



**Bible Study
Lessons on
Various
Subjects**

T.O.D. Johnston

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Bible Study Lessons on Various Subjects

Religious Non-fiction

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About This Book

This book contains Bible study lessons on various subjects that were taught over the years, at Paran Baptist Church in Lake City, SC. This book is dedicated for knowledge, understanding, and inspiration as we seek to follow Our Lord & Savior Jesus Christ. We hope that this collection of Bible study lessons will serve as a useful companion guide to the author's Biblical commentaries. A comprehensive range of topics is covered, including Christian living and prayer, Christian history, the nature of Christ and the Holy Bible, and Biblical prophecy.

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Christian Life

The Church -
Support System for Growth

Def. Responsibilities each agrees to in relation to one another and God.

I. Based on the Lordship of Christ which leads to joining others in the same relationship with Christ.

II. Requiring performance.

Acts 2:37-47.

"37 ¶ Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?

38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call.

40 And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.

41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls.

42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

43 ¶ And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.

44 And all that believed were together, and had all things common;

45 and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all *men*, as every man had need.

46 And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,

47 praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."

What actions are named?

Results (verses 46,47).

Together - help each other grow:

1. Steadfast study of the apostles' doctrine.
2. A strong bond of spiritual fellowship was part of it.
3. They regularly broke bread together.
4. They continuously prayed for the Lord's will in their own lives and the lives of others.

Our church:

1. What does it do to train members in basic doctrines?
2. What things show fellowship here?
3. What things encourage growth in prayer?

III. Under the Lordship of Jesus there should be unity as servants under their master. Showing - meekness, long-suffering, forbearance, lowliness.

"Keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" - turn to God in prayer every time.
Which is more important for us - to stay together, or for me to be right and have the last say?

IV. Our Calling - to be priests who share their faith to bring others to the Lord. We are to do everything to the glory of God and not ourselves.

We agree to join together for the purpose of fulfilling God's plan - that we would grow together toward the likeness of Christ.

V. Our covenant is to be a means that each member can be trained fully for the good works that God has for each of us to do. We are to support one another in this growth.

Questions:

How important should the commitment to the church be? Our committing our lives to God is one to One - but in committing ourselves to the church we do so to a group and each individual in that group. All being under the Lordship of Christ.

Thoughts to ponder:

What do we see as the actual reality of commitment to God and His church today?
What other things come first? What can be done in addition to prayer to positively change the situation?

To advance the church:

How can you measure the advancement of our church in growth in the Christian life?

Ephesians 4:11-16.

11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

12 for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

13 till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

14 that we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

15 but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, *even* Christ:

16 from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

Four tests of a growing church:

1. Development of gifts.
2. Unity.
3. Stable doctrine.
4. Church growth in number.

All members have gifts that can be used in serving God and others. Different gifts may be used at different times. These should be developed. Unity, as it grows, shows the coming under the Lordship and a filling of the Spirit of Christ's love. Doctrine is continually emphasized here. Is there growth - active members compared with 10 years ago - 3 years ago?

The power to do these things is not found in human effort alone - but only through the mighty working of the Holy Spirit through God's people. The price - the giving of time, talents, and money. Christians should grow in the grace of giving.

Take the test. Grade our church on its growth in spirituality, knowledge of the Bible, and holiness of living average - below average or above average. Rate your own contribution to the advancement of the church in these areas.

Church discipline - on the positive side, it is training of the members in Christ-like living and service. On the negative side (Matthew 18:15-17) it directs the church on how to deal with a member who is bringing about shame to the name of Christ. What can others observe from our lives about our commitment to Christ?

Taste the fruit - developing these calls for a strong commitment to Christ. The Word of God is a guide for what is right. Abiding in Jesus and His Word produces this Christ-like fruit.

I Corinthians 4:1-2.

"1 Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.

2 Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful."

Determine to be better. Begin today.

We are to grow in humility and self-control. Galatians 5:23 - "meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." Are we often our own worst enemy?

VI. Humility, meekness -
One under God's control
One who seeks God's will
One who puts others before himself

Definition - the quality of properly relating yourself to God, to the will of God, and to others.

Self-control - temperance directed mostly inward. To be governed by your purposes and goals rather than impulses or fleshly desires.

The Holy Spirit will lead us into self-control, to become more Christ-like, to be a greater help to others, and to glorify God.

Questions to ponder:

What areas of everyday life test a Christian's self-control? How well are we doing? Have you set personal goals?

Beware of pride. Don't become proud of how humble you are. Christ-likeness is the guide and the goal.

Salvation: So Great, yet So Simple

Acts 1:6 - "When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?"

As Jesus was about to ascend to the Father, this was the last question the disciples asked Him. This clearly showed their expectations and hopes. They had heard the prophets' teachings about the Messiah - who would throw off the Gentile yoke and reestablish the Kingdom of David and bring the 1,000 years of peace.

The church age between the first and second comings of Christ was still a mystery to them. They had not looked for the suffering servant, the rejected and crucified Saviour, but a conquering victorious One to deliver Israel from the cruel yoke of the Romans. These expectations possibly were foremost in prompting the disciples to leave all to follow Him.

It was a shock that Jesus was accused of being a common criminal, and nailed to a cross to die a criminal's death. All their hopes were shattered, and they had all fled in fear. Although Jesus had foretold this suffering and taught them that He must suffer and die, and then rise again on the third day, they hadn't been able to take that in. It was beyond their understanding. They had not grasped the meaning of Calvary.

For those days that Jesus was dead, they were utterly confused and without hope. Then He arose and their hopes revived. Surely now He would set up the Kingdom. Those forty days He spent telling them many things about the Kingdom but not doing anything toward it.

Finally, at the very place foretold that the Messiah would come to set up the Kingdom upon the earth (Zechariah 14:4), Jesus had led the disciples: the Mount of Olives. This was the same place where Peter, James, and John had seen a vision of the glory of His Kingdom in the Transfiguration (Matthew 17). This was the right place - He must be ready now to set up the Kingdom. So, their question was - "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6.)

The answer Jesus gives them lets them know that it is not the time - and further, that it is not for them to know exactly when it was to happen. He says: "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power." (Acts 1:7.)

One thing must be made clear - Jesus only said that the time is not to be known. He did not deny that He was to set up the Kingdom of Israel as foretold by the prophets. Much speculation and confusion has occurred from not clearly understanding that the promises made to Israel were not transferred to the Church. Jesus gave them the promise of the Holy Spirit, Who would instruct and guide them on what was to be done in the Church Age or the interim, before He was to come again to set up the Kingdom.

Though they are not to know the time, Jesus had reassured them that the Kingdom would ultimately be set up - then He suddenly leaves them, and the Scripture says: "And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight." (Acts 1:9.) All they could do in utter amazement and despair was to stand there in confused silence and look: they "looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up..." (Acts 1:10.)

Jesus is gone. What were they to do now, without Him? But while they were standing and gazing up into heaven, Jesus had sent two messengers. Jesus must have known what they were going through and then sent two angels with the first message from Heaven for them.

"Behold, two men stood by them in white apparel" (Acts 1:10.) They were not to be left in loneliness and despair. This first message from the Right Hand of God would assure them and confirm their hope.

The two men said, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven" (Acts 1:10,11.)

Our Lord's first message after leaving was His promise to come back in like manner. That when He returns, the promises of the Kingdom would be fulfilled.

The great lesson that Jesus teaches us about His coming is that we are not to know the time. Jesus will return one day, and that day could be today. Some have tried to teach that this or that or the other must happen first - then the Lord will return. Some say there must be one great last world-wide revival, some that the Temple in Jerusalem must be rebuilt, or that Russia must do something against Israel, and so on.

Christ's coming is imminent, a powerful and comforting certainty. The early disciples expected His return in their day, so we have certainly as much, if not more, reason to expect Him today. This is our incentive for holy living, for service to others, and the sharing of our faith (the Gospel) with anyone.

In Luke 12:45,46 Jesus gives us warning:

"45 But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken;
46 the lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for *him*, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers."

Are there things that we would want to do before He comes? Are there things that we have done that we would want to make right? John, in his first letter, shows us how this blessed hope should stir our lives to be lived for the Lord (I John 3:3).

"And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."

Jesus pronounced a blessing upon the faithful servant in Luke 12:42-44 -

"42 And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season?
43 Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.
44 Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath."

There was a story about a caretaker of a large estate in Italy. The estate was owned by an extremely wealthy man who owned many dwellings, and lived in another country. He seldom visited this estate. The caretaker kept the grounds beautifully, and everything was immaculate.

Someone visiting the area heard of this beautiful place and how it was kept though the owner hardly ever came. He went in amazement to speak to this man. He asked him how often the owner came. The man said that the owner had come twice in the past 10 years.

The visitor asked, "Why do you work so hard, every day, and keep everything so perfect when he may not come again for years?" The humble man said, "He may come today."

We are the stewards of everything the Lord has given to our care. We are the messengers to everyone we come in contact with. We serve Our Lord in faith that He is coming for us, that we may be with Him forever.

Jesus calls upon us today: "Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come." (Matthew 24:42.)

When Temptation Comes

Do temptations seem to come in greater fierceness or number when you have been trying harder to do right, or when you have been closer to God?

Jesus also experienced this: "in all points tempted as we are." This was a way to test or reveal before all the watching universe, His complete trust in the Father.

His first temptation followed the Holy Spirit's descent upon Him:

The Nature of the 3 temptations - Matthew 4:1-11.

"1 Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

2 And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward ahungered.

3 And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.

4 But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

5 Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple,

6 and saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

7 Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

8 Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;

9 and saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

10 Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

11 Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him."

1. satan took advantage of physical weakness.

2. satan offered Jesus an easy, spectacular way to get a following and prove who He was.

3. satan offered Jesus an easy way to gain the world - compromise and worship him. Jesus answered each time "It is written"

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

The Word of God is the best defense in any situation.

Will you always resist temptation? No! Will you be discouraged? Not a question of if, but when!

I John 1:8 - "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." The Bible uniquely tells the failures of most of its heroes. Adam, Noah, Abraham, David.

1. Paul said, "Don't worry, instead, pray." Philippians 4:6.

2. When you fail, repent. Psalms 51. I John 1:9 - "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Just as we forgive our own children freely - so we must accept God, our heavenly Father's forgiveness.

3. Restoration of fellowship comes through forgiveness. The consequences of sin are not necessarily removed. David's son dies.

Questions to ponder:

Why do Christians sin? How do you feel when you fail to live up to your commitment to Christ? What can you do when you sin?

I Corinthians 10:13 - "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God *is* faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear *it*." Temptations are part of God's plan - to test His people, and purge us of sin.

God also makes a way of escape for every temptation He allows satan to come at us with. It is we who give in to our own selfish desires.

Facing a heavy weight, a muscle strains and is exercised. To become stronger, more weight and more exercise are essential. As a weight lifter faces a training program that the coach has outlined, he must realize that to reach his goal to become better and stronger, he must lift those weights.

Just so as a Christian must face the trials and testing that God has planned for his life, and realize that only in facing those trials according to God's will that greater spiritual strength and maturity will follow.

Thoughts to ponder:

How can we help one another in times of temptation? What are some temptations facing those in our community? Can we do anything to help solve these problems?

The usual attitude:

You'll never change this old world. Will one person's stand for what is right make any difference? Not likely!

Daniel 1:8-21 -

8 ¶ But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.

9 Now God had brought Daniel into favor and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs.

10 And the prince of the eunuchs said unto Daniel, I fear my lord the king, who hath appointed your meat and your drink: for why should he see your faces worse liking than the children which *are* of your sort? then shall ye make *me* endanger my head to the king.

11 Then said Daniel to Melzar, whom the prince of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hanani'ah, Mish'a-el, and Azari'ah,

12 Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink.

13 Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee, and the countenance of the children that eat of the portion of the king's meat: and as thou seest, deal with thy servants.

14 So he consented to them in this matter, and proved them ten days.

15 And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat.

16 Thus Melzar took away the portion of their meat, and the wine that they should drink; and gave them pulse.

17 ¶ As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.

18 Now at the end of the days that the king had said he should bring them in, then the prince of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar.

19 And the king communed with them; and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hanani'ah, Mish'a-el, and Azari'ah: therefore stood they before the king.

20 And in all matters of wisdom *and* understanding, that the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians *and* astrologers that *were* in all his realm.

21 And Daniel continued *even* unto the first year of king Cyrus."

The response:

Opposition, apathy, ridicule. What happens when you compromise a little here or there?

How one person can affect one's life:

Examples in scripture -

1.) Stephen influenced Paul

2.) Ananias came to Paul in forgiveness.

3.) Barnabas, "Son of Consolation", took Paul to the apostles when others were still afraid of him.

He was later to take in John Mark when Paul refused.

Encourage one another and build one another up. (I Thessalonians 5:11).

Christian life is in fellowship to encourage one another in word and deed.

More thoughts to ponder:

Who has encouraged you in your Christian life? Did they risk or give up anything to do it? What difference did it make in your life? Who, as you think of those around you now, can you be an encourager to? We must be diligent and watch for opportunities to share our faith and help anyone who we come in contact with.

Trust Not in Ourselves, but in God

II Corinthians 1:9,10.

9 but we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead:

10 who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us;

Our fleshly confidence with which we are puffed up, is so stubborn, that it cannot be overthrown in any other way than our being forced into utter despair. The flesh is proud, and doesn't willingly give up. Only the mighty hand of God can bring us down to true submission.

Also, the saints have some remains of this disease clinging to them. For this reason they are often brought into trials and tribulations, that stripped of all self-confidence, they may learn humility at the hand of God.

No man ever is completely free from sin, until God sets death before their eyes. Think how displeasing to God is this confidence in ourselves, when for the purpose of correcting it, it is necessary that we should be condemned to death.

So it is that we must first die, in renouncing confidence in ourselves, conscious of our own weakness and sin. This of itself is not enough but only leads us to put our only hope in God, in order that we may be raised by His power, a confidence that rests upon God. We must realize that God is He Who calls those things that are not, as though they were, and to hope in God Who raiseth the dead.

Paul says that death had been set before his eyes, that he might therefore recognize more clearly the power of God, by which he had been raised up from the dead. He goes on to apply this personally to himself, proclaiming the grace of God, that he had been delivered from death, through the sacrifice of Christ Jesus.

In Whom we have an assured hope. The Lord has accomplished in part what He has promised. He thereupon calls us to expect what He has promised yet to do. He continues in the present to give us so many pledges, or earnest, to continue to confirm His promises.

I Peter 1:3-9.

3 ¶ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

4 to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,

5 who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

6 Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:

7 that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

8 whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see *him* not, yet believing, ye

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