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Harvest Seminar for Spiritual Maturity



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Harvest Seminar for Spiritual Maturity

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LESSON 1

ENCOUNTER WITH THE BIBLE

**"Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that
comes from the mouth of God." (Matthew 4:4)**

LESSON 1. ENCOUNTER WITH THE BIBLE

CONCEPT OF THE PICTURE

1. **Torn Calendar** God has spoken to people in various ways.
 - (1) **Nature** God has spoken through nature.
 - (2) **The Prophets** God has spoken through the prophets.
 - (3) **Infant** God has spoken through the Son (Jesus Christ).

2. **Two Hands Holding Out The Bibles** The Bible is a love letter from God to man.

3. **Shadow of a Person on the Old Testament** ... The Old Testament is the shadow of Jesus Christ.

4. **Person on the New Testament** The New Testament is the fulfillment of the Old Testament.

5. **Six Symbols on the Bibles** There are six distinctive features about the Bible.
 - (1) **First Symbol (Rope)** There is a wondrous unity and harmony in the Bible.
 - (2) **Second Symbol (Printer)** The Bible is the world's best-selling book.
 - (3) **Third Symbol (Pen)** The Bible is translated into more languages than any other book.
 - (4) **Fourth Symbol (Sword)** The Bible has overcome various persecutions.
 - (5) **Fifth Symbol (Prize Ribbon)** The contents of the Bible are unique.
 - (6) **Sixth Symbol (Lighthouse)** The Bible has led the history of humankind.

6. **Four Sections of the Old Testament** The Old Testament can be divided into four sections.

7. **Four Sections of the New Testament** The New Testament can be divided into four sections.

8. **Two Keys on the Wrists** There are two keys to understanding the Bible.
 - (1) **First Key** You must read it focusing on Jesus Christ.
 - (2) **Second Key** You must be led by the Holy Spirit.

9. **The Shining New Testament** The purpose of the Bible is to give us eternal life.

LESSON 1. ENCOUNTER WITH THE BIBLE

INTRODUCTION

There is no other book more wondrous than the Bible, and there is no other book more misunderstood.

1. God has spoken to people in various ways.

- (1) God has spoken through nature.

"For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood without from what has been made, so that men are without excuse." (Romans 1:20)

☞ cf. Psalm 19:1

- (2) God has spoken through the prophets.

"In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways," (Hebrews 1:1)

- (3) God has spoken through the Son (Jesus Christ).

"in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe." (Hebrews 1:2)

"No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known." (John 1:18)

2. The Bible is a love letter from God to man.

Martin Luther, the Protestant Reformer, called the verse of John 3:16 "the heart of the Bible—the Gospel in miniature" and explained that even if the whole Scripture were lost and only John 3:16 remained, people would continue to become Christians.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16)

3. The Old Testament is the shadow of Jesus Christ.

It is taught in the book of Hebrews that the law and the sacrifices in Old Testament times could not save man completely, and they are simply the shadows of Christ.

"The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming—not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship."

(Hebrews 10:1)

"Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ."
(Colossians 2:16,17)

4. The New Testament is the fulfillment of the Old Testament.

Jesus Christ said that he came not to abolish the Old Testament but to fulfill it.

☞ cf. Luke 24:27, 44 John 5:39 Hebrews 10:7

"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished." (Matthew 5:17, 18)

5. There are six distinctive features about the Bible.

In the book, *Evidence That Demands A Verdict*, the author Josh McDowell lists these six points as distinctive features about the Bible:

- (1) There is a wondrous unity and harmony in the Bible.
 - It was written over a 1,600-year period.
 - It was written by more than forty people.
 - It was written in various places.
 - It was written in three different languages:

Hebrew	Most of the Old Testament
Aramaic	A part of the Old Testament (Ezra and Daniel 2:4b–7:28)
Greek	The New Testament
 - It covers numerous controversial topics.
 - The Bible is the only book that contains such diversity yet remains unified and in harmony.
- (2) The Bible is the world's best-selling book.
 - According to a 2005 report, about 400,000,000 whole and partial Bibles were distributed worldwide (about 1% were in Japan).
- (3) The Bible is translated into more languages than any other book.
 - The Bible was the first book ever translated. (The Hebrew Old Testament was translated into Greek in 250 B.C. and was called Septuagint LXX.)
 - The Bible was translated into 2,200 languages as of the year 2005. The translation into another 1,500 languages is in progress. There are 3,700 languages for the Bible yet to be translated into.

- (4) The Bible has overcome various persecutions.
- More than 13,000 whole and partial ancient, authoritative sources of the Bible have been discovered. If the creditability of the Bible can be discounted with such overwhelming evidence, then our highly respected classical works (Plato, Aristotle, or Shakespeare, etc.), with fewer copies of manuscripts, must certainly be suspect as well. The Bible has overcome historical persecutions.
 - The Bible has faced various persecutions from the times of Roman Emperor to modern Communism.
- (5) The contents of the Bible are unique.
- The value as prophecy:

Genesis 3:15	(Messianic Prophecy)
Genesis 49:10	(From the tribe of Judah)
2 Samuel 7:12, 13	(From the line of David)
Isaiah 53:5, 6	(As a substitute for man)
Micah 5:2	(To be born in Bethlehem)
Zechariah 12:10	(To be pierced)
 - The value as a history book
 - The candid descriptions of the characters in the Bible
- (6) The Bible has led the history of humankind.

6. The Old Testament can be divided into four sections:

- | | | | |
|----------------|-----------------------|------------|-------------------|
| (1) The Law | Genesis – Deuteronomy | (5 books) | |
| (2) History | Joshua – Esther | (12 books) | |
| (3) Literature | Job – Song of Songs | (5 books) | |
| (4) Prophecy | Isaiah – Malachi | (17 books) | Total of 39 books |

7. The New Testament can be divided into four sections:

- | | | | |
|----------------|----------------|------------|-------------------|
| (1) The Gospel | Matthew – John | (4 books) | |
| (2) History | Acts | (1 book) | |
| (3) Epistle | Romans – Jude | (21 books) | |
| (4) Prophecy | Revelation | (1 book) | Total of 27 books |

○ Memory tip: O.T. 39 books, N.T. 27 books, Total 66 books

$$\underline{3 \times 9 = 27}$$

8. There are two keys to understanding the Bible.

(1) You must read it focusing on Jesus Christ.

- The theme of the Bible is Jesus Christ.

"You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me." (John 5:39)

- The promise about the Messiah, who saves fallen man from sin, is already given in Genesis 3:15.

"And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."

(Genesis 3:15)

- From that perspective, see the Bible as shown below:

Old Testament Preparation for Christ

The Gospel Appearance of Christ

Acts Transmission of Christ

Epistle Understanding of Christ

Revelation Completion by Christ

(2) You must be led by the Holy Spirit. The Bible was written by inspiration of God.

It is different from what the cults call Psychography or Spiritual Automatic Writing. In biblical writing, the authors' personalities, education, and characters are openly used, and, yet, there was God's protection on the process of their descriptions.

☞ cf. 1 Corinthians 2:9–13

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:"

(2 Timothy 3:16) (KJV)

"For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."

(2 Peter 1:21)

9. The purpose of the Bible is to give us eternal life.

Eternal life means the quality of life is renewed.

"But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." (John 20:31)

LESSON 2

ENCOUNTER WITH ONESELF

**"I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do,
but what I hate I do." (Romans 7:15)**

LESSON 2. ENCOUNTER WITH ONESELF CONCEPT OF THE PICTURE

1. **Heart Shining on Man's Chest** Man was made in the image of God.
2. **Man in the Jail with His Back to the Light** Man living against the Creator is a slave of all bondage.
 - (1) **Burden** Man is afraid of his past.
 - (2) **Mask** Man is afraid of facing himself.
 - (3) **Conflict with Neighbors** ... Man cannot live peacefully with his neighbors.
 - (4) **Fortune** Man is ruled by materials rather than ruling over the materials.
 - (5) **Clock** Man is afraid of death.
3. **Serpent Moving Around by the Keys** Satan is moving around to give man a false sense of freedom.
 - (1) **First Key** Materialism shouts out to gain more fortune.
 - (2) **Second Key** Humanism shouts out to gain more education.
 - (3) **Third Key** Legalism shouts out to do more good deeds.
 - (4) **Forth Key** Mysticism shouts out to be more faithful.
4. **Light Shining through the Window** Solution is given from God to those who are in difficulties.
 - (1) **Crack in the Corner of the Room** Man feels pain when being exposed to the light.
 - (2) **A Hand Stretched Out** A hand of Christ's salvation is stretched out.
 - (3) **Key of the Cross in the Hand** The cross of Christ is the true solution.

LESSON 2. ENCOUNTER WITH ONESELF

INTRODUCTION

Where do I come from and where am I going? Man can never experience a sense of rest until he finds clear answer to these questions.

"When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?"
(Psalm 8:3-4)

It is not easy to comprehend oneself. The Apostle Paul suffered from self-contradiction and had to confess as below.

"I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do."
(Romans 7:15)

"I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing."
(Romans 7:18, 19)

1. Man was made in the image of God.

Man did not come into being spontaneously by evolution. We are made as the Creator's best workmanship, and have these features not found in other animals:

Intellect	Man can think logically, rule the environment, and do creative jobs.
Emotions	Man is a being who can be moved by art and finds satisfaction by loving and being loved.
Will	Man can chose his life by making his own decisions.
Spirit	Man can have fellowship with the absolute being of the universe (God) and enjoy this being.

Man's mission was to live as God's representative on this earth.

"God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.'"
(Genesis 1:28)

2. Man living against the Creator is a slave of all bondage.

Just like cars need fuel to function, we need a relationship with God to become the fruitful people we are meant to be. Man, however, disobeyed God and chose to live his life selfishly. This willful disobedience is called sin.

"And the LORD God commanded the man, 'You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.'" (Genesis 2:16, 17)

"When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it."(Genesis 3:6)

Sin entrapped man into all bondage.

- (1) Man is afraid of his past.

Adam and Eve disobeyed God, and when they heard God's voice, they hid among the trees of the garden (Genesis 3:8). Because of his sense of morality, he came to live with the sense of guilt.

"The wicked man flees though no one pursues, but the righteous are as bold as a lion." (Proverbs 28:1)

- (2) Man is afraid of facing himself.

Adam and Eve were afraid of facing their true selves, so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves (Genesis 3:7). Fig leave represents man's empty effort. Man has become a being who cannot accept himself in peace unless he covers the outside of him with something.

- (3) Man cannot live peacefully with his neighbors.

When asked by God, Adam blamed Eve, and Eve blamed the serpent (Genesis 3:12, 13). Man cannot live carrying the burden of his sin, so he is always looking for a chance to blame others.

Without healthy self-esteem, man cannot love others, and this truth can be seen in the words of Jesus Christ below.

"Jesus replied: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" (Matthew 22:37–39)

- (4) Man is ruled by materials rather than ruling over the materials.

Material itself is not bad, but when it is misused, something originally good destroys man's dignity, causes conflict, and brings in bondage.

"What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?"
(Matthew 16:26)

(5) Man is afraid of death.

When death comes, it eliminates all of his potential and ends all of his activities. Death is irrational. In the Bible there is no such thing as a natural death. All deaths are unnatural and sad. No matter if he is conscious of this or not, every man is living like a condemned criminal waiting for his death penalty.

"Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned—"
(Romans 5:12)

3. Satan is moving around to give man a false sense of freedom.

It seems that reasonable solutions have been thought through and given to those who are in difficulties, but none of them could provide an absolute and final sense of freedom. Let's take a look at those solutions.

(1) Materialism shouts out to gain more fortune.

Commercial civilization can be thought of as a religion with theology. In it, we can see ceremonies, and it has the power that demands full involvement of man.

It also contains the concept of sin and salvation. It is, in fact, a religion that is covered with a veil named modern civilization.

(2) Humanism shouts out to gain more education.

There are some people who believe that continually gaining knowledge will take them to utopia. This fantasy, however, was completely destroyed by two world wars happening in the 20th century, and the 21st century is full of ethnic wars.

(3) Legalism shouts out to do more good deeds.

Is there a need to mention the hundreds of laws created by Pharisees in Judaism? Man has always tried to achieve salvation by laws and works. This idea, however, is completely refuted by Paul's statement:

"Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin."
(Romans 3:20)

- (4) Mysticism shouts out to be more faithful.

Japanese has its unique way of thinking; that is, it is more important to have faith itself than what you have faith in. In the Bible, this is one of the most hated sins called "spiritual adultery."

"You shall have no other gods before me." (Exodus 20:3)

4. Solution is given from God to those who are in difficulties.

God has not forsaken man at all. God asked Adam and Eve, "Where are you?" (Genesis 3:9) and He is asking the same question of the whole world today.

- (1) Man feels pain when being exposed to the light.

Why did Adam and Eve hide when they heard God? Why do people feel resistance about coming to church? It is because man feels pain when being taken out of darkness into light.

- (2) A hand of Christ's salvation is stretched out.

The words God spoke to Adam and Eve were all questions. God came closer to them, not to blame them but to save them. God loves and saves everyone as they are.

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."

(Matthew 11:28)

- (3) The cross of Christ is the true solution.

Genesis 3:15 is called the proto-evangelium or the first gospel, and it foreshadows God's salvation plan that will be developed in the rest of the Bible. It continues until final victory over Satan by the cross of Christ.

"And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."

(Genesis 3:15)

Genesis 3:21 is foreshadowing the garment of Christ's righteousness. This differs from a decaying garment made by man, because it is an everlasting garment of righteousness, a gift from God.

"The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them."

(Genesis 3:21)

LESSON 3

ENCOUNTER WITH JESUS CHRIST

"Who do you say I am?" (Matthew 16:15)

LESSON 3. ENCOUNTER WITH JESUS CHRIST

CONCEPT OF THE PICTURE

1. Jesus Standing between the Scrolls of B.C. and A.D.

..... World history was separated into two eras by Jesus Christ.

2. Four Scrolls There are four facts established as evidence to prove that Jesus Christ is different from any other man in history.

3. First Scroll The prophecy in the Old Testament

- (1) **The Prophets Pointing at the Star** ... Prophets in the Old Testament foretold the coming of Christ, and all the prophecies were fulfilled.

4. Second Scroll Testimony by Christ himself

- (1) **The Cross and Gavel** ... Christ was crucified because he claimed himself to be God.

5. Third Scroll Testimonies by his disciples

- (1) **A Lamb without Blemish or Defect** ... Christ committed no sin in his entire life.
- (2) **A Scales that Holds a Man and the Earth**

..... Jesus claimed that man's life is more valuable than the whole world.

- (3) **Lazarus Wrapped in Cloths** ... Christ performed many miracles in his life.
- (4) **The Cross** Christ acted in love until his death on the cross.
- (5) **Empty Tomb** Christ rose from the dead.

6. Fourth Scroll Testimonies by historical facts

- (1) **Rejoicing Disciples** ... The cowardly disciples were changed instantly.
- (2) **Church Building** The church was born.

7. Three Tombs in Barren Land

..... Among the founders of the world's four largest religions, three of them were buried in their tombs and never rose from the dead. Christ lives!

8. Christ Inviting People Christ is alive today and can save people.

9. People Coming Close to Heaven through Christ

..... Even today many people are receiving eternal life through Christ.

LESSON 3. ENCOUNTER WITH JESUS CHRIST

INTRODUCTION

There is no one who has influenced the history of the world more than Jesus Christ, and there is no one more misunderstood.

Jesus is the Greek pronunciation of Joshua in Hebrew, which means "The Lord who saves." Christ is the Greek pronunciation of Messiah in Hebrew, which means "Anointed One" or "Savior."

1. World history was separated into two eras by Jesus Christ.

Historians thought that Christ was the right person to separate world history into two eras. The era before Christ's birth is called B.C. (Before Christ), and the era after his birth A.D. (Anno Domini), which means "the Year of The Lord."

2. There are four facts established as evidence to prove that Jesus Christ is different from any other man in history.

Faith begins with knowing. Believing without examining the facts is fanaticism. Disbelief of fact is unfaithfulness. Receiving the fact as it is, that is faith. Of course, it is impossible to examine all the facts, and the nature of faith is to believe the unseen. What 'knowing' here means is to understand the evidence that is trustworthy. Faith and logic do not oppose but coexist.

Let us consider the four facts that show Jesus is a trustworthy person.

- Prophecy in the Old Testament
- Testimony by Christ himself
- Testimonies by his disciples
- Testimonies by historical facts

3. The prophecy in the Old Testament

(1) Prophets in the Old Testament foretold the coming of Christ, and all the prophecies were fulfilled.

- First Messianic Prophecy

"And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel." (Genesis 3:15)

- The Prophecy that the Messiah would be born from the tribe of Judah
 "The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs and the obedience of the nations is his."
 (Genesis 49:10)

- The prophecy that the Messiah would be born from the line of David
 "When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever."
 (2 Samuel 7:12, 13)

- The prophecy that the Messiah would die for man
 "But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all."
 (Isaiah 53:5, 6)

- The prophecy that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem
 "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times."
 (Micah 5:2)

4. Testimony by Christ himself

- (1) Christ was crucified because he claimed himself to be God.
 This man said, "I am the way and the truth and the life" (John 14:6), and declared, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies." (John 11:25)
 Also, he forgave man's sin (Mark 2:5) and insisted that he existed before Abraham. (John 8:58)
 Who else other than Christ could have made such daring declarations? Christ was judged and crucified because of these declarations of his deity. (Matthew 26:62-66)

5. Testimonies by his disciples

- (1) Christ committed no sin in his entire life.
 Peter, who spent the entire three years with Christ, witnessed as follows. It is an extraordinary statement.

"He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth. When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly." (1 Peter 2:22, 23)

- (2) Jesus claimed that man's life is more valuable than the whole world.

People were moved by the wonderful teachings of Christ, especially his deep love and compassion for man. He claimed that man's life is more valuable than the whole world (Matthew 16:26a), and when dealing with all kinds of sinners, he never humiliated any of them.

- (3) Christ performed many miracles in his life.

Evidence that Christ is the Son of God are his miracles. He drove out demons, healed illnesses, raised the dead, and ruled over nature. To those who stand on the premise of atheism without any proof and deny any kind of miracle, Christ's miracles must be hard to understand. However, those who examine all data from a neutral position will find miracles to be very powerful evidence for belief in Christ.

- (4) Christ acted in love until his death on the cross.

Christ showed his love in a practical way that was beyond man's understanding. This is the love of God. No man can pray as Christ did on the cross.

"Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.' And they divided up his clothes by casting lots." (Luke 23:34)

"This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins."

(1 John 4:9, 10)

- (5) Christ rose from the dead.

The cowardly disciples were changed instantly to a group of bold evangelists because Jesus rose from the dead. Just as the independence of the Israelites is based on the historical event of Exodus, the birth of the Christian church is based on the historical event of Christ's resurrection. It is impossible to explain the birth of the church with anything other than the resurrection (cf. 1 Corinthians 15).

6. Testimonies by historical facts

- (1) The cowardly disciples were changed instantly.

"But Peter and John replied, 'Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God. For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.'"
(Acts 4:19, 20)

- (2) The church was born.

The first church was born on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2). Resurrected Jesus ascended to heaven and poured the Holy Spirit, which was the Father's promise, upon the disciples. As a result, the church was born.

7. Among the founders of the world's four largest religions, three of them were buried in their tombs and never rose from the dead. Christ lives!

Judaism Abraham (His tomb is in Hebron)

Islam..... Muhammad (His tomb is in Medina in Saudi Arabia.)

Buddhism..... Buddha (His bones and ashes were spread to eighty thousand temples.)

8. Christ is alive today and can save people.

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever."

(Hebrews 3:18)

9. Even today many people are receiving eternal life through Christ.

"Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me."

(Revelation 3:20)

LESSON 4

ENCOUNTER WITH A NEW LIFE

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!"

(2 Corinthians 5:17)

LESSON 4. ENCOUNTER WITH A NEW LIFE

CONCEPT OF THE PICTURE

1. **Two Tablets in the Sky** The standard of God's holiness never changes.
2. **Man Standing with His Back to the Light** Man's sinful nature never changes.
 - (1) **First Tree** Sinful life does not produce harvest.
 - (2) **Second Tree** Sinful life brings death.
3. **Burning Fire** God's judgment never changes.
4. **The Cross** God's love never changes.
5. **Child on His Father's Back** God's method of saving man never changes.
6. **Man Standing Facing the Light** The blessing for saved man never changes.
 - (1) **First Tree** Peace
 - (2) **Second Tree** Purpose
 - (3) **Third Tree** Power

LESSON 4. ENCOUNTER WITH A NEW LIFE

INTRODUCTION

Why is it that many people are not interested in becoming Christians? Why is it that many people don't have the confidence of salvation even though they say they believe in Jesus Christ? Some of the reasons could be (1) lack of information, (2) misunderstanding, and (3) prejudice.

In this lesson, we learn how we can enjoy the abundant life the Bible promises.

"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."
(John 10:10)

1. The standard of God's holiness never changes.

Living in the world where everything is always changing, man is searching for something that is unchangeable and absolute. The standard of God's holiness, shown in the Ten Commandments, never changes (Exodus 20:1–17).

- (1) You shall have no other gods before me.
- (2) You shall not make for yourself any carved image.
- (3) You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.
- (4) Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy.
- (5) Honor your father and your mother.
- (6) You shall not murder.
- (7) You shall not commit adultery.
- (8) You shall not steal.
- (9) You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor .
- (10) You shall not covet your neighbor's house.

God's law is like the light from a lighthouse that leads man to a happy life. We can choose to ignore this light, but no one can escape from reaping its unhappy result.

2. Man's sinful nature never changes.

When exposed to the light of God's holiness, it becomes obvious that every man is a sinner. What is sin? It will be defined by the following characteristics.

- Belonging to the devil (John 8:4)
- Disobeying the laws (1 John 3:4)

- Not doing correct things even though you know what you are supposed to do (Jacob 4:7)
- Things that do not come from faith (Romans 14:23)

(1) Sinful life does not produce harvest.

In Jesus' parable recorded in Matthew 13:3–23, there are four kinds of soil: along the path, rocky places, among thorns, and good soil. In good soil, we see harvests of a hundredfold, sixtyfold, and thirtyfold.

Some people think that they can live a fairly good life without becoming Christian. What should be noticed here is that if such people are reconciled with God, they can live even more fruitful lives.

(2) Sinful life brings death.

"but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."
(Genesis 2:17)

"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."
(Romans 6:23)

3. God's judgment never changes.

The Bible is clearly teaching about God's judgment.

"But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed."
(Romans 2:5)

"By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men." (2 Peter 3:7)

"just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment,"
(Hebrews 9:27)

The parable of "The Rich Man and Lazarus" in Luke 16:19–31 has an important meaning, especially for us Japanese. Many people say that they'd rather go to a place where their ancestors are, but what are the ancestors shouting? Let's take a look at what the rich man is saying.

"for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment."
(Luke 16:28)

4. God's love never changes.

The cross is the symbol of God's love. It was once a horrible tool for capital punishment, but it came to be loved by many.

- (1) God's love is unconditional. (Matthew 11:28)
- (2) God's love is self-sacrificial. (Romans 5:8)
- (3) God's love is everlasting. (Jeremiah 31:3)

5. God's method of saving man never changes.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16)

God tried to save us by faith. Faith means:

- (1) Knowledge about the Gospel
- (2) Agreement with the Gospel
- (3) Decision to receive the Gospel
- (4) Action to follow the Gospel

6. The blessing for saved man never changes.

Salvation brings various blessings, but here, let's deal with three main blessings.

(1) Peace

"Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," (Romans 5:1)

(2) Purpose

"For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." (Ephesians 2:10)

(3) Power

"On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, 'If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.'" (John 7:37, 38)

You can start a new life today with this prayer.

"Heavenly Father, I was a sinner. Please forgive me. I welcome Jesus Christ into my heart as my Savior from my sin and Lord of my life. Thank you that my sin is now forgiven and you made me a child of God. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen"

LESSON 5

AS AN INFANT

"Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation,"

(1 Peter 2:2)

LESSON 5. AS AN INFANT CONCEPT OF THE PICTURE

1. **Infant** Christians are spiritual infants.
 - (1) **Infant wearing diaper** incomplete self.
 - (2) **Infant sucking pacifier** Remaining old habits.

2. **Mother** God expects infant to grow.
 - (1) **Mother holding infant** God accepts you as you are.
 - (2) **Infant when matured** God sees potential.

3. **Baby bottle** Infant grows by drinking spiritual milk.
 - (1) **First bottle** Find what is written in the Bible.
 - (2) **Second bottle** Understand what it means.
 - (3) **Third bottle** Apply to your situation.

4. **5 doves** Prayer, or spiritual breathing, allows infant to grow.
 - (1) **First dove (thumb)** Calling
 - (2) **Second dove (index finger)** Praise
 - (3) **Third dove (middle finger)** Your needs
 - (4) **Fourth dove (ring finger)** ... Forgiveness of sins
 - (5) **Fifth dove (pinky)** Protection from evil

LESSON 5. AS AN INFANT

INTRODUCTION

How do people become Christians? You do not become a Christian just because you've been baptized, or by attending church services.

To become a Christian you must be reborn – which is to invite Jesus Christ into your heart. The certainty of the promises of the Word (the Bible) is the first step into new life, even if one does not feel reborn – it's like an infant being born even if he doesn't realize it. Also, there are people who have faith but do not know when they started to; do not be concerned – just because you don't know your birthday doesn't mean you haven't been born.

1. Christians are spiritual infants.

Christians are spiritual infants who have begun a new way of life. What God expects is for us to grow from infancy to adulthood.

(1) Incomplete Self.

It takes about 3 years before an infant gets out of diapers. Wearing a diaper is not abnormal. That is the way it is. But do we have very wrong ideas about the Christian life, and expect too much from people that have just been saved? Or maybe you feel you haven't changed too much since being saved, and doubt your salvation.

These types of misunderstandings come from not understanding that Christians are spiritual infants.

(2) Remaining old habits

It is difficult for us to get rid of old habits. You might move your furniture from one side of the room to the other, but for a moment expect it to be where it was before. It takes time to leave old habits behind and grow as a Christian.

2. God expects infants to grow.

God gives us all kinds of lessons in order for us to grow. It's just like the relationship between a parent and a child.

"And have you completely forgotten this word of encouragement that addresses you as a father addresses his son? It says, "My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son." Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children. For what children are not disciplined by their father?"

(Hebrews 12:5-7)

- (1) God accepts you as you are.
- (2) God sees your potential.

It is important to remember these two things. Jesus invited Peter with these words:

"And he brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, 'You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas' (which, when translated, is Peter)."

(John 1:42)

Jesus said, "you are Simon son of John," because he knew who Peter actually was. But at the same time he saw the potential that resided inside of Peter and said, "you will be called Cephas (meaning rock)."

3. Infant grows by drinking spiritual milk.

Just as our bodies are made from what we take in from the outside, our inner selves (spirit) are made from spiritual milk. These are the three basic steps to reading the Bible. Biblical hermeneutics is in itself a science and an art, and therefore it cannot be completely covered within the limited space of this text, but it will be of great help just to know the basis of hermeneutics.

- (1) Find out what is written in the Bible.

The most important thing here is to read the Bible as you would read any other book. You don't have to feel uptight that you are reading some special text.

- (2) Understand what it means.

What you must do next is to understand. There are three obstacles between modern people and the Bible:

- Time
- Geography
- Culture

You can't truly understand the meaning of the Bible unless you overcome these obstacles. In order to have the correct interpretation it is important to remember these two things:

- What is the author's intention?
- How did people of the time understand it?

To help correctly interpret the Bible, develop the habit of studying from other references such as Biblical commentaries and sermons.

(3) Apply it to your situation (What does it mean to me?)

The purpose of Bible study is to find truths you haven't found, experience them, and to begin applying it to your actions.

4. Prayer, or spiritual breathing, allows infant to grow.

The Bible does not contain the words "spiritual breathing," but they are perfect for expressing the prayers of a Christian. People can live only on water for about 40 days, but without breathing, they will die within minutes.

Let's study how to pray from the Lord's Prayer, Matthew 6:5-15:

(1) Calling

"Our Father in heaven"

Prayers begin with the words of calling. The target of the calling is "our Father in heaven." This calling is born out of perfect trust for God. Throughout history, many of those who opposed Christianity had issues with their own fathers.

(2) Praise

"Hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

At this point, praise God by remembering His glory and character. Meditate on His eternal presence, omnipresence, and love. Also, remember past blessings.

Moreover, pray that His kingdom and will are realized on Earth, and that His plans move forward. This is also the point at which you pray for your church, your pastor and church leaders, and missionaries. You can also pray for those who are yet to be saved.

(3) Your needs

“Give us today our daily bread.”

One of the characteristics of Lord’s Prayer is that you pray for God’s Will, and then for your needs. At this stage pray for your physical needs, not limited to food but for various needs. You may also pray for financial, interpersonal, and physical difficulties.

Remember that worrying is a sin and pray that you’ll be given the power you need for the day.

(4) Forgiveness of sins

“And forgive us our debts,”

This prayer asks for forgiveness of sins. God awaits us to show ourselves in front of Him as the sinners that we are.

If you are to follow the structure of the Lord’s Prayer, you don’t need to confess your sins at the beginning of the prayer. It does not mean that forgiving the sins of others is a condition required for your sins to be forgiven.

(5) Protection from evil

“And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.”

This prayer asks for protection in the spiritual battle against evil. Christians are not placed in a calm place, isolated from the rest of the world. Christians will experience hardships in life, but will be victorious in the name of Jesus Christ. (John 16:33)

LESSON 6

AS A CITIZEN OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

"You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden."

(Matthew 5:14)

LESSON 6. AS A CITIZEN OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

CONCEPT OF THE PICTURE

1. **Jesus preaching on the Mount** Jesus Christ came as the King of the kingdom of God.
2. **Jesus positioned in center of the crowd** ... Jesus Christ has absolute authority in the kingdom of God.
3. **8 types of people surrounding Jesus** Citizens of the kingdom of God are distinguished from the rest of the world.
 - (1) **David** Blessed are the poor in spirit.
 - (2) **Job** Blessed are those who mourn.
 - (3) **Moses** Blessed are the meek.
 - (4) **Paul** Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.
 - (5) **Good Samaritan** Blessed are the merciful.
 - (6) **Stephen** Blessed are the pure in heart.
 - (7) **Barnabas** Blessed are the peacemakers.
 - (8) **Daniel's 3 friends** Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness.

LESSON 6. AS A CITIZEN OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

INTRODUCTION

People cannot walk enriched lives without a correct self-image. In the previous section, we learned that Christians are spiritual infants, and in this section we will learn that they are citizens of the kingdom of heaven.

As a prerequisite for this section's lesson, focus on the following points:

"Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down.
His disciples came to him," (Matthew 5:1)

- The Sermon on the Mount does not preach salvation by law.
- The Sermon on the Mount was spoken to the disciples.

1. Jesus Christ came as the King of the kingdom of God.

Jesus Christ's first message in life was "repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." (Matthew 4:17) The Kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven have the same meaning. The kingdom of God was the central theme to Jesus' preaching (in this case the kingdom of God is the messianic kingdom, in other words the Millennial Kingdom). The kingdom of God requires these three things:

- (1) Presence of the King
- (2) Authority of the King
- (3) The King's people

Geographic concepts that we commonly associate with a kingdom are not included. Kingdom of God also means God's control within the followers' hearts.

"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." (Matthew 6:33)

2. Jesus Christ has absolute authority in the kingdom of God.

During the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus often quoted the Old Testament and showed his authority to interpret and heighten it to a spiritual level by following this speech pattern: "You have heard _____. However, I will say to you now_____." Also, he commanded his disciples as follows when leaving this world: of God also means God's control within the followers' hearts.

"Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'" (Matthew 28:18-20)

3. Citizens of the kingdom of God are distinguished from the rest of the world.

God demands the citizens of the kingdom of God to have a different lifestyle, value system, and logic from the ordinary people of the world. Israelites, who are the people of God, were blessed when they began a way of living that was separated from this world, and their demise began when they became one with it.

- Abraham's divine calling (Genesis 12:1-3)
- The experience of the Exodus (Leviticus 18:1-4)
- Shifting of imperial rule (1 Samuel 8:5, 19, 20)
- The sin of idol worship (Ezekiel 20:32)
- Captivity of Israel (2 Kings 17:7-8)

In order to understand the Sermon on the Mount you need to understand background information such as follows. Jesus Christ called the citizens of the kingdom of God the “salt of the earth” (Matthew 5:13) and the “light of the earth” (Matthew 5:14), which indicate these three expectations God has of them:

- They are distinguished from the rest.
- Have the characteristic to spread.
- Can give positive influence.

Jesus Christ touched on 8 characteristics possessed by the citizens of the kingdom of God, and called them Blessed People. “Blessed” in this case means:

- Not whether one feels subjective happiness, but is an objective declaration.
- Not what comes after death, but what one experiences in this world.

(1) Blessed are the poor in spirit. (Matthew 5:3)

The poor in spirit are people who can recognize what they need to be, and those who can repent. David is a person with those qualities.

- A soldier of the Lord (1 Samuel 17:47)
- A sinner who received grace (Psalms 32, 51)
- A poet (Psalms 23)

(2) Blessed are those who mourn. (Matthew 5:4)

Christian life is not a bed of roses. Christians will face problems. There are also problems that arise because you are a person of faith. Remember Job at such times—he learned these lessons from his sufferings:

- Do not think that hardships happen as a result of your sins.
- People's words will not help you.
- God gives us enough grace.

(3) Blessed are the meek. (Matthew 5:5)

To be meek is not to be weak, but to have the ability of self-control. Also, it is the ability to objectively criticize oneself. Moses is a perfect example of these qualities.

"Now Moses was a humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth."
(Numbers 12:3)

- 40 years in Egypt (development of personal abilities)
- 40 years in Midian (discovery of powerlessness)
- 40 years of the Exodus (blooming of meekness)

(4) Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. (Matthew 5:6)

This means to wish to live righteously in your relationship with others, as well as with God. The first name that comes to mind as someone who sought justice vigorously is Paul.

- Sought the justice of law
- Learned the justice of God
- Martyred for the justice of God

(5) Blessed are the merciful. (Matthew 5:7)

To be merciful is to be considerate towards those who are in need of help. The Good Samaritan is a person who showed his mercy through action (Luke 10:30~37). Mother Teresa, who devoted herself for others in Calcutta, India, is a divine vessel who most eloquently speaks of mercy to modern people.

- Knows he has received mercy
- Sensitive to the needs of their neighbor
- Does not expect favor in return

(6) Blessed are the pure in heart. (Matthew 5:8)

These are people who live without anything to hide—those with pure motives. The first person that springs to mind as someone with this characteristic is Stephen. He is a person controlled by the Holy Spirit.

- Personality has been changed (someone with an angelic face)
- Is filled with power (someone who has refuted their enemy)
- Has seen what can't be seen (someone who saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God)

"But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. 'Look,' he said, 'I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.'"

(Acts 7:55-56)

(7) Blessed are the peacemakers. (Matthew 5:9)

The truth splits people in two, and creates conflict. When one lives by putting God first, one will immediately be attacked by the world. Christians, however, do not create conflict on their own. They are taught to seek peace with all peoples. Barnabas was a peacemaker.

- Person of dedication (Acts 4:36~37)
- Person of consolation (Acts 9:26~30)
- Person of forgiveness (Acts 15:37)

(8) Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness. (Matthew 5:10)

As long as there is a battle between the kingdom of God and the kingdoms of this world, persecutions will occur. No matter how truthfully Christians lead their lives they will be persecuted for their truth. This is where we remember Daniel's three friends (Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego).

"Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to him, 'King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty's hand. But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.'"

(Daniel 3:16-18)

- Prepared for persecution.
- Relied on God for the final judgment.
- Chose to be happy regardless of the outcome.

LESSON 7

AS A SOLDIER

**"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms."
(Ephesians 6:12)**

LESSON 7. AS A SOLDIER

CONCEPT OF THE PICTURE

1. **Battlefield** The Christian life has the aspect of a spiritual battle.
2. **Light shining in from above** This battle is the Lord's battle.
3. **Burning Arrows** There are three enemies that attack Christians.
 - (1) **Dark Shadow** Satan
 - (2) **Throne** Desires of the flesh
 - (3) **Food, Clothing, and Shelter** worldly desires
4. **3 Soldiers** There are three types of soldiers that fight the spiritual battle.
 - (1) **Wounded Soldier** The natural man
 - (2) **Soldier in Despair** Those who belong to the flesh (Infants in Christ)
 - (3) **Fighting Soldier** Those who are with the Spirit
5. **Equipment of Fighting Soldier** You must wear the spiritual armor given to us by God.
 - (1) **Belt** Belt of truth
 - (2) **Breastplate** Breastplate of righteousness
 - (3) **Sandals** Readiness for the gospel of peace
 - (4) **Giant shield** Shield of faith
 - (5) **Helmet** Helmet of salvation
 - (6) **Sword** Sword of the Spirit (the Word of God)

LESSON 7. AS A SOLDIER

INTRODUCTION

To live is in itself a constant battle whether you are a Christian or not. An infant is thrown into the new battle as soon as it is born. Human bodies incessantly fight against bacteria that enter them. Plants will die without water and maintenance. Marriages are not a matter of luck, but something that requires nurturing by two people. To live, in that sense, is to fight.

1. The Christian life has the aspect of a spiritual battle.

Becoming a Christian does not mean that you no longer have to fight. Before his death, Jesus prayed for his disciples:

"My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it."

(John 17:15-16)

What is guaranteed to a Christian is not freedom from problems, but freedom within problems.

2. This battle is the Lord's battle.

However, Christians do not have to fight this spiritual battle on their own. Jesus Christ will fight with you.

"for the battle is the Lord's,"

(1 Samuel 17:47)

"You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. They are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them."

(1 John 4:4-5)

3. There are three enemies that attack Christians.

These three enemies are not distinct from one another but rather intertwined, but for the sake of this lecture let's split them into three parts:

(1) Satan

Even those who believe in God sometimes doubt the existence of Satan. Once you decide to listen to and follow God's voice, the existence of Satan starts to be a reality.

Satan acts not only to trouble us, but to completely destroy us.

"Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour."

(1 Peter 5:8)

Satan will:

- Interfere with God's work. (Mark 4:15)
- Attempt to separate people from God (Job 2:4~5)
- Demand worship (Luke 4:6~8)
- Disguise himself as an angel (2 Corinthians 11:14)
- Abuse the Bible (Matthew 4:6)
- Raise the lawless one (2 Thessalonians 2:9)

Satan's obstruction of evangelism is obvious from the accounts about the work of the Apostles.

- Simon, the Samaritan sorcerer (Acts 8:9)
- Bar-Jesus, the Salamisian false prophet and sorcerer (Acts 13:6)
- Young female slave in Philippi who was taken by the spirit of divination (Acts 16:16)
- Evil spirit in Ephesus and the Jewish exorcist. (Acts 19:13)

(2) Satan

We need to be aware that in this context, the word "flesh" does not mean our physical bodies or human nature, but rather the fundamental evil that resides within us.

"As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out."

(Romans 7:17-18)

Our selfishness must be crucified consistently. While it is a decision to be made at a certain point, it is also something that must be continued every day.

"Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires."

(Galatians 5:24)

Galatians 5:16~26 illustrates the contrast between physical and spiritual principles, but because Christians have both of these characteristics within themselves, they experience unending troubles.

(3) Worldly Desires

"Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever."

(1 John 2:15-17)

The word "world" may refer to the mainly human world created by God, but it may also refer to the forces that oppose God. In this case, it is the latter. In the previous section we discussed the two polar characteristics of Christians (physical and spiritual) but here, too, is another set of polar characteristics—that Christians are not of this world, but are sent to this world.

- Not of this world. (John 17:14-16)
- Are sent to this world. (John 17:18)
- Cannot conform to the pattern of this world. (Romans 12:2)

A blessed life is the life in which one confesses to being a sojourner.

4. There are three types of soldiers that fight the spiritual battle.

How do people fight this spiritual battle?

- The natural man
- Those who belong to the flesh
- Those who are with the Spirit

Let's think about it in terms of the three parts mentioned above.

(1) The Natural Man

To these people, only what they can see is real—the spiritual world, and the reality of the Word appear foolish to them. Consequently, they will absolutely lose the spiritual battle.

"The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit."

(1 Corinthians 2:14)

(2) Those who belong to the flesh (Infants in Christ)

Paul called the Corinthian Christians the following (1 Corinthians 3:1-4)

- Not ready for solid food.
- There is jealousy and quarreling.

These are the people that are aware of the spiritual battle, but cannot win.

(3) Those who are with the Spirit

"The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things, but such a person is not subject to merely human judgments,"

(1 Corinthians 2:15)

Let's now think once again about spiritual breathing (the Lord's prayer) which we learned about in section 5.

5. You must wear the spiritual armor given to us by God.

Those that are with the Spirit can put on the divine armor and win the battle.

"Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

(Ephesians 6:14-17)

(1) Belt of Truth

People will find freedom if they follow the truth, and if they oppose it, they won't get anything done.

"To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

(John 8:31-32)

"For we cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth."

(2 Corinthians 13:8)

(2) Breastplate of Righteousness

A breastplate is for protecting the heart. Paul spoke of the change in your values when you understand the righteousness of God.

"What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in[a] Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith."

(Philippians 3:8-9)

(3) Readiness for the Gospel of Peace

It is important to be ready to act on God's Will. Soldiers wore sandals so that they could move at a moment's notice.

(4) Shield of Faith

The faith mentioned here must be faith in the Word. Faith is to have assurance of something that you haven't seen.

"Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see."

(Hebrews 11:1)

(5) Helmet of Salvation

This means to be sure of salvation. Without assurance you will fall into the enemy's traps.

"But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet."

(1 Thessalonians 5:8)

(6) Sword of the Spirit (the Word of God)

Jesus' trials in the wilderness all ended with victory by the Word.

The battle of Christians will be lost if we turn our backs towards the enemy. The armor given to us by God are all meant to protect the front of our bodies. Let's keep moving forward without turning our backs to the enemy.

LESSON 8

AS A SHEEP

**"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come
that they may have life, and have it to the full"**

(John 10:10)

LESSON 8. AS A SHEEP

CONCEPT OF THE PICTURE

1. **Sheep in danger on rocks** Incorrectly receiving guidance will lead you to grave mistakes.
 - (1) **Sheep in fear** If you fear mistakes, you will make mistakes.
 - (2) **Sheep with a blindfold** If you are tenacious in keeping to your own plans, you will make mistakes.
 - (3) **Sheep wearing sunglasses** Those ignorant of guidance will make mistakes.

2. **Sheep walking on road** Those who walk according to the Will of God will be blessed.
 - (1) **Gate of Bible** Prompting by the Word
 - (2) **Gate of Prayer** Peace through prayer
 - (3) **Gate of Shepherd's Staff** Confirmation from the situation
 - (4) **Sheep on side of road** Advice from faithful friends

3. **Image displayed in sky and shadow on lake** Other general principles related to guidance
 - (1) **Jesus holding lamb** Trust in the Lord
 - (2) **Shadow on lake** Desire to do God's will
 - (3) **Lamp** The principle of step-by-step
 - (4) **Scales** Logical judgment

4. **Road split into 3** The principle of a free child

LESSON 8. AS A SHEEP

INTRODUCTION

The Bible compares our relationship with God to a shepherd and his flock of sheep. It makes sense once you consider some of the characteristics that sheep possess.

- Sheep are cowards
- Sheep are vulnerable to enemies.
- Sheep require a constant supply of food and water.
- Sheep tend to act as a group.
- When sheep are too fat, their lives are threatened.
- Sheep sometimes lack judgment.

These characteristics show that they are in need of a good shepherd. Jesus Christ understood that we are very much like sheep and spoke as follows:

"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full"

(John 10:10)

1. Incorrectly receiving guidance will lead you to grave mistakes.

God has a plan for the lives of each and every one of us, but not all people discover those plans and live blessed lives. To find and confirm God's guidance for you is a basic principle to living a blessed life, but you must scientifically learn the principles of guidance, and artistically apply those principles.

- (1) If you fear mistakes, you will make mistakes.

Fear has just as much power as faith, and it works in negative ways. Fear binds people, and takes away their joy, and in most cases it is coming from Satan.

What we need to fear most is being prevented from accomplishing what you are meant to do because of the fear of failure.

- (2) If you are tenacious in keeping to your own plans, you will make mistakes.

Have you seen a child crying because the parents don't give him what he wants? Human parents sometimes give in and respond to such demands, but God will not. You cannot approach God with your own plans and expect to find guidance.

(3) Those who are ignorant of guidance will make mistakes.

Those who do not study the principles of guidance are like people that drive without a license. There are dangers lurking everywhere.

2. Those who walk according to the Will of God will be blessed.

God has a path of blessing prepared for each and every one of us. In all problems and despair, there is certainly at least one path of blessing. This is the faith that we have in God. Let's study the 4 general principles of guidance:

(1) Prompting by the Word

The Bible describes itself as follows:

- The Bible is a lamp. (Psalms 119:105, Proverbs 6:23)
- The Bible is rain. (Isaiah 55:10-11)
- The Bible is food. (Jeremiah 15:16, 1 Peter 2:1-2, Hebrews 5:12-14)
- The Bible is fire. (Jeremiah 20:9, 23:29)
- The Bible is a seed. (1 Peter 1:23)
- The Bible is a sword. (Ephesians 6:17)

(2) Peace through prayer

Place importance on thoughts and ideas that arise during prayers. A newborn Christian's thoughts are a mirror that reflects God's Will.

"for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose. Do everything without grumbling or arguing,"

(Philippians 2:13-14)

(3) Confirmation from the situation

You must confirm God's providence from the situation. Ruth 2:3 shows a classic example of confirmation through the situation:

"So she went out, entered a field and began to glean behind the harvesters. As it turned out, she was working in a field belonging to Boaz, who was from the clan of Elimelek."

(Ruth 2:3)

In this example, Naomi was assured of Boaz and Ruth's marriage through the situation.

(4) Advice from faithful friends

God may speak to you through other Brothers and Sisters. It's best to listen to others in order to crush selfish convictions and build a more solid foundation.

Let's look at the example of the Church of Antioch, which sent the first missionary to a foreign society:

"While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.' So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off."

(Acts 13:2-3)

3. Other general principles relating to guidance

Let's study the following four points as additional general principles:

(1) Trust in the Lord

The concept that opposes fear is trust. In Proverbs 23 David describes trust as follows:

- | | | |
|------------------------------|---|-----------|
| • Prerequisite to trust | "my shepherd" | (verse 1) |
| • Taking care of daily needs | "green pastures", "beside quiet waters" | (verse 2) |
| • Protection in emergency | "refreshes my soul" | (verse 3) |
| • Victory over death | "the darkest valley" | (verse 4) |

(2) Desire to do God's will

"Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them."

(John 14:21)

(3) The principle of step-by-step

You cannot see the whole plan at once. Once you move to a certain point, you will be able to see what's next. Let's look at Acts 16—the vision of the man of Macedonia. They were not thinking about traveling to the European continent from the beginning. They went step-by-step to reach Troas, and when they didn't know where to move on from there, they had the vision.

(4) Logical judgment

God made even our logic. Aspire to collect information and make the correct judgment.

- Does this glorify of God?
- Does this bring people closer to Jesus?
- Does this build up my character?
- Is this something that's never been done by others?
- Can I do this better than others?

4. The principle of a free child

Finally, let's consider what we can do when the principles described above do not lead to a decision. When it seems that it doesn't matter whether you choose A or B, we, as free children, have a right and responsibility to choose. Pray like this:

"Dear God, I have prayed asking for your will, but it seems that in this situation it doesn't matter whether I choose A or B. As a free child, I will decide on my own. Please give me a sign if I am wrong."

"You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love."

(Galatians 5:13)

LESSON 9

PANORAMA OF LIFE

"And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit."

(2 Corinthians 3:18)

LESSON 9. PANORAMA OF LIFE

CONCEPT OF THE PICTURE

1. **Fetus** Human existence begins at the moment of conception.
2. **Infant** Humans enter life on earth through the birth of the physical body.
3. **Person in front of cross** Spiritual life begins through spiritual rebirth.
4. **Tomb** The death of the physical body is the end of life on earth.
5. **Person coming out of a tomb** Christians will be resurrected into new bodies when Jesus returns.
6. **Child playing with lion** The Millennial Kingdom will be realized on Earth and order will return to the natural world.
7. **Staircase climbing to heaven** Christians will live with the Lord in the New Heavens and New Earth for an eternity.

【Additional Information】

- (1) **Fire between 5 and 6** The Tribulation before the Millennial Kingdom.
- (2) **Fire between 6 and 7** The Judgment of the Great White Throne, which will bring final judgment to Satan and sinners.

LESSON 9. PANORAMA OF LIFE

INTRODUCTION

“What happens to people when they die?” Because my mother was prone to being sick, I constantly worried about that question. Sometimes I felt despair, and sometimes I would avoid thinking about it altogether. However, I finally found the answer within the Bible.

In this section, let's study where people come from and where they're going.

1. Human life begins at the moment of conception.

The most moving and clear description of the creation of man can be seen in Psalms 139.

- The all-knowing God (verse 1 - 6)
- The omnipresent God (verse 7 - 12)
- The God of creation (verse 13 - 16)
- Trust towards God (verse 17 - 24)

"Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be."

(Psalms 139:16)

The equation that shows the chance of the existence of humanity:

$$400/300,000 \times 1/500,000,000$$

2. Humans enter life on earth through the birth of the physical body.

The most dramatic and dangerous of the experiences in life is to be born. During this state the fetus completely changes its form of existence.

- It begins to breathe.
- It begins to drink milk.
- It begins to want interpersonal relationship.

It is, however, impossible for a fetus to understand that such a world exists.

3. Spiritual life begins through spiritual rebirth.

Just as a fetus cannot imagine the world after being born, the natural man cannot believe that there is spiritual life. But in the Book of John, Chapter 3, Jesus Christ clearly mentions to Nicodemus the necessity of being born again.

"Jesus replied, 'Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.'"

(John 3:3)

The conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus reveals these three points:

- The necessity of being born again
- The nature of being born again
- The nearness ("urgency") of being born again

There are correlations between the birth of the physical body and the birth of the spirit.

- Pain (the cross in Calvary)
- Breath (prayer)
- Milk (the Word)
- Relationship (Fellowship)

4. The death of the physical body is the end of life on earth.

Note that in the Bible, death is not a word that represents disappearance but it expresses the termination of a relationship.

"And the Lord God commanded the man, 'You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.'"

(Genesis 2:16-17)

The Bible describes three types of death:

- Spiritual death (severance from God, experienced in life)
- Physical death (separation of body and spirit)
- Eternal death (final destiny for sinners)

Here, we are talking about the second death (physical death). What happens to people when they die?

☐ The body will be buried in a grave.

☐ The spirit will go to Paradise (Abraham's bosom).

"I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far;"

(Philippians 1:23)

☐ The spirit of sinners will go to Sheol (Hades). (*reference: Luke 16:19-)

In the world of the Old Testament the place of suffering and the place of consolation (paradise) both existed in Sheol (Hades), but after the rebirth and the rise of Jesus Christ, Paradise was brought up to the Third Heaven.

"This is why it says: 'When he ascended on high, he took many captives and gave gifts to his people.' (What does 'he ascended' mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.)"
(Ephesians 4:8-10)

- You must understand the following regarding the destiny of sinners:
 - People are judged according to the amount of light given to them.
 - There are heavy sins and light sins in Hades.
 - There is no second chance.

5. Christians will be resurrected into new bodies when Jesus returns.

The time between death and being born again into a new body is called the intermediate state, but during this time people will continue to be conscious and live blessed lives. When the Lord Jesus returns, the dead will finally be resurrected with new lives.

- The Second Coming is mentioned over 300 times in the New Testament (1 in every 25 verses).
- Christ is a Prophet, a Priest, and a King.
- The dead will be resurrected, and the living will be lifted up into Heaven.

"But our citizenship is in Heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body."

(Philippians 3:20-21)

- Christians will be judged. This, however, isn't a judgment of sin but of reward.
 - There is a class system in Heaven, but it isn't based on jealousy.
 - There are various types of crowns:

"Everlasting Crown"	(1 Corinthians 9:25)
"Crown of Joy"	(1 Thessalonians 2:19)
"Crown of Righteousness"	(2 Timothy 4:8)
"Crown of Life"	(James 1:12)
"Crown of Glory"	(1 Peter 5:4)

6. The Millennial Kingdom will be realized on Earth and order will return to the natural world.

The people of God will rule the Millennial Kingdom alongside their king, Jesus Christ, for a thousand years. This is the realization of the vision prophesized by Isaiah. (Isaiah 11:6-9).

During this time the following phenomena will occur:

- Restoration of the natural world (Romans 8:18-22)
- Restoration of Israel
- Salvation of Gentiles
- Extinction of war (Isaiah 2:4)
- Extinction of sickness (Isaiah 35:4-6)

7. Christians will live with the Lord in the New Heaven and New Earth for an eternity.

The blessings prophesized in the Book of Revelation Chapters 21 and 22 will be realized. These blessings will never change for the people of God.

【Additional Information】

- (1) The tribulation will come before the Millennial Kingdom. Researchers' opinions are split over whether the Rapture will take place before the Tribulation or not. The Tribulation will end with the Battle of Armageddon.
- (2) At the end of the Millennial Kingdom, the Judgment of the Great White Throne will take place, and Satan and sinners will be thrown into a pit of fire (Revelation 20:7-15).

LESSON 10

THE GREATEST PROJECT OF HISTORY

"Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'"

(Matthew 28:18-20)

LESSON 10. THE GREATEST PROJECT IN HISTORY

CONCEPT OF THE PICTURE

1. **Four people playing trumpets** The Great Commission is indicated in 4 places.

2. **Crown on Earth** The Great Commission is ensured by the authority of Jesus Christ.

3. **Fire above 4 people** The power of the Great Commission is the Holy Spirit.

4. **4 trumpets** The contents of the Great Commission are expressed with 4 verbs.
 - (1) **First trumpet** go
 - (2) **Second trumpet** baptize
 - (3) **Third trumpet** teach
 - (4) **Fourth trumpet** make disciples

5. **5 planets surrounding Earth** The Great Commission has 5 motives.
 - (1) **Person in prison** Humanity is facing demise.
 - (2) **Zacchaeus** We are indebted.
 - (3) **Prodigal son** The love of Christ is coming.
 - (4) **Centurion** It is Christ's command.
 - (5) **People looking at sky** Christ's Second Coming is near.

LESSON 10. THE GREATEST PROJECT IN HISTORY

INTRODUCTION

Human history has seen a number of people and nations that held the vision of world domination, i.e.

Alexander the Great,
the Roman Empire,
the Mongols,
Napoleon,
and Hitler.

In Japanese history,
Hideyasu Toyotomi,
Ieyasu Tokugawa,
and modern Japan between the Meiji and Showa eras
are great examples.

All of their attempts, however, ended in failure. Today, corporations aim for world domination through economic advancement. Jesus Christ's project (the Great Commission) is greater than any person or nation we've mentioned in its scale, motive, and influence.

1. The Great Commission is recorded in 4 places.

The resurrected Christ appeared in front of his disciples for forty days to teach and guide them. The focus of his teaching was the kingdom of God. (Acts 1:3)

He gave the Great Commission to his disciples as He rose to heaven so that they can bring the kingdom of God to the world. This incident is recorded in 4 different places in the Bible.

- | | |
|--------------|--------------------|
| • By Matthew | (Matthew 28:18-20) |
| • By Mark | (Mark 16:15-18) |
| • By Luke | (Acts 1:8) |
| • By John | (John 20:21-23) |

2. The Great Commission is ensured by the authority of Jesus Christ.

In order for a project of this magnitude to succeed, it must have a guarantee. Is it:

- Money?
- People?
- Organization?

The Disciples had none of those. Their guarantee was Jesus Christ's authority. He gave the Great Commission to his disciples as He rose to heaven so that they can bring the kingdom of God to the world. This incident is recorded in 4 different places in the Bible.

"Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'"

(Matthew 28:18-20)

【Reference】 Philippians 2:5-11, Colossians 2:15, 1 Corinthians 15:55-56, Ephesians 1:21-23, Revelation 15:3-4

3. The power of the Great Commission is the Holy Spirit.

The Disciples spent a total of three and a half years with Jesus Christ, and also became witnesses to His death on the Cross and his resurrection. But that wasn't enough for them to be witnesses to Christ. They required the help of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

(Acts 1:8)

"When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them."

(Acts 2:1-4)

If those who lived in the first days of the church required the power of the Holy Spirit for evangelism, then how much more do us modern people need the help of the Holy Spirit?

4. The contents of the Great Commission are expressed with 4 verbs.

If we consider the contents with a focus on Matthew 28:18-20, the purpose and the method of the project planned by Jesus Christ himself becomes clearer.

(1) Go

- It does not mean going to a specific destination.
- The Disciples were broken up by persecution. (Acts 8:4, 11:19-21)
- You must be the Lord's witness no matter where you go.
- Evangelism through existence.

- (2) Baptize
 - Baptism with water is the representation of spiritual union with Christ.
 - Baptism occurs only once.
- (3) Teach
 - To teach is an act that is repeated.
 - Teach the Great Commission of Christ.
 - Teach all, rather than choosing what to teach.
- (4) Make disciples
 - The only command in the 4 verbs.
 - A keyword in the Great Commission.
 - Jesus' method: discipleship.
 - Paul's method: discipleship.

"And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others."

(2 Timothy 2:2)

Paul → Timothy → reliable people → Other people
 (parent) (child) (grandchild) (great-grandchild)

5. The Great Commission has 5 motives.

The greatest project in history differs from every other project in its motives. The Church is the only organization that, with a clear motive and without personal gain, tries to spread the kingdom of God.

- (1) Humanity is facing demise.

If we knew that a person directly in front of us was about to face his demise, what sort of actions would we take?

Alfred Russel Stone (aged 25 at the time), who, in a shipwreck in Japan in 1954, was martyred because he gave his life preserver to a stranger, continues to bring inspiration to many even today.

- (2) We are indebted.

"I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish."

(Romans 1:14)

"For when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, since I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!"

(1 Corinthians 9:16)

"Then they said to each other, 'What we're doing is not right. This is a day of good news and we are keeping it to ourselves. If we wait until daylight, punishment will overtake us. Let's go at once and report this to the royal palace.'"

(2 Kings 7:9)

(3) **The love of Christ is compelling.**

"For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again."

(2 Corinthians 5:14-15)

(4) **It is Christ's command.**

"For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

(Matthew 8:9)

(5) **Christ's second coming is near.**

The reality of the end of the world is being felt on a global scale. In 1743, when King George II first heard Handel's Messiah, he stood up during the chorus and said "how could I remain seated in front of the King of Kings."

The day when people will sing the great choir in front of the King of Kings will surely come. Are you ready?

LESSON 11

THE BIBLICAL STEWARDSHIP

"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms."

(1 Peter 4:10)

LESSON 11. BIBLICAL STEWARDSHIP

CONCEPT OF THE PICTURE

1. **Kneeling person at top left** A good steward first receives from God.
2. **Person managing pots of treasure** A good steward manages what is given to him by God.
3. **Person in center and crown symbol on pots** A good steward knows who has the right of ownership.
4. **7 Pots of Treasure** There are seven pots of treasure that must be managed by a good steward.
 - (1) **Heart symbol** the Spirit
 - (2) **Brain symbol** the Intellect
 - (3) **Athlete symbol** the Body
 - (4) **Gold Coin symbol** Wealth
 - (5) **Bible symbol** the Gospel
 - (6) **Mouth symbol** Words
 - (7) **Clock symbol** Time
5. **Person in vision** A good steward imagines the joy of windup.
 - (1) **Towel being given** Greater service
 - (2) **Fruit basket** Rapid response to prayer
 - (3) **Crown** Praise from God

LESSON 11. BIBLICAL STEWARDSHIP

INTRODUCTION

Let's study the meaning of the word stewardship as it is portrayed in the Bible.

1. A good steward first receives from God.

The model for Biblical stewardship is Joseph, who appears in the Book of Genesis 39:4-6.

There are 4 factors to consider:

- A faithful steward
- A sovereign master
- Authority given to steward by the master
- Final accounting to be given.

When we think of stewardship, we may associate it mainly with giving, but you must first receive from God.

You may feel that to be passive is to be more spiritual, but understand and accept that to be fulfilled in various aspects is the first step to being a good steward.

2. A good steward manages what is entrusted to him by God.

What comes after receiving is good management.

Jesus teaches with clarity what a good steward is in the parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30). This story holds the secret to being freed from feelings of inferiority and living a rich life.

- Each person has different capabilities.
- Even 1 Talent (the smallest amount) is worth an impressive amount (1 Talent is 6000 Denarii, in other words 16 years worth of pay).
- What is important is how much of your talent you use, and not the comparison with others.

3. A good steward knows who has the right of ownership.

Everything on this earth belongs to God.

Your body, life, and possessions all belong to God. Once you realize that you do not have the right of ownership, the way you live will change.

When you borrow a book from someone, you read it with utmost care. I have lost photographs that I borrowed for TV production. The first time I just had to ask for forgiveness, and another time I was able to find the photographs later and was able to return them.

In this way, everything we have, we are temporarily borrowing from God.

4. There are seven treasures that must be managed by a good steward

Here, we are going to focus on the 7 especially important treasures:

(1) The Spirit (heart)

The inner part of a person is difficult to see from the outside, and we might not think of it seriously or think that it is beyond management. But that is not the case. Remember Section 5: to be an infant. A newborn life must be nurtured.

Remember that the failure to be faithful comes from a lack of management of the inner-self, and practice the spiritual breathing (the Lord's prayer) that you learned in section 5.

(2) The Intellect

Faith and intellect do not oppose one another. Having a simple faith is not being ignorant. In order to have a deeper understanding of the Word of God we must read, enjoy music, acquire the newest information, and be sensitive to world affairs.

The prophets in the Old Testament come from various backgrounds but they shared the following three things in common:

- A deep understanding of the Word of God.
- The recognition of Israel's national mission.
- The ability to understand the times, and speak to it.

It would be great for us to acquire the ability to think in centurial terms as modern prophets.

(3) The Body

"Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship."

(Romans 12:1)

"Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies."

(1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

There is no concept in the Bible that separates man into the body and the spirit. The Hebrew understanding of man sees a person as a whole.

- Nutrition
- Sleep (rest)
- Exercise

(4) Wealth

The Christian offering is to recognize that all things came from God, and to pay Him back as a token of appreciation. Tithing was taught in the Old Testament days and in the New Testament days, the teaching was to "give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion" (ref. Malachi 3:8-12, 2 Corinthians 9:6-15).

It is written that the first generation of Christians sold their possessions to help the poor (Acts 4:32-37), but in modern times it is necessary to think about this on a global scale.

(5) The Gospel

The duty of a steward is to provide meals as commanded by the master.

To explain the Word is to speak the Bible as it is written. Human problems have not changed since the day of creation, and God's response has not changed either.

- Man is lonesome.
- Man carries the weight of sin.
- Man is afraid of death.

(6) Words

Words have the power to create thought and change the situation. God created the entire world with the Word and gave humans the ability to control language. Therefore, the management of words requires utmost care.

"We all stumble in many ways. Anyone who is never at fault in what they say is perfect, able to keep their whole body in check."

(James 3:2)

(7) Time

Time doesn't exist infinitely. Also, time is given equally to all people (24 hours a day).

However, someone may use his time wisely, while another wastes it away. You must also understand that besides physical time, there is mental time. Time is to be created and used wisely.

To see how much time a person spends on which aspects of his life reveals his interests. Biblical priority in life is as follows:

- God
- Family
- Church
- Work

5. A good steward imagines the joy of the final accounting.

We must live our lives while considering the final accounting to be given in front of God. This accounting is a concept that reminds us of the end of days, but it is also something that is happening continually every day. A good steward receives blessings such as the following:

(1) Greater devotion

God gives generously. Once you understand that God gives us more than we give Him, your doubts about offerings and devotion will be taken away.

(2) Rapid response to prayer

God will listen to the prayer of a dedicated servant (1 John 3:17-22)

(3) Praise from God

"Well done, good and faithful servant!" (Matthew 25:21) is the voice of God that recognizes the meaningfulness of our lives.

LESSON 12

EVANGELISM IN THE END TIMES

**"Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season;
correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful
instruction."
(2 Timothy 4:2)**

LESSON 12. EVANGELISM IN THE END TIMES

CONCEPT OF THE PICTURE

1. **Smiling person** The first rule of evangelism is to become a winsome person.
 - You are aware of your special rights as a Child of God.
 - There are no sins you have not confessed.
 - You are certain of the filling of the Holy Spirit.
 - You know the methods of evangelism.

2. **4 people** There is no one who does not need to be saved.

3. **Painting of the Samaritan Woman** The method used by Jesus is the most effective method of personal evangelism.
 - (1) **Coffee cup** speaks to the heart.
 - (2) **Illustration from Section 1** Speaks to the intellect.
 - (3) **Illustration from Section 2** Speaks to the conscience.
 - (4) **Illustration from Section 3** Speaks to the spirit.
 - (5) **Illustration from Section 4** Speaks to the will.

4. **Illustration from Section 5 onwards** The goal of evangelism is to make disciples.

5. **Scenery of dusk outside window** There is not much time left for evangelism.

LESSON 12. EVANGELISM IN THE END TIMES

INTRODUCTION

There is only one way for the Great Commission of the Lord to be realized in a concrete fashion. That is, personal evangelism by the believers.

The reason for Christianity's explosive expansion during the first generation of the Church is not only due to the participation of leaders such as Paul and Peter. People whose names are not known spoke of Jesus as their Savior in their local areas and in all parts of the Roman Empire, and so Churches were born throughout the land.

As a summary of this seminar, let's learn about "personal evangelism by the believers."

1. The first rule of evangelism is to become a winsome person.

It would be difficult for a person with unresolved issues within themselves to help others. It also does not make sense to preach about what you have not experienced yourself.

What reaches and moves people's hearts is love. People will be saved if evangelism is without selfish motives and is rooted in love (this does not mean you would be free from all problems. If that were the case, it would be impossible to preach since it is impossible to sustain such a condition in life on this earth).

- To be aware of the special rights as a Child of God (ref. Romans 8:14-17).
- To be without unconfessed sins (ref. Leviticus 16:6-10, 20-21, 1 John 1:8:-10).
- To be certain of being filled by the Holy Spirit (ref. Ephesians 6:18, 1 John 5:14-15).
- To know the methods of evangelism (ref. 1 Peter 3:15).

2. There is no one who does not need to be saved.

What becomes a roadblock to evangelism is negative faith. We will subconsciously have thoughts such as the following within our hearts:

- Those who are wealthy do not need to be saved.
- Those who are successful do not need to be saved.
- It is difficult for a stubborn person to be saved.
- People in poverty are just getting by and have no capacity to listen to the message of the Gospel.

Before you know it, you will be convinced that “that person” cannot be saved.
There is, however, no one who does not need to be saved. All people are invited by God.

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”
(Matthew 11:28)

3. The method used by Jesus is the most effective method of personal evangelism.

The book of John contains several parts where Jesus speaks to a person, or a group of people. His method was to always speak from the perspective of the listener, as was Paul’s (1 Corinthians 9:19-23).

People make decisions based not on reasons given to them by others, but on reasons that they think of themselves. Let’s be sure to remember that.

- Conversation with Nicodemus (3:1-21)——— “God’s Kingdom and a new life”
- Conversation with Samaritan woman (4:1-42)— “Living water”
- Message after feeding 5000 people (6:22-71)—— “Bread of life”
- Healing of the blind (9:1-41)——— “Light of the world”

(1) Speaks to the heart.

“When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, ‘Will you give me a drink?’”
(John 4:7)

The way Jesus spoke to the Samaritan woman immediately gave her a good impression;

- A Jewish man;
- speaks to a Samaritan woman;
- asking for water.

People only listen to those they have opened their hearts to, or those who have given them a good impression. You must be aware that our personalities themselves become our messages. You must speak to the heart; only then can you move on to the next step.

(2) Speaks to the intellect.

“Jesus answered her, ‘If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.’”
(John 4:10)

The Samaritan woman was interested in water. So, Jesus begins to talk about “living water.”

The Japanese lack a Biblical background and often think of Christianity as one of the many religions. In order to preach to those people, you must first indicate that the Bible is a unique book.

Let's now take the illustration from Section 1, Encounter with the Bible, and evangelize. Find a friend or a family member who has finished Step 1 above, and tell them that there is a process of learning the Bible that can be done in four simple steps and invite them.

- Let them decide the place and time.
- Take it lightly—think of it as just a chance to get to know them a little better.
- Go step by step, while being attentive to their reactions.
- Do not make them feel under pressure.

(3) Speaks to the conscience.

"He told her, 'Go, call your husband and come back.'" (John 4:16)

To speak to the voice of the conscience doesn't mean to be condescending or hurt their pride. Jesus respected the personalities of those whom he spoke to at all times, even if he was speaking to a sinner and was always full of grace.

When speaking of sin to the Japanese, most of whom have little or no knowledge concerning the Bible, it is easy to create an unnecessary awkwardness, or a conflicting relationship if you do not interact with them with utmost care.

- How do you talk about idol worship?
- How do you answer the question
“what happens to those who died without knowing Christ?”

Take the illustration from Section 2, Meeting Yourself, and discuss the appearance of man. Do not take the stance of teaching, but share your own experiences. Be attentive to their reaction, determine whether they have opened or closed their hearts, and go step by step. If they begin to talk about deeper issues within themselves, you can take it as a good sign.

(3) Speaks to the spirit.

"Then Jesus declared, 'I, the one speaking to you—I am he.'" (John 4:26)

Here, Jesus revealed Himself—in other words He declared Himself as the Messiah—which is surprising, since he hadn't made this known even to His disciples. Christ responded to the deepest need of the woman.

Take the illustration from Section 3, Meeting Christ, and discuss the necessity of the spirit.

(5) Speaks to the will.

"Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, 'Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?' They came out of the town and made their way toward him."
(John 4:28-30)

The woman made a decision and left Christ. The words "leaving her water jar" represents the meaning of her action.

Take the illustration from section 4, Meeting A New Life and speak to their will. What is important here is whether the person's heart is ready; in other words, if the time has come yet. You cannot force an immature baby out of its womb. The result is left up to God, but be careful so that you can keep a good relationship no matter the outcome.

4. The goal of evangelism is to make disciples.

The goal of the Great Commission was to gain apprentices. The Samaritan woman immediately became the evangelist to the people in her town. As such, our goal, too, is to lead and protect new believers, and make them our disciples.

5. There is not much time left for evangelism.

"Don't you have a saying, 'It's still four months until harvest?' I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest." (John 4:35)

Lift your eyes and see:

- The Lord of the harvest.
- The time of the harvest.
- The field of the harvest.