

## Learn Your Bible

### Lesson #17

"I suppose you have heard of the man who attended the gospel meeting, expressing a desire to become a member of the church. The only problem, he was in the wrong church, talking to the wrong preacher. He said, 'I want to be baptized, but I don't want to be called on to visit the sick or the newcomers; I don't really care to develop into a song leader, or a teacher of the congregation. Also, my time is valuable, so don't expect to see me at worship too often. When I do come, I'll not be able to give much to the church for I have just bought a boat and a house on the lake.'

The preacher thought for a moment and replied, 'I believe you are in the wrong church. The church you are looking for is about three blocks on down the street.' The man followed the directions and soon found himself standing before an old abandoned, boarded-up church building. Obviously, no one had met there for years. He was standing before the end result of the very attitude he nursed in himself. Here, in eloquent testimony, the old building was saying, 'Saved people are the church. Without active members, the church will die. Religion that costs nothing in time, money, and sacrifice is a dead religion.' The man had found a church that was "out of business" because of people exactly like him." Think about it!!



One very difficult hurdle for us to jump seems to be that of shouldering responsibility. We often reply that "I know I should..." and that's as far as we get. Very few are like the man in the story who admitted what he wanted... most are not that honest with themselves. The purpose of this lesson will be self-evaluation.

Simply stated, the problem is that time is not on our side. Every 21 seconds, someone dies without the Lord. 50 million die each year. 70 million more people are born, than die. If we convert 300,000 a



year, this is 4/1000's of 1% of the world's population increase. It is an awesome set of odds stacked against us!

.....

**You can always find excuses for not doing the things you do not want to do...**

.....

Our Lord as he prepared to leave this earth, left the apostles with what is often called the "Great Commission"; "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:19-20).



The early Christians took the example set by the apostles seriously. They taught daily as they went house to house (Acts 5:42). As a result, the Lord added to the church day by day (Acts 2:47). Today most churches teach only 4 hours in 7 days! Early Christians "went everywhere preaching the word." Is this the case today? What has changed? The word is the same. The church of scripture is the same. What could possibly be different?

In the space of 35 years "THEIR VOICE HAS GONE OUT INTO ALL THE EARTH, AND THEIR WORDS TO THE ENDS OF THE WORLD." (Romans 10:18). The apostle affirms that it "was proclaimed in all creation under heaven," (Colossians 1:23).

In the space of the next 35 years, if things continue as they *are*, will we be able to say this again? We're prone to say..."I'm not



responsible for the whole church's lack of effort. Obviously one person cannot preach to the whole world. If the entire church did just as you do, would we be able to cover the world with the teachings of Jesus Christ? In fact, if the early church followed *your example*, would it still be here today?

It is an unfortunate fact of life that approximately 95% never win a soul to Christ. We can't answer for the church, but we will answer for our deeds (II Corinthians 5:10).

### **You Are Preaching...**

**There isn't a word that a preacher can say, no matter how lovely or true,**

**Nor is there a prayer that his eager lips pray, that can preach a sermon as you,**

**You vowed to serve Christ and men know you did. They're watching the things that you do.**

**There isn't one action of yours that is hid, men are watching and studying you.**

**You say you're no preacher? Yes, but you preach a wonderful sermon each day.**

**The acts of your life are the things you teach it isn't the things that you say.**

**So Christians, remember you bear his dear name. Your lives are for others to view.**

**You are living examples, men praise you, or blame, and measure all Christians by you. (Borrowed)**

Notice what God said to Ezekiel setting forth the responsibility that comes with knowledge. "Son of man, I have appointed you a watchman to the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from My mouth, warn them from Me. "When I say to the wicked, 'You will surely die,' and you do not warn him or speak out to warn the wicked from his wicked way that he may live, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand. "Yet if you have warned the wicked and he does not turn from his wickedness or from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered yourself." Ezekiel 3:17-19.

In a practical sense are we not the watchmen of today? Do we not have the responsibility to warn and teach? Most in the church would have to agree. " But prove yourselves doers of the word, and

not merely hearers who delude themselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for {once} he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the {law} of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does." James 1:22-25

In most cases individuals underestimate their own ability to lead others to Christ. The preacher is so much more qualified, or is he? A picture directory company made a survey for use in sales promotions. They sought to find out why a person chooses a particular church. The results are as follows:

- 3% chose a church because the minister called on them
- 9% because of the architectural beauty of the building
- 14% prior church affiliation
- 18% nearness of the building
- 22% people there were respected and admired
- 34% a member of the church had invited them

Lloyd Barker, via Gospel Truths

The influence of friends genuinely concerned is unfortunately the most powerful determining factor. I say unfortunately only because it is often the least used!

You are presently reading this because someone was concerned enough about you to help you have the hope of heaven. "Treat others the same way you want them to treat you." (Luke 6:31)

In the next 5 years, enough people to populate the United States, will die without Jesus Christ!



1) How often does someone without Jesus Christ, die? \_\_\_\_\_ What does this emphasize? \_\_\_\_\_

2) Read Matthew 28:19-20. What were some of Jesus' last words before leaving this earth? \_\_\_\_\_ Since this was said at the end, what does this show about its' importance? \_\_\_\_\_

3) How did the early Christians view this responsibility? Acts 8:1-5

---

4) How long did it take them to cover the earth with their words?  
\_\_\_\_\_ How many Christians never convert another? \_\_\_\_\_



5) Read Acts 28:17-23. When Paul came to Rome, A) What had these people heard from knowledgeable sources? \_\_\_\_\_ B) What had they heard from rumor about the Church of Christ? \_\_\_\_\_ C) When given the opportunity to “know” truth, what was their reaction? \_\_\_\_\_ D) What insight does this give us when we encounter objections (from others) to what the Bible says)? \_\_\_\_\_

---

6) Read Ezekiel 3:17-19. a) If we warn the wicked and he ignores us, what is the result to him? \_\_\_\_\_ What is the result to us? \_\_\_\_\_ b) You now have the knowledge to make it to heaven and what that statement means. What if we don't warn those around us? \_\_\_\_\_

7) A) Read I Samuel 8:7. If they reject the gospel whom have they rejected? \_\_\_\_\_ B) Read II Corinthians 4:1-7, Note the “earthen vessels” Paul has been dead for 2000 years, who has this “treasure” today? \_\_\_\_\_

8) Read John 1:35-41

a) What was the first thing after following Jesus, that Andrew did? \_\_\_\_\_

b) Read I Corinthians 4:10-15 Andrew apparently wasn't as eloquent and outgoing as Peter. If Peter had many children in the gospel, what did Andrew have? \_\_\_\_\_

c) Reread vs. John 1:41 How complicated was Andrew's approach? \_\_\_\_\_

d) What overrode Andrew's lack of "deep knowledge"?

---

9) Compare Romans 10:1-3 and Revelation 3:15-16. I would compare the so called "Jehovah's Witnesses" to the Jews' dilemma in Romans 10. They are an example of zeal without \_\_\_\_\_ Since you now have "knowledge" of the gospel, what is your greatest immediate danger from Revelation 3? \_\_\_\_\_ Is it fair to say that the end of zeal without knowledge, and knowledge without zeal are virtually the same? \_\_\_\_\_



10) Compare Matthew 4:18-20 and I Corinthians 11:1. Is the old parental adage "do as I say, not as I do" valid for a Christian? \_\_\_\_\_ What was Paul's approach?

---

11) II Corinthians 12:14-16 a) Often the more we love... \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ b) We should use all the wisdom we can gather True / False

12) Make a list of 10 people you know. Use this as a "Prospect List" for the next couple of months.

- |          |           |
|----------|-----------|
| 1) _____ | 6) _____  |
| 2) _____ | 7) _____  |
| 3) _____ | 8) _____  |
| 4) _____ | 9) _____  |
| 5) _____ | 10) _____ |

If we don't get **started**, we'll **never** get there!!

13) Make a list of people you have talked to about Jesus Christ in the last 6 months.

---

---

---

---

If you were Jesus Christ, would you consider this an adequate demonstration of your love for Him? He *died* for you!

14) Read Luke 6:46. If we don't get started how would this apply?

---

### Why Doesn't the Church Do Something???

#### Read Luke 14:15-24 then....

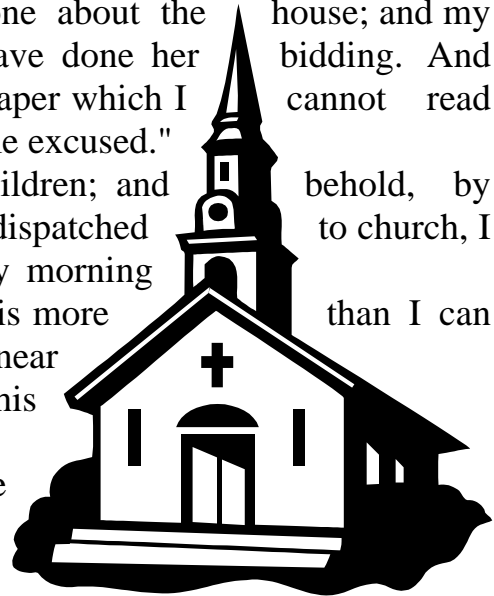
Behold, a certain church prepared a service of worship and invited whosoever should to come. And it came to pass that the church sent forth an invitation to all of its members saying "Come, for the elders and deacons have made all things ready." And, lo, the majority began with tiresome repetition to make excuses.

The first to speak said, "All week I have labored hard and unceasingly, yea, until very late on Saturday night. On Sunday I must needs rest in bed until noon. Or if I should arise at the usual hour, there are many odd jobs to be done about the house; and my wife does not let me rest until I have done her bidding. And as a last resort, there is the Sunday paper which I cannot read at any other time. I pray thee, have me excused."

And another said, "I have children; and behold, by the time they are dressed, fed, and dispatched to church, I have reached the end of my Sunday morning enthusiasm, and to get myself ready is more than I can manage; and besides this, our near kindred are to visit in our home this day. I pray thee, have me excused."

And another said, "The members of my family are indeed peculiar, for they must needs eat on Sunday the same as on other days; if I go to church, will the minister send someone to prepare dinner? To sit down to dinner an hour late is near impossible, for we are not at all of the mind to subdue the call of the appetite to our spiritual needs and Christian thoughts. I pray thee, may I be excused?"

And many other excuses of equal impressiveness did the people make. Yet did these same people raise a great hue and cry and make bitter lament when war and crime and corruption and cheap living among the young people and adults flourished greatly in our midst. Where once the preachers and leaders were looked to as *guides*, they



instead became *followers*, and that of worldly things; the world of pleasure, the movies, and her counterpart television, proved to be their master. Influence and dedication were disregarded and indifference grew mightily. And with one accord they began to make complaint saying, "Why doesn't the church do something about this thing? never realizing that *they* are the church!

**--Adapted**

15) A recent survey indicates the average congregation baptizes only 5% of their membership annually. If children of members are deducted, the figures drop to 2%. Less than 10% had an active prospect file. The number of college classes averaged less than 1% of the membership. Members gave less than 4% of their income to the church and all works related to Christ. Less than 5% of us won a soul to Christ last year.



Without the proper care we all shrivel up and die, so does the church. This dog represents many in their spiritual condition... starved!

a) How does this compare with your congregation?

---

b) Who is the person you should start with to raise those averages? \_\_\_\_\_

c) According to the survey in the reading, (done by the directory company), the preacher is the biggest influence in a church's membership. True / False

16) Read Proverbs 20:11. Relate this to our claims, "I am a Christian (follower of Christ)" and "I love the Lord," if we don't do anything in this area of Christianity? \_\_\_\_\_

---

17) Read Matthew 23:1-4

- a) Did the Pharisees teach the right things to do? \_\_\_\_\_
- b) Did they do them? \_\_\_\_\_
- c) What is the effect of this attitude on the part of parents in a family? (Application) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- d) What is the effect in church? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- e) Their attitude was that the work of God was for somebody else to do. True / False
- f) Luke 12:1 What does Jesus call this attitude? \_\_\_\_\_
- g) This is a common charge leveled against the church. Can we afford to let it be true? (Matthew 24:50-51) \_\_\_\_\_

18) Read Matthew 22:37-40

- a) What is the second "great" commandment? \_\_\_\_\_
- b) Can you "love your neighbor" and silently allow them to be lost? \_\_\_\_\_

19) Read Luke 14:15-24

- a) What is our Lord's attitude toward excuses? \_\_\_\_\_
- b) Relate Galatians 6:7-9:  
\_\_\_\_\_
- c) You will need to point to some "fruit" of your labor in the judgment. When should you begin working on this?  
\_\_\_\_\_



**Remember:**

- 1) God knows what I really can or can't do
- 2) I cannot deceive God
- 3) I will be held responsible for not making an attempt

20) Read Matthew 25:14-30

- a) vs. 14 Because he's traveling in a "far country" what are we tempted to do with our talents? \_\_\_\_\_
- b) What is the effect? \_\_\_\_\_

## Compare the effectiveness of the JESUS' Church "Then" with the JESUS' Church "Now".

### The Church then...

- 1) Jerusalem Christians taught daily... (Acts 5:42)
- 2) They taught publicly and from house to house (Acts 5:42; 20:20)
- 3) There were additions daily (Acts 2:47)
- 4) Early Christians went everywhere preaching the word. (Acts 8:4)
- 5) They preached the gospel to the whole of creation in less than 35 years after the great commission was given. (Mark 16:15; Col. 1:23)

### THE CHURCH Now...

4 hours in 7 days (a few exceptions)

Publicly (for the most part.)

Many congregations with several hundred in attendance do not average one convert per week

Approximately 95% never win a soul to Christ

**Several religions around us** are growing at a faster rate than the Church... And we have the printing press, copy machines, and the internet



" Therefore, I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. "For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God.." Acts 20:26-27

**Let's live for Jesus, He died for us!**

Jerry Blount 2004 revised 6/05