



**Growing  
as  
Christians**

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## INTRODUCTION

For the next 12 weeks we will be studying about Growing As Christians. This study will be divided into four parts: (1) The meaning of Christian Growth, (2) How Christians Grow, (3) Problems to Christian Growth and (4) Areas of Christian Growth. The foundation of Christian growth is Jesus Christ and the continuing response of man through the work of the Holy Spirit. Some of the ways Christians grow are through conflict, study, fellowship, worship and service. The lessons will also deal with the personal and cultural problems to Christian growth. Some of the areas of Christian growth we will study will be faith, self-discipline, patience and love.

Today our churches have an important part to play in human growth. We have church buildings, Baptist Publishing House, Bible Way Correspondence Course, Radio-Television witness, Sunday School, women's work, worship services, evangelistic campaigns - all these are for one purpose and that is: the growth of the individual Christian. We pray that these lessons will be a guide to greater Christian growth in each person through the power of the Holy Spirit.

## LESSON 1

### THE FOUNDATION OF CHRISTIAN GROWTH

Our Time With God:

Women's verse and hymn:

Memory verse:

*"For no other foundation can any one lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ."  
1 Corinthians 3:11.*

Scripture reading:

1 Corinthians 3:3-10.  
2 Corinthians 5:14-17.

Prayer:

LEADER:

The Parliament Building in Lusaka is one of the most beautiful buildings in Zambia. As you drive into Lusaka, especially at night, it is the first thing you see. It is up on a hill which makes it above everything else in the city. Many tons of steel and cement went into the foundation of this building. The builders were the best who could be found and they knew how important it was to build a good strong foundation.

Even an inexperienced builder knows that a good foundation is absolutely necessary to build a good building. (Read 1 Corinthians 3:16). Here Paul tells us that the Christian is the temple of God and God lives in him. Therefore the most important building on earth is the Christian life. Remember that a great foundation is necessary for a great building. What kind of foundation is the Christian life built upon?

## PART ONE:

### Signs of No Christian Growth. (1 Corinthians 3:1-4).

While Paul was on his second missionary campaign he went to Corinth. He worked in this large city for about 18 months. During this time a church was established. It had become a large church.

Three years later while Paul was in Ephesus he heard of the serious problems which were threatening the church at Corinth. So he wrote a letter to help them with their problems. The church had divided into four parties and immorality had come into the church members were fighting among themselves. There were problems concerning marriage. Some were even questioning Paul's apostleship. They had questions about proper dress for worship, about the meaning of the Lord's supper, about the matter of spiritual gifts and the resurrection of believers.

When Paul heard of this he called them "babes in Christ." They had not grown as Christians. They were acting like ordinary men and not like creatures in Christ.

## PART TWO:

### God's Instruments for Christian Growth. (1 Corinthians 3:5-9).

Here Paul speaks of the work of different leaders in the work of the kingdom of God. Preachers, missionaries, teachers and other leaders are not rivals; they are fellowworkers "For we are labourers together with God." One person can do one thing, and some one else can do another. What each one can contribute is needed by all. Everyone is needed in order to build the church. Followers of Christ are not to fight one another. They are to work together in the great task of building the church.

How sad it is that so many times we have these same problems in our churches.

Pastors, missionaries, teachers and leaders are necessary because God uses them to do his work. And yet, it is not these men who produce the results; it is God who gives the increase. Men and women with different abilities and talents are used of God. One plants, another waters or cultivates, but the increase comes from God. The workmen are not competing with one another but labouring together. "Each shall receive his wages according to his labour."

### PART THREE:

The Foundation of the Christian.  
(1 Corinthians 3:10-11).

Paul was anxious to spread the gospel throughout the known world. He wanted to reach as many cities and countries as possible. He seldom stayed in one place very long. Paul did spend 18 months in Corinth and three years in Ephesus because of their special needs. Paul was always planning ahead wanting to go to areas and establish new churches. He would work in an area for a short time, build a church or "lay a foundation" then move on leaving others to build on this foundation.

Each time Paul laid the same foundation. This foundation was Jesus Christ. It is the foundation on which all Christian growth must rest. This growth includes three things:

(1) Forgiveness - Man becomes aware of his sins. He confesses his sins and receives complete forgiveness. Therefore he has a new relationship with God. God is no longer his enemy but his friend - his father.

(2) Strength for daily needs - The Christian can receive through the Holy Spirit strength for his need. Life has new meaning and purpose.

(3) Hope for the future - The Christian now has hope for the future. God is his hope and the Christian has no fear for the future, either while he lives or as he faces death.

Christ is the foundation. He is complete. Christ fulfills every need of man. Christian growth must come from God.

#### PART FOUR:

We Must Die in Order to Grow.  
(2 Corinthians 5:14-17).

"For the love of Christ controls us." Paul's concern for the Christian came from the great love which Christ had for him. This great love made him have a deep desire and concern for these Christians and kept him from bragging and boasting. Paul was very humble. He was convinced that Christ died for all men. This fact controlled Paul's thinking and living.

When we accept Christ as our personal Saviour we pass from death into life with him. One who does not know Christ is truly dead, but by faith in him one passes from death into life eternal. Only when one dies to himself can he truly live for Christ.

#### LEADER:

Once we lay the foundation of Christ in our lives great things can be done in His name. Every true Christian has his foundation in Christ. But so often we let Satan creep into our lives and we become cold and indifferent. We do not read our Bibles and pray daily, we do not worship regularly in church. These things cause us to be very weak as Christians.

Christ is the foundation of all Christian Growth. When that foundation is secure then we are expected to grow.

## LESSON 8

### OUR CONTINUING RESPONSE TO CHRIST

Our Time With God:

Women's hymn and verse:

Memory verse:                   *"I press toward the  
mark for the prize of  
the high calling of God  
in Christ Jesus."  
  Philippians 3:14.*

Scripture reading:           Philippians 3:7-16.  
  Colossians 3:1-3.

Prayer:

LEADER:

We should often ask ourselves this question. What is my reason for living?

Many people feel when they have accepted Christ they have reached the final goal in life. They feel that when they have accepted Christ and have been baptized, they are all right. This is not true - accepting Christ is only the first step in living a life full and rich in the will of God.

Today we are going to study how we should continue to grow as Christians.

PART ONE:

Choosing a Goal for Your Christian Life.  
(Philippians 3:7-11).

On the road to Damascus, Paul had been faced with a big decision. He had to choose between being a leader and ruler of the Jewish nation and following Jesus Christ. Paul was a

Jew among Jews. He was Jew by birth. He had reached the goal of every devout Jew. He kept the law to the letter. Paul was proud of his achievements as a Jew.

Then one day Christ came into his life. Paul says when Christ came into his life he realized that all the things he had thought were so important and had been so proud of were really nothing. Paul began to realize that all the things which had seemed so important in his life would actually destroy his life.

Paul realized he wanted Christ more than anything else. Therefore, he gave up all the things in his old life, and accepted Christ as his Saviour.

When Paul was in prison he looked over his life as a Christian. There had been long years of suffering for Christ's sake, but they made Paul more certain that his choice had been wise.

Today, if you were called on to suffer for Christ's sake, would you be strong enough to stand for what is right in the name of Jesus Christ or would it be easier to give in and let Satan take over your life.

There are also those who would be willing to suffer physically for Christ's sake, but cannot find the strength to live a Christian life daily.

Let us pray that we will be willing to suffer or live daily for Christ. Let us be willing to do whatsoever he calls on us to do.

PART TWO:

Continuing to Grow.  
(Philippians 3:12-16).

Paul had the greatest desire to become perfect in Christ, but he was fully aware he

had no become perfect. The closer we become to Christ the more we realize our own imperfections.

Paul tells us that in spite of his imperfections he continues to work toward the goal of being perfect in Christ. More than anything else Paul wanted to measure up to what his Lord expected of Him. He could not bear to disappoint the Saviour who had done so much for him.

Paul was afraid that some of the members of the church at Philippi felt they had become "perfect". Paul wanted to help them realize they had not achieved perfection. He urged them to press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

#### PART THREE:

Seeking Things That are Above.  
(Colossians 3:1-3).

In these verses Paul reminds us that we have been "raised with Christ". Baptism is a symbol of the death of our old lives, as we are "buried" in the water. The resurrection is symbolized as we rise to walk in newness of life. Then, we, as Christians are on the other side of the grave; we are walking with Christ.

Now we are citizens of the kingdom of God, and all our thoughts and desires must be centered in Christ.

Paul reminds us that when we become a Christian we are dead to our old lives of sin, but we are alive in Christ Jesus. We are in Christ who is God, and no one can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

#### PART FOUR:

Results of Christian Growth.

Paul believed we should have a goal for our lives. A person may not reach his goal

but it is certain he will not rise above it.

Paul chose the highest goal for himself. This was so that he might know Christ to the fullest. What do we mean by knowing Christ? Some have heard of Christ but have not made him a part of their lives. Perhaps this illustration will help us to understand. Before marriage a man knows something about his wife. He had heard about her beauty, her intelligence, her student record, her personal character, her home life, and who her parents are. Then he marries her and loves her. Next comes a rich and meaningful marriage relationship. Love overflows into children. Through tears and laughter, through joy and sorrow, they walk and kneel in prayer together. Now the man really knows his wife - their lives have become one. Even so must our lives be with Christ.

LEADER:

Paul tells us if we are to succeed in our Christian life we must remove all the things that are not necessary in our lives. If we do not do this many of us will fail in the Christian life just as many young people fail as students. They have too many things which demand their time and attention. Today are you willing to remove all the things which keep you from serving Christ from your life?

## LESSON 3

### CHRISTIANS GROW THROUGH CONFLICT

Our Time With God:

Women's hymn and verse:

Memory verse:

"He who conquers shall  
have this heritage, and  
I will be his God and  
he shall be my son."  
Revelation 21:7.

Scripture Reading: Romans 7:13-25.

Prayer:

LEADER:

Often new Christians ask, "Is it easy to be a Christian?" The true answer is, "No, it is not easy to be a real Christian." We must not mislead children or young people by telling them that it is easy to be a Christian.

It is difficult to be a dedicated Christian. Constantly we are tempted. There are problems which often face us. Sin is always before us. Today we shall learn how these problems and temptations can help us to grow as Christians.

PART ONE:

What Effect Does the Law have on the  
Christian?  
(Romans 7:1-12).

In these verses Paul is trying to show what place the Law of Moses should have in our lives as Christians.

To the Jew, the law was the most important part of his religion. Paul wrote: The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. But how does the law pertain to the Christian?

The Jewish Christians felt that becoming a Christian did not change the fact that they were obligated to the law. On the other hand there were those who felt that becoming a Christian made them free to do anything they wanted to do.

The law helps us to know right from wrong. Therefore the law shows us we are lost in sin. When we study the law we realize it is impossible for us to keep it. We cannot become perfect as God demands perfection; therefore, we must turn to the only good and perfect Son of God. He can remove the sin from our lives and make us acceptable before God.

#### PART TWO:

We Must Strive to Serve God.  
(Romans 7:13-23).

Paul tells us that from the moment we are saved we will be faced with conflict. Paul was one of the greatest Christians who ever lived; and yet he was tempted to sin.

Paul said, "I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate." How often do we know and declare something as wrong and evil; and yet, in a moment of weakness find ourselves doing that very thing we hate?

Some Christians may be tempted to drink beer. Their friends may laugh and scoff at them if they refuse to drink. Young men and women are tempted to commit adultery in a moment of weakness. Very few places in the world are young women so free to give themselves and have so high a price to pay. In Zambia if a girl has a child before she is married no decent man will have her. And we have yet to see a marriage work where the couple have to get married because the girl is pregnant.

There is, also, the constant temptation to cheat in school and in business. Often students and businessmen feel they must cheat because "everyone else does." A Christian workman today is often tempted to waste time and in other ways not give a full days work for the money received. If we fail to speak out when we see injustice being done, we are wrong. These are just a few ways Christians are tempted. Sin is always with us.

How can we constantly face the struggle with sin?

### PART THREE:

#### The Way to Victory.

(Romans 7:24-25).

Paul knew there was a "way" in which we could overcome sin. The "way" is provided by God through Jesus Christ our Lord. When we are tempted he is always ready to help us if we are willing to call upon him.

As Christians we must always be aware of sin. Sin is constantly waiting for our weak moments.

As Christians we must pray if we are to overcome sin. When we are tempted we must call upon the Lord; he will give us the strength we need to overcome temptation.

Many people say that Christians should not have to face trials and troubles in life. How can this be so when even our Lord was tempted. We must not regard these conflicts and trials as something impossible to face, but we must understand that these things serve a purpose in our lives. We cannot grow as Christians if we do not have these times of testing. These experiences can make us become strong, stable Christians.

An athlete will never become a great soccer player merely by listening to the instructions

of his coach. He must get into the game, meet his opponent on the field, and get some bruises. Really getting out and playing the game is what makes a player.

#### PART FOUR:

#### The Struggle of Others.

The Bible tells us of people who struggled with problems in life. It was in the hour of fear and loneliness that Jacob struggled with the angel and became a prince with God. Joseph had been the petted and pampered favourite son of his father; then he was taken to Egypt as a slave and a prisoner. Joseph overcame many conflicts but these helped him become a stronger child of God. Through this strength he was able to liberate his people. Daniel and his companions showed their courage and faith as they faced the fiery furnace and lions den. John, the disciple who Jesus loved, was imprisoned on the lonely island of Patmos because of his faith in Christ, but the Lord blessed him by giving him a glimpse of heaven. We know also the struggles and suffering of Paul. Also our Lord and Saviour suffered on the cross so that you and I might have eternal life.

#### LEADER:

We are not saying that one should go out and look for trouble, but when we are confronted with conflict we should face it through the strength and power of our Lord and Saviour.

We must remember we can grow as Christians through the conflicts of life.

## LESSON 4

### CHRISTIANS GROW THROUGH STUDY

Our Time With God:

Women's hymn and verse:

Memory verse:

*"For whatever was written in the former days was written for our instruction, that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope."*

*Romans 15:4.*

Scripture reading:

Acts 17:10-12.  
2 Timothy 3:10-17.

Prayer:

LEADER:

When we go to school, textbooks are given to us; school is impossible without them. No man can become a lawyer without a basic knowledge of Law; no scientist can be a good scientist without a knowledge of the basic facts and truths of science. And no Christian can be a worthy Christian without a basic, intelligent knowledge of the Bible.

PART ONE:

We Should Respond to the Truth of God.  
(Acts 17:10-12).

Paul had to leave Thessalonica because of the severe persecution there. He went on to Beroea where he went first to the Jewish synagogue to preach.

The Jews in Beroea listened to Paul's message with eager hearts. They began to study

the scripture. They wanted to know if what Paul and Silas were teaching was really true. They had never heard the word of God preached in this way before. They wanted to know more about the truth of which Paul taught. Paul was thankful to see the people so interested in the word of God. Our preachers of today would be glad to see their church members studying their Bibles and learning the truth for themselves.

As the people studied and searched the scriptures for themselves, many believed. Both Jews and Gentiles, men and women, became followers of Christ.

Most of our leaders and missionaries have had long and careful training in Bible. This is good. However we should also emphasize the responsibility of all other Christians. Many Christians are not aware of their obligation to study the word of God.

#### PART TWO:

Learning From Experience.  
(2 Timothy 3:10-14).

Second Timothy was the last epistle written by Paul. Paul, then an old man, was in prison in Rome awaiting trial. He was certain that he would be sentenced to death. He began to think of his younger friend, Timothy, who had been his companion and helped for many years and who was now pastor of the church at Ephesus.

Paul had no greater desire for Timothy than that he continue to grow in Christ. Paul told him, "Continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed."

Timothy had learned what it was to have faith in Christ as Lord and Saviour. Therefore, he must continue to grow in the wisdom and knowledge of God.

### PART THREE:

Finding Life Through the Scripture.  
(2 Timothy 3:15-17).

Timothy grew up in a Godly home. His mother and grandmother were devoted to their Scripture, the Old Testament.

The Bible tells us how to become a Christian. Many people have accepted Christ by reading the Bible.

The scripture is inspired by God. God inspired or directed "holy men" to write it. Therefore, the Bible is the word of God.

This scripture is "profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness."

The scripture is our guide in life. We have no other way of knowing how and what we should do as Christians. Therefore when we accept Christ as our Saviour we are to use the Bible as our guide. Without the Bible we would be like a person with no legs. A person with no legs can do very little for himself, his family, or his fellowman. So it is with the Christian - he is useless to himself and his Lord if he does not study and use his Bible as a guide for his life.

The purpose of the Bible is to help us to grow as Christians.

### PART FOUR:

Plan to Study.

Why do Christians fail to study their Bibles? Many say, "I have no time" or "I have no proper place to study." Others say, "I do not understand when I read the Bible." These are nothing but excuses, Satan is pleased with us when we do not study. But in reality we know we can study; we can find time

if we want to do so. Most of us can do most anything we really want to do. Every Christian should really want to study his Bible so that he can know God's will for his life daily.

There was a famous jewel cutter who lived in America. His job was cutting precious stones making them into beautiful precious jewels.

One night John went to the office of the Jewel-cutter. John, who was a common labourer, took from his pocket a rough red stone and handed it to the jewel cutter saying, "I want you to cut and polish this stone." With much surprise the cutter asked, "Where did you get it?" John answered, "My father picked it up in Hungary fifty years ago. He thought it was a pretty pebble. When I landed in this country, I found it in my suitcase. It has been lying around the house all these years. The children played with it. My last baby cut his teeth on it."

"One night I dreamed it was a diamond worth a lot of money, but it is not a diamond. It is red." said John. The stone cutter said, "No it is not a diamond. It is a ruby." John asked, "What is it worth?" The cutter answered, "I would say it is worth from K100,000-250,000." John was so shocked he leaned against the door.

The big, rough stone was cut to a flawless ruby of great value. It is believed to be the largest ruby in America and perhaps the largest in the world.

LEADER:

How sad it is that in many homes the Book that is worth more than many jewels is neglected and considered of little value.

Let us covet together today and study our Bibles and pray daily. Did you know that if you read three chapters a day and five on Sunday you could read the Bible through in one year. Let us each make this our goal for this year.

## LESSON 5

### CHRISTIANS GROW THROUGH FELLOWSHIP

Our Time With God:

Women's hymn and verse:

Memory verse:

*"Let us then pursue  
what makes for peace  
and for mutual up-  
building."*

*Romans 14:19.*

Scripture reading: Romans 14:13-21.

Prayer:

LEADER:

One day a government official asked one of our Christians, "Why do you go to church in order to sing and pray together when you could do so in your own homes?" They were standing by a charcoal fire. A woman answered, "Dear master, separate these coals and they will at once die out, but what a pleasant fire they make when they all burn together!"

Today we are continuing our studies on Christian growth. There is no better, quicker way for Christians to grow than through a vital fellowship with other Christians. There was a serious problem among the Christians in Rome. This problem was threatening the fellowship of the Church.

PART ONE:

Fellowship Threatened.  
(Romans 14:19-21).

Some of the members of the church were weak and others were strong. The strong Christians were upset with the weaker Christians because they felt they were eating meat which has been offered to the idols.

Eating meat offered to idols had become a problem all over the Roman Empire. A pagan might slay an animal and offer the blood or part of the animal as a sacrifice to his god. Then he would sell what was left of the meat in the public market. The one who bought it had no way of knowing whether or not his meat was a part of an animal which had been offered as a sacrifice. The question was whether or not it was wrong to eat this meat. Some of the Christians said that it was wrong. Others saw no wrong in it.

Paul used this problem to show the Christians their responsibility toward one another when problems did come to them.

Churches are made up of many individuals. Each one has his own idea about how things should be done. Paul wanted to show these Roman Christians how their church could be strong in spite of the differences among the people. Paul wanted the Christians who saw no harm in eating the meat to understand the feelings of the other Christians. Paul asked them, "why do you pass judgement on your brothers? For we shall all stand before the judgement seat of God."

PART TWO:

The Responsibility we Have for our  
Fellow Church Members.  
(Romans 14:13-18).

Apparently deep conflict had grown between those who taught there was no sin in eating such meat and those who felt it was sin. Each side was judging the other and the fellowship of the church was being destroyed.

Christians today still have different opinions as to what is right and wrong for a Christian to do. Paul says, "I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself; but it is unclean to anyone who thinks it unclean."

Paul tells us we should not decide whether something is right or wrong simply because it is harmless to ourselves. But we should decide on the basis of whether it is right or wrong for others. Christians are to love one another and what we do to one another must be based on love. There are always people who watch everything we do. If we do something they are not sure is right or wrong, then they do it, we may cause them to do something very harmful to themselves. Paul tells us not to do anything that would cause the destruction of one for whom Christ died.

Paul tells us, if we do anything to cause our brothers to stumble in their Christian life, we are wrong. If I go to the tavern and my Christian brother (or sister) sees me, then goes in himself and comes out a drunkard, it is my fault. I have told him by my actions it is all right for him to go to the beer hall. You say that really wouldn't happen. You are wrong.

There is a man in one of our churches who was a deacon in his village. He has come to town and has a very good position on the mine. He comes to church almost every Sunday, but often during the week he can be found in a tavern or Mine Club.

One day one of our young Christians saw him in the beer hall, he thought, "Mr. So-and-So goes to the beer hall; therefore, it must be all right if I go." Not many months passed until that young man had become an alcoholic. He would do anything, even steal, for just enough money to buy more beer to drink. Who had led this young man astray?

PART THREE:

Love One Another.

Love and understanding don't just happen in our churches. We must work in order to have

them in our church. Every leader and church member has a duty to keep peace in the church. Immediately when we see a problem come up in the church we should meet, pray about it and ask God to help us overcome the problem.

Fellowship has great value and importance in the church. People of all races and tribes, people of all walks of life whether rich or poor, can have fellowship if they are of one heart. The love of God breaks down all barriers among people. Older people whose friends have passed on find fellowship in the church. Young men and women who face many temptations every day can find strength and inspiration from the church. Many new Christians would be lost without the fellowship of the church. A church which has this love, understanding and fellowship will be a soul-winning church. Where people outside Christ see and hear of a church filled with the love of Christ, they want to be a part of it. A church filled with love can be the greatest instrument for winning the lost to Christ.

#### PART FOUR:

##### Fellowship Together With Christ.

Christ promised us that, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them." Christ makes himself known to us in fellowship as we think, talk, and discuss together about the things of God.

When there is true fellowship in the church, Christians continue to grow. Paul tells us that we are all one in Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. (Galatians 3:28). To Christ we are all alike. The main thing is that the individual is a child of God through faith in Christ. When this happens than we have true fellowship.

Paul might have said that whether a man is black, white, red, yellow or brown, whether a man is rich or poor, whether he is an African or American, whether he is young or old - these things do not matter in Christian fellowship.

LEADER:

Let us pray today that our church will continue to grow and be strong. Pray that when ever troubles come into your church the love of Christ will be so strong that these problems can be overcome.

## LESSON 6

### CHRISTIANS GROW THROUGH WORSHIP

Our Time With God:

Women's hymn and verse:

Memory verse:

*"God is a spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."  
John 4:24.*

Scripture reading:

Mark 1:35.  
Acts 2:46,47.  
Hebrews 10:19-25.

Prayer:

LEADER:

During World War I an Indian Prince asked an American, "Do you know why God is punishing the Christians by letting them fight and destroy each other as they are?" The Prince continued, "If I paid as little attention to my religion as most Christians pay to theirs I would expect God to punish me." The prince told the American that even though only 1 out of every 100 of his officials were British, he kept his offices closed on Sunday. He had also built two Christian churches so that these Christian officials could have both time and place to worship. He said, "But they only have meetings once every three months." The American asked, "Where do they go on Sunday?" The Prince said, "They go hunting, boating, playing tennis, racing and play cards. If you ask me why God is punishing the Christian nations, I think it is because they do not worship their God."

Can people who are not Christians in our nation ask the same question about us? "Why do Zambians not worship their God?"

Today we want to see what true worship can mean and make it an important part of our lives.

PART ONE:

Jesus Worshipped Privately.

(Mark 1:35).

Jesus went out early in the morning, before daylight. Jesus often had his private devotions early in the morning. Many Christians today find that this is the best time for talking with God. Early in the morning minds are clear. We need the spiritual strength to begin our day.

We are told that Jesus went to a lonely place to pray. Perhaps we can whisper a prayer in a crowd. But it is far better to be in a quiet place to pray where there are no distractions or interruptions. So Jesus found a quiet or a "lonely" place and there he talked with God.

Prayer is the most important part of worship. We do not know how long Jesus prayed. We do not know if he knelt. We do not know if he prayed aloud. These things are unimportant. The important thing is that he talked with God. Jesus must have waited silently letting God speak to him in the time of private worship. The Bible tells us of several times when Jesus withdrew for prayer. From these times of prayer he must have received wisdom and strength for his work.

PART TWO:

A Church Which Worships.

(Acts 2:46-47).

These new Christians were Jews, and at this early date they continued to worship in the Temple. Later we find accounts of church services being held outside the Jewish synago-

gues. This was public worship as a group. It seems they went to the Temple each day. Later, they conducted their formal worship services on Sunday, the first day of the week, because it was in memory of the resurrection of Jesus. Long before church buildings were built, churches met for worship together.

The joy, happiness, and peace seen in these early Christians must have made a great impression on the people outside the church. The holy Spirit was with these Christians and we are told that the Lord added many to their number day by day those who were being saved. When the Lord adds people to our churches there is no need to worry about them. Only a praying, worshipping church can win the lost to Christ.

#### PART THREE:

We Reach God Through Christ.  
(Hebrews 10:19-25).

The book of Hebrews was written to the Jewish Christians who were being persuaded to give up Christianity and return to Judaism. The writer of Hebrews tells these people about the complete superiority of Christianity over Judaism. He tells how Jesus is better and greater than the prophets, the angels, Moses, and Aaron. Jesus was the perfect sacrifice.

He says that everything has been done to make it possible for man to have perfect access to God.

Man is not worthy to come into the presence of God, but if his life has been made clean by Jesus Christ, he can go before his Lord. Therefore we can only worship God through the cleansing power of Jesus Christ.

We should never doubt our faith in Christ. We should take our stand for Christ before the whole world. The faith that wins others must be certain, positive and confident. In a Christian community each person should realize his responsibility toward others. We are to be an example of love and good works.

The writer of Hebrews is reminding these Christians not to neglect meeting and worshipping together. When Christians fail to attend worship services, they will find themselves in great difficulty with the Lord. The lost people think that Christianity has no value to believers who fail to go to church. The church as a whole suffers. Its witness is weakened. But the greatest loss is to the Christian himself. Every Christian needs the encouragement, support, and inspiration which comes only from public worship with his fellow Christians.

#### PART FOUR:

##### Family Worship

A third type of worship is family worship. Every Christian family should have a time of worship together. They should read their Bibles, pray and perhaps sing praises to the Lord. We are told, "A family which prays together, stays together." How very true this is. If our young married couples would begin family worship from the beginning of their marriages there would be no divorces and broken homes.

We must remember that the Bible is necessary for these forms of worship - private, family and public worship. The heart of worship is prayer.

The Bible, prayer and a willing heart are the three necessities of worship.

LEADER:

Worship is a vital part of our Christian life. Without it we would be useless Christians. Let us be more faithful in our worship. Start Family Worship in your home today and see what a blessing it can bring to your life.

## LESSON 7

### CHRISTIAN GROWTH THROUGH SERVICE

Our Time With God:

Women's hymn and verse:

Memory verse:

*"The Son of man also  
came not to be served  
but to serve, and to  
give his life a ran-  
some for many."  
Mark 10:45.*

Scripture reading: Romans 12:1-13.

Prayer:

LEADER:

For the past few weeks we have been studying about growing as Christians. We have learned about growing through conflicts, in fellowship, in worship, all of these are important if one is to serve his Lord.

Today we are going to study the 12th chapter of Romans which tells us how we should serve as Christians. It will help us to see what it means to really serve our Lord and how this service will help us grow as Christians.

PART ONE:

Reasonable Service.  
(Romans 12:1-3).

Paul is telling us in these verses that because of God's great mercy and grace which provided for us salvation, we have an obligation to him. Because of all that God has done for us we must show our gratitude by serving him.

Paul says, "Present your bodies." We are to give our bodies as a complete gift, or

sacrifice, to God. We no longer are required to give a dead sacrifice on the altar as was required in the Old Testament. Our offering is a living body as a sacrifice. Man's body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. All that a man can do for God must be done with the body. Our work in the home, on the mine, at the office - is to be given to God. Every day life is a living sacrifice.

If we are to give everything we do unto God - all our work, play and worship, then we may have to change some of our ways of living. If our work, study and play include some things that are not acceptable to God then we must stop doing them. Can you offer everything you say and do every day to God? If not you may have to change some of your ways.

Paul knew that many people think more highly of themselves than they should. Some people think they are better than anyone else and they think everything they do is better than what anyone else can do. Paul warned us against such pride. People like this should examine their lives, because when they have such pride they are not acceptable before God. Each of us should measure his life with that of Jesus Christ. When we do so we see we are nothing. Jesus is the only true and perfect one.

#### PART TWO:

Christians Serving One Another.  
(Romans 12:9-13).

Paul begins with love. Love is the most important part of our human nature. Love creates the church and keeps it going. Love must be in the hearts of the children of God.

Paul also tells us we must hate evil. We must hate evil and the consequences of doing evil. But we are to hang on to the things that are good.

We are to have brotherly love. In the church each member has the responsibility of loving his fellow Christian. The church is really the family of God; therefore, as brothers and sisters in Christ we are expected to love one another. We should also be loyal to one another as brothers and sisters in Christ.

We should never forget that, as Christians, our concern is to serve - not to be served. It is easy to think of what our church family should do for us, but do we ever consider what we should do for them? There are some people who feel their only responsibility as a Christian is to attend Sunday morning worship services. These people have very little real joy in their church life. Those who find many hours a week for doing good to the others in the church family are the happy Christians. We serve the Lord only as we serve our fellowman. The church has a mission to the world, the world is needy and only Christians can meet that need.

The last thing Paul tells us in these verses is: pray constantly, give generously, and to practice hospitality.

### PART THREE:

The Christian Living With Outsiders.  
(Romans 12:14-21).

These verses tell us how we are to behave toward other people. Paul knew that we will always have those who are against us. Paul tells us to live peaceable. We are not to hurt other people - we must not hurt them mentally or physically. Even if someone hurts us we must not hurt them in return. This is not always easy, but we must do it. The only way we can do it is to ask the Lord to help us.

It is natural for us to "hit back" when someone hits us. It is natural for us to hate others when they hate us, but as Christians we must do what is right and acceptable before God. As Christians we are to love our enemies.

PART FOUR:

No Growth Without Service.

Jesus told a parable about the talents. One man received one talent. He was afraid of losing that talent so he took it and buried it. Then the talent was good to no one. Two other men received talents and they invested them so that they would make more talents for the master.

The first man had the same old talent when the master returned.

Life and talents (ability to do things) were not given to us so that we could hide them or use them only for ourselves; but they were given to us for a purpose. And the purpose was to serve the Lord with the talents he has given us. When we fail to use these talents we may as well bury them because they are of no use to us or the Lord.

Our purpose in life is to serve. When we fail to serve, our lives are empty.

How grateful we should be that God did not choose just certain people who should serve him. Each of us has the opportunity to serve him. What a blessing!

LEADER:

Christians do grow through service to the Lord. When we fail to serve we fail to grow just as a baby fails to grow properly if he is not permitted to move and walk about.

Pray that the Lord will help each of us to be better servants for him.

## LESSON 8

### OUR SINFUL NATURE

Our Time With God:

Women's hymn and verse:

Memory verse:

*"If we live in the  
Spirit, let us also  
walk in the Spirit."  
Galatians 5:25.*

Scripture reading: Galatians 5:13-26.

Prayer:

LEADER:

Today Zambia and many other parts of the world are in a terrible condition - morally. There is more drunkenness than ever before; more marriages fail than ever before. Theft is becoming a common thing.

Today we want to think about our human weakness and learn how the power of God can help us overcome these weaknesses.

PART ONE:

The Problem of Christian Freedom.  
(Galatians 5:13-15).

Paul is telling us that we are all under the law - every man, woman, boy and girl - until we have accepted Christ as our personal Saviour. When we have accepted Christ as our Saviour, we are ruled by the grace and love of Jesus Christ. This means we are then free from the law.

What does this freedom mean? Does this mean we are free to sin and do as we please? When a person is free of the Law he follows his fleshly desires or he is compelled or led by some higher power. The Christian is to

love his brethren and let his life be directed by a love and compassion for his fellowman. This love is to replace sinful desires. Under the Law a man must do the right thing, and a new man in Christ wants to do the right thing. If a person is really a Christian, love rules his life - he delights in loving and serving his fellowman.

#### PART TWO:

#### The Desires of the Flesh. (Galatians 5:16-21).

In these verses Paul tells us what happens when we yield to the desires of the flesh. Paul names some of the sins of the flesh:

1. *Adultery* - had been accepted by the pagan world. Then Christianity came and gave sex a new meaning. Christianity teaches that the sex act is a holy and honourable union to be practiced only by a man and his wife.
2. *Impurity* - not just impurity in sex, but in all of life. Impurity here means anything that makes a man too dirty to walk with God. It means the soiling of life by any unworthy thought or act. It is any uncleanness.
3. *Lasciviousness* - the sin of any man who lives as he pleases, with no restraints whatever, he does not care what God or man may think of him.
4. *Idolatry* - the worship of man-made idols, of anything man has made in preference to what God has made.
5. *Witchcraft* - this was a part of the pagan's life, but was not to be a part of the Christian's life.
6. *Enmity* - hostility to one's fellowman. The Christian loves all men.
7. *Strife* - causing quarrels and trouble - always wanting an argument.

8. *Seditions* - people who left one church in anger to start another.
9. *Emulation* - the burning desire to have more than any other man.
10. *Wrath* - uncontrolled temper that destroys rather than creates.
11. *Heresies* - teaching things against the scripture and claiming they are true.
12. *Envy* - the worst of sins, a quality of the bitter mind, hatred of others who have more than you have.
13. *Murder* - killing anyone.
14. *Drunkenness* - carousing; drinking until the mind and body is completely destroyed.

These are the passions of the flesh, the results of low living. The result of these sins is complete spiritual death.

### PART THREE:

The Fruit of the Spirit.  
(Galatians 5:22-26).

1. The fruit of the Spirit is *love*. Paul means the love that seeks the highest things in life, love that helps the neighbour, love that will die for others, love that is service.
2. *Joy* - not just having fun and good time, but joy in living in the fellowship of God.
3. *Peace* - not freedom from trouble, but having a definite faith even when troubles come; the peace which is beyond human understanding because it is of God. It is a peace that passes all understanding.
4. *Long-suffering* - the patience to see things through, being ready to die, even as Christ died, if we must.

5. *Gentleness* - the Christian is, first, always a gentleman. He is never violent or brutal. He is guided by love in all the dealings.

6. *Goodness* - doing good regardless of what others do.

7. *Faith* - being loyal and dedicated to the task.

8. *Meekness* - having control of self; being willing to give yourself to God's will.

9. *Temperance* - self-control, being moderate, having common sense.

All these should be the qualities of a Christian. A true Christian has "crucified" or done away with the desires of the flesh. Paul says if you do this then the church "fellowship" will not be destroyed.

#### PART FOUR:

Compare a Life of Sin with  
a Life of Life.

How often do we hear it said, "God gave us the sex desire; therefore, we can use it as we wish;" or "God gave us the desire to sin therefore we are not expected to control these desires." "God made beer and wine; therefore, we are free to drink as we wish." These are the lame excuses men give for living a life of sin. These are also people who live everyday for itself and never think of the consequences which will come at the end of that life lived in sin.

When we live such a life of sin without any responsibility to our God or fellowman we see lives ruined, homes broken, nations destroyed, and civilization itself is threatened. The first man on earth also yielded to his desires. He ate the forbidden fruit then gave the excuse, "The woman you gave to me; she

gave me the fruit of the tree, and I ate it." He was saying to God this is your doing; you gave me the woman; the woman caused me to sin. Excuses! Excuses! Today we are still giving God these feeble excuses for our sin. We sin-commit adultery, drink until we are drunkards and cannot hold a job. Our homes are destroyed as well as, the lives of our loved ones. Then we cry, "Why has God done this to me?" God has not done it. A life lived in sin causes destruction; not only to ourselves but to all those about us, our children, our marriage partner, our homes, are destroyed because we are weak.

Now let us look at the life of a dedicated Christian. It is true, more than likely he will never be the richest man in town, but he will be one of the happiest. A good Christian husband works hard to make a living for his wife and children. He is always filled with love and concern for his wife and children. He is always filled with love and concern for his family. He finds time to pray and study the word of God with his family. He goes to all services of the church with his family. He has concern for fellow Christians when they need his help. He does not cause trouble in his church, but helps to serve his Lord in every possible way. Look at his life. It is a busy, but very happy one. A life which is worth living.

LEADER:

A Christian wife has a busy life - cooking, cleaning, always having everything clean and ready for her husband when he returns from a hard days work. The wife has the responsibility of the home and children. What a blessed responsibility. She has the opportunity to lead her children every day in the way of Christ.

Cooking, cleaning, and caring for our children may sometimes seem rather dull, but we must remember there is no greater way to

serve our Lord and those we love the most. Once I heard Evelyn Mukumbo speaking with a friend. The friend was talking about all her classmates who had gone on to school and training for special careers. As Evelyn sat with her second child on her lap she said, "But look we have babies and husbands to love for our very own." These are God's great gifts to us, what greater thing can we ask from life? This is life full of love, joy and hope.

## LESSON 9

### GROWING IN FAITH

Our Time With God:

Women's hymn and verse:

Memory verse:

"Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."  
Hebrews 11:1.

Scripture reading:

Hebrews 11:1-6.  
Colossians 1:9-14; 21-23.

Prayer:

LEADER:

Today we are going to continue our study of Christian Growth. How does faith help us grow as Christians? What is faith? Christian faith is trust in the person of Jesus Christ, the truth of his teaching and salvation which he accomplished through his death on the cross.

PART ONE:

Faith is Essential.  
(Hebrews 11:1-6).

If we were to describe faith we might do it in this way: Perhaps you have been away from home and parents for many years. You decide to go home and see your family. As you turn down the road which leads you home, you see different things you saw many times as a child. These remind you that you are very near your home. You know that in a short while you will be home with your family again. Then you look and there are your father and mother coming to greet you. This was as you dreamed it would be. The joy and thrill of being home again! So it is with the Christian; he has the assurance that when he comes to the end of life the Father in heaven will be there to receive and welcome him.

If we are to have the right relationship with other people we must have faith. To be happy, a wife must have the assurance of her husband's faith in her. The husband must have the assurance of his wife's faith in him. A son needs to know that his father believes in him. Also, without faith we cannot please God. God would not be pleased with one who calls him Father, and yet, does not have faith in him. God wants the faith, the trust, and the love of his children.

We must worship God, but before we can worship him we must have faith in him. We must believe that God is the creator of all things and that God is love.

#### PART TWO:

Faith Grows Through Knowledge.  
(Colossians 1:9-14).

A leader of the Colossian Church visited Paul in prison at Rome. He told Paul of the problems in the church. There was a group of people who were teaching falsely in the church.

Paul did not argue with them or their ideas, but he told the people to study and seek the will of God for themselves. Then they would know the truth. Paul told them that God is truth and that if one would find full knowledge it must come from God.

When we grow in faith and knowledge then we can endure anything.

#### PART THREE:

The Results of Faith.  
(Colossians 1:21-23).

When there is true faith in Christ, then comes salvation. Remember what Paul told the jailer - "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved." This is the result of faith and trust in Christ.

We must never doubt the cleansing power of Jesus Christ. We must state our beliefs and be willing to stand for them regardless of the consequences.

Salvation is a gift from God. We have done nothing to earn it. The Bible tells us that by grace through faith are you saved and that not of yourself but it is the gift of God.

Faith in Christ as Lord and Saviour brings us salvation, but faith must not stop there. Faith is necessary every day of our lives and our faith should continue to grow from the day we are saved. This faith will help us drive Satan from our lives every day.

#### PART FOUR:

##### How does Faith Grow?

If a person refuses to accept Christ because his faith is so small, saying he will accept him when his faith becomes great, he will not accept Christ nor will his faith grow. It is when we launch out on the faith we have that we receive greater faith. Faith grows as we associate with men of faith. Faith is contagious - it spreads from one person to another.

A woman tells this story about her little girl, Mary. Mary was one of those children who is afraid to go to bed in the dark. She wanted the light on all night. One night as she snuggled down under the blankets her mother went over to turn out the light, and the child cried, "Don't turn out the light, mother."

Her mother asked her, "Would you be afraid if I stayed here with you, Mary?"

"No, I wouldn't," answered the child.

The mother replied, "Well I cannot stay, Mary. I can't always be with you, but the Lord is always with you. He will be with you, even when the light is out."

Mary had no answer to that, but she began to think. Her mother left the room with the light still on; and a few minutes later she heard the click of the switch as Mary turned the light off. And a few minutes later she heard the small, confident voice say, "Hello, Jesus!"

This is faith.

LEADER:

The purpose of life is to live in such a way and live such a life that God will be pleased with our living, as well as our life. Our lesson says that without faith it is impossible to please God. Therefore, the sin of unbelief and faithlessness is one of the greatest of all sins.

## LESSON 10

### GROWING IN SELF-DISCIPLINE

Our Time With God:

Women's hymn and verse:

Memory verse: *"For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant; later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it!"  
Hebrews 12:11.*

Scripture Reading: 1 Corinthians 9:24-27.  
1 Corinthians 10:12-13;  
23; 31-33.

Prayer:

LEADER:

It is not easy to be a Christian. Jesus often told his followers of the difficulties in following him. Paul and other New Testament writers point out the seriousness of being a follower of Christ. We must deny self and discipline ourselves. It can be no other way.

PART ONE:

Life Demands Self-Discipline.  
(1 Corinthians 9:24-27).

The Christians at Corinth had fallen into a spiritual laziness and careless living. They had lost the spirit and zeal which the Christian should have. Paul wanted them to wake-up and have the desire to work and to win the lost. Living a Christian life is a battle and we as Christians are the soldiers of Christ.

Paul knew training was as necessary for a Christian as it is for an athlete. When we were in high school the boys who played ball were given set rules. These rules were:

1. Drink no beer or alcoholic beverage.
2. No smoking.
3. No sweets.
4. They must have 3 good meals a day.
5. Be in at 9:00 every night.
6. Attend all ball practice sessions each day.
7. Always listen to the coach.

If any boy broke one of these rules he was thrown off the team. Why?

1. If a boy drank he would not be mentally alert. Also, drinking beer destroys the body.
2. If he ate sweets he would be short winded. He would not be able to play the game well and would not last through the whole game.
3. If he did not eat the proper food he would not be strong enough to play the game.
4. If he did not get in bed early at night he would be too tired to play the game.
5. If he did not attend all practice sessions he would not know how to play the game.

PART TWO:

Compare the Athlete with the  
Christian.

Why did Paul compare the athlete with the Christian? Let's look again at the seven rules for the athlete and relate them to the life of the Christian.

1. When a person drinks he not only destroys his own life but the lives of his family and loved ones. Most people start out with one drink, then later they want more until their whole lives are centered around that bucket of beer. Their lives are useless - the beer bucket has such a hold on them they cannot turn loose.

2. No smoking - not only is this a bad habit that is not becoming a Christian but in recent years it has become a proven fact that smoking causes death and sickness in many people. Also, it is a habit which is almost impossible to stop.

3. Sweets make the athlete short winded - he runs only a short distance and he cannot go any further. Sweets are not forbidden among Christians, but they do cause some of us to be fat and others to have rotten teeth. We are told that sugar has no nutritional value.

4. Three good meals a day - Most of us know that value of good food to the welfare of our bodies. It is not only food for our bodies but also for our minds. Science tells us that a child who grows up without proper food will not have as good a mind as he would have had if he had proper food. If we are strong mentally and physically we can better serve our Lord.

5. Be in at 9:00 - This rule can apply to the Christian in two ways. First, for the adult; When a man leaves home everynight looking for a good time and other women - he destroys his home and family - not only his own life but also those who are nearest to him. Just as an athlete destroys his body when he neglects it and gets no rest, so does a man destroy his family when he neglects it. Destruction just for a few moments pleasure! But is it really pleasure when it breaks the laws of God, as well as our conscience.

6. Be at every training practice session - How can we as Christians really serve our Lord if we fail to attend the church where we can be trained. We do not know how to play the game of life if we do not attend church where we learn how to serve our Lord.

7. Listen to the coach - The athlete would be useless if he refused to listen to his coach and follow his rules. So are we useless to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ if we fail to follow him and live by his rules.

### PART THREE:

Discipline in Temptation.  
(1 Corinthians 10:12-13).

The Corinthian Christians were severely tempted, especially in sexual matters. The city was known for its immorality and it was easy for Christians there to follow the majority. Also they were tempted to idolatry. Some of the church members felt quite secure and had no fear of yielding to temptation. But Paul knew the danger of such over confidence, and he urged them to be careful, to be alert and on guard. All of us know of times when good people have been caught off guard and have brought shame to the cause of Christ.

When God permits temptation, it is not to make the Christian fall, but to test him. In his testing he may grow and develop into a strong Christian. When a Christian overcomes temptation he knows a new strength and confidence.

Often we feel out temptations are different and that no other person has had to experience them. However Paul declares that no temptation has come to you that is not common to other men or women. We must realize that others have come through the same temptations and have won the battle over Satan and self.

God knows when we are being tested and has provided a way of escape. That "way" is

through Jesus Christ our Lord. If we call upon him he will be with us every step of the way.

#### PART FOUR:

Ways of Self-Discipline.  
(1 Corinthians 10:23;24;31-33).

We are not to seek our own good but the good of others. This was the teaching Christ and Paul reminded the Christians of constantly. It is not easy to think of others first. We should think first of our wife or husband, our children, our neighbours and friends. How often do men and women forget their children and home; go out for a few moments pleasure which changes the whole course of their own lives, as well as the lives of the marriage partner and their children - all this because of a few moments of selfish pleasure.

Many Christians have never realized their obligation to glorify God in everyday life. This is our responsibility. It involves more than giving a testimony and singing praises to God. All life is sacred, and our humblest service in daily living should be dedicated to the glory of God.

#### LEADER:

Let us take time for special prayer. Ask each woman to pray that God will help each of us to overcome every temptation that comes our way. Ask for the strength and knowledge to live for our Lord every day.

## LESSON 11

### GROWING IN UNDERSTANDING AND PATIENCE

Our Time With God:

Women's hymn and verse:

Memory verse:                   *"And let us not be weary  
in well doing; for in  
due season we shall reap,  
if we faint not."  
Galatians 6:9.*

Scripture Reading:           Philippians 4:1-7.  
Colossians 3:12-15.

Prayer:

LEADER:

Today we are going to study about understanding and patience. These are two of the most difficult qualities for a Christian to possess, but they are two of the most important qualities of a Christian.

How often do we hear husbands say, "My wife just doesn't understand me." or the wife say, "My husband doesn't understand me." Young people also say the same thing about their parents. There may be many members in your church who yearn for someone to understand them. Our study today should help us realize the importance of being understanding and patient, and to see how we should grow in these Christian qualities.

PART ONE:

When Christians Disagree.  
(Philippians 4:1-3).

Paul had established the church at Philippi. The people loved Paul very much. Therefore they sent one of their members to express their love to Paul while he was in prison at

Rome. Paul replied by sending this letter to the Philippians.

Paul loved all his churches, but none was closer or dearer than this church at Philippi. Paul tells them "You are my joy" since every memory of them brought joy to his heart. He also calls them his "crown" showing his pride in them. He must have had a very wonderful fellowship with these people.

Even in the good church at Philippi, disagreements arose. Two women, Euodia and Synthyche, had had a quarrel. They were both friends of Paul and he was grieved because of the disagreement. Paul pleads with them to settle their differences "in the Lord". To our sorrow these things do happen among Christians, but Paul says, "It ought not to be so."

These women who were faithful workers had worked side by side with Paul. They had proved their value as Christians. To disagree with each other was a reflection upon them and the church.

#### PART TWO:

When the Peace of God Guides Us.  
(Philippians 4:4-7).

If we let God be the guide for our lives he will keep peace in our hearts. He will give us patience and understanding even when things go wrong.

We are to "rejoice in the Lord always." Paul was in prison but he used the word joy again and again. He rejoiced that God had given him new life in Christ Jesus. This gave him all the joy and reason for living. A Christian who truly rejoices in the Lord has no time for petty quarreling.

"Let your moderation be known." Moderation means-understanding, being fair and willing to see another man's position. Often Christians

are misunderstood and ridiculed, but we are to remain patient and kind. When we do this we are a witness to the grace and goodness of God. We are to display our understanding, not boastfully but humbly in the spirit of Christ.

#### PART THREE:

When the Peace of God Rules Our Lives.  
(Colossians 3:12-15).

Paul tells us to completely forsake our old lives of sin and take up a completely new life in Jesus. As a Christian you are living a new kind of life that is always learning more and more of what is right, and trying to be more and more like Christ who created the new life within you.

In this new life our nationality, race, education or social position are not important. Such things mean nothing. Whether a person has Christ is all that matters and he is equally available to all.

Since we have been chosen by God who has given us a new kind of Life, and because of his deep love and concern for us, we should practice tenderness and kindness to others. We should be gentle and ready to forgive. Remember, the Lord forgave us, so we must forgive others. Most of all we must let love guide our lives for then the whole church will stay together in perfect harmony.

We should let the peace of Christ rule our hearts and lives, for this is our responsibility and privilege as members of his body.

#### PART FOUR:

Christians - The Chosen Ones.

The chosen ones of God are those who have given their hearts and lives to Jesus Christ. Believers are "holy" and "Beloved" by God. They are not perfect, but they are holy in God's sight and to be holy should be our "goal"

in life. The chosen are loved by God; they are his children and are precious in his sight.

Patience and understanding should be practiced by all believers in Christ. Christians are to show forth sympathy and understanding.

The Christian will have in his heart the peace that passes all understanding. Christ came on earth that he might bring peace and understanding to all men.

We, as Christians, should show the love and peace of Christ in our hearts.

LEADER:

Let us pray that God will help us be more patient and understanding to our husbands, children, friends and all those we meet daily.

## LESSON 12

### GROWING IN CHRISTIAN LOVE

Our Time With God:

Women's hymn and verse:

Memory verse:

*"This is my commandment,  
that you love one another  
as I have loved  
you."*

*John 15:12.*

Scripture reading: 1 John 4:7-21.

Prayer:

LEADER:

There were those who were teaching that Jesus was only a man. When John heard this he wrote this letter which we call 1 John. John taught that Christ was God and man; that God was light and life; and, above all - God is Love. Christ came as the perfect revelation of that love. He was the only begotten Son of God and we are the children of God.

PART ONE:

The Apostle of Love.

John was one of the twelve disciples of Jesus. He was very close to Jesus and was also known as one of the three who were closer to Jesus.

John became known as the "apostle of Love." John did not naturally have a loving nature. In Mark 3:17 we read where Jesus called John and his brother, James, "Boanerges" which means "sons of thunder". They had such violent tempers that they wanted to call down fire from heaven to burn up a Samaritan village which was inhospitable to Jesus. But the love of Jesus Christ changed John.

All through this epistle John speaks of love. History tells the story of the last words of John. As he lay dying, his friends asked him if he has anything to say to them. He said, "Little children, love one another." He repeated these words several times. Then they asked him if that were all he had to say, he answered, "It is enough, for it is the Lord's command."

## PART TWO:

### Love One Another (1 John 4:7-12).

John tells us that Christians should love one another so that we may be one in Christ. He says that we are God's children and God is love; therefore, we should love one another. God is love; if any man has any love in his heart it comes from God.

John says that a man who says he loves God and hates his brother is a liar!

If we really know God then we know love.

God is love and he had to make his love known to men. He did this by sending his only Son into the world. This was the best thing God could do, but it cost him his only Son. Through Jesus Christ we can come to know God the Father.

In this love, not that we love God but that he loved us and sent us his Son to be the expiation for our sins, and because of his love for us he provided for us the only way of salvation.

Our love for God is developed and made perfect by our practice of love for one another.

### PART THREE:

#### God's Love in Us. (1 John 4:13-21).

God has given us his own spirit. Those who have experienced this presence can testify to this truth. The world may not understand, and certainly the unbeliever cannot see God, but we as Christians know that his presence is real.

Dedicated, working Christians prove without a doubt that God sent his Son into the world. They have experienced new life in Jesus. Changed lives are proof of the Christian faith. In every Christian community there are people whose lives have been so radically changed by their faith in Christ that they cause men to say that only Christ could make **this** change.

Has Christ made this change in your life?

People of Africa experience many fears. Fear of evil spirits, fear of thieves and robbers, fear of those who would intimidate or threaten their lives, fear of not being able to get a place in school, fear of not getting a job, fear of sickness, fear of death. Many of these fears have been experienced by most of us. There also may be those of us who fear the judgment after death. But the Christian who has strong faith in God who loves us has no cause for fear. Our God is love and where perfect love is, there can be no real fear.

### PART FOUR:

#### Growing in Christian Love.

Because of God's love for us we should grow in Christian love.

John says if we love our brother we are born of God. Love of one another is the sign and proof of our birth and knowledge of Jesus Christ.

There have been many questions asked of the convert before baptism in order to find out if the convert has been truly saved. But has anyone ever been asked the question, "Do you love your fellowman?" This was John's test. If a man could pass this test he knew he had really been changed and had new life in Jesus.

God commands that we love one another. He did not say, "Love only those who are of the same tribe and same colour as you are." He did not say, "Love only the educated, the rich, and those with social prestige." He did say, "Love one another, even as I have loved you." We should love all people, all races, all tribes - everyone. When all the Christians in the world, regardless of race or colour, can kneel before the same altar and worship their Lord together then our world can be won to Christ. Also our world will be able to live in peace. Most of the trouble in our world today is because of our lack of faith and trust in people of other races.

LEADER:

Are you willing to love your fellowman even as Christ loves you? Are you willing to show the love of Christ in your own life so that others will see Christ in you? Let us each bow our heads for a few moments of silent prayer asking God to help us do his will every day of our lives.

## DAILY BIBLE READINGS:

### 1st MONTH:

1. 2 Corinthians 5:14-17.
2. Matthew 4:19
3. Ezekiel 3:18
4. Luke 19:10
5. Matthew 28:20
6. Mark 8:34
7. John 15:5
8. I John 1:9
9. Romans 12:1-2
10. John 3:11
11. John 3:3,6-8
12. Romans 10:9-10
13. John 1:12
14. I John 3:14
15. Romans 8:14,16
16. Acts 22:14,15
17. Acts 4:13
18. Romans 1:16
19. I John 5:14-15
20. Isaiah 55:11
21. I Corinthians 13:4-8,13
22. Acts 5:32
23. I Peter 1:23
24. Isaiah 55:10
25. Luke 4:4
26. I Peter 2:2
27. Psalm 119:11
28. 2 Corinthians 4:3-4
29. Hebrews 4:12
30. Psalms 119:105
31. Luke 18:1

DAILY BIBLE READINGS:

2nd MONTH:

1. Matthew 18:19
2. John 3:34
3. Acts 4:12
4. Romans 12:1-2
5. Galatians 5:13
6. 2 Timothy 1:7-8
7. Psalm 19:14
8. Ecclesiastes 11:6
9. 2 Timothy 4:2
10. John 3:3
11. Proverbs 24:10-12
12. Romans 3:23
13. Galatians 5:20-21
14. James 4:17
15. I John 3:4
16. John 16:8
17. Romans 10:13
18. I John 1:8
19. Isaiah 64:6
20. John 3:36
21. John 3:18
22. Romans 6:23
23. Mark 10:17-31
24. I John 1:9
25. John 9:41
26. I Corinthians 6:20
27. 2 Corinthians 5:20
28. Acts 4:12
29. Luke 13:3
30. Psalm 51:17
31. Isaiah 53:6

## DAILY BIBLE READINGS:

### 3rd MONTH:

1. Acts 1:8
2. Romans 10:9-13
3. Matthew 25:1-13
4. Matthew 12:30
5. John 1:12
6. Matthew 10:32
7. Luke 12:8
8. Titus 3:5
9. Proverbs 28:13
10. Ephesians 2:8-9
11. Titus 3:5
12. 1 Timothy 1:9
13. Hebrew 7:18-19
14. Colossians 1:14
15. Galatians 6:7-8
16. John 10:9
17. John 16:6
18. Acts 4:11-12
19. Titus 1:16
20. I Timothy 2:5
21. I John 2:1
22. John 20:31
23. I Corinthians 8:5-6
24. Proverbs 11:30
25. I Timothy 1:15
26. Matthew 11:28-39
27. Romans 14:12
28. 1 John 2:17
29. Daniel 12:3
30. 2 Timothy 3:16
31. John 20:31

*Baptist Publishing House*

OF THE BAPTIST MISSION OF ZAMBIA  
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