

## Lesson's In Christ's School

Scripture Reading:

**Ephesians 4:21-23** "IF SO BE THAT YE HAVE HEARD HIM, AND HAVE BEEN TAUGHT BY HIM, AS THE TRUTH IS IN JESUS: THAT YE PUT OFF CONCERNING THE FORMER CONVERSATION THE OLD MAN, WHICH IS CORRUPT ACCORDING TO THE DECEITFUL LUSTS; AND BE RENEWED IN THE SPIRIT OF YOUR MIND;"

In one of my study Bibles, these verses are labeled "Lessons in Christ's School. That phrase caught my eye because when I was a small child I always loved school. In fact when I was age four that love presented a problem for my mother. We lived only a half mile from the community school building. It had a bell tower and a bell above the front door that the teacher rang a few minutes before classes started to hurry the slowpokes that were still on their way. That bell could be heard for well over a mile. And little Billy stood at the back yard gate and bawled because he couldn't go to school, at age 4. If I could have gotten that gate open, no doubt, I would have gone on my own. While I loved school, at least through high school, one of the things that I did not learn that I should have until much later was:

### The Value of Instruction

There are many things that we need to be taught, and not just the fun things, not just the subjects that we might enjoy but all the things that we need in order to conduct ourselves in this life. Solomon, given wisdom from God beyond the normal measure indulged himself in the pleasures of life, great riches, gaining much power and honor among men but when he boiled it all down near the end of his tenure on this earth he wrote:

**Ecclesiastes 12:13** "LET US HEAR THE CONCLUSION OF THE WHOLE MATTER: FEAR GOD, AND KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS: FOR THIS *is* THE WHOLE *duty* OF MAN."

In order to fear God we must be taught. In order to know the commandments of God we must be taught. We must be instructed in the ways and the laws of our Lord. God knows that; so he gave these instructions to Israel:

**Deuteronomy 6:6-7** "AND THESE WORDS, WHICH I COMMAND THEE THIS DAY, SHALL BE IN THINE HEART: AND THOU SHALT TEACH THEM DILIGENTLY UNTO THY CHILDREN, AND SHALT TALK OF THEM WHEN THOU SITTEST IN THINE HOUSE, AND WHEN THOU WALKEST BY THE WAY, AND WHEN THOU LIEST DOWN, AND WHEN THOU RISEST UP."

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And he continues with instructions to bind them on their hand, place them before their eyes like frontlets, to write them on the door posts of their houses and their gates. They are to keep the commandments of God before them at all times, they are to live with them day and night, make them the standard by which they conduct themselves in their day to day living.

They were to teach them "DILIGENTLY" to their children. Their children were admonished by the wisdom of Solomon:

"MY SON, HEAR THE INSTRUCTION OF THY FATHER, AND FORSAKE NOT THE LAW OF THY MOTHER." **Proverbs 1:8**

They and we need to remember that:

"FOR THE COMMANDMENT *is* A LAMP; AND THE LAW *is* LIGHT; AND REPROOFS OF INSTRUCTION *are* THE WAY OF LIFE." **Proverbs 6:23**

When Israel failed to do what God's law commanded in **Deuteronomy 6**, they failed their God and suffered his wrath. Hosea the prophet wrote:

**Hosea 4:1** "HEAR THE WORD OF THE **LORD**, YE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL: FOR THE **LORD** HATH A CONTROVERSY WITH THE INHABITANTS OF THE LAND, BECAUSE *there is* NO TRUTH, NOR MERCY, NOR KNOWLEDGE OF GOD IN THE LAND."

There was no knowledge of God in the land of the chosen people of God? How can that be? The prophet tells us:

**Hosea 4:6** "MY PEOPLE ARE DESTROYED FOR LACK OF KNOWLEDGE: BECAUSE THOU HAST REJECTED KNOWLEDGE, I WILL ALSO REJECT THEE, THAT THOU SHALT BE NO PRIEST TO ME: SEEING THOU HAST FORGOTTEN THE LAW OF THY GOD, I WILL ALSO FORGET THY CHILDREN."

They had forgotten the laws of God because they weren't taught. They weren't taught because they rejected the knowledge of the laws of God. We gain knowledge by being instructed. This is why in Christ's school we're taught:

**Ephesians 6:4** "AND, YE FATHERS, PROVOKE NOT YOUR CHILDREN TO WRATH: BUT BRING THEM UP IN THE NURTURE AND ADMONITION OF THE LORD."

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This is why the Apostle Paul commanded the young preacher:

“AND THE THINGS THAT THOU HAST HEARD OF ME AMONG MANY WITNESSES, THE SAME COMMIT THOU TO FAITHFUL MEN, WHO SHALL BE ABLE TO TEACH OTHERS ALSO.” **II Timothy 2:2**

Because without faith, without believing in God and Jesus Christ His Son; it is impossible to please God (**Hebrews 11:6**) and faith comes by hearing the word of God (**Romans 10:17**). We need to learn and appreciate the value of instruction in the scriptures. Because it is through his revelation that God provides for us “ALL THINGS THAT PERTAIN TO LIFE AND GODLINESS” (**II Peter 1:3**). He provides us with Truth, Absolute Truth, truth that will guide us come what may. This is the next lesson in Christ's School.

### Truth

In the School of Christ we learn what Truth is. We learn its source. Then we learn to recognize that which is not Truth. We learn to examine the words of men; especially regarding the realm of religion for the devil seeks to deceive us with false teachings and false teachers.

If we are paying attention and value instruction we will learn the source of Truth, we will learn that our God:

“**He is** THE ROCK, HIS WORK IS PERFECT: FOR ALL HIS WAYS **are** JUDGMENT: A GOD OF TRUTH AND WITHOUT INIQUITY, JUST AND RIGHT IS HE.” **Deuteronomy 32:4**

We see the words of David in his prayer to God of thanksgiving and his request to build God a house, a temple, rather than the tabernacle that had been carried from place to place.

**II Samuel 7:28** “AND NOW, O LORD **GOD**, THOU **art** THAT GOD, AND THY WORDS BE TRUE, AND THOU HAST PROMISED THIS GOODNESS UNTO THY SERVANT:”

Then God sent His truth to this earth in the form of His only begotten Son:

**John 1:14** “AND THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH, AND DWELT AMONG US, (AND WE BEHELD HIS GLORY, THE GLORY AS OF THE ONLY BEGOTTEN OF THE FATHER,) FULL OF GRACE AND TRUTH.”

And as he went about for place to place, teaching, healing the sick, performing signs and miracles of all kinds, teaching them that:

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“...I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE: NO MAN COMETH UNTO THE FATHER, BUT BY ME.” **John 14:6**

God and his Son, Jesus Christ are the source of absolute truth. Oh, but men encouraged by the wiles of Satan would have us to believe that there are many ways, many paths, many truths. They claim that there is no such thing as absolute truth. They claim that we're all going to heaven even if we teach doctrines that conflict, doctrines that cannot be found in scripture, or even oppose each other. So the truth of God's revelation warns us through the words of the Apostle John:

**I John 4:1** “BELOVED, BELIEVE NOT EVERY SPIRIT, BUT TRY THE SPIRITS WHETHER THEY ARE OF GOD: BECAUSE MANY FALSE PROPHETS ARE GONE OUT INTO THE WORLD.”

And through Paul's warning to Timothy:

**II Timothy 3:13** “BUT EVIL MEN AND SEDUCERS SHALL WAX WORSE AND WORSE, DECEIVING, AND BEING DECEIVED.”

Which brings us to our third lesson:

### Sin Is Deceptive

From the very first sin ever committed Satan has been deceiving men. He deceived Eve:

**I Timothy 2:14** “AND ADAM WAS NOT DECEIVED, BUT THE WOMAN BEING DECEIVED WAS IN THE TRANSGRESSION.”

How was Eve deceived? Well, it couldn't be any plainer to those who value instruction in such matters. When God placed mankind in the garden that He had prepared he gave them just one prohibition that is recorded for us:

**Genesis 2:17** “BUT OF THE TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL, THOU SHALT NOT EAT OF IT: FOR IN THE DAY THAT THOU EATEST THEREOF THOU SHALT SURELY DIE.”

And when Eve is confronted by the serpent, Old Satan, she repeats God's prohibition, she knew what she had been commanded. She knew that the fruit of that tree was forbidden. But Satan tells her:

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**Genesis 3:4-5** “AND THE SERPENT SAID UNTO THE WOMAN, YE SHALL NOT SURELY DIE: FOR GOD DOTHTH KNOW THAT IN THE DAY YE EAT THEREOF, THEN YOUR EYES SHALL BE OPENED, AND YE SHALL BE AS GODS, KNOWING GOOD AND EVIL.”

So Eve yielded, she sinned, she transgressed the law that God had given them. Oh, can't you just hear our religious neighbors today. Oh, God is a God of love. He loves us so much that he surely, surely wouldn't punish anyone for just one little old sin. They have been deceived! God will punish us for our sins, just as he punished Adam and Eve.

**Genesis 3:16** “UNTO THE WOMAN HE SAID, I WILL GREATLY MULTIPLY THY SORROW AND THY CONCEPTION; IN SORROW THOU SHALT BRING FORTH CHILDREN; AND THY DESIRE *shall be* TO THY HUSBAND, AND HE SHALL RULE OVER THEE.”

**Genesis 3:17** “AND UNTO ADAM HE SAID, BECAUSE THOU HAST HEARKENED UNTO THE VOICE OF THY WIFE, AND HAST EATEN OF THE TREE, OF WHICH I COMMANDED THEE, SAYING, THOU SHALT NOT EAT OF IT: CURSED *is* THE GROUND FOR THY SAKE; IN SORROW SHALT THOU EAT *of* IT ALL THE DAYS OF THY LIFE;”

And to both of them and all mankind that would follow came physical death:

**Genesis 3:19** “IN THE SWEAT OF THY FACE SHALT THOU EAT BREAD, TILL THOU RETURN UNTO THE GROUND; FOR OUT OF IT WAST THOU TAKEN: FOR DUST THOU *art*, AND UNTO DUST SHALT THOU RETURN.”

And such has been the case for mankind ever since the first sin. Let's look at what else Satan said to Eve. Your eyes will be opened. You will be wise as gods. Why you'll even know the difference between good and evil. Sadly that part was true. They now knew what evil was. They knew what sin was. And men are still being deceived the same way today.

Paul writing to Titus makes this confession in giving him direction concerning what he was to teach other men. He said warn them to be subject to higher powers, obey magistrates, be ready to every good work, speak evil of no man and more; why?

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“FOR WE OURSELVES ALSO WERE SOMETIMES FOOLISH, DISOBEDIENT, DECEIVED, SERVING DIVERS LUSTS AND PLEASURES, LIVING IN MALICE AND ENVY, HATEFUL, *and* HATING ONE ANOTHER.” **Titus 3:3**

Paul was deceived. He was deceived into believing that when he persecuted Christians, even to the point of pursuing them into other cities that he was doing the Lord's work. But he learned differently on that Damascus road through the value of the instruction that Jesus provided. Saul changed his life and became the Apostle Paul. We need the encouragement of others and each other to escape the deceitfulness of sin just as we're told:

**Hebrews 3:13** “BUT EXHORT ONE ANOTHER DAILY, WHILE IT IS CALLED TO DAY; LEST ANY OF YOU BE HARDENED THROUGH THE DECEITFULNESS OF SIN.”

Exhort one another daily. Help each other defeat the deceitfulness of sin. Help each other overcome our temptations. Learn the lesson that sin is deceitful. Why? Our next lesson:

## Sin Is Deadly

We just saw that in the Garden of Eden, when Adam and Eve sinned that physical death for all mankind was the result. But there was a spiritual death as well. During the time directly following creation God walked in the garden during the cool of the day (**Genesis 3:8**). We're not told; but there is no doubt in my mind that he visited with the man and woman that he created during those times. But what happened after they had contaminated themselves with sin? They were barred from the garden, in their sinful condition they were separated from God, they suffered spiritual death.

**Genesis 3:24** “SO HE DROVE OUT THE MAN; AND HE PLACED AT THE EAST OF THE GARDEN OF EDEN CHERUBIMS, AND A FLAMING SWORD WHICH TURNED EVERY WAY, TO KEEP THE WAY OF THE TREE OF LIFE.”

They suffered a spiritual death that is inevitable when we are in sin because God in his holiness can have no fellowship with sin. God cannot even stand to look upon sin or someone in sin. The prophet Habakkuk tells us this:

**Habakkuk 1:13** “*Thou art* OF PURER EYES THAN TO BEHOLD EVIL, AND CANST NOT LOOK ON INIQUITY: WHEREFORE LOOKEST THOU UPON THEM THAT DEAL TREACHEROUSLY, *and* HOLDEST THY TONGUE WHEN THE WICKED DEVoureth *the man that is* MORE RIGHTEOUS THAN HE?”

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Again we see that the wisdom of God given to Solomon confirms this death:

**Proverbs 11:19** "AS RIGHTEOUSNESS *tendeth* TO LIFE: SO HE THAT PURSUETH EVIL *pursueth* IT TO HIS OWN DEATH."

And the prophet Ezekiel:

**Ezekiel 18:4** "BEHOLD, ALL SOULS ARE MINE; AS THE SOUL OF THE FATHER, SO ALSO THE SOUL OF THE SON IS MINE: THE SOUL THAT SINNETH, IT SHALL DIE."

The prophet is not talking about physical death. He says that the soul shall die but we know that our souls are eternal. So then, he is talking about spiritual death, separation from God. Then finally this lesson is brought home to us by the Apostle Paul in words so plain that they cannot be mistaken:

**Romans 6:23** "FOR THE WAGES OF SIN IS DEATH; BUT THE GIFT OF GOD IS ETERNAL LIFE THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD."

Yes, the wages of sin is death, spiritual death, separation and alienation from the God of heaven. But unlike physical death which we cannot escape:

### We Can Forsake Sin

When Job was suffering the terrible tragedies that God had allowed Satan to bring upon him his friends thought that he was being punished for some great sin. The advice of Zophar to Job was this:

"IF INIQUITY *be* IN THINE HAND, PUT IT FAR AWAY, AND LET NOT WICKEDNESS DWELL IN THY TABERNACLES." **Job 11:14**

If iniquity or sin is in your hand, put it far away from you; don't let wickedness or evil live in your house. Get rid of your sin, God will favor you again. When the prophet Isaiah wrote to the nation of Judah; in the early chapters of his book he warned them of their destruction as a nation, the captivity that they would endure, their punishment by God for their sin. But in the latter chapters he gives them a vision of the coming of our savior and the redemption that would be available to mankind through Him. His message to them and to us is to "RETURN UNTO THE LORD":

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“LET THE WICKED FORSAKE HIS WAY, AND THE UNRIGHTEOUS MAN HIS THOUGHTS: AND LET HIM RETURN UNTO THE **LORD**, AND HE WILL HAVE MERCY UPON HIM; AND TO OUR GOD, FOR HE WILL ABUNDANTLY PARDON.” **Isaiah 55:7**

Let the wicked “RETURN UNTO THE **LORD**”. How? We return unto to the Lord by forsaking, giving up the sin which is separating us from Him. There is no other way.

The Apostle Peter in his letter to the “STRANGERS” scattered throughout the region of Asia Minor writes this:

**I Peter 2:11** “DEARLY BELOVED, I BESEECH *you* AS STRANGERS AND PILGRIMS, ABSTAIN FROM FLESHLY LUSTS, WHICH WAR AGAINST THE SOUL;”

Yes, if we have sin in our lives we can forsake that sin; we can put off those things that prevent us from serving God in righteousness. In Hebrews chapter eleven we have the examples of faith, men and women who served God and were counted faithful. Oh, they weren't perfect; far from it in some cases. But the Hebrew writer; through the inspiration of God, honors them for their faithfulness. The writer, referring to these examples tells us:

“WHEREFORE SEEING WE ALSO ARE COMPASSED ABOUT WITH SO GREAT A CLOUD OF WITNESSES, LET US LAY ASIDE EVERY WEIGHT, AND THE SIN WHICH DOTHSO EASILY BESET *us*, AND LET US RUN WITH PATIENCE THE RACE THAT IS SET BEFORE US,” **Hebrews 12:1**

Yes, we can “LAY ASIDE” “THE SIN WHICH DOTHSO EASILY BESET *us*”. If we are not a child of God we can put off that old man, that old life and that is our next lesson in Christ's School

### Put Off the Old Life

How do we put off that old life, that old man; that sinful man whom God will not even look at, much less tolerate? The Apostle Paul suggests that he be crucified:

**Romans 6:6** “KNOWING THIS, THAT OUR OLD MAN IS CRUCIFIED WITH *him*, THAT THE BODY OF SIN MIGHT BE DESTROYED, THAT HENCEFORTH WE SHOULD NOT SERVE SIN.”



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Our old man of sin was crucified with "*him*", crucified with Jesus Christ because it was through his crucifixion, through his death that the means of redemption was made available to all mankind. It is through the sacrifice of His shed blood that we can now put off that old man of sin. How do we do that? The Apostle Paul assured the Colossian brethren that they were those:

"IN WHOM ALSO YE ARE CIRCUMCISED WITH THE CIRCUMCISION MADE WITHOUT HANDS, IN PUTTING OFF THE BODY OF THE SINS OF THE FLESH BY THE CIRCUMCISION OF CHRIST: BURIED WITH HIM IN BAPTISM, WHEREIN ALSO YE ARE RISEN WITH HIM THROUGH THE FAITH OF THE OPERATION OF GOD, WHO HATH RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD."

**Colossians 2:11-12**

We put off the old man by being by being "BAPTIZED INTO HIS DEATH". The Apostle Paul couldn't have made it any plainer that what we read in:

**Romans 6:3-4** "KNOW YE NOT, THAT SO MANY OF US AS WERE BAPTIZED INTO JESUS CHRIST WERE BAPTIZED INTO HIS DEATH? THEREFORE WE ARE BURIED WITH HIM BY BAPTISM INTO DEATH: THAT LIKE AS CHRIST WAS RAISED UP FROM THE DEAD BY THE GLORY OF THE FATHER, EVEN SO WE ALSO SHOULD WALK IN NEWNESS OF LIFE."

We are baptized into his death in order to be raised up and live a new life. We live a new life because we are renewed spiritually. So we now have the final lesson of this session in Christ's School.

## We Are Renewed Spiritually

Through our obedience to prepare ourselves for baptism by believing that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, by confessing that belief before men and repenting of our past sins we become candidates for spiritual renewal. In his agony over his sin with Bathsheba, King David begged his Lord:

"CREATE IN ME A CLEAN HEART, O GOD; AND RENEW A RIGHT SPIRIT WITHIN ME." **Psalm 51:10**

David sought renewal. David needed to be spiritually renewed, he needed God to forgive him of his sins, which at that time included adultery and murder. He's pleading with God for that purpose because he knew the truth of God's word, he knew God's mercy, he knew what Isaiah would later write to Judah:

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“BUT THEY THAT WAIT (depend) UPON THE **LORD** SHALL RENEW *their* STRENGTH; THEY SHALL MOUNT UP WITH WINGS AS EAGLES; THEY SHALL RUN, AND NOT BE WEARY; AND THEY SHALL WALK, *and* NOT FAINT.” **Isaiah 40:31**

Just like David; all mankind that are not in a right or a righteous relationship with the Heavenly Father need to have the spirit within them renewed to the same condition that it was when God gave us physical life. God can renew our spirits to be pure, clean and holy. For those who have never done so that means they must be:

“...BURIED WITH HIM BY BAPTISM INTO DEATH: THAT LIKE AS CHRIST WAS RAISED UP FROM THE DEAD BY THE GLORY OF THE FATHER, EVEN SO WE ALSO SHOULD WALK IN NEWNESS OF LIFE.” **Romans 6:4**

Or if like David we have had fellowship with God but have wandered into the darkness of sin (**I John 1:6-9**) destroyed our fellowship with God; we need the same remedy as David. But while David prayed to God alone, we have each other to lean on; we have each other to help bring our supplications to God. God has given that remedy through the writing of James:

**James 5:16** “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.”

Invitation