

# **CALLED TO SHEPHERD GOD'S PEOPLE**

**200 CLASS OUTLINES FOR  
PORTABLE BIBLE SCHOOLS**

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## **SECTION FIVE**

**Shepherding God's People**

## **SHEPHERDING THE FLOCK**

### **Feeding the Flock of God**

Peter wrote, "Feed the flock of God which is among you" (1Peter 5:2). Undoubtedly he was remembering that day when Jesus asked him three times if he loved Him (John 21: 15-17). Each time Jesus followed the question by telling him to feed the lambs and the sheep. Today Jesus gives that same command to His followers whom He has called to be His representatives in the villages and towns of this country.

There was another part of Peter's instructions to the young under-shepherds. Not only were they to feed the flock, but they were to "take the oversight" of it and to be "examples to the flock". This means that they were to be concerned about the problems, the questions, the burdens that would come upon the flock, and at all times to set the pattern for life and conduct.

These lessons deal with a variety of subjects - with preaching, with counseling, with living as ambassadors of the Most High God. The words of Peter express the goal of the course - "Be shepherds of God's flock . . . And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away" (1 Pet. 5:4).

The book *Preachers and People*, by R. Stanley, published by Blessing Books in Vellore, India was an extremely helpful source for many of the valuable truths found in these lessons.

#### **Lesson 1 - PREACH THE WORD**

Preaching that brings fruit that lasts is based upon the Word of God. The study of God's Word has played a vital role in the revivals recorded in the Old Testament, particularly under King Josiah (2 Kings 22:8-11) and Ezra (Ezra 7:10). Amos prophesied of days of famine of the Word of the Lord (Amos 8:11,12), and those days may be already upon us! From many pulpits are heard stories and experiences, but very little exposition of God's Word.

Milk is good, but for how long? No maturity is possible without strong meat.

Paul said to preach the Word (2 Tim. 4:2-4). This is essential.

**Discussion:** Study the passages noted above and discuss the effect of preaching based solidly on the Word of God.

#### **Lesson 2 - WHY WE NEED REVIVAL**

Revival is not an end in itself. It is a means to an end, the end being evangelism. Revival is not evangelism, but revival begets evangelism. David prayed, "Restore to me

the joy of Your salvation . . . , then . . . sinners shall be converted (Psa. 51:12,13). Evan Roberts of the Welsh Revival prayed, "Lord, bend the Church and bless the world!"

Most of the revivals of the past have given birth to great missionary and evangelistic movements. But some died out too soon, one of the main causes being the failure of the leaders to channel the revival blessings into aggressive evangelism and soul-winning.

God is not interested in pouring out His Spirit upon His people just to excite them or make them feel good. No! He is interested in the "world"!

One of the reasons for the delay in revival is that we do not yet know why we need revival.

**Discussion:** What conditions in your congregations indicate a need for revival? Make this a subject for prayer together.

### **Lesson 3 - PREACHING FOR REVIVAL**

Are your people cold, uninterested in the things of the Lord? Are there dissensions, jealousies, evil speaking among your flock? Are they committing sins - stealing, lying? Are they reverting to heathen practices? They need revival!

Revival means to come back to life - there is a difference between evangelism and revival. A sinner needs evangelism to bring him to the Lord. But the born-again person who has fallen into sin and coldness needs to be revived.

**1. How to get revival** - 2 Chron. 7:14 gives four simple, concise steps:

1. Humble themselves.
2. Pray.
3. Seek My Face.
4. Turn from their wicked ways.

**2. Results of revival**

1. God will hear your prayers.
2. He will forgive your sin.
3. He will heal and strengthen your lives.

Are you thirsty for revival? Pray for it, and preach it strongly!

**Discussion** - How can you communicate the thirst for revival to your flock? Give practical plans that can be carried out.

### **Lesson 4 - PRAYING FOR REVIVAL**

The need of prayer as a preparation for revival cannot be over-emphasized. Prayer here is more than a simple petition for revival. It means self-examination and confession of sins (Rev. 2:23). It's a time of remembering our broken vows before the Lord (Eccl.5:1-6) and the wrongs we have committed against others (Matt.5:23,24).

Prayer leads to true humility, because in His presence we realize our nothingness and His holiness (Isa. 6:1-5). It is an expression of our inadequacy and a pleading for His strength and power (Matt. 26:41).

God is pleased with such sacrifices, and His fire will invariably fall on them (Psa. 51:17-19). When Elijah repaired the altar of the Lord, the fire fell. When Jesus prayed heaven was opened. When the early church prayed, the place was shaken.

Prayer releases the power of the Spirit to affect the earth. God makes and breaks His men on their knees.

**Discussion** - Meditate upon the verses above and comment upon the effects of prayer in each instance.

## **Lesson 5 - LOVE, A DUAL MINISTRY**

Just before His ascension Jesus asked Peter the searching question, "Do you love Me?" (John 21:15-17). Love is the foundation and capstone for a Christian minister.

When Jesus first called him it was to be a **fisher of men** (Matt. 4:19). Now He commissions Him to be a **shepherd of men** (John 21:15-17). You need love both for soul-winning and shepherding. One is **love for the lost** and the other is **love for the found**. Souls must be **brought in** and **brought up!**

**Discussion** - What are some practical ways of demonstrating your love for the lost? for the saved?

## **Lesson 6 - PUBLIC MINISTRY**

The under-shepherd's greatest privilege is to stand and preach the gospel. This will involve both studying and experience, and will require the blessing of God to be effective to the conversion of sinners and strengthening of believers.

He must remember to give the whole counsel of God which will include evangelism, Bible doctrine, teaching, reproofs, exhortations and warnings - Acts 20:27.

He must learn to pray publicly, and that can be learned only by much private prayer in the secret place. In the pastoral prayer he lifts the congregation into the presence of God in an atmosphere of sublime worship.

He must also learn to read the Scriptures clearly, reverently and distinctly, so that all can understand - Neh. 8:8.

He is commanded to "feed the Church of God", Acts 20:28, by preaching sermons and Bible lessons that are applicable to the listeners' individual needs.

He is to protect the flock from false teachings and false teachers, Acts 20:29,30, and he has the responsibility to care for the poor of his flock, Acts 11:29,30.

He has the privilege of leading his people into reaching out to the lost, and to unchurched areas.

At the close of the service he has the responsibility of expressing God's blessing upon the people - Num. 6:23-26; Rev. 1:4,5.

The serious question in 2 Cor. 2:16 - "Who is sufficient for these things?" has a triumphant answer in 2 Cor. 3:5 - "Our sufficiency is of God"!

**Discussion** - Which of the responsibilities listed above will be most difficult to fill? Which do you consider the most important?

## **Lesson 7 - KEEP A BALANCE IN YOUR MINISTRY**

We must avoid extremes in preaching and practice lest we become spiritual eccentrics. Preach about the love of God and about His holiness that cannot tolerate sin, about heaven and hell, about a close walk with God in communion and about practical

methods of serving Him, about revival and evangelism, etc. Paul was able to say “I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God”.

It will be helpful to keep a list of all the sermon topics you preach and to prepare a preaching schedule for several months ahead. Your mind and your heart will be gaining information and strength, and you will be guarded from omitting truths from the rich counsel of God.

**Assignment** - Make a tentative list of sermon subjects for a three-month period.

## **Lesson 8 - PERIODIC EVALUATION**

It is good to set aside a day every month and a couple of days once or twice a year for self-examination and evaluation. Are you realizing your goals? Are you seeing fruit? Success and blessing can blind our eyes to the extent of the remaining task, and a sudden disaster can make us forget the progress that has been made. Standing back for a clear perception of the course of the ministry will permit a helpful evaluation. Mistakes may need to be corrected - even John the Apostle made the mistake of worshipping the angel twice and was corrected (Rev.19:10; 22:8,9) - and practices changed.

Jesus said, “Come apart”.

**Discussion** - What are some of the goals you should strive toward in the beginning of your ministry?

## **Lesson 9 - MINISTRY OF COUNSELING**

The under-shepherd must be able to talk to people individually about salvation and about their personal problems. At times he must point out discrepancies in their testimony - Matt.18:15-17.

He must learn to comfort the bereaved and the sorrowing.

He should enter the personal lives of his people and become a part of the family - Rom. 12:15.

He must remember that he is in a very special way the representative of the Lord Jesus here on earth at all times.

**Discussion** - What are some common events in your village that offer good opportunities for Christian counseling and help?

## **Lesson 10 - ENCOURAGING FELLOWSHIP**

Fellowship is based on an intimate family relationship to Christ and His family. Christians need to be together, to talk together, to pray together, to sing together, to laugh together, to weep together, just to be together - 1 John 1:7;1:3.

### **1. The purpose of fellowship**

1. To strengthen one another, both in services and in happy times of meal sharing. The men should be brought together for a meal, the women for an evening of sharing, the young people for games - and all of these around the Word of God. Christians will be strengthened and outsiders attracted.

2. To encourage one another in the hard places of life. We can't tell when a heart is aching - we can make the burden lighter.

3. To share experiences for the benefit of all; our testimony may prevent someone from making a similar error.

4. To share the thrill of answered prayer - Psa. 50:15. This will surely encourage others to pray.

5. To weep with them who weep - Rom. 12:15. Those bereaved should be given the fellowship of tears, of sorrow, of suffering.

6. To exhort the backslider to return to God.

### **2. Results of Christian fellowship**

1. We learn to walk in the light - 1 John 1:7.

2. We learn to suffer together - Phil. 3:10.

3. We learn to serve together - Col. 4:7.

4. We learn to comfort one another - 1 Thess. 4:18.

5. We learn to pray for one another - 1 Thess. 5:25.

6. We learn to bear one another's burdens - Gal. 6:2.

7. We learn to rejoice with the joyful - Rom. 12:15. Joy is contagious.

8. We grow and glow for the Lord - 2 Pet. 3:18.

**Discussion** - What type of social fellowship would be helpful in your congregation?

## **Lesson 11 - EVANGELISTIC PREACHING**

There are limitless topics for the man of God to use for his sermons. He must be careful about keeping a balance in his subjects. There is the danger of assuming that sermons on salvation are not needed, and all attention is focused on polishing the saints, not on making new ones.

The fact is that often people are members of the local church but have never become a part of Christ's body, the true church. But salvation is real, and without it a man is lost eternally. A church built on unconverted members will have no life, no message, no transforming power.

The church leader must remember Ezekiel's solemn words about the watchman who failed to sound a warning (Ezek. 33:6).

**Assignment** - List a number of texts and topics appropriate for an evangelistic sermon.

## **Lesson 12 - ASSURANCE OF SALVATION**

What if one of your flock has doubts about whether he is really saved?

Assurance of salvation is necessary if a believer is to help others spiritually. To have that assurance is to be absolutely confident that we are saved and that if we died suddenly we would go immediately to heaven - John 10:28,29.

### **1. Basis of assurance of salvation**

1. Witness of the Holy Spirit - Rom. 8:16; Gal. 4:6.

2. The Word of God - 1 John 5:10, 13; John 5:24; Rom. 10:13. Say to Satan: "The Word of God says that if I believe on Jesus Christ I have eternal life. On \_\_\_\_\_ (give the date) I believed on Jesus, therefore I have eternal life. I am saved. My sins are forgiven. I am on my way to heaven!"

3. The changed life - 1 John 3:14; 2 Cor. 5:17.

## **2. Hindrances to an assurance of salvation**

1. Failure to trust the Word of God.
2. Worldliness.
3. Lack of the fullness of the Holy Spirit - John 7:37-39.
4. Sin and backsliding - 1 John 1:9.

**Caution:** Be careful in persuading people that they are saved. This is the work of the Holy Spirit who knows and searches the heart.

**Assignment** - The students may pair off and dialogue with each other, one of them playing the role of an uncertain believer and the other leading him to assurance in the Word of God.

## **Lesson 13 - DISCIPLING NEW CONVERTS**

A new believer is a babe in Christ and must have tender loving care, just like a tiny baby new to this world.

The first week in a convert's life is extremely important, for Satan will do all he can to plant doubts in his heart. Visit with him every day and read the Word and pray together.

Prepare opportunities for him to share his new found faith; this will strengthen him and will be an effective witness to unsaved friends.

Undoubtedly your denomination has a catechism course preparing the convert for baptism. Begin the lessons immediately after the confession of faith.

The young Christian must be thoroughly saturated with the Word of God - it is the genuine milk that will allow him to grow (1 Pet. 2:2). See that he becomes a member of a Bible study.

Here is the fine opportunity for a Big Brother/Little Brother or Sister pairing. Carefully match the new believer with a mature, caring Christian who will lead and pray him into the riches of God's love.

**Discussion** - How can you encourage young Christians in your congregation? How can you set up a Big Brother/Little Brother pairing?

## **Lesson 14 - WHY WITNESS?**

*Scriptures: Matt. 10:32,33; Rom.10:9*

### **1. The necessity of confessing Christ audibly**

1. Christ commanded it - Matt.10:32,33.
2. It is a source of help and strength in our own lives. A witnessing Christian is not liable to backslide.
3. It solves many problems. Others know what you stand for and respect you for a clear-cut stand. The world despises a weak, cowardly, secret Christian. Temptations to visit worldly places are halted.
4. Because of what Christ has done for you.

### **2. Methods of confessing Christ**

1. Publicly in church services, prayer meetings, testimony services, etc.
2. Privately in daily conversation with friends, relatives and neighbors. This is possibly the most difficult, yet most essential, method.

3. Publicly, in baptism and joining a good church.
4. By constant attendance at church services and the communion table.
5. A public confession must be made repeatedly - Jer.20:9.

Note: The Christian life that is not confessed will starve and die!

**Discussion** - Who of your acquaintances is an effective witness? How can others be encouraged to begin witnessing?

## **Lesson 15 - GETTING SOUL-WINNERS STARTED**

God continues to be calling, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" (Isa. 6:8). That lament is still true today, "the laborers are few" (Lk.10:2). The church seems to be increasing in number of people who will send others, but decreasing painfully in a corps of personal soul-winners.

What can you do about it? You should do all you can to change this situation. We cannot get our country evangelized until every Christian is made a soul-winner. There are four specific things you can do:

1. Lead by example!
2. Preach a series of sermons on the importance of soul-winning (see Lesson 15).
3. Announce a soul-winner's training class and begin a series of lessons.
4. Try to find a work-study book or article on soul-winning and circulate it among your people.

You will fail in your calling if you neglect scattering your supporters into the streets out-where-the-sinners-are and make each one a soul-winner!

**Assignment** - How can we teach our people by example to be witnesses? Prepare three specific ideas.

## **Lesson 16 - REASONS FOR SOUL-WINNING**

Few are called to be preachers, but every born-again Christian is called to be a soul-winner. You must lead your people into the joy of soul-winning. "Soul-winning is a definite effort to lead a definite person to accept a definite Saviour at a definite time" - Billy Sunday.

### **1. Reasons for being a soul-winner**

1. The worth of a soul - Mark 8:35-38.
2. The fact of hell.
3. The sufferings of Christ on the cross for each sinner.
4. The emptiness and folly of this world.
5. The desire to have the family circle complete in heaven.
6. The glories of heaven.
7. The personal rewards that are offered to faithful soul winners.

### **2. Needs of a personal worker**

1. He must be saved himself and sure of his salvation.
2. He must live a pure life.
3. He must work in a spirit of love.
4. He must have a fair knowledge of the Bible and know how to use it.
5. He must be a man of prayer.

6. He must be filled with the Holy Spirit.
7. He must have a compassion for lost souls.

**Discussion** - Why is each of the needs listed above important?

## Lesson 17 - HOW TO WITNESS

### 1. How to witness

1. A witness for Christ must be saved himself.
2. Tell the simple facts of your conversion and the change in your life.
3. Tell about answers to prayer you have received - Psa.50:15.
4. Tell how Christ satisfies you completely.
5. Tell about personal victory over sin and temptations.
6. Tell about your favorite verses in the Bible, and how God spoke to you this morning from a particular passage of Scripture.
7. Give your friends the gospel of Christ. Tell them about Him.

### 2. Hindrances to confessing Christ

1. Fear of man - 2 Tim.1:7; 1 John 4:18; Phil.4:13.
2. Ashamed - 2 Tim.1:8.
3. Impure life - 1 John 1:9.

**Note:** Read Ezek. 33:8 to discover the danger of not witnessing!

**Assignment** - Prepare a testimony based on the facts of your conversion and describe the changes it brought in your life.

## Lesson 18 - WITNESSING PLANS

“**Four Spiritual Laws**” is perhaps the most widely used witnessing tool today, and it is very effective.

The **Wordless Book**, with its black, red, white, gold and green pages, also has an excellent ministry, especially with children.

Another way to present the plan of salvation to children is by **use of the fingers of your hand**. No equipment or book is necessary.

First finger - God loves you, John 3:16.

Second finger- All have sinned, Rom. 3:23.

Third finger - Christ died to pay for your sin, 1 Cor.15:3.

Fourth finger- Believe Christ died for your sin, John 1:12.

Fifth finger - When you believe, you receive everlasting life, Rom.6:23.

Others may prefer to use the **Roman Road**. Point out the verses in the Bible as you explain them.

Man’s need - Romans 3:23

Sin’s penalty - Romans 6:23

God’s provision- Romans 5:8

Man’s response - Romans 10:9

A **marked New Testament** is an excellent way to have someone read with you through chosen verses on salvation, for the inquirer may appreciate the trouble you have gone to in preparing the Bible. Put a tab with the number 1 showing at the top on the page of Rom.3:23. A high-light pen might make the verse easier to find quickly. In the margin,

write “See page \_\_\_ for 2”, indicating the page number for Rom.6:23 where you have placed the tab. Continue in this way through the following verses, explaining each one. John 1:12; 1 John 1:9; Rev.3:20; 1 John 5:10-13.

**Assignment** - Decide which of these plans you want to teach. Drill the class on the verses, then have them play the role of a seeker and the soul-winner. Then have them reverse the role, the seeker becoming the soul-winner. Insist that every interview must end asking for a definite commitment, and then a prayer asking for forgiveness.

## **Lesson 19 - TEACHING ABOUT GIVING**

Giving to the Lord may seem a hard burden to your people. Plant these thoughts in their hearts, so it will become a joy.

### **1. How are we to give to the Lord?**

1. Systematically - 1 Cor.16:2 - “Upon the first day of the week”. We are to give every week of the year. Be businesslike in your giving, and God will reward your honesty.

2. Individually - 1 Cor.16:2 - “let every one of you”. This is not only for the head of the home, but mother and children too. It is for the rich and the poor.

3. Proportionately - “as God hath prospered”. We ought to give the tithes plus offerings. God gives abundantly to those who give to Him.

4. Cheerfully - 2 Cor. 9:7 - not grudgingly.

5. Sacrificially, 2 Cor. 8:2 - they gave out of their deep poverty. The widow gave two mites, which was all her living. God measures gifts by how much is left, not by how much we give.

Blessings follow generous gifts to the Lord - Acts 20:35; Matt. 6:20; Mal. 3:10.

One more word: your people will not tithe if you are not a cheerful giver. .

**Discussion** - Does your church follow Scriptural methods in receiving its offerings? What improvements should be made?

## **Lesson 20 - HOW TO EXHORT**

God graciously provides a way of cleansing from the attack of sin. When we confess, 1 John 1:9, He cleanses. But there is a danger of hardening, if sin is not confessed. Heb.3:13 says, “Exhort one another daily, while it is called today, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin”. Keeping sin away by exhortation is essential for fellowship.

When the leader notices a shortcoming in a brother, he should be moved with concern, and he should not shrink from exhorting the brother. How should he do it?

1. There must be a gentle spirit - Luke 9:54-56; 1 Thess. 2:11; Matt. 12:20.

2. We must speak in all humility - Rom. 12:10; Eph. 4:2.

3. We must use the Word - 2 Tim. 3:16-4:2; Col. 3:15.

4. It should be under the Spirit’s guidance - Eph. 5:18,19.

5. The scriptural way to correct is privately - Matt. 18:15.

For three years Paul ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears - Acts 20:31.

**Discussion** - What will be the result of exhorting a person harshly? publicly? How can you prevent this?

## **Lesson 21 - HOW TO DEAL WITH SIN IN THE FLOCK**

### **1. The Biblical procedure - Matt. 18:15-17**

1. Go to the erring one alone to exhort him to repent.
2. If he resists, take two or three others as witnesses.
3. If he continues to harden his heart, inform the church.
2. If he continues to resist, he will be considered a sinning heathen man.

### **2. Reasons for discipline**

1. False doctrine - Titus 1:13. The false teaching of cults sometimes deceives believers. This must be guarded against.
2. Open sin - 1 Tim. 5:20.
3. Immorality - 1 Cor. 5:1-5.

### **3. How to correct a sinning brother**

1. In humility - 1 Cor. 10:12.
2. In sincerity - Matt. 7:3-5.
3. In love - 1 Cor. 13:4.
4. By Scripture.
5. By testimony and by experience.

**Assignment** - Is there someone in your congregation living in sin? How will you deal with that situation?

## **Lesson 22 - DEALING WITH BACKSLIDING**

Often we find someone who was a strong Christian but now is backslidden. Remember the solemn warning of 1 Cor. 10:12 and Prov. 16:18. No one backslides suddenly. Many little things enter in slowly and undermine the life.

### **1. The true causes of backsliding**

1. Failure to pray.
2. Failure to read the Bible - 2 Tim. 2:15.
3. Failure to attend church - Heb. 10:25.
4. Failure to obey the Holy Spirit - Eph. 4:30.
5. Failure to confess Christ - Matt. 10:33.
6. Failure to walk in the light - 1 John 1:7.

### **2. The results of backsliding**

1. A loss of power, of peace, of joy and happiness.
2. Murmuring and darkness will cloud the daily pathway.
3. The loss of rewards, and the person will "suffer loss".
4. Some teach that it may even lead to the loss of the soul.

### **3. God's invitation to return - Jer. 3:22; Hosea 14:4.**

The true Christian hates backsliding - Psa. 101:3: "I will set no wicked thing before my eyes." The true object to set the gaze on - Heb. 12:2. Paul's goal was Christ - Phil.3:14.

**Assignment** - Ask yourself if there are any backslidden Christians in your village. Plan how you will try to win them back to Christ. Pray for them, along with your congregation.

### **Lesson 23 - DIVORCE**

What if a home in your congregation is threatened by the plague of divorce? Through all the world, divorce represents one of the major problems of family living. It is a tragedy because it undermines the home, the basis of society. It is doubly tragic in the church, for the Christian home is a sacred institution inaugurated by God and the symbol of Christ's union with His Church. There lies the reason for Satan's attack upon marriage.

Only misery follows in its wake: broken homes, bruised and broken hearts, homeless children, delinquent youth, loneliness and tears.

There is only one Scriptural grounds for divorce, and that is fornication - Matt. 19:9. That means illicit sexual relations, probably habitual, with a third party. Even then, divorce is not commanded, it is permitted only in unusual and extreme cases.

Do all you can to reconcile the partners having difficulties. Here are some suggestions:

1. Clearly instruct that a marriage contract is for life "till death breaks it", Matt. 19:6. In marriage God performs a miracle when two individuals become one person. Only God is permitted to break that union by taking one of the partners in death.

2. If there are children, their welfare should be considered, for they suffer most.

3. Point out that divorce is a public admission of utter failure.

4. Plead with each partner to get right with the Lord, and then with one another.

Confession and repentance with mutual sharing will restore any marriage.

If a reconciliation takes place, let both husband and wife solemnly renew their vow for "better or worse, till death do us part". Encourage them to continually woo each other; each needs a great deal of affection. Assure them that they must continually ask God for a holy love for each other.

**Discussion** - What are the most important ingredients of a Christian home? What are injurious influences?

### **Lesson 24 - ADULTERY**

The spiritual leader must sound God's warning against the sin of adultery. The seventh commandment has never been abrogated, Ex. 20:14 and 17.

Only by seeing how God hates adultery can we see the sanctity of marriage. Do you remember that God commanded the death penalty, death for both, for adultery, Lev.20:10? The spiritual leader himself must avoid all taint and appearance of sexual misconduct.

There is no question about it - adultery and fornication lead to hell, Prov. 7:27; Prov. 9:13-17; 1 Cor. 6:9,10.

**Discussion** - Have the Christians of your area become more careless about sexual sins in this generation? What are the results?

### **Lesson 25 - WITCHCRAFT**

It's a common occurrence - parents bring their babies to the front of the church for baptism or dedication and if the little dress is lifted there can be seen a string around the baby's waist. Is this permissible? Absolutely not! Fetishes are a tool of witchcraft, and the Bible makes it very clear that to use witchcraft, or sorcery, is to be in complicity with evil spirits. Look at the verses: Ex. 22:18; Acts 19:18,19; Gal. 5:20 and Rev. 22:15.

The terror of the poison cup and witchcraft held many lands in darkness until the coming of the light of the gospel. Still today the devil tries to persuade people to revert to the old pagan darkness. But Christ will have no fellowship with darkness. Those who practice magic arts - witchcraft and sorcery - their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulphur (Rev.21:8).

Each person must choose whom he will serve, but he cannot serve two masters. The fetishes must be burned when Christ is accepted as Saviour and Lord.

**Discussion** - What witchcraft practices are in use in your part of the country? What can you do to eliminate them?

## **Lesson 26 - WHY TO PREACH AGAINST DRINKING**

Everyone realizes that alcoholism is a curse, destroying homes and lives, but some feel that the moderate use of alcoholic beverages is permissible. They cite the Saviour's turning water into wine at a wedding, John 2:1-11, and Paul's instruction to Timothy to use wine as a medicine, 1 Tim. 5:23.

In both instances the Greek word is "vinos", meaning grape juice, while the word for intoxicating liquor is "shekar". Both of these words are used in Luke 1:15: "For he (John the Baptist) shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine (vinos) nor strong drink (shekar)".

These verses show God's view of drinking: Prov. 20:1; Prov. 23:29-35; Isa. 28:7; Hos. 4:11; 1 Cor. 6:10 and Gal. 5:21. The first mention of wine in the Bible is in Gen. 9:21 and tells of Noah being drunk and the calamity that fell on his son Ham.

### **Reasons why the Christian should not drink:**

1. His body is the temple of the Holy Ghost and should not be defiled in any way.
2. He is a witness for Christ, and if he takes even a tiny sip a weaker brother might be tempted to take a larger portion.
3. He is his brother's keeper, Gen.4:9, and has a responsibility to help his brother live a pure, upright life.

There are many other reasons why everyone, whether a Christian or not, should completely avoid drinking.

1. It is a costly waste of money - Deut. 21:18-21; Prov. 23:20.
2. For the safety of others on the highway.
3. Drinking aids in breaking up homes.

William Gladstone said, "Strong drink is more destructive than war, pestilence and famine".

Because one taste leads to another, one glass to another, the only safe, Scriptural conclusion is complete abstinence under ALL circumstances.

**Discussion** - Are there other reasons that a Christian should not drink?

## **Lesson 27- HELPING CHRISTIANS WHO SUFFER**

Many good Christians are calling out to God. “Why? Why must I suffer like this?” Friends sometimes, like those of Job, will cruelly judge them and say it is because of some evil in their lives. The witch doctor may accuse someone of putting a curse on the person having severe or fiery trials. But for the true Christian, life has a plan, for God has a purpose for each life - Rom. 8:28.

### **1. Why do sufferings come?**

1. Sometimes, as a result of sin - John 5:14; Miriam in Num. 12:10; King Asa in 2 Chron. 16:12.
2. That the works of God might be made manifest - John 9:2,3.
3. For the glory of God - John 11:4; Phil. 1:29.
4. The work of the enemy - with God’s permissive will - Job in the book of Job; Mark 5:1-5; Luke 13:16; Acts 10:38. God knows your load limit, the amount that you can endure.
5. Chastisement - child training - Heb. 12:5-13.

### **2. Our response to suffering**

1. We may despise it, rebelling instead of submitting. This attitude leads to hardness.
2. We may faint under it, but we need not, for His grace is sufficient - 2 Cor. 12:9.
3. We may accept and bear it, but with sadness.
4. We may joyfully yield to the will of God - this is the highest form of victory.

**Assignment** - Write a list of from 3 to 7 people in your flock who are suffering. Make a plan of ministering to each. Involve others from your flock in this ministry.

## **Lesson 28 - MINISTERING TO THE SICK**

Christians become ill, and the Lord’s servant must minister to them faithfully, assuring them of God’s love and concern. Let us consider some approaches to the problem of sickness.

### **1. Is God capable of healing miracles?**

The Bible tells the true stories of many miracles. The greatest miracle was the resurrection of Jesus, but many others were performed. Our God is a miracle-working God. Jehovah Rappi (Ex. 15:26) is one of His names, “I am the Lord who healeth thee”. See Psalm 103:3; Matt. 19:26; Luke 18:27. He is still the Great Physician today.

### **2. Anointing of the sick in James 5:14-20**

1. The sick are to call in the elders.
2. The elders are to pray the prayer of faith and anoint the sick one with oil.
3. James speaks of confessing faults one to another.

### **3. Some sicknesses are not healed.**

1. In Acts 28, Paul performed two miracles. But he prayed three times for deliverance from sickness and it was denied him, 2 Cor. 12:7-10. One purpose of the sickness was to keep Paul humble.
2. If we were always healed, then we would never die.

The Christian worker must strengthen the sick person with the Word of God. How tragic if he is allowed to revert to fetishes and become soul-sick as well as physically sick.

A deathbed scene with the saint relaxed and happy in the will of God is a blessed parting. Jesus promises, "My strength is sufficient" - even in sickness.

**Discussion** - What are some Scripture passages that will comfort the sick?

## **Lesson 29 - MINISTRY IN TIME OF DEATH**

Life is an unsubstantial flimsy thing. It is here today and gone tomorrow. Of all men born on the earth, only Elijah has escaped death. Of all those living today, every one will die, except for the Lord's children who will meet Him in the air at the Rapture. Heb. 9:27 is very true.

The Christian worker has a heavy responsibility when the Grim Reaper visits his congregation. Family and friends are in deep grief, for parting is always painful. The believers should be organized to spend time with the mourners, to take meals to them, to assist in preparing the corpse and the grave for burial. Weep with those who weep, to show Christ's compassion to the brokenhearted.

If the deceased was a believer, comforting the bereaved is far easier, for the soul of the loved one has already found peace and joy. Truly, to be with Christ is far better than anything this world can offer. The funeral, in spite of the grief of parting, should be a celebration.

In the time of death the Christian leader must take a firm stand against the reversion to pagan practices on the part of the family. Wailing to the spirits, burying articles of wealth, drinking and superstitious rites have no place in a Christian burial, but unsaved relatives and friends often try hard to introduce the elements of hopelessness and terror that accompany their perception of death. Stand firm against it. Rally the Christians to stay on the scene until the body has been committed to the earth, singing and praying and assisting in every way possible.

The sermon should serve warning to all that life is only a moment of time in which to prepare for the long, long eternity.

A wise man told his disciples to prepare for death the day before they died. But they objected, "We may die tomorrow".

"True", he replied, "then prepare today".

**Discussion** - What are other practical ways of helping when someone of your congregation dies?

## **Lesson 30 - COUNSELING ENGAGED COUPLES**

An engagement is the announcement to the community that the couple plans to marry soon - likely within the year. For the couple it is a time of getting better acquainted and ascertaining whether or not they are prepared and really meant for each other. But they must not take liberties one with the other, for they are not married. It is important for future happiness that both be virgins at marriage. Marriage privileges **MUST** be reserved until after marriage, lest love turn to hate and mutual respect be lost completely - 2 Sam. 13:15.

This is the ideal time for the church leader to instruct the couple on establishing a Christian home, referring to Eph. 5 and Titus 2. Let both learn to pray together over every problem and misunderstanding. Encourage them to express their love for each other throughout life, both by act and word.

Marriage is the oldest human institution. Next to salvation, the choice of a partner may be the greatest decision a young person has to make. The spiritual leader must give strong counsel and support in this crucial period.

**Principles of a happy marriage:**

1. Christians may only marry Christians - 2 Cor. 6:14-17.
2. Pray much and seek God's will.
3. Wait to marry until you know the other person thoroughly, both good points and bad points. Hasty marriages are dangerous.
4. Wait for love. Infatuation is not sufficient. Marriage is for life, and it will take godly love to make a happy home.
5. Wait until you are old enough to marry. Marriage is for adults, not children, for it carries heavy responsibilities.
6. Wait until moral problems are settled. Never marry a man to reform him.
7. Wait for the approval of the girl's parents. This is very important.
8. Wait for a measure of financial stability, not wealth, but some security.
9. Insist on a public Christian wedding. Never for a moment consider elopement or a secret marriage. Marriage is far too sacred for this.

**Assignment** - Prepare a lesson for a young people's class on steps to lead to a happy marriage.

### **Lesson 31 - HOW TO COUNSEL A CHILDLESS COUPLE**

When a married couple expects to have children and years pass without a baby's arrival, their disappointment grows and often steals their Christian victory. They see their friends coming into the church leading their little tots and holding their tiny babies, and they ask, "Why hasn't God answered our prayers?" Some become bitter and leave the church. Some turn to the witch doctor and throw away their savings - and their relationship with God. Barren couples need your prayer, your counsel and your support. They often say like Rachel, "Give me children, or I'll die" (Gen. 30:1).

Hannah's years of sterility and the supportive conduct of her husband can be a model and blessing to the childless couple. Hannah had no children, but the beautiful loyalty of Elkanah is shown in verse 5 of 1 Samuel 1. "He loved Hannah, although the Lord had closed her womb." The husband of a barren woman has no right to send her back to her family. He must be an Elkanah!

For the Hannahs in your congregation, point out these truths:

1. They must continue in prayer, as Hannah prayed. God had closed her womb for a purpose, and in His time He opened her womb. God gave Abraham and Sarah a baby when they were too old to have one (Gen. 21:2). Psalm 113:9 is a good verse!
2. Relax, and be happy in the Lord. Don't nag your husband like Rachel. Be thankful for the blessings you have and let your face show your joy. Gloominess will only kill your husband's love and make you a miserable person.

3. If the Lord doesn't give you children, you can still have a mother's heart and show your love to other children. There are orphans and neglected children who need care. Having a Bible club or Sunday School class will give you the opportunity to have spiritual children.

Deborah became a "mother in Israel" (Judges 5:7).

**Discussion** - Discuss ministries that childless women of your congregation may develop. How can you encourage them?

## Lesson 32 - MINISTRY TO WIDOWS

Your congregation probably has some older women, widows, who love the Lord and are faithful in the services. They may feel unneeded and lonely. They too should be using their gifts in the service of the Lord, 1 Pet. 4:10. Speak to them of these widows:

1. Naomi became the nurse of her grandchild (Ruth 4:16) and was able to pass along her faith to generations to come. Grandmothers can be a great help in the **care of little children** of the parish, and they will receive love in return.

2. The widow of Zarephath hosted a man of God (1 Kings 17). Older women can perform a valuable service of **hospitality**.

3. Anna was a widow of 84 years who "served God with fastings and prayers day and night, and . . . spoke of Him to all" (Luke 2:36-38). Older women make wonderful **prayer warriors**.

4. Another chose to **give to God** "all the livelihood that she had" (Luke 21:4).

5. Possibly Dorcas, who comforted many and made coats and garments for them, was a widow, because those who stood by weeping were widows (Acts 9:39). She **helped those in need**.

6. Lois had a part in preparing her grandson Timothy for his ministry (2 Tim. 1:5).

This period of life may be wonderfully fruitful. How much better than simply awaiting the call to eternity!

**Discussion** - Review the ideas suggested by these Scriptures for widows' ministries. Can you add others?

## Lesson 33 - CHRISTIANS WITH UNSAVED SPOUSES

Marriage partners who stand alone in the faith need special care and encouragement. Your counsel to them should include the following instructions:

1. Do not allow a rift to develop between you and your spouse because of your spiritual experiences.

2. Never make your spouse feel inferior.

3. Shower more love upon your partner. Express your love more freely because now the love of God has been poured out in your heart.

4. Don't share your problems with outsiders.

5. Let a godly atmosphere characterize your home.

6. Be a happy person. Let a sweet spirit clothe you.

**Discussion** - How can the church leader form bridges of friendship with these unsaved spouses? What activities can you propose that will attract them to the church and its people . . . and to its Christ?

### **Lesson 34 -OBSERVANCE OF THE LORD'S DAY**

The Lord's Day, Sunday, is a New Testament fact that has its roots in the Sabbath of the Old Testament.

#### **1. Contrast between the Sabbath and the Lord's day**

1. The Sabbath is the seventh day, and the Lord's day is the first day of the week.
2. The Sabbath commemorates God's creation rest, while the Lord's Day commemorates Christ's resurrection.
3. The Sabbath was for the Jews, and the Lord's day is for the Church of Jesus Christ.

#### **2. The Apostolic Church kept the first day of the week.**

1. Matt.28:1 - Jesus remained in the grave long enough to fulfill the Jewish Sabbath, and arose on the first Easter Sunday.
2. Acts 20:7 - Regular church services are described here.
3. 1 Cor. 16:2 - Instructions for Sunday church collections.
4. Rev.1:10 - John spoke of the "Lord's day".

#### **3. The true way to keep the Lord's day**

1. To delight in the Lord. Make it a special day of worship, prayer and praise.
2. To cease from your own pleasure. This is a day for HIS pleasure. Visit the sick and do other acts of mercy for HIM.
3. To make it a day that honors the Lord. Six days we work and earn our living, but the seventh belongs to Him.

**Discussion** - What common Sunday activities are not appropriate for the Lord's day?

### **Lesson 35 - FATHERS DAY**

God has placed the husband as head of the home, Gen.18:19; Eph. 5:23. Christian fathers need encouragement to perform their duties as priest of the family. Why not have a special service to honor the fathers of the congregation? Advertise it well in advance, and announce that all the children, even adult ones, will sit with their fathers. Have a father read the Scripture, and another pray. You might recognize the oldest father in the audience, the youngest, and the one with the most children.

The sermon will focus on the Biblical standard for a Christ-honoring father. He must love his wife, Eph. 5:25, loving in health, in sickness, in poverty and in prosperity. He must be faithful to her, and comfort her in times of sorrow, 1 Sam. 1:8.

The father must be an active partner in the training and discipline of the children for the Lord, Prov. 22:6. He is responsible to establish a family altar for daily family worship. He is responsible for grace at meals. Together the parents will pray and work to bring the children to the Lord at an early age, Matt. 19:13,14.

He must love his wife and his family, but he must love Christ more. The Christian father will always put Christ first in his life, Luke 14:26.

**Assignment** - Prepare a list of sermon themes appropriate for Fathers Day services.

## **Lesson 36 - MOTHERS DAY**

Good wives and good mothers are wonderful gifts from the Lord, Prov. 31:10. Wives need appreciation and praise, and the church should be careful to honor their ministry in the home and their testimony.

A service honoring mothers might have a song by children dedicated to mothers, and a tribute to his mother by an older child. Each child might bring a flower to present to his mother. The sermon will probably be based on a woman of the Bible.

**Assignment** - Plan the program for a Mothers Day service for your congregation, listing those who will take part and what each will do.

## **Lesson 37 - ESTABLISHING A FAMILY ALTAR**

The secret of a successful Christian home is in the family altar where Christ is recognized as the head of the home, and the family joins to worship and learn of Him.

If you describe the practice of family devotions and urge the Christians to begin, some may be persuaded, but others won't really understand what to do. Why not have a demonstration in one of the services? Choose a family and meet with them to prepare an example of the family altar. They may begin with a chorus or the verse of some familiar hymn. All the children old enough to read may take turns in reading the Scripture, and the smaller ones might recite a verse already memorized. Perhaps the father will make some brief remarks about the Scripture passage, and he will close the period with prayer. After the family has left the platform, a short message may be given about the importance of parents and children gathering together for family worship.

The family giving the demonstration will be strengthened, and other families may be persuaded to begin family devotions in their homes.

What a difference that will make to every member of the family!

**Assignment** - Let the class demonstrate a family altar service.

## **Lesson 38 - REACHING THE WHOLE FAMILY**

One of the most important ministries you will have will be to direct whole families on the way to heaven. This you will do by leading parents to be obedient to God in passing on His truth to their children. Here are a few suggestions:

1. Preach publicly and counsel privately about the responsibility of parents to surround their children with the Word of God. Deut. 6:6-9 and Proverbs 6:20-23 are fine texts for this, as well as Psalm 119:11.

2. Encourage parents to open their homes and lives to their children's Christian friends. Show them the importance of being enthusiastic, loyal and whole-hearted Christians and church supporters for the sake of their children. One of the essentials for a strong family is a love for God that permeates the parents.

3. Keep your congregation family-oriented. Encourage the believers to pray for and support the children of other families. Have activities that will acquaint the older people with all the children and young people of the congregation. God's people should not be victims of a generation gap.

4. Instruct parents of grown children about the evils of a severe dowry system. Many young people fall into sin because of the demands of an excessive dowry payment that makes holy matrimony impossible for many years.

Children are a wonderful gift from the Lord, and leading them to the Saviour will be a great joy to the parents in your congregation, a joy that will last through eternity.

**Discussion** - Consider each of the four points given above. Will they be practical helps for your congregation? Can you suggest other thoughts?

### **Lesson 39 - MOBILIZING LAYMEN FOR SERVICE**

Very possibly you are the most capable person in your congregation in leadership abilities, and you will be strongly tempted to carry all the work of the church on your own shoulders. But that would be a sad, sad mistake. Why?

First of all, read 1 Pet. 4:10. The instruction is very clear. "Each one should use whatever gift he has to serve others." To grow in the Lord your people must exercise their gifts, and you must train and encourage them. A pond that has no outlet becomes stagnant. Streams of living water should be flowing out from your lay Christians.

Form a gospel team. One can be the song leader, another a soloist. Perhaps one can play the guitar, one can give a testimony. Assign them parts in your worship service. Ask some to lead in prayer cells, or home Bible studies. Some can teach Sunday School classes, others might conduct children's clubs through the week. Develop a puppet ministry. And above all else, teach them the art of leading someone to Christ.

**Discuss** other ways your lay people can be led to express their love of the Lord in service to Him.

### **Lesson 40 - USING THE GIFTS OF WOMEN**

The women of your congregation should not be allowed to be mere onlookers to the work of the Lord. They have gifts that will bring blessing to the congregation, glory to the Lord, and strength to their own spirits.

Study the women of your flock. Do what you can to inspire and prepare them to serve their Lord in one of these ministries:

#### **1. Among women**

1. As a deaconness - visiting the sick or grieving.
2. In a prayer cell, leading or being the hostess.
3. Leading a Bible study.
4. Discipling young Christians, perhaps in a Big Sister/Little Sister role.

#### **2. Among children**

1. Teaching a Sunday school class.
2. Leading neighborhood clubs.

#### **3. In the home**

1. Training their children to follow the Lord.
2. Showing hospitality both to fellow Christians and to the unsaved.
3. As a help-meet to her husband, encouraging him if he is saved, and endeavoring to reach him for Christ, if he is unsaved.

**Discussion** - What other ministries can you add for the women of your flock?