on number one and continue working on it until it's finished. Then take number two and continue working on that until it is finished. Then number three and so on. If you cannot complete all the items, at least

you have done the most important of them. Do this for every working day."

Schwab, years later, said this lesson of priority in programming was one of the most profitable lessons he had ever learned in all his years in business.

The importance of identifying the most important priority and giving ourselves to it before going on to another is emphasized by Jesus in Matthew:

But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

Matthew 6:33

Example of Jesus

Jesus knew how much wasted and futile effort could be consumed on non-priority activities such as worry over material needs, physical features, and the future (Matthew 6:25-34). He also was aware that even in sincere service to God, our priorities can get out of focus as was the case with Martha in Luke 10:38-42.

Martha, my dear, you are worried and bothered about providing so many things. Only a few things are really needed, perhaps only one...

Luke 10:41-42 (JBP)

Programming means discovering the few things that are really needed and giving ourselves to them systematically.

Scheduling

Scheduling is putting a time factor on the program by fitting the sequence of activities into an actual calendar with dates, hours, and minutes projected to the accomplishment of the objective. Too often, the only date set is the target date for the completion of the goal. But this is not enough. Short-term, easier-to-reach goals must also be target-dated as well as the activities and planning leading up to the completion of each stage. Deadlines need not mean a last minute rush if proper scheduling has been exercised.

God places great importance on the timing of His plan. The days of creation indicate that God was on schedule in His plan to Make the world and all within it. Galatians tells us that:

...when the fulness of the time came God sent forth his Son...

NOTES

Galatians 4:4

Again we see God working according to His divine schedule of events. The intricacy of prophets dating also confirms that although no one knows the exact day or the hour of future events but the Father alone, there is certainly a great and dynamic schedule being fulfilled.

He planned for the maturity of the times and the climax of the ages to unify all things... and consummate them in Christ.

Ephesians 1:10 (Amp.)

It is not surprising that God, who is so concerned with proper timing and scheduling, should exhort His people to "make the best possible use of your time...despite the difficulties of these days." (Colossians 4:5; Ephesians 5:16 JBP)

Budgeting

Budgeting is estimating the total resources needed and wisely planning how to employ the resources available to obtain the greatest results.

Estimate Need

The first step in budgeting is to estimate the total need--or to "count the cost." It is essential to consider all the necessary resources--men, money, time, and materials--realistically. Luke 14:28-32, stresses the importance of wisely "calculating the cost" before embarking on a project. Many do not, however, and the inevitable consequence is a half finished and usually poorly done task. Time, money, and effort are wasted because budgeting was not a part of the original planning.

The Inventory

The second step, after having estimated the need, is to take inventory of the available resources--"to see if there is enough to complete" the objective. Sometimes God purposely limits our resources so we will have to trust Him more. If we pray for "sanctified imaginations," God can help us to use our means. Wisely appropriating the resources to the task is a skill that demands great insight and wisdom.

The example of Gideon in Judges 7 illustrates how God purposely restricted the resources and how Gideon used creative and wise budgeting plus faith in God to accomplish the objective. Although God had purposely reduced Gideon's army, He assured Gideon that there were enough resources to accomplish the task (verse 15). By wisely dividing his men into three companies and by using the trumpets and torches, Gideon created the illusion of many more men than he actually had. The result was overwhelming victory "on a budget."

Establishing Procedures

Procedures are the standardizing of methods, materials, and work to accomplish the objective. A wise leader will usually choose procedures that:

- Are in line with his own strengths and gifts,
- Are in keeping with his resources, and
- Utilize optimally the strength and gifts of his team.

Methods that are or have been successful for others may not be the best for your particular project. Hence, it is important to be careful in the choice of procedures. Once the methodology has been decided, however, it will promote unity, uniformity, and order in the fulfilling of the task.

It must be remembered that procedures are dynamic and in a constant state of change. They must constantly be re-examined in the light of present and future needs and adjusted so as not to become hindrances. Yet, when used in the right way, procedures or methodology can prevent the chaos that came about in the book of Judges when "there was no king in Israel and everyone did what was right in his own eyes."

Summary

Planning is the first major principle in leading and is a vital part of any successful endeavor. The skills involved in planning are--

- Estimating
- Establishing objectives
- Developing policies
- Programming

- Scheduling

- Budgeting

- Establishing procedures.

Each of these skills can be identified in the Scriptures and are basic to the planning of both Old and New Testament leaders. The best planners tend to be men of vision with the ability to think conceptually and analytically.

NOTES

FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN

A great help in understanding the teaching of an epistle is to know something of its origin. It is good to make this the first step in your approach to any book of the Bible. Sources of information you can use for background study of New Testament books are:

1. The four Gospels and especially the Book of Acts. Look in these historical books for references to the author of a book and those receiving it. Use a concordance to see where the author appears, as well as other references to the city or people receiving the letter.
2. Some Bibles include background information at the beginning of each book.
3. The Bible Book by Book--G.C. Luck, Moody Press.
4. Also see the list of helps in "The Life of Hope," a study in this series.

WRITER OF THE EPISTLE

1. What was the occupation of John, the author of this letter, before Jesus called him to follow Him? (Mark 1:19)

2. When Jesus called John and his brother, how did they respond? (Mark 1:20)

3. In what way did John describe his relationship to Christ? (John 19:26; 20:2; 21:7,20)

4. What was the two-fold purpose of John's Gospel? (John 20:31)

5. What was John's main purpose in this first letter? (I John 5:13)

6. What was another reason for this letter? (I John 1:3)

WHEN AND WHERE?

Evidence indicates that John wrote this letter about 90 A.D., when he was an old man. Where he was is uncertain, but it was a general letter probably addressed to churches in and around the city of Ephesus, where John is believed to have spent many years of his ministry (Ephesus is in western Asia Minor).

WHY?

John writes to combat false teachings about Christ and also against a head-knowledge kind of Christianity that does not affect people's hearts and lives. He stresses that we can know we are saved (I John 5:13), and that the Christian life is one of harmonious fellowship with God and with others. John also spells out other evidences which will be present when Christ dwells in a heart.

SURVEY

Read through the letter several times, at least once at one sitting. The word "love" leads to some of the major teachings in this book. The word "know" is the clue to other truths. Notice how often these words occur and what they teach. You may want to mark these words in your Bible.

Number of times book read

Number of times you found the word "love"

Number of times you found "know," "known," "be sure"

In each chapter what is the outstanding verse with the word "love" in it, and what is its key thought?

Verse Key Thought

2: _____

3: _____

二、

••
•

In chapters 2 to 5, what is the best verse containing the word "know"?
And what is it that we can know?

Verse What do we know?

22

3

4

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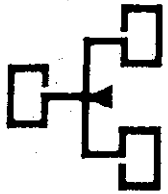
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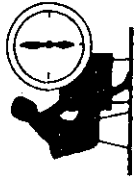
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[The body of the document contains extremely faint, illegible text that appears to be a series of lines or paragraphs. The text is too light to transcribe accurately.]



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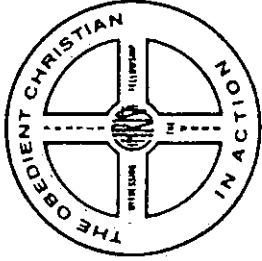


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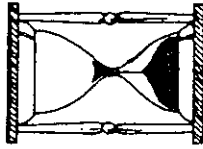
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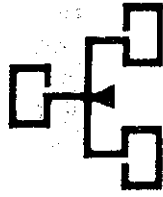
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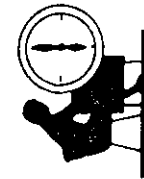
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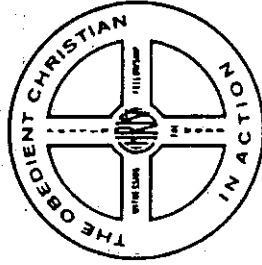
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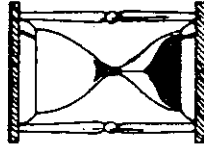
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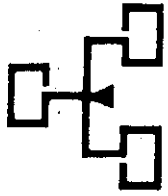
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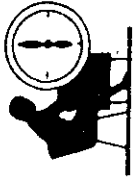
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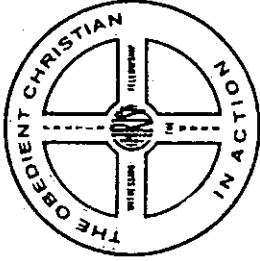


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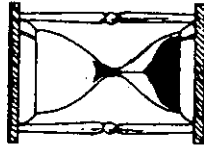
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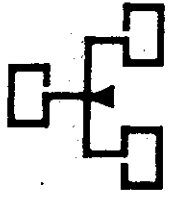
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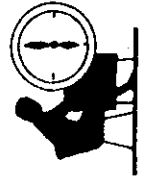
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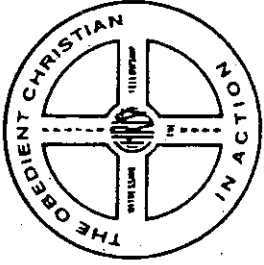
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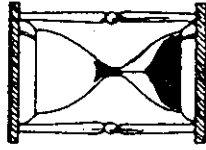
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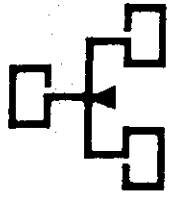
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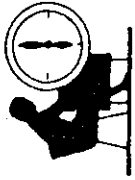
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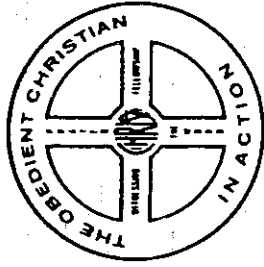
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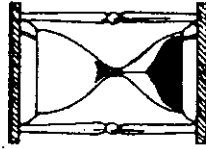
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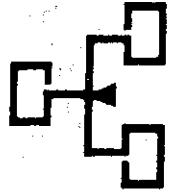
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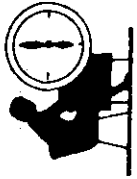
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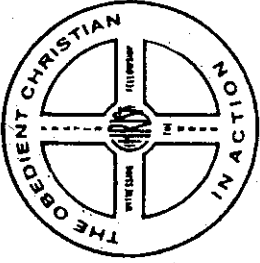
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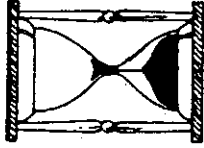
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The Holiness of Christ

God made him who had no
Sin to be sin for us, so that
In him we might become
The righteousness of God.

II Corinthians 5:21.

Before speaking further of holiness in ourselves, it is well that we also consider the holiness of Christ. We need this first of all to be firmly grounded in our security in Christ. As we study more fully the implications of "Be holy because I am holy," we will see more of our own sinfulness. We will see the wickedness and deceitfulness of our hearts, and how far we miss the mark of God's perfect holiness. As this happens, the true Christian will in his heart flee for refuge in Christ. It is important therefore that we understand the righteousness of Christ, and the fact that His righteousness is credited to us.

On numerous occasions the Scriptures testify that Jesus during His time on earth lived a perfectly holy life. He is described as "without sin" (Hebrews 4:15); as One who "committed no sin" (I Peter 2:22); and as "Him who had no sin" (II Corinthians 5:21). The Apostle John stated, "In Him is no sin" (I John 3:5). The Old Testament describes Him prophetically as "the Righteous One" (Isaiah 53:11), and as One who "loved righteousness and hated wickedness" (Psalm 45:7). These statements, taken from six different writers of Scripture, show that the sinlessness of Jesus Christ is the universal teaching of the Bible.

Even more compelling, however, is Jesus' own testimony concerning Himself. On one occasion He looked the Pharisees squarely in the eye and asked, "Can any of you prove Me guilty of sin?" (John 8:46). As someone observed, it was not their failure to answer His question that is so significant, but the fact He dared to ask it. Here was Jesus in direct confrontation with people who hated Him. He had just told them they were of their father the devil, and that they wanted to carry out his desires. Surely if any people had a reason to point out to Him some careless act of His or some flaw of His character, they would. Furthermore, Jesus asked this question in the presence of His disciples, who lived with Him continuously and had ample opportunity to observe any inconsistencies. Yet Jesus dared to ask the question because He knew there was only one answer. He was without sin.

But the holiness of Jesus was more than simply the absence of actual sin. It was also a perfect conformity to the will of His Father. He stated that He came down from heaven "not to do My own will, but to do the will of Him who sent Me" (John 6:38). On another occasion, He

said, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me" (John 4:34). Perhaps His highest testimony to His positive holiness was His statement, "I always do what pleases Him" (John 8:29).

Such a positive declaration must include not only His actions but also His attitudes and motives. It is possible for us to do the right action from a wrong motive, but this does not please God. Holiness has to do with more than mere acts. Our motives must be holy, that is, arising from a desire to do something simply because it is the will of God. Our thoughts should be holy, since they are known to God even before they are formed in our minds. Jesus Christ perfectly met these standards, and He did it for us. He was born in to this world subject to the law of God that He might fulfill it on our behalf (Galatians 4:4-5).

Whenever we seriously contemplate the holiness of God, our natural reaction is to say with Isaiah, "Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts" (Isaiah 6:5).

A serious view of the holiness of God--His own moral perfection and infinite hatred of sin--will leave us, as it did Isaiah, seeing with utter dismay our own lack of holiness. His moral purity serves to magnify our impurity.

Therefore, it is important that we receive the same assurance that Isaiah received: "Behold...your iniquity is taken away, and your sin is forgiven" (Isaiah 6:7). It is not only at the initial point of salvation that we need this assurance. In fact, the more we grow in holiness, the more we need assurance that the perfect righteousness of Christ is credited to us. This is true because a part of growing in holiness is the Holy Spirit's making us aware of our need of holiness. As we see this need, it is well for us to always keep in mind the righteousness of Jesus Christ on our behalf, and the fact that "God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God" (II Corinthians 5:21).

The truth of our acceptance by God through the righteousness of Christ may seem so elementary that you wonder why it is stressed here. It is because we need to dwell on it to thwart the attacks of Satan. The Holy Spirit makes us more aware of our lack of holiness to stimulate us to deeper yearning and striving for holiness. But Satan will attempt to use the Holy Spirit's work to discourage us.

One of Satan's attacks is to try to convince you that you are not a genuine Christian after all. He will say something like, "A true Christian wouldn't think the evil thoughts you've been thinking today." Now it may be that six months ago Satan would not have come to you with such a suggestion because you were not troubled about your thoughts. But now that the Holy Spirit has begun to reveal how sinful your thoughts of lust and resentment and pride really are, you may begin to have doubts about your salvation. A number of years ago, God was allowing me to go through some deep inner struggles to

teach me something of the sinfulness of my heart. During this time I was leading a weekly Bible study at a military base about an hour's drive from where I lived. Every Monday night as I left the fellowship of that Bible study and started my lonely drive home, Satan would begin to attack me: "How can anyone who is having the struggles you are having be a Christian?" I began to fight him by resorting to an old Gospel hymn which begins,

Just as I am without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidst me come to Thee;
O Lamb of God, I come.

I would sing through that hymn and by the time I finished I would be praising God for His salvation given freely to me through Jesus Christ.

You, too, if you diligently pursue holiness, must often flee to the Rock of your salvation. You flee there, not to be saved again, but to confirm in your heart that you are saved through His righteousness alone. You begin to identify with Paul when he said, "Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners--of whom I am the worst" (I Timothy 1:15). It is at this point that Christ's holy life lived on your behalf becomes so important to you.

A second reason we need to consider the holiness of Christ is because His life is meant to be an example of holiness for us. Peter told us that Christ left an example for us to follow in His steps (I Peter 2:21). Peter spoke particularly of Christ's suffering without retaliation, but in the following verse he said also that Christ committed no sin. Paul urged us to be imitators of God (Ephesians 5:1), and also said, "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ" (I Corinthians 11:1).

Clearly then, the sinless holy life of Jesus Christ is meant to be an example for us. Consider then His statement, "I always do what pleases Him." Do we dare take that as our personal goal in life? Are we truly willing to scrutinize all our activities, all our goals and plans, and all of our impulsive actions in the light of this statement: "I am doing this to please God"?

If we ask that question honestly, we will begin to squirm a bit. We know we do some things, good things in themselves, to gain admiration for ourselves rather than glory for God. We do other things strictly for our own pleasure, without any regard for the glory of God.

What is my reaction when the neighborhood bully pesters my little boy? Usually my initial reaction comes from a spirit of retaliation till the Holy Spirit reminds me of the example of Jesus. How do we view those who do not show love for us? Do we see them as persons for whom Christ died or as persons who make our lives difficult?

I recall an unpleasant business encounter once with a person who later became a Christian through another's witness. When I learned of this,

I was deeply chagrined to reflect on the fact that I had never once thought of him as a person for whom Christ died, but only as someone with whom I had an unpleasant experience. We need to learn to follow the example of Christ, who was moved with compassion for sinners and who could pray for them even as they nailed Him to the cross on Calvary.

In the words of nineteenth-century Scottish theologian John Brown, "Holiness does not consist in mystic speculations, enthusiastic fervours, or uncommanded austerities; it consists in thinking as God thinks, and willing as God wills."¹ Neither does holiness mean, as is so often thought, adhering to a list of "do's and don'ts," mostly don'ts. When Christ came into the world, He said, "I have come to do Your will, O God" (Hebrews 10:7). This is the example we are to follow. In all of our thoughts, all of our actions, in every part of our character, the ruling principle that motivates and guides us should be the desire to follow Christ in doing the will of the Father. This is the high road we must follow in the pursuit of holiness.

Footnotes

¹John Brown, Expository Discourses on I Peter (1848; reprint edition, Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, Volume 1), page 106.