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“HOWDY PARTNER”

LESSON 1 ■ For week ending April 3, 2021

Whomever we align or partner ourselves with has a drastic impact on our thoughts, behaviors, and even our lives. Everyday—as our eyes slowly open from a long night of restful slumber or restless anxiety—we choose how the day will proceed quickly and simply by our thought alignment. Even the worst of days physically, can still be manageable when we partner our spirit with the Holy Spirit. Regrettably, all too often when the day starts off bad, our spirit partners with negativity, murmuring, and dread.

– Deaconess Kimberley Combs

KEY TEXT: *“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy-laden and overburdened, and I will cause you to rest. [I will ease and relieve and refresh your souls.] Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am gentle (meek) and humble (lowly) in heart, and you will find rest (relief and ease and refreshment and recreation and blessed quiet) for your souls. For My yoke is wholesome (useful, good-not harsh, hard, sharp, or pressing, but comfortable, gracious, and pleasant), and My burden is light and easy to be borne”* (Matthew 11:28-30, AMPC).

1. When God is your partner, the undulations (wave-like motion) of life are growing pains for maturing through Christ.

- » When one is strongly partnered with God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, their strength arises from the deep roots of the faithfulness of His Word (Romans 8:28).
- » When God is your partner—He WILL work all things out! A great example of this is the relationship Abraham had with God (Galatians 3:9). How is Abraham described in this passage?
- » Discuss the meaning of Jesus’ invitation to take His yoke upon you.

2. When we partner ourselves with our fellow believers, there is a sense of unity and comradery that strengths us both physically and spiritually.

- » It is understood that not only are we not alone, we are covered by the prayers of our brothers and sisters.
- » Just one phone call or text to anyone in the Body of Christ (our spiritual family) and we are covered with love and encouragement! Read I John 1:3 and Philippians 1:3-5.

3. When we partner with anything or anyone carnal, worldly, and/or unrighteous, it becomes immediately clear that our countenance changes: the inflection in our voice is altered and our attitude descends into darkness.

- » When a person is unequally yoked with someone contrary to their walk in Christ, strife ensues (follows in pattern) and relationships are hurt or even destroyed (II Corinthians 6:14-15; I Corinthians 10:19-21; Proverbs 29:24).

4. To be partnered with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, means that we are yoked with the One who has all of the answers.

- » He has our Provision (Philippians 4:19). He has our Healing. He has our Deliverance. He has our Redemption. He has an abundance of strength to give us when we are weak (II Cor. 12:9,10).
- » Partnered with the *true source* of anything we could ever want and/or need, we have blessed assurance, hope, and faith that God will direct us in wisdom towards His divine will for our lives (John 14:8-14).
- » **How do you know to whom you are yoked?** Our thoughts and behaviors are indicators of our partner. Sometimes we many begin our day yoked up with Christ, but by mid-morning we have removed His yoke and put on the worldly yoke. Be mindful of your choices (I Peter 1:13-16).

“IN SEARCH OF SOPHIA”

LESSON 2 ■ For week ending April 10, 2021

Behold—the unlimited beauty of Sophia, as she is pure and peace-loving, gentle and merciful, sincere and not partial, and willing to listen. Although the answer to finding Sophia is simple, the search is not easy; for she is valued beyond precious jewels and to seek her out will require effort. She is not a fruit, nor is she a gift, Sophia is a spirit. Sophia is the Greek word for Wisdom! The Holy Spirit gives Wisdom to those that are His; however, Sophia comes with a price.

– Deaconess Kimberley Combs

KEY TEXT: “*But the wisdom from above is first pure [morally and spiritually undefiled], then peace-loving [courteous, considerate], gentle, reasonable [and willing to listen], full of compassion and good fruits. It is unwavering, without [self-righteous] hypocrisy [and self-serving guile]*” (James 3:17, AMP).

1. There is the *wisdom of man*, which is worldly and subject to error, and there is the *wisdom from above*—which is divine and pure (James 3:14-17).

- » Where does this *wisdom from above* come from (Proverbs 2:4-7)?
 - » Discuss the difference between man's wisdom and the wisdom of God.
 - » The flesh cannot—on its own—understand nor function in the *wisdom from above*, thus it must submit to God and be obedient to His requirements (Job 28:12,20-23,28).
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2. Wisdom (Sophia) is not what you would think.

- » Wisdom is not one of the Fruits of the Spirit found in Ephesians 5:22-23, nor is she, in her entirety, found in the gifts (I Corinthians 12:8).
 - » A “message/word of wisdom” is the gift.
 - » Wisdom is a manifestation of the Spirit of God.
 - » Read and discuss Deuteronomy 34:9 and Isaiah 11:2.
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3. Wisdom expresses her feelings and conditions in Proverbs 1:20-33.

- » Wisdom has boundaries, she calls out to the people with instructions, and if they do not heed to her voice, she allows for their calamity.
 - » Many times, we have prayed for *wisdom*, only to go our own way instead. In doing so, we put ourselves in unjustified situations (Proverbs 21:2).
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4. *Wisdom from above* comes from God alone; therefore, we must have a relationship with the Father in order to access this power source (Isaiah 55:9).

- » James 1:4-5 says we can ask for *wisdom*, but watch out, there is a condition identified in James 4:6.
 - » **JAMES 1:4-5; 4:6**, (4) “*But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be [a]perfect and complete, lacking nothing. (5) If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him...4:6*, (6)“*But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: “God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.”*”
-

5. We receive *wisdom from above* in the same way we grow in Christ (John 15:1-7).

- » As long as we abide (remain in Him, unmovable) in Christ and He in us, we are continually connected to the Source for everything we need or desire.
- » *Wisdom from above* comes only through the sacrifice of our earthly wisdom, thoughts, feelings, and/or beliefs (II Corinthians 10:5).

“SOMETHING’S GOTTA GIVE!”

LESSON 3 ■ For week ending April 17, 2021

The closer we grow through Christ into what God has purposed to be, we inevitably find that there is a cost to be paid. Yes, salvation is free and His Grace is freely offered to us continually; however, in order to form these deep roots of faith and maturity in love, *something's gotta give!*

– Deaconess Kimberley Combs

KEY TEXT: "He must increase, but I must decrease. He must grow more prominent; I must grow less so" (John 3:30, AMPC).

1. God’s Word tells us emphatically that we are created in the image of God.

- » **GENESIS 1:26,27**, “Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” 27 So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.”
- » Interestingly though, we are a mere image—not a replica—of God.
- » We are given a glimpse of who we are to be and how we should look by the example that Jesus set before us, but the end result will take much effort and sacrifice (I John 2:15-17).
- » Discuss the lust of the flesh (people), the lust of the eyes (possessions), and the pride of life (positions/power) that we struggle with during our lives.

2. It could be said by some that the "lust for people, possessions, and/or power" means nothing to them because they have "outgrown such immaturity".

- » Fair enough, let's look elsewhere. Read Proverbs 6:16-19.
- » Six things the Lord hates, indeed seven are an abomination to Him.
- » Break down and discuss these 7 sins and how they have infiltrated the Church even masquerading as *religious spirits*.

3. What would cause a long-time believer in Christ to behave in such abominable ways against their brother or sister?

- » More often than not, the cycle begins with hurt. Offense leads to anger. Anger leads to resentment, bitterness to pride, pride to unforgiveness, and ultimately—HATE.
- » A hurt that is not transformed inwardly (forgiven in our hearts), will be transferred outwardly through our words and actions (Proverbs 18:19; Matthew 12:34).

4. Carnality is an enemy of the Spirit that we face every day of our lives.

- » **CARNALITY** (noun) – *Pertaining to flesh; fleshly; sensual; opposed to spiritual; as carnal pleasure.*
- » The more of our fleshly selves that we retain due to justifications and/or excuses, the less room we have available for the Holy Spirit to grow and increase in us (Romans 8:13).

5. Within all of us, lying beneath the surface of what we allow others to see, are hidden areas in which we have not fully surrendered to the Father.

- » That which is not fully surrendered to God, becomes fair play for the enemy to manipulate and control (James 4:7).
- » Submitting to God—deals with this flesh. Resisting the enemy—deals with the spirit.
- » Our flesh must decrease so that the Spirit of the Living God can increase and fight our battles for us! Read Philippians 4:13.

“WHO’S YOUR ASSIGNMENT?”

LESSON 4 ■ For week ending April 24, 2021

Have you ever been around someone who just seemed to rub you the wrong way? Maybe it's their mannerisms, the way they talk, the way they act, their attitude, or perhaps nothing in particular. They are just like nails to a chalkboard to you. Welcome to your ASSIGNMENT! These people are placed in our little worlds to shake us up, rattle our cages, and ultimately reveal in us areas that need assessed.

– Deaconess Kimberley Combs

KEY TEXT: *“Iron sharpens iron; so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend” (Proverbs 27:17, AMPC).*

1. Assignments come in many shapes and forms because of the unique personalities we all possess.

- » Just as no person is exactly like another (including identical twins), no assignment is exactly like another.
- » Let's talk about *The Secret Assignment* (Acts 16:16-18).
- » **ACTS 16:16-18**, *“Now it happened, as we went to prayer, that a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much profit by fortune-telling. 17 This girl followed Paul and us, and cried out, saying, “These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation.” 18 And this she did for many days. But Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, “I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.” And he came out that very hour.”*
- » What was Paul's assignment in this portion of Scripture (Proverbs 27:21)?
- » Praise from another is a temptation the enemy uses to reveal what is in our heart.

2. There’s another type of assignment which is more common to us in life, these are the Sandpaper Assignments.

- » Now, let's discuss this assignment that most of us encounter frequently. The person(s) in our life that causes our eyes to squint and our teeth to clench tightly when their name is mentioned.
- » How easy is it to blame the "Assigned Person" in our life for their faults, personality quirks, and shortcomings, all the while overlooking the true purpose for the assignment (Matthew 7:1-3).

3. God places us together with some people in order to buff away the sharp edges of our own life.

- » These are affectionately called SANDPAPER MOMENTS...LOL!
- » There can be a lot of heat (friction) during these moments and one may be tempted to blow things out of proportion or context.
- » However, when Light (revelation of the purpose) is introduced, then the SANDPAPER MOMENT is fleeting (Acts 15:39-40).
- » **ACTS 15:39-40**, *“Then the contention became so sharp that they parted from one another. And so Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus; (40) but Paul chose Silas and departed, being commended by the brethren to the grace of God.”*
- » What happened after the two parted ways?



4. In rare occasions, two completely different personalities are assigned to each other in order to bring about balance.

- » For example, one may be *too hard*, and the other *too soft*.
- » While there may be a heated moment from time to time, eventually these two people will learn how to communicate their feelings or ideas in a healthy manner (Proverbs 27:6).
- » **PROVERBS 27:6**, *“Faithful are the wounds of a friend, But the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.”*

“THE SECRET PLACE OF PRAYER”

Lesson 5 ■ For week ending May 1, 2021

It is an awesome thing to witness the manifestation of God’s glory. When God moves, there is salvation and healing, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit operate freely in the Church. The way to see more of this manifestation of God’s power is to understand the ministry of prayer. It is in the secret place of prayer that God goes to work on behalf of those who put their trust in Him.

KEY TEXT: *“He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in Him will I trust”* (Psalms 91:1,2).

1. Jesus taught some very important principles on how to be effective in ministry. He gave warning to those who do all they do just to be seen of men.

- » Discuss the power that comes from praying to the Father in secret as you read Matthew 6:5,6.
- » A *prayerless* Christian is a *powerless* Christian.
- » Did Jesus practice this principle in His own life (Mark 6:45,46)?

2. One of the traps that we fall into as believers is to be so busy that we do not take the time to pray. If we are too busy to pray—then we are too busy!

- » It is in the place of prayer that we receive and release the power of God into every area of our lives and ministries.
- » What can we accomplish through prayer (Mark 11:22-24; John 14:11-14)?

3. Prayer should be the number one priority in all that we do. This is something that the Apostles had to recognize as the Early Church began to grow and the demands of ministry became greater (Acts 6:1-4).

- » Prayer was not something that could be put off until all the work was done.
- » Prayer—and the ministry of God’s Word—are the work!
- » Why was prayer so important to the Apostles?
- » Read Psalms 143:8; John 16:12,13; and Matthew 10:27.

4. Daniel was a man that was known for his faithfulness to God in prayer. In fact, this was the only thing the presidents and princes could find to use against him (Daniel 6:5-9).

- » Daniel did not pray just to be in defiance of this decree, he prayed in faithfulness to God just as he had always done before (Daniel 6:10).
- » Daniel dwelt in the secret place of the Most High, and God moved on his behalf in the time of trouble (Daniel 6:16,19-23). When we seek God in secret, He will reward us openly!
- **DANIEL 6:16,19-23**, *“So the king gave the command, and they brought Daniel and cast him into the den of lions. But the king spoke, saying to Daniel, “Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you...19 Then the king arose very early in the morning and went in haste to the den of lions. 20 And when he came to the den, he cried out with a [a]lamenting voice to Daniel. The king spoke, saying to Daniel, “Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?” 21 Then Daniel said to the king, “O king, live forever! 22 My God sent His angel and shut the lions’ mouths, so that they have not hurt me, because I was found innocent before Him; and also, O king, I have done no wrong before you.” 23 Now the king was exceedingly glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no injury whatever was found on him, because he believed in his God.”*

"A GOD OF RESTORATION"

Lesson 6 ■ For week ending May 8, 2021

Throughout the Scriptures, we find that God has a plan to bring about a restoration of all things that have been lost as a result of the devastating effect of sin on mankind and the world. Although we have all sinned and fallen short of God's glory, He always stands willing and ready to restore us. God's hand of mercy is extended to all who will turn from their sinful ways and seek to be restored.

KEY TEXT: *"And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you"* (Joel 2:25).

1. Satan would like nothing more than for us to believe that because of the sin and failures of our past, we can never be restored to a right relationship with God.

- » The truth is that Jesus came *"to seek and to save that which was lost"* (Luke 19:10).
- » Consider the promise God made to His people in Joel 2:25-27.
- » Can God restore a life that has been devastated by years of sin? Notice what He said would happen in verses 28 and 29.

2. King David was a man who experienced first-hand what it was like to fall and then be restored by the power of God.

- » As you read Psalms 51:1-4, notice that the first thing David did in the process of restoration was to acknowledge his sin and repent.
- » Can we be restored to God without first turning from our sinful ways?
- » David *knew* and *acknowledged* that the restoration he needed in his life could only be found in God (Psalms 51:10-12; 23:3).

3. Perhaps the greatest example of God's restoration power is the story of the Prodigal Son found in Luke 15:11-24.

- » After the son had hit rock bottom and *"came to himself,"* what was his attitude?
- » Discuss the importance of humility when seeking to be restored.
- » The father in this story is a vivid picture of the way in which our Heavenly Father watches and waits for His children to return home so that He can restore them to the fellowship with joy (Luke 15:10).
- » LUKE 15:10, *"Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."*

4. Restoration with the Father can only come through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ the Son (John 14:6; Romans 5:1,2).

- » Jesus suffered, died, and resurrected so that we might be able to experience a total restoration and healing in our lives both naturally and spiritually.
- » Discuss this as you read Isaiah 53:4-6 and Luke 5:30-32.

“MAKING OURSELVES READY”

Lesson 7 ■ For week ending May 15, 2021

The Holy Scriptures reveal that when Jesus returns to this earth, He will be looking for His beautiful Bride to take her place at His side to rule in His kingdom. The Bride which Jesus is looking for is the Church, which will be made up of people that have made themselves ready for His coming. It is time to make preparation. Behold the Bridegroom cometh!

KEY TEXT: “Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready” (Revelation 19:7).

1. The concept that Jesus is a Bridegroom that will one day come back to earth to claim His Bride, is well-established in the Scriptures.

- » Discuss this as you read Matthew 25:1-13, John 3:28,29, and Luke 5:34,35.

2. Complacency is the enemy of our destiny in Jesus Christ.

- » There are too many who are dozing off into spiritual sleep because they lack the sense of urgency in regard to the coming of Jesus (Matthew 25:1-5).
- » Consider Paul’s exhortation to the Church in Romans 13:11-14.

3. For a bride, a very important part of being ready for her wedding day is being properly dressed. She must have her wedding dress on.

- » Our key text says, “His wife hath made herself ready.”
- » Discuss this preparation as you read Isaiah 52:1,2 and Revelation 19:8.

4. The Bride of Christ will be made up of those people who fulfill the scriptural requirements found in the Word of God—the Holy Bible.

- » Ephesians 5:25-27 explains that it is by “*the washing of water by the Word*” that we are cleansed and made mature.
- » God’s Word will remove any spot or blemish that defiles us.
- » Right now is the time for the Bride to sit in front of the mirror of God’s Word so that she can be sure that everything is in place (James 1:21-25).
- » According to Revelation 14:1-5, what 2 things *will not* be found in the Bride of Jesus?
- » REVELATION 14:1-5, “*Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father’s name written on their foreheads. 2 And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps. 3 They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth. 4 These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb. 5 And in their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God.*”

5. It is an abiding love for Jesus that should motivate us to be ready and waiting when He returns. His Bride will love Him for who He is, not just what He can do for her.

- » Our love and desire for Him should grow stronger each day (Joshua 22:5).
- » His Bride will be found diligently doing His will (John 14:23).

“SHARPENING OUR SWORD”

Lesson 8 ■ For week ending May 22, 2021

In the Bible, the Word of God is compared to a sharp two-edged sword. It is a part of the armor and weaponry that we as believers have been given to use in our battle against the forces of spiritual darkness. We must endeavor to develop and harness the power of this weapon in our lives. How? Through disciplined study and faithful obedience to the Word of God. The more we use this Sword, the sharper it becomes in our hand!

KEY TEXT: “*And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God*” (Ephesians 6:17).

1. What is the nature of the battle that we are fighting today? Read Ephesians 6:11,12.

- » It is no wonder that God gave us the most powerful weapon in existence to combat the enemy: *“the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.”*
- » Confirm further the effectiveness of the Word of God as you read Hebrews 4:12.

2. No warrior would ever go into battle without a thorough knowledge of the weapon that he is going to use.

- » In order to be successful, he would take time to be trained to use his sword skillfully.
- » He would be sure that his sword had been properly sharpened.
- » Apply this same principle to our need to be skillful in our use of the Word of God as you study Hebrews 5:11-14 and II Timothy 2:15.
- » It is the job of the Holy Spirit to help us remember the Words of Jesus, but how can He do His job if we don't read God's Word?
- » Read John 14:25,26.

3. From a very young age, Jesus applied Himself to become very skillful in His knowledge and use of the Word of God (Luke 2:42,46-52).

- » As Jesus prepared to enter into His ministry and was confronted by the enemy, He demonstrated for us the way in which the Word of God should be used to stop Satan's attack.
- » Discuss the skillfulness with which Jesus used the Word of God as you read Matthew 4:1-10.
- » Should we engage in discussions with Satan based on our own understanding?
- » Consider the example of Eve in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:1-6).

4. Another crucial part of our spiritual warfare is the battle for the souls of men. This battle is also won through skillful use of the Word of God.

- » Discuss the power of God's Word to stir up faith in unbelievers as you read Romans 10:13-17.
- » It is for this reason that we should seek continually to sharpen our knowledge of the Word of God (I Peter 3:15).
- » I PETER 3:15, *“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.”*
- » As we trust in the Holy Spirit, He will teach us how to effectively handle the Word of God (John 14:26).
- » JOHN 14:26, *“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.”*

“AN EXCELLENT SPIRIT”

Lesson 9 ♦ For week ending May 29, 2021

The way we live our lives should mirror what we believe about God. We are called to love the Lord with all our heart, soul, and mind. This means we give of ourselves for Him in an unsparing way. As His people, we will go above-and-beyond to do everything that we do as unto the Lord. The Holy Spirit within us will cause us to have an excellent spirit!

KEY TEXT: *“Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm” (Daniel 6:3).*

1. The most excellent Spirit of all is the Spirit of God. Consider the principle of Divine Law found in Ecclesiastes 3:14.

- » Everything that God does is done in a perfect way! This was demonstrated in the giving of His Son to be the perfect sacrifice for our sins (Romans 8:32).
- » Notice that God spared not when it came to our salvation. In other words, He did not keep anything back. He did not refrain from doing something. He did what needed to be done and He did it right.

2. Since God did not spare any expense to save us, we in turn should not be found guilty of serving the Lord sparingly.

- » Deuteronomy 6:5 tells us how we should serve the Lord. When we love Him in this way, we will serve the Lord with gladness!
- » We should strive to be the best at whatever we find to do because we know we are doing it as unto the Lord (Ephesians 6:5-8).

3. We are not saved by good works. We do good works because we are saved!

- » With that in mind think about this: The way we live as Christians should stand out from everyone else (John 13:35).
- » JOHN 13:35, *“By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”*
- » We have a higher calling in this world. We are here to represent Jesus, the King of kings and the Lord of lords.
- » This is what Jesus taught in Matthew 5:14-16.

4. Jesus taught about having an excellent spirit in His Sermon on the Mount.

- » He called for His people to live up to a higher standard than those of the world. Discuss this as you read Matthew 5:43-48.
- » When we have an excellent spirit as Christians, those around us in the world will notice and be affected in a positive way for Christ (Philippians 2:12-15).

5. As those aspiring to be the Bride of Christ, we must develop an excellent spirit.

- » This term comes from Daniel 6:1-3, *“It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom one hundred and twenty satraps, to be over the whole kingdom; 2 and over these, three governors, of whom Daniel was one, that the satraps might give account to them, so that the king would suffer no loss. 3 Then this Daniel distinguished himself above the governors and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king gave thought to setting him over the whole realm.”*
- » The word *excellent* here means *surpassing, extreme, extraordinary*.
- » Consider the example of Rebekah as a type of the Bride of Christ found in Genesis 24:17-20.
- » Someone once said, “The difference between *ordinary* and **extraordinary** is that little **extra**.”

“MY UNDEFILED IS BUT ONE”

Lesson 10 ❖ For week ending June 5, 2021

God’s desire is to have a special people unto Himself. They will be a holy people. The word *holy* means *sacred, set apart*. God’s Bride will be a people that sanctify themselves to Yahweh—and to Him alone! She will have nothing to do with other gods or any thing that is pagan or of pagan origin. She will do whatever it takes to please the One to whom she belongs: Jesus Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords.

KEY TEXT: “My dove, my undefiled is but one; she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bare her. The daughters saw her, and blessed her; yea, the queens and the concubines, and they praised her” (Song of Solomon 6:9).

1. Throughout the Bible, women are used in typology to represent churches.

- » Take a look at Song of Solomon 6:8,9.
- » The queens, concubines and virgins represent the vast number of churches and organizations that are a part of the kingdom of God.
- » Among all of these, God has His eye on one special lady that He desires to be His: *“My undefiled is but one.”*
- » Discuss God’s desire to have a special people as you read Deuteronomy 7:6 and Leviticus 20:26.

2. The thing that causes the Bride to stand apart is that she is undefiled. The word *undefiled* means *to be unsoiled or pure*.

- » In Hebrews 13:4, it is used to describe the marriage relationship.
- » Spiritually speaking, God is looking for a people who will be faithful to Him alone.
- » Revelation 14:4a, in reference to the Bride, says, *“These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins...”*
- » Will God accept just anyone or anything when it comes to choosing His Bride?

3. There is another woman found in the Scriptures declaring herself to be queen. She is found in Revelation 17:3-5.

- » Her name is Mystery, Babylon the Great.
- » Notice that one of her offenses is the sin of fornication. This is speaking of none other than the Roman Catholic Church.
- » It was in Rome that the truths of God’s Word were compromised by the church in order to accommodate the pagan practices of their day (Isaiah 1:21,22).
- » Rome was called the Mother of Harlots because of the influence she had on so many other churches that to this day share with her in her confusion and pollution.
- » Discuss the influence holidays such as Christmas and Easter have had on most of the kingdom of God—even though many of the practices associated with them are pagan in origin and have little to do with the Word of God (Jeremiah 10:2).

4. God is very clear about how He feels when it comes to our involvement or association with anything that has to do with false gods (Exodus 20:2-5).

- » In verse 5 He says, *“I the Lord thy God am a jealous God.”*
- » Discuss the way we are to deal with anything that would cause us to become defiled or unfaithful in our relationship with the Lord (Deuteronomy 7:5,6; II Corinthians 6:14-17).

“LET THE WORLD SEE JESUS”

Lesson 11 ■ For week ending June 12, 2021

The world in which we live is daily growing darker just as prophecy declares that it would; however, we as believers should not be in despair. When darkness is at its darkest, the light of Jesus can shine through us at its brightest! There must be a sense of urgency to lift up Jesus to those who are lost in the darkness of sin. Jesus is the only Light of Life! He is the hope of salvation!

KEY TEXT: *“Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee” (Isaiah 60:1,2).*

1. Isaiah declared that the *glory of the Lord* would be seen upon the people of God during a time of great darkness.

- » The glory that is seen upon God’s people is none other than the glory of Jesus Christ (John 1:14)!
- » Consider the prophecy of Isaiah 9:1,2 and its fulfillment in Matthew 4:13-17.

2. When the glory of the Lord arises upon your life—or, in other words, when you come to a true revelation of Jesus Christ—your very life will be transformed causing you to reflect the light that He has brought to you.

- » The Apostle Paul made this very clear in II Corinthians 4:1-6.
- » Expand upon his statement *“..we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord.”*

3. The calling of the church is to point this world to Jesus (I Peter 2:9; Ephesians 3:9).

- » Jesus—as the Light of the World—bestowed upon the church the responsibility to continue shining His Light in the world (Matthew 5:14-16).
- » Matthew 5:14-16, *“You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. 16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”*
- » Ask yourself this question: *“If someone was watching my life and following me, would I lead them to Jesus?”*

4. As Jesus prepared His disciples for His departure from this world, He prayed a prayer not only for them, but for all who would come to believe in Him.

- » Read part of this prayer (John 17:14-21).
- » JOHN 17:14-21, *“I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 15 I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. 16 They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 17 Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. 18 As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. 19 And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth. 20 “I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; 21 that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.”*
- » Discuss the ongoing mission of the church to stand as a visible witness of Jesus Christ to this world (Acts 2:32).
- » ACTS 2:32, *“This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses.”*

“RAPTURE: FACT OR FICTION?”

Lesson 12 ■ For week ending June 19, 2021

According to the Bible, there will be a rapture (from the Latin *rapio* which means *to seize or carry away*). This gathering mechanism will take place at the 7th Trump return of Jesus Christ when the Christians that are still living on this earth will be caught up together with the resurrected Christians to meet the Lord in the air.

KEY TEXT: “Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (I Thessalonians 4:17).

1. Considerable disagreement exists over whether the rapture will take place immediately prior to the 7 years of tribulation, at the middle, or at the end.

- » The first 3 ½ years of tribulation is when the Man of Sin tries to deceive the saints of God (Daniel 8:25); the second 3 ½ years is when God pours out His wrath on the earth (Matthew 24:21,22).
- » The Church of God teaches that the *catching away* will take place at the end of the 7 years.

2. The coming of the Lord at the 7th Trump is destined to be a magnificent event. There will be nothing secret about His return at the end of the last 7 years.

- » According to I Thessalonians 4:13-18, what will happen to believers still on the earth?
- » I Corinthians 15:51,52 confirms that this takes place at the “*last trump*” which we know is the 7th Trump (Revelation 11:15-18).

3. If anyone should know the truth about the return of Christ, it certainly should be Jesus, Himself.

- » In Matthew 24, our Lord set about to answer the three questions that His disciples asked in verse 3.
- » The first question concerned what He had just said about the destruction of the Temple. The second and third questions concern His second coming.
- » Jesus answers their questions in the following verses of Matthew 24:4-31.

4. This supernatural gathering of the saints will not be to whisk everyone off to heaven to escape the Tribulation.

- » It will be for the purpose of immediately fulfilling the scene of Revelation 19:11-21.
- » Discuss the Old Testament example of God supernaturally protecting the Israelites in Goshen while simultaneously pouring out His wrath—in the form of plagues—upon the wicked of Egypt (Exodus 12:12,13).
- » EXODUS 12:12-13, “*For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the Lord. 13 Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.*”

5. The scripture that emphasizes that the Lord is coming as a thief in the night, is there to urge the saints of God to maintain their righteousness before God.

- » Why? So that they will be prepared for His coming in power and glory (Revelation 16:15).
- » How should we approach the Last Days? (I Thessalonians 5:1-11).

“GOD CAN DO IT!”

Lesson 13 ❖ For week ending June 26, 2021

God delights in doing for us that which we cannot do for ourselves. All of us—at one time or another—are faced with hardship or sickness. The good news is that we serve a God who is well able to deliver and heal us. We don't always understand why we go through the things we do; however, we know that if we will trust the Lord, He will be our salvation. We must let our faith arise. With God all things are possible!

KEY TEXT: *“Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen” (Ephesians 3:20-21).*

1. Life can be a mystery. We wonder at times why we go through certain things, such as sickness and pain.

- » Jesus addressed this very issue in John 9:1-3.
 - » It may be that the struggle you are facing is the very thing God will use to bring glory to His Name.
 - » Discuss the reality that Jesus is still working miracles today (Hebrews 13:8).
 - » HEBREWS 13:8, *“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.”*
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2. Sometimes it is easier for us to believe that God will move on behalf of someone else, than it is to believe that He will meet our own needs!

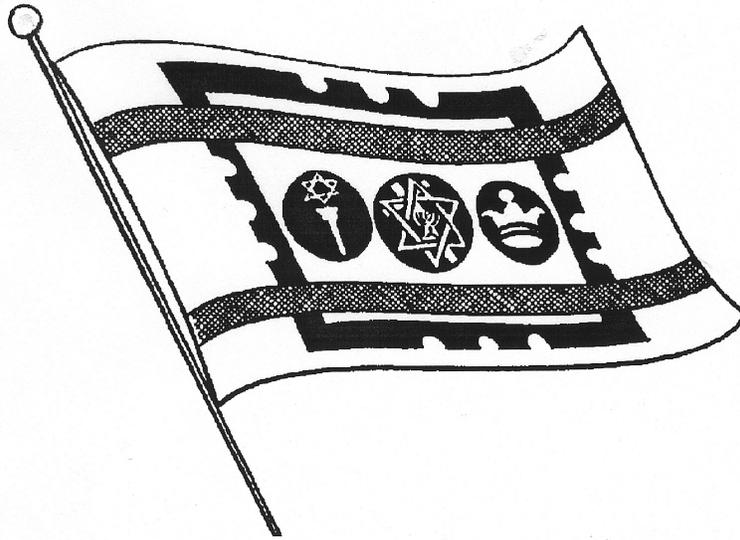
- » Someone once said, *“Faith is more than believing that He can move, it is KNOWING that He will!”*
 - » Consider this further as you read Mark 9:17-29.
 - » Is there any situation in our lives that God cannot take care of if we will only believe?
-

3. A miracle occurs when there is something that needs to happen which is beyond our human ability.

- » It is when we cry out to God in our weakness, “I can't,” that God moves in and says, “I can!”
 - » Discuss the great miracle which God performed for His people on the day they were trapped between the Red Sea and the pursuing armies of Egypt (Exodus 14:21-27).
-

4. Many of the great miracles that Jesus performed occurred on the Sabbath day.

- » Confirm this as you read the following passages: Matthew 12:10-13 and Luke 13:10-16.
- » The message of the Sabbath is that we must cease from our labors.
- » There are some things that we simply cannot accomplish by our works. Both salvation and healing are benefits that must come from God.
- » The New Testament Sabbath is symbolic of the rest that we receive from the Messiah (Matthew 11:28-30).
- » MATTHEW 11:28-30, *“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”*
- » The Sabbath is about us *not trying to do what we can't*, and by letting God *do what He can!*
- » Conclude by reading the words of Jesus in Mark 10:27, *“But Jesus looked at them and said, “With men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible.”*



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