

Single Bible Study Lessons 2023 Collection

This collection contains eleven Bible study lessons that are offered as pick-and-choose possibilities for Bible study lessons. The objective is to offer a variety of topics in a format that offers maximum flexibility.

To purchase a PDF suitable for copying for the congregation, go to our website or call or email and request the lesson desired. (The product code for website reference is provided below.) The cost is \$4.00 each lesson, and you may make as many copies as desired for your congregation.

When you order, an email will be sent to you with the download link.

Issues Series

Acceptance, 15239

Modesty and Simplicity versus Affluence, 15240

A Christian's Worldview, 15241

Singing and Music, 15242

The Conscience, 15243

Self-Righteousness, 15244

The Safety of a Godly Culture, 15245

Building Convictions, 15246

Stages of Life, 15247

The Christian's Reputation and Being Blameless, 15248

Loyalty, 15249



Gospel Publishers

PO Box 230, Moundridge, Kansas 67107

Ph. 620-345-2532; Email orders@gospelpublishers.com

Website www.gospelpublishers.com/usa

Sample Lesson for Bible Study

Acceptance

Is acceptance a trait we acquire, or is it a gift certain temperaments are born with? Some people seem to accept or adjust easily, and some only do so with great difficulty. At some time in our life, each one of us will come up against something we will struggle to accept.

Questions for Discussion

1. To what degree is acceptance an act of the will?
2. How much are our ambitions or expectations of the future involved in how quick we are to accept new things?
3. Is ready acceptance always appropriate?
4. What are childish or inappropriate responses to sudden changes in life?
5. What is the end result of not coming to acceptance?
6. How much should we accept our natures, how introverted or extroverted we are, our seeming lack of abilities, our relationships with others, our feelings about others' successes, or our children's struggles or successes?
7. Can you think of times, events, and experiences where acceptance is appropriate or needed?
 - tragedies, unfortunate events
 - major illness or health conditions that are life-changing
 - age-related changes

Scriptures

2 Corinthians 12:7 And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.

8 For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.

9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

Philippians 4:10 But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity.

11 Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

12 I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where

and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

Examples from the Bible

Job 1 — Job accepts the calamities he experienced.

2 Samuel 7 — David accepts that he could not fulfill his dream to build a house for God.

Sample Lesson for Bible Study Gospel Publishers

Sample Lesson for Bible Study

Modesty and Simplicity versus Affluence

In the 1959 General Conference, a resolution was drafted that states that we must teach and practice modesty, simplicity, and economy in all that we possess and undertake. However, compared to a few decades ago, our living standards are higher, and our homes and vehicles are much more comfortable as a result of affluence.

Questions for Discussion

1. Should we pursue all of the opportunities that present themselves to us in our occupations?
2. What is the main danger in affluence?
3. How is moderation kept if better quality items can be afforded?
4. How do we know if a competitive spirit controls us?
5. Do we honestly esteem the man who is struggling financially as much as the one who has wealth?
6. Can generosity be a way to justify having more assets?
7. Is living simply and modestly in our affluent times simply a matter of balance?
8. What is godly temperance or modesty in hobbies, special interests, recreation, or decorating?
9. How much virtue is there in making sure our homes and yards are plain?
10. Does a homemaker who has a natural touch for making things come together and look nice need to throttle back her instincts to make it painfully plain?
11. What is simplicity and modesty in our businesses?
12. Can our equipment be the best or most expensive in comparison to others in our community or in similar occupations?

Scriptures

Proverbs 21:2, 4 Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the LORD pondereth the hearts.

4 An high look, and a proud heart, and the plowing of the wicked, is sin.

Isaiah 42:1-2 Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.

2 He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street.

1 Timothy 2:9 In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array.

1 Timothy 6:8-10 And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.

9 But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.

10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

1 Peter 5:5 Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

On the other hand:

Ecclesiastes 5:18–20 Behold that which I have seen: it is good and comely for one to eat and to drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labour that he taketh under the sun all the days of his life, which God giveth him: for it is his portion.

19 Every man also to whom God hath given riches and wealth, and hath given him power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labour; this is the gift of God.

20 For he shall not much remember the days of his life; because God answereth him in the joy of his heart.

Sample Lesson for Bible Study Gospel Publishers

Sample Lesson for Bible Study

A Christian's Worldview

Does my outlook, or my worldview, need to be rethought? Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines *worldview* as “a comprehensive conception . . . of the world especially from a specific standpoint.” We all have a worldview that affects our daily choices, prejudices, and attitudes. Let us consider our general outlook toward civil authority and church authority.

Some see situations or decisions in black-and-white terms. Everything is entirely wrong or it is entirely right. Anyone who cannot understand this clearly is written off. Others see the same situations from a different perspective entirely and find the issue to be complex. Some are almost locked up with indecision. Is our outlook or inherent way of reacting unalterable? Each one believes his view is correct.

If one has some principles he holds to firmly and will not yield or compromise, where does it divide between being self-right or strong-willed, or standing for what is right and not compromising with wrong?

Questions for Discussion

1. What shapes a person's worldview?
2. Is it unalterable?
3. Why do we often believe our worldview is correct and everyone else's is less so?
4. How can parents raise their children to respect others' views and not feel theirs are inherently better?
5. What can we do if we are too suspicious of everyone and their motives? What if we are too trusting?
6. What causes one to live in suspicion of the government or those around us?
7. What drives suspicion toward the medical community and trust in less conventional or alternative methods?
8. What effect does an inclination toward believing unproven theories about world events have on our peace?
9. How do the following affect my responses, decisions, and positions?
 - How I feel about myself and my place in my environment
 - The issues I am sensitive about
 - How I feel about politics and the officials who shape national policies
 - How I feel about congregational leaders and church authority

Scriptures

Proverbs 3:5–6 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

Proverbs 16:2, 9, 16 All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the LORD weigheth the spirits.

9 A man's heart deviseth his way: but the Lord directeth his steps.

16 How much better is it to get wisdom than gold! and to get understanding rather to be chosen than silver!

Romans 13:1-3 Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.

2 Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.

3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same.

Philippians 2:3 Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

Hebrews 13:17 Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

Sample Lesson for Bible Study Gospel Publishers

Sample Lesson for Bible Study

Singing and Music

Music moves our spirit in a way no other communication can move it. Is singing the language of the soul? Whether or not you believe this is so, is it alike for everyone? Singing in worship services is something all can participate in—a truly communal form of worship—and makes us fellow believers.

Kinds of songs in our music today:

- Worship songs
- Petition songs
- Consecration or commitment songs
- Warning or invitation songs
- Comfort and assurance songs
- Praise songs

Questions for Discussion

1. Why is there caution against instrumental music?
2. Is all religious music appropriate for the people of God?
3. What are the dangers of recorded music?
4. What type of music is our generation producing, and what does it say about us?
5. Is it more inspiring to hear good singing or to be the one singing?
6. What is the balance in singing for the singers' enjoyment or adjusting the selection so the listeners can absorb or understand the message?
7. In worship services, what is the relationship between music and the sermon?
8. Does a preaching service need music to make it complete? (Think: an evangelistic message and an invitation song or an evening of special numbers in song.)

Scriptures

Psalms 95:1 O come, let us sing unto the LORD: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.

1 Corinthians 14:15 What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.

Ephesians 5:19 Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.

Colossians 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

The Conscience

The conscience is a feeling or voice inside a person that acts as a guide to appropriate behavior. It is shaped by several things, including our parents' influence, the things that happen in our life, and behaviors we observe among people around us. Over time, the conscience begins to learn what is appropriate behavior. Unfortunately, not everything the conscience learns is true. Since our conscience is trained by imperfect surroundings, we cannot rely on it alone to determine what is right and wrong.

If someone were to offer irrefutable proof that the way we had always lived our life needed to be changed, it would be very hard to retrain our conscience to allow for that. The early Christians' consciences were programmed to trust in the Jewish culture. The apostles had to work very hard, even among themselves, to retrain their consciences to accept the new teachings of Jesus. Because they had faith that Jesus was the Son of God, they became willing to reorient their consciences to make it easier to serve God without unnecessary guilt.

The conscience is a valuable tool, but it is not infallible. In fact, each conscience will most likely have some things that it does not judge correctly. For this reason, we will need to be keen to the Holy Spirit to teach us the mind of Christ more accurately.

The Holy Spirit makes no mistakes. He is faithful and authoritative. When He speaks, we can always trust Him to have our best interest and the interests of God at heart. However, his voice can sometimes be hard to hear over the clamor of our conscience. It is unfortunate, but the conscience can sometimes work against us and make life more difficult. It is the goal and challenge of the Christian to make both the Spirit and the conscience work together for the good of the soul.

No matter what our own conscience is like, it will need to be humbly given over to God so He can reorient it in the areas where our standards are not helpful or pure. Our unique experiences and training make us into the person we are. God understands our makeup and graciously makes room for each of us to be who we are as a person and still be a Christian.

Questions

1. An overly keen conscience can have a crippling effect on a person. How can a person learn to distinguish between the cry of a fearful conscience versus the hopeful voice of the Spirit of God?
2. What is the contrast between how the Spirit deals with mistakes versus the way a conscience addresses mistakes in our life?
3. If we feel the need to confess or repent excessively, it may be due to a conscience that was formed by fear or shame. How can we find a proper balance in this without feeling guilty or afraid?
4. Why is the conscience often louder than the voice of the Spirit?
5. A loving, nurturing environment will usually help us form a conscience that has similar attributes. Conversely, being raised in a self-righteous, ungodly, or harsh environment

can make a conscience that is sharp and relentless. How can the conscience be softened in an appropriate way?

6. Despite its imperfections, the conscience is very valuable. In what ways is it invaluable for the Christian?

7. Is sanctification how the Holy Spirit works with the Christian's conscience?

8. Are those who struggle with doubts and fears victims of an overactive conscience, or is it a different spirit?

9. A very weak conscience is destructive. What is meant by a seared conscience, and is there a remedy for this?

10. Shame is an often-destructive emotion that may or may not be warranted. Shame tends to incapacitate a person from moving forward in a redemptive way. Guilt is the appropriate response to having committed a sin or crime. Guilt is based on facts. Proper feelings of guilt have a redemptive, positive quality to them. How can we learn to know the difference between the two?

11. What is getting in our way if we do not enjoy the fruits of love, joy, and peace (Gal. 5:22–23) in daily Christian life?

12. Why do we sometimes feel ashamed if we accept a compliment or accolade without saying something self-deprecating in response?

Scriptures for Meditation

Romans 8:26 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

Galatians 5:22–23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

2 Timothy 1:7 For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

Hebrews 10:22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

Sample Lesson for Bible Study

Gospel Publishers

Sample Lesson for Bible Study

www.gospelpublishers.com

Self-Righteousness

Self-righteousness is characterized by harshness or a severity that nearly everyone finds off-putting. Obsession with correcting others, a coldness of spirit, and a judgmental, calculating mind often accompany a self-righteous attitude. Despite this, those who find themselves caught in the trap of self-righteousness will usually feel as though they are a beacon of light in an otherwise darkened room.

What comes to our mind when you think of self-righteousness? If we are honest, most of us probably think of a time when we have had a self-righteous attitude or spirit. Isaiah 64:6 says, “But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.” The parable of the Pharisee and publican comes to mind. The Pharisee stood on the street corner and told the Lord all the good things he had done, and the publican said, “God be merciful to me a sinner.” The realization that our works do not gain us salvation is one of the keys to humility.

We all have things we struggle with. It is easy to look at our brethren and wonder why they are doing something we may not approve of, but it is a good practice to examine ourselves and uncover why we are having these thoughts. How well do we do in relationships with our neighbors and friends who are not a part of our faith? Sometimes we may come across with a better-than-you attitude because of what we perceive to be our superior lifestyle and religious commitment. Before we trust an elevated perception of ourselves, may we remember that each of us has nearly equal potential to make a mess of our life without the grace and mercy of God in our heart.

Questions

1. Self-confidence is a good thing. It is simply the confidence to be who God intended us to be. What are the differences in being self-righteous or having self-confidence?
2. How can we make the assessment ourselves if we are self-righteous? Is it possible for us to figure that out on our own, or does it always come from others?
3. True or False: A sign of self-righteousness in our lives is noticing self-righteousness in my brother.
4. Most grow to believe that the way they were raised and taught was the right way. What can we do to avoid a condescending attitude toward other cultures or religions?
5. Jesus showed a strong disdain for self-righteousness. Are we more lenient with this spirit than we should be?
6. Some may fear that if they completely rid themselves of a self-right spirit, they will open themselves up to being permissive or too soft on sin. Is this a valid fear?
7. The Pharisees were extremely conservative and pious. They put so much stock in retaining their conservative values that they lost sight of the true Spirit of God. Where is the balance today in conserving good values but not losing sight of the godly spirit that is compassionate, good, and kind to those who may not share the same value system?

Scriptures for Meditation

Luke 6:41–42 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

42 Either how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye.

Luke 18:9–14 And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others:

10 Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.

11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

12 I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

13 And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

Galatians 6:1 Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

Sample Lesson for Bible Study
www.gospelpublishers.com

Sample Lesson for Bible Study

www.gospelpublishers.com

The Safety of a Godly Culture

“What is the chaff to the wheat? Saith the LORD” (Jeremiah 23:28).

The church is made up of spiritual brothers and sisters. As these brethren have lived and worked around each other, their intertwined lives have formed a culture. This culture is largely good and comforting and tends to nourish many peripheral needs of the Christian. The culture of the church is safe for the nurture of souls, but the culture itself is not to be confused with righteousness or holiness. It is simply a safe place for such things to germinate and grow.

Chaff feeds, protects, and nourishes a kernel of wheat as it grows. Similarly, our daily lives affect the kernel of God's Spirit in our hearts. Chaff is vital to the growth of wheat. In the same way, the culture we are surrounded by is vital to the growth of the true kernel. Chaff is of no value after wheat is harvested, and neither is the culture that shaped our Christian lives when we come to face an eternal God in time or eternity.

1. Does a repentance experience affect culture?
2. How much of our church service is cultural practice?
3. Is our singing a cultural tradition?
4. Does our cultural safety tend to breed a lack of conviction among the young ones?
5. How and why did Jesus move past cultural boundaries?
6. Who creates cultural barriers?
7. What is cultural unity, and is it a worthy goal?
8. Does endorsing cultural practices bring about unity?
9. Does unity of the Spirit bring cultural oneness?
10. Do the differences in our upbringing and the communities in which we are raised create cultural gaps? How easily can one adjust his thinking to really fit into another culture?
11. Is it appropriate to place any spiritual value on culture?
12. What are some of the safe things about our church's culture?
13. Culture is inevitable. How responsible am I for the culture of the church?
14. Are there some things that we now view as inappropriate or sinful which may simply be cultural differences?

Scriptures for Meditation

Mark 7:1-23

1 Corinthians 9:19-23

Galatians 3:28

Sample Lesson for Bible Study

www.gospelpublishers.com

Building Convictions

A conviction is a firmly held belief or the state of being convinced of something. It has been said that a conviction is a belief strong enough to live it. Convictions are more than just an opinion. They are a persuasion that has the power to make us change the way we live. True conviction does not come from being told what to believe or what to do; it is born through prayer, self-reflection and meditation, and a thirst for the truth. It is a personal thing that requires effort and sacrifice to acquire.

Godly convictions are the Christian's building blocks. A godly conviction will never be out of line with the leading of the Spirit. A conviction that is of God will not cause divisions with our Christian brothers and sisters. A godly conviction will always retain the spirit of unity and charity. It is not uncommon for convictions to vary slightly from Christian to Christian. However, these minor variations do not mean a lack of unity or that a conviction is not valid. Unity does not stumble at variety; rather, it thrives on the harmonious beauty found in variety. It is when we find that our convictions seem to destroy the peace that flows between us and our brethren that we should be concerned.

Let us seek to establish convictions that are built on the Word of God and Spirit of Christ.

"Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established" (Proverbs 16:3).

Questions

1. How can we teach our children to develop godly convictions?
2. Is avoiding watching television a conviction?
3. What is the relationship between conference decisions and convictions?
4. How can we undo a conviction that we find to be at odds with the majority of our brethren?
5. What is the key to living a conviction that is slightly different from those around us without breaking the bond of unity? (Examples: having the conviction that our children's curfew should be half an hour earlier than the curfew of their peers or being more plain with vehicles or home furnishings.)
6. Do you need to have conviction to be saved?
7. It is sometimes said, "With money comes new light." Why would our convictions change when there is more money available?
8. How similar should our convictions be?
9. Do our convictions need to be Holy Spirit inspired?
10. Do we need conviction on recreation?
11. Concerning conference decisions, especially about photography and recorded music:
 - A. Should the use of photography be a personal conviction? Do we need to understand the reasons for not using photography in certain circumstances or simply abstain as a matter of respect?
 - B. Our children hear us say "for business purposes" when discussing photography. Do

they know what our convictions are on the matter? Is it necessary for our children to hear us teach on photography?

C. Do we leave mixed signals when it comes to recorded music?

D. Do you feel more conviction is needed for other conference decisions?

12. The conviction on watching videos varies greatly among us. Whether it be YouTube or news videos, where are the lines we should not cross?
13. What is the appropriate response if our convictions are challenged by changing times? For example, if a brother has a strong conviction against the use of the smartphone or internet but soon finds himself alone in his conviction, while nearly all of his brethren move ahead with the change of times.

Sample Lesson for Bible Study
www.gospelpublishers.com

Sample Lesson for Bible Study

www.gospelpublishers.com

Stages of Life

Youth

Youth is a thrilling stage of life. Young people are learning to know what it's like to be more independent and learning the responsibilities and consequences of that independence. Youth can also be one of the more awkward and lonesome times of life because of trying to fit in to a social group while maintaining a meaningful Christian life. How can we strengthen the resolve of youth against the temptations they face? Do we sometimes leave them on their own too much as we try to give them room to be more independent? Is it sometimes a temptation for older Christians to try to teach young people life's lessons by consistently pointing out the things they are doing wrong and perhaps neglecting to instruct them on the proper way? How can we bolster the youth in a positive way?

The church youth program is a way to prepare the youth for Christian life and to encourage the growth of their talents. How structured should youth programs be? What can be done to promote healthy social skills such as proper conversational skills, having good manners, etc.? How can the church help nurture appropriate self-confidence? Should every young person be pushed to serve in a unit, mission, or care facility?

Newly Married

Young people are excited when they begin their home. Are our expectations for how marriage works often too high or unrealistic? What are the dangers of going into marriage expecting to always live the good life? Some may think that if they are unhappy before they are married, marriage will make them happy. Do older Christians sometimes worsen this misconception through teasing and matchmaking? What can go wrong if someone enters marriage believing that their spouse will make them happy even though they struggled to find happiness as a youth? Marriage may bring great happiness or great unhappiness. What factors determine what happens over time?

A marriage is made up of two people who come from different backgrounds. What prepares them to form a new home of their own? What is necessary for them to respect each other's concepts, traditions, and values? What is the proper balance in the husband and wife's relationship—he being the head of the home and she being in a submissive, supporting role, yet carrying the heavier load in caring for the children? Taking care of the home and young children is a big job that can be taken for granted by some men. Is the man's role solely as a provider and advisor, or should he take more of an active role in household tasks? Alternatively, is it appropriate for a wife to get a part-time job to help with finances while there are young children at home?

What foundational blocks need to be laid between husband and wife before children are added to the home? With children comes the need to rear them with love and a vision for the future. If there is not a clear conviction or plan, dealing with children can quickly get out of hand and become a battle for control. This situation leads to frustration on the part of both the parent and the child. How does a young couple find a solid, spiritual vision on child nurture? Is it more important to correct a child or to teach them?

Sample Lesson for Bible Study

Middle Age

We tend to get locked into our patterns of life: immersed in our occupation, introverted or extroverted, and socially accomplished or more withdrawn. Is middle age a time of less spiritual growth, less spiritual emphasis? Middle age is often the time we get into business and financial involvements that absorb much of our time. How can we assess and correct intemperate work habits that cause us to neglect our duties in our home or congregation? What is the proper balance between time spent away from home and time spent with our family?

Not many couples volunteer for mission service in middle age; it often is younger families who go to the mission, and it is often older couples who go to serve as houseparents in voluntary service units. In what form should we seek to give service in middle age? The church is greatly enriched by the gifts and labors of this age group. The refining fire of time has usually tempered them, giving them a certain balance of youth and wisdom that can be very useful. This leaves us with an important responsibility to teach and nurture. How do we fulfill this responsibility? What is the proper role or relationship of the middle aged in dealing with the younger in the workings of the church? It seems it is difficult for some to accept that they are no longer young, clinging to the last vestiges of youth in a way that onlookers may find concerning or amusing.

It is important for families to spend time together. However, it can be possible to spend so much time with family that we have little time or desire for other fellowship. How do we know if we have become too immersed in our own family: our married children and young families and grandchildren?

Over Seventy, and the Sunset Years

Worldwide, only forty-three percent of people make it to the age of seventy. So, a person is very privileged to join this age group. Studies have shown that the majority of people at this age find themselves the most contented. For those in their seventies and even eighties, it can be a time of great responsibility. Some may be busier at this age (especially with the work of the church), than they were when they were younger. What groundwork is necessary in order for a person to be contented and happy when they reach older age? What are things that give older Christians an advantage when reaching out to others?

Aging also brings an undeniable physical decline that is, in varying degrees, an added burden, which can affect a positive outlook. How can we graciously accept physical limitations? What positive attributes do we gain in the place of our physical strength and stamina? What are some ways to combat possible feelings of loneliness or inferiority that may manifest themselves? In congregational elections, the younger men tend to get nominated and get elected for the various positions. Is it normal for the older to have feelings that it is all over, they are putting us out to pasture, or that we are not relevant any longer?

One of the greatest joys of aging is being grandparents and watching grandchildren mature. What responsibilities do grandparents have to their children and grandchildren? Or is being a grandparent simply the role of an observer?

Some very talented and useful people never marry or have lost a spouse to death.

Aging brings a few added challenges for them that may not be completely understood by those who are not in the same shoes. How can these brothers and sisters continue to find fulfillment?

What are the avenues for service as we age? Older people have learned many lessons in life. Their wisdom is essential for the nurture and growth of younger Christians. The experiences they have in life are meant to be shared for the edification of others. How can we maintain the desire to fulfill our duty to our brethren and the church as we enter a stage of life where energy or zeal may be waning?

Can the older ones find fulfillment in being in a supportive role as the younger and middle aged take on the responsibility for the church at large, leadership, etc.? Do the ones in this age recognize the need to be gracious when we need to be supporters of the younger brothers and sisters, but also to be gracious when asked to help with something?

Scriptures for Meditation

1 Timothy 4:12

Ecclesiastes 11:9; 12:1

2 Timothy 2:22

1 John 2:12-14

Titus 2:3-5

Titus 2:2, 7-12

Matthew 11:28-30

Sample Lesson for Bible Study
www.gospelpublishers.com

Sample Lesson for Bible Study

www.gospelpublishers.com

The Christian's Reputation and Being Blameless

We may feel we are living an upright, godly life. However, it may be beneficial to examine our lives to try to understand what impression we may be making on others in our community. Our appearance or lifestyle may be giving off signals we do not realize we are sending.

What should be the Christian's reputation in the community? Is the Christian's reputation formed by conscious effort or as result of his life?

Proverbs 22:1 A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold.

Psalms 15 LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?

2 He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart.

3 He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour.

4 In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the LORD. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.

5 He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent. He that doeth these things shall never be moved.

Philippians 2:15 That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.

What are we known for in our communities? Sometimes a person from the surrounding community will ask if nonmembers can attend our services. Do they see us as a closed or segregated people? It usually says on our church signs that everyone is welcome. Is that enough of an invitation? How can we make someone feel a warm invitation?

If we are too proud of our reputation, this can have a far-reaching negative impact. A parent may feel their child must keep a certain standard of outward appearance or attitude that may actually help sow seeds of self-righteousness or deception—or rebellion. What are some ways parents may do this to their children? How can we judge if we have an unhealthy view of how we and our children appear to others? Is there a healthy amount of reputational pride that motivates us to make our appearance and life appealing to others, or is all pride negative?

Can we be blameless in all areas of our life? Think of our affluence and how that looks to the world to drive on the church yard and see numerous late-model, expensive vehicles. It sometimes seems we feed off each other within the church to influence our purchases or design preferences. It is not unusual, however, for our tastes to be seen as rich or even

flashy by our neighbors. How important is it for us to be in tune with the criticisms or concerns of the community when it comes to the cars we drive or our homes and furnishings? What part, if any, should the ideas and thoughts of the surrounding community play in how we dress and behave in public or even at home?

When outside children come to Bible school, they may be made to feel they do not fit in. Sometimes we find that in teaching our children about worldliness, we have inadvertently made them feel repulsed or frightened about interacting with “worldly” people. What part do we as parents and leaders play in this? Are we blameless? How can we teach our children to be inviting and friendly and yet caution them against the dangers of the world?

Are we blameless in our claim to be a plain people? How are we doing with our style of dress as it relates to being a plain people of God? Where is the line between acceptable fashion trends and unacceptable ones? Is it modesty? Neatness?

Are we blameless in our financial dealings? Do our tax preparers or bankers see it that way? Or do they see us as a people who seek out any loopholes they can find even if it means stretching the truth a bit? Is it fair to say that we should go to any lengths to avoid paying any more taxes than necessary? What witness should we leave with those we deal with financially? How many of our customers or accountants would feel a warm invitation to attend church with confidence that we are pilgrims and strangers here on earth?

If we were to come into a time of opposition such as our great-grandfathers endured, would our reputation be quite different because we would not be going to war or buying war bonds, as was the situation in their times? How much will being blameless in other areas of life influence whether we are considered nonresistant? What is the relationship between our financial philosophy and practice and nonresistance? How do we stay blameless when it comes to politics?

Are we upholding our beliefs and practices in the time before marriage and thus living in a blameless way and above reproach in this area? We have always held that marriage partners are found by God’s leading and not by dating or courtship; and after a couple is engaged, they should be careful to be generally in the presence of family and friends. In recent times it seems some prospective marriage partners display a more relaxed attitude about spending time alone (driving together, etc.) as compared to former years. How do we stay blameless in this? Should the announcement of an engagement be a surprise to the congregation?

Sample Lesson for Bible Study
www.gospelpublishers.com

Sample Lesson for Bible Study

www.gospelpublishers.com

Loyalty

To be loyal is to be dedicated and steady. It is being committed to those we care about or faithful to a cause or purpose. Loyalty is a natural product of spiritual life, but it must also be moderated at times so we do not become disoriented and lose sight of God's proper order. Blind loyalty has been the cause of many unfortunate circumstances throughout human history. On the other hand, loyalty is a necessary element of human connection, friendship, and trust. It is expected of a Christian to be appropriately loyal. What does that entail?

What is the root of loyalty? Is it love? Responsibility? Can loyalty be taught?

When we think of loyalty, we often think of being dedicated to those we love. It can also mean a commitment to the same causes or ideals as our loved ones. How much loyalty should we have for:

- Our extended family
- Our culture
- Our congregation
- Our church
- Our nation

There is a point when loyalty can become misguided or misplaced. When this happens, this can be a detriment to us. In some cases, it can deceive us and lead us away from God's purpose for our life.

What is the danger in being overly loyal in certain areas? For example, some find they hold a strong allegiance to certain political agendas or ideals. They may even feel this is God-led. What, if anything, is dangerous about this scenario?

For some people, loyalty becomes so consuming that it hides possible negative outcomes from view. In these cases, it becomes nearly impossible for these individuals to be swayed. This can be a good thing in certain conditions. What are circumstances that show the value of or danger of blind loyalty? How can we tell if our loyalties are in the right place? As a Christian, can I misplace my loyalty without realizing it?

A fundamental element of marriage is loyalty. Without it, a marriage cannot last. However, this does not mean that a spouse should go along with or hide sin in their husband or wife's life. What is proper loyalty within marriage? What destroys it? What nurtures it?

Friendships are necessary for all well-adjusted people. Friendships are based on mutual trust and mutual benefit. Everyone defines friendship slightly differently. For some, a friend is anyone they remember and like. For others, friendship is forged through many tests and proven by time. These tend to have few they would consider true friends. No matter the definition of a friend, once a friendship is established, a measure of loyalty is needed to maintain it. How loyal should we be to our friends? Is it beneficial to be unwaveringly dedicated to a friend? Is there any danger in that?

Scriptures for Meditation

1 Samuel 24:6–10 And he said unto his men, The Lord forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the Lord's anointed, to stretch forth mine hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the Lord.

7 So David stayed his servants with these words, and suffered them not to rise against Saul. But Saul rose up out of the cave, and went on his way.

8 David also arose afterward, and went out of the cave, and cried after Saul, saying, My lord the king. And when Saul looked behind him, David stooped with his face to the earth, and bowed himself.

9 And David said to Saul, Wherefore hearest thou men's words, saying, Behold, David seeketh thy hurt?

10 Behold, this day thine eyes have seen how that the Lord had delivered thee to day into mine hand in the cave: and some bade me kill thee: but mine eye spared thee; and I said, I will not put forth mine hand against my lord; for he is the Lord's anointed.

Proverbs 17:17 A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.

Proverbs 18:24 A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.

Matthew 18:21–22 Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?

22 Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.

1 Corinthians 4:2 Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.

Sample Lesson for Bible Study
www.gospelpublishers.com