

TWELVE KEYS TO HEAVEN'S BEST

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INTRODUCTION

These twelve lessons were first published over twenty years ago. Their message is still alive and much needed today. Originally they were a brief correspondence course called “The School of Blessings.” The purpose of these lessons is to awaken Christian believers to the great blessings that are available and attainable through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Other Bible studies may teach you Bible doctrine or Bible history; these will be an experience.

There are so many things that I want these pages to do for you and those you love. In them are some new thoughts and ideas from ancient wisdom as old as God, from that fountain of comfort, the Bible. More than new ideas and another book, I want to give you the eternal key to a life of power and achievement, prosperity, real happiness, health, and the casting aside of inhibitions, inferiority complexes, habits, sins, and unpleasant dispositions. You can have an attractive personality for the little effort required by God’s wisdom.

Your wants or needs may be simply for health, food, clothing, shelter, and a chance to live. Or, you may be like thousands of others who smother under ambitions and visions of achievement, both in material and spiritual enterprises. These lessons should show you what God wants you to have, what He has provided for you, and then give you the key to “heavens best.” So many good, sincere people live on the verge of these things and are never conscious that the needs of a rich, full life, both for now and eternity, are provided by God our Father in His great wisdom.

So often our lives sink into the ruts of the commonplace and we despair of ever rising above our seeming limitations. Our abilities and talents are a great unexplored frontier, a “Canaan land flowing with milk and honey” ready for the conquest. These lessons are not just another course of studies, or a formula for success; they are a lighthouse to those aspiring to better things.

The satisfied and ambitionless need go no further - results will only attend those who will apply these simple yet amazing truths. Each lesson must be thoroughly mastered and understood.

Think of this study as a guide to lead you to paths great men have trod, who have talked with God, received dynamic power to change history, and have climbed to heights of divine knowledge.

LEARN AND LIVE

The Master said, *“I am come that they might have life,
and that they might have it more abundantly.”*

JOHN 10:10

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GOD'S CHALLENGE TO YOU

LESSON ONE

To change one's habits, ways of living, and attitudes, requires two things:

*First, A KNOWLEDGE OF GOD, and
Second, FAITH IN GOD.*

It is the purpose of this first lesson to induce you to lay aside doubts and fears. If a person can dare to trust God, and give God a chance to do for him all the things His Word declares He will do, the battle is won.

We are living in days of apostasy and darkness, in which religion has drifted far from its original pure state. Read of the glory and power of the Church - the miracles and grandeur of God's dealings with men in the Bible. Then, look honestly at the "Christian" today. In churches there is a rivalry of pulpits and pews - a thousand creeds disputing over trivial doctrines. The palaces of worship, beautiful, massive edifices are sadly lacking in miracles and power, the pure gospel that Jesus taught.

The display of "the better" folk on Sunday morning, gathering into church while the beautiful pipe organ plays is impressive; yet, to the church of this day, Jesus said:

Because thou sayest, 'I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing' - and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. Revelation 3:17

"Wretched and miserable?" Yes, for too often they leave, never finding the comfort and help they need.

"Poor?" Yes, for though they boast this world's goods they are paupers, destitute of all the things God wants them to have.

"Blind and naked?" Yes indeed. They are blind to God's will and blessings, and are not clothed with His smile. Would the first century apostles recognize the Church today? Let us try to forget preconceived prejudices and go afresh into God's Word to learn all over again of Him and His will for us.

First, meditate upon this Scripture. Ponder it in your mind:

... as His DIVINE POWER hath given unto us ALL THINGS that pertain unto LIFE AND GODLINESS through the KNOWLEDGE of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue, whereby are given UNTO US exceeding GREAT AND PRECIOUS PROMISES, that by these ye might be PARTAKERS OF THE DIVINE NATURE ... 2 Peter 1:3-4

Think of it! God's divine power has given unto us **ALL THINGS** that make a full life. How? Through the **KNOWLEDGE** of God and His Son.

Now notice verse 4, which speaks of our receiving **PRECIOUS PROMISES** in the Bible that enable us to **PARTAKE OF THE NATURE OF GOD**. This is the secret. God plants Himself within our hearts when we trust in Him and believe upon His Son, Jesus, as our Saviour. It does not matter how great or how many our problems are, for we read:

*... with God nothing shall be impossible. **Luke 1:37***

The God Who created the universe, all life, and made man in "His Own image," plans that you and I shall be like Himself (**1 John 3:1-2**), or as we read before, "partakers of the nature of God."

GOD'S INTEGRITY

The promises of God's Word are so great that they are difficult to grasp and believe, for we are prone to limit God because of our own limitations. Therefore, we will build up our faith in God first by a study of the following verses.

*God is not a man, that He should lie, neither the son of man, that He should repent. Hath He said, and shall He not do it? Or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good? **Numbers 23:19***

*And being fully persuaded that what He had promised He was able also to perform. **Romans 4:21***

God is honourable, and He always fulfils His Word. To please God, you must believe that He is telling you the truth in His Holy Word.

*But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. **Hebrews 11:6***

In God's Word we see that He urges us, He **CHALLENGES** us, to prove His power. God says, in **Jeremiah 33:3**:

Call unto Me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.

Do you doubt God's ability to do for you? Believe His Word and doubts will flee.

*Then Job answered the Lord, and said, 'I know that thou canst do **EVERYTHING**, and that no thought can be withholden from thee.' **Job 42:1-2***

...our God is in the heavens: He hath done whatsoever He hath pleased. Psalms 115:3

A similar passage of Scripture in the words of Jesus is:

...with God all things are possible. Matthew 19:26b

GOD ENCOURAGES US TO ASK LARGELY

Some of you may say, “I do not doubt that God can do all things, but ‘would’ He do this?” Notice that Jesus encourages us to ask largely that our joy may be complete.

...whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it to you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name. Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. John 16:23b-24

Do not be afraid of asking for too big a thing, as long as you are asking for something God wants you to have; for we read that He is able to do more than we can ask or even think.

Now unto him that is ABLE to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us. Ephesians 3:20

In asking God for blessings be sure you **KNOW** the things God **WILLS** you to have. Only as we pray in His will do we receive His abundance.

Only as we live and ask in obedience to His will do we leave the shadows of doubt and fear and step into His radiant sunshine of blessing.

In the lessons that follow, we will study the promises of God for blessing and the conditions we must meet to receive their fulfilment in our lives. Lesson Two will deal with eternal blessings in answer to prayer.

LESSON REVIEW

1. What is the Scripture reference to God’s “precious promises?” Try to memorise this passage.
2. Memorise four Scripture references in this lesson in which are found God’s “ability” and “power.”
3. Where in God’s Word are we encouraged to “ask largely” of Him?
4. What must we first do if we would have our prayers answered?

WHO ARE WE?

LESSON TWO

A man without the Christ is like a ship without a rudder, a business without a manager, or a car without a driver. Man was made to fellowship with Eternal God, and to live with His guidance and wisdom.

As the Apostle Paul said:

Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God. 2
Corinthians 3:5

Mankind - weakened by generations of sin and wars - why is he here? Where is he going? Who is he? Certainly there must be a great plan in the Divine Intelligence behind all this. If God made us in His Own image, He surely had a reason for it. As we observe the lives of others being shipwrecked everywhere about us because of ignorance, sin, habits, and so on, is there not a compass and chart to steer us in this life to our God?

Yes, our Father has a plan and purpose in this world, which was once created for His pleasure, but is now filled with sin, war, ignorance and injustices. Because men have wandered on the “detours” away from God for centuries does not mean that God has not built a road to Himself, for God has done just that.

God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to point the way to divine fellowship and blessing. Jesus said:

... I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh unto the Father, but by Me. John 14:6

Jesus, the Son of God, was born as a man to make men as gods, even Sons of the Almighty.

But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. John 1:12-13

Here is a marvellous thing - that we may be God's Sons. Those born of God are those in whose hearts the spark of **GOD-LIFE** has been planted. Theirs are the treasures of heaven and earth, for God is their Father. God is their Father, for He himself plants within their hearts the **GOD-LIFE**, which means a Divine Nature. Read again that key verse we studied in the first lesson.

Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be PARTAKERS OF ME DIVINE NATURE ... 2 Peter 1:4

After we pray to God, and receive this wonderful position in God's family, we are urged to:

... 'be ye separate,' saith the Lord, 'and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. I will be a FATHER unto you, and YE SHALL BE MY SONS AND DAUGHTERS,' saith the Lord Almighty. 2 Corinthians 6:17-18

Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. 2 Corinthians 7:1

Let as many of us who believe upon Christ as our Saviour live as the above passage directs, realising that blessing comes with obedience.

Here are some Scriptures on how we become God's Sons, and what that means.

But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law (of Moses), THAT WE MIGHT RECEIVE THE ADOPTION OF SONS. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, 'Abba, Father.' Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an HEIR OF GOD THROUGH CHRIST. Galatians 4:4-7

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ. Romans 8:14, 16-17

We can begin to see the beautiful meaning of the Apostle John's words, when he spoke of the reality of being Sons of God and heirs of God.

Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God! Therefore the world knoweth us not (i.e. as God's Sons), because it knew Him not. Beloved, NOW we are the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but WE KNOW that when He shall appear WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM, for we shall see Him as He is. 1 John 3:1-2

If you honestly want these blessings and treasures, bow your heart and in the name of Jesus pledge your life to God. Commend your soul to God, for the Sons of God are a

generation without defeat. Theirs is the world, now and hereafter, for this is their inheritance as His Sons:

For whatsoever is born of God of OVERCOMETH THE WORLD, and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our FAITH. 1 John 5:4

He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. Revelation 21:17

WHO ARE WE?

If we believe on Jesus Christ as the Saviour of men then we are God's dear children with the resources of the Father at our command. God will lead us into all He demands of us.

Our lives and work are not our efforts alone, but God works with us and for us:

For we are labourers together with God. 1 Corinthians 3:9

For I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, 'Fear not, I will help thee.' Isaiah 41:13

This means we are in partnership with God! What a position of power and blessing is ours if we will but learn simple, childlike faith in our Heavenly Father.

Do not remain any longer outside the door of heaven's treasures - lift the latch and walk in, even as our Father bids us:

And I say unto you, ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him? Luke 11:9-13

LESSON REVIEW

1. Give the one way to God, found in **John 14:6**.
2. Memorise **John 1:12-13**.

3. In **2 Corinthians 6:17-7:1**, what must we do to become God's adopted children?
4. Be able to give two references on the Christian being God's heir.

Study these lessons with your heart as well as with your mind. Read these lessons and Scriptures often and prayerfully. May God give you wisdom.

YOUR HEART'S DESIRE

LESSON THREE

What do you want? In every heart there are wishes and dreams which fill our days with longing and striving. Hence, we find the world in a struggle to realise their hopes. A few get what they want from life; others who have legitimate desires and good ambitions never do.

Can God help those of us who put faith in Him to know these blessings for ourselves - have our heart's dreams answered? If God watches over the sparrow, and clothes the lily of the field, will He not give His children those desires of their heart (providing that those desires are not for the lusts and sins of this world, but for the good and righteous things)?

Let us again turn to God's Word, for that alone is a safe refuge in an uncertain world. Jesus said:

Heaven and earth shall pass away, but MY WORDS SHALL NOT PASS AWAY. Matthew 24:35

Again, we read the words of God:

FOR I AM THE LORD, I CHANGE NOT, Malachi 3:6

In the Word of God, inspired by an unchangeable God Whose Word shall outlive heaven and earth, is your fondest wish:

Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily THOU SHALT BE FED. Delight thyself also in the Lord, and HE SHALL GIVE THEE THE DESIRES. OF THINE HEART. COMMIT THY WAY UNTO THE LORD, TRUST ALSO IN HIM, AND HE SHALL BRING IT TO PASS. Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him; fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices -to pass. Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; fret not thyself in any wise to do evil. For evildoers shall be cut off, but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall INHERIT THE EARTH. Psalm 37:3-5, 7-9

Here, first of all, is a "meal ticket:" trust in God, do good and He will feed you. Then, further, delight in God, rejoice in His truths, serve Him willingly as a LOVE SLAVE, and yours is your heart's desire.

DO YOU BELIEVE IT? If you find God's Word difficult to grasp, say as the needy soul to the Master:

... LORD, I BELIEVE; HELP THOU MY UNBELIEF.

Mark 9:24

Notice the verse, “Commit your way, your whole life to God, and as you trust in Him, He shall bring it to pass.” The word “it” refers to the preceding thought, the desire of your heart. “It” here refers to whatever you need or want. We can write the verse this way:

TO WHOSOEVER WILL:

*COMMIT THY WAY UNTO THE LORD: TRUST ALSO
IN HIM; AND HE SHALL BRING _____ TO
PASS.*

(saith our God) **Psalms 37:5**

We can fill in that blank by writing our wishes. Incredible? It may seem so at first but the Word of God has been tried and proven by the sceptical for centuries. It is still the only fire that can warm the heart of the world. Give God a chance and fill out your blank check on heaven now.

In Christ’s teaching of “the vine and the branches,” we read Jesus’ words:

*If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask
WHAT YE WILL, and it shall be done unto you. **John 15:7***

Notice here that we must live a Christian life - “abiding in Him,” and we must harbour the Word of God in our hearts, before we can meet the conditions to ask what we will and receive it.

Only God could make such a statement; but remember:

*... what he had promised, he was able also to perform.
Romans 4:21*

One verse especially appealing is **Psalm 84:11:**

*For the Lord God is a sun and shield. The Lord will give
grace and glory. NO GOOD THING WILL THE LORD
WITHHOLD FROM THEM THAT WALK UPRIGHTLY.*

As we walk uprightly before God, He will not withhold ANYTHING GOOD (that is, good for us) from us.

These are “great and precious promises” as Peter said. Like Abraham of old, let us not “stagger at the promise of God through unbelief, but be strong in faith” (**Romans 4:20**).

Here is another promise Jesus spoke to a praying man:

*Therefore I say unto you, what things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. **Mark 11:24***

God repeats the phrase, “What things ye desire.” A more inclusive promise can not be made by God for you. There is only one thing you must remember: these blessings are for an inner group of divine disciples - those who are living in obedience to God’s commands. They must put God first and the other worldly things second. This we see in **Matthew 6:33**:

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

Some say, “I want this and that,” and admit their motive is selfish. They are not in harmony with God; they have not met His conditions and therefore are not entitled to these promises. We read in **James 4:3**:

Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.

When we delight in God then our desires are motivated by God’s will. Our desires cease to be selfish, greedy, lustful, and so on, and then we desire an abundance, for instance, of material goods, it is only to bless, to give, to help others; for these are the greatest pleasures in the world.

Because a little knowledge is a dangerous thing, honestly apply the truths in these lessons, and be certain that you are fully surrendered in mind and heart to God’s will.

Give God a chance to do it for you. If, after seeing the conditions God asks us to meet, you feel unworthy of asking for these blessings, then a few minutes of sincere prayer to God in Jesus’ name each day, with meditation on God’s Word will soon eliminate any hindrances you may have. In chemistry we know that a formula must be followed exactly if we would see the desired results. So also, in this lesson, we see an exact formula for getting our heart’s desire. With patience and persistence let us believe and take from God’s loving hand. Thoughtful meditation on these truths daily, and frequent sessions of secret prayer, is the path to blessing.

LESSON REVIEW

1. God is immutable (He is always the same). Give a Bible reference in this lesson stating this.
2. Memorise **Psalm 37:4-5** and explain why this is heaven’s “blank check.”
3. In Jesus’ discourse on the “vine and the branches,” what does He say we must do to receive “what we will?”

4. In **James 4:3**, what is a cause of unanswered prayer?
5. The upright have what promises?

“LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY” - I

LESSON FOUR

We have studied God’s challenge to us to believe His promises and claim His blessings. We have found that by faith we are God’s dear children with untold privileges in the family of God (Lesson Two). In the last lesson we studied those amazing Scriptures showing us that God wants us to have the desires of our heart.

Realising that all these things are for us, as supplicants of God’s smile, we must begin to correct the mistakes and faults of our lives and prayers; and then study the Biblical promises for spiritual blessings, such as the men of God in ancient times enjoyed. We want to build faith for divine health, for financial prosperity, for victory over harmful habits, and for inner happiness. Among other things, we want to have a Christlike personality, we need inner power, and to learn to live in constant reliance upon Him.

What are God’s instructions for true worship? What is His will for our own life? These are questions each one of us want answered. We are striving for the childlike faith that pleases God and banishes worry and anxiety which are contrary to faith. Another truth which we know so little about is the heaven-given privileges we have through the name of Jesus.

As you study, believe, and apply the truths mentioned previously, you will be thrilled in the following lessons at the literalness of God’s promises. You will have new confidence to claim the fullness of God’s blessing.

We shall study diligently the simple conditions we must meet for answered prayer. The purpose is to obtain briefly the key to the largely untapped blessings of God’s Word. This is not a new creed or religion - we are striving to build your faith, not change it. We want to build it upon the same Bible, the Word of the Living God, that you believe now. Perhaps these lessons are truths and thoughts that you have heard before; truths that are as old as God. We seek to make them real to you, to awaken your faith. Christians often get off the main road to God’s blessings. This is a light to point the way back. Many earnest Christians today need God’s help in so many ways. Someone helped me to greater faith, and many prayers were answered when I found where I had failed in worship. These truths belong to you as God’s children. I trust this lesson on prayer that follows will be a help to you.

OUR PRAYERS PLEASE GOD

Have you ever wished that like Mary of Bethany you might bring precious perfume to anoint the Lord? I suppose every Christian has wished at some time that he might bring Him some precious gift like the wise men did at His birth. You can, for **Revelation 5:8** tells of the golden vials full of odours - sweet perfume to the nostrils of God - are the prayers of the saints. Also in **Revelation 8:3-4**, we read that our prayers go up before the Lord as a sweet incense to Him. Surely,

The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and His ears are open unto their cry ... The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all of their troubles.
Psalm 34:15, 17

As we scan the pages of the Bible, again and again we read of our Father's everlasting solicitude for His children. Knowing the love of God, should we not, as the disciples of Christ, cry to Him:

... *LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.* **Luke 11:1**

If there is any greater need among the sincere believers today, I do not know what it is. The prayers of a large percentage of Christians are ineffectual, because they have not yet learned to pray. Let us read Jesus' instructions concerning prayer:

And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do, for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them, FOR YOUR FATHER KNOWETH WHAT THINGS YE HAVE NEED OF, BEFORE YE ASK HIM. **Matthew 6:5-8**

I wonder if we are always aware that God is with us wherever we are and that He knows the number of the hairs of our heads? Yes, He knows what we have need of before we even ask Him. If He then knows our needs, we ought to be more bold to ask for them. Long, pious, cleverly worded prayers are not necessary. It is not necessary to repeat your request, over and over. The Lord warns against vain repetitions. In fact, they show a lack of faith, for if we believed God, we would not ask again. Long prayers are not given priority in heaven - our "much speaking" is not necessary. Only pray often, give thanks for His blessings continually, and in praying, realise that prayer is conversation with your Father in heaven. As Jesus taught us here, it is always good to have a solitary place, a "closet," where you can shut the rest of the world with its hustle and bustle out and be alone with your Father. Meet Him often in the secret place, and His blessing will be something you may shout from the housetop.

We may learn much also from Jesus' teaching to the Samaritan woman on prayer. She said:

'Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, and ye say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.'
Jesus saith unto her, *'Woman, believe me, THE HOUR COMETH, WHEN YE SHALL NEITHER IN THIS MOUNTAIN, NOR YET AT JERUSALEM, WORSHIP THE FATHER ...BUT THE HOUR COMETH, AND NOW*

*IS, WHEN THE TRUE WORSHIPPERS SHALL
WORSHIP THE FATHER IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH;
FOR THE FATHER SEEKETH SUCH TO WORSHIP
HIM. GOD IS A SPIRIT, AND THEY THAT WORSHIP
HIM MUST WORSHIP HIM IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH.*
John 4:20-21, 23-24

We do not have to face toward the east when we pray, as the Jewish people do, nor must we revere one place of prayer above another, as did the Samaritans in pointing out that prayer should be from that particular mountain. Jesus teaches us the truth that God is omnipresent and that He hears the prayers and cries of His children wherever they may be. In Old Testament times, men prayed often at the temple where they brought their offerings; but Jesus teaches that the hour had come that true worshippers henceforth pray in spirit and in truth - in other words, sincerely from the heart. How blessed are the words of Jesus, that the Father is seeking such worship.

Every day and everywhere you may “tune in” to God. Pray from your heart; you may not even speak your prayer out aloud, but only direct it to God in Jesus’ name from your heart, which is enough. That is true prayer after all.

“LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY” - II

LESSON FIVE

The Bible is filled with examples and passages on the power of the prayer of faith. We read in the Book of James:

... The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Elias (Elijah) was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain; and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

James 5:16-18

When we read of such power in prayer, we say like the Apostles, “We know not how to pray as we ought,” and we pray like the disciples, “Lord, teach us to pray!” As long as we pray just for the comfort in it, or for our own Christian life, we shall not know what prayer should mean to us. We need to study and practice praying rightly. If we ask the Lord, as did the disciples, I am sure He will teach each one of us to pray; for none can pray like Jesus. Even now He is at the right hand of the Father praying for you and me, and for all who put their faith in Christ. This we read in **Hebrews 7:25**.

Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God BY HIM, SEEING HE EVER LIVETH TO MAKE INTERCESSION FOR THEM.

Jesus, now engaged in prayer for us, is the One Who can best teach us to pray. The prayer of faith is learned at the feet of God. It is surprising that God’s Son did not teach His disciples to preach, or sing beautifully, but PRAY. We must first know how to speak to God before we can speak to men. Influence with God comes before we can have influence with men. It is to prayer that God gives the privilege to take hold of Himself and His strength. All of the promises of God are fulfilled by the prayer of faith. As we pray in the name of Jesus, we have the answer from our Father in heaven (**John 16:24**). Christ is our Intercessor, Who prays for us. As an illustration; the passengers of a large ship were frightened at the fog. They could see nothing, and cried to the sailors to stop before they went on the rocks. But the sailors laughed and said it was a low fog, for at the top of the ship, where the captain was, there was no fog. This is a beautiful lesson; where our Captain is there is none of the fog of uncertainty and fear of the future; and He promises us that:

... all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.

Romans 8:28

In the sermon on the mount Jesus gave us this promise:

*Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For EVERY ONE that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. **Matthew 7:7-8***

As you step on a rubber mat in front of an electric door, which has no doorknob or handle, it automatically swings open. So, with us, as we step on God's promises and trust Him, as we "knock" - "it shall be opened." The life of faith is a new world entirely. Just as the world would seem "like new" to a person of poor vision with a new pair of glasses, even so, new joys and blessings attend our way once we see with eyes of faith.

Jesus compares our faith to a mustard seed. That little seed, growing in the crevice of a rock, can split open the rock which an earthquake could not break. A little faith, if cultivated and permitted to grow, will bring into your life all of the miracles which the Holy Bible promises to you (**Matthew 17:20**).

There are no limits to your requests of God except one: you must ask in the will of God and for His glory. For instance, if our hearts are selfish and greedy, or lustful, we are not promised our petition. As we read in Lesson Three, **James 4:3**, we "receive not, because we ask amiss," to consume it on our own lusts or selfish desires. If you find a promise in God's Word for your need then stand on it, as it is God's will for you to have it. If you do not know if it is God's will to grant your petition, then pray, "Lord, if Thou wilt ... " It is best to KNOW THE PROMISES OF GOD, to remove all uncertainty from your prayers.

We have used the phrase "stand on the promise" in this lesson and perhaps there may be some doubt as to what is meant by that. If you ask God for something with faith in your heart, you will "stand" on the promise. That is, a delay in answer will not discourage you, but you will know the answer is coming. We read that,

*... FAITH IS THE SUBSTANCE OF THINGS HOPED FOR ... **Hebrews 11:1***

This is the kind of faith that does not make "vain repetitions" in asking again and again, but claims the answer. This is what we call importunity or persistence in prayer. Real faith continues to rejoice in answered prayer before the answer comes. For example, the Israelites did their shouting and rejoicing BEFORE the walls of Jericho fell. I suppose as we ponder over this lesson, we shall say like the disciples, "Lord, increase our faith" (**Luke 17:5**).

Our faith needs exercising, just as an unused or paralysed limb needs stretching to grow and become useful, for too long we have been in the "ye of little faith" group. We have all been guilty of limiting the wonderful love and promises of God, until we can not read His Word without sticking a few human "if's" and "but's" into the passages. Let us not add to or take away from the glorious statements of God, but rather continue to pray for greater faith to claim these in our lives.

Real faith does not look at circumstances or conditions and the impossibility of what we pray for. We know the experience of Peter who thought he had faith to walk on the sea to Jesus. As you remember, he did walk on the water until the pounding waves put fear into his heart and he doubted; and, of course, began to sink. Also, in **Luke 5**, we read the story of the draught of fishes. When they had fished and caught nothing they were told what to do, and though it seemed useless, they complied and a miracle was performed. The same thing was true when the women at the feast were told to fill the urns with water and bear them to the governor of the feast, and the water would be turned into wine. They ignored circumstances, trusted God, and the water was turned into wine.

These are examples to build your faith if the answer to your prayer seems impossible. There is nothing impossible with God (**Luke 1:37**). Ignore circumstances completely in your need; pray, and see God work it out.

And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us. And if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him. 1 John 5:14-15

These promises we have studied are the beautiful Scriptures that have been quoted to the dying, given as comfort to the living, and put on the walls in motto form. Let us not just receive comfort from them, let us **USE** them to God's glory. There was once an illiterate woman who was very poor, although she had a wealthy son. When asked why he did not send her any money to live on, she replied that she did not know, but that he did send her a nice letter and a picture each month which she pasted on the wall. Investigation showed that the "pictures" were actually bank drafts worth a small fortune, but she had not realised their value, only thought them beautiful. Do not just admire the Word of God, but "cash in" on the blessings of God. God's Word was intended for you as much as for any of the great men of faith of the past.

All of these blessings await the opening of your heart by faith to receive them. They are like the sunshine without, which will flood into your room as soon as the blind is drawn. So much of the world lies in darkness, that it behooves the Sons of God to exhibit a "blessed life" to the world that men may know and see God in us.

The most benefit of the lessons will come to those who study, over and over again, the truths contained until they are thoroughly mastered.

LESSON REVIEW

1. According to the lesson, Who can best teach us to pray?
2. Try to memorise **Matthew 7:7-8**.
3. What does it mean to "stand" on the promises of God?
4. In **John 5:14-15**, if our prayers are in God's will, what do we know?

THE VINE AND THE BRANCHES

LESSON SIX

This lesson is also on one of the fundamental truths which we must trust and follow for the blessed life. While we shall study only portions of Scripture from **John 15**, it would be a source of blessing to study the entire chapter along with this lesson. This chapter deals with the relationship of the loving Father to the believers, and will compel greater faith in God when cherished and followed. Let us read the words of Jesus.

I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman. Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. NOW YE ARE CLEAN THROUGH THE WORD WHICH I HAVE SPOKEN UNTO YOU. ABIDE IN ME, AND I IN YOU. AS THE BRANCH CAN NOT BEAR FRUIT OF ITSELF, EXCEPT IT ABIDE IN THE VINE; NO MORE CAN YE, EXCEPT YE ABIDE IN ME. I AM THE VINE, YE ARE THE BRANCHES. HE THAT ABIDETH IN ME, AND I IN HIM, THE SAME BRINGETH FORTH MUCH FRUIT; FOR WITHOUT ME YE CAN DO NOTHING. If a man abide not in Me, He is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they, are burned. IF YE ABIDE IN ME, AND MY WORDS ABIDE IN YOU, YE SHALL ASK WHAT YE WILL, AND IT SHALL BE DONE UNTO YOU ... IF YE KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS, YE SHALL ABIDE IN MY LOVE. THESE THINGS HAVE I SPOKEN UNTO YOU THAT MY JOY MIGHT REMAIN IN YOU, AND THAT YOUR JOY MIGHT BE FULL. ... WHATSOEVER YE SHALL ASK OF THE FATHER IN MY NAME, HE MAY GIVE IT YOU.
John 15:1-7, 10-11, 16

While not all of the chapter is written here, we have tried to bring some of the thoughts to you which will help in our search for a fuller relationship with God. As we study the Word of God, we find there is only one true Church spoken of, and that church is made up of those who trust in the Christ of the cross for their salvation. This is what Jesus called the “born again” (**John 3:3; 1:12-13**). There are many churches and conflicting creeds today, but only one true Church. By that I do not mean that unless you belong to a certain denomination you are not saved. No, the born again of every denomination, who have saving faith, are the “born again.” The church is bigger than any denominational walls that men may set up. We do not “join” the Church of Christ, we are “born” into it. You may know of some who are members of various denominations who are not Christians, just as you may know of good Christians in many denominations. We must be careful to remember that the Church of Christ is **ONE**, as the believers and Christ are **ONE**. In the passage on the vine and the

branches, we read that Jesus is the Vine, the source of our life and strength, and that we are the branches, **ORDAINED OF GOD TO BEAR THE FRUIT OF GOD IN THIS WORLD.**

The Christian life should not be a struggle or an effort. In fact, does a branch have to “try” to be part of the tree? No indeed! Just so, as we yield our wills to God:

*... it is God which worketh in you both TO WILL and TO DO of His good pleasure. **Philippians 2:13***

The child of God is as closely connected with God as a branch is to the vine. A dead branch is one that no longer receives food and strength from the tree - so a dead Christian is one who no longer bears fruit because he does not receive his strength and power from God.

Notice that we are clean through the Word of God (**John 15:3**). For in it are the promises and the power of God revealed. It is not possible for us to “bear fruit” or produce God’s blessings in ourselves. Truly, “without Him you can do nothing” (**John 15:5**).

Then, we are told again of conditions to be met, so that we may “... ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you,” **John 15:7**. Jesus tells us that: (1) we must abide in Him; and (2) His words must abide in us.

How can we be in Him and His words be in us just as the branch abides in the tree and the sap of the tree abides in the branch. There is no struggle “to be a branch” - it is a place of complete confidence and trust. So the Christian life may be noted for its **ABSENCE OF STRUGGLE**; for it is complete trust in God.

His Word abiding in our hearts is of great importance, for David said,

*Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee. **Psalms 119:11***

Jesus said,

*... Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. **Matthew 4:4***

Spiritually, and in every way, our lives should depend on Christ, as indicated in the phrase of Paul:

*... Christ Who is our life ... **Colossians 3:4***

Isaiah declared,

*Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee because he trusteth in Thee. **Isaiah 26:3***

This position of unreserved trust in God gives us untold power, which is largely unused and untapped by Christians today. Notice the words of Jesus in **Matthew 28:18-20**;

And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, 'ALL POWER IS GIVEN UNTO THEE IN HEAVEN AND IN EARTH. Go ye THEREFORE and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, LO, I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS, even unto the end of the world (age) ...

Because He has all of the power in the universe, Jesus bids us to go forth with the Word of God, knowing He will supply the power to back up the Word, and “**SIGNS** shall follow them that believe” (**Mark 16:17-18**). Here is Scriptural proof of God’s willingness to bless today. God has not changed and does not change. In fact, we are told to consider the theme of preaching and to listen to the minister or teacher who preaches:

Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and for ever.
Hebrews 13:8

In **John 15:10**, we notice that Jesus said if we kept His commandments we would abide in His love. I have never heard of these blessings coming to the disobedient. Therefore, diligence should be given to “know His will and do it” (**John 13:17**).

Jesus tells us that He spoke these things for one reason - **THAT HIS JOY MIGHT REMAIN IN US AND THAT OUR JOY MIGHT BE FULL**, or absolutely complete. Jesus wants to bless us and make us joyful in this life. He does not mean that we should have a long face and many unsolvable problems. In this chapter, Jesus calls us friends if we obey Him (**John 15:14**). We have the same intimacy with God that Abraham had, who was called the friend of God (**James 2:23**). These truths are the **SECRET OF FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD**. May we all pray for wisdom and guidance to know how to apply them in our own lives.

There is a portion of **John 15:16** which we would not omit:

... whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in My name, He may give it to you.

When we reach this place of faith, with our prayers in God’s will and receiving heaven’s best for our lives, then indeed we are bearing the fruit of God. This is God’s way of showing the world the blessedness of trust in God. When we reach this place of blessing, it is surprising how rich and full and complete life becomes.

LESSON REVIEW

1. Can you explain what Jesus meant by “the vine and the branches?”

2. Memorise **John 15:7**.
3. What two things did Jesus say we must do before He gives us “what we will?”

HEALTH FROM HEAVEN - I

LESSON SEVEN

In our search for heaven's best we shall devote this lesson to the subject of divine healing for our bodies. We have studied in the previous lessons many truths pertaining to the promises and blessings of God; and this book would be incomplete if it did not declare the willingness of God to heal the bodies of the sick and afflicted. We read in **Matthew 8:16-17**:

When the evening was come, they brought unto Him (Jesus) many that were possessed with devils. And He cast out the spirits with his word, and HEALED ALL THAT WERE SICK, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias (Isaiah) the prophet, saying, 'Himself took our infirmities, and bore our sicknesses.' (See **Isaiah 53:3-5** for the prophecy).

In Christian teaching today, we find that multitudes can believe that Jesus, the Son of God, died for the sins of the whole world, that whosoever should believe on Him might be saved eternally. Yet, so few believe the Scriptures when they read that the Son of God bore our sicknesses as well as our sins. Indeed, Jehovah God has always been the Great Healer of our diseases.

The Psalmist David wrote:

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and FORGET NOT ALL HIS BENEFITS: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; Who HEALETH ALL THY DISEASES. **Psalm 103:2-3**

When Jesus, following His passion and resurrection, gave His disciples the great commission to "go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (**Mark 16:15**), He promised them that the "signs" should follow the preaching of God's promises; "they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover."

This was not just the power of God working through the disciples only, but Jesus declares that the Church, that is His disciples in all ages to come, should have this blessing for their bodies in answer to prayer. We read the words of Jesus:

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall He do also; and greater works than these shall He do because I go unto My Father. **John 14:12**

By this Scripture then, we know that God has greater things than His children have yet dared to believe Him for.

Can we read the following unqualified promises of God, and then say, “It is not God’s will to heal the sick today?”

Notice these promises of Jesus, the Son of God:

*Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven. **Matthew 18:19***

*And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive. **Matthew 21:22***

*And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do ... **John 14:13***

*If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it. **John 14:14***

In the Bible we read of the mighty power of prayer, that men of faith prayed and the seas parted, rivers were rolled back, the heavens were shut up that it might not rain. Prayer brought water from a rock for the thirsty in the wilderness, brought fire from heaven. Prayer rendered helpless the lions in the den of condemnation. Prayer cooled the flames of the fiery furnace and made them harmless. Prayer even made the sun stand still in the sky. Men of faith prayed and the heavens rained food for the hungry. The recounting of the blessings that mankind has received from God is strange and hard to believe, but our God is an amazing Father of all grace and kindness.

Truly the Apostle wrote with inspiration that,

*... my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. **Philippians 4:19***

God’s plan for believers does not leave a single blessing or need of your life out. He supplies them all by Christ Jesus.

*He that spared not His Own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with (or by) Him also freely give us all things? **Romans 8:32***

There is a reasoning that is hard to circumvent. If God loves you and me enough that He gave His Son to die, to bear the penalty of sin for us who have sinned, then God will freely give us all things for His Son’s sake.

Healing for the body runs from the beginning of the Bible unto the end. We find in Genesis that Abraham prayed for his friend and he was healed. In Revelation we read of the tree whose leaves were for the “healing of the nations.”

The last disciple of the New Testament to die was John, the Beloved. We read in his last epistle that he prayed:

Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth. 3 John 2

Then after the death of the disciple John, the early church fathers wrote down through each succeeding generation that the blessing of God included healing of the afflicted. Justin Martyr, Iranaeus, Tertullian, Origen, Clement of Alexandria, Luther, Count Zinzendorf, John and Charles Wesley, and so forth, all record in their writings and journals of the kind deeds of the Great Physician.

How difficult it is to claim faith in the Bible as God's Word and then repudiate the promises in His Word and cast them aside. Some who are sceptical will say, back in Bible times they did not have good doctors and scientific knowledge of disease, so God healed them. But the Bible teaches us otherwise, for Luke is called the "beloved physician," and no doubt from his name we can safely say that he was a physician that men and women put confidence in and loved very much. He was a capable doctor, yet he records in his gospel some twenty-four healings alone.

Then in **Mark 5:26**, we read of the woman with the issue of blood for twelve years. She had been to many physicians. There were many doctors then, even as there are now. Yet God healed then, when there were many physicians, and the testimony of many today shows that God heals today. The Lord has healing, not only for you, but for your afflicted loved ones as well. In the next lesson we shall study the manner in which the Lord heals and the covenant of healing today.

LESSON REVIEW

1. Briefly explain by Bible references why you believe that it is the will of God to heal our sick bodies today.
2. Give the promises of Jesus to answer prayer. Memorise as many of them as you can.
3. Memorise **Philippians 4:19**.

HEALTH FROM HEAVEN - II

LESSON EIGHT

As we continue our study of God's healing for our bodies, we want to study how God heals and His covenant of healing in the Word of God.

When we open the New Testament to find the pattern God uses in healing the sick, we are surprised to find that there is no set of rules or instructions telling us how to receive healing

Instead, we find that sometimes the sick left the Master without any apparent results, as did the ten lepers who were healed as they went their ways. Sometimes we read that the sick began to "amend from that very hour." Usually the healing was not gradual but instant. Sometimes the healing was delayed until the future, or near future, as in the case of the blind man in **John 9**, whose eyes were anointed and he was told to go and wash in the pool of Siloam. He returned seeing.

There seems to be no limitation as to the kind of disease or wound that Jesus can heal, for we read that He healed lunacy, epilepsy, leprosy, palsy, fever, paralysis, blindness, lameness, deafness, withered limbs, a sword-cut, and so on.

Nor were the healings just among those who stood in the presence of the Lord, for sometimes Jesus granted the healing of loved ones who were far away.

Jesus also transmitted this power to others; to the twelve disciples, to the seventy disciples, and to believers generally who claimed the power of God. We read that when the Apostle Peter walked down the street that his shadow fell upon the sick by the way, and they were healed. Paul's handkerchief was sent to the sick with healing virtue.

God sent an angel to the pool for the stirring of the water and we read that the first one in the pool after the stirring was healed. All of these healings may seem strange, and God's children find themselves asking why God works as He does.

It is evident that God does not want us to be limited by instructions and rules for healing, but rather, He wants us to believe Him for our healing at any time and any place. He invites us to call upon Him for the unusual and the supernatural:

*Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh, is there anything too hard for me? ... Call unto Me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not. **Jeremiah 32:27, 33:3***

God has always had His covenant of healing for His people. In the Old Testament times we read His covenant with Israel:

*... If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in His sight, and wilt give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians; for I am the Lord that healeth thee. **Exodus 15:26***

So great was the faith of God's people in this covenant that we read:

*...there was not one feeble person among their tribes. **Psalm 105:37***

Then in the New Testament we read the healing covenant for today:

*Is any among you afflicted? Let him pray. Is any merry? Let him sing psalms. **IS ANY SICK AMONG YOU?** Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil (a type of God's Holy Spirit) in the name of the Lord. **AND THE PRAYER OF FAITH SHALL SAVE THE SICK, AND THE LORD SHALL RAISE HIM UP;** and if he has committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Elias (Elijah of the Old Testament) was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain; and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit. **James 5:13-18***

There are times when it is not possible for the afflicted to be anointed with oil by elders who believe in divine healing, and there are times when the sick do not have opportunity to obey the instructions of this covenant. Notice that it is the prayer of faith that shall save the sick and the Lord shall raise them up. Often we find self-styled "healers" who claim the power of mental healing, and that we have power in our minds to cure every ailment. God does not say this. God says that the Lord raises up the sick and forgives them of their sins. No man can heal by the power of the mind except the mental disorders or ailments brought on by fear.

God's plan of healing is not some occult power or mystical teaching. Our Lord heals in answer to the prayer of faith - simple, childlike faith.

These blessings are our heritage from the Lord, our God-given rights in prayer. His Word asks "Is ANY sick among you?" If you are ill in body, pray, or ask for prayer; there is no cost, for the things of God are not sold:

*Every good gift and perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father... **James 1:17***

If you are anxious to build your faith for healing, remember how we build faith:

*... faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of
God. Romans 10:17*

So if you are seeking greater faith, read and re-read these lessons; then read the promises in the Bible. Another aid to building faith is the testimony of someone who has been healed in answer to prayer.

Dare to believe God and His marvellous promises.

LESSON REVIEW

1. Memorise the healing covenant of **James 5:14-16**.
2. How do we build up our faith in God?

EFFECTIVE LIVING - I

LESSON NINE

Our problem is how to make our lives effective and useful. Most of us want to make our lives influential and a blessing to others, but we do not know how to do this. The purpose of this lesson, and those that follow, is to bring truths from God's Word that will help us be successful and overcome harmful habits in our lives. These truths lead to the blessed life - a life of peace and joy and inner happiness, and fellowship with God. Others want to be our friends when they see that we have tranquillity and peace of mind.

Most of us, when we seek the blessings of God and strive for a more godly life, find that, like Jacob of old, we are full of faults and the weaknesses of the flesh. But we read how Jacob became Israel - God's prince. In that story of Jacob's victory we find the secret of all victorious living that overcomes every weakness. Jacob lied and deceived his father, wanting the blessing that belonged to his older brother. Jacob wanted to be blessed, but the blessing of God does not come through tricks or similar means.

*And Jacob was left alone, and there wrestled a Man with him until the breaking of the day. And when He saw that He prevailed not against him, He touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with Him. And He said, 'Let Me go, for the day breaketh.' And he said, 'I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me.' And He said unto him, 'What is thy name?' And he said, 'Jacob.' And He said, 'Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel; for as a prince HAST THOU POWER WITH GOD AND WITH MEN, AND HAST PREVAILED.' **Genesis 32:24-28***

Like Jacob, we may look for the blessing of God to come when we sincerely seek it with all of our heart. Earnest prayer is necessary to overcome some of the besetting sins which so often discourage us.

In **Proverbs 16:32**, we read that he that ruleth his spirit is greater than he that taketh a city. The truly great in the sight of God are those who are willing to pray and "wrestle," as Jacob did, until they have controlled and subdued their dispositions and natural weaknesses.

We learn in the Bible that men were not blessed because they were deserving of the blessing, but because in their need they turned to God, and sought Him with all their heart.

SUCCESSFUL LIVING

To be a success in this world must mean more than temporal prosperity - we must feel that inner happiness that comes from achieving something worthwhile. We read in the Bible of God's "blessed man:"

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his DELIGHT is in the law of the Lord, and in His law doth HE MEDITATE DAY AND NIGHT. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. Psalm 1:1-3

The man that God blesses finds that whatever he does is prospered of the Lord. He delights in God's truths and meditates on the things of God day and night. He has prosperity because he walks in the truth that God gives him, rather than in the advice of sinners and the ungodly.

Meditation seems to be a lost art in these days when men and women are so busy with the cares of life. As we meditate upon these truths, they become a part of our life. The Apostle Paul told Timothy to ponder his words - the truth in his epistle:

Meditate upon these things, give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all. 1 Timothy 4:15

The rest of the world will behold a change when we meditate and ponder on God's truths and give ourselves over to them. A way to effective living is by the prayer:

Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer. Psalm 19:14

In fact, this was the secret of success given to Joshua by the Lord God, when he was told:

This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. Joshua 1:8

Let our meditations be directed toward our loving Father in praise and thanksgiving. As our thoughts are directed toward heaven, the blessings of heaven are directed toward us.

Few realise that the meditations of the heart determine what we believe and do. Truly God's Word declares:

For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he ... **Proverbs 23:7**

It is a life of peace and blessing to stay our minds upon the grace and love of God. Our thoughts determine our actions. If we think upon our Lord, our thoughts bring forth faith in our hearts, and faith brings the blessing. To the Lord, we say,

Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee. Trust ye in the Lord forever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.

Isaiah 26:3-4

Here again we see the secret for the life of inner happiness and peace. This is the life that trials and testings can not defeat. When people worry over circumstances and the future, they defeat themselves, for it seems a law of this world, that thoughts of defeat and anxiety attract failure.

In the world today are many professing faith in God who are guilty of doubting and mistrusting their God. That is exactly what worrying and fretting amounts to in the sight of God.

If we belong to God and we are His dear children then, whatever happens to us, God is able to overrule circumstances and events. We know that the promise of God is true.

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose. **Romans 8:28**

This promise is a sure solution to every worry of the child of God. The life of faith knows that everything that happens to us is directed by God for our ultimate good.

LESSON REVIEW

1. Give a rule for successful living.
2. Can you give a Scripture that is a sure solution to worry? Memorise it.

EFFECTIVE LIVING - II

LESSON TEN

Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines ...

Song of Solomon 2:15

The things which defeat our lives and destroy our usefulness are usually not great things, but little “foxes,” little weaknesses and sins. It is said that large doors swing on small hinges. Success or failure often come from the little things in our lives.

Little words, little thoughts, little things we do or fail to do, little moments saved or wasted, little temptations yielded to or overcome - these are the cause of an abundant life or a useless life.

One of the things which this study should do for the man or woman who is sincerely seeking the Lord’s will for their life is that it will create a desire to be faithful in the little things.

It is surprising the effect a little habit may have upon the mind and soul. Christians who persist in habits have often found that they are the “small foxes” that destroy a world of good intentions and sincere desires.

Usually if one craves a thing or feels that they “simply must have” the stimulant that their habit gives them, it is because they have not entered fully into the blessed life where God fills every desire and longing of the human heart.

If you want to overcome some habit in your life, then:

1. Ask the Lord to help you overcome your weakness. And believe that God will free you from that chain.

For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world, and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our FAITH. 1 John 5:4

2. A habit is best broken by breaking it clean and not dwelling on it in your mind. Some have tried to taper off their habits and break with them gradually. This usually fails. It is so much simpler and easier to stop entirely, once and for all. Each time that you give in after that makes the victory that much harder, for then doubt is in your mind as to whether you can honestly quit your sin or not.
3. Do not justify or defend a habit to yourself, but abhor it as a sin that will keep God’s blessing off of your life.

The call to consecration in **Romans 12** shows us that by a complete surrender of ourselves to the will of God we will be able to ascertain what God’s will is for each of

us individually. This surrender calls for each act and habit of sin to be put aside. We read:

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God (all of His blessings), that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not CONFORMED to this world, but be ye TRANSFORMED BY THE RENEWING OF YOUR MIND, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect WILL OF GOD. Romans 12:1-2

This kind of surrender is a deep consecration that affects every thought and action of our lives. This means the transforming of our lives into God's perfect will.

As we show ourselves obedient to these truths, our happiness is guaranteed:

If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them. John 13:17

The life that excludes worry and wilful sin is a life of peace, for we read:

Be careful (anxious) for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the PEACE OF GOD, WHICH PASSETH ALL UNDERSTANDING, SHALL KEEP YOUR HEARTS AND MINDS THROUGH CHRIST JESUS. Philippians 4:6-7

Truly those who know this peace in their hearts agree that it passes all understanding. May God grant that each of us may find this peace in our lives.

The Apostle Peter called it "joy unspeakable." These lessons do not attempt to analyse God's blessings - only to inspire His children to seek them and to claim them by faith.

Inner happiness brings a radiant personality that attracts friendship and success. This does not mean success in terms of money and material possessions alone, but rather for all of the glorious blessings described in these lessons.

There is a feeling of restlessness in the world today. The world is troubled, and every heart finds times of discouragement and discontentment. We read that,

... godliness with contentment is great gain. 1 Timothy 6:6

Again, we read that you should,

Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have, for He hath said, 'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.' So that we may boldly say, 'The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.' **Hebrews 13:5-6**

If a grasping world, and even Christians who are tormented by greed, could only learn of the happiness and contentment to be found in the life of faith, how wonderful that would be.

We are told by the Apostle Peter that we should be:

Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you. **1 Peter 5:7**

In trying times, you have a God Who, in all circumstances, is able to deliver and preserve His own (**2 Peter 2:9**). Can you cast all of your problems on the Lord and trust Him to work them out?

It seems that all of us face troubles and problems that at times seem too much for us. Sometimes we face obstacles in this life that seem insurmountable. Let us finish this lesson, on breaking habits and the happiness of a consecrated life, by giving you some promises in God's Word for you in times of trouble.

He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him. **Psalm 91:15**

The Angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and DELIVERETH them. **Psalm 34:7**

As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is roundabout His people from henceforth, even forever. **Psalm 125:2**

Is there some obstacle in the way of your happiness and success? Read **Luke 17:6**.

And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, 'Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea,' and it should obey you.

So if we have faith, God will thus remove obstacles in the way of the contented life.

OUR WORSHIP

LESSON ELEVEN

In this lesson, we shall study a few thoughts on our worship of the Lord. In every phase of life, we find that men have a system to their actions. They build habits that are constructive. All of us plan to eat at regular intervals, and we have certain hours for working, a certain time to sleep. Yet our worship and service to the Lord our God is often spasmodic - depending upon the whims of the moment.

This must grieve the Lord, that the most important phase of our lives is neglected too often, and sometimes forgotten entirely.

A source of blessing to every child of God is to establish a system to his devotional life. The Word of God admonishes us to take time to be holy. Daniel received many wonderful revelations and visions from God. His prayer life was diligent - three times a day he prayed.

All of the truths of these lessons can do us no benefit unless we daily have a time to meet with our Father in the secret closet of prayer and there commune with Him.

Our study of God's Word, too, is often left to whims. If we would plan to read a portion of the Bible daily while on our knees in prayer, we would find that God's Holy Spirit would open the Scriptures to our hearts, and these blessings would become a reality in our lives.

Another habit to be cultivated is that of thanksgiving. We should try to pause and thank God for every blessing that He brings into our lives.

Few Christians today fully appreciate the privilege of prayer that is theirs. In times past we read that men brought to the Tabernacle, or to the Temple, the sacrifices for their sins; and there they had to have a holy man, a priest, take their offering to the Lord. Men could not come to God boldly because of the sin in their heart. In the temple was a large veil (sometimes spelled vail) which separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies. Within the Holy of Holies was the Ark of the Covenant, which represented the presence of God. No one had access to God except the high-priest, who could enter but one day a year to make atonement for the sins of God's people. However, when Jesus died, we read that all of this was changed:

*Jesus, when He had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent. **Matthew 27:50-51***

When Jesus died upon the cross, He died to give us once more the access to the throne of God that mankind lost by sin. How beautiful is the Christian's opportunity. Now, by the name of Jesus, we may come to God - not in fear and trembling lest the judgment of God fall upon us for our iniquities, but with confidence and trust,

knowing that Jesus died to give us access to God. Jesus was a type of that Old Testament high-priest, who entered the Holy of Holies once a year on the Day of Atonement. We read in Hebrews:

Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which can not be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. LET US THEREFORE COME BOLDLY UNTO THE THRONE OF GRACE, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. Hebrews 4:14-16

When Jesus, our High Priest, died upon the cross, the veil in the temple was rent. God ripped it from top to bottom, now all may come directly to God without the veil separating them from the Father:

Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus (shed on the cross), by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say (in type), His flesh. And having an high priest (Jesus) over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience ... Hebrews 10:19-22

We see by this passage of Scripture that through Jesus Christ, and His death on the cross, we are urged to come boldly to the great God of heaven and earth, that we may receive grace to help in time of need. The blessings of the Word of God are ours through Jesus' name (**Acts 4:12**). He alone is our source to God.

In a previous lesson we heard some of the promises through the name of Jesus in prayer. Let us review three of them here:

And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. John 14:13

If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it. John 14:14

Jesus saith unto him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.' John 14:6

LESSON REVIEW

1. List the suggestions made for the worship of God.

2. Through what name should we pray? Through what name do we have access to the throne of God?

OUR DESTINY IN LIFE

LESSON TWELVE

In this last lesson, we want to touch on the subjects which as yet have only been hinted at. The first is God's abundance for our financial needs, and instructions on our monetary service to God, and then, the place that God has for each of us in life.

Let us see what the Master tells us are the instructions for a useful life.

*But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest. For He is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. Judge not, and ye shall not be judged. Condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned. Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven. Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again. **Luke 6:35-38***

*... He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work. **2 Corinthians 9:6, 8***

Good deeds are like bad ones. They are boomerangs that come back to us. If we smile at our neighbour, we will usually receive a smile back again. This is the law of harvest, that what we sow we will reap. Hence, the Word of God tells us here that we should sow bountifully and we will also reap bountifully. Jesus said that if we give, it shall be given unto us. When we do good by faith in God, it will always come back to us. The blessing may not come from the source that we look for, but it will come.

When we give love to others, we are loved back again. When we make our lives a blessing to others, we are blessed. When we give to support a church or a man of God, we find that the hand that is outstretched with a gift takes back the greater blessing.

We are living in a world where many are selfish and grasping. They never seem to learn that God blesses the charitable.

There is sure to be this objection: those who say they would like to do good for others, but they have nothing to give; and it seems as if they do not have the means.

But the promise reads that, "God is able to make **ALL GRACE ABOUND TOWARD YOU**, that you may have a sufficiency to **ABOUND TO EVERY GOOD WORK.**" In other

words, if you have good intentions and want to do good to others, it is the will of God to pray for material abundance that you may prove a blessing to others. Those who pray with selfish motives are merely turning off the faucet without knowing it. We must pray with an unselfish spirit and God will bless us.

These are truths that must be put into action to be fully appreciated. But when we do these things, they become the greatest source of blessing in our lives.

In this lesson, and those preceding, are many truths which we hope will be helpful to you in the days to come in securing greater blessings upon your life.

Do not be afraid of anything in God's Word, be open for every blessing of the Lord. We can never get to the place where we may say that we have all that God has for us. As we seek the Lord, we will find He has a work and a place for each of His children.