NEW LIFE IN CHRIST



Volume 5

Living free
by knowing
the truth...

More biblical answers to common lies

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By knowing
The truth...

More biblical answers to common lies

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First English edition 2013 Copyright Mark Robinson
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March 30, 2014

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TEACHER'S GUIDE

1. We congratulate you for accepting the challenge of discipling new believers using New Life in Christ as your guide. The results of this study can produce eternal fruit.

2. Let the Bible always be your authority in answering the questions. The students should look up the Bible passages by themselves and try to answer the questions based on what the Bible says.

   Some new believers need a brief orientation on how to find the references in their Bibles.

3. This manual may be used in many different ways. In most cases, you will study one lesson a week, encouraging the student to do all the assignments in each lesson.

4. Try not to let your sessions get too long. Keep an eye on your audience's attention span.

5. Encourage the students to answer the questions in their own words. Avoid copying the Bible word for word. Using their own words will help them to analyze the meaning of the text being studied.

6. Avoid preaching. Use questions to discover what the students understand and to stimulate active participation.

7. Prepare well for each session. As the teacher, you should be familiar with the content and key concepts of each lesson.

   Your preparation should include prayer for your students and for your own heart.

8. Try to have the students think about the practical implications for their lives. Help them to understand specific, practical applications.

   Each lesson has sections marked by a STOP sign. These are designed for the students to stop and think about the implications of the lesson for their lives. Take time to meditate on these sections.

   The assignments in the boxes at the side of each lesson are designed for this purpose. Make use of them.

9. Help students cultivate the habit of prayer. Teach them by praying together with them.

10. It is important to understand that discipleship is much more than studying the lessons of New Life in Christ. Discipleship implies a life change for the disciple.

    This manual is just an initial aid in their growth. The students will need God's continued help to change their character, ways of thinking, habits, etc.

11. It is of the utmost importance that the students learn habits like daily Bible reading, prayer, and Scripture memorization.

    At the beginning of each lesson, take time to review the previous memory verse and ask how the daily Bible study is going. Do not scold students who have not completed some of the assignments, but be sure to encourage them to finish.

12 Be sensitive to what God is doing in each student's life. Take time out of each session to answer any questions they might have, or to help with problems in their personal life.

    Keep in mind that there are times when it is not possible to get to every question in the lesson because of time limitations. In these cases, choose the most important questions to discuss.



His truth shall be your shield and buckler.

Psalms 91:4

This book is dedicated to the study of some of the lies that the world and the devil use to confuse us.

We will look at topics like tolerance, hypocrisy, male chauvinism (machismo), the prosperity gospel and more...

Each lesson seeks to give biblical answers that will allow you to make choices that will lead to freedom.



Step 1
Don't Judge! Be Tolerant!

Answer TRUE (T) or FALSE (F)

_____ *I don't have the right to tell anyone else what they should do.*

_____ *The most important thing in life is to be tolerant of others.*

_____ *Judging others is a problem in today's world.*

THE LIE

This lie has several variations: • "*Jesus said don't judge, so who am I to criticize or tell others what to do?*" • *"I don't want to offend anyone."* • *"All the rules at church are just legalism."* • *"I don't like anyone to tell me what to do; I know how to run my own life."* We hear things like this often. Are they true? Or like most lies, are they halftruths?

JUDGING

1. What is the problem with judging others? Matthew 7:1-4 _____

   _____

   Think about your own mistakes before looking at the faults of others.

2. Does that mean that we should never be critical of what others say or do? Explain. _____

   _____

3. Is there a difference between judging, exhortation, and admonition? _____

   _____

   Judging seeks to criticize or condemn others, while exhortation and admonition seek to correct and restore them. While it is true that Jesus commanded us to not judge, in no way does this free us from the responsibility to exhort and admonish others in the faith. Volume 3 of *New Life in Christ* speaks about these subjects.

Tolerance

"In the world it is called Tolerance, but in hell it is called Despair, the sin that believes in nothing, cares for nothing, seeks to know nothing, interferes with nothing, enjoys nothing, hates nothing, finds purpose in nothing, lives for nothing, and remains alive because there is nothing for which it will die." Dorothy Sayers

Do you agree with this quote? Why or why not?

TOLERANCE

4. The kind of tolerance that is often taught today does not limit itself to being friendly and respectful of others. Instead, it has been converted into a doctrine, almost a religion. It affirms the idea that all beliefs are equally valid, so that no one has the right to examine other beliefs critically.

   Ironically this modern "tolerance" is a dogmatic belief system that is intolerant of any who dare to question it. It condemns, in the strongest terms, any proclamation of absolute or biblical truth. While it promotes the validity of all beliefs, it rejects biblical Christianity as antiquated and extremist.

5. Based on the following passages, what would you say to those who say, *"You should tolerate and never offend anyone."* Matt. 23:25-27 _____

   Titus 1:5, 9-13 _____

   _____

6. Do you ever have the right to tell anyone what to do? 2 Timothy 4:2-4 _____

   _____

THINK ABOUT IT

In previous generations people sought the truth and believed it could be found in the Bible.

Today many say that each one makes his own truth. They do not believe that absolute truth exists.

Today the emphasis is not on truth, but on tolerance, which has become the new "religion" of many.

The irony is that this new religion does not tolerate those who do not bow their knee to it or question its absolute dominance over the modern mind.

What do you think about the above statements?

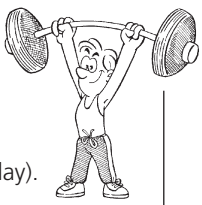
_____

_____

_____

_____

_____



GROWING STRONGER

Read Judges 1-7 (one chapter per day).

Memorize 2 Tim 4:2

"Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage with great patience and careful instruction." NIV

"Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching." NKJV

7. Read Galatians 6:1. How would you answer those who say, *"If you're my friend, you have to accept me as I am without judging me?"* _____

   _____

   Precisely because you are their friend, you need to speak the truth in love because you care about them and seek their restoration. You can't be indifferent to a friend's sin. Only someone who isn't a friend could say, *"I don't care about that. It's your problem."*

   Ephesians 4:25 "Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body."

CHECK YOUR ATTITUDE

8. What should your attitude be when dealing with someone who is in sin or with whom you disagree?

   Galatians 6:1 _____

   Ephesians 4:2 _____

   _____

   Colossians 3:12-13 _____

   _____

   Tolerance that accepts any kind of behavior is wrong. But that doesn't give us permission to be judgmental or unkind. God calls us to ***bear with one another***, being kind, gentle and humble because we also have many faults. In love we forgive so as not to become proud or bitter. We hate sin but love sinners.

LEGALISM

There is a false idea that any church with rules is legalistic. Yet how can we explain the fact that the New Testament is full of rules and prohibitions? Rules can help or hurt a church but true legalism is something else.

The legalist thinks he is better than others because he follows a set of rules he considers necessary to be spiritual. Like the Pharisees, he takes the attitude: *"Thank God, I'm not like them."* He measures his spirituality not by an inner righteousness, but rather by his ability to fulfill a list of external rules. Through self-effort, he produces an exterior appearance of holiness. He often believes that the best way to motivate others is by shaming them.

The problem is not the rules but the heart of the legalist who trusts in his own righteousness instead of depending on the Holy Spirit to produce a holy life. A spiritual Christian abstains from many things because they don't edify, not because abstinence will get him into heaven. He desires to have his inner life conformed to God's will. His way of motivating others is by challenging them to a holy life, not by shaming them.

TWO EXTREMES TO AVOID

- **Judging others:** Looks upon others with scorn. Lacks love land grace.
- **Permissive, tolerating anything:** Fears offending others, "Who am I to judge? " .

  Both extremes show a lack of love and an indifference towards others.

  Note: *Sometimes it is necessary to take a stand against evil. A church which tolerates sin cannot expect God's blessing because "...a little yeast leavens the whole batch" (1 Cor. 5:1-2, 6). To study more about church discipline see Matt. 18:15-17; Gal. 6:1-2; 2 Cor. 2:5-11; 2 Thess. 3:14-15; 1 Tim. 5:20; and Acts 5:11 in context.*



Step 2
I don't feel like a new creature

Answer TRUE (T) or FALSE (F)

_____ *If you don't feel like a new creature in Christ, you probably aren't.*

_____ *True liberty is being able to choose to become God's servant.*

_____ *To be dead to sin means that we are free to follow righteousness instead of sin.*

THE LIE



When they see their weaknesses, many Christians feel frustrated or discouraged. They ask, *"Why don't I feel special like when I first received Christ? Yes, I'm saved, but why do I keep on failing? I don't feel like a new creature."* There are two possible answers to these questions:

- It's possible that they were never born again. It is important to review their "conversion." Did they understand the gospel or was it just an emotion? Were they pressured to accept Christ?
- In this lesson we want to examine another possibility. It is possible that when a true believer looks at his faults, his emotions bring doubt about whether he is saved. Or if he knows that he is saved, he doubts that it will be possible to find the victory he seeks. *This lesson deals with the lie that says the our emotions are a good measurement of our spiritual condition*. It's better to see what the Bible says.

THE TRUTH

The problem with depending on emotions is that they aren't trustworthy. Whatever your emotions might be telling you, Romans 6 helps you sort things out and understand the truth about your position in Christ. Romans 6 has three key words which clear things up: **Know** (v. 3-10); **Consider** (v. 11); **Present/Offer yourself** (v. 12-14).

1. **KNOW.** When someone asked Paul in v. 1 if a Christian could go on sinning, what was his answer?

   _____

   What does it mean to be dead to sin? Keep on reading Romans 6.

2. Read verses 2-10. What words or concepts are repeated? _____

   _____

   Some say the baptism mentioned in v. 3-4 refers to water baptism; but that would imply that one is not saved until he is baptized. The Bible teaches that salvation is by faith alone, without works, including baptism. Others believe that these verses refer to the baptism of the Spirit that identifies us as members of the body of Christ when we are converted (1 Cor. 12:13). When we believe we are identified with Christ in his death, burial and resurrection. Water baptism symbolizes this death and resurrection to a new life

3. What should we **KNOW**? v. 5-6 _____

   _____

   STOP *Meditate on the significance of the word "if" in v. 5. Is it important? Why?*

4. What's the difference between KNOWING and **CONSIDERING** that we are dead to sin but alive to God? v. 11

   _____

   The word ***"consider"*** is key. If we believe that nothing has changed, then nothing will change. When we consider ourselves to be dead to sin and alive to God, we pass from theory to reality. We are saying, "I believe it's true because God says so!" This reflects a change of mindset, to see ourselves as God sees us. Knowledge without faith is of little value. I accept my position in Christ by faith, even when I don't feel it. I accept the finished work of Christ which makes it possible to be the new person God says I am.

IT'S A QUESTION OF THE MINDSET YOU HAVE.



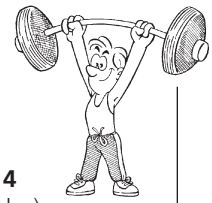
One can know all about new life but until he considers himself to be a new creature there will be no change.

There are many who believe the truth but live as if it were a lie.

This man has tuned into what God says about him...



He considers himself as dead to sin and alive to God even when his emotions tell him something else. He decides to present every part of his body to God on a moment by moment basis.



GROWING STRONGER

Read Judges 8-14
(one chapter per day).

Memorize Romans 6:11

"In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus." NIV

"Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord." NKJV



- *When someone says: "I don't feel like a new person," ask, "What is more reliable, how I feel or what God says?"*
- *Do you really consider yourself to be dead to sin and alive to God?*
- *How would your life change if every morning and evening your told yourself, "I consider myself dead to sin and alive to God, even in those moments when I don't feel it."*

5. **PRESENT YOURSELF** (NKJV) or **OFFER YOURSELF** (NVI):

   Verses 12-14 speak of the battle for your soul. Will you permit the evil desires of sin to rule your life, or is there an alternative? What are the two alternatives mentioned in v. 13? _____

   _____

6. Give examples of how we would present specific parts of our bodies to God.

   v. 13 _____

   _____



- *Think about times when you have presented some of the members of your body to sin.*
- *Write down on a separate sheet specific ways you desire to offer those same members to God as instruments of righteousness.*

7. What are the two alternatives mentioned in v. 16? _____

   _____

   So, are we slaves, or are we free? _____

   Contrary to popular belief, absolute freedom doesn't exist. We are always under the authority of another. It is impossible to be free from slavery to sin without previously submitting ourselves as slaves to a higher authority. To be free, we must submit ourselves as slaves to righteousness. The only freedom we have is to decide to whom we will submit ourselves. Of course, when we submit to and obey God, we will be free from the power of sin (v. 17).

8. What are the two types of fruit mentioned in the following verses?

   v. 21, 23 _____

   v. 22 _____

REVIEW

- **Know** that when we receive Christ, the old man dies and a new person is born.
- **Consider** ourselves dead to sin and alive to God. If not, then sin will continue to dominate our lives. We need to adopt a new mentality as to who we are. *Consider* means to believe that what God says is true, even when we don't feel it.
- **Present or offer** the members of our bodies to God and not to sin. We must decide what we will serve, sin or righteousness. Will we serve God or ourselves?

Prayer: Lord, you know that I still struggle with sin and at times doubt that it is possible to overcome it. While I do not fully understand, by faith I declare that I am dead to sin and that I don't have to obey it any more. I consider myself to be a new creature, even when I don't feel like it. I accept this by faith because you tell me it's true. *Lord, I offer my whole self to you. I give you my hands, mouth, feet, ears, and above all, my mind. I choose to submit myself to you moment by moment.*



Step 3
Hypocrites in the church

Answer TRUE (T) or FALSE (F)

_____ *All Christians are hypocrites.*

_____ *There is no such thing as a perfect church.*

_____ *There are people in church who aren't real believers.*

THE COMPLAINT

Some say, *"All Christians are hypocrites; they judge others yet do the same. Preachers use their position to control and exploit others, taking money from the poor while they live in luxury."* It is tragic that in some cases, these accusations are true. This type of hypocrisy is a huge stumbling block which gives some an excuse to reject God.

JESUS AND THE HYPOCRITES

1. Jesus confronted the Pharisees and teachers of the law in Matthew 23. What was the result of their hypocrisy? v. 13 _____. What is the hypocrite's main problem? v. 23, 28 _____

   They were careful to keep up appearances, while at the same time their hearts were full of evil. As a consequence, they lead others to evil and condemnation. The same thing occurs today when Christians don't live up to their faith.

   - Many flee the church because of hypocrisy. They reject Christ because they reject the "Christians" they know.
   - Others who are Christians fall into the same trap of hypocrisy due to the example they see in fellow believers.

2. Are there people who claim to serve God, yet are not even converted? Matthew 7:21-23 Yes ❑ No ❑
   How can we spot a real Christian? v. 21 _____

ARE ALL CHRISTIANS HYPOCRITES?

3. How should we respond to those who claim all of us are hypocrites? _____
   _____

   This is a half truth. In part they are right because all of us have acted hypocritically at times even though this is not our normal way of living. If we understand the that church is to be a hospital for sinners, it should not surprise us to find faults in those who are in the process of healing, just as we all are.

4. It's necessary to distinguish between hypocrites and Christians who occasionally sin.

   The Hypocrite: What is the lifestyle of the hypocrite? _____

   In public he pretends to be a Christian, but his lifestyle in private (and at times in public) is full of contradictions. He may not yet be converted. Others are believers, but they will be disciplined for their lifestyle.

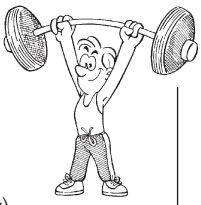
   The Sincere Christian: Check those that apply. ❑ Does not sin. ❑ Recognizes and confesses his sin.
   ❑ Believes he is better than others. ❑ Still battles with his sin nature. He is not perfect yet.
   ❑ Is a sinner saved by the grace of God who occasionally sins.

   The sincere Christian imitates Christ in public and in private. Even so, he is still a sinner saved by grace. When he fails, he admits his sin, asks forgiveness and continues onward. He is transparent, not covering up his defects, nor blaming others, or making excuses. Even the Apostle Peter fell into hypocrisy and had to be admonished by Paul (Galatians 2:11-14).

TESTIMONY OF GOD'S GRACE

John Newton was an evil man, captain of a slave ship during the 18th century. In spite of his overwhelming sinfulness, he was redeemed by the grace of God and later wrote the famous hymn "Amazing Grace." Meditate on his words:

"I am not what I ought to be,
I am not what I want to be,
I am not what I hope to be
in another world;
but still I am not what
I once used to be, and
by the grace of God
I am what I am."



GROWING STRONGER

Read Judges 15-21
(one chapter per day).

Memorize Matthew 6:1

"Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven." NIV

"Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven." NKJV

THOUGHTS FOR SINCERE CHRISTIANS

5. Read the quote from John Newton in the side column. What was he trying to say? _____

   _____

6. What is Christ's invitation in Matthew 11:28? _____

   _____

   The church is not for the perfect, but for the weak, like a rehab center that helps those suffering from spiritual disease. We should not be surprised to find weakness in the church, rather it should motivate us towards grace and compassion for we know that we ourselves are in need of God's grace.

7. What's the purpose of meeting together with other believers? Heb. 10:24-25

   _____

8. What things did the first Christians do? Acts 2:42, 46-47 _____

   _____

9. What identifies someone as a true child of God? John 13:34-35

   _____

10. *Steps for sincere Christians:*
    - Make sure you follow Christ and not men. Doing this, you will not become discouraged when others fail.
    - Examine yourself and confess your sin. Don't be a stumbling block to others.
    - Denounce hypocrisy. Combat it with teaching, exhortation, and discipline.
    - Don't be intimidated by accusations of hypocrisy. Use them as an occasion to examine yourself, confess, and continue on. Don't let guilt paralyze you. When you see hypocrisy, look at faithful Christians, not the hypocrites. Meditate on the heroes of the faith who lived in a world surrounded by sin.
    - Depend on the Spirit to produce his fruit and eliminate the works of the flesh. Galatians 5:16-22
    - How do others see you? Ask them to speak truth into your life.



We need to guard our testimony. What kind of a message are you sending?
❏ *My life attracts people to Christ* ❏ *Sometimes I'm a stumbling block.*
Has anyone ever called you a hypocrite? Explain.

Warning for those who reject church because "it is full of hypocrites."

For Christians:

- Will your problems go away if you leave the church? Be honest. If you think the world offers something better, you might be in for a bitter surprise.
- Focus on Christ, not other people.
- Don't reject the message because of the messenger. The truth is still the truth, even if others fail.
- There have always been and always will be hypocrites in the church, yet that does not excuse your unfaithfulness. If you are cold towards the Lord, the problem is not with others but with yourself. Beware! Don't let the devil deceive you by blaming others.

For those who don't believe:

- Look at Christ, not people. Yes, there are hypocrites in the church, but Christ isn't one of them.
- Watch out, you could end up spending eternity with some of these hypocrites.
- What is the real reason for your resistance? Is it really the hypocrisy of others, or is it just that you don't want to submit to Christ's rule in your life? John 3:19-20
- Christ offers you forgiveness, eternal life, and a better life. The decision is yours alone, don't let others' faults steer you onto the wrong path. Don't reject the message because of the messenger.



Step 4
Machismo (male chauvinism)

Answer TRUE (T) or FALSE (F)

_____ *The man's role is to dominate women.*

_____ *To be a man is not so much a privilege as a responsibility.*

_____ *The main job of a husband is to love his wife.*

WHO IS THE REAL MAN?

Compare the two columns and mark which of the characteristics belong to real men. Compare the characteristic in the left hand column with the opposite on the right. A real man is...

- ❑ Is tough and never cries.
- ❑ Does not depend on anyone except himself.
- ❑ Looks at women as inferior.
- ❑ Jealous, and controlling towards his wife.
- ❑ Climaxes quickly during sex, leaving his wife unsatisfied.
- ❑ Is a heavy drinker.
- ❑ Is a womanizer.
- ❑ Uses women as the object of his jokes.
- ❑ Is resentful and seeks vengeance.
- ❑ Doesn't stand up to injustices, keeps quiet.
- ❑ Follows the crowd.
- ❑ Makes all the family decisions.
- ❑ Is proud and egotistical.
- ❑ Mistreats or batters his wife.
- ❑ Blames others for his problems.
- ❑ Lies to get ahead or to win.
- ❑ Is bossy, controlling.



- ❑ Is strong yet tender; knows how to express his feelings.
- ❑ Asks for help when he needs it. He's humble.
- ❑ Respects women as being of equal value.
- ❑ Trusts his wife to make her own decisions.
- ❑ Takes the time to satisfy his wife during sex.
- ❑ Is self controlled and knows when to stop.
- ❑ Is capable of loving and being faithful to one woman.
- ❑ Controls his tongue and defends women.
- ❑ Forgives his enemies.
- ❑ Speaks up to confront evil.
- ❑ Swims against the current when necessary.
- ❑ Is wise and seeks his wife's input and opinion.
- ❑ Is humble and knows how to serve others.
- ❑ Is considerate and hates abuse and violence.
- ❑ Accepts his own responsibility and asks forgiveness.
- ❑ Always speaks the truth, even when it hurts or is costly.
- ❑ Encourages others to develop and take the initiative.

The machista (chauvinist) is egotistical and shows an attitude of superiority, especially in relation to women. Sadly, many men are pathetic failures who have abandoned their responsibilities and wander purposelessly, controlling and abusing. They are alone, without love, worthy of pity instead of admiration.

Men, you might object that you aren't as bad as that. Perhaps not, but it is important to realize that chauvinistic attitudes have subtly penetrated our culture, without us realizing it. Stop being defensive and listen to the Word of God. May this lesson help you to see if your attitudes are worthy of a Christian man.

A REAL MAN IS STRONG YET GENTLE

Jesus was strong: Chasing vendors out of the temple, confronting the Pharisees, and suffering abuse and the pain of the crucifixion without complaint. ***Yet, he wept*** when Lazarus died, spent time with children, healed the sick, respected women, felt compassion for the multitudes, and on the cross asked his Father to forgive his tormentors.

1. How is the bravery and steadfastness of Paul revealed in 2 Cor. 11:23-27? _____
   _____ Yet, his concern was for others, not himself (v. 28-29).
   He was tough, yet what lifestyle did he recommend to believers? Colossians 3:12-13 _____
   _____
   How did he treat others? 1 Thessalonians 2:7-8 _____

RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP IN LOVE

2. When a man reads Ephesians 5:22-28, 33, does he see it from a different point of view than a woman does? Explain. _____

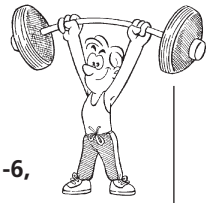


Does helping his wife with household chores make him less of a man?

THINK ABOUT IT

What do you think about the following statements?

- *Be protective, but not possessive.*
- *Jealousy is the best way to poison a relationship. The man who tries to control her so as not to lose her is destined to lose her.*
- *Women need to hear continuously that their spouses love them. There are many ways to do this but one of the best is simply to say, "I love you."*
- *Machismo is obviously a problem in our society. Does it exist in the Christian community too? Can you give examples?*



GROWING STRONGER

Read 1 Timothy 1-6, Philemon
(one chapter per day).

Memorize Ephesians 5:25

"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her" NIV

"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her." NKJV

3. What does Ephesians 5:21 say to both men and women? _____

   _____

4. What is the command for men in vv. 25 and 28? _____

   How should he love his wife? v. 25 _____

5. What does it mean to be the head of the woman? Eph. 5:23-24 See below.

   What it is: To be the head is not so much a privilege as it is a responsibility. It implies responsible and loving leadership. It means to love her as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her (v. 25-26). The husband sacrifices himself for his wife. His love builds her up, honors her, and gives her preference. (Phil. 2:3-4).

   He is a servant who guides his family towards righteousness. If he is wise, he listens to his wife and delegates responsibility to her. They work together, instead of competing against each other.

   What it is not: It is not competition or a pretext to dominate her, crush her, or manipulate her, but rather to guide her. He is not dictatorial *(I'm in charge here)*, nor egotistical *(Everyone must serve me).* He does not consider her incapable, inferior, or of less worth (see Prov. 31:10-31). He doesn't invalidate her opinions or her emotions, nor does he make all the decisions or control everything.

6. In your opinion, what percentage of men are real leaders in their homes? _____% Many men limit themselves to paying the bills. The chauvinist isn't a leader in disciplining or raising the children, nor in protecting his wife's feelings or in defending the home from evil influences. He has everything backwards, wanting privileges without responsibilities. Few men are true leaders for good in their homes.

7. If a husband is a responsible leader who treats his wife like Christ loves the church, will it be difficult for her to submit to him or follow his lead?

   _____

STOP ***Husbands:***

- *Review the two columns on the previous page to identify areas your thinking is confused regarding the meaning of true masculinity.*
- *Ask your wife to review question 5 and get her opinion. Listen with humility to what she says. Be careful not to control her answers.*
- *Are there changes that you need to make? Write them on a separate sheet.*

Wives:

- *Machismo isn't just a problem for men, but for women too. By tradition, many women accept this as a valid lifestyle for the men in their lives and even teach their children to follow this anti-biblical model. Meditate on your own views about this subject.*
- *Share your feelings with your spouse about the list at the beginning of the lesson. Share how you feel being his wife, good or bad?*
- *Nagging is counterproductive. It produces antagonism instead of cooperation.*

Both: *Be careful. The reason for this study is not to cause conflict or competition in your home. The goal is that each one admit, confess, and repent of their errors, seeking to love their spouse as God commands. Remember, the command of Ephesians 5:21 is that both* ***submit to one another.***



Step 5

Real Men

Answer TRUE (T) or FALSE (F)

_____ *Women are more fragile and need to be treated with consideration and respect.*

_____ *The most important thing for women is to have nice clothes and sex.*

_____ *A wise man listens to his wife and takes her ideas into account.*

HOW TO TREAT A WOMEN

1. Husbands _____ your wives and don't be _____ with them. Colossians 3:19

2. Make a list of six concrete ways that a husband could show love towards his wife. If you are a woman, write down six ways that you would like for your husband to show you his love.
   - _____
   - _____
   - _____
   - _____
   - _____
   - _____

3. Why is the warning in Colossians 3:19 necessary? _____
   _____

4. How does 1 Peter 3:7 contradict the *machista* viewpoint? _____
   _____

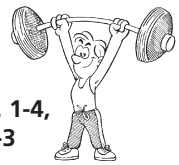
5. Write down three ways to treat your wife with consideration and understanding.
   _____
   _____
   _____

6. What does it mean that the wife is a heir together with her husband of the grace of life? 1 Peter 3:7 _____
   _____

7. What things are necessary to have a healthy relationship between a man and a woman? 1 Peter 3:8 _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

8. If both husbands and wives put into practice what 1 Peter 3:9 says, how would it affect their relationship? _____
   _____
   _____

GROWING STRONGER



Read 2 Tim. 1-4, 1 Samuel 1-3

Memorize 1 Peter 3:7

"Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers." NIV

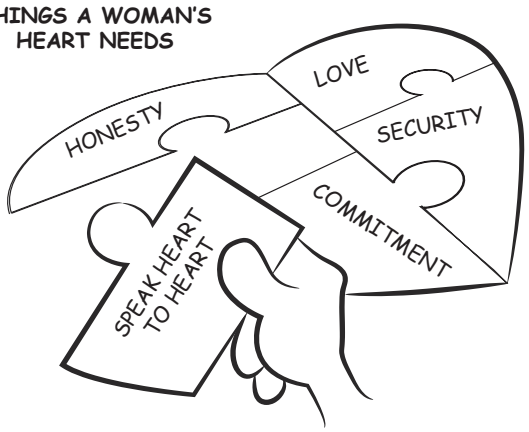
"Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered." NKJ

9. Many men would say that what is most important for their wives is, a house, food, clothes, and sex. What would women say is most important? _____

_____

In reality, a woman needs much more.
There are at least five basic things she needs:

- Love, tenderness and respect.
- To speak heart to heart.
- Honesty and transparency. Don't keep secrets.
- Security: physical, emotional, economic and spiritual.
- Commitment - She needs to know that he values her and is committed to maintain a healthy relationship.



STOP ***Checkup for men:***

Are you fulfilling these 5 basic need of your wife? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Sit down with her and ask her what her needs are. Listen without interrupting. Don't be on the defensive if you hear something you don't like. Do you need to make changes? ❑ Yes ❑ No What changes do you need to make?

_____

On a separate sheet make a practical plan of the changes you need to make and how you will make them.

THE PRICE OF BEING A MACHO



The machista brings suffering to others, especially to women, but he too falls victim to his twisted way of thinking. A man might think of himself as "the man," but suffer great losses, for example:

- He knows that he is not as tough as he acts. He says he doesn't cry, but on the inside, behind his mask, yes, he cries.
- He finds it hard to express his emotions. His emotions are frozen.
- Since he does not admit that he needs others or affection, he distances himself emotionally from his family and other significant relationships. He's alone.
- He looks for love and acceptance in the wrong places.
- He is unwilling to admit his need for God and therefore lives separated from Him.
- When he is confronted with personal problems, he flees, finding refuge in his "friends," television, sports, work, reading, alcohol, an affair, etc.
- He refuses to accept responsibility for his problems, choosing to blame others or bad luck. Therefore he will never find a real solution.
- He lives confused about who he is and why he is here.
- Jealousy is a way to cover his insecurities. Jealousy limits the possibility of having normal relationships based on love and trust.
- His lack of success in life leaves him depressed, angry, and bitter.

WHEN A WOMAN IS EMOTIONAL

- She needs your understanding and sympathy instead of offering her solutions.
- She needs to know that her man is listening to her.
- Most men want to offer solutions too quickly.

What should the man do?

- Listen. Don't talk.
- Listen. Don`t offer advice.
- Listen and take her in your arms.



- Listen. There will be time to talk later.

10. Men, as you think about the price the machista pays, which of the consequences mentioned above have you seen in your life? _____

_____

_____

Seek advice from your pastor or a mature friend. At times it might be helpful to seek professional counseling.



Partners or competitors?

Step 6

The Modern Woman

Answer TRUE (T) or FALSE (F)

_____ *A woman who submits to her husband will lose her own identity.*

_____ *Submission means to obey without expressing your own feelings or opinions.*

_____ *Modern women need to claim their rights because men are very machista.*

THE CONTROVERSY

There are many points of view regarding the role of women. Traditionally the ideal woman was considered to be pure, long-suffering, passive and a martyr who sacrificed for her family. The traditional woman was defined more by her role as mother than as a wife. Her identity revolved around her family. In contrast the concept of the modern woman is one who is liberated and independent. She defends her rights, controls her own destiny, and has her own life independent of that of her husband and her home. Which of these represents the role the Bible lays out for women? Or is there another?

WOMEN AS VIEWED IN THE BIBLE

1. Read Proverbs 31:11-31 and underline in your Bible key phrases that describe a woman of virtue. Then on a separate sheet write down the characteristics that most caught your attention.

2. What can a woman do if she wants to be praised? v.30 _____

3. Is the woman described in Proverbs 31 passive or weak? Why? _____

   _____

4. How can a wife win her husband for Christ? 1 Peter 3:1-2 _____

5. What does 1 Peter 3:4-6 say about the way a godly woman dresses? _____

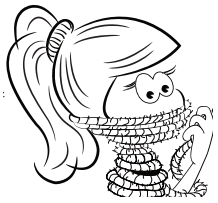
   _____

   What makes a woman beautiful? _____

6. When v. 7 describes the woman as "weaker," does it mean she is inferior? What does it mean? _____

   _____

7. What is the command in Ephesians 5:22-24? _____ v. 33 _____



What submission is not:

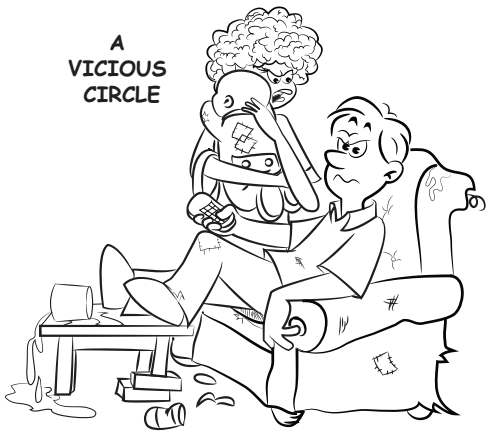
• Submission is not to be forced. She herself decides to submit, not out of fear but to obey God and bring harmony to the home. Force does not bring submission but slavery; and the life of both husband and wife will be full of frustration and bitterness.

- It does not mean she is inferior or of lesser value.
- It does not prevent her from thinking for herself or from expressing her own ideas, needs, and feelings.
- It is not a license for the husband to be abusive. The Bible commands the husband to love his wife as Christ loves us. Mistreatment will begin a cycle of conflict and complaint that will affect the whole family negatively.
- It does not mean she is to be passive, like a rug for everyone to walk on (including her kids). Neither is she obligated to sin in order to please or obey her husband.

How submission works:

- According to Ephesians 5:21, submission is mutual. The man also submits to her. (1 Peter. 3:7 and Phil. 2: 3-4)
- Submission permits both to work together as equals, not as competitors, seeking the good of the whole family. Both win because this allows the family to live in peace as they seek to resolve conflict instead of provoking it.
- If the husband loves his wife as Christ loved the Church, it will be easy for her to submit; both will be equal partners. If he treats her badly, it will be much harder for her to submit.
- Men need to assume leadership for their homes and delegate responsibilities. While many men believe they are in charge, it is often the woman who is forced to carry most of the load.
- Submission encourages him to treat her with respect. The Golden Rule is based on mutual respect. (Matt. 7:12)

8. **A VICIOUS CIRCLE**



Since he doesn't lead, she complains and he responds with anger or by withdrawing. She complains even more, causing him to withdraw more. Nobody wins.

What happens if the husband doesn't respect her, doesn't assume leadership in the home, or is irresponsible? She gets frustrated and resorts to complaining and criticism to get what she needs. She takes the reins, and the man, in anger, withdraws into passivity. The more she complains, the more he withdraws, so she complains more and more. It's a vicious circle.

Although they won't admit it, few men really lead in their homes. They leave many of the most important things to the wife, like child rearing, planning, etc. Many men want the privileges without taking on the responsibilities of leadership. They want submissive wives, but their passivity forces their wives to take the reins. Then, men complain that their wives are too bossy.

Have you seen this in your home? _____

9. What does Proverbs 21:9 and Proverbs 27:15-16 say about the effects of constant complaining? _____

_____

Complaining is counterproductive and only produces more conflict, more withdrawal, or more verbal, emotional or physical abuse. Even so, abuse by a spouse is never justified. Each one is responsible for his or her own actions.

10. What can the wife do to break this vicious circle when she feels disrespected? Ephesians 4:25 tells us to put off _____ and speak _____ to our neighbors, for we are _____.
It's necessary for women to speak the truth in love (Eph 4:24-32). Many wives believe that submission requires them to keep silent, pretending that everything is fine. But keeping silent in the face of an unacceptable situation isn't submission, it's lying. They need to understand that they have the right to express their feelings and needs. If they don't speak out, they will only become more and more frustrated until they explode and start the vicious cycle again.

11. Ephesians 4:29 warns us to avoid unwholesome talk, like the kind that causes family disputes. What kinds of words should we use? _____

12. What does Ephesians 4:31-32 say that would help bring peace to our homes?
v. 31 _____
v. 32 _____

13. On which of the three things mentioned in v. 32 do you need to focus your attention?
_____

"The woman was made of a rib out of the side of Adam; not made out of his head to rule over him, nor out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved."
Matthew Henry

GROWING STRONGER



Read
1 Sam. 4-10

Memorize
Proverbs 31:30

"Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised." NIV

"Charm is deceitful and beauty is passing, but a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised." NKJV

Finding a balance (read and discuss the following points).

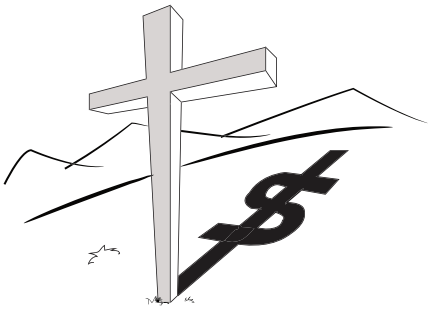
- Even as she submits, she needs to learn to speak up and set limits. With respect, she should tell her spouse and kids what she needs and expect them to help around the house. With appropriate words she may be able to motivate them to take more responsibility at home.
- A wise woman takes care of herself. If not, she will be frustrated and bitter and there will be conflict in the home. She needs friends with whom she can share, especially wise and mature women. She needs to set aside time for the things that she likes, take care of her health, etc.



- A wise man will listen to his wife; if not, there will be more conflict.
- A husband must defend his wife and teach the children to respect her. Meanwhile, she should not allow disrespect. If she does, she will be sowing the seed of machismo in her sons and daughters.

13. Read Proverbs 14:1. List things that will build up your home.
_____
and things that will destroy it. _____
_____

STOP *Answer on a separate sheet: How do you want your family to remember you?*



Step 7

The Gospel and Prosperity

Answer TRUE (T) or FALSE (F)

_____ *God's will for every believer is to be prosperous and healthy.*

_____ *Poverty is a sign of lack of faith.*

_____ *God warns us to guard against greed because there are many other things more important than money.*

THE DEBATE

Today many proclaim a new interpretation of the gospel which says that God's will for every believer is prosperity. They believe that health and wealth are the rights of every believer and evidence of God's favor. They consider sickness and poverty to be curses that no believer need suffer. This message appeals to many because we all want to live well.

They say that prosperity comes through faith and giving to the ministries of those who teach this new gospel. The more one gives the more prosperous he will be. They speak about money continuously and link God's blessings to the offerings one gives, almost as if it were an investment with guaranteed results. One of them has said:

"Give $10 and receive $1000; give $1000 and receive $100,000... Give one house and get one hundred houses back, or one house worth one hundred times as much... In short, Mark 10:30 is a very good deal." (Gloria Copeland, *God's Will Is Prosperity* , p. 171)

They have their own definition of faith, sometimes called *"Name It, Claim it"* or *"Word of Faith."* They say faith is a force which is activated by the spoken word. When a person declares with his mouth and believes in the desired result, everything that he claims will come to pass. For them, faith is not so much based on the promises of God's word as on what one desires and believes he will receive from God. If one's prayers are not answered, they would say it is due to a lack of faith or because of sin in his life. They do not use the phrase *"If it be your will"* because they claim to already know what God's will is. Many emphasize prophetic utterances.

Is this prosperity gospel the same that was preached by Christ and the Apostles? Does God really promise health and wealth to every believer? What does the Bible say?

THE FOCUS OF THE GOSPEL PREACHED IN THE BIBLE.

1. What was the focus of the gospel that the apostles preached? Did it emphasize the interior life of the believer (holiness) or their material prosperity and health? The following verses are typical of apostolic teaching. Summarize the main thoughts in each passage.

   Colossians 1:21-22 _____

   _____

   Col. 3:1-3 _____

   _____

   Col. 3:5 _____

   Col. 3:12-13 _____

   The focus here is on leaving sin in order to seek holiness, where the inner spiritual life predominates over the exterior life. Although those who teach prosperity would not deny this, their preaching and practices communicate something else, emphasizing the material over all else, so that even many non-believers scoff at this unbalanced and unbiblical approach.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT MATERIAL GOODS?

Since so many ministries speak of prosperity, let's see if this is the biblical focus. What does the Bible say about riches and prosperity?

2. What does Matthew 6:19-21 say about material possessions? _____

   _____

   v. 24 _____



GROWING STRONGER

Read
1 Samuel 11-17
(one chapter per day).

Memorize
Luke 12:15

"Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions." NIV

"Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses." NKJV

Jesus didn't encourage his disciples to seek riches. He warned against pursuing them. To those who sought his kingdom first, he promised to provide their basic necessities like food and clothing, but he never promised wealth. Matt 6:25-34

3. Why should we guard against greed? Luke 12:15 _____
   _____ (See the parable that follows in verses 16-21.)

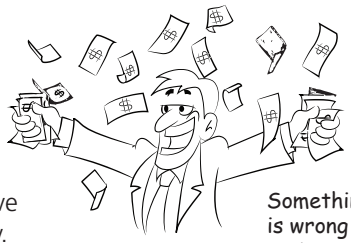
4. Jesus warned, *"The worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word..." Mt. 13:22 He also said, "it's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God." Matt. 19:24*
   What did Jesus say when someone wanted to follow him? Matthew 8:19-20 _____
   _____

5. Some think that *"Godliness is a means to financial gain"* (1 Timothy 6:5). Summarize Paul's attitude towards material possessions and suffering. 1 Timothy 6:6-8 _____
   _____
   v. 9-10 _____
   Philippians 4:11-13 _____
   4:19 _____
   Paul never sought prosperity, instead he learned to be content whatever his circumstances, whether he had plenty or whether he was in need. He was satisfied just by having clothes on his back and something to eat. He warned that the love of money enslaves, calling it the root of all evil (1 Tim. 6:10).

6. *If poverty signals a lack of faith, how can we explain the fact that Lazarus the beggar, instead of the rich man, is presented as an example of a man blessed by God? Poverty is not necessarily a sign of a deficient spiritual life.*

DRAWING CONCLUSIONS:

7. After thinking about these passages, meditate on the following:
   - If prosperity is so important, why didn't Jesus and the apostles emphasize it more?
   - The New Testament never presents prosperity as a priority, or as something to seek after; but the epistles are full of advice on how to attain an inner life that is holy.
   - The New Testament warns against the dangers of materialism. It is impossible to serve God and riches. Riches are temporary, and yet they have entangled and ruined many.
   - The emphasis on prosperity can easily become a selfish gospel that appeals to greed. It emphasizes the material over the spiritual, the exterior instead of the interior.
   - The Christian life is a mixture of good and hard times; suffering is part of it. God isn't against prosperity. At times he blesses in abundance, but wealth was never Jesus' nor the apostle's main enfasis.



Something is wrong if you begin to see God as your ATM machine.

8. Galatians 1:9 says *"If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let them be under God's curse!"* Thinking about what we have learned in this lesson, is the prosperity gospel ***another gospel?*** _____
   _____

SO HOW SHOULD WE LIVE? Learn to be content.

9. Where should we focus our attention? 2 Corinthians 4:17-18 _____
   Colossians 3:2 adds, "Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things." The material is secondary.

10. In James 1:9, what is the advice given to the poor? _____
    In v. 9-10 what is the advice for the rich? _____
    Riches don't last. In addition, materialism can cause the rich to forget that, like the poor, the only thing they can really be proud about is their glorious position in Christ.

11. What does Hebrews 13:5-6 say about contentment? _____
    _____

STOP *Check your attitude: Are you able to be content like Paul whether you have much or little?*



Step 8

Prosperity... Part 2

Answer TRUE (T) or FALSE (F)

_____ *My faith is a force that can change my reality.*

_____ *There are programs on Christian television that should be of concern to any believer who knows his Bible and thinks for himself.*

_____ *God has said that his power is made perfect in weakness.*

FAITH

The Bible gives many examples of men of faith, but one of the most well known is Abraham. By faith he believed that God would give him a son when he was 100 years old, and by faith he was willing to sacrifice that son, Isaac, in obedience to God's command.

1. In Romans 4:20-22, what is the main characteristic of Abraham's faith? _____

   _____

   He pleased God because he was convinced that God would do what he had promised.

2. Where does faith come from? Romans 10:17 _____

   Biblical faith is always based on the Word of God and its promises. He who says, "I believe because the Bible says..." is depositing his confidence in the Bible, not in his own desires and beliefs. The one that says, *"I believe, therefore I know God will do it,"* bases his faith on what he himself feels, wants, or believes instead of what God has promised. *One is Bible centered, the other, man centered.*

THE ROLE OF FAITH IN THE PROSPERITY GOSPEL

The prosperity gospel presents a very different concept of faith that some refer to as ***"the Word of Faith"*** or ***"Name it and claim it."*** Its proponents define faith as a force that has the power to change things. They say that when one declares with his mouth what he believes in faith, his ***words*** have power. One of their preachers explains it like this:

> *"You speak the desired result and do not doubt in your heart. You believe that your words have power, and the things you say will come to pass. The result is that you can have whatever you say when you believe."* (Kenneth Copeland, *The Force of Faith*, p. 21)

> *"You should only speak words you want to come to pass and believe they will produce results. By getting into the Word of God and continually feeding on it so faith controls our vocabulary, you can come to the place where all your words will come to pass. When your words are words of faith, God will be able to trust you with His power in the words of your mouth. What you speak, good or bad, is what you will receive."* (*The Force of Faith*, p. 22)

As you can see the emphasis is not on a concrete promise from the Bible, but rather on one's conviction of a desired result. It is common to hear phrases like, *"I declare it... in the name of Jesus."* Now think: Isn't it a bit presumptuous to claim something will happen if we do not have a specific promise from God?

While they claim to base their faith on the Word, what if their interpretation of the Word is in error? Dreams and prophecies are not on the same level as a direct promise from the Bible. One could be mistaken so it is important to test these revelations before putting all our faith in them.

Based on 1 Peter 2:24, *"by his wounds you have been healed,"* many conclude that the death of Christ guarantees healing of all physical infirmities. However, if we examine this passage in its context, we see that it is not speaking about material healing, but rather about the forgiveness of sin, in order to live in justice. Claiming that God's will is to heal all sickness is based on a doubtful interpretation of 1 Peter 2:24.

GROWING STRONGER



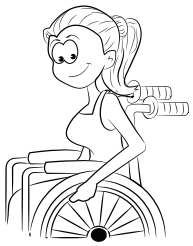
Read
1 Samuel 18-24,
one chapter each day.

Memorize
Romans 4:20-21

"Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised." NIV

"He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform." NKJ

By faith I had declared victory over my illness... So why was I still in my wheel chair?



Now I have learned to be content in whatever situation because God tells me: "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness."

WHAT SHOULD A LEADER BE LIKE?

Read the following passages and jot down on a separate piece of paper what they say about biblical leadership:

1 Peter 5:2-3
2 Peter 2:2
1 Timothy 3:2-4
Titus 1:7
John 13:13-15



HEALING FOR ALL?

Of course God heals, but is there a biblical base to assure us that His will for **all believers in all cases** is to be healed? If that is so, how can we explain the following passages?

1 Timothy 5:23 Paul told Timothy: "Stop drinking only water, and use a little wine because of your stomach and your frequent illnesses."

2 Corinthians 12:7-9 "Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me."

In 2 Timothy 4:20 Paul said, "... and I left Trophimus sick in Miletus."

ABUSIVE LEADERSHIP IN THE PROSPERITY MOVEMENT

Some things that are seen in churches, Christian television or radio programs should concern any believer who knows his Bible and thinks for himself. Read and discuss the following list to see if you believe that some of these abuses are occuring today:

- Many small churches suffer economically because their members give much of their offerings to certain mega churches or popular radio and television ministries.
- Many prosperity preachers live in luxury at the expense of sincere but much poorer believers.
- Their focus is not in accord with the biblical teaching about riches. While they emphasize riches, Luke 12:15 says *"Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions."*
- Although they claim biblical backing for their luxurious lifestyle, their way of interpreting Scripture is confusing, verses taken out of context, prophetic revelations, etc., all to justify what seems to be just plain old materialism. They ignore clear passages about the dangers of riches, and warnings about using religion as a way to enrich themselves. All prophecy should be tested and should never contradict scripture.
- Their "gospel" is not working. In spite of being people of great faith and sincerity, many of their followers continue to be poor or sick. To justify the lack of results, many leaders blame the poor and sick, saying their problems stem from a lack of faith or from sin in their lives.
- It seems like many leaders have hypnotized their followers with their personal magnetism. Claiming to live by faith, they rely more on their charisma to convince and motivate people. Many use intimidation and fear as well as appealing to people's desires for a better life.
- Few followers of this movement know their Bibles well. They tend to trust what the preacher says, without thinking for themselves or asking if the teaching is biblical or not. Those with doubts often fear to question the teaching because this type of leader does not like to have his authority questioned. He considers himself to be "God's anointed."
- God commands believer's to work "that they may have something to share with those in need" (Eph. 4:28). In many ministries the emphasis is on asking the poor for money instead of giving to the poor.
- In many cases there is a notable lack of humility and gentleness in the way leaders treat their followers. It is hard to say that most are following the exhortation of 1 Peter 5:2-3: *"Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them... eager to serve...not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock."*
- Many give the impression that giving offerings to their ministries is the only way to see one's prayers answered or be liberated from a problem. Does God only work in response to the offerings given (the bigger, the better)? It reminds one of the ancient practice of selling indulgences.
- They criticize those who pray *"Lord if it is your will..."* They say that this is an excuse not to pray in faith. This is probably true in some cases, but none of us can claim to know all the will of God for each person. That would be presumptuous. 1 John 5:14-15.

PAUL: EXAMPLE OF A HEALTHY MINISTER.

- 1 Thessalonians 2:5-7 *"You know we never used flattery, nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed—God is our witness. We were not looking for praise from people, not from you or anyone else, even though as apostles of Christ we could have asserted our authority. Instead, we were like young children among you. Just as a nursing mother cares for her children..."*
- 2 Corinthians 6:4, 10 *"Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses... sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything."*
- 2 Corinthians 2:17 "Unlike so many, we do not peddle the word of God for profit. On the contrary, in Christ we speak before God with sincerity, as those sent from God."
- Is it possible that Matthew 7:22-23 speaks of some of these prosperity preachers when it says, "Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'"



Are your sufficiently alert to detect these abuses? Study your Bible. Think for yourself.



Step 9
Am I Still Saved?

Answer TRUE (T) or FALSE (F)

_____ *My assurance of eternal life depends on my faithfulness to God.*

_____ *Believing that I cannot loose my salvation gives me a license to sin.*

_____ *There are many "Christians" who live in sin, but they never really understood the gospel. They were never saved.*

THE DEBATE

Do you know someone who made a profession of faith, walked with the Lord, but then went astray? Is he still saved or has he lost his salvation? Or on a more personal note, are you a sincere believer who lives in fear and frustration because you have not yet attained what you consider to be a holy life? Do you fear that you might have lost your salvation or that you could lose it? The evangelical church is divided on this point. Some believe that it is possible to lose your salvation, while others say it is not. Is this something important to discuss, or is it just a minor doctrinal issue? Of course, it must be discussed. Is there anything more important than knowing where you will spend eternity? There are **two errors** that have caused confusion and controversy:

A cheap gospel

Some, believing that they cannot loose their salvation, fall into a life of sin. Their attitude is, "I've got my ticket to heaven; now I can do as I please." This shows one of two things. Either these "believers" never understood the gospel and therefore never had eternal life or they are ignorant of what the grace of God is all about. They have confused liberty in Christ with license to sin. The Apostle Paul warned against this attitude in Romans 6:1-6, *"Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?"*

Living in fear and uncertainty

Although some use the idea that they can lose their salvation as a motive for holy living, others go far beyond that. Some churches manipulate believers by using fear. Believers in these churches are always trying to please their church and God by following a list of "Do's and Don´ts." This system tramples grace by replacing it with human effort. In other words, while we are saved by grace, not works, they believe that in order to stay saved, we must meet certain requirements (works). The Christian life turns into an effort to continue to deserve salvation.



It doesn't matter what the opinion of the author of *New Life in Christ* is or any other well-intentioned believer, or even that of a well-known preacher; the only thing that matters is what God says.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

1. Are all those who claim to be Christians saved? Matthew 7:21-23 _____

   Which of the following ***assures*** us that someone is truly a Christian?

   ❏ Attends church. ❏ Raised their hand in an evangelistic service. ❏ Gained victory over drugs and alcohol.
   ❏ Reads the Bible. ❏ Felt sorry for their sin. ❏ Was baptized. ❏ Teaches a Sunday School class.
   ❏ Tithes faithfully. ❏ Speaks in tongues. ❏ Helps the poor. ❏ Is a sincere person.
   ❏ Has repented of sin and believed on Christ, accepting him as his one and only sufficient Savior.

2. A key question is: *Does my salvation depend on my works or the finished work of Christ on the cross?*

   _____

3. What is the only requirement for salvation? John 1:12; John 3:16, Eph. 2:8-9 _____

   Many believe with their heads but not with their hearts. How could you explain to someone what it means to "receive" or "believe" in Christ? _____

   _____

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THE FOLLOWING?

Someone said, *"I have been in churches that believe you cannot lose your salvation and others that believe you can. I feel doubly blessed. If it cannot be lost, I have the security of heaven. If it can be lost, this motivates me to live in holiness."*

Do you agree with this? Why?

That which should motivate us to holiness is: ❑ Fear
❑ Thankfulness

WHAT PLACE DO WORKS PLAY IN SALVATION?

Read Ephesians 2:8-9. Although the Bible teaches clearly that salvation is **by** grace through faith without works, it also teaches in v. 10 that we were saved **for** good works. This is not a contradiction. The one and only **means** to be saved is by faith. The **result** of being saved is a changed life characterized by good works.

Let's stop the indifference towards sin. We are saved to live in holiness. At the same time, we are saved to live securely because our eternal destiny has already been decided. We live in the liberty of grace. There is nothing we can do to deserve salvation, nor can we continue to deserve it. Our only hope is the finished work of Christ.

GROWING STRONGER



Read 1 Samuel 25-31
(one chapter each day)

Memorize John 5:24

"Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life." NIV

"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life. NKJV

4. Salvation is called *"eternal life"*. Does it begin, now or when we get to heaven? John 5:24? _____
   Although it seems obvious, *eternal* means without end. Is it possible that we could have it today and lose it at a future date? _____

5. According to Ephesians 1:13-14, each believer has been sealed with the Holy Spirit. This guarantees that we are marked as God's eternal possession.
   When are we sealed? v. 13 _____
   Until when are we sealed? v. 14 _____
   _____
   The Spirit is a down payment to guarantee our inheritance until the final redemption. Please note: ***It is the Holy Spirit who guarantees salvation, not the believer with his good works.***

6. When you read John 10:27-30, does it bring confidence or fear in regards to the security of your soul? _____
   Note: Be careful not to vaccinate people against the gospel with a superficial presentation of the gospel, making them believe they are saved when they are not. Many so-called "believers" have never understood grace. When we evangelize, we need to be clear so as to avoid the errors mentioned in questions 1 and 2. We are ***saved*** by grace and ***preserved*** by grace.

BE CAREFUL

7. As we have noted, having eternal life is not a license to sin. What can we say about those who say they are Christians but continue to live in sin?
   - *Perhaps they were never true Christians, but instead had fooled themselves and others. They might not have understood the gospel and truly believed.*
   - *If truly converted, they are carnal Christians. They continue to be God's children, but are not experiencing the benefits of daily communion with God.*
   - *They will be subject to God's discipline in order to bring them back into fellowship with God. Hebrews 12:5-11.*
   - *They will lose their rewards at the judgment seat of Christ. 1 Cor. 3:11-15*

8. Read 1 Corinthians 3:11-15 carefully. What about good works? The works of each believer will be judged at the judgement seat of Christ. This judgment is not to determine if they are saved or not, but rather to give rewards. They will be rewarded for works done in the power of the Spirit (gold, silver, and precious stones). Works done in the flesh (human effort) will be burned up like wood, hay, and straw, even if they were "good" things.

9. Is it possible to "serve God" and not receive rewards? ❑ Yes ❑ No
   What reward will a Sunday School teacher receive who teaches with a bad attitude or out of pride? v. 15 _____

10. What does v. 15 say about believers who build their Christian lives on their own efforts? _____
    Will they be saved? _____ What will they lose? _____

STOP *Are you sure where you will spend eternity? Why or why not?*
Who does your eternal destiny depend on?
Are you trusting in Christ alone or on your ability to be faithful?



Step 10
I Have Questions Before I Receive Christ

Answer TRUE (T) or FALSE (F)

_____ *It's better to wait until I have my life in order before I come to Christ.*

_____ *If I accept Christ I will live a good but boring life.*

_____ *There's no rush. There is plenty of time to receive Christ.*

COMMON DOUBTS AND OBSTACLES

There are always questions that come up when we present the gospel. Some say that these unanswered questions are keeping them from making a decision. In some cases they have sincere doubts. In other cases they are just excuses people use when they are confronted with the need to make a decision for Christ. Below we list some of these questions and their biblical answers.

"I'm afraid of what my friends or family will say."

1. There are times when a new believer is rejected by his friends or even his family because of his faith. Give examples. _____

2. How do the following verses help someone who is afraid of what others will say about his new faith?
   Mark 8:36 _____
   We could paraphrase it this way, *What's the point in having my friend's approval if I lose my own soul?*
   Psalm 27:10 _____
   Hebrews 13:5-6 _____

3. One fears he will lose his friends; but are there some friends that we would be better off losing? Why?
   _____

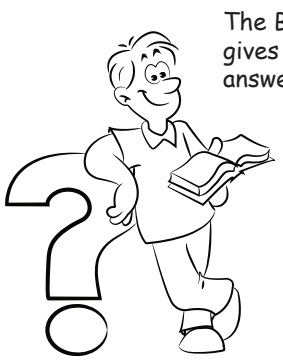
4. If a friend does not respect you when you say no to the things you used to do, is he a real friend? Why?
   _____

5. What do the following passages say about the possibility of finding new friends in Christ?
   Ephesians 2:19 _____
   1 John 1:3, 7 _____

"I'm afraid I won't be able to follow through and be faithful. I don't want to play games with God."

Is it necessary to straighten out your life before coming to God? Or should you come to him first, asking his help to change what you are unable to change? If you wait until all is "fixed," will you ever come to Christ? No.

6. How do the following verses help those who are afraid of not being able to be faithful?
   Philippians 4:13 _____
   1 John 1:9; 2:1-2 _____
   1 Corinthians 10:13 _____



TO DO

Do you believe that some of these obstacles are keeping some of your friends from accepting Christ?

_____

Which obstacles are bothering them?

_____

_____

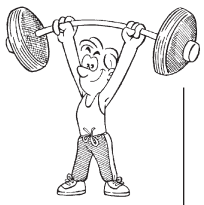
_____

Pray, asking God to give you an opportunity to share with your friends. Write down the names of some with whom you hope to talk.

_____

_____

_____



GROWING STRONGER

Read Mark 1-8
(one chapter each day)

Memorize Mark 8:36

"What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? NIV

"For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?" NKJV

1 John 4:4 _____

The beautiful thing about the Christian life is that it isn't for the perfect but for sinners saved by God's grace. This is exactly why God has made provision to forgive your sins when you fall. He also promises a way to escape in every temptation.

"I'll have to stop having fun and live a boring life."

How clever is the devil to make us believe that the world offers us more then Christ! Not only does the world offer parties, friends, money, influence, lovers, but much more...whatever we want. But this "wide path" that is popular among so many leads to destruction and frustration (Matt. 7:13-14).

7. You need to ask if your present life is really as "happy" as you believe.
   What are the things you fear losing? _____

   _____

   Be honest, have these things really made you happy? Are you at peace?

   _____

8. Is being a Christian boring or sad?
   John 10:10b _____
   1 John 1:4 _____

9. Galatians 5:19-23 compares the works of the flesh with those of the Spirit.
   Which lifestyle will make you happier? _____
   Which one do you want? _____

   _____

"It will cost me too much to become a Christian." *(Similar to the previous).*

10. How do the following verses answer this doubt?
    Mark 8:36 _____
    Matthew 6:19 _____
    Matthew 6:33 _____

"I think it's best to wait. There is still time."

11. How secure is the future? Is there any guarantee that there will be an opportunity tomorrow? Proverbs 27:1 _____

12. Why not wait? 2 Corinthians 6:2 _____

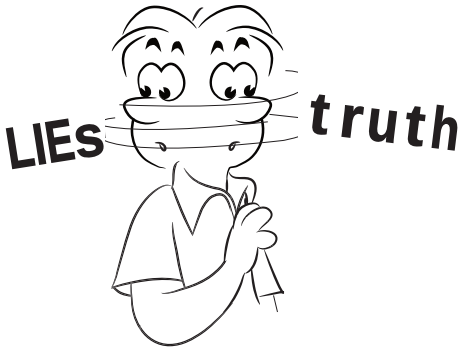
    _____

13. Psalm 95:7-8 warns against _____

14. What is Christ doing? Revelation 3:20 _____

    _____

    What answer will you give to Christ today? _____



Step 11
Now What?
The Truth or Lies?

Answer TRUE (T) or FALSE (F)

_____ *It's difficult to find the truth but perhaps if I study and ask a lot of people I might find it after a long time.*

_____ *The truth is my defense against the forces of the devil.*

_____ *It's important to study the Bible but it is a bit tedious and boring.*

THE TRUTH AND THE WORLD

1. What kind of a reaction can one expect from the world when he lives as God commands? Why? I Cor. 1:18

   _____

   What will happen to human wisdom? v. 19 _____

   STOP *What the world calls "truth" is really a dead-end street that only leads to loss. In contrast, the gospel changes both your life now and your eternal destiny. So why worry about what others say?*

2. Read Romans 1:21-25. What does it say about those who reject the truth in favor of lies? v. 21 _____

   _____

   v. 22, They thought they were _____ but were really _____. Does this happen today? _____

   Give an example _____

   v. 25, They exchanged the _____ of God for _____, and worshiped _____

   instead of the _____. Explain in your own words the meaning of this verse: _____

   _____

   The lie leads to idolatry. We have a type of modern idolatry today which will be discussed in question 5.

4. Isaiah 44:16-20 comments on human wisdom. It describes how a man cuts down a tree.

   He uses part of the wood for _____ v.16

   What does he do with what is left over? _____ v.17

   What does Isaiah conclude in v. 18? _____

   In v. 20? _____

   It would be comical if it weren't so tragic. Without biblical truth, one is blind and lost.

5. Looking at what Isaiah says about idolatry, it would be easy to say, *What fools they are to think that a piece of carved wood could help them*. Today many still worship images, but there is also a modern idolatry that bows to material things like money, sex, beauty, education, music and entertainers, sports, power, religion, having the latest "stuff," etc. Even good things like work and family can crowd God out of our lives.

   What are some of the things that have become "idols" in your life: _____

   _____

TRUTH AND FALSE TEACHERS IN THE CHURCH

6. What will happen in later times? 1 Timothy 4:1-3 _____



7. What will false teachers look like when they come?
   Matthew 7:15 _____
   2 Corinthians 11:13-15 _____

8. What does Luke 6:26 say about popularity? _____
   _____

9. Have you encountered false teachers in churches? Explain. _____
   _____

10. What tools do we have to test those who teach us today? _____
    _____

11. In your opinion, what percentage of believers today know their Bibles well enough to be able to distinguish between truth and error in their church? _____ %

"Bread gained by deceit is sweet to a man, but afterward his mouth will be filled with gravel." Proverbs 20:17

"Blessed is that man who makes the Lord his trust, And does not respect the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies." Psalm 40:4

HAVING THE RIGHT ATTITUDE

12. Do you think that by reading the Bible we all acquire understanding and wisdom automatically? Yes ❑ No ❑
    What is needed to accurately understand the Word? Psalm 119:18
    _____
    Since God is the one who opens the eyes of understanding, our attitude should be, *"Here I am Lord, listening and waiting to hear from you."*

13. What attitude do we see reflected in Psalm 119:28-30 when the author was passing through difficult times? _____
    _____

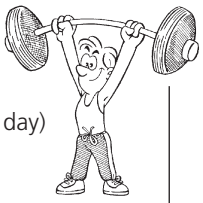
A CHALLENGE UPON FINISHING VOL. 4 & 5*: The battle for your mind.*

In these two manuals (Volumes 4 and 5) we have examined common lies and responded with biblical answers. The goal is not to memorize an answer to each lie, but to learn to think biblically, examining everything from God's point of view. To do this you need to spend time in the Scriptures, permitting them to flood your thinking. This is the only way to discern between truth and error. The battle is won or lost in the mind.

- *How has this manual and the previous (Vol. 4) helped you?*
- *Do you feel intimidated when people scoff at your faith?*
- *What are you doing to be able to think biblically?*
- *Do you have a time set apart each day to be with God, praying and filling yourself with his Word? If not begin today. See Vol. 1, Step 8 of NLIC. Sign below to indicate your desire:*

  I purpose to set aside at least 30 minutes each day to be with God. I will do it at _____ (time) and in _____ (place).
  _____ Signature

GROWING STRONGER



Read Mark 9-16
(one chapter each day)

Memorize
Proverbs 20:17

"Bread gained by deceit is sweet to a man, but afterward his mouth will be filled with gravel." NKJV

"Food gained by fraud tastes sweet, but one ends up with a mouth full of gravel." NIV

Appendix 1

Cut on the lines. Carry these cards with you and memorize the verses.

Mark 8:36 Step 10

"What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? NIV

"For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?" NKJ

Luke 12:15 Step 7

"Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions." NIV

"Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses." NKJV

Ephesians 5:25 Step 4

"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her" NIV

"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her." NKJV

2 Timothy 4:2 Step 1

"Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage with great patience and careful instruction." NIV

"Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching." NKJV

Proverbs 20:17 Step 11

"Bread gained by deceit is sweet to a man, But afterward his mouth will be filled with gravel." NKJV

"Food gained by fraud tastes sweet, but one ends up with a mouth full of gravel." NIV

Romans 4:20-21 Step 8

"Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. " NVI

"He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, 21 and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform." NKJ

1 Peter 3:7 Step 5

"Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers." NIV

"Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered." NKJV

Romans 6:11 Step 2

"In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus." NIV

"Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord." NKJV

John 5:24 Step 9

"Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life." NIV

"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.

Proverbs 31:30 Step 6

"Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.." NIV

"Charm is deceitful and beauty is passing, but a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised." NKJV

Matthew 6:1 Step 3

"Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.." NIV

"Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven." NKJV

Certificate

Presented to

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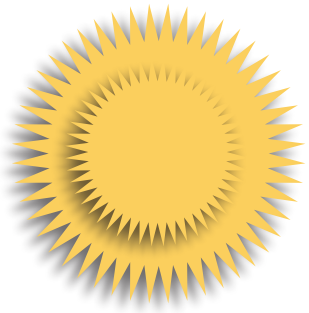
who has satisfactorily completed all the lessons of the course

New Life in Christ Volume 5

Living free by knowing the truth...

More Biblical answers to common lies

"He shall cover you with His feathers,
And under His wings you shall take refuge;
His truth shall be your shield and buckler." Psalm 91:4



_____ _____

Pastor or teacher Date



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