

DISCIPLESHIP. LESSON 46

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| 1 | PRAYER |
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Group leader. Pray for God’s guidance through his Spirit, for awareness of his presence and for listening to his voice. Dedicate this lesson about disciple making to the Lord.

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| 2 | SHARING (20 minutes) [QUIET TIMES] JOB 38, 39, 40, 41 and 42 |
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Take turns and share (or read from your notes) in short what you have learned from one of your quiet times out of the assigned Bible passages (Job 38, 39, 40, 41 and 42). Listen to the person sharing, take him serious and accept him. Do not discuss what he shares.

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| 3 | MEMORISATION (20 minutes) [DISCIPLESHIP] (5) MATTHEW 28:18-20 |
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A. MEDITATION

Read Matthew 28:16-20. Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

(5)

Write the following memorisation verse on a white or blackboard as follows:

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

Write the Bible reference on the back of your card.

1. The great claim (Matthew 28:18).

Jesus Christ makes a great claim! He claims that after his death and resurrection God the Father has given him all authority, not only in heaven, but also on earth, that is, where you live.

(1) The authority of Jesus Christ was prophesied before his first coming.

Matthew 28:18 is the fulfilment of prophecy in the Old Testament and the New Testament. In Isaiah 9:6-7 the prophet says, “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever.”

Daniel 7:13-14 prophesies, “In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshipped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.”

And Jesus prophesies in Matthew 16:28, “I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.”

(2) The authority of Jesus Christ before and after his death and resurrection.

See manual 3, lesson 30, question 1: (Matthew 28:18) “Was there a time when Jesus did not have all authority?”

Before his death and resurrection, Jesus possessed great authority. God the Father had committed all things to him (Matthew 11:27). He healed the sick, freed the demon-possessed and restored the paralysed (Matthew 4:24).

Nevertheless, he did all this with self-restraint, because *he still had to fulfil salvation history by his death and resurrection.*

He told the former leper and former blind person not to make known that they had been cured (Matthew 8:4; Matthew 9:30). He raised the dead (Luke 8:49-56; Luke 11:7-14; John 11:37-44). He refused to be made an earthly king (John 6:14-15). He declined to make use of his authority to call upon the help of twelve legions of angels to rescue him (Matthew 26:53). And yet he allowed his enemies to strike him with their fists, flog him with a whip, spit in his face, put a crown of thorns on his head, strike him with a staff on his head and finally crucify him (Matthew 26:67; 27:1-2,26-31).¹

Before his death and resurrection, Jesus did not exercise his unlimited sovereign power, because he had deliberately and willingly “emptied himself” (that is, he renounced his being equal to God)(Philippians 2:6-8).

But after his death, resurrection, ascension and enthronement in heaven, he *began to exercise his unlimited authority* in heaven and on earth! He performed miracles through his apostles and made them bold and courageous to proclaim the gospel everywhere. Through the proclamation of the gospel by Christians, he “robs” an uncountable number of people from the dominion of Satan and brings them into his own kingdom (Matthew 12:29-30; Luke 10:17-19; John 12:31-32; Colossians 1:13; Revelation 12:10-12; Revelation 20:3). No-one and nothing can or will stop him until all knees bend before him and all tongues confess that he truly is the Lord (Philippians 2:9-11; cf. Isaiah 45:23).

(3) The authority of Jesus Christ as a reward.

Jesus received this unlimited authority as a reward for his completed work of salvation (Ephesians 1:19-23; Philippians 2:9-11; Revelation 5:5). From his first coming onwards, Jesus has overcome the world and the world remains in the state of being overcome (John 16:33)². In the vision of John, Jesus Christ wears the victory wreath and rode out as conqueror bent on conquering (Revelation 6:2). The apostles and those that follow them must demand that everyone in every sphere of life acknowledge that Jesus Christ is “King of kings and Lord of lords” (Revelation 17:14; Revelation 19:16).

2. The great commission (Matthew 28:19).

The great authority of Jesus makes the great commission possible! “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:19).³

(1) Take the initiative.

The disciples of Jesus must not wait until people in the world come to them, but they must take the initiative and go to the people in the world. They must go to people in their own neighbourhood, to people in other towns and cities and to people living in other countries. From the beginning of the Bible, God had purposed to include people from every family and every culture in the world in his people (Genesis 12:3).

From the beginning, God loved the lost people in “the world” (John 3:16). The lost people in the world consist of the people that are alienated from God, laden with sin, subject to God’s righteous judgement and in need of God’s salvation. God loved these people without distinction of race, nationality, language or culture (John 3:16).

These lost people in the world towards whom he directs his love are at the same time the objects of his eternal election (Romans 8:29-34; Romans 9:11-12; Romans 11:5; Ephesians 1:4; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 2 Timothy 1:9-10; 2 Timothy 2:19; 1 Peter 1:1-2; Revelation 17:14).

Now that Jesus Christ had fulfilled God’s righteous requirement for salvation by his death and resurrection, God planned that the message of salvation through Jesus Christ should go from Jerusalem out to all places on earth (Acts 1:8, note Isaiah 2:1-4). First the apostles and then all Christians are his messengers.

(2) Make people from all the nations into disciples of Jesus Christ.

The main verb is: “Make disciples”. It is a command which Jesus Christ gave to his disciples *once for all time*. The other verbs “go”, “baptise” and “teach to obey” are participles dependent on this main verb. They therefore also have the power of commands. The command to make disciples is *continuously applicable*!

No one is born “a Christian”; a person must be born again (John 3:7) through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit and through faith in the truth (2 Thessalonians 2:13-14).

¹ Other religions in the world glorify their “prophet” or “founder” by making him a hero and a super personality that never suffers! But Jesus Christ is “the man of sorrows and suffering”. “He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men” (Isaiah 53:2-3). When the governor presented him, “Here is the man” (Latin: Ecco homo!)(John 19:5), the people shouted, “Crucify him!”

² Greek: νενικηκα (perfect tense)

³ Greek: πορευθεντες (participle, aorist) ουν μαθητευσατε (imperative, aorist, active) παντα τα εθνη, βαπτιζοντες (participle, present tense, active) αυτους εις το ονομα του πατρος και του υιου και του αγιου πνευματος, διδασκοντες (participle, present tense, active) αυτους τηρειν

And every born-again Christian must be made into a disciple of Christ. That happens by baptising the Christian *with water* and teaching him continuously to keep the commands of Jesus Christ. A disciple is a follower of Jesus Christ, who learns from Jesus as he follows and he has specific characteristics which Jesus taught in the Gospels (see manual 2, lesson 23). A disciple is therefore a mature, functioning and persevering Christian. The great commission is therefore to make as many people as possible disciples of Jesus Christ.

(3) Baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

The command to baptise a disciple with water. When people sincerely believe in Jesus Christ (that is, when they have accepted Him into their heart and life) they show that they have been baptised *with*⁴ the Holy Spirit (that is, that they have been born again through the Holy Spirit) (Acts 11:14-18; Acts 15:7-9). The faith in their heart and the confession with their mouth (Romans 10:9-10) show that they have been baptised *by or with*⁵ the Holy Spirit into the one Body of Jesus Christ (that is, they have become members of the one worldwide Christian Church (1 Corinthians 12:12-13).

The meaning of baptism with water. The Christian baptism with water is a visible sign and seal (cf. Romans 4:11) of the invisible reality, namely, the baptism with the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:47-48). The Christian baptism with water is the visible sign and seal that Jesus Christ has become the Representative of the new believer with God in heaven (Romans 5:17-19; Hebrews 9:24) and that the new believer shares from beginning to end in the completed salvation work of Jesus with respect to the past, the present and the future. The baptism with the Spirit establishes three things and these are symbolised in the baptism with water:

- In the past the following has been established: the believer died and was resurrected with Christ at his baptism with the Spirit (that is, at his rebirth, conversion and believing) (Romans 6:3-5; Ephesians 2:4-7) and since then has legally a share in the righteousness and holiness of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 1:30)! Since his rebirth he has a spiritual position (state) “in Christ”, namely, that he is: justified (completely forgiven)(Romans 5:1) and sanctified (completely separated from the sinful world and completely dedicated/devoted to Christ)(Romans 1:7). Since his rebirth the believer is under God’s grace and love (Romans 6:14; Romans 8:35,39).
- In the present the following is already a reality: through rebirth at the beginning the believer possesses a new spiritual nature (Titus 3:5-7) and wants to, can and shall thereafter live a righteous and holy life (Romans 6:1-8). He is a disciple of Jesus Christ (a growing Christian)(Matthew 28:19), a member of the one Body of Christ (the worldwide⁶ Church)(1 Corinthians 12:13) and a member of God’s one covenant people (Galatians 3:26-29).
- In the future the following may be expected: the believer will in the future share in the resurrection of the body (Philippians 3:20-21) and in body and spirit be like the perfect human nature of Jesus Christ (1 John 3:1-3; Philippians 3:20-21). He will never be condemned (doomed to damnation in hell) (Romans 8:1), because he shares in eternal life (John 3:16; John 5:24; cf. Matthew 25:46).

The Christian baptism with water is:

- the visible sign and seal of your baptism with the Holy Spirit (your regeneration, your being born anew and from above) (Acts 10:47-48)
- the visible sign and seal of your conversion (the changing of your mind, the direction of your life and the reformation of your life) (Acts 3:19)
- the visible sign and seal of your forgiveness (Acts 2:38), the wiping out (Acts 3:19) or washing off (Acts 22:16) of all your sins, that is, your complete justification in God’s eyes through your faith (Romans 5:1)
- the visible sign and seal of your union with the one God who has revealed himself in three ways of existence (Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:38) and of your union with God’s covenant people (Galatians 3:27-29; Ephesians 2:17-19; Ephesians 3:2-6) or God’s Church (1 Corinthians 12:13).
- and thus the visible sign and seal of your share in Jesus Christ and share in what he has accomplished in the past through his death and resurrection, and what he accomplishes in the present through his reign in heaven and what he will accomplish in the future at his second coming (Romans 6:1-8; Ephesians 2:5-6). This includes your participation in making disciples of Jesus Christ in all the nations in the world (Matthew 28:19).

The method of baptism with water. The visible symbol of your baptism with⁷ the Holy Spirit is your baptism with⁸ water (Mark 1:8). John the Baptist baptised people with water in⁹ the river Jordan (Mark 1:5).

Philip baptised the Ethiopian in a place where there was “some water”¹⁰ (Acts 8:36). Both of them descended into¹¹ the water and both came up out of¹² the water after Philip had baptised the Ethiopian. This does not refer to baptism “by

⁴ Greek Acts 11:16: Ἰωάννης μὲν ἐβαπτίσεν ὑδατι, ὑμεῖς δὲ βαπτισθήσεσθε ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ
twice dative case = here an indication of the instrument or means whereby

⁵ Greek 1 Corinthians 12:13: καὶ γὰρ ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι ἡμεῖς πάντες εἰς ἐν σῶμα ἐβαπτισθῆμεν, ... καὶ πάντες ἐν πνεύμα ἐποτίσθημεν
dative case = here an indication of the instrument or means whereby

⁶ Greek : καθολικός, “catholic”, means: “general, worldwide”, and not Roman Catholic (a denomination)

⁷ Greek Mark 1:8b: ἐν πνεύματι, dative case = here an indication of the instrument whereby

⁸ Greek Mark 1:8a: ὑδατι, dative case = here an indication of the instrument whereby

⁹ Greek Mark 1:5: ἐν ποταμῷ, dative case = here an indication of the place where

¹⁰ Greek: τι ὕδωρ

¹¹ Greek Acts 8:38: κατεβησαν ἀμφοτεροὶ εἰς τὸ ὕδωρ, accusative case = here an indication of the place whereto

immersion” in water, because then *both would have been submerged below the surface of the water and Philip would have baptised the Ethiopian under the surface of the water and both would have emerged again from below the surface of the water.* What happened was that they both descended from the road to a place where there was “some water”. Both stood in the water while Philip baptised the Ethiopian, probably by pouring water on and over him (just as in Acts 22:16). Then they both walked up to the road again (Acts 8:38-39, verse 37 is a later addition to the original Greek text)¹³. Not a single passage in the Bible refers to baptism by immersion!¹⁴

Ananias baptised Paul in a house (Acts 9:17-18). Paul stood while Ananias poured water on and over him just as people took a bath at that time (cf. “washing of rebirth”)(Titus 3:5-6). And Paul called on the name of the Lord. In this way his sins were washed off (Acts 22:16). The baptism with water was the visible sign of the baptism with the Spirit, who was also poured out from above on and over people (Acts 2:3,17,33; Acts 10:44-45; Acts 11:15-16; Titus 3:5-7)!

While the Bible clearly teaches the meaning of baptism with the Spirit and baptism with water, the Bible does not teach or prescribe any method for the baptism with water!

(4) Teach them to obey all that Jesus has commanded.

After a believer has been baptised, he continues to grow by learning the teachings of Jesus Christ and by obeying the teachings of Jesus Christ. Believers must put their knowledge into practice (Matthew 7:24-27). Therefore all new Christians should receive Christian teaching (Greek: *katécheó*, catechism) or discipleship training!

3. The great promise (Matthew 28:20).

The great promise makes the great commission a reality. This is not merely a promise. It is a fact! The fact is that Jesus Christ is present with his disciples throughout the day, every day and all the days until the end of this world. When Jesus says, “Remember”, he means “Pay close attention!” The great commission is not an easy task. Without the fact that Jesus Christ is present this great commission would have been impossible. Now it is not only possible, but also an actual reality for every believer who obeys.

B. MEMORISATION AND REVIEW

1. Write. Write the Bible verse on a blank card or on one page of your small notebook.

2. Memorise. Memorise the Bible verse in the right way. (5) Making disciples. Matthew 28:18-20.

3. Review. Divide into twos and check one another’s last memorised Bible verse.

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| 4 | BIBLE STUDY (70 minutes) <i>[LIVING IN THE WORLD]</i> (5) THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IN THE WORLD: GALATIANS 5:13-26 |
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Make use of the five steps method of Bible study and study Galatians 5:13-26 together.

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| STEP 1. READ. | GOD’S WORD |
| <i>Read.</i> LET US READ Galatians 5:13-26 together. Let us take turns to read one verse each until we have completed the reading. | |

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| STEP 2. DISCOVER. | OBSERVATIONS |
| <i>Consider.</i> WHICH TRUTH IN THIS PASSAGE IS IMPORTANT FOR YOU? Or WHICH TRUTH IN THIS PASSAGE TOUCHES YOUR MIND OR HEART? <i>Record.</i> Discover one or two truths that you understand. Think about them and write your thoughts in your notebook. <i>Share.</i> (After the group members have had about two minutes to think and write, take turns to share). Let us take turns to share with one another what each of us has discovered. (The following are examples of people sharing what they have discovered. Remember: In every small group, the group members will share different things, not necessarily these things) | |

Discovery 1. The manifestation of the sinful nature.

The indwelling sinful nature expresses itself in *physical sins* like sexual immorality and excess, in *spiritual sins* like idolatry and occultism, and in *social sins* like selfish ambition and quarrelling.

¹² Greek Acts 8:39: *ανεβησαν εκ του υδατος*, genitive case = here an indication of the place wherefrom

¹³ Nestle-Aland. Novum Testamentum Graece

¹⁴ Of course Christians may baptise people by immersion, because the Bible does not forbid it. The Bible does not prescribe the method of baptism with water: by sprinkling, by pouring or by immersion.

Discovery 2. The manifestation of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

The indwelling Holy Spirit expresses itself in the fruit of the Spirit. A genuine Christian possesses the Holy Spirit, is controlled by the Spirit and bears the fruit of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the controlling influence in his life and the Christian willingly and gratefully co-operates with the Spirit. Only in this way can the Christian conquer the manifestations of his sinful nature. The fruit of the Spirit manifests itself in the fundamental spiritual characteristics as love, joy and peace, in relationships as patience, friendliness and goodness; and in faith towards God, gentleness towards people and self-control towards yourself.

STEP 3. QUESTION.

EXPLANATIONS

Consider. WHICH QUESTION ABOUT ANYTHING IN THIS PASSAGE WOULD YOU LIKE TO ASK TO THIS GROUP?

Let us try to understand all the truths in Galatians 5:13-26 and ask questions about the things we still do not understand.

Record. Formulate your question as clearly as possible. Then write your question in your notebook.

Share. (After the group members have had about two minutes to think and write, let each person first share his question.)

Discuss. (Then, choose a few of these questions and try to answer them by discussing them together in your group.)

(The following are examples of questions the students might ask and some notes about the discussion of the questions.)

5:13-15

Question 1. What is the nature of true freedom?

Notes.

(1) True freedom does not mean that Christians are free to do whatever they like.

Many people in the world believe in the complete freedom of the will. They believe that freedom means that you are free to decide or choose what you like, free to do what you like, free to say what you like and free to be what you like. Freedom is the liberty to follow your natural inclinations, especially your natural sinful desires.

(2) True freedom means that Christians are set free to do what is right.

According to the Bible true freedom is never the liberty to follow your natural inclinations or natural sinful desires. Within true freedom you rather do what you ought to do! True freedom in the Bible is behaving and living in the way that Jesus Christ teaches. True freedom in the Bible is to be bound to Jesus Christ and therefore able to act within his will. In John 8:32-36 Jesus says, "If you hold to (obey) my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. ... I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. ... If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."

God has created people without the possibility to be completely independent and free from everyone and everything! Every human being is bound to someone or something. All the people, who want to be free from Jesus Christ, are in fact bound to the power of sin in them and are in fact slaves of sin! Slaves are not free to submit themselves to God's law or Word.

- They *do not submit* to God's law or Word (they do not do it)
- and they *cannot submit* themselves to God's law or Word (Romans 8:7-8) (And they cannot do it).

They think that they are free to do what they like and so indulge in the sinful nature. But in fact they are not free at all!

In contrast, all people who are bound to Jesus Christ, are in fact truly free from the guilt, shame and power of sin! They are much more than merely *slaves* of Jesus Christ! They are "children of God", "sons and daughters of God" in a purely spiritual sense!

(3) True freedom means that Christians are set free to serve one another in love.

"The most important commandment in the Bible is, Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is: Love your neighbour as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these" (Mark 12:29-31). "All the Law of Moses and the Prophets hang on these two commandments" (Matthew 22:37-40). If true freedom is doing what you ought to do, then true freedom is to love God, to love other people and to love yourself. The nature of Christian love is not to seek yourself (1 Corinthians 13:5), but to serve others.

5:16

Question 2. What are two major responsibilities for a born-again Christian?

Notes.

Every Christian is responsible to live in dependence on the Holy Spirit, that is, in dependence on Jesus Christ. This means to have Jesus Christ as your King and Lord.

Every Christian is responsible not to yield to sinful desires, but rather to put them to death (Romans 8:13). This means that a Christian is involved in a continuous spiritual struggle.

5:17

Question 3. Why does a Christian experience such a great inner conflict in himself?

Notes.

(1) The difference between the libertine, the legalist and the believer.

The libertine follows his natural inclinations and experiences no conflict within his conscience when he commits sins. He does not want to achieve victory over sins.

The legalist is unwilling to accept God's grace and rather struggles continually in his own power to keep the law and not sin again. But he does not achieve victory over sins and he does not experience the sense of certain, ultimate triumph.

The believer experiences an agonizing conflict within himself, but nevertheless has a genuine conviction

- that God has already *declared* him righteous and *regards and treats* him as righteous
- that he *wants to, can and shall* live righteous (holy)
- and that he therefore ultimately will triumph over sin.

(2) Spiritual conflict only in Christians.

As long as the Holy Spirit does not make God's moral and spiritual commandments understandable and meaningful to a person, that person will not be bothered by the sins which he commits. He will lie, steal, cheat and murder without feeling too much guilty (Romans 2:14-15). Or he will be self-centred, selfish, self-righteous and independent from God without feeling guilty or ashamed. He will not take the interests of others into consideration (Philippians 2:4).

But when that person is born-again, the Holy Spirit lives in him. If he commits a sin, he will feel guilty and ashamed. The conflict between his old sinful nature and the Holy Spirit in him is then a real conflict. This conflict is a sign that he is truly born again and that God is working in him!

(3) The nature of the spiritual conflict.

The spiritual conflict consists of:

- the awareness that you sometimes do not do the good which you want to do,
- and that you sometimes do the evil which you do not want to do (Romans 7:19).
- You delight in God's moral and spiritual laws (God's truth),
- but at the same time you abhor the evil that still lives in you (Romans 7:15,20).

The old sinful nature makes you "a prisoner of war" of the law of sin (your sinful nature). You cannot escape from your sinful nature in you (Romans 7:23).

The fact that you experience a spiritual conflict inside yourself is a proof that the Holy Spirit is at work in you! The spiritual conflict is not pleasant, but unavoidable!

5:18

Question 4. What does it mean that a Christian is no longer "under the law"?

Notes.

(1) The law is God's righteous requirement.

The word "law" has several meanings in the Bible. The most fundamental meaning is: "The law of God is the requirement of the righteous and holy God of the Bible that all people must live perfect lives and that all transgressions of God's law must be punished. This "law" is summarised in the laws of the moral law (and the ceremonial law). Because God is 100% holy and righteous, he demands that all people obey the law as summarised in the moral law (and ceremonial law) perfectly and that every transgression must be punished perfectly. If God would not demand perfect obedience to his law and also would not have punished the transgressions of his law, he would no longer be the holy and righteous God!

(2) All natural people are legally "under the law of God".

The Bible says, "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands (his deplorable position), no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one... For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:10-12,23)! It is clear that not a single person in history, except Jesus Christ (that is, God in his human nature)(John 1:1,14), is sinless (John 8:46; Hebrews 4:15). Thus, all natural people are legally "under God's law"!

(3) Non-Christians are legally "under the law of God".

The Bible says, "All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: 'Cursed is everyone who does not continue to *do everything written in the Book of the Law.*'" (Galatians 3:10). God demands nothing less than 100% perfection! The Bible says, "For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it" (James 2:10). A transgressor is guilty, not only because he transgressed a particular law, but *because he sinned against the Lawgiver, God himself!*

People in many religions in the world do not believe what is written in Galatians 3:10 and James 2:10. They do not believe that God demands *absolute perfection* and that God is satisfied with *relative goodness*. They think that God has a scale in heaven on which he weighs the good and evil deeds of people against each other. As long as the good deeds are more than the bad deeds, will God forgive them (declare them righteous) and give them a place in Paradise¹⁵. That is why they are so eager to perform “religious works”: They pray several times a day; they listen to a sermon of their leader every week; they keep the fasting days; they conduct a pilgrimage to Jerusalem or another holy place; they give a certain amount of money; they wear religious clothing and they eat only “ceremonial clean” food etc. They ardently hope that God would forgive them on the Last Judgement Day, but they are never certain!

The Bible says very clearly that all such attempts are futile! “No one will be justified (forgiven) by observing the law” (Galatians 2:16), because there is no one who submits *perfectly* to God’s law or who can submit to God’s law (Romans 8:7-8)! “Clearly, no one is justified before God by the law” (Galatians 3:11)! All religious people (non-Christians) are legally “under the law of God” and thus also “under the curse of God”!

(4) Christians are legally no longer “under the law of God”.

The good news in the Bible is that God himself in his love for lost people has fulfilled his demand for 100% righteousness! The God of the Bible is not only 100% holy and righteous, but also 100% love! By taking on the human nature in Jesus Christ, by living a perfect sinless life on earth (2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15) and by taking on himself the punishment for the sins of people who believe in him (1 Peter 2:24), he satisfied his demand for perfect righteousness and made it possible for sinners to be justified. He took on himself the sins of people who believe in him and gave them his perfect righteousness (2 Corinthians 5:21; see Mark 10:45; John 10:11).

“Therefore, my brothers, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. Through him everyone who believes is justified from everything you could not be justified from by the Law of Moses” (Acts 13:38-39)! The law cannot justify or save anyone. The natural man and the religious man cannot save themselves, but Jesus Christ can save them! People who believe in Jesus Christ realise that they can never be justified (forgiven) by trying to keep the law of God. They realise that they need *a Saviour who has kept the law of God perfectly in their place and who has paid the penalty for all their sins in their place!* This Saviour is only Jesus Christ, because only he fulfilled the law of God in this sense (Matthew 5:17) “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: ‘Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree’” (Galatians 3:13). Therefore, salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12)!

Our old existence was crucified together with Jesus Christ so that “we should no longer be slaves of sin” (Romans 6:6). By faith we died with Christ in order to bring our old sinful life to an end! He saves believers whose lives before were constantly ambushed and defeated by temptations (1 Corinthians 10:13)!

People who believe in Jesus Christ no longer try to be justified by keeping the law. They believe:

- that Jesus Christ lived a perfect sinless life on earth in their place,
- that Jesus Christ brought a perfect sacrifice for the atonement of their sins in their place
- and that Jesus Christ was resurrected from the dead in their place as the guarantee that they would also one day be resurrected from the dead, never to die again!

Before Christians came to faith in Jesus Christ, they were also legally “under the law of God”. But after they have come to faith in Jesus Christ, they are no longer “under the law of God”. Jesus Christ has fulfilled the law in their place (Matthew 5:17). The law as God’s righteous requirement for justification found its end in Christ, so that everyone who believes in Christ will be declared “righteous” (Romans 10:4). Because Jesus Christ has already perfectly fulfilled the law of God in their place, Christians no longer try to be justified (forgiven) by keeping the moral law of God. The law as God’s righteous requirement can only lead people to realise their spiritual impotence, to experience defeats and bondage and finally to face God’s curse. But if a believer is led by the Holy Spirit, he is no longer subject to the law of God as God’s requirement for justification. The Law is no longer the reigning and controlling power in the life of a Christian, but the Holy Spirit is now the Reigning and Guiding Power of his life (Galatians 5:18).

(5) Nevertheless, Christians still obey the moral law of God.

The fact that Christians are not justified (forgiven, saved) by keeping the law, does not mean that Christians disregard or are exempt from the moral law of God. Born-again Christians continue to obey the moral laws of God (the Ten Commandments) (Mark 12:29-31; Romans 13:8-10; Galatians 5:14), not as the means whereby they are justified (forgiven, saved), but as the guideline (compass, map, light) of how the justified (saved, forgiven) Christian should and can live his life!

¹⁵ Or re-incarnate them into a higher incarnation on earth or finally make them dissolve into Nirvana.

5:19-21

Question 5. What are clear manifestations of the fact that your sinful nature still controls you?

Notes. The following are manifestations of the sinful nature.

(1) Vices related to sex.

Sexual immorality. The Greek word “porneia” means: all thoughts, words and acts related to sex before and sex outside marriage. It refers to illegal sexual relationships as: fornication (1 Corinthians 5:1; 1 Corinthians 6:13,18; 1 Corinthians 7:2), incest (Leviticus 18:6), adultery (Leviticus 18:20), homosexual or lesbian relationships (Leviticus 18:22) and sodomy or bestiality (Leviticus 18:23). In heathen religions sexual immorality is very closely related to spiritual immorality as idolatry (Colossians 3:5).

Impurity. The Greek word “akatharsia” means: all thoughts, words and actions with respect to unnatural sex as pornography, sexual fantasies, dirty jokes, flirting and necking, petting and hands under clothes (1 Thessalonians 4:7).

Debauchery. The Greek word “aselgeia” means: uncontrolled sensuality, indecency, licentiousness, attacking someone’s honour and indulging in every kind of sexual excess and sexual vice with a continual lust for more (Ephesians 4:19). It is a filthy lifestyle and lawless acts (2 Peter 2:7-8).

(2) Vices related to false gods.

Idolatry. The Greek word “aidólolatria” means: worshipping images including the evils associated with it as eating sacrifices to idols when conscience forbids it, temple prostitution and obscene and naked dancing. Idolatry is replacing the God of the Bible with someone or something else. Worshipping a “god” in the religions of the world that has been devised by the mind of man is in fact “idolatry” (Exodus 20:3; Isaiah 43:10-11). Atheism is in fact the exaltation of a person himself as “god” and this too is idolatry!

Witchcraft. The Greek word “farmakeia” means: magical practices and sorcery in which mysterious powers are attributed to certain articles that are carried on the body (amulets) or are placed in specific places. It means: powers accorded to formulas of sorcery and texts in religious books (mantras) (Exodus 7:11). It includes the following: astrology and horoscopes (Numbers 22:6-7; Isaiah 47:9-13). Magicians claim to possess superhuman powers (Acts 8:9; Acts 13:8; Acts 19:13,19; Revelation 9:21; Revelation 21:8). Faith in magic is a form of idolatry.

(3) Vices related to strife.

Hatred. The Greek word “echthrai” means enmity or hostility (Ephesians 2:16).

Discord. The Greek word “eris” means: quarrelling or discord (1 Timothy 6:4; Titus 3:9).

Jealousy. The Greek word “zélōs” means: an intense possessive attitude. The word is often connected to quarrelling and it means that a person has such an intense devotion to a particular person or issue, that when another name or issue is mentioned, he immediately dismisses it with much wrangling. A jealous person craves to be close to his hero and even *possess* his hero only for himself.

Fits of rage. The Greek word “thumoi” means: outbursts of anger or fiery flashes of rage, especially when a person cannot realise his desire or is blocked in attaining his wish.

Selfish ambition. The Greek word “eritheia” means: a self-seeking pursuit to a position of power by dishonest means. For example, making empty promises in public, canvassing votes in secret, making agreements behind the back of others or making decisions by excluding those who should have been involved. This happens in politics, but unfortunately also in religious circles (Filippenzen 1:17; Filippenzen 2:3).

Dissensions. The Greek word “dichostasiai” means: causing divisions or dissensions. The word is connected to false teachers and disunity in churches (Romans 16:17)

Factions. The Greek word “hairésis” means: heresy, forming factions, groups that split off or sects (1 Corinthians 11:18-19) and is later associated with people teaching strange dogmas or heresies.

Envy. The Greek word “fthonoi”. “Envy” means displeasure of seeing what someone else possesses, while “jealousy” means the fear of losing what one possesses. It was envy that caused the murder of Abel; threw Joseph in the well; caused Korah and his associates to rebel against their spiritual leader; made king Saul pursue David; caused the elder brother to say harsh words against his father in the parable of the lost son; and crucified Christ. Genuine Christian love never envies (1 Corinthians 13:4)!

(4) Vices related to extravagance (splurging).

Drunkness. The Greek word “methai” means: drunkness or drinking bouts. The Bible regards alcoholism (the addiction to alcohol) a sin and not merely a sickness. Wherever personal responsibility and accountability for vices such as alcoholism and drunkness is ignored or minimized, a civilization declines and is finally destroyed.

Orgies. The Greek word “kómoi” means: excessive feasting, revelry or carousing. Originally this was a festal procession with torches through the streets, joyous songs and a great meal in honour of the god Bacchus or Dionysus,

the god of wine. The revellers ate a lot of meat, drank a lot of wine and made a lot of noise. Many new Christians were accustomed to such pagan festivals before they became believers.

(5) A serious warning.

The apostle Paul warns that those people who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. The words of their opponents, “Let us do evil that good may result” (Romans 3:8; Romans 6:1) are definitely a lie! While no one can enter into God’s kingdom by doing good works, certainly no one will enter into God’s kingdom by doing these evil practices! A new believer in Jesus Christ must say farewell to ALL the works of darkness. Otherwise he proves that he is not as yet walking in the light (John 3:19-21; 1 Corinthians 6:11; Ephesians 5:7-12).

5:22-23

Question 6. What are clear manifestations of the fact that the Holy Spirit controls you?

Notes. The following are manifestations of the born-again life controlled by the Holy Spirit.

(1) The fruit of the Spirit consists of spiritual characteristics.

Love. The Greek word “agapé” means: the self-sacrificial love of God in Christ for lost people and the love of Christians for one another as defined in 1 Corinthians 13:1-8. It is the love of God that makes the three natural loves of people (namely, affection, friendship and sexual love)¹⁶ complete and perfect. It perfects the affection of parents to children and other family members. It perfects the friendship between friends. And it perfects the physical love between a man and his wife. See Bible study in manual 2, lesson 14. This is the most important Christian virtue.

Joy. The Greek word “chara” means: delight and rejoicing. Christians find their delight in walking according to God’s commands (Psalm 119:35). And Christians can rejoice even amid the most distressing circumstances, because God makes all things that happen in their lives work together for good (Romans 8:28).

Peace. The Greek word “eirené” on the one hand means: *the absence* of fighting, quarrelling, war, fear and irritation and on the other hand: *the presence* of God’s power to heal the brokenness of people completely and perfectly.

(2) The fruit of the Spirit consists of social characteristics.

Patience. The Greek word “makrothumia” means: patience in relation to people who annoy, oppose or molest you. Patience refuses to flare up in anger. Patience can wait for a long time and bears/endures the injuries afflicted by others.

Kindness. The Greek word “chrestotés” means: kindness, gentleness or mildness especially towards women (Luke 13:10-13), children (Luke 18:15-17) and sinners (Luke 23:34).

Goodness. The Greek word “agathosuné” means: moral and spiritual excellence of every description that is created by the Holy Spirit. It means uprightness (Ephesians 5:9) and generosity (Galatians 5:22).

(3) The fruit of the Spirit consists of virtues in three relationships.

Faithfulness. The Greek word “pistis” can mean faith, but rather means faithfulness or loyalty, especially towards God.

Gentleness. The Greek word “prautés” means: considerateness, courtesy, meekness or gentle submissiveness.

Self-control. The Greek word “engkrateia” literally means: “possessing inner power” (lack of self-control is thus a weakness) especially with reference to matters of sex. It means holding in or keeping control of passions and appetites.

5:23

Question 7. What does it mean that there is no law against the fruit of the Spirit?

Notes. While the law is clearly directed against the sins in verse 19 to 21 (cf. 1 Timothy 1:9), there is of course no law directed against the fruit of the Spirit in verse 22 tot 23, against the social, moral and spiritual virtues which the Holy Spirit affects in believers. “Laws” generally forbid certain actions, but with these words the apostle Paul spurs Christians on to practise these virtues (the fruit of the Spirit) (verse 22-23) in order to wipe out the vices (the acts of the sinful nature) (verse 19-21)!

However, Christians are not continually focussing their attention on wiping out the vices of the sinful nature. They rather focus their attention on the Holy Spirit, which lives and works in them. Christians do not gratify the desires of the sinful nature (verse 16), allow the Holy Spirit to lead them (verse 18) and keep in step with the Holy Spirit (verse 25). Christians do not focus on sin and the sinful world, but on Jesus Christ and the spiritual realities in heaven (Romans 7:25; Colossians 3:1-4). Christians focus on love, because love sums up all that is positive in the law (Galatians 5:14).

STEP 4. APPLY.

APPLICATIONS

Consider. WHICH TRUTHS IN THIS PASSAGE ARE POSSIBLE APPLICATIONS FOR CHRISTIANS?

Share and record. Let us brainstorm with one another and record a list of possible applications from Galatians 5:13-26.

¹⁶ Greek: storgé, filia and erós

Consider. WHICH POSSIBLE APPLICATION DOES GOD WANT YOU TO TURN INTO A PERSONAL APPLICATION?

Record. Write this personal application down in your notebook. Feel free to share your personal application. (Remember that people in every group will apply different truths or even make different applications of the same truth. The following is a list of possible applications.)

1. Examples of possible applications from Galatians 5:13-26.

- 5:13. Remember that God called you, not to be a slave to the power of sin, but to be free to love and serve others.
- 5:15. Remember that the lack of love only results in people destroying each other (e.g. wars).
- 5:16. Only when you live under the control of the Holy Spirit, will you not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.
- 5:17. Remember that the Holy Spirit is always opposed to the manifestations of the sinful nature!
- 5:24. Remember that true Christians have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires.

2. Examples of personal applications from Galatians 5:13-26.

Although I do not like the inner spiritual battle between my old sinful nature and the Holy Spirit in me, I rejoice in the fact that the Holy Spirit lives in me and works in me. Therefore I want to keep in step with the Holy Spirit.

Although I must get rid of all the manifestations of the sinful nature in my life, the main focus in my life is on bearing the fruit of the Spirit, especially to love God, other people and myself.

STEP 5. PRAY.

RESPONSE

LET US TAKE TURNS TO PRAY ABOUT ONE TRUTH THAT GOD HAS TAUGHT US in Galatians 5:13-26.

(Respond in your prayer to what you have learned during this Bible study. Practise to pray only in one or two sentences. Remember that people in every group will pray about different issues.)

5

PRAYER (8 minutes)

**[INTERCESSION]
PRAY FOR OTHERS**

Continue to pray in groups of two's or three's. Pray with one another for one another and for the people in the world (Romans 15:30; Colossians 4:12).

6

PREPARATION (2 minutes)

**[ASSIGNMENT]
FOR NEXT LESSON**

(Group leader. Give the group members this preparation for at home in writing or let them copy it down).

1. **Commitment.** Be committed to make disciples.
Preach, teach or study the Bible study of Galatians 5:13-26 together with another person or group of people.
2. **Personal time with God.** Have a quiet time from half a chapter of **Ecclesiastes 1, 2, 3 and 4** each day.
Make use of the favourite truth method. Make notes.
3. **Memorisation.** (5) Making disciples. **Matthew 28:18-20.** Daily review the last 5 memorised Bible verses.
4. **Prayer.** Pray for someone or something specific this week and see what God is doing (Psalm 5:3).
5. **Update your notebook** on making disciples. Include the notes on your personal time with God, memorisation notes, Bible study notes and this preparation.