

REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH OF IRELAND



SENIOR
STUDENT'S
WORKSHEETS

UNIT 2

Revised 1995

Copyright
Committee on the Instruction of the Young
Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland

LESSON 1

Studies in the Shorter Catechism

THE MORAL LAW (1)

Catechism Questions 39, 40.

Scripture Text - Ecclesiastes 12: 13; Micah 6: 8; Romans 2: 14,15.

RULES . . . RULES . . . RULES . . . RULES.

1. **CONSIDER....?** What would life be like if there were no rules?

No Highway Code
No rules in sport
No civil laws

2. What rules has God given to man?

In what two ways does He reveal these to man?

a) _____ (Romans 2: 14,15)

b) _____ (Exodus 20: 4- 17)

3. **RULES & RESPECT**

Obedience
is based
on respect

List some of those whom one should obey.

4. **There is a way that seems right to a man, BUT ...**

(Proverbs 14 : 12)

From Micah 6: 6, 7 make a list of wrong ways by which people may try to please God

... **think** ... What are some of the present day examples of this?

APPLICATION

Have I broken God's rules? _____

In what different ways have I broken God's rules? List.

What must I do in order to be right with God? 1 John 1 : 9

LESSON 2

Studies in the Shorter Catechism

THE MORAL LAW (2)

Catechism Questions 41, 42.

Scripture Text - Exodus 31 :18; Deuteronomy 10 : 4; Matthew 22 : 37-40.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

1. Of what were The Ten Commandments a summary?

Were they given only to the Children of Israel?

If they were given to a redeemed people are they binding on non-Christians today?

What did their being written by the finger of God indicate?

2. It is generally accepted that The Ten Commandments present to us a two-fold responsibility:-

1) o u r d u t y
to_____

2) o u r d u t y
to_____

Look at The Commandments and note which relate to these duties.

3. **RENEWAL ...**

After being given The Ten Commandments what did the Children of Israel do? (Deuteronomy 9:12)

What did God do in return to Moses' response ? (Deuteronomy 10:4)

What is the 3-fold significance of this renewal?

i) _____

ii) _____

iii) _____

4.

CHRIST'S SUMMARY

In Matthew 22:37- 40 The Ten Commandments are summarised in two commandments. What are they?

First commandment :

Second Commandment:

Which of The Ten Commandments particularly relate to:-

Christ's first commandment?

(Exodus 20 : 3-11)

Christ's second commandment?

(Exodus 20: 12-17; Romans 13:9)

APPLICATION

‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind ...Love your neighbour as yourself.’

LESSON 3

Studies in the Shorter Catechism

THE MORAL LAW (3)

Catechism Questions 43, 44.

Scripture Text - Exodus 20: 2 ; Joshua 24: 1-28; 1 Corinthians 6: 20.

WHY OBEY GOD' S COMMANDMENTS?

1.

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">God's Preface</div>	<p style="text-align: center;">‘I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.’</p> <p>God, in this preface, uses 3 different titles for Himself. What do you understand by each?</p> <p>God _____</p> <p>LORD _____</p> <p>Redeemer _____</p>
--	--

2.

DISCUSS

“We are not saved because we keep the Commandments; we keep the Commandments because we are saved.”

How could you prove this from the preface to The Ten Commandments?

3.

Give three reasons why we must obey God's Commandments.

Think back to question 1.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4.

RESEARCH AND REPORT

Read Joshua 24: 1-18. List all the things that God had done for His people from the time of Abraham to their victories in Canaan.

(Note: It was on the basis of this that Joshua issued the appeal of vs. 14, 15)

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

count the cost

Is the cost of commitment to God and His commands too great?
See Luke 14: 25-35.

Have **you** ever thought about the price of redemption? In 1 Corinthians 6:20 we are told that a price was paid for our redemption: 'You were bought at a price.' WHAT WAS THAT PRICE?

1 Peter 1: 18, 19 _____

1 John 4: 9, 10 _____

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

Considering the cost of Redemption, is the cost of commitment to God's commands too high for you?

LESSON 4

Studies in the Shorter Catechism

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT (1)

Catechism Questions 45, 46.

Scripture Text - Exodus 20:3; Deuteronomy 26:17; 1 Kings 11:1-10;
1 Chronicles 28: 9; Matthew 4: 10

Imagine King Solomon on trial for breaking the first Commandment.

Outline the case for the prosecution and for the defence.

1. The Case for the Prosecution

- (a) God had been very gracious to him. (1 Kings 3: 5-15).

Give details _____

- (b) God had given specific commands on this matter. (1 Kings 11: 9,10)

Give details _____

- (c) God had given strict warnings about what would happen if he broke this commandment. (1 Kings 9: 6,7).

Give details _____

2. The Case for the Defence

(a) What he did was in the interest of business. (1 Kings 5:1-12; 9:11).

Give details _____

(b) He was only being tolerant towards other religions. (1 Kings 11:7,8)

Give details _____

(c) He gave the Lord an outstanding place in his worship by building a magnificent temple for Him. Was that enough? (1 Kings 9: 6-9).

Give details of what God said would happen to the temple if Solomon went after other gods. _____

3. The Verdict? (1 Kings 11: 9-11)

LESSON 5

Studies in the Shorter Catechism

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT (2)

Catechism Questions 47, 48.

Scripture Text - Habakkuk 1:15,16; Matthew 6: 24; Romans 1: 21-32;
Philippians 3: 18,19; 2 Timothy 3: 4.

HOW DO YOU RATE?

1. You have been offered an attractive job in an area where there would be little opportunity of Christian fellowship. Do you
 - (a) refuse?
 - (b) accept without any reservations?
 - (c) accept and hope to get back occasionally to your old church?

Ans. _____

2. On Friday evening you are asked to work on Saturday and Sabbath. Do you
 - (a) refuse because you could miss church?
 - (b) refuse because you would miss football / shopping on Saturday?
 - (c) accept with reluctance because you feel your employer expects it of you?
 - (d) accept it eagerly because of the extra money?

Ans. _____

3. You have been awarded a substantial pay rise. Do you
- (a) increase your givings to the church?
 - (b) spend it all on yourself?

Ans. _____

You know of course, that answers 1(a), 2(a) and 3 (a) are the ones which are in line with what is required in the First Commandment. How can we be brought to accept them wholeheartedly?

LESSON 6

Studies in the Shorter Catechism

THE SECOND COMMANDMENT (1)

Catechism Questions 49, 50.

Scripture Text - Matthew 28:20; Exodus 32: 1-6; Deuteronomy 4:14-26; 12:32.

Jeroboam, king of Israel, is described in the Bible as ‘Jeroboam the son of Nebat who made Israel to sin’. The story is found in 1 Kings 12: 26-33.

Imagine Jeroboam on trial for his sin, and outline the case for the prosecution and the defence.

The Case for the Prosecution

He was breaking God’s commandment - Exodus 20: 4-6 - in what ways?

_____ 1 Kings 12: 28

_____ 1 Kings 12: 31

_____ 1 Kings 12: 32

The Case for the Defence

1. He was only wanting to keep the people from going back to Jerusalem.

For what reason?

_____ 1 Kings 12: 26, 27

2. He was going to make life easier for the people. How?

_____ 1 Kings 12: 28

3. He continued the practice of worship and sacrifice. How?

_____ 1 Kings 12: 32

Verdict

_____ 1 Kings 12: 30

DISCUSS: In what ways do some people claim to make worship easier and more attractive today by adding something God has not commanded? What answer from Scripture can we give them?

LESSON 7

Studies in the Shorter Catechism

THE SECOND COMMANDMENT (2)

Catechism Question 51, 52.

Scripture Text - Exodus 34: 13,14; Deuteronomy 4: 15, 16; 12: 32; Psalm 95: 6; 45:11.

A. Indicate your attitude to the following using the key

A = approve, B = disapprove, C = neither approve nor disapprove

1. Pictures of Christ in children's Bible story books _____
2. Nativity plays _____
3. The crucifix _____
4. Carol services _____
5. A cross as jewellery _____
6. Stained glass windows depicting the Good Shepherd _____
7. The cross as church decoration _____

Discuss the reasons for your answers.

B. 1. What is the error of all representations of God or Christ? (see Lesson 6)

2. Why does the R.P.Church use only the Divinely-inspired and Divinely-appointed Psalms in worship and without instrumental music?
See Deuteronomy 12:32

C. What three Biblical reasons are summarised for us in Question 52?

a) _____

b) _____

c) _____

LESSON 8

Growing in Faith

THE SOURCE OF CHRISTIAN LIFE

Scripture Text - John 15

1. COMPLETE AND CONSIDER

a) What is an allegory ?

b) When did Jesus give this teaching?

c) This allegory teaches the vital union between _____

d) Christ teaches three principles of abiding in Him - what are they?

i) _____ vs. 2, 6.

How do Christians come to be in Christ?

ii) _____ v. 2.

What form may this take?

iii) _____ vs. 9, 10, 14

What is necessary for this?

How is this revealed to us?

2. **ABIDING IN CHRIST YIELDS RESULTS.**

In John 15 we find 4 mentioned. What are they?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

MY RESPONSE:

Am I abiding in Christ?

Is my life characterised by fruitfulness?

Do I faithfully witness for Christ by what I say and do?

REMEMBER: Christ said, 'Apart from me you can do nothing.'

LESSON 9

Growing in Faith

THE NECESSITY OF GROWTH

Scripture Text - Ephesians 4: 1-16; Hebrews 5: 12- 6 : 3; 1 Peter 2: 1-3.

1. Essentials for Growth

The following verses present us with 5 factors that are essential for spiritual growth. What are they? (Note the similarity between physical and spiritual growth).

1 1 Peter 2:2 _____

2 Ephesians 4:11c-12 _____

3 2 Chronicles 16:9a _____

4 Philippians 3:14 _____

5 John 15:12 _____

Results of Growth

1 See Hebrews 5:12-6:3 _____

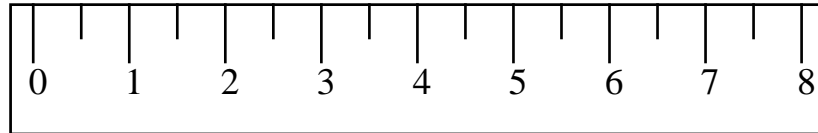
2 See Ephesians 4:15 _____

3 See Ephesians 4:12 _____

CHALLENGE

1. Am **I** growing?
 2. If not, why not?
 3. How can **I** grow more?
-

Growth



measured

Growth can be measured. A child can be weighed or have his weight calculated. Write down 7 ways by which spiritual growth can be measured.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____

LESSON 10

Growing in Faith

THE QUIET TIME

Scripture Text - Psalm 1: 2; 119: 9; Matthew 6:16; Mark 1: 35.

1. The variety of religions throughout the world and throughout history teach us that man is _____

2. When a person becomes a Christian he discovers that there is fellowship with God the Father and that He _____ (John 4:23).

3. What did the risen Christ wish to have with the **church** in Laodicea?
 Note: it was with the Church (Rev. 3:20) _____

4. There are many examples of people who had a daily devotional time.

Genesis 5:22 _____	Genesis 24:63 _____
Psalm 5:3 _____	Psalm 77:12 _____
Daniel 6:10 _____	Acts 9:11 _____
Acts 10:9 _____	Mark 1:35 _____

What are the 4 practical helps for a Quiet Time?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

The aim of a Quiet Time is to worship God and listen to Him. This requires three things. From the lesson write down what these are.

a) _____

b) _____

c) _____

LESSON 11

Growing in Faith

HOW TO RECEIVE THE WORD OF GOD

Scripture Text - 2 Chronicles 34; 1 Thessalonians 1, 2.

Josiah, king of Judah reigned 31 years from 639 - 608 BC. He began to reign when he was 8 years old. When he was 16, he began to seek after the Lord God of David. When he was 20, he began his reforms. These included the demolition of the places and objects of pagan worship and the repair of the Temple. When he was 26, the finding of the Book of the Law gave great impetus to his reforms, the most thoroughgoing reformation Judah had known.

1. How did hearing God's Word affect Josiah? 2 Chronicles 34:19
 _____ i.e. filled with anguish.
2. What did he discover about the Lord's attitude to Judah? 2 Kings 22:13

3. What did Josiah do when of the Book of the Covenant was read?
 1 Kings 23:3

4. How did the Thessalonians receive the Word of God? 1 Thess. 1:6, 2:13

5. Why was this? 1 Thessalonians 1:5

6. What was the result of the Thessalonians receiving God's Word in this

way?

1: 6(a) _____

1: 7 _____

1: 8 _____

1: 9(b) _____

1: 10(a) _____

7. How does God say we are to receive His Word? James 1: 21

8. In the light of this how should we approach private and public worship?

LESSON 12

Growing in Faith

THE STUDY OF THE WORD OF GOD

Scripture Text - 1 Corinthians 15: 1-11

The Word of God can only be understood by the help of the Spirit of God. There are different ways in which to study the Bible. It is good to take a book and study it in depth. A good commentary is useful. This will give the background and comment on the passage. If you need help with choosing a commentary, ask your minister.

The following are some guidelines for study:

- (a) It is always appropriate to begin Bible study using the words of Psalm 119:18.

- (b) Read the passage, perhaps using a second translation.
In this case 1 Corinthians 15:1-11.

- (c) Learn the theme - (The resurrection of Christ)

- (d) Note the content of the Gospel:
vs. 1-2 Paul introduces his theme

vs. 3-4a Paul outlines to them the Gospel which he had declared earlier.
(See Acts 18: 4,5,8,11)

What was Paul's method in the synagogue?

He _____

What was the result which led to the formation of the church in Corinth?

- (e) Note the evidence for the Resurrection. Can you think of other witnesses?
- (f) Note that Paul did not originate the message he passed on to them (v. 3)
- (g) List the lessons learned
 - i) Paul's message - death and resurrection of Christ
 - ii) the aim of preaching the Gospel - to persuade
 - iii) church members - those who are persuaded

LESSON 13

Growing in Faith

THE PURPOSE OF THE SACRAMENTS

Scripture Text - Matthew 28: 18-20; Luke 24: 14-20.

‘In Remembrance of Me’ Chapter 3.

- ◆ A sacrament is an holy ordinance instituted by Christ in His Church,
- ◆ to signify, seal and exhibit unto those who are within the Covenant of Grace the benefits of His mediation;
- ◆ to strengthen and increase their faith, and all other graces;
- ◆ to oblige them to obedience;
- ◆ to testify and cherish their love and communion one with another and to distinguish them from those that are without.

For the Christian the Sacraments are important for several reasons -

1. Because they have been instituted by Christ.
2. Because things which we see are more readily absorbed and retained in the memory. The commercial world uses illustrations both on TV and advertising hoardings. Knowledge which is communicated by more than one of the senses makes a greater impact. The sacraments are signs or action symbols which vividly portray God’s work of grace.
3. Just as a seal is placed on a legal document to verify that it is authentic, so the sacraments are a seal certifying that God's promises stand and can be claimed by the believer.
4. In battle each battalion carried a banner so that the soldiers could gather round their own flag. In a similar way the sacraments demonstrate that believers are Christ’s followers and the observance encourages others to join with them.
5. Properly used, they increase our faith and love for Christ, as they point us towards His finished work on Calvary.

LESSON 14

Growing in Faith

THE MEANING OF CHRISTIAN BAPTISM

Scripture Text - Genesis 17: 1-14; Galatians 3: 15-29; Romans 6: 1-14

To understand baptism it is necessary to begin with Abraham. Every New Testament teaching has its roots in the Old Testament. Since baptism is associated with salvation (Acts 2:38) we therefore consider what was associated with Abraham's salvation (Genesis 12:1-3; Genesis 17:1-14).

We find here a reference to God's Covenant. A covenant is a promise or solemn oath. In Genesis the promise is made by God to Abraham, and Abraham's descendants.

1. How long was this covenant (solemn promise) to apply? Genesis 17:7; Psalm 105:10; Hebrews 13:20

2. To whom was the covenant to apply? Genesis 17:7; Acts 2:28-29; Acts 3:25; Galatians 3:14,29

3. What visible sign was to signify the covenant in the Old Testament? Genesis 17:11

4. Is there evidence to suggest that many of the people trusted in the outward sign rather than what the sign signified? Deuteronomy 10:16

5. What was needed for the outward sign to become an inward reality in the Old Testament? Deuteronomy 30:6. _____
6. Why was it necessary to introduce a new sign under the new administration of the covenant in the New Testament? Hebrews 9:12

7. What was this new sign and at what significant point was it introduced? Matthew 28:18-20
-

8. Match the following sets of verses with the meaning of baptism.

cleansed from the defilement and guilt of sin (1 Corinthians 12, 13; Gal. 3:27, 28)

forgiveness (Acts 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21)

saving union with Christ (Romans 6:3; Colossians 2:11, 12)

admission into the visible church of Christ (Acts 2:38; 5:31; 11:18)

9. Linking Acts 2:38, 39 with the baptism of the entire households of Lydia (Acts 16:15), Philippian Jailer (Acts 16:33) and Stephanus (1 Corinthians 1:16) what conclusion would you arrive at with respect to the inclusion of children within the covenant in the New Testament?
-

10. Ask your parents about the day of your baptism and discuss with them the significance of it.

LESSON 15

Growing in Faith

THE ACTIVITY OF PRAYER

Scripture Text - Hebrews 10: 16-22; Romans 8: 26-39

1. All the laws of prayer are eventually governed by this principle - to be successful, prayer must be according to God's will. See 1 John 5:14.
 'If we _____'

2. How does the Holy Spirit help us to ascertain the will of God and so to pray for the right things? See John 15: 17, and 16: 13, 14

3. We are told in John 14: 13, 14 that Christ said, 'Whatever you ask in my name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in my name, I will do it.' What do you think Jesus meant by 'ask in my name?'

4. The writer to the Hebrews tells us that there is a proper way of drawing near to God. After you have looked up the Scripture passages in list B match them with the proper condition in list A.

A

Confidence in the presence of God
 No known unconfessed sin
 Obedience
 Forgiveness of others
 Asking in faith
 Asking in sincerity
 Persistence
 Fervent

B

Matthew 6: 5-13
 Luke 11: 5-10
 James 5: 16
 Hebrews 10: 19-22
 Psalm 66: 18
 Matthew 6: 12
 1 John 3: 22
 James 1: 5, 6

5. Does prayer work?

Write down examples of prayer which have been answered.

(a) from the Old Testament

(b) from the New Testament

(c) in the work of your congregation

(d) in your own life

If you cannot give examples in your own experience check conditions in A above.

LESSON 16

Growing in Faith

LEARNING TO PRAY

Scripture Text - Luke 11: 1-13.

Memorise these verses.

‘You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart’. Jeremiah 29: 13.

‘Without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him’. Hebrews 11: 6.

Prayer is the most important part of our spiritual lives because we are talking to God through Jesus. Using His example think about your own prayer routine.

1. Jesus prayed regularly, often alone but also in the company of others. Does prayer have a regular place in your life? Nowhere in the Bible are there laws to tell us when or where to pray. It is, however, very easy to let things crowd our day, if we do not make a definite time to be alone in a quiet place to pray. Matthew 6: 6.
2. Our praying should include -
 - (a) A concern for God’s glory and the extension of His Kingdom. (‘Hallowed be Thy Name, Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth, as it is in Heaven’), i.e. God must come first.
 - (b) A confession of our sins. (‘Forgive us our debts’).
 - (c) The bringing of our own and other’s needs to God. (‘Give us this day our daily bread ...’). i.e. ourselves second.

The Lord’s Prayer is a model suggested by Jesus, but it must not become a mere repetition. Use it to construct your own prayers. Be specific in your

praying, e.g. make a list of Church activities, missionaries, friends, enemies etc. and their particular needs. Pray for them repeatedly. Make use of Prayer Letters.

Patience Strong, writing on the 23rd Psalm, says,

‘The shepherd anticipates the need of his sheep. He does not wait until they are starving to death before he moves them on to new pastures. The shepherd also knows where the grass is green and the waters fresh. The journey to the next pasture may be long and hazardous involving the flock in hardship and inconvenience but the shepherd knows it is for their good.

‘Thus does God lead us from one set of circumstances to another, knowing the needs of every individual soul. Sometimes we resent these changes, but the shepherd knows what is best for the sheep. There are times when we have to be pushed around and transported to different surroundings and there are times when we are allowed to browse in tranquillity and contentment.’

‘For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him’.
Matthew 6:8.

LESSON 17

Growing in Faith

THE DISCIPLINE OF PRAYER

Scripture Text - Ephesians 6:18-20; Acts 2:41-42; Acts 3:1; 1 Timothy 2:1-8

The subject of prayer is one that cannot be stressed too much. Finding time to pray is a major problem with many Christians. There are so many demands on our time in the ordinary work-a-day life. In the evening the devil can arrange plenty to occupy us. A late night does not make it easy to find time for prayer in the morning. What does the apostle Paul say about prayer in his letter to the Ephesians - 6:18?

1. When to pray

(a) Is it realistic to pray continuously? See 1 Chronicles 16:11.

Explain the meaning of this verse _____

List some situations when we can practise being in the presence of God _____

(b) There are many examples of people in the Bible who rose early to pray.

Mark 1: 35 _____ Genesis 28: 18 _____
1 Samuel 1: 19 _____ 2 Chronicles 29: 20 _____
Psalm 5: 3 _____ Job 1: 5 _____

This is the best time because usually the mind is less tired and we are more alert.

(c) What does Luke 6: 12 tell us about our Lord?

-
- (d) What do Acts 2: 42, Acts 1: 1 and Acts 12: 5 tell us about the early church?
-

2. How to pray

Prayer is very comprehensive, note the use of the word 'all'.

- (a) '*with all prayer*' a very general term indicating not only cries for help but also adoration, confession of sin, thanksgiving
 - (b) '*and supplication*' or '*petition*' for specific needs
 - (c) '*in the Spirit*' that is with the help of the Spirit
 - (d) '*being watchful*' - always on the alert, aware of what is happening
 - (e) '*with all perseverance*' see Luke 18:1
 - (f) '*for all the saints*', note the context is Christian conflict against spiritual wickedness
 - (g) Consider postures in prayer, is there any Biblical basis for sitting?
-

3. What to pray

Make a list of those who might be included in praying for 'all the saints'

LESSON 18

Studies in the Psalms

THANKSGIVING, SUPPLICATION AND ANTICIPATION

Scripture Text - Psalm 85

1. The Psalm can be divided into three sections. What is the main idea of each section?

verses 1-3 _____

verses 4-7 _____

verses 8-13 _____

2. (a) What is the importance of the first word of verse 8 of the Psalm?

(b) To whom will God speak peace? (v. 8) _____

(c) Who will show God's glory? (v. 9) _____

3. Complete the following sentences which refer to things which the

Psalmist was really concerned about.

verses 4-5 God was _____ with His people.

verse 6 The people did not _____ in the Lord.

verse 9 The Psalmist wanted God's _____ to dwell in the land.

4. This Psalm and Isaiah 37: 14-20 have a lesson for us about prayer:-

(a) Start by _____

(b) Tell God _____

(c) Trust God _____

LESSON 19

Living the Christian Life

OBEYING OUR PARENTS

Scripture Text - Luke 2: 41-52.

Jesus was brought up in a God-fearing home. Joseph had obeyed every instruction given by God, and Mary was completely at God's disposal. They were not unreasonable parents. At the age of 12 Jesus had a considerable degree of freedom probably because he had proved Himself trustworthy. He respected and accepted the standards of His parents. There was no 'generation gap' such as young people are told to-day. When Mary rebuked Jesus for causing Joseph and herself concern He replied to her exactly as we might have expected 'Didn't you know that I had to be about my Father's business?' And yet we read immediately after this that Jesus went home with Mary and Joseph and was obedient to them. It was inconceivable that Jesus would put anything else before His Father's business, but having made this point, He gave whole-hearted obedience to His legal parents.

Penny became a Christian at her school Scripture Union. Her parents are not Christians and, although they do not forbid her to go to Church, they organise family outings on Sunday and expect her to accompany them.

Should she -

1. Refuse to go with them and go to Church?
2. Keep quiet about her desire to go to Church?
3. Go with them, but make it clear that she is not enjoying herself?
4. Tell them how she feels but go with them if they insist?

John is 18 and a Christian. His parents object to the way he dresses; to his long hair; to the way he spends his money.

Should he -

1. Tell them that he is 'of age' and can do what he likes?
2. Buy a suit like his father's, have a 'short back and sides' and put his money in the bank?
3. Respectfully remind them that man looks on the outward appearance but God looks on the heart?

While it is the parents who create the atmosphere in a home and Christian parents have a duty not to provoke their children to anger nor to put a stumbling-block in their way, children have a duty to obey their parents because it is God's will for them to do so. They should do so with goodwill because this brings glory to God. There is no more convincing witness to the love and power of God than a united Christian family.

Jesus said, 'If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word'. (John 14:23)

In what ways does love for one's parents make obedience easy?

LESSON 20

Living the Christian Life

WHEN TO FORGIVE

Scripture Text - Matthew 18: 15-35

Many tragic but inspiring accounts are documented about the persecution of the Covenanters in Scotland during the latter part of the seventeenth century.

One of the lesser known concerns Marion Cameron and her friends of Ayrshire who were being persecuted by the dragoons for public profession of their reformed faith. They had escaped and had hidden in the moss (heather).

Next morning they had worship and sang Psalms to God from their hide-out. But the dragoons were guided to the spot by the sound of the little company of worshippers and surprised them. As commonly happened they offered the girls their lives on condition that they would burn their Bibles and renounce their faith, knowing full well that the offer would be rejected. The girls would not yield and without the slightest signs of compassion, the dragoons shot them on the spot. As Simpson put it ‘the warm purple stream of life mingled with the dark moss water in the moor, and their redeemed spirits were conveyed by the angels from their mangled bodies to the mansion of eternal blessedness’.

The story of Marion Cameron depicts the barbarity of the late seventeenth century and the persecutions suffered by the Covenanters, our forefathers. There are many other instances of men and women who enlisted the greatest firmness and moral heroism and endured sufferings and death for Christ’s sake.

To think about -

1. Should Marion Cameron have burnt her Bible? If she had, how should her fellow Christians have dealt with her?
2. What should Marion’s feelings have been towards the dragoons? What would your feelings have been?

FURTHER READING:

James 5:16 Luke 17:3, 4 Matthew 5: 23-24
Simpson, Rev. R. - Traditions of the Covenanters (out of print).

LESSON 21

Living the Christian Life

THE CHRISTIAN CITIZEN

Scripture Text - Luke 20: 19-26; Romans 13: 1-7.

1. Romans 13: 1-7

verse 1 Why does Paul tell us we should obey the governing authorities?

verse 2 What would we be doing wrong in God's sight if we refused to obey them?

verses 3-4 In practical terms, why does good behaviour ensure that we keep 'on the right side' of the law?

verse 5 Paul has another important reason for obeying authority. What is it?

verses 6-7 What sort of people in authority do you think deserve our respect and honour?

2. Conflict between Christians and authority

There is supposedly great freedom of all kinds in modern China. Some pastors from Hong Kong visited mainland China in 1979 to make contact with the official Church leaders in the large cities. The Chinese government informed them that churches were free to meet together without opposition from the state, and, in public. Chinese clergymen backed this view up and made declarations of great changes for the better.

The pastors from Hong Kong had hardly any opportunity to speak to these clergymen personally, but one of them saw his chance during an unguarded moment to whisper to one of the visitors, 'If you only knew what it was really like!'

Behind all the external politeness and ceremony, the truth broke through now and again. Courses of lectures in religious science are being offered at the University of Peking.

During one of these lectures, a very explicit explanation was given for the present freedom in the Chinese People's Republic. The lecturer said, 'By encouraging people to express their opinion in public, we hope that Christians will also work up the courage to do so. By this means, they will make themselves known and then we know who they are and then there will come a time that we shall be able to take them in'.

What would Christians do in such a situation?

LESSON 22

Living the Christian Life

OVERCOMING TEMPTATION

Scripture Text - Matthew 4: 1-11; 1 Corinthians 10: 1-13

The price of freedom is said to be eternal vigilance. We need to be constantly on our guard because of the wiles of the devil. The Bible warns us that our adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion walks about seeking whom he may devour. James said, 'Resist the devil and he will flee from you'. Christ said to His disciples, 'Watch and pray that you do not enter into temptation, the spirit truly is willing but the flesh is weak'.

We could all probably echo that - 'The flesh is weak'. It is so easy to yield to temptation. Sin is attractive. There is no question about that. We may run away when we meet a lion on our path but when we see a light we are attracted. (1 Peter 5:8; 2 Corinthians 11:14) Before we know it we have been caught by Satan. We loathe ourselves for what we have done - told a lie, spoken unkindly to, or about a friend, taken something that didn't belong to us, yielded to the desires of our bodies - the list is endless. Satan can indeed be a very real enemy. It is not surprising that Martin Luther flung an ink-pot at him! The mark is still there in his room in Wartburg to remind us.

How do we overcome temptation?

Let Christ's example be your guide. Let God's Word, the Bible be your standard in life. Don't depart from it. Read it, learn it, study it, apply it and live it out. Ask God for help day by day. Christ spent long periods in prayer, strengthening Himself to meet temptation. Seek God's will for your life and follow it resolutely.

When you accept Christ as Saviour He comes to dwell in you ... 'it is no longer I but Christ who lives in me'. (Galatians 2:20) Therefore, when Satan attacks you, you do not have to meet him in your own strength. Christ, by His Spirit, lives in you and He can help you to resist the devil. 'Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world'.

When you accept Christ as your Saviour you receive a new nature. It is up to you to feed that new nature and starve the old nature. If the company of certain people is not helpful, avoid those people; if certain magazines and novels excite all the fleshly part of your nature and hinder your fellowship with Christ, do not read them. It is dangerous to skate on thin ice. That is asking for trouble. Instead of feeding the old nature you should seek to build up your new life in Christ by following the advice of Phil. 4:8. 'Whatever things

are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, think on these things’.

The first promise in the Bible (Genesis 3:15) says that Satan would bruise Christ’s heel and that Christ would bruise Satan’s head. In other words when Christ died on the cross Satan bruised His heel but by His resurrection Christ defeated Satan completely and won the victory over sin and death. Satan had no power over Christ and this victory is passed on to us. If we are relying on Christ’s death for our salvation we, too, have victory over Satan, over sin and over death. Paul says, ‘Sin shall not have dominion over you’. Rom. 6:14. A believer need not yield to temptation. He has the power within him to resist. Satan is powerless against those who resist his attack. ‘God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able; but with the temptation will also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it’. 1 Corinthians 10:13.

In 1941 Japan bombed Pearl Harbour and the U.S.A. entered the second World War on the side of the Allies. Churchill said then, ‘We have won the War’. But Germany had overrun Western Europe, the British had been evacuated from Dunkirk. What did Churchill mean? He meant that no matter how many battles Germany and Japan might win in the future the final victory was in no doubt. With the material and military resources of the U.S.A. added to those of Britain and her allies victory was bound to come. All that was needed was the ‘proper application of overwhelming force’.

Victory over temptation is always possible because Satan is a defeated foe. All that is needed is the ‘proper application of overwhelming force’.

LESSON 23

Living the Christian Life

CHOOSING OUR FRIENDS

Scripture Text - 2 Corinthians 6:14 - 7:1

1. Avoiding friendship with the world

In 2 Corinthians 6: 14-18 the Apostle Paul warns the Christians at Corinth not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers. What are the five sets of opposites which he declares to be incompatible?

When James wrote in his epistle ch. 4 v 4 ‘... Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God’. What did he mean by ‘the world’? See 1 John 2: 15-16; Romans 12:2a.

Jesus told His disciples that they were not of the world, but that He had chosen them out of the world. They were still in the world of mankind, but He had delivered them from the spirit of rebellion and disobedience, the spirit of evil and wickedness that dominates the people of this world. Friendship with God and friendship with the world are like oil and water, they do not mix. The Christian must be SEPARATE from the world unto God. The Christian will have different attitudes and standards of behaviour. The temptations and pressures of the world on the Christian to conform to its standards are strong, especially when to conform would be financially advantageous, and appeal to the selfish instinct and the fleshly appetite.

In the light of Paul’s teaching to the Corinthians, what advice would you give in the following instances?

- (a) John is a Christian, and has a friend Peter, who is not a Christian. They are both keen on canoeing. Peter belongs to the local club and invites John to a week-end canoeing camp. John knows that it will involve canoeing on the Sabbath, and that he will miss the Boys’ Brigade Bible Class and the Youth Fellowship, of which he is secretary.
- (b) Through their interest in music, Mary and Philip become close friends.

Although Mary is a Christian and Philip is not, they agree to become engaged. Mary is advised by another Christian friend to break off the engagement, but she says that she has made Philip promise to come to church with her after they are married.

2. The importance and value of true friendships

We know well the influence that friends can have on one another. True friendship can be very helpful and enriching.

Who was reputed to be 'a friend of sinners'? Matthew 11:19 _____

How did He show His love and friendship towards sinners? Romans 5:6-8.

Is Jesus Christ your friend?

A Christian is one whose first love and loyalty is to Christ. He must, like his Master, show himself friendly to both Christian and non-Christian.

You may have non-Christian friends, so long as you do not compromise your Christian faith and loyalty to Christ, and standards of conduct. As a Christian you can have an influence on others for good and attract others to Christ. How can you best share your Christian faith with non-Christian friends?

The most enriching friendship is that between Christians who can share their faith and enjoy spiritual fellowship. Malachi 3:16. List the qualities found in 1 Samuel 16:18, which Saul's servant saw in David, and which would have attracted Jonathan to become his friend.

Which of these qualities would you say was the most important?

Jonathan and David's friendship, like any other true friendship, was two-sided.

How did they show that their love and friendship was two-sided?

How did they show their love and friendship towards one another?

(See 1 Samuel 18: 3-4; 20: 4, 12-17; 23: 16-18.)

LESSON 24

Living the Christian Life

THE CHRISTIAN AND SUFFERING

Scripture Text - John 11: 1-6; James 1: 1-5; Romans 5: 1-5; 8:18, 28; Job 1.

If you get the opportunity read the paperback 'The Miracle of the River Kwai' by Ernest Gordon (Fontana Books). It is a true story set in Malaya and Burma during the Japanese occupation of S.E. Asia 1943 - 45.

Ernest Gordon, from Dunoon in Scotland, enlisted in the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders at the age of 24 and was posted to Singapore. When that city was overrun by the Japanese he was captured and sent to Burma to work on the construction of the notorious Burma railway. He was assigned to Chungkai Camp (known as Death Camp) whose section of work included the construction of the famous bridge over the River Kwai.

Gordon describes in vivid detail the atrocious conditions suffered by the prisoners. Food was very poor, living accommodation almost non-existent, disease rampant and medicines unavailable. Above all there was the inhuman cruelty of the Japanese guards.

Between 20 and 30 people died each day at Chungkai Camp, Gordon himself being 'written off' on one occasion.

Despite such conditions, Gordon describes how love grew in that camp, a respect for one's fellow men and the value of human life. He writes, 'We arrived at our understanding of God's ways not one by one, but together. In the fellowship of freedom and love we found truth and with truth a wonderful sense of unity, or harmony, of peace'. It was through service to others that Gordon fully realised the strength of the eternal truths they had found in their meetings amongst the bamboo.

Again and again, he was faced with the great basic problems of human experience. Reason said, 'We live to die'. Jesus said, 'I am the resurrection

and the life'. They realised that God was in their midst suffering with them.

Of course, not everyone in Death Camp became a Christian, and the brutality and deaths continued, but the story demonstrates how the true Christian must be prepared to accept bad times as well as good. He may perhaps have to endure a period of testing to mature and strengthen true faith in the power of Jesus Christ.

Gordon survived Chungkai Camp and after the war trained as a minister and worked in Scotland and America.

Make an effort to read this excellent and compelling true story. Think about the following questions in relation to Job, Chungkai Camp and yourself.

- (a) Can we believe that there is a God who cares for us in adversity?
- (b) Do we accept that all things work together for good?
- (c) Do we feel at times depressed and question the purpose of our lives?
- (d) Do we think too much about our rights and not enough about our responsibilities?

Thought : Suffering should not lock us up in the prison of self-pity, but should bring us into what Albert Schweitzer calls the 'fellowship of those who bear the mark of pain'.

LESSON 25

Living the Christian Life

THE CONTROLLED TONGUE

Scripture Text - James 1:19, 26; 3: 1-13.

Have a look at these incidents. As you read them, try to see how the 'facts' change as they are gossiped from person to person.

1. Ann has been unhappy recently because she had done badly in her exams, and feels that she isn't as good as her friends. She has quarrelled with Brenda, who didn't approach her very sympathetically, and has told Brenda she wants to be left alone.
2. Brenda goes to Cathy, another friend, and tells her how bad-tempered Ann is at the minute and how Ann told her to 'get lost' when she was only trying to help.
3. Cathy meets Linda, and says 'Did you hear what Ann said to poor Brenda? Brenda was trying to be nice to her and Ann was really rude to her. She's always like that, the ungrateful thing - I remember she once borrowed a book from me, and by the time she eventually gave it back it was all torn and dirty. She didn't even apologise'.
4. Linda passes on the story to someone else, and adds: 'That's all you can expect of Ann anyway. She's a really spiteful person. Well, we don't need her - we're just going to ignore her and let her see how she feels when she hasn't any friends'.

But remember that gossip is not the only way we can sin with our tongues.

You have a friend who frequently, perhaps unknowingly, takes God's name in vain. What would you do?

- (a) Say nothing;
- (b) Break off your friendship;
- (c) Point out the serious implications of the Third Commandment.

A hypocrite is someone who says something he does not really mean, e.g. The Pharisees, Judas Iscariot or Hitler regarding the invasion of Poland. God has no time for people like this. See Luke 20: 45-47. Are our words consistent with the teaching of Christ?

Duncan (Living the Christian Life) sums it up as follows:-

‘What your heart is filled with your tongue will be speaking of. If your heart is filled with bitterness, your words will be bitter. If your heart is filled with cowardice, your words will be fearful. But if your heart is filled with Christ and with His Spirit your words will be true and gracious, pure and strong’.

LESSON 26

Living the Christian Life

SUPPORTING THE CHURCH'S WORK

Scripture Text - 1 Corinthians 16: 1-4; 2 Corinthians 9

Work in the World

Perhaps some of you will be starting a job soon, or may even have started. Have you ever thought about what this entails? Working involves employing one's gifts for the benefit of others. To develop one's gifts to the full requires that we devote all our time to them, i.e. specialization. In return we receive a wage enabling us to live.

Work in the Kingdom, I

The Kingdom of God also requires workers. We all have a part to play in it, though each will differ according to the gift we have received. What are some of these tasks? (1 Peter 4: 10-11; Romans 12: 4-8).

Some Christians' gifts require that they devote all their time to their employment. Who are they?

Work in the Kingdom, II

If ministers and missionaries need to devote all their time to studying and applying God's Word, how will they be able to support themselves and their families?

What did the Lord Jesus direct? (Matthew 10:10; 1 Corinthians 9:14).

Whose responsibility is this? (Gal. 6:6). _____

How is such responsibility to be viewed? (2 Corinthians 9).

Is there any benefit for us in all this? (2 Corinthians 9: 8-11).

Points for pondering

- a) How many wage earners would it take in a congregation to support the minister?
- (b) How seriously do we take Paul's statement in 2 Corinthians 9: 6?
- (c) What other kinds of support should the minister receive?

LESSON 27

The Church

THE ELDERS AND OUR ATTITUDE TOWARDS THEM

Scripture Text - 1 Timothy 3: 1-7; Hebrews 13: 7

Recently there was a pipe band contest in our town and a large number of people gathered to watch and listen. The people were all there for the same purpose - to listen to the bands. They were all there at the same time - the time which had been announced beforehand. Next day, many of the same people gathered in church. They were there for the same purpose - to worship God and listen to His Word. They were there at the same time - the time that had been announced beforehand. There are, you see, some similarities in these two gatherings on the Saturday and the Sabbath, but there are many differences between them. Let's consider one of the differences. The Church, unlike the crowd at the band parade, is not just a collection of people who happen to gather at the same time in the same place. The Church is a body with members united in Christ and organised according to Christ's direction. Jesus Christ rules over His Church as King and cares for it. He has appointed men, known as elders, through whom He rules. This system of government is known as Presbyterianism. What did Paul do as soon as some people in a particular locality had been converted? (Acts 14:23)

1. The Work of the Elder

What two responsibilities of the elder are mentioned in 1 Timothy 5:17?

What is involved in ruling a congregation?

How did Paul explain their responsibilities to the elders from Ephesus? (Acts 20:28)

2. The Character of the Elder

In 1 Timothy 3: 2-7, the qualifications of the elders are listed. Some of these refer to special gifts the elder ought to possess, e.g. ‘able to teach’. Others refer to his character; note these.

Paul, Peter and Jesus emphasized the need for humility in leaders in the Church. Why do you think this quality is so essential? (1 Timothy 3:6; 1 Peter 5:3)

3. Your attitude to the Elders

Read Hebrews 13:17,18

In what ways ought you to submit to the elders?

As an individual?

As a member of the Sabbath School or Bible Class?

As a member of the C.Y.?

How can the members of the congregation help the elders in their work?

How should you pray for the elders in your congregation?

LESSON 28

The Church

CHRIST THE CHURCH'S HEAD

Scripture Text - Colossians 1: 1-29; 3: 1-4.

1. Henry VIII was king of England from 1509 to 1547. By 1530 he was dissatisfied with his wife, Catherine of Aragon, because they had no son. He wished to divorce her and marry again but this was opposed by the Papacy (which held sway in England at that time). It was suggested to Henry that his answer to this dilemma was to place himself as the one with absolute authority in Church and State, and by his own authority sanction the divorce.

In the first place he blackmailed the clergy by accusing them of treason, because they recognised and submitted to the unconstitutional power of Cardinal Wolsey, 'an agent of a foreign power, the Pope'. Henry offered pardon only on the condition that they recognised him as head of the Church instead of the Pope. Then he issued a circular letter to the Justices of the Peace, setting forth that the clergy in their convocations had already recognised him as 'Supreme Head, immediately under God, of the Church of England', denouncing all obedience to any foreign jurisdiction, whether of the Bishop of Rome or any other.

2. During the seventeenth century, the Scottish Covenanters took a stand for the right of Christ to be Head of His Church against the assertion of the Stewart kings to rule it. Many people were prepared to suffer whatever consequences might follow this stand. Isobel Alison was one such; her dying testimony is as follows:-

'I declined their authority (i.e. those of the Council who tried and condemned her), and told them that they had declared war against Christ, and had usurped and taken his prerogatives. So I think none can own them, unless they disown Christ Jesus. Therefore, let

enemies and pretended friends say what they please, I could have my life on no easier terms, than the denying of Christ's kingly office. So I lay down my life for owning and adhering to Jesus Christ. He being a free King in His own house, for which I bless the Lord that ever He called me to that'.

Consider these two historical incidents:

1. Was Henry VIII right in deposing the Pope and placing himself as Head of the Church?

2. Was he acting on grounds of Scripture or what was his motive?

3. Do you think the Church was helped by this action?

4. Contrast the motives of Isobel Alison - whose interest was she putting first?

5. Think of areas where this principle needs to be reasserted today.

LESSON 29

The Church

THE MARKS OF THE CHURCH

Scripture Text - Acts 2: 41-47; 5: 1-11.

The great Scottish reformer, John Knox, the man who, under God, was the architect of the Presbyterian system in Scotland, started his adult life as a priest in the Roman Catholic system, a system that claims to be the only true Church.

As a priest of Rome, he was influenced and befriended by George Wishart, an early preacher of the Reformed faith. After Wishart was burned at the stake for his loyalty to Jesus Christ, John Knox began to preach the same gospel that had cost Wishart his life. This preaching not only set out the pure doctrine of the Word of God, it also condemned the system of doctrine and practice that Knox was committed to uphold as a priest of Rome.

From this period onwards, John Knox refused to accept that the Roman Catholic system could in any way be called a true Church of Jesus Christ and continued throughout the whole of his life and ministry to expose the errors of Rome - particularly as they related to the preaching of the Word and the administration of the sacraments.

It was this conviction that drove him on through all kinds of dangers and hardships until he had seen a Reformed Church established throughout the land of Scotland, a Church where the pure gospel of Jesus Christ was preached, the sacraments administered according to Biblical simplicity and Church discipline upheld in order that 'vice would be repressed and virtue nourished'.

Points for discussion:

1. Should Knox have remained in the Roman system and worked from within?
2. How bad must a professing Church be before faithful Christians should leave it?
3. What can we do to make sure that our denomination has the characteristics and marks of a true Church of Jesus Christ?

LESSON 30

The Church

CHURCH DISCIPLINE

Scripture Text - Matthew 18: 15-17; James 5: 19-20

William James was a typically lively eight year old. For several months his parents had been instructing him in the rudiments of good table manners. Last week the minister and his wife came to visit the family and to have tea with them. Throughout the meal, William James insisted on speaking with his mouth full, keeping his elbows on the table and grabbing all the best buns. If you had been his parents, how would you have reacted? What would you have done? What motive should you have had for any action you might take?

All would agree that William James should be disciplined. He had disobeyed his parents, he had acted selfishly, he had embarrassed the guests and broken the laws of good table manners. He was harming his own social development and upsetting the harmony of the home.

Now let us transfer this situation into the Church. The Church can be described as a family into which all the members are adopted as the Children of God and in which unitedly they are called 'the household of God'. When members of the Church act in a way that is harmful to their own spiritual lives that dishonours the Lord and upsets the harmony among His people, then, just as in the home, discipline is clearly necessary.

I. The Need for Discipline

- (a) What will be the effect on the whole Church when some of the members openly disobey God's law? Consider the distinction between those sins which are open and those which are secret.
-

- (b) Read James 5:19, 20. In what ways had the person referred to here

erred? What are his brethren to seek to do?

- (c) To what extent are members of the Church responsible for one another?
-

2. The Nature of Discipline

- (a) What is the purpose of Church discipline?
-

- (b) Read Matthew 18: 15-17. Identify the various steps which Jesus sets out for dealing with a brother who had committed some open offence.
-
-

3. The Exercise of Discipline

- (a) To which members of the Church is the responsibility for discipline especially given?
-

- (b) How does the exercise of discipline show those within the Church and those outside that members love one another?
-
-

LESSON 31

The Church

ACCEPTABLE WORSHIP

Scripture Text - Deuteronomy 12: 32; Mark 7: 1-13

It was Mother's Day again! Quite a discussion was going on in the kitchen among the children while Mum was out at the shops. 'I think Mum would like a nice bunch of flowers,' said Jane. 'Well, I think Mum would probably appreciate a nice box of chocolates,' said Bob. 'No, I think she would probably like something more useful,' said Jill, 'maybe a new apron'. Suddenly, Dad said, 'Don't you think it would be better to ask Mum what she wants, instead of deciding for her?' So many people think that they themselves can decide what forms of worship are acceptable to God, without realizing that God had asked us specifically to worship only in the way that He had commanded. Such a holy Creator God has surely the right to ask this of His creatures. Here is the principle then:-

True worship is only what is commanded: what is not commanded is therefore forbidden.

Questions:

1. What is the regulative principle of worship? Defend it.

2. State the five elements of worship?

3. Make a list of things common in worship to-day that God has not commanded.

LESSON 32

The Church

SEPARATED FROM THE WORLD

Scripture - John 17: 11-24; 2 Corinthians 6: 14-18

'In' and not 'of' is how Jesus describes the Christian's relationship to the world, John 17:6, 11. Though the Christian's inheritance is above, his residence is below. Though he is bound for heaven, he is now a stranger and pilgrim on earth. How is the Christian to live during his period in the world?

1. In what activities should the Christian engage while in the world?

Gen. 2:15 _____

Prov. 13:11 _____

Rom. 12:11 _____

Gen. 5:22 _____

Matt. 6:6 _____

Ps. 1:2 _____

2. Why is the Christian to be careful how he lives in the world?

Matt. 5:14 _____

2 Cor. 3:2 _____

3. How do men of the world regard the Christian?

John 17:14 _____

Matt. 5:11 _____

4. What must the Christian avoid while living in the world?

(a) Withdrawal from the world. Why is this wrong in the light of:
Matt. 5: 15-16 _____

(b) Conformity to the world. Why is this wrong in the light of:

Rom. 12: 2 _____

James 4: 1-4 _____

1 John 2: 15-17 _____

5. What duties is the Christian called to fulfil in the world?

1 Cor. 10: 31 _____

1 Cor. 6: 20 _____

Matt. 5: 41-46 _____

James 1: 27 _____

Ps. 51: 13 _____

Prov. 11: 30 _____

Acts 1: 8 _____

Titus 2: 12 _____

Phil. 1: 10-11 _____

6. What confidence does the Christian have as he lives in the world?

John 17: 15 _____

1 John 4: 4 _____

1 John 5: 4 _____

LESSON 33

The Church

CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

Scripture Text - Mark 10: 1-12; 1 Peter 3: 1-7.

When you go into a newsagent's shop there is normally a row of magazines of various kinds for sale - some specialist, some for enthusiasts, some for the ladies and some especially for young people. Many of these young people's magazines, particularly those aimed at the girls, deal with the emotional life of the young. There are articles and features dealing with the relationships between boy and girl, and they picture very accurately the attitude that exists in society with regard to these matters. In one copy of 'Jackie' magazine, the following advice was given to a correspondent seeking advice concerning a relationship with a boy:-

'One thing we feel is unnecessarily mixing you up is your fixed ideas on how boys and girls should behave. Everyone is an individual and your relationship is a unique one, which you both have to work out in your own way'.

The problem facing the young person was one of rightness or wrongness of allowing the relationship to progress sexually.

1. There are several questions that need to be asked:
 - (a) Is morality a matter of personal choice?

 - (b) Are there any fixed ideas on how boys and girls should behave?

 - (c) Does the attitude portrayed in the magazine lead to an understanding of the responsibilities of marriage?

 - (d) If two people are free to 'work it out in your own way', will this not

lead to an abandoning of the relationship when the going becomes tough?

2. The romance stories and the advice given in magazines are all based upon the immediate emotional attachment - when the emotion is no longer there, the only option left is to terminate the relationship.

(a) What is the basis of a Biblical marriage?

(b) Is love the same as emotional attraction? (1 Cor. 13)

(c) How can two people prepare themselves for Christian marriage? (see 1 Peter 3: 1-7).

LESSON 34

The Church

WORKING FOR GOD

Scripture Text - Ephesians 6: 5-9; 2 Thessalonians 3: 6-13.

John was a 'bin-man'. He was also a zealous Christian and a Sabbath School teacher. He was known by all his workmates as being absolutely straight and honest. When his colleagues removed items from the 'bins' (especially from the 'posh' area of town) for their own personal use, John would never participate. Although he was often speaking to the rest of the men about their need of Christ, John was popular because he always did his fair share. Due to completely unforeseen circumstances John was told that he would have to work on the day planned for the Sabbath School outing. He attempted to get the day off but this request was refused by his employers. Some of his Christian friends urged him to simply take the day off - after all, the Sabbath School work was Christian work and therefore much more important than the secular work of emptying 'bins'. Some even suggested that he should tell his employers that he was sick, that way he would not even lose the day's pay. His workmates too urged him in the same direction, and they offered to 'cover' for him if he wished to take the day off. Here John was in a difficult position; he was extremely committed to the work of the Sabbath School and had a great concern for the children in his charge. He knew that he would be letting them down, and that they would be disappointed if he did not go.

Put yourself in the position of John - what factors are you going to take into account in the decision that you will make?

1. Should I look on the work in the Sabbath School as more spiritual than the daily work of emptying the 'bins'?
2. Would I be right to make an excuse to 'get off' work to do something more important?

3. If I take the day off how will this affect my witness to the men I work with?
4. How can I best glorify God in the situation?

Try to apply the situation of John to your own particular situation and seek personally to answer the question:

How can I ensure that in my own special circumstances I will be working for God?

LESSON 35

The Church

CALLED TO BE WITNESSES

Scripture Text - Luke 24: 13-53.

‘I could never be a witness for Christ, firstly, because I am not entirely sure that I am a Christian, and secondly, because I feel awkward about talking about religious matters’.

Does this sum up your feelings and those of some of your friends and acquaintances? If it does you have some very serious thinking and praying to do.

Start by carefully examining your relationship with Christ. It is not enough just to know His life-story and the miracles which He performed. It is essential to have a personal knowledge of Him. Next, pray that your relationship with Him may be strengthened and really brought to life. Don't just pray once or twice, continue to ask for guidance and help.

Christ does not permit us to keep the knowledge of Himself to ourselves. We are commanded to witness to others.

How can we do this, remembering the constraints of daily life? If you are at school cultivate the friendship of Christians, join the Scripture Union and don't be afraid to take even a small part in the meetings. If you are working seek out fellow Christians. Remember that one of the best ways of witnessing is by example, showing others by the way we behave, talk, treat our fellow men, etc., that we are different, that we owe an allegiance not to the world, but to Christ. Not everyone is asked to be a missionary in a foreign land, but all of us are asked to speak ‘a word in season’, and to support the Church's efforts to witness.

I hear many cries of ‘I couldn't do that’. Remember Moses and Jeremiah, when they were asked to witness for the Lord.

Read Exodus 3: 10-14 and 4: 10-16. Doesn't it sound familiar?

'I'm not capable to go to Pharaoh',

'I don't know what to say when they ask me about God',

'I can't talk to people'.

Read Jeremiah 1: 4-10. 'I can't talk to people, I am too young'.

Yet both these people, with God's help, are counted as among the greatest witnesses of the Old Testament. So remember, the promises that God gave them are still offered to us to-day.

1. Think of other examples of people who witnessed for the Lord.
2. What assurance do we have that the Scriptures recorded by God's witnesses are correct? (2 Peter 1: 20-21).
3. Read Mark 1: 16-20 and note the immediate response of Simon, Andrew, James and John to Christ's call to become 'fishers of men'.
4. As a witness we must show the qualities listed in Galatians 5: 22-23.

Conclusion: To-day's witness of Jesus needs to have the presence of the Holy Spirit and a ready supply of God's Word.

LESSON 36

The Church

ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN THE CHURCH

Scripture Text - 1 Corinthians 12: 12-27; Ephesians 4: 12-16.

How would you like it if one brick in every ten was missing from your house? It would be a damp, draughty place, wouldn't it? Yet that is sadly often the problem with the Church - some of the 'living bricks' that Peter speaks of are missing, because some people think they can be Christians without being members of the Church. This cannot be so. If you are a Christian, you have been saved so that you might take your place in God's building.

Consider the following situation. Jim was trimming the hedge when suddenly- 'Ouch!' - a big thorn stuck in his thumb. The suffering thumb sent a rapid message to the brain which registered the pain and sent another message to the other hand to drop the hedge clippers immediately and pull out the thorn. But, the other hand refused to move! The finger and thumb decided not to bother coming to the rescue of the other thumb that was throbbing in pain, and remove the thorn! Absurd, isn't it? Yet that is how many congregations try to exist. The Bible says we must all work together for the body's good. That means being actively committed to every member of your congregation.

So consider:

1. Are you an active member - committed to Jesus Christ - and throwing your all into the Church's life - her singing, her prayer, her fellowship? How much time do you give to C.Y., to Camps, to Outreach?
2. Write down your own particular gifts.

3. Write down ways in which you are going to use those gifts. Ask your elders' advice.

4. List the ways in which disharmony can be caused in the body and how to deal with such things.

Further Reading: Cinderella with Amnesia - Michael Griffiths.