

Humility

TEXT: Matthew 5:1-5; 8:5-10; Isaiah 29:19; 57:15

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES: Isaiah 61:1-3; Romans 12:3

KEY VERSE: For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. — Luke 14:11

The love of God dwelling in the heart produces humility, a beautiful ingredient in a Christian's life. It is the complete opposite of self-exaltation or a proud spirit. It is not artificial or feigned, but is exhibited in each aspect of a true Christian's life.

1. How does God react to one who is humble, as compared with one who takes pride in his own accomplishments? See James 4:6.

2. In our Matthew 8 text, the centurion who came to Jesus showed a humble attitude by saying that he was not worthy to have Christ come under his roof. Why is it important for us to have a humble attitude when we come to Christ? Substantiate your answer by Scripture.

3. If one is living according to Philippians 2:3 and 1 Peter 5:5, in what way will his relationships with others be enhanced? Give at least one specific example.

4. Does humility come naturally, or will one have to make a special effort to humble himself before God and others? See James 4:10.

5. Jesus said that we should love our neighbor “as ourselves” (Mark 12:31). How can this teaching co-exist with humility?

6. Jesus is our perfect pattern. He is the Son of God, and worthy of all our worship and honor. What kind of an example in humility did He leave us? See Matthew 11:29 and Philippians 2:5-8.

7. How must a sinner come before the Lord when he desires to become a Christian? See Luke 18:13. Why does the Bible tell us in 1 Corinthians 1:26 that not many wise or mighty or noble men are called?

8. Is it possible for one to be proud of his humility? Is this true humility? Explain.

Mercy

TEXT: Matthew 5:6-9,38-48; 18:23-35

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURE: 1 Samuel 26:7-11

KEY VERSE: The merciful man doeth good to his own soul: but he that is cruel troubleth his own flesh.

— Proverbs 11:17

Mercy is an attribute essential to Christian living, and unless we extend mercy, we will not receive it.

Mercy shows compassion and forbears punishment, even when justice demands it. Mercy extends help to the lowly and even the undeserving.

1. In your own words, describe *mercy*. Give an example, either from the Bible or from personal knowledge, of one who has practiced this attribute.

2. God requires mercy in the lives of His children (Micah 6:8). What are the rewards for possessing this attribute?

3. Why is it that our own acts of mercy cannot save us, if the merciful shall obtain mercy? See Titus 3:5.

4. The parable of the Good Samaritan is a well-known example in the Bible of one who showed mercy. Read Luke 10:33-37, then write what specific actions the Good Samaritan did in order to offer mercy. In what ways might being merciful require our time, money, or personal effort?

5. In our text, what was the servant's attitude when the king demanded payment of the debt?

6. How did the king react when the servant had nothing with which to pay the debt? Contrast his reaction to God's forgiveness of the debt of sin.

7. After the servant had been forgiven his debt, he put a fellow servant into prison for a small debt. This was obviously an unmerciful act. Name some ways in which a person might be unmerciful, though not necessarily outwardly so.

8. If you had been the king, what would your attitude have been toward the unmerciful servant? What are some ways you might be able to show mercy?

Christians as Radiant Lights

TEXT: Matthew 5:14-16; Daniel 6:1-28

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES: John 1:1-9; Acts 13:47; Philippians 2:14,15; 1 John 1:5-9

KEY VERSE: For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light.

— Ephesians 5:8

Physical light makes vision possible, provides for life on earth, results in warmth and comfort, and dispels darkness. In Genesis 1:2-5, we find that light was so important God devoted the first day of creation to making it in order to dispel darkness. Without physical light, death ensues. Spiritual light is even more important. Malachi the prophet refers to Christ as “the Sun of righteousness” (Malachi 4:2). Without spiritual light there would be no eternal life.

1. Read carefully John 1:1-9. What is the source of spiritual life? What happens when spiritual light is “screened out”?

2. Considering then the importance of spiritual light, what do you think would happen to your school, your work world, your community, and the world in general if all Christians failed to follow Christ's command in Matthew 5:16?

3. Describe how Daniel, as the first of three presidents under Darius the king, “let his light shine.” Refer to Daniel 6:3,4.

4. The 2 presidents and the 120 princes sought to find fault with Daniel so that they might accuse him to the king. Daniel was not only faithful to his God, but he was faithful to his country and to the king's business. They could find no fault, but what scheme did they devise against him, and why?

5. Once the decree was signed by the king, how did Daniel respond?

6. The light from Daniel's life had generated faith in the king's heart in the only true God. How was this manifested in the king's words to Daniel?

7. What specific character trait radiated from Daniel causing the king to say in verse 16 and again in verse 20, "whom thou servest continually"?

8. How far did Daniel's light shine as a result of his steadfast faith and deliverance from the lions' den?

Christ and the Law

TEXT: Matthew 5:17-20; Romans 8:3,4; Galatians 3:19-29

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES: Romans 10:4-9; Galatians 2:16; 1 Timothy 1:8-11

KEY VERSE: Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. — Galatians 3:24

The word *schoolmaster* comes from the original Latin word *paedagogus* or *pedagogue*—the entrusted servant who watched over a boy until he was grown. The pedagogue's duty was to protect the boy in all his activities. A schoolmaster held an important place but it was not intended that the schoolmaster be retained after the young man came to maturity. Thus it was with the Law of Moses. It was given by God and was good; it was needful for Israel until Christ came. But when Christ came, the days of the schoolmaster (the time of the Law) were completed.

1. For what reason was the Mosaic Law given? See Galatians 3:19.

2. For whom was the Law made? See 1 Timothy 1:9,10.

3. The rituals of the sin offering as found in Leviticus 8:15 and Hebrews 9:19-22 pointed to sin. How did these also point to Christ? See Hebrews 13:11,12.

4. What did Jesus mean when He said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil"?

5. The observance of the Law required more than ceremonial sacrifices. In Galatians 3:22-26, what is the key word used in every verse? Why was that word significant in the salvation of those under the Law, as well as in the salvation of us today? See Habakkuk 2:4 and Romans 1:17.

6. What does it mean to be *justified*? Considering Galatians 2:16 and Galatians 3:24, by what are we justified?

7. How does righteousness, which is by faith, operate? See Romans 10:9,10.

8. What was one of the indirect results of the Law? See Acts 10:28. How was this indirect result abolished through Jesus Christ?

Benevolence — Giving

TEXT: Matthew 6:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8:1-15

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES: Luke 6:38; Hebrews 13:1,2

KEY VERSE: He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack: but he that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse. — Proverbs 28:27

As you study this lesson you will be impressed with the fact that the early disciples gave not just ten percent of their income, but according to, and even beyond, their apparent ability. The Church at Jerusalem was impoverished because of severe persecution; and the Church of Macedonia—itsself in poverty—had set an example of liberality and generosity by gathering a substantial gift for the saints of Jerusalem. In mentioning this gift, Paul was exhorting the Corinthian church likewise to give sacrificially. But in addition to the giving of money, the disciples gave of their time and effort to care for the widows, and shared their possessions with the orphans and the poor among them.

1. Why should we engage in benevolent giving? To whom should we give?

2. Needs are many, and our financial gifts can only extend so far. How can we decide to whom our gifts should be given?

3. *Alms* means “to practice mercy or beneficence—to show compassion.” It is the same word used in the account in Acts concerning the crippled man at the Temple gate who looked for alms from Peter and John. It is also the word used to describe the good works of Cornelius who, according to tradition, may have been the one who built a synagogue for the Jews at Capernaum. It is closely related to the word translated *almsdeeds* used with *good works* to describe the deeds of Dorcas who, through Peter’s prayers, was raised from the dead. In the light of this definition, how should the term “alms” be reflected in Christianity today?

4. In Luke 21:1-4, Christ commended the poor widow who gave her all. But we must be financially responsible in providing for our own needs and for the needs of those in our care. In light of this, how much should we be willing to give?

5. In considering giving, it is good to think about the blessings God has bestowed on our lives. List here some of the gifts you have received from the Lord, both material and spiritual.

6. Using this list, what things can you give benevolently?

7. The problems in our everyday world range from poverty, hunger, and criminal activities to illness, wars, etc. What is the Christian's responsibility in doing something about these problems? How can an individual help?

8. In your own words, write out the verse given in Matthew 6:3 and explain what it means.

Fasting and Prayer

TEXT: Matthew 6:5-8,16-18; 17:14-21

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 58:1-11

KEY VERSE: Therefore also now, saith the LORD, Turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning. — Joel 2:12

Fasting is the abstaining from or giving up of one's food for a period of time, for the purpose of humbling oneself before God with a spiritual burden or request. It is usually accompanied by earnest prayer. Jesus brought out the need for prayer and fasting in the account in Matthew 17:21 when His disciples were unable to heal a father's sick son.

1. What did God say about the value of fasting and making our voices heard by Him in prayer if the lives we live before others are not consistent with God's Word? See Isaiah 58:3-7.

2. What was Jesus' attitude toward prayer and fasting when it was done to be seen of men?

3. The questions of when and why we should fast can best be approached by considering some Biblical examples of circumstances where fasting was necessary in order to bring about an answer to an urgent need. Describe the circumstances brought out in the following Scriptures, identifying the petitioner, the need, and the results in answer to their fasting:

Ezra 8:21-23,31

Nehemiah 1:4-11; 2:1-6

Esther 4:15-17; 5:1-3

4. Sometimes stressful circumstances reveal to us the need for a time of prayer and fasting. Are there other times we should fast? What instructions did Jesus give His disciples, both by word and example, as to when and why they should fast? See Matthew 9:14,15 and 17:21.

5. What action will Satan take when we purpose to pray and fast before the Lord for some special need? See Daniel 10:3,12,13.

6. How did Job feel concerning the importance of food during the time of his great trial? See Job 23:12.

7. Does fasting and prayer guarantee that a person will receive the desires of his heart? Explain your answer.

8. Read Acts 13:2,3 and Acts 14:23, two instances when the Early Church fasted and prayed before the Lord. What was the purpose of these fastings, and what were the results?

Heavenly Investment

TEXT: Matthew 6:19-21; Luke 12:13-21

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURE: Matthew 13:44-46

KEY VERSE: Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. — Colossians 3:2

Solomon in his wisdom sought for “that good for the sons of men, which they should do under the heaven all the days of their life.” He proved that earthly treasures did not satisfy (Ecclesiastes 2:3-11). Jesus Christ teaches us about the true investment: “Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven . . . for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Matthew 6:20,21). In a comparison of these two values, the person who is honest will recognize the need to choose the heavenly investment.

1. Name several things that in your consideration would be counted as earthly treasures. Then go back through your list and underline the items which are absolutely necessary to sustain physical life.

2. In the course of time, what could happen to each of the treasures you listed?

3. Earthly treasures are expected to bring happiness to the one who has them. While they may seem to bring contentment for a time, why does this eventually not work out? See Ecclesiastes 5:10.

4. What are some of the items you would include in a list of heavenly treasures?

5. If money cannot buy heavenly treasures (1 Peter 1:18), how does one invest in these important things? See Malachi 3:16,17; John 14:1-3; 1 Peter 1:19.

6. In Luke 12:17, what did the rich man think was his problem? How did the rich man propose to solve his problem?

7. What was the rich man's real problem?

8. Jesus drew a parallel between the rich man and the one who is not rich toward God. He said the rich man was a fool, and "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." Why do you think Jesus said that?

9. Explain the meaning of our key verse.

Worldly Care and God's Providence

TEXT: Matthew 6:25-34; 2 Kings 4:1-7

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES: Isaiah 43:1,2; Philippians 4:6,7,19

KEY VERSE: But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. — Matthew 6:33

As we travel through life, we are called upon to make decisions as to whether we will put our faith and trust in God, or become absorbed in the cares of this life. If we choose God, He will take care of our necessities. In 1 Peter 5:7 we learn that we can cast all our care upon God because He cares for us.

1. In your own words, tell what is meant by the verse in our text which says, "Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?"

2. Matthew 6:26 indicates that God provides for the fowls of the air, even though they do not sow or reap. What question is asked in that same verse? Consider Isaiah 43:7 and John 3:16 as you answer that question.

3. Jesus tells us, in verse 28, to "consider the lilies of the field . . ." Why do you think He wanted us to focus on these seemingly simple things? What is important about the words, "they toil not, neither do they spin"?

4. Do you think the woman in our text (2 Kings 4) did a wise thing to come to Elisha with her problem?

Why?

5. The sons were required to borrow empty vessels from their neighbors. What spiritual attributes did they exhibit when they did this and how does this parallel our spiritual lives today?

6. What did God do to provide for the temporal needs of this family? Relate an instance from your own experience or knowledge where God provided for a need in a miraculous way.

7. Verse 31 of our text in Matthew tells us to “take no thought” of what we will eat, drink, or wear. What does that mean? What assurance can we find in verses 32 and 33?

8. As we consider Matthew 6:34, we can be assured that God does not condone a lazy, thoughtless, irresponsible attitude toward life. Read Proverbs 6:6-11, Ephesians 4:28, and 2 Thessalonians 3:10. What do these verses tell us about not neglecting hard work and earning a living?

Judging vs. Spiritual Evaluation

TEXT: Matthew 7:1-5,15-23; Romans 2:1-3

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES: Luke 6:37,41-45; 13:6-9

KEY VERSE: A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

— Matthew 7:18

Have you ever had a foreign object in your eye? It may have been very small, but it still hurt a lot, didn't it? Jesus warned us about looking for and trying to remove the mote from our brother's eye when we may have a beam in our own eye. Usually when a person sees too many things wrong with others, he has a serious "eye" problem. Judgment belongs to God. "I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings" (Jeremiah 17:10).

1. What is the meaning of the word *judge*? How is this word used in the context of Scripture?

2. Jesus strictly forbids judging others. Why do you think He did so?

3. In 1 Corinthians 11:31, we read that we can only judge ourselves. If we faithfully do this in the light of God's Word, we will escape the condemnation which the world will receive at the Judgment Seat of God. Another reason for self-examination is found in 2 Corinthians 13:5. What is it, and how do we judge ourselves?

4. While we are warned against judging others, the Bible does tell us, “by their fruits ye shall know them.”

We can judge ourselves because we have all the information, but we are limited by God’s Word to examining the fruit of another’s life. We need to be careful in our examination of others because we cannot see their motives or the circumstances involved. When might there be a need to be able to recognize the spiritual condition of others?

5. List the points of evaluation you feel should be used in examining the spiritual condition of another’s life.

6. How does the fruit of the Spirit or the lack of it displayed in one’s life indicate his spiritual condition?

See Galatians 5:22-26.

7. Think about it: If you subjected yourself to the same type of evaluation that you apply to others, how would you measure up?

Faith and Prayer

TEXT: Matthew 7:7-11; 9:27-30; 1 John 5:14,15

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES: Mark 11:24; 1 John 3:22

KEY VERSE: If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. — John 15:7

Prayer brings one into the presence of the highest, holiest, and most powerful Being in the universe.

Prayer not accompanied by faith is an exercise in futility (Hebrews 11:6). Faith embraces God's promise by action as well as by word. True faith and prayer cause the Spirit to make intercession for the petitioner, producing results in accord with the will of God.

1. What three words did Jesus use to encourage people to pray? How does each of these words apply to faith when we pray?

2. What results can be expected when following Jesus' directions?

3. What factor or element enters into successfully seeking for God? See Matthew 21:22. Has this factor always been an essential ingredient? Explain.

4. "Have faith in God," Jesus said in Mark 11:22. Where does faith come from? See Romans 10:17.

5. In our Matthew 9 text, Jesus asked the blind men, "Believe ye that I am able to do this?" Why do you think Jesus asked this question?

6. Read the account of the healing recorded in John 9. Jesus told the blind man: "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam." What part did faith play in this healing?

7. How can Christians be sure that they will receive an answer from God?

8. How are the promises in Mark 11:24 and 1 John 5:14,15 similar?

Golden Rule

TEXT: Matthew 7:12; Luke 6:31; Numbers 12:1-13

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES: Romans 13:10; Galatians 5:14

KEY VERSE: Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them. — Matthew 7:12

The commandment to love one another is the great principle that guides us in the life of discipleship. Our lesson today centers around the key verse which is often referred to as the Golden Rule. Practice of this principle will help us in business dealings, in our home life, and in all communication with others, for it underlies every personal relationship. In serving others, we serve ourselves, because people like to deal with those who believe in and practice the Golden Rule.

1. Write the definition of the word *rule*. How does it apply to our lesson?

2. A certain lawyer asked Jesus the question, "Which is the great commandment?" His answer is found in Matthew 22:37-40. What is the similarity between our lesson text and Jesus' answer?

3. Look up the following verses and compare each with the Golden Rule. Give an everyday situation which would be an example of each of these verses:

Proverbs 15:1

Romans 12:8

Romans 12:14

Romans 12:21

4. How did Aaron and Miriam violate the Golden Rule?

5. Explain how Moses' response to Aaron and Miriam was correct according to the Golden Rule. See Galatians 6:1.

6. Jesus is our example of One who lived by the Golden Rule. We are told that we should follow in His steps. How did He respond to being reviled and suffering at the hands of others? See 1 Peter 2:21-23.

7. How will the proper response to any type of action by our fellowmen mean the difference between victory and defeat?

8. Many feel that if they keep the Golden Rule, this qualifies them for Heaven. Give scriptural evidence to substantiate or refute this premise.

Thought Provoker: "When a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him." Proverbs 16:7

Two Ways

TEXT: Matthew 7:13,14; Deuteronomy 30:15-20; Psalm 1:1-6

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES: Psalm 37:1-11; Proverbs 14:12

KEY VERSE: Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat. — Matthew 7:13

There are but two ways—right and wrong, good and evil—the way to Heaven and the way to Hell. We are all walking in one way or the other; there is no middle way now and no middle place hereafter. The difference between the saint and sinner, the godly and ungodly, is revealed by the way in which they walk. The narrow way leads to life, and the broad way leads to destruction.

1. In Luke 13:24 Jesus encouraged His listeners to “strive to enter in at the strait [confined or narrow] gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.” Immediately preceding this statement, one had asked a question of the Lord. Write the question and explain Christ’s response.

2. Why is no sin allowed on the narrow way? Use Deuteronomy 25:16, Isaiah 59:2, and 1 John 3:8 to support your answer.

3. Galatians 5:19-21 lists characteristics found in the lives of those on the broad way. Identify three of these characteristics that you are aware of in the world today and be prepared to cite specific examples.

4. As we travel through life, there are many temptations that would draw us to the broad way. How can we best resist these allurements?

5. The first Psalm contrasts the two ways—godly versus ungodly. What is the delight of the godly, according to the Psalmist?

6. Staying in the right way will take effort. What can we do to improve the quality of our devotions?

7. According to Psalm 1:1, what three things are to be avoided by the one who wants to be blessed? State in your own words what these mean.

8. Moses set before the people a choice between life and good, and death and evil. Today, man is offered the same choice. If one decides he doesn't want either the narrow way or the broad way, what is his alternative?

House on the Rock

TEXT: Matthew 7:24-29; 1 Corinthians 3:9-15

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES: Romans 2:13; James 1:22-25

KEY VERSE: But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

— James 1:22

Christ's teaching regarding the importance of building on the Rock is a very plain statement. This comparison reveals that it is useless to call ourselves Christians unless we practice the things that Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount. The hearers of God's Word are divided into two classes: those who hear and respond to what they hear; and those who hear but ignore what they hear. In which class are you?

1. After reading Matthew 7:24-27, what similarities can you find in the two classes of hearers? What differences?

2. After comparing and contrasting the two types of hearers, what conclusion can you draw about people who attend church and hear the Word of God, but fail to respond?

3. To be a doer of Jesus' teachings includes abiding by the teachings of the whole Bible. Unfortunately, some teachings of the Bible are not received among Christians as they should be. They may be heard, but not acted upon. Name one or more teachings of the Bible that you think are neglected by some Christians.

4. The rains, floods, and winds come, and they prove what sort of foundation a life is built upon. Name some spiritual “storms” that may come into a life.

5. Christ Jesus is the Rock that has been provided for us to build upon. What is the starting point in building a solid Christian life?

6. What was the reaction of the people when Jesus finished the Sermon on the Mount? Why do you think this was so?

7. This past quarter we have studied some of the teachings of Jesus. Are we doing what He taught or have we only heard His words? Of the previous twelve lessons, which one has motivated you to be more of a doer in your spiritual life? Give a specific example.