

BUILDING A POSITIVE LIFE
Volume 1

J.J. Turner

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DEDICATION

To

Carl Allison

A Friend And Positive Life Builder

Introduction

I have personally known Brother J.J. Turner for several years. Our first meeting came about during the time he was connected with White's Ferry Road School of Preaching in West Monroe, Louisiana. Although in recent years he has worked with the church in Garden Grove, California, and presently serves as the local preacher with the church in Doraville, Georgia, I have continued to follow his work with great interest.

Brother Turner could be described as a preacher, teacher, writer, and a doer of many good works. He is a man of many talents and one who is deeply involved in the Lord's work. Another way of putting it, he is a man who is able to get things done.

I am grateful to Brother Turner for asking me to publish this and other volumes of his writings. This particular volume has to do with BUILDING A POSITIVE LIFE. In the first place, I think this would be characteristic of the author's life. Therefore he is in a unique position to write on this theme.

There is so much negativism all around us. It is refreshing to see some emphasis put on the positive side of things for a change. I would hope that this book will find an acceptance both among individuals and in Bible class groups. If properly studied and applied, I am sure that it can be a means of blessing all who go through it.

J.C. Choate
January 25, 1988

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE	2
HOW TO USE THIS BOOK	3
INTRODUCTION	5
1. Positive Living 101	7
2. Building a Positive Life	11
3. Building a Sure Foundation	14
4. Where Positive Living Begins	18
5. In the Beginning God	21
6. Think Right to Live Right	24
7. Keeping Your Head Above Water	27
8. A Lifetime Learner	30
9. Follow The Map	34
10. Now Is Your Time To Live	38
11. The Good News	41
12. The Crucified Life	45
13. Dealing With Discouragement	49
14. Captured by Conscience	52
15. Right Thinking About Money	55
16. Enjoy Today	58
17. Reach High For Your Goals	61
18. The Power of Expectancy	64
19. The Search for Happiness	67
20. Standing On The Inside	70
21. Spotlight On Spirituality	73
22. Equal Partners	76
23. Learning From Defeat	79
24. Turn On Your Living	82
25. 10 Rules for Mental Health	85
26. Possessing Real Peace	88

PREFACE

Every day the life you are building is inspected by the Creator who knows even the secret desires of the heart (Psalm 139:1-12). What does the Inspector see? What kind of life are you building? Is it strong, positive and secure, or is it weak and faltering?

No one can build your life for you. You are the builder who must work in harmony with the blueprints God has drawn for you. He wants you to build a positive life upon His Son as the foundation of your life (1 Corinthians 3:11,12). The Bible contains these blueprints (2 Peter 1:3).

Building a life is a lot like building a house. You need plans, materials, tools, time and work to get the job done. This book which is Volume One of a two volume series, is designed to assist you in these areas. It contains materials for one year's building. These twenty-six lessons may be studied privately, in a class setting, in home devotionals, or any place where people are interested in building a positive life. All you need is your Bible to make this study very beneficial.

To gain the maximum benefits from this material, I suggest that you study very carefully the suggestions in the "How To Use This Book" chapter.

God bless you as you build a positive life for His glory (1 Corinthians 15:58). I'll see you at the finish line, because the best is yet to be (Revelation 2:10).

J. J. Turner, D.Min.

Stone Mountain, GA 30087
January 15, 1988

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This book is designed for your reading pleasure and study. It may be studied on a personal basis or in a class. If you plan to use it in a class or group setting, I would suggest the following things to help you get the most out of your efforts.

1. This book is designed to be used with a Bible. There are passages that must be turned to and studied.

2. Encourage each member of the class to read and study a chapter before you cover it in class.

3. The "For Additional Study and Discussion" at the end of the lesson has six response areas. They are the heart of the course. Use them for maximum benefit.

4. As the teacher, find some good illustrations for some of the major points in each lesson. Encourage each member of the class to do likewise.

5. Teach the material in your own words.

6. Prepare your own set of questions over the material.

7. Prepare and use visual aids.

8. Allow the class time to discuss major points or ask questions.

9. Be sure to encourage personal application of the material before you leave class.

10. You may begin each class by asking the members to share how they used the material they studied in the last class.

11. Find additional verses of Scripture for the lessons.

12. If time permits allow group work (e.g., getting into small groups for discussion and application, etc.: "Here is how I can use this point", "Here is what this means to me").

13. Recommend reading in other books on some of the subjects covered in a lesson. Tapes

are good too.

14. Pray for wisdom (cf. James 1:5).

15. Consider inviting a guest to come and share with the class in an area he has special training in (e.g., physician, counselor, minister, etc.).

16. Really STRESS the importance of each person doing the "Proof of Positive Actions" sections. This is where real growth is seen and measured.

INTRODUCTION

At birth, without a choice in the matter, you were enrolled in the Course of Life. Every day you have attended classes in the University of Hard Knocks. Some of these courses have been good for you; some have been very discouraging and even harmful. Chances are that you have some insight into these words spoken by Job: "Man that is born of a woman, is of few days, and full of trouble..." (Job 14:1). Trouble! Many of us could sing as our theme song this line from the old spiritual song: "Nobody knows the trouble I've seen...", and really mean it.

Since your new birth of water and Spirit (John 3:1-5), however, things have changed. You are now a disciple of Christ, which means that you are enrolled in His school of growth and service. There is a new curriculum which pertains to life and godliness (cf. 2 Peter 1:3). You have a new power for facing and handling life's problems (cf. Ephesians 3:20).

Every day in the school of Christ our faith is tested (cf. James 1:1-5); but we are given help in passing these tests (cf. James 1:5; 2 Corinthians 10:13). In Christ we are more than conquerors (Romans 8:37). By passing our tests and finishing our course, we are guaranteed a "diploma" (i.e., crown of life) in the end (Revelation 2:10; 2 Timothy 4:7,8).

All of our courses in the school of Christ relate to the subject of building a positive spiritual life. Every day I lay a brick in my spiritual structure which I call LIFE. I am building this life to the glory of God (Ephesians 3:20). I must, according to Paul, be very careful how I build (1 Corinthians 3:11-13), because my task as a spiritual life builder, is to offer up spiritual sacrifices to God (1 Peter 2:5).

I have written this book to help me and you build our spiritual lives for God. It is a

one-year course designed to instruct, encourage and guide you in the joyous task of building a positive life. It will work if you will use it as I prescribe.

Let's begin our work by taking a few minutes in this introduction to answer a few questions and do a little self-examining.

1. Describe your present personal growth plans:
2. What is your description of the **ideal** Christian?:
3. What is your basic philosophy of life?:
4. What would you like to "update" in your life?:
5. What should you do to build a more positive life?:
6. What would you like to gain from this study?"
7. List one of your goals in each of the following areas of your life:
 - a. Social:
 - b. Family:
 - c. Religious:
 - d. Vocational:
 - e. Recreational:
 - f. Financial:
8. What are the five most important things in your life?
9. How important is positive spiritual growth to you?"
10. Do you promise to spend at least two hours per week in studying this material? () Yes () No.

My prayer is that God will bless you as you daily go about the task of building a positive life for the Lord: 1 Corinthians 15:58. I'll see you at the finish line, because the BEST IS YET TO BE!

CHAPTER 1

POSITIVE LIVING 101

Welcome to the exciting world of building a positive life. Most colleges list their basic or foundational courses under a 100 numerical designation, with 101 being the first. Every Christian must begin building his life with the basics and continue this building for a lifetime. This is one course that must be repeated very frequently during your lifetime.

After a teacher had told his students how they should play the game of life, one puzzled student asked: "But how can we play the game when we don't know where the goal posts are or what the rules are?" You can't build a positive life without knowing where the goals are and what the rules are.

Jesus has set the goal posts and has given us the basic rules to live by on a daily basis. Our goals are (1) an abundant life (John 10:10), and (2) heaven in the end (John 14:1-3; 1 Peter 1:2-5). This is why He has given us all things that pertain to life and godliness (cf. 2 Peter 1:3). Our rules consist of the word of God (Matthew 4:4; John 8:32; 12:48).

Dr. Carl Jung, the Swiss psychiatrist, has quoted one of his patients as saying: "If only I knew that my life had some meaning and purpose, then there would be no silly story about my nerves." Building a positive life is based upon **purpose**. Study very carefully the following purposes for your existence as a child of God.

1. We are created to bring God pleasure (Revelation 4:11 KJV).

2. We must bring God glory in the church (Ephesians 3:21).

3. Our daily aim is to be holy as God is holy (1 Peter 1:16,17).

4. God is Spirit: and they that worship

Him must worship in spirit and truth (John 4:24).

5. We must daily work on "paying our debt" (Romans 1:14-16).

6. We must put the kingdom first in our lives (Matthew 6:33).

7. We must do good unto all men (Galatians 6:10).

8. We must maintain the attitude of Christ in every situation (Philippians 2:5-8).

9. As branches in the Vine we must bear fruit (John 15:1-5; Galatians 5:22,23).

10. God has commissioned us to be stewards. We must be faithful in all things (1 Corinthians 4:2,3).

11. We must walk worthily of our calling (2 Thessalonians 2:14; Ephesians 4:1,2).

12. To live right we must think right (Philippians 4:8).

Upon these twelve major purposes for our lives we can (and must) add many additional purposes. When you get these twelve in their right perspective, building a positive life will be easier and more enjoyable.

God wants us to have a FULL life. Most people, however, are like the character mentioned by Ben Robertson in **Red Hills and Cotten**, who had this inscription on his tombstone: "Born 1810. Died 1890. Lived 50 years." I wonder what happened during the "missing" 30 years of his life. We must learn to LIVE while we are alive.

LIFE

"Youth--middle life--old age--

And life is past--

So live each day that God shall say,

'Well done!' at last."

--Edward Rowland Sill

God has given us a life and a real reason

for living. I hope you're not like the little girl who lost her birth certificate. She cried to the teacher: "I've lost my excuse for being born." Discover your reasons for living and get on with the exciting business of building a positive life. God bless you in "Positive Living 101." Remember, the course of life is taken for credit!

For Additional Study and Discussion

RELATED VERSES

How do these verses relate to our subject?

1. John 17:3; 14:6.
2. John 11:25; 20:31.
3. I John 5:11-13,20.

TRUE OR FALSE

1. T F: We need to get back to the basics on how to build a positive life.
2. T F: Everybody knows the purposes of life.
3. T F: God wants us to enjoy life.

FILL IN THE BLANKS (One word per blank)

1. "This is one _____ that must be very _____ during _____ life _____."
2. "You _____ build a _____ life _____ knowing _____ the _____ are and what the _____ are."
3. "_____ has set the _____ posts _____ has given us the _____ to live by on a _____ basis."

THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

1. Why is it essential to get back to basics for building a positive life?
2. List several ways people wrongly try to build their lives.
3. How does being alive differ from real

living?

4. How do you plan to use this lesson in your life?

QUESTIONS YOU HAVE (Write them down)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

PROOF OF POSITIVE ACTIONS

A completion of the following areas are essential action steps to building a positive life.

1. Here is my power thought for this week:
2. Here is an improvement I see in myself:
3. I am especially thankful for this blessing:
4. Here is how I helped someone this week:
5. I am an okay person because:
6. My sentence prayer is:
7. With God's help I affirm to:

CHAPTER 2

BUILDING A POSITIVE LIFE

I know you have heard this expression: "Life is what you make it." Someone has said: "Life is a constant struggle to keep up appearances and keep down expenses." Seneca said: "Life is a play! 'Tis not its length, but its performance that counts."

To bake a delicious cake you must have the right ingredients, mix them properly, and bake at the right temperature.

To build a house you must have a blueprint, materials, and qualified construction people.

To build a positive life you, likewise, must have the right ingredients. A haphazard approach to living produces frustration, unhappiness, and a host of other negative impacts upon your life. Look around you! How many people do you see building negative lives? Scores. How about you? What kind of life are you building?

Life should be an exciting, positive adventure as you put your hand into God's unchanging hand. Jesus came so that we may have life and enjoy it to the fullest (cf. John 10:10). If you aren't, there's a good chance that you're using negative materials in the construction of your life. It's time to STOP laying negative blocks.

There are many essentials that must go into building a positive life. Here are a few of them.

1. God and His will must be the foundation you build upon (James 4:14-20; Genesis 1:1; 1 Corinthians 3:11,12).

2. The Bible must be your blueprint (2 Timothy 2:15; John 8:32; Proverbs 23:23).

3. You must daily trust God's promises (Romans 8:28).

4. Be sure to activate and maintain an action attitude (James 1:18-22).

5. Keep the fire under your zeal. View every day as an exciting challenge (Revelation 3:19; 1 Peter 2:2).

6. Praise God for your daily redemption (1 John 2:2; 5:13).

7. Worship God in Spirit and in truth (John 4:24).

8. Try giving yourself away. IT is more blessed to give than to receive.

9. Find time to pray (1 Thessalonians 5:17)

10. Never, never, never quit (Revelation 2:10).

Everyone of us is building a life. It makes good sense to build it positively. A positive life helps others to take notice that we have been with Jesus. Desire, a plan and a beginning date is all you need to start building.

For Additional Study and Discussion

RELATED VERSES

How do these verses relate to the subject?

1. John 10:10.
2. Romans 8:1.
3. Ephesians 3:20,21.

TRUE OR FALSE

1. T F: It is easy to be positive in life.
2. T F: God wants us to build a positive life.
3. T F: It takes work to build a positive life.

FILL IN THE BLANKS (Only one word per blank)

1. "To _____ a positive _____ you, likewise, _____ have the right _____."
2. "It's _____ to _____ laying _____ blocks."

3. "Every _____ is _____ a _____."

THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

1. Why should we be interested in building a positive life?
2. What are some of the keys to building a positive life?
3. How do you plan to use this lesson?

QUESTIONS YOU HAVE (Write them down.)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

PROOF OF POSITIVE ACTIONS

1. Here is my power thought for this week:
2. Here is an improvement I see in myself:
3. I am especially thankful for this blessing:
4. Here is how I helped someone this week:
5. I am an okay person because:
6. My sentence prayer is:
7. With God's help I affirm:

CHAPTER 3

BUILDING ON A SURE FOUNDATION

Suppose you were sitting in your living room and suddenly the floor under your feet started to sink, and soon the house was sliding down a hill. How would you feel? Scared! Shocked! Upset! That's just what happened a few weeks ago down the coast from where I live. Several expensive homes, without any warning, were destroyed because the earth gave way under the foundations. We were once again reminded that a building is no stronger or safer than its foundation.

Life must be built upon a sure foundation if man hopes to have peace of mind during the storms of life. Jesus said:

"Every one therefore that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them, shall be likened unto a wise man, who built his house upon a rock; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat the house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock!.

Matthew 7:24, 25

A reading of the verses that follow the above two will reveal the consequences of building upon the sand (i.e., unsure foundation).

When it comes to building a positive life, there is only one sure foundation. This sure foundation is Jesus Christ. Paul wrote: "For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 3:11).

Let's notice some biblical reasons for building our lives upon Christ:

1. He is the only Savior appointed by God (Matthew 1:21; Acts 4:11,12).

2. He loves us and gave His life for us (Romans 5:6-8; Revelation 1:5).

3. He is the only mediator between God and man (1 Timothy 2:5).

4. There is no condemnation in Christ (Romans 8:1).

5. Christ is God's only "living stone" upon which we may safely build (1 Peter 2:1-8).

6. He is with us always (Matthew 28:18-20).

7. He is the builder of the church, which is His body (Matthew 16:13-19; Colossians 1:18).

8. He is the alpha and omega (Revelation 21:6; cf. 1:8).

9. He is our Just Judge (John 12:48; Romans 14:10; 2 Corinthians 5:10).

10. We must follow Him in all that we do (Matthew 16:24).

Harkness Tower at Yale University is of exquisite grace and beauty. There is a stone in the lower part of the structure which is different from any other in the building. It bears an inscription which states that it is a part of the bedrock on which the tower stands, and that it is set there to be a visible witness of the invisible foundation and to bear testimony to the truth that the things which are not seen are eternal. By faith in God, who is Spirit (John 4:24; Hebrews 11:1), a positive life is built. There is no other foundation that will last eternally.

For Additional Study and Discussion

RELATED VERSES

How do these verses relate to our subject?

1. Psalm 127:1.

2. Hebrews 3:3,4; 11:10.

3. Ephesians 2:22; Colossians 2:7; Romans 15:20.

TRUE OR FALSE

1. T F: A building is no stronger than its foundation.
2. T F: Men try to build their lives on things other than God.
3. T F: Christ is the only SURE foundation.

FILL IN THE BLANKS (One word per blank)

1. " _____ must be _____ upon a sure _____ if man _____ to have _____ of mind _____ the _____ of life."
2. "This sure _____ is _____."
3. "There is _____ other _____ that will last _____."

THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

1. Why should we build on the right foundation?
2. What are some of the wrong foundations that men build upon?
3. How does Christ become our SURE foundation?
4. How do you plan to use this lesson?

QUESTIONS YOU HAVE (Write them down)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

PROOF OF POSITIVE ACTIONS

A completion of the following areas are essential action steps to building a positive life.

1. Here is my power thought for this week:

2. Here is an improvement I see in myself:
3. I am especially thankful for this blessing:
4. Here is how I helped someone this week:
5. I am an okay person because:
6. My sentence prayer is:
7. With God's help I affirm to:

CHAPTER 4

WHERE POSITIVE LIVING BEGINS

Once we exempt God, everything else has (or had) a beginning. This is especially true when we come to the subject of positive living and building a positive life. A lot of people would like to get in on it but don't know where to begin. Others have begun their journey but have become sidetracked, and merely need to get back on course. For both categories, and any others, I suggest a consideration of the following points as beginning qualities for positive living.

First, there must be dissatisfaction. You must not settle down to a status quo existence. You must want to grow and improve your spiritual man (cf. 1 Peter 2:2). You must be like Paul and forget those things which are behind and press on to the goal (cf. Philippians 3:14).

Second, You must have a desire. This is the fuel that gets you moving in the right direction. Your spiritual growth will be in direct relation to your desire. How much do you want a positive life?

Third, there must be a decision to act. Nothing will happen until you affirm a course of action and then take it. James wrote, "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only..." (James 1:22).

Fourth, dedication is essential for positive living. On your list of dedication priorities, God must be FIRST. A person can't really live without God (Matthew 22:37,38).

Fifth, you must dare to change and grow. This takes courage which only God can supply (2 Timothy 1:7). We must be bold in our efforts

to become like Christ (Acts 4:13).

Sixth, proper direction must be sought and accepted. This means an affirmation to follow the Bible (Psalms 119:97-104). The word of God must direct our steps. Also, a personal plan of action is essential.

Seventh, positive living has a set of demands that must be accepted. This assures you that no surprises lie ahead for you.

Eighth, it will take discipline to reach your goal. Self-discipline must occur every day, in every situation (1 Peter 2:5-7).

These eight cylinders must be operating smoothly in order to BEGIN your journey to the higher plains of positive living. Set your starting date and begin on time. Life is fulfilling when you choose the positive approach. You're now ready to begin!

For Additional Study and Discussion

RELATED VERSES

How do these verses relate to the subject?

1. Romans 8:1,37.
2. Luke 9:62
3. John 14:15.

TRUE OR FALSE

1. T F: Negative living is okay.
2. T F: A person can choose his attitude toward life.
3. T F: All positive living begins with God.

FILL IN THE BLANKS

1. "Once we _____ everything else _____ a _____."

2. "First, there _____ be _____."
3. "Life is _____ when you _____ the _____ approach."

THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

1. Why is it important to know where to begin building a positive life?
 2. What additional points would you add to the list?
 3. How do you plan to use this lesson?
- QUESTIONS YOU HAVE (Write them down)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

PROOF OF POSITIVE ACTIONS

1. Here is my power thought for this week:
2. Here is an improvement I see in myself:
3. I am especially thankful for this blessing:
4. Here is how I helped someone this week:
5. I am an okay person because:
6. My sentence prayer is:
7. With God's help I affirm:

CHAPTER 5

IN THE BEGINNING GOD

I once read that after Mark Twain had made his triumphant tour through Europe, where he was honored by great universities and kings, his daughter said: "Daddy, I guess pretty soon you will know everybody except God."

If a person doesn't know God, he will be ruined eternally. Jesus said: "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3). If you know God, you know the only one who really counts.

The four most important words in the English language are: "In the beginning God" (Genesis 1:1). This is set forth without any need for a formal defense for the eternal nature and creative power of God. He is the only true and living God. The one who loved us so much that he gave His only Son for our redemption (cf. John 3:16; Romans 5:7-9).

God, our heavenly Father, wants to be first in our lives (cf. Matthew 6:33). We must take His will into consideration before we embark upon our plans (cf. James 4:14).

How about you, how well do you know God? Paul revealed that by observing creation we can see God's eternal power (cf. Romans 1:19-25). It is, however, through a study of written revelation (i.e., the Bible) that we learn about the personal attributes of God. Our knowledge of God depends upon how much time we have given to Bible study. There is no more fundamental course of study for the Christian than the doctrine of God.

Take a few minutes and study the following attributes of God. It will help you know Him better.

1. God is eternal (Exodus 3:12-15).

2. God never changes (Psalms 33:11; Hebrews 6:17,18).
3. How is all-powerful (Genesis 1:3; Isaiah 40:12-17).
4. God is just (Psalms 89:14; 97:21).
5. God is love (John 3:16; 1 John 3:1,2).
6. God is Spirit (John 4:24).
7. God is all knowing (Psalm 139:1-12).
8. God is one God (Deut. 6:4).
9. God is boundless (1 Kings 8:27).
10. God is holy (Isaiah 6:1-6).

God is the beginning point for building a positive life. He is the solid Rock and help in time of need. Spend some time each day studying about your Father in heaven.

For Additional Study and Discussion

RELATED VERSES

How do these verses relate to the subject?

1. Matthew 3:16,17.
2. Matthew 28:19.
3. 2 Corinthians 13:14.
4. Jude 20, 21.

TRUE FALSE

1. T F: Knowing God is eternally important.
2. T F: A person can have limited knowledge about God.
3. T F: The Bible reveals the personal attributes of God.

FILL IN THE BLANKS:

1. "If you _____ God you _____ the _____ one _____ really _____."
2. "_____, our heavenly _____, wants to be _____ in our _____."
3. "He is the _____ and _____"

in time of _____."

THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

1. Why is there so much ignorance about God?
2. How can we grow in knowledge about God?
3. How do you plan to use this lesson?

QUESTIONS YOU HAVE (write them down)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

PROOF OF POSITIVE ACTIONS:

1. Here is my power thought for this week:
2. Here is an improvement I see in myself:
3. I am especially thankful for this blessing:
4. Here is how I helped someone this week:
5. I am an okay person because:
6. My sentence prayer is:
7. With God's help I affirm:

CHAPTER 6

THINK RIGHT TO LIVE RIGHT

George Bernard Shaw said: "Few people think more than two or three times a year: I have made an international reputation for merely thinking once or twice a week." How much REAL thinking do you do?

The charge has been made against the average person that he doesn't do any real, indepth thinking; also, that he rarely, if ever, thinks more than 10 to 15 seconds on any given subject without his mind drifting into other areas.

A business man said: "I can get people to do anything except two things: (1) think and (2) do things in order of their importance." Someone recently asked: "Where have all the thinkers gone?" A good question! Are YOU an indepth thinker?

Paul's advice to Titus was this: "These, then are the things you should teach. Encourage and rebuke with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you" (Titus 2:15). What did Paul mean by the term **despise**? The word comes from the Greek root from which we get the English word **periphery**. The thrust of his injunction to Titus, therefore, is for the younger man not to let people think mental circles around him and thus look down on him as a poor thinker. You don't have to park your brains to be a good Christian. It demands thinking.

Solomon was an observant man. This contributed to his ability as a thinker. He wrote: "I passed by the field of the sluggard and by the vineyard of the man lacking sense; and behold it was completely grown up with thistles...when I saw, I reflected upon it; I looked and received instruction" (Proverbs 24:30-32). He **looked, thought...and learned**. The person who has to have everything spelled out for him will miss

many valuable lessons in life. This is one of the reasons God wants each of us to be "doers of the word." This demands thinking.

To build a positive life requires straight, biblical thinking. The wiseman said, "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Proverbs 23:7). Paul gives us a positive list of things to think on in Philippians 4:8:

1. **True:** Only the truth will set us free (John 8:32). Error will never free.
2. **Honest:** Dishonesty abounds; we must not think on it.
3. **Just:** Justice is the need of the hour. We must be fair, equitable, and impartial in all dealing.
4. **Pure:** "Without additives, or anything taken away" (cf. Matthew 5:8).
5. **Lovely:** There is a lot of ugliness in the world. There is more beauty, dwell on it (cf. Matthew 6:24-34).
6. **Good report:** There are a lot of rumors and scandals in the world.
7. **Virtue and praise:** acting godly and praising.

"THINK ON THESE THINGS" and build a positive life.

For Additional Study and Discussion

RELATED VERSES

How do these verses relate to the subject?

1. Mark 7:14-23.
2. Acts 26:9.
3. Philippians 3:16.

TRUE OR FALSE

1. T F: Most people find thinking easy.
2. T F: Christians must be good thinkers.
3. T F: Solomon didn't waste his time

looking at the events around him.

FILL IN THE BLANKS

1. "Are _____ an _____?"
2. "To _____ a _____ life requires _____, biblical _____."
3. "_____ on these _____ and _____ a positive _____."

THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

1. Why is sound thinking important to build a positive life?
2. How can we improve our thinking?
3. How do you plan to use this lesson?

QUESTIONS YOU HAVE (Write them down)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

PROOF OF POSITIVE ACTIONS:

1. Here is my power thought for this week?
2. Here is an improvement I see in myself:
3. I am especially thankful for this blessing:
4. Here is how I helped someone this week:
5. I am an okay person because:
6. My sentence prayer is:
7. With God's help I affirm:

CHAPTER 7

KEEPING YOUR HEAD ABOVE WATER

Little Johnny was telling a friend what he had learned during his first swimming lesson. One of his remarks was: "To keep from drowning all you have to do is keep your head above water, but boy, is that tough?"

To get to heaven all you have to do is "keep your head above water," or to put it in a biblical language, all you have to do is overcome daily through living by faith: "...be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Revelation 2:10). Faith guarantees eternal survival.

Keeping your head above water, spiritually speaking, is not just splashing to no avail. It is positive spiritual survival at its best. It is progress to the finish line to receive the crown of life. Paul wrote, "I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air" (1 Corinthians 9:26). How do you keep your "head above water?" Faith is the **ONLY** way!

Faith is essential to building a positive life. The Hebrew writer said, "Without faith it is impossible to please God" (Hebrews 11:6). Our Christian journey was begun by faith and it must continue by faith (cf. Romans 1:17-19)...Peter Forsythe wrote, "Unless there is **within** us that which is **above** us, we shall soon yield to that which is **about** us." Faith is the victory!

At one time or another we have all had that sinking feeling as we face the challenges of life. Faith keeps us from sinking as we travel the sea of life. Here are some specific areas faith keeps us from sinking into.

1. Faith keeps us from sinking into **pessimism** (Psalm 23).
2. Faith keeps us from sinking into **unbelief**

- (Revelation 21:8).
3. Faith keeps us from sinking into **temptation** (1 Corinthians 10:13).
 4. Faith keeps us from sinking into **timidity** (2 Timothy 1:7).
 5. Faith keeps us from sinking under **difficulties** (Matthew 17:21).
 6. Faith keeps us from sinking under **discouragement** (2 Chronicles 32:7,8).
 7. Faith keeps us from sinking into **impatience** (1 Samuel 13:11,12).
 8. Faith keeps us from sinking into **destruction** (Mark 16:15,16).

Faith is like a magnetic compass needle, often trembling, yet always true; swayed, amidst the tempest's wildest tossing. It never fails to direct as it should. As seaman John Newton wrote, "Thro' many dangers, toils, and snares I have already come, 'tis grace hath brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home." Paul said grace works through faith for our salvation (cf. Ephesians 2:5-8).

For Additional Study and Discussion

RELATED VERSES

How do these verses relate to the subject:

1. John 12:42.
2. Hebrews 11:1.
3. Romans 5:1.

TRUE OR FALSE

1. T F: Faith is optional for survival.
2. T F: Faith is the same as belief.
3. T F: We can't please God without faith.

FILL IN THE BLANKS

1. "Faith is _____ to _____ a
_____ life?"

2. "Faith is _____."
3. "It is _____ spiritual _____ at its _____".

FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

1. How does a person develop faith?
2. Why or how is "faith alone" wrong?
3. How do you plan to use this lesson?

QUESTIONS YOU HAVE (write them down).

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

PROOF OF POSITIVE ACTIONS:

1. Here is my power thought for this week:
2. Here is an improvement I see in myself:
3. I am especially thankful for this blessing:
4. Here is how I helped someone this week:
5. I am an okay person because:
6. My sentence prayer is:
7. With God's help I affirm:

CHAPTER 8

A LIFETIME LEARNER

Study is essential to building a positive life. King Ptolemy Lagua asked Euclid, "if there was not a shorter and easier way to the knowledge of geometry than he had laid down in his 'Elements.'" He answered, "There is no royal road to geometry." I will add that neither is there a royal (i.e., easy) road to any study. Knowledge comes through study and hard work.

Concerning study the Proverbs writer said: "The heart of the righteous studieth to answer: but the mouth of the wicked poureth out evil things" (Proverbs 15:28; cf. 1 Peter 3:15). The apostle Paul wrote: "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15 KJV).

As students in the school of Christ we are lifetime learners. Our study must not stop until we have gone to be with the Lord. As students, there are several qualities that will help you in studying God's word, as well as other good materials.

First, you must have an open mind. This attitude is manifested throughout the Bible (Acts 17:11; Daniel 5:20; 2 Peter 3:2; 2 Corinthians 3:14).

Second, you must be spiritually minded. The Bible is a spiritual book (Colossians 1:9; Titus 2:6; James 1:8).

Third, you must have a passion to know the truth (Psalms 119:11, 103); you must also believe that you can know the truth (John 8:32; Ephesians 5:17).

Fourth, you must be a man of prayer, who asks for guidance and wisdom in your study of the word (James 1:5; 3:15).

Fifth, you must be persistent. Some things

(i.e., truths) can't be fully understood without constantly studying them (Proverbs 12:27; John 5:39).

Sixth, you must be willing to accept revealed truth. Finding the truth will not help the student unless he accepts and applies it (Luke 8:18; Psalms 49:4).

Seventh, you must rid yourself of all preconceived ideas about the subject or text. This was one of the problems the Jews had (Mark 12:10; 15:28; Matthew 22:29; Luke 24:27,32,45).

Eighth, you must be a person of courage. To accept truths that have heretofore gone unnoticed will, in many instances, take great courage. It will also take courage to put them into practice in your daily life (Proverbs 22:22; Psalms 119:104).

Ninth, you must be able to use your reasoning skills (Acts 17:2; 18:4; 28:19; 24:25).

Tenth, you must believe in the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Bible (2 Timothy 2:16, 17).

Every Christian is a lifetime learner. Through knowledge a positive spiritual life is built. God's word must be the constant diet for our souls (cf. 1 Peter 2:1-3).

For Additional Study and Discussion

RELATED VERSES

How do these verses relate to the subject?

1. Proverbs 24:2
2. 1 Thessalonians 4:11.
3. Ecclesiastes 12:12.

TRUE OR FALSE

1. T F: We should love to study God's word.
2. T F: Everyone has the right to study the Bible.
3. T F: Everything in the Bible is easy

to understand.

FILL IN THE BLANKS

1. " _____ come through _____ and _____ work."
2. "As _____ in the _____ of _____ we are _____ learners."
3. "Our _____ must not _____ until we have _____ to be _____ the _____."

FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

1. How much time do you spend in Bible study?
2. What is your personal plan for Bible study (i.e., method, approach, etc.)?
3. How may a person improve his Bible study?
4. How do you plan to use this material in your life?

QUESTIONS YOU HAVE

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

PROOF OF POSITIVE ACTIONS

A completion of this section will provide materials for building a positive life?

1. Here is my power thought for this week:
2. Here is an improvement I see in myself:
3. I am especially thankful for this blessing:
4. Here is how I helped someone this week:

5. I am an okay person because:
6. My sentence prayer is:
7. With God's help I affirm to:

CHAPTER 9

FOLLOW THE MAP

Recently, while studying the California Driver's Handbook, I came across this sage sentence: "If you aren't sure of the way, study a map before you get on." This advice to persons who are going to drive on the freeways has a good principle of truth for positive life building: we need to study God's map to know how to get on the straight and narrow road that leads to LIFE (cf. Matthew 7:13,14); because, as Jeremiah said, "...it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23; cf. Proverbs 16:9).

"Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?" (John 14:5). How can we know the way? This is one of the most important questions ever to fall from the lips of man. Notice the answer Jesus gave: "...I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6).

The way (i.e., Greek **hodos** means "road") to heaven is contained in the Holy Bible. It is the map that must be followed. In it we have all things that pertain to life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3). It is our standard of judgment (John 12:48).

Here are 10 practical reasons why the Bible is a safe map for positive life builders to follow:

1. The word of God keeps us from sinning (Psalms 119:11).
2. The word of God shows us the way (Psalm (119:105).
3. The word of God gives us understanding (Psalms 119:130).
4. The word of God is true (Psalms 119:160; John 8:32; 17:17).
5. The word of God is powerful (Hebrews 4:12).

6. The word of God is inspired (2 Timothy 3:16a).

7. The word of God is profitable for doctrine, reproof, for correction, for instruction (2 Timothy 3:16b).

8. The word of God is our weapon against the Devil (Ephesians 6:17; cf. Matthew 4:1-4).

9. The word of God is the seed of the kingdom (Luke 8:11; Mark 16:15,16).

10. The word of God saves and keeps the soul saved (James 1:18,21; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4; 1 Peter 1:22).

It was Voltaire, the French skeptic, who wrote in his study in Paris: "I will go through the forest of the Scriptures and girdle all the trees, so that in one hundred years Christianity will be but a vanishing memory." But the very room in which he wrote these words was later purchased by the British and Foreign Bible Society, and was packed from floor to ceiling with Bibles. Follow the MAP, it has, and will, endure the test of time.

For Additional Study and Discussion

RELATED VERSES

How do these verses relate to the subject?

1. 1 Timothy 4:5,6.
2. Psalms 33:4-6.
3. Matthew 5:18; 13:31,32.

TRUE OR FALSE

1. T F: Man must have directions from earth to heaven.
2. T F: The Bible is the ONLY map to heaven.
3. T F: We must take time to study the Bible.

FILL IN THE BLANKS (One word per blank)

1. "How _____ we _____ the _____?"

2. "This is _____ of the most _____ questions ever to _____ from the lips of _____."
3. "_____, the _____, it has, and _____, endure the _____ of _____."

FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

1. How do we know we can trust our Bible?
2. List additional reasons for following the Bible.
3. How would you answer the critic who says: "We can't understand the Bible"?
4. How do you plan to use this lesson in your life?

QUESTIONS YOU HAVE (Write them down)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

PROOF OF POSITIVE ACTIONS

A completion of this section will provide additional materials for building a positive life:

1. Here is my power thought for the week:
2. Here is an improvement I see in myself:
3. I am especially thankful for this blessing:
4. Here is how I helped someone this week:
5. I am an okay person because:
6. My sentence prayer is:

7. With God's help I affirm to:

CHAPTER 10

NOW IS YOUR TIME TO LIVE

When a man wakes up to the fact that "the show is on," that his span of life is shortening with every tick of the clock, and if he is going to build a useful life, he must be at it--at that moment life begins for him, no matter what his age. The tragedies of life are with those who drift, and never discover that life has begun. For them the curtain never rises.

As stewards, God has given us 168 hours per week to use in building our positive lives. Time is used moment by moment. Shiller has written: "He who neglects the present moment throws away all he has." Time works wonders. So would most people if they worked twenty-four hours a day as time does. Time once lost is gone forever.

The Clock of Life

The clock of life is wound but once
And no man has the power
To tell just when the hand will stop--
At late or early hour.

Now is the only time you own!
Live, love, toil with will;
Place not faith in "tomorrow" for
The clock may then be still.

Author unknown

The Bible has a number of important passages that deal with the subject of time and the brevity of life. Here are a few of them:

1. We must learn to number our days (Psalm 90:12)
2. We must redeem our time: use it wisely (Ephesians 5:16; Colossians 4:5).

3. Life is as brief as a vapor (James 4:14).
4. Our days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle (Job 7:6).
5. We must not worry or fret about tomorrow (Matthew 6:34).
6. Our flesh is as grass (temporal at best) (1 Peter 1:24).
7. We must not brag about tomorrow which we don't have (Proverbs 27:1).
8. We have a basic promise of 70 years of life (Psalms 90:10).

"Where does the time go!" exclaimed a weary mother. "Why, mother," her small daughter replied, "the time goes into all the things you do." Whether we invest our time in positive acts or wasteful acts, it goes; and once gone, it can never be recalled. Whatever you're planning to do, you need to get on with it. Time is passing you by! Now is your time to live and build a positive life.

For additional Study and Discussion

RELATED VERSES

How do these verses relate to the subject:

1. Joshua 24:15.
2. Hebrews 5:12.
3. 1 Peter 1:17.

TRUE OR FALSE

1. T F: We all have the same amount of time.
2. T F: It is sinful to waste time.
3. T F: Christians should learn how to manage their time.

FILL IN THE BLANKS (One word per blank)

1. "_____ is used _____ by _____."
2. "_____ once _____ is gone _____."
3. "_____ is passing _____ by!"

FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

1. Why is it important for us to get control of our time?
2. What system do you use to manage your time?
3. Why do people waste time?
4. How do you plan to use this lesson?

QUESTIONS YOU HAVE (Write them down.)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

PROOF OF POSITIVE ACTIONS

A completion of this section will provide additional materials for building a positive life:

1. Here is my positive thought for this week:
2. Here is an improvement I see in myself:
3. I am especially thankful for this blessing:
4. Here is how I helped someone this week:
5. I am an okay person because:
6. My sentence prayer is:
7. With God's help I affirm:

CHAPTER 11

THE GOOD NEWS

A man was looking in a shop window at a beautiful picture of the Crucifixion. Standing next to him was a ragged little boy who was rapt in contemplation of the picture. Wondering if the boy really understood it, the man asked: "Sonny, what does it mean?" "Doncha know?" he answered. "That there man is Jesus and them others is Roman soldiers, and the woman what's cryin' is His mother, and--they killed Him." The man turned away, and in a moment heard pattering footsteps behind him. The little street kid said breathlessly: "Say, mister, I forgot to tell you, but He rose again!"

Thank God for Sunday morning! Friday had been perhaps the darkest hour in human history. The Son of God had been nailed to a tree (cf. Matthew 27:50-54). When the women arrived at His tomb, the angel gave them the good news: "He is not here: for He is risen, as He said. Come see where the Lord lay" (Matthew 28:6).

For almost 2000 years mankind has been rejoicing because of the empty tomb and the good news: "He is not here: for He is risen..." The resurrection was the final step in proving that Jesus was the Messiah (cf. Romans 1:4,5). This is the Gospel we proclaim, obey and stand firm in (1 Corinthians 15:1-5); it is God's power unto salvation (Romans 1:14-16).

Because of Christ's resurrection, I am guaranteed a resurrection (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:6-58). Death has lost its power because of the empty tomb: it can't hold me! This is a cardinal truth upon which I can build my life with great confidence.

The good news of Christ's resurrection is important for so many reasons. A better under-

standing of these will help us stand firm in our faith. Notice a few of these essential truths.

1. Jesus predicted that He would be raised from the dead (Matthew 12:39,40).

2. The Apostles and over 500 brethren saw the raised Christ (1 Corinthians 15:6; Matt. 28:16-20).

3. The apostle Peter preached the resurrection of Christ (Acts 2:22-36).

4. The Holy Spirit raised Jesus from the dead (Romans 8:11).

5. If Christ was not raised, we are still in our sins (1 Corinthians 15:14).

6. The Gospel is the message of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (1 Corinthians 15:1-4).

7. We are begotten again unto a living hope by the resurrection (1 Peter 1:3).

8. Water baptism has meaning because it is connected with the resurrection of Christ (1 Peter 3:21; Romans 6:1-6, 17).

9. When we are baptized we are raised in the likeness of His resurrection (Romans 6:5).

10. Jesus promised that ALL who are in the grave will be raised (John 5:25-31).

In a world full of bad news, we should be honored to announce the good news of the empty tomb: "He is not here: he is risen." Today would be a good day to share this good news with a friend.

For Additional Study and Discussion

RELATED VERSES

How do these verses relate to the subject?

1. Acts 4:2, 33.

2. Hebrews 6:2; 11:35.

3. 2 Timothy 2:18.

TRUE OR FALSE

1. T F: The Good News centers around the death, burial and resurrection of Christ.
2. T F: The resurrection proved that Jesus was the Son of God with power.
3. T F: Over 500 persons saw the resurrected Christ.

FILL IN THE BLANKS (One word per blank)

1. "_____ God for _____ morning!"
2. "The _____ news of _____ resurrection is _____ for so _____ reasons."
3. "_____ would be a _____ day to _____ this _____ news with a _____."

FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

1. Why is Christianity based upon the resurrection of Christ?
2. How would you prove that Christ was raised?
3. How does the Gospel relate to the resurrection?
4. How do you plan to use this lesson?

QUESTIONS YOU HAVE (Write them down)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

PROOF OF POSITIVE ACTIONS

A completion of this section will provide additional materials for building a positive life:

1. Here is my power thought for this week:

2. Here is an improvement I see in myself:
3. I am especially thankful for this blessing:
4. Here is how I helped someone this week:
5. I am an okay person because:
6. My sentence prayer is:
7. With God's help I affirm:

CHAPTER 12

THE CRUCIFIED LIFE

A sad and strange spectacle took place a few years ago in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. On nationwide TV a mystic named Patrice Tamao had himself nailed to a cross "as a sacrifice for world peace and understanding." An unforeseen problem developed when Tamao's foot became infected the following day and physicians ordered him pried loose and taken down. His wife, Marita, then volunteered to be hammered up in his place.

Jesus made it very clear that in order to follow Him, a person would have to take up a cross: "He that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me" (Matthew 10:38; 16:24). The Lord didn't mean, however, a literal one to use in a foolish act. To follow Him was to experience reproach, rejection and ridicule. The Savior is interested more in the figurative (or spiritual) application of crucifixion than a physical (or literal) one.

The apostle Paul wrote: "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Romans 6:6). This is why he could say, "I am crucified with Christ..." (Galatians 2:20).

Positive life builders every day face challenges related to the crucified (i.e., dead to sin) life. "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts" (Galatians 5:24). The cross is our source of glory: "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Galatians 6:14).

An uncrucified life is a nonvictorious life. This is why our message to the world must center

in the cross of Christ. Through it people are brought to salvation (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:17,18).

There are enemies of the cross. Paul wrote: "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ" (Philippians 3:18). A person becomes an enemy of the cross in some of the following ways:

1. By rejecting the historical event of the crucifixion of Christ (Matthew 27:22-54).

2. By letting the old man of sin stay in control (Romans 6:6).

3. By failing to daily take up a cross (Matthew 16:24).

4. By falling away we crucify Christ anew (Hebrews 6:6.)

5. By not preaching Christ crucified (1 Corinthians 1:23).

6. By not crucifying the flesh (Galatians 5:24).

7. By failing to partake of the Lord's Supper we dishonor the death of Christ (1 Corinthians 10:16; 11:26).

I'm not ashamed to own my Lord,
Or to defend His cause,
Maintain the honor of His word,
The glory of His cross.

As a positive life builder have you crucified yourself today?

For Additional Study and Discussion

RELATED VERSES

How do these verses relate to the subject?

1. Matthew 27:32
2. Luke 14:26,27.
3. Mark 10:21,22.

TRUE OR FALSE

1. T F: A literal cross is easier to carry

- than a spiritual one.
2. T F: Self-denial is easy for most people.
 3. T F: We must learn how to carry our crosses.

FILL IN THE BLANKS (One word per blank).

1. "To _____ Him was to _____ reproach, _____ and _____."
2. "An _____ life is a _____ life."
3. " _____ are _____ of the _____."

FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

1. Why is daily crucifixion of self so important?
2. How does a person crucify himself?
3. What is the most difficult thing about living the crucified life? Why?
4. How do you plan to use this lesson?

QUESTIONS YOU HAVE (Write them down)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

PROOF OF POSITIVE ACTIONS

A completion of this section will provide additional materials for building a positive life:

1. Here is my power thought for this week:
2. Here is an improvement I see in myself:
3. I am especially thankful for this blessing:
4. Here is how I helped someone this week:

5. I am an okay person because:
6. My sentence prayer is:
7. With God's help I affirm:

CHAPTER 13

DEALING WITH DISCOURAGEMENT

Someone has said, "If you don't deal with discouragement, discouragement will deal with you." I believe this!

In a recent workshop I asked a group of about 100 people to respond to this request: "If you have never been discouraged please raise your hand?" How many do you think raised their hands? Not one person. If you can't raise your hand, don't despair. Even the sun has a sinking spell every night, but it rises again in the morning.

When things try to discourage us, we must not let them rob us of courage, hope, or confidence, because that's what happens when we lose our courage. This is why we must knock out the little prefix **dis** before it knocks us out of the Christian race.

How about you--have you ever been discouraged? Sure you have, that is if you're human. It's the lot of all people at one time or another. Jeremiah, the great prophet of God was so discouraged he wanted to give up preaching and go into the motel business (cf. Jeremiah 9:2). However, after additional thought his courage came back and he announced that he couldn't quit (cf. Jeremiah 20:9). Why? Because of the influence of God's word in his heart. Noah, Moses, Elijah, Jonah, and a host of other Bible heroes faced discouragement. Thus, you join the ranks of some great people when you are challenged by discouragement. The challenge is not to let it harden your heart but rather, your determination to knock out the **dis**.

Try these keys the next time discouragement raises its ugly head.

1. Turn to God's word for strength (Jeremiah 20:9; Matthew 4:4).

2. Always place God's reign first in your life (Matthew 6:33).
3. Remember, "This too shall pass" (Roman 8:28).
4. Turn everything over to God (Matthew 11:28-30).
5. Remember only Satan wants you to be discouraged (1 Peter 5:8).
6. Read Psalm 73 and discover what the Psalmist learned.
7. Note what John, while in exile, said in Revelation 19:6.
8. Remember growth comes through trials (James 1:2-4).
9. Pray for wisdom (James 1:5).
10. Analyze WHY you are discouraged.

Trusting God's word and remembering He is in control are two major ways to win over discouragement. Jesus said, "Be of good cheer (i.e., courage, JJT), for I have overcome the world" (Matthew 14:27).

For Additional Study and Discussion

RELATED VERSES

How do these verses relate to the subject?

1. John 14:1-5.
2. Galatians 6:5.
3. John 10:10.

TRUE OR FALSE

1. T F: Some people never get discouraged.
2. T F: Discouragement comes before defeat.
3. T F: People with faith never get discouraged.

FILL IN THE BLANKS

1. "If you don't _____ with _____,

- _____ will _____ with _____."
2. "This is why we must _____ the
_____ prefix _____ before it _____ us
_____ of the _____."
3. "Be of good _____, for I _____ over-
come _____."

FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

1. What discourages you the most?
2. Name some other Bible examples of discouragement.
3. How do you plan to use this lesson?

QUESTIONS YOU HAVE (write them down)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

PROOF OF POSITIVE ACTIONS

1. Here is my power thought for this week:
2. Here is an improvement I see in myself:
3. I am especially thankful for this blessing:
4. Here is how I helped someone this week:
5. I am an okay person because:
6. My sentence prayer is:
7. With God's help I affirm:

CHAPTER 14

CAPTURED BY CONSCIENCE

The part of man's being called **conscience** is a powerful and unique force. It approves or disapproves his actions. Bessus, a Grecian, gave as a reason for pulling down the birds' nests about his house, that the birds never ceased to accuse him of the murder of his father. Cicero said, "It is a man's own dishonesty, his crimes, his wickedness, and boldness, that takes away from him soundness of mind: these are the furies, these are the flames and firebrands of the wicked."

Concerning conscience, J. Oswald Sanders said: "Conscience originates nothing. It is like a thermometer, which though detecting and indicating the temperature, never modifies or creates its own temperature." This is why we are captured by our conscience when we do wrong. It merely, because of its orientation, registers a complaint which upsets our peace.

A person's conscience can be awakened at some very strange times. Joseph's brethren is a good example of this fact. They were being accused of being spies (cf. Genesis 42:14), but their conscience was pricked because of what they had done to Joseph many years before (cf. Genesis 42:21). Sooner or later a person's conscience catches up with him.

There are a number of biblical truths which relate to conscience that will help us build a positive life.

1. A weak conscience **condemns** (1 Corinthians 8:7-12).
2. A conscience may be **defiled** (Titus 1:15).
3. A conscience may be **good** (1 Timothy 1:19).
4. A conscience may be **seared**, i.e.,

- cauterized (1 Timothy 4:2).
5. A conscience may be **touched** (pricked, Acts 2:37).
 6. A conscience may be **clear** (1 Peter 3:21, after baptism).
 7. A conscience may be **void of offense** (Acts 24:16).
 8. A conscience may be **perfected** through Christ's blood (Hebrews 9:9-14).
 9. Conscience **alone** is not an infallible guide (1 Corinthians 4:4).
 10. A conscience must be **exercised** (Acts 24:16).
 11. Your conscience may **feel good** but be oriented wrong (cf. Acts 23:1; 1 Timothy 1:15).
 12. Everybody has a conscience (Roman 2:15).

When your conscience is right before God it gives joy. Paul said, "For our rejoicing in this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward" (2 Corinthians 1:12).

For Additional Study and Discussion

RELATED VERSES

How do these verses relate to the subject?

1. 1 Corinthians 10:25,26.
2. 2 Samuel 24:10,11.
3. Job 15:20-22.

TRUE OR FALSE

1. T F: Not all people have a conscience.
2. T F: A person can do wrong and still have a clear conscience.
3. T F: The Bible is good orientation for the conscience.

FILL IN THE BLANKS

1. "Conscience _____ nothing."
2. " _____ or later a _____ catches _____ with him."
3. "A _____ conscience _____."

FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

1. Why do some people follow their conscience in religious matters?
2. What does Peter mean in 1 Peter 3:21? How does it occur?
3. How do you plan to use this lesson in your life?

QUESTIONS YOU HAVE (Write them down.)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

PROOF OF POSITIVE ACTIONS:

1. Here is my power thought for this week:
2. Here is an improvement I see in myself:
3. I am especially thankful for this blessing:
4. Here is how I helped someone this week:
5. I am an okay person because:
6. My sentence prayer is:
7. With God's help I affirm:

CHAPTER 15

RIGHT THINKING ABOUT MONEY

A small boy given two quarters--one for Bible school collection and the other for himself--was running down the street on Sunday morning. Suddenly he dropped one of his quarters. He watched the quarter roll along the sidewalk and then drop through a grill into the drain. "Well," he muttered, "there goes God's quarter."

We smile at this story about a child and his money. Sadly, it is the attitude many adults have toward money. They are quick to put God last in matters of distributing. When a crunch comes their plan to give to the church is cancelled until things get better. They never seem to learn the lesson that "it is more blessed to give than to receive (cf. Acts 20:35). Some practice "robbing Peter to pay Paul."

Since the love of money is the root of all evil (1 Timothy 6:10), it is obvious then, that we must **think right** about it. One man responded to this statement by saying, "Any thinking I do about money is right." It all depends upon the content of his thoughts as to whether or not it was right thinking. The Bible is our guide in right thinking about money.

We can't think right about money until we realize that God is the owner of all things. By running the abstract of title on property you can find the original owner. Biblically, when we run an abstract of title, we find God is the original owner of ALL THINGS (cf. Deuteronomy 10:14; Psalms 24:1; 50:10-12; Acts 14:17; James 1:17).

Our job is one of management. We are stewards who have been entrusted with the management of God's property. This demands that we be honest, fair, careful, equitable, etc., in handling His money (cf. 1 Corinthians 4:1-7;

Luke 16:10,12; 1 Timothy 6:7). We must be faithful stewards in the things of God.

A major responsibility we have as managers is one of proper investment. Jesus gives us some guidelines: "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth...lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven...For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:19-21).

If we think right about money, we will be motivated to give something each first day of the week to support the local church (1 Corinthians 16:1,2). A positive life is built through thinking right about money.

For Additional Study and Discussion

RELATED VERSES

How do these verses relate to the subject?

1. 2 Corinthians 8:5.
2. 2 Corinthians 9:6.
3. Acts 20:35.

TRUE OR FALSE

1. T F: If a man earns something it belongs to him.
2. T F: Giving is a demonstration of love.
3. T F: A person can't be covetous today.

FILL IN THE BLANKS

1. "The _____ is our _____ in right _____ about _____."
2. "Our _____ is one of _____."
3. "_____ must be _____ stewards in the _____ of _____."

FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

1. Why do some people get upset when the preacher talks about money?
2. What does the word steward mean? Discuss fully.

3. How do you plan to use this lesson?

QUESTIONS YOU HAVE (write them down)

1.

2.

3.

PROOF OF POSITIVE ACTIONS:

1. Here is my power thought for this week:

2. Here is an improvement I see in myself:

3. I am especially thankful for this blessing:

4. Here is how I helped someone this week:

5. I am an okay person because:

6. My sentence prayer is:

7. With God's help I affirm:

CHAPTER 16

ENJOY TODAY

Some people never learn the lesson that yesterday ended last night. This is evident by the fact that they are still wallowing in the problems, failures and frustrations of yesterday. They miss the beauty and opportunities of today because of this approach to life. Happiness is enjoying today. NOW is all the time you have.

On the other side of the coin there are those who are worrying about about tomorrow. They are bound by "what if" possibilities which usually come from negative thinking. Jesus commanded His followers not to live like this: "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own" (Matthew 6:34 NIV). An unknown person has said, "I have seen yesterday, I'm not afraid of tomorrow, and God is with me today."

A New Day

"This is the beginning of a new day.
God has given me this day to use as
I will.

I can waste it or use it for good.
What I do today is very important
because I am exchanging a day of
my life for it.

When tomorrow comes this day will be
gone forever,
leaving something in its place.
I have traded for it: I want it to
be gain--not loss;
Good--not evil; Success--not failure,
In order that I shall not forget
the price I paid for it."

--Author unknown.

Isn't it great to have a choice? Each morning we can choose how we will use the new day. "This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it" (Psalms 118:24). Let me give you a few additional suggestions for enjoying today.

1. Begin each new day by thanking God for it. It's a new opportunity for you to serve Him.

2. Spend several minutes in prayer and Bible reading (e.g., Matthew 6:25-34, etc.). This will give you fuel for the day.

3. Plan to encourage at least one person during the day.

4. Do one thing you really want to do. This keeps life exciting.

5. Remember, it's okay to enjoy today.

6. If possible, rest a while (cf. Mark 6:31).

7. Turn all your worries over to the Lord.

Today is the ONLY TIME you have to build a positive life. Be sure to take advantage of it.

For Additional Study and Discussion

RELATED VERSES

How do these verses relate to the subject:

1. Psalms 40:1-3.
2. Matthew 6:26-30.
3. Philippians 4:6-9.

TRUE OR FALSE

1. T F: We have all the time in the world to do what we want.
2. T F: We shouldn't worry about tomorrow.
3. T F: God gives us power to live each day.

FILL IN THE BLANKS

1. " _____ is enjoying _____."
2. "Isn't it _____ to have _____?"
3. " _____ is all the _____ you _____."

FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

1. Why do a lot of people let the joy of today slip by?
2. What makes your day a real joy?
3. How do you plan to use this lesson?

QUESTIONS YOU HAVE (write them down).

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

PROOF OF POSITIVE ACTIONS:

1. Here is my power thought for this week:
2. Here is an improvement I see in myself:
3. I am especially thankful for this blessing:
4. Here is how I helped someone this week:
5. I am an okay person because:
6. My sentence prayer is:
7. With God's help I affirm:

CHAPTER 17

REACH HIGH FOR YOUR GOALS

I always get a kick out of children who try to touch or get things out of their reach. They strain, jump, climb chairs and a host of other things in efforts to acquire some desired object. From their earliest attempts, they were constantly programmed by mom and dad not to reach too high. "Leave that alone," or "get away" were constant reminders that they must not try.

Many of us have reached adulthood with our attitudes still operating on a "don't reach too high" program in our minds. Like a child, if you see something you really want, you must reach for it. Many wonder how high they should reach. The sky is the limit!

What determines the height of your reach? Several things.

1. **Your desire.** What do you really want out of life?

2. **Your needs.** What do you and your family really need?

3. **Your faith.** This determines how high you are willing to reach.

4. **Your attitude.** Your attitude determines your altitude.

5. **Your emotions.** How do you feel about it?

6. **Your sense of urgency.** How soon do you want it?

7. **Your motivation.** What will it take to move you?

8. **Your preparation.** Have you paid the price of being prepared?

9. **Your courage.** What will you do when the going gets tough?

10. **Your plan.** How high have you planned

to reach?

To reach high goals you must develop these 10 qualities in your life. It doesn't matter how much you are lacking in these areas. The challenge is to go to work on improving them. **Growth** is a key to success (Read Ephesians 4:11-16).

Reaching high is an exciting adventure in life. It demands that we know where we are going and how we are going to get there. Low goals are okay as intermediate steps to the ultimate heights (goals) you are reaching for. Never make the mistake of not reaching high for your goal.

The apostle Paul wrote: "Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead" (Philippians 3:13).

For Additional Study and Discussion

RELATED VERSES

How do these verses relate to the subject?

1. 1 Corinthians 15:58.
2. Hebrews 11:1,6.
3. Ephesians 3:20.

TRUE OR FALSE

1. T F: We shouldn't set our aim high, we will only be disappointed.
2. T F: Our background has no relation to our present attitudes.
3. T F: We should always "Play it safe."

FILL IN THE BLANKS

1. "Many _____ how _____ they should _____."
2. "The _____ is the _____."
3. "The _____ is to go to _____ on _____"

_____ them."

THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION.

1. Why should we set our aim high for goals?
2. How important is attitude in setting goals?
3. How do you plan to use this lesson?

QUESTIONS YOU HAVE (write them down)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

PROOF OF POSITIVE ACTIONS:

1. Here is my power thought for this week:
2. Here is an improvement I see in myself:
3. I am especially thankful for this blessing:
4. Here is how I helped someone this week:
5. I am an okay person because:
6. My sentence prayer is:
7. With God's help I affirm:

CHAPTER 18

THE POWER OF EXPECTANCY

You will not make progress by looking backward. Success is always straight ahead. To reach your goal you must chart a course for moving forward in life. To achieve great things never linger in the ruts of frustration and failure. Lift your eyes to positive horizons. Expectancy keeps you alive, excited and active.

What do you see coming up on your horizon? What have you been expecting all these years? Your dream will become a reality in proportion to your concept of it. If your dream is big, exciting, far-reaching, you will get it.

In 1907 George Westinghouse lost his business in a fire. Those associated with him became depressed and discouraged. Mr. Westinghouse said, "No, I am going to become optimistic and look forward with enthusiastic expectation for building a great business." Through dreams, work and positive thinking, the great Westinghouse Corporation became a reality.

Success comes through positive expectancy. If you don't expect anything, you will always get your wish. On the other hand, if you expect great things, great things will become realities in your life. Jesus said, "According to your faith be it unto you" (Matthew 9:29). This is a promise relative to the attitude of expectancy.

Your horizons are what you make them. Your future is in your hands. You can choose dark, negative horizons which hold only misery, or you can choose positive horizons. Here are a few tips for choosing positive horizons:

1. Be excited about life. This comes from interest.
2. Be optimistic. The best is yet to be.
3. Find a way to help others. It is more blessed to give than to receive.

4. Don't take your disappointments too seriously.

5. Do something that is challenging or different.

6. Relax and visualize a positive horizon.

7. Don't worry. 95% of the things we worry about never happen.

8. Set some positive goals.

Tomorrow when you get out of bed believe that something positive is going to happen in your day. Look to God for strength and encouragement, which comes through His word. Expect the best!

For Additional Study and Discussion

RELATED VERSES

How do these verses relate to the subject:

1. Isaiah 8:17.
2. 1 Peter 1:2-5.
3. Ephesians 1:3.

TRUE OR FALSE

1. T F: Expectancy is a key to success.
2. T F: Faith doesn't enter into expectancy.
3. T F: You usually get what you expect.

FILL IN THE BLANK

1. "Success is _____ ahead."
2. "Your _____ are what _____ make them."
3. "_____ your eyes to _____ horizons."

THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

1. How does expectancy relate to your daily life?
2. Why is belief important to every day living?

3. How do you plan to use this lesson?
QUESTIONS YOU HAVE (write them down)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

PROOF OF POSITIVE ACTIONS?

2. Here is my power thought for this week:
2. Here is an improvement I see in myself:
3. I am especially thankful for this blessing:
4. Here is how I helped someone this week:
5. I am an okay person because:
6. My sentence prayer is:
7. With God's help I affirm:

CHAPTER 19

THE SEARCH FOR HAPPINESS

Someone has said: "The whole world is on a mad dash in search of happiness. Somewhere, just maybe, it will be found. We must not give up."

A number of years ago, I came across some unusual statements about happiness. In response to the question: **Where is happiness?** the author answered:

1. **Not in money.** Jay Gould, an American millionaire, had plenty of money, when dying, he said: "I suppose I am the most miserable man in the world."

2. **Not in pleasure.** Lord Byron lived a life of pleasure, if anyone did. He wrote: "The worm, the canker, the grief are mine alone."

3. **Not in unbelief.** Voltaire was an infidel of the strongest type. He wrote: "I wish I had never been born."

4. **Not in position and fame.** Lord Beaconsfield enjoyed more than his share of both. He wrote: "Youth is a mistake; manhood a struggle; old age a regret."

5. **Not in conquest:** Alexander the Great conquered the known world of his day. Having done so, he wept in his tent, because he said: "There are no more worlds to conquer."

The world is full of people who believe that happiness will come if they ever accomplish one or more of the above five things. This isn't so!

King Solomon had it all and tried it all. Wine, women, song, money, prestige, power, respect, wisdom, etc. Toward the end of his life, however, he concluded that all these things were VANITY.

Where is happiness? Listen to Solomon's

answer: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man." (Ecclesiastes 12:13). That's it! Simple, but oh how challenging.

Solomon gives us the reason for fearing God and keeping His commandments: THE JUDGMENT IS COMING. "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Ecclesiastes 12:14; cf. Matt. 12:36).

The search for happiness **begins** and **ends** with God. The sooner mankind learns this great truth, the sooner his "mad dash" will be over.

For Additional Study and Discussion

RELATED VERSES

How do these verses relate to the subject?

1. John 10:10; 14:6.
2. Ecclesiastes 11:9,10.
3. Romans 12:1,2.

TRUE OR FALSE

1. T F: Most people are as happy as they want to be.
2. T F: Happiness is in **things**.
3. T F: God is the source of true happiness.

FILL IN THE BLANKS

1. "The _____ world is on a _____ dash in _____ of _____."
2. "Toward the _____ of his _____, however, he _____ that all these _____ were _____."
3. "The _____ for _____ begins and _____ with _____."

THOUGHTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Why is it important to be happy?

2. What additional things contribute to the Christian's happiness?
3. How do you plan to use this lesson?

QUESTIONS YOU HAVE (write them down).

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

PROOF OF POSITIVE ACTIONS:

1. Here is my power thought for this week:
2. Here is an improvement I see in myself:
3. I am especially thankful for this blessing:
4. Here is how I helped someone this week:
5. I am an okay person because:
6. My sentence prayer is:
7. With God's help I affirm:

CHAPTER 20

STANDING ON THE INSIDE

A mother repeatedly told her little boy to sit down. The boy continued to stand, disobeying his mother. Finally, the mother went to him, and plopped him down in a chair. Fuming, the boy said, "I may be sitting down on the OUTSIDE, but I am standing on the INSIDE!"

A wise man, several hundred years ago, penned these words for the Lord, "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Proverbs 23:7). The boy in our illustration was disobedient in his heart; his attitude was wrong. God is not pleased with mere **outward** conformity to His commandments, He wants the heart (mind) conformed too.

Jesus spoke some of His strongest words to people who were only concerned with external compliance: Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and the dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence" (Matthew 23:25; cf. vs. 26-28).

A man's thinking, according to Jesus, is responsible for his outward actions: "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. These are the things which defile a man..." (Matthew 15:20). Sin begins in the heart, and may remain there even though the external hides it.

Attitude, which is a product of the mind, is so important that if it isn't **changed** a person can't be saved. This is what the Greek word **metanoeo**, which is translated **repent**, means: "change your mind or to have another mind."

God's word gives us some good advice relative to what to do with our minds and thoughts.

1. We should strive to have righteous thoughts (Proverbs 12:5).
2. We must guard our thoughts because God knows them (Psalms 139:2,23; Matthew 9:4).
3. We must bring every thought captive to Christ (2 Corinthians 10:5).
4. We must be renewed in our minds (Romans 12:1,2).
5. We must set our minds on things above (Colossians 3:1,2).
6. We must think on right things (Philippians 4:8,9).
7. We must obey the word within our minds (Hebrews 4:12).
8. We must be spiritually minded (Romans 8:6).

God wants us to be in control of our attitudes. When we are "sitting outwardly", He wants us to be "sitting inwardly." Attitude is a vital ingredient to building a positive life.

For Additional Study and Discussion

RELATED VERSES

How do these verses relate to the subject?

1. Lamentations 3:40;
2. Psalms 119:97, 130.
3. 1 Peter 1:13.

TRUE OR FALSE

1. T F: We shouldn't spend too much time on attitude.
2. T F: A person can control his thinking.
3. T F: Attitude has nothing to do with salvation.

FILL IN THE BLANKS

1. As a man _____ in his _____, so

2. "_____ begins in the _____, and may remain _____ even though the _____ it."
3. "We must be _____ in our _____."

FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

1. Why should we spend time on studying attitudes?
2. How can we get better control of our thinking?
3. How do you plan to use this lesson?

QUESTIONS YOU HAVE (write them down)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

PROOF OF POSITIVE ACTIONS

1. Here is my power thought for this week:
2. Here is an improvement I see in myself:
3. I am especially thankful for this blessing:
4. Here is how I helped someone this week:
5. I am an okay person because:
6. My sentence prayer is:
7. With God's help I affirm:

CHAPTER 21

SPOTLIGHT ON SPIRITUALITY

"To be carnally minded is death." With these words, Paul once and for all removes the need for spirituality from the realm of option. It is essential to growth and approval by God. The rest of Paul's remark goes like this: "...to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Romans 8:6,7).

Because of his new birth (John 3:1-5), and citizenship in the spiritual kingdom (Colossians 1:11-13), the Christian must daily work on developing spirituality. He is fighting the flesh (cf. Galatians 5:7), and can only win through the Spirit.

What does it mean to be spiritual? Obviously it means to mind the things of the Spirit and implement the teachings of the Spirit into one's life. My spirituality is the degree of Christ-likeness that shows in my attitude and actions. To the degree, therefore, that Christ is not seen in me, to that degree I **am not** spiritual. It means to have the ATTITUDE of Christ in every situation (cf. Philippians 2:5).

When we turn the spotlight on spirituality there are a number of qualities revealed as being essential. The following attributes must characterize a person's life before it can be said he is minding the things of the Spirit.

1. He has placed God first in his life (Matthew 6:33).

2. He knows God and His will for his life (John 17:3).

3. He has set his mind on things above (Colossians 3:1,2).

4. He is working on producing the fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-26).

5. He does not conform to the standards of the world (Romans 12:1,2).

6. He is a servant of others (Mark 12:35-45).

7. He daily denies himself (Matthew 16:24).

8. He has total faith in God and His word (Hebrews 11:6).

9. He is convinced of the need of helping others (Galatians 6:1).

10. He desires to grow in Christ-likeness (Ephesians 4:11-16).

11. He fights worldliness (1 John 5:19), because he knows to the degree the things of the world satisfies him, to that degree he is worldly.

12. He serves the Lord with his mind (Romans 7:25).

Spirituality is evidence of maturity in Christ. This takes time and patience (cf. 1 Corinthians 3:1-3; Hebrews 5:12), and looms as a major challenge for the Christian's faith. Until a person becomes spiritually minded, he will not understand the things of the Spirit (cf. 1 Corinthians 2:14). A carnal minded person can't build a positive life.

For Additional Study and Discussion

RELATED VERSES

How do these verses relate to the subject?

1. Romans 8:8-10.

2. Galatians 6:1.

3. Ephesians 5:19.

TRUE OR FALSE

1. T F: Spirituality is an easy quality to develop.

2. T F: When you are baptized you automatically become spiritual.

3. T F: We can't really be spiritual no matter how hard we try.

FILL IN THE BLANKS

1. "To be _____ minded _____
_____."
2. "It is _____ to _____ and
_____ by God."
3. "_____ is evidence of _____
in _____."

FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

1. Who is the most spiritual person you know? Why do you think so?
2. What are three major hindrances to spirituality?
3. How do you plan to use this lesson?

QUESTIONS YOU HAVE (write them down).

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

PROOF OF POSITIVE ACTIONS

1. Here is my power thought for this week:
2. Here is an improvement I see in myself:
3. I am especially thankful for this blessing:
4. Here is how I helped someone this week:
5. I am an okay person because:
6. My sentence prayer is:
7. With God's help I affirm:

CHAPTER 22

EQUAL PARTNERS

Three men were lost in a blizzard. The first was so cold and tired that he could not go on, but stumbled and fell into the snow. The second decided to go on alone, hoping to reach a shelter some distance away. The third, however, would not leave his friend but knelt down beside him and vigorously rubbed his friend's hands and feet until the blood started to circulate freely again. As he worked on his friend, he noticed that he, too, was getting warmer because of the exercise, and soon both of them could continue on together. A short distance before they reached the shelter, they stumbled over the frozen form of the man who tried to make it alone.

"No man is an island." We can't make it through life without others. When we help others there is always a blessing which comes our way. This is a principle from the law of sowing and reaping (cf. Galatians 6:5-8); as Jesus said, "it's more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

Christianity is **other person** centered. Instead of what I can get, I am more interested in what I can give. The biblical reason for this attitude is described by the word **fellowship**. In Christ we have become part of a caring community. There is no other "partnership" in the world where the members have the same care, one for another" (1 Corinthians 12:25,26). We are equal partners with unique responsibilities one to another. In order for the church to fulfill her mission in the world, each partner must do his share.

Some of the things we owe one another are as follows.

1. Bear one another's burdens (Gala-

- tians 6:2).
2. Build up one another (Romans 14:19; 1 Thessalonians 5:11).
 3. Be kind to one another, tender hearted (Philippians 2:1,2).
 4. We must give preference to one another (Romans 12:10).
 5. Regard others as more important than yourself (Philippians 2:3).
 6. Forgive one another (Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:13).
 7. Live in peace with one another (1 Thessalonians 5:13).
 8. We must love one another (1 John 3:23; 2 John 5).
 9. We must be devoted to one another (Romans 12:10).
 10. We must be subject to one another (Ephesians 5:21).

We build our own lives by helping others. This is God's way to the top. As partners, let us arise and build.

For Additional Study and Discussion

RELATED VERSES

How do these verses relate to the subject?

1. Colossians 3:9.
2. 1 Thessalonians 5:15.
3. Romans 15:7.

TRUE OR FALSE

1. T F: Some people don't need anybody.
2. T F: God knew that it was not good for man to be alone.
3. T F: I don't owe anybody anything in the church.

FILL IN THE BLANKS

1. " _____ make it _____

- without _____."
2. "Christianity is _____ person _____."
 3. "We are _____ with unique _____ one to another."

FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

1. Why, as Christians, do we need fellowship?
2. Why do some Christians never see the importance of fellowship?
3. How do you plan to use this lesson?

QUESTIONS YOU HAVE (write them down)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

PROOF OF POSITIVE ACTIONS

1. Here is my power thought for this week:
2. Here is an improvement I see in myself:
3. I am especially thankful for this blessing:
4. Here is how I helped someone this week:
5. I am an okay person because:
6. My sentence prayer is:
7. With God's help I affirm:

CHAPTER 23

LEARNING FROM DEFEAT

A few years ago Erwin W. Lutzer wrote an interesting little book entitled "Failure: The Back Door to Success." In his **preface** he wrote this paragraph: "Although personal failure is not a requirement for being a success, our failures can be used as stepping-stones to a more meaningful relationship with God. Having failed, we can yet be successful in God's sight because of the incredible generosity of God's forgiveness and acceptance" (p. 11, Moody Press, 1975, Chicago).

How did you handle your last set-back or failure? When you lose how do you feel? What does defeat do to you? These questions and their answers let us know real quick what we're made of. Do you ever give thanks for losing? The apostle Paul said, "In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (1 Thessalonians 5:18). The man who wrote these words had ample opportunities to put them into practice (cf. 2 Corinthians 4:8-12).

Charlie Brown, one of the characters in **Peanuts**, was complaining because his team never won any of their games. Lucy gives him this advice for consolation: "Remember, Charlie Brown, you learn more from your defeats than you do from your victories." And Charlie Brown replies, "That makes me the smartest man in the world!"

What should we learn from defeat? A number of things.

1. Defeats are the exceptions and not the rule.
2. Everybody experiences defeat at one time or another (Job 14:1).
3. Defeats let us know what to avoid next

time.

4. Defeats are merely stepping-stones to success.
5. God loves us even when we suffer defeat (John 3:16).
6. Defeats aren't final (Psalm 1).
7. All things work together for good (Romans 8:28).
8. You learn to appreciate the victories (Psalms 119:67).
9. It doesn't mean as a human being that you are a loser (Psalms 37:25).
10. It lets you know how strong your belief system is (Hebrews 11:6).

Defeat is a challenge to building a positive life. Our attitude determines how we handle it. Like the Phoenix, we must arise from defeat and build.

For Additional Study and Discussion

RELATED VERSES

How do these verses relate to the subject?

1. Philippians 4:13.
2. 1 John 4:4.
3. James 1:5.

STRUE OR FALSE

1. T F: It is normal to have defeats in life.
2. T F: God brings about defeats.
3. T F: Defeats are stepping-stones.

FILL IN THE BLANKS

1. "_____ : The _____ door to _____."
1. "Defeat is a _____ to _____ a Positive life."
3. "_____ let us know _____ to _____ next _____."

FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

1. What is the biggest defeat you have suffered?
2. How do defeats help us grow spiritually?
3. How do you plan to use this lesson?

QUESTIONS YOU HAVE (write them down)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

PROOF OF POSITIVE ACTIONS

1. Here is my power thought for this week:
2. Here is an improvement I see in myself:
3. I am especially thankful for this blessing:
4. Here is how I helped someone this week:
5. I am an okay person because:
6. My sentence prayer is:
7. With God's help I affirm:

CHAPTER 24

TURN ON YOUR LIVING

Every person is building a life. Every day we add material to our lives that, hopefully, will make it better. All of us are alive, but are we really living? Are our dreams still alive? Are your eyes set for the good? (Read Jeremiah 24:6).

A mother was given a new TV by her children. She called one of her sons to complain about the television set not working. He came over and checked it out. It worked fine. He told his mother: "Mom, it works fine. All you needed to do was turn it on."

That's the way life is. It'll work fine if you'll turn it on!

Most people go through life being served at the counter of circumstances or "fate." Whatever is offered, is what they take. This will change if a person will dare to **dream, plan** and **act**. This allows you to create your own circumstances.

Jesus announced to the world: "I am come that you might have life and have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). The Master lets us know it's okay to turn on your living. In order to do this, I suggest the following 12 things.

1. Take time to smile and laugh. It is good medicine (Proverbs 15:13; 15, 17:22).

2. Slow down and smell the flowers (Matthew 6:25-35).

3. Find something you like to do and do it (Ecclesiastes 9:10).

4. Slow down. Rest awhile (Mark 6:31).

5. Get yourself a goal and work toward it (Ephesians 4:12-14).

6. Meditate on God's word (Psalms 119:97).

7. Try giving yourself away (Acts 20:35).

8. Learn what real living is all about (Luke

12:15).

9. Put a little more gold into the rule (Luke 6:31).

10. Set your attitude on positive (Proverbs 23:7).

11. Take time to pray about your life (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

12. Practice thanksgiving (Colossians 4:2).

There is a switch within your mind that is just waiting to be turned on. The choice is yours. Today will be an exciting and eventful day as you turn on your living.

For Additional Study and Discussion

RELATED VERSES

How do these verses relate to the subject?

1. John 14:1-5.

2. Romans 8:37.

3. Romans 8:26.

TRUE OR FALSE

1. T F: Christians should be sad people.

2. T F: Most people never turn on their living.

3. T F: We shouldn't expect too much from life.

FILL IN THE BLANKS

1. "Every person is _____ a

_____."

2. "Are your _____ still _____?"

3. "This _____ if a person will

_____ to _____, _____ and _____."

FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

1. How would you help a person who feels like life is a drag?

2. Share some additional ways to turn on your living.

3. How do you plan to use this lesson?

QUESTIONS YOU HAVE (write them down)

1.

2.

3.

PROOF OF POSITIVE ACTIONS

1. Here is my power thought for this week:

2. Here is an improvement I see in myself:

3. I am especially thankful for this blessing:

4. Here is how I helped someone this week:

5. I am an okay person because:

6. My sentence prayer is:

7. With God's help I affirm:

CHAPTER 25

10 RULES FOR MENTAL HEALTH

In his book entitled **Why Christians Crack Up***, Marion H. Nelson, M.D., give ten vital rules for good mental health. Here with some adaptation are Dr. Nelson's rules.

1. Accept everything that comes into your life as God's perfect will for your life and thank Him for it. May our prayer be, "...Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matthew 26:39).

2. Live a carefully balanced life, paying attention to God's rules about body and mind in regard to the proper amount of rest and relaxation along with work. "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth" (3 John 2).

3. Walk in the light: be obedient to God's law, no matter what happens. "But if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another..." (1 John 1:7).

4. Maintain a good conscience. "And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men" (Acts 24:16).

5. Walk in the energy of God...instead of the flesh (Galatians 5:16). Our goal is to produce the fruits of the Spirit.

6. Walk in faith instead of by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7). Without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6).

7. Take a stand against Satan. "...resist the devil and he will flee from you" (James 4:7).

8. Regularly feed upon the word of God and have regular communion through prayer (Read Psalms 119:97; 1 Thessalonians 5:17).

9. Cast every particular care or worry into the lap of God and leave it there for Him to handle (1 Peter 5:7).

10. Think about the right kind of things.

Things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, virtuous, and praiseworthy (cf. Philippians 4:8).

Through guidance from God's word, the child of God can have a peace that passeth understanding. This is the key for sound mental health. A positive life is built out of a sound mind.

For Additional Study and Discussion

RELATED VERSES

How do these verses relate to the subject?

1. 2 Timothy 1:7.
2. 1 Peter 1:13.
3. 2 Corinthians 8:12.

TRUE OR FALSE

1. T F: The Bible can't help us with mental health problems.
2. T F: God wants us to enjoy good health.
3. T F: Sin causes a lot of emotional problems.

FILL IN THE BLANKS

1. " _____ everything that comes into your _____ as _____ will _____ your _____ and thank _____ for it."
2. " _____ a _____ conscience."
3. "Cast _____ care or _____ into the _____ of _____ and leave it there for _____ to _____."

FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

1. What is the major reason Christians are reluctant to admit that they have problems?

2. Share some additional rules for good mental health.
3. How do you plan to use this lesson?

QUESTIONS YOU HAVE (write them down)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

PROOF OF POSITIVE ACTIONS

1. Here is my power thought for this week:
2. Here is an improvement I see in myself:
3. I am especially thankful for this blessing:
4. Here is how I helped someone this week:
5. I am an okay person because:
6. My sentence prayer is:
7. With God's help I affirm:

* Moody Bible Institute, pp. 119-122, 1960, Chicago, Ill.

POSSESSING REAL PEACE

Dr. Robert Oppenheimer, who supervised the creation of the first atomic bomb, was once called before a congressional committee. During the questioning, a Congressman asked: "Doctor, is there any defense against the nuclear weapon?"

"Certainly," Dr. Oppenheimer replied, "it is peace."

Is there any defense against stress, unhappiness, depression, worry, fear, loneliness, and a host of other emotional problems that bother us? Yes! Through Jesus Christ real, inner peace is possible. Paul wrote: "Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means" (2 Thessalonians 3:16). This is possible only through the Prince of Peace (cf. Isaiah 9:6).

The Bible contains a wealth of material relative to peace. Some samples are as follows:

1. Peace comes from having our minds set on God: "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee..." (Isaiah 26:3).

2. Peace must first be made with God: "Let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me; and he shall make peace with me" (Isaiah 27:5; cf. Romans 5:1).

3. Jesus gives His followers peace: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27).

4. **The fruit of the Spirit** is love, joy, peace (Galatians 5:22).

5. God's peace passeth all understanding: "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:7).

6. We must allow God's peace to rule in

our hearts: "And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called" (Colossians 3:15).

7. Since we have peace, we must become peacemakers: "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God" (Matthew 5:9).

In 1941 by Executive Order President Roosevelt took the eagle on the U.S. Seal and turned its head toward the olive branch, away from the arrows. Let's turn to Jesus, the Prince of Peace. He will protect us from the arrows of life that seek to disrupt our peace. This is essential to building a positive life.

For Additional Study and Discussion

RELATED VERSES

How do these verses relate to the subject?

1. 2 Corinthians 13:11.
2. James 3:16,17.
3. Romans 12:18.

TRUE OR FALSE

1. T F: Peace is possible in a world of trouble.
2. T F: Inward peace depends on outward circumstances.
3. T F: Jesus is the source of lasting peace.

FILL IN THE BLANKS

1. "The _____ contains a _____ of material relative to _____."
2. " _____ must _____ be made with _____."
3. "Let's _____ to Jesus, the _____ of _____."

FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

1. Why is the world looking in the wrong place for peace?
2. Share some additional ways to gain peace within.
3. How do you plan to use this lesson in your life?

QUESTIONS YOU HAVE (Write them down)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

PROOF OF POSITIVE ACTIONS

1. Here is my power thought for this week:
2. Here is an improvement I see in myself:
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