

## The Blessings and Responsibilities of a Christian

### Lesson 1

#### *My Sins are Forgiven*

Intro:

1. The fact that I am a Christian means that my life now has greater blessings than ever before.
2. With these blessings are responsibilities; just remember that each of God's commands is designed for my own personal good.
3. Forgiveness tops the list of blessings that we have. Without it, we could not go to heaven.
4. We serve a God who is "good, and ready to forgive, and abundant in lovingkindness (Psalm 86:5).
5. As Christians, we must never forget our purification from our former sins (2 Peter 1:9).

#### **I. All Have Sinned**

- A. Sin (*hamartia*) defined: "A failing to hit the mark, a bad action, evil deed ... a sinning, whether it occurs by omission or commission, in thought and feeling or in speech and action. 2. That which is done wrong ... an offense, a violation of the divine law in thought or in act" (Thayer). "To act contrary to the will and law of God" (Louw and Nida).
  1. Transgression (lawlessness). 1 John 3:4
  2. Unrighteousness (wrongdoing). 1 John 5:17
  3. Wasted opportunity. James 4:17
  4. "Not of faith" (going against conscience). Rom. 14:23
- B. The Scriptures teach that all sin: Rom. 3:23; 1 John 1:8-10
- C. The consequences of sin:
  1. Separates us from God. Isa. 59:1-2
  2. Causes us to be lost. 2 Thess. 1:7-9; 2 Cor. 5:10; Rev. 20:11-12; 21:8

#### **II. Jesus Came to Save the Lost. Luke 19:10; 1 Tim. 1:15**

- A. He died for our sins. Rom. 5:6-8; Heb. 9:22; Matt. 26:28
- B. He is our advocate with God. 1 John 2:1-2
- C. The New Testament is the means of our salvation.
  1. The Law of Moses (Old Testament) could not save. Rom. 3:20
  2. The New Testament does. Heb. 10:9-10; 2 Tim. 3:15-17; Jas. 1:21

#### **III. We are Saved by Obeying the Gospel. Rom. 1:16; Heb. 5:8-9**

- A. The great commission. Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:47
- B. First preached on Pentecost. Acts 2:36-41
- C. We must:
  1. Believe. Heb. 11:6; John 8:24
  2. Repent of sin. Acts 2:38; 17:30
  3. Confess Jesus as Lord. Rom. 10:9-10
  4. Be baptized. Acts 2:38
    - a. Baptism puts us into Christ. Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3
    - b. In Christ we are saved. 2 Cor. 5:17
- D. Thus, we have remission (*aphesis*): forgiveness, pardon, of sins (prop. The letting them go, as if they had not been committed), remission of their penalty" (Thayer).

#### **IV. When Christians Sin. 1 John 1:7-2:2; Acts 8:22**

- A. Becoming a Christian does not mean we have attained flawless perfection. It does mean we have access to God's forgiveness through the blood of Christ.
- B. As Christians, we receive this forgiveness when we repent and confess our sins to God.

Conclusion: Forgiveness of sins is one of the greatest blessings that we enjoy as Christians. If we can show others how wonderful it is to be Christians, perhaps more will be asking, "What shall we do?"

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### *Lesson 2*

#### ***My Responsibility of Growing***

Intro: When one becomes a Christian, he/she is then a babe in Christ. He has the need of constantly growing stronger before Him. In this lesson we study the need and manner of that growth.

#### **I. God Expects Me to Grow as a Christian.**

- A. A command. 2 Pet. 3:18
- B. Making our calling and election sure. 2 Pet. 1:5-11
- C. Proper use of time in growing. Heb. 5:11-14

#### **II. God's Word Provides Spiritual Food for our Growth.**

- A. Babies desire milk; new Christians desire growth. 1 Pet. 2:1-2
- B. Bible provides both milk and meat. Heb. 5:12-14
- C. The Bible furnishes us completely for all spiritual needs. 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3
- D. Therefore, we need to study. Acts 20:32; 2 Tim. 2:15 (to handle accurately)
  - 1. How often should we study? (How often do you need physical nourishment?) Acts 17:11
  - 2. How should we receive the word? James 1:18-21
- E. Now that I'm a Christian, I must study God's word every day.

#### **III. My Responsibility to Attend Each Service of the Church.**

- A. Several benefits from assembling together:
  - 1. We study together: benefit of learning from each other. Cf. 1 Tim. 4:16; 2 Tim. 2:2; 4:2
  - 2. We admonish one another. Col. 3:16-17; Eph. 5:19-20
  - 3. We encourage one another to good works. Heb. 10:24-25
  - 4. We have fellowship in the things of God. Acts 2:42; 20:7
- B. Attendance is essential to growth. We feed our bodies often; how often do we feed our souls?
- C. Christ is with us. Matt. 28:18-20
- D. It is God's will. Heb. 10:23-25. God expects me to be a working part of a local group of Christians who are striving to do His will.
- E. It is essential to fellowship in worship and work.
  - 1. Many acts involving fellowship (joint participation). Acts 2:42
    - a. Lord's Supper. Matt. 26:26-29
      - 1. Done on the first day of the week. Acts 20:7
      - 2. "In remembrance of Me." Reminder of His death. 1 Cor. 11:25-26
      - 3. Shows faith in the Lord's second coming. 1 Cor. 11:26
      - 4. Causes self-examination. 1 Cor. 11:28
      - 5. Necessary to spiritual health. 1 Cor. 11:29-32
      - 6. The Lord placed this in the assembly; I must assemble to do this.
    - b. Singing. If we avoid being with brethren, how can we do this? Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16
    - c. Prayer with others. Acts 2:42
  - 2. God wants us to assemble with our brethren to fulfill these responsibilities.
- F. Attendance helps keep me faithful.
  - 1. Pattern of missing assemblies usually symptomatic of one falling away.
  - 2. Spiritual union with Christ is essential; part of this is found in our assembling with other saints who are in fellowship with Christ.
  - 3. Being faithful to Him is a great blessing. I have the promise of great reward. Rev. 2:10

Conclusion: Gal. 6:9; 1 Cor. 15:58

## The Blessings and Responsibilities of a Christian

### Lesson 3

#### *My Responsibility to the Local Congregation*

Intro:

1. Jesus built the church that in it God might be glorified. Eph. 3:21
  - a. To be saved means that we are a part of His church (universally). Eph. 2:16; 5:23
  - b. To glorify God then, we must understand our responsibility to the church.
2. "Church" (*ekklesia*) is used in different senses: universal and local.
  - a. Universally the church includes every Christian everywhere. There is no organization or function of the universal church. It is a relationship.
  - b. The local church is a band of Christians in a given locality. There is organization and work involved at the local level. Phil. 1:1; 1 Cor. 1:2, etc.
3. What is the work of the local church?
  - a. Negatively: not recreation (ball games, parties, etc.); not secular education (math, science, etc.); not medical (fighting disease, building hospitals); not penal rehab or psych. care; not child-rearing and day-care, etc. Individuals function in these areas, but the local church has special work given by God.
  - b. Positively: Preaching and supporting the gospel. 1 Tim. 3:14-15; Phil. 4:15-16; Edifying (building up) saints. Eph. 4:12; Acts 20:32; Relieving saints in need. 1 Tim. 5:16
4. What is the government of the local church?
  - a. A plurality of elders (pastors, overseers) in each group. Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5
  - b. They "oversee," "tend," and lead. Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2; Heb. 13:17
  - c. Deacons are special servants who work under elders. 1 Tim. 3:8ff
5. Every member has a part; works to the best of abilities. Cf. Eph. 4:16; Rom. 12:4-8

#### **I. It is My Responsibility to be a Part of a Local Church**

- A. Not a "membership at large" option. See Acts 9:26
- B. We need fellowship and help of other Christians in local setting. Heb. 10:23-25
- C. We must be a part in order to fulfill obligations to God (previous lesson).

#### **II. It is My Responsibility to Do My Part as a Member of the Body**

- A. Every member is vitally important. 1 Cor. 12:14-27
- B. There is something that I must supply. Eph. 4:16
- C. Each is to work according to ability. Rom. 12:4-9
- D. Each to set a godly example. Phil. 1:27
- E. Each to help support the church financially. 1 Cor. 16:2
- F. Each to attend assemblies in order to encourage. Heb. 10:23-25

#### **III. It is My Responsibility to Work with the Elders**

- A. They lead, direct – we are to follow the lead. Heb. 13:17
- B. We are to esteem them highly. 1 Thess. 5:12-13
- C. We cooperate with them in all that is scriptural.

#### **IV. It is My Responsibility to Help Maintain the Unity and Purity of the Church. Eph. 4:1-6**

- A. "Walk worthy of the calling..."
- B. Endeavor to keep the unity of the spirit...
  1. By speaking as the Bible speaks. 1 Pet. 4:11
  2. By never speaking evil of one another, and refusing gossip. Titus 3:2
  3. By being willing to make right any wrong we have done. Matt. 5:23-24
  4. By applying the teachings of Eph. 4:25-32

Conclusion: Understand your obligation to the local church; do not neglect it.

## The Blessings and Responsibilities of a Christian

### Lesson 4

#### *My Responsibility in Giving*

Intro:

1. God has ordained every command for our benefit and spiritual well-being. True of giving. Acts 20:35
2. Central theme: "It is more blessed to give than to receive."
3. Think of what God gave to us: life (Acts 17:24-25); material blessings (Acts 14:17); His Son (John 3:16); Salvation, forgiveness (Rom. 6:23; 8:32). Jesus freely gave and brought untold blessings. If He gave freely, we need to learn this lesson also.
4. Not about us getting your money; it's about you supporting the work of God.

#### **I. The Church is Blessed with Increased Ability**

- A. The church cannot enter into business to finance its work: e.g., real estate, raffles, pie suppers, etc. We find no authority for this in the Bible.
- B. The individual works in business. 1 Thess. 4:11-12; Eph. 4:28
- C. Then gives of this prosperity, so that the church can support its own work. 1 Cor. 16:2; 1 Cor. 9:14; 1 Tim. 5:16

#### **II. The Divine Command to Give. 1 Cor. 16:2**

- A. Obedience to God's will always brings blessings.
- B. Note the elements of this command:
  1. It is periodic: "upon the first day..."
  2. It is personal: "everyone of you..." Not amount, but motive and ability. Mark 12:41-44
  3. It is proportionate: "as God has prospered him."
  4. How much shall I give? Compare Deut. 16:16-17; 2 Cor. 8:12; 1 Cor. 16:2
    - a. OT: "as he is able." 10% went to support of Levites. Above this was the free-will offering and "temple tax" or tribute.
    - b. NT: "As God has prospered him." Read 1 Cor. 9:13-14
    - c. Note: tithing is not commanded in NT; but you need evaluate your motive and ask, am I giving as God has prospered me?
  5. This is voluntary: God loves a cheerful giver. 2 Cor. 9:7
  6. Must be purposed in the heart first, not an afterthought of what you have on you at the time. Giving needs to be planned in advance.

#### **III. The Blessings to the Giver**

- A. God blesses those who give freely. Cf. Malachi 3:8-10; Luke 6:38; Psalm 126:6
- B. If we sow bountifully, we reap bountifully. 2 Cor. 9:6-7
- C. Profit increases to our account. Phil. 4:15-17
- D. Keeps perspective: lay up treasure in heaven. 1 Tim. 6:17-19; Matt. 6:19
- E. Pleases God. Heb. 13:16
- F. Note: not "health and wealth" promise, but we will be blessed in immeasurable ways if we cheerfully give of our time and resources. First give ourselves! 2 Cor. 8:5; Rom. 12:1-2

Conclusion: When we do not give properly, we essentially are robbing God. More than that, we rob ourselves of His blessings. Have you given yourself to the Lord first? Then are you giving of your time, abilities, and resources to support God's work?

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### Lesson 5

#### *My Responsibility to Teach Others*

Intro:

1. I became a Christian because someone taught the truth to me.
2. I should work hard to take the truth to others, to bear fruit. Psalm 126:6; John 15:1-6

#### **I. The Mission of Christ and His Church is Salvation**

- A. Christ came to save the lost. Luke 19:10
- B. The church has the mission of being the pillar and support of truth. 1 Tim. 3:15
- C. As disciples of Christ, we carry forward this work. Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16
- D. New Testament examples:
  1. They went everywhere preaching the word. Acts 8:4
  2. They continued in the apostles' teaching. Acts 2:42
  3. They taught daily, and house to house. Acts 2:46; 20:20

#### **II. Why We Should Teach Others the Gospel**

- A. Christ taught; we should follow His example. Cf. John 3:1-5; 4:6ff
- B. To follow the example of the early Christians (above).
- C. To obey the commands of God. Matt. 28:19; 2 Tim. 2:2; 1 Pet. 3:15; Jude 3
- D. Because souls need teaching to be saved. 1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9
- E. We derive great blessings. Prov. 11:30; Dan. 12:3
  1. Helps us to grow in the word. Matt. 5:6; Heb. 5:12-14
  2. The joy of bringing others to Christ. Luke 15:6-7; 3 John 4
- F. God's plan for converting others is for us to teach the gospel. Cf. Rom. 10:13-17

#### **III. The Calls of this Duty**

- A. From *Above*: God commands it. Matt. 28:19
- B. From *Without*: mankind needs it. Rom. 3:23; John 4:35
- C. From *Within*: conscience. Rom. 9:1; 10:1; 1 Cor. 9:19-20
- D. From *Beneath*: Jude 23; Luke 16:27-31

#### **IV. The Gospel Meets the Needs for Salvation. Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 15:1-4**

- A. We obey from the heart (Rom. 6:17-18); sins are washed away. We tell others so they can have this.
- B. But it must be taught (as a Dr's prescription must be applied). 2 Tim. 2:2
- C. We must never get too busy to take the gospel to others.
- D. Not all can preach publicly, but all can teach the gospel to friends. One of the greatest joys is to see one whom you have taught obey the gospel.
- E. Study Ezek. 3:15-21 carefully. Is there an application for you?

Conclusion: We cannot have someone else obey for us: give for us, be honest for us, or be baptized for us. Neither can someone else take our place in telling others about Christ. When we rely only on others to do this, we rob ourselves of the blessings that come from helping others go to heaven. We can help save souls from death (cf. James 5:19-20). How many people will be in heaven because of you?