

Character Building Supplement

Juniors II

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Preface

Rote memory as a method of instruction is often considered cruel. But the Scripture does teach us that we are to not only to “hold fast a form [or schema] of sound words” (1 Tim 1:13), but also to memorise Scriptures, for as David puts it: “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee” (Ps 119:11). Additionally, experience teaches us that the things, which we commit to memory in childhood are most likely to be retained in our lives for our lifetime.

It is for this reason that the catechism classes in PCC as with the best Reformed churches, emphasise rote memory. Of course, as far as possible, we would like to ensure that our children understand what they are memorising. But the fact is that the ability of the children to memorise is often ahead of their ability to understand (just as their ability to read is usually ahead of their ability to comprehend). Therefore, we will do well to encourage them and train them to memorise as soon as they are able, knowing full well that often the catechism and verses memorised at a young age will rest only on the surface of their heart. We do so believing that when God begins to work grace in their heart (which can be early in childhood), these words retained in their memories, will sink in deeply as a stone on a frozen lake sinks deep when the first sunshine of spring melts the ice. Did not the Lord teach us that one of the roles of the Holy Spirit is to bring to mind the things that we have learn (Jn 14:26)?

This new booklet on the theme of character building is designed for those in Primary 3 or 4 to use (after completing the first two levels of Bible History Catechism). Naturally character building cannot be taught simply by memorisation. But these verses will give a good foundation to our children as they work on building their character through experience and the application of the Word. We would recommend that the children memorise at least the answer to the question (text for before the ‘—’); and if they are able to and at the discretion of the fathers, memorise the supporting verse.

Parents, especially fathers, are urged to spend some time to explain the verses as well as to share some relevant experience that may be helpful for the children to understand and apply the verses to their own life. Additionally, I would recommend that the verses be marked out in the child’s personal Bible. This is so that if your child eventually forgets the exact reference for the verses learned, he might be able to locate it in his own bible without difficulty.

The teachers at the catechism classes on the Sabbath should be seen as playing a supplementary role in the instruction of your children. They will try to reinforce some lessons as well as to allow time for the children to discuss what they learned. They will also review the verses memorised by your child on one to one basis. I would also recommend that the children write (with parental supervision) a 100 word story essay on the theme of the lesson for the coming week as an additional exercise. But the teachers may exercise their discretion to assign something else.

Parents and teachers are of course encouraged to exercise discretion on the standard to set for each child. As children develop at different rates, the demands of memorising a whole page of Scripture may be too difficult for some. If this be the case, with your child, please indicate to the teacher which verses were memorised so that he can review those only with your child. Likewise writing an essay may be too difficult for some. Whatever the case may be, we must seek to make the learning experience and enriching rather than tortuous one. May the Lord bless our efforts and cause by His Spirit that the Word memorised and received may be mixed with faith in the hearts of our covenant children, that they may bear fruits to the glory of Christ our Lord.

—JJ Lim

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Lesson 1: LOVE

M1. Which is the greatest commandment?

To love God totally—“The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment” (Mark 12:29-30)

M2. Which is the second greatest commandment?

To love others as myself—“And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these” (Mark 12:29-31).

M3. What is the new commandment?

To love fellow believers as Christ love us—“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:34-35).

M4. Is love an important virtue?

Yes, for without love I am nothing—“Though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing]” (1 Corinthians 13:2b-3)

M5. Who must I love?

Because the Lord commands me to—“But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you” (Matthew 5:44).

M6. From whom should I learn how to love?

From the example of the Lord Jesus—“Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren” (1 John 3:16)

M7. How must I love?

With words and deeds—“But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? ¹⁸ My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth” (1 John 3:17-18).

M8. May I not dislike someone in church?

No, I must love all my brethren—“If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?” (1 John 4:20).

M9. What if someone irritates me, must I still love?

Yes, love covers the multitude of sins—“And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins” (1 Peter 4:8).

M10. Does this mean that love is blind?

No, “[Love] rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth” (1 Cor 13:6; cf. Lev 19:17)

Lesson 2: JOYFULNESS

M1. Who is joyful?

Every Christ must be joyful—“Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart” (Psalm 32:11).

M2. When should we be joyful?

At all times—“Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice” (Philippians 4:4).

M3. Where can true joy be found?

In the presence of God—“Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore” (Psalm 16:11).

M4. Why should I be joyful?

Because God has saved me—“I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness...” (Isaiah 61:10; cf. Rom 5:11)

M5. What attitude must I have to be joyful?

I must be meek and humble—“The meek also shall increase their joy in the LORD, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel” (Isaiah 29:19)

M6. What if I am going through a difficult time, can I be joyful?

Yes, because God is working grace in me—“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; ³ Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.” (James 1:2-4; cf. 1 Pet 1:6)

M7. My neighbours find enjoyment in the things of the world; can I join them?

No, I must never find joy in things displeasing to God—“Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment” (Ecclesiastes 11:9).

M8. Does being joyful means jesting and laughing at jokes?

No, it means being grateful to the Lord for all things—“For as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of the fool: this also is vanity” (Ecclesiastes 7:6)

M9. Can I be joyful at play?

Yes of course, I should be joyful at play—“A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones” (Proverbs 17:22).

M10. How can I be joyful at home and in school?

By “[doing] all things without murmurings and disputings” (Phil 2:14).

Lesson 3: PEACEABLENESS

M1. Does God require us to be peaceable?

Yes, He is the God of Peace, and therefore would have us to be peaceable—“Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another” (Rom 14:19).

M2. What does it mean to be peaceable?

It is to refuse to quarrel with anyone—“But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace” (Jas 3:17-18).

M3. But how can I be peaceable when others are quarrelsome?

I must not worry about others as long as I am peaceable—“If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men” (Rom 12:18).

M4. If my friends quarrel, what can I do?

I can try to be a peacemaker—“Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God” (Mt 5:9)

M5. How can I be peaceable towards those who do not agree with me?

By being humble and meek—“With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph 4:2-3; cf. 2 Tim 2:24-25)

M6. Is it important for me to be peaceable at home?

Yes, the Christian home must be peaceable—“Better is a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, than an house full of sacrifices with strife” (Prov 17:1).

M7. Is peace in the church important?

Yes, God is please when there is unity and peace in the church—“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!” (Ps 133:1).

M8. How can I promote peace in the church?

By refusing to quarrel with anyone and praying for peace—“Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it” (Ps 34:14); “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee” (Ps 122:6).

Lesson 4: FAITH

M1. What is faith?

Faith is believing—“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Heb 11:1).

M2. Is faith important?

Yes, for without faith we cannot please God—“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Heb 11:6).

M3. Is faith natural in all men?

No, the natural man has no faith—“And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins... For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God” (Eph 2:1, 8).

M4. Whom does God give faith to?

To His elect—“As many as were ordained to eternal life believed” (Acts 13:48b).

M5. Faith is believing, but what must we specifically believe?

We must believe in the Lord Jesus Christ—“Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified” (Gal 2:16).

M6. How can I grow in faith?

By hearing God’s Word and prayer—“Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom 10:17); “Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief” (Mk 9:24b).

M7. Are there false-believers or people who pretend to believe?

Yes, there are many in the world—“They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away” (Lk 8:13; cf. Mt 13:20-21; Act 8:13, 20-23; Acts 26:27-28).

M8. Is faith necessary in prayer?

Yes, God will not answer faithless prayers—“And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive” (Mt 21:22).

M9. Is faith necessary for the Christian life?

Yes, without faith we will be consumed by the world—“This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?” (1 Jn 5:4b-5).

Lesson 5: ATTENTIVENESS

M1. Are we commanded to be attentive (in our ears, eyes and heart)?

Yes; Solomon teaches us to be attentive— “My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings. Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart” (Prov 4:20-21).

M2. From whom can I learn attentiveness?

From the Lord Jesus who was the best example of attentiveness— “And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions” (Lk 2:46).

M3. Who must we be particularly attentive to?

We must be attentive especially to the Lord— “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me” (Jn 10:27; cf. v. 3-4).

M4. How can I exercise attentiveness towards the Lord?

By listening and receiving God’s Word gladly— “These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so” (Acts 17:11; cf. 1 Thes 2:13).

M5. Is it important to be attentive at the preaching of the Word?

Yes, for “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom 10:17).

M6. What if I already know what is being preached or taught?

I must still be attentive— “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall” (1Cor 10:12).

M7. Must I believe everything that I hear?

I must believe only what is according to the Bible— “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (1 Thes 5:21).

M8. What happens if I fail to be attentive?

If I fail to be attentive, I will not receive any blessing from God— “Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have” (Lk 8:18).

M9. How can I exercise attentiveness towards others?

By being slow to speak, but swift to hear— “Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath” (Jas 1:19).

Lesson 6: OBEDIENCE TOWARDS GOD

M1. Is obedience to God commanded in the Bible?

Yes; obedience to God is commanded everywhere in the Bible. For example: “Ye shall walk after the LORD your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him” (Deut 13:4; cf. Ecc 12:13).

M2. Must Christians obey God more than any other people in the world?

Yes; as God’s people we must especially obey Him—“Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine” (Ex 19:5; cf. Dt 7:9).

M3. From whom may you learn obedience?

From the Lord Jesus Christ especially—“Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered” (Heb 5:8).

M4. Is obedience important?

Yes; it is far more important than all religious acts of worship—“And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams” (1 Sam 15:22).

M5. What happens if you regard not the law of God?

My prayers will be hateful to God—“He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination” (Prov 28:9).

M6. Can you choose to obey some commandments but not others?

No; I must obey every commandment cheerfully with the Lord’s help—“Ye shall observe to do therefore as the LORD your God hath commanded you: ye shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left” (Deut 5:32).

M7. What can you do if you desire to be more obedient to God?

I must pray for more grace. I must pray like the Psalmist: “Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart” (Ps 119:34; cf. Ps 143:10).

M8. Can you have faith without obedience?

No; faith without obedience is dead—“But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves” (Jas 1:22; cf. v. 25).

M9. Can you love God without obeying Him?

No; to love God is to keep His commandments—“For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous” (1 Jn 5:3; cf. Jn 14:15).

Lesson 7: RESPECT & SUBMISSION

M1. Is respect for authority commanded in the Bible?

Yes; it is taught in the 5th Commandment—“Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise)” (Eph 6:1-2; cf. Ex 20:12).

M2. From whom can you learn respect?

From the Lord Jesus Christ especially—“And He [i.e. the Lord Jesus] went down with them [i.e. His earthly parents], and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them” (Lk 2:51a).

M3. In what areas must you obey my parents?

In all areas—“Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord” (Col 3:20; cf. Prov 1:8).

M4. What does the Bible say about talking back or being rude to your parents?

It is very hateful to God—“The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it” (Prov 30:17).

M5. Must you respect the elders or minister in the church?

Yes; the Bible teaches us to obey and respect them—“Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you” (Heb 13:17).

M6. Must you respect your civil government too?

Yes; for even if they are unbelievers they are appointed by God—“Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God” (Rom 13:1).

M7. Must you obey any authority which requires you to sin against God?

No; I must disobey whatever command which requires me to sin against God—“Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29).

M8. How should you regard those who are older than me in the church?

I must honour and respect them—“Rebuke not an elder [i.e. older man], but intreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren; The elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, with all purity” (1 Tim 5:1-2).

M9. What is one way of showing respect to the elderly?

I will rise up to greet them when they walk toward me—“Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man, and fear thy God: I am the LORD” (Lev 19:32).

M10. Do you need to submit to you peers in the church?

Yes; for the Bible says—“Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God” (Eph 5:21).

Lesson 8: HUMILITY

M1. Why must you be humble?

The Bible commands us to be humble for God hates pride—“Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble” (1Peter 5:5; cf. James 4:6)

M2. From whom can you learn humility?

From the Lord Jesus Christ especially—“⁵ Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: ⁶ Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: ⁷ But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: ⁸ And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Phil 2:5-8).

M3. How should you be humble?

I must regard others as more important than myself—“Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another” (Romans 12:10).

M4. Is being proud a sin?

Yes; for God hates pride—“An high look, and a proud heart, and the plowing of the wicked, is sin” (Prov 21:4).

M5. The world says “without pride we can have no success.” What does the Bible say?

The Bible says: “A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit” (Prov 29:23).

M6. Can a humble man do well in society?

Yes; it is the promise of God—“By humility and the fear of the LORD are riches, and honour, and life” (Prov 22:4; cf. Prov 15:33).

M7. Is it wrong to boast when I do well at anything?

If I boast rather than give God the glory, God will bring me low for my good—“And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted” (Mt 23:12).

Lesson 9: HONESTY

M1. From whom can I learn honesty?

From the Lord Jesus Christ—“For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth” (1 Pet 2:21-22).

M2. Is honesty in speech important?

Yes; God hate lies—“Lying lips are abomination to the LORD: but they that deal truly are his delight” (Prov 12:22; Eph 4:25).

M3. Is cheating also dishonest?

Yes; cheating is condemned in the Word of God—“A false balance is abomination to the LORD: but a just weight is his delight” (Prov 11:1).

M4. Is it right to pretend to be hardworking when daddy or my teacher is watching?

No; I must never pretend. I must fear God—“Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God” (Col 3:22).

M5. Is it alright to flatter or to exaggerate?

No; God hates flattering tongues—“The LORD shall cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaketh proud things” (Ps 12:3).

M6. Do we need to correct a falsehood or lie which is past?

Yes; if I told a lie, I must correct it with the truth—“And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.” (Acts 24:16; cf. 2 Cor 8:21).

M7. Is honesty the best policy in life?

It certainly is—for “The integrity of the upright shall guide them: but the perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them” (Prov 11:3; cf. Prov 19:1).

M8. Is it wrong to use bribes to get things done?

Yes, the world often use bribes, but Christians must resist such dishonest means—for says Moses: “Thou shalt not wrest judgment; thou shalt not respect persons, neither take a gift: for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous” (Deut 16:19).

Lesson 10: SELFLESSNESS & CONSIDERATENESS

M1. Is selflessness commanded in the Bible?

Yes, indeed—“Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.” (Phil 2:4; cf. 1Co 10:24).

M2. Who set the greatest example of selflessness?

The Lord Jesus Christ—“For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.” (2 Cor 8:9).

M3. What is it to be considerate?

It is to think for others and to try to be kind to them—“We them that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself” (Rom 15:1-3a).

M4. Does being considerate mean never provoking another person?

No, being considerate may sometimes require us to correct one another’s faults—“And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works” (Heb 10:24; cf. Rom 14:19).

M5. Is courtesy a Christian virtue?

Yes, being courteous is part of being considerate—“Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous” (1Pt 3:8).

M6. Do we need to be helpful to one another?

Of course, for Christ our Lord teaches us that we must serve one another—“If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another’s feet” (Jn 13:14).

M7. What does it mean to be helpful to one another?

It means bearing one another’s burdens—“Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ” (Ga 6:2).

M8. Give a couple of examples of being helpful and considerate?

Giving to the poor and showing hospitality—“Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality” (Ro 12:13).

M9. Should I be helpful even to those who may not be appreciative?

Yes, for the Lord teaches us that “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35).

Lesson 11: CONTENTMENT

M1. Is contentment commanded in the Bible?

Yes, it is commanded in the 10th commandment—“Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour’s” (Ex 20:17).

M2. Is contentment a very important Christian virtue?

Yes; for “godliness with contentment is great gain” (1 Tim 6:6; see also v. 7-10).

M3. Can I be poor and yet content?

Yes, absolutely! —“I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need” (Phil 4:11-12).

M4. From whom can we especially learn contentment in poverty?

From the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God—who says “The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head” (Mt 8:20).

M5. Is it always good to be poor rather than rich?

No; not necessarily—King Agur prays: “Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the LORD? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain” (Prov 30:8-9).

M6. Is contentment only about being poor or rich?

No; it has to do with our circumstance and reputation too. —The apostle Paul says: “Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God” (1 Cor 7:24), and “Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another” (Gal 5:26).

M7. How can we be encouraged to be content?

By remembering the Lord’s promise to be with us always—“Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Heb 13:5).

Lesson 12: GRATITUDE OR THANKFULNESS

M1. Is thankfulness commanded in the Bible?

Yes; it is commanded everywhere in the Bible. —For example, the apostle Paul says: “In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you” (1 Thes 5:18).

M2. Is gratitude very important?

Yes; when the Lord healed 10 lepers, only one came back to thank Him. The Lord was pleased with him, but not with the others. —He said: “Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger” (Mt 17:17-18).

M3. How should we express our gratitude to God?

By giving thanks in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ—“By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name” (Heb 13:15; cf. Rom 1:8; Col 3:17; Ps 100:4).

M4. Should we thank God for the friendship of fellow believers?

Yes, definitely. We should be like the apostle Paul who told the Philippians: “I thank my God upon every remembrance of you” (Phil 1:3).

M5. Is it important for us to give thanks before food?

Yes; our Lord Jesus Christ always give thanks before food. —For example, when He fed the 4,000, “he commanded the people to sit down on the ground: and he took the seven loaves, and gave thanks, and brake, and gave to his disciples to set before them” (Mk 8:6).

M6. Is thanking God with our voices the only way we should show gratitude to God?

No; we must live our Christian lives gratefully —the apostle Paul says: “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving” (Col 2:6-7); and “Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren” (Phil 3:16).

M7. Should we also show gratitude to our fellow men who did us good?

Yes; we should follow the example of godly men in the Bible,—such as David who told Solomon: “Show kindness unto the sons of Barzillai the Gileadite, and let them be of those that eat at thy table: for so they came to me when I fled because of Absalom thy brother” (1 Kgs 2:7).

Lesson 13: FORGIVENESS

M1. Why must we forgive one another?

Because God has forgiven us, —for as the apostle Paul commands: “be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you” (Eph 4:32).

M2. Whom must I forgive?

Anyone who comes to me repenting of a fault against me, —for the Lord Jesus says: “Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him” (Lk 17:3).

M3. How many times must I forgive my brother who sins against me?

As many times as he comes to ask for forgives. —When the apostle Peter asked: “Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?” (Mt 18:21); the Lord answered: “I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven” (Mt 18:21).

M4. What if my brother keeps repeating the same sin against me?

I must still forgive, for the Lord says: “And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him” (Lk 17:4).

M5. What if I refuse to forgive someone?

If I persist in unforgiveness, then I cannot be a child of God, —for the Lord says: “if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (Mt 6:14-15; cf. Mk 11-25-26).

M6. What someone who wronged me does not come up to apologise?

I must still bear no grudge and think not revenge, —for the Lord says: “Vengeance is mine” (Rom 12:19) and James says: “Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door” (Jms 5:9).

Lesson 14: ANGER

M1. Is anger always sinful?

No; because the Lord Jesus was angry but he did not sin (Mk 3:5; Heb 3:15), and the apostle Paul says: “Be ye angry, and sin not” (Eph 4:26a).

M2. When is anger sinful?

When it is selfish, unreasonable or excessive. —The Lord Jesus says: “Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment” (Mt 5:21-22a).

M3. Is it alright to remain angry for days for any reason?

No; for the devil will take advantage of me. —The apostle Paul says: “let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil.” (Eph 4:26b-27).

M4. What should I do if someone does something that irritates me?

I should exercise self-control, —for Solomon says: “He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city” (Prov 16:32).

M5. What if someone say something that hurt me?

I must try not to get angry, and try to overlook his words if possible, —for: “The discretion of a man deferreth his anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression” (Prov 19:11).

M6. What can I do to prevent angry quarrels with my friends?

By not responding to angry words with angry words, for: “A fool uttereth all his mind: but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards” (Prov 29:11).

M7. If I am quarrelling with someone, what can I do to stop the quarrel?

By speaking softly and gently, for: “A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger” (Prov 15:1).

M8. Is it important for me to quickly settle any disagreements I have with my friends?

Yes; for it can I must not let it grow out of control, —for as Solomon says: “The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water: therefore leave off contention, before it be meddled with” (Prov 17:14).

M9. If someone is angry with me, what can I do?

I must try to reconcile with him (Mt 5:23-24; 18:15); and a gift may help, for “A gift in secret pacifieth anger” (Prov 21:14).

Lesson 15: FAITHFULNESS & RESPONSIBILITY

M1. Is faithfulness the same as faith?

No; faith is believing, while faithfulness is being true to our promises and duties. —God is said to be faithful because He keeps His promises, so the Psalmists says: “I will sing of the mercies of the LORD for ever: with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations” (Ps 89:1).

M2. From whom may we especially learn faithfulness and responsibility?

From the Lord Jesus who was faithful to His Father—“Who [i.e. the Lord Jesus] was faithful to him [i.e. the Father] that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house” (Heb 3:2)

M3. What is it to be faithful servant to the Lord?

It is to make my life count for the Lord by making use of the talents He has given me, —for the master in the Lord’s Parable of the Talents said to his faithful servants: “Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord” (Mt 25:21, cf. v. 23)

M4. What is it to be faithful in my words?

It is to tell the truth: “A faithful witness will not lie: but a false witness will utter lies” (Prov 14:5).

M5. What is it to be faithful to fellow believers?

It is to be especially helpful to them, —for the apostle John commends Gaius: “Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers [i.e. though they are strangers]” (3 Jn 5).

M6. What is it to be faithful at home?

It is to be responsible even in little things like doing my homework and keeping my room tidy. —The Lord says: “He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust [or unfaithful] in the least is unjust [or unfaithful] also in much” (Lk 16:10).

M7. What will be the immediate result of my being responsible at home?

I will win my parents’ trust and will not get unnecessary nagging just as the priest trusted the faithful workmen in Joash’s days, —for “they reckoned not with the men, into whose hand they delivered the money to be bestowed on workmen: for they dealt faithfully” (2 Kgs 12:15).

M8. Is faithfulness a rewarding virtue in this life?

Yes; “A faithful man shall abound with blessings: but he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent” (Prov 28:20).

Lesson 16: LOYALTY

M1. Is loyalty a Christian virtue?

Yes; but it is spoken of as love and faithfulness towards a person, church or country especially in times of difficulty. —Solomon says: “A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity” (Prov 17:17).

M2. From whom can we learn how to be a faithful friend?

From the Lord Jesus Christ —whom Solomon refers to when he says: “A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother” (Prov 18:24).

M3. What is it to be loyal or faithful to a friend when he is in trouble?

It is to defend him like when Jonathan defended David when his father wanted to kill him—“And Jonathan spake good of David unto Saul his father, and said unto him, Let not the king sin against his servant, against David; because he hath not sinned against thee, and because his works have been to theeward very good” (1Sam 19:4).

M4. What is it to be loyal or faithful to a friend who commits a sin?

It is to admonish in love, for “Open rebuke is better than secret love. Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful” (Prov 27:5-6).

M5. What is it to be loyal or faithful to those who confide in me?

It is to keep secrets, for “A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter” (Prov 11:13).

M6. Is there an example of loyalty to the civil government in the Scriptures?

Yes; David spared king Saul despite his attempt to kill him; —and he told him: “Behold, this day thine eyes have seen how that the LORD had delivered thee to day into mine hand in the cave: and some bade me kill thee: but mine eye spared thee; and I said, I will not put forth mine hand against my lord; for he is the LORD’S anointed” (1 Sam 24:10).

M7. Does the Bible condemn disloyalty?

Yes; for Solomon says: “Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint” (Prov 25:19).

M8. To what extent should we be loyal?

To the extent of righteousness and truth, for love “Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth” (1Cor 13:6).

Lesson 17: ORDERLINESS & DISCIPLINE

M1. Is orderliness a Christian virtue?

Yes; the apostle Paul commands us: “Let all things be done decently and in order” (1 Cor 14:40).

M2. Is discipline related to orderliness?

Yes; to be discipline is to be strict and orderly with our conduct. —The apostle Paul knew the importance of discipline. He says: “But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway” (1Cor 9:27).

M3. Is a disorderly life sinful?

Yes; the apostle Paul told the Thessalonians to withdraw from disorderly brothers—“Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us” (2Thes 3:6).

M4. Is it important to be orderly in your life?

Yes; the LORD says: “Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation [i.e. life] aright will I shew the salvation of God” (Ps 50:23).

M5. Did the Lord Jesus show us an example of being orderly?

Yes; when he fed the 5,000 men, —“He commanded them [His disciples] to make all sit down by companies upon the green grass. And they sat down in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties” (Mk 6:39-40).

M6. Did the Lord Jesus show us an example of being discipline?

Yes; it was his daily habit to rise up very early to pray. —Mark tells us: “And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed” (Mk 1:35).

M7. Name one way you can cultivate a disciplined Christian life?

I will resolve before the Lord: “My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up” (Ps 5:3).

M8. How can you cultivate orderliness in your Christian life?

I will try to be orderly, neat and tidy in all that I do at home, in school and in church, for “God is not the author of confusion” (1Cor 14:33).

Lesson 18: PATIENCE & LONGSUFFERING

M1. Are patience (waiting with a happy spirit) and longsuffering (enduring pain cheerfully) important Christian virtues?

Yes, the apostle Paul prayed for the Colossians that they might be “Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness” (Col 1:9-11).

M2. From whom must we especially learn patience and longsuffering?

The Lord Jesus Christ, —for as the writer of Hebrews says: “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Heb 12:1-2).

M3. How did the Lord Jesus demonstrate patience and longsuffering?

“He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth” (Is 53:7).

M4. From whom else can we learn patience and longsuffering?

From the Job and from prophets, —for says James: “Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job...” (Jas 5:10-11a).

M5. How should Christians face suffering?

Joyfully and patiently, —for James says: “My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing” (Jas 1:2-4 cf. Rom 5:3-4; also see 1 Pet 2:20).

M6. Should we give up doing good because people are not appreciative?

No; for says the apostle Paul: “Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not” (Gal 6:9).

M7. Living the Christian life and learning the catechism is really tough, what should I do?

Be patient in the Lord —“It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD. It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth” (Lam 3:26-27).

M8. God does not seem to hear my cry for help, what should I do?

Wait patiently for the Lord—“I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry” (Ps 40:1; cf. Ps 37:7).

Lesson 19: INDUSTRY & DILIGENCE

- M1. Are industry (i.e. being hardworking) and diligence (i.e. doing everything well) Christian virtues?
Yes; for the Scripture commands: “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might” (Ecc 9:10).
- M2. From what does the Scripture suggest we may learn industry and diligence from?
From the ants; —for Solomon says: “Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, Provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest” (Prov 6:6-8).
- M3. With what attitude must I do all my duties at home, in school and in church?
“And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men” (Col 3:23).
- M4. What incentives do we have for industry and diligence?
We can serve the Lord with our substance. —For example we shall be able to help those who are in need; for say Paul: “Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth” (Eph 4:28; cf. Acts 20:35).
- M5. Does the Lord reward those who are diligent in this life?
Yes; for Solomon says: “Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men” (Prov 22:29).
- M6. What is the result of laziness?
Poverty and a miserable life, —for says Solomon: “Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth; and thy want as an armed man” (Prov 24:33-34).
- M7. Are we required to labour diligently everyday?
No; we must rest on the Sabbath and keep it holy—“But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates” (Ex 20:10).
- M8. Does this mean we do not need to be diligent on the Sabbath?
No; we must remain diligent in works of piety and mercy. —For example, we must pray, as the apostle Paul says: “Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant [diligently] in prayer” (Rom 12:12).

Lesson 20: WISDOM

M1. Is wisdom a Christian virtue?

Yes; wisdom is thinking God's way, for David says: "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever" (Ps 111:10).

M2. We can obtain knowledge, but can we obtain wisdom?

Yes, we can; for Solomon says: "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding" (Prov 4:7).

M3. How can I obtain wisdom?

I can obtain it from the Word of God read and heard, —"For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding" (Prov 2:6; cf. Prov 5:1).

M4. Is reading and hearing the Word enough to obtain wisdom?

No; I need to ask the Lord for wisdom, —for says James: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (Jas 1:5; see also 2 Chr 1:7-12).

M5. How can I live wisely?

By obeying the commandments of God —"Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me" (Ps 119:98).

M6. What if I do not know which commandments I should apply in a situation and there is no one to ask?

I will pray and I will consider what the Lord would have me do in the situation, —for "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding" (Prov 9:10; cf. Prov 1:7).

M7. How does my mummy and daddy help me to grow in wisdom?

They discipline me when I act foolishly or sinfully —"The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame" (Prov 29:15).

M8. Is wisdom important for a happy Christian life?

Yes; "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding" (Prov 3:13).

M9. Is wisdom needed for good relationships with my friends?

Yes; for "He that is void of wisdom despiseth his neighbour: but a man of understanding holdeth his peace" (Prov 11:12).

Lesson 21: MEEKNESS

M1. Is meekness a Christian virtue?

Yes, it is a mark of grace of every true believer, —for the Psalmist says: “For the LORD taketh pleasure in his people: he will beautify the meek with salvation” (Ps 149:4) and the Lord Jesus says: “Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth” (Mt 5:5).

M2. Apart from the Lord Jesus, who was the meekest person who ever lived?

Moses was the meekest man during his days —“Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth” (Num 12:3); but the meekest man who ever lived was the Lord Jesus who says: “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls” (Mt 11:28-29).

M3. What is the difference between meekness and humility?

Meekness is being humble and gentle especially when being threatened by others. —The Lord Jesus showed His meekness in that “when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously” (1 Pet 2:23).

M4. Why is meekness important in the church?

Without meekness we will be unchristian, and there will be no unity in the church. —The apostle Paul says: “I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph 4:1-3).

M5. Can meekness be cultivated?

Yes, and it is important to do so, —for the prophet Zephaniah says: “Seek ye the LORD, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD’S anger.” (Zep 2:3)

M6. How can I cultivate meekness?

By constantly remembering the “meekness and gentleness of Christ” (2 Cor 10:1); and by not imposing our opinions on others —“And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth” (2 Tit 2:24-25; see also Tit 3:2)

M7. What does those who are meek enjoy *in this life*?

They will be guided by the Lord in all that they do — “The meek will he [God] guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way” (Ps 25:9)

Lesson 22: PERSONAL HOLINESS

M1. What is it for me to be holy?

It is to conduct myself, in words, deeds and thoughts, in such a way that I am more like the Lord Jesus Christ, but different from the world. —The apostle Peter commands: “But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy” (1 Pet 1:15-16).

M2. Isn't every Christian already holy in Christ Jesus?

Yes, we are justified in Christ and therefore called ‘saints’, which means ‘holy ones’; but we have the responsibility to live holy lives. —The writer of Hebrews says: “Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord” (Heb 12:14).

M3. Can a justified person be without holiness?

No; one who is justified in Christ will also grow in sanctification or holiness. One who claims justification but has no personal holiness is lying. —The apostle Paul says: “For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God” (Eph 5:5).

M4. Must one be born again to grow in holiness?

Yes, a justified person is also a regenerated person. —The apostle Paul is speaking to a regenerated person when he says: “But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life” (Rom 6:22).

M5. How may I grow in holiness?

By reading and hearing the word of God, —for the Lord Jesus prayed: “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth” (Jn 17:17); and the apostle Paul says: “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim 3:16-17).

M6. Apart from reading and hearing the Word of God what must I do to grow in holiness?

I must put the Word of God into practice. —The apostle Paul says: “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Rom 12:1-2).

Lesson 23: TEMPERANCE OR SELF-CONTROL

M1. Is temperance a Christian virtue?

Yes, it is something which Christians must cultivate,—for the apostle Peter says: “Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; ⁶ And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; ⁷ And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. ⁸ For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Pet 1:5-8).

M2. Is temperance or self-control one of the marks of grace?

Yes, one who is born again will know how to control his passions and lust, —for “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” (Gal 5:22-23).

M3. How can I cultivate temperance?

By bearing in mind that I belong to Christ. —The apostle Paul says: “But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof” (Rom 13:14).

M4. Who is a good example to learn temperance or self-control from?

The prophet Daniel, for “But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king’s meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself” (Dan 1:8).

M5. In what areas must I exercise self-control as a child?

In any area of pleasure where indulging or over-indulging will lead me to sin against God, waste my time or abuse my body. —For example, watching television, playing too much or even eating too much sweet. Solomon says: “Hast thou found honey? eat so much as is sufficient for thee, lest thou be filled therewith, and vomit it.” (Prov 25:16)

M6. What is one area in my life which I must be especially careful to exercise self-control as I grow older?

In the area of physical purity, —for the apostle Paul says: “Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body” (1 Cor 6:18).

Lesson 24: PRAYERFULNESS

M1. Is prayerfulness a Christian virtue?

Yes, for prayerfulness is an evidence of true conversion. —The Lord told Ananias: “Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth” (Acts 9:11).

M2. Do not many unbelievers also pray zealously?

Yes; but they are praying to idols or gods of men’s imagination. —The prophet Isaiah tells us that unregenerate men will not call upon the living and true God. He says: “But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee” (Isa 64:6-7a)

M3. How can I cultivate prayerfulness?

One important way is to wake up early everyday to pray like the Lord Jesus— “And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed” (Mk 1:35; cf. Lesson #17, M6).

M4. Should I only pray in the morning?

No, I should “Pray without ceasing” (1 Thes 5:17).

M5. What does it mean to pray without ceasing?

It is to pray at every opportunity. It is also to have a disciplined prayer life like the prophet Daniel, —for “he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime” (Dan 6:10).

M6. Must I always bow down and close my eyes to pray?

No; Nehemiah sets us a good example by praying before giving the king an answer to his question: —“Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of heaven. And I said unto the King...” (Neh 2:4-5).

M7. What if I don’t know how or what to pray?

The Holy Spirit will help me, —for the apostle Paul says: ²⁶ Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. ²⁷ And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God” (Rom 8:26-27).

Lesson 25: DISCERNMENT

M1. Is it important to be discerning?

Yes, for the apostle John says: “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world” (1 Jn 4:1).

M2. Did not the Lord Jesus say “Judge not, that ye be not judged”?

Yes, but He also says: “Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment” (Jn 7:24).

M3. What happens if we are not discerning?

We can easily be led astray, —like “children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive” (Eph 4:14).

M4. How may I practice discernment?

“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (1 Thes 5:21).

M5. How do I prove all things?

By comparing with the Scriptures, —for the prophet Isaiah says: “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” (Isa 8:20).

M6. How can I use the Scriptures to prove all things?

By hiding the Scriptures and scriptural catechism in my heart. The psalmist says: “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.” (Ps 119:11).

M7. How else can I cultivate discernment?

Pastors and teachers are given by the Lord to help us grow in spiritual maturity and discernment. I will learn from them; I will also compare what they say with the Scripture. I will be like the Bereans —for it is said of them: “These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so” (Acts 17:11)

M8. Are there teachers and pastors I must avoid?

Yes, many of them are wolves in sheep skin, —for the apostle Paul says: ¹⁷ Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. ¹⁸ For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple” (Rom 16:17-18)