



Theme Thoughts

The purpose of this quarter is to focus on the meaning of complete consecration. Keeping this in mind, we started this quarter with a lesson on the heart, "for out of it are the issues of life." We continued with various members of the physical body, showing that each member can be consecrated and can be used in the service of the Lord. In order to be totally committed to Christ, we should not only consecrate the parts of our physical body, but also our will, time, money, relationships, and future.

As you study these lessons, you will find that in many cases they overlap. For instance, the lesson which deals with the tongue relates closely to the lesson on the heart, "for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." We are not suggesting that each part can be consecrated as a segment, or in a certain progression, but rather endeavoring to stress that total commitment to Christ involves all of these aspects.

Consecration begins with salvation when one dedicates his life to God, but total commitment to Him involves day-to-day decisions. You might say that we have taken one lesson on total consecration and divided it into thirteen sections in order to give an in-depth coverage.

Heart

TEXT: Mark 7:14-23; Luke 6:45

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES: Psalm 139:1-14; Proverbs 4:23; Jeremiah 12:3; Ezekiel 11:5,19-21; Revelation 2:23

KEY VERSE: And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts. — 1 Chronicles 28:9

The physical heart is a muscular organ which maintains life by pumping blood through the body. But in our lesson we are dealing with the spiritual heart which is the seat of life and strength—the mind, soul, spirit, will—one's entire emotional nature and understanding.

1. Using the dictionary, define *treasure*. Read Luke 6:45 and, in the context of this verse, list some things that might be considered good treasures of the heart.

2. If we haven't confessed and believed unto righteousness, what things did Jesus say will come forth from our hearts?

3. What does Paul say is necessary in order for us to receive God's salvation into our hearts? See Romans 10:9,10.

4. Look up Jeremiah 29:13. What three words in this verse give us the key to a successful search for God?

5. Read 1 Samuel 10:9-11. Who was the man this Scripture refers to and what happened to him?

6. Read 1 Samuel 15:3,13-24. What happened to the spiritual condition of the man mentioned in the preceding question? What does this show?

7. In Proverbs 4:23 the writer tells us to keep a careful guard on our hearts. In doing this, the actions of other members of our body will be guided. Name several of these. See Proverbs 4:24-27.

8. What did Jesus say was the first and great Commandment? Is our love for Him complete? See Matthew 22:37,38.

9. Proverbs 3:5-9 shows that if we will yield our hearts completely to the Lord, He will direct our lives. Name several ways we can do this.

Tongue

TEXT: James 3:1-18

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES: Job 6:25; Psalms 52:2-4; 59:12; Proverbs 6:17; 12:17; Isaiah 32:6; 1 Peter 3:10

KEY VERSE: He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life: but he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction. — Proverbs 13:3

The importance of having a heart right with God is also stressed in this lesson on the tongue. James explains the spiritual danger of not controlling the words that proceed from the mouth. It has been said: “There is nothing in all the world so good or so bad as the tongue. It can bless or curse, bring joy or wring the heart with sorrow; it can bring peace or war; it can lead to virtue or seduce to vice; it can speak the truth or utter lies; it can be harsh or mild, rough or smooth, refined or vulgar, pure or impure. It is with the tongue we bless God or curse man.” (S. L. Flowers: The Serpent’s Fang)

1. What things that are small in size, and possibly seem insignificant, are mentioned in our lesson as being of very great importance? Consider the power they exert.

2. Think on how a large forest fire can be started by a very small spark. How does the Bible compare this to the tongue?

3. What types of communication will bring the blessing of God, and what kinds will grieve the Spirit of God? See Ephesians 4:29-31; 5:19,20.

4. Using Ephesians 4:29 and 5:19,20 for guidance, explain the feeling one experiences when speaking things which edify and encourage others.

5. What does the lesson teach us about a wise man's conduct and conversation? Ask yourself: Does my conversation qualify me as being wise?

6. What do these Scriptures teach us to do about controlling our tongue? See Psalms 15:1-4; 34:13; Proverbs 21:23; James 1:26.

7. Explain how the motives of the heart and the use of the tongue are related.

8. What is God's attitude toward the person whose tongue utters those things which proceed from a righteous heart and mind (Malachi 3:16,17)? Give some specific examples of ways the tongue can be consecrated to God's use.

Feet

TEXT: Matthew 25:31-40; James 2:15-18

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES: Isaiah 40:9; John 5:36; 17:4; Romans 10:15; Ephesians 6:15

KEY VERSE: And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. — Mark 16:20

The sound of the guard's footsteps echoes outside the cell door—does he come with a message of freedom? Footsteps approach a pitiful hovel—could it be someone is bringing a morsal of food? That steady tread approaching a secluded mountain village—is it a missionary bringing the story of salvation? Followers of Jesus have a divine challenge and responsibility to be ambassadors of Christ. The Apostles were instructed to go into all the world and preach the Gospel. That commission is just as binding today as the day it was given. The task is tremendous.

1. When Jesus said, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me," of what was He speaking?

2. Acts 10:38 declares that Jesus went about doing good. The Gospel can be represented by many acts. How many ways can you think of that would come under the title of helping to spread the Gospel?

3. In what ways could the actions of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:33) be used as an example in spreading the Gospel?

4. What goes hand in hand with faith as the Gospel is carried to the world? Why? See James 2:14-16.

5. Often people have a feeling of responsibility for the needs of the world. James states specifically to whom we should offer clothing or food. What does he say?

6. Mark 16:15 focuses on a different and broader responsibility of the Christian. What is this responsibility?

7. Write in your own words what you think Isaiah 52:7 means.

8. When Peter and John were called before the council and commanded not to speak or teach in the Name of Jesus, they responded, "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." Today, what sort of witness should we exhibit to the world? See John 20:29 and 1 Peter 1:8.

9. What does John 9:4 tell us about the urgency of our responsibility?

Hands

TEXT: Exodus 17:8-14; 1 Samuel 30:18-25; Matthew 10:41,42

KEY VERSE: Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest. — Ecclesiastes 9:10

When our hearts have been consecrated to God, we have given Him direct access to our lives. From that point on, our speech will be directed by God. Our feet will be following Him—going where He leads. And when our feet have taken us to the area where He would have us serve, our hands must be ready to perform the task God has for each of us, be it great or small.

1. Moses, Joshua, Aaron, and Hur had a particular part in the fight against Amalek. Outline the sequence of events described in our text, and describe what part each of these men played.

2. How were the hearts, tongues, feet, and hands of the four men named in question 1 involved in this sequence of events?

3. How were these four men doing what is commanded in our key verse? Explain the verse and write how you think it applies to our lives.

4. What do we learn from Matthew 10:41,42? Phrase your explanation using a present-day situation.

5. In 1 Samuel 30:24, what is meant by, “so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff: they shall part alike”? Give an application that would have meaning to us today.

6. Given below are some Scripture references to hands. Can you identify the situations given and the people involved?

Proverbs 31:20

Matthew 14:31

Mark 9:27

Mark 10:16

Acts 3:7

Acts 9:41

7. How does our present-day situation differ from the four men listed at the first of our lesson? How is it alike?

8. List several things that can be accomplished for the Lord with your hands.

THOUGHT PROVOKER: Frances Ridley Havergal wrote a song entitled, “Take My Life and Let It Be.”

Can you ask God with her, “Take my hands, and let them move at the impulse of Thy love”?

Ears

TEXT: Proverbs 17:4; Matthew 7:24-27; Luke 8:11-15; 2 Timothy 4:3,4

KEY VERSE: Incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding. Proverbs 2:2

As we study our text and related Scripture, we realize that God is speaking of much more than just our ears receiving and identifying audible sounds. God expects us to act upon what we hear and be a doer of the Word and not a hearer only. We should also be aware that there are voices to which we should not listen. We must carefully evaluate what our ears hear, rejecting that which is contrary to the Word of God.

1. In the text in Matthew, was the man wise because he could remember all the sayings taught by the Lord? Give a reason for your answer.

2. Think about the characteristics of a rock and sand. The man mentioned in Matthew 7:26 had a problem because he built on something that was shifting, movable, changeable. What are some of the things we may hear in our world today which are also shifting and changing?

3. In John 5:24, what action did the hearer have to take to receive eternal life?

4. In Romans 10:17, the Apostle Paul says that we receive faith by hearing. Hebrews 11:6 says that without faith it is impossible to please God. Is hearing more than just perceiving an audible sound? Would deaf people be unable to gain faith because they cannot hear? Write the definition for the word *hear*.

5. The wayside hearers mentioned in Luke 8:12 are those who listen to the devil when he comes with doubts or a suggestion such as, "Hath God said?" Inasmuch as we rarely have a head-on confrontation with the devil, how might he introduce some of these doubts and fears into our minds?

6. Read James 1:23,24. Unto what does James liken the one who is a hearer but not a doer of the Word? What do you think this means?

7. List some of the things to which a Christian should not lend an ear. See Proverbs 6:16-19; 10:18; 20:19; Romans 16:17.

8. We cannot shut out the audible sounds of the world around us even though they are not in accord with the spirit. How do we deal with them?

Eyes

TEXT: Psalm 121:1,2; Matthew 14:22-33; Luke 11:34-36

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES: Genesis 13:10; Job 31:1; Matthew 13:15,16; Mark 9:47; Luke 24:31

KEY VERSE: For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. — 1 John 2:16

The Bible says that we are fearfully and wonderfully made. One of the most striking examples of this statement is the human eye. It is mentioned at least 534 times in Scripture. Our eyes were created to adapt to extreme sunlight or near darkness. In the dark, their sensitivity increases 10,000 times so that one can detect a faint glow, less than a thousandth as bright as a candle's glow. God gave us color vision superior to most animals'. Each retina contains about 130 million cells which connect with the brain to provide instantaneous response. It has been estimated that from the vast panorama presented by our eyes, each eye can send a billion impulses per second to the brain—then our mind chooses significant details. We can stare at a sign without becoming aware of its message, while on the other hand, a fragmentary glimpse of some familiar object attracts our attention immediately.

1. In considering the wonders of this organ of our bodies, we value our eyes highly and care for them. But Jesus said we would be better off to go into eternity without one of them if it should cause us to sin. What conclusions can we draw from Christ's teaching in Matthew 5:29?

2. Scriptures relate several instances in which people were affected by what their eyes did or did not see. In the following examples, fill in the situation described in the text given and tell what we learn from each of these instances.

Joshua 5:13 — Joshua

2 Samuel 11:2 — David

2 Kings 2:10-12 — Elisha

2 Kings 6:17 — Elisha's servant

Matthew 14:30 — Peter

Acts 22:6 — Saul

3. List some of the things which might be classified as tools of the devil and describe how they could be used to allow evil to enter into the mind through the eye.

4. List some things that our eyes can look upon which could be classified as being spiritually beneficial.

5. One of the best ways to keep our eyes from focusing on the wrong thing is to have our spiritual eyes single toward Christ. Read Luke 11:34. To illustrate the meaning of the word *single*, place two dots on your paper. Suppose that one dot represents Christ and one yourself. What conclusions can you draw regarding the relationship between the two points?

6. What do you think verse 35 of our text in Luke implies? You may use 1 John 1:6,7 as a supporting reference for your answer.

7. What are some of the things we are promised if we use our eyes to look on the right things?

Psalm 121:1

Isaiah 33:15-17

James 1:25

8. Consider the differences between the physically blind and the spiritually blind. Which would be the greater handicap, and why?

Will

TEXT: Matthew 26:36-42; Philippians 2:5-11

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES: Matthew 28:1-7; John 5:30; 7:17; Galatians 4:4,5; Ephesians 6:6;
1 John 2:17

KEY VERSE: 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 12:2

Seemingly, one of the hardest things for man to do is to submit to the will of God. The Apostle Paul says the carnal mind is enmity against God and is not subject to the Law of God (Romans 8:7). For those who wish to make Heaven their home, it is absolutely necessary to conform to God's will; not only when their lives are first surrendered to the Lord, but they must submit daily to the will of God.

1. How many disciples accompanied Jesus to Gethsemane, and which three did He select to be with Him as He went to pray? Why do you think Jesus asked these three to go with Him?

2. Do you think the sorrow Jesus felt was only because He knew He was going to the cross? Explain.

3. Who came to strengthen Him? Luke 22:43

4. Explain in your own words what "this cup" (verses 39,42) refers to.

5. Why didn't the Father in Heaven spare His own Son? Romans 5:8-21

6. What condition would the world have been left in if Jesus had called for more than twelve legions of angels to come and deliver Him (Matthew 26:53,54)? How was His submission an example to us?

7. We have many Biblical examples of those who were willing to submit to God's plan for their lives. Tell about one and what might have happened if he or she had refused to obey God.

8. What are some of the ways we can ascertain whether a certain course of action is in the will of God for us?

THOUGHT PROVOKER: Jesus Christ, who is equal with God, submitted to the will of His Father even unto death. Shouldn't we, who are His creation, be willing to conform to His will in our daily lives?

Mind

TEXT: Romans 8:5-9; Philippians 2:3; 4:4-9

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES: 1 Chronicles 28:9; Luke 12:29; Acts 17:11; 1 Corinthians 1:10; Hebrews 10:16

KEY VERSE: For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he. — Proverbs 23:7

In Proverbs 23:7, we learn that as a man thinks in his heart, so he is. Our actions are almost always preceded by thoughts. Once we have committed our hearts and minds to Christ and are truly born again, our desires are changed from those which are sinful to those which are pure and godly. However, as long as we are here on earth, we can be tempted to think to do evil. Therefore, it is important that we make a conscious effort to direct our minds away from evil and toward the good. With our new godly nature, we must continue to live with minds controlled by the Spirit of God.

1. We cannot ignore the evil in the world. Christians love sinners but hate the evil they do. Clip articles from your newspapers or magazines which illustrate some of the evils present around us, and some illustrating Christianity in action. Note your reaction to these articles.

2. Research the meaning of the word *meditate*.

3. Name Old Testament characters who meditated often on God's Word.

4. Select a Scripture that at some point in your life you meditated on and from which you gleaned some spiritual insight or strength. Write down this Scripture and what it meant to you.

5. Write Psalm 119:148 in your own words.

6. Psalm 143:5 gives us appropriate things on which to meditate. Read the verse and then give a specific example for each.

7. It has been said that even the good and necessary can keep us from the better, which can, in turn, keep us from the best. Explain how this can be with reference to what we think about.

8. Isaiah 26:3 gives one benefit of keeping our minds fixed on God. What is it?

9. Peter exhorts us to “grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18). Even Jesus “increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man” (Luke 2:52). In light of today’s lesson, note here the action you plan to take to increase your Christian stature.

THOUGHT PROVOKER: At the end of a regular workday, take inventory of how many times during the day your mind was on Scripture, a hymn, the presence of Christ, the need to see your fellow workers saved, a prayer, and the like.

Relationships

TEXT: 1 Corinthians 3:15-20; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18; Ephesians 5:3-5

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES: Deuteronomy 7:2,3; Matthew 19:3-12

KEY VERSE: But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints. — Ephesians 5:3

Relationships with those of the opposite sex can only be blessed by God if the parties involved stay within the guidelines of God's Word. The outcome of such a relationship may be marriage. In the beginning God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone," and He created Eve to be the companion of Adam. If it is ultimately a marriage blessed by God that we wish, the steps we take to get that mate must also be blessed by God and in accordance with His will. With this in mind, it would be well to lay out a formula that would lead us from a place of unattachment to a union God can bless.

1. What is implied by the words "walk together" in Amos 3:3?

2. What is the meaning or implication of the word *yoked* in 2 Corinthians 6:14? In what way is this verse in harmony with the Scripture in Amos?

3. What should be the criterion used for making a decision as to whom we will date?

4. In Ephesians 4:1, Paul exhorts us to "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called." Tell briefly what you think that means.

5. To guard against getting out of God's will in a dating relationship, what is the man's responsibility?

What is the woman's?

6. What happens to the relationship of a dating couple when they each draw closer to the Lord?

7. In the context of a dating couple, what might it mean to "defile the temple of God"? See 1 Corinthians 3:16,17.

8. In light of the above Scripture, what allowance is given for the current trend toward having a sexual relationship outside of marriage?

9. Dangerous stress is added to a relationship if self-love or self-interest enters in, and one presses for an immediate marriage. If we are within God's will in the development of a relationship, occasionally God may signal, "Wait." What might be some of the indicators that point to the fact that postponing a marriage would be wise?

10. What is the key requirement for the development of any relationship as given in Matthew 6:33?

Family

TEXT: Proverbs 31:10-31

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES: Genesis 18:19; Exodus 20:12; Proverbs 15:20; Ephesians 6:4

KEY VERSE: As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD. — Joshua 24:15

For our Mother's Day lesson, Proverbs portrays a beautiful example of a godly mother. She is honored by her children and praised by her husband who implicitly trusts in her. However, as valuable as the influence of a Christian mother and wife is, it in no way releases the other members of the family from their obligations to the Lord. Each of us has a responsibility to God that no one else can fill. If we accept that responsibility we will be blessed here on earth and rewarded in Heaven.

1. What is indicated by the phrase, "Who can find a virtuous woman?" List some of the characteristics of this woman, and note some of the pressures or trends in our world today which might influence a woman striving to exemplify these traits.

2. The woman described in our lesson has many commendable observations made about her. She is praised by her husband and honored by her children, but which of her attributes do you consider most praiseworthy?

3. To receive God's blessing, who in the family is responsible for establishing the spiritual foundation of the family? How can this be done? See Deuteronomy 6:5-7.

4. We are given this excellent example of a godly woman and how she occupied her time. Write briefly what you think the Lord might expect of a godly father. See Deuteronomy 4:9; Proverbs 13:24; 1 Corinthians 15:58; 2 Corinthians 12:14; Ephesians 6:4; Hebrews 10:25.

5. At what age does the Bible encourage us to seek the Lord (Ecclesiastes 12:1)? What are the advantages of following this advice? What are some things godly parents can do to encourage this?

6. Having established spiritual guidelines for mothers and fathers, what are the two major instructions given in the Bible to children? See Exodus 20:12 and Colossians 3:20.

7. In looking back over our last questions, we see that both parents and children have certain responsibilities toward God and each other. If each individual is fulfilling these, what effect does this have on the family as a whole?

8. Consider next a family in which all the members are united, but this time they are united in their worldly interests and their lack of desire to serve God. What might we expect to see evidenced in that family?

THOUGHT PROVOKER: When each member of a family fulfills his responsibility as directed by God's Word, that family can expect God's blessing. "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" (Psalm 37:4,5).

Money

TEXT: Proverbs 3:9,10; Matthew 19:16-22

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES: Exodus 23:19; Deuteronomy 28:8; Malachi 3:10; Mark 10:17-22; Luke 18:18-30

KEY VERSE: 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 6:38

Jesus died on the cross and made salvation possible, not only so that we could enter into Heaven, but so that He could work through us and accomplish things He wants to have done in this world. To each of us who has been saved, He has given the commission to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, deliver the oppressed into freedom, and bring justice to the downtrodden. He wants us to be instruments through which such important things can be done. As we consecrate our all, including our finances to be used for God's work, we can be assured that we will receive God's greatest blessings.

1. Many people misquote the verse in 1 Timothy 6:10 and say, "Money is the root of all evil." However, Scripture says it is the *love* of money that is the root of all evil. What is the difference? Give a hypothetical example.

2. It is possible to have a small amount of money, yet be so consumed with desire for more money that one can think of little else. Some people even say that once they get what they feel they need, then they will begin to serve God as they know they should. Unfortunately, the "green spot over the hill" is never quite reached, so the Lord is not served. Others may say they know God is blessing their lives because they have an abundance of material goods. Does one's material wealth prove he has God's blessing? If not, what is the proof that God is blessing him?

3. Read Acts 2:44-47 and describe the feelings in the hearts of that group of early Christians who gave of their substance to God. Are these feelings any different than what the world desires now? Explain.

4. A part of giving money is done by means of tithing. The word *tithe* means “a tenth part.” We first read about tithing in the Book of Genesis (Genesis 14:20). In chapter 28, verse 22, we see where Jacob vowed a vow and said, “All that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.” Other references are Leviticus 27:30; 2 Chronicles 31:5; Malachi 3:10. We never would think of robbing a bank or stealing money from our neighbor, but how about from God himself? Read Malachi 3:8-10 and explain what you think these verses are saying. How does Matthew 23:23 indicate that tithing was still necessary after Jesus fulfilled the Law?

5. Jesus spoke the words of our key verse when He was instructing His disciples on the requirements of their spiritual life. Read the key verse and explain what it means.

6. It is good to reflect on the past and analyze how often the Lord has come through for us, not only spiritually but materially. Think back over the times you have given to the Lord and write down how the Lord has blessed you through your life. Remember the last line of the key verse.

We who are members of the Church (the believers) must be reminded that the Church does not exist to be served and to be the receiver of gifts. Instead, the Church exists to serve and give of itself to others, just as Jesus was rich and became poor for our sake. We must learn that the best gift we can give to Jesus is ourselves. This means, then, that we will live to serve the least of our brothers and sisters and be willing to give of our resources to meet their needs. As children of God, He expects us to do what we can to meet the needs of others so they can see and experience His love also.

Time

TEXT: Luke 12:16-21; 14:16-24; James 4:13-15

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES: 1 Chronicles 29:15; Matthew 6:24; 13:22; Acts 13:46; Colossians 4:5

KEY VERSE: See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. — Ephesians 5:15,16

Years ago, Will Rogers advised, “Buy land because they’re not making any more of it.” Another thing “they” are not making any more of is the number of hours in a day. God has given to every man a measure of time to be used as man chooses. Today, as always, the wise man uses his time for spiritual gain.

1. Complete the following statements from Scripture:

Psalm 89:47 — Remember how _____. (4 words)

Hosea 10:12 — It is time _____. (4 words)

Luke 19:44 — Because thou knewest _____. (6 words)

Romans 13:11 — Now it is high time _____. (5 words)

1 Corinthians 7:29 — But this I say, brethren _____. (4 words)

Revelation 1:3 — Keep those things which are written therein: _____.
(6 words)

2. Which of the above Scriptures point out the importance of using our time for spiritual betterment, and why?

3. Using your dictionary, define the 6th and 13th words of the key verse. Then rewrite the verse using these definitions.

4. Listed in Ecclesiastes 3:2-8 are twenty-eight things that there are times for in life. Which two from the twenty-eight things are generally done by the disposition of God? Explain how they differ from the list of other activities regarding our use of time.

5. What is our responsibility with regard to how we use our time?

6. List ways that you use your time for spiritual gain.

7. Referring to the Luke 14 portion of our text, all of those invited to the great supper made excuses why they couldn't go. Three specific excuses are recorded. What do you think was the true reason each excused himself from going to the great supper?

8. What are we telling the Lord when we say we don't have time to be involved in His work?

9. What Scripture in today's text is the key as to how we should make future plans for our time? What are the benefits of applying this thought to our daily plans?

THOUGHT PROVOKER: If you knew that your time was down to the last sixty minutes, how would you spend it?

Future

TEXT: Philippians 3:7-15

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES: 2 Kings 18:5-7; Job 13:15; Psalm 37:37-40; 1 Corinthians 2:9; 2 Timothy 1:12

KEY VERSE: I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. — Romans 12:1

Paul encouraged the Christians in Rome to present their bodies “a living sacrifice.” This metaphor referred to the bringing of sacrifices to the altar of God. The person making an offering selected the choicest of his flock, one without blemish, and brought it to the altar and presented it there as an atonement for his sins. We, too, are included in Paul’s exhortation. When Jesus, the Lamb of God, died to take away the sin of the world, He made it possible for Christians to be living sacrifices to God. We are to give ourselves wholly to the Lord, just as the burnt offering was wholly given on the altar—no part held back for any other use. The whole man—body, mind, and soul—is to be given to God. When this has been done, we can live a holy life, one that is “wellpleasing” to God (Hebrews 13:21), and we can know that our future is in God’s hands.

1. At the end of the key verse we read: “. . . which is your reasonable service.” After reading the introduction to this lesson, how could offering this type of complete sacrifice be considered “reasonable service”?

2. Review the lessons from this quarter, and give several ways we can glorify God in our body and spirit.

3. Excerpts from Adam Clarke’s commentary on Philippians 3:13,14 give some clarification: “Whatever gifts, graces, or honors I may have received from Jesus Christ, I consider everything as incomplete till I have finished my course, have received this crown, and have had my body raised and fashioned after His glorious body. The sole business of my life is to forget those things which are behind and reach forth to those things which are before. In other words, my conduct is not regulated nor influenced by that of others. If others think they have time to loiter or trifle, I have none. Time is flying. Eternity is at hand and all is at stake.” Give an example from daily life (either hypothetical or real) that would give the impression that one is living by this Scripture.

4. In verses 12 and 13 of our text, Paul says he had not yet “attained,” meaning he had not yet reached the goal. But a very good formula is given in verses 13 and 14 to help one in reaching the goal. What is it and what does it have to do with our future?

5. A traditional phrase in Christian churches is, “I will go where You want me to go, I will say what You want me to say, and I will do what You want me to do.” While these are noble words of actions which will affect your future, what might be some indication that you really meant what you said?

6. Many times we feel the excitement of a revival and determine in our minds that we are going to consecrate everything to God, including our future. But Satan is also aware of these good intentions, and after you tell the Lord that your life is totally submitted to Him, Satan will try to cause you to ease up and be less “radical” about all this. You see, Satan knows total commitment to Christ means NO commitment to him, so a war will take place. However, Jesus said, “In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). How far-reaching might the results be if we turn back from a total commitment of our future to the Lord? See Psalm 106:15.

In concluding this lesson as well as this quarter, it is obvious that we must first decide where we will place Jesus in our lives. Jesus teaches that we should love Him more than anyone or anything—no other relationship can compare with our relationship with Him. We must be willing to say from the depths of our being that He will have preeminence over all others. We must be willing to say, “For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Philippians 1:21). This is the only proper response that we can give God for the great things He has done for us. There is no way to be holy other than by being instruments set apart by God to fulfill His purposes in our world. Holiness is not a “better than you” attitude, but a willingness to let God set you apart for His work. Will you let Him? We do not know what the future holds, but we can know the One who holds the future.