

WELL-KNOWN PARABLES

Perhaps the best-known of all Christ's teachings are His parables. Certainly they are the most interesting and fascinating to study. Christ was not the first one to use parables as a means of teaching--nor was He the last; but He was the Master of this type of teaching as, indeed, He was of every type of teaching. As an example of what a parable is, study now what was evidently the first parable which He gave:

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

Matthew 13:1-23, Mark 4:1-25, Luke 8:4-18

A. The Occasion for the Parable: Read Matthew 13:1-3; Mark 4:1-2; Luke 8:4

1. Where was Jesus when He gave this parable? Matthew 13:1, 2

2. To whom was it spoken? Luke 8:4

3. Was this the only parable given at this time? Mark 4:2

B. The Parable Itself: Read Luke 8:5-8

1. What are the two basic nouns in this story? Luke 8:5a

2. From Luke 8, chart briefly the events of this story in the first two columns:

<u>Where the Seed Fell:</u>	<u>What Happened to It:</u>	<u>Meaning:</u>
vs. 5 _____	_____	vs. 12 _____
_____	_____	
vs. 6 _____	_____	vs. 13_
_____	_____	
vs. 7 _____	_____	vs. 15
_____	_____	

3. Was all the soil on which the seed fell of the same kind?

4. Were the results the same in each case?

5. What caused the difference in the effectiveness of the seed in each case?
(Think!)

6. What did Jesus say as He concluded this story? Luke 8:8b

C. The Meaning of the Parable: Read Luke 8:9-18

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1. Identify the two basic nouns in the story:
 - a. What is the seed? Luke 8:11 _____
 - b. Who then would be the sower? (*THINK!*) _____
2. What do you think the soil stands for in each case? (Look for something that all four types of soil have in common). Luke 8:12a, 13a, 14a, 15b

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3. In the third column above, chart the meaning of each of the four types of soil, as given by Jesus.
 4. On the basis of these answers, what would you say makes the difference in the effectiveness of the Word of God when it falls on a human heart? (*THINK!*)

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5. Therefore, with what warning did Jesus close His interpretation of this story? Luke 8:18a
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QUESTIONS FOR ME TO THINK ABOUT:

1. How do I hear God's Word when it is given out? Like which type of soil am I?

2. Do I have an honest and good heart, which hears, understands and accepts the Word of God, and holds it fast patiently until it bears fruit in my life?

SOME PARABLES OF THE KINGDOM

Matthew 13:31-35, Mark 4:26-34, Luke 13:18-21

Through the study of the parable of the Sower, we have seen that a parable is a true-to-life story designed to teach some spiritual truth. From the study of the following, see what further truths concerning parables you can discover:

A. The Parable of the Growing Seed: Read Mark 4:26-29

1. To what did Jesus liken the kingdom of God? Mark 4:26

2. What happened to the seed after it was sown? Mark 4:27

3. Therefore, what does this story teach you about the kingdom of God? (THINK!)

B. The Parable of the Mustard Seed: Read Mark 4:30-34, Matthew 13:31-32

1. To what else did Jesus compare the kingdom of God? Mark 4:30-31a

2. How large is a mustard seed? Mark 4:31b

3. Yet, when it is sown and grows up, how large does it become? Mark 4:32

4. What does this story teach you about the kingdom of God? (THINK!)

C. The Parable of the Leaven: Read Matthew 13:33, Luke 13:20-21

1. To what else did Jesus compare the kingdom of God? Matthew 13:33a

2. What did the leaven do after it was put into the meal? Matthew 13:33b

3. Therefore, what does this story teach you about the kingdom of God? (THINK!)

4. What truth about the kingdom of God is included in each of the above three parables?

D. The Parable of the Hidden Treasure: Read Matthew 13:44

1. To what else did Jesus compare the kingdom of God? Matthew 13:44a

2. How would one feel when he had found such a treasure? Matthew 13:44b

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3. What would this discovery cause him to do? Matthew 13:44c

4. Therefore, what does this story teach you about the kingdom of God? (THINK!)

E. The Parable of the Pearl of Great Price: Read Matthew 13:45-46

1. What was the man in this story seeking? Matthew 13:45

2. What did he find as a result of his search? Matthew 13:46a

3. What did he do when he had found it? Matthew 13:46b

4. What in this story do you think is supposed to represent the kingdom of God?

5. Therefore, what does this story teach you about the kingdom of God? (THINK!)

6. How is this parable like the parable of the hidden treasure?

QUESTIONS FOR ME TO THINK ABOUT:

1. Do I know anything from my own experience about the growth of the kingdom of God? Is the kingdom of God something vague, unreal, and far-off to me? Or has it begun within my own heart? See Luke 17:21b

2. How much is the kingdom of God worth to me?

SOME PARABLES OF DISCIPLESHIP

**Matthew 10:37-39, 16:21-27; Mark 8:31 - 9:1; Luke 9:27-29, 57-62,
14:33**

From the parables of the kingdom, we have discovered one of the basic principles of interpreting parables--namely, that each parable has one central teaching, and one only. We discovered from the first three parables something of the growth of the kingdom of God--mysteriously, from a very small beginning, until it shall eventually penetrate every part of the world. We discovered, also, from the last two parables something of the tremendous value of the kingdom of God to an individual, whether he stumbled upon it suddenly, or whether he had been seeking something like it for a long time. From the following parables, discover next what the individual should do after he has discovered the great value of the kingdom of God:

A. The Setting of the Parables: Read Luke 14:25-27

1. Notice the occasion of Jesus' giving these teachings: Who were accompanying Him on His journeys? Luke 14:25

2. What did Jesus warn them that they must do, if they would become His disciples? Luke 14:26-27

3. Notice how this same teaching is given again in Matthew 10:37-39. How does it explain Jesus' meaning of "hate", as used in Luke 14:26a?

4. Notice that two parables (or, more accurately, parable-comparisons) were given to illustrate the teaching Jesus had just given. See how each of them helps to show the logic of Jesus' teaching:

B. The Parable of the Man Building a Tower: Read Luke 14:28-30

1. What did Jesus say any man would be sure to do before he began building a tower? Luke 14:28a

2. What might happen if he did not do this? Luke 14:28b-30

3. What would others do if this should happen? Luke 14:29b-30

C. The Parable of the King Going to War: Read Luke 14:31-32

1. What would a king be sure to do before he set out to war against another king? Luke 14:31

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2. If he discovered that he could not win in a battle, would he even begin it? Luke 14:32

3. What would he do instead? Luke 14:32

D. The meaning of Both Parables: Read Luke 14:33

1. What did Jesus say a person must do before he can become His disciple? Luke 14:33

2. If he is not willing to do this, should he even start out to become a Christian? See also Luke 9:57-62

E. Other Similar Teachings: Read Matthew 16:21:27, Mark 8:31 - 9:1, Luke 9:22-29

1. Notice that these passages give essentially the same teaching as that given in the parables above. Here, what did Jesus say one must do if he would come after Him? Luke 9:23

2. What will happen to one who is not willing to do this? Luke 9:24a

3. What will happen to one who is willing to do this, and loses his life for the sake of Jesus and the gospel? Luke 9:24b

4. Is it possible to gain anything in the long run by refusing to follow Jesus? Luke 9:25, Mark 8:26-27

5. What will eventually happen to one who refuses to follow Jesus?

QUESTIONS FOR ME TO THINK ABOUT:

1. Have I fully considered the cost of becoming Jesus' disciple?

2. Am I willing to pay this price?

PARABLES OF THE FATHER'S HEART

Matthew 18:12-14, Luke 15:1-32

In our previous studies, we have discovered that *some of the details of a parable have special spiritual significance*: For instance, in the parable of the sower, the seed, the bird, and the thorns all had special significance. One of the chief points for difference of opinion among interpreters of parables is how many of the details have spiritual significance. Notice the details of the following parables, and try to determine which of them have special spiritual significance:

A. The Setting of the Parables: Read Luke 15:1-2

1. Who began to come to Jesus to hear His teachings? Luke 15:1

2. How did the Pharisees and scribes feel about this? Luke 15:2

3. Notice that these three parables were given in answer to this attitude which the scribes and Pharisees had toward Jesus because He received sinners.

B. The Parable of the Lost Sheep: Read Luke 15:3-7

1. How many sheep did the man have? Luke 15:4a

2. What did he do when only one of them was lost? Luke 15:4b

3. What did he do when he had found it? Luke 15:5-6

4. What did Jesus say that this story teaches us? Luke 15:7

C. The Parable of the Lost Coin: Read Luke 15:8-10

1. How many pieces of silver did the woman have? Luke 15:8a

2. What did she do when only one of them was lost? Luke 15:8b

3. What did she do when she had found it? Luke 15:9

4. What did Jesus say this story teaches us? Luke 15:10

D. The Parable of the Lost Son: Read Luke 15:11-32

1. How many sons did the father have? Luke 15:12

2. Where did one of them go? Luke 15:13a

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3. What did he do there? Luke 15:13b

4. What happened after this? Luke 15:14

5. What job did he get to try to help himself? Luke 15:15

6. What would he like to have done? Luke 15:16

7. About whom did he then begin to think? With whom did he compare himself? Luke 15:17

8. What did he decide to do? Luke 15:18a

9. What did he plan to become there? Luke 15:19

10. When the boy's father saw him coming, what did he do? Luke 15:20

11. Notice the other things he did for the boy, Luke 15:22-23. How did the father feel now that his son was back at home? Luke 15:24

12. By contrast, how did the older brother feel about the way the father treated the younger son? Luke 15:28

QUESTIONS FOR ME TO THINK ABOUT:

1. Whom do the shepherd, the woman, and the father in these stories represent? Whom does the elder brother represent? See Luke 15:2

2. What is God's attitude toward me as a sinner today?

PARABLES OF THE CHRISTIAN'S HEART AT SALVATION

Luke 18:9-14, Luke 7:36-50

From the story of the *Prodigal* (or recklessly extravagant) Son, we saw that *some_details of a parable are not intended to have special spiritual significance*; as the ring, the fatted calf, the best robe, and the shoes. These belong only to the story as a story, and have meaning only as they show the Father's heart of love to his son. From the following studies, see how this truth is again revealed:

A. The Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican: Read Luke 18:9-14

1. Notice to whom this parable was given: How did these people feel about themselves? About others? Luke 18:9

2. What did both men in this story do? Luke 18:10

3. With whom did the *Pharisee* (orthodox religious leader of the Jews) pray? Luke 18:11a

4. For what did he give thanks? Luke 18:11b

5. What did he say about himself? Luke 18:12

6. Where did the *publican* (hated tax-collector) stand to pray? Luke 18:13a

7. What two things did he do as he prayed? Luke 18:13b

8. What did he tell the Lord about himself? Luke 18:13d

9. What did he ask God to do for him? Luke 18:13c

10. Which of these men did Jesus say was *justified* accepted by God as worthy of salvation) after his prayer? Luke 18:14a

11. Notice why this was true: Luke 18:14b. Could one ever be saved as long as he exalts himself? What must be his heart attitude to be saved?

B. The Parable of the Two Debtors: Read Luke 7:36-50

1. Notice the events which took place before Jesus told this story: Where was Jesus invited to eat? Luke 7:36

2. Who came into the house while Jesus was there? Luke 7:37a

3. Notice the three things she did for Jesus: Luke 7:37b-38. What did the Pharisee say within himself when he saw this? Luke 7:39

4. Notice that Jesus answered these thoughts of the Pharisee's mind with the parable of the two debtors. How much more did the one owe than the other? Luke 7:41

5. What was true of both debtors? Luke 7:42a

6. Therefore, what did the creditor do to both? Luke 7:42b

7. What was Jesus' question to Simon? Luke 7:42c

8. What was Simon's answer? Luke 7:43a

9. What did Jesus say of Simon's answer? Luke 7:43b

10. To whom did Jesus then explain the meaning of the parable? Luke 7:44a

11. After showing that the woman had performed for Jesus the three duties of a host, which Simon had failed to perform, what did Jesus say of her? Luke 7:47a

12. What proved the fact that her sins were forgiven? Luke 7:47b

13. What did Simon's lack of love for Jesus prove about him? Luke 7:47c

QUESTIONS FOR ME TO THINK ABOUT:

1. What is my heart attitude toward myself in the sight of God? Am I proud, critical, more aware of the faults of others than of my own? Or have I come with a humble and contrite heart, casting myself on the mercy of God?

2. What is my heart attitude toward God? Do I more or less ignore Him, or do I love Him fervently for His matchless grace in forgiving my terrible sins?

A PARABLE OF THE CHRISTIAN'S HEART ATTITUDE TOWARD THOSE WHO WRONG HIM

Matthew 18:15-35

Since some of the details of a parable have special spiritual significance, and some do not, the question naturally arises as to how one determines which do and which do not. A good rule to follow is that *details have significance only as they relate to the central truth of the parable*. Notice how this has been true in the parables studied in the past, and in the PARABLE OF THE UNFORGIVING SERVANT below:

A. The Setting of the Parable: Read Matthew 18:25-22

1. Notice that Jesus had just been teaching the disciples what to do if someone should wrong them (Matthew 18:15-17). After this teaching, what question did Peter ask?
Matthew 18:21a

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2. What did Peter think might be the answer to this question? Matthew 18:22

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3. What did Jesus say was the answer to his question? Matthew 18:22

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4. Notice that He then told the parable to show why this was true.
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B. The Servant Before the King: Read Matthew 18:23-27

1. What did the king in this story decide to do? Matthew 18:23b

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2. What did he discover about one of his servants? Matthew 18:24b, 25a

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3. A talent was worth at least \$1,000, perhaps \$1,200. Therefore, how much did he really owe?

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4. Since he could not pay this debt, what did the king command to be done? Matthew 18:25

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5. What did the servant do when he heard the king's command? Matthew 18:26

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6. How did the king feel as a result of this plea? Matthew 18:27a

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7. What did he therefore do? Matthew 18:27b
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8. How would you think the servant would feel after such an event? What attitude should be in his heart? (THINK!)
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C. The Servant and His Fellow-Servant: Read Matthew 18:28-30

1. What did this servant afterwards do to one of his fellow-servants? Matthew 18:25
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2. Each pence (or shilling) was worth about \$.17. Therefore, how much did this fellow-servant really owe him?
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3. What did the fellow-servant beg of him? Matthew 18:29
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4. What did he do after this request? Matthew 18:30
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5. Was this the proper way to show his gratitude for what had been done for him?
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D. The Servant Again Before the King: Read Matthew 18:31-35

1. How did this man's fellow-servants feel when they heard what he had done? What did they do? Matthew 18:31
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2. When the king heard of it, what did he say the man should have done, in view of what the king had done for him? Matthew 18:32-33
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3. How did the king feel because of his action? What did he do? Matthew 18:34
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4. Whom did Jesus say this unforgiving servant was like? Matthew 18:35
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QUESTIONS FOR ME TO THINK ABOUT:

1. How much has God forgiven me?
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2. In comparison with this, how great is any wrong that one could do to me?
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PARABLES OF THE CHRISTIAN'S HEART ATTITUDE TOWARD HIS ASSOCIATES

Luke 14: 7-11, 10: 25-37

From the parable of the Unforgiving Servant, we saw that *doctrines are not to be based on parables alone, but on the entire teaching of Scripture on a given subject*. Thus it would be incorrect to base one's doctrine as to what happens if a Christian does not forgive on this parable alone, without considering the whole teaching of Scripture on this subject. See what further principles of interpreting parables you can learn from the following lesson:

A. The Parable of the Lowest Seat at the Feast: Read Luke 14:7-11

1. Where was Jesus when He gave this parable? Luke 14:1

2. To whom was this parable given? Luke 14:7a

3. What did Jesus notice that they were doing, that caused Him to give this parable? Luke 14:7b

4. Why did Jesus say they should not do this? Luke 14:8b-9

5. Where did He say they should sit instead? Luke 14:10a

6. What might be the result in this case? Luke 14:10b

7. How would others feel toward one who would take Jesus' advice? Luke 14:10c

8. What did Jesus say was the central truth of this parable? Luke 14:11

9. Notice that the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican had the same central teaching. There, humility toward God is stressed; here, humility toward whom? See Philippians 2:3b, Romans 12:10b

B. The Parable of the Good Samaritan: The Setting: Read Luke 10:25-29

1. What question did a lawyer (or scribe) ask of Jesus? Luke 10:25b

2. Why did he ask this question? Luke 10:25a

3. When Jesus asked him what the law said on this subject, what did the lawyer answer? Luke 10:27

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4. When Jesus told him he had answered correctly, and that if he would do this, he would live, what did the lawyer ask? Luke 10:29b

5. Why did he ask this question? Luke 10:29a

6. Notice that the parable is given in direct answer to this question.

C. The Story Itself: Read Luke 10:30-35

1. What happened to the traveller Jesus described? Luke 10:30

2. Who saw him after this? Luke 10:31a, 32a, 33a

3. What did the first two do when they saw him? Luke 10:31b, 32b

4. What did the third do? Luke 10:33-35

D. The Spiritual Message: Read Luke 10:36-37

1. What question did Jesus ask in concluding this story? Luke 10:36

2. What was the lawyer's answer? Luke 10:37a

3. What was Jesus' message to the lawyer after this? Luke 10:37b

4. Therefore, what is the answer to the lawyer's question: "Who is my neighbor?"

QUESTIONS FOR ME TO THINK ABOUT:

1. Do I seek to put others before myself in all my social contacts with them?

2. Am I the kind of neighbor that the Samaritan was, to all who are in need?

PARABLES OF A CHRISTIAN'S HEART ATTITUDE TOWARD GOD

Luke 11:1-13, Matthew 7:7-11, Luke 18:1-8

From the parable of the Good Samaritan, we noticed that *the setting is a very important key to the understanding of a parable*. Notice how this is true also in the following parables, and see what additional principle of interpretation you can learn:

A. The Parable of the Friend at Midnight: Read Luke 11:1-10, Matthew 7:7-8

1. Notice the setting of this parable in Luke 11:1-4: What had Jesus been doing just before this? Luke 11:1a

2. When He had stopped, what had one of the disciples asked Him to do? Luke 11:1b

3. What teaching had He then given them? Luke 11:2-4

4. Read now the parable itself in Luke 11:5-8. When did the man in the story go to his friend's house? Luke 11:5a

5. What did he ask him to do? Luke 11:5b

6. Why did he ask this favor? Luke 11:6

7. What answer MIGHT a person give in such a case? Luke 11:7

8. But WOULD a person give such an answer to his friend? What would he do? Luke 11:8c

9. Even if the person would not do this because of his friendship, why would he do it? Luke 11:8b

10. Notice Jesus' comment on the meaning of this parable. Who else did He say should be characterized by *importunity* (urgent persistence in asking)? Luke 11:9-10

11. Does this parable help you to understand what Jesus meant by asking, seeking, and knocking? In the Greek, these words mean "keep on asking...keep on seeking...keep on knocking."

B. The Parable of the Father's Gifts: Read Luke 11:11-13, Matthew 7:9-11

1. What three things might a son ask of his father? Luke 11:11a, 11b, 12

2. What three things would a father not think of giving him instead of those he asked?
Luke 11:11a, 11b, 12

3. Since this is true of an earthly father, what does it teach us about our Heavenly Father?
Matthew 7:11

C. The Parable of the Judge and the Widow: Read Luke 18:1-8

1. Notice the scripture comment which preceded this parable in Luke 18:1: What is this parable supposed to teach us?

2. Notice the parable itself: What kind of judge lived in a certain city? Luke 18:2

3. What did a widow ask him to do? Luke 18:3

4. What did he do at first? Luke 18:4a

5. Why did he finally decide to grant her request? Luke 18:5

6. Notice Jesus' comment on this story: If an unjust judge could be so moved to grant requests, who else would be moved even more? Luke 18:7a

7. What did Jesus say God would do for His own elect? Luke 18:7a, 8a

8. On what condition will He do this? Luke 18:7b

9. What might He sometimes do before He answers? Luke 18:7c

QUESTIONS FOR ME TO THINK ABOUT:

1. Do I, as God's child, keep on presenting my requests to Him without wearying?

2. Do I have perfect confidence that because I am His own, He will answer in His own way in His own time, even though He may wait a long time to do so?

THE CHRISTIAN'S HEART ATTITUDE TOWARD THINGS

Luke 12:1-34

In each of the preceding parables, we noticed that not only the setting but also *the scripture comment on the application is an important key to understanding a parable*. Notice how much scripture comment there is concerning the application of the following PARABLE OF THE RICH FOOL:

A. The Setting of the Parable: Read Luke 12:1-15

1. Notice that in Luke 12:1-12, Jesus had been teaching a great multitude of people (Luke 12:1). What was one of the things He had taught them? Luke 12:6-7

2. Right in the middle of His teachings, what did one man ask Him to do? Luke 12:13

3. Did Jesus, as a human being or as a religious leader, have any right to take charge of such matters? Luke 12:14

4. Of what did He warn the crowds to beware? Luke 12:15a

5. Why should they guard against this? Luke 12:15b

6. Notice that the parable was given just after this warning:

B. The Parable Itself: Read Luke 12:16-20

1. What happened to a certain rich man? Luke 12:16

2. What problem did this create for him? Luke 12:17

3. What did he decide to do about this problem? Luke 12:18

4. For whom did he plan to use these riches? Luke 12:19

5. What did God call this man? Luke 12:20a

6. Why did He call him this? Luke 12:20b

C. The Scripture Comment on the Application: Read Luke 12:21-34

1. Who did Jesus say was like the rich fool? Luke 12:21

2. Therefore, what did Jesus say to His disciples? Luke 12:22

3. What did Jesus tell them to consider when they were tempted to worry about food?
Luke 12:24

4. Could worrying change even the slightest circumstance of life? Luke 12:25

5. Would it do any good, then, to worry about larger things? Luke 12:26

6. What did Jesus tell them to consider, when they were tempted to worry about clothing?
Luke 12:27-28

7. What are Christians not to seek after? Luke 12:29

8. Who seeks after such things as these? Luke 12:30a

9. What are Christians to seek after instead? Luke 12:31a

10. What will happen if they do seek after this? Why? Luke 12:31b, 30b

11. What should Christians do, instead of what the rich fool did? Luke 12:33a

12. Where should they lay up their treasures? Luke 12:33b

13. Why is this so important? Luke 12:34

QUESTIONS FOR ME TO THINK ABOUT:

1. For whom am I laying up treasure?

2. Where is my treasure? About what are my daily thoughts chiefly concerned? Where is
my heart's interest chiefly centered?

PARABLES OF THE CHRISTIAN'S HEART ATTITUDE IN SERVICE

Luke 17:7-10, Matthew 19:23 - 20:16

In the parable of the Wheat and Tares, we saw that *Jesus' method of interpreting parables was to identify the nouns*, and then all the rest of the story would be clear. See how this principle applies to the following parables as well:

A. The Parable of the Unprofitable Servant: Read Luke 17:7-10

1. If a man had a slave, what might that slave do all day? Luke 17:7a

2. When he had finished that, would the man tell him to do and eat right away? Luke 17:7b

3. What would he ask the slave to do first? Luke 17:8

4. Would a master feel that he should thank the slave for the things he had done for him? Luke 17:9

5. Notice that we are like slaves in relation to God: If we should do all that He has commanded us to do, would He owe us any thanks? Luke 17:10a

6. What would we still be in His sight? Why? Luke 17:10b

7. Is there any such thing as a slave doing more than he should for his master?

B. The Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard: The Setting: Matthew 19:23-30

1. Notice the setting of this parable, Matthew 19:23-30. What had Jesus told the disciples after the rich young ruler went away sorrowful? Matthew 19:23

2. What did Peter ask after this teaching? Matthew 19:27

3. Notice the answer that Jesus gave, in Matthew 19:28-29. What statement did He make at the end of this answer? Matthew 19:30

4. Notice that the parable immediately follows this statement:

C. The Story Itself: Read Matthew 10:1-16

1. To whom is the kingdom of heaven (or God Himself) compared in this story? Matthew 20:1

2. What did this man agree to pay the first set of workers whom he hired? Matthew 20:2

3. What did he promise the next four groups of workers? Matthew 20:4b, 5b, 7b

4. When evening came, which workers did he pay first? Matthew 20:8

5. How much pay did he give them for one hour's work? Matthew 20:9

6. When the first workers saw this, what did they expect? Matthew 20:10a

7. But what did they get? Matthew 20:10b

8. What did they do when this happened? Matthew 20:11

9. Of what did the man then remind them? Matthew 20:13

10. What did he say was wrong with them? Matthew 20:15b

11. On the other hand, what was true of him? Matthew 20:15c

12. Which laborers really got more for their labor--those who made a contract with the man, or those who worked without a contract, trusting him to give them what was right? How were the last first?

QUESTIONS FOR ME TO THINK ABOUT:

1. If I could work every possible moment of every day for God, could I ever begin to repay Him for all He has already done for me?

2. Am I willing to work unstintingly for God, with no agreement as to my reward, trusting Him to give more than I could ever possibly deserve?

PARABLES OF PREPARATION FOR THE END TIME

Mark 13:34-37, Matthew 25:1-13

Perhaps the greatest principle of all to remember in the study of parables, is that *the main purpose of parables is to help us in our own daily living*. From the following parables, see what lesson you can learn to help you in your own life today:

A. The Parable of the Watching Porter: Read Mark 13:34-37

1. Who is the Son of Man? Mark 13:34a, Luke 19:10

2. To whom is He compared in Mark 13:34a?

3. When this man assigned work to all his servants, what did he tell the *porter* (gatekeeper or doorkeeper) to do? Mark 13:34b

4. Therefore, what did Jesus say His followers should do? mark 13:35a

5. Why is this so important? Mark 13:35b

6. What might happen if one should fail in this, even for a short time? Mark 13:36

7. To whom was this message given besides the apostles? Mark 13:37

B. The Parable of the Ten Virgins: The Setting: Matthew 24:1-51

1. Notice, first of all, the setting of this parable. About what event had Jesus been teaching His disciples? Matthew 24:27, 30, 39

2. What had He told them concerning this event? Matthew 24:36

3. Therefore, what must they be sure to do? Matthew 24:42

4. Notice that several parables follow this statement, including that of the Ten Virgins. Now study the parable itself, to see what you can learn.

C. The Parable Itself: Read Matthew 25:1-13

1. What did the ten virgins in this story do? Matthew 25:1

2. How many of them were wise in planning for this event? Matthew 25:2a

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3. How many of them were foolish? Matthew 25:2b

4. What did the foolish virgins do? Matthew 25:3

5. What did the wise virgins do? Matthew 25:4

6. What did the bridegroom do? Matthew 25:5a

7. What did the virgins all do while he did this? Matthew 25:5b

8. When the bridegroom finally came, what did the virgins all do? Matthew 25:6-7

9. What did the foolish virgins discover? Matthew 25:8b

10. Therefore, what did they ask the wise virgins to do? Matthew 25:8a

11. Would the wise virgins do this? Why? Matthew 25:9a

12. What did they tell the foolish virgins to do? Matthew 25:9b

13. What happened while the foolish virgins were doing this? Matthew 25:10

14. When the foolish virgins later asked to be admitted to the feast, what did the bridegroom say to them? Matthew 25:12

15. Notice the brief scripture comment on the application of this parable. What did Jesus say we should do? Matthew 25:13

QUESTIONS FOR ME TO THINK ABOUT:

1. Am I faithfully, continuously watching for the Lord Jesus' return?

2. Am I ready *now* for His return, or would I still have to try to get ready if He should return today?

PARABLES OF ACTIVITIES BEFORE THE END TIME

Matthew 24:36-51, Luke 12:35-48

From the parable of the Ten Virgins, we have seen the importance of this principle: *Don't force the meanings of the details of parables. If a meaning is right, it will fit without forcing.* Therefore, it is not necessary that we believe that exactly half of those who appear to be waiting for the Lord's coming will be unprepared; or that Jesus will come at midnight; or that because all were called virgins and had lamps and some oil, they were all genuine Christians. See how this principle can be further applied to the following parables:

A. The Setting of the Parables: Read Matthew 24:36-42 (see also Luke 12:1-34)

1. Notice that in Matthew these parables occur just after Jesus' teachings concerning His second coming, and just before the parable of the Ten Virgins. What warning immediately precedes these parables? Matthew 24:42

2. Notice that Matthew gives only two parables, whereas Luke gives three.

B. The Parable of the Servants Awaiting Their Absent Master: Read Luke 12:35-38

1. Like whom did Jesus say His followers should be? Luke 12:36a

2. If they were like this, what would be true of them? Luke 12:35

3. What would they therefore be able to do? Luke 12:36b

4. How did Jesus describe such servants? Luke 12:37a, 38b

5. What would the master do for such servants? Luke 12:37b

C. The Parable of Watching Against the Thief: Read Matthew 24:42-44, Luke 12:39-40

1. Does a man know at what hour a thief might enter into his house? Luke 12:39a

2. If he did, what would he be sure to do? Luke 12:39b

3. What do these parables teach us that we should do? Luke 12:40

D. The Parable of the Faithful and Unfaithful Waiting Servants: Read Luke 12:41-48

1. Notice the question Peter asked after the above parables: Luke 12:41. This question was the direct reason for this third parable. What kind of servant is first described? Luke 12:42a

2. What work did his master give him to do? Luke 12:42b

3. What did Jesus say would be true of this servant if his master should find him doing this upon his return? Luke 12:43

4. What would his master do for him? Luke 12:44

5. On the other hand, what might such a servant begin to think? Luke 12:45a

6. If he thought this, what might he do? Luke 12:45b

7. What would happen to such a servant? Luke 12:46, Matthew 24:51b

8. Will all who do not do God's will be punished the same? Luke 12:47-48

9. Which ones will be punished most? Luke 12:47

10. Why is this true? Luke 12:48

QUESTIONS FOR ME TO THINK ABOUT:

1. If I would be ready when the Lord comes, when must I be ready?

2. Are there any activities of my daily life today which I would not want the Lord to find me doing when He comes?

PARABLES OF SEPARATION AT THE END TIME

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43, 47-50

In the preceding parables, we have seen what happens in a person's heart, from the very first time he hears of the kingdom of God, on through the whole scope of his Christian experience. We have watched him discover the great value of the kingdom of God, seen him count the cost and decide that even through it meant giving up all he had, he would get that great treasure for himself. We have seen his attitude of heart as he first comes to God for mercy--and later as he is forgiven, and filled with gratitude to God and love to Christ. We have seen how this attitude expresses itself toward others, in forgiveness, love, and helpfulness. We have seen that he spends his life not just for earthly joys, but with eternity's values in view--faithfully serving His Lord, and constantly watching for His return. Now in the following parables, seek to discover what happens at the end of his earthly sojourn.

A. The Parable of the Wheat and Tares (or Weeds): Read Matthew 13:24-30

1. In this story, what kind of seed did the man sow in his field? Matthew 13:24

2. Then what did his enemy do while he slept? Matthew 13:25

3. When did the man's servants discover what had been done? Matthew 13:26

4. What did his servants think he should let them do about this? Matthew 13:28

5. Why did he not let them do this? Matthew 13:29

6. What did he say they should do instead? Matthew 13:30a

7. At harvest time, what would he then tell his reapers to do? Matthew 13:30b

B. The Meaning of the Parable of the Wheat and Tares: Read Matthew 13:36-43

1. To whom did Jesus explain this parable? Matthew 13:36

2. Who did he say the one who sowed the good seed is? Matthew 13:37

3. What is His field? Matthew 13:38a

4. Who are the good seed? Matthew 13:38b

5. Who are the tares? Matthew 13:38c

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6. Who is the enemy who sowed the tares? Matthew 13:39a

7. When is the harvest? Matthew 13:39b

8. Who are the reapers? Matthew 13:39c

9. Therefore, what two great things will happen at the end of the world?

a. Matthew 13:41-42

b. Matthew 13:43

C. The Parable of the Drag-Net: Read Matthew 13:47-50

1. In this story, what was gathered into the net when it was cast into the sea? Matthew 13:47

2. When it was full, what did the owners do with the contents? Matthew 13:48

3. What does this show will happen at the end of the world? Matthew 13:49

4. Where will the wicked be placed? What will they do there? Matthew 13:50

QUESTIONS FOR ME TO THINK ABOUT:

1. If the separation at the end of the world should take place today, in which group would I be placed?

2. Am I sure that I am not headed for that furnace of fire, where there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth?

A PARABLE OF THE BASIS FOR REWARDS AT THE END TIME

Matthew 25:14-30

In the parable of the Wheat and Tares, Jesus showed that the proper method for interpreting parables is to *look for the meaning of nouns*, and then the rest of the story will be clear. See how this principle applies also in the Parable of the Talents:

A. The Setting of the Parable: Matthew 24:1 - 25:13

1. Notice what this parable follows immediately the parable of the Ten Virgins and other teachings in Matthew 24. What is the subject of all these teachings? See Matthew 24:27, 37, 39, 42, 44 and 25:13

-
2. Therefore, what would you expect this parable to be about?
-

B. The Story Itself: The Servants Receive: Read Matthew 25:14-15

1. What did the man in this story decide to do? Matthew 25:14a, 15b

-
2. What did he give to his servants before he left? Matthew 25:15

-
3. What do we usually think of a talent as being?

-
4. But what was it in Jesus' day? Matthew 25:27a

-
5. To whom did that which they received belong? Matthew 25:14b

-
6. What determined how much each servant received? Matthew 25:15b
-

C. The Servants Work: Read Matthew 25:16-18

1. While the man was away, what did the first two servants do with the money they had received? Matthew 25:16-17

-
2. What was the percentage of their gain?

-
3. What did the third servant do with the money he had received? Matthew 25:18
-

D. The Servants Give Account and Are Rewarded: Read Matthew 25:19-30

1. When did the man call his servants to give account to him? Matthew 25:19

2. Was there any difference in what the man said to the first servant and the second servant? Matthew 25:21, 23

3. For what were the first two servants commended? Matthew 25:21, 23

4. What was to be their position in the future? Matthew 25:21,23

5. What were they to share from now on? Matthew 25:21, 23

6. Was the man satisfied to receive *just* what he had given to the third servant? Matthew 25:25-26

7. What two things happened to the servant who did not use his master's goods to gain profit for his master? Matthew 25:28, 30

E. The Meaning of the Parable:

1. Notice that the scripture gives no comment whatsoever on the meaning of this parable; but whom do you think the man traveling into a far country would represent? Matthew 25:14, 13, 31

2. Whom would his servants represent? Matthew 25:14, 32

3. In what way is the unprofitable servant like a professing Christian, who is not really saved?

4. In what way is he like an unfaithful Christian?

5. What does this parable teach is the chief basis for rewards at the end time? Matthew 25:21, 23

QUESTIONS FOR ME TO THINK ABOUT:

1. What am I doing with the abilities, money, etc., which God has loaned to me?

2. Read I John 2:28. Would I be ashamed to meet Jesus if He should come today?

A PARABLE OF THE DIFFERENCE IN REWARDS AT THE END TIME

Luke 19:11-27

In the parable of the Talents, we noticed that there was no scripture comment on the meaning of the parable, but the story itself had many details, the meanings of which were very obvious. Notice how this is true also in the Parable of the Pounds below.

A. The Setting of the Parable: Read Luke 19:11

1. Where was Jesus when He gave this parable? Luke 19:11a

2. What did the crowds with Him expect to happen when He reached that city? Luke 19:11b

B. The Story Itself: The Nobleman's Departure: Read Luke 19:12-14

1. What was the nobleman in this story planning to do? Luke 19:12a

2. What did he expect to receive there? Luke 19:12b

3. Then what did he plan to do after this? Luke 19:12c

4. What did he give to his ten servants before he left? Luke 19:13a

5. What did he tell them to do while he was away? Luke 19:13b

6. How did the nobleman's citizens feel about him? Luke 19:14a

7. What message did they send after him? Luke 19:14b
-

C. The Nobleman's Return: Read Luke 19:15-27

1. What did the nobleman do as soon as he returned? Luke 19:15a

2. What did he want to know from each servant? Luke 19:15b

3. How much had each servant received from the nobleman? Luke 19:16a, 18a, 20a

4. What percentage had the first servant gained? Luke 19:16

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5. Over how many cities was he given authority? Luke 19:17b

6. What percentage had the second servant gained? Luke 19:18

7. Over how many cities was he given authority? Luke 19:19

8. What percentage had the third servant gained? Luke 19:20-21

9. Was the nobleman content to receive from him *just* what he had given to him? Luke 19:22-23

10. What reward was this servant given? Luke 19:24-26

11. What did the nobleman do to those citizens who did not want him to reign over them? Luke 19:27

D. The Moaning of the Parable:

1. Notice that here again, as in the parable of the Talents, there is no scripture comment whatsoever to give a clue as to the meaning of the parable. And yet, whom does the nobleman obviously represent? Luke 19:12

2. Whom do his servants represent? Luke 19:13

3. Whom do the nobleman's citizens represent? Luke 19:14, 27

4. What does this parable teach us concerning rewards at the end time? Will they all be equal?

5. What will determine how great a person's reward is? See Luke 19:15b

QUESTIONS FOR ME TO THINK ABOUT:

1. How much gain have I made for my Lord so far? Would He be satisfied with that amount from me?

2. Am I zealous in using all that the Lord has intrusted to me to make the *greatest possible* gain for Him?

A PARABLE OF LIFE AFTER DEATH

Luke 16:19-31

In the past few lessons, we have seen that God divides all the world into two distinct groups and rewards them according to deeds done in their earthly lives. Now study what Jesus said about the final state of human beings--their life after death.

A. The Setting of the Parable: Read Luke 16:1-18

1. Whom had Jesus been teaching in Luke 16:1-13? Luke 16:1a?

2. What was one of the main things against which He taught? Luke 16:13

3. Who heard these teachings of Jesus? Luke 16:14a

4. What was the condition of their hearts? Luke 16:14b

5. Therefore, what did they do when they heard His teachings? Luke 16:14c

6. What did Jesus say they were concerned about doing? Luke 16:15a

7. On the other hand, what is God most concerned about? Luke 16:15b

8. Notice how the following parable is related to the above teachings.

B. The Story Itself: Two Kinds of Life on Earth: Read Luke 16:19-21

1. What kind of clothes did the rich man wear? Luke 16:19

2. What kind of food did he eat? Luke 16:19b

3. What was the condition of Lazarus? Luke 16:20

4. What did he desire? Luke 16:21

5. Who alone cared about comforting him? Luke 16:21

6. For whom was the rich man obviously living? (THINK!)

C. Two Kinds of Life After Death: Read Luke 16:22-31

1. What happened to both of these men? Luke 16:22

2. Where was Lazarus immediately taken? Luke 16:22a

3. Where did the rich man immediately go? Luke 16:23a

4. What did he suffer there? Luke 16:23b

5. What could he see from there? Luke 16:23c

6. For what did he cry out? Luke 16:24a

7. What did he want Lazarus to do? Luke 16:24b

8. Why did he want this? Luke 16:24c

9. What was he still able to do? Luke 16:25a

10. What made it impossible for his request to be granted? Luke 16:26

11. What other request did he then make? Luke 16:27-28

12. What answer was given to this request? Luke 16:29

13. When he said that this was not enough, what was he told? Luke 16:31

D. The Meaning of the Parable:

1. Notice that here, again, no scripture comment is given as to the meaning of the parable. And yet, what is the main sin that is condemned by it? Luke 16:29, 31

2. Was there any possible remedy for this sin after death? Luke 16:26

QUESTIONS FOR ME TO THINK ABOUT:

1. Have I truly believed the message of Moses and the prophets?

2. What will be the awful, eternal, unchangeable results to me if I fail to believe this message before my earthly life ends?

SUMMARY OF THE STUDY OF PARABLES

A. Great Principles of Interpreting Parables:

1. Each parable has one *central teaching*, and one only.
2. In order to discover this central teaching, be sure to notice all *three parts* of the parable: The Setting, The Story Itself, and The Scripture Comment on the Meaning of the Parable (especially the meaning of nouns).
3. Some *details* of parables have spiritual meaning, and some do not; details have spiritual meaning only as related to the central teaching.
4. Do not base *doctrines* on details of parables alone, but on all teaching of scripture on a given subject.
5. Study parables with one purpose -- to find lessons for *your own* daily life.

B. Commonly Held Central Teachings of Parables Included in This Study:

1. *The Sower*: The importance of *hearing* the Word of God with an open heart.
2. *The Growing Seed*: The *mysterious growth* of God's Kingdom.
3. *The Mustard Seed*: The *growth* of God's kingdom *from a very small beginning* to a large ending.
4. *The Leaven*: The *growth* of God's kingdom *until it penetrates all parts* of the world.
5. *The Hidden Treasure*: The *great value* of God's kingdom *to one who discovers it suddenly*.
6. *The Pearl of Great Price*: The *great value* of God's kingdom *to one who has it been seeking* for a long time.
7. *The Man Building a Tower*, and *The King Going to War*: The necessity of *counting the cost* before becoming a Christian.
8. *The Lost Sheep*, *The Lost Coin*, and *The Lost Son*: God's Concern over the lost, and His joy at their salvation.
9. *The Pharisees and the Publican*: The necessity of *humbling oneself before God* in order to be saved.
10. *The Two Debtors*: *great love toward Jesus* because He has forgiven us for so much.
11. *The Unforgiving Servant*: The necessity of *forgiving others*, because God has forgiven us for so much.
12. *The Lowest Seats at the Feast*: The necessity of *humility toward others*.
13. *The Good Samaritan*: The necessity of *loving even those who don't love you*.
14. *The Father's Gifts*: *God's desire to give good things*.
15. *The Friend at Midnight*, and *The Judge and the Widow*: The necessity of *keeping on asking* in prayer.
16. *The Rich Fool*: The foolishness of *living selfishly*, for this life, and *not providing for eternity*.
17. *The Unprofitable Servant*: The importance of *doing all one can for God*, since He has done so much for us.
18. *The Laborers in the Vineyard*: The necessity of *working for God with no agreement* as to reward, *trusting Him* to give more than one could ever possibly deserve.
19. *The Watching Porter*: The necessity of *watching faithfully* for Jesus' return.
20. *The Ten Virgins*: The necessity of *being ready* for Jesus' return.
21. *The Servants Awaiting Their Master*, and *Watching Against the Thief*: The necessity of being ready because of the *unknown time of Jesus' return*.

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22. *The Faithful and Unfaithful Waiting Servants*: The necessity of *correct daily behavior* in view of the unknown time of Jesus' return.
23. *The Wheat and the Tares*: The *co-existence of good and evil* in the world until the end of the age.
24. *The Drag-Net*: The *final separation* of people at the end of the age *into two groups: good and evil*.
25. *The Talents*: *Equal rewards for equal faithfulness* in service.
26. *The Pounds*: *Varying rewards for varying faithfulness* in service.
27. *The Rich Man and Lazarus*: The *eternal, unchangeable results of choices* made in earthly life.

Section Two: **OTHER GREAT TEACHINGS**

In addition to Jesus' parables, four other great bodies of His teaching deserve special emphasis in this book. The first of these is:

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Matthew 5 - 7, Luke 6:12-49

Nearly everyone is familiar with the fact that Jesus preached a great sermon on a mountain, but few know exactly what teachings this sermon includes. Study to discover what you can learn that will benefit you in your own personal life:

THE CHRISTIAN'S INNER CHARACTER

Matthew 5:1-16, Luke 6:12-26

A. The Occasion for This Sermon: Read Luke 6:12-20

1. What two things had Jesus done just before he gave this sermon?
 - a. Luke 6:12 _____
 - b. Luke 6:13 _____
2. What *three* groups gathered about Him as He descended to a plain (or _____)
3. What did Jesus do for some of them before He began this sermon? Luke 6:15-19

4. To whom was this sermon actually given? Luke 6:20a, Matthew 5:1b-2

B. The Beatitudes (or "Blessednesses"): Read Matthew 5:1-12

1. List in order those whom Jesus said are blessed (enjoying spiritual happiness), and give His reason for including each in this list:
 - a. Matthew 5:3 _____
 - b. Matthew 5:4 _____
 - c. Matthew 5:5 _____
 - d. Matthew 5:6 _____
 - e. Matthew 5:7 _____
 - f. Matthew 5:8 _____
 - g. Matthew 5:9 _____
 - h. Matthew 5:8-10 _____

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2. Read through the characteristics listed above: "What part of a person's life do the first eight all portray? (THINK!)

3. Read through the list again. Are these the ones whom the average person in the world today would say are really happy?

4. What did Jesus say about people who have the opposite character to that portrayed in the beatitudes? Luke 6:24-26

C. The Similitudes (or Likenesses): Read Matthew 5:13-16

1. To what two things did Jesus liken or compare His followers? Matthew 5:13a, 14-15

2. If either of these fails to perform the function for which it was created or designed, is it of any value? Matthew 5:13-15

3. What is a Christian good for, if he does not perform God's purpose for him in the world? (THINK!)

QUESTIONS FOR ME TO THINK ABOUT:

1. How many of the inner characteristics listed in the beatitudes are characteristic of *my* life?

2. If I fail to allow Jesus to develop these characteristics in me, can I ever hope to be truly happy? Can I hope to accomplish God's purpose for my life?

THE CHRISTIAN'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE LAW

Matthew 5:17-48, Luke 6:27-36

Jesus continued His sermon on the mountain with a discussion of his own relationship to the Old Testament Law, commonly called the Law of Moses, and what He expected from His followers in this regard. See what you can learn about this below:

A. A General Statement Concerning the Law: Read Matthew 5:17-20

1. What did Jesus say He had *not* come to do to the Law? Matthew 5:17a

2. Rather, what *had* He come to do? Matthew 5:17b

3. What did He say would happen to one who breaks (or does away with, or relaxes) one of the least commandments, and teaches men so? Matthew 5:19a

4. But what will happen to the one who both does and teaches these commandments? Matthew 5:19b

5. What group of people thought that they were the most righteous people of Jesus' day? Matthew 5:20

6. These people were very careful to keep to the letter every requirement of the Old Testament law, and also many traditions which their elders had made since that time. Yet what did Jesus say about their righteousness? Matthew 5:20

B. Specific Examples from the Law: Read Matthew 5:21-48, Luke 6:27-36

1. What was the simple statement of the law concerning *murder*? Matthew 5:21, Exodus 20:13, Deuteronomy 5:17; 16:18

2. Who did Jesus say deserved the same punishment as a murderer? Matthew 5:22

3. Therefore, what should a Christian do if he realizes that someone has something against him? Matthew 5:23-24

4. What was the simple statement of the law concerning *adultery*? Matthew 5:27, Exodus 20:14, Deuteronomy 5:18

5. How did Jesus say it was possible for a person to commit this sin? Matthew 5:28

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6. What two members of the body might especially tempt a person to commit such a sin?
Matthew 5:29a, 30a

7. What did Jesus teach that it would be better to do than to allow this to happen? Matthew
5:29-30

8. What two other ways did Jesus say it was possible to commit this sin? Matthew 5:32

9. Compare the teaching of the law concerning *swearing* (Leviticus 19:12, Numbers 30:2)
with what the Jewish leaders had been teaching: Matthew 5:33

10. But is everyday swearing good? Exodus 20:7 Or necessary? Matthew 5:34-37

11. What had the law said concerning retribution for evil? Exodus 21:24, Leviticus 24:20,
Deuteronomy 19:21

12. But did this mean that individuals were to *retaliate* (get even) against those who
wronged them? Matthew 5:39-42, I Peter 2:23, Isaiah 53:7

13. What had the law said concerning one's *neighbors*? Matthew 5:43a, Leviticus 19:18

14. What had the Jewish leaders taught that this meant concerning their *enemies* (especially
the Gentiles)? Matthew 5:43b

15. But what four things did Jesus say God really meant for people to do to their enemies?
Matthew 5:44

16. By so doing, whose example would they be following? Matthew 6:45-48

QUESTIONS FOR ME TO THINK ABOUT:

1. When God gave the Old Testament Law, was He concerned only about man's outward
behavior, or was He also concerned about his inner attitudes, as Jesus was?
Deuteronomy 6:6, 5:29

2. Do I seek to keep my inner attitudes pleasing to God? Or am I concerned only about my
outward behavior? See Proverbs 4:23, Matthew 15:18-19

THE CHRISTIAN'S RELATIONSHIP TO RELIGIOUS ACTS

Matthew 6:1-18

All religions include certain outward actions as expressions of worship. Notice what Jesus said in His great sermon on the mountain about these outward actions:

A. The General Principle Concerning All Such Acts: Read Matthew 6:1

1. What did Jesus warn must *not* be a Christian's reason for doing good or pious or right deeds? Matthew 6:1a

2. What will happen if a person *does* do good deeds for this reason? Matthew 6:1b

B. The Principle Applied to Giving Alms: Read Matthew 6:2-4

1. What did the hypocrites of Jesus' day do when they gave *alms* (charitable gifts)? Matthew 6:2b

2. Why did they do this? Matthew 6:2c

3. Will they get any other reward for giving these gifts? Matthew 6:2d

4. Should a Christian's giving be done in this way? Matthew 6:2a

5. How should his giving be done? Matthew 6:3-4a

6. Even though it is done in this way, who will see it? Matthew 6:4b

7. And what will He do? Matthew 6:4c

C. The Principle Applied to Praying: Read Matthew 6:5-15

1. How did the hypocrites of Jesus' day pray? Matthew 6:5b

2. Why did they pray this way? Matthew 6:5c

3. Will they get any other reward for their prayers? Matthew 6:5c

4. Should Christians follow their example in praying? Matthew 6:5a

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5. Rather, how should they pray? Matthew 6:6a

6. Who will see and hear such prayers? Matthew 6:6b

7. What else will He do? Matthew 6:6c

8. How did the heathen of Jesus' day (and still today) pray? Matthew 6:7a

9. Why did they do this? Matthew 6:7b

10. Should Christians pray in this manner? Matthew 6:7a, 8a

11. Why is this not necessary? Matthew 6:8b

12. Notice the model prayer which Jesus gave in Matthew 6:9-13. Have you ever heard it used as a *vain* (empty, useless or worthless) repetition?

D. The Principle Applied to Fasting: Read Matthew 6:16-18

1. What did the hypocrites of Jesus' day do when they were fasting (doing without food, usually to pray)? Matthew 6:16c

2. Why did they do this? Matthew 6:16c

3. Would they receive any other reward for their fasting? Matthew 6:16d

4. Should Christians behave in this way when they fast? Matthew 6:16a

5. Rather, what should they do? Matthew 6:17-18a

6. Who will know about their fasting even if they do this? Matthew 6:18b

7. What will He do about it? Matthew 6:18c

QUESTIONS FOR ME TO THINK ABOUT:

1. For whose sake should all religious acts be performed? Colossians 3:23-24

2. What is *my* motive in giving, praying, and any other religious acts I do?

THE CHRISTIAN'S RELATIONSHIP TO EARTHLY WEALTH

Matthew 6:19-34

Jesus' great sermon on the mountain also included instruction concerning the getting and using of earthly wealth. Read these instructions below:

A. The Christian's Goal in Life: Read Matthew 6:19-24

1. What do most people do with their treasures? Matthew 6:19a

2. What usually happens to most of these treasures eventually? Matthew 6:19b

3. What could happen to all of them at any time? Matthew 6:19c

4. Is this what the Christian should do with his treasures? Matthew 6:19a

5. Where should he store his treasures instead? Matthew 6:20a

6. Can anything corrupt or destroy treasures there? Matthew 6:20b

7. What is the great reason that Christians should do this? Matthew 6:21

8. Notice the illustration in Matthew 6:22-23. If a person's physical eye is *single* (simple, clear, not looking two ways), what will be the result?

9. But if the physical eye is *evil* (distempered or bad), what will be the result? Matthew 6:23

10. Do you see how this would be true of the spiritual eye as well? If a person's thoughts and affections are centered around two things, what will be the result? James 1:8

11. But if he has a singleness of purpose, centered on heavenly things, what will be the result? Luke 11:36

12. Is it possible for a person to *serve* (belong wholly and be entirely under command to) both God and *mammon* (riches)? Matthew 6:24

B. The Attitude Necessary In Obtaining This Goal: Read Matthew 6:25-34

1. Since this is true, for what three things did Jesus say His followers should take no thought (anxious concern)? Matthew 6:25a

2. If God gives the greater things--life and body, is it likely that He will fail to provide the lesser things--food and clothes? Matthew 6:25b

3. Is anxious concern of any value whatsoever? Matthew 6:27

4. For whom has God provided ample food, even though they are incapable of planting, harvesting and storing it? Matthew 6:26

5. For whom has God provided beautiful clothing, even though they are incapable of working or spinning to make it? Matthew 6:28-29

6. Since God takes such good care of them, what should we expect Him to do for us? Matthew 6:26b, 30

7. Therefore, is it really necessary for Christians to be anxiously concerned about food, drink and clothing? Matthew 6:31 Why? Matthew 6:33a

8. For whom are such things the main concern of life? Matthew 6:32a

9. But what should be a Christian's main concern in life? Matthew 6:33a

10. What will happen if this is his main concern? Matthew 6:33b

11. Should Christians be concerned about the future? Why? Matthew 6:34

QUESTIONS FOR ME TO THINK ABOUT:

1. Where are *my* treasures? What is *my* goal in life?

2. Have I learned to center all my thoughts, affections and interests on God's kingdom, and His righteousness, trusting Him to meet all my needs for this earthly life? See Colossians 3:2

THE CHRISTIAN'S RELATIONSHIP TO HIS FELLOW-MAN

Matthew 7:1-12

In the past few lessons, we have noticed that it was the person's heart condition--his inner character--which determines his happiness, rather than any outward conditions, such as what he may get or do, or where he may be; we saw that it was the heart attitude which matters in the keeping of the law, and the performance of all religious acts; and also, that it was the heart attitude toward riches which determines to a great extent a person's activities throughout life. With this in mind, seek to discover what is the most important rule one should follow in his dealings with his fellow-man, as taught by Jesus in this great sermon on the mountain:

A. The Relationship to Another's Faults: Read Matthew 7:1-5

1. Why did Jesus say His followers should not judge (criticize and condemn) others?
Matthew 7:1

2. If we do judge others with criticism and condemnation, what will happen to us?
Matthew 7:2a

3. Notice the illustration in Matthew 7:2b. If you borrowed a measuring cup of sugar from a neighbor, what would the neighbor use to mete (measure) how much to return to you? (THINK!)

4. Do you see how the same thing would be true if you criticize and condemn that neighbor?

5. Notice a second illustration in Matthew 7:3-5. Would it be wise for a person to be concerned about a *mote* (speck of dust) in his friend's eye, if he had a *beam* (huge board or log) in his own eye? Matthew 7:3

6. Would you let a person with a beam in his eye help you get the mote out of your eye?
Matthew 7:4

7. What did Jesus call such a person? Matthew 7:5a

8. What did He say that person should do first? Matthew 7:5b

9. Then what would he be able to do? Matthew 7:5c

B. The Relationship to Unreceptive Hearers: Read Matthew 7:6

1. Should holy things be given to dogs? Matthew 7:6a

2. Should pearls be put down for *swine* (pigs and hogs) to admire? Matthew 7:6b

3. What would they probably do, if you should do this? Matthew 7:6c

4. Therefore, should you continue to talk about the things of the Lord to someone who is a savage and snarling hater of truth, or who seems incapable of appreciating the priceless jewels of Christianity?

C. The Secret of Such Relationships: Read Matthew 7:7-11

1. Do you think it would be easy to keep from criticizing and condemning others?

2. Would it be easy to know when to witness to a person, and when to stop if he shows a savage attitude toward the things of the Lord?

3. But what might be a great help in both of these matters? Matthew 7:7-8

D. The Golden Rule for All Relationships: Read Matthew 7:12

1. What type of things should you do to other people? Matthew 7:12a

2. In what manner should you do these things? Matthew 7:12b

3. Where had this principle been taught before Jesus Himself gave it? Matthew 7:12c

QUESTIONS FOR ME TO THINK ABOUT:

1. Have I been guilty of critical and condemning judgment of other people? What is the remedy for this? I Peter 4:8

2. What faults are there in my own life which may be greater than those which I have condemned in others? See Romans 12:3

THE TWO REACTIONS TO JESUS' TEACHINGS

Matthew 7:13-29

As the climax of His great sermon on the mountain, Jesus pressed upon His hearers the two possibilities which faced each individual in His hearing. Study to discover what these two possibilities are, and what are the advantages of each.

A. The Two Ways: Read Matthew 7:13-14

1. What kind of way did Jesus describe first? Matthew 7:13c

2. What kind of gate leads to this way? Matthew 7:13b

3. Where does this way lead? Matthew 7:13d

4. How many are traveling this way? Matthew 7:13e

5. What is the second way Jesus described? Matthew 7:14b

6. What kind of gate leads to this way? Matthew 7:14a

7. Where does this way lead? Matthew 7:14c

8. How many are able to find this way? Matthew 7:14d

9. Which of these two ways did Jesus urge His hearers to choose? Matthew 7:13a

B. The Two Trees: Read Matthew 7:15-20

1. Of whom did Jesus tell His hearers to beware? Matthew 7:15

2. How did Jesus say one might know such people? Matthew 7:16

3. Notice the illustration which proves this: Matthew 7:17-19. What kind of tree is described first? Matthew 7:17a

4. What kind of fruit will it always bring forth? Matthew 7:17b

5. Is it possible for it to bring forth any other kind? Matthew 7:18a

6. What is the second kind of tree? Matthew 7:17c

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7. What kind of fruit will it always bring forth? Matthew 7:17d

8. Is it possible for it to bring forth any other kind? Matthew 7:18b

9. What will eventually happen to this second kind of tree? Matthew 7:19

C. The Two Foundations: Read Matthew 7:21-27

1. Would all of Jesus' hearers be allowed to enter into heaven? Matthew 7:21a

2. Which ones would be permitted there? Matthew 7:21b

3. Would some expect to get there, but not be permitted to go? Matthew 7:22a-23

4. Yet what had they called Jesus? Matthew 7:21a, 22a

5. What three things had they done in His name? Matthew 7:22b

6. Yet what will Jesus say to them? Matthew 7:23

7. To what did Jesus compare the first group of hearers? Matthew 7:24-25

8. To what did He compare the second group? Matthew 7:26-27

D. The Reaction to Jesus' Sermon on the Mountain: Read Matthew 7:28-29

1. How did the people feel when Jesus had ended this great sermon? Matthew 7:28

2. Why did they feel this way? Matthew 7:29

QUESTIONS FOR ME TO THINK ABOUT:

1. Which way am I traveling? Like which tree am I? Like which hearer am I?

2. Is there a decision I should make, in view of the above answers? Am I willing to make that decision? See II Corinthians 6:2b

JESUS' PROPHECTIC DISCOURSE

Matthew 24 - 25, Mark 13, Luke 21:5-36

This second of Jesus' "Other Great Teachings" is often called the Olivet discourse, because it was given on the Mount of Olives. See what you can learn from this discourse, which was given on Tuesday evening before Jesus' death on Friday.

A. The Occasion of the Discourse: Read Matthew 24:1-3

1. As Jesus left the temple for the last time, what startling prediction did He make?
Matthew 24:1-2

2. Later that same evening, as He sat on the Mount of Olives, what three-fold question did His disciples (Mark 13:3) ask Him? Matthew 24:3

B. Warnings Against False Alarms: Read Matthew 24:4-26

1. What general warning did Jesus give His disciples as He began to answer this question?
Matthew 24:4

2. What specific things did He warn would happen?
 - a. Matthew 24:5 _____
 - b. Matthew 24:6a _____
 - c. Matthew 24:7a _____
 - d. Matthew 24:7b _____
3. Yet, what did He say concerning these things? Matthew 24:6b, 8

4. After warning about how His followers would be treated (Matthew 24:9-10), what other things did He say would happen before the end comes?
 - a. Matthew 24:11 _____
 - b. Matthew 24:12a _____
 - c. Matthew 24:12b _____
 - d. Matthew 24:14 _____

C. True Signs of Jesus' Coming: Read Matthew 24:15-36

1. Besides answering the first part of the disciples' question concerning the destruction of Jerusalem (Luke 21:20-24), what terrible thing did Jesus say would happen? Matthew 24:15

2. Why did He say those in Judea should flee at this time? Matthew 24:16-21

3. What did He say would happen, unless those days were shortened? Matthew 24:22

4. What did He say false prophets would do at that time? Matthew 24:23-24

5. Why did He say people should not go out to look for Him? Matthew 24:26-27

6. What four things will be affected immediately after the tribulation of those days?
Matthew 24:29

7. Then what will happen? Matthew 24:30a, c

8. How many will see Him? Matthew 24:30b

9. What will they do when they see Him? Matthew 24:30b

10. What will Jesus do at this time? Matthew 24:31

11. What did Jesus say His followers might know, when they see these things? Matthew
24:33

QUESTIONS FOR ME TO THINK ABOUT:

1. Is there any reason for anyone to be deceived concerning Jesus' coming?

2. Would I be ready if Jesus should come today? See Matthew 24:36, 42

JESUS' PROPHETIC DISCOURSE, CONCLUDED

After warning against being deceived by false signs, and giving the true signs of His coming, Jesus continued His prophetic discourse with certain warnings and teachings. Study these in the lesson below.

A. Teachings and Parables of Warning: Read Matthew 24:37 - 25:30

1. Like what days did Jesus say that the days of His coming would be? Matthew 24:37

2. What were they doing in those days, right up until the day that Noah went into the ark? Matthew 24:38

3. When did they realize that the judgment was coming? Matthew 24:39

4. Notice how this is like the time of Jesus' coming: What will people be doing then? Matthew 24:40a, 41a

5. What will happen to them? Matthew 24:40b, 41b

6. What solemn warning is given in connection with this teaching? Matthew 24:42

7. Notice that the following parables, already studied in previous lessons, are a part of this prophetic discourse:
 - a. Watching Against the Thief: Matthew 24:43-44 _____
 - b. The Faithful and Unfaithful Waiting Servants: Matthew 24:45-51 _____
 - c. The Ten Virgins: Matthew 25:1-13 _____
 - d. The Talents: Matthew 25:14-30 _____

B. The Final Judgment: Read Matthew 25:31-46

1. Who will come with the Lord Jesus when He comes in all His glory? Matthew 25:31a

2. What will He do at that time? Matthew 25:31b

3. Who will be gathered before Him? Matthew 25:32a

4. What will He then do with them? Matthew 25:32b

5. Where will He put those who are compared to sheep? Matthew 25:33a

6. Where will He put those who are compared to goats? Matthew 25:33b

7. What will He then say to those on His right hand? Matthew 25:34

8. Why will they be given this privilege? Matthew 25:35-36

9. Will the righteous be aware that they have done any of these things? Matthew 25:37-39

10. How will the King say they have done these things to Him? Matthew 25:40

11. What will the King say to those on His left hand? Matthew 25:41

12. Why will they be sent there? Matthew 25:42-43

13. Will they be aware that they have failed to treat the King as they should have treated Him? Matthew 25:44

14. In what way will they have shown their neglect of Him? Matthew 25:45

15. How long will the punishments and the rewards of these two groups last? Matthew 24:46

QUESTIONS FOR ME TO THINK ABOUT:

1. If Jesus should come today, would I be taken, or would I be left? Would I be placed at His right side, or His left side?

2. If I would be ready when Jesus comes, what must I be doing *now*?

JESUS' FAREWELL DISCOURSE

John 14 - 16

On the last evening before Jesus' crucifixion, He gave three great sermons or discourses to the eleven, just after He instituted the Lord's supper, and just before He went to the garden of Gethsemane. Study the first of these discourses below.

THE FIRST FAREWELL DISCOURSE

John 14

A. The Occasion of the Discourses: Read John 13:31-38

1. What startling announcement had Jesus made just before this time? John 13:31-33

2. How did this cause the disciples to feel? John 14:1a

B. Jesus' Reason for Leaving the Disciples: Read John 14:1-14

1. For what reason did Jesus say He was going away? John 14:2b

2. What did He promise to do after this? John 14:3b

3. What did Jesus say is the way to the place He was going? John 14:6

4. What unusual thing did Jesus tell them about the relationship between Himself and His Father? John 14:9b, 10a, 11a

5. What was one great proof that this statement was true? John 14:10b, 11b

6. What did He promise the disciples that they would be able to do because He was going to His Father? John 14:12

7. What did He promise to do for them, even though He was going away? John 14:13-14

C. Jesus' Provision for the Disciples in His Absence: Read John 14:15-26

1. What did Jesus say His disciples would do in His absence if they really loved Him? John 14:15, 23a

2. What would He do for them in return? John 14:16-17

3. What would they know as a result of the Comforter's coming? John 14:20

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4. Although Jesus was going away, and the world would not be able to see *Him*, what did He promise His disciples? John 14:18b, 19a

5. What special promises did He make to those who would prove their love by keeping His commandments? John 14:21, 23

6. Although Jesus had taught them some things while He was with them, who would later teach them all things? John 14:26a

7. What other wonderful thing would this One do for them? John 14:26a

D. Jesus' Parting Gift to the Disciples: Read John 14:27-31

1. What parting gift did Jesus give the disciples? John 14:27a

2. What should this gift enable them to do? John 14:27b

3. How did Jesus say they would feel about His going away if they really loved Him? John 14:28

4. Why had He told them these things at this time? John 14:29

QUESTIONS FOR ME TO THINK ABOUT:

1. Did Jesus make ample provision for His disciples before He left them?

2. Is there any reason for me to be troubled because Jesus is not here in person?

THE SECOND FAREWELL DISCOURSE

John 15:1 - 16:4

After explaining His reason for going away, and His provision for His disciples in His absence, Jesus continued talking with His disciples especially about their relationships in the future. Study to see what these relationships would be.

A. The Disciples' Relationship to Jesus: Read John 15:1-16

1. To what did Jesus compare Himself in this chapter? John 15:1a

2. Who did He say was the *Husbandman* (farmer)? John 15:1b

3. Who were compared to the branches of the vine? John 15:5a

4. What is the one purpose of the branches of the vine? John 15:2 and THINK!

5. If a branch does not fulfill this purpose, what will the Father do with it? John 15:2a, 6

6. If a branch IS fulfilling this purpose, what will the Father do to it? Why? John 15:2b

7. What had already *purged* (cleansed and purified by getting rid of what was impure or superfluous) the disciples? John 15:3

8. What is the chief duty of the Christian? John 15:4a

9. Why is this so necessary? John 15:5b

10. What will one who *abides* (stays, continues, dwells) in Christ be able to do?
 - a. John 15:5 _____
 - b. John 15:7 _____
11. What will be one great result of the fruit-bearing which results from abiding in Christ? John 15:8a

12. In what special quality of Jesus did He say His disciples should continue or abide? John 15:9

13. What would make this possible? John 15:10

14. Why had Jesus told them all these things? John 15:11

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15. What title would have been suitable for the disciples in relation to Jesus up until this time? See John 13:13, 16

16. What new title did Jesus give them at this time? John 15:14, 15

B. The Disciples' Relationship to Each Other: Read John 15:17, 12, 13:34-35

1. What commandment did Jesus repeatedly give to His disciples at this time? John 14:17, 12, 13:34

2. What did He say that all men would know, if they would keep this commandment? John 13:35

C. The Disciples' Relationship to the World: Read John 15:18 - 16:4

1. What did Jesus warn that the world would do to His disciples? John 15:18a, 19c; 20b; 16:2

2. Why would they do this?

a. John 15:19b _____

b. John 15:21, 16:3 _____

c. John 15:24b, 23 _____

3. What two things made their guilt for these sins worse than ever? John 15:22, 24

4. For what two reasons did Jesus tell the disciples these things at this time?

a. John 16:1 _____

b. John 16:4a _____

QUESTIONS FOR ME TO THINK ABOUT:

1. Is my life lived in constant vital spiritual union with my Lord?

2. If not, can I ever hope to show forth His love toward my fellow-Christians, or be able to withstand the world's hatred and persecution? John 15:5b

THE THIRD FAREWELL DISCOURSE AND CLOSING PRAYER

John 16:4 - 17:26

Having made clear what would be the disciples' future relationships to Himself, to each other, and to the world, Jesus again returned to the subjects of the first discourse, to sum up His message for them at this time. Study this last discourse now.

A. Jesus' Promise Concerning the Spirit: Read John 16:4-15

1. Why had Jesus not told His disciples the contents of these discourses from the beginning? John 16:4b

2. When He told them these things, how did they feel? John 16:6

3. Why did Jesus say it was *expedient* (suitable, advantageous, advisable) for them that He go away? John 16:7

4. When the Holy Spirit came, of what three things would He convict or convince the world? John 16:8-11

5. Why did Jesus not tell the disciples all He yet wanted to tell them? John 16:12

6. What did He promise that the Holy Spirit would do for them when He came?
 - a. John 16:13a _____
 - b. John 16:13b _____
 - c. John 16:14 _____

B. Jesus' Predictions Concerning the Future: Read John 16:16-33

1. What did Jesus again tell them at this time? John 16:16

2. Did the disciples understand what He was talking about? John 16:17-18

3. What did He then say they would do? John 16:20a

4. What would the world do? John 16:20b

5. But what would later happen to the disciples? When? John 16:20c, 22

6. What wonderful promise did Jesus again repeat to them? John 16:23b-24

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7. How did Jesus say He was now speaking to them? John 16:25a

8. Did the disciples think He was speaking in this way? John 16:29

9. What did they say they firmly believed concerning Jesus? John 16:30

10. Yet what did Jesus say they would soon do? John 16:32

11. Why had Jesus spoken these things to them at this time? John 16:33

C. Jesus' Prayer of Intercession: Read John 17:1-26

1. What did Jesus say as He began this prayer? John 17:1a

2. What did He pray concerning Himself? John 17:1b, 5

3. For whom else did He especially pray? John 17:9

4. What were His two special prayers for them? John 17:11b, 15; 17, 19b

5. For what other group did Jesus also pray? John 17:20

6. What were His three special prayers for them? John 17:21a, 21b, 22b, 23a; 24a; 26b

QUESTIONS FOR ME TO THINK ABOUT:

1. Did Jesus' followers lose, or did they actually gain, by Jesus' going away?

2. Am I taking full advantage of the Holy Spirit's presence in my life and work for my Lord? See John 16:13

JESUS' GREAT COMMISSION

Matthew 28:16-20, Mark 16:14-20, Luke 24:44-53, John 20:19-23, Acts 1:1-11

Since all the teachings of the Epistles must be included in this volume, it has been necessary to omit most of the teachings which were mentioned in Volume II in connection with the events which prompted them. However, one of these is so important that it must be studied in detail, since no listing of Jesus' Great Teachings would be complete without it. Study this last great teaching below:

A. The Great Commission in John: Read John 20:19-23

1. What did Jesus begin to teach the disciples from the very day of His resurrection? John 10:21b

2. Where had Jesus' Father sent Him? John 17:18a

3. And where was Jesus sending His disciples? John 17:18b

B. The Great Commission in Mark: Read Mark 16:14-20

1. Into how much of the world were Jesus' disciples to go? Mark 16:15a

2. What were they to do as they went? Mark 16:15b (one word)

3. What was to be their message as they went? Mark 16:15c

4. To how many were they to minister? Mark 16:15d

C. The Great Commission in Matthew: Read Matthew 28:16-20

1. Where did Jesus meet with His disciples during the forty days between His resurrection and His ascension? Matthew 28:16

2. What did He tell them when he met them there? Matthew 28:18

3. Therefore, what did He command them to do? Matthew 28:19a

4. What two things did He tell them to do with those who became disciples?
 - a. Matthew 28:19b _____
 - b. Matthew 28:20b _____

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5. What special help could the disciples rely on as they went forth to do these things?
Matthew 28:20b

6. How long would this help continue? Matthew 28:20c

D. The Great Commission in Luke: Read Luke 24:44-53

1. What two special things did Jesus say should be preached in His name? Luke 24:47a

2. Where should this be preached? Luke 24:47b

3. Where was this preaching to begin? Luke 24:47c

4. What did Jesus say He would send upon them? Luke 24:49a

5. What would this give them for their work? Luke 24:49c

6. Where were they to tarry (wait or stay) until they received this? Luke 24:49b

E. The Great Commission in Acts: Read Acts 1:1-11

1. What was the promise of the Father which the disciples were to receive? Acts 1:4b, 5b

2. How long after this would it be before they were to receive this promise? Acts 1:5c

3. What would this enable them to do? Acts 1:8b

4. In what four places were they to do this? Acts 1:8c

5. What happened to Jesus immediately after He had given this command? Acts 1:9

QUESTIONS FOR ME TO THINK ABOUT:

1. Did Jesus feel that this last command of His was very important? Why?

2. Am I right now obeying Jesus' last command?
