

GROWING IN GRACE & KNOWLEDGE

Topic: CHRISTIAN LIVING

Lesson: PHILIPPIANS 2:12-13

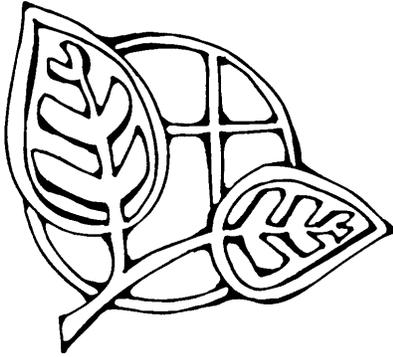
Goal: to define “sanctification”

1) Read Philippians 2:12-13.

- What is the difference between the phrases “to will” and “to act”? What is Paul trying to emphasize by mentioning both?
- Underline all of verse 12 and in the margin write, “Sanctification is God working in me to change my will and my actions.”
- In the margin also write, “See James 1:17-21.” Look up that passage now. That passage tells us specifically how God works in us. What tool does God use to bring us to faith and to enable us to serve him?
- James said that this tool “saves you.” God uses that tool to create faith and keep our faith strong. Through faith in Jesus Christ our sins are washed away, and we are saved. Use that fact to explain what Paul means in Philippians 2:12 when he says “continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling.” (Hint — Think about what would happen if we deliberately stayed away from that tool.)
- Note that Paul wrote “God *works* in you to will and to act...” and not “God *worked* in you to will and to act...” What does the fact that Paul used a present-tense verb in that verse tell us about our sanctification?

2) Applying what you’ve learned

- Paul writes, “*Since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand*” (Romans 5:1-2).
When Paul speaks of our justification (I.E. - God declaring us “not guilty” of our sins), he speaks in the past tense — “*we have been justified.*” Our salvation is a completed action. But we just saw that when Paul spoke of our sanctification, he used a present tense verb — “God *works* in you.” Our sanctification is an ongoing process.
What would happen if someone mixed up their understanding of justification and sanctification?



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Lesson: **2 CORINTHIANS 5:14-17**

Goal: to understand the motivation for Christian living

1) Read 2 Corinthians 5:14-15

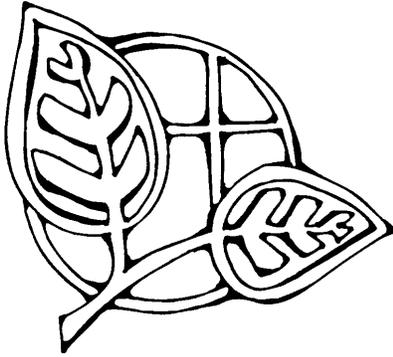
- Underline the phrase “Christ’s love compels us.” What are some other words that have the same meaning as “compel”?
- Compel can mean “to force someone to do something against their will.” What are some ways that the world compels people? For example, how does the police compel people to obey the law? How does a teacher compel their students to behave? Is this the type of compulsion Paul is writing about here.
- In the margin write “See 1 John 4:19.” Look that passage up now. How does that passage relate to these two verses?

2) Read 2 Corinthians 5:16-17

- In verse 17 Paul writes “he *is* a new creation.” Not “he *will be* a new creation.” Nor “He *should be* a new creation.” If anyone is in Christ, he IS a new creation. What does this verse add to our understanding about Christian living?
- When Paul writes “the old has gone,” what do you think he means by “the old”? When he writes, “the new has come,” what do you think he means by “the new”?

3) Applying what you’ve learned

- Jim is a regular attendee at St. Matthew's. He doesn't really want to go. He'd rather sleep in, but his parents have told him that as long as he lives under their roof, he will follow their rules. So he goes. He hasn't missed a single worship service or Bible class in three years! Carl is in the Navy, and his ship is often at sea for six months at a time. There are worship services held on the ship, but he is not in fellowship with the chaplain who conducts those services, so he doesn't attend. He misses worship, but settles for personal Bible study. Which of these two people is practicing true Christian living?



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Topic: **CHRISTIAN LIVING**

Lesson: **ROMANS 6:1-7**

Goal: to see the power we have for Christian living

1) Read Romans 6:1-4

- Imagine someone would say, “Jesus died to pay for all sin. Therefore, logically, if I commit lots of sins then that makes Jesus’ sacrifice all the more valuable... all the greater!” According to these verses, what is the error in that logic?
- Some church bodies make baptism into something that we do for God. Here Paul writes, “We *were buried* with him through baptism.” Is baptism something we do for God, or is it something that God does for us?
- What part of us gets buried with Christ through baptism? What is God’s purpose for burying that part of us? (Look at the closing words of verse 4).

2) Read Romans 6:5-7

- What are some of the consequences of sin?
- But in these verses, Paul tells us that sin is “powerless.” What are some ways that Christ has rendered sin powerless in our life?
- Underline the phrase “be united with him.” In the margin write “See Galatians 2:20.” In what way are we united with Christ?

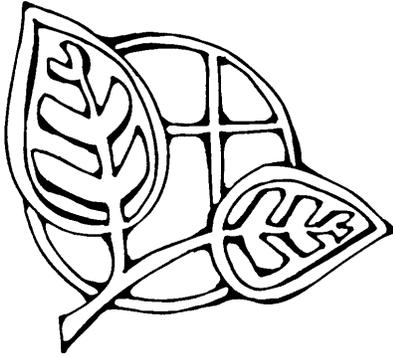
What does this mean... for our salvation?

... for life after death?

... for our Christian living?

3) Applying what you’ve learned

- People sometimes think of their baptism as something that happened to them when they were just a baby. God saved them through baptism. Does your baptism have any value for you today? If so, what?



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Topic: **CHRISTIAN LIVING**

Lesson: **PSALM 119:97-105**

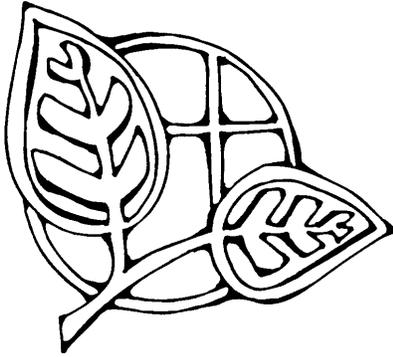
Goal: to see where we find guidance for Christian living

1) Read Psalm 119:97-105

- Imagine trying to walk through a home that you are unfamiliar with in the middle of the night. It is pitch dark. What is going to happen? How is that like trying to walk through life without the Word?
- In verse 100 underline the phrase “I have more understanding” and in the margin write “See verse 34.” Look up verse 34 of this psalm now. How does verse 34 relate to verse 100.
- In verse 104 underline the phrase “I gain understanding from your precepts” and in the margin write “See 1 Corinthians 2:14.” Look up that passage now. That passage explains how we gain understanding and wisdom from the Word. Who gives it to us?
- “I have more insight that my teachers... more understanding that the elders.” In what way is the Christian, armed with God’s Word, wiser than the astrophysicist or brain surgeon?
- In verse 101 double-underline the phrase “I have kept my feet from every evil path.” In verse 104 double-underline the phrase “I hate every wrong path.” Mark these passages with an asterisks (*). At the bottom of the page put another asterisks and write, “Christian living involves: 1) avoidance of evil, and 2) opposition of evil.” What are some ways we can oppose evil in our Christian lives?
- In this psalm, does it seem like meditating on God’s Word is a chore for the psalmist, or is it something he enjoys? Why do you think he feels this way? (Look at 1 John 5:3-4 for help.)

3) Applying what you’ve learned

- The Bible teaches that God has written his Law on our hearts. We call it our conscience. Why is our conscience not enough to help us live our Christian lives? Give some examples from our society of things that don’t bother most people’s conscience but that do disobey God’s Word.



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Topic: **CHRISTIAN LIVING**

Lesson: **ROMANS 7:15-25**

Goal: to find comfort for when we fail in our Christian living

1) Read Romans 7:15-20

- What problem has Paul identified in his life?
- In verse 18 underline the phrase “my sinful nature” and “I cannot carry it out.” In verse 19 underline the phrase “keep on doing.” What do these verses tell us about our Christian life?
- In verse 16 underline the phrase, “the law is good.” In the margin write “see verse 7.” Read verse 7 of this chapter now. How is the Law good?
- Our Christian life flows out of our Christian faith. But even when Paul is committing the sin that he “keeps on doing,” there is still evidence of the Holy Spirit at work inside Paul. What is that evidence?

2) Read Romans 7:21-25

- Paul describes a war going on inside every Christian. Who are the two participants in this war?
- Underline the phrase “What a wretched man I am!” In the margin write, “The fact that sin is unavoidable does not make us comfortable when it occurs in our life.” Paul does not find comfort in the fact that his sinful nature makes sin unavoidable. Where does Paul turn for comfort? Why would this give Paul comfort?

3) Applying what you’ve learned

- Mary, a Christian friend of yours, is in the hospital, dying of cancer. You visit her and she tells you, “I know I shouldn’t be, but I’m a little scared to die.” You say to her, “Mary, look at what you’ve done in your life! You’ve been a faithful wife. You’ve raised three wonderful kids. You had those kids baptized and took them to Sunday School. It’s obvious that you’re a Christian, and therefore you’re saved!”
Would this response provide comfort to Mary? Is there a better way to comfort her?