

Disciple of Christ Study: Lesson 12 Fear the Lord

Purpose of study: *Live life as a disciple of Christ and intentionally make disciples for the glory of the triune God. A disciple is a “student” or “follower” who learns, studies, and acts in accordance to the teachings of Christ, the Master.*

Lesson 12: Fear the Lord (Day One) *Understanding Sin*

We can trust the Bible. We can rely and depend on it as God's word to mankind. *Lesson 11: Why the Bible is Trustworthy* gave us facts to strengthen our faith in God and the truth of His word.

When we ignore or misapply God's word, we sin. Sin is rebellion against God. It means we choose our own evil path and miss God's good purpose for our lives. It is taking the wrong road and ending up at the wrong destination. Sin is an important subject in the Bible; it is mentioned 473 times.

You are part of the *CLI Disciple of Christ Study* because you are a professing Christian. You have found forgiveness of your sins by believing that Jesus is the Son of God who died on the cross for all your wrongdoing, including your inherited sin from Adam and Eve. But you still have wrong thoughts, motives, relationships and actions. You might even have difficulty breaking bad habits or addictions. Godly perfection is challenging!

Read Philippians 3:12-21 and answer questions 1- 6:

Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.¹³ Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead,¹⁴ I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.¹⁵ All of us who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you.¹⁶ Only let us live up to what we have already attained.¹⁷ Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you.¹⁸ For, as I have often told you before and now say again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ.¹⁹ Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things.²⁰ But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ,²¹ who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body. Philippians 3:12-21

1. What does the apostle Paul say about *his* state of perfection (vs. 12-13)?

****See end of lesson for repeat of questions and blank spaces for you to write your answers.**

2. What is Paul's plan of action since he has not yet been made perfect (vs. 12-14)?

Definition: A mature Christian is one who has and reveals qualities gained by development and experience in Christ Jesus. He or she has mental, emotional and even physical characteristics associated with the Spirit's guidance and leadership (see 1 Corinthians 3:1-3 for a description of immature Christians).

3. Does Paul consider himself a mature Christian (v. 15)? Yes No (Circle One)
4. Would you consider yourself a mature Christian? Why or why not?
5. How does Paul describe those who *live as enemies of the cross of Christ* (vs. 18-19)?
6. Who is watching our progress, empowering us and will ultimately transform our lowly bodies into glorious ones (vs. 20-21)?

Why Christians Sin

After we have been born again we are a new creation. Our sins are forgiven and we have God's Spirit to lead us in all righteousness. We clearly have the ability to do what is right (Romans 6:11-14) but we do sin (1 John 1:8).

God does not take away our human nature and our ability to choose good from evil (Romans 6:19). We still have free will and we still have Satan and his followers who prowl around looking for someone to devour (1 Peter 5:8). In our natural body, we will always be tempted to put ourselves, our comfort and our own satisfaction above others. Plus, we continue to live in a fallen and corrupted world that can sidetrack our journey with Christ.

In Hebrew and Greek, the words that mean "tempt" and "test" are the same. It depends on the form of the verbs and the context. However, in modern English, we have separate meanings.

Definitions: Test is defined as taking measures to check the quality, performance, or reliability of (something), especially before putting it into widespread use or practice. God tests for faith and loyalty. Temptation is defined as something that causes a strong urge or desire to have or do something and especially something that is bad, wrong, or unwise. Satan tempts or entices people to sin.

Even Jesus, in His humanity, was tempted by Satan (Matthew 4:1-11). He was tempted to turn rocks into bread when He was hungry, to receive His reward early (if He worshipped Satan) and avoid the cross (Matthew 26:38-39). The devil was unable to entice Jesus to evil.

God allows Satan to tempt people (Matthew 4:1), but He never does (James 1:13). God tests our hearts for our own good. The testing helps us to prove our devotion and grow in our faith.

Jesus lives within believers by His Holy Spirit and helps us resist temptation. Believers also have the wonderful and effective promises for righteousness though the New Covenant (*Lesson 6: The New Covenant*, p. 16). Allow Jesus to take over and work through you (Philippians 4:13).

Once we are saved, we begin the process called sanctification (to make holy). Yes, believers have a holy status before God in Jesus Christ but we also grow in holiness and purity each day (Hebrews 12:14-15 and 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8). We are set apart by God to be spiritually transformed into the likeness of His Son (Romans 8:29).

As a new creation, we do not enjoy sin but may have trouble identifying and overcoming it. When we do sin, we confess with godly sorrow by stating plainly to God how we have wronged Him. God is just and will forgive us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).

Read Numbers 5:5-8 and answer questions 7-9:

The LORD said to Moses,⁶ "Say to the Israelites: 'When a man or woman wrongs another in any way and so is unfaithful to the LORD, that person is guilty⁷ and must confess the sin he has committed. He must make full restitution for his wrong, add one fifth to it and give it all to the person he has wronged.⁸ But if that person has no close relative to whom restitution can be made for the wrong, the restitution belongs to the LORD and must be given to the priest, along with the ram with which atonement is made for him. Numbers 5:5-8

7. When we wrong another person in any way, how does God view those actions (v. 6a)?
8. What are some ways that we might not act rightly toward another person?
9. What is the remedy for unfaithfulness (disloyalty, untrustworthiness) to the LORD in the Old Testament and the New Testament (v. 7-8)? (Read 1 John 1:8-9 and Luke 19:8)

The Old Testament and the New Testament both call for confession and restitution. For example, if we stole goods or money from another person, we should return all the items and repay the money. Other injuries may not have such a straightforward solution. Ask the Holy Spirit to lead you in both your confession and the reparation (compensation).

Read Proverbs 28:13-14 and answer questions 10-12:

He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy.¹⁴ Blessed is the man who always fears the LORD, but he who hardens his heart falls into trouble. Proverbs 28:13-14 (Renounce - formally give up.)

10. What is one surefire (guaranteed) way **not** to prosper (v.13)?
11. How are you assured of finding mercy (v.13)?
12. _____ is the man who always _____ the LORD, but he who _____ his heart falls into _____ (v. 14).

Lesson 12: Fear the Lord (Day Two) *Fearing Man*

The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him-- the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD--³ and he will delight in the fear of the LORD. Isaiah 11:2-3a (This prophecy is about the Messiah, Jesus)

13. Read Isaiah 11:2-3a and fill in the blanks. The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him- the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the _____ of the LORD--³ and he will delight in the _____ of the LORD.

Jesus is the Son of God and equal to God. Nevertheless, He humbled Himself and became an obedient, human servant (Philippians 2:6-8) displaying and modeling the *fear of the LORD*. Recall from the CLI Leadership Bible study that Jesus is our Leader and Model.

Sacred and righteous *fear of the LORD* “dreads God’s displeasure, desires His favor, reveres His holiness, submits cheerfully to His will, is grateful for His benefits, and conscientiously obeys His commandments. Fear and love must coexist in us in order that either passion may be healthy and that we may please and rightly serve God.”¹

King Solomon, filled with godly wisdom, penned the book of Ecclesiastes. He goes to great lengths to tell us that everything is meaningless outside of fearing God. Fearing God is the purpose of the whole of mankind, or as the NIV translates, *the whole duty of man*.

Read Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 and answer questions 14-15:

Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.¹⁴ For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil. Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

14. What are two things all men and women are responsible for (v. 13)?

15. Why should we take care to fear God and keep His commandments (v. 14)?

Sadly, many of us fear man instead of fearing God. We become cowards in Christ’s army instead of powerful warriors. In other words, we are afraid of men and women who might cause us physical, emotional, or mental pain. We dread other people’s displeasure and desire their favor or good opinion more than God’s. Fearing man also indicates that we do not trust God to protect and care for us in His perfect will. Instead we trust others or ourselves.

There are many ways that we fear man instead of God. We might be afraid of bodily harm or afraid of their opinions of us. Perhaps we are not actually afraid, but overly concerned with our own reputation or standing within a community or group. We might care more for our being liked and popular rather than trusting and pleasing God.

Peter was a Jew, as were all the apostles, including Paul. Jews and Gentiles (non-Jews) did not mix in fellowship such as eating together. Gentiles were considered unclean and a Jew was not

¹ Harrison, R.K., “The New Unger’s Bible Dictionary”, Moody Press, 1957. p. 404.

supposed to even enter a Gentile's home. As with many of God's commands, they were taken out of context and misused. God initiated the separation to keep His people from becoming ensnared in and by idol worship.

The early church had issues and challenges just like our churches do today. One of the challenges came from Jewish believers. They were called the circumcision² group because they believed that Gentile believers needed to be circumcised, among other things. It appears they were part of the Church at Jerusalem where James was recognized as the leader. This does not mean that James (Jesus' half brother) was part of their deviation (departure) from the truth.

When Peter came to Antioch, I (Paul) opposed him to his face, because he was clearly in the wrong.¹² Before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. Galatians 2:11-12 (Parentheses for clarification)

Read Galatians 2:11-12 and answer questions 16-21:

16. Why did Peter stop eating and having fellowship with Gentile believers (v. 12b)?
17. Why do you think Peter was afraid of those belonging to the circumcision group?
18. Did Paul fear man in this particular circumstance (v. 11)? Yes No (Circle One)
19. Explain how Paul and Peter's involvement encourages you in this situation:
20. Think about your own life. Who or what group do you fear and why?
21. From your answer in 20, what will you do about this particular fear?

Peter was a humble man and accepted Paul's rebuke. He knew the truth and changed back his eating habits to reflect the full acceptance of Gentiles into God's Kingdom. His example gives us hope to overcome our fear of man and to continue in God's grace to bring Him glory. We know Peter was faithful in his witness, even to his death. He no longer feared man.

When we fear man, we are saying that we do not think God can save us. We are also saying that this person or group's opinion is more important than His. Simply, we are putting others before God. Man becomes the idol that we worship. All in all, fearing man is very bad business.

We need to trust God and understand He wants the best for you and me. He also has the power to accomplish anything and everything! We need to fear God and *not* man. We must make choices that reflect God's character and not worry what others think about us or our actions.

Definition: A snare is a trap for catching birds or animals. It is usually made with nooses or nets and hidden under leaves and brush.

² Circumcision is the removal of all or part of the foreskin from the penis. God initiated this procedure with Abraham and his descendants as a sign of His covenant (promise). Genesis 12:1-3, 17:10-12.

Read Proverbs 29:25 and answer questions 22-23:

Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is kept safe.

Proverbs 29:25

22. Why do you think the fear of humans can be a snare or trap?

23. How can we be protected from the snare of fearing others (v. 25b)?

Fearing what others think of us elevates them to the place of God in our lives and wrongly empowers them. God has made us in His image and loves us with an everlasting love. But when we care too much for people's approval, we are acting like God's opinion does not matter.

There are various ways that Satan will seek to trap and hold us captive through fear of others. He might use it to prey on our insecurities and keep us from trying anything new or different. Certainly, he used the fear of others to keep us from sharing the gospel.

Here are false words that Satan may use against us:

"What will people think of you?"

"You are going to look foolish!"

"You are stupid and cannot do anything right!"

24. Have you ever heard these kind of false words ringing in your ears? Yes No (Circle One)

25. What will you do to overcome the fear of appearing foolish?

Fear of people may also be an underlying need for love. It is difficult to say "no" to others because we are afraid they will be unhappy with us. If they are unhappy, they will reject us and we will not get the affection that we crave. Therefore, we are driven to be people-pleasers rather than a God-pleaser. The people-pleaser is not trusting in God's love and purpose for his or her life.

The apostle Paul made it clear that we cannot please men and be a servant of Christ. As Christ's servant, we seek to do the Father's will. It usually does not line us with worldly requests and honors. Even requests from other disciples need to be filtered through God's plan for us.

Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ. Galatians 1:10

26. Read Galatians 1:10. Whose approval should we try to win?

There is a healthy way to care about other's opinions. We should desire that our words and actions will cause others to praise God. An honorable reputation reveals godly character and should ultimately direct people to Christ. *A good name is more desirable than great riches* (Proverbs 22:1).

Be cautious. We may start out caring about our good reputation and end up trying to impress other Christians with our good works or words. This is another aspect of fearing humans. We are prideful and desire to be the center of attention. We want to be admired and even idolized.

For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.
Luke 14:11 (Exalt means to hold oneself in praise or high regard.)

27. What does Jesus tell us in Luke 14:11 about prideful people who exalt themselves?

Trying to impress others is just another way of getting ourselves exalted. It is a way of trying to take away God's role as "exalter" and putting ourselves in charge. As disciples we are to humble (modest and unassuming) ourselves and depend on God. When and if praise comes, it is deflected (change direction) to the Lord where it belongs. Our reward or commendation for obedience will be given at the resurrection of the righteous (Luke 14:14)

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. Matthew 11:29

Definition: Yoke is a bar or frame that is attached to the heads or necks of two work animals (such as oxen) so that they can pull a plow or heavy load. Jesus is using the word yoke as a figure of speech meaning to rely on Him as Savior and Lord.

28. Read Matthew 11:29. How do we learn gentleness, humility and find rest for our souls?

29. Prayerfully consider the various aspects of fear of humans and confess it as sin. Pray and ask God to help you to destroy the fear of man and replace it with the fear of Him in Christ Jesus. I have confessed any fear of people as sin and prayed for help: Yes No (Circle One)

Meditate on the following verses for help in overcoming the fear of man:

Let those who fear the LORD say: "His love endures forever."⁵ In my anguish I cried to the LORD, and he answered by setting me free.⁶ The LORD is with me; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?⁷ The LORD is with me; he is my helper. I will look in triumph on my enemies.⁸ It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in man. Psalm 118:4-8

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. Psalm 23:4

For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.⁸ So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner. But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God,⁹ who has saved us and called us to a holy life-- not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace.
2 Timothy 1:7-9a

30. After meditating on the above verses, please share how God encouraged you:

Lesson 12: Fear the Lord (Day Three) *The Heart Condition*

He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy.¹⁴ Blessed is the man who always fears the LORD, but he who hardens his heart falls into trouble. Proverbs 28:13-14 (Also reference Hebrews 10:26-39)

The heart is the core of our being. It houses our consciousness, our awareness and perception. In other words, the heart includes our mind, will and emotions. Basically the heart is the word that we use to indicate our center as a human being.

The Bible reveals that God is interested in our heart. A soft heart indicates openness to God and eagerness to respond to His will. A soft heart is sensitive and wise to God's working and moving in his or her midst. It is neither skeptical nor cynical. It is believing and trusting.

God warns us about a hard heart, or letting one's heart become hardened. This kind of heart is not open to God and not eager to do His will. The hard heart is insensitive and dull to God's working and moving in his or her midst. It is skeptical or cynical. It is neither believing nor trusting.

but when they saw him walking on the lake, they thought he was a ghost. They cried out,⁵⁰ because they all saw him and were terrified. Immediately he spoke to them and said, "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."⁵¹ Then he climbed into the boat with them, and the wind died down. They were completely amazed,⁵² for they had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened. Mark 6:49-52

Read Mark 6:49-52 and answer questions 31-35:

31. Write the reason that the apostles were completely amazed (v. 52)?
32. What did the disciples not understand about the loaves (See Mark 6:38-44)?
33. In what way do you think that the disciple's hearts were hardened?
34. Is there any area of your heart that is hardened toward God? Yes No (Circle One)
If yes, what will you do about it?
35. Does the fact that the apostles, Jesus' closest companions, had hard hearts at times encourage or discourage you? Yes No (Circle One) Why or why not?
Although we all have hard hearts at times, the truth of our salvation or deliverance will be evident in a soft heart toward God. This softness toward God is conveyed through a changed lifestyle. No Change – No Jesus. No Jesus – No Change. The changes may be small or they may be huge, but there will be some kind of shift in our hearts toward God.
36. List the date or approximate time when you trusted Jesus as your personal Savior. Look back on your life from that time and list some of the ways that you have changed.
37. Do the changes encourage or discourage you? Why or why not?

38. What kind of changes or transformation in your character or lifestyle do you desire? Why?

Satan may not be able to get you into hell, but he and his army still roam the earth with snares of sinful habits, addictions and behaviors. If they can get you and me to take our eyes off Jesus and onto ourselves or others, they have won a victory. They have not only kept us from expanding God's Kingdom, they have ruined our witness and succeeded in making our lives ineffective and mundane (worldly, dull).

Sometimes the enticement of drugs, food, alcohol, sex, gambling, or co-dependency may seem too powerful to overcome. You or someone you know may be addicted to one or more of these snares. Addiction is a good example of a hardened heart. The sin has become so engrained in a person's life that the entire body has become hard towards God.

Definition: Co-dependency is a psychological (mental, emotional) condition or relationship in which a person is controlled or manipulated by another who is affected with a condition (as an addiction to alcohol or heroin); *broadly*: dependence on the needs of or control by another.

Definition: Addiction "is a condition in which the body must have a drug to avoid physical and psychological withdrawal symptoms. Addiction's first stage is dependence, during which the search for a drug dominates an individual's life. An addict eventually develops tolerance, which forces the person to consume larger and larger doses of the drug to get the same effect."³

"Addiction is a condition that results when a person ingests a substance (alcohol, cocaine, nicotine) or engages in an activity (gambling) that can be pleasurable but the continued use of which becomes compulsive and interferes with ordinary life responsibilities, such as work or relationships, even health. Users may not be aware that their behavior is out of control and causing problems for themselves and others."⁴

There may be horrible circumstances that have contributed to a person's becoming addicted to drugs, food, alcohol, sex, gambling, or co-dependency. We live in a fallen world and the satanic crew may have enticed your parents or those close to you to harm you in some way.

"Researchers at the National Institute on Drug Abuse surveyed 196 men and women who were inpatients being treated for alcohol dependence. Almost one-quarter of men and 33% of women reported a history of childhood physical abuse while rates of sexual abuse were 12% for men and 49% for women."⁵

Abuse is a sad and painful tragedy; it causes real heartache. Perhaps *you* experienced abuse when you were a child and wonder why God allowed it to happen. He is sovereign and although God did not cause it, He could have stopped it.

But then we could say that about every evil that exists in the world. God has given mankind the ability to choose right from wrong; Jesus over Satan. The person who harmed you chose to

³ American Physiological Association website: <http://www.apa.org/topics/addiction/index.aspx>

⁴ Psychology Today website: <http://www.psychologytoday.com/basics/addiction>

⁵ Roan, Shari, Los Angeles Times, For the Booster Shots blog, 2012.

follow the devil and sin against you and God. If he does not repent and turn to Jesus, he may suffer eternal punishment. As hard as this may be, a disciple of Christ will pray for his or her enemies. Like God, we do not want anyone to perish but to come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9).

God has a plan for your life and He will use your hellish experiences to bring healing and help to others. Embracing our circumstances, good or bad, glorifies God. Remember, glorifying God is our chief goal, end or aim (1 Peter 4:11 and 1 Corinthians 10:31).

Accepting awful situations, does not mean that God wants them to stay that way. Pray and seek God's will. He truly wants the best for you. He desires your heart to be *healed* and *softened*.

Jesus loves *you*! He loved you and me so much that He willingly submitted to carry all of our sins in His body while being crucified. The triune God is interested in every aspect of your life. Today, ask Him to show you how much He does care for and love you.

Perhaps you are not an addict but just have a few bad habits. Bad habit is another word for sin. After all, we can have good habits. A good habit might be reading the Bible every day. A bad habit might be reading books that dishonor God with greed, sex, violence or profanity.

Another example of a bad habit might be avoiding people and relationships. There may be a number of reasons why it seems easier to be a loner. We talked about abuse and if this has happened to you, trusting others may be difficult. Or you may be lacking in social skills or have a difficult time relating to other people. You might even think, "Give me Jesus, but you can keep His people." I have even heard, "Ministry is great, except for the people."

No matter what kind of issue you are dealing with, you either want to change or you do not. This includes me also. We might think, "Well it's just a little thing and it doesn't really matter." But, it really does matter: You and I must love Jesus more than our sinful habits, addictions or deeds.

39. What does your addiction or your "little" bad habit say of your relationship with Jesus?

When we prefer our sinful ways, no matter how small or insignificant they may seem, we are saying we love that habit or ourselves more than Jesus. We are choosing not to listen to God or look to Jesus. We are favoring an ineffective and dull life and saying no to all that God wants for us. We are saying no to the real joy of His presence and power.

Breaking the power of bad habits or addictions is not easy. Sin can be a potent (strong) enemy even when we acknowledge we want Jesus more than anything else in the world. You and I need divine power to break the yoke of addictions.

In addition, there is a physical reason why addictions are so difficult to break. According to Dr. Nora Volkow, *Director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse*, drugs physically change the brain. The changes will remain for a long time after the person stops using the drug.

The change involves a critical substance in the human body called dopamine. It is one of the main chemicals that control or regulate the pleasure center in the brain. In other words, the

chemical dopamine sends messages or signals to receptors in the brain.⁶ God has designed the receptors to receive the signal and convert it into a pleasure message.

Cocaine addicts were shown pictures of a nature scene with no change in dopamine, but when shown pictures of someone using cocaine, there was a marked rise in dopamine levels. It is the rise in dopamine levels that drives or motivates the behavior of the addict toward the seemingly pleasurable object.⁷ The object could be alcohol, food, gambling and other kinds of things.

God created and designed our bodies for good. He wants us to feel pleasure and find joy in Him and His ways. However, it also seems that God designed us in such a way that we have a part in hardening our own hearts. When we habitually sin and disobey God, our dopamine signals get confused and lie to us about true and lasting happiness.

Dr. Nora Volkow's research is also showing a reduction of dopamine receptors in the brains of heroin, alcohol, cocaine, methamphetamine, marijuana and nicotine users. The brain is not wired to handle a rush in dopamine so when it receives such stimulation, some of the receptors shut down. The sense of pleasure keeps decreasing and at some point, these addicts are using a substance just to feel normal.⁸

Another issue with drug use is that it can adversely affect the frontal cortex. This is the area of the brain that helps us in making decisions and exerting our free will. If drugs have damaged the frontal cortex, this person may have difficulty making wise choices.

God's ability to heal and restore should never be underestimated. He may miraculously heal the body or the brain with a word or He may accomplish it through medical treatment. God gives physicians their talents and gifts, whether or not they choose to believe it.

God works in various ways in different circumstances. One person may have to struggle for years to overcome an addiction and another may be healed in an instant. We cannot predict exactly how God will work in our lives, only that He is able and will guide us perfectly.

Read Romans 6:18-19 and answer questions 40-42:

You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.¹⁹ I put this in human terms because you are weak in your natural selves. Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer them in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness. Romans 6:18-19

40. What does the apostle Paul tell Christians they have been set free from (v. 18a)?

41. What are Christians now slaves to (v. 18b)?

⁶ "Hooked: Why bad habits are hard to break", script aired on CBS April 29, 2012. Morley Safer, correspondent. http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-18560_162-57423321/hooked-why-bad-habits-are-hard-to-break/

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Ibid

42. How should you offer the parts of your body (v. 19c)?

Believers have been set free from sin because of Jesus' death and resurrection. This includes bad habits, addictions and any kind of evil that tries to take us captive again. Disciples need to make a conscious decision each day to offer their bodies to Jesus and His righteousness.

Remember, righteousness comes through the blood of the New Covenant. We studied its terms and benefits on pages 15-16 of the Disciple of Christ Study: *Lesson 6, The New Covenant*. Use these promises to overcome the world with its deadly addictions and sinful habits.

Claiming God's promises does not always mean an instant fix. He may use others, such as physicians or counselors, in the healing or sanctification process. Be open to the Spirit's leading.

The Old Testament lays down the principle of this foundational truth. When King Hezekiah became ill, the prophet Isaiah told him to get his house in order, because the LORD said that He was going to die. Hezekiah prayed to the LORD, and He extended his life for fifteen years.

Then Isaiah said, "Prepare a poultice⁹ of figs." They did so and applied it to the boil, and he recovered. 2 Kings 20:7

43. Read 2 Kings 20:7. What was the process for Hezekiah to be healed?

No matter what kind of healing, whether physical or mental, the principal of God's word is the same. He may heal immediately or through a process. Of course, there are times when God may choose not to heal. But there is another truth embedded in the story of Hezekiah. Did you notice that through prayer, Hezekiah was able to change God's decision of imminent death to life for an additional fifteen years?

Read 2 Kings 20:2-5 and answer questions 43-45:

Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the LORD,³ "Remember, O LORD, how I have walked before you faithfully and with wholehearted devotion and have done what is good in your eyes." And Hezekiah wept bitterly.⁴ Before Isaiah had left the middle court, the word of the LORD came to him:⁵ "Go back and tell Hezekiah, the leader of my people, 'This is what the LORD, the God of your father David, says: I have heard your prayer and seen your tears; I will heal you. 2 Kings 20:2-5

43. What does Hezekiah ask God to remember (v. 3)?

44. When we pray for God to act through the promises of the New Covenant, what do we ask God to remember?

45. Why did God decide to heal Hezekiah (v. 5)?

⁹ Poultice is a substance spread on a cloth and then applied to the skin.

Hezekiah's prayer could be another way of saying, "I have feared You rightly O LORD. I followed You faithfully and wholeheartedly; I was careful to do Your will."

Be open to God's healing, mending and sovereign rule in all areas of your life. Be open to change, transformation, improvement and renewal. God is calling; be prepared to answer correctly.

Pharaoh said, "Who is the LORD, that I should obey him and let Israel go? I do not know the LORD and I will not let Israel go." Exodus 5:2

Read Exodus 5:2 and answer questions 46-49:

46. When Moses and Aaron first appeared before Pharaoh about releasing the Israelites, what was Pharaoh's response?

47. Why did Pharaoh not have a good excuse for recognizing the LORD and obeying His command delivered by Moses and Aaron (Romans 1:14-32)?

48. What was the condition of Pharaoh's heart?

49. Do you think God would have been glorified if Pharaoh had listened and immediately released a million or more slaves from his work force? Yes No Maybe (Circle One)
Why or Why not?

In Pharaoh's pride, he would not recognize God's authority and willingly fulfill the purpose that God had for him. He did not have any kind of excuse for his disobedience because the Bible tells us that *since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities-- his eternal power and divine nature-- have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse* (Romans 1:20). God had graciously given Pharaoh great power. He could have used it for good, i.e. God's purposes, but instead he used his station on this earth for his own selfish motives. He wanted to keep the Israelites enslaved for his greed, wealth and power.

God does not want anyone to perish, but He desires everyone to come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9). He is patient with you, me and *even* Pharaoh. He sent Moses to Pharaoh five times with five different plagues. The result was always the same – Pharaoh kept hardening his heart.

By the sixth plague, Pharaoh had come under God's righteous judgment and became a vessel of wrath. He would not be given any more opportunities for repentance. God began hardening Pharaoh's heart as He told Moses He would (Exodus 4:21-23). God is all-knowing (omniscient); He is perfect in knowledge past, present and future. He knew that Pharaoh had a hard heart and that he would continue to harden it.

God is also sovereign. His will and purposes will stand whether we choose to be part of His plan or not. God's glory is never at risk; He *will* be glorified. However, the man or woman who refuses God is at risk of severe judgment.

The apostle Paul is making this point in Romans 9. He is emphasizing God's ability to move and act with total freedom. Paul does not mention the fact that Pharaoh had initially hardened his own heart because he is writing about God's sovereign choice in all matters, great or small.

Paul does not mean that God randomly and with no thought dispenses mercy and judgment. This would be totally out of God's character. The LORD is a God of order (Mark 6:39-41), justice (Jeremiah 9:23-24) and wisdom (Psalm 104:24).

In addition, Paul concludes this chapter by saying that God rejected the Israelites because *they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the "stumbling stone."* (Romans 9:32). Ultimately, it is our responsibility to answer God's call for salvation and purpose. In other words, God does the calling, we must do the answering.

As disciples, we aim to win hearts to follow Jesus. We are not God and have no way of knowing whether a heart will soften or remain hard. God will tell us how to work with someone and what to say and do. He will also tell us where to spend our time and energy and when to move away from certain relationships.

See answer sheet for self-awareness questions 50-53 to answer.

Lesson 12: Fear the Lord (Day Four) *Action Required*

We would not be told that our faith must be accompanied by action if we did not have the ability to act. We would not be commanded to be self-controlled if we did not have the ability to control ourselves. Our life and future *does* rest on our heart and subsequent actions.

Christianity is **not** fatalism. Fatalism is a philosophical doctrine that declares that all events are predetermined (prearranged) so that we are powerless to alter our destiny. A fatalistic attitude or person is one who believes that he is powerless to influence his own actions. He thinks that he is powerless to do anything other than what he does.

When faced with difficulty, a fatalist will **not** put forth any kind of effort or action. Hence, an addict with this attitude will not try to affect his destructive behavior because he believes he cannot. This person will not understand the power of prayer either; he thinks that it will not make any difference. He does not understand that God wants us to pray and will respond to requests that honor Him.

God is sovereign and in control of everything. In His supremacy, He made us with the ability to think and determine our actions. This ability that God gave us does not alter His command and power in the least. He is still the Creator, and we are still the creature. The Bible makes it clear how this relationship works. Be mindful that it is not an equal relationship. God has no equals. He is the absolute, Supreme Being.

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. Proverbs 9:10

54. Read Proverbs 9:10. How do you become wise?

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow his precepts have good understanding. To him belongs eternal praise. Psalm 111:10 (precept - law, instruction, rule)

55. Read Psalm 111:10. What is the action required in fearing the LORD properly?

Let us look more closely at what it means to fear the LORD. There are several Hebrew words in the Old Testament that express fear, terror or being afraid. Yare (יָרֵא) is the word that is translated *fear* in Deuteronomy 10:12, referenced later, and used elsewhere in the Old Testament.

Definition: Notice these definitions vary depending on the Hebrew verb forms: Qal, Niph'al, Piel. Yare (יָרֵא), fear, is a verb meaning Qal: **1.** *fear, be afraid*; **2.** *stand in awe of*, **3.** *fear, reverence, honor* Niph'a: **1.** *be fearful, dreadful* **2.** *cause astonishment and awe*: of Yahweh himself; *wonderful, glorious things*, of Messianic king; of Yahweh himself. **3.** *inspire reverence, godly fear and awe*: **a.** as attribute of God; **b.** of the name of Yahweh. **c.** of sacred things; place of theophanies (visible manifestation of God). Piel: *make afraid, terrify*, with acc.

The English noun *awe* is used three times in defining the Hebrew word fear.¹⁰ Awe is an emotion of mixed reverence, dread and wonder. It is fearful veneration or respect. Its archaic (ancient, old) use meant it was the power to inspire reverence or fear.

The verb dread (dreadful) is also used to define yare (יָרֵא). This word means to be in great fear of and to hold in reverence or awe. It also means to anticipate with alarm, anxiety or reluctance.

The meaning of the English verb fear is similar to the Hebrew word. It means to be filled with fear; to be frightened. The second meaning is to be afraid of; dread. The third meaning of the word is to feel reverence or awe for someone or something. Thus, having reviewed the various meanings of the word fear, we offer the following definition of fear of the Lord:

Definition: Fear of the Lord is defined as a mix of reverence, dread and wonder. It is fearful veneration or respect. Its archaic (ancient, old) use meant it was the power to inspire reverence or fear. Fearing the Lord also means being afraid of offending God. Fear of God originates in love. We care for the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit so much that we want to serve Him and we experience true anxiety in failing Him.

Lesson 12: Fear the Lord (Day Five) *Fearing the Lord Today*

And now, O Israel, what does the LORD your God ask of you but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul,¹³ and to observe the LORD's commands and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good? Deuteronomy 10:12-13

56. Read Deuteronomy 10:12-13. Speaking for God, Moses asks Israel to fear the LORD and gives a four part definition of how this is to be done. List the 4 ways of fearing the LORD:

¹⁰ English words defined by Riverside Webster's New College Dictionary.

Read Isaiah 11:1-3 and answer questions 59-60:

A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.² The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him-- the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD--³ and he will delight in the fear of the LORD. Isaiah 11:1-3a

58. Who is our model and the real Person this passage is describing?

59. What are some ways that *you* can follow in Jesus' steps in living and delighting in the fear of the LORD?

His pleasure is not in the strength of the horse, nor his delight in the legs of a man;¹¹ the LORD delights in those who fear him, who put their hope in his unfailing love. Psalm 147:10

60. Read Psalm 147:10. Who does the LORD delight in?

God is not pleased with those who rely on their own talents and strengths. He enjoys the saints who depend on Him and look for His loving answer and provision. This is not to say that we do not use our talents and gifts, it means that we use them in the way God directs us. When we do not follow the Holy Spirit's guidance, we dishonor and disrespect God. We have done wrong.

Teach me your way, O LORD, and I will walk in your truth; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name. Psalm 86:11

61. Read Psalm 86:11. Can God teach and enable you to fear Him? Yes No (Circle One)

62. Pray now for God to teach and enable you to have an undivided heart that fears His name.

How great is your goodness, which you have stored up for those who fear you, which you bestow in the sight of men on those who take refuge in you.²⁰ In the shelter of your presence you hide them from the intrigues of men; in your dwelling you keep them safe from accusing tongues. Psalm 31:19-20 (Read and meditate on Genesis 22:12; Psalm 33:18-22, 103:11-13, 17, 112:1.)

63. Read Psalm 31:19-20 and the additional scripture verses listed. List three blessings received for fearing God properly?

Read 1 John 4:16-21 and answer questions 65-66:

And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him.¹⁷ In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him.¹⁸ There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.¹⁹ We love because he first loved us.²⁰ If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen.²¹ And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother. 1 John 4:16-21

64. Why will we have confidence on the day of judgment with no fear of punishment (v. 17)?

65. Now that you have studied the “fear of God,” what do you think this passage is talking about when the apostle John says that *the one who fears is not made perfect in love* (v. 18)?

---End Lesson 12---

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS Lesson 12
CLI Disciple of Christ Study: Fear the Lord

Return your answers to your Discipler for discussion and review. Include a personal letter with your answers. This study is designed to forge a close, yet professional, friendship between you and your Discipler. Even short notes help bridge the distance and connect hearts in Christ.

Name: _____ Number: _____ Date: _____

Name of Institution: _____ Street address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Lesson 12: Fear the Lord (Day One) *Understanding Sin*

1. What does the apostle Paul say about *his* state of perfection (vs. 12-13)?

2. What is Paul’s plan of action since he has not yet been made perfect (vs. 12-14)?

3. Does Paul consider himself a mature Christian (v. 15)? Yes No (Circle One)

4. Would you consider yourself a mature Christian? Why or why not? _____

5. How does Paul describe those who *live as enemies of the cross of Christ* (vs. 18-19)?

6. Who is watching our progress, empowering us and will ultimately transform our lowly bodies into glorious ones (vs. 20-21)? _____

7. When we wrong another person in any way, how does God view those actions (v. 6a)?

8. What are some ways that we might not act rightly toward another person?

9. What is the remedy for unfaithfulness (disloyalty, untrustworthiness) to the LORD in the Old Testament and the New Testament (v. 7-8)? (Read 1 John 1:8-9 and Luke 19:8)

10. What is one surefire (guaranteed) way **not** to prosper (v. 13a)? _____

11. How are you assured of finding mercy (v. 13b)? _____

Lesson 12: Fear the Lord (Day Two) *Fearing Man*

12. _____ is the man who always _____ the LORD, but he who _____ his heart falls into _____ (v. 14).

13. Read Isaiah 11:2-3a and fill in the blanks. The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him- the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the _____ of the LORD--³ and he will delight in the _____ of the LORD.

14. What are two things all men and women are responsible for (v. 13)?

(1. _____) (2. _____)

15. Why should we take care to fear God and keep His commandments (v. 14)?

16. Why did Peter stop eating and having fellowship with Gentile believers (v. 12b)?

17. Why do you think Peter was afraid of those belonging to the circumcision group?

18. Did Paul fear man in this particular circumstance (v. 11)? Yes No (Circle One)

19. Explain how Paul and Peter's involvement encourages you in this situation:

20. Think about your own life. Who or what group do you fear and why? _____

21. From your answer in 20, what will you do about this particular fear? _____

22. Why do you think the fear of humans can be a snare or trap? _____

23. How can you be protected from the snare of fearing others (v. 25b)? _____

24. Have you ever heard these kind of false words ringing in your ears? Yes No (Circle One)

25. What will *you* do to overcome the fear of appearing foolish? _____

26. Read Galatians 1:10. Whose approval should we try to win? _____

27. What does Jesus tell us in Luke 14:11 about prideful people who exalt themselves?

28. Read Matthew 11:29. How do we learn gentleness, humility and find rest for our souls?

29. Prayerfully consider the various aspects of fear of humans and confess it as sin. Pray and ask God to help you to destroy the fear of man and replace it with the fear of Him in Christ Jesus.

I have confessed any fear of people as sin and prayed for help: Yes No (Circle One)

30. After meditating on the above verses, please share how God encouraged you:

Lesson 12: Fear the Lord (Day Three) *The Heart Condition*

31. Write the reason that the apostles were completely amazed (v. 52)? _____

32. What did the disciples not understand about the loaves (See Mark 6:38-44)?

33. In what way do you think that the disciple's hearts were hardened?

34. Is there any area of your heart that is hardened toward God? Yes No (Circle One)

If yes, what will you do about it? _____

35. Does the fact that the apostles, Jesus' closest companions, had hard hearts at times encourage or discourage you? Yes No (Circle One) Why or why not?

36. List the date or approximate time when you trusted Jesus as your personal Savior. Look back on your life from that time and list some of the ways that you have changed.

37. Do the changes encourage or discourage you? Why or why not?

38. What kind of changes or transformation in your character or lifestyle do you desire? Why?

39. What does your addiction or your “little” bad habit say of your relationship with Jesus?

40. What does the apostle Paul tell Christians they have been set free from (v. 18a)?_____

41. What are Christians now slaves to (v. 18b)?_____

42. How should you offer the parts of your body (v. 19c)?_____

43. Read 2 Kings 20:7. What was the process for Hezekiah to be healed?

43. What does Hezekiah ask God to remember (v. 3)?_____

44. When we pray for God to act through the promises of the New Covenant, what do we ask God to remember?_____

45. Why did God decide to heal Hezekiah (v. 5)?_____

46. When Moses and Aaron first appeared before Pharaoh about releasing the Israelites, what was Pharaoh’s response?_____

47. Why did Pharaoh not have a good excuse for recognizing the LORD and obeying His command delivered by Moses and Aaron (Romans 1:14-32)? _____

48. What was the condition of Pharaoh's heart? _____

49. Do you think God would have been glorified if Pharaoh had listened and immediately released a million or more slaves from his work force? Yes No Maybe (Circle One)

Why or Why not? _____

50. List the addiction or behavior in your character that you would like changed:

51. How were you able to recognize this particular sin problem? Or what would have to happen for you to see the danger in your behavior? _____

52. Have you ever tried to work on this addiction or behavior in the past? What happened?

53. What are the risks to you, your relationship with God, or other people, if this problem or behavior continues? _____

Lesson 12: Fear the Lord (Day Four) *Action Required*

54. Read Proverbs 9:10. How do you become wise? _____

55. Read Psalm 111:10. What is the action required in fearing the LORD properly?

Lesson 12: Fear the Lord (Day Five) *Fearing the Lord Today*

56. Read Deuteronomy 10:12-13. Speaking for God, Moses asks Israel to fear the LORD and gives a four part definition of how this is to be done. List the 4 ways of fearing the LORD:

(1. _____) (3. _____)
(2. _____) (4. _____)

57. According to Acts 9:31, how did the early church or Christians live? _____

58. Who is our model and the real Person this passage is describing? _____

59. What are some ways that *you* can follow in Jesus' steps in living and delighting in the fear of the LORD? _____

60. Read Psalm 147:10. Who does the LORD delight in? _____

61. Read Psalm 86:11. Can God teach and enable you to fear Him? Yes No (Circle One)

62. I pray for God to teach and enable me to have an undivided heart that fears His name.
Yes No (Circle One)

63. Read Psalm 31:19-20 and the additional scripture verses listed. List three blessings received for fearing God properly? (1. _____

(2. _____) (3. _____)

64. Why will we have confidence on the day of judgment with no fear of punishment (v. 17)?

65. Now that you have studied the "fear of God", what do you think this passage is talking about when the apostle John says that *the one who fears is not made perfect in love* (v. 18)?

Next: Lesson 13: The Holy Spirit

Rev 4/1/2016

Advancing Christ's Light in Prisons

