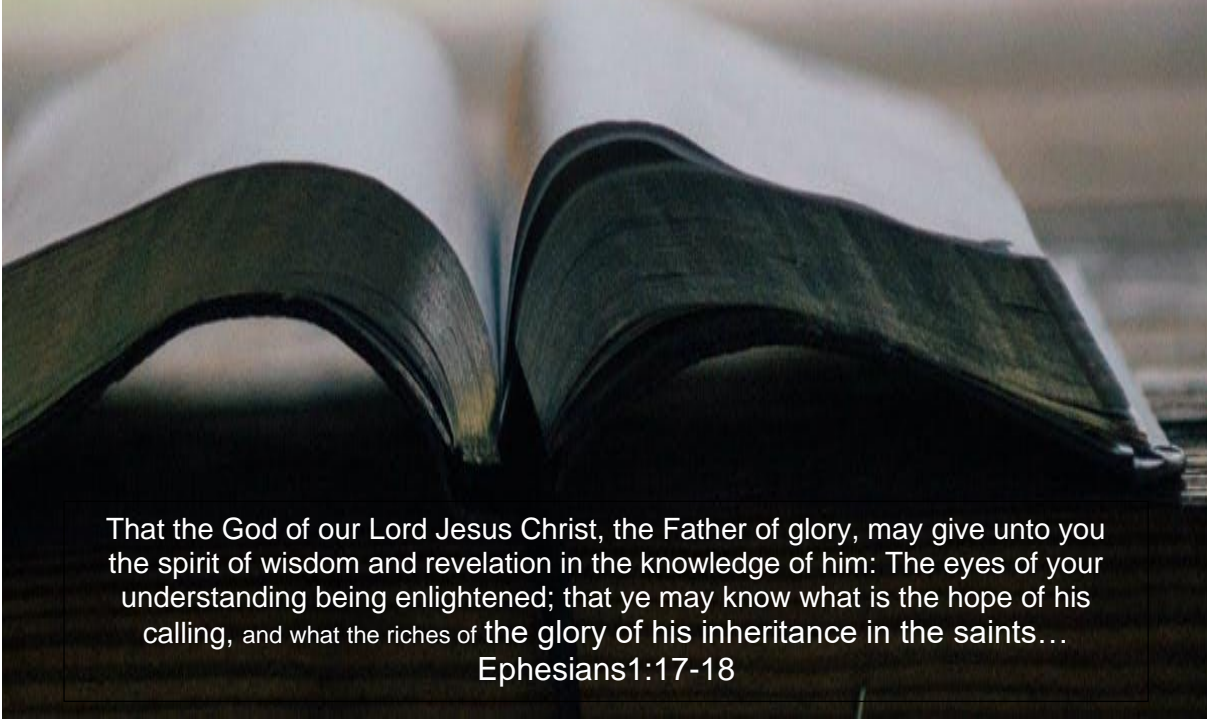


# The Mysteries of GOD'S CHURCH



That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints...

Ephesians 1:17-18

**OUR IDENTITY | OUR WALK | OUR WARFARE**

# Syllabus March-May 2020

## MARCH 2020

Date	Lesson
3	1: SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS IN CHRIST #1-3
<b>*Saturday-April 4 -Saturday Morning Prayer 8am-9am</b>	
10	1: SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS IN CHRIST #4-7
17	2: GOD'S PICTURE OF THE NATURAL MAN #1-6
24	2: GOD'S PICTURE OF THE NATURAL MAN #7-12
30-April 4	Sabbath Week

## APRIL 2020

Date	Lesson
<b>*Saturday-April 4 -Saturday Morning Prayer 8am-9am</b>	
7	3:BROUGHT NEAR BY THE BLOOD #1-3
12	3:BROUGHT NEAR BY THE BLOOD #4-7
19	4:7 TRUTHS ABOUT THE CHURCH #1-3
26	4:7 TRUTHS ABOUT THE CHURCH #4-7

## MAY 2020

<b>*Saturday-May 2 -Saturday Morning Prayer 8am-9am</b>	
Date	Lesson
5	5:LIVING WORTHILY # 1-2(2)
12	5:LIVING WORTHILY # 2(2)-3
19	6:GIFTS FROM THE ASCENDED LORD #1-3
26	6:GIFTS FROM THE ASCENDED LORD #4-5
<b>*Possibly on Conference Call</b>	

## LESSON 1 SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS IN CHRIST (Scripture Portion: Ephesians I: 1 - 14)

The apostle Paul spent three years in Ephesus (Acts 19; and 20: 17-38), and as a result of his ministry a church was established in that city. Ten years later, from his prison in Rome, Paul wrote this Letter and sent it by Tychicus to the Christians there. Ephesians is a thrilling book because it tells us how we (or anyone) can become a Christian and how God wants us to live the Christian life. Chapters 1 – 3 tell us of our *Wealth in Christ*, and chapters 4 – 6 tell us of our *Walk in Christ*.

The Key Verse to the first three chapters is 1: 3, which introduces the theme of this first study. In the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, God has made over to the believer His whole estate of spiritual wealth. Without Christ, and apart from Him, we have nothing, we are nothing and we can do nothing (John 15: 5); but, as believers, God says to us – Luke 15: 31. How rich we are – yet how few of us realise our true wealth and “possess our inheritance” (Obadiah 17)! God has made His Son the source of all spiritual blessing, and the moment we receive Him as Saviour and Lord all the blessings which are in Him become ours. What are these blessings which are ours in Christ and which we need to appropriate and enjoy? Verses 4 -14 mention seven.

- 1. We have been CHOSEN in Christ before the Creation of the World (verse 4).** This is the great truth of Election. How wonderful that God should select us to be His very own! Notice when He chose us and why He chose us – compare John 15: 16 and I Peter 1:15-16. What a marvel of sovereign grace this is! Our salvation was certainly no after-thought in the mind of God; the whole plan was conceived in eternity past. Believer, do you ever wonder whether after all you will be saved? Read and rest upon verse 4, cast away your doubts forever – and look up John 6: 37-39.
- 2. We have been PREDESTINED unto the Adoption of Children (verses 4/5).** This word “predestine” means “to mark out beforehand”. In eternity God not only chose us but He planned what He would do with us. Election looks backward and tells us we were chosen (verse 4); predestination looks forward and tells us why we were chosen (verse 5). God’s purpose in choosing us is that we should be brought into His family and given the full status and privileges of sonship. Think of it – we who were lost and enemies have been chosen to be sons, members of the Royal Family of Heaven! – look up 1 John 3: 1-3, and compare Romans 8: 18, 19 and 23.
- 3. We have been ACCEPTED in the Beloved (verse 6).** This means that whereas God could never accept us in our sinful, unregenerate condition, yet once we trust Christ as our Saviour He does accept us in Him – compare Isaiah 64: 6 with Ephesians I: 6. This should banish all my doubts. If I look at my sinful self I doubt at once, but if I fix my eyes on Jesus (Hebrews 12: 2), in whom I am accepted, my doubts vanish, because God has accepted the perfect life and the finished work of His Son, and it is in Him that I find my acceptance.
- 4. We have been REDEEMED and all our sins have been forgiven (verse 7).** To redeem is to buy back, to release by ransom – look up 1 Peter 1: 18-19. We were “sold as a slave to sin” (Romans 7: 14), and we have been “bought at a price” (1 Corinthians 6: 20); and not only this, we have been forgiven - look up Isaiah 44: 22-23; Psalm 103: 12 and Luke 7: 47. God has not only made us His own, but He has made us fit to live with Him for ever. How has He done this? - “by His blood”; that is, by the sacrifice and atoning work of the Lord Jesus - look up Matthew 20: 28, and compare 2 Corinthians 5: 21 with Hebrews 9: 12; 1 Peter 1: 18 and 2: 24 and Revelation 1: 5-6.
- 5. We have been INITIATED into the Divine Mystery (verses 8 to 10).** This word “mystery” refers to truth which was once undisclosed but which God has now revealed. The particular “disclosure” referred to in verse 10 is that everything is moving towards the glorious consummation of all things, when Philippians 2: 10-11 will be a reality. Where has God made known unto us the mystery of His will (verse 9)? In His Word, which is “the word of the prophets made more certain” (2 Peter 1: 19). There we have God’s glorious plan for the future, until time is no more and the saved are with Him for all eternity.
- 6. We have obtained an INHERITANCE (verse 11).** In Christ we have everything we need for time and for eternity (verse 11) - look up 1 Peter 1: 4, and compare Romans 8: 17 and 32; 1 Corinthians 3: 21-23; 2 Timothy 2: 12 and Revelation 5: 10. Inheritance speaks of riches, wealth, possessions - and how rich we are in Him! Verse 14 tells us that we already have the guarantee of our inheritance. The Holy Spirit within us is the pledge that one day we shall enter into all that which already belongs to us in Christ - look up Ephesians 4: 30 and compare John 14: 16-17.
- 7. We have been SEALED with the Holy Spirit of Promise (verses 13 and 14).** This divine sealing denotes ownership and security; we belong to Him and we shall always belong to Him! – we have been sealed “unto the journey’s end” (Ephesians 4: 30).

These spiritual blessings belong to every Christian. They are only ours if we are “in Christ” (verse 3); if, having *heard* the gospel (verse 13), we have *believed* (verse 13).

# NOTES:

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## LESSON 2 | GOD'S PICTURE OF THE NATURAL MAN (Scripture Portion: Ephesians 2: 1-12)

The Bible, God's inspired Word (2 Timothy 3: 16), is a picture book, a kind of family album of the human race. The pictures in God's album are true to life; they are not touched-up, and therefore they are sometimes very uncomplimentary. By "the natural man" we mean the man who is not a Christian, who has never been born again, and who is described in Ephesians 2: 3 by the words "by nature..." - compare 1 Corinthians 2: 14. In this study we are to look at God's photograph of fallen humanity, of every man and woman who is not a Christian, and of ourselves, apart from the grace of God and the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. But before looking at God's life-sized portrait of ourselves in Ephesians 2, notice the following pictures of the "natural man" in Genesis 6: 5; Psalm 14: 2-3; Isaiah 1: 5-6 and Isaiah 64: 6; Jeremiah 17: 9; Matthew 15: 18-20 and Romans 1: 21-32. When we turn to Ephesians 2: 1-12, we see what we were like before we were saved and what we are like now apart from the Lord Jesus.

- 1. The Natural Man is "dead in transgressions and sins" (verse 1).** Compare Genesis 3: 15-17 with Romans 5: 12; then look up John 5: 24 and 40; 1 John 3: 14 and 5: 11-12; and compare Ephesians 4: 18. Physical death is the separation of the body from the soul; spiritual death is the separation of the soul from God, and by nature we are all spiritually dead.
- 2. The Natural Man walks "according to the ways of this world" (verse 2).** That is, his conduct is according to the trend of the age in which he lives. The unregenerate person lives according to the standards of this world – with regard, for example, to his attitude towards sin, pleasures, dress, desires - look up Matthew 7: 13-14, and compare Psalm 1.
- 3. The Natural Man follows "the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient" (verse 2).** In other words, by nature he is controlled by Satan. Our first parents listened to the lie of Satan, and when they yielded to him they became dominated by him - look up Genesis 3: 1-13; and we are likewise under the control of the Enemy of souls. Satan is a real person whose domain is the air, and he is tremendously active - look up 1 John 5: 19.
- 4. The Natural Man is a child "of disobedience" (verse 2).** Our first parents disobeyed God, and we have inherited their fallen nature; consequently our natural tendency is to disobey the Lord - look up Psalm 51 :5, which tells us that by nature our tendency is to commit sin.
- 5. The Natural Man wants to gratify the cravings of his sinful nature and to follow its desires and thoughts (verse 3).** The word "craving" does not necessarily refer to that which is revolting and impure, but to that which we naturally desire, and because we are spiritually dead and controlled by Satan our desires are fleshly, perverted, often sensual. Notice the words "sinful nature" in verse 3, and look up Romans 7: 18 and 8:8.
- 6. The Natural Man is a child "of wrath" (verse 3).** This means that by nature men and women are condemned and are under sentence of death. Look up the following references and notice how forcibly this truth is brought out: - John 3: 18-19 and 3: 36; and Romans 1: 18-20. How solemn this is! Everyone who is not a Christian is condemned already and is under the wrath of God.
- 7. The Natural Man is "separate from Christ" (verse 12).** See what the Lord Jesus said in John 14: 6. What a solemn thing it is to be "separate from Christ"! Millions around the world today are without Christ, the only Saviour of men - look up Acts 4: 12 and 1 Timothy 2: 5-6.
- 8. The Natural Man is "excluded from citizenship" (verse 12).** To be unregenerate is to be a poor wandering outcast, a spiritually displaced person; it is to have no country, no Heavenly Home (John 14: 1-30) and this is the position of everyone who is not a Christian.
- 9. The Natural Man is a "foreigner" (verse 12).** A foreigner has no claim whatsoever upon God. Only those who are related to God through faith in Christ Jesus and who are therefore members of His family have any claim on Him at all - compare Matthew 22: 11-13 and Luke 13: 25-26.
- 10. The Natural Man is "without hope" (verse 12).** He is helpless, and apart from Christ his state is hopeless. Sometimes a doctor has to tell his patient that his case is hopeless – physically hopeless; but God tells us that apart from Christ our condition is spiritually hopeless - look up John 8: 21 and 24.
- 11. The Natural Man is "without God" (verse 12).** He is a God-less man, like the rich farmer of whom we read in Luke 12:16-21 - look up and compare Luke 12: 24, where we read of the ravens who had no barns but they had God; and Luke 12: 18, where we read of the farmer who had barns but who had no God.
- 12. The Natural Man is an "enemy" of God (verses 15-16).** By nature we hate God – Psalm 14: 1 (lit.) – "No God for me!"

Here, then, is God's picture of the Natural Man. According to God's estimate man by nature is lost, helpless, completely ruined by sin, under the domination of Satan, and is therefore in need of a Saviour and of the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. How very wonderful it is that in spite of all that we are by nature, God loves us and wants us – look at and revel in the glorious truth of Ephesians 2: 4-7.

# NOTES:

## LESSON 3 BROUGHT NEAR BY THE BLOOD OF CHRIST (Scripture Portion: Ephesians 2: 13-22)

In Ephesians 2: 1-3, and in verse 12, we are given God's terrible but true description of fallen humanity. Apart from Christ we are: Dead in sin (verse 1); Deceived by the world (verse 2); Dominated by Satan (verse 2); Degenerate in our living (verse 3), and Doomed to punishment (verse 3). Left to ourselves we are utterly lost, helpless and hopeless. The world does not accept this description, but God declares it - look up Romans 3: 10-18. What is God's attitude towards fallen humanity? We certainly have no claim on God and our completely bankrupt, destitute and disobedient state would justify Him in having nothing more to do with us. What is His attitude towards us? Notice in the second chapter of Ephesians that there are two wonderful "buts" which reveal to us the amazing love of God in Christ Jesus: the first of these is in verse 4, and the second is in verse 13. The Lord Jesus, by His death on Calvary's cross, has brought us back into full fellowship with God. All that was lost by sin and the Fall has been regained and fully restored, and we (who believe) have been "brought near..." What exactly does this mean? It means at least seven wonderful things.

### 1. We have been Born Again and have Received Eternal Life (verses 1 and 5).

We who were spiritually dead because of sin have been made alive, by the miracle of the new birth (John 3: 3 and 5). The moment we believed on Christ and received Him as our Saviour (John 1: 12), we were born of God (John 1:13). Having received the Lord Jesus Christ we became possessors of eternal life (1 John 5: 11-12), and partakers of the divine nature (2 Peter 1: 4).

### 2. We have been Raised to Sit in Heavenly Places in Christ (verse 6).

And what does that mean? It does not mean that we are seated *with* Christ in heavenly places; the verse does not say that. We are seated in heavenly places "*in* Christ Jesus"; and this means that through faith we are united to and with Christ who has been raised and exalted to the highest heights in glory. We who were down in the lowest depths have been raised up to the highest heights in Christ! That is our new position through grace. We are now "citizens of heaven" (Philippians 3: 20).

### 3. We have been Saved by His Grace (verses 8 to 10).

What a great word is this word "saved"! It includes all the blessings which become ours through faith in Christ. Notice in verses 8 to 10 that: (1) Salvation is a present possession; (2) It is altogether by grace; (3) It is a gift received by faith alone; (4) It is "to do good works".

### 4. We have been Reconciled and are now at Peace with God (verses 14 – 17).

We, who were enemies, have been reconciled to God through the blood-shedding of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is blessedly true that through Christ all racial and social barriers have been broken down, but the greatest barrier of all is that which existed between ourselves and God which has been completely swept away in the Person and through the finished work of the Lord Jesus. Meditate upon the words in verse 14: "He is our peace", and compare Romans 5:1.

### 5. We have been Brought into a New Relationship with God (verse 18).

Each word in this verse is worth pondering. "...through Him" refers to our Lord Jesus Christ; "both..." means Jew and Gentile; "access..." means an entrance and a welcome; "one Spirit..." refers to the Holy Spirit; and now notice the important ending of the verse, "to the Father". The moment we are "brought near", we know God not only as the holy and just God and the powerful Creator, but as our gracious, loving heavenly Father.

### 6. We have been Made Members of the Household of God (verse 19).

The "household of God" is the Church. How do we become members of the Church? By the baptism of the Spirit - look up 1 Corinthians 12: 13. The Lord Jesus is the foundation of the Church (1 Corinthians 3: 11), but Paul tells us here that the apostles and the New Testament prophets are foundation members, for it was through their ministry that the Church was "joined together" and started to grow into "a holy temple in the Lord" (verse 21).

### 7. We have been Made Fit Dwelling Places for God (verse 22).

The Church is God's holy temple, built by the Holy Spirit, and believers are living stones by which the temple has been built through the years. Soon God's temple will be complete. Then will end the day of grace and we shall be raptured into his presence to be forever with the Lord (1 Thessalonians 4: 15-17). But notice that the Church is "a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit"; and this is true of each individual member - see 1 Corinthians 6: 19.

By nature and by practice far -	So nigh, so very nigh to God
How very far from God!	I cannot nearer be;
Yet now by grace brought nigh to Him,	For in the Person of His Son
Through faith in Jesus' blood.	I am as near as He.

So dear, so very dear to God,  
More dear I cannot be;  
The love wherewith He loves the Son -  
Such is His love to me!

# NOTES:



## LESSON 4 | SEVEN TRUTHS ABOUT THE CHURCH (Scripture Portion: Ephesians 3: 1-12)

In these verses we are told seven truths about the Church, and it is very important for us to understand these.

### 1. The MYSTERY of the Church.

The word “mystery” occurs in verses 3, 4 and 9. It does not mean that which is obscure or unintelligible, but it means a divine secret which is known only to those to whom it is revealed – note verse 3, and compare 1 Corinthians 2: 7-12. The special revelation of the truth of the Church was first made to Paul, but he would not have understood the dispensational significance of the “mystery” of the Church apart from the revelation given to him by God; and likewise we cannot understand the significance of the “mystery” without the help and illumination of the Holy Spirit. For further study look up Romans 11: 25; 1 Corinthians 15: 51; Ephesians 3: 3-4 and 6: 19; 1 Timothy 3:16.

### 2. The MEANING of the Church.

What do we mean when we speak of the Church? What does God mean? We are not thinking about a church, that is, a building; we are thinking about *the* Church – verse 10, and in verse 6 we are told what the Church is and how it is composed. The key word here is the word “Body”. The Church, then, is the Body of Christ – compare Ephesians 4: 12, 15 and 16 and Colossians 1: 18. If the Church is the Body of Christ and He is the Head of the Body, who are the members of the Church and how do they become members?

### 3. The MEMBERSHIP of the Church.

Verse 6 tells us that the Church, which is the Body of Christ, is composed of Jews and Gentiles. This is the “mystery” - that Jew and Gentile were to be united in one body was an entirely new thing. But how is the “Body”, the Church, formed? It is formed “through the gospel” (verse 6); that is, by the preaching of the gospel. When the gospel is preached the Holy Spirit convicts and converts, souls are born again – Jews and Gentiles – and are baptised into the Body of Christ - 1 Corinthians 12: 13. This is what the Holy Spirit is doing today (Acts 15: 13-14), and only those who have been born again and washed in the precious blood of Christ are true members of the Church, which is His Body.

### 4. The MISSION of the Church.

What is the function of the Church in the world? It is a two-fold function, as verses 8 and 10 make clear. The purpose and ministry of the Church in the world is that men may hear the gospel, and that to the *angels and unseen hosts* may be made known “the manifold wisdom of God.” Note the Church’s message - “the unsearchable riches of Christ”, and “the manifold wisdom of God” - not merely ethics, morality, philosophy or politics! The mission of the Church is not just to gather people together for “religious” purposes; it is not to compete with the world in worldly things, nor is it to convert the world. The mission of the Church is to evangelise the world – look up Matthew 28: 19.

### 5. The MINISTERS of the Church.

Verse 7 tells us that Paul was a minister, or servant, of the Church, and therefore of the gospel, but the word here is not used in any official sense. All true members of the Church are ministers of the Church and are responsible to take their share in proclaiming the gospel. Notice how we become ministers or servants. Paul writes, “I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God’s grace” (verse 7). If the question is asked, “How are ministers made?”, the answer is that God makes them! – compare Ephesians 4: 11.

### 6. The MARKS of the Church.

This portion of scripture tells us also some of the characteristics of those men and women, Jews and Gentiles, who are members of the Church. What are they like, or what should they be like? Notice the following five marks which should characterise every member of the Body of Christ: (1) Captivity. Are we bond-slaves of the Lord Jesus? (verse 1); (2) Fellowship. The words “heirs” and “sharers together” remind us of that which we share in Christ (verse 6); (3) Humility. (verse 8); (4) Testimony. (verse 8); (5) Acceptance. (verses 11 – 12). Underline the words “approach”, “freedom”, “confidence” and “in Him”.

But who is sufficient for these things? Can we fulfil this high calling in our own strength? No! Note finally:-

### 7. The MIGHT of the Church.

This is indicated in verse 7 in the words, “the gift of God’s grace given me”; and also in the words, “through the working of His power.”

There are those who think that because the witness of the Church today is often weak and ineffective, and many Christians are half-hearted, the Church will decline until she fades away altogether! – but the Church will never fail, because the Lord Jesus Christ is her Founder, her Foundation, her Builder, and He has guaranteed that no power on earth or in Hell will prevail against *His* Church - look up Matthew 16: 13-18 and 1 Corinthians 3: 11.

# NOTES:

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## LESSON 5 | LIVING WORTHILY! (Scripture Portions: Ephesians 4: 1-3 and 17-26)

We now come to the second half of this letter. Chapters 1 – 3 are **Doctrinal**, and they emphasise our standing “in Christ”; chapters 4 – 6 are **Practical**, and they emphasise our state down here in the world. What we are “in Christ” must be related to what we are in the world. Doctrine must always issue in duty; our creed must be seen in our conduct. There are two dangers which we must always seek to avoid: (1) **Teaching doctrine without relating it to duty** – this will make for a mere intellectualism and a dead formalism; (2) **Teaching duty which does not issue forth from doctrine** – this will make for error, superficiality and spurious growth.

Notice in verse 1 how the apostle commences this second half of the letter: “...I urge you to *live a life worthy* of the calling you have received” - for the first mark of a saved person is that his life is different. It used to be like Ephesians 2: 2-3 and 4: 17-19, but now – what a change has taken place!

### 1. The **CONSTRAINT** of a Worthy Life.

What is it that constrains us to live a worthy life? We are constrained by a tender, loving appeal, as verse 1 indicates. Paul had led these Ephesians to Christ, and now from the prison in which he languishes he writes to his spiritual children and says, “I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received”; that is, that your conduct corresponds with your high calling in Christ Jesus. Behind this written appeal from Paul we hear the voice of our loving Lord beseeching us to “live worthily”. Are we going to respond to His appeal? – or are we going to live a life which is dishonouring to Christ? The choice is left with us. He has loved us and given Himself for us (Galatians 2: 20). Does His love compel us to do as He commands and to live a life which pleases Him? - look up 2 Corinthians 5: 14.

### 2. The **CHARACTERISTICS** of a Worthy Life.

We read of Enoch (Genesis 5: 22-24); of Abraham (Genesis 24: 40); and in the Old Testament we find many other references to those who “walked with God.” In the New Testament the same idea is conveyed in the words “behave decently” (Romans 13: 13); “live” ( 2 Corinthians 5: 7; Galatians 5: 16; Ephesians 5: 15; Colossians 2: 6); and “walk” (1 John 1: 7; and 3 John 3). All these references tell us of the marks or characteristics of the Worthy Life; but if we confine ourselves to the verses in our portion we see that:-

**(1) A Worthy Life is a HEAVENLY Life** (verse 1). “...the calling you have received.” Our calling is a heavenly calling (Hebrews 3:1); a high calling (Philippians 3:14) and a holy calling (2 Timothy 1:9). We are a heavenly people living upon the earth, and to live worthily means just that - to live the heavenly life on earth!

**(2) A Worthy Life is a HUMBLE Life** (verse 2) The word “humble” means to be selfless, utterly lacking in self-assertiveness. Look up Matthew 11: 29; Philippians 2:3; Titus 3: 2; and James 1: 21. The root meaning of the word is “a spirit that never takes offence” - that is, humility. Therefore – 1 Peter 5: 6.

**(3) A Worthy Life is a HELPFUL Life** (verse 2). The word “patient” means “to endure with an unruffled temper”; yes, to do that instead of being intolerant, impatient and critical! The word “bearing” is explained in Colossians 3: 13, and it means “lovingly putting up with what we don’t like in other people!” And, for all this, “love” is the motive power – as Ephesians 5: 2 makes plain.

**(4) A Worthy Life is a HARD Life** (verse 3). The words “make every effort...” mean “to strive with great earnestness and unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” Paul speaks here of ‘effort’, and that means toil, striving and perseverance. It can be hard work, but we must “make every effort”. God has wonderfully united all believers in the Body of Christ (verses 4 – 6), and the Holy Spirit dwells within us to make that unity real. Our responsibility as members of the Body is to maintain that unity - look up Romans 12: 18!

**(5) A Worthy Life is a HOLY Life** (verse 3). The word “Spirit” refers to the Holy Spirit who indwells us and who is very easily grieved (Ephesians 4: 30), and with whom we are to be constantly filled (Ephesians 5: 18).

In verses 17 – 26 we are given five injunctions which must be obeyed if we are to behave ourselves in a holy way (1 Thessalonians 2: 10):- (i) in verses 17 – 19 we must “NO LONGER...”; (ii) in verse 22 we are to “PUT OFF...”; (iii) in verse 24 we are to “PUT ON...”; (iv) in verse 25 we are to “PUT OFF...”; (v) in verse 26 we MUST NOT...

### 3. The **CONSUMMATION** of a Worthy Life.

How long does this earthly life go on, and where and how does it end? Verse 13 tells us. That will be Glory!

When He comes, our glorious King,  
All His ransomed home to bring,  
Then anew this song we’ll sing:  
Hallelujah! What a Saviour!

# NOTES:

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## LESSON 6 | GIFTS FROM THE ASCENDED LORD (Scripture Portion: Ephesians 4: 4-16)

In Ephesians 4: 4-6, emphasis is given to those great fundamental facts of the Christian faith which are at once its unifying features. In verses 7 – 16, the apostle writes of the diversity of gifts which characterise those who are members of Christ's Body, the Church. This is an intriguing theme, and we need also to refer to three other New Testament passages which deal with the subject of spiritual gifts - look up Romans 12: 3-8; 1 Corinthians 12: 4-11 (indeed, chapters 12, 13 and 14); and 1 Peter 4: 10-11. Let us confine our study to the teaching embodied in Ephesians 4: 4-16, and notice the following:-

### 1. The GIVER of the Gifts.

This is brought out in verses 7, 8 and 11, where we are told that Christ Himself gives spiritual gifts to the members of His Church; but especially notice verse 8, which is a quotation from Psalm 68: 18. The Lord Jesus went down into death, was raised and then ascended to Heaven. When He ascended, having conquered sin, death and Hell, He "led captives in his train" – (these were the Old Testament saints who up until the Ascension dwelt in Paradise), and then He received gifts from the Father in order that He might bestow these gifts upon the Church. But who does He give these gifts to?

### 2. The RECIPIENTS of the Gifts.

Are spiritual gifts only for a few members of the Body, the Church? - look at verse 7, and underline the words, "to each one of us". That refers to every true believer. Every Christian, without exception, has received some gift from the risen and exalted Lord – see Romans 12: 4, where we are told that we all have some "function"; also 1 Corinthians 12:4-5 and 1 Peter 4: 10. It is wrong for any Christian to say, "There's nothing I can do", or, "My days of service are over now!" But note this wonderful fact: to every Christian has been given grace as Christ apportioned it (verse 7). You see, the nature of the gift determines the measure of grace that is supplied in order that we may exercise the gift. Grace is given to the preacher to preach, to the pray-er to pray, to the teacher to teach, to the helper to help (1 Corinthians 12: 28), and so on! But do all have the same gifts?

### 3. The DIVERSITY of the Gifts

Look at verse 11. Here Paul mentions five special gifts which the Lord has given to His Church, (or, five kinds of men to whom are given these special gifts):-

- (1) **Apostles:}** These were given for the purpose of laying the foundations of
- (2) **Prophets:}** the Church, as Ephesians 2: 20 tells us.
- (3) **Evangelists:** An evangelist's ministry is especially directed towards the unconverted - look up 2 Timothy 4: 5.
- (4) **Pastors:** The word means "shepherds" – compare John 21: 15-17 and Acts 20:28. This is a caring ministry for the sheep in Christ's fold.
- (5) **Teachers:** The work of the teacher is to instruct the Church in the things of God, to give milk to the babes (1 Peter 2: 2), and meat to those who are more mature (Hebrews 5: 14) in order that there may be growth and stability.

In 1 Corinthians 12: 8-11, and also in verses 14-25, we read of other gifts besides those mentioned above. Perhaps yours is mentioned there? Study this whole portion carefully, and then notice the little word "help" in 1 Corinthians 12: 28. Each gift is important and necessary. What is your gift? But what are the gifts for?

### 4. The PURPOSE of the Gifts.

In verses 12 and 14, we are told of a three-fold purpose that the Lord has in giving these gifts to His Church.

- (1) **To Prepare us for Service.** This is what verse 12 tells us. The meaning is this: The Lord has given evangelists, pastors, teachers, etc..." to prepare God's people for works of service." The evangelists, pastors and teachers are not to do all the ministry, but their chief task is that of getting the saints to function actively as members of the Body.
- (2) **To Help us to Grow.** Verse 12 goes on to say, "so that the body of Christ may be built up" God does not want us to remain as *babies* spiritually (1 Corinthians 3: 1-3), but He wants us to grow up (2 Peter 3: 18); therefore, He has given gifts to the Church, in order that the members may grow – look at verse 15!
- (3) **To Protect us from Harm.** The Enemy is always ready to deceive even the "elect" (Matthew 24: 24), and in order that we may be protected against his "false prophets" (Mark 13: 22), and their "destructive heresies" (2 Peter 2:1), the Lord has placed teachers in the Church so that we may be instructed in the truth and know how to detect the Devil's deadly counterfeits and lies!

The ultimate purpose that the Lord has in giving gifts to His Church is indicated in verse 13 – which tells us also about:

### 5. The DURATION of the Gifts.

How long will the gifts be needed in the Church? Only until – verse 13! When we are with Christ, who is the Head of the Body, the Church, then He will be "all in all" (Ephesians 1: 23), and there will be no room for, or need of, gifts! He will be ALL!

# NOTES:

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## LESSON 7 | SPIRITUAL INTOXICATION! (Scripture Portion: Ephesians 5: 1 – 21)

In Ephesians 5: 18 a contrast is made between the person who is under the influence of alcohol and the person who is under the controlling influence of the Holy Spirit. We as Christians are not to be drunk with the wine that comes from any earthly vineyard but with the new wine of the Kingdom which comes from the heavenly vineyard, from Him who is the True Vine (John 15: 1). There is a purpose in setting these two commands in contrast. It was a pagan belief that God dwelt in the blood of the grape, so that in drinking wine man was drinking God into himself. Drunkenness was therefore held to be a sacrament in which a man was supposed to be under the control of the god who filled him. Paul reminded the Christians at Ephesus of this pagan belief, and then he pointed them to the true way of being God-possessed. Concerning the Spirit-filled life, let us notice the following truths:

- (1) **The Spirit-filled life is a command.** In Ephesians 5: 18 there are two commands, both of which require obedience; they are not optional, they are imperative.
- (2) **The Spirit-filled life is a command to every Christian.** The experience of the Holy Spirit's fulness is not for a select company of believers, but for every born again person. Notice the word "all" in Acts 2: 4 and 4: 31.
- (3) **To be filled with the Spirit is more than being indwelt by the Spirit.** The Christians at Ephesus were "sealed" by the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1: 13; 4:30), and thus they were indwelt by the Holy Spirit, as every Christian is (1 Corinthians 6:19), but we may be indwelt and not filled by Him; we may possess Him without His possessing us.
- (4) **To be filled with the Spirit is not a matter of excess, but of sanity.** The word "excess" means "riot". The most spiritually sane people in the world are those who are filled with God's Spirit. The Lord Jesus is our example.
- (5) **The Spirit-filled life is to be the normal experience of God's children.** Ephesians 5: 18 means "Go on being filled..." God's plan for every one of His children is that they may be filled with the Holy Spirit so that they may live lives that are glorifying to Him in all their personal (Ephesians 5: 15-21), domestic (Ephesians 5: 22-33 and 6: 1-4), and business (Ephesians 6: 5-9) relationships.
- (6) **Being filled with the Spirit is not our getting more of Him; it is His getting more of us.** The Holy Spirit is a Person, and to be filled with Him means to allow Him to take full possession of our personalities.
- (7) **The Spirit-filled life is marked by certain definite and easily discernible characteristics.** Just as a drunken man can easily be recognised, so can a Spirit-filled Christian be recognised; the same characteristics are true of both. What are they? - look up those that are mentioned in Ephesians 5: 14-21, and then consider the following.
  1. **A Drunkard is Possessed by an Immense Sense of Well-being.** So is a Spirit-filled Christian! He is exhilarated, exuberant. The Greeks have a word for it – "Euphoria", which means "an immense sense of well-being". The first Christians were accused of being drunk (Acts 2: 15); the early disciples were noted for their intense joy - look up Acts 13:52.
  2. **A Drunkard is Recognised by his Face.** So is a Spirit-filled Christian! Many of our faces are shadowed instead of shining! There should be a radiance about us, as there was with Moses (Exodus 34: 29); with Stephen (Acts 6: 15); with the Lord Jesus (Luke 9: 29) - and look up Psalm 34: 5, and compare Psalm 40: 3 with Ephesians 5: 19-20.
  3. **A Drunkard has a Characteristic Savour about him.** So does a Christian! You can smell a drunkard! – now look at Ephesians 5: 2. Our Lord Jesus Christ was as holy incense before the Father and before the world; Christians, by being filled with His Spirit are to be, and may be, the same. The Spirit-filled life is God's provision for making our lives beautiful, graceful and gentle.
  4. **A Drunkard can be Detected by the Way he Walks.** So can a Spirit-filled Christian! Our walk is our manner of life, and according to Ephesians 5: 15 a drunkard's walk is careless, whereas the walk of the Spirit-filled man is very circumspect – that is, disciplined and consistent. The drunkard cannot walk straight, but the Spirit-filled Christian is enabled to live before God and the world in a way that is upright and honest in every respect.
  5. **A Drunkard is Betrayed by the Way he Speaks.** So is a Spirit-filled Christian! Many a drunkard has a stammering tongue, and often his speech is impure and foul. A Spirit-filled Christian will be very careful in the words he uses and in the matters of which he speaks, and, of course, a Spirit-filled Christian will be a testifying Christian - look up Acts 4: 20!
  6. **A Drunkard is not Responsible for his Actions.** Nor is a Christian! A drunkard does many foolish things because he cannot help it, and a Christian, if he is filled with the Holy Spirit, will produce from his life fruit which is supernatural (Galatians 5: 22-23), and works which are, humanly speaking, impossible – see what Peter said in Acts 3: 12.
  7. **A Drunkard is Known by the Company he Keeps.** So is a Spirit-filled Christian! A drunkard will make his way quickly to the bar; the Spirit-filled Christian will seek the fellowship of God's people - look up Acts 4: 23.

How can we become Spirit-filled - possessed and controlled by the Holy Spirit? Think of the drunkard again. How does he become a drunkard? By drinking, and drinking and drinking again – and this drinking for us involves three things: (1) **A Real Thirst** (Isaiah 44: 3; Matthew 5: 6; John 7: 37-39); (2) **A Great Capacity** (Psalm 81: 10); and (3) **A Simple Faith** (Luke 11:13; 1 John 5: 14-15).

# NOTES:

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## LESSON 8| THE CHRISTIAN'S RELATIONSHIPS (Scripture Portions: Ephesians 5: 22-33 and 6: 1-19)

The importance of this subject is seen by the fact that the Holy Spirit has devoted such a large proportion of this letter to the relationships which should exist between Christian husbands and wives, parents and children, and masters and servants.

1. **There is nothing more beautiful on earth than a Christian home.** In this portion of scripture we have an inspired picture of what God intends a Christian home to be, and of what it is possible for it to be with His enabling.
2. **The Christian life must be lived effectively first and foremost in the home.** We are to carry our Christian experience into every relationship of life - personal, social, business, professional, recreational, etc., but first it must operate in the domestic sphere - look up and compare Mark 5: 19 and Luke 8: 39. Our lives must tell and our lips must tell first in the home - look up also 1 Timothy 5: 4 and Titus 2: 5.
3. **The hardest place to live a really consistent life is in the home.** This is because it is here that we most easily cast off restraint, and unless we have learned God's way of victory and God's plan for harmonious living, there is bound to be discord and friction.
4. **The greatest testimony we can offer to the world is a happy, harmonious and peaceful Christian home.** In the home Christianity is seen in action - look up 2 Kings 4: 8-10.
5. **God has made provision for every one of His children to live a consistent Christian life in the home.** That provision is the infilling of the Holy Spirit - Ephesians 5: 18. God's ideal for a home is only possible of attainment by the infilling of the Holy Spirit.

How, then, should believers behave in the exacting relationships of domestic life? The answer is in verse 21. In other words, the secret of a happy and a harmonious home is mutual submission; not proud resistance, not striving to stand up for one's "rights", but a loving consideration of the other person, a mutual respect and loyalty, a Christ-like spirit. Consider in detail the relationships mentioned.

### 1. **WIVES, submit to your husbands (5: 22-24 and 33).**

These are not man's ideas, they are God's instructions. Wives are to submit themselves to their husbands "as to the Lord...in everything." The Lord is the Head of the Body, the Church, and thus He cares for the Church, provides for it and protects it. The husband is to do this for his wife, and thus the wife is to submit herself to him as her head. "It is not a question of the superiority of the husband and the inferiority of the wife, but of the respective positions God, in His sovereign wisdom, has assigned to each." From Creation this has been God's order - see Genesis 2: 21-23 - and if the order is reversed there will always be trouble.

### 2. **HUSBANDS, love your wives (5: 25-33).**

The husband is to love his wife "just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her" - that is, with a love that is unselfish and sacrificial. How often there is lack of thoughtful consideration and of understanding on the part of the husband, and how frequently this causes unhappiness in the home! A husband's love for his wife must operate in every phase of the matrimonial, domestic and social life, which includes the more intimate relationships as well as those that are observed by others.

### 3. **CHILDREN, obey your parents (6: 1-3)**

These verses give us God's order for a Christian home, and it is the only kind of home that He recognises. What a need there is today for children to give heed to verse 2! - look up 2 Timothy 3: 1-3, and notice that disobedience to parents is one of the signs of the apostasy of "the last days". In our Lord Jesus Christ we have the perfect example of obedience - look up Luke 2: 51.

### 4. **PARENTS, bring your children up for the Lord (6: 4)**

Notice that this verse begins with a note of warning: "Do not exasperate your children" - look up Deuteronomy 6: 6-9. What a sacred ministry is entrusted to those who have children to "bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord" - compare Proverbs 22: 6.

### 5. **SERVANTS, be obedient to your masters (6: 5-6)**

In Ephesus there were slaves in most households, and that is why the Holy Spirit has included this master-servant relationship here. What a high standard is expected from servants! We are to work for our earthly master just as if he were our heavenly Master (verses 5 and 7). This means that we shall not watch the clock, we shall not be late, lazy or disloyal - and God will surely reward us (verse 8).

### 6. **MASTERS, consider the welfare of your servants (6: 9)**

This means that employers are to give the same consideration as they expect and to which they are entitled from their employees. Here is food for thought for all employers!

These are God's rules for happy, holy and harmonious human relationships, and they are only possible as we live in obedience to Ephesians 5: 18 - that is, as wives and husbands, children and parents, servants and masters seek to live their lives under the control of and in obedience to the Holy Spirit.

# NOTES:

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## LESSON 9| OUR ENEMY AND OUR WARFARE (Scripture Portion: Ephesians 6: 10-19)

In his Letters the apostle Paul speaks of the Christian life under a number of suggestive metaphors. For example, in this letter to the Ephesians his favourite designation of the Christian is how he should LIVE - compare 2: 2; 4: 1 and 17; 5:2, 8 and 15. In chapters 5 and 6, *wives* (5: 22-24), *husbands* (5: 25-31), *children* (6: 1-3), *fathers* (6: 4), *servants* (6: 5-8) and *masters* (6: 9), are told how to live and how to behave. But suddenly the apostle changes the metaphor, and in chapter 6, verse 10, he introduces us to something of the stern side of the Christian life; he tells us that there is a fight to be fought, that we have a powerful enemy to face, and that we can only be "more than conquerors" (Romans 8: 37) as we "put on the full armour of God." As Christians, we are *saints* (Ephesians 1: 1), *children* (1: 5), *believers* (1: 13), *servants* (6: 5) - but we are also *soldiers* (6: 11), and compare 2 Timothy 2: 3-4, and as soldiers we are in a great conflict and have to fight (1 Timothy 6: 12; 2 Timothy 4: 7). We, as believers, are engaged in a WARFARE. In order that we may appreciate the necessity of putting on the whole armour of God if we are to be victorious soldiers in God's army, let us first consider the nature of the conflict, then the character of the enemy, and finally, the secret of victory.

### 1. THE NATURE OF THE CONFLICT

1. **It is a real warfare.** It is a literal fight against a literal enemy. Notice the word "against" occurs six times in verses 11 and 12.
2. **It is a conflict between real antagonists.** Who are they? "The Lord" (6: 10), and "the Devil" (6: 11). The soldiers, or allies, of the Lord are the believers in Christ. Notice the word 'our' in verse 12, which refers to the saints. The allies of Satan are also mentioned in verse 12.
3. **It is a fierce conflict.** Ponder verse 12, and see how deadly a fight it is!
4. **It is a hand-to-hand conflict.** It is as literal as any battle against "flesh and blood", but it is ten thousand times more deadly (verse 12), for it is a conflict not with the human and visible, but with the superhuman and invisible (Luke 12: 4-5).

This is not far-fetched or fanciful, but it is God's revealed truth. Let us accept it, for only by so doing shall we be fortified for the fray and spurred on to "put on the full armour of God" (verse 11).

### 2. THE CHARACTER OF THE ENEMY

1. **He is a real person.** The names given to Satan indicate personality, and the actions attributed to him imply personality: deceiver, liar, murderer, accuser, tempter, prince, etc. Look up the following: Job 1: 6; Isaiah 14: 12; Matthew 4: 10; 6: 13; 9: 34; 10:25; 25:41; Luke 4: 12; John 8: 44 and 12: 31; 2 Corinthians 2: 11; 1 Thessalonians 2: 18 and 3: 5; and 2 Thessalonians 2: 9-11.
2. **He occupies an exalted position.** He is "the ruler of the kingdom of the air" (Ephesians 2: 2), indicating his control over evil spirits; and he is "the prince of this world" (John 12: 31; 14:30; 16: 11), showing his domination in the lives of "those who are disobedient" (Ephesians 2: 2). He has a "kingdom" (Matthew 12: 26); he is "the god of this age" (2 Corinthians 4: 4); and he counterfeits true Christianity (1 Corinthians 10: 20-21; 2 Corinthians 11: 14; 1 Timothy 4: 1 and Revelation 2: 9).
3. **He is very powerful.** His power is subtle (2 Corinthians 11: 14); sinister (Colossians 1: 13); supernatural (2 Thessalonians 2:9) and destructive (Hebrews 2: 14) - and compare Acts 26:18.

### 3. THE SECRET OF VICTORY

1. **We must recognise our Standing in Christ.** Study verse 10, and notice that we are only strong "in the Lord". There is no strength or ability to wage this warfare apart from the strength which is ours in Him. We are to stand and withstand, not in our own strength, but in His (verses 11, 13 and 14).
2. **We must accept our Protection from Christ.** This protection, provided by Him for our use, is "the full armour of God" (verses 11 and 13), five pieces being for defensive warfare, and one only for offensive warfare. There is no protection for the back because (to change the figure) – Luke 9: 62! Our part is to "put on" these pieces – verse 11.
  - **The belt of truth (14).** As the belt encompassed the waist of the soldier, so truth must encompass our whole life (Psalm 51: 6; John 8: 32; 3 John 4). There must be no hypocrisy, unreality, insincerity or compromise.
  - **The breastplate of righteousness (14).** This covers very vital organs. We must stand firm in Christ who is our righteousness, and we must be righteous in our life (i.e. right).
  - **The shoes of preparation (15).** When tempted and tried, we are sustained by the experience of Philippians 4: 7 and Isaiah 26: 3.
  - **The shield of faith (16).** Just as a shield can protect each part of the body, so faith must operate in respect to each part of our life.
  - **The helmet of salvation (17).** An unprotected mind is a ready prey to Satan's deceptions, delusions and defilements.
  - **The sword of the Spirit (17).** Compare Matthew 4: 4, 7 and 10 - "It is written..." – and Hebrews 4: 12.
3. **We must maintain our Communion with Christ** (verse 18). This is essential for victory - "All prayer, at all seasons, with all perseverance."

# NOTES:

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## LESSON 10|

## PRAYING ALWAYS WITH ALL PRAYER (Scripture Portion: Ephesians 6: 18-24)

Paul was a man of prayer. Prayer was the secret of his life, of his amazing influence, of his suffering and endurance, of his burning passion for the souls of men, and consequently he is the one man, apart from the Lord Jesus Himself, who is most qualified to instruct us in the holy art of praying. In the verses before us there are seven vital truths about prayer.

### 1. Prayer is the Great Essential.

Paul speaks of the armour we are to put on, and then he goes straight on without a break – “Praying at all times...” It is tremendously important for a soldier to have on the right armour and to be equipped with a sword, but what is equally important is that the soldier should keep in constant communication with his Commander-in-chief (Hebrews 2: 10). The Christian, while he is on the field of battle, is in direct touch with the throne of God, and the prayer-line of communication with our risen Lord must never be broken. Prayer is the great essential: it is certainly not optional; it is fundamental.

### 2. We must Pray at All Times.

Paul not only exhorts us to pray, but to pray “on all occasions”, and this reminds us of 1 Thessalonians 5: 17, which means that we are to seek to live in the very atmosphere and attitude of prayer. It is most important that we should have set times for prayer – like Daniel who prayed three times a day (Daniel 6: 10); like David who prayed three times a day (Psalm 55: 17), and later told us that he prayed seven times a day (Psalm 119: 164); and like the Saviour who constantly withdrew into the place of prayer (Luke 6: 12). Then, we may pray at special times: for instance, when in trouble (Psalm 55: 16); when needing guidance (James 1: 5); when tempted (Psalm 69: 1); when persecuted (Psalm 7: 1); when disturbing letters arrive (Isaiah 37: 14); when sickness threatens (James 5: 14); and whenever there is a need of any kind (Philippians 4: 6).

### 3. We Must Employ All Kinds of Prayer.

“All kinds of prayers and requests” suggests that prayer may consist of Adoration, Praise, Thanksgiving, Petition, Supplication or Intercession. But consider the following three “kinds” of prayer - individual prayer (Matthew 6: 6); the prayer of agreement (Matthew 18: 19); and corporate prayer (Acts 12: 5).

### 4. We Must Keep on Praying.

We are always to keep on praying and to remain alert (verse 18) – look up Luke 18: 1, and compare Luke 11: 5-8. We need persistence - look up 1 Kings 18: 43. The words “be alert” indicate that there are perils in prayer, and so there are! There is the peril of: (1) **Distraction**. How often other things crowd in and prevent us from praying! (2) **Disinclination**. This may be due to tiredness or to preoccupation with worldly things; (3) **Discouragement**. Perhaps we have prayed once, or even twice, and then we have become impatient because the answer has not come! (4) **Despair**. The situation sometimes seems so impossible – even for God! – so instead of trusting Him we are overwhelmed with a sense of frustration and even of futility of prayer; (5) **Defeat**. Yes, overwhelming defeat! – look up Judges 16: 20.

### 5. We Must Pray for All Saints.

It is, of course, impossible to pray individually for all saints, and yet in a general sense, and certainly in a systematic sense, we may do so. We may pray, for example, regularly and systematically for: (1) **God’s suffering saints**; (2) **God’s sinning saints**. Do you ever pray for these? – for Christians who are tempted and overcome by the world, the flesh and the Devil – backsliders who have been tripped up by the wiles of the Enemy? (3) **God’s shut-in saints**. So many who love the Lord are laid on one side by sickness, and such sickness has been permitted for the furtherance of the gospel (Philippians 1: 12). These afflicted ones need prayer that they may receive grace to testify to the power and sufficiency of Christ. **Pray for the new converts** (Acts 9: 17); **for workers to be thrust forth** (Matthew 9:38); **for the printing of Christian literature** (Psalm 43: 3); **for open doors for the gospel** (1 Corinthians 16: 9); **for Satan’s power to be broken** (Luke 13: 12-16)...

### 6. We Must Pray for Workers in the Forefront of the Battle.

Verses 19 and 20 teach us that those who are in prominent positions in Christian service are in special need of the prayers of God’s people – look up Acts 4:29. How should we pray for preachers, evangelists, teachers and leaders in God’s harvest field? That they may have utterance, boldness and grace to preach the gospel.

### 7. All Our Praying to be Effective Must Be “In the Spirit”.

Here is the secret of it all – “in the Spirit” (verse 18) – compare Romans 8: 26-27.

It is gloriously true that, as William Cowper wrote, “Satan trembles when he sees the weakest saint upon his knees”; and Alfred Lord Tennyson was right when he wrote:

“More things are wrought by prayer  
Than this world dreams of, wherefore, let thy voice  
Rise like a fountain before me night and day.  
For what are men better than sheep and goats  
That nourish a blind life within the brain,  
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer,  
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?...”

# NOTES:

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