

THE SHINING PATHWAY

STUDIES 1 - 10

STUDENT MANUAL

Stephen Nemeth Lectures

THE SHINING PATHWAY

Studies 1 - 10

Student Manual

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Stephen Nemeth Lectures

THE TWO WAYS IN CONTRAST

STUDY 1

Scripture Portion: Proverbs 4:18-19

Proverbs 4:18-19 -

Matthew Henry, the old commentator, says that God is so concerned that the divine truth should penetrate into the hearts of men that He has devised a great variety of methods whereby that truth may reach them.

In the Bible, God has given divine laws, histories, songs, prophecies and proverbs! It is to the book of **Proverbs** that we turn for the theme title of this series of studies.

These words of the wise Solomon make a vivid contrast between “the path of the just” and “the way of the wicked.”

From God’s standpoint, there are only two classes of people in the world - the “just” and the “wicked.”

The “just” are those who are right with God, and the “wicked” are those who are wrong before God: the saved and the lost; believers and unbelievers; children of God and children of wrath.

To which class do you belong?

THE “JUST” ARE IN THE MINORITY. THE “WICKED” ARE IN THE MAJORITY.

Our key verses speak of the “path” of the just and the “way” of the wicked.

Is there any difference between a little winding path and a broad highway along which masses of modern traffic speed?

All the difference in the world!

The Lord Jesus spoke of the “broad way” and the “narrow way” -

Matthew 7:13-14 -

He said there would be many on the broad way and few on the narrow way. So we see that the just are in the minority. This has always been so.

In Noah's day, after his 120 years of warning the wicked, only eight souls were saved.

1 Peter 3:20 -

In the case of wicked Sodom, only a small minority escaped God's judgment.

Genesis 19:23-25 -

This was so in the days of the psalmist and the prophets. Read the words of Jesus in -

Matthew 20:16 -

Luke 13:23-24 -

Christians are in the minority today. The tragedy is that the crowd on the broad way thinks that to be among the majority must be the right way. It is easy to be beguiled by numbers. It is dangerous to go with the crowd.

Proverbs 14:12 -

2. THE "JUST" ARE IN THE LIGHT. THE "WICKED" ARE IN DARKNESS.

"The path of the just is as the shining light" is the experience of every born again Christian, but how solemn is the condition of those who do not know the Lord! "The way of the wicked is as darkness."

2 Corinthians 4:4 -

Satan is keeping multitudes in spiritual darkness.

The first thing that happens when we pass from "the way of the wicked" to "the path of the just" is that the light of the gospel of Christ shines into our hearts.

1 Peter 2:9 -

Are you on the road of light or on the road of darkness that leads to blackness and darkness for ever?

3. THE "PATH OF THE JUST" GETS BRIGHTER. THE "WAY OF THE

WICKED” GETS DARKER.

The path of the just is as “the shining light that shineth *more and more.....*” In contrast, “the way of the wicked is as darkness: *they know not at what they stumble.*”

The non-Christian stumbles through life hoping for the best, but he has no real anchorage and no eternal hope.

Does God want us to stumble through life?

No! He wants us to know the experience of “shining more and more unto the perfect day.”

He waits to lead every stumbling soul. If they will put their hands into His, He will guide them, as He does every one of His children.

Psalm 37:23 -

This wonderful Guide waits to lead you through all the intricate pathways of life until at last you enter into His presence.

4. THE “JUST” HAVE A GLORIOUS PROSPECT. THE “WICKED” HAVE A TERRIBLE PROSPECT.

The just are traveling on to “the perfect day.”

John 14:2-3 -

One translation of our key verse reads: “The wicked shall be silent in darkness.” That surely speaks of judgment.

Matthew 8:12 -

Are you traveling on the road with a glorious prospect or on the one with a terrible prospect?

It is easy to read these words and yet put off the vital decision which the Holy Spirit is urging you to make.

For the sake of the Saviour Who loved you and gave Himself for your salvation, for the sake of your friends and loved ones who will be powerfully influenced by your attitude toward the Lord Jesus, and for your own sake, if you are not a Christian then *join the minority now* and experience the joy and peace of sins forgiven and the blessed hope of

heaven.

Open your heart to the Lord Jesus, receive Him as your personal Saviour and ask Him to take full possession of your life.

Do it now - and travel on to “the perfect day!”

Now read -

Psalm 1:1-6 -

which is a striking commentary on -

Proverbs 4:18-19 -

which emphasizes the same truths.

Particularly notice the closing verse of the psalm.

Which “way” are you traveling?

*Walk in the light, so shalt thou know
That fellowship of love
His Spirit only can bestow,
Who reigns in light above.*

*Walk in the light, and sin abhorred
Shall not defile again.
The blood of Jesus Christ the Lord
Shall cleanse from ev'ry stain.*

*Walk in the light - thy path shall be
Peaceful, serene and bright;
For God, by grace, shall dwell in thee,
And God Himself is Light.*

NOTES

THE LIFE MORE ABUNDANT

STUDY 2

Scripture Portion: John 10:10

John 10:10 -

In this study we will see that the Christian life, the life of the Lord Jesus which we receive when we become Christians, is an *abundant* life.

One of the great purposes our Lord had in coming into the world was to bring to us the gift of spiritual life. The quality, or the degree of life He came to make possible for us all, is described as “life more abundant!”

Is there any difference between life and abundant life?

In our gardens we can see plants which are just alive while others are abounding with life.

In the realm of human life we can see those who are weak in body, whereas others are robust and vigorous.

It is equally true in the realm of spiritual life that we may have life but not abundant life. Every Christian has life, but not every Christian enjoys the abundant life which Christ came (and now lives) to give.

The deficiency is not on His side, but on ours. His is the abundant life, but often we possess so little of it - of Him.

The lack is not in the giving but in the receiving!

1. NOTE THE FOLLOWING FACTS ABOUT THE ABUNDANT LIFE.

God’s plan and purpose are that the abundant life should be the **NORMAL** life of His children.

Many think that the life of spiritual abundance is the abnormal experience of Christians, but, it is not meant to be. Anything less than abundance is the abnormal. God’s desire and provision for every believer is fulness of life.

This abundant life is for **EVERY** believer.

We sometimes think that the abundant life is only meant for a few “special” children of God. Not so!

If you are a Christian, God's desire and plan for you is fulness of life.

c. This abundant life is to be enjoyed NOW.

When we die, we will enter into a fuller life altogether, but the abundant life of which we are thinking is to be enjoyed while we are on earth.

2. WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THIS ABUNDANT LIFE?

The abundant life is the life of the Lord Jesus Himself, imparted to us, lived in and through us by the Holy Spirit.

The abundant life is the same life of fulness and abundance that possessed His human body when He was upon the earth, imparted to us, received by us by faith, and reproduced in and through us.

What were the characteristics of Christ's abundant life lived on the earth?

His life was -

A life well-pleasing to the Father.

For thirty-three years, His life was wholly pleasing to His Father.

Compare -

Matthew 3:17 -

John 8:29 -

Of ourselves, we can never live a life that is pleasing to God, but the life of Jesus is entirely pleasing to Him.

When *His* life fills us, God is well-pleased with us.

b. A life of utter dependence upon the Father.

John 8:28 -

The abundant life is a life of constant dependence upon “Christ Who is our life.

Colossians 3:4 -

and Who lives in us -

Galatians 2:20 -

3. A life of complete submission to the will of the Father.

See what Jesus said in the word of prophecy in anticipation of His coming into the world-

Psalms 40:7 -

Then look up -

Luke 22:42 -

One of the chief characteristics of the abundant life comes in the words of F. R. Havergal’s consecration hymn:

*“Take my will, and make it Thine;
It shall be no longer mine.....”*

d. A life of moment-by-moment fellowship with the Father.

During His earthly life there was not a cloud of sin or self between our Lord and His Father, until He was “made sin” for us upon Calvary’s cross.

Matthew 27:46 -

2 Corinthians 5:21 -

The abundant life is a life of constant, intimate fellowship with God.

5. A life of constant victory over sin and the devil.

Our Lord was tempted in all points as we are, yet He never yielded to sin or to the devil.

He always overcame -

John 8:46 -

Hebrews 4:15 -

1 Peter 2:22 -

He offers to us also, a life that is victorious and triumphant over sin and Satan.

6. A life of abundant peace and joy.

When did He speak of “My peace?” -

John 14:27 -

John 16:33 -

“My joy?” -

John 15:11 -

John 17:13 -

It was when He was facing the cross of shame and suffering.

His peace and joy are the experience of all who enjoy His abundant life.

7. A life of sacrificial service.

He “went about doing good” -

Acts 10:38 -

He gave *Himself* -

Matthew 20:28 -

3. HOW MAY WE LIVE AND EXPERIENCE THIS ABUNDANT LIFE?

We enter into it as we *live in dependence upon Him*.

The abundant life is one of submission, fellowship, victory, joy, peace and sacrificial service.

The whole point is this:

It is *His* life. Only as we *receive Him fully into our life* and surrender ourselves completely to Him, is He able to live out His abundant life in and through us.

The measure in which I can know and experience His abundant life depends upon, and is in exact proportion to, the measure in which I am surrendered to Him.

Will you yield yourself fully to Him and let Him fill you with His life more abundant?

NOTES

DISCOVERING THE WILL OF GOD

STUDY 3

Scripture Portion: Ephesians 5:17

Ephesians 5:17 -

It is very necessary that we, as Christians, should discover and understand the will of the Lord, or that we should “not be *foolish*, but have *discernment* as to what is the will of the Lord” (literal translation).

Notice that the verse begins with the word “Wherefore” linking it to the previous verse where we are reminded that “the days are evil” -

Ephesians 5:16 -

“Because the days are evil,” says Paul, “it is most important to understand what is the will of the Lord.”

Many Christians are foolish and have no discernment. This disqualifies them from real usefulness in the service of God. For example -

(1) *They have little, or no, discernment as to the true nature of the Christian life.*

It is a new life -

2 Corinthians 5:17 -

It is imparted by a new birth -

John 3:3 -

John 3:5 -

John 3:7 -

It is experienced upon receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour -

John 1:11-13 -

- (2) *They have no discernment as to the provision that God has made in Christ for victorious Christian living and the secret of life more abundant .*

John 10:10 -

of fruitfulness in service -

John 15:5 -

of deliverance from bondage to sin and self -

Romans 6:11 -

Romans 7:24-25 -

Romans 8:2 -

or of a life of triumphant holiness -

2 Corinthians 2:14 -

- (3) *They have no discernment as to the true nature and purpose of the church - that it is not primarily an outward organization but an invisible, living organism consisting of every true believer.*

The church in the world is the medium through which God is accomplishing His saving purposes in this dispensation.

Matthew 28:19 -

Acts 2:47 -

- (4) *They have no discernment as to God's purpose in this dispensation*

that He is forming and completing the church -

Acts 15:14 -

that this world will not, therefore, be converted, that the kingdom of God will not be built on earth in this age, and that the world will go on getting *worse*.

(5) *They have no discernment as to God's future program for the world, the church and the Jew.*

All these wonderful revelations are made in the Word of God. If we would understand them, we must -

2 Timothy 2:15 -

with the prayer in our hearts -

Psalm 119:18 -

What is God's will, His wish and His desire for men and women?

IT IS GOD'S WILL THAT ALL MEN SHOULD BE SAVED.

He desires the salvation of everyone.

2 Peter 3:9 -

Compare -

Isaiah 45:22 - *Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.*

Isaiah 53:6 -

John 1:29 -

John 3:16 -

Revelation 22:17 -

In His great mercy God has provided salvation for everybody, everywhere, though, alas, not everybody, everywhere, will accept God's provision!

The Word of God never leads us to believe that all will be saved, but it does teach that all *may* be saved.

IT IS GOD'S WILL THAT THOSE WHOM HE SAVES SHOULD BE *SANCTIFIED*.

1 Thessalonians 4:1-4 -

1 Peter 4:1-5 -

God's will for His children is that they should be holy.

Ephesians 1:4 -

2 Timothy 1:9 -

1 Peter 1:15-16 -

2 Peter 3:11 -

If you are His child -

John 1:12-13 -

God's will is that *you* should be holy, that is,

whole -

John 5:6 -

clean -

1 John 1:7 -

1 John 1:9 -

and constantly being filled with the *Holy Spirit -*

Ephesians 5:18 -

What need there is today for holy people!

IT IS GOD'S WILL THAT THOSE WHOM HE SAVES AND SANCTIFIES SHOULD *SERVE* HIM.

We are saved to serve! What is Christian service?

Romans 12:1 -

The fundamental meaning of service for God is presenting ourselves wholly to Him, placing ourselves absolutely at His disposal for Him to work in and through us. The sphere and nature of our service may be varied, but the *meaning* of it is always -

Romans 12:1 -

4. IT IS GOD'S WILL THAT THOSE WHOM HE SAVES AND SANCTIFIES SHOULD ALSO *SUFFER* FOR HIM.

Many of God's children are not instructed in this truth.

1 Peter 3:17 -

So, we can suffer because it is the will of God for us to suffer!

1 Peter 4:19 -

So, we can suffer and be right in the will of God!

Philippians 1:29 -

Acts 9:16 -

and remember the three characteristics of His will -

Romans 12:2 -

5. IT IS GOD'S WILL THAT THOSE WHOM HE SAVES AND SANCTIFIES, WHO SERVE HIM AND SUFFER FOR HIM, SHOULD ALWAYS UNDERSTAND AND KNOW HIS WILL.

The question of knowing God's will can be a very real problem. But should this be so in the light of -

Psalm 25:9 -

Psalm 32:8 -

Psalm 73:24 -

Proverbs 3:5-6 -

Isaiah 58:11 -

John 16:13 -

James 1:6 -

How does He reveal His will to us?

There are three methods which He employs.

1. By His WORD in response to our study.

2 Timothy 2:15 -

The more we study God's Word, the more we become acquainted with the things that are pleasing to Him and which He desires for His children.

Acts 9:6 -

John 2:5 -

2. By His PROVIDENCES, IN RESPONSE TO OUR SURRENDER.

Romans 12:1-2 -

When we are seeking God's guidance on a certain matter, we must take into account all the circumstances and expect Him so to arrange these that we may understand His will.

Psalm 37:5 -

c. By His HOLY SPIRIT, in response to our earnest prayer.

Romans 8:26-27 -

We can be sure of God's will when the clear teaching of the Word, the providences and the voice of the Holy Spirit *harmonize*.

1 John 5:14-15 -

Let us pray for each other the prayer that Paul and Epaphras prayed for the Colossians

-

Colossians 1:9 -

Colossians 4:12 -

remembering -

1 John 2:17 -

Philippians 2:13 -

Acts 22:14 -

NOTES

NOTES

THE UPPER ROOM

STUDY 4

Scripture Portion: Acts 1:13-14

In the life of the Christian there must be the “shut door” (private prayer). In the life of any church there must be an “upper room” (public prayer).

Just as there is no substitute for private prayer in the life of the Christian, so nothing can take the place of public prayer in the life of the church.

The church was born in the upper room.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit, for which those early disciples were told to wait, was to mark the birth and beginning of the infant church.

For ten days this company of praying souls was gathered in the place of united prayer until the heavens were rent and -

Acts 2:4 -

It is in such upper rooms that the greatest business in the world is transacted by the church, under the presidency of the Holy Ghost, where humble, born again souls meet and prostrate themselves before Him in a willingness to do His will.

In many respects, this eve-of-Pentecost prayer meeting was a model one.

So, let us note some of its characteristics mentioned in -

Acts 1:14 -

(1) Notice the word “ALL”.

“These *all* continued with one accord in prayer.....” That is, the eleven apostles, the women, Mary, the mother of Jesus, and our Lord’s brothers, and others. There were about 120 present

Acts 1:15 -

The lesson is simple: *it is the privilege and responsibility of all to attend the prayer meeting.*

(2) *They “CONTINUED in prayer.....”*

Their praying was persevering and steadfast. There is no suggestion that they ate, slept or lived in the upper room, but the Holy Spirit records the fact that they all *continued*.

Read **Acts 12:5-17**.

(3) *They prayed “WITH ONE ACCORD”.*

They prayed with one mind and one heart. There was unanimity about the matters for which they prayed. There was heart-agreement between the pray-ers. They enjoyed the unity of the Spirit.

Ephesians 4:3 -

United prayer is vain if the pray-ers are not on good terms with one another.

Psalms 133:1-3 -

Compare with -

Matthew 5:23-24 -

(4) *They continued in “PRAYER”.*

The use of the word “prayer” reminds us that it includes praise, worship, thanksgiving, adoration, confession and intercession.

Frequently in our praying, the note of praise is not sufficiently to the forefront so let us always bring to Him that which glorifies Him, even our praise.

(5) *They united in prayer and “SUPPLICATION”.*

They made definite petitions, asking for God’s will to be accomplished, beseeching Him that He would -

Malachi 3:10 -

We have illustrations of this kind of *definite* prayer all through the book of **Acts**.

What is the result of such meetings of the church for united prayer?

THE FIRST RESULT IS GUIDANCE IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE CHURCH.

It has been suggested that Peter and the other disciples acted in the energy of the flesh in appointing Matthias to take the place of Judas (read **Acts 1:14-26**), but -

Acts 1:24 -

suggests otherwise.

Significantly, -

Acts 6:2 -

speaks of “the twelve.” Evidently the Holy Spirit recognized his presence with the eleven.

The lesson is obvious: only where there is united prayer on the part of the members can there be the accomplishing of God’s will in and through the church. Without such praying, wrong decisions will be made. Man’s wisdom will be exalted and God’s work will be hindered.

With much praying, the work of God will go forward and His will will be accomplished.

2. THE SECOND RESULT WILL BE THE PRESENCE AND POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

The result of this prayer meeting was Pentecost!

The result of every true prayer meeting should, and will, be Pentecost - the outpouring of the Spirit of God.

Compare -

Acts 4:23-31.

Notice that the same disciples who were present in the upper room on the Day of Pentecost were again filled with the Holy Ghost following a time of urgent intercession and prayer.

More prayer on the part of the whole fellowship of God's people means more of the convicting and converting power of the Holy Spirit in the personal and public preaching of the gospel; more power in the lives of God's people enabling them to show forth the beauty of the Lord Jesus in their daily walk and witness.

6. THE THIRD RESULT WILL BE THE PRESENCE AND POWER OF SATAN.

As soon as the Spirit of God began to work in the church, the adversary began also. In the book of **Acts**, see how Satan did his utmost to disturb the work of God.

A full and prosperous prayer meeting is the guarantee of the presence of two great personalities - the Holy Ghost and Satan.

Thank God, however, for the truth in -

1 John 4:4 -

The devil is a defeated foe. When a church knows how to "pray through", the Spirit of the Lord will put him to flight.

Isaiah 59:19 -

The devil leaves some churches alone. He does not attack the church that is little more than a religious club or that is propagating "another gospel" -

Galatians 1:6 -

or that is worldly and places no great value on the preaching of the Word, the ministry of prayer and the desperate need of lost men and women.

No, he attacks the church in which the Holy Spirit is at work!

The fact that Satan is on the warpath need not be a cause for discouragement, therefore. Where God's people know how to pray through, the powers of darkness will not only be held back, but Satan's devices will be used by God for the furtherance of His purposes.

7. THE FOURTH RESULT WILL BE THE MIGHTY SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL.

Within a few days of the conclusion of this prayer meeting, the whole of heaven's machinery was set in motion for the spreading of the gospel!

Acts 1:8 -

Prayer thrusts out workers -

Matthew 9:38 -

NOTES

NO EXCUSE FOR NOT WITNESSING!

STUDY 5

Scripture Portion: Acts 1:8

Acts 1:8 -

The first business of every Christian should be the winning of souls.

It is God's plan that every Christian should be concerned to make the Saviour known to as many people as possible, and as quickly as possible.

God alone can save souls.

But He will not save souls alone for He has ordained that this work will be done through human instruments.

This places a great responsibility on those of us who know the Saviour, for, in a real sense, the salvation of souls depends upon our obedience and faithfulness.

In this study we want to suggest seven ways of witnessing.

There are many ways of witnessing for the Lord Jesus - which is providential for we are all different in temperament and gifts, so some will be effective using one method, some using another. Some are able to witness by preaching, but most cannot do this.

Yet we are all given the opportunity and are left without excuse, for there will be at least one way in which we may effectively witness for our Lord and Master.

When He uttered the words recorded in -

Acts 1:8 -

our Lord was speaking prophetically.

Ten days later, the prophecy began to be fulfilled.

It is still the Lord's plan for world evangelization.

What are the marks of a true witness who delivers souls?

Proverbs 14:25 -

(1) He must know the risen Christ personally.

Acts 2:32 -

Acts 3:15 -

(2) He must witness to the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

Acts 1:8 -

(3) He must be no respecter of persons.

Acts 26:22 -

(4) He must be willing to suffer.

Revelation 20:4 -

(5) He must be spiritually equipped.

Acts 1:8 -

Acts 20:23 -

THE FIRST AND MOST IMPORTANT METHOD OF WITNESSING IS THAT OF
A CONSISTENT CHRISTIAN LIFE.

No witnessing will ever be successful that does not proceed from a Christ-like life.

No testimony is so powerful as that of a changed life.

The greatest proof to the world of the risen Christ is a Christian, one in whom He lives and through whom His life is flowing.

John 7:38-39 -

Every Christian can witness for the Lord in this way.

Luke 8:35 -

Luke 8:39 -

Then notice the following three illustrations of the power of a transformed life.

Joseph.

Genesis 39:2-3 -

b. Lazarus.

John 12:10-11 -

3. The man at the Beautiful Gate.

Acts 4:14 -

In an unostentatious way, we must all seek to witness for the Lord, Whose we are and Whom we serve -

Acts 27:23 -

by what we *are*, what we *do* and what we *do not do*!

EVERY CHRISTIAN SHOULD BE READY TO WITNESS FOR THE LORD BY
WORD OF MOUTH.

Yes, *every* Christian!

Psalm 107:21 -

If the Lord has saved us, we can tell others what He has done for us. Our excuses for not speaking are not only unreasonable but unworthy. In the early church, the Christians told all whom they met about their wonderful Lord.

Acts 4:20 -

We should all “preach” in the sense that Philip did in -

Acts 8:35 -

Acts 5:42 -

Have you consecrated your conversation to the Lord?

Psalm 50:23 -

To some may be given the additional privilege of more *public* witnessing of preaching to the crowd -

Acts 8:5 -

taking a Sunday School class, conducting services in hospitals, prisons, in the open air....

There is a great need for more preachers who can witness in this way. The Lord promises to supply their need.

Jeremiah 1:4-9 -

EVERY CHRISTIAN SHOULD WITNESS FOR THE LORD BY OPEN ASSOCIATION WITH THE PEOPLE OF GOD.

Where it is possible, Christians should join a church or assembly of the Lord's people. This is not only for their own spiritual welfare -

Hebrews 10:24-25 -

and for the help of other Christians -

Galatians 6:2 -

it is also a definite form of an open witness to the Lord Himself -

Acts 3:1 -

MANY CHRISTIANS WITNESS EFFECTIVELY FOR THEIR LORD BY DISTRIBUTING SCRIPTURE PORTIONS OR HELPFUL LITERATURE.

There are great promises to all who will serve God in this way.

2 Kings 10:10a -

Psalm 126:6 -

Ecclesiastes 11:1 -

Ecclesiastes 11:6 -

Isaiah 55:10-11 -

Galatians 6:9 -

D. L. Moody always distributed tracts when he was on a train journey.

Hudson Taylor was converted through reading a tract!

SOME CHRISTIANS USE LETTER WRITING AS A MEANS OF WITNESSING.

Many Christians have found great scope and blessing in this ministry by prayerfully writing to folk who are ill, in trouble, leaving the district, starting a new job.....and encouraging them to seek the Lord.

Isaiah 55:6 -

6. SOME CHRISTIANS HAVE ADOPTED UNUSUAL METHODS OF WITNESSING.

Where they have been led to adopt such methods, the Lord has owned and blessed their testimony.

7. THERE ARE A VARIETY OF SILENT METHODS OF EFFECTIVE WITNESS, MANY OF WHICH CHRISTIANS SHOULD ADOPT.

Our homes should bear testimony that we are the Lord's -

giving thanks at mealtimes testifies that we belong to Him,

kindness to a neighbor in trouble.

We can continue the list!

There is no excuse for not witnessing!

Acts 1:8 -

1 Samuel 3:18 -

“Now then DO IT!”

NOTES

THE DANGER OF SPIRITUAL RELAPSE

STUDY 6

Scripture Portion: Proverbs 14:14

Proverbs 14:14 -

Some Bible names cause one to shudder - for instance -

Judas Iscariot -

Matthew 10:4 -

Demas -

2 Timothy 4:10 -

Diotrephes -

3 John 9 -

Other names coupled together in the scriptures have a similar effect upon us. For example -

David and Bathsheba -

2 Samuel 11:3-4 -

Samson and Delilah -

Judges 16:20 -

Ananias and Sapphira -

Acts 5:1 -

Then there are names of places that cause us to search our hearts - such as -

Sodom -

Genesis 13:13 -

Sardis -

Revelation 3:1 -

Perhaps it is the presence and use of certain words in scripture that, more than anything else, cause us to think seriously - for example -

“castaway” -

1 Corinthians 9:27 -

“reprobate” -

2 Corinthians 13:5 -

or the word in our key verse -

“backslider” -

Proverbs 14:14 -

What, or who, is a backslider?

A backslider is a Christian who gets out of touch with the Lord, a careless, disobedient, unhappy, ineffective Christian who has suffered a relapse. He (or she) is one of the most miserable people on earth.

The Christian who is enjoying the fulness of blessing in Christ is entirely satisfied with the Lord Himself.

The non-Christian can be happy up to a point because he has never tasted (and, therefore, does not miss) the things of Christ.

But the backslider is isolated between two worlds. He is not able to enjoy the Lord and he cannot enjoy the world!

Is this a description of you?

Notice three vital truths which emerge from our key verse.

1. EVERY CHRISTIAN IS FACED WITH THE DANGER AND POSSIBILITY OF SPIRITUAL RELAPSE.

Backsliding is not necessary for, in the Lord Jesus Christ, every provision has been made for us to be -

Romans 8:37 -

all along the line, and to be able to live a life of deliverance to the praise and glory of God.

However, it is important to note that *there is no position of grace from which a fall is impossible.*

Read **1 Corinthians 10:1-13.**

Particularly notice -

1 Corinthians 10:6 -

1 Corinthians 10:11 -

1 Corinthians 10:13 -

If we depend upon our Lord Jesus Christ and rely upon the power of the Holy Spirit, we need not backslide and suffer the spiritual and moral relapses that are so common among the people of God.

But let us not forget that we are always faced with the danger of backsliding.

2. BACKSLIDING ALWAYS BEGINS IN THE HEART.

It is “the backslider in heart” who is filled with his own ways.

Backsliding begins *inwardly*, long before the outward evidences are seen (such as giving up church attendance, prayer and Bible reading, losing love for the Lord’s work and for soul winning).

Read about the relapse of -

John Mark -

Acts 13:13 -

Demas -

2 Timothy 4:10 -

But, note that the record only tells of the outward evidence of backsliding which had begun previously *in the heart*.

What is the state of our heart?

Sooner or later its state will be manifested in our life and the inward condition will come out.

When some trial, bereavement or trouble comes, then we may find we have no resources to draw upon. We will be “filled with (our) own ways.”

3. THE OUTWARD EVIDENCE, OR THE RESULT OF BACKSLIDING, IS ALWAYS THE SAME.

Our key verse says -

Proverbs 14:14 -

In New Testament language that means “walking in the flesh” instead of “walking in the Spirit.”

Galatians 5:16 -

What a paradox!

A Christian filled with himself - self-willed, self-assertive, self-centred, self-opinionated, filled with self-pity, self enthroned instead of Christ - a self- filled Christian!

Notice that, because the backslider is filled with himself instead of with Christ -

His state is insecure.

As to our *standing*, we are eternally “in Christ,” and, thank God, that can never be altered!

Ephesians 1:3 -

But, as to our *state*, what we actually are down here in the flesh, that can, and does, alter very much. Our state is what we are in ourselves.

The first result of backsliding is that the backslider is insecure. He is still a Christian, but he has no sense of security and assurance.

b. His profession is insincere.

When we backslide, we usually keep up a pose before our friends and the world.

Matthew 15:8 -

Oh, the insincerity of it - still going to church, holding office, preaching, a missionary, a pastor, an evangelist, making a great profession - but - a backslider!

4. His life is inconsistent.

God wants our profession and our walk to correspond. But every backslider is living an inconsistent life. It cannot be otherwise.

How can service be effective if self, instead of Christ, is on the throne?

If we are filled with ourselves, then our service is born of the energy of the flesh. That can bear no fruit nor bring any glory to God.

The service of a backsliding Christian is always ineffective.

Thank God, backsliders may return and be sure of a welcome!

Jeremiah 3:12 -

If we need to do so, then let us come back with contrition and confession in our hearts and upon our lips, as we rest upon and rejoice in the truth of -

1 John 1:9 -

NOTES

THE MYSTERY OF GOD'S CHASTENING

STUDY 7

Scripture Portion: Hebrews 12:5-13

Key verse -

Hebrews 12:6 -

Every Christian must sooner or later experience the Lord's chastening in his or her life. The classic New Testament passage which deals with this subject is **Hebrews 12:5-13**.

This, of course, concerns only Christians, members of God's family. It has no meaning at all to the unbeliever.

In the Scofield Bible these verses are headed, "The Father's Chastening." In them we find a repetition of the words "father," "son," "child."

God is speaking to His own blood bought children about a matter that intimately concerns them and about which they should be instructed.

What is the Lord's chastening?

It is God's loving discipline in the life of every one of His children!

Discipline includes instruction, correction and that form of punishment which will prevent or correct us from doing wrong things.

It will train us to do right things. It is not always in the form of punishment, nor does it follow that, because God is chastening us, we must necessarily have displeased Him.

In a good school, all the pupils are disciplined.

In God's school, all His pupils are lovingly disciplined.

Now, turn to **Hebrews, chapter 12**, and note -

CHASTENING IS EXPERIENCED BY *ALL* THE TRUE CHILDREN OF GOD.

ALL - therefore, if we belong to the Lord, this is something we must expect.

Hebrews 12:8 -

We must expect chastening for two reasons:

(1) because God is our Father and chastening is an evidence of His love -

Hebrews 12:7 -

(2) because we are His sons, and chastening is a mark of sonship -

Hebrews 12:8 -

If we never experience Love's discipline, then He is not our Father and we are not His children at all!

WE ARE NOT TO *DESPISE* HIS CHASTENING.

That is, we are not to regard it lightly and be insensible to the purpose of it.

Hebrews 12:5 -

We often do despise the chastening of the Lord.

We find ourselves entertaining wrong thoughts about Him.

We begin to question His love and His wisdom.

Let us beware of treating the chastening of the Lord *lightly* or of failing to learn the lesson He is trying to teach us by permitting the chastening.

3. WE ARE NOT TO *FAINT* UNDER IT.

Hebrews 12:5 -

This means “Don’t collapse!” This same thought is expressed in -

Hebrews 12:12 -

In the closing months of his life, Hudson Taylor, the great missionary to China, was so weak in body that he said,

“I am so weak, I can’t work, pray or read my Bible. I can only lie still in God’s arms like a little child and trust Him.”

But that is all He asks us to do at the best of times. Incidentally, the remedy for faintness is mentioned in -

Hebrews 12:3 -

4. GOD’S CHASTENING IS ALWAYS *PROFITABLE*.

Sometimes an earthly father will chasten his son arbitrarily in a fit of passion, but our heavenly Father never does this. His chastening is always for our profit.

Hebrews 12:10 -

We are apt to think that chastening - sickness, sorrow, bereavement, hardship - spells *loss*, but it always spells *gain*.

What is the gain that comes out of the Lord’s chastening?

Hebrews 12:10 -

That is the great purpose in all His chastening - *to make us holy*, like the Lord Jesus.

Romans 8:29 -

5. WE ARE NOT EXPECTED TO *ENJOY* CHASTENING.

It is always “grievous” -

Hebrews 12:11 -

It is not intended to be otherwise.

Notice the four words used in this portion of scripture to convey to us the different aspects of God’s chastening -

Rebuke -

Hebrews 12:5 -

Scourging (i.e., punishment) -

Hebrews 12:6 -

c. Chastisement -

Hebrews 12:8 -

5. Correction -

Hebrews 12:9 -

Do you like it when the Lord rebukes, scourges, chastises or corrects you? No! He does not expect you to! But -

6. THERE IS ALWAYS AND “AFTERWARDS” TO CHASTENING.

Hebrews 12:11 -

Chastening is fruit-producing.

What kind of branch does the Lord purge? Why does He purge it?

John 15:2 -

The fruit that chastening produces is *righteousness* and *peace*.

Hebrews 12:11 -

Righteousness means being right with God, right in our daily living, therefore, in the deepest sense, being *at peace*.

In other words, it brings us into conformity to God's will. Only when we are brought there, can we know real peace.

When we are being chastened, it is very comforting to hear the Lord say -

John 13:7 -

Never consider the "*now*" apart from the "*hereafter!*"

7. WE MUST BE *EXERCISED* BY ALL HIS DEALINGS WITH US.

This is the condition of blessing, of profit, of present and future reward.

Look at the last six words of -

Hebrews 12:11 -

There are four words in -

Hebrews 12:9 -

which reveal to us what our attitude should be when the Lord's hand is upon us in chastening -

"subjection unto the Father."

Now, read -

Matthew 11:26 - *Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight.*

PRESENTING OUR BODIES TO THE LORD

STUDY 8

Scripture Portion: Romans 12:1

In this study we centre our thoughts upon the theme of giving our all to the Lord Jesus. We often sing about it, but perhaps we do not sufficiently mean what we sing. It is a most solemn thing to take these words upon our lips -

*In full and glad surrender
I give myself to Thee.
Thine utterly and only
And evermore to be.*

Yet, this is exactly what the Lord asks of us.

As Christians we have two alternatives:

***(1) to hand our life to the One Who has redeemed us
by His blood -***

1 Peter 1:18-19 -

(2) to continue to run our own life.

However, the life that is entirely dedicated to the Lord is the only life that is truly glorifying to God, useful to others, satisfying to ourselves and disturbing to the devil.

Every Christian should be a constant worry to the enemy! The Lord, through His servant Paul, pleads with us to hand our lives over in entire dedication to Him.

8. THE REQUEST THAT IS MADE.

Romans 12:1-2 -

Study these words. Every word is vital. Notice the great appeal that is made to every Christian.

“I beseech you.....” not “I command you.....”

Moses would have said that, but we are -

Romans 6:14 -

This was one of Paul's favorite method of appeal.

Compare -

1 Corinthians 4:16 -

2 Corinthians 2:8 -

2 Corinthians 5:20 -

2 Corinthians 6:1 -

2 Corinthians 10:1 -

Galatians 4:12 -

Ephesians 4:1 -

Philemon 9-10 -

“you.....brethren.....”

The appeal to surrender, to give, to dedicate is only ever made to Christians. Before the sinner can give, he must receive.

Psalm 116:12-13 -

“What shall I give?I will take”

God appeals to “you,” to “brethren,” to present *all* to Him.

c. “that ye present.....”

It is a voluntary matter. There are no conscripts in Christ's army!

Of our own free will, empowered by the Holy Spirit, we are urged to dedicate ourselves to Him, but we are not forced to do so!

4. “your bodies.....”

There is nothing ambiguous here.

Have you ever made a present of your body to God?

This means to give *all* that we are and have and hope to be - *the whole man* - to Him.

Study very carefully -

Romans 6:13 -

e. “a living sacrifice.....”

The sacrifices offered on Jewish altars were dead. We are to offer a *living* sacrifice, our whole *life* to Him Who gave His life in *death* for us.

6. “holy.....”

The root meaning of this word is “devoted to the use of” or “set apart unto.”

When we present ourselves completely to Him, we become wholly devoted to His service, wholly set apart to Him and for Him.

f. “acceptable unto God.....”

How wonderful that we can bring an offering to the Lord that is entirely well pleasing and fully agreeable to Him!

Will you present your body to Him?

Why should you?

9. THE REASON THAT IS GIVEN.

There are three compelling motives for giving our all to the Lord -

Romans 12:1 -

7. Because we are “brethren.”

We have been brought into a new and wonderful relationship with our Father God through the Lord Jesus, Who is not ashamed to call us brethren.

Hebrews 2:11 -

8. Because of “the mercies of God.”

The word “therefore” takes us back to all that has gone before in **chapters 1-11** of this epistle.

Because of “the mercies of God”, we should feel constrained to present ourselves to Him.

Consider the following great mercies -

- (1) **Justification - Romans 3:21 - 5:21.**
- (2) **Identification - Romans chapter 6.**
- (3) **Unification - Romans 7:1-6.**
- (4) **Sanctification - Romans 7:7-25.**
- (5) **Emancipation - Romans 8:1-17.**
- (6) **Glorification - Romans 8:18-32.**
- (7) **Preservation - Romans 8:33-39.**

a. Because it is our “reasonable service.”

In view of all that He has done for us, and the fact that we already belong to Him -

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 -

it is only right, reasonable and logical that we hand over to Him what is already His. The Greek words here may also be translated “your spiritual worship.”

The greatest act of worship we can make is the dedication of our whole selves to the Lord.

What will follow such an *act* and *attitude* of dedication?

3. THE RESULT THAT IS PROMISED.

When we present our *all* to Him there will be a threefold result. This is clearly indicated in -

Romans 12:2 -

1. Separation from the world.

The world is all that shuts out Christ.

2 Corinthians 6:14-18 -

Galatians 1:4 -

If we present ourselves to the Lord, we will not want the world and its follies, pleasures and sins.

1 John 2:15-17 -

b. Transformation into His likeness.

The word “transformed” here is the same word as in -

Matthew 17:2 -

Luke 9:29 -

How can I be like Him? The answer is -

Romans 12:1 -

2 Corinthians 3:18 -

3. Rejoicing in the will of God.

To “prove” means to find out for yourself in actual experience.

If we will present ourselves utterly to Him, we will soon discover that His will for us is *good, acceptable* and *perfect*.

We will not simply be resigned to His will, but we will glory in it and will want nothing but His will.

THE SECRET OF RENEWED STRENGTH

STUDY 9

Scripture Portion: Isaiah 40:31

Isaiah 40:31 -

In order to realize the significance of our key verse, we need to read the context in which the words occur -

Isaiah 40:25-31 -

These verses touch the very core of Christian experience.

If we are honest before God, and with ourselves, we must admit that we fail very much in our Christian living and service.

(1) The Word of God convinces us of our failure.

We often “faint” and “have no might” (**verse 29**). We are “weary” and we “fall” (**verse 30**).

This is God’s description of the weakness that so often characterizes the lives of His children.

(2) Observation convinces us of failure.

Our eyes tell us that there is much weakness in the church today and amongst God’s people. Indeed, the prevailing condition would seem to be one of failure.

(3) Experience tells us that there is much failure.

Our own heart tells us this. We are so faint and weary, and so slow to learn the way of victory and power!

Proverbs 14:10 -

What is the cause of our failure?

There is a *primary* and a *secondary* cause.

4. THE *PRIMARY* CAUSE: IGNORANCE OF THE RESOURCES AT OUR DISPOSAL.

Yes, ignorance!

Hosea 4:6 -

Compare -

Matthew 22:29 -

Then, see what is said in -

Isaiah 40:28 -

What are the resources at our disposal?

Isaiah 40:28-29 -

The Lord is offering to give us power and strength. Against the sad background of our failure is the promise of the everlasting God, the Creator of the universe, to turn our failure into glorious triumph.

He places all His unlimited resources of strength and power at our disposal - *but - we must tap these resources!*

5. THE *SECONDARY* CAUSE: FAILURE TO TAP THESE RESOURCES.

Isaiah 40:29 -

In response to His giving we must receive.

How do this giving and receiving take place? How does God transfer His power to me?

Isaiah 40:31 -

What does it mean to “wait upon the Lord?” Does it mean to pray, worship, attend services and read the Bible?

Yes, but not primarily. It means to “keep silence before God.”

Isaiah 41:1 -

Compare -

Psalm 62:1 -

where the word “waiteth” literally means “be silent.”

Proverbs 8:34 -

Waiting upon God means to be cast upon Him in utter dependence, ready to hear His voice and to do His bidding, having our whole expectation from Him. It implies complete confidence and trust in the Lord and absolutely no confidence in self or in human help.

What is the result of such waiting upon the Lord?

There is a fourfold result, as emphasized by the four “shalls” in -

Isaiah 40:31 -

We shall have God’s strength in place of our weakness.

The word “renew” may be literally translated “change” or “exchange.”

Our greatest weakness is our own strength. If we will go to the Lord in our utter weakness, He will *exchange* it for His strength.

2 Corinthians 12:9 -

What kind of strength?

Physical strength?

Yes. He can, and does, renew our physical strength when we wait upon Him.

Romans 8:11 -

Mental strength?

Yes. He is the fountain of all wisdom and quickens our minds as we wait before Him.

Romans 12:2 -

Ephesians 4:23 -

2 Timothy 1:7 -

Moral strength?

Yes. How we need it!

Ephesians 6:10 -

2 Timothy 2:1 -

Spiritual strength?

Yes.

Luke 24:29 -

Acts 1:8 -

1 Corinthians 1:25 -

Isaiah 30:15 -

b. We shall enjoy life above the average.

We shall “mount up with wings as eagles,” far above earth’s sordid level to where

*“the things of earth grow strangely dim
In the light of His glory and grace.”*

The eagle is the only bird which flies so high that it is lost to sight. That is where you and I belong. We belong to heaven now.

Philippians 3:20

Ephesians 2:6 -

Colossians 3:1-2 -

Many Christians are earth-bound, hopping on the ground like a bird with a broken wing, instead of flying high like an eagle!

You and I have been made to fly - not hop!

3. We shall do supernatural things.

We shall “run, and not be weary.....” It is not natural to run and not to feel weary, but God promises supernatural power for the accomplishing of supernatural tasks.

We are a supernatural people because we are linked to a supernatural God!

John 7:38 -

John 14:12 -

Are the “rivers” flowing through us and the “greater works” being accomplished through us?

d. We shall live victoriously in the hardest place of all - in the daily routine of life.

We shall “walk, and not faint” - not “run and not faint.”

Sometimes it is easier to run than to walk.

The most testing place for each one of us is that place where we engage in “the trivial round, the common task.”

Genesis 5:22 -

Psalms 37:23 -

Dr. A. B. Simpson frequently used to get alone in the presence of the Lord and say, -

“I’m a failure! I have no strength, no life. But Thou art my life. Thou art my strength. Thou art my victory.....”

By faith he would breathe in the life of his risen Lord, for body, mind and spirit. Surely this is what it means to “wait upon the Lord!”

And the result?

Strength renewed!

NOTES

WHY WE ARE SURE HE IS COMING

STUDY 10

Scripture Portion: 2 Peter 3:3-4

All unfulfilled prophecy in the Word of God is bound up with the personal, bodily and visible return of Christ. In this study we will examine the testimony of the Word of God to the truth of His return.

The question in -

2 Peter 3:3-4 -

is very significant. It is asked by the scoffer, but we will ask it, and seek to answer it, so that we may realize the weight of testimony that scripture gives to the certainty of our Lord's second coming.

Our key verses speak of something we are to *know* and to be sure about, something that relates particularly to the *last days*, the closing days of the Dispensation of Grace immediately prior to the Lord's return.

Peter tells us that there will be scoffers in the last days. So anyone who scoffs at this truth is fulfilling prophecy.

He tells us what the scoffers say. They say -

2 Peter 3:4 -

There are seven answers to this question.

WHERE IS THE PROMISE OF HIS COMING - in the Old Testament?

The 39 books in the Old Testament can be divided into:

the five books of Moses, called the Pentateuch - **Genesis to Deuteronomy.**

twelve historical books - **Joshua to Esther.**

c. six books of poetry - **Job to Song of Solomon and Lamentations.**

4. the sixteen books of the prophets - **Isaiah to Malachi.**

Concerning all these books, we read -

2 Timothy 3:16 -

2 Peter 1:21 -

In each of these four groups, we find the promise of His coming.

For example -

GENESIS 3:15 -
.....thou shalt bruise his heel.

refers to the first advent and was fulfilled at Calvary, where our Lord Jesus was crucified for us.

GENESIS 3:15 -
.....it shall bruise thy head,.....

refers to the second advent and to our Lord's final overthrow of Satan -

2 Thessalonians 2:8 -

Revelation 20:1-3 -

GENESIS 5:24 -
*And Enoch walked with God: and he was not;
for God took him.*

Compare -

Hebrews 11:5 -

1 Thessalonians 4:17 -

GENESIS, chapters 22, 23 and 24.

Abraham (a type of God the Father.)

Eliezer, Abraham's servant (a type of the Holy Spirit.)

Isaac (a type of the Lord Jesus.)

Rebekah (a type of the church, the Bride.)

GENESIS 41:45 -
*And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnathpaaneah; and he gave him
to wife Asenath the daughter of Potipherah priest of On. And Joseph went
out over all the land of Egypt.*

Joseph (a type of Christ) during his rejection, took a Gentile bride.

Compare -

Genesis 42:8 -

Genesis 45:3-4 -

Acts 15:14 -

GENESIS 49:10 -

The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.

No comment needed!

1 SAMUEL 16:11 -

And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all thy children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him: for we will not sit down till he come hither.

A picture of “great David’s greater Son.”

2 KINGS 2:11 -

And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

Compare -

1 Thessalonians 4:17 -

JOB 19:25 -

For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:

Compare -

Zechariah 14:4 -

Acts 1:11 -

PSALM 22 -
was prophetic of His death.

PSALM 23 -
is true of the believer now.

PSALM 24 -
awaits fulfilment.

The prophecies of **Isaiah to Malachi** are full of the promise of His coming. They were not all fulfilled at His first advent. They await fulfilment when He comes again.

The Old Testament is full of the promise of His second coming!

WHERE IS THE PROMISE OF HIS COMING - in the four gospels?

In the gospels, our Lord frequently spoke of His second coming. For example:

MATTHEW 16:21 -

MATTHEW 16:27 -

MATTHEW 24:3 -

MATTHEW 24:27 -

MATTHEW 24:35-37 -

MATTHEW 24:44 -

Read MATTHEW 25:1-10.

MARK 13:24-27 -

Read **LUKE 19:11-27.**

LUKE 21:25-28 -

JOHN 14:1-3 -

JOHN 21:21-22 -

Thus, in many of the clear statements made by our Saviour, and in some of His parables, we have the promise of His coming.

WHERE IS THE PROMISE OF HIS COMING - in the Acts of the Apostles?

There are two particularly important references -

ACTS 1:9-11 -

The testimony of the angels is very important because they were right there at His birth.

Luke 1:28-33 -

Luke 2:8-14 -

and at His resurrection -

Matthew 28:1-8 -

ACTS 15:14-17 -

Verse 14 is what God is doing today.

Verses 16 and 17 await fulfilment.

**4. WHERE IS THE PROMISE OF HIS COMING - in
the epistles of Paul, James, Peter, John and Jude?**

PAUL -

1 Corinthians 4:5 -

1 Corinthians 15:51-52 -

1 Thessalonians 4:13-17 -

Titus 2:11-13 -

JAMES -

James 5:7-8 -

PETER -

1 Peter 1:10-11 -

1 Peter 5:4 -

2 Peter 3:3-4 -

JOHN -

1 John 2:28 -

1 John 3:1-2 -

JUDE -

Jude 14 -

5. WHERE IS THE PROMISE OF HIS COMING - in the Apocalypse?

The book of **Revelation** does not make sense if you take from it the promise of His personal return. The whole message of the book is summed up in -

Revelation 1:7 -

Revelation 22:7 -

Revelation 22:12 -

Revelation 22: 20 -

6. WHERE IS THE PROMISE OF HIS COMING - in the Lord's Supper?

See the last three words of -

1 Corinthians 11:23-26 -

Whenever we take the bread and the wine, we are reminded of the promise of His coming.

7. WHERE IS THE PROMISE OF HIS COMING - in the heart of the true believer?

Revelation 19:10 -

What is the testimony of Jesus which we have within us?

Revelation 22:20 -

Does your heart thrill as you read the promise of His coming?

NOTES
