

Introduction

The past 100 years have seen a dramatic erosion of the morality of the nation in which we live. The signs of this decline are everywhere. In areas from sexual morality to modes of dress to entertainment, our society has become accepting of sins that would have enraged our forefathers.

Nor is this decline of morals limited to the world. Even within the Lord's church, many Christians are engaged in a quiet redefinition of sin. Many things that honest students of God's word have understood to be sinful for centuries are now being given a veneer of respectability. Evils ranging from gambling to social drinking are now often considered matters of conscience rather than matters of right and wrong. As a result, the church is gradually becoming more like the world and less like Christ.

This decline must stop, not merely for the sake of those sins themselves, but for the impact it has on our view of our relationship with the world and with God. We must take a stand. We must commit ourselves to being what God requires: strangers and pilgrims on the earth rather than its citizens. We must take the hard line against sin that our Teacher took. Jesus stood against the traditions of men, but He also stood for truth, for righteousness, and for the devotion of the heart and the life to God. This book is about applying the mindset of Jesus to the moral challenges that beset us. It is about learning to walk as He walked.

©Copyright Matthew W. Bassford, 2006. This material is subject to a Creative Commons attribution-noncommercial-no derivative works license. This means that it may be reproduced, shared, and used freely, provided it is attributed to the author, not used for commercial purposes, and not altered in any way. For more information, please see creativecommons.org.

Table of Contents

Lesson One: Materialism	5
Lesson Two: Gambling	7
Lesson Three: Contentment in God	9
Lesson Four: Substance Abuse	13
Lesson Five: Social Drinking	15
Lesson Six: Rejoicing in God	17
Lesson Seven: Ungodly Entertainment	21
Lesson Eight: Impure Dress & Speech	23
Lesson Nine: Holiness in God	25
Lesson Ten: Adultery & Fornication	29
Lesson Eleven: Divorce & Remarriage	31
Lesson Twelve: Fulfillment in God	33
Lesson Thirteen: Review	35

Part One:
The Love of Money

As He Walked

Lesson One: Materialism

Day One

1. In your own words, what is materialism? What does Ephesians 5:5 tell us about materialism? When do we commit it?
2. What story does Acts 8:18-23 tell? Do you think that Simon behaved materialistically in this story? Why or why not?
3. What pattern of behavior does Ecclesiastes 4:8 describe? Do you think this problem is basically a materialism problem? Why or why not?
4. Where around us today do you see signs of materialism? Why do you think these things reflect a materialistic outlook?
5. What does Proverbs 23:4-5 tell us about the pursuit of wealth? What does this mean? Why is this important?

Introduction

Edmund Burke once observed, "In order for evil to triumph, it is only necessary that good men do nothing." Burke originally spoke with respect to the rise and fall of nations, but his words hold true within the life of the individual as well. The most powerful of the sins that destroy the soul are not those of action. They are those of inaction.

Covetousness provides us with a classic demonstration of the way these sins of inaction work. Certainly, there are millions of people in this country who profess to put money first in their lives, but there are far more who do, but who will claim they do not. They say they put God first or family first or friends first, but their lives do not match the priorities they express. Instead, when family time conflicts with job, it is family time rather than the job that must be postponed. When worship interferes with a golf outing with an important new client, it is worship that must wait until next week. Thus, the covetous man becomes lost without ever meaning to.

As God's people, we must take care lest the same thing happen to us. We cannot let the urgency of the materialistic rat race distract us from the importance of our walk with God. We don't have to defiantly accept Satan's offer of the kingdoms of the world in order to reject our Lord. All we have to do is nothing.

Lesson One: Materialism

6. What pattern of behavior does Ecclesiastes 5:12 describe? How does this relate to materialism? What should we learn from this?
7. What is the message of Proverbs 22:7? What connection does this proverb have with materialism? Do you think our culture sees this problem as clearly as it should? Why or why not?

Day Two

1. What does 1 Timothy 6:9-10 tell us about the spiritual problems associated with the desire to be rich? What are some of these problems?
2. According to 1 Timothy 6:10, does the covetous man achieve the physical happiness he hopes for either? Why would this be true?
3. What story does Acts 5:1-10 tell? How much does greed have to do with this story's unhappy ending? Why?
4. In Acts 5:1-10, how do materialism and religion (at least outward religion) interact? What warning should this give us?
5. What parable is contained in Luke 12:15-21? How does the parable illustrate the point made in 12:15?
6. What fatal error does the farmer of the parable make? How can we make this same error today?
7. What does Luke 12:20 tell us about the inevitable conclusion of the materialist's quest for riches? What should we learn from this?

As He Walked

Lesson Two: Gambling

Day One

1. What sin does Ephesians 5:5 describe as idolatry? In your own words, define this sin. When do we commit it?
2. Is it possible for me to go into a store, see a pair of pants I like, and buy those pants without coveting? Why or why not?
3. Is it possible for me to go to a casino, realize that the owner has money, desire that money, and gamble for it without coveting? Why or why not?
4. Some Christians who gamble say that they go to casinos not because they covet the owner's money, but because playing games of chance is fun. Is this defense persuasive? Why or why not?
5. Assume that it is possible for a particular Christian to gamble without coveting. Is there still a covetousness problem associated with his gambling? Explain.

Introduction

There are two main ways that Christians regard their service to God. One kind of Christian turns the New Testament into a second Law of Moses, a checklist of rules and regulations to be obeyed if necessary but evaded if possible. The other kind of Christian looks upon God's word as a storehouse of spiritual wisdom, a means of learning daily how to become more like Christ.

The difference between these two kinds of Christians is most apparent in issues that require the use of judgment, like gambling. The checklist Christian considers gambling and says, "There is no Scripture that explicitly condemns gambling, so I'm going to gamble whenever I please." The Christ-centered Christian considers gambling and says, "Gambling comes from an evil heart, is practiced among evil companions, and has evil consequences. Every principle of God's word cries out against it. I will never gamble."

Where do we stand? How do we look at God's word? Is it an obstacle between us and where we want to go, or is it a guide that will help us get there? It all comes down to whether our hearts are committed to God. On the day of judgment, all the checklists and loopholes we can imagine won't pull the wool over God's eyes. He will judge our hearts, and only the heart that has earnestly desired to serve Him and love Him will be justified before Him.

Lesson Two: Gambling

6. Is there a difference between a Christian who goes to a casino to gamble, and two Christians who play a round of golf and agree that the loser buys lunch for both? Explain.
7. All in all, how closely linked are gambling and covetousness?

Day Two

1. According to your knowledge and experience, what effects does gambling have on the surrounding area? How would you characterize these effects?
2. Similarly, what effects does gambling have on those who devote themselves to gambling? How would you characterize these effects?
3. Should Christians be engaging in a practice that has these effects? Why or why not?
4. Generally speaking, how should Christians deal with their money? Consider passages like 1 Timothy 5:8; 6:17-19 in your answer.
5. What effect does gambling have on the Christian's responsibility to fulfill these duties? How?
6. What principle is expressed in 2 Corinthians 8:21? What does this mean? What relevance does this have to the issue of gambling?
7. Considering all these things, should Christians engage in gambling? Why or why not?

As He Walked

Lesson Three: Contentment in God

Day One

1. What is the point of what Paul says in Philippians 4:11-13? How can we make this point relevant to us?
2. In Philippians 4:11, why does Paul say that he is content in whatever state he is? How can we accomplish the same thing in our lives?
3. How does Paul describe his attitude toward varying circumstances in Philippians 4:12? How can we learn to capture that attitude for ourselves?
4. What does Jesus counsel us not to do in Luke 12:22-23? What does this mean? Why?
5. What two humble things does Jesus describe in Luke 12:24-28? What conclusion does Jesus use these things to reach? How can we practically apply what Jesus says here?

Introduction

From a Biblical perspective, at least, one of the more baffling religious trends of the past century has been the rise of the gospel of health and wealth. Proponents of this gospel turn the focus of the Bible from the hereafter and place it on the here-and-now. They search for God so that He will make them rich. In this bizarre deformation of the gospel, Mammon gets a throne next to God's.

What a tragedy—millions of self-professed Christians, who could lay up treasure in heaven if they only wanted to, devoting themselves to the pursuit of earthly riches that they do not own and cannot keep! They exchange the diamond of eternal life with God for a lump of materialistic coal. Although they do not realize it, in what they think is service to God, they have become servants of the devil.

We need to learn from this and seek our treasure where it can truly be found. There's nothing wrong with enjoying creature comforts, but we need to make sure that those gifts from God don't become a trap. We need to be willing to be content with food and clothing, if that's what God gives us, while devoting our efforts to seeking our inheritance in heaven. Greed, even when cloaked in religion, can never satisfy. We can only find true contentment when we count the things of this world as nothing beside the priceless blessing of knowing God.

Lesson Three: Contentment in God

6. What does Jesus say about the Father's knowledge in Luke 12:30? How does this connect with His promise in Luke 12:31? What does this mean to us?
7. How does Jesus statement in Luke 12:32 connect with the rest of this context? What does this tell us about the real reason we can be sure God will provide for us?

Day Two

1. What does Ecclesiastes 5:18-20 encourage us to do? Why? How does this help us keep our physical wealth in perspective?
2. Do you think it's true that the non-materialistic Christian should gain more enjoyment from his possessions than the godless materialist? Why? How do we put this into practice?
3. What behavior does 2 Corinthians 9:6-8 describe? Is this connected with material contentment? Why?
4. What reassurance does 2 Corinthians 9:8 give to the generous Christian? What does this promise? What does it not promise? How should it change the way we look at wealth?
5. What related behavior does Paul discuss in 1 Timothy 6:17-19? What are some ways that we can fulfill this command today?
6. What motivation for good deeds does Paul describe in 1 Timothy 6:19? What does this mean? How should it change the way we think?
7. What does Luke 12:34 tell us about one of the most important consequences of laying up treasure in heaven? What does this mean? What effect should it have on us?

Part Two:

Drunkenness

As He Walked

Lesson Four: Substance Abuse

Day One

1. What does Romans 13:13-14 say to us about drunkenness? In your own words, what is drunkenness?
2. What comment does 1 Peter 4:1-3 make about drunkenness, revelries, and drinking parties? What should this tell us?
3. What consequence does Jesus ascribe to drunkenness (among other things) in Luke 21:34? Why would this be true? What should it teach us?
4. What does Galatians 5:19-21 tell us about both drunkenness and sorcery? Why is this significant?
5. In Galatians 5:10, the Greek word translated "sorcery" in most English translations is *pharmakia*. What English word/words does *pharmakia* resemble? What connection is there between those English words and the idea of sorcery?

Introduction

Drug and alcohol abuse are a terrible problem in our nation today in every demographic group imaginable. Because of their prevalence, the idea of addiction is also a familiar one. We jokingly speak of being "addicted" to everything from football to chocolate.

However, this idea of addiction can also help us to understand something important about the nature of Satan's work in the lives of sin. Every sin, not just alcohol or drug use, is addictive. Sin begins with a wonderful initial encounter that provides a lot of pleasure for little apparent cost. However, each time the sinner returns to that same sin, it becomes less and less pleasurable, until the sinner is driven to do more and more to acquire the same thrill. He becomes trapped in a downward spiral of addiction. This pattern becomes evident both in the materialism that lures families into bankruptcy and in the lust that drives the porn addict to cheat on his wife as well. It is everywhere.

We need to remember the addictive nature of sin in everything, but particularly when we are first tempted. We should ask ourselves not only what the immediate consequences of the sin will be, but also where the sin will ultimately lead. Satan doesn't just want 10 percent of our souls; he wants all of them, and his plan of attack is always geared to get them. Let's remember that and stop sinning before we start.

Lesson Four: Substance Abuse

6. Some kinds of bread mold have hallucinogenic properties. If a man eats them, he both becomes very ill and begins to see visions. With that in mind, what is the Israelite king Jeroboam claiming about the prophet Amos in Amos 7:10-13?
7. Why would God's word condemn the use of this kind of "sorcery?" Passages like Colossians 2:18-19 might help.

Day Two

1. What consequences of lingering long at wine does Proverbs 23:29-30 describe? In what ways is this true?
2. What does Proverbs 23:31 say not to do? In what ways does the world around us encourage us to disobey this divine instruction? Why do we need to recognize this?
3. What consequences of drunkenness does Proverbs 23:32-35 describe? What does all of this mean? Why would God want us to avoid these things?
4. What other consequence of drunkenness does Proverbs 23:19-21 describe? In your experience, is this true? Why or why not?
5. How does 2 Peter 2:5 describe Noah? According to Genesis 6:9, what kind of moral character did Noah have? And yet, what did Noah do in Genesis 9:20-23 when he became drunk? What should this teach us?
6. How does the Bible describe Lot in 2 Peter 2:7-8? What happened to Lot when he became drunk in Genesis 19:30-35? How would you describe Lot's conduct during this episode? What should we learn from this?
7. Taking all of these things together, what kind of threat do drunkenness and substance abuse pose to the Christian physically? What threat do they pose spiritually? What should we take from this?

As He Walked

Lesson Five: Social Drinking

Day One

1. Is Paul's injunction to Timothy in 1 Timothy 5:23 proof that Paul approved of the recreational consumption of alcohol? Why or why not?
2. What does this admonition to Timothy establish about Timothy's practice? Why is this important?
3. Are there any situations today where we permit something to be done in a medical context that would be sinful in any other contexts? What? Why is this important?
4. What about first-century sanitary practices and the properties of wine might have made the consumption of wine by first-century Christians not only allowable, but necessary?
5. *Koine* Greek, the language of the New Testament, has no word for unfermented grape juice. Instead, *oinos*, from which we derive the English word "wine," is used to describe any fruit of the vine, whether it has fermented or not. Is this significant? Why?

Introduction

One of the more ironic accusations hurled at the Lord's church is that we are "Pharisaical." Many in the religious world around us claim that because we are devoted to obeying God, even in the smallest details of His law, that we are the spiritual descendants of the scribes who opposed Jesus. Interestingly enough, this is the opposite of what the Pharisees did. As we see in passages like Matthew 5 and Matthew 23, the Pharisees aroused Jesus' ire because they did NOT keep the Law. Although they loved to make up their own rules, they did everything they could to minimize the commandments of God.

In the church, modern-day Pharisaism appears in the same commandment-shrinking impulse. This is especially evident in the realm of social drinking. Too many Christians today point to the absence of an explicit Scriptural prohibition of social drinking while resolutely closing their ears to the Bible principles that tell us it is sinful. This is no different than the behavior of the Pharisees who believed that the commandment against murder left them free to hate.

We cannot allow the Lord's church to become a den of Pharisees. Instead, we must learn to read God's word as God intends for it to be read—with an ear for what God wants as well as for what God says. Only thus can we be the church that God wants us to be.

Lesson Five: Social Drinking

6. Does Jesus' miraculous conversion of water into wine in John 2:1-10 establish that Jesus accepted social drinking? Why or why not?
7. Does the charge that the Pharisees leveled against Jesus in Matthew 11:18-19 show that Jesus approved of recreational drinking? Why or why not?

Day Two

1. What does 2 Peter 1:5-8 tell us about the result of self-control, when combined with other Christian virtues? To what extent must we possess these virtues to achieve this result? Why is this important?
2. When people in the world talk about "having a few beers and relaxing," what are they saying about the purpose of their drinking with respect to self-control? How often does even moderate drinking have this effect?
3. If social drinking causes the impairment of a virtue that God wants us to abound in, what does that make social drinking? Why?
4. What does Romans 13:14 tell us about what our attitude toward the flesh should be? If we choose to engage in social drinking, is it more accurate to say that we have made "no provision" or "some provision?" Explain. Why is this important?
5. In Colossians 3:1-3, what commandment does Paul give to Christians? Is the impulse to drink socially the product of a mind set on things above, or of a mind set on things on the earth? Why? What makes this question significant?
6. Failing all else, what does light does Romans 14:20-22 shed on this subject? Considering the positions on social drinking of many in the church, what standard of conduct does this enjoin on all of us?
7. Considering all of these things, what role does social drinking have in the life of the Christian? Explain.

Lesson Six: Rejoicing in God

3. What attitude in himself does Paul describe in Philippians 1:18? Is this an appropriate attitude? Why? If so, how can we develop it in ourselves?
4. What kind of rejoicing does 1 Corinthians 13:6 mention? What does this mean? Where should this kind of rejoicing appear in our lives today?

Day Two

1. What kind of rejoicing appears in Philippians 4:1; 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20; 2 Timothy 1:4; Philemon 1:7; 2 John 12, and 3 John 4? Why would this be true? What does the massive repetition of this idea in Scripture tell us?
2. What kind of rejoicing does Romans 12:12 describe? Why would this thing cause rejoicing? How can we share in this rejoicing?
3. 1 Peter 1:3-9 describes continuing rejoicing in hope despite another factor. What is that other factor? Why did Peter's readership continue to rejoice? How can we manage it?
4. James 1:2-4 also describes rejoicing in trial, but for a different reason. What is this reason? How can we learn to rejoice in this way?
5. We see similar advice given in 1 Peter 4:12-13. According to 4:13, to what extent should we rejoice as Christians? Why should we do this? How can we do it?
6. What happens to the apostles in Acts 5:40-42? How do they react? What does the last half of 5:41 mean? How can we learn to share the apostles' sentiments?
7. When we look at these Scriptures, how important is joy to the disciple of Christ? How can we achieve it?

Part Three:
The Things of the World

As He Walked

Lesson Seven: Ungodly Entertainment

Day One

1. What is the message of Proverbs 4:23? What does this mean?
2. What are some ways today that we need to practice keeping/watching over our hearts? Explain why you think these are important.
3. What warning does John issue in 1 John 2:15? Why does John say this is important? According to John, what are the consequences of ignoring this warning?
4. What does it mean for us today to "love the world or the things in the world?" How can we guard against this in our lives?
5. What counsel does Paul give to Christians in Romans 6:11? What does this mean? How do we do it?

Introduction

In 1 John 2:15, John cautions us, "Do not love the world or the things in the world." In this verse, we see the essence of what we must NOT do as Christians. On the day of judgment, every one-time servant of God who is lost will be lost precisely because he loved the things of the world more than he loved the things of God.

Because this is so, one of Satan's primary objectives in our lives is to teach us to love the things of the world. For most of human history, Satan has done this directly, by enticing the righteous to practice sin. In recent years, however, Satan has begun to employ the technology of mass communications to get his point across. Seemingly half the songs on Top 40 radio stations glorify debauchery and sexual immorality, much of the TV lineup does the same while taking potshots at traditional morality whenever possible, and on the Internet, the vilest pornography is never more than a mouse click away.

In a world like this, we need to ask ourselves daily what the entertainment we seek after is teaching us. Do we watch, listen to, and read things that will not impede our quest for godliness, or do the things that amuse us serve as advertisements for sin? Ungodly entertainment is no harmless pastime, for sooner or later, what we put in our hearts will be revealed in our actions. We must fear, lest the entertainment we consume someday consume us.

Lesson Seven: Ungodly Entertainment

6. What does Paul tell us not to do in Romans 6:12? What will be evident about our lives if we ignore this command? How do we fulfill it?
7. What other admonition does Paul give in Romans 6:13? What picture of the Christian life does this paint? How do we apply this today?

Day Two

1. How does Solomon describe the miser in Proverbs 23:7? Is this limited to misers, or is it true of everyone? What makes it important?
2. What does Jesus tell us about lust in Matthew 5:27-28? Does this idea of sin in the heart apply only to adultery, or is there a corresponding sinful lust for every sin? What does this tell us about how carefully we should guard our thoughts?
3. In the secular world of entertainment that surrounds us, how common are things that provoke some kind of lust? Where do we see it? What should our response to these kinds of things be?
4. Sometimes, we think of lust as being a "victimless crime." Was this true in 2 Samuel 11:2-4? What were the consequences of this lust? What can be the consequences of our lust?
5. What warning does Proverbs 16:25 offer? Is this particularly true in the realm of lust? Why? Explain the danger you see.
6. Some people claim that they can watch lust-provoking things in movies or on TV and remain unaffected by them. What has probably happened to these people? Hebrews 3:13 may provide an answer.
7. On a practical, daily level, how can we monitor our entertainment to make sure that we are not becoming corrupted by lust?

As He Walked

Lesson Eight: Impure Dress & Speech

Day One

1. What does 1 Timothy 2:9 prescribe with respect to the dress of women? Is this principle limited to women only? Explain.
2. What specific examples of immodest and improper dress does Paul give in 1 Timothy 2:9? What can we learn from this?
3. In terms of modesty, how would we describe the dress of the daughters of Zion in Isaiah 3:16-23? Why? Why is this important?
4. By contrast, what does Paul specify for the adornment of godly women in 1 Timothy 2:10? Why is this significant?
5. What are the consequences of this adornment with good works? 1 Peter 2:12 may help.

Introduction

Nobody wants to be different. The same impulse that drives junior-high girls to call their friends before the first day of school to see who's wearing what still operates with equal force once those girls grow up. Boys who will follow a schoolyard bully to pick on the class nerd will laugh at the boss's jokes as men. "Sticking out like a sore thumb" is never a good thing, only a bad thing.

The problem is that Christ calls us to stand out. We are to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. It's not that we as Christians are supposed to be different for the sake of being different; we're supposed to be different for the sake of being good. If we are good, we will be different.

This war between goodness and conformity is fought on a thousand different battlegrounds in the life of the Christian. Two of those battlegrounds, and two of the most telling, are the realms of dress and speech. How do we want to dress, in a way that blends in with the immodest dress of the world, or in a way that shouts at people to turn their attention to God? How do we want to speak, in a way that mimics the lowbrow humor of the water cooler, or in a way that glorifies God even when we aren't speaking directly of Him? These can be hard choices to make, especially for new Christians, but they must be made. Only by standing out as different from the world can we approach conformity with Christ.

Lesson Eight: Impure Dress & Speech

6. If modest dress is dress that allows the wearer to glorify God, what is the defining feature of immodest dress? Explain.
7. What effect does a "Christian" woman wearing revealing clothing have on an unrighteous man? What effect does she have on a righteous man? In either case, is God glorified? Why is this important?

Day Two

1. What general command does Paul give in Ephesians 5:3? Does this mean that we literally can't let words like "fornication" and "covetousness" pass our lips? If not, what does it mean?
2. What application does Ephesians 5:4 make from Ephesians 5:3? What is this talking about? Why is it important for us to behave in the way Ephesians 5:4 describes?
3. What counsel does Paul give in Ephesians 5:11-12? What kind of "speaking" is under discussion here? Romans 1:32 may provide an answer. Why is this important?
4. What contradiction does James expose in James 3:8-10? What does James say about this contradiction? Why?
5. In a related area, what does Paul direct us to do in Colossians 3:8? Why? What connection is there between doing this and Paul's topic in Colossians 3:10?
6. What command is given in Colossians 3:10? Why? If we choose to do otherwise, whom are we truly serving? John 8:44 may prove useful.
7. What last principle with respect to our speech is set out in Proverbs 26:20-22? What does this mean? Why is it important?

As He Walked

Lesson Nine: Holiness in God

Day One

1. What does it mean to be holy? Why is this a significant idea? Acts 13:2-3 might help.
2. If human holiness is being set apart for God's purposes, what does it mean that God is holy, as in 1 Peter 1:15-16?
3. According to 1 Peter 1:18-19, what is the source of our holiness? How does this add significance to our Christian existence?
4. What does 1 Peter 1:17 tell us we should do? Why? What does this mean for us?
5. Explain what reaction our holiness should cause in us, according to 1 Peter 1:13-14. Why would this be true?

Introduction

Holiness, like love, is one of those "church words" whose meaning is sometimes hard to pin down. When the Bible-class teacher asks us what holiness is, we blurt out, "Set apart," but don't really pause to think about what that means. Perhaps this is because our two-word definition is missing something: the idea of purpose.

When the Bible describes us as a holy nation, this means a number of things, all of which revolve around the idea of purpose. God didn't take us out of the world so that we could sit around and look pretty; instead, He set us apart to prepare us to serve and glorify Him. We aren't supposed to separate ourselves from sin and evil merely because those things are bad; instead, we are to keep apart from wickedness because it will ruin us for our intended purpose. We do not live holy lives by playing hermit in a cave someplace; instead, we live holy lives by working for the Lord.

We need to consider ourselves in this way, as instruments of the righteousness of God. We are His tools, and it's up to us to make sure that we are well-maintained to do His will. When we put sin in our lives, we make ourselves useless in the same way that we would make a car engine useless if we put sugar in the gas tank. Holiness is not an abstraction; it is at the core of what we must be as Christians. Only through a constant dedication to holiness can we be what God wants us to be.

Lesson Nine: Holiness in God

6. What is one of the things God does to ensure that we remain holy? Look at Hebrews 12:5-6, 10 for help. How does God do this? Why is it important that we recognize this?
7. What is the result of holiness? Hebrews 12:14 may help. What connection does this idea have with both the definition of holiness and with 1 Peter 1:13-14? Why do we need to recognize this connection?

Day Two

1. What does Paul counsel us to do in 2 Corinthians 7:1? What means does Paul prescribe to accomplish this end? Practically speaking, how do we ourselves accomplish it?
2. What promise is referred to in 2 Corinthians 7:1? Why is it important that we recognize this?
3. What other means of achieving holiness does Paul prescribe in 2 Corinthians 6:14? What does this mean? 2 Corinthians 6:11-13 provides context. Why would this be true? Practically, what should we do about it?
4. Another motivation for holiness is described in 2 Peter 3:10-11. What is it? Why does this logically move us to be holy? What does this mean for us?
5. According to Romans 6:19, what is our purpose as holy people? How do we carry this purpose out?
6. What principle is expressed in Haggai 2:11-12? Is this still relevant today? If so, how?
7. What contrasting principle does Haggai 2:13-14 set out? Is this still true today? If so, what is its relevance for us?

Part Four:

Sexual Immorality

As He Walked

Lesson Ten: Adultery & Fornication

Day One

1. What basic principle is set out in 1 Thessalonians 4:3? What does this mean?
2. What contrast does Paul pose in 1 Thessalonians 4:4-5? Why is this contrast significant?
3. How does Paul describe sexual immorality in 1 Thessalonians 4:6? What should we learn from this description?
4. What does Paul say of those who reject his teaching about morality in 1 Thessalonians 4:8? How important is this? Why?
5. In 1 Corinthians 6:16-17, Paul poses another contrast. What is it? Why is it significant?

Introduction

Despite the modern fascination with public displays and discussions of sex, the problem of sexual immorality is hardly a new one. We read about instances of sexual immorality in the Bible from Genesis all the way through Revelation. It also appears throughout human history as a symptom of the decline of nations, from Israel to Rome to probably the United States. As nations lose touch with the discipline and self-sacrifice that are the foundation of any enduring civilization, that lack of self-control often becomes evident in the realm of sexual morality.

When we consider morality in our personal contexts and in our lives, then, we must recognize that the way we behave sexually says a great deal about who we are, and vice versa. Those who engage in this type of immorality proclaim to the world a lack of interest in any good greater than their own pleasure. Similarly, it is the weak and self-seeking who are most likely to fall prey to immorality.

Let each of us therefore order our own walk with God to keep the deadliness of immorality far from us. Self-control is like a muscle; it grows with use. As we discipline ourselves for the purpose of godliness, it strengthens our ability to resist temptation, and in turn, as we resist temptation, we learn to become more self-controlled. Selfishness expressed in sex is all around us; let us diligently labor to keep it from within us.

Lesson Ten: Adultery & Fornication

6. In what terms does Paul describe sexual immorality in 1 Corinthians 6:18? What should we learn from this?
7. What does Paul teach in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20? What's the point of what he says here? How do we need to apply this?

Day Two

1. Some people in the religious world claim that only premarital and extramarital intercourse is a sin, and that other sexual activity is not sinful. Is this true? Consider Galatians 5:19 in your answer. What should our attitude toward such things be?
2. Many opponents of the Bible's teaching on homosexuality like to point to the fact that Jesus is never recorded as having mentioned homosexuality as a sin. Does this prove anything? Why or why not?
3. The argument is also made that the New Testament prohibition against homosexuality is meant to include only homosexual prostitution, not all relations between people of the same sex. In the light of Romans 1:26-27, how likely does this appear? Why?
4. Yet another argument is made that the sin of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah was in attempting to rape a stranger, not in the homosexual activity for which both cities were known. What does Jude 7 have to say about this argument?
5. According to 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, what is the result of homosexuality? What should this tell us?
6. In comparison to these things, lust seems like a harmless pastime. Is this true? Why? What does Matthew 5:27-28 have to say about the subject?
7. What problem with lust does James 1:14-15 highlight? What should we learn from this?

As He Walked

Lesson Eleven: Divorce & Remarriage

Day One

1. What statement does Jesus make about God's creation in Mark 10:6. What are the implications of that statement?
2. What does Jesus say of the married in Mark 10:8? What does this mean? Why is it important?
3. What does Mark 10:9 tell us about the way man and wife are joined together in marriage? What is the significance of this?
4. What do we learn about the teachings of the Law of Moses about divorce in Mark 10:4-5? What was the reason for this Mosaic ordinance? How do we reconcile this with Jesus' teaching on divorce?
5. Whom does Malachi 2:14 describe as the witness against the divorcing party in a divorce? What should we learn from this?

Introduction

Economists often speak of capital, the financial resources that a person, corporation, or nation has to devote to its work. In the realm of government, reporters are fond of discussing the political capital of a president or governor, his ability to lead others to carry out his will. Along these lines, we would do well to also think of spiritual capital. This kind of capital measures the spiritual resources of an individual or group, their capacity for happiness and godliness. Good, godly parents will pass spiritual capital down to their children; evil parents will not.

Recent statistics tell us that of new first marriages in the U.S., 40 percent of couples will remain happily married, 20 percent will stay unhappily married, and 40 percent will divorce. There are all sorts of economic consequences from divorce, but divorce does the most damage in the realm of spiritual capital. Assurances in advice columns to the contrary, it is not better for a child to have one parent than two. Both father and mother bring unique capabilities to parenting, and without both, the child is at a serious disadvantage.

When we consider the strictness of God's laws against divorce, we need to remember that God does not act without purpose. He imposes these rules not to torment us, but for our good and the good of our children.

Lesson Eleven: Divorce & Remarriage

6. In Malachi 2:14-16, divorce is described repeatedly as a certain kind of dealing. What kind is it? What should this teach us about divorce?
7. What opinion about divorce does God express in Malachi 3:16? What does this tell us that we do when we divorce another without cause? Why is this significant?

Day Two

1. According to Matthew 19:9, what spiritual consequences attach to the man who divorces his wife without cause and marries another? Why?
2. Also in Matthew 19:9, what spiritual consequences attach to the one who marries a divorced spouse? Why?
3. What does Matthew 5:32 tell us about what the man who divorces his wife without Scriptural reason causes her to do? How would you describe the man's behavior in this instance? What are the implications of this?
4. What exception does Matthew 5:32 provide to the Bible's stance against divorce? What does this mean?
5. In light of these passages, what must 1 Corinthians 7:15 mean? Why?
6. Some claim that the "bondage" mentioned in 1 Corinthians 7:15 is the same thing as being "bound by the law" in Romans 7:2. Thus, they argue, the one who is abandoned by his spouse is just as free to remarry as the one whose spouse dies. Is this a good argument? Why or why not?
7. What does 1 Corinthians 7:17 teach? Does this mean that a man who was unscripturally divorced and remarried before becoming a Christian may stay married to his second wife? Why or why not? Romans 6:1-2 may shed some light on the subject.

As He Walked

Lesson Twelve: Fulfillment in God

Day One

1. What does Hebrews 13:4 tell us about the way we should look at marriage? What are the implications of this statement?
2. What does Proverbs 5:15-17 warn us against? Why?
3. What does Proverbs 5:18-19 actively encourage? How should this inform our attitude?
4. What is the message of 1 Corinthians 7:2-3? What picture of married life does this present?
5. What principle is presented in 1 Corinthians 7:4-5? How should this govern the way we interact in marriage?

Introduction

Perhaps more than anything else, the search for human happiness is the search for fulfillment. As Solomon observes in Ecclesiastes 3:11, God has set eternity in our hearts, a formless longing for the infinite that we pursue in this finite world. Men have gone down a million different paths to find fulfillment, but the only path that leads to it is also the path that leads to God.

This is just as true of sex as it is of anything else. All of the alternatives that the world proposes, the beer-drenched party lifestyle of the undergraduate, the unlimited hedonism of the movie star, and even the lust of the homosexual, all have one thing in common: they never satisfy. The more mankind seeks fulfillment through sexual sin, the more those sins both enslave and oppress. It is not the Hollywood magnate with a girl on each arm who achieves sexual bliss; it is the loving, happily married couple with 2.4 kids and a house in the suburbs.

However, even though this kind of domestic contentment is a tremendous blessing from God, even it is not necessary to the Christian's happiness. As many single disciples through the ages have learned, from the apostle Paul on down, the joy of marriage is nothing unique. It is merely an expression of the joy of selflessness, the joy of knowing, understanding, and becoming like God.

Lesson Twelve: Fulfillment in God

6. In Christianity, are we typically directed to meet our own needs by pursuing them selfishly, or by seeking to meet the needs of others first? Romans 15:2-3 may help. How applicable is this concept to marriage?
7. How should we apply the spirit of *agape* in a marital context? Consider Ephesians 5:22-31 in your response. What consequences will this have?

Day Two

1. Is marriage the only path to happiness and usefulness that Christianity offers? Why or why not? 1 Corinthians 7:32-34 may offer some useful guidance.
2. What statement do Jesus' disciples make in Matthew 19:10? In Matthew 19:11-12, how does Jesus reply? What does this mean? In what circumstances today might such a drastic step be required of the Christian?
3. In a similar context, what promise does Jesus make in Mark 10:29-30? What does this mean? How should this change the way we look at singlehood?
4. Along the same lines, what does God say to the faithful "eunuch" in Isaiah 56:3-5? What does this mean?
5. According to Romans 7:1-2, how long does marriage last? According to 1 Thessalonians 4:17, how long does our relationship with God last? Which, then, is more important?
6. Whom does Colossians 1:21 describe as the one who perfects/completes us? What does this mean? What should it teach us about fulfillment?
7. What does Ephesians 3:14-19 teach us about the greatness of the Christian's fulfillment in God? What path leads to this fulfillment? How, as Christians, do we seek it?

As He Walked

Lesson Thirteen: Review

Day One

1. *For each of the lessons listed below, summarize the main point of the lesson, citing Scripture where relevant, and describe a way that Christians today need to apply it.*
 - a. Lesson One: Materialism.
 - b. Lesson Two: Gambling.
 - c. Lesson Three: Contentment in God.
 - d. Lesson Four: Substance Abuse.
 - e. Lesson Five: Social Drinking.

Introduction

This lesson book has been an attempt to examine some of the most important moral challenges facing Christians of our time. In the course of so doing, it has hopefully pointed out that sin in one area of our lives is not some isolated, surface occurrence. Instead, it reflects a failure on our part to understand some important component of the law of God. God does not want us to fill out a checklist; instead, He wants us to live with hearts that are devoted to Him.

One of the dangers of this course of study, though, is that the warning against checklist religion itself becomes a checklist. The eight categories set forth in this book are far from the only ways that Christians can fall, nor is merely avoiding them enough to lead us to heaven. If we pride ourselves on avoiding gambling, drinking, illicit sex and the like, Satan will surely take advantage of our complacency by ensnaring us with something else.

This book, then, should not be taken as an encyclopedic description of sin and of righteousness. Instead, it should be a reminder of the pervasiveness of sin in our lives, of the ways that sin gradually erodes the boundaries we set up, and of the true righteousness that God demands of His people. Let us lay aside, then, not merely these encumbrances, but every encumbrance, that we may run with endurance the race that God has set before each one of us.

Lesson Twelve: Fulfillment in God

f. Lesson Six: Rejoicing in God.

Day Two

1. *For each of the lessons listed below, summarize the main point of the lesson, citing Scripture where relevant, and describe a way that Christians today need to apply it.*

a. Lesson Seven: Ungodly Entertainment.

b. Lesson Eight: Impure Dress & Speech.

c. Lesson Nine: Holiness in God.

d. Lesson Ten: Adultery & Fornication.

e. Lesson Eleven: Divorce & Remarriage.

f. Lesson Twelve: Fulfillment in God.