

‘Come Follow Me’

Advisor’s Edition

with guidelines for leading discussion

version 4.2, July 2010

Guidelines for Advisors *(please read this first)*

A) The Purpose of this Course

Our Lord Jesus Christ commanded us to 'make disciples' (Matthew 28:19). A disciple of Christ should not merely bear Christ's name. He or she should show Christ's attitude and character in every part of life: in the family, with friends, at work, everywhere. In any situation Christ's follower should do what Christ himself would do. The disciple should become like the master!

This change does not happen suddenly. Over many years, the Holy Spirit inside us helps us overcome wrong attitudes and habits. He makes us more like Jesus.

Remember, one candle lights another candle. Someone helped you grow as Christ's disciple. Now it is your turn to help someone else grow. This course is a tool to help you 'make disciples', just as our Lord Jesus Christ commanded.

So, the overall purpose of this Course is for each learner to grow strong in Christ: -

- understanding His will in our lives,
- trusting Him with gratitude,
- deciding to put Him first in everything,
- living close to Him with the help of His Spirit, and
- playing our part in the community of Christ's followers.

(Note: If your friend is just finding out about the Christian faith, then please choose a different course. This course is for those who want to grow as Christ's followers).

B) Your role as Advisor

You are not the teacher! The book is the teacher. It gives you all the information you need, and in each lesson the teacher's picture shows you which are the key points. The book gives the teaching in a simple way, it asks easy questions and it even gives the answers at the end of each lesson.



This makes your task easier. You do not need to write the lessons yourself. Instead you are the advisor and friend of the learners in the group. Your task is to help them learn for themselves and put it into practice.

Remember that they are not children but adults. They have many experiences of life which they can contribute to the group. Therefore in the discussion time, ask them lots of questions. Ask them about their opinions and experiences. Help them to think for themselves. Make sure that they do the 'practical task' each week. Be a good model for them. Care for them. Pray for them. Be their friend. Share their joys and sorrows.

The learners in the group will watch you carefully. Your example is more important than your knowledge. As one new believer said, *"When I asked for Bible study, I didn't want to study the book, I was studying the person who was discipling me"*.

C) How to Use this Course

- You may use this course with a group of believers or with one believer alone.
- Group members have the 'student edition' of this course, and you have the 'advisor's edition'. Your edition contains all the same pages as their edition, with the same page numbers. But your edition (unlike theirs) also has guidelines to help you lead the discussion for each lesson.

- The students' material is in 'Times New Roman' font, on the main part of the page, while advisors' guidelines are in 'Arial' font in the margin. So you can easily tell the difference.
- This course has a total of 20 lessons, printed in two books. There are several different ways you can use this course: -
 - The preferred method is to start from lesson 1 and go through to lesson 20. Each week the learners will do one lesson's 'homework' on their own, then meet with you for 'discussion', then do the 'practical task';
 - Another method is for learners not to do the homework, but just to meet with you weekly to discuss the lesson together; this is suitable for learners who cannot read, but it is still important for them to do the 'practical task' and 'memory verse';
 - A third method is to select some of the 20 lessons which are relevant for the learners in their particular situation; for instance, those preparing for baptism could do lessons 1 and 14.
- We strongly recommend that you do the 'advisors training workshop' especially if you have never used this type of course before. Find out about this training from the person who gave you this book.

D) What to do each Week

Before each Meeting

1. At least two days before the meeting, prepare the lesson yourself, as though you were a student. Write your answers to all questions. Don't take short-cuts.

2. Read the 'Aims' for the lesson. Our suggested aims are in a box, at the start of each lesson in this advisors edition. For example, here are the Aims for lesson 9:

You will notice that all these aims have something for the members to do this week:

- to 'be sure' is the most important aim for this week, so it is in bold letters;
- to 'understand' is something they should know in their minds;
- to 'learn to act wisely' is something they should put into practice;
- to 'memorise' is a good way to bring God's word right inside their hearts and lives.

3. Read the guidelines for this lesson. These guidelines are all in boxes in the page margin, like this for example:

The guidelines show you how to lead the discussion, in easy steps. For instance,

- '**LOOK** at this picture' means the whole group should look together at the picture in the book;
- '**READ** the shaded portion' means that one member should read and speak out the words in the book which are shaded like this;
- '**ASK**' is a question for you to ask the group;
- '**SAY**' is an instruction for you to give to the group;
- '**PRAY TOGETHER**' is for the group to do at the beginning and end of each discussion, using their own words or the words in the book.

4. We have given you detailed guidelines to help you step-by-step. Choose the discussion questions which are relevant for your members. Later, as you gain more experience, feel free

Commented [Advisor1]:

AIMS OF LESSON 9 For each member to:

- a. **be sure that nothing can separate us from God's love**
- b. understand that persecution will definitely happen but God uses it for our good
- c. learn to act wisely to avoid unnecessary persecution
- d. memorise 1 Peter 2:21

Commented [Advisor2]:

LOOK at this picture

READ the shaded section.

ASK:

- "According to verse 17, how can we gain victory in the spiritual 'jihad'?"
[we have to 'put to death' whatever belongs to our earthly nature.]

SAY:

- "Please do this Practical Task this week"

PRAY TOGETHER

to write your own discussion questions according to the needs of your members and the aims of the lesson.

5. Pray for each member of the group and for God to help you be a good advisor.

During the Meeting

1. Welcome people as they arrive. Serve tea if you wish.

2. At the start of the meeting, ask questions from the *LESSON REVIEW* to check that members have done their homework properly. The Lesson Review comes at the end of each lesson. In the student edition there are no answers, because they should already know the answers. But the answers are given in your advisors edition.

3. Next, ask members about the *PRACTICAL TASK* they did after last week's lesson. If you ask them about it every week it shows them how important it is. If you do not ask them, many of them may neglect it.

4. Then ask the *DISCUSSION QUESTIONS*.

- Some of these are already in the student edition and they are marked 'for discussion' in the Lesson Answers. Members must answer these from their own opinion or experience. These are the most important questions to help them grow in Christ! So they should not leave these questions blank. Check they have written their own answers in their books.
- Other discussion question are in the boxes in this advisor's edition. Use the ones //Some of these are already in the student edition and they are marked 'for discussion' in the Lesson Answers. Members must answer these from their own opinion or experience. These are the most important questions to help them grow in Christ! So they should not leave these questions blank. Check they have written their own answers in their books.

//If you are short of time, definitely do the ones which are marked 'for group discussion'.

5. With each discussion question we have also suggested some answers, in brackets [*like this*]. But help members to give their own answers in their own words. Sometimes there is no 'right' or 'wrong' answer, especially when the question is about members' personal opinion or experience.

6. At the end of the discussion time, ASK "What is the most important thing you have learned today?"

7. *PRAY* for God's help to put the lesson into practice. Also, pray for each other in the group. Teach members how to pray simple prayers in their own words.

3. After the Meeting

1. If your group has marks for tests or attendance, record these.

2. Consider if you led the discussion well. Ask yourself these four questions:

- "Did I talk too much?"
- "Did all members take part in discussion including the quiet and shy members?"
- "Were my questions clear to understand and good for discussion?"
- "Did the lesson fulfil its aims and was it practical for our lives?"

3. If these four questions have shown you weaknesses in how you lead discussion, try to improve next week.

E) For those who can't read

If some members of the group cannot read easily or at all, follow these guidelines:

- For each of these people, find another member of the group to be their helper. Beforehand they will go through the lesson together, to help the non-reader/slow reader understand the main teaching. Then in the meeting they will sit together, and the helper will help them find the right place or picture in the book. The helper might be a member of the family, or another person.
- Remember that the non-readers in the group have as much experience of life as those who can read. Their opinion is just as valuable. Make sure they have equal opportunity to contribute to the discussion so that all members can benefit.
- Also, the non-readers should take a full part in the 'memory verse' and the 'practical task', just like everyone else.

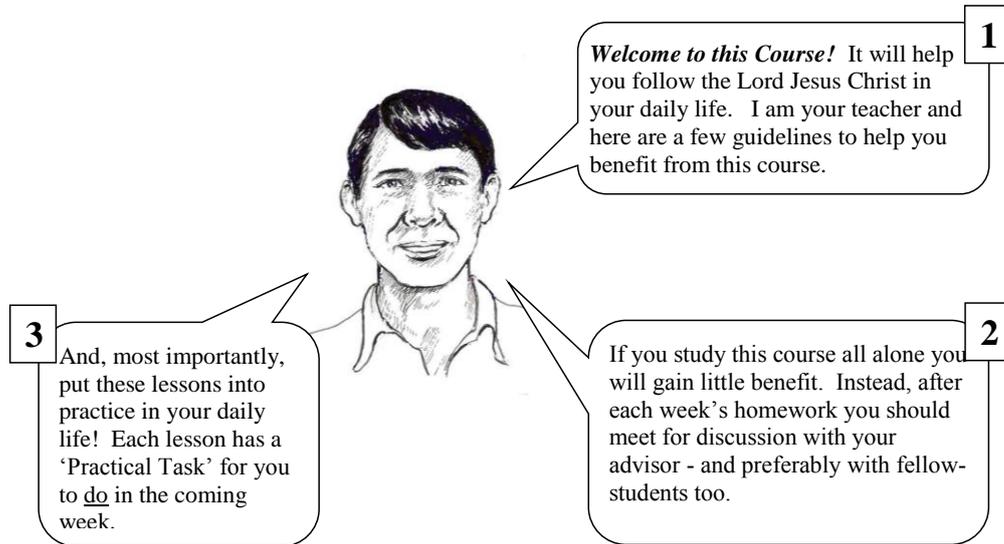
F) The Introductory Meeting

To learn how to run the introductory meeting with a new group, see 'Further Information for the Advisor' at the end of this book.

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Guidelines for the Student



1. Read each question carefully.
2. Write or tick [✓] the correct answer in the blank spaces provided.
3. After you have written each answer, you may check with the correct answers at the end of the lesson.
4. After completing each lesson, do the Lesson Review to ensure you can remember the key points.
5. Some of the answers are for you to bring your own opinion to the discussion time. Make sure you answer these questions and be ready for discussion.
6. For the first five lessons the only text-book you need is this course book. After lesson 5, you will also need your own copy of the Holy Bible.
7. Remember, your advisor is giving his or her own time to help you. Show your respect for that person by arriving punctually for each discussion time, and by completing the homework.

Now begin, with the Lord's help!

Lesson 1 Becoming Christ's Follower



The Purpose of our Lives

Two men were having a discussion about the purpose of their lives. One of them said, "I believe that God Almighty created me to obey His commands. He sent the prophets to show me the Straight Path. The purpose of my life is to walk in that path. That is sufficient for me."

The other man replied, "I too want to know God's commands and to obey them. But just to know the difference between *halal* and *haram* does not satisfy the longing of my heart. Even more than that, I want to know my Creator in a personal way. I want to hear His voice and to feel His love. From the bottom of my heart I want to live in his intimacy. This is the purpose of my life."

To think about: Do you agree with the first man or the second man? What is the purpose of your life?



1 When God Almighty created humans, He had a special purpose. He created Adam and Eve different from all the animals. The animals were content to eat or sleep, but God made humans to love Him and know Him personally. As a wise scholar once prayed, "O Lord! You have created us for Yourself, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in You."

For what special purpose did God create us? (*tick the best answer*)

- a) to eat and sleep like animals
 b) to love Him and know Him personally

2 God wants us not just to obey Him as Master, but also to love Him as our greatest Friend! The Holy Bible tells us how this is possible:

"Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent."
 (John 17:3)

Whom did God send so that we can know Him personally and have eternal life? Jesus

Becoming Jesus Christ's Follower

3 We can know God personally through Jesus Christ. When Christ came to this earth, one of the first people to become his follower was a fisherman named Simon Peter. Let's read about this in the Holy Bible:

Commented [Advisor3]:

AIMS OF LESSON 1

By the end of this meeting:

- a. Each member should be sure if he or she is Christ's follower or not.
- b. Those who are not yet Christ's followers should understand how to receive him.
- c. Those who are Christ's followers should be sure of it and glad of it.

Commented [Advisor4]:

TO START THE MEETING

START with PRAYER

Ask God to help us as we learn together.

SAY:

- "In this first lesson, we learn how Jesus Christ called Simon Peter to become his follower. From this we learn how we too can become Christ's followers".

LESSON REVIEW

- Check what members wrote in their books, or ask them to say what they wrote.
- The correct Review answers are given at the end of this lesson (in this Advisors edition).

Commented [Advisor5]:

ASK:

- "What answer did you write here?"
[b) is correct]
- "How can we love God and know him personally?"
[through Jesus Christ]

One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, with the people crowding around him and listening to the word of God, he saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat.

When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, 'Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch'. Simon answered, 'Master, we've worked all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets.'

When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break... When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, 'Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!' For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken... Then Jesus said to Simon, 'Don't be afraid: from now on you will catch men'. So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him."

(Luke 5:1-11 in the Holy Gospel)

After you have read the whole passage, tick (✓) this box and continue.

4 It seems that Simon Peter took four steps to become Jesus' follower. By these same four steps people today too become followers of Christ. Let's learn about them now.

First Step: Turn away from Sin

When Simon saw the miracle of the fish, his eyes were opened. He recognised Christ's holy authority, and by contrast his own shame. What did he say to Jesus? "Go away from me, Lord; I am a _____" (see the passage above, in the last paragraph)

5 Simon realised he was a 'sinful man'. Probably he had never murdered anyone, or committed adultery. But Jesus could see right inside his heart. Simon could not hide from Jesus his shameful secrets or his evil thoughts.

What about you? What are your hidden secrets, which would make you die of embarrassment if they were announced aloud from the loudspeaker in your local mosque? Maybe you can hide these secrets from your neighbours and family, but you can't hide them from Jesus Christ. He can see every hidden evil in your life as clearly as a doctor can see, in an X-ray, every hidden bone of your body!

➤ *Pause now, and let Jesus show you the dark corners of your life.*

6 Truly every person is stained by sin. As the poet Omar Khayum said,

"Tell me who has not sinned in this world
Tell me where are those who have not sinned,
I wrong you and you wrong me
So tell me what is difference between you and me."

Can anyone hide his sins from God? [Yes / No] (circle the correct answer)

7 You were previously taught that God loves those who make themselves pure and hates those who do wrong. But did Jesus the Pure One hate the impure Simon? Astonishingly, he did not! How did Christ reply to Simon? (see the passage in question 3 and tick the correct answer:)

___ a) 'Go away from me'

Commented [Advisor6]:

READ the shaded section
[ask one member to read it]

ASK:

• "What did Simon realise about himself?" [I am a sinful man]

• "Likewise, what must we all realise when we come to Jesus?"

[we are sinful]

Commented [Advisor7]:

READ the shaded section

ASK:

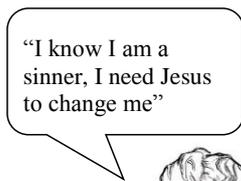
• "As the poet says, what is the difference between you and me?" [no difference. We all have sinned. We cannot hide our sins from God]

• "Are we good enough for God to accept us?" [no! Not one person in the world is good enough for God.]

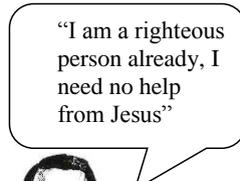
___ b) 'Don't be afraid'

8 How relieved Simon was to hear Jesus say 'don't be afraid'! If you, like Simon, realise you are an impure sinner, then take heart. Christ is ready to forgive you and wash away your impurity!

Look at these two contrasting people:



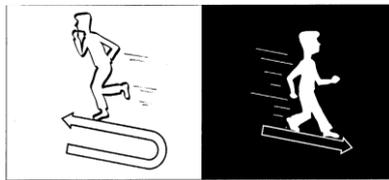
Shafique



Imran

What kind of person can Christ help: a proud person like Imran or a humble one like Shafique?

9 Jesus Christ said 'I have come ... to call sinners to repentance' (Luke 5:32). 'Repentance' means turning around to go in the opposite direction. Look at these two men:



a) Which of these men has repented, 1. or 2.? ___

b) Which of them is continuing in his old ways, 1. or 2.? ___

10 'To repent' is more than merely to regret our sins. It means completely to turn away from sin, like man 2 in the picture. Therefore, what is the evidence of real repentance? (*tick one answer*)

- ___ a) to feel no regret for your sin-stained life
- ___ b) to regret your sins but not to change your lifestyle
- ___ c) to completely turn away from sin and change your lifestyle

11 What was the first step Simon took to become Jesus' follower? _____ away from sin

Second Step: Understand the Cost

12 The next step for Simon was to understand the cost of becoming Christ's follower. Simon faced a hard choice. He was probably caught between two thoughts:

Commented [Advisor8]:

ASK:

- "What answer did you write here?"
[a humble one like Shafique' is correct]

- "Think about your own attitude: Are you more like Imran or Shafique?"
[for each member to think about personally, they don't need to speak their answer.]

Commented [Advisor9]:

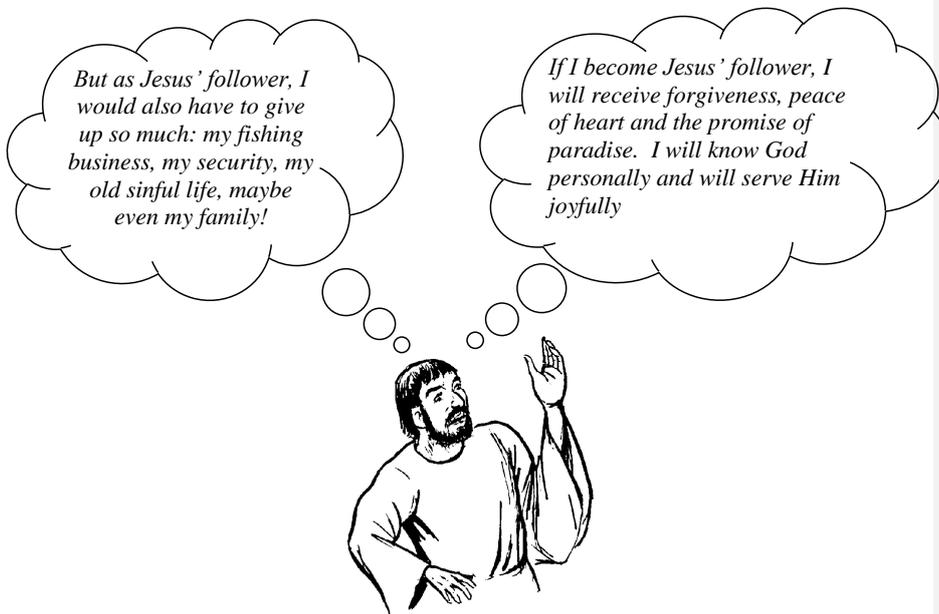
READ the shaded section
[ask one member to read it]

ASK:

- "What is the difference between mere regret and real repentance?"
[answers b) & c) make it clear. Real repentance brings a changed lifestyle]

REVIEW:

- "What is the first step to become Christ's follower?"
[Turn away from sin]



What did Simon understand? The _____ of becoming Christ's follower.

13 Jesus told this parable about how much it might cost to become his follower:

"The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it" (Matthew 13:45-46)

As Jesus' follower, what are the most costly things you might have to give up? Tick one or more of the following: (*your own answer*)

- a) your reputation in the community
- b) your employment or business
- c) your family and home
- d) your property or inheritance
- e) other (*write it here*) _____

14 But 'the pearl of great value' is worth it! And whatever sacrifice we made for Christ's sake, remember that he made an even bigger sacrifice for us on the cross!

God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5: 8)

So, who paid the greater price: we or Christ? _____

In lessons 9 and 10 we will learn more about why we have to face persecution.

Commented [Advisor10]:

LOOK at this picture

ASK:

- "What do you think Simon felt as he considered the cost of following Jesus?" [*to discuss. Every member can present their own opinion, there is not a right or wrong answer.*]
- "Have we faced a similar choice in our own lives?" [*to discuss. Members should describe their own experience.*]
- "Do you think Simon made the right choice?" [*to discuss. But yes, he made the right choice*]

Commented [Advisor11]:

READ the shaded section

ASK:

• "In your opinion, what is the meaning of this story?" [*to discuss. Having Christ is more precious than the finest pearl, but it may cost us everything we have*]

• "What answers did you write for question 13?" [*members should say what they wrote*]

• "But for us to be joined to Christ, who paid the bigger price: us or him?"

[*He did. See the box in question 14*]

REVIEW:

- "What is the second step to become Christ's follower?" [**Understand the cost**]

Third Step: Entrust yourself to Christ

15 To become Christ's follower, Simon had firstly to turn away from sin, and secondly to understand the cost. Then he came to the third step: "Entrust yourself to Christ"

In question 3 read again the last sentence in the passage. What did Simon and his companions do in response to Jesus' call? (*fill the blank spaces*)

"They pulled their boats up on shore, _____ everything and _____ him."

16 Simon entrusted himself completely to his new master Jesus.

How do we entrust ourselves to someone in everyday life? Here are some examples:

- ✓ **A tired child** entrusts himself to his father when he jumps into his arms to be carried.
- ✓ **A patient** entrusts himself to the doctor when he takes the medicine.
- ✓ **A passenger** entrusts himself to the bus driver at the start of a dangerous journey.

Just like the child, the patient or the passenger, we entrust ourselves to Jesus when we place ourselves in his hands. We trust him to protect and guide us. We obey him as our master.

What is the third step in becoming Christ's follower?

1. Turn away from sin
2. Understand the cost
3. _____ yourself to Christ

17 After entrusting himself to Christ, Simon Peter travelled with him for the next three years. He shared in his master's joys and sorrows. He saw Jesus heal sick people and even raise the dead! He learned to love people as Jesus loved people. Little by little in his character Simon became more and more like his master-teacher Jesus. Later he was better known by his second name Peter.

How did Simon Peter become Christ's follower? (*tick the better answer*)

- a) By entrusting himself to Jesus as master
- b) By reciting a new creed

18 As you know, an apprentice learns from his master by watching and copying what he does. This is how Simon Peter developed as Jesus' apprentice.

We too become like apprentices when we follow Jesus, even though we cannot see him with our physical eyes. We learn to copy what he does and we become like him. We have the honour of sharing in his work.

What is the third step in becoming Christ's disciple? _____ yourself to Christ



Fourth Step: Join Christ's Ummah

19 When Simon obeyed Jesus' call, he was not alone. He joined Christ's ummah. Together Christ's disciples lived as one group and shared their lives. They were from different tribes and different social levels.

This was not easy. Sometimes they had arguments. But Simon Peter learned that all those who belong to Christ must also join his _____.

Commented [Advisor12]:

READ this section

ASK:

- "How much trust does each of these people show?"
[A lot of trust. They trust the other person to take care of them and not harm them]

- "Can we trust Jesus in the same way?" [to discuss. Yes, he is more trustworthy than any human]

- "What do we trust him to do for us?" [to discuss. For example, we trust him to forgive our sins, come into our lives, give us power to do good, protect and guide us, bring us safely to heaven]

REVIEW:

- "What are the first three steps to become Christ's follower?"

[If members can't remember, see the last part of question 16. The correct answers are:

1. Turn away from sin
2. Understand the cost
3. Entrust yourself to Christ]

Commented [Advisor13]:

REVIEW:

- "What is the fourth step to become Christ's follower?"
[Join Christ's ummah]

ASK:

- "In your opinion, why is this fourth step necessary?"
[to discuss. Joining Christ means joining his people. We will discuss this more in later lessons].

- 20 Jesus Christ called Simon Peter to be his follower. What four steps did this involve?
1. _____ from sin
 2. _____ the cost
 3. _____ yourself to Christ
 4. _____ Christ's *ummah*



Finally, what does today's lesson mean for you personally?

- **Maybe you are already Christ's follower?** If so, the rest of this course will help you to keep growing in Christ.
- **Maybe you are ready to become Christ's follower now?** Then talk in private with your advisor, and he or she will help you go through the steps.
- **Maybe you want more time to think about this important step?** That's fine, but don't delay the decision for ever, for one day it may be too late. And until you decide about following Christ, you will gain little benefit from the rest of this course.

LESSON 1 PRACTICAL TASK

This week, find a place alone and think seriously about these questions. Are you already Christ's follower? Or are you ready to become his follower? Or do you want more time to think about it?

Now do the Review.

LESSON 1 REVIEW

1. For what special purpose did God create humans? To _____ Him and _____ Him personally (*see question 1*)
2. Name four steps in becoming Christ's follower:
 1. _____ from _____
 2. _____ the _____
 3. _____ yourself to _____
 4. _____ Christ's _____

Commented [Advisor14]:

READ the shaded section

ASK:

- "Which three kinds of people does the teacher mention here?"

[those who are already Christ's followers, those who are ready to become his followers, and those who want more time to think about it]

- "Which of these people are you?"
[for each member to think about personally]

Commented [Advisor15]:

TO FINISH THE MEETING

ASK:

- "What is the most important thing you have learned today?"

[members should share their opinions briefly]

SAY:

"The Practical Task each week is very important because it helps you put into practice what you learned in the lesson, so it becomes part of your life not just theory."

READ the Practical Task in the box

SAY:

- "This is a very important task for you to do this week. Please talk with God about it. If you wish, talk with me privately about it too."

"And prepare lesson 2 for next week"

CLOSE IN PRAYER

thanking God that we can know Him personally through Jesus Christ..

Commented [Advisor16]:

LESSON 2 REVIEW

CORRECT ANSWERS:

Question 1
love, know

Question 2

1. turn, sin
2. understand, cost
3. entrust, Christ
4. join, *ummah*

LESSON 1 ANSWERS

- 1 b)
- 2 Jesus Christ
- 3 read the passage
- 4 sinful man
- 5 personal response
- 6 No
- 7 b)
- 8 a humble person
- 9 a) person 2 b) person 1
- 10 c)
- 11 turn
- 12 cost
- 13 personal response
- 14 Christ
- 15 left... followed
- 16 entrust
- 17 a)
- 18 entrust
- 19 ummah
- 20 1. turn 2. understand 3. entrust 4. join

Lesson 2 New Life in Christ

A person who becomes Christ's follower does not merely recite a new 'kalima'. Rather, he or she receives a brand new life in Christ! This includes:

- A. A New Identity
- B. A New Birth
- C. A New Nature



1 Let's learn about this wonderful new life from a part of the Holy Bible called 'The First Letter of Peter' (or 1 Peter for short). It begins like this:

"Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to God's chosen people, scattered"
(1 Peter 1:1)

So who wrote this letter, under God's guidance? (*tick the correct answer*)

- a) the apostle John b) the apostle Peter c) the apostle Matthew

2 The word 'apostle' means a person sent with a special message or on a special mission (not someone on whom a holy book descends). The Lord Jesus, after giving intensive training to his twelve Companions, sent them out on his mission with his message. That is why they are called 'apostles'. Their leader was the apostle Peter. (This is Simon Peter whom we learned about in lesson 1.)

Which part of God's Word will we study in this course? The first letter of the apostle _____

3 The first verse of 1 Peter tells us not only who wrote this letter, but also who received it. These were followers of Christ living in a region which is now called Turkey. Look back to question 1 and fill the blank spaces:

"Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to God's chosen people, _____"

4 As Christ's followers we are 'scattered', for our old community rejects us. But in God's sight, what new identity do we have? We are 'God's _____ people' (see the verse in question 1).

A) Our New Identity

5 Yes, we are 'God's chosen people'! If our old community calls us 'infidels', let's remember that we now belong to the new community which is far more precious. We are proud to be God's chosen people!

As Christ's followers, what is our new identity? (tick the correct answer)

- a) God's chosen people b) infidels c) apostates

6 Other people may accuse us, but "*if God is for us, who can be against us?... Who will bring any charge against God's chosen ones?*" (Romans 8:31,33). "*Will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night?*" (Luke 18:7)

Commented [Advisor17]:

AIMS OF LESSON 2

By the end of this meeting, each member should:

- a. be excited about his new life in Christ.
- b. memorise 2 Corinthians 5:17
- c. understand that we receive a new identity, a new birth and a new nature.
- d. be committed to fight the spiritual battle against his old nature.

Commented [Advisor18]:

TO START THE MEETING

START WITH PRAYER

SAY:

- "This course *Come Follow Me* is based on a part of God's word called 'The First Letter of Peter'. The apostle Peter wrote it under God's guidance. Today's lesson is based on the first three verses."

LESSON REVIEW

- For Review questions 1 & 2, check what members wrote in their books.
- For Review question 3, we will discuss this later today.
- Practise saying the memory verse, all together as a group: "*If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!*" (2 Corinthians 5:17)

ASK:

- "Do you remember what was the practical task for lesson 1?" [*It was, to take time alone to ask yourself if you really are Christ's follower yet!*]
- "Did you do that?" [*Personal answers*] "If not, please do it very soon. It is an important step in your spiritual life".

Commented [Advisor19]:

READ the shaded section.

ASK:

- "What do people in our country call those who change their faith?" [*to discuss. Maybe 'infidel' or 'apostate'*]
- "How does it make you feel to know you belong to 'God's chosen people'?" [*to discuss - personal responses*]

Who gave us this identity as His chosen people? _____

7 It is amazing to realise that long before we chose God, He chose us to be his own people! The next verse in 1 Peter says that we

“... have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father” (1 Peter 1:2)

Therefore, which one of the following statements is true? (*tick one*)

- a) We chose God first b) God chose us long before

B) Our New Birth

8 You know the difference between a worm and a caterpillar. Although they look rather similar, there is actually a huge difference between them. A worm crawls around without any change till it dies. But a caterpillar goes through a marvellous change. Instead of dying, what does it become?

- a) a worm
 b) a butterfly



9 Isn't it a marvel that the ugly caterpillar, which merely crawled along a leaf, is changed into a beautiful butterfly which soars in the sky? It is like going through a completely 'new birth' to become a new creature.

What change takes place in the caterpillar? A kind of 'new _____'.

10 Have you become a follower of Jesus Christ? When you look in the mirror you see the same person as you were before, on the outside. But in fact, the change inside you is as great as a caterpillar becoming a butterfly. This amazing change through Christ is called 'new birth'.

Which people experience this new birth? (*tick one*)

- a) all those who live in our country
 b) all those who personally entrust themselves to Christ

11 The next verse of 1 Peter tells us about this new birth:

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead”
(1 Peter 1:3)

According to this verse, who has given us this new birth? (*tick the correct answer*)

- a) God in His great mercy
 b) We by our good deeds

Commented [Advisor20]:

READ the shaded section

ASK:

- “Isn't it wonderful to know that God our Father chose us before we were even born?!”
[to discuss – personal responses]

Commented [Advisor21]:

LOOK at the picture of the caterpillar and butterfly

READ the shaded section.

ASK:

- “When a caterpillar becomes a butterfly, what change takes place in it?”
[it goes through a kind of 'new birth']

Commented [Advisor22]:

READ the shaded section

ASK:

- “What is the correct answer?” [b]

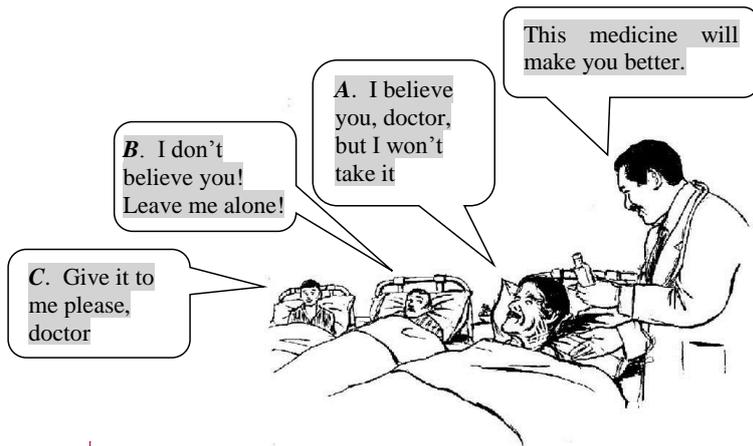
SAY:

- “To find out how to receive this new birth, let's turn to question 12”.

Have you experienced this New Birth?

12 God offers this new birth to everyone, but not everyone receives it.

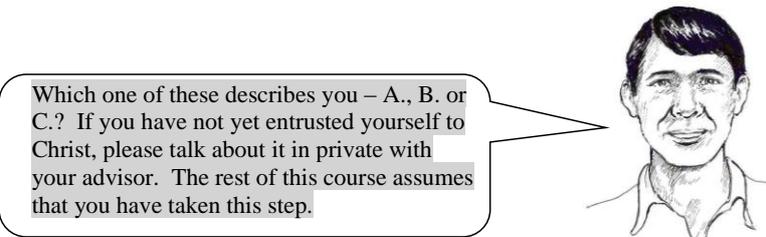
Look at what the doctor says to the three patients, and their replies:



Which of these three sick people, A. B. or C. will get better? _____

13 In the same way, which of the three people below will receive new birth in Christ? (tick one)

- ___ a) The one who says, "I believe your teaching, O Christ, but I am afraid to receive you into my life"
- ___ b) The one who says, "I do not believe you"
- ___ c) The one who says, "I believe you, Lord Jesus. Now I entrust myself to you. Please come into my life".



C) Our New Nature

14 We have learned about our 'new identity' and 'new birth' as Christ's followers. Being in Christ also gives us a 'new nature'. This is the nature of Jesus who now lives in us by his Spirit.

Many people from the same previous religion as yourself have become Christ's followers. Here some of them describe the positive changes he has made in their lives:

- Talib:** "Life in Christ is an exciting and soul-satisfying life"
- Hasan:** "Jesus gave me joy and peace"

Commented [Advisor23]:
READ the shaded section.
SAY:
 • "This doctor is like the Lord Jesus, who offers us spiritual medicine"
ASK:
 • "What kind of person is patient A like? [someone who believes Christ's offer but is afraid to follow him]"
 • "What kind of person is patient B like? [someone who does not believe Christ's offer at all]"
 • "What kind of person is patient C like? [someone who believes Christ's offer and trusts him and receives him into his life]"
 • "So, how do we receive the spiritual new birth?" [by trusting Christ's offer, like patient C. We say to him 'please come into my life'.]

Commented [Advisor24]:
READ the shaded section
SAY:
 • "Have you yet received the Lord Jesus into your life? This is the only way to receive the wonderful new birth. If you have not yet taken this step, please come and talk about it with me in private".

Shamim: “My tension and worry disappeared”
Shaheeda: “My burdens and fears have gone”
Lamin: “I know that God accepts me just as I am”
Ahmad: “The colour of my past was black and its smell was of alcohol, women and sin. The colour of my present is light, covered with joy and peace”

These are all real people, whose true stories have been published in books. What difference came in their lives? (*tick one*)

- a) Christ gave them a new nature with many positive changes
 b) Their lives became worse than before
 c) They were left unchanged in their old nature

15 Jesus Christ gave his new nature to all these his followers. Like them, we too will experience new feelings of joy and peace. But our feelings are not the most important thing. More important are the changes Jesus brings to our character. Here are some true examples:

Hasan: “Jesus enabled me to break my smoking habit”
Jehangir: “Jesus changed my old attitude of pride”
Razzaq: “My stammer and inferiority complex disappeared”
Seidu: “I stopped being a troublemaker”
Shamim: “I became more interested in other people”
Parwaiz: “The spirit of service has taken the place of pride and conceit in my life”
Reza: “I learned to rely on the Lord in my business and to work with honesty”
Mariah: “I long to bring others to know Christ’s love”
(from ‘Jesus More than a Prophet’ by Ralph Wotton)

What actual changes has Christ brought in your own life? Write your ideas, and be ready to share them in the discussion time: _____

16 Don't worry if you have not immediately experienced all the above changes. They will come gradually as you grow in Christ. It takes many years for a baby to grow into an adult, and in the same way it takes many years for someone born again spiritually to reach maturity.

But because Jesus lives in you, which ‘nature’ should be seen more and more in you?

- a) your old sinful nature b) your new nature in Christ

Our Spiritual Battle

17 Even though we already have a new nature in Christ, we must also wage a ‘jihad’ against our old nature - every day for the rest of our lives! God’s Word gives us this command:

“Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature ... You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self [nature] with its practices and have put on the new self [nature], which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.”
 (Colossians 3:5,7-10)

According to the above verses, (*put a circle round the correct answers*)

- a) which nature must we ‘put to death?’ [old nature / new nature]

Commented [Advisor25]:

READ the shaded section. Different group members should read the different lines.

Commented [Advisor26]:

READ the shaded section. Different group members should read the different lines.

Commented [Advisor27]:

READ the shaded section.

ASK:

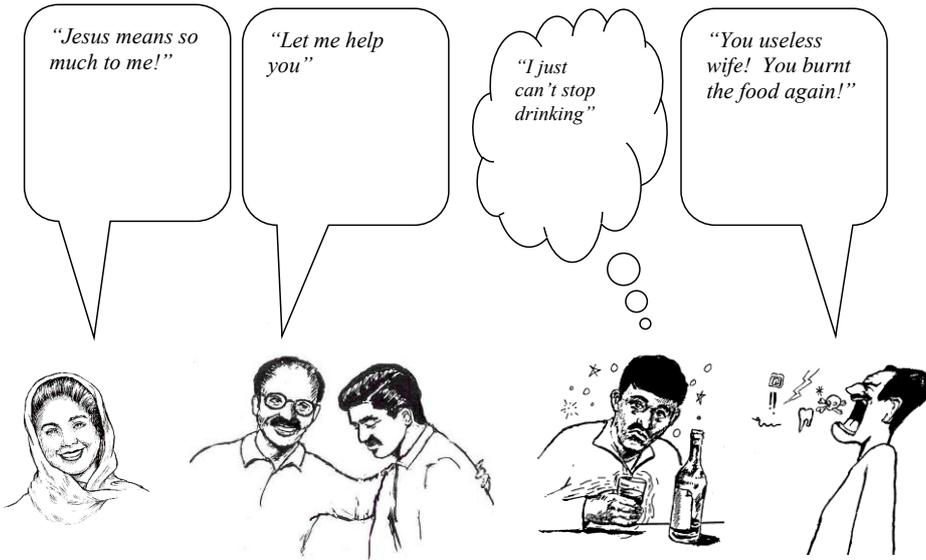
- “What did you write here? And what did you write in the Lesson Review, question 3?” *[each member should mention one thing from his own experience.]*

SAY:

- “Questions like this one don't have a ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ answer. So, sometimes people leave them blank. But actually these are the most important questions because they link to our own experiences in life! Throughout this course, whenever you find a question ‘for group discussion’ please write your ideas. This will help you learn more yourself. Also you will have more to pass on to others in the group, so we can all benefit.”

- b) which nature have we 'taken off'? [old nature / new nature]
 c) which nature have we 'put on'? [old nature / new nature]

18 The pictures below show Christ's followers doing different things. In the blank space by each name, write 'old' if the person is behaving according to their old nature, or 'new' for their new nature:



Person d):
 _____ nature

Person c):
 _____ nature

Person b):
 _____ nature

Person a):
 _____ nature

19 Every day our new nature, which is Jesus' nature put into us, fights against our old sinful nature. A simple farmer once described this struggle like this: "I feel as if two cats are fighting in my life, a white one and a black one." His listener asked him, "So which cat wins?" He replied, "Whichever one I feed the most"!

➤ **Think about the farmer's parable. What do the two cats represent? Which one is winning in your life these days? Why? Be ready for the discussion time.**



From today's lesson, let's remember three great privileges we have in Christ:

- We have a new identity as God's chosen people
- We have gone through a new birth, like a caterpillar becoming a butterfly
- Jesus brings positive changes through his new nature in us

20 The following verse from God's Word summarises what we have learned today:

Commented [Advisor28]:

READ the shaded section.

ASK:

- "What do the two cats represent?"
 [the black cat represents our old nature, & the white cat our new nature]
- "Which one wins in our lives?"
 [whichever one we 'feed the most', i.e. if we feed our new nature in Christ it will grow stronger, but if we give in to our old sinful nature it will gain more control over us.]
- "According to God's word, in the box in question 17, how can we gain victory in the spiritual 'jihad'?"
 [we have to 'put to death' whatever belongs to our earthly nature and 'rid ourselves' of anger, rage, malice etc.]
- "Give examples of this spiritual battle in your own life" [to discuss. Members should give examples, and you too should mention things from your own life. Explain that you are still fighting this battle and you are not perfect yet.]

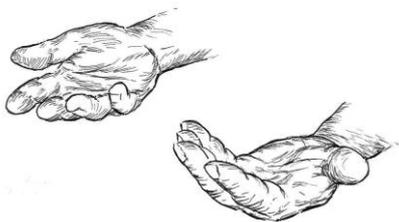
“If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”
(2 Corinthians 5:17)

Fill the gaps and repeat the verse till you know it by heart:

“If anyone is in _____, he is a _____ creation; the _____ has gone, the _____ has come!”
(2 Corinthians 5:17)

Now say this prayer:

O Lord,
In your great mercy You made us your own
chosen people – thank you!
Thank you for giving me new birth and a new
nature.
By Christ’s power, help me daily to fight the
spiritual battle against my old sinful nature.
Ameen



LESSON 2 PRACTICAL TASK

Make a list of three positive changes in your life, which come from your new nature. Thank God for these changes. Also make a list of three habits from your old nature which still persist in your life. This week, with God’s help, fight against these bad habits.

LESSON 2 REVIEW

- When a person entrusts himself to Christ, what change takes place in him?
_____ birth
 - What new identity do we have as Christ’s followers? We are God’s

- Our spiritual battle is between our [old / new] sinful nature and our [old / new] nature in Christ (*cross out the wrong answers*)
- Give two examples of changes which Christ brings in the life of his followers (*if you can’t think of any, see questions 11-12*):

- From memory, fill the gaps from the verse 2 Corinthians 5:17: “If anyone is in _____, he is a _____ creation; the _____ has gone, the _____ has come!”

Commented [Advisor29]:

TO FINISH THE MEETING

ASK:

- “What is the most important thing you have learned today?”

[members should share their opinions briefly]

READ the shaded portion (the Practical Task)

SAY:

- “Please do this Practical Task this week. And prepare lesson 3 for next week.”

CLOSE IN PRAYER

asking God to help us fight daily the spiritual battle.

Commented [Advisor30]:

LESSON 2 REVIEW

CORRECT ANSWERS:

Question 1

- new
- chosen people

Question 2

old, new

Question 3

personal responses [but all members should have written something in their books]

Question 4

Christ, new, old, new

LESSON 2 ANSWERS

- 1 b)
- 2 Peter
- 3 strangers in the world
- 4 chosen
- 5 a)
- 6 God
- 7 b)
- 8 b)
- 9 birth
- 10 b)
- 11 a)

- 12 C
- 13 c)
- 14 a)
- 15 be ready for discussion
- 16 b)
- 17 a) old nature b) old nature c) new nature
- 18 a) old b) old c) new d) new
- 19 be ready for discussion
- 20 memorise the verse

Lesson 3 Chosen by God the Father

In this course you will read many true accounts about people who had the same previous religion as yourself. One such person was named Bilquis Sheikh. Whenever she tried to reach out to God through her religion, He always seemed so far away. She was not able to communicate with Him.

Then one day a follower of Jesus suggested to Bilquis, 'Try speaking to God as your father'. At first she was horrified! This idea seemed to be 'shirk'! But later, alone in her room, she tried it. Here she describes what happened:

" 'Oh Father, my Father'. Hesitantly, I spoke His name aloud... 'Father, oh my Father God', I cried, with growing confidence.... He was there! I could sense His Presence. I could feel His hand laid gently on my head. It was as if I could see His eyes, filled with love and compassion. He was so close that I found myself laying my head on His knees like a little girl sitting at her father's feet. For a long time I knelt there, sobbing quietly, floating in His love."

(from her book 'I dared to Call Him Father')



So, is it 'shirk' to call God our Father?
Let's continue our study in 1 Peter chapter 1.

1 1 Peter 1:2 says:

"...who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father," (1 Peter 1:2)

What title is used for God in this verse? (*tick the correct answer*)

___ a) Lord of the worlds ___ b) God the Father ___ c) Creator

2 Yes, God's names include not only *ar-Rabb* and *al-Khaliq*, but also 'Father'! Many people have heard 99 other names for God, but never this one. Yet in the holy *Injil* God is called 'Father' many times. Jesus himself prayed to God as 'Father' and he even taught his followers to do the same.

By what title did Jesus speak to God? _____

3 The holy *Injil* assures us,

"How great is the love the Father has lavished upon us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!" (1 John 3:1).

This is a very startling truth! Of course, we do not mean that God has children in a physical way, which would be *shirk*. Rather, God has adopted us as His spiritual sons and daughters, in Christ.

Therefore, as God's spiritual children, we can dare to call Him _____

Commented [Advisor31]:

AIMS OF LESSON 3

By the end of this meeting, each member should:

a. rejoice to speak to God as Father

b. memorise 1 John 3:1

c. be sure that our heavenly Father loves us always, never rejects us, and disciplines us for our good

d. take steps to model the same kind of love towards children

Commented [Advisor32]:

TO START THE MEETING

OPEN IN PRAYER

SAY:

- "People think it is *shirk* to call God Father! But in a spiritual way this is possible. In fact, it is our great privilege. We will learn about this today".

LESSON REVIEW

- Check that members can give correct answers to the Review questions.
- Practise the memory verse:

"How great is the love the Father has lavished upon us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!" (1 John 3:1)

ASK:

- "What was the Practical Task for Lesson 2?" [Write three positive changes and three habits which still need to change]. "Did you do this Practical Task?"

Commented [Advisor33]:

SAY:

- "This lesson starts with a true account by Bilquis Sheikh, a wealthy Pakistani lady."

READ the shaded section (preferably, a female member should read it)

ASK:

- "Have any of us ever had a similar experience to this?" [to discuss]
- "When you pray, by what title do you like to speak to God?" [to discuss. We can pray to God with many titles]
- "Why do Christians dare to call God Father?" [because Jesus himself did, and he taught his followers to do the same. see question 2]

A) God the Father loves us always

4 Let's think about the character of our divine Father. According to the verse in question 3, what has God 'lavished on us'? (*check the verse and tick the exact word*)
___ a) mercy ___ b) kindness ___ c) love

5 Yes, unlimited 'love' is what God has lavished upon us. 'Love' is stronger than mere 'mercy' or 'kindness'. In fact love is the strongest thing in the universe, stronger even than force. God himself is love – love without limit!

Here again is the verse from question 3. Fill the blanks, and keep repeating the verse until you can say it from memory:

"How _____ is the _____ the Father has lavished upon us, that we should be called _____ of God! And that is what we are!" (1 John 3:1).

6 No doubt your parents love you very much. But sometimes parents show conditional love to their children. They may love a child who brings them honour, but despise a child who disappoints them. For this reason some children try to earn their father's love through achieving success in exams.

By contrast, our divine Father's love is unconditional. We do not need to earn His love. He loves us just the same whether we come 'top of the class' or 'bottom of the class'! This is because His own nature is to love constantly, it does not depend on our achievements.

Put a circle round the correct answers below:

- a) Whose love sometimes depends on our achievements?
[a human father / God our Father]
- b) Does God love us always, or only when we are good? _____
- c) When should we love our own children? [only when they do good / all the time]

7 We can always trust and rely on God's love because this is His character. I once heard about a human father who wanted to teach his son a lesson of life. So he told the boy to stand on a low wall. 'Now jump into my arms', he said, 'don't worry, I will catch you'.

The boy jumped, but the father dropped his arms to his side and let his son crash to the ground. 'That is to teach you a lesson of life', he told the bewildered child. 'The lesson is – never trust anyone!'

Is our Father God like that untrustworthy father? No! No! No!

➤ **Pause now, and thank God that he is more trustworthy than any human father, and he loves us always**

- 8 By the following statements, write 'True' or 'False':
 - a) God our Father loves us if we do good and hates us if we do bad _____
 - b) God our Father loves us always, whether we are good or bad _____

B) God the Father never rejects us

9 Here is a story about a man who had two sons:

The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate'. So he divided his property between them. Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for

Commented [Advisor34]:

ASK:

- "How would you explain to a non-Christian friend why it is not *shirk* when we call God our heavenly Father?"
- [to discuss. See question 3, and add your own ideas. A///For more on this topic, see Romans 8:14-17]

Commented [Advisor35]:

READ the shaded section.

ASK:

- "How can we know that God is love and that love is always in His character?"
- [to discuss. We know it because His Word says so. And also because He proved it by sending Jesus Christ to die for us.]

Commented [Advisor36]:

READ the shaded section.

ASK:

- "What is the difference between our human father's love and our heavenly Father's love?" [our human fathers might love us according to our achievements, but our heavenly Father loves us however we are]
- "Does God love us always, or only when we are good?" [always]
- "Should we love our children always, or only when they are good?" [always]

Commented [Advisor37]:

ASK:

- "Look at question 7. Do we ever fear that God would be like that father who let his son crash to the ground?"
- [to discuss. Let group members describe their fears honestly. After that, assure them that God will never let us down! He has promised 'Never will I leave you, never will I forsake you' (Hebrews 13:5)]

a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to eat pigs. He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! I will return to my father and see if he is willing to take me back, even as one of his own servants.'

So he got up and went to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him ...

After such a son had dragged his father's honour in the dust, how would you expect the father to react? Do you think he would:

- a) welcome his son with open arms?
- b) reject him and send him away?
- c) let him back into the home, but with a heavy punishment?

(write your own opinion and be ready for the discussion)

10 It may surprise you to hear that this story was first told by Jesus Christ. Jesus continued the story in an even more surprising way:

But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him. The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.'

(Luke 15:11-24)

- a) After bringing such dishonour to his father, did the son deserve to be welcomed or rejected? _____
- b) But what did the father in Jesus' story actually do, welcome or reject his son? _____

11 By contrast, let me tell you about my friend Nazir (the account is true but I have changed his name).

Around 1990 Nazir was sent by his father, a senior religious leader in Uganda, to study religion in a *madrassa* overseas. But during that time Nazir became a follower of Jesus instead.

Several years later Nazir returned to Uganda and went to his home, hoping to be accepted by his father. Instead, from behind the locked gate, his father asked him 'We have heard rumours that you became a Christian – is it true?' 'Yes', Nazir admitted. 'Then you are no longer my son', replied his father. Then, from behind the gate, he threw stones to drive Nazir away.

Later Nazir told me, 'That day was the hardest day of my life'.

Which father is God like? (*tick one*)

- a) the father of Nazir, who rejected him because he brought dishonour
- b) the father in Jesus' parable, who did not reject his son even after he caused dishonour

12 We try not to cause dishonour to our divine Father. But if we do, we must come back to him and apologise sincerely, like the son in Jesus' parable. When we do that, we can be sure He will [never / probably] reject us. (*circle the correct answer*)

Commented [Advisor38]:

READ the shaded section.

ASK:

- "What answer did you give? Why?" [to discuss. There is no 'right' answer. But probably most human fathers would do b) or c)]
- "By contrast, what is very surprising about the father in Jesus' story?" [see question 10. He welcomed back his son who had brought him so much dishonour!]

Commented [Advisor39]:

READ the shaded section

ASK:

- "Have any of us faced an experience like Nazir?" [group members should describe their experiences. If we have not yet been rejected maybe it will happen later when our family find out about our faith in Christ]
- "What is the difference between Nazir's father and our heavenly Father?" [our heavenly Father will never reject us!]

13 It is written *“Though my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will receive me”* (Psalm 27:10). Often we are emotionally closer to our mothers than to our fathers. But God’s love for us is even stronger than our mother’s love!

Which one of the following will never reject us? (*tick one only*)
___ a) our father ___ b) our mother ___ c) God

C) God the Father disciplines us for our good

14 All parents want their children to grow up with a good character. So they discipline them and train them. God does the same with us. *“God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father?... God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness”*. (Hebrews 12:7,10)

According to this verse, why does God our Father discipline us?

- ___ a) for our own good
- ___ b) because he likes to hurt us

15 Yes, our divine Father disciplines us for our own good. He wants to make our character more like the character of Jesus Christ. He wants us to become patient, trusting, loving, obedient children.

Do you think these characteristics will be developed in us more through the easy times of life or more through the hard times? Write your personal opinion here, and be ready for discussion:

16 Because God our Father loves his spiritual children so much, he disciplines us. He deliberately allows us to pass through hard trials:

“In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith – of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire – may be proved genuine” (1 Peter 1:6-7)

According to this verse,

- a) What does the goldsmith use to purify gold? _____
- b) What does God our Father use to purify our faith? _____

17 Look back over three things about God our Father we have learned in this lesson.

- a) In which section did we learn that God the Father loves us always?
from question 4 to question ___
- b) In which section did we learn that God the Father never rejects us?
from question ___ to question ___
- c) In which section did we learn that God the Father disciplines us for our good?
from question ___ to question 16

Commented [Advisor40]:

READ the shaded section

SAY:

- “Let’s repeat together this verse from the Zaboor” [say all together, *“Though my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will receive me”*]

Commented [Advisor41]:

READ the shaded section.

ASK:

- “What answer did you write here?” [Each member should give his opinion. It is true that we become more like Jesus Christ through the hard times. We learn to be patient, prayerful, forgiving].
- “Describe a hard time in your life when God disciplined you for good.” [Members should describe their experiences. Be ready with an example from your own life too.]

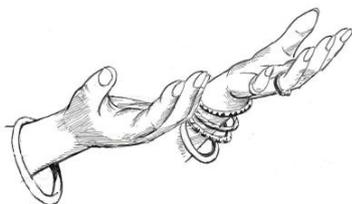
Commented [Advisor42]:

READ the shaded section

ASK:

- “According to this verse, why does our heavenly Father allow us to pass through hard trials?” [to purify our faith, like gold]

Now say this prayer:



Father God,
Thank you very much for making me as your spiritual child and loving me without limit. I too love you, and as your child I want to bring you honour.
Ameen.

LESSON 3 PRACTICAL TASK
This week, do something to show love to the children in your life (your own or your relatives' children). Give attention to them and show interest in them. For instance, you could spend time listening to what they want to tell you, or take them with you to the market, or give them a 'well done', or lovingly guide them to change a bad habit in their life.

LESSON 3 REVIEW

- 1 Write three things we have learned about God our Father: *(see question 17)*
 - a) God the Father _____ us always
 - b) God the Father never _____ us
 - c) God the Father _____ us for our good

- 2 By each of the following statements, write 'True' or 'False':
 - a) God our Father loves us even when we fail _____
 - b) We can trust God our Father all the time _____
 - c) God's discipline is bad for us _____

- 3 Write the verse you memorised:

"How _____ is the _____ that we should be called _____ . And that _____ !" (1 John 3:1). *(if you can't remember, see question 5)*

Commented [Advisor43]:
TO FINISH THE MEETING
ASK:
• "What is the most important thing you have learned today?"
[members should share their opinions briefly]
READ the shaded section
ASK:
• "Which of us can do this Practical Task with our own children? For the others, are there children in your household with whom you can do this?"
CLOSE IN PRAYER
thanking God that He is so much more reliable than any human father and that we can be even closer to Him than to our human parents.

Commented [Advisor44]:
LESSON 3 REVIEW
CORRECT ANSWERS:
Question 1
a) loves
b) rejects
c) disciplines
Question 2
a) true
b) true
c) false
Question 3
great, love the Father has lavished upon us, children of God, is what we are

LESSON 3 ANSWERS

- 1 b)
- 2 Father
- 3 Father
- 4 c)
- 5 great, love, children
- 6 a) a human father b) always c) all the time
- 7 your personal response to God
- 8 a) False b) True
- 9 for the discussion time
- 10 a) rejected b) welcome
- 11 b)
- 12 never
- 13 c)
- 14 a)
- 15 for the discussion time
- 16 a) fire b) all kinds of trials
- 17 a) 8 b) 9,13 c) 14

Lesson 4 Obeying Christ, Filled with the Holy Spirit



Let's continue learning about God's work in our lives. In lesson 3 we learned about God as Father. Today, let's find out more about the work of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. We will also think about how these three belong together as the one true God.

1 Let's read again 1 Peter 1:2:

"...who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood" (1 Peter 1:2)

In addition to God the Father, which two other names are mentioned here?

- the _____
- Jesus _____

2 What a privilege we have to call God our Father! Yet the only way we can experience him as Father is through Jesus Christ who revealed Him, and through God's Spirit who makes Him real to us today.

Jesus Christ's Work in our Lives

According to 1 Peter 1:2, for what have we been chosen? For '_____ to Jesus Christ and _____ by his blood'.

3 These words 'obedience' and 'sprinkling' link us back to an earlier occasion in the history of God's people. The Lord, after rescuing Bani-Israel from oppression in Egypt, made a firm commitment with them to be their God. They made a firm commitment to be His people. This mutual commitment was called a 'covenant' and it was sealed with a sacrifice.

The Tawrat of Moses describes what happened next:

"Moses... took the Book of the Covenant and read it to the people. They responded, 'We will do everything the Lord has said: we will obey'. Moses then took the blood, sprinkled it on the people and said, 'This is the blood of the covenant that the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words'" (Exodus 24:7-8)

In the box, underline the words 'obey' and 'sprinkled' and 'covenant'.

4 Today we, Christ's followers, have inherited this identity as 'God's chosen people'. We belong in a 'covenant' with the Lord. This new covenant is a firm commitment where he has promised to be our God and we promise to be his people.

Our oath of allegiance to Him is even more binding than the oath of a *murid* to his *pir*!

According to 1 Peter 1:2,

- whose blood is sprinkled on us as a seal of this covenant? _____
- whom have we made a firm commitment to obey? _____

5 The pictures below show three of Christ's followers:

Commented [Advisor45]:

AIMS OF LESSON 4

By the end of this meeting, each member should:

- resolve fully to obey the Lord, in thought, word and deed
- memorise Ephesians 5:18
- use the sun analogy to briefly describe the Trinity
- long to be filled more and more with the Holy Spirit

Commented [Advisor46]:

TO START THE MEETING

START WITH PRAYER

SAY:

- "Today we will discuss the work of the Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit in our lives. Also we will try to understand a little about how the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit belong together as the one true God."

LESSON REVIEW

- Check that members can give correct answers to the Review questions.
- Practise saying the memory verse: "Be filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18)

ASK:

- "Did you do the Practical Task of showing love to the children in your life? What did you do?" [Group members should describe what they did and what was the result]

Commented [Advisor47]:

READ the shaded section.

ASK:

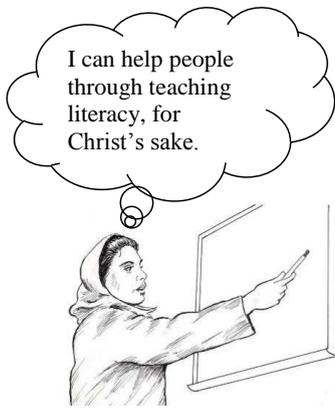
- "What does the word 'covenant' mean? [see question 4. It is a firm commitment which must not be broken]
- "What did Moses sprinkle on the people as proof of their binding commitment to obey God? [the blood of sacrificed animals]
- "According to 1 Peter 1:2, what has been sprinkled on us as proof of our binding commitment to obey God?" [the blood of Jesus Christ]

Commented [Advisor48]:

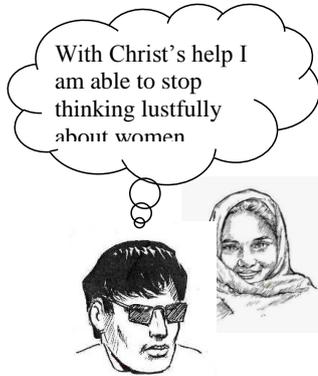
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ASK:

- "What does this sentence mean for us?" [The disciple makes a *ba't* (oath of allegiance) to obey the *pir* in everything. We are bound to obey our master Christ in the same way. And in fact, our commitment to obey him should be even stronger than the *murid's* obedience to his *pir*, because Christ has done more for us than any *pir*!]



Rukhsana



Qasim



Shagufa

- a) Which one, Shagufa Rukhsana or Qasim, is obeying Christ by their deeds? _____
 b) Which of the three is obeying Christ by their words? _____
 c) Which is even obeying Christ by their thoughts? _____

6 Yes, we have bound ourselves to obey our master Jesus Christ in every area of our lives: in our deeds, our words and even our thoughts!

According to 1 Peter 1:2, for what have we been chosen? 'For _____ to Jesus Christ and _____ by his blood'

The Holy Spirit's Work in our Lives

7 What gives us the inner strength to obey our master Jesus? 1 Peter 1:2 gives us the answer. It is 'the sanctifying work of the _____' (see question 1 again)

8 Let's find out more about 'the Spirit' mentioned here and many times in the Holy Bible. He is also called:

- the Spirit of God
- the Spirit of Christ
- the Holy Spirit.

So, according to the Bible's teaching, who is the Holy Spirit? (tick one answer)

- a) the angel Gabriel
 b) the personal presence of God, through Christ
 c) an impersonal force like fate

9 Yes, the Holy Spirit is God's own personal presence, active in the world and in Christ's followers. Christ's Spirit in our lives makes God real to us.

How do God the Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit belong together? This is hard to understand, but an analogy of the sun can help us.

Commented [Advisor49]:

LOOK at these three pictures

ASK:

• "Which do you think is most important: to obey the Lord Jesus with our deeds, or our words or our thoughts?"
 [to discuss. Actually, all three are very important and we must not choose to omit any of them!]

• "Give an example from your life of how Christ has helped you obey him in your thoughts, words or deeds"
 [to discuss. Remember to involve everyone in the discussion, even the shy members]

Commented [Advisor50]:

READ the shaded sections in questions 7 and 9.

ASK:

• "According to the Bible's teaching, who is the Holy Spirit?"
 [God's own personal presence, active in the world and especially in Christ's followers]

• "Since you became Christ's follower, is God's presence more real in your life than previously?" [Most members will say 'yes'] "So who is making God's presence more real in your life these days?" [His Spirit, whom we call the Holy Spirit]



The sun is 150 million kilometres away, but its rays cross that vast gap to show us what the sun is like. In fact, without those rays, we could know nothing at all about the sun.

When the rays strike the earth, they create sunshine. People who choose to step into the sunshine experience its life-giving warmth, brought to them by its rays.

We can distinguish between the sun, the rays and the sunshine, but also all three belong together as one.

What are three elements of the one sun? _____

10 Now we can explain the analogy



- The sun is the source of life, so strong and reliable. This is like God the Father.
- The rays cross that vast gap to bring the sun to us and show us what it is like. This is like God the Son (Jesus Christ);
- The sunshine comes from the sun by means of its rays to fill our lives with warmth and strength. This is like God the Holy Spirit.
- We can distinguish between them, but also all three belong together as the one True God!

The gap between the Creator and His creatures is even greater than between the sun and the earth. But God the Son (Jesus Christ) came all the way from God to be born as a human. He crossed that vast gap and shows us what God is like. And God's Spirit fills our lives with His strength and love. Only through God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, can we have any contact at all with God the Father!

a) Could you experience the sun in your life if it had no rays and sunshine? [Yes / No]

b) Could you experience God in your life without Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit?
[Yes / No]

11 Everything God does in our lives is by means of his Spirit living in us. We will see this again and again throughout this course. It is the Holy Spirit who enables us to:

- turn away from sin (lesson 1)
- receive a new life (lesson 2)
- talk with God and read His Word (lessons 5, 6)
- witness to others (lesson 13)
- obey Christ's *shariah* (lesson 15)
- serve one another, using His gifts (lesson 19)

So, to live as Christ's followers, is it 'essential' or 'optional' for his Holy Spirit to be active in our lives? _____

Commented [Advisor51]:

READ the shaded section

SAY:

- "Trinity means three-in-one. There is one God, who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This sounds more complicated than our previous idea of God. But remember, our previous God could not show himself on this earth! He could not enter our lives! We can only experience God's closeness and power because he is Trinity".

LOOK at the picture of the sun on this page.

ASK:

- "How can we use the analogy of the sun to explain why the Trinity is so important to us? [to discuss. If members find it difficult to explain, just read the teacher's words in the 'bullet points' in question 10.]

Commented [Advisor52]:

READ the shaded section

ASK:

- "Up till now, which things in this list has the Holy Spirit enabled you to do?" [to discuss]
- "So is it essential or optional for God's Spirit to be active in our lives?
[essential – see end of question 11]

12 Without the Holy Spirit we cannot live for Christ. 1 Peter 1:2 tells us of another very important work he does in our lives. What is this? ‘..the _____ work of the Spirit’ (if you can’t remember, look back to question 1)

13 To ‘sanctify’ means ‘to set apart as holy’. God wants to set apart His people from a sin-stained lifestyle, in order to be dedicated to Him alone. He says to us, “Be holy, because I am holy” (1 Peter 1:16).

Suppose you want to clean a dirty glass, to set it apart for the sole use of your special guest. With what would you clean it?

- ___ a) with pure clean water ___ b) with dirty water ___ c) with alcohol

14 Of course, we need pure clean water to wash a dirty cup and set it apart for special use. God’s Spirit himself is ‘holy’ and he works in our life to make us holy and to set us apart for God’s sole use.

What does he command us in 1 Peter 1:16? (see question 13) “Be____, because I am _____”

Be filled with the Spirit

15 Not all human beings have the Holy Spirit, but only those who have invited Christ to come in to their lives. Christ lives in them not in a physical form, but by his Spirit.

- a) Did you invite Jesus Christ to enter your life? [Yes / No]
 b) If ‘yes’, then do you have the Holy Spirit in your life? [Yes / No]

16 However, although all Christ’s followers have his Spirit in their lives, not all are filled to overflowing with this Spirit.

The Holy Bible speaks of water as an analogy of the Holy Spirit. Look at these two glasses:



- a) Which glass, 1. or 2., symbolises the person who has never received Christ’s Spirit in his life? ___
 b) Which glass 1 or 2., symbolises the person who has the Holy Spirit in his life? ___

17 Here is a third glass:



- a) Do glasses 2. and 3. both have water in them? _____
 b) Then what is the difference between them? _____

Commented [Advisor53]:

READ the shaded section

ASK:

- “One very important work of God’s Spirit in our lives is to sanctify us. What does this mean?” [to discuss. Only He can cleanse us so we can be set apart as holy]

Commented [Advisor54]:

LOOK at these three glasses

SAY:

- “These three glasses represent three kinds of people, and the water represents the Holy Spirit.”

ASK:

- “What kind of person does glass 1. represent?” [someone who has not received Christ and therefore does not have his Spirit at all]
- “What kind of person does glass 2. represent?” [someone who has received Christ and is partly filled with his Spirit]
- “What kind of person does glass 3. represent?” [someone who has received Christ and is full of his Spirit]

18 In the same way, although all Christ's followers have his Spirit in their lives, not all of them are filled to the brim with the Holy Spirit.

How does God want our lives to be?

- ___ a) empty of His Spirit
- ___ b) partly filled with His Spirit
- ___ c) overflowing with His Spirit, to bring His life to others



19 This is God's command to us:

"Be filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18)

In the original language, this verse says that we need to keep on being filled with Spirit, not just one time. Yes, we need to be filled anew every day of our lives. Every day we sin, and grieve the Holy Spirit within us, so every day we need to be again cleansed and set apart for God's sole use.

- a) Whose work is it to cleanse and fill us afresh every day?
[our own work / the Spirit's work]
- b) Whose work is it to turn every day from sin and ask God to fill us afresh?
[our own work / the Spirit's work]

20 Write again the verse from question 19, and memorise it:

"Go on _____" (Ephesians 5:18)

Your Personal Response

- *Do you long to experience the presence and power of God in your life?*
- *Do you want the beautiful character of Jesus to be seen in you?*
- *Do you want to bring blessing to those around you?*

If your answer is 'yes', then ask God now and every day to fill you more and more with His Holy Spirit.

LESSON 4 PRACTICAL TASK

Each day this week, when you wake up in the morning ask God to fill you to overflowing with the Holy Spirit.



Please Note: Starting from lesson 6, you will start to look up verses yourself in God's Word, instead of just reading them in this study book. So you must obtain your own copy of the Holy Bible. Please ask your advisor how to buy or borrow one.

Commented [Advisor55]:

READ the shaded section.

ASK:

- "Which kind of person do you want to be: empty, partly filled or overflowing?"
- [to discuss. Probably most members will say 'overflowing']*

Commented [Advisor56]:

READ the shaded section.

SAY:

- "God will indeed fill us in answer to this prayer and as we play our part to keep close to Him. Sometimes He will give a sudden filling, sometimes gradual. But His command is to keep on being filled. For the rest of our lives we need to keep on being filled more and more and more!"

Commented [Advisor57]:

TO FINISH THE MEETING

ASK:

- "What is the most important thing you have learned today?"
- [members should share their opinions briefly]*

READ the shaded section

SAY:

- "Today let's pray together for God to keep filling us with His Spirit. And your Practical Task this week is to keep praying for this."

CLOSE IN PRAYER

asking God to fill us more and more with His Spirit!

SAY:

- "If any of you don't have yet your own copy of the Bible or New Testament, please come and see me about it now".
- [each member will need one from lesson 6 onwards]*

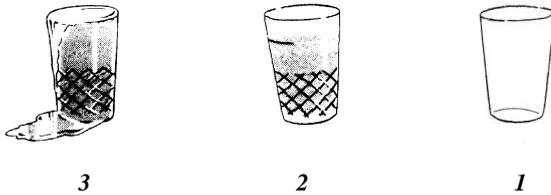
LESSON 4 REVIEW

1 According to 1 Peter 1:2, for what have we been chosen? 'For _____ to Jesus Christ and _____ by his blood' (see question 1)

2 According to the Bible's teaching, who is the Holy Spirit? (tick one)

- a) the angel Gabriel
- b) the personal presence of God, through Christ
- c) an impersonal force like fate

3 Here is a picture of three glasses



- a) Which glass symbolises the person who has never received Christ in his life? _____
- b) Which glass symbolises the person who has received Christ's Spirit but has not given him full control of his life? _____
- c) Which glass symbolises the person who is fully under Christ's control and is overflowing with his Spirit? _____

4 What is God's command in Ephesians 5:18? " _____ with _____ " (see question 21)

Commented [Advisor58]:

LESSON 4 REVIEW

CORRECT ANSWERS:

Question 1
obedience, sprinkling

Question 2
b) is correct

Question 3
a) 1.
b) 2.
c) 3.

Question 4
Be filled, the Spirit

LESSON 4 ANSWERS

- 1 a) Spirit b) Christ
- 2 obedience, sprinkling
- 3 underline the words in the verse
- 4 a) Jesus Christ b) Jesus Christ
- 5 a) Rukhsana b) Shagufa c) Qasim
- 7 Spirit
- 8 b)
- 9 sun, rays, sunshine
- 10 a) No b) No
- 11 essential
- 12 sanctifying
- 13 a)
- 14 holy, holy
- 15 a), b) personal response
- 16 a) 1 b) 2
- 17 a) yes b) glass 2 has some water in it, but glass 3 is full to the brim
- 18 c)
- 19 a) the Spirit's work b) our own work
- 20 "Be filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18)

Lesson 5 Salah, Dua or Talking with God?

1 Imagine a man trying to present his problem before a great king. However hard he tries he cannot enter the king's presence, but instead must deal with his servants. But if the king's own son has a problem, he may come close to the king at any time. What gives him the right to do this? Of course, it is because he is the king's own child.

As we learned in lesson 4, you have the right to call God your Father! Therefore, how may you enter into His presence?

- ___ a) directly, at any time
 ___ b) indirectly, through holy men



Talking with God as Father

2 1 Peter 1:17 reminds us that we 'call on a Father'. What will a loving father do when his daughter comes to talk with him?

- ___ a) send her away
 ___ b) tell her to contact his servant instead
 ___ c) listen to her with patience and full attention

3 When we come close to our Father God, He listens to us with patience and full attention. He wants us to come close to Him in prayer. He is always willing to give us time. We do not need the intercession of holy men to bring us close to God.

Circle 'true' or 'false' in the following statements:

- a) We live in God's intimacy by talking with Him as our Father [True/False]
 b) We need to come to God through the intercession of holy men [True/False]
 c) Our Father God is always ready to listen to us [True/False]

4 A loving father or mother wants their children to talk with them about anything. In the same way, we may talk with our loving father God about anything. Which things in the following list may we talk with God about? (tick one or more)

- ___ our worries ___ our fears ___ our sorrows ___ our joys
 ___ our sins ___ our families ___ our desires ___ our regrets

5 Yes, God wants us to talk with Him about all these things! Jesus taught his followers to speak to God as 'dear father' or even 'daddy'.

How may we live in God's intimacy? By talking with Him as our dear _____

Salah, Dua or Talking with God?

6 When we talk with God as Father we need not use long words or the Arabic language. Christ's followers talk with God in their mother-tongue, with simple words. Is this more like the *salah* you are accustomed to, or like *dua*? _____

Commented [Advisor59]:

AIMS OF LESSON 5
 For each member to:

- a. be able to talk with God throughout each day
 b. understand that prayer is talking with God, not just a ritual
 c. learn that prayer includes confessing, thanking and asking
 d. memorise the Lord's prayer

Commented [Advisor60]:

TO START THE MEETING

START WITH PRAYER

SAY:

- "Look at this picture. We think of God as being a great King, which He is. But today we will learn that we are also His spiritual children, so we can talk with Him as our heavenly Father!"

LESSON REVIEW

- Check that members can give correct answers to the Review questions.

ASK:

- "Did you do the Practical Task? Did you pray each day during this last week for God to fill you with his Holy Spirit?" [Personal responses. We remind the group members each week about the Practical Task so that they realise it is an essential part of the course]

Commented [Advisor61]:

READ the shaded section

ASK:

- "Why is God always willing to give us his attention? [because he is our heavenly Father]
- "Why do we not need the intercession of holy men to bring us close to God?" [because we are God's spiritual children, so we have the right to come close to Him ourselves!]

Commented [Advisor62]:

READ the shaded section

ASK:

- "On which of these things did you put a tick?" [each person should say what he or she wrote. In fact, we can talk with our heavenly Father about all these things!]

7 When Christ's followers talk with God, it is more like *dua* than *salah*. We may talk with our heavenly Father at any time in any place, at any time.

But prayer is not merely asking God for things. Above all, prayer is talking with God. We speak with him and he listens. He speaks with us and we listen.

- a) What is prayer? _____ with God.
b) Does talking with God also include listening to Him? [Yes/No]

- 8 Which answer below is the best description of Christian prayer? (*tick one only*)
___ a) talking with God as Father
___ b) doing 'salah'
___ c) merely asking God for things

9 In prayer our motive is not to gain religious merit. In fact our highest motive in prayer is not even to ask God to give us things. Above all, we pray in order to live in God's intimacy. What should be our highest motive in prayer? To live in God's _____

10 The longing of our hearts is to live in God's intimacy. The Sufi poets longed for this. God the Generous has granted to us what others could only long for! Through Christ we have the privilege of living in God's intimacy.

"Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy" (1 Peter 1:8)

- **Stop now to thank God for the 'inexpressible and glorious joy' which He gives you through Christ. Ask Him to help you live in His intimacy more and more.**

Pray Continually

11 Probably you think that talking with God as Father is easier than *salah* because it requires less ritual. In one way, this is true. But in another way, it is harder! God's word commands us to

"Pray continually" (1 Thessalonians 5:17)

Which is harder, to pray five times a day or to pray continually? _____

12 What does 1 Thessalonians 5:17 command us to do? _____

13 To 'pray continually' sounds impossible! But remember that the true purpose of prayer is to live in God's intimacy. By means of His Spirit within us, we can do this all day long. A follower of Jesus from the same previous religion as yourself, explained it like this: "*When I pray, inside me I am praising and enjoying God, because there is something new in me, which is God's Spirit in contact with my spirit*".

So you can talk with God and listen to Him in your spirit, without speaking words aloud. Which of the following times offer a good opportunity for you to live in God's intimacy, during your busy day? (*Tick one or more, according to your own circumstance*)

- ___ while sitting in a bus
___ while waiting in a queue
___ while walking to the market
___ while washing the dishes
___ before each meal

Commented [Advisor63]:

ASK:

- "For what various motives do people say their *namaz* or *dua*?" [*different motives, for instance people often do 'namaz' to earn merit, or 'dua' to meet a need.*]
- "What should be our highest motive in prayer?" [*to live in God's intimacy, according to point 9, though members may express this idea in their own words.*]

Commented [Advisor64]:

READ the shaded section

ASK:

- "Have you ever felt this 'inexpressible and glorious joy'? Describe what you felt. [*members should describe their feelings. Some may not be able to do so yet, and that's fine*]
- "Through what means can we reach so close to God?" [*through Jesus Christ himself, not through our own efforts of doing 'zikr'*]

Commented [Advisor65]:

ASK:

- "Why does 1 Thessalonians 5:17 command us to do? [*pray continually*]
- "According to one story, a person said that 50 prayers a day was far too many. So how can we possibly 'pray continually'? Let's see what point 13 says about this. [*read the shaded section together*].
- "What answers did you each tick for point 13? [*each person should say what they wrote. They should share their experiences of living close to God right through the normal activities of daily life*].
- "In this list, the last suggestion is 'before each meal'. If your family circumstances allow, have you made this your habit? [*personal responses. It is a good habit to develop, wherever possible.*]

Although we may talk with our heavenly Father at any time and any place, it is important that we also make a daily routine for personal prayer. This builds a healthy habit in our



The Lord's Prayer

14 All over the world, Christ's followers say the following prayer in their own languages:

“Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be your name,
Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
Forgive us our debts, as we have also forgiven our debtors,
And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one.
For yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory. Amen”

(Matthew 6:9-13)

This prayer is called the Lord's Prayer because the Lord Jesus himself taught it to his followers. When you have said it aloud twice, tick this box

15 The Lord's Prayer contains an ocean of meaning in a few simple words. We do not recite it to seek a reward, but because it gives us a good pattern for our own prayers. It reminds us of three kinds of prayer:

- confessing our sins
- thanking God
- asking for our needs

With whom do we talk, using these different kinds of prayer? _____

16 Let's think about these three kinds of prayer, in turn.

Confessing our Sins

Suppose your son threw a ball inside the house, broke a window, and then demanded money from you to buy sweets. How would you feel? Too often we come to our heavenly Father like that! We ask him for things without even saying 'sorry' first.

Therefore, before asking for things, we should first confess our wrong deeds, wrong words and wrong thoughts which caused pain to our father God.

What is the first kind of prayer? _____ our sins.

17 When we say 'sorry' to God for the ways we have dishonoured him, He keeps his promise to forgive us and cleanse our sin-stained consciences. We may think of confession as being like our spiritual ablution before we enter God's presence.

Commented [Advisor66]:

MEMORISE the Lord's Prayer

[Use the words in the box, or whatever version in your language is best known. Practise it in short sections, until members can say the whole of it with the book closed].

ASK:

- "Do we earn any religious merit by praying the Lord's prayer?" *[some members might think so. But in fact, we do not to gain merit but to live in God's intimacy]*
- "But if we say the Lord's prayer ten times instead of one time, will that give us more merit?" *[No! The Lord Jesus said, "When you pray, do not keep babbling on like the pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words" (Matthew 6:7)]*
- "In which language do you think it is better to pray, in Arabic or in our own language?" *[Some people think Arabic. But actually, our own language is better, because we can pour out our desires and thanksgiving to our heavenly Father more freely in our own mother tongue]*

Commented [Advisor67]:

READ the shaded section

ASK:

- "How can we be sure that God will forgive and cleanse us when we say sorry to Him?" *[because He promises this. 1 John 1:9 says "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness"]*

Put a circle round the correct answers below:

- a) What does washing with water cleanse? [our dirty bodies / our guilty consciences]
- b) What does God cleanse when we confess our sins?
[our dirty bodies / our guilty consciences]

Thanking God

18 Often we come to God with a selfish motive, asking him to meet our own needs. But, as grateful children, shouldn't we also thank our heavenly Father for all he has done for us? He has given us salvation and so many physical and spiritual blessings.

What is this second kind of prayer? Tick the correct answer:

- a) Confessing
- b) Thanking
- c) Asking

19 We thank God not only for what He has done, but also for His own character. He is our loving, faithful, holy Redeemer! Write one characteristic of God which is very precious to you _____

Asking for our Needs

20 Jesus said to his followers,

“Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!”
(Matthew 7:7-11)

Is our heavenly Father glad or reluctant to give us good gifts when we ask him? _____

21 God loves to give his children good gifts. Therefore we come to Him with all our requests. What kind of prayer is this? (tick the correct answer)

- a) Confessing
- b) Thanking
- c) Asking

22 We should ask God not only for our own needs, but also for the needs of whom? (tick one or more, according to your own opinion)

- our family members
- our friends cut off from Christ
- the sick and needy
- our government and leaders
- our brothers and sisters in Jesus
- our enemies
- other: _____

[Note: In the discussion time, your advisor will show you how to make a list to pray regularly for these different things]

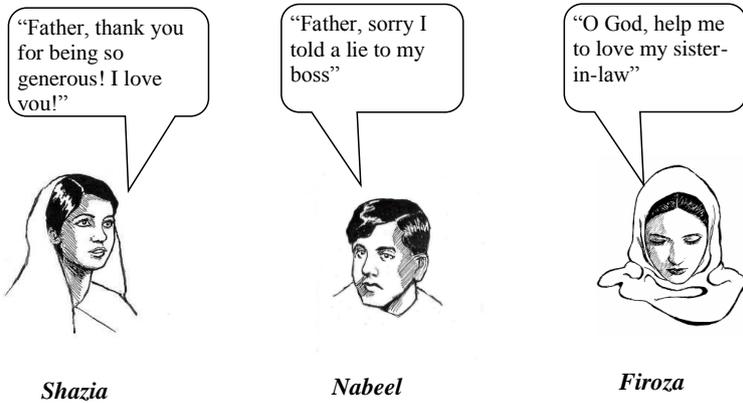
Commented [Advisor68]:
ASK:
• “Give an example of how God answered your prayer and met your need” [members should give their own experiences]

Commented [Advisor69]:
ASK:
• “What was your personal answer for point 22? [each member should say what they wrote]

Commented [Advisor70]:
READ the shaded section
EXPLAIN how to make a prayer list:

- “It is easy to be selfish and only pray for ourselves. But our heavenly Father wants us to pray for other people too. When we pray for them, God works in their lives”.
- “Sometimes God especially brings to our mind a person He wants us to pray for. We should pray straightaway for that person.”
- “But also we should develop the habit of praying regularly for different people. For example, in point 22 we could pray for our family members every Friday. Write ‘Friday’ in your book next to ‘our family members’.”
- “In the same way, write ‘Saturday’ next to ‘our friends cut off from Christ’, ‘Sunday’ for the next point, and down the list this way till you reach Wednesday.”
- “For whom will you pray on Thursdays?” [members should make their own suggestions - e.g. to pray for the people in their village, or their workplace, or other suggestions]
- “Write in your book ‘Thursdays’ and next to it whichever topic you will pray for on that day. This is your own choice what you write.”
- “Continue this pattern every day for a few weeks. Afterwards it is fine to change your topics if you wish, but make sure you keep praying regularly for different people”.

23 Look at these three people using the three types of prayer:



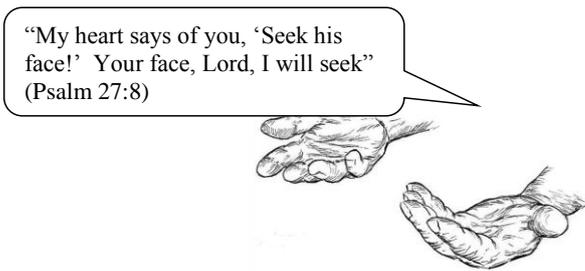
Draw lines to match each person with their related type of prayer (*the first line is already drawn for you, now do the others*):

<u>Person</u>	<u>Type</u>
Firoza	Confessing
Nabeel	Thanking
Shazia	Asking

24 Now write the three kinds of prayer you have learned:

_____ our sins
 _____ God
 _____ for our needs

Finally, using this prayer of Hazrat Dawud, ask your Father God to keep you always close to Him:



LESSON 5 PRACTICAL TASK

Memorise the Lord’s Prayer and speak it out in prayer each day this week. Be ready to say it in the group next week.

LESSON 5 REVIEW

- 1 Which answer below is the best description of Christian prayer? *(tick one only)*
 a) talking with God as Father
 b) doing ‘salah’
 c) merely asking God for things
- 2 What three kinds of prayer have we learned in this lesson? *(see question 15)*
 _____, _____, _____
- 3 What does 1 Thessalonians 5:17 command us to do? _____
(see question 11)
- 4 Write here the Lord’s Prayer *(if you haven’t yet memorised it, copy it from question 14)*
 “Our Father, _____

 _____”

If you do not yet have your own copy of the Bible, please obtain one. You will need it for all the remaining lessons.



Commented [Advisor71]:

TO FINISH THE MEETING

SAY:

- “For the next lesson you must have your own copy of the Bible or New Testament. Does anyone not yet have one? *[each member will need one from lesson 6 onwards]*

READ the shaded portion (Practical Task)

SAY:

- “But remember, our main purpose in prayer is not to recite fixed words to earn merit! What is our highest motive in prayer?” *[to live in God’s intimacy, see point 9.]*

CLOSE IN PRAYER

Base your prayer on the words of hazrat Dawud (point 24). We, like him, want to seek God’s face and live in His intimacy.

Commented [Advisor72]:

LESSON 5 REVIEW

CORRECT ANSWERS:

Question 1
a)

Question 2
confessing (our sins)
thanking (God)
asking (for our needs)
[the answers may be in any order, and the words in brackets are optional]

Question 3
pray continually

Question 4
Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be your name,
Your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
Forgive us our debts, as we have also forgiven our debtors,
And lead us not into temptation
But deliver us from the evil one.
For yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory. Amen”

LESSON 5 ANSWERS

- 1 a)
- 2 c)
- 3 a) True b) False c) True
- 4 we may talk with God about all of these
- 5 father
- 6 *dua*
- 7 a) talking b) Yes
- 8 a)
- 9 intimacy
- 10 stop and pray about this
- 11 personal response
- 12 pray continually
- 13 share your answer in discussion
- 14 repeat the prayer twice, then continue reading
- 15 God our Father
- 16 Confessing
- 17 a) our dirty bodies b) our guilty consciences
- 18 b)
- 19 personal response
- 20 glad
- 21 Asking
- 22 share your answer in discussion
- 23 Firoza – Asking, Nabeel – Confessing, Shazia-Thanking
- 24 Asking, Thanking, Confessing

Lesson 6 God's Word for Us



In the last lesson we learned that one way to live in God's intimacy is by talking with Him. Another way is by letting Him talk to us through His Word, the Holy Bible.

Commented [Advisor73]:

AIMS OF LESSON 6
For each member to:

- a. start the habit of a dedicated time with God every day
- b. learn three steps for this
- c. be able to find a reference from the Bible
- d. be 'thirsty' to read the Bible

Thirsty for God's Word

1 Look at these two babies and read their thoughts:



Baby B



Baby A

Commented [Advisor74]:

TO START THE MEETING

START WITH PRAYER

SAY:

- "Today we will learn how God speaks to us through His word, the Holy Bible. It is 'more precious to us than gold and sweeter than honey' (Psalm 19:10).

LESSON REVIEW

- Check that members can give correct answers to the Review questions.

ASK:

- "What was the Practical Task last week?" [to say the Lord's prayer daily]. "Let's practise it now." [say it all together, or take turns]

Which baby, A. or B., will grow strong and healthy? Baby _____

2 Of course - the foolish baby who says "I need no milk" will grow weak and die. Only those who are thirsty for pure, good milk will grow strong. 1 Peter tells us:

"Like newborn babies, be thirsty for pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good." (1 Peter 2:2-3)

One taste of a drop of milk will make a baby thirsty for more.

- a) Have you personally 'tasted that the Lord is good'? _____
- b) Are you personally thirsty for 'pure spiritual milk' from God? _____

3 Hopefully you are indeed thirsty for more and more from God, now that you have tasted how good He is! But what is this 'pure spiritual milk' mentioned in the verse? Another translation of this phrase is 'pure milk of the word'. Therefore, what does this phrase probably refer to?

- ___ a) cow's milk ___ b) goat's milk ___ c) the milk of God's Word

Commented [Advisor75]:

ASK:

- "Look at this picture. Why is baby B strong and healthy while baby A is so weak?" [because baby B is thirsty for the milk while baby A rejects it].

- "What is the spiritual meaning of this example?" [to grow healthy like baby B, we should be thirsty for God's word which is 'pure spiritual milk'].

4 Like newborn babies, we should be thirsty for the pure milk of God's Word. Throughout the day newborn babies cry for milk every few hours. During the night they wake again and cry for milk. Why?

- a) because they like to annoy their parents
- b) because they are thirsty for milk

5 The baby who does not thirst for milk will not grow physically strong. And some people who become Christ's followers do not grow spiritually strong, because they are not thirsty for spiritual milk. What is this spiritual milk? God's _____

6 Read 1 Peter 2:2-3 again in question 1, and fill in the gaps:

"Like newborn babies, be _____ for pure spiritual _____, so that by it you may _____ in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good."

The Holy Bible is God's Word

7 God's word, i.e. our spiritual milk which makes us grow strong, is the Holy Bible. Through the Bible God speaks to us. The Bible is God's word in human language.

It is written,

"Prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21)

According to this verse, how did prophecy come? ' _____ spoke from _____ '

8 According to the verse you have just read, answer each of the following 'True' or 'False':

- a) Prophets invented their own words and pretended they came from God _____
- b) Prophets spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit _____

9 The verse says 'men spoke from God'. This means that God, by his Holy Spirit, breathed His thoughts into the prophets' minds. So the prophets spoke out and wrote down exactly what God wanted them to. They and the other writers wrote the words themselves, but under God's complete control and guidance. For this reason we call the Bible the 'word of God'.

How was the Holy Bible written? ' _____ spoke from _____ '

10 Why do we call the Bible the word of God? Because: (tick one)

- a) It speaks only of God
- b) God breathed into the writers' minds to ensure they wrote exactly what he wanted them to write.
- c) It is the copy of a book in heaven
- d) It was dictated by the angel Gabriel

11 God wants to communicate with all people, not just with those who can learn a special religious language. So God caused the Bible to be written in the ordinary human languages of Hebrew and Greek. Since that time, by God's help, parts of the Bible have been translated into more than 2500 languages!

What does this show about God? (tick one)

- a) He wants us to understand his Word in our own mother-tongue
- b) He wants us to recite his Word in a special heavenly language

The Different Parts of the Bible

Commented [Advisor76]:

READ ALL TOGETHER the shaded section.

ASK:

- "Do we really thirst as much for God's word as a baby thirsts for milk? [personal responses]"

Commented [Advisor77]:

READ the shaded section.

ASK:

- "Some non-Christians think the Bible seems like a human book. It was written by humans and talks about human history. How can we explain that it is still the word of God?" [This is a difficult question. But point 9 explains how 'men spoke from God'. And the Bible is the account of how God involves himself in human lives, see point 14]

Commented [Advisor78]:

READ the shaded portion.

ASK:

- "In what languages was the Bible originally given? [Hebrew for the Old Testament, and Greek for the New Testament]"

EXPLAIN:

- "We thank God for the people who worked hard to translate and print His word into our language. In this way He speaks to us in our own mother-tongue!"
- "The following translations of the Bible are available in our language, or are presently being done" [give details]
- "It is fine to have more than one translation of the Bible. This helps us see the different aspects of the meaning. It does not mean we have altered the original text."

12 By now you should have obtained your own copy of the Holy Bible.

Please open your Bible at the first page, 'List of Contents'. You will notice that the Bible consists of not just one book, but a library of 66 books. These are found in two main sections. The first is called the 'Old Testament'. What is the other section called? The '_____ Testament'. (check the List of Contents)

13 The **Old Testament** includes the *Tawrat*, the *Zabur*, and some other books. In the Old Testament we read how God Almighty got involved in human history. God created people, He spoke with them, He felt their pain and rescued them, He even came to meet them personally! He made promises to His prophets such as Noah, Abraham, Moses and David, and He gave a special task to the people of Israel.

Which Testament, Old or New, contains the *Tawrat* and *Zabur* alongside other books? _____

14 Perhaps you think it strange that much of the holy Bible describes humans and their activities, not just words from God himself. But actually this is God's chosen way. Instead of staying remote from men and women, He got closely involved in their lives.

So what does the Bible teach us about the Lord of the Worlds? (tick one)

- ___ a) He remained far off in heaven and sent his commands for us to obey
- ___ b) He came close to humans and got involved in their lives

15 In the **New Testament** we read how the Creator became even more closely involved in human affairs by entering this world in Jesus Christ! The Lord Jesus is the central theme of the New Testament: from when he first came to this earth as a baby, till he will come again on the Judgment Day.

a) Which Testament, Old or New, covers the period from the beginning of creation up till the coming of Jesus Christ? _____

b) Which Testament, covers the period from the first coming of Jesus Christ up till his second coming? _____

16 Each book of the Bible is divided up into chapters and verses. Bible references are always given in this order: first book, then chapter, then verse. This enables you to find any particular verse.

Let's try this with the first epistle of Peter, also written as 1 Peter. Use the 'List of Contents' to find 1 Peter (near the end of the New Testament). Open your Bible at 1 Peter chapter 1. The chapter numbers are written in large font, and the verse numbers in smaller font.

Have you found the right place? Then tick this box

17 From our previous lessons, you will already be familiar with verses 1,2,3,4,6,7,8 and 16 from 1 Peter chapter 1.

Now find 1 Peter chapter 1 verse 3 and write the first two words here: _____

It is good to gain knowledge about the Bible. But it is even more important to let God speak to us through the Bible! For this, it helps very much to dedicate a particular time with God every day.



Commented [Advisor79]:

READ the shaded portion

ASK:

- "Which Testament includes the *Tawrat* and *Zabur*?" [Old Testament]
- "Which Testament is called the *Inji*?" [New Testament]

EXPLAIN:

- "We never say that the New Testament replaces or abrogates (*nasikh*) the Old Testament. We need both of them. Together they form God's precious Word."

SAY:

- "Now let's open our Bibles or New Testaments at the 'List of Contents'. Everyone put your finger on the place where it says 1 Peter." [help them if needed.]

- "There are also audio versions of the New Testament including 1 Peter. If you would like to obtain one, I have the information" [insert the relevant information for your country]

- "Let's turn together to 1 Peter chapter 1 verse 3" [every member should find the place in his own Bible or New Testament. Some members may need your help in this.]

READ TOGETHER 1 Peter 1:3

Commented [Advisor80]:

READ the shaded portion

SAY:

- "If we set aside a special time each day to be with God, it helps us grow strong and healthy, like baby B at the start of this lesson. Let's discuss how to do this practically."

18 How often does a baby need milk? Once a month, once a week or every day? _____

19 Yes, a baby definitely needs milk every day. God's word is our spiritual milk. Without it we will quickly become weak. How often should we read it or listen to it?

___ a) once a month ___ b) once a week ___ c) every day

20 To benefit from this spiritual milk, it is good to dedicate a special time every day. Try to find a place and a time where you can be alone with God to read his Word. If you do not have privacy for this in your own home, then ask God to show you another place.

- a) What is the best time for you each day to read the Bible without interruption? _____
b) What is the best place for you to read the Bible without interruption? _____

(Write your personal response, and be ready for the discussion time.)

21 Each day during your dedicated time alone with your Lord, you may like to go through the following steps:

Step 1:

Prepare

- Remember you are unclean, entering into intimacy with the pure God. So, confess your sin and ask God to cleanse you. This is your spiritual ablation.
- Then ask God to speak with you through his word and help you understand it.

What is the first step in your dedicated time with God? (tick one)

___ a) prepare ___ b) read ___ c) pray

22 After your heart is prepared and your conscience cleansed, go to step 2:

Step 2:

Read

- Start to read at the beginning of one book of the Bible, for instance 1 Peter or another book suggested by your advisor.
- Read five or more verses, until one verse especially leaves its impression on you. You feel in your spirit that God is especially speaking to you through that verse. Or else read a paragraph and ask 'what command or promise or example does God give me in this passage?'
- To help you remember this special message from God, write the verse in a notebook, or memorize it.
- Memorizing the verse is not to gain religious merit. Rather, it is to keep the verse safe. Someone may take away your written Bible, but no one can snatch God's memorized word from your heart.

What is the second step in your dedicated time with God? (tick one)

___ a) prepare ___ b) read ___ c) pray

23 After reading your Bible for a few minutes, the suggested third step is this:

Commented [Advisor81]:

READ the shaded portion

ASK:

- "In question 20, what did you write for parts a) and b)?" [personal answers. Ask each and every member to say what they wrote. Perhaps some members left these answers blank in their books. Remind them to fill all the answers. When we do this we have to think about their own opinions and so we learn much more.]

SAY:

- "For our dedicated time with God, we should each choose the time and place which suits us best. We can do this on our own, or else with a friend or family. Both ways are fine, but let's make it our regular habit!"

Step 3:

Pray

- Thank your Lord for His message to you through this verse and ask Him to help you put it into practice.
- Talk with God about anything you like, using your own words, or the Lord’s Prayer or another set prayer.
- Enjoy being in God’s intimacy!

What are the three steps we suggest for your dedicated time in God’s intimacy?

Step 1: _____
 Step 2: _____
 Step 3: _____

24 If your family members are followers of Jesus, you may *prepare, read* and *pray* all together, instead of doing it on your own. Or if you have a close friend who loves Jesus, you can meet with him/her regularly, to explore God’s Word together and support each other in prayer.

What is the best way for you to spend a dedicated time with God each day – on your own, with your family or with a friend? Note your own opinion and be ready to discuss it in the group.

We pray and read God’s Word not in order to earn a reward, nor will He punish us for any times we are unable to do so. Rather, our motive is to live in God’s intimacy and to grow spiritually strong.

And remember: we grow strong not just by reading or listening to God’s Word, but even more by **obeying** it!



Commented [Advisor82]:

READ the shaded section.

ASK:

- “What did you write?” [ask each and every member to respond]

SAY:

- “Now go to Supplement 1 at end of your book” [In this advisor’s book, you will find the remaining discussion questions for today’s meeting. Turn to it now.]

LESSON 6 PRACTICAL TASK

Start to spend a dedicated time with God, using the three steps you learned in questions 21-23. If you wish you may use Supplement 1 at the end of this book, ‘My Dedicated Time with My Lord’, to guide you each day in this.

Commented [Advisor83]:

TO FINISH THE MEETING

READ the shaded portion

SAY:

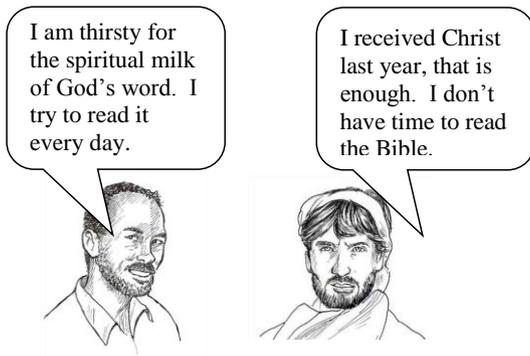
- “Each day this week, please try to spend a short time with God. You can do this alone or with another believer; you choose the time and place; you can use Supplement 1 or not. All these things are your choice. But please do it!”

CLOSE IN PRAYER

asking our Father God to help us spend a dedicated time with Him each day this week.

LESSON 6 REVIEW

1 Here are two followers of Christ:



Daood

Shafique

- a) Which of these two, Shafique or Daood, will grow spiritually strong? _____
- b) What happens to babies who are not thirsty for milk? _____

2 Why do we call the Bible the word of God? Because:

- ___ a) It speaks only of God
- ___ b) God breathed into the writers' minds to ensure they wrote exactly what he wanted them to write.
- ___ c) It is the copy of a book in heaven
- ___ d) It was dictated by the angel Gabriel

3 What are the two main sections of the Bible?
The _____ Testament and the _____ Testament

4 It is important to spend a dedicated time in God's intimacy every day. Write three suggested steps for how to spend this time:
Step 1: _____
Step 2: _____
Step 3: _____

Commented [Advisor84]:

LESSON 6 REVIEW

CORRECT ANSWERS:

Question 1

- a) Daood
- b) they grow weak and die

Question 2

b) is the only fully correct answer
(Sentence a) is not correct because it says 'only')

Question 3

Old, New

Question 4

Prepare
Read
Pray

LESSON 6 ANSWERS

- 1 B
- 2 a) & b) your personal answers, before God
- 3 c)
- 4 thirsty
- 5 word
- 6 thirsty, milk, grow up
- 7 men, God
- 8 a) False b) True
- 9 men, God
- 10 b)
- 11 a)
- 12 New
- 13 Old
- 14 b)
- 15 a) Old b) New
- 16 find 1 Peter 1, then tick the box
- 17 Praise be to
- 18 every day
- 19 c)
- 20 a) & b) for discussion time
- 21 a)
- 22 b)
- 23 Step 1: Prepare, Step 2: Read, Step 3: Pray
- 24 for discussion time

Lesson 7 Members of Christ's Church

Suppose there is a new believer named Majid. Two years ago he started listening to radio programmes about Jesus Christ. The messages about forgiveness warmed his heart, and last year Majid took the step of commitment to become Jesus' follower. He did this in the privacy of his own house, by praying to God on his own.

Since then, Majid has never met with other followers of Christ. He is afraid to do so, in case his family found out. Also he says,



I don't know if I can trust the others in the meeting. Later they might betray me. It is safer if I keep my faith secret.

1 Do you think Majid is wise to keep his faith secret, or should he take the risk to join with a group of believers? Write your own opinion and be ready to share it in this week's discussion.

2 In today's lesson we will study this matter. In your Bible, using the 'list of contents', find the first letter of Peter (1 Peter). Now turn to chapter 2, verse 4. How may we write this? (tick one)

- ___ a) 1 Peter 2:4 ___ b) 1 Peter 4:2 ___ c) 2 Peter 2:4

1 Peter chapter 2 gives at least three beautiful descriptions of Christ's church:

- A) A spiritual house
- B) A chosen people
- C) A brotherhood

If Majid could understand why this *ummah* is so precious, maybe he will be more motivated to join it!



A) A Spiritual House

3 Now that you are using your own Bible, we will no longer write out all the verses for you. You can look them up for yourself. The instructions for this will be in this kind of box.

Read 1 Peter chapter 2 verses 4-5 and fill the blank spaces from verse 5: "You also, like living stones, are being built into a _____ house".

4 A spiritual house is where God lives by His Spirit. It is not wrong to dedicate buildings for worship, but God does not need them to dwell in. What He wants most is the 'spiritual

Commented [Advisor85]:

AIMS OF LESSON 7 For each member to:

- a. be committed to join the local group of believers
- b. learn three descriptions of Christ's church from 1 Peter 2
- c. memorise 1 Peter 2:9
- d. be able to find different references in 1 Peter

Commented [Advisor86]:

TO START THE MEETING

START WITH PRAYER

SAY:

- "Till now, all our discussion has been from the course book. But starting today, we will also look up verses in God's word. Therefore, please bring your own Bible or New Testament with you each week."

LESSON REVIEW

- Check that members can give correct answers to the Review questions.

ASK:

- "Our Practical Task last week was to spend a dedicated time with God each day. Did you manage to do this? Did it help you keep close to your heavenly Father?" [ask each person to respond]
- "For those who did not manage it, what were the obstacles and how can you overcome them?" [personal responses]

SAY:

- "Please try to have a special time with God each day this week too. If you make this your regular habit it will help you a lot!"

Commented [Advisor87]:

READ TOGETHER 1 Peter 2:4-5 [First, give the page number and help everyone to find the place in their own Bibles or New Testaments]

ASK:

- "According to verse 5, which people are like living stones?" [Find the answer in the verse. It says 'you also', that means all of us who are Christ's followers]
- "According to v.5, what are we, the living stones, being built into?" [see v.5. We are being built into a 'spiritual house']

house' of His people when they gather together in worship. We are God's house, we are God's church.

With what kind of stones does God want to build His spiritual house? (tick one):

- a) ordinary stones, with which we build our own houses
- b) 'living stones', i.e. Christ's followers

5 In verse 5 Christ's followers are described as 'living stones'. But a stone on its own is of little use. Even a pile of stones is useless, until a mason fits them together to make a house. God wants to fit together His people as 'living stones' to make a spiritual house.

So, which is more important for us: to build beautiful buildings for God or to meet together as His people? _____

6 The earliest followers of Christ did not have special buildings for worship. Perhaps they could not afford it, or perhaps it was too risky at times of persecution. So where did they hold their meetings? Read the following New Testament verses:

- "Aquila and Priscilla greet you warmly in the Lord and so does the church that meets at their house." (1 Corinthians 16:19)
- "to Apphia our sister, to Archippus our fellow soldier and to the church that meets in your home." (Philemon 2)

So, in New Testament times, where did the churches usually meet to worship? (tick one):

- a) in special church buildings
- b) in the homes of their members
- c) in mosques

7 Whenever we meet together as Christ's followers, even as a tiny group in our own homes, he dwells among us in a special way.

The Lord Jesus told his followers, "Where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them" (Matthew 18:20).

Therefore what is the minimum number of believers needed for Christ to be present in this special way, by his Spirit? (tick one)

- a) 100 believers
- b) 10 believers
- c) 2 or 3 believers

8 So if you know only one other person who loves Jesus, don't worry! When you meet with that person to pray, who will be present with you in a special way? _____

9 Have you sensed this special presence of Jesus Christ when you meet to worship with his followers? Write your own experience: _____

10 But Majid at the beginning of this lesson refuses to meet with other believers. So is he included in the 'spiritual house' which God is building in his neighbourhood?

[Yes/No]

Let's come now to 1 Peter 2:9 for the next description of Christ's church.

B) A Chosen People

11 Read 1 Peter 2:9-10 and fill the blank spaces:

Commented [Advisor88]:

READ the shaded portion.

ASK:

- "Does God need a special building to live in?" [No, He just wants us to gather together. We are his dwelling-place!]

Commented [Advisor89]:

READ the shaded portion.

ASK:

- "What is the correct answer?" [b], the homes of their members]
- "In our town, what are the best places for Christ's followers to meet?" [Discuss the different options, according to the local situation]

Commented [Advisor90]:

READ the shaded portion.

ASK:

- "Here today, are we at least two or three people gathered in Jesus' name?" [Yes]
- "So, is Jesus present with us in a special way?" [Yes! We can't see him physically but he is definitely with us, by His Spirit.]

Commented [Advisor91]:

READ the shaded portion.

ASK:

- "What did you write here?" [each member should speak. If they have nothing to say, check their course books to see if they wrote anything. Remind members to write their personal responses so that they are ready to share them in discussion.]

“You are
 a _____
 a royal priesthood,
 a holy nation,
 a people belonging to God,
 that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful
 light.” (1 Peter 2:9)

Now memorise this verse, with its reference.

12 In this world, some nations consider themselves to be God’s chosen race, superior to other nations. But who are called ‘a chosen people’ in 1 Peter 2:9?

- ___ a) Arabs ___ b) Jews ___ c) Christ’s followers

13 Yes, in Christ we are God’s chosen people! Our master Jesus was ‘*rejected*’ by men but *chosen* by God and *precious* to Him’ (1 Peter 2:4). We his followers are also rejected by men; but who has chosen us and called us precious? _____

14 The Arabic translation of 1 Peter 2:9 says we are God’s ‘*ummah*’. Christ’s followers from which of the following ethnic groups are included in His ‘*ummah*’? (*tick one or more correct answers*)

- ___ Pakistanis ___ Arabs ___ Iranians ___ Turks ___ Americans
 ___ Malays ___ Chinese ___ Jews ___ Bangladeshis ___ Indonesians

15 1 Peter 2:9 also explains God’s purpose in making us His chosen people: “*that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light*”.

For what purpose, then, has God chosen us? (*tick one*)

- ___ a) so that we take pride in being better than other nations
 ___ b) so that we may declare His praises among the nations

16 Yes, God’s chosen people must make him known among all tribes, ethnic groups and nations. He has called us out of darkness into his wonderful light. Now we must shine for Him in the darkness!

Commented [Advisor92]:

SAY:

- “So, 1 Peter chapter 2 says we are being built into ‘a spiritual house’. It also calls us a ‘chosen people’. Turn to 1 Peter 2:9.”

READ TOGETHER 1 Peter 2:9

[Give time for all members to find the right place. Then, one person should read the verse while others follow the words in their own Bibles]

REPEAT THE VERSE:

[Repeat it together several times until everyone can say it from memory].

Commented [Advisor93]:

READ the shaded portion.

ASK:

- “What emotion do you feel, knowing that you are chosen by God and precious to Him?” [members should describe how they feel]

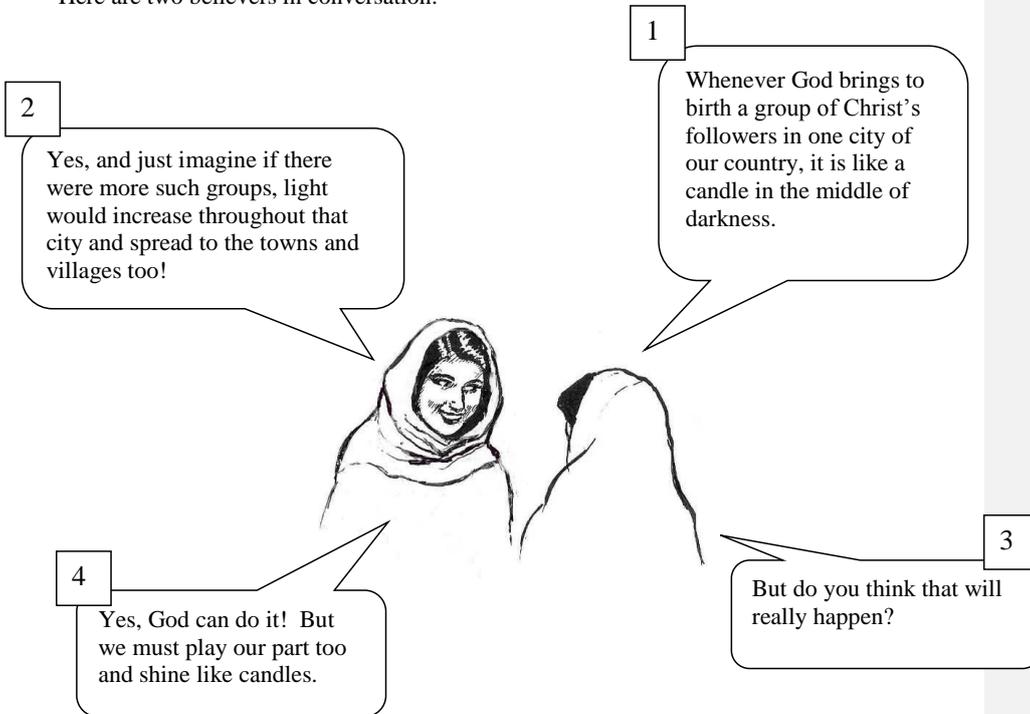
Commented [Advisor94]:

READ the shaded section.

ASK:

- “According to this verse, out of what has God called us, and into what?” [out of darkness into his wonderful light]
- “For what purpose has God chosen us?” [To ‘declare his praises’, see v.9.]
- “What does this mean we should do?” [We should tell other people about the great works and character (‘amaal wa sifaat’) of our God]

Here are two believers in conversation:



For what has God chosen us? To ‘_____’ the _____ of him who called us out of darkness into his wonderful light’.

17 Now write again the verse you memorised earlier (see question 11).

“You are
a _____
a royal priesthood,
a _____,
a people belonging to _____,
that you may _____.” (1 Peter ____:9)

18 Revision In 1 Peter chapter 2, which two descriptions of Christ’s church have we studied so far? (*tick two*)

- a) a spiritual house
- b) a chosen people
- c) a brotherhood

C) A Brotherhood

19 In lesson 3 we learned that all Christ’s followers have the right to call God ‘Father’. Therefore, as God’s spiritual children, how are we related to each other?

- a) as brothers and sisters
- b) merely as friends

Commented [Advisor95]:
LOOK at this picture.
ASK:
• “These two brave ladies know that Christ called them to shine for him in the darkness. Are we willing to do the same?” [Discuss together]
• “Do you have the opportunity to tell anyone about God’s wonderful deeds?” [Discuss together. We will discuss this more in lesson 13.]

Commented [Advisor96]:
ASK:
• “In 1 Peter 2, what two descriptions have we learned so far about us as Christ’s church?” [We are ‘a spiritual house’ and ‘a chosen people’]
• What third description do we find in the heading of point 19? [A brotherhood]

20 Yes, through Jesus Christ you and I are members of the same spiritual family, with God as our heavenly Father. That makes us brothers and sisters to each other.

In **1 Peter 2:17**, we are instructed to respect everyone but especially to love whom? ‘The _____?’

21 When you were born, you had no choice about who are your physical brothers and sisters. Likewise, when you received new birth in Christ, you could not choose your spiritual brothers and sisters. You belong to them and they belong to you.

Who belongs to the brotherhood of believers? (*tick one*)

- a) Anyone who has received new birth into God’s family, through Christ
- b) Anyone who is related to you by physical birth
- c) Anyone who has joined your family through marriage

22 It is the same for us today. When we love Jesus it breaks down the division between educated and illiterate, urban and rural, Arab and non-Arab! As God’s word says,

“You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus... There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” (Galatians 3:26-28)

Our brotherhood in Christ overcomes all our other differences. We are ‘all one in Christ Jesus’.

- a) Should Christ’s followers from different tribes be willing to eat together? [Yes / No]
- b) Should a doctor and a street cleaner be willing to worship together if they both love Jesus? [Yes / No]

What about you?

- Which groups or tribes would you normally not associate with at all?
 - If someone from that group becomes Christ’s follower, will this break down the barrier enough for you to have fellowship with him/her?
- Be ready for discussion.*

1 Peter chapter 2 describes Christ’s followers as a ‘spiritual house’, a ‘chosen people’ and a ‘brotherhood’. Also, 1 Peter chapter 4 calls us Christians’. But, surprisingly, this word ‘Christian’ hardly comes at all in the Bible! So we are free to describe ourselves with different terms, if we wish.

Some people in our society have a wrong understanding of what ‘Christian’ means. For this reason, would we perhaps be wiser to call ourselves ‘followers of Christ’? Let’s discuss this in the discussion time.



Do You need Christ’s Church?

23 Think of many pieces of charcoal burning red-hot on a barbecue stall.

- a) While all the pieces remain in the fire, do they stay hot or cold? _____
- b) But if you push one piece of charcoal out of the fire and leave it on the side, what will happen to it? _____

Commented [Advisor97]:

READ the shaded sections in points 20, 21 and 22.

ASK:

- “Which people belong to this brotherhood?” [All Christ’s people, who have received new birth as members of God’s spiritual family]
- “Does this include people from a different tribe or ethnic group to you?” [Yes, if they are Christ’s followers]
- “Which groups or tribes would you normally not associate with at all?” [Discuss together]
- “If someone from that group becomes Christ’s follower, will this break down the barrier enough for you to have fellowship with him/her?” [Discuss together. But if we obey God’s word then we will definitely accept each other as brothers and sisters in Christ]

Commented [Advisor98]:

READ the shaded section (in the speech bubble)

ASK:

- “What do you think, it is better to call ourselves ‘Christians’ or ‘Christ’s followers’? [Discuss together. I think that, although the word ‘Christian’ is a good one, some people misunderstand it badly. In such situations it may be wiser to say ‘Christ’s follower’ because this expresses the true meaning of ‘Christian’.]

24 Our spiritual lives are like the pieces of charcoal. Remaining in the warmth of fellowship with other believers, we are like the charcoal which stays hot in the fire. But if we cut ourselves off from Christ's church, what will happen to our faith?

25 Are you regularly meeting with other followers of Christ? If not, why not?

Prayer



“Father God,
Thank you for other believers who help me keep warm like the charcoal in the fire.
Help me to play my part actively in Christ's church.
Thank you for making me part of your chosen people.
Ameen”

LESSON 7 PRACTICAL TASK

Maybe your circumstances allow you to take part openly in Christ's church, maybe this is not yet possible. But even if it has to be in secret, try your best to meet with at least one other follower of Christ this week.

LESSON 7 REVIEW

- What three descriptions of Christ's church have we learned according to the teaching of 1 Peter ch. 2?
 - a spiritual _____
 - a _____ people
 - a _____
- When two or three believers meet to pray and worship, who is present in a special way with them? _____ (see question 9)
- Write again the memory verse.

“You are
a _____,
a _____,
a _____,
a _____,
that you may _____ of him who _____
_____.” (1 Peter __: __)

Commented [Advisor99]:

READ the shaded sections from points 23 and 24

ASK:

- “What did you write for point 24?” [discuss. Clearly, like the charcoal, if we cut ourselves off from the community of believers our faith will grow cold]
 - “In this of this, what advice would you give to Majid?” [This is an important question and ask each member for their opinion. In the end we have to take the risk to trust. If we were all like Majid and refuse to trust others the body of Christ will never grow in our country. We need to make the brave decision trust others even if that sometimes brings difficulty and persecution.] There is also a risk not to. And you show yourself to some not to others. How to choose? There is a risk one way but a bigger trust the other way. Example of believer whose families and now high and dry. For the community their children will go back to Islam by default. If you want the best for your children's future you have to find your place in the community. You can usually work out who are the dodgy ones. The Holy Spirit will help us. Christ knew who to trust and who not to trust. Be sensible and discerning.
 - 1. yes we need be careful and the Spirit will guide us in this. Some you can trust more than others, and reveal yourself more to them. Photos.
 - 2. the consequences of not doing are more serious both yourself and for your family.
 - 3. early church was the same but they took the risk Acts 9 Sual and Barnabas Heb 10
- //Brothers or family of God?//

Commented [Advisor100]:

TO FINISH THE MEETING

READ the shaded portion

ASK:

- “Do you all have at least one other believer to meet with this week?”
- [If anyone lacks someone to meet with, they can meet with someone from the group, or with you]

CLOSE IN PRAYER

thanking God for giving us brothers and sisters in Christ and helping us to trust each other.

Commented [Advisor101]:

LESSON 7 REVIEW

CORRECT ANSWERS:

Question 1

- house
- chosen
- brotherhood

Question 2

Jesus Christ

Question 3

chosen people, royal priesthood, holy nation, people belonging to God, declare the praises, called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.
(1 Peter 2:9)

LESSON 7 ANSWERS

- 1 for discussion
- 2 a)
- 3 spiritual
- 4 b)
- 5 meet together as His people
- 6 b)
- 7 c)
- 8 Jesus Christ
- 9 personal response
- 10 No. He will be like a stone lying on its own, separate from the house
- 11 chosen people
- 12 c)
- 13 God
- 14 all the answers are correct
- 15 b)
- 16 declare, praises
- 17 check with the verse in question 11
- 18 a), b)
- 19 a)
- 20 brotherhood
- 21 a)
- 22 a) Yes b) Yes
- 23 a) hot b) it will grow cold
- 24 it will grow cold
- 25 personal answer (you may like to discuss this with your advisor privately)

Lesson 8 Members of Two Communities

Many people think that if a person changes his religion he is an apostate who has turned against his society and nation. But does changing our personal faith really make us traitors? Don't we still love our homeland and our people?



In this lesson we will learn how we can try to be loyal to our society and nation as well as being loyal to our Saviour Jesus.

Members of Two Communities

1 **Read 1 Peter 2:11-12.** How are Christ's followers described in verse 11? As '_____ and _____ in the world'.

2 Here in this world we are 'aliens and strangers', i.e. temporary residents. Our permanent homeland is with Christ for ever. Yet, for the period of our lives on this earth, He has a good purpose for us to fulfil here. Thus we are members of two communities at the same time. We belong to our spiritual community, which is Christ's church, and at the same time to our earthly community which is the society in which we were born.

So, which one of the following statements is true?

- ___ a) We belong only in our earthly community
- ___ b) We belong only in our spiritual community
- ___ c) We belong in both communities at the same time

3 Was it by mistake that you were born into a particular society and nation? No, this was God's wise plan. He decided the place and time of your birth. Or maybe you have migrated to another country where you now are trying to settle. Don't worry, your father God knows about that too. He wants you to be gladly a member of two communities. What are they? (write 'earthly' or 'spiritual' in the correct places:)

- a) Our _____ community, which is the society where we live
- b) Our _____ community, which is Christ's church

4 But often, even when we want to play a positive role in our earthly community, other people are negative towards us. They view us with suspicion.

At the time 1 Peter was written, Christ's followers faced the same difficulty. Non-Christians accused them of 'doing wrong' (1 Peter 2:12).

a) Do you think the apostle Peter's readers found it easy or hard to hear such untrue slander?

b) Have you faced any similar experience of people making false accusations against you?

Write about it here. _____

Commented [Advisor102]:

AIMS OF LESSON 8
For each member to:

- a. be committed to serve both communities
- b. be willing to submit to those in authority, for the Lord's sake
- c. memorise 1 Peter 2:17

Commented [Advisor103]:

TO START THE MEETING

START WITH PRAYER

SAY:

"Today we will learn we are members of two communities at the same time, and God wants us to serve both of them."

LESSON REVIEW

- Check that members can give correct answers to the Review questions.

ASK:

- "Our Practical Task last week was to meet with at least follower of Christ. Did you manage to do this? Did it give you spiritual strength?" *[ask each person to respond]*

Commented [Advisor104]:

READ the shaded portion

ASK:

- "In what two communities does God call us to serve Him?" *[The spiritual community of Christ's church, and the earthly community of the society in which we were born]*
- "If someone says, 'we don't need to serve our earthly community, all that matters is our spiritual community', what answer would you give?" *[Discuss together. According to 1 Peter chapter 2, God has called us to serve in both communities]*

Commented [Advisor105]:

READ the shaded portion

ASK:

- "What did you write here?" *[Discuss together]*
- "According to 1 Peter 2:15, what is the best way to 'silence the ignorant talk of foolish men'?" *[by doing good]*

Doing Good

5 It is always hard to bear false accusations from people. They call us infidels even though we believe in God, they call us traitors even though we are loyal to our people! How should we respond to our accusers?

By our words alone, it is difficult to convince them. But instead, says 1 Peter 2:15, “it is God’s will that by _____ you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish men” (*read the verse and fill the blanks*).

6 Here is a true story:

In a certain country of North Africa, Christ’s church is growing. In one town there, the local religious leaders became angry about this growth. They complained to the town mayor that “you should arrest these apostates”. “No, I won’t arrest them”, replied the mayor. “Since their group started to grow in this town, the crime rate has gone down”.

So, what is the best way to defend ourselves when people accuse us falsely? (*tick one*)

- a) by complaining
- b) by doing good
- c) by fighting back

7 By ‘doing good’, we prove that we love our nation, our culture, our language, our society, our tribe and our family group. In your opinion, which of the following will be good ways to do this? (*tick more than one*)

- a) We should pray for our nation and for its leaders
- b) We should serve our neighbourhood wherever we live
- c) We should long to emigrate to another country as soon as possible
- d) We should appreciate our local poetry and music
- e) We should work for the uplift of our village or local community
- f) We should refuse to attend the funeral of our non-Christian relatives
- g) We should contribute to the wedding expenses of our non-Christian cousins

8 Our Lord looks with compassion on our nation. He wants to build up our earthly community, to give it a better future. Whom can He use for this great purpose? Us, who are ‘God’s chosen people’ in this land!

In which of the following ways may God want to use us as channels of blessing to our fellow-countrymen? (*tick one or more, according to your personal opinion*)

- a) to care for widows and orphans
- b) to heal the sick and the broken-hearted
- c) to teach the illiterate
- d) to reconcile enemy groups

9 In which two communities has God placed us?

- a) in Christ’s _____ which is our spiritual community
- b) in our society which is our _____ community

Commented [Advisor106]:

READ the shaded portion

ASK:

- “How many of you put a tick on part a)? [*members should put their hands up*]
- “How many of you put a tick on part b)? [*members should put their hands up*]

ASK about parts d), e) and g) in the same way.

ASK:

- “Did any of you put a tick for parts c) or f)? Why?” [*to discuss. I personally think that these ways do not help us serve our society and nation, but ask the members’ opinion*]
- “Why do you think these are good ways to serve our society and nation?” [*discuss*]

Commented [Advisor107]:

READ the shaded portion

ASK:

- “Which answers did you tick?” [*Probably most members will put ticks on all four answers, which is good*]

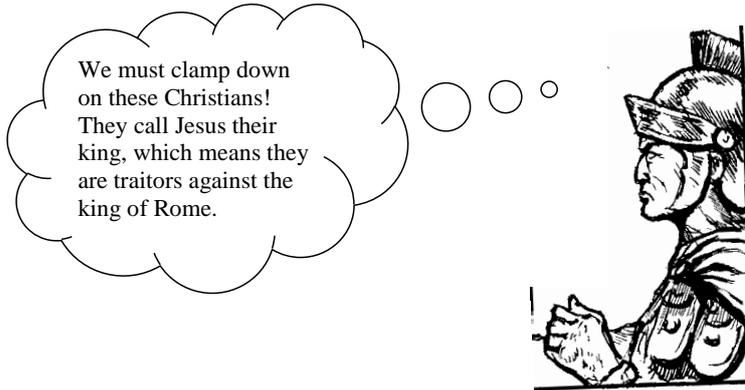
• “Have you had an opportunity to serve people in any of these ways?” [*Discuss together*]

- “What other opportunities do you have to serve your society, village or nation?” [*Discuss together*]

• “In points 7 and 8, and in our discussion, we have mentioned many ways to serve our society. Which one of these will you put into practice in your own life?” [*Each member should choose one action point which is most relevant to them*]

Submitting to our Government

10 The early Christians endured not only slander from the general public, but also persecution from the Roman government. The Roman rulers thought:



For instance, the Roman emperor Nero persecuted and even tortured Christ’s followers. He enjoyed feeding them alive to the lions, or covering them with oil and setting them on fire!

How did the apostle Peter tell his readers to respond to such an unfair king and government? Read 1 Peter 2:13-14 and tick the correct answer:

- a) fight back with weapons
- b) submit, for the Lord’s sake
- c) deny they were followers of Jesus

11 According to 1 Peter 2:13, what attitude should we show towards the government authorities? We should ‘s _____, for the Lord’s sake’.

12 Christ’s followers are not rebels. We do not overthrow our governments. As much as possible, we should seek to obey all the laws of our land, even pay our taxes. For whose sake should we submit to the government, according to 1 Peter 2:13? ‘For the _____ sake’

13 But what if our rulers tell us to do something against God? Should we obey them then?

On one occasion the religious rulers commanded the apostle Peter to stop teaching the people about Jesus Christ. But Peter replied bravely, “We must obey God rather than men!” (Acts 5:29). So the rulers whipped him and he submitted to this punishment.

- a) Did Peter obey the rulers on this occasion? [Yes / No]
- b) Did he still submit to their punishment, for the Lord’s sake? [Yes / No]

Commented [Advisor108]:
READ 1 Peter 2:13-14 together
ASK:
 • “In these verses, what does God command us to do?” [‘submit to every authority’, v.13]
 • “For whose sake should we submit?” [‘for the Lord’s sake’, v.13]

Commented [Advisor109]:
READ the shaded portion
ASK:
 • “If you work in a shop and your boss tells you to cheat the customers, what would you do? Respond in the light of what we have just learned from the apostle Peter’s example.” [discuss together. This is very hard because you don’t want to disobey God but you don’t want to lose your job either]

Submitting to our Boss

14 Read 1 Peter 2:18 To whom is this verse written?
 a) husbands b) wives c) slaves

15 Just think:

- It is easy to submit to a boss who is ‘good and considerate’, but 1 Peter 2:18 tells us to submit even to those who are ‘harsh’.
- It is easy to work for high wages, but the slaves in 1 Peter 2:18 worked for no wages at all! They were the property of their masters and had to obey them in everything.

Even then, what were the slaves told to do? ‘ _____ yourselves to your masters with all respect’.

16 Are you a man, working on low wages for a harsh boss? Are you a woman, working hard all day in the house for a husband who never thanks you? Even in these unfair circumstances, what should our attitude be, according to 1 Peter 2:18? (*tick one*)

- a) do as little work as possible
- b) feel bitter resentment in our hearts
- c) submit ourselves to our boss with all respect
- d) complain to everyone about our harsh boss

17 My true story I used to work in a factory under a manager who never showed appreciation for my dedicated effort. Yet one time I made a small mistake. In fact, it wasn’t even my mistake, it was the fault of a worker under me. Yet my boss blamed me and gave me a written warning! That day I had to fight hard in my heart against resentment. Can you guess what verse from God’s word helped me gain the victory? Yes, it was 1 Peter 2:18!

Now, let’s think about another aspect of our work. Place a tick on any of the following professions which you think are ‘noble’ or ‘honourable’:

- shepherd doctor government minister fisherman
- engineer carpenter university lecturer tailor

18 Perhaps you wrote that ‘doctor, government minister, engineer or university lecturer’ are the honourable ones. Perhaps you are not ambitious for your son to become a ‘shepherd, fisherman, carpenter or tailor’. But did you know that some of the most honourable people of the Bible did ordinary manual jobs?

Match these people with their professions:

- | <u>People</u> | <u>Professions</u> |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| a) prophet David | carpenter |
| b) Jesus the Messiah | fisherman |
| c) the apostle Peter | tailor (making tents) |
| d) the apostle Paul | shepherd |

(If you don’t know all the answers, check them at the back of the lesson)

Commented [Advisor110]:

READ 1 Peter 2:18-19 together

ASK:

- “To whom is this verse written?”
[to slaves]
- “In your opinion, what would be hard about working as a slave?” [Discuss together. For example, you would have to work very hard but receive no pay and no freedom.]
- “Should the slaves in v.18 submit just to the ‘good and considerate’ masters or also to the ‘harsh’ ones?” [both to the good ones and the harsh ones].
- “If we too have to work hard for an unfair boss, or for an unfair husband or father or mother-in-law, what comfort and strength can we draw from 1 Peter 2? [We submit for the Lord’s sake, v. 13; we know it is ‘commendable’ before God, v.19]

19 Even though all these four people were honourable spiritual leaders, yet they felt no shame to work with their hands.

So, which of the following workers has more honour in God's sight? (*tick one*)

___ a) a labourer who does his work well, for the Lord's sake



___ b) a university lecturer who sells grades for a bribe

Commented [Advisor111]:

LOOK at the two men here

ASK:

- "Would you prefer your son to become an honest labourer or a dishonest lecturer?" [*That's a hard question! Discuss together. What would the Lord want?*]

20 Some people, when they become Christ's followers, are thrown out of their good jobs. They have to find any work they can, in order to survive. In India, a person became Christ's follower from the same previous religion as you. He describes what happened next:

"My father became furious. He grabbed a large stick and began to beat me. He beat me so hard that the stick broke in half. I was compelled to leave home.

Everywhere I went, I inquired about a job – but to no avail. While I was waiting, an army officer asked me to be his servant. It was a menial job. I had come from a prominent family, in fact I had had my own servant. I was being asked to become someone else's personal servant! I rebelled against the very idea. I was hungry, but it seemed better to starve than to lower myself to that extent.

In the inner struggle I experienced, I knew that God was teaching me a very important lesson. The Lord Jesus said that he did not come to be served but to serve. I, too, had to experience the meaning of serving in humility. God gave me the willingness and courage to accept the job. God enabled me to be a loyal and efficient servant."

(*from 'The Truth Path' by Mark Hanna*)

1 Peter 2 tells us we should have the same attitude to our boss as to the government. What is it? 'S _____'

Summary

21 Remember, we belong to two communities at the same time. In the words of 1 Peter 2:17,

- We "show proper respect to everyone" - as members of our society and nation
- We "love the brotherhood" - as members of Christ's church.

We have responsibilities towards both communities. For each of the responsibilities below, write 'earthly' or 'spiritual' according to which community it relates to (the first one has been done for you).

Commented [Advisor112]:

READ the shaded portion

ASK:

- "Who can recite 1 Peter 2:17 from memory?" [*Show proper respect to everyone, love the brotherhood*]
- "In this verse, which words tell us to play our part in our earthly community?" [*show proper respect to everyone*]
- "Which words tells us to play our part in our spiritual community?" [*love the brotherhood*]

Our responsibility

- a) We try to be the best citizens of our nation
- b) We meet regularly with our brothers and sisters in Christ
- c) We submit to our government and pray for our rulers
- d) We submit to our boss and work hard for him
- e) We build each other up in our Christian faith

Which community?

 earthly

22 To remind yourself of these twofold responsibilities, memorise 1 Peter 2:17 now:

“Show proper respect to everyone, love the brotherhood” (1 Peter 2:17)
--

And let’s try to be loyal to both communities!

LESSON 8 PRACTICAL TASK

During the next week,

- do something to help a needy person

or

- do something extra for your non-Christian boss (at work or at home) that you would not normally do

LESSON 8 REVIEW

- 1 Of which two communities are we members?
 - a) Our _____ community which is Christ’s church
 - b) Our _____ community which is our society and nation

- 2 What one word summarises the attitude we should have to the government and also to our boss? _____

- 3 Write the memory verse here:

reference 1 Peter ____ : ____

Commented [Advisor113]:

TO FINISH THE MEETING

READ the shaded portion

CLOSE IN PRAYER

asking God to help us serve our earthly and spiritual communities, and to submit to those in authority, for Christ’s sake.

Commented [Advisor114]:

LESSON 8 REVIEW

CORRECT ANSWERS:

Question 1

- a) spiritual
- b) earthly

Question 2

submit

Question 3

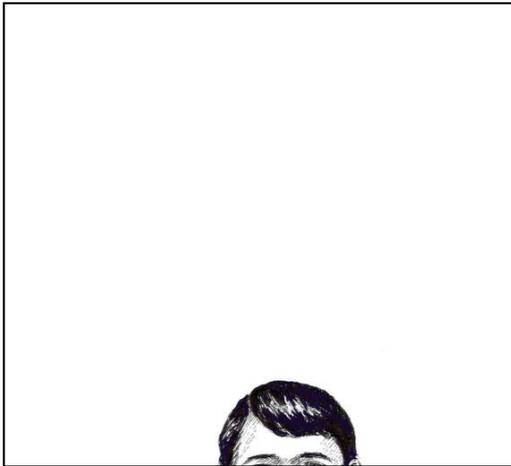
“Show proper respect to everyone, love the brotherhood” (1 Peter 2:17)

LESSON 8 ANSWERS

- 1 aliens, strangers
- 2 c)
- 3 a) earthly b) spiritual
- 4 a) I am sure you wrote 'hard'
b) your personal answer
- 5 doing good
- 6 b)
- 7 share your answers in discussion
- 8 I think all of these are correct. Be ready for discussion.
- 9 a) church b) earthly
- 10 b)
- 11 submit
- 12 Lord's
- 13 a) No b) Yes
- 14 c)
- 15 submit
- 16 c)
- 17 your personal answer
- 18 a) shepherd b) carpenter c) fisherman d) tailor
- 19 a)
- 20 submit
- 21 a) earthly b) spiritual c) earthly d) earthly e) spiritual
- 22 memorise the verse

Lesson 9 Reasons for Persecution

If your relatives and friends know about your decision to follow Jesus Christ, they are probably very angry with you. Or perhaps it is still a secret, but you fear what they will do when they find out.



of flowers

our reasons why persecuted.



Do not be surprised at this opposition! Jesus Christ promised a path of thorns to all his followers. No-one likes to suffer. However, our master Jesus has trod this thorny path first himself. With him at our side we will find it is also a path of joy and the path to glory.

First Reason: The World Hates Us

1 Our Lord Jesus said to his disciples, *"you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you"*. (John 15:19)

Therefore, as Christ's followers what do we expect to receive from non-Christians around us?
 a) persecution b) love

2 We are 'God's chosen people' but the world will hate us. In what ways, till now, have you faced opposition for being Jesus Christ's follower? (*tick one or more answers, according to your own experience*)

- a) Your friends mocked you and turned away from you
- b) Your relatives cut off contact with you
- c) You were physically beaten
- d) You were forced to leave home
- e) Someone threatened to kill you
- f) You lost your job
- g) People have not persecuted you too much
- h) You have not yet suffered because your faith in Christ is still secret
- i) any other experience of persecution: _____

Commented [Advisor115]:

AIMS OF LESSON 9 For each member to:

- a. be sure that nothing can separate us from God's love
- b. understand that persecution will definitely happen but God uses it for our good
- c. learn to act wisely to avoid unnecessary persecution
- d. memorise 1 Peter 2:21

Commented [Advisor116]:

TO START THE MEETING

START WITH PRAYER

SAY:

"In this lesson and the next one we will talk about persecution. This is a very hard subject. Maybe our discussion will bring tears because of the hurt we experienced. But God can heal our pain as we talk about these things."

LESSON REVIEW

- Check that members can give correct answers to the Review questions.

ASK:

- "Our Practical Task last week was to help a needy person or do something for someone in authority over us. Did you do that? How did the other person respond?" [*ask each member in turn. If they say the other person was grateful for the help, that's good. But if the person was not grateful, it doesn't matter, for we serve them for Christ's sake*]

Commented [Advisor117]:

READ the shaded sections from points 1 and 2.

ASK:

- "Which answers did you tick here? Or did you experience persecution in other ways? Tell us what happened to you." [*let each person talk about their experiences. This is an important time of sharing.*]

3 We can suffer in different ways. One believer told me, "I could endure the beatings from my father, but the tears of my mother were much harder to bear!"

Another form of persecution is when our relatives try to snatch our land or other property. There is certainly a risk of losing our earthly 'inheritance' in this way. But according to 1 Peter 1:4, we have another "_____ that can never perish, spoil or fade, kept in heaven for you". **Read 1 Peter 1:4** and fill the blank space.

4 So even if we lose our temporary property for Christ's sake let's take courage, because we will receive an eternal inheritance instead.

a) Which kind of inheritance will 'perish, spoil or fade': earthly inheritance or heavenly?

b) Which kind of inheritance can never 'perish, spoil or fade': earthly inheritance or heavenly?

5 It feels very hard to lose our inheritance on this earth, but our inheritance in paradise is much greater.

In the 1970's the government of Cambodia was persecuting Christ's followers. A believer named Haim was arrested with his whole family. They were forced to dig a large grave-hole. Haim, with his wife and children knelt in prayer by the grave. He comforted them with these words, "We are gathered for a short while here by this grave, but will soon be around God's throne, free forever in paradise."

As the victims' bodies fell down into the pit, their souls soared up to the place their heavenly Father had prepared for them.

(from 'Killing Fields, Living Fields' by Don Cormack)

What did Haim and his family gain?

___ a) a long life on this earth ___ b) an eternal inheritance

6 Christ warned his disciples:

"They will lay hands on you and persecute you... You will be betrayed even by parents, brothers, relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death. All men will hate you because of me. But not a hair of your head will perish. By standing firm you will gain life"
(Luke 21:12-19)

a) In the box, underline all those words which show the opposition we may face: 'lay hands', 'persecute', 'be betrayed', 'put some of you to death', 'hate'.

b) Put a circle around all those words which show the protection we are promised: 'not a hair will perish', 'gain life'



So in Christ, even if we die, we still gain life!

Commented [Advisor118]:

SAY:

"God knew that the early Christians faced much opposition. So he comforted them with strong promises in the first letter of Peter."

READ 1 Peter 1:3-7

ASK:

- "According to v.4, where is our inheritance? [*in heaven*]
Will it ever 'perish, spoil or fade'? [*no – unlike our earthly inheritance!*]
- "According to v.5, what shields us at this present time?
[*God's power*]
- "When we face 'many kinds of trials' how should we respond, according to v.6? [*we 'greatly rejoice*]
- "What does v.7 say our faith is like? [*like gold, indeed 'of greater worth than gold'*]
- "Why does a goldsmith allow gold to pass through fire?" [*to make it pure*]. "So, why does God allow us to pass through persecution?" [*to prove our faith, and to make us pure, patient and strong. This is a big encouragement for us!*]

7 We face persecution because the world hates us. Although we try our best to fit in with the society around us, they will reject us to some extent. Like pilgrims or refugees, we look forward to a better future.

What is the first reason we are persecuted? Because the world _____ us.

Second Reason: God Allows Persecution

8 **Read 1 Peter 1:5.** Whose power shields us during our lives on earth? _____'s power.

9 God's power is like a shield protecting us. It is important for us to understand that:

- **God is all-powerful.** Therefore everything we face, including persecution, is under his control.
- **God is also all-loving.** Therefore everything he allows us to endure, even persecution, is for our good.

We are God's chosen people. Who allows persecution, for our good? _____

10 **Even in severe persecution, God will never abandon us. This is His firm promise:**

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written, ‘for your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered’. No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us”. (Romans 8:35-37)

Can even death separate us from Christ's love? [Yes / No]

11 As we learned in lesson 3, God our Father allows persecution to purify our faith just as fire purifies gold. We need to be trained in the college of suffering.

Imtiaz was severely persecuted when he became Christ's follower. Later he studied for three years at Bible college. But he said, “college is not what made me strong – persecution did”.

What does God allow, to make us patient and strong in faith? _____

12 What are two reasons we may face persecution?
First reason: The world _____ us
Second reason: _____ allows persecution.

On the other hand, here is a third reason we can be persecuted:

Third Reason: We sometimes Act Foolishly

13 Not all persecution is necessary or beneficial. Sometimes we bring unnecessary suffering on ourselves by our foolish behaviour. Read the following true story:

A young man named Shakeel lived in a town in Pakistan. His father was a shrine-guardian so Shakeel's family was highly respected in the neighbourhood. But at the age of 20, while travelling in a distant city, Shakeel experienced healing in Jesus' name and became his follower.

Later he returned to his own non-Christian family and told them about his decision. They were worried that, because of Shakeel, they would lose their reputation and their income from the shrine. But Shakeel did not care about this and he made his new faith public. This brought

Commented [Advisor119]:

READ the shaded portion

ASK:

- “Can anything separate us from Christ's love, anything at all?” [no, nothing can separate us from his love, not even death]
- “Do you remember the story of Haim who died with his family in Cambodia?” [go back to point 5 in this lesson]. “Could even death separate Haim's family from Christ's love?” [no! When they died they went straight to be with God]

ASK:

- “Are you facing persecution these days?” [members can describe their personal situations]

PRAY TOGETHER for any members of the group facing persecution at this time

READ to the group God's strong promise:

“I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:38-19)

embarrassment to the family. When the opposition from his father increased, Shakeel ran away to a big city. Later he wrote a letter to his father, angrily accusing him that “you do not financially support me and you no longer love me.”

After some time Shakeel returned home. His mother was willing to accept him, but his father said, “You insulted me in writing. Now I will not accept you back”.

In your opinion, in what ways did Shakeel act foolishly? Write your ideas and be ready for discussion.

14 So let’s learn to distinguish between ‘necessary’ persecution and ‘unnecessary’ persecution.

- **Necessary persecution** is what Christ’s followers face for being loyal to him;
- **Unnecessary persecution** takes place if Christ’s followers behave in foolish or disrespectful ways towards non-Christians.

a) 1 Peter 2:19 says, “*It is commendable if a man bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because he is conscious of God.*” Is this ‘necessary’ or ‘unnecessary’ persecution?

b) 1 Peter 2:20 continues, “*But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it?*” Is this ‘necessary’ or ‘unnecessary’ persecution? _____

15 Our decision to follow Christ was the correct one. But maybe it caused our dear family members to suffer. Our parents may feel pain that we rejected the path in which they trained us. Our sisters may find it harder to find a good marriage arrangement because of our reputation. Our relatives may feel we dishonoured the family name.

So let us remain loyal to our Lord, but also try to avoid causing unnecessary shame for our families.

➤ **Stop and think.** *Are you doing anything to cause unnecessary dishonour for your non-Christian relatives? Or unnecessary persecution for yourself?*

16 If opposition increases in our home community, we should be wise. Sometimes the wisest action is to flee to another place, sometimes it is better to stay and endure the opposition. In the book of Acts, on some occasions Christ’s followers fled from danger, on other occasions they remained.

In what circumstances would you advise someone to flee persecution? Note your ideas and be ready for discussion _____

1 Peter gives us a fourth reason we will surely face persecution.

Fourth Reason: We Follow in Christ’s Steps

17 Whenever we face ‘necessary’ persecution, we are following in the steps of our master Christ. “*No servant is greater than his master*”, he reminded his followers, “*If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also*”. (John 15:20).

Whose steps do we follow when we are persecuted? _____’s steps.

Commented [Advisor120]:

READ the shaded portion

ASK:

- “What is your opinion on this question?” *[everyone should give their opinions. If they are not ready to give an answer, check in their books to see if they wrote anything or if they just left it blank]*

[In my opinion, Shakeel behaved foolishly by bringing embarrassment to his family, running away from home and insulting his father]

- “Did Shakeel face necessary persecution or unnecessary?” *[unnecessary]*

- “How should we avoid unnecessary persecution?” *[discuss. For example, we should respect our elders and support our families. We should try not to bring them shame in the community, so far as possible.]*

- “But should we avoid necessary persecution?” *[We must not deny the name of Christ. But we might choose to move location for some time, as discussed below]*

Commented [Advisor121]:

READ the shaded portion

ASK:

- “What is your opinion on this question?” *[discuss together. I cannot give you a ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ answer because you know the circumstances better. A person in danger of their life need to consider moving to another place for some time. However, if not in great danger they should try if possible to live quietly at home until the situation improves. They should try to prove they are still loyal to their family even though they follow Jesus Christ.]*

18 Now read [1 Peter 2:21-25].

- a) Did Jesus deserve to suffer? (see v.22) [Yes / No]
b) How did he react to his unjust punishment? (read v.23 and tick one)
- 1. he cursed his enemies
 - 2. he defended himself
 - 3. he entrusted himself to God

19 Our beloved Christ trod the 'path of thorns', all the way to his death. He suffered insults and whippings. The crowds shouted for his death. His closest friends ran away. Then the Roman soldiers nailed him to a cross; they used this agonising form of torture for the worst kind of criminals.

Why was the honourable Son of God willing to suffer this worst form of pain and dishonour? 1 Peter 2:24 gives the answer: "He himself bore our _____ in his body on the tree".

20 We deserved to die. Instead, Christ died for our sake and in our place. "By his wounds you have been healed" (verse 24). In all the world there is no greater example of love than this!

- **Pause now to thank the Lord Jesus for loving you enough to give his life for you. You may use this prayer:**

Dear Lord Jesus,
Thank you for bearing so much pain and shame on the cross, for me.
I know that as your follower I too will bear pain and shame.
Help me to follow in your steps.
Ameen.



Commented [Advisor122]:

READ the shaded sections from points 17, 19 and 20.

ASK:

- "If we have to suffer much persecution, then whose footsteps do we follow?" [the footsteps of our master Jesus. He trod the 'path of thorns' and it is an honour for us to place our steps in his!]

21 When we become Jesus' followers, we are not just changing a religion, getting baptized, praising the Lord and enjoying his sweet presence. No, we must also follow in Christ's steps, even if that includes suffering.

Memorise this verse, together with its reference.

"Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps"
(1 Peter 2:21)

Summary

22 From 1 Peter chapters 1 and 2 we have learned four reasons why Christ's followers face persecution:

Commented [Advisor123]:

PRACTISE TOGETHER
the memory verse (1 Peter 2:21)

first reason: The world hates us
second reason: God allows persecution
third reason: We sometimes act foolishly
fourth reason: We follow in _____'s steps (*fill the blank*)

LESSON 9 PRACTICAL TASK

In today's lesson there are many comforting verses from the Holy Bible. Each day this week, look at a different verse from this lesson and think what it means in your life. You will find these verses in points 1, 3, 6, 8, 10, 14, 17, 19 and 21 of today's lesson.

LESSON 9 REVIEW

- 1 Write the memory verse, together with its reference.
"Christ suffered _____"
_____ " (1 Peter ___ : ___)
- 2 What four reasons have we learned, about why Christ's followers face persecution?
first reason: The _____ us
second reason: _____ allows _____
third reason: We sometimes _____
fourth reason: We follow in _____'s _____

Commented [Advisor124]:

TO FINISH THE MEETING

READ the shaded section.

CLOSE IN PRAYER

Ask different members to pray short prayers, thanking God for His strong promise in times of persecution. Pray too for those suffering persecution in other countries.

Commented [Advisor125]:

LESSON 9 REVIEW

CORRECT ANSWERS:

Question 1

"for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps" (1 Peter 2:21)

Question 2

1. world, hates
2. God, persecution
3. act foolishly
4. Christ's steps

LESSON 9 ANSWERS

- 1 a)
- 2 personal response
- 3 inheritance
- 4 a) earthly b) heavenly
- 5 b)
- 6 a) underline the related words b) circle the related words
- 7 hates
- 8 God's
- 9 God
- 10 No
- 11 persecution
- 12 hates, God
- 13 for the discussion time
- 14 a) necessary b) unnecessary
- 15 stop and think
- 16 for discussion
- 17 Christ
- 18 a) No b) 3.
- 19 sins
- 20 pause to pray
- 21 memorise the verse

Lesson 10 Reacting to Persecution

Here two followers of Christ are talking about how they react to insults and persecution:

Me too. When someone hurts me I want to hurt him back. Honour demands I must take revenge. It's a sign of weakness just to forgive. Christ tells me to forgive my enemy, but it is very hard...



When someone insults me, my blood boils. I would rather die than to be insulted. How can I forget when another person has stabbed me so deep, like a dagger into my heart?



So, what do you think? When people persecute us, how should we react? 1 Peter chapters 3 and 4 will help us answer this question.

Commented [Advisor126]:
AIMS OF LESSON 10
For each member to:
 a. truly believe that forgiveness is better than revenge
 b. take steps to forgive a person who hurt him/her
 c. memorise Matthew 5:44

Commented [Advisor127]:
TO START THE MEETING
START WITH PRAYER
ASK:
 • "In our last meeting we learned four reasons why Christ's followers face persecution. Can you say them? [1. The world hates us
 2. God allows persecution
 3. We sometimes act foolishly
 4. We follow in Christ's steps]
SAY:
 "Today we learn about how God wants us to react to persecution, and especially how we can forgive our enemies."
LESSON REVIEW
 • Check that members can give correct answers to the Review questions.
ASK:
 • "Our Practical Task last week was to think each day about the different Bible verses in Lesson 9. Which verse was your favourite?" [each member should mention one of the verses. It does not matter if they all choose the same verse or they all choose different verses]

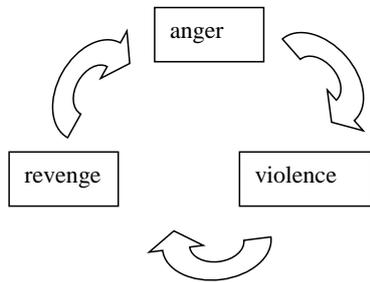
Commented [Advisor128]:
READ the shaded portion
ASK:
 • "Have you ever felt like that man?" [discuss together. If members say that it is hard to forgive and a sign of weakness, then that's fine. The rest of the lesson goes to discuss these issues]

The Cycle of Revenge

1 When someone insults or hurts us, don't we want to hurt him in return? Taking revenge is our natural human reaction. Which of the following proverbs expresses this idea?

- ___ a) [a local proverb teaching us to take revenge, compare the English proverb 'give as good as you get']
- ___ b) [any other proverb with a completely different meaning, e.g.]

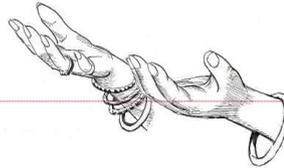
2 Taking revenge is our way to keep our honour. But when someone hurts us and we strike back, it does not stop there. He will react worse in turn. This leads to a cycle of revenge, which goes round and round like this:



Think of an example where you have seen this cycle of revenge getting worse and worse. Note it here and be ready for discussion. _____

3 Think about our own dear nation! For so many, many years it has been torn apart by anger, violence and revenge. Revenge is like a curse on our nation. How can we break the curse, how can we stop the cycle of revenge?

➤ **Stop and pray for God to set our nation free from the cycle of revenge**



Forgiveness instead of Revenge

4 Jesus Christ taught us how to break free from the cycle of revenge. He said

“Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” (Matthew 5:44).

Write this command here again, and memorise it:

“Love _____” (_____ 5:44)

5 It is very difficult to forgive our enemies! But Jesus Christ did not merely teach this, he put it into practice. As Roman soldiers hammered sharp spikes into his hands and feet, he prayed “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing”! (Luke 23:34)

Many great leaders ended their lives on the battlefield, cursing their enemies. By contrast, how did our Lord Jesus end his life?

- ___ a) with forgiveness
- ___ b) with revenge

Commented [Advisor129]:

READ the shaded portion

ASK:

- “What example did you think of here?” [discuss together]
- “So the way of forgiveness is hard to take and the way of revenge is easy. But which of them makes the damage worse and worse?” [the way of revenge]

Commented [Advisor130]:

READ the shaded portion

PRAY TOGETHER

the revenge to stop, and for peace to come with justice, in our families and nation

Commented [Advisor131]:

READ the shaded portion and

PRACTISE TOGETHER the memory verse Matthew 5:44

ASK:

- “It is not easy to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us. So why should we try to do it?” [because Jesus Christ is our master and he commands it. Also because it breaks the cycle of revenge and makes a better future for our children]

Commented [Advisor132]:

SAY:

“Let's think about four people mentioned in lesson 10 who reacted to persecution in different ways. From them we can learn for our own lives. The first of these is our Lord Jesus Christ.”

READ the shaded portion

ASK:

- “Was Jesus a weak leader or strong?” [strong]
- “But Jesus Christ did not use his strength to curse his enemies. He did not use his strength to destroy his enemies. Instead, for what did he use his strength?” [to forgive his enemies]
- “What can we learn from his example?” [To forgive is not a sign of weakness, but of strength and courage]
- “Who will give us the strength to forgive our enemies?” [Jesus himself, by the power of his Spirit living in us]

11 Instead of taking revenge, Farid forgave and blessed the person who hurt him. **Read 1 Peter 3:9** and fill the blank spaces: “Do not repay _____ with evil or _____ with insult, but with blessing”.

12 Miriam is a Pathan believer. Her true story is similar to Farid’s, but the outcome was harder:

Miriam was looking after the shared cash for the women in her neighbourhood. She had 15,000 rupees locked in a box. One time a neighbour came to get some money. Miriam gave her 5,000 rupees, then she put the box away. Her husband’s aunt was visiting at that time and saw everything. That afternoon the aunt went back home. The next day Miriam went to the box and noticed she hadn’t locked it, and the money was gone. The aunt had stolen the 10,000 rupees!

Miriam had to work for months to replace the money that was stolen, feeding her own children less. She was so angry with her aunt. She even had difficulty praying. But one day, she realized how much she hated her aunt and she chose to forgive her. When she did, joy filled her heart and she was set free from her hate.

How did Miriam react to the person who caused her such a great loss?
 ___ a) with revenge ___ b) with forgiveness

13 It is hard to bear such harm. But if we do not forgive, the harm to our lives will be even greater. The desire for revenge will rule our lives. Resentment will destroy our mental, physical and spiritual health. As an Afghan poet wrote with wisdom:

“Storing up grudges leads to discomfort
 Your heart hardens,
 In the end it brings a scorpion’s sting.”

To be set free from this ‘scorpion’s sting’, what must we do about our persecutors?
 _____ them.

14 One believer from Africa said,

“I found it very hard to forgive those who beat me and left scars on my body. I wanted to pray they would go to hell. I felt like this for two years until God changed my attitude. Almost as much as I suffered from the persecution, I suffered afterwards through not forgiving my persecutors.”

Bring to your mind the memory verse from question 4 and fill the blanks:
 “Love _____ and pray for _____” (Matthew 5:44).

If the blank spaces in the last sentence held the names of your enemy or persecutor, would you be able to forgive them? At the end of this lesson we will learn practical steps of forgiveness.



Commented [Advisor135]:

SAY:
 “Now let’s read about a third person who was able to forgive her enemy”

READ the shaded section.

ASK:

- “Why do you think God met Farid’s financial loss in a marvellous way, but not Miriam’s?” [discuss together. We don’t really know the answer. God knows what is best for each one of us at different times. Sometimes he shows us a miracle to strengthen our faith, as with Farid. Sometimes he makes us go the hard way to strengthen our endurance, as with Miriam. Either way, He is at work for good in our lives]

- “What set Miriam free from hating her husband’s aunt?” [she chose to forgive her. Then joy filled her heart!]

Commented [Advisor136]:

READ the shaded portion

ASK:

- “Tell of a time in your own life when you held on tight to resentment and refused to forgive. What was the result for you?” [discuss together]

- “To be set free from the ‘scorpion’s sting’, what must we do? [forgive our enemies]

Commented [Advisor137]:

SAY:
 “The fourth person is from Africa. He too previously had the same religion as yourselves. Because he turned to Christ his relatives tried to kill him.”

READ the shaded section in the box.

ASK:

- “This man said, ‘Almost as much as I suffered from the persecution, I suffered afterwards through not forgiving my persecutors’. What did he mean?” [discuss together. I think he meant that he suffered a lot from the bitterness inside him]

Commented [Advisor138]:

SAY:
 “Look again at our memory verse, in point 14.

ASK:

- “Were you able to do that? How did it feel to say those words?”

Commented [Advisor139]:

READ the shaded sections from Matthew 5:44 and the speech bubble.

SAY:

“Can you think of someone who hurt you and think of that person’s name in the blank spaces, without writing it down? [if his name was Firaz, it would be ‘love Firaz and pray for him’]. Let’s all pause now and do that quietly under our breath”.

15 Our human instinct is to take revenge. But as God's chosen people, we need not be controlled by our human nature. We also have a 'new nature', which is Christ in us and us in him.

- a) In my old human nature, is it possible for me to forgive my persecutors? [Yes / No]
b) Being in Christ, is it possible for me to forgive my persecutors? [Yes / No]

Joy in our Sufferings

16 Read 1 Peter 4:12-13 and fill the blank spaces from v.13 : "But _____ that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be _____ when his glory is revealed".

17 We can 'rejoice' now even in our sufferings, and later we will be 'overjoyed' when we see our beloved Jesus in all his glory.

Now read 1 Peter 4:14-16.

- a) Which verse says we should not be ashamed to suffer as a Christian? v. _____
b) Which verse says that those who are insulted because of Christ's name are blessed? v. _____

18 Perhaps you have been deeply hurt by people's insults and lies. Perhaps even your closest family members have rejected you. Our loving Lord knows your pain. He will bind up your emotional wounds. And he gives you this promise:

"Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven"
(Matthew 5:11-12)

In the box above, underline the words 'blessed', 'rejoice' and 'be glad'.

Summary

19 The way for Christ's followers to survive in this world that persecutes them, is to be like Christ himself! What two reactions to persecution have we learned in today's lesson?

1. From 1 Peter ch.3, _____ instead of Revenge (*questions 4-16*)
2. From 1 Peter ch.4, _____ in our Sufferings (*questions 17-19*)

Commented [Advisor140]:

READ the shaded section.

ASK:

- "In our new nature, can we have the strength to forgive our enemies and persecutors?" [*yes, for this is Christ's nature in us*]

Commented [Advisor141]:

READ TOGETHER 1 Peter 4:12-16.

ASK:

- "What was your favourite verse in this passage, and why?" [*different responses*]
- "Describe an occasion when God gave you joy in the midst of suffering" [*discuss together*]

LESSON 10 PRACTICAL TASK

In question 10c) of this lesson, you thought about a person who insulted or hurt you. Your task is to forgive that person from your heart. Go through the following steps:

Step 1): If you find it hard to forgive that person, think of Jesus Christ, who forgave his murderers as they hammered nails into his hands and feet. He forgave your sins too.

Step 2): If you are ready, decide to forgive that person. This is your choice. Not even God will force you to forgive. But if you don't forgive, then the anger will continue to burn inside you like an acid. The only way to find peace is to forgive.

Step 3): Pray this prayer:

Dear Father God,

Help me to forgive [think of a person's name here but don't write it] even though he/she hurt me.

I decide now to forgive him/her.

I can't do this in my own strength, but through the strength of Jesus Christ in me.

In due time, please heal my emotions of anger and revenge.

Ameen."

Step 4): Remember, your decision to forgive comes first. Only later will you feel less angry towards that person. Keep praying until God takes away your anger. If this takes a long time, talk with another believer about it.

These steps will help you forgive that person from your heart. This decision has set you free from the prison of revenge. However, your relationship with that person may still need to be restored. We will learn more about this in Lesson 12.



Commented [Advisor142]:

TO FINISH THE MEETING

READ the shaded portion.

SAY:

"You have to decide about doing this task yourself, no one can force you to do it. It is a hard task but, if you choose it, God will give you the strength to carry it out. Then it will release great joy in your life!"

CLOSE IN PRAYER

Thank God for showing us that forgiveness is better than revenge. Ask Him to give us strength for the Practical Task this week.

LESSON 10 REVIEW

- 1 We should 'follow in Christ's steps'. Therefore, when we are insulted or persecuted, what should be our reaction: revenge or forgiveness? _____
- 2 Write again the verse you memorised:
"Love _____" (_____ 5:44)

LESSON 10 ANSWERS

- 1 a)
- 2 for discussion
- 3 stop and pray
- 4 memorise the verse
- 5 a)
- 6 check this yourself from lesson 9
- 7 b)
- 8 forgive
- 9 a) revenge b) forgiveness
- 10 a) God (through the voice)
b) He later followed Jesus
c) personal response
- 11 evil, insult
- 12 b) 13 forgive
- 14 check the memory verse from question 4
- 15 a) No, b) Yes
- 16 read v.13 17 a) v.16 b) v.14 18 underline the words
- 19 a) forgiveness, b) joy

Lesson 11 Husbands and Wives



Do you enjoy the stories of Mullah Nasruddin?

In one story people asked Mullah Nasruddin, ‘When did your first marriage take place?’ He answered, ‘I can’t remember – but it was just before I got wise!’

s about marriage. But remember, is God’s precious gift to you. married, one day you probably will benefit you too!



God’s Design for Marriage

1 As you know, the very first husband and wife on this earth were Adam and Eve. Adam was created first. At this time Adam had no lack of servants, for the animals were there to obey him. But he lacked a companion, to be his closest friend.

God saw that *“it is not good for the man to be alone”*. (Genesis 2:18). So he created Eve to be Adam’s wife. What did God make Eve to be? (*tick one*)

- a) Adam’s servant b) Adam’s companion and friend

2 Moreover, the Tawrat tells us, *“God created man in his own image... male and female he created them”* (Genesis 1:27). Of course no one can make a picture of the invisible Creator! Rather, to be ‘in God’s image’ means to be in his likeness. Humans can be like him in some ways – they can be creative and spiritual and intelligent.

Which kind of humans were created in God’s image? (*tick one*)

- a) both males and females b) males only

3 So Eve equally with Adam was created in God’s image and likeness. They had equal value in God’s sight.

This has important lessons for us today. Circle ‘True’ or ‘False’ by the following statements:

- | | |
|--|------------------|
| a) Men and women are of equal value in God’s sight | [True / False] |
| b) Men are the peak of God’s creatures and women are inferior | [True / False] |
| c) God created wives as servants to their husbands | [True / False] |
| d) God created wives as helpers and companions to their husbands | [True / False] |

Commented [Advisor143]:

AIMS OF LESSON 11
For each member to:

- understand God’s design for marriage: one man united with one woman for their whole life
- want to please their spouse above themselves
- believe that men should give priority to their wives above their mothers
- memorise Genesis 2:24

Commented [Advisor144]:

PLEASE NOTE

- If your group has a mix of men and women, it is good for them to discuss today’s lesson together. However, if they are shy to discuss it in front of each other, you can put them in two groups for part or all of today’s discussion (men with men and women with women). This is your choice.
- This week’s topic is extremely important and there are very many aspects to discuss. You don’t need to rush through the discussion questions. If you cannot complete them all today, then take an extra week to discuss it, then continue with the rest of the course.

Commented [Advisor145]:

TO START THE MEETING

START WITH PRAYER

SAY:

“Our relationship with our husband or wife is the most important human relationship we have, even more than with our parents. Let’s learn today about God’s design for marriage.”

LESSON REVIEW

- Check that members can give correct answers to the Review questions.

ASK:

- “Our Practical Task last week was to forgive a person who hurt us. Did you do that task? What difference did that make in your life?” [*discuss together. Notice any individuals who do not speak, or who are still finding it difficult to forgive. Speak privately with those individuals later*]

Commented [Advisor146]:

SAY:

“In point 3, there are four statements about men and women for you to mark ‘True’ or ‘False’. Let’s look at each of these in turn.”

READ the shaded portion, stopping for discussion after each statement.

ASK (after each statement a) to d)):

- “What do you think is the correct answer for this statement? What reason do you have?”

[*the correct answers are given in the book. These are correct according to God’s Word but they are different from what most people think in our society. Therefore group members should be able to give reasons for their answers. Some reasons are found in points 1-2*]

4 Our wise Creator gave Adam and Eve to each other in marriage. God’s design for marriage is one man united with one woman, for their whole life.

“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh”. (Genesis 2:24)

- a) Whom should a man ‘leave’ when he gets married? His father and _____
- b) With whom is he united, as ‘one flesh’? His _____

5 Often it is not possible for the husband physically to leave his parents’ home as soon as he gets married. But emotionally, he should definitely ‘leave’ his father and mother and ‘be united’ to his bride. A man’s unity with his wife is more important than his unity with his parents! (Of course, the new wife should also make effort to fit in with her mother-in-law, and her husband should guide her in how to do this).

According to Genesis 2:24, to whom should a man give first place in his love and loyalty?

- ___ a) his wife
- ___ b) his mother and father

(Only one of these answers is correct!)

6 Look at this picture of a man caught between his mother’s wishes and his wife’s wishes:



In your opinion,

a) When a man is caught between his mother and his wife, to whom should he give priority? _____

b) Why? _____

Be ready for a lively discussion!

7 With the help of question 4, fill the gaps below and memorise this important verse:

“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his _____, and they will become _____” (Genesis 2:24)

8 God’s design for marriage is one man united with one woman, for their whole life. One time some religious people sought a *fatwa* from Jesus Christ. They asked, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?”

Jesus quoted the verse you have just memorised. Then he continued “So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate’.” (Matthew 19:3-6)

According to Christ’s teaching, which one of the following statements is correct?

Commented [Advisor147]:

ASK:

- “What is God’s design for marriage?” [one man united with one woman for their whole life]

REPEAT this point several times till every member is sure of it.

ASK:

According to God’s design for marriage,

- “How many wives should a man have?” [one]
- “For how long should they stay married?” [for their whole life]
- “What should happen between them, in body, mind and spirit?” [they should be united]
- “What is our memory verse for today’s lesson? [For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh’ (Genesis 2:24)]

SAY:

“It may be that before you became Christ’s follower, you already had taken more than one wife, or maybe your husband already has more than one wife. Or maybe you have already been through divorce. We will discuss these situations later, and if you want about your situation with me privately then please feel free to do so.”

Commented [Advisor148]:

LOOK at the picture

ASK:

- “What do you really think? Should a man give priority to his wife, and if so why?” [discuss together. Usually we expect the man to give priority to his mother. But Genesis 2:24 says he should leave his mother and be united to his wife. This means he should give priority to his wife.]
- “But how can a Christian man show this truth to his mother, without offending her?” [discuss together. I think he should show by his actions that he still loves his mother just as much as before, but that he also needs to give priority to his wife, even before their first child is born]
- “And how can a Christian woman show love and respect to her mother-in-law? [discuss together. She should be wise and not always insist on her right to have priority over her husband. She should understand that it is hard for her mother-in-law to let go of her son after all these years, and it is also hard for her husband to be pulled in two directions]

- ___ a) Marriage is merely a contract which two people make or break as they wish
- ___ b) Marriage is a binding commitment, joining two people into one

9 Yes, in God’s sight two separate people become ‘one’ in marriage. Husband and wife should share this unity not just with their bodies but also with their hearts and minds. They are no longer two, but one.

What is God’s design for marriage? One man united with ___ woman, for their whole life.

10 Can one man be fully united in heart and mind with two wives at the same time? No, this is impossible! Which of the following usually result when a man takes more than one wife? (tick one or more answers, according to your own observation)

- ___ a) the man treats one wife as his favourite
- ___ b) the other wives are jealous of the favourite one
- ___ c) there is harmony in the home
- ___ d) there are too many children and they get neglected

11 God’s design for marriage is one man united with one woman, for their whole life. This is strong teaching! Many people will not agree with it. Have you met men like this one below?



I say that my wife is my ‘field’. I sow my seed in the field. If my field is fruitless, I may dispose of it and take another. Or I might obtain another field, if I can afford it. I am the landowner and I may take whatever fields I like.

What differences do you see between this man’s attitude and God’s design for marriage? Note your ideas here and be ready for the discussion:

12 Marriage is a precious gift from God. But God does not command everyone to get married. Jesus himself never married. He said “some have renounced marriage because of the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 19:12).

For those who do get married, what is God’s design? ___ man united with ___ woman for their ___ life.

Review Let’s summarise what we have learned so far:

- Men and women have equal value in God’s sight;
- God created wives as companions to their husbands, not as servants;
- God’s design for marriage is: one man united with one



Commented [Advisor149]:

READ TOGETHER Matthew 19:3-6

ASK:

- “From the Pharisees’ question in v.3, does it seem that it was easy in those days for a man to divorce his wife?” [yes, it seems so. In fact, some Pharisees taught that a man could divorce his wife if she merely burnt the food]
- “Which verse of the Tawrat does Christ quote in v.5?” [Genesis 2:24, the same one that we memorised. It shows that Jesus Christ confirmed that teaching]
- “The Tawrat and our Lord Jesus Christ both taught that a man should be ‘united’ with his wife. How can they grow this unity, not just physically but also with their hearts and minds? [I think they should spend time together, talking a lot with each other and doing things together, as true friends]
- “In v.6, does Christ say that marriage is just a human contract for people to make or break as they wish, or has God joined them together?” [God has joined them together]
- “According to Christ’s words in v.6, why is divorce wrong?” [God has made the marriage so humans should not break it. What God has joined together, let not man separate’. In v.9 Christ again says that divorce is wrong]

Commented [Advisor150]:

READ the shaded section.

ASK:

- “Which answers did you tick?” [each member should say what they wrote]

Commented [Advisor151]:

READ the shaded sections.

ASK:

- “What did you write here?” [discuss together. This man’s attitude to his wife is common in our country. He thinks she is just there to give him children, she is his property so he can get rid of her or he can take another wife. But according to the Holy Bible, men and women have equal value. God gave wives as companions and friends with their husbands, not just to serve them and bear children. Also, God hates it when men divorce their wives or take another wife]
- “It is clear that a follower of Christ should not take a second wife. But suppose a man already had more than one wife before he received Christ, what would you advise him to do?” [discuss. I believe he should not divorce any of his wives because the Lord says ‘I hate divorce’ (Malachi 2:16). He should treat all his wives fairly and kindly.]
- “Suppose a woman is Christ’s follower and her husband has more than one wife. What would you advise her to do?” [discuss. I believe she should endure the situation patiently, showing love to her husband and the other wives and their children. But she can thank God that He understands how hard it is for her.]

Husbands and Wives in 1 Peter

13 As we have seen, God sets a high standard for our married lives! But we often fail to reach to God's standard, because we are selfish. 1 Peter chapter 3 tells us how to strengthen our marriage by overcoming our selfish attitudes.

Read 1 Peter 3:1-7. Tick the box when you have done so .

14 Men and women have equal value in God's sight. However, God gave different responsibilities to husbands and wives, so that in marriage they could fit together perfectly and meet each other's needs. What are these responsibilities, according to 1 Peter 3?

- **Responsibility of Wives:** "Be _____ to your husbands" (1 Peter 3:1)
- **Responsibility of Husbands:** "Be _____ as you live with your wives" (see 1 Peter 3:7)

Responsibility of Wives

15 Wives are told "*be submissive*". This is not easy if your husband is unkind or selfish. But, wives, remember that we submit "*for the Lord's sake*" (1 Peter 2:13) even if our husband does not deserve it.

In 1 Peter 3:1-2, what is the responsibility of wives? 'Be _____ to your husbands'.

16 Should a 'submissive' wife live as her husband's slave, never expressing her opinion? No, sometimes if he wants to make a foolish decision it is her duty to speak up. But she will do this for the sake of her family, not because she is selfish.

Look at this selfish wife nagging her husband:



Do you expect me to wear these old clothes for my cousin's wedding?! I need a new suit, and shoes to match! And you have never given me a gold bangle since we got married! And ... and...

What does this wife care more about?

- a) 'How can I please my husband?'
 b) 'How can my husband please me?' (tick one)

17 According to 1 Peter 3:3-4, she is making another mistake too. What is it? (read the verses) a) She thinks true beauty comes from gold jewelry and fine clothes
 b) She thinks true beauty comes from a gentle and quiet spirit

18 Instead of being selfish, what should wives do according to 1 Peter 3:1? 'Be _____ to your husbands'.

Responsibility of Husbands

19 If you are a man reading this lesson, maybe you are glad to know that your wife should be submissive. But be careful! 1 Peter chapter 3 puts an even more difficult responsibility on you than on your wife!

Read 1 Peter 3:7 again and fill the blanks: "Husbands, in the same way be _____ as you live with your wives, and treat them with _____"

20 Notice this verse says 'in the same way':

a) As we learned earlier, what should Christian wives care about more: (tick one)

1. 'How can I please my husband?' or
 2. 'How can my husband please me?'

b) Therefore, in the same way, what should Christian husbands care about more:

1. 'How can I please my wife?' or
 2. 'How can my wife please me?'

21 Many men in this world assume that women exist merely to make them happy. Husbands, our selfish attitude has to change when we become Christ's follower! Compare these two men:

I want to please my wife. I am grateful for all the work she does to take care of the house and children. I am willing to help her when she needs it.

I want my wife to please me. She must cook delicious food, keep the house clean and take care of my children. She must not refuse me in bed either.

Shafiq



Tariq



Commented [Advisor152]:

SAY:

"Now let's learn how Christ's followers should try to please their spouses instead of pleasing themselves. Look first at what this woman says..."

READ the shaded portion

Commented [Advisor153]:

SAY:

"Now see what Tariq says..."

READ the shaded portion

ASK:

- "The woman in point 16, and Tariq here, who are they trying to please: themselves or their spouse?" [themselves]

Commented [Advisor154]:

SAY:

"But see how Shafiq is different..."

READ the shaded portion

ASK:

- "Who is Shafiq trying to please, himself or his wife?" [his wife]
- "Who is more selfish, Tariq or Shafiq? [Tariq]
- "Who is more manly, Tariq or Shafiq? [by the world's standards, Tariq is more manly. But by God's standards, Shafiq is more manly. It is noble and manly to be unselfish. Our Lord Jesus Christ set us the example for this]

- a) Which man, Tariq or Shafique, is considerate towards his wife? _____
 b) Which man is selfish? _____
 c) In your opinion, which of them is more manly? _____

22 The husband should be 'considerate'. He will never beat his wife. He will not neglect her or insult her. Instead he will sacrifice himself for her, to help her and build her up. This is manly. This is Christ-like.

Instead of being selfish, what should husbands do according to 1 Peter 3:7? 'Be _____ as you live with your wives'.

23 Husbands, we think that the wife is the servant of the home and we are the head. But what did our master Jesus do? Even as head, he washed his disciples' feet. He loved us by serving us and by giving himself for us. This is the model that we husbands should imitate!

If a wife is ill and tired, should the husband help her with the housework? *(Write your opinion and be ready for discussion).*

If your Spouse is not yet in Christ...

24 It is very sad if only the husband is a believer, or only the wife. God wants the other one to come too.

But how will this happen? Tick one best answer below, according to the advice in 1 Peter 3:1-2 for Christian wives:

- a) keep nagging her husband to become Christ's follower
- b) refuse to share their bed until the husband turns to Christ
- c) obtain divorce from her husband
- d) be submissive, with purity and reverence

25 Read this true account of an Afghan couple:

Daud Jan became Christ's follower. His wife, Sharifa, opposed him at first. But she saw that his treatment of her changed. He even thanked her for the food she cooked! Now she too has entrusted herself to Jesus Christ.

If Christ's follower is patient and loving like Daud Jan, what do you think will be the effect on the non-Christian spouse? *(Write your opinion and be ready for discussion)*

26 Often after one spouse turns to Christ, the other eventually follows. But this is not guaranteed. The non-believing partner may bring all kinds of pressure, insults or even divorce for the believer.

Commented [Advisor155]:

READ the shaded section.

ASK:

- "Is it possible for a man to maintain his authority in the home without beating his wife and children? *[discuss]*

Commented [Advisor156]:

READ the shaded section.

ASK:

- "What is your opinion, should the husband help his wife with the housework if she is ill and tired?" *[discuss together]*

Commented [Advisor157]:

READ the shaded section.

ASK:

- "What is your opinion?" *[discuss together. Sometimes the non-Christian spouse is attracted to Christ and becomes his follower. Sometimes this does not happen. But even then, when Christ's follower is patient and loving towards the spouse, it helps to keep harmony in the home]*

But whatever happens, should the follower of Jesus initiate *talaq* or *khula*? [Yes / No]

If your Spouse is already in Christ...

27 If your spouse is Christ’s follower, then how fortunate you both are! 1 Peter 3:7 says that together you are ‘heirs of the gracious gift of life’ and partners in prayer. What are good ways to strengthen this joint partnership? (*tick one or more good answers, in your opinion*)

- ___ a) Pray and read the Bible with each other every day
- ___ b) Discuss together how to bring up the children
- ___ c) Share your joys and anxieties with each other
- ___ d) Spend more time chatting with your friends than with your spouse
- ___ e) Jointly train your children to be followers of Jesus



Finally, think about your relationship with your own spouse (if you have one).

- Is it a close friendship? Or is it more like a master/servant relationship?
- What practical steps can you take to strengthen your partnership with your spouse?

LESSON 11 PRACTICAL TASK

Think of one thing you can do to make your spouse happy. Then do it this week.

LESSON 11 REVIEW

1 Write the memory verse:

“For this reason a man _____” (Genesis 2 : ____)

2 What is God’s design for marriage? ____ man united with ____ woman for their ____ life.

3 Husbands and wives have equal value in God’s sight, but different responsibilities.

- a) What responsibility of the wife is mentioned in 1 Peter 3:1? ‘Be _____’,
- b) What responsibility of the husband is mentioned in 1 Peter 3:7? ‘Be _____’,

4 Being selfish, we usually think ‘How can my spouse please me?’ But as Christ’s followers what should we care more about? ‘How can ____ please my spouse?’

Commented [Advisor158]:

READ the shaded portion

ASK:

- “Which answers did you tick, and why?” *[discuss together]*
- “Part e) says ‘jointly train your children to be followers of Jesus’. In what ways can we do this?” *[discuss together. I suggest we should:*
- show our children a good Christian example in our own lives;
- keep a strong marriage;
- give our children time, attention and love;
- give them wise discipline;
- apologise to them if we fail them;
- pray for them;
- pray with them and read the Bible with them each day;
- bring them regularly to join in our local group of believers;
- teach them to serve Christ.]

Commented [Advisor159]:

READ the shaded portion in the speech bubble.

SAY:

“Be silent for two minutes, think about the teacher’s questions. What practical steps can you take to strengthen your relationship with your wife or husband?” *[this is for group members to think about, not to discuss]*

Commented [Advisor160]:

TO FINISH THE MEETING

READ the shaded section.

CLOSE IN PRAYER

Put group members into pairs to pray with each other – men with men and women with women (or husbands and wives if they are present). They should ask God’s help to obey what they learned about marriage.

Commented [Advisor161]:

LESSON 11 REVIEW

CORRECT ANSWERS:

Question 1
“...will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh” (Genesis 2:24)

Question 2
one, one, whole

Question 3
a) submissive
b) considerate

Question 4
I

LESSON 11 ANSWERS

- 1 b)
- 2 a)
- 3 a) True b) False c) False d) True
- 4 a) mother b) wife
- 5 a)
- 6 for discussion
- 7 memorise the verse
- 8 b)
- 9 one
- 10 in my experience, a) b) and d) are true. If your experience is different, bring it for discussion
- 11 for discussion
- 12 one, one, whole
- 13 read the passage then continue to the next question
- 14 submissive, considerate
- 15 submissive
- 16 b)
- 17 a)
- 18 submissive
- 19 considerate, respect
- 20 a) 2 b) 2
- 21 a) Shafique b) Tariq c) for discussion
- 22 considerate
- 23 for discussion
- 24 d)
- 25 for discussion 26 No (according to Christ's teaching in question 8)
- 27 my suggestion is a), b), c)

Lesson 12 Solving our Disputes

We are God's chosen people, His holy *ummah*. Therefore we should love each other deeply. Our Lord Jesus said, "All men will know that you are my disciples if you love one another" (John 13:34).

Yet even as Christ's followers, we sometimes have disputes. In this lesson we will learn how to solve these disputes. When we manage to do so, the bonds of love between us grow even stronger than before.



Disputes among Christ's Followers

1 **Read 1 Peter 3:8-12** and fill the gaps from verse 8: "Finally, all of you, live in _____ with one another; be _____, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble."

2 This verse commands us to have 'one mind' and 'one heart'. Also we must 'love as brothers'.

But in every earthly family, there are sometimes disputes between brothers or jealousy between sisters. This happens too in our spiritual brotherhood of Christ's church. In heaven our brotherhood will be perfect, but it is not yet perfect here on earth.

- a) Has a brother or sister in Christ ever caused hurt to you? [Yes / No]
 b) Have you ever caused hurt to a brother or sister in Christ? [Yes / No]

3 **At the time of the apostle Peter, the believers were filled with love and unity. But even they sometimes had disputes and needed to be reconciled. When they learned to solve their disputes, their love grew even stronger.**

Mark the following statements 'True' or 'False':

- _____ a) God's chosen people on this earth are always perfect
 _____ b) Christ's followers sometimes have disputes
 _____ c) Christ's followers can solve their disputes and be reconciled

Commented [Advisor162]:

AIMS OF LESSON 12
 For each member to:

- a. choose a good way to solve disputes, not bad ways
 b. understand and practise three steps to solving a dispute in a good way
 c. memorise 1 Peter 3:11

Commented [Advisor163]:

TO START THE MEETING

START WITH PRAYER

SAY:

"Christ's followers, like non-Christians, have disputes. But they should be better than non-Christians at solving their disputes. Today, let's learn how to do that."

LESSON REVIEW

- Check that members can give correct answers to the Review questions.

ASK:

"Our Practical Task last week was to do something to make our wife or husband happy. Did you do that? Did you enjoy making them happy?" [discuss together. Now that we have tried it for one week, let's do it every week!]

Commented [Advisor164]:

READ the shaded section.

ASK:

- "Should we be surprised that sometimes Christ's followers have disputes?" [no. They are not perfect. But they can solve their disputes and be reconciled]

SAY:

"Probably all of us have experienced hurt from a brother or sister in Christ. But let's remember we have caused them hurt too! In Christ's family we give and receive forgiveness. That's a wonderful family to belong to!"

4 Some disputes of those early believers were similar to our disputes today. We read about them in the book of Acts. For instance:

- One group of believers complained that another group was receiving more aid money than them (Acts 6:1-6)
- One group criticised the apostle Peter for breaking their ethnic customs (Acts 11:1-18)
- Two groups disagreed about what kind of *shariah* Christ's followers must obey (Acts 15:1-32)

On each of those occasions the believers solved their disputes. They sought God's will above their own will, and they sought peace with each other. Their leader Peter wrote that Christ's follower "must seek peace and _____ it" (*read 1 Peter 3:11 and fill the gap*)

5 In your experience, what things cause disputes among Christ's followers today? Tick one or more of the following, according to your own observation:

- a) money from foreigners leads to jealousy
- b) one believer causes dishonour to another
- c) two people compete to lead the group of believers
- d) Christ's followers disagree over doctrine
- e) believers pass on gossip about each other
- f) another cause, such as _____
(*give an example from your own experience*)

God longs for us to solve our disputes

6 Whenever God sees us divided by disputes, it grieves Him very much. He longs for us to be reconciled to each other. The Lord Jesus said to his followers,

"If you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift."
(Matthew 5:23-24)

According to this teaching, if you are in dispute with another person, which of the following actions is more urgent? (*tick one*)

- a) to carry out your worship correctly
- b) to be reconciled to your fellow-believer

7 What is our Saviour's attitude whenever there are disputes among his chosen people? (*tick two correct answers*)

- a) It makes Him very sad
- b) It does not affect Him at all
- c) He longs for us to solve our disputes



God longs for us to solve our disputes and be reconciled. But how practically can we do this? There are bad ways and good ways. Let's learn first about some bad ways.

Commented [Advisor165]:

READ the shaded section.

ASK:

- "From statements a) to e), which ones did you tick?" [*discuss together*]
- "Under part f), what examples can you give from your own experience?" [*discuss together*]

Commented [Advisor166]:

READ the shaded section.

ASK:

- "Why do you think our disputes make God sad?" [*discuss together. Some non-Christians think our actions cannot affect God, but this is not true. Our disputes do make him sad, for Christ paid a heavy price to bring us peace, and he longs for us to live in peace. Also when we have disputes it is a bad witness to the nonbelievers*]

Commented [Advisor167]:

READ TOGETHER 1 Peter 3:8-12

SAY:

"This passage gives us good instructions for how to live in peace with each other."

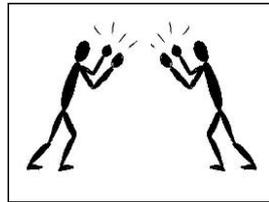
ASK:

- "In v.8, what good actions help us live in peace with each other?" [*live in harmony, be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate, be humble*]
- "In v.9, what bad actions should we avoid?" [*repaying evil with evil or insult with insult*]. "Instead what should we do?" [*repay evil with blessing*]
- "What else must we do, in v.10?" [*keep our tongues from evil and our lips from deceitful speech*] "Why?" [*because evil tongues and deceitful speech stir up disputes a lot*]
- "From which verse in this passage does today's memory verse come?" [*v.11 – seek peace and pursue it*]

Bad Ways to Solve Disputes

8 One bad way to solve disputes is to fight. Some people fight with fists, some with kalashnikovs. Some fight in the law-courts and some in their homes. But what does this lead to, according to what we learned in lesson 10?

- ___ a) reconciliation ___ b) revenge



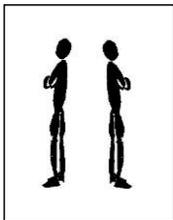
Commented [Advisor168]:

ASK:

- "In this lesson we find three bad ways to solve disputes. What is the first one, in point 8?" [fight]
- "But what does fighting lead to?" [revenge]

SAY:

"The way of fighting obviously causes damage, whether with fists, kalashnikovs or lawsuits. But many people don't realise that the second bad way also causes harm..."



9 Another bad way to solve disputes is to turn our backs on each other. People cut each other off and refuse to talk with each other. They even prevent their families from having any contact with each other.

Sometimes this state of isolation continues for years and years. What are the negative results, in your experience? _____

Commented [Advisor169]:

READ the shaded section.

ASK:

- "What is your experience of this?" [discuss together. When people choose this way it doesn't solve the cause of the dispute. Instead, for many years people guard bitterness in their hearts and this destroys them from within like acid. Also it can split whole families down the middle]

10 A third bad way to solve disputes is to enforce surrender. The stronger person forces the weaker person to give way. If a mediator is asked to help, he typically takes the side of the senior person without tackling the issue fairly. So the junior person has to surrender and say the words 'I apologise' even when he does not mean it.



On the surface this appears to solve the dispute, but:

- a) Has justice really been done? [Yes / No]
 b) Will the junior person still feel resentment in his heart? [Yes / No]
 c) Does true reconciliation take place? [Yes / No]

Commented [Advisor170]:

READ the shaded section.

ASK:

- "Does this ever happen in your own family or community?" [discuss together]
- "On the surface this appears to solve the dispute, but why is it not a proper deep solution?" [see parts a), b) and c) of point 10: justice has not been done, the junior person will still feel resentment, and there is no true reconciliation]

11 Tackling disputes through 'enforced surrender' brings peace on the surface, but it is not true deep peace. A wife may surrender to her husband, but their hearts will remain divided. In the church, a younger leader may surrender to the elder one, but often he will continue to spread discontent among the believers and later the group will split. This has happened many times among Christ's followers!

Can fighting, turning our backs or forcing a surrender bring true peace? _____

A better way to solve disputes

Now let us learn a better way to solve our disputes.

This way involves three steps:

- First step:* Bring your emotions to God
Second step: Talk with the other person
Third step: Give and receive forgiveness



Commented [Advisor171]:

READ the shaded sections in points 11 and the speech bubble.

SAY:

"Let's practise these three steps, with the example of Ali and Daud"

First Step: Bring your emotions to God

12 When we have a dispute with someone we feel strong emotions against that person. Hurt, anger and desire for revenge fill up our minds so completely that there is no room left for any other thoughts!



But if we go to confront the other person while our thoughts are still full of anger, we will definitely use angry words too. Then in turn the other person will defend himself with angry words.

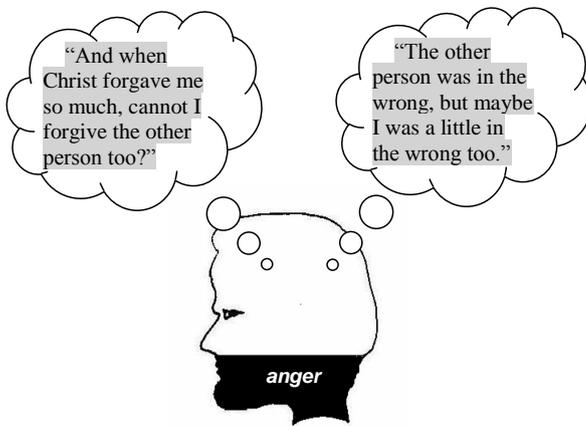
In such a state, will that person be able to consider calmly anything we say? [Yes/No]

13 Truly, “Man’s anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires” (James 1:20). We need to bring our angry emotions to God.

When we pour out our emotions to God, He is ready to hear us. The Lord is our Healer. So we can freely show him our spiritual wounds just as a patient shows his bodily wounds to the doctor.

What is the first step towards solving our disputes? Bring your _____ to God.

14 As we keep talking with God about these negative emotions, He will gradually reduce the anger in our minds. That makes room for other thoughts to enter, like this:



Probably we are not yet completely free of the anger. But slowly our emotions have come under control sufficiently for us to be able to speak calmly with the other person. We also ask God to prepare that person to be willing to listen to us. We wait for the right opportunity to meet with them.

What is the first step towards solving our disputes? Bring your emotions to _____
Second Step: Talk with the other person

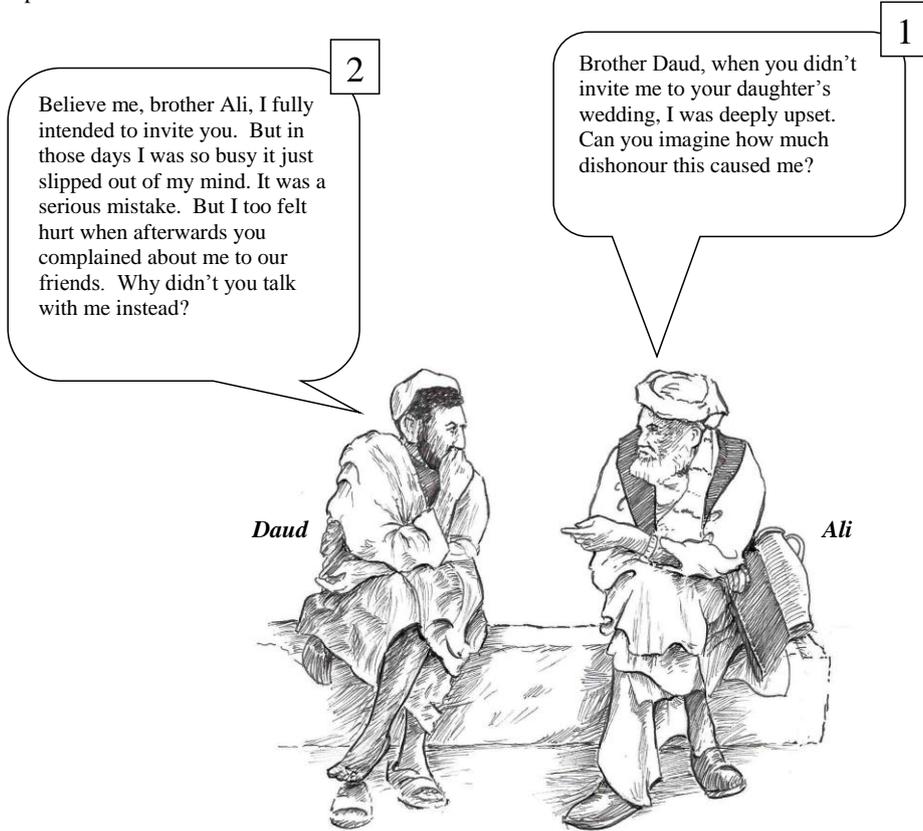
Commented [Advisor172]:
LOOK at this angry man.
ASK:

- “Is that how you feel when you are in dispute with someone?” [discuss together. Probably everyone feels this way!]
- “If you go and talk with the other person while you are still in this state, what will happen?” [your anger will explode then he will be angry in return]

Commented [Advisor173]:
READ the whole of point 14 (shaded).
ASK:

- “Why should we bring our emotions to God before we go to talk with the other person?” [so that, with God’s help, we can control our anger to some extent. Then we will be calm enough to talk with the other person]

15 In the picture Ali and Daud are two followers of Christ. They have a dispute. Ali speaks first:



- a) Are they discussing in a calm or angry way? _____
 b) Are they listening carefully to each other? _____

16 Ali had previously completed the first step by bringing his emotions to God. So now he is able to discuss the problem without getting angry again. Calmly he explains how Daud hurt him. Daud listens carefully without interrupting. Then Daud explains how Ali hurt him, and Ali listens without interrupting.

They both describe their feelings honestly, but in a loving way. They are “*speaking the truth in love*”, as Ephesians 4:15 says. They are making good progress towards solving their dispute.

What is the second step in solving our disputes? [Talk / fight] with the other person
 (circle the correct answer)

17 Also, notice that Ali does not attack or insult Daud’s person. Instead he just focuses on Daud’s specific action.

Commented [Advisor174]:
LOOK at the picture of Ali and Daud
ASK:

- “Are they able to discuss the problem in a calm way?” [yes]
- “Are they listening carefully to each other?” [yes]
- “Are they interrupting each other?” [no]
- “Are they describing their feelings in an honest but loving way?” [yes]
- “Why do all these things help them solve their dispute?” [discuss together. I think that all these things enable them to understand the problem fully from both sides]

This is important to remember whenever we have a dispute with our spouse.

- a) Which sentence below, 1. or 2., is better for a wife to say to her husband? _____
 - 1. 'The meat you bought yesterday was too expensive, could you try a different butcher next time?'
 - 2. 'You are so wasteful, you always waste our money!'
- b) Why? _____

18 But earlier Ali had made a mistake. When he was upset with Daud, he had complained to his friends. Instead he should have talked directly with Daud in private. Our Lord Jesus gave us this guidance:

"If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over." (Matthew 18:15)

Why is it so important to speak in private? (write your own opinion and be ready for discussion)

19 Let's check if Ali and Daud are using bad ways to solve their dispute:

- a) Are Ali and Daud fighting with each other? [Yes/No]
- b) Are they turning their backs on each other? [Yes/No]
- c) Is one of them forcing the other to surrender? [Yes/No]

20 They are tackling their dispute in a good way! Write here the two steps they have taken so far:

- First Step:** Bring your _____ to God
- Second Step:** _____ with the other person

21 Now Ali and Daud come to the third step.

Third Step: Forgive each Other

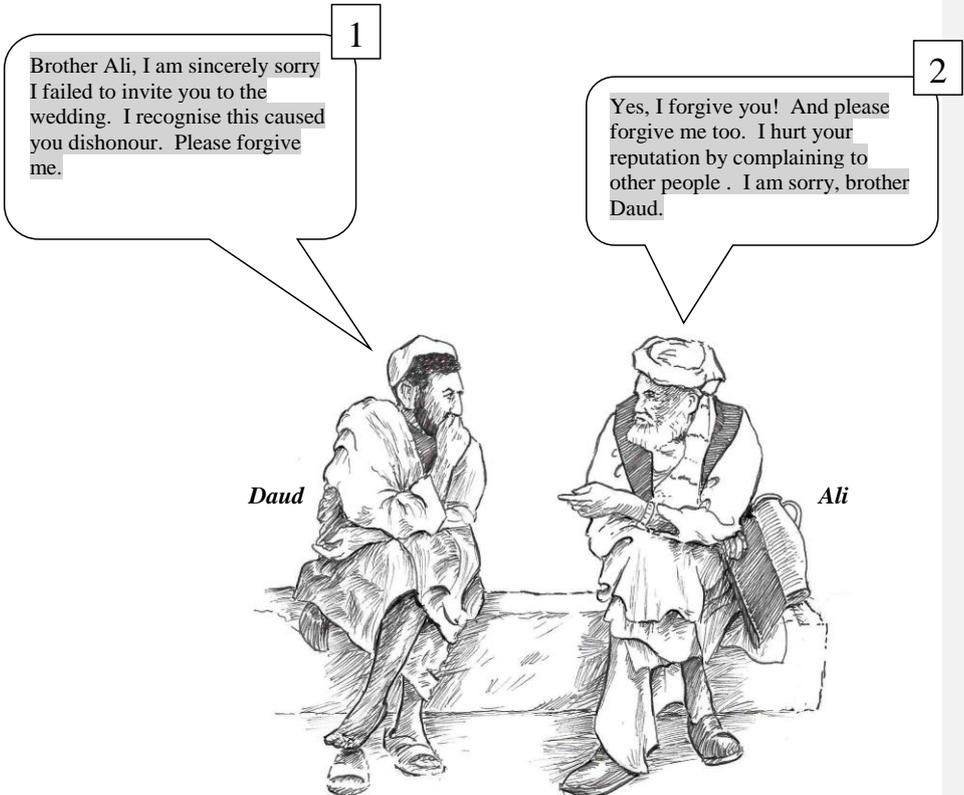
This time Daud speaks first:

Commented [Advisor175]:

READ the shaded section.

ASK:

- "What is your opinion about this?" [discuss together. When we talk about the problem with lots of people it spreads it far and wide, like seeds on the wind. This increases the hurt and makes reconciliation harder]
- "What advice did our Lord Jesus give, when our brother sins against us?" [go and show him his fault, just between the two of you]



In this conversation,

- a) Which of them apologises? (*tick one only*)
 1. Ali 2. Daud 3. Both of them 4. Neither of them
- b) What did they each say? (*tick one only*)
 1. 'Nothing was my fault'
 2. 'Everything was my fault'
 3. 'I apologise for the part that was my fault'

22 Both Ali and Daud make a sincere apology. But neither of them makes a false apology. They do not merely surrender and say 'everything was my fault' (as in question 10). Instead they recognise that 'one hand does not make a clap' and so:

- Ali apologises specifically for what was his fault
- Daud apologises specifically for what was his fault

It is hard to ask someone to forgive us, isn't it? This is not a weak thing to do. Rather, it takes manly strength to do such a hard thing.

What is the third step in solving our disputes? _____ one another.

23 We should be

"forgiving one another, just as in Christ God forgave you" (Ephesians 4:32).

Commented [Advisor176]:

LOOK at the picture and **READ** the shaded sections.

ASK:

- "In this conversation who apologises, Ali or Daud? [*both of them!*]"
- "What did they each say: 'nothing was my fault', 'everything was my fault', or 'part of it was my fault and I apologise for that part' [*they each name the part that was their fault, and they apologise for that*]"

God has forgiven and buried our past sins. In the same way when we forgive someone for a particular sin, we should bury it. Digging up old sins is like a dog digging up old bones!

But what if that person repeats the same offence in future? Should we forgive him again? The apostle Peter asked this same question. Read Jesus' reply in Matthew 18:21-22.

How many times did Jesus tell Peter to forgive? _____

24 Watch now as Daud and Ali give and receive forgiveness. What joy these two brothers in Christ feel when they are reconciled!



➤ **Stop and think:** Are you in a dispute with a brother or sister in Christ? Would you like the joy of being reconciled to them? Pray now for God to prepare the way for this to happen.



Sometimes, even when we ourselves try to give and receive forgiveness in a dispute, the other person might not be willing. This makes reconciliation impossible until their attitude changes. But at least let us try our best from our side. God's word says, "If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone" (Rom 12:18).

Summary

26 God longs for us to solve our disputes. Write 1 Peter 3:11 again here (see question 4) and memorise it.

"He must seek _____" (1 Peter _____ : _____)

LESSON 12 PRACTICAL TASK

94

Commented [Advisor177]:
READ the shaded section.
ASK:

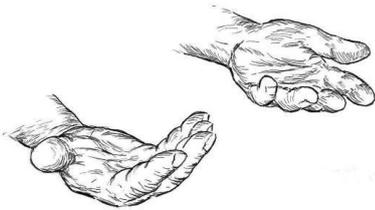
- "Since God has forgiven all our sins, should we be willing to forgive those who sin against us?" [yes!]
- "After we have forgiven someone for their sin against us, and buried it, should we dig up that same sin again?" [no]
- "What if they sin against us another time?" [we should forgive them again, just as Christ told the apostle Peter]
- "Look how happy Daud and Ali are when they solve their dispute! What are your feelings when you are reconciled with someone?" [discuss together]

Commented [Advisor178]:
READ the shaded section.
SAY:
 "Be silent for a little while and think about this. If you have a dispute with someone, bring it to God in your heart now."

Commented [Advisor179]:
READ the shaded section.
ASK:

- "If the other person is not willing to solve the dispute, should we still forgive them from our side?" [discuss together. This is a really hard situation. In my opinion, we should still forgive them in our heart, but proper reconciliation is not possible till the other person also responds. Sometimes, if the other person has died or moved, reconciliation will sadly never be possible. But we should still forgive that person from our hearts.]

In question 24, you thought about someone with whom you need reconciliation. Each day this week, talk with God about this person. Use this prayer:



“Dear Father God,
Please change my emotions about [name].
Help me understand his/her point of view.
Provide a suitable opportunity to talk with him/her.
Enable both of us to listen to each other
and to forgive each other.
In the name of the Lord Jesus who forgave me,
Amen.”

Commented [Advisor180]:

TO FINISH THE MEETING

READ the shaded section.

SAY:

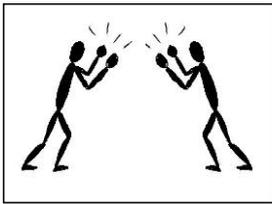
“This is your Practical Task. Each day this week, talk with God about the dispute, using this prayer. You may not have the opportunity to actually solve the dispute this week, but at least you can prepare the ground”.

CLOSE IN PRAYER

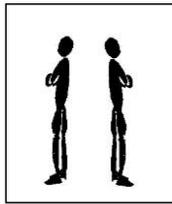
Our memory verse says we ‘must seek peace and pursue it’. Pray for God to help us do this and to solve our disputes in a good way.

LESSON 12 REVIEW

1 These pictures show three ways people often try to solve disputes. Write by each one ‘good’ or ‘bad’:



___ a) fight



___ b) turn our backs



___ c) enforce surrender

Commented [Advisor181]:

LESSON 12 REVIEW

CORRECT ANSWERS:

Question 1

- a) bad
- b) bad
- c) bad

Question 2

- first step: emotions
- second step: talk
- third step: forgive

Question 3

“... peace and pursue it” (1 Peter 3:11)

- 2 Write three good steps to solve our disputes:
First Step: Bring your _____ to God
Second Step: _____ with the other person
Third Step: _____ one another

3 Write the memory verse, with its reference:
“He must seek _____” (1 Peter ____:____)

LESSON 12 ANSWERS

- 1 harmony, sympathetic
- 2 a), b) personal answers. Probably all of us have been hurt by other followers of Christ, but probably we have all hurt them too.
- 3 a) False b) True c) True
- 4 pursue
- 5 personal answers, for group discussion
- 6 b)
- 7 a), c)
- 8 b)
- 9 for group discussion
- 10 a) No b) No c) No
- 11 No
- 12 No
- 13 emotions
- 14 God
- 15 a) Yes b) Yes
- 16 talk
- 17 a) 1. b) because sentence 1. is about her husband's specific action, while sentence 2. is a general attack on him personally
- 18 for group discussion
- 19 a) No b) No c) No
- 20 emotions, talk
- 21 a) 3. b) 3.
- 22 forgive
- 23 seventy times seven, i.e. so many you lose count! (You can find Matthew's gospel in your Bible in the 'List of Contents')
- 24 stop and pray
- 26 memorise the verse

Lesson 13 Our Shahaadah

Mehdi Dibaj was a pastor in Iran. The government put him in prison for nine long years. Finally, in December 1993, they brought him to trial on the charge of apostasy.

- ***If you were an old man, after nine years in prison, wouldn't you long to be free? This would be so easy – just by disowning Christ and returning to your old religion.***

Medhi Dibaj gave courageous testimony in front of the whole court. Here are some extracts from his actual speech:

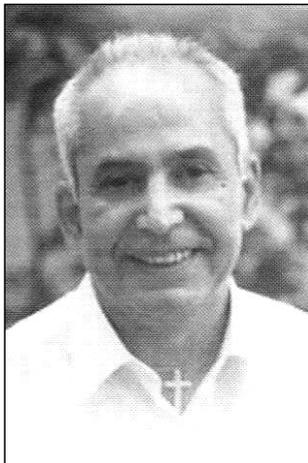
"I have been charged with 'apostasy'... I would rather have the whole world against me, but know the Almighty God is with me; be called an apostate, but know I have the approval of the God of glory.

They tell me, 'Return!' [to my former religion]. But from the arms of my God, who can I return to?... It is now 45 years that I am walking with the God of miracles, and His kindness upon me is like a shadow...The love of Jesus has filled all my being and I feel the warmth of his love in every part of my body.

Life for me is an opportunity to serve Christ, and death is a better opportunity to be with him. Therefore I am not only satisfied to be in prison for the honour of his Holy Name, but am ready to give my life for the sake of Jesus my Lord and enter His kingdom sooner.

With respect,

Your Christian prisoner, Mehdi Dibaj"



Do you want to know what was the outcome of Mehdi Dibaj's trial? You will have to wait till the group meeting!. But now let's learn how we can give witness for Christ.



Our Witness for Christ

1 1 Peter 3:14-15 tells us three important guidelines for our witness. Read the verses and fill the blanks:

- "Do not be _____. But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord"
- "Always be _____ to give an answer to everyone who asks you"
- "But do this with _____ and respect."

Commented [Advisor182]:

AIMS OF LESSON 13
For each member to:

- want to tell others about Christ
- be wise in knowing whom to tell, and when
- be able to explain what Jesus Christ has done for us
- memorise 1 Peter 3:18

NOTE: There is a lot to discuss for Lesson 13. So today we will discuss up to point 11 only. Next week we will discuss the rest of Lesson 13 (and all of Lesson 14, which has less material).

Commented [Advisor183]:

TO START THE MEETING

START WITH PRAYER

SAY:
"We received new life in Christ because someone told us about it. In the same way we need to tell others. *Shahaadah* (witness) is a duty for all Christ's followers."

LESSON REVIEW

- Check that members can give correct answers to the Review questions.

ASK:

- "Our Practical Task last week was to solve a dispute with someone. Were you able to do that, or are you still praying for the right opportunity? What happened?" *[discuss together]*

Commented [Advisor184]:

READ the shaded section.

SAY:
"Do you want to know what happened to Mehdi Dibaj afterwards? He was given the death sentence, released for a few months, and then murdered.

"The witness (*shahid*) became a martyr (*shaheed*). And today many Iranian Christians, including Mehdi Dibaj's family, remember his *shahaadah* with pride.

"He reminds us of the brave witnesses in Revelation chapter 12 who overcame Satan."

READ Revelation 12:11

ASK:

- "By what three ways did these men overcome Satan?" *[1. by the blood of the Lamb (the Lord Jesus); 2. by the word of their testimony; 3. they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death]*

2 Come, let's learn about each of these guidelines.

A) 'Do not be Frightened'

We are naturally frightened about how our friends and relatives will react when they discover we are Christ's followers. Have you personally felt that fear? _____

3 God says:

"Do not be frightened" (1 Peter 3:14)

Fear holds us back from making spiritual progress. But when we break through the barrier of fear, it sets us free:

In a country in North Africa, some young people had become Christ's followers but they kept this a secret. They feared that their parents would find out. But later the police heard about these young people and threatened them, "If you persist in your new religion, we will tell your parents".

The young believers remained faithful to Jesus, and the police told their parents. They suffered some persecution after that. But they grew much stronger in trusting their Lord, because they had survived the very thing that they had feared the most!

What guideline of giving witness did these young believers learn through experience?
'Do not be _____'

4 1 Peter 3:14-15 continues, "Do not be frightened. But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord". Making Christ 'Lord' means that he is our Ruler, not anyone else. Therefore, what should we do? (tick one)

- a) give witness that we are Christ's followers
- b) deny that we are Christ's followers

5 In principle, we should openly give witness for Christ. But sometimes our circumstances make this very difficult. Perhaps you feel the time is not yet right to tell your loved ones about your faith in Jesus Christ.

This may be wise for a period of time. But it should only be a temporary stage, on the path towards giving open witness. We should not remain secret for ever! Those who do so, almost always grow weaker spiritually.

Therefore, which of the prayers below is better, A or B? _____

Commented [Advisor185]:
READ 1 Peter 3:14-18
ASK:
"What three important guidelines for witness did we learn from 1 Peter 3:14-15?"
[1. 'do not be frightened'
2. 'be prepared to give an answer'
3. 'with gentleness and respect']

Commented [Advisor186]:
READ the shaded portion
ASK:
• "What did you each write?" [ask each member to speak. Probably some of them have not yet told their families. They can learn from other members who have told their families. Some fear is natural, but if members are too much afraid, remind them of God's word in 1 Peter 3:14 'do not be afraid']
NOTE: Listen carefully to each member's response to this question. It will show you which ones are still secret believers.

“O Lord, please prepare my family members to hear about Christ when the time is right. And, when that time comes, help me not to be frightened”



B

“O Lord, may my family members never find out that I am your follower.”



A

Commented [Advisor187]:

READ the shaded sections (the whole of point 5).

ASK:

- “With which of these two believers is God more pleased?”
[the lady B. This does not mean she has to tell her family straightaway. But she is willing for God to show her when the time is right. Man A is not willing]

6 In John’s gospel we read about a man called ‘Joseph of Arimathea’. He was Jesus’ follower. At first he remained a secret believer because of his circumstances. But later, at the time of testing, he publicly proved loyal to Christ (John 19:38).

By contrast, the apostle Peter boasted of his loyalty to Jesus. But at his time of testing, out of fear he publicly denied being Christ’s follower. Afterwards he deeply regretted this and ‘wept bitterly’ (Luke 22:62).

So, when we face our time of testing, should we be like Joseph or Peter? _____

7 Some of us are still secret believers, but in due time we too will face the test. At that time, we will take strength from this promise of our Lord Jesus:

“On account of me you will stand before governors and kings as witnesses to them... Whenever you are arrested and put on trial, do not worry beforehand about what to say. Just say whatever is given you at the time, for it is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit”
(Mark 13:9,11)

This reminds us of the first guideline for giving witness, from 1 Peter 3:14-15. What is it? “Do not be _____”

If you are still a secret follower of Christ, talk about it with your advisor. Above all talk with God, for by His Spirit He will guide you what to do.



B) 'Be Prepared to Give an Answer'

8 The apostle Peter wrote "be prepared to give an answer". People may ask us questions like these:

<div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 15px; padding: 10px; width: 80%; margin: 0 auto;"> <p>The Christians have changed the <i>Injil</i>, so why do you believe it?</p> </div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 15px; padding: 10px; width: 80%; margin: 0 auto;"> <p>Why did you betray the faith of your ancestors and follow a western religion?</p> </div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 15px; padding: 10px; width: 80%; margin: 0 auto;"> <p>How much did the foreigners pay you to become a Christian?</p> </div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 15px; padding: 10px; width: 80%; margin: 0 auto;"> <p>Why do you call Jesus the Son of God? That is <i>shirk!</i></p> </div>
 <p>D</p>	 <p>C</p>	 <p>B</p>	 <p>A</p>

Pick one of these questions, whichever one you like, and think about how you would answer it.

Which person's question have you chosen? _____ (write the letter)

What answer would you give? _____

(Just note down a few ideas, they need not be perfect. We will discuss this more together).

9 Some people ask questions merely to attack our beliefs and to trip us up. But other people have a different motive. They genuinely want us to 'give a reason for the hope that you have'.

Therefore, let's be prepared with a different type of answer for different types of people.

In your opinion:

- a) With a person who just wants to harm us, should we say a little or a lot? _____
- b) With a person who genuinely wants to know about Christ, should we say a little or a lot? _____

Commented [Advisor188]:

READ the shaded sections.

ASK:

- "Which of you chose to answer question A? What did you write?
[discuss together. Many answers are possible. For example, we do not have any idea of God having relations with a woman, that is horrible! Rather, the son shows the father's authority and character. In some languages we use 'son of' as a metaphor, not literally. e.g. In Farsi 'son of Herat' means a person from Herat.]

- "Which of you chose question B? What did you write?
[discuss together]

- "Which of you chose question C? What did you write?
[discuss together. For example, we could say 'I have not betrayed our ancestors, I love my ancestors and tribe and family. I have chosen to follow Jesus Christ who was an Easterner not a Westerner. And in our own country many people were Christ's followers hundreds of years ago. I have not become a foreigner!]

- "Which of you chose question D? What did you write?
[discuss together. It is not true that the Christians changed the Injil. The proof is of this that in the world's museums today are thousands of old manuscripts of the Injil. By comparing them we can be sure the Injil is reliable]

10 With the spiritually closed people it is probably wise to be careful and say little. But with those who are open we may say more. In this picture the person has a genuine question:



What difference has Jesus Christ made in your own life?

What answer would you give her? Note a few ideas and be ready to share them in discussion:

11 We should 'be prepared to give an answer' to those who have genuine questions. We should be ready to explain the good news of Christ in a simple way. Some key points of our message come in 1 Peter 3:18:

"For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God"
(1 Peter 3:18)

Repeat this verse until you have memorised it.

12 Our non-Christian friends think that Jesus Christ came to this earth only to give 'right guidance'. But we long for them to know his real purpose! What was it? "... to bring you to _____" (see the verse above)

13 Write the verse again from memory:

"For Christ _____"
_____ (1 Peter ____:____)

14 Suppose your friend or family member asks you this question:

Commented [Advisor189]:

READ the shaded sections.

DIVIDE the group, to put each member in a pair with one other

SAY:

"This lady has a genuine question. So we should be ready to tell her what difference Jesus Christ has made in our own lives. Suppose that one person in each pair is that lady. The other person should say, in five minutes, what changes have happened in your life since you started to follow Jesus Christ."

After five minutes, **SAY:**

"Now swap over. The second person should say for five minutes what changes Jesus Christ made in your life."

Commented [Advisor190]:

READ the shaded section.

REPEAT the memory verse till everyone knows it well

ASK:

"This verse helps us remember some main points of our message. What do you think are the main points in this verse? 1. 'Christ died' He really did die on the cross, and afterwards God raised him to life again, and gave him a place of highest honour in heaven.

2. 'for sins once for all' This was God's plan from the beginning. God told the people of the Tawrat to make animal sacrifices to take away sin temporarily. But he also told them that the Messiah will make a perfect, permanent sacrifice 'once for all'.

3. 'the righteous for the unrighteous' We are all sinful and we are ashamed and we deserve to burn in the hell-fire. But Jesus the Messiah was without sin, as all the books say. He, the righteous one, took our sin with its punishment and shame when he died on the cross!

4. 'to bring you to God' God created us not just to obey Him, but to love Him and know Him personally. We cannot come into His intimacy through our own efforts, but Jesus has made the way. He himself is the 'Straight Path' to bring us to God!

SAY:

"That is enough for this week. Before next week, please read Supplement 2 at the end of this lesson. Next week we will practise this more and also discuss Lesson 14."

Finish the discussion here, and go straight to the Practical Task at the end of Lesson 13.

What did Jesus Christ do for mankind?

Are you 'prepared to give an answer'? Note your answer here, including some points from 1 Peter 3:18, and be ready to explain it to others in the discussion time.



C) 'With Gentleness and Respect'

15 Let's read 1 Peter 3:15 once more:

"Do not be frightened. But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect" (1 Peter 3:14-15)

According to this verse, which of the following is the best way to speak about Christ to our relatives and friends? (tick one)

- a) Speak openly about Jesus but in a disrespectful way
- b) Be ready to speak about Jesus, with gentleness and respect
- c) Don't speak at all about Jesus even when we are asked

16 As 'God's chosen people', we should show gentleness and respect. If we argue and quarrel with non-Christians, we will only build up bigger barriers.

Therefore, how should we give witness? With gentleness and _____.

17 Read this true account:

Saleem was a young man when he received Christ. His non-Christian brothers were very angry with him. They tried to persuade him to return to his old religion but he carefully explained his reasons for following Christ. Saleem's brothers set fire to his house, but he managed to escape. Then they gave him poison and he nearly died.

Commented [Advisor191]:

NOTE: For points 14-21 of Lesson 13, leave the discussion till next week.

READ the shaded portion

SAY:

"Now let's practise what to say to this man, using our memory verse 1 Peter 3:18".

ASK:

- "What four main points of our message did we find in 1 Peter 3:18?"

- [1. 'Christ died' ... it really happened
- 2. 'for sins once for all' ... as a perfect, permanent sacrifice
- 3. 'the righteous for the unrighteous'... taking our sin with its shame and punishment
- 4. 'to bring you to God'... Christ is the Straight Path to bring us into God's intimacy]

DIVIDE the group, to put each member in a pair with one other

SAY:

"Suppose that one person in each pair is that man in the picture. The other person should say, in five minutes, what Jesus Christ has done for mankind. Use the ideas you wrote in your books, and also the four main points from 1 Peter 3:18."

After five minutes, **SAY:**

"Now swap over. The second person should say for five minutes what Jesus Christ has done for mankind."

Commented [Advisor192]:

ASK:

- "Will the man believe your message the first time you say it?"

[probably not. But don't worry, this is normal. He will think about it afterwards. Maybe he will hear the message from someone else later. Maybe the man will start reading the Injil. Maybe God will speak to him in a dream. Your job is just to plant the seed. It is God's job to water the seed.]

- "Is it sufficient for the man in the picture just to understand what Jesus Christ has done for mankind? Or does he need to do something more?"

[He will not receive salvation just by hearing the message. He needs to respond to it too. One way to do this is with // or bridge You can show this to him with the diagram in Supplement 2]

After this he moved to another city, but he kept in contact with his brothers and sisters. He sent greetings at Eid and helped financially when they were sick. Gradually, seeing his love their attitude began to change. Today they are still not followers of Jesus, but they trust and respect Saleem. But this change took 20 years!

- Which one answer below describes how Saleem gave witness to his loved ones? (*tick one*)
- a) Saleem was 'prepared to give an answer' but not 'with gentleness and respect'
 - b) Saleem showed 'gentleness and respect' but was not 'prepared to give an answer'
 - c) Saleem showed 'gentleness and respect' and also was 'prepared to give an answer'

18 Yes, Saleem followed the guidelines of 1 Peter 3:15. He was bold in his witness but also gentle and respectful. This is hard to do, especially if we live at home under our parents. We wonder how far should we compromise and go along with their wishes?

For instance, what would you do in the following circumstances?

- ? Suppose your father commands you to throw away your Bible...
- ? Or your mother pleads, with tears, that you stop meeting with Christians...
- ? Or your uncle tells you to pray with him in the mosque every Friday...
- ? Or your parents arrange your marriage with your non-Christian cousin?

Think about what you would do in these difficult situations, and be ready for discussion.

19 If at all possible, it is best not to run away from home. We should try to stay, and respect our parents, and earn money to contribute to the household. By our actions as well as our words, what will we show? (*tick two answers*)

- a) gentleness
- b) respect
- c) pride
- d) rebellion

The Water of Life

20 Have you heard this proverb? *'If you find a blind person near a well and keep silent then you have sinned'*.

Jesus Christ is the Water of Life. We have satisfied our own spiritual thirst at this well. But how will our loved ones have the opportunity to drink also?

- a) if we remain secret believers
- b) if we give witness for Christ only through our deeds not through our words
- c) if we give witness for Christ in our words as well as our deeds

21 Read this true account from Central Asia:

A man was Christ's follower for many years but did not tell his wife. Later she received Christ herself through the witness of her friend. Afterwards she was astonished to find he too was a believer. "Why didn't you tell me earlier?!" she exclaimed.

If we have the 'water of life', should we deny it to our loved ones? [Yes/No]

How can we refuse the 'water of life' to those who are thirsty?! Our Lord Jesus Christ offers to satisfy their thirst eternally. Let's ask God to guide us to those who have genuine spiritual thirst and let's have the courage to tell them.



Commented [Advisor193]:

SAY:

"Our first guideline for giving good *shahaadah* is 'do not be frightened'. The second is 'be prepared to give an answer'. Now we come to the third one, 'with gentleness and respect'."

READ the shaded portion

ASK:

- "What would you do in each of those difficult situations?" [discuss together. I cannot give a 'right' or 'wrong' answer here. On the first three points it may be wise to submit to one's parents as much as possible, for a temporary period, until circumstances allow more freedom. But the fourth point is more serious because it has permanent consequences.]

- "What advice would you give to a believer whose marriage is going ahead to a non-Christian? Should they privately tell the fiancée before the marriage that they are Christ's follower, or not?" [discuss. Those who have done so have been glad of it, and it has led to a happier marriage, because the other person did not feel deceived.]

Commented [Advisor194]:

READ the shaded portions

ASK:

- “Should we refuse the water of life to those who are thirsty?” [no. Remember the proverb, ‘if you find a blind person near a well and keep silent, then you have sinned’]

LESSON 13 PRACTICAL TASK

Think of one person you want to tell about the good news of Jesus Christ. Ask God to make that person ready to listen. Then look out for an opportunity to show or tell him/her just a little of what Christ has done for you.

LESSON 13 REVIEW

- 1 1 Peter 3:14-15 gives three guidelines on how to witness for Christ. What are they?
 - a) "Do not be _____"
 - b) "Always be _____ to give an answer"
 - c) "But do this with _____ and _____."
- 2 Look at these two believers:
 - ❖ *Nadia*'s sister asks her why she has accepted Jesus. *Nadia* replies "*I don't really know, I can't tell you.*"
 - ❖ *Anwar* says to his father, "*If you don't become a follower of Jesus you will go to hell*".
 - a) Which guideline for witness has *Nadia* forgotten?
'Be _____ to give an _____'
 - b) Which guideline for witness has *Anwar* forgotten?
'With _____ and _____'
- 3 Write the memory verse:
"For Christ _____, _____"
_____ (1 Peter ____:____)

Commented [Advisor195]:

TO FINISH THE MEETING

READ the shaded section.

SAY:

"This is your Practical Task for this week. Remember, 'do not be frightened', 'be prepared to give an answer', 'speak with gentleness and respect'."
[note for translators: please translate these three phrases according to the standard headings used throughout this lesson]

CLOSE IN PRAYER

Ask God's help to show us whom we should tell about the Lord Jesus Christ, and to help us give a good *shahaadah*.

Commented [Advisor196]:

LESSON 13 REVIEW

CORRECT ANSWERS:

Question 1

- a) frightened
- b) prepared
- c) gentleness, respect

Question 2

- a) prepared, answer
- b) gentleness, respect

Question 3 the memory verse is:

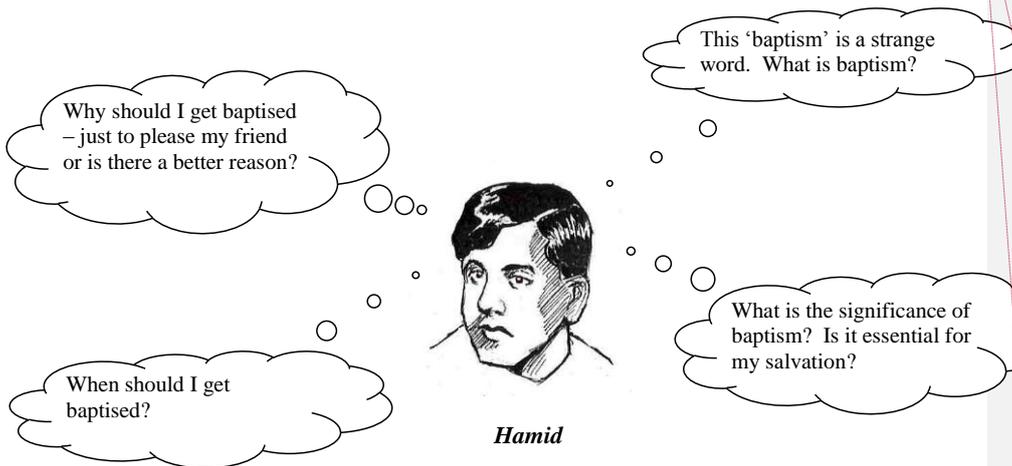
"For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God" (1 Peter 3:18)

LESSON 13 ANSWERS

- 1 read the verses to find the answer
- 2 personal answer
- 3 frightened
- 4 a)
- 5 b)
- 6 Joseph
- 7 frightened
- 8 be ready for discussion
- 9 I suggest: a) a little b) a lot 10 for discussion
- 11 memorise the verse
- 12 God
- 13 write the verse from memory
- 14 personal answer
- 15 b)
- 16 respect
- 17 c)
- 18 for discussion
- 19 a) and b) are correct
- 20 c)
- 21 No

Lesson 14 Baptism

This young man Hamid is puzzled. Last year he entrusted his life to Jesus Christ. He is growing stronger in his new faith. Recently another believer told him, “Soon you should take baptism”. This started many questions in Hamid’s mind:



Let’s try to answer each of Hamid’s questions in today’s lesson.

‘What is Baptism?’

1 To ‘baptise’ literally means to ‘immerse’ someone in water. In the Gospel we read how Hazrat Yahya baptised people in the river Jordan, including even Jesus himself. These days Christ’s followers may take baptism in a river or tank, going right down under the water for a few moments. An alternative way is to pour or sprinkle water on them.

We go through this ceremony just once, not repeatedly through our lives. What is the name of this ceremony? _____

‘Why should I get Baptised?’

2 We get baptised because the Lord Jesus commanded it. He said

“Go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”.
(Matthew 28:19)

This is an important verse. Please memorise it now.

3 In obedience to Christ’s command, the apostle Peter told a huge crowd in Jerusalem “Repent and be baptised”. That day three thousand people accepted his message and took baptism!

What is the best reason for me to get baptised? (*tick one only*)

- ___ a) because I want to do it
- ___ b) because my Christian friends want me to do it
- ___ c) because the Lord Jesus commands me to do it

Commented [Advisor197]:

AIMS OF LESSON 14
For each member to:

- a. understand three points about the significance of baptism
- b. *either* look back in gratitude for their baptism in the past, *or* look forward and plan for their baptism in the future
- c. memorise Matthew 28:19

Commented [Advisor198]:

TO START THE MEETING

START WITH PRAYER

SAY:

“Are you like Hamid in the picture, puzzled about baptism? We will try to answer your questions today. But first, let’s finish last week’s discussion about giving a good *shahaahdah*.”

ASK:

- “Our Practical Task last week was to seek an opportunity to tell one person about Jesus Christ. Did you have an opportunity? Tell us about it.” [*discuss together. For those who have not yet had an opportunity, ask ‘are you definitely praying for this?’*]

SAY:

“Turn now to Lesson 13, point 14.”

[**NOTE: Today, for the first half-hour, discuss Lesson 13 from point 14 to 21. Afterwards discuss Lesson 14, which has less material**]

Commented [Advisor199]:

LESSON 14 REVIEW

- Check that members can give correct answers to the Review questions.

Commented [Advisor200]:

READ the shaded portion

ASK:

- “What is the best reason to get baptised?” [*because our Lord Jesus Christ commanded it*]
- “Who can recite our memory verse?” [*several members can practise it*]
- “Do you know what was the occasion when Christ gave this command?” [*he gave it to his disciples after his resurrection, just before he was raised up to heaven. With these words he commanded them to continue the work he had begun. From that time till today Christ’s followers have been making disciples and baptising them*]

‘What is the significance of baptism?’



Baptism is very special and significant. According to the New Testament, baptism means at least three things. It is a sign that:

- A. I am a New Person
- B. My Sins are Washed Away
- C. I have joined Christ's *Ummah*

Let's learn now about these wonderful truths.

A) I am a New Person

4 If you sink under water for a long time you will drown, won't you? Don't worry, during baptism people go under the water only for a few seconds and it is not dangerous. But it is a meaningful symbol of what happens to us when we turn to Christ. It is like our old sinful nature being drowned in the water so that we can rise up again to a new life in Jesus!

Draw lines to match the actions below with their related meaning:

Action

- a) Going down into the water
- b) Coming up out of the water

Meaning

- 1. I rise again as a new person in Christ
- 2. The old 'me' is put to death

5 So, baptism is a sign that my old life has drowned and now I am a new person in Christ. God's word says,

“We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life... In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus” (Romans 6:4)

What is the significance of baptism for me? (*circle the correct answer*)
[I am a new person, in Christ / I am still in my old, sinful nature]

6 This significance of baptism becomes plain when it is sometimes done in the following way. People go down into the water wearing their old clothes symbolising their old sinful life. Then they come up out of the water and put on fresh clean clothes to symbolise the new life..

If you have already been baptised, what were your emotions when you came out of the water? Be ready to talk about this in the discussion time.

7 Firaz from Africa came to Christ from the same previous religion as yourself. Here he describes, in his own words, what he felt after his baptism:

“I felt I have died to my old sinful way, I have given myself to God and am now a new person. I am not the Firaz my friends knew, not the one whom Satan knew, but a new Firaz - forgiven,

Commented [Advisor201]:

READ the shaded portions

ASK:

- “Which action (on the left) did you link with which meaning (on the right)?”
[it should be action a) with meaning 2., and action b) with meaning 1.]

born again, controlled by the Spirit. The old Firaz is dead, the new one is alive in Christ. I came out of the water feeling I am a new person!"

In the box above, how many times did Firaz use the phrase 'new'? ___ Underline them.

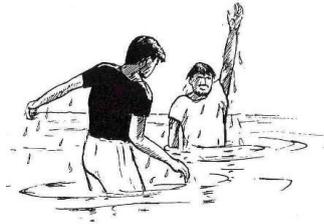
8 What is the first significance of baptism for me? I am a ___ Person

B) My Sins are Washed Away

9 Acts 22:16 tells us about a second significance of baptism: "be baptised and wash your sins away".

In this verse, what is the significance of baptism for me? (tick one)

- a) I am a new person
 b) My sins are washed away



10 As we know from our own experience, *wuzu* or even *ghusal* is not enough to wash away our sins. Water can only wash the outside of our bodies, it cannot cleanse our hearts and consciences.

Nevertheless, baptism is a powerful outward sign of the inner cleansing which Christ does in our hearts. He died on the cross to make this possible. "The blood of Jesus... purifies us from all sin" (1 John 1:7).

When Christ comes into our lives, does he: (tick one)

- a) wash away the dirt from our bodies?
 b) wash away the sins from our hearts?

11 The apostle Peter, who baptised many people during his life, also wrote about baptism in his letter. Read 1 Peter 3:18-22. This passage is not easy to interpret. But the main points are:

- Our salvation is through Jesus' death (v.18) and resurrection (v.21)
- Water is a mark of this salvation for us (v.21) as it was for Hazrat Noah (v.20)

Which ceremony reminds me that my sins are washed away? (tick one)

- a) my baptism b) my wedding c) my funeral

C) I have joined Christ's Ummah

12 By getting baptised we publicly join Christ's *ummah*, his worldwide family of believers. We are men and women from many different races, but all united in Christ "for we were all baptised by one Spirit into one body." (1 Corinthians 12:13).

Every day, in every country of the world, by what ceremony are people joining Christ's *ummah*?



Commented [Advisor202]:

READ the shaded portions

ASK:

- "When you came out of the water, did you feel like Firaz? What were your emotions?" [discuss]

Commented [Advisor203]:

READ the shaded portion

ASK:

- "What is the second meaning of baptism?" [my sins are washed away]
- "So does the water have magic power to wash away our sins?" [no. Water just washes the dirt from our bodies, but it is a powerful symbol of Christ washing the sin from our hearts]

Commented [Advisor204]:

READ the shaded portion

ASK:

- "What is the third meaning of baptism?" [I have joined Christ's ummah]

SAY:

"Do you know that every week, around the world, hundreds of people from the same previous religion as yourself are taking baptism? Isn't that exciting?!"

13 Baptism is not something private just for you, but it involves the whole community of believers. They will witness your baptism ceremony, and at the end of it they may use words like this to welcome you:

“We welcome you into the Lord’s family. We are members together of the body of Christ; we are children together of the same heavenly Father; we are inheritors together of the kingdom of God. We welcome you.”

➤ ***How fortunate we are to be welcomed by ‘God’s chosen people’! Stop now to thank God for your brothers and sisters in Christ.***

14 What three things does baptism signify for me? *(fill the blank)*

- a) I am a _____ Person
- b) My _____ are washed away
- c) I have _____ Christ’s *Ummah*

‘Is Baptism essential for me?’

15 In one way it is not essential, for we are saved through trusting Christ not through water. But still, baptism is Christ’s command! And as we have seen, it is an important sign of belonging to him and to his church. So you should get baptised, when the time is right.

- a) Look at your finger. If you are married, you are probably wearing a wedding ring. What does it show? _____
- b) Even though a ring is not totally essential for being married it is still an important sign that you are committed to whom? _____

16 When a woman gets married, she wears a wedding ring as her sign of commitment to her husband. Everyone knows that she now belongs to him. She is proud to belong to him. Likewise, our baptism is an important mark that we belong to whom? _____

17

- a) Is baptism totally essential to your salvation? [Yes / No]
- b) Yet, is baptism a very important mark that you belong to Christ? [Yes / No]

In this lesson we have tried to answer Hamid’s different questions about baptism. Now we come to his last question.



‘When should I get Baptised?’

18 Some Christians advise you to take baptism as soon as you receive Christ. Others say it is better to wait for some time until your faith is stronger. Listen to their advice, but listen to God’s Spirit also. God himself will guide you in this important step. When the time is right, you will feel it in your heart.

Don’t let humans rush you into getting baptised if you are not ready. But don’t hang back either, if God is telling you now is the right time.

Which of the actions below are good? *(tick two answers)*

- ___ a) listen to the advice of wise believers who care for you
- ___ b) avoid getting baptised because you fear the consequences
- ___ c) think it is unimportant to get baptised
- ___ d) get baptised when you feel God telling you

19 Wise believers care for you and will give good advice about baptism. But be aware that some believers are unwise in making baptism arrangements, and some church leaders take advantage of baptisms to promote their own name. So find someone you trust to make arrangements for your baptism.

If you know who can give you good advice about your own baptism, tick this box . If you don't know a suitable person, ask your advisor.

20 We thought earlier about what baptism means for us believers. But what is its significance for our non-Christian relatives? For them it is a sign that we publicly cut ourselves off from them, causing them hurt and shame.

How then should we take baptism? (*tick one*)

- ___ a) Fearfully, worried for our own safety
- ___ b) Carefully, out of love for our families

21 Because of our non-Christian relatives, and also for the sake of local believers including the baptiser, it is wise take precautions. What precautions can you think of, to make sure that news of our baptism would not cause too much embarrassment to our relatives? (*Note your ideas and be ready for discussion*)

22 What advice would you give to a husband whose wife is not yet Christ's follower? Should he get baptised now, or wait in the hope they can do it together when she too believes? (*Note your ideas and be ready for group discussion.*)

And what if the wife is a believer but not the husband, would you give the same advice in her situation?



Although Hamid's baptism should be carried out with due precaution, it will be a time of great rejoicing! Even the angels will celebrate with him!



Commented [Advisor205]:

READ the shaded portion

ASK:

- "What did you write here?" [*discuss together. My suggestions are:*
- don't announce it publicly, but instead invite trustworthy people privately;
- have the baptism in a quiet place where outsiders can't see;
- only have one camera and let the baptised person decide who will have copies of the pictures;
- with that one camera, don't take photos when the baptised person is actually in the water (any photos can be taken afterwards, in a group with friends)
- if there is a baptism certificate, keep it in a very safe place]

Commented [Advisor206]:

READ the shaded portion

ASK:

- "What did you write here?" [*discuss together. There is no 'right' answer because it depends on circumstances. Husbands who waited till they could take baptism with their wives, have usually been glad of it. But if after many years the wife still does not turn to Christ, the husband might feel it is right to go ahead without her]*

Commented [Advisor207]:

READ the shaded portion

ASK:

- "What did you write here?" [*discuss together. Again, this depends on circumstances. But in our culture women are less free to make choices than men. So it may be wise for her to wait longer. But God will guide]*

NOTE: check in members' books, that they have written something for points 21 and 22. Writing helps them think about it more seriously and take better part in the discussion.

Commented [Advisor208]:

READ the shaded portion

SAY:

- "Yes, even though baptism is a bit risky, we should not be too afraid. It is a time to celebrate!"

LESSON 14 PRACTICAL TASK

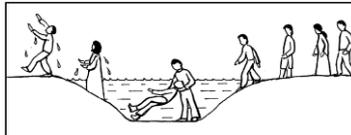
If you have not yet been baptised, go to talk about it with the person you named in question 19. Get their advice about when and how you should be baptised. Ask the Lord for His advice too.

LESSON 14 REVIEW

1 Write the memory verse: "Go and make disciples, _____
 _____ (Matthew ____ : ____)

- 2 We learned that my baptism is a sign of three things. What are they?
 a) 'I am a new _____',
 b) 'My _____ are _____ away',
 c) 'I have joined _____ ummah'

- 3 Here is the picture you saw in question 6:
 a) Which action in this picture is like 'dying' to our old life? _____
 b) Which action is like 'rising' to our new life in Christ?



4 How important is it to get baptised? (review questions 15-17 and circle one answer)
 essential for salvation - very important - not important

Commented [Advisor209]:

TO FINISH THE MEETING

READ the shaded portion.

SAY:

"Do this Practical Task if you have not previously taken baptism. And if you are baptised already, you could meet this week with a member of our group who is still thinking about this step. Give that person your advice and pray with him/her"

CLOSE IN PRAYER

Thank God for the three meanings of baptism we have discussed today, and pray for any member of our group who is thinking about getting baptised.

Commented [Advisor210]:

LESSON 14 REVIEW

CORRECT ANSWERS:

Question 1 the memory verse is:
 "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19)

Question 2

- a) person
- b) sins, washed
- c) Christ's

Question 3

- a) going down into the water
- b) coming up out of the water

Question 4

very important

LESSON 14 ANSWERS

- 1 baptism
- 2 memorise the verse
- 3 c)
- 4 a) 2 b) 1
- 5 I am a new person, in Christ
- 6 your personal response
- 7 4
- 8 new
- 9 b)
- 10 b)
- 11 a)
- 12 baptism
- 13 stop and thank God
- 14 a) new b) sins c) joined
- 15 a) that you are already married
b) No, for you can still get married without a ring
c) your husband or wife
- 16 Jesus Christ
- 17 a) No b) Yes
- 18 a) and d) are good
- 19 tick the box if you know a wise person to advise you
- 20 b)
- 21 for discussion
- 22 for discussion

Lesson 15 Christ's Shariah: The Straight Path



Have you ever watched an intoxicated man trying to walk in a straight line? He can't do it, can he? Even if you tell him clearly which direction he should walk, he is completely incapable to do so. He is addicted to this drug which prevents him following a straight path.

It is the same, spiritually, for all human beings. God Almighty has sent very many prophets to tell us the Straight Path. Everyone knows what is the Straight Path. We have prayed so many times, "Guide us on the Straight Path". Yet in practice we have not walked straight. Why not? And what can we do about it? We will find out about this in today's lesson.

The Purpose of Shariah

1 The word *shariah* means 'path', and we know that God wants to guide people on the Straight Path. Long ago God rescued the followers of Moses from slavery to Pharaoh, and afterwards He gave them His *shariah* to guide them on the straight path. The *shariah* of Moses is called the *Tawrat*.

Which event happened first? (tick one)

- a) God rescued Moses' followers
 b) God gave them His *shariah*

2 God gave His *shariah* to the people of Israel. The *shariah* was good. It was a complete way of life to guide the people. But still there was a problem. The *shariah* of Moses did not give people the strength to obey it. Again and again God sent prophets to remind His people, but still they did not obey.

Why did the people of the *Tawrat* not follow the straight path?

- a) because they did not know what was the straight path
 b) because the *shariah* itself was bad
 c) because they were addicted to sin

Why do People not follow the Straight Path?

3 God's *shariah* is good. But sadly, even when people know what is the straight path, they do not want to walk in it because the intention of their heart is crooked. And even if they want to walk straight and do good, they are not able to, because their minds and bodies are addicted to sin. Sin is like a drug which prevents them from following God's straight path, like the intoxicated man at the start of this lesson.

In your opinion, what can rescue people from their addiction to sin? (tick one)

- a) their own hard work
 b) extra laws
 c) extra prayers
 d) God Himself

Commented [Advisor211]:

AIMS OF LESSON 15
For each member to:

- a. **commit to live for God not for himself or herself**
 b. agree that we cannot walk in the 'straight path' by our own efforts
 c. understand why slavery to Christ brings true freedom
 d. memorise 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Commented [Advisor212]:

TO START THE MEETING

START WITH PRAYER

SAY:

"Do you think that Christ's followers have no *shariah*? They do have *shariah*, but it is different from the kind of *shariah* we previously followed. Let's learn about it for the next three lessons."

LESSON REVIEW

- Check that members can give correct answers to the Review questions.

ASK:

- "Our **Practical Task** last week was to get advice on taking baptism, or to give advice on this. Did you do this? What did you decide? [discuss together. If any member wants to get baptised soon, talk with him later about who should make the arrangements]"

Commented [Advisor213]:

LOOK at the picture

ASK:

- "Why is this man not able to walk in a straight line?" [he is intoxicated, under the control of alcohol. Even if he wants to walk straight he is not able to]
- "What is the spiritual meaning of this example?" [discuss together. Humans cannot walk on the 'straight path' because they are under sin's control and addicted to it. They cannot walk straight even if they want to]
- "Every day in *namaz* people pray 'guide me on the Straight Path'. And they think God has sent thousands of prophets for guidance. But is guidance enough to make them walk on the Straight Path? [no] Why not? [prayer is good and prophets are good, but above all people need the power to walk straight]"

Commented [Advisor214]:

READ the shaded portion

ASK:

- "What did you write here? The book says answer d) is correct, but do you agree?" [discuss together. Members should think for themselves. But answer d) is according to God's Word]

4 Some people called Pharisees tried very hard to obey the *shariah* of Moses in every small detail. But even this effort to be religious gave rise to sinful attitudes! These attitudes included:

- Pride, because they thought they were better in God's sight than non-religious people;
- Hypocrisy, because they obeyed the law outwardly but not in their hearts;
- Wrong Priorities, because they made the law's regulations more important than its underlying purpose.

Religious people in every country are in danger of having these same attitudes. Therefore, are even religious people addicted to sin? [Yes / No]

Clean and Unclean

5 The Pharisees were extremely careful to eat only *halal* food. But this did not make them clean inside. The Lord Jesus taught that:

"Nothing outside a man can make him 'unclean' by going into him. Rather, it is what comes out of a man that makes him 'unclean'... For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and make a man 'unclean'." (Mark 7:15-23)

In the passage above, underline all the different sins mentioned by Jesus, which come from inside and make people unclean.

6 Yes, the reason why people cannot follow God's good *shariah* is that they are addicted to evil. Their hearts are unclean. God's word says "*The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure.*" (Jeremiah 17:9)

What is 'beyond cure', according to Jeremiah 17:9? _____

God's Cure for the unclean Heart

7 Because the human heart is 'beyond cure', God planned a more radical remedy. Long ago he promised a kind of 'heart transplant'. Read His marvellous promise here:

"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws." (Ezekiel 36:26-27)

This promise is for each of us! Read aloud the verse again, but this time wherever it says 'you' put your own name there instead.

8 Not only did God promise us these things, He has actually fulfilled His promise! He sent Jesus Christ to put 'a new heart and a new spirit' in us.

Therefore, when a person puts their faith in Jesus, what do they receive? A new heart and a new _____.

9 This 'new spirit' is the Holy Spirit, whom God puts into our lives when we decide to follow Jesus. The Holy Spirit makes our hearts new. Moreover, he makes us willing and able to walk in the straight path! It is exactly according to God's promise that "*I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws*".

According to God's word,

Commented [Advisor215]:

READ the shaded portions of points 4 and 5.

ASK:

- "Which words did you underline in the box?" [it should be 'evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance, folly']
- "Did *halal* food make the Pharisees clean inside?" [no] "Why not?" [because their inner sins defiled them {najasta} on the inside]
- "What matters more, *haram* food or *haram* thoughts?" [discuss together. According to Christ's teaching, *haram* thoughts matter more, because they defile us in our hearts. Then they come out in the open as *haram* words and *haram* deeds]

Commented [Advisor216]:

ASK://

"According to the verse in point 6, what is 'deceitful above all things and beyond cure?' [the human heart]

READ the shaded portion.

SAY:

"Let's practise this now. Each of us in turn will say this verse, adding our own name wherever it says 'you'. I will go first to show you:

[Suppose your own name is Ibrahim. Then you would say the verse like this:

"I will give you, Ibrahim, a new heart and put a new spirit in you, Ibrahim; I will remove from you, Ibrahim, your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you, Ibrahim, and move you, Ibrahim, to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws."

After that everyone should say it all together, using their own names]

SAY:

"This is God's promise to each one of us! He has already put His Spirit in us when we became Christ's followers."

ASK:

- "Who makes us want to walk in the Straight Path?" [God's Spirit within us]
- "Who makes us able to walk in the Straight Path?" [God's Spirit within us]

- a) Before we received the Holy Spirit, were we able to follow God's *shariah*? [Yes / No]
 b) Now that we have received the Holy Spirit, are we able to follow God's *shariah*? [Yes / No]
 c) Does the Holy Spirit make us want to follow God's *shariah*? [Yes / No]

10 Who makes us both willing and able to follow God's straight path? The Holy _____

Living for God

11 Let's turn now to the book of the New Testament which we are studying throughout this course. What is its name? _____

12 Read 1 Peter 4:1-6 and fill the blanks from verse 2: "As a result, he does not live the rest of his earthly life for _____, but rather for _____"

13 We do not know how much longer we will live on this earth. But whether the rest of our earthly lives are short or long, for whom must we live, according to 1 Peter 4:2?
 ___ a) for evil human desires ___ b) for God

14 In the past we were slaves to sin. But the apostle Peter says to us, "*you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do – living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry*" (1 Peter 4:3). Now Christ has set us free from our addiction to evil! For whom then should we live, for ourselves or for God?

15 Look again at the list of sins in 1 Peter 4:3. Maybe you think 'These are big sins, but I am not guilty of those. I only do small sins and God overlooks them'.

But no sin is small in God's sight. 'Lust' is included in that list of sins in verse 3. Concerning lust Jesus Christ said:

"You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart."
 (Matthew 5:27-28)

According to Christ's holy standard,

- a) If a man thinks about sleeping with a beautiful girl, but does not actually do so, is this sin? [Yes / No]
 b) If I have the intention for a sin but do not act on it, is this still sin? [Yes / No]



- 16 What kinds of sin does Christ's *shariah* forbid? (tick any correct answers)
 ___ a) major sins
 ___ b) minor sins
 ___ c) sinful actions (such as beating my wife)
 ___ d) sinful words (such as telling lies)
 ___ e) sinful thoughts (such as planning revenge)

Commented [Advisor217]:

READ the shaded portion

ASK:

- "Answer a) is obviously true, but what about b)? Do minor sins matter? [discuss together. Maybe they did not matter under your previous religion, but they do in Christ's shariah]
- "What about answer d), surely it doesn't matter to tell a lie?" [discuss together. Yes, telling a lie does matter to Christ, even though most people don't take it seriously]
- "What about answer e), sinful thoughts? If we have the intention for a sin but do not act on it, is this still sin?" [discuss together. If Satan tempts us with an evil thought and we resist the temptation, it is not sin. But if we deliberately continue go on thinking about it or planning to do it, this sin]

True Freedom

17 Some so-called 'Christians' say,



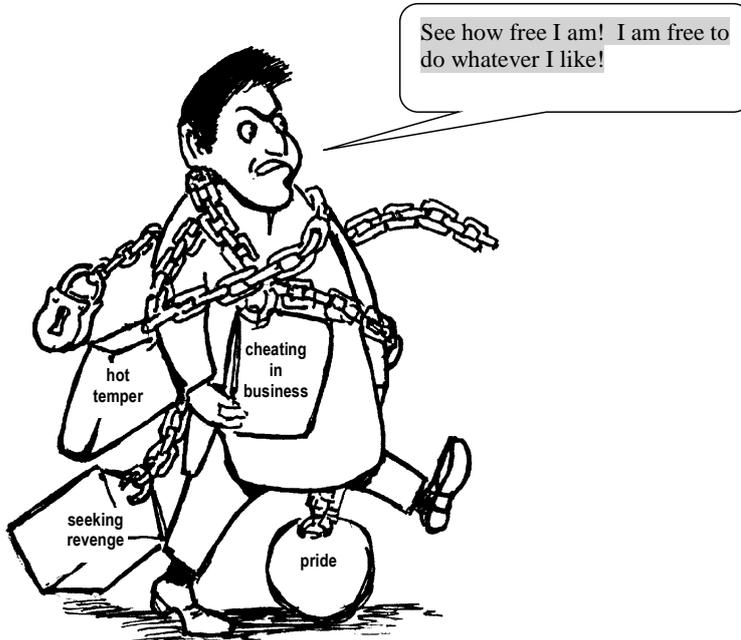
"Christ has set me free, so I can do whatever I like! The more I sin, the more he will forgive me!"

This attitude is totally wrong! What answer would you give to this man, from 1 Peter 4:2-3? Note your ideas here, and be ready for discussion:

18 Yes, Christ set us free from our addiction and slavery to sin. But what kind of freedom does this give us? (tick one)

- a) freedom to live for ourselves
- b) freedom to live for God

19 Look at this man.



Is he truly free or not? Why? (note your ideas and be ready for discussion)

Commented [Advisor218]:

READ the shaded portions

READ 1 Peter 4:2-3

ASK:

- "What did you write here?" [discuss together. 1 Peter 4:2 tells this man to stop living for 'evil human desires, but rather for the will of God'. 1 Peter 4:3 says he has spent enough time in the past doing wrong things]

READ Romans 6:15 and keep the passage open.

ASK:

- "The man in the picture says 'The more I sin, the more he will forgive me. What does Romans 6:15 say about this wrong attitude?' [It says 'shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means!']

Commented [Advisor219]:

LOOK at the man in the picture

ASK:

- "Is this man truly free or not?" [discuss together. Obviously, he is not free. He is chained by heavy weights of sin]

20 If we live for ourselves, this is not true freedom. It is slavery to sin. The only place to break our chains is at the cross of Jesus Christ.



Christ paid a great ransom to buy us back from slavery. He paid with his own blood.

Therefore, to whom do we now belong?

___ a) to ourselves ___ b) to sin ___ c) to Christ

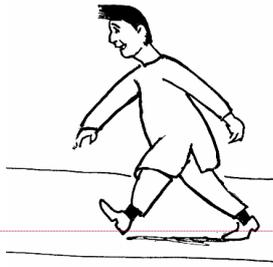
21 Memorise this verse:

“You are not your own, you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your body”
(1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

22 We belong to Christ our master, who bought us. As his slaves we find true freedom – freedom from sin! This sounds strange but it is true.

Only one of the following people is able to walk on the straight path. Which one?

- ___ a) the person who lives to please himself
- ___ b) the person who tries hard by his own efforts to obey the *shariah*
- ___ c) the person who lives as a slave to Christ and is filled with the Holy Spirit



Never consider it a burden to obey Christ's *shariah* and to follow the straight path. It is not a burden but a joy, by the help of God's Spirit! In the next lesson we will more about Christ's *shariah*.

Commented [Advisor220]:

READ the shaded portion

LOOK at the picture

ASK:

- “This is the same man as before. What has happened to his chains?” [*he chains have been broken at the cross*]
- “Is he now free from his slavery to sin?” [*yes*]

READ Romans 6:16-18

ASK:

- “When we are set free from slavery to sin, what must we now obey, according to Romans 6:16-18?” [*discuss together. We are no longer slaves to sin but slaves to righteousness*]

Commented [Advisor221]:

ASK:

- “To whom do we now belong?”
[*to Christ, because he paid a great ransom for us*]

Commented [Advisor222]:

READ the shaded portion

SAY:

“Let's put our own names in this verse, like we did before. This time we will go round our group. First I will say it to the next person, putting their name here:

“Umar, you are not your own, you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your body.

“Then Umar will do the same with the next person. And in the same way round the group.”

SAY:

“Yes, it is true. Each one of us was bought with a price. We are not our own. So let us honour God with our bodies!”

Commented [Advisor223]:

READ the shaded portion

SAY:

- “Which one will we try to be this week: a), b) or c)? Let's be quiet for a short time and each talk with God in our hearts”



Ask God to guide you on the straight path, using this prayer of *hazrat* David:

‘Teach me your way, O Lord; lead me in a straight path’
(Psalm 27:11)

LESSON 15 PRACTICAL TASK

Getting angry is a very common sin. It is hard to control our angry words, but we can do it through the ‘*Spirit of power, of love, and of self-discipline*’ (2 Timothy 1:7).

- Ask God to help you not to say angry words this week
- Each day this week, keep a count of how many times you speak in anger to another person (including your spouse and children)

LESSON 15 REVIEW

- 1 Compare Moses’ *shariah* with Christ’s *shariah*: (*circle the correct answers*)
 - a) Which *shariah* told people the straight path but they could not follow it?
[Moses’ *shariah* / Christ’s *shariah*]
 - b) Which *shariah* told people the straight path and God’s Spirit gave them strength to follow it?
[Moses’ *shariah* / Christ’s *shariah*]
- 2 Who makes us willing and able to follow God’s straight path? The _____ Spirit
- 3 What kinds of sin does Christ’s *shariah* forbid? (*tick any correct answers*)
 - ___ a) sinful actions (such as cheating at business)
 - ___ b) sinful words (such as dirty language)
 - ___ c) sinful thoughts (such as lust or pride)
 - ___ d) _____ (*write your own idea*)
 - ___ e) _____ (*write your own idea*)
- 4 Write the memory verse: “You are not _____
_____ (1 Corinthians ____ : _____)

Commented [Advisor224]:

TO FINISH THE MEETING

SAY:

“It is not enough just to talk about leaving sin. Now we must do it, with the help of God’s Spirit ! We will try it this week in our Practical Task”

READ the shaded portion.

CLOSE IN PRAYER

Thank God that He has set us free from slavery to sin. Ask for His help to be slaves to Christ this week.

Commented [Advisor225]:

LESSON 15 REVIEW

CORRECT ANSWERS:

Question 1

- a) Moses’ *shariah*
- b) Christ’s *shariah*

Question 2

Holy

Question 3

a), b) and c) are all forbidden in Christ’s *shariah*

For d) and e), ask members what they wrote (I hope they did not leave these spaces blank!)

Question 4 the memory verse is:

“You are not your own, you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your body”
(1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

LESSON 15 ANSWERS

- 1 a)
- 2 c) 3 only d) can rescue people from this addiction
- 4 Yes
- 5 You should underline: evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance, folly
- 6 the heart
- 7 Put your own name in the verse, e.g. "I will give *Razia* a new heart and put a new spirit in *Razia*."
- 8 spirit
- 9 a) No b) Yes c) Yes
- 10 Spirit
- 11 1 Peter
- 12 read the passage
- 13 check the words yourself in 1 Peter 4:2
- 14 for God
- 15 a) Yes b) Yes
- 16 you should tick all these answers
- 17 for discussion
- 18 b)
- 19 for discussion
- 20 c)
- 21 memorise the verse
- 22 c)

Lesson 16: Christ's Shariah: The Way of Love

Two young men met in the market. Both were servants, and their masters had sent them to do the shopping. They started talking about their masters. "I try hard to please my master", said the first servant, "but I never know when he will get angry. I am afraid of his punishment".

"I too try to please my master", replied the other servant. "But I do it out of love, not out of fear. You see, my father was killed in the war and my mother died of cancer. I had to beg in the streets. One day a kind man found me and brought me to his home. He has done so much for me and even lets me eat at his table. I love him because he first loved me".

"I wish I could love my master", commented the first servant.



God loved us first

1 What kind of person can love God with all his heart and soul and mind and strength? (tick one)

- a) A person who is afraid of God's punishment
 b) A person who is not afraid, because he is sure that God has forgiven him

2 We cannot fully love someone we fear. So if we are afraid of God's punishment, how can we fully love Him? But hear God's comforting word to us through his apostle John:

"There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made complete in love. We love because he first loved us."
 (1 John 4:18-19)

Mark the following statements 'true' or 'false':

- a) God loves us because we first loved Him [True / False]
 b) We love God because He first loved us [True / False]

3 Some people think that God only loves those who do good and love Him. But in fact, God loved us before we ever loved Him! "This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins..." (1 John 4:10).

Above all, how did God prove His love to us? (tick one)

- a) By sending His prophets to guide us
 b) By sending His books to teach us
 c) By sending His Son to die for us

4 "So we know and rely on the love God has for us" says the same passage (1 John 4:16). Therefore, how should we now serve him? (tick one)

- a) from love, because He loved us first
 b) from fear, because He might send us to hell.

Commented [Advisor226]:

//problem of space on this page!!

AIMS OF LESSON 16

For all members to:

- seek to love the Lord with all their heart and their neighbours as themselves
- be secure that God's for us does not depend on our love for Him
- understand that we owe everything to God, out of gratitude
- memorise Mark 12:30-31

Commented [Advisor227]:

TO START THE MEETING

START WITH PRAYER

SAY:

"Today we will learn more about Christ's shariah, which is the shariah of love."

LESSON REVIEW

- Check that members can give correct answers to the Review questions.

SAY:

"Our Practical Task last week was to keep a count of how many times you spoke in anger to another person. Divide now into pairs and speak about this with the other person."

DISCUSS in PAIRS

Give the members five minutes for this, in pairs. Hopefully by now they trust each other enough to do this. If they don't, then find another way to talk about it.

Afterwards, SAY:

"Probably we all spoke in anger last week. We did, said and thought other wrong things. We should not take this lightly. But thank God, we have a way to be cleansed and come back to Him, through the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Please pray this prayer with me, repeating each phrase after me:

PRAYER:

"Our Father God... [repeat it together]
 Thank you for your promise...[together]

Commented [Advisor228]:

LOOK at the picture

ASK:

- "Which servant is happier to serve his master?" [the one who serves because he is grateful; the other servant is afraid]
- "What is the meaning for us?" [We serve God in gratitude for saving us. Others serve from fear of punishment]

Commented [Advisor229]:

READ the shaded portions

ASK:

- "Are we completely safe and secure in God's love?" [yes, if we are in Christ]
- "So will He send us to hell, even for a time?" [no, because Christ has paid for all our sins; we have no more to pay]
- "Why then should we serve God with all our heart?" [because we love Him so much! We want to live for Him, show Him our gratitude and bring Him honour]

5 In the box in question 2, look again at the underlined words, and fill the blank spaces:
 “We _____ because _____” (1 John 4:19)

God proved His Love

6 The greatest way God proved His love was when Christ died for us. The night before Jesus Christ went to the cross, he ate his last meal with his disciples. Read what he did during it:

“Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying ‘Take and eat; this is my body’. Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins’”
 (Matthew 26:26-28)

Which two words are underlined in the passage above? _____ and _____

7 The Lord Jesus made this meal a special ceremony for his followers. We call it ‘the Lord’s Supper’. Down through all the centuries since then, his followers have regularly taken part in this ceremony. They still do so today, in every country, and they will continue this ceremony until Christ comes again.



What do we call this ceremony, where Christ’s followers eat bread and drink from a cup of grape juice? The Lord’s _____

8 In the Lord’s Supper (also called holy communion), we remember what our Saviour Jesus did for us on the cross. His body was broken for us, his blood was poured out for us, when we did nothing to deserve it!

- a) What do we eat in gratitude for Jesus’ broken body? _____
- b) From what do we drink in gratitude for his poured out blood? _____

9 Some people think that we must do things to make God love us. For them, the most important act of worship is to do the pillars of religion, especially *salah*.

But the special act of worship which Jesus commanded is the Lord’s Supper. In this ceremony, we don’t do anything to earn merit. Instead we receive, with grateful hearts.

What did Jesus command his followers to do in the Lord’s supper? (*tick one*)
 _____ a) ‘take’ _____ b) ‘give’

10 Why do we love God? ‘We love, because He first _____’ (1 John 4:19)
 (Fill the blanks from question 5)

The Way of love

11 The Lord Jesus did not cancel the *shariah* of Moses, rather he fulfilled it. One time a *faaqih* asked Jesus, “Of all the commandments, which is the most important?” For Jesus’ reply, read Mark 12:30-31.

According to Christ’s *shariah*,

- a) What is the most important commandment? “ _____ the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.”
- b) What is the second most important commandment? “ _____ your neighbour as yourself.”

Commented [Advisor230]:

EXPLAIN:
 “Christ’s followers worldwide follow two special ceremonies. One is called Baptism and we learned about it before. The other is called the Lord’s Supper or Holy Communion.”

READ the shaded portion

- ASK:**
- “How often do you take part in the Lord’s Supper? Or have you never had the opportunity?” [*discuss together. Some groups of believers do it frequently, others less often. Maybe some members have never taken part yet*]

//2. nan and juice vessels - whatever is available is fine, but some people like it for reverence

- “What are your emotions when you take the bread and the grape juice?” [*discuss together. Probably members will describe their emotions of love and gratitude*]

Commented [Advisor231]:

READ the shaded portions

- SAY (if you wish):**
- “At the end of this course we will have a special meeting to worship God and then we will share the Lord’s Supper together in our group.”

12 What is another name for Christ's *shariah*? The way of _____ (the same word as your answers in question 11).

13 Write again and memorise the summary of Christ's *shariah*:

The first commandment: "Love the _____ your _____ with all your _____ and with all your _____ and with all your _____ and with all your _____."

The second commandment: "Love your _____ as _____" (Mark 12:30-31)

Loving God with all our hearts

14 We love God because He first loved us. Our Lord Jesus gave all of himself for us. So we must give all of ourselves for him! He asks us:

- Will you give me your precious possessions?
- Will you give me your daily obedience?
- Will you give me your decisions?
- Will you give me your plans and ambitions?
- Will you give me your resentments against those who hurt you?

➤ **Stop and think.** Out of the things listed above, which one do you find the hardest to give back to God? Put a circle round that thing.

➤ **Now ask God to strengthen you to give that thing to Him and to love Him with all your heart.**



Loving our neighbours as ourselves

15 In Christ's *shariah*, what is the second commandment? (see question 11)
"Love your _____ as yourself"

16 What does it mean, practically, to 'love your neighbour as yourself'? (tick one)

- a) Putting the other person's needs above your own
 b) Putting your own needs above the other person's

17 Even in our own families we must 'love our neighbours as ourselves'. This includes our parents, our parents-in-law, our husbands and wives, our children.

Commented [Advisor232]:

READ the shaded portions

SAY:

"This is our memory verse for this week. Let's practise saying it together" [repeat it many times until every member can say it with their books closed]

ASK:

- "This summary of Christ's *shariah* is very short and simple to memorise. But is it simple to obey?" [discuss together. In my opinion, it is very hard to obey]

- "Who makes us able to obey this *shariah*?" [God's Spirit in our lives. We are weak but he is strong. We are sinful but he is holy, the Holy Spirit. However, he will only help us if we ask him too. It is like electricity which is so powerful, but it only works when we turn the switch]

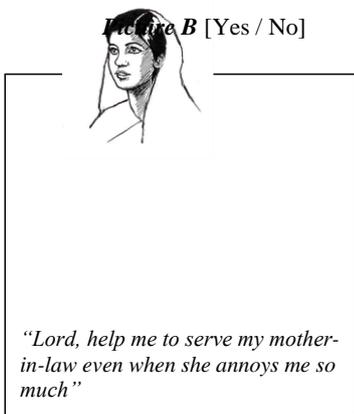
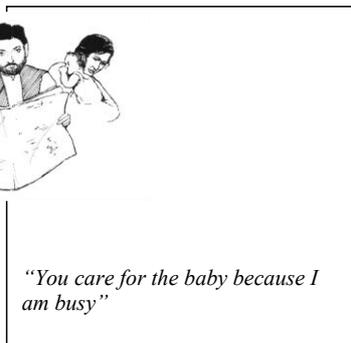
Commented [Advisor233]:

READ the shaded portions

ASK:

- "Which of these things do you find the hardest to give back to God? Each of us will say, in turn" [each member should speak. They should give real examples from their lives. This is an important time of sharing]

In which of the pictures below is Christ's follower putting the needs of their family member first? (circle 'yes' or 'no' beneath each picture).



Picture D [Yes / No]

Picture C [Yes / No]

18 In your opinion, is Christ's *shariah* easy or hard to follow? _____

19 This *shariah* is so hard to follow that we cannot do it in our own strength! But, as we learned in lesson 15, God has given us a new heart and put a new spirit in us. "God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us". (Romans 5:5)

How it is possible for us to love our neighbours as ourselves? (tick one)

- a) because those people are kind to us, so we love them in return
- b) because God has poured his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit
- c) because we try very hard to love them by our own efforts

20 We should love not only those who belong to our own family, neighbourhood or clan. God's word commands us to love others also.

- a) **Read 1 Peter 2:17** Whom does this verse command us to love? 'the _____',
- b) **Read 1 Peter 3:8** How does this verse tell us to love? 'as _____',

Commented [Advisor234]:

LOOK at the pictures

ASK:

- "In Picture A, to obey Christ's *shariah*, what should the husband do?" [discuss together. I think he should leave his newspaper and take care of his baby for a while]

- "In Picture B, why is the wife happy with her husband?" [because he cares for her. He shows his love for her in practical ways. He is obeying Christ's *shariah*]

- "In Picture C, the girl is disobeying Christ's *shariah*. What will be the result?" [the sister will be upset with her. Trust will be broken]

- "In Picture D, in what ways might God answer this lady's prayer?"

[The mother-in-law might start to behave better. Or even if she doesn't, the daughter-in-law may find her less annoying. Or God might give her patience and joy to endure the situation]

Commented [Advisor235]:

READ the shaded portions

SAY:

"Yes, answer b) is really true. God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit! We ourselves can't produce this kind of love, but He can pour it into our lives!"

21 As we learned in lesson 7, we are spiritual brothers and sisters with all of Christ's followers. We must love them.

Read 1 Peter 4:8-9 According to verse 8, how should we love one another? 'love one another _____',

22 We are told to love one another deeply. We should show this in practical ways. Here is a true account.

One time in Indonesia three ladies were sentenced to prison because of their Christian witness. Their Christian brothers and sisters did not neglect them. Instead, one person drove 60 kilometres every day by motorbike to meet them in prison and take care of their needs. Every week the whole group of believers travelled to the prison to share in worship with them.

Think about any brother or sister in Christ you know, who is in need at this time. Write here one practical thing you can do to 'love that person as yourself' _____

Be ready to share your idea in discussion.

23 Another practical way to show love is given in 1 Peter 4:9. What way is this? 'Offer _____ to one another without grumbling'.

24 Therefore, if a Christian brother or sister visits us from a different city, or if the local group of believers wants to meet in our home, can we 'offer hospitality without grumbling'? Should we be like Farida or like Salim below? _____

"What a burden! These guests create extra trouble for us, and it costs so much to feed them!"



Salim

"We are glad to serve these guests with whatever we have, for they are our brothers and sisters in Christ"



Farida

Commented [Advisor236]:

READ 1 Peter 4:7-10

ASK:

- "v.8 says that one thing is most important among Christ's followers. What is it?" [love each other deeply]
- "v.8 also says that 'love covers a multitude of sins'. What do you think this means?" [discuss together. I think it means that Christ's followers do sometimes sin against each other, but if they truly love each other they can find a way to sort out those problems]

{note for translators: this phrase is in the Greek text but seems to be missing in my edition of the Dari Injil. Is it in the new edition? If it is missing there too, then please omit this question}

- "What different ways do v.8-9 mention, for Christ's followers to love each other?" [v.9: offer hospitality, v.10: use our gifts to serve others. Other parts of God's Word give many other ways we can show love to each other]

Commented [Advisor237]:

READ the shaded portion

SAY:

"There are other examples like this one. In Nepal the Christians promised that, if any of them were sent to prison, the others would look after their families. This helped them give a strong witness for Jesus Christ."

Commented [Advisor238]:

READ the shaded portion

ASK:

- "What did you write here?" [discuss together]

25 Finally, loving our 'neighbour' is not limited just to our relatives, or even to our brothers and sisters in Christ. The Lord Jesus taught,

"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbour and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you"
(Matthew 5:43-44)

Whom does Christ expect us to love? (*tick one*)
 a) just our friends and neighbours
 b) our friends, our neighbours and even our enemies



Is it possible for us to love our enemies? Is it practical? Let's talk about this in the discussion time

LESSON 16 PRACTICAL TASK

In question 22 you wrote one practical thing you can do to help a needy brother or sister in Christ. Do that thing this week. (If circumstances do not allow that particular thing, find another way to show love to a fellow-believer this week).

LESSON 16 REVIEW

1 Christ's *shariah* contains two commands and we should obey them both. What are they?

The first commandment: " Love the _____ your _____ with all your _____ and with all your _____ and with all your _____ and with all your _____."
The second commandment: " Love your _____ as _____" (Mark 12:30-31)

2 What is another name for Christ's *shariah*? *The way of _____* (question 12)

3 Mark the following statements 'true' or 'false':
 a) God loves us because we first loved Him [True / False]
 b) We love God because He first loved us [True / False]

Commented [Advisor239]:

READ the shaded portion

ASK:

- "What do you think? Is it possible to love our enemies?" [*discuss together. This seems impossible for humans to do. But God's Word says 'I can do everything through him who gives me strength' (Philippians 4:13)*]
- "In our country people have been fighting each other so long. Just imagine, if they started to love their enemies instead, what would be the outcome?" [*discuss together. If this happened it would an amazing improvement in our country! Truly, Christ's shariah is the best shariah!*]

Commented [Advisor240]:

TO FINISH THE MEETING

READ the shaded portion.

CLOSE IN PRAYER

Thank God that loved us before we ever loved him. Ask him to pour out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, so we can love him fully and love our neighbours as ourselves..

Commented [Advisor241]:

LESSON 16 REVIEW

CORRECT ANSWERS:

Question 1

The first commandment is:
 "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength"
The first commandment is:

"Love your neighbour as yourself"

Question 2

love

Question 3

- a) False
- b) True

LESSON 16 ANSWERS

- 1 b)
- 2 b)
- 3 c)
- 4 a)
- 5 love, He first loved us
- 6 bread, cup
- 7 supper
- 8 a) bread b) cup (of grape juice)
- 9 a)
- 10 loved us
- 11 a) love b) love
- 12 love
- 13 Lord, God, heart, soul, mind, strength, neighbour, yourself
- 14 talk with God about this
- 15 neighbour
- 16 a)
- 17 Picture A: No Picture B: Yes Picture C: No Picture D: Yes
- 18 in my opinion, it is hard!
- 19 b)
- 20 a), b) read the verses yourself
- 21 deeply
- 22 personal answer, for discussion
- 23 read the verse
- 24 Farida
- 25 b)

Lesson 17 Christ's Shariah: Fasting and Zakat

Let's recall what we have learned about Christ's *shariah*:

- God wants us to walk in His 'straight path'
- In our own strength we cannot manage this
- But God has given us 'a new heart' so we want to obey Him
- And God has given us 'a new spirit' (the Holy Spirit) so we are able to obey Him
- The summary of Christ's *shariah* is to love God with all our heart and to love our neighbour as ourselves
- We love because He first loved us!

Today we learn how God guides us on the straight path, using *roza* and *zakat* as examples.



1 Should Christ's followers obey his *shariah*? (tick one)

- a) No, because they are free from the law and they can do what they like
 b) Yes, because Christ has bought them with his blood and he is their master

2 In fact, Christ's *shariah* sets a high standard. Our Lord is concerned about our inner character, not our outward ritual.

If we say our *salah* correctly but still tell lies, are we obeying Christ's *shariah*? [Yes/No]

3 In your opinion, which of the following actions are important in Christ's *shariah*?
 (by each one write 'Yes', 'No' or 'Not sure').

- a) having a beard
 b) being holy in all we do
 c) loving each other deeply
 d) performing the correct actions for *salah*
 e) ridding ourselves of deceit and envy
 f) wearing clothes which show we are religious
 g) being compassionate and humble

How does God guide us on the Straight Path?

4 The Bible gives us clear guidelines for how to follow God's straight path. It tells us the character and behaviour we should have. But it does not give us many detailed regulations, especially in the New Testament. There is a good reason for this. Look at these pictures:

Commented [Advisor242]:

AIMS OF LESSON 17

For all members to:

- a. start a disciplined habit of fasting and giving
- b. be glad to do this generously and sacrificially, without compulsion or seeking merit (*swaab*)
- c. learn two principles of how God guides us
- d. revise Mark 12:30-31

Commented [Advisor243]:

TO START THE MEETING

START WITH PRAYER

SAY:

"Today is our last discussion on Christ's *shariah*. Under this *shariah* we will fast and give money with a different motive than in our old *shariah*."

LESSON REVIEW

- Check that members can give correct answers to the Review questions.

SAY:

"Our Practical Task last week was to help a needy brother or sister in Christ. What did you do? How did that person respond?" [discuss together]

Commented [Advisor244]:

SAY:

"First, let's remember what we learned earlier about Christ's *shariah*"

READ the shaded portions (the teacher's speech and point 1)

Commented [Advisor245]:

READ the shaded portion

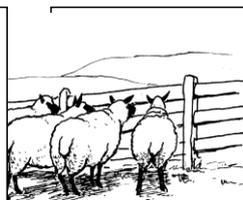
ASK:

- "Which answers in the list do you think are important? Why? [discuss together. Answers b), c), e) and g) all come directly from 1 Peter, so we can definitely say they are in Christ's *shariah*. Answers a), d) and f) are not mentioned anywhere in the Injil, so they are optional for Christ's followers. e.g. We are free to have a beard or not]
- "In that list, what is different about the important commands b), c), e) and g), compared with the unimportant ones a), d) and f)?" [important ones concern our attitudes and behaviour towards others: the unimportant ones are about our external appearance or ritual]
- "What is the summary of Christ's *shariah*?" [to love the Lord our God with all our heart and soul and mind and strength, and our neighbours as ourselves. God cares more about these about whether we have a beard]



By contrast, in the East, there is no need for a fence. The shepherd himself stays close to the sheep and guides them personally.

Picture 2



In Western countries, a shepherd leaves his sheep alone in a field. He builds a fence round the field to stop the sheep escaping.

Picture 1

- a) In picture 1, what stops the sheep escaping? _____
 b) In picture 2, who guides the sheep personally? _____

5 This example helps us understand *shariah*.

- a) Which picture, 1. or 2., is like humans who need a fence of *shariah* to stop them escaping into sin? ____
 b) Which picture, 1. or 2., is like Christ's followers who willingly follow wherever he leads them? ____

6 Sheep without a shepherd need a fence. People without God need detailed regulations of *shariah*.

But we are God's chosen people! Jesus Christ is our 'good shepherd'. "The sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out... He goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice" (John 10:3-4)

Therefore, how can we best find God's guidance for our lives? (*tick one*)

- ___ a) by keeping close to Jesus our shepherd and listening to his voice
 ___ b) by having a detailed list of regulations to obey

7 Although we cannot see Jesus our shepherd physically, he is still with us by his Spirit. He guides us on the straight path, by His Spirit speaking quietly within us. But we need to listen carefully!

As we learned in lesson 4, who has the Holy Spirit? (*tick one*)

- ___ a) every human
 ___ b) everyone who has invited Christ into his life
 ___ c) only a few special Christians

8 What two ways have we learned, that God guides us on the straight path? (*tick two*)

- ___ a) through His word, the Bible
 ___ b) through His Spirit within us
 ___ c) through a complete list of what is 'compulsory' or 'forbidden'

Commented [Advisor246]:

LOOK at the two pictures

ASK:

- "What is different about keeping sheep in Western and Eastern countries?" [discuss together. The description under the two pictures makes it clear]

- "Which picture is like your former *shariah*?" [picture 1] "Which picture is like your new *shariah* under Christ?" [picture 2] "Why?" [because in our former *shariah* there is a fence of detailed regulations to stop people escaping. In our new *shariah* we keep close to Christ our shepherd and he guides us where to go]

?**READ** 1 Peter 2:25??

Commented [Advisor247]:

READ the shaded portion

Commented [Advisor248]:

READ the shaded portion

ASK:

- "How can we hear Christ speaking to us by his Spirit?" [discuss together. Often he speaks quietly, through our conscience, or through a particular Bible verse, or by bringing an idea strongly into our mind,. Sometimes he speaks more loudly, through a dream or a clear voice. He also speaks to us through the advice of other believers]

- "But can we make mistakes in hearing the Holy Spirit's voice?" [Yes, easily. Sometimes we think it is God's voice when it is only our own sinful desire! Whatever God says in our minds will never contradict what He wrote in the Bible. His written word is the most reliable guide.

Remember this too: If we keep walking close with Christ, in prayer and obedience every day, we will hear his voice more clearly. Any sheep which wanders far from the shepherd will not be able to hear his voice!

Commented [Advisor249]:

READ the shaded portion



Of course, Christ's followers still need some written rules – for instance, murder and adultery are 'forbidden'. But the *Injil* contains fewer detailed rules than you had in your previous religion. So you need to listen to Christ's voice through his Spirit within you.

Should we Fast?

9 If we don't have detailed regulations, how can perform our religious duties correctly? Christ's follower Parveen is worried about this in relation to fasting:

Parveen

Which month should I fast, and how many days?

In Christ's *shariah*, is fasting compulsory for me?

Should I abstain just from food, or from water as well?

What time of day should I start the fast and what time should I break it?

This is all so confusing for me!

According to what we learned above, in what two main ways will God guide Parveen about fasting? (tick two answers)

- a) through His word, the Bible
- b) through His Spirit within her
- c) through a detailed list of regulations

10 So, concerning fasting:

- **God's word** gives Parveen general guidelines about how and why to fast;

Commented [Advisor250]:

READ the shaded portions

ASK:

- "Do you have the same questions as Parveen?" [discuss together, briefly]

SAY:

"Come, let's find some answers to help Parveen and ourselves"

and

- **God's Spirit** gives Parveen specific guidance, telling her when to fast.

- a) What gives general guidelines to Christ's followers? God's _____
b) Who shows us how to apply this in specific ways? God's _____

11 Parveen finds general guidelines in God's word. She reads that God's people fasted at times of danger or repentance or mourning. Fasting was their expression of earnest prayer. It showed God that they were serious. They desperately needed His help. They cried out to their Lord with their voices and also with their stomachs!

From God's word, what general guideline does Parveen learn? That fasting is an expression of [earnest prayer/religious merit]

- 12 However, in the Bible there was variety in the method of fasting:
- Sometimes God's people fasted just for one day, sometimes for many days;
 - Sometimes they fasted just from food and sometimes from water also;
 - Sometimes they fasted continuously and sometimes they stopped in the evening.

So God's word gives Parveen general guidelines about fasting, but who will give her specific guidance about when and how to fast? God's _____

13 Jesus himself was 'led by the Spirit' into a particular time of fasting (Matthew 4:1). Parveen follows his *sunnah*. She too is led by the Holy Spirit.

One time Parveen fasts to pray earnestly for her friend's sick child. Another time she cries out to God to grant salvation to her non-Christian family. Another time she fasts in deep repentance.

Why do Christ's followers fast?

- ___ a) as an expression of earnest prayer
- ___ b) to gain religious merit

14 Christ's followers fast with earnest prayer. They pray for others, not just for themselves. They fast because they love God and they love other people. In this way they obey the *shariah* of love.

Also, around the world many Christians fast during the forty days before Easter. Through fasting they dedicate themselves to God and learn self-discipline.

Stop and think:

- **Do you ask God to guide you when to fast? Or have you been lazy in fasting since becoming Christ's follower?**

15 Parveen has one more question:

Commented [Advisor251]:

READ the shaded portion

Commented [Advisor252]:

READ all the shaded portions (points 11-13)

ASK:

- "According to points 11-13, when should Christ's followers fast?" [*whenever they are led by the Spirit to do to, see point 13*]
- "Does this mean that fasting is compulsory (*wajib* or *farz*) for us, or optional?" [*discuss together. In my opinion, it is compulsory whenever the Holy Spirit specifically leads us to fast. At other times, it is optional*]
- "For what reasons will Christians fast?" [*discuss together. They do not fast to gain religious merit, but as an expression of earnest prayer. It shows God we are serious in our prayer. It may be at a time of danger or repentance or mourning. See points 11 and 13*]
- "How many days should Christ's followers fast, and how many hours? Should they avoid just food or water as well?" [*see point 12. God's people in the Bible fasted in different ways at different times*]

Commented [Advisor253]:

READ the shaded portion

ASK:

- "How is fasting part of the *shariah* of love?" [*because by fasting we show our love: firstly for God, and secondly for other people, as we pray earnestly for them*]
- "Have you heard about this fasting period before Easter?" [*discuss together. It is called 'Lent'. Not all Christ's followers worldwide fast during Lent, but many do*]

Commented [Advisor254]:

READ the shaded portions

ASK:

- "Have you been lazy in fasting since becoming Christ's follower?" [*discuss together*]

My family members are not yet Christ's followers. Should I fast with them in Ramadan or not?'



What do you think? Write one reason for Parveen to fast with her family, and one reason against:

For: _____

Against: _____

Be ready for discussion.

Should we Give Zakat?

16 Majid belongs to the same local group of believers as Parveen. His questions are similar to hers:

To which kinds of people should I give my zakat?



Majid

In Christ's shariah, must I give zakat?

If I give one-fortieth part to God, does the rest belong to me?

What book gives Majid general guidelines on this subject? _____

17 Majid asked, "If I give one-fortieth part to God, does the rest belong to me?" The Bible gives a clear guideline on this.

King David generously gave gold, silver and other precious materials for building the magnificent house of God. The leaders followed his example and gave 'freely and wholeheartedly to the Lord.'

Then David led them in this prayer:

"O Lord... everything in heaven and earth is yours..."

Commented [Advisor255]:

READ the shaded portions

ASK:

"Do you have the same questions as Parveen?" [discuss together, briefly]
 In my opinion, reasons for fasting with the family include:
 - she can show she is still loyal to her family even as a follower of Jesus;
 - she can use this opportunity to fast and pray earnestly for her family to find salvation;
 - if she does not fast with them, it will cause unnecessary problems for her;
 - if she does not fast, her family will think that Christ's followers are lazy.

In my opinion, reasons against fasting with the family include:
 - they will think she is still following their religion;
 - they will think she is doing it for religious merit.

- "So how should we decide what to do about this?" [discuss together. We should each make our own decision about this, as God leads us. Alternatively, you might decide as a group what you will do in the next Ramadan. God can guide you as a group, or individually]

Commented [Advisor256]:

ASK:

"Now let's come to another subject: giving money for God's work."

READ the shaded portions

ASK:

- "Do you have the same questions as Majid?" [discuss together, briefly]

But who am I, and who are my people,
that we should be able to give as generously as this?
Everything comes from you,
and we have given you only what comes from your hand...
And all of it belongs to you." (a summary of 1 Chronicles 29:1-17)

According to king David's prayer, how much of our property belongs to God? (*tick one*)
___ a) one-fortieth ___ b) one-tenth ___ c) all of it

18 Everything we own belongs to our Creator. Naked we came into this world, and naked we will leave it. All our property belongs to God.

Therefore let us not seek a detailed regulation on how much to give back to God. Instead, let's give 'freely and whole-heartedly' as king David did!

What two general guidelines have we learned from God's word? (*circle the correct answers*)

- a) [All/some/none] of our property belongs to God
b) We should give back to God [freely and whole-heartedly/as little as possible]

19 Think too about the example of our Lord Jesus. "*Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor*" (2 Corinthians 8:9). He gave up everything for us, even his life. Therefore how much should we be willing to give for him?

- ___ a) everything ___ b) nothing ___ c) a little

20 Christ sets no limit on our giving. So should we give as little as possible? Not at all! On the contrary, we should give as much as possible! God's word continues,

"Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7)

According to this verse, should we give reluctantly or cheerfully? _____

21 Christ's followers give cheerfully. They consider this a joy, not a burden. It is not a compulsory tax, like *zakat*. It is their voluntary gift. They give because of their love for God and their love for people in need.

What is another name for Christ's *shariah*? The *shariah* of _____

22 The verse in question 20 says 'Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give'. In my opinion Christ's *shariah* does not specify a fixed amount for how much we should give. However, let this not become an excuse to be mean! If as Christ's followers we would give less than we previously gave under another religion, how shameful that would be! In fact, many Christians give at least one-tenth of their income. This brings much blessing to them personally and also to God's work.

Therefore Majid still needs specific guidance about how much he should give. Who will give him this specific guidance?

- ___ a) God's word the Bible ___ b) the Holy Spirit within him

23 So Majid talks to God about this.

Commented [Advisor257]:

READ the shaded portions

ASK:

- "How much of our property belongs to God?" [*all of it*]
- "Therefore should we set a limit on how much we give back to him?" [*no*]

Commented [Advisor258]:

READ the shaded portion

ASK:

- "What summary of Christ's *shariah* did we memorise last week?"
- [the first commandment: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.*
- the second commandment: 'Love your neighbour as yourself']*
- "What is the reference for this memory verse?" [*Mark 12:30-31*]
- "How are we obeying this *shariah* by giving money?" [*we are showing love for God by giving money back to Him, and love for other people by using the money to help them*]

SAY:

"Christ gave this teaching in Mark chapter 12. Soon afterwards, in the same chapter, was a lady who really did love the Lord her God with all her heart and soul and mind and strength. This happened at the House of God in Jerusalem (?Al-Quds)."

READ Mark 12:41-44

ASK:

- "From Christ's point of view, who gave more: the rich people or the poor widow?" [*the poor widow, see v.44*]
 - "Why?" [*because the rich gave what they could spare, but she gave all she had*]
 - "So, under Christ's *shariah* should we give as little as possible, or as much as possible?" [*as much as possible*]
 - "Is this a good way to seek religious merit?" [*no, it's not a question of religious merit. We do it from love. Love cannot seek a reward for love is not selfish.*
- Love seeks to make someone happy. Our master Christ is happy when we give generously. He was happy when the widow gave even her two small coins, because he knew the intention [ne-at] of her heart]*

“O God, You have given me *rizq* to provide for my family’s needs. But all my property belongs to you. Please give me specific guidance, by your Spirit, on how much I should give back to you each month. Ameen”



- Now speak to God yourself, using the same words as Majid.
- But if you have no control over money in your household, what else can you give? Some food for the hungry or clothes for the poor? A portion of your crops at harvest time? Or can you just offer your time to help others? Within your limited circumstances, offer to God everything you have.

24 Guided by God’s Spirit, Majid decides how much he will give each month. Now he must be self-disciplined to set aside this money. In your opinion, what is the best time for Majid to set aside this portion from his income?

- ___ a) On the first day of each month as soon as he receives his salary
- ___ b) On the last day of the month, if there is anything left over from his expenses

25 In Majid’s local fellowship are other believers who have decided to set aside money every month as their gift for God’s work. So they agree to put all their gifts together in one box. They will not spend this money on their own needs. Rather, through these gifts they will show their love for God and their love for needy people. So together they seek the Holy Spirit’s specific guidance on where to use the money.

If you were a member of that group, for what purposes would you suggest the money should be used? Note three ideas and be ready for discussion:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

The Shariah of Love

26 Majid gives generously because he loves God and he loves his neighbour. Parveen fasts for the same two reasons. Christ’s *shariah* is the *shariah* of love! When we fully love God and love other people, we do not need many detailed regulations!

Write again the summary of Christ’s *shariah* which you memorised in lesson 16.

The first commandment:

“_____ the Lord your God with all your and all _____

Commented [Advisor259]:

READ the shaded portions

ASK:

- “What is your own situation? Are you earning an income, or can you give in some other way?” [discuss together]

Commented [Advisor260]:

READ the shaded portions

ASK:

- “What did you write here?” [discuss together. I think if we wait till the end of the month there will be nothing left]

Commented [Advisor261]:

READ the shaded portions

ASK:

- “What did you write here?” [discuss together. In my opinion, some good ways to use the money are:
 - help the poor, not just those who are our own relatives;
 - buy Injils, or CDs about Jesus Christ, to give to non-Christians who show interest;
 - contribute to the costs of the place where you meet for worship;
 - contribute to any believers who are doing Christian service full-time]

{for translators: I am not sure if these are good suggestions for the local context, so please give me better ones}

_____”

The second commandment: “_____ your neighbour as _____”
(Mark _____:_____)

LESSON 17 PRACTICAL TASK

If you control your own income, decide how much of it you will set aside each month to give back to God. If you don't have your own income, decide what other ways you can give generously, because of your love for God and for others.

LESSON 17 REVIEW

- 1 In what two main ways does God guide us on the straight path?
 - a) God's _____ gives us general guidelines
 - b) God's _____ gives us specific guidance
- 2 Why did God's people in the Bible fast? As an expression of earnest _____
- 3
 - a) How much of our property belongs to God? _____
 - b) How much should we give back to Him: as much as possible or as little as possible? _____
- 4
 - a) Why do we fast and why do we give generously?
Because of our love for _____ and our _____ love for _____
 - b) What is another name for Christ's *shariah*? The *shariah* of _____

Commented [Advisor262]:

TO FINISH THE MEETING

READ the shaded portion.

SAY:

“Don't just think about setting aside money to give to God. Actually do, starting this month!

Now, pray in groups of three. Ask God to show us when He wants you to fast, and how much He wants you to give. Let's seek to be generous and disciplined in these things, with His help.”

CLOSE IN PRAYER in small groups

Commented [Advisor263]:

LESSON 15 REVIEW

CORRECT ANSWERS:

Question 1

- a) word
- b) Spirit

Question 2

prayer

Question 3

- a) all of it
- b) as much as possible

Question 4

- a) God, our neighbour (or 'other people') //
- b) love

LESSON 17 ANSWERS

- 1 b)
- 2 No
- 3 'Yes' for b), c), e), g) [according to 1 Peter 1:16, 1:22, 2:1 and 3:8]
'No' for a), d), f) [in my opinion, but if your opinion is different bring it to discussion]
- 4 a) the fence b) the shepherd
- 5 a) 1. b) 2.
- 6 a)
- 7 b)
- 8 a), b)
- 9 a), b)
- 10 a) word b) Spirit
- 11 earnest prayer
- 12 Spirit
- 13 a)
- 14 your personal response
- 15 for discussion
- 16 God's word / the Bible
- 17 c)
- 18 a) All b) freely and whole-heartedly
- 19 a)
- 20 cheerfully
- 21 love
- 22 b)
- 23 your personal response
- 24 in my opinion a) is better
- 25 for discussion
- 26 if you can't remember, see lesson 16 question 11

Lesson 18 Fate and Magic

The following true account is from North Africa, where one time a group of Christ's followers faced a problem:

"Whenever it was time for Christian worship, Ahmad felt a strong stomach ache. He also felt that something like a black wall was in front of him, preventing him from praising Jesus. Fatima wanted to pray and read the Bible, but instead words of curses filled her mind. And at nights, Sabina felt attacked by strong fear of death and horrible nightmares."



What could be holding these believers back from making spiritual progress? We will find out in today's lesson.

In fact all these believers had previously been involved in magic practices, such as visiting shrines, wearing amulets and living in homes which were under a curse.

Before studying this subject today, let's pray:

"Almighty God, You have authority over all spiritual forces which try to harm us. We trust in your protection as we study today's lesson. In the mighty name of Jesus Christ, Amen"



1 Do you think there is any harm in magic and practices like wearing amulets or visiting shrines? Give your own opinion:

[Yes / No / I'm not sure] (circle one)

2 But more than our own opinion, we need to know what God's word teaches about fate and magic. Today we will learn three truths. Here is the first one:

A) God guides our lives, not Fate

Many people have a false idea about Almighty God. They think He is too far away to be interested in their daily lives! Their idea of God is like this:

Commented [Advisor264]:

AIMS OF LESSON 18

For all members to:

- a. be sure of three key biblical truths concerning fate and magic
- b. understand why God detests idolatry
- c. deal with any occult influence from their past life
- d. memorise 1 Peter 5:7

Commented [Advisor265]:

TO START THE MEETING

SAY:

"Before we discuss 'fate and magic', let's place ourselves under God's protection. Let's all join in with the prayer in the box."

PRAY TOGETHER

using the prayer in the box here

LESSON REVIEW

- Check that members can give correct answers to the Review questions.

SAY:

"Our **Practical Task** last week was to decide what you will give to God from your monthly income, or in other ways. Have you decided that? And have you started to act on your decision?" [members should say if they have done this. But they should not say exactly how much they decided to give. That is between them and God]

Commented [Advisor266]:

READ the shaded portion

ASK:

- "What is your real opinion: 'yes', 'no' or 'not sure'?" [personal answers]
- "How did you form that opinion?" [maybe members never thought about it, they just picked it up from their mothers or from traditions]
- "Whose opinion matters most on this subject: ours, our friends, or God's?" [God's] "How can we know what God's opinion is?" [from His word the Holy Bible]

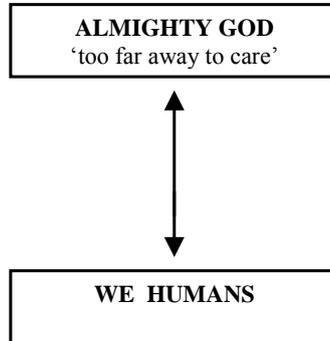
SAY:

"On this subject of fate and magic, the devil has told us many lies. People in our country have believed those lies for centuries. So they remain in Satan's power. Maybe those false ideas sit in our own minds too. Today let's break them with God's truth!"

ASK:

In point 2, what is our first truth which breaks the devil's lies? [heading A): 'God guides our lives, not fate']

People's False Idea:



Commented [Advisor267]:

LOOK at this diagram

ASK:

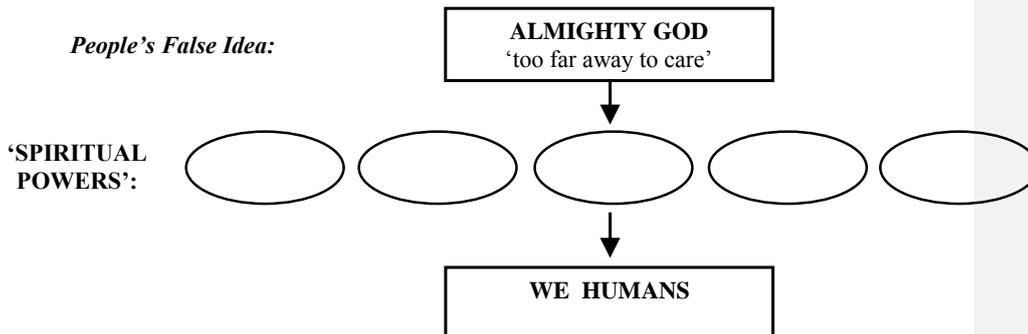
- "What idea of God do most people have in our country: that He is far away, or that He comes close and cares about their problems?" [discuss together]

What idea of God do these people have? (*tick one*)

- a) they think God is far away and does not care about their lives
 b) they think God comes close and cares about their problems

3 Such people suppose that other 'spiritual powers' are closer than God Himself. They think these other powers influence their daily lives for good or evil. Within each oval space below, write one of the following 'powers' which people believe in:
angels – evil eye – fate – *jinn* – evil spirits

People's False Idea:



Commented [Advisor268]:

LOOK at this diagram (with the words filled in the blank spaces)

ASK:

- "Do you agree that this is what people think? Do they think that fate, jinn and the evil eye influence their daily lives?" [discuss together. Some people believe this more than others]

4 These people feel their lives are controlled by 'fate'. They think that nothing can change whatever is 'written' for them. Maybe you believe in fate too?

But how can we best find out what God is really like? (*tick one*)

- a) from God's word the Bible b) from people's opinions

5 In contrast to what these people think, Almighty God really does care about us! In the Old Testament He did not remain far away, but came close to His people. He spoke personally with them on different occasions. He listened to their prayers. King David, going through a tough time in his life, found that

"The Lord is close to the broken-hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit"

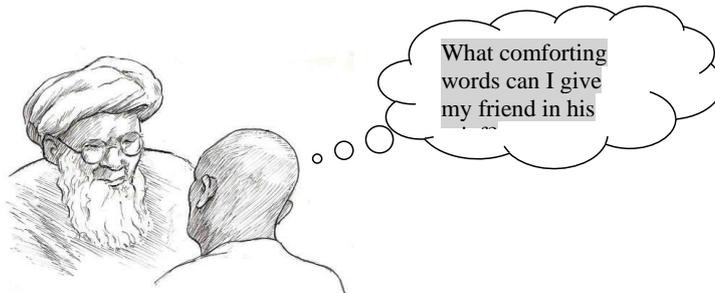
(Psalm 34:18)

According to these Old Testament examples, what is God really like? (*tick one*)

- a) God is too far away to care about our daily lives

___ b) God comes close to us and cares about our problems

6 Suppose your friend's son has just died. You go to pay condolences. You are thinking:

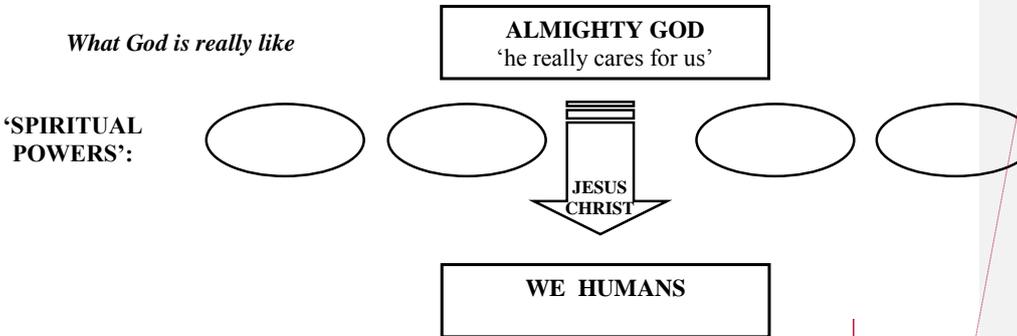


1. You could _____ say to your friend,
 "Don't mourn. This was God's will. It was fate and nothing can be done about it"
2. Or you could say, in the words of Psalm 34,
 "The Lord is close to the broken-hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit"

In your opinion,

- a) Which answer, 1. or 2., gives deeper comfort? _____
 b) Which answer shows what God is really like? _____

7 In the New Testament, God Almighty came even closer to share in our lives. He came as a human being, Jesus Christ! Jesus came down to our level. So he cares for us and shares our sorrows.



Our Lord Jesus himself experienced sorrow and suffering. So, does he care about our problems? _____

8 The Lord really does care! Therefore when we have problems in life, we should not speak of heartless fate. Nor should we turn for help to other spiritual powers. Instead let us come close to God:

"Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you" (1 Peter 5:7)

Write here this precious verse, and memorise it now:
 "Cast _____ (1 Peter _____ : _____)

Commented [Advisor269]:
READ the shaded portion
ASK:
 • "What did you write for part a)?" [individual answers]
 • "What did you write for part b)?" [individual answers]
 • "Why does answer 2. give greater comfort and show what God is really like?" [discuss together. It shows what He is really like because the Bible says so. It gives greater comfort because it says that God comes close to people in their sorrow]
 • "Next time you go to pay condolences, could you try saying something like answer 2?" [discuss together. Maybe members will agree or maybe they won't. They don't have to agree with everything in our discussion times]

Commented [Advisor270]:
READ the shaded portion
LOOK at the diagram (with the words written in the blank spaces)
ASK:
 • "How do we know that God really cares for us and comes close to us?" [because God's word tells us that. Moreover, Jesus Christ himself came from God down to our level. He was born as a baby. He suffered himself, so he can share our suffering!]

Commented [Advisor271]:
READ the shaded portion
GO ROUND THE GROUP like this:
 • The first person should ask the second person, "What are you anxious about these days?" [that person gives their individual answer]
 • Then the first person says to the second person, "Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you" (1 Peter 5:7)
 • Then the second person does the same thing with the third person. He asks him "what are you anxious about?"
 • The third person asks the fourth person, and so on round the group, including the group leader.

9 “I know the plans I have for you” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future” (Jeremiah 29:11). Fate is impersonal, it has no heart. But God our Father is personal! And His heart beats for us!

Who guides the lives of God’s chosen people?
 ___ a) Fate ___ b) God our Father

B) God detests Magic and Idolatry

10 Many men and women seek refuge in magical practices. They do this to seek help for their problems. They might tie an amulet to seek protection from the evil eye, or go to a shrine in the hope of healing, or sacrifice an animal. Others think palm-reading will tell their future. Some even use black magic to gain revenge on their enemies.

Do people in your neighbourhood practise such things? For what purposes? (Write your own opinion) _____

11 Some people think there is no harm in using magic to contact spiritual powers. But let’s learn what God says about this, in His word.

Read Deuteronomy 18:10-12 . (Deuteronomy is the fifth book in the Bible. Find the page number from the ‘List of Contents’).

From this passage, answer the following questions:

- a) Which verse forbids ‘divination’? Verse ___
 (this means trying to predict the future, e.g. through palm-reading, horoscopes, etc.)
- b) Which verse forbids ‘sorcery’ and ‘witchcraft’? v. ___
 (this includes all kinds of magic, such as ‘casting spells’ in verse 11.)
- c) Which verse forbids interpreting ‘omens’? Verse ___
 (for instance, looking for patterns in a tea-cup.)
- d) Which verse forbids a ‘medium or spiritist or one who consults the dead’? Verse ___
 (e.g. visiting shrines to contact the spirits of dead saints.)

12 Deuteronomy chapter 18 forbids all these magical practices: “anyone who does these things is _____ to the Lord” (see v.12 and fill the blank space)

13 Ezekiel 13:18 says, “Woe to the women who sew magic charms on all their wrists”.

What practice is condemned here?

- ___ a) visiting shrines ___ b) amulets ___ c) palm-reading

14 Read 1 Peter 4:3. What is the last sin mentioned in this list? ‘detestable _____’

15 One kind of idolatry is following ‘holy men’, and God detests it. An idol is any created thing we worship instead of the Creator Himself. Anything we trust in or follow or obey more than Him is *shirk!*

If we trust in amulets, or follow horoscopes, or obey our ‘holy man’, is this a kind of idolatry?
 [Yes / No]

Commented [Advisor272]:

READ the shaded portion

ASK:

- “What is the first truth we have learned, to break the devil’s lies?” [see heading A) in point 2. ‘God controls our lives, not fate’]
- “What is the next important truth? See heading B)” [‘God detests magic and idolatry’]

Commented [Advisor273]:

READ the shaded portion

ASK:

- “What did you write for this question?” [discuss together]

Commented [Advisor274]:

SAY:

“The book of Deuteronomy comes in the Tawrat of Moses. Turn to ch.18. Here the Lord warns Bani Israel not to do magic like the other nations, because He detests it”

{translator: for ‘detest’ use the same word as in the course book, heading B}

READ Deuteronomy 18:9-14

//check NIV

ASK:

- “According to v.9, would God mind if His own people do magic like the other nations?” [yes He does mind! He says they are ‘abominable practices’] //
- “In v.10-11, what different kinds of magic does God forbid?” [members can read out from the list. They do not need to understand every detail, but the main meanings are in point 11 in the course book]
- “What does v.12 say about people who do these kinds of magic?” [they are an abomination to the Lord, and for such practices He is driving the people out]
- “Instead, how should God’s chosen people be, in v.13?” [‘blameless’]
- “In v.14, does God allow or forbid His people to do magic?” [forbid]
- “After reading this passage, what do you think is God’s attitude towards magic?” [He detests it]

Commented [Advisor275]:

READ the shaded portion

ASK:

- “What is God’s attitude when His people follow pirs?” [He detests it. It is a form of idolatry]

16 It is easy to trust God when he answers our prayers as we wish. But it is harder if we don't receive the answers we want. What advice would you give to this disappointed lady who is Christ's follower?

I have prayed for many years for God to give me a child. But I am still childless! Therefore I will go the 'holy man', maybe his prayers will be answered because he is closer to God than me.



Write your advice to this lady, and be ready for discussion _____

17 God detests all kinds of magic because they are idolatry. Why would we trust in any of these things instead of trusting in our Saviour? After drinking the fresh water of salvation from the spring of life, why would we turn back to stale pond-water?!

Till now, we have learned two truths about fate and magic. Fill the gaps:

- a) God guides our lives, not _____ (questions 2-9)
- b) God _____ magic and idolatry (question 10-17)

Here is today's third truth:

C) The Lord Jesus rules over all Spiritual Powers

18 Curses and evil spirits are harmful. But the Lord Jesus was never afraid of evil spirits. Rather, they were afraid of him!

A man... who was possessed by an evil spirit cried out, 'What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are – the Holy One of God!' 'Be quiet!' said Jesus sternly. 'Come out of him!' The evil spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek.

The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, 'What is this? ... He even gives orders to evil spirits and they obey him' (Mark 1:23-27)

Did this evil spirit obey or disobey Christ's command? _____

19 The Lord Jesus rules over all spiritual powers. He has gone up to heaven, and [1 Peter 3:22] mentions three powers which are now 'in submission to him'. Write these three in the three oval spaces on this diagram.

Commented [Advisor276]:

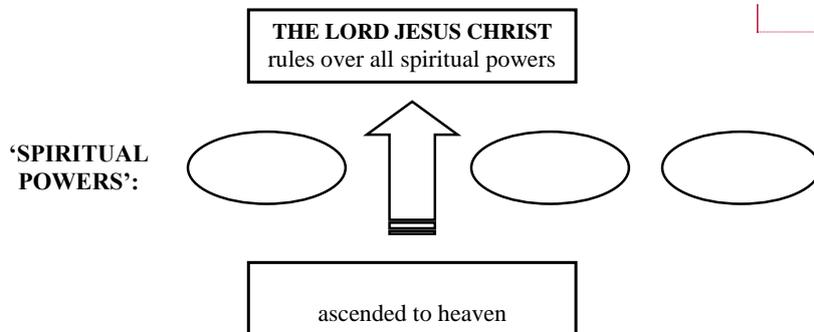
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ASK:

- "What advice would you give this lady?" [discuss together. Here are my suggestions of what we could tell this lady:
 1. Above all, she needs to know that God cares for her very much. He feels her sorrow. As we learned earlier, 'the Lord is close to the broken-hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit'.
 2. It is not true that the 'holy man' is closer to God than this lady is. In fact she is closer to God, because she is in Christ and he is not. She is God's spiritual daughter! Her heavenly Father will certainly hear her prayers.
 3. God does not want this lady to go to the holy man. She should not follow two masters. Either Christ is her master or the holy man.
 4. She should ask other believers to pray with her. They can pray in Jesus' Christ's name for God to give her a child. Above all, they can ask God to fulfil His purpose in her life. His purpose is best, whether or not she has the joy of a child]

Commented [Advisor277]:

READ the shaded portion // combine or get rid



Commented [Advisor278]:

READ 1 Peter 3:22

LOOK at the diagram (with the words written in the blank spaces)

ASK:

- "On this diagram, who is higher: the Lord Jesus Christ or the 'spiritual powers'?" [the Lord Jesus Christ]
- "Who is more powerful than the jinn?" [the Lord Jesus Christ]
- "Who is more powerful than evil spirits?" [the Lord Jesus Christ]
- "If someone puts a curse on you, who is more powerful than the curse?" [the Lord Jesus Christ]
- "Who rules over all spiritual powers?" [the Lord Jesus Christ]

20 The Lord Jesus also gave his followers "authority to drive out evil spirits" (Matthew 10:1).

- a) Who is more powerful: evil spirits, or us in our own strength? _____
 b) Who is more powerful: evil spirits, or us in Christ? _____

21 When evil spirits attack us or our loved ones, we command them to go – in the mighty name of Jesus Christ and by the power of his Spirit. And they will obey us!

In whose mighty name do we command evil spirits to leave? _____

[Please remember that this is a tough ministry, and sometimes the spirits resist the command for a long time. Also, it is sometimes difficult to tell the difference between spirit possession and mental illness. For these reasons it is not wise to do battle against evil spirits on your own. Always ask the advice of a more experienced Christian.]

Commented [Advisor279]:

READ the shaded portions

ASK:

- "Do any of us have experience of Christ defeating evil spirits?" [discuss together]

Can we serve Two Masters?

22 A person who tries to follow Christ and at the same time follows a 'holy man', is like someone trying to ride two horses at the same time. Neither will Satan be pleased with him, nor will Christ!

So, if you have chosen to follow Christ, is it wise or right to keep visiting shrines?
 [Yes/No]

Commented [Advisor280]:

READ the shaded portion

SAY:

- "If any of you are worried about evil spirits these days, please talk afterwards with me or with another experienced believer"

23 Someone said,

"A man dreamt he had a house with five rooms. He gave one room to Jesus. But a thief came and stole some things. The man asked Jesus, 'Why did you not stop him?' Jesus replied, 'Because the house is not mine'. So the man gave Jesus four rooms and kept back only one.

But the thief came again. The man was very disappointed and asked Jesus the same question as before. Jesus replied, 'Only if you give me the whole house can I control who comes in and who doesn't'.

Then in the dream the man gave all five rooms to Jesus. And the thief never came back."

What do you think this dream means? (note your ideas and be ready for discussion)

Commented [Advisor281]:

READ the shaded portion

ASK:

- "What answer did you write? [discuss together. In my opinion, the meaning of the dream is that if we should let Jesus Christ take control of our whole lives. If we keep part of our life for ourselves, or for the holy man or for amulets (taweez), it gives the devil an opportunity to attack us]

24 When we turn to Christ, we should renounce and turn away from all kinds of magic. This is what new believers did in a town called Ephesus: *“A number who had practised sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly... In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power”* (Acts 19:19-20).

These scrolls contained their magic spells, and were worth a lot of money. But what did these new believers do? (*tick one*)

- a) they continued to practise magic as well as follow Christ
- b) they sold their magic scrolls and gave the money to the poor
- c) they renounced magic and publicly burnt the scrolls

This week’s practical task will help you recognise whether there are any magical practices you should renounce in your life.

And do you remember the North African believers at the beginning of our lesson? When they renounced their previous magical practices the spiritual attacks ceased!



LESSON 18 PRACTICAL TASK

Think back over your life:

- Have you ever sought help from shrines or *pirs* or witches? Have you used verses of a holy book for amulets or drinking with water? Have you ever tried to contact the spirits of the dead?
- Do you think your parents or ancestors were active in witchcraft or magic?
- So far as you know, has anyone ever placed a curse on you?
- Are there any objects presently in your home which you think should be destroyed?
- Have you repeatedly experienced a strong fear of death, or the presence of evil in any particular place in your home?
- Do you ever experience physical pains or mental blockages when worshipping God in the name of Jesus?

Not everyone has been affected by these harmful influences. But if you think you have, then ask an experienced follower of Christ to guide you in renouncing them.

LESSON 18 REVIEW

- 1 What three truths about fate and magic have we learned in this lesson?
- a) God guides our lives, not _____
 - b) God _____ magic and idolatry
 - c) The Lord Jesus rules over all spiritual _____
- (see question 17 if you can't remember)*

Commented [Advisor282]:

ASK:

- "Today we have talked about three important truths to break the devils' lies. What are they?"

[1. God guides our lives, not fate

2. God detests magic and idolatry

3. The Lord Jesus rules over all spiritual powers]

Commented [Advisor283]:

TO FINISH THE MEETING

READ the shaded portion.

SAY:

"One time this week, ask yourself these questions, in God's presence. Carefully go through the questions. Ask God to remind you of any past occasions when magic or *pirs* influenced your life. If there was any such influence, then ask another believer to help you pray against it."

CLOSE IN PRAYER

Stand up together and declare against the devil these three truths:

- 'God guides our lives, not fate'

- 'God detests magic and idolatry'

- 'The Lord Jesus rules over all spiritual powers'.

Commented [Advisor284]:

LESSON 18 REVIEW

CORRECT ANSWERS:

Question 1

a) fate

b) detests

c) powers

LESSON 18 ANSWERS

- 1 your own opinion (maybe you will change it during this lesson)
- 2 a)
- 3 write the five words in the five spaces
- 4 a)
- 5 b)
- 6 in my opinion, 2. is a better answer for both a) and b)
- 7 Yes he does care
- 8 memorise the verse
- 9 b)
- 10 for discussion
- 11 read the verses and find the answers yourself
- 12 detestable
- 13 b)
- 14 idolatry
- 15 Yes
- 16 for discussion
- 17 a) fate b) detests
- 18 obey
- 19 write the words 'angels', 'authorities', 'powers'
- 20 a) evil spirits b) us in Christ
- 21 Jesus Christ
- 22 No
- 23 for discussion
- 24 c)

Lesson 19 Serving one another

One time Jesus Christ was having a meal with his twelve disciples. They were arguing among themselves about “*which one of us is the greatest?*”

Jesus their master rebuked them: “*The greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.*” (Luke 22:26-27)



Then Jesus proved his point in an astonishing way. He got up from the table and took the place of a slave. He took off his outer clothes and tied a towel round his waist and poured water into a basin and started to wash the feet of his disciples!



What do you think about this surprising act? Would Jesus lose his follower’s respect by serving them in this way? Or is it possible to serve and lead at the same time? Today we will learn how to serve one another, according to Jesus’ example.

Serving One Another

1 After washing his disciples’ feet, Jesus said to them:

“You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord’, and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you”. (John 13:13-15)

- In this passage, two titles show Jesus’ authority over his disciples. What are these titles? ‘Teacher’ and _____,
- By washing the disciples’ feet, did Jesus lose his authority over them? [Yes/No]

2 Jesus Christ did not lose his disciples’ respect by serving them. In fact, soon afterwards he served them by sacrificing his life for them! As a result, they respected and loved him even more.

From the last sentence in the box, fill the blank spaces:

‘I have set you an example that _____’,

- Jesus said “You should do as I have done for you”. Jesus is our Teacher and our Lord. According to his example, what should we do? (*tick one*)
 - serve one another
 - rule over one another
 - compete with one another

Commented [Advisor285]:

AIMS OF LESSON 19

For all members to:

- be committed to use their gifts humbly, to serve each other
- support the church leaders and understand their responsibilities
- memorise 1 Peter 4:10

Commented [Advisor286]:

TO START THE MEETING

START WITH PRAYER

SAY:

“God has given us various gifts and abilities. We should use these gifts to serve Him and serve each other.”

LESSON REVIEW

- Check that members can give correct answers to the Review questions.

SAY:

“Our **Practical Task** last week was to check if there was any influence from magic or *piris* in your past. Have you all done that task? [*members should say if they have done this. But they should not talk about their past life in front of the group, that can be done privately if they wish*]

“If you still have problems in your life from this, please see me privately. I will be glad to discuss it with you.”

Commented [Advisor287]:

//change this

LOOK at the picture

SAY slowly, with pauses:

“Look at the feet in this picture. Imagine they are your feet.

“Look at the hands in this picture. They are Christ’s hands.

“Christ is washing your feet!

“What does this make you feel? Talk to your Lord now about this now, in your heart.”

ASK:

- “What were your emotions when you looked at the Lord Jesus Christ washing your feet?” [*discuss together*]

Commented [Advisor288]:

READ the shaded portion

ASK:

- “Our ‘Lord and Teacher’ Jesus Christ bent low to wash our feet. What must we now do?” [*see the box. He says ‘I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you’. So we like him should bend low to wash each other’s feet, to serve each other*]

4 Afterwards Simon Peter followed the example of his Teacher. Let's learn from 1 Peter chapters 4 and 5, where the apostle Peter teaches us how to serve one another.

Gifts for Service (1 Peter 4)

Read **1 Peter 4:10-11** and fill the blank:

"Each one should use whatever _____ he has received to serve others" (1 Peter 4:10)

5 This is our memory verse for this lesson. Write it again and **memorise** it:

"Each one _____" (1 Peter ____:____)

From 1 Peter 4:10-11, we learn three things about these gifts for service:

- a) Different people have different gifts
- b) Each of us has a gift
- c) We should use our gifts humbly



A) Different People have different gifts

6 1 Peter 4:10 speaks of 'God's grace in its various forms'. God gives different gifts to different people. Some gifts are natural abilities which develop from our birth. Others are supernatural abilities we receive after our 'new birth'.

Who gives all these gifts? _____

7 All these abilities come from our generous God, through His Spirit. We cannot earn them. They are God's free gifts for His chosen people.

Write 'True' or 'False' by the following statements:

- a) Different people have different gifts _____
- b) We earn God's gifts by doing good _____

8 Think about the beautiful carpets we weave in our country. If all the threads in a carpet were the same colour, how boring that would be! Instead, the weaver combines threads of many different colours into a lovely design.

In the same way, God weaves us together to be His beautiful chosen people! Does He give us all the same gifts, or different gifts? _____

9 Because we all have different gifts, we need each other. It is like a body with many parts. If we had many eyes in our face but no ears, how useless that would be! In Christ's community different people have different gifts, so we need each other.

Commented [Advisor289]:

READ 1 Peter 4:10-11

PRACTISE the memory verse:

'Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others' (1 Peter 4:10)

ASK:

- "According to v.10, do we all have a gift?" [*yes. It says 'each one'*]
- "What should we each do with our gift?" [*use it to serve others, v.10*]
- "Does everyone have the same gift?" [*no, we have different gifts. v.10 says 'God's grace in its various forms'*]
- "What two examples of gifts are mentioned in v.11?" [*'speaking' and 'serving'*]
- "Are these two the only gifts?" [*no, there are many different gifts. 1 Peter 4:11 mentions two examples, but other Bible passages give other examples*]
- "In v.11, how should 'the one who speaks' fulfil his responsibility?" [*as one speaking the very words of God'. He should take this responsibility seriously and fulfil it very well*]
- "In v.11, how should 'the one who serves' fulfil his responsibility?" [*with the strength God provides'. He should take this responsibility seriously and fulfil it very well*]
- "At the end of v.11, with what purpose should we use our gifts: to bring praise to us or to God?" [*to God; 'so that in all things God may be praised'*]
- "Let's say the last part of v.11 all together in a loud voice." [*together: 'To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever! Amen!'*]

Commented [Advisor290]:

//omit this one??? yes

READ the shaded portion

ASK:

- "What is the meaning of this analogy?" [*discuss together. It is good that we all have different gifts! For God is weaving us together to be His beautiful chosen people*]

Did you hear the story about two handicapped men? One was blind and the other crippled. They both needed to get to the city centre. But the blind man couldn't see which way to go and the crippled man couldn't walk. So how could they reach there?

Well, the blind man told the cripple to get on his back, and be his 'eyes' for him and he would be the 'feet' for the cripple. By helping each other, they both reached their destination. They served each other and trusted each other.

Think about this story. In what ways does it apply to us in our local group of believers? Note your ideas and be ready for discussion.

B) Each of us has a Gift

10 Here again is the verse we memorised:

"Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others" (1 Peter 4:10)

- a) Does 'each one' of Christ's followers have a gift from God? [Yes/No]
- b) Therefore do you yourself have a gift to use in Christ's service? [Yes/No]

11 It doesn't matter if you are old or young, male or female, educated or not! God has given each of us a gift for serving others.

Some people think they have no useful gift for service. In a local group of believers, two ladies are discussing this:

That's not true, dear Fayzia. You are very good at encouraging people. You notice when they are sad. You lift them up. You pray for them. God has given you the gift of encouragement, and it is very special for us!



Laila

I am just an illiterate woman, busy with my children. I am not gifted to serve in the church!



Fayzia

What gift for service has God given to Fayzia? (tick the correct answer)

- a) a gift of preaching
- b) a gift of encouraging others
- c) a gift of healing

Commented [Advisor291]:

READ the shaded portion

ASK:

- "What did you write here?" [discuss together. In my opinion, we all have strengths but we also have weaknesses. We are all 'blind' or 'crippled' in some way. Not one of us is complete and perfect by ourselves.

But my weaknesses are your strengths. So we need each other in our local group of believers. We should appreciate each other's strengths and tolerate each other's weaknesses.]

Commented [Advisor292]:

LOOK at the pictures

ASK:

- "What gift for service has God given to Fayzia?" [a gift of encouraging others]
- "How did Laila help Fayzia?" [by telling her what is her gift]

12 Never think you are insignificant. Others in the church need you. God wants you to use your gift to serve His chosen people.

In every local church, how many people have gifts for service? (tick one)

- a) only the leaders
- b) only those who are well educated
- c) each person, even the shy and humble member

13 We find out our gifts by trying out different kinds of service. Then we ask ourselves:

- “When I serve in this way,
- Do other believers think I am good at it?
 - Do I see positive results from it?
 - Do I enjoy it?”

For instance, suppose a young man Samir enjoys leading the singing when the believers worship together. They tell him he is good at it, and there are positive results as people’s hearts are lifted in praise to God.

So then, what is Samir’s gift for service? _____

14 That way is how we discover our gifts for service. But as we do so, there is a danger! We may develop a wrong attitude. We may become proud of our own gifts, or jealous of other people’s gifts.

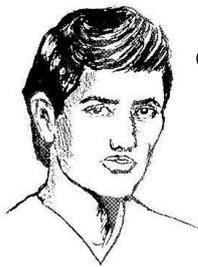
So we need to learn a third thing too:

C) We should use our Gifts Humbly

Recall our memory verse once more, and fill the blank space: “Each one should use whatever gift he has _____ *yafra* to serve others”. (1 Peter 4:10)

15 The verse reminds us that we ‘receive’ gifts. We cannot earn them and we do not deserve them! They all come from God’s generous hand.

Here again is the young man Samir from question 13. He has many gifts:



I am good at leading singing, and evangelism, and praying for the sick. I understand the Bible very well. I preach excellent sermons. I even speak in supernatural tongues. I have more gifts than anyone else in my local church. So why didn't they make me their leader?

Commented [Advisor293]:

READ the shaded portion

ASK:

- “How can we find out what are our gifts?”
[it is mentioned here in point 13.]

First we try any particular kind of service, according to the opportunity. It could be teaching adults from God’s word, or teaching children, or leading worship, or praying for the sick, or advising people, or telling non-Christians about Christ, or serving our neighbourhood... Or anything else where God gives the opportunity

Then we ask ourselves three questions:

- ‘Do other believers think I am good at it?’ //note for translators, we are not talking about boasting or posing, people giving honest feedback
- ‘Do I see positive results from it?’
- ‘Do I enjoy it?’

Then, if the answer to all three questions is ‘yes’, probably we have a gift for that particular kind of service. However, we will only use it if others ask us to. We will not push ourselves forward]

If you were a member of that church, would you want Samir to be the leader? Write reasons for and against giving him responsibilities as leader, and be ready for discussion.

Reasons for Samir being leader: _____

Reasons against Samir being leader: _____

16 Proud Samir has forgotten that we should use our gifts humbly. They are for us to serve God and to serve others.

1 Peter 4:11 gives two examples of this. Fill the blanks from this verse:

“If anyone _____, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God.
If anyone _____, he should do it with the strength God provides”

17 1 Peter 4:11 shows that it is a big responsibility to ‘preach’ God’s word. Every preacher should work hard to prepare the sermon carefully.

1 Peter 4:11 also says that we should ‘serve’ with God’s strength. This word (in the original language) often refers to serving a meal. Men forget how hard women work to cook delicious meals, serve them and then clear up afterwards! But to God the person who serves in this way is just as important as the one who preaches.

For what reason do we serve? (read the rest of v.11 in your Bible)

- ___ a) so that we may be praised by other people
- ___ b) so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ

18 From 1 Peter chapter 4, what three things have we learned about gifts for service? Fill the blank spaces:

- a) Different people have _____ gifts (see question 6)
- b) _____ of us has a gift (see question 10)
- c) We should use our gifts _____ (see question 14)

Serving as Leaders (1 Peter 5)

19 Read 1 Peter 5:1-4. To whom is the apostle Peter writing this section? “To the _____” (verse 1.)

20 In the New Testament, each local church had a group of leaders. This is better than having just one leader in each church. They can share the different responsibilities according to their different gifts.

Look at this progression:

Jesus Christ himself is the “Chief Shepherd” (1 Peter 5:4)

Jesus told the apostle Peter “take care of my sheep” (John 21:16)

Peter told the church leaders, “Be shepherds of God’s flock” (1 Peter 5:1)

Commented [Advisor294]:

READ the shaded portions

ASK:

- “What reasons did you give for Samir being the leader?” [discuss together. He has many gifts for leadership]
- “What reasons did you give against Samir being the leader?” [discuss together. The main problem is his proud attitude]
- “So there are reasons for and against. What should that group of believers decide to do?” [discuss together. There is no one ‘right’ answer, but here are my suggestions:
//delete - First they may talk with Samir about his proud attitude.
- Then they may give him a small responsibility, to test him. He should fulfil this responsibility under the authority of an older leader.
- //at the same time, one older believer talk with him about his attitude
- If he does it well, with a humble attitude, he may be given more responsibility. But if he is proud, then he should wait longer.
- And the group should not appoint him as the only leader. Always it is good to have two or more leaders working together as a team]

Commented [Advisor295]:

READ the shaded portion

ASK:

- “Who is more important in God’s sight, the person who preaches or the person who serves a meal?” [discuss together. In my opinion, both are equally important. It is good to thank people who serve us. We should thank those who preach and we should thank those who serve meals]

Commented [Advisor296]:

// omit it or put a question
READ the shaded portion

What important task has God given to church leaders? To be _____ of His flock.

21 Jesus the Chief Shepherd shows us how to be a good shepherd. He said “*I lay down my life for the sheep*” (John 10:15).

What are the characteristics of a good shepherd? (tick any correct answers)

- ___ a) He is unselfish
- ___ b) He cares more for the sheeps’ welfare than for his own.
- ___ c) He is lazy
- ___ d) He lets the sheep wander into danger
- ___ e) He sacrifices himself for the sheep

22 1 Peter 5:2-3 tells leaders how to be unselfish shepherds of God’s flock. Fill the blanks:

- a) “not because you must, _____ because you are willing” (v.2)
- b) “not greedy for money, _____ eager to serve” (v.2)
- c) “not lording it over those entrusted to you, _____ being examples to the flock” (v.3)

23 This repeated word ‘but’ shows that Christian leaders should be very different from worldly leaders. Just think of the difference:

- Worldly leaders use their people for their own benefit.
- Christ-like leaders sacrifice themselves for their people’s benefit.

It is not easy to lead in a serving way. But what will such leaders receive as a reward? A “_____ of glory” (see v.4).

24 Leaders have a big responsibility to care for God’s people. The people’s responsibility is to encourage and submit to their leaders instead of complaining. Let us be grateful for our leaders, and respect them.

Read 1 Peter 5:5-6

What attitude should the younger men show towards the church leaders? “Be _____”

25 Whether we are leaders or members of a church, 1 Peter 5:5 tells us “*Clothe yourselves with humility towards one another*”. Just as Jesus humbly served his disciples by washing their feet, so we serve each other humbly.

At the start of this lesson, we asked ‘is it possible to serve and lead at the same time?’ Most people think it is impossible. But what do you think? Note your ideas and be ready for discussion: _____

Jesus completely changed the whole system of service. He was the Master, but He did the serving. So let us forget about status and position, and serve from our hearts!



Commented [Advisor297]:

READ the shaded portion

ASK:

- “Which answers did you tick here?” [discuss together. In my opinion, a), b) and e) are correct.]
- “Therefore, what should be the characteristics of a good leader in Christ’s church?” [discuss together. A good leader should unselfish, should care more for the people’s welfare than his own, and should sacrifice himself for them]

Commented [Advisor298]:

READ 1 Peter 5:2-3 and keep the passage open //1-4 and mre later?//

ASK:

- “These verses draw a contrast between worldly leaders and Christian leaders, in three ways. What are these three?”
- [1. ‘not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be’;
- 2. ‘not greedy for money, but eager to serve’;
- 3. ‘not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock’]
- “For whose benefit do worldly leaders work?” [for their own benefit, and their own family]
- “For whose benefit do Christ-like leaders work?” [for the benefit of the believers, who are their spiritual family]
- “Is it hard or easy to be a good shepherd, following Christ’s example?” [it is very hard. Therefore we should support our leaders who do this hard task for our sake]
- “How should the local believers help their leaders do this difficult task?” [discuss together. In my opinion, they should pray for them, respect them, encourage them and be grateful to them. They should not complain about them in secret. Rather, if they have a complaint or a suggestion they should go to talk personally to the leaders, with respect]

Commented [Advisor299]:

READ the shaded portion

ASK:

- “What do you think about this? Is it possible?” [discuss together. In my opinion it is possible. The serving leader is still a leader. He (or she) leads and has authority. The people should respect him. They respect him not with fear but with love. He serves them by sacrificing himself for them. They know this and they respect him for it. They follow his lead willingly because he wants their benefit not his own]

Commented [Advisor300]:

READ the shaded portion

LESSON 19 PRACTICAL TASK

Ask another believer, who knows you well,
“What gifts for service do you think I have? How can I use those gifts to serve others?”

LESSON 19 REVIEW

1 From 1 Peter chapter 4, what three things have we learned about gifts for service? *Fill the blank spaces:*

- a) Different people have _____ gifts (see question 6)
- b) _____ of us has a gift (see question 10)
- c) We should use our gifts _____ (see question 14)

2 Write the memory verse: “Each one _____
_____”. (1 _____ : _____)

Commented [Advisor301]:

TO FINISH THE MEETING

READ the shaded portion.

SAY:

“For your Practical Task this week, do you all have a friend whom you can ask about this... a friend who knows you well?”

CLOSE IN PRAYER

Look again at the picture at the beginning of this lesson. Think again about Christ washing our feet. Ask him to help us serve others as he has served us.

Commented [Advisor302]:

LESSON 19 REVIEW

CORRECT ANSWERS:

Question 1

- a) different
- b) each
- c) for service

Question 2 the memory verse is:

‘Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others’ (1 peter 4:10)

LESSON 19 ANSWERS

- 1 a) Lord b) No
- 2 copy from the box in question 1
- 3 a)
- 4 gift
- 5 memorise the verse
- 6 God
- 7 a) True b) False
- 8 different gifts
- 9 for discussion
- 10 a) Yes b) Yes
- 11 b)
- 12 c)
- 13 leading the singing
- 14 received
- 15 for discussion
- 16 read the verse
- 17 read the verse
- 18 a) different b) each c) humbly
- 19 elders
- 20 shepherds
- 21 a), b), e) are correct
- 22 a) but b) but c) but
- 23 crown
- 24 submissive
- 25 for discussion

Lesson 20 A Different Kind of Hajj

Some people talk about five ‘pillars’ of faith. In the Christian faith there is really only one pillar. i.e. Jesus Christ himself. He is our rock, our foundation.

However Jesus’ followers do also practise the five ‘pillars’, in a different way from other religions. We have learned about *shahaadah* (in lesson 13), *salah* (lesson 5), *sawm* (lesson 17) and *zakat* (lesson 17). But what about the *hajj*? Do Christ’s followers have any equivalent for that?



Our Spiritual Hajj

1 In the Old Testament, the people went on pilgrimage to Jerusalem for their festivals three times a year. Jerusalem, also called *Zion*, was the centre of their religion and the *qibla* for their prayers. On pilgrimage they used to sing psalms like this:

“Blessed are those whose strength is in you, who have set their hearts on pilgrimage.... They go from strength to strength, till each appears before God in Zion” (Psalm 84:5,7)

To which city did the people of the Tawrat do *hajj*? _____

2 But Jesus Christ changed the *qibla*. He taught that it will no longer matter if people worship at Jerusalem or another place, for “*God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth*” (John 4:24). Therefore, God Himself is the *qibla* for our worship, not any particular city on earth.

Of course, if Christians wish they may visit Jerusalem to see the famous places. But it is not an important part of their faith. There is no advantage for them to pray at Jesus’ tomb, for his tomb is empty and he now reigns in heaven!

What is the *qibla* for Christ’s people and the centre of their worship?

- ___ a) Jerusalem ___ b) God Himself

3 In fact, Christ’s followers are on a different kind of pilgrimage, a spiritual *hajj*. This is not a journey we make once in a lifetime to an earthly city. Rather, our whole life on earth is a pilgrimage towards our heavenly homeland.

Where is our true *watan* (homeland)?

- ___ a) in our country where we own a house or land
 ___ b) in Jerusalem
 ___ c) in heaven with our Lord

4 We are on a pilgrimage to paradise. At last, on the day of our death, we will reach our destination. We will meet God our Father face to face!

Stop and Think about your own pilgrimage:

- *Do you strongly desire to reach your homeland in paradise?*
- *Are you pushing straight ahead towards your destination, or are you just wandering aimlessly in circles?*

Talk with God about this, before going on to the next question.

Commented [Advisor303]:

AIMS OF LESSON 19

For all members to:

- a. be certain they will reach paradise safely and look forward to it eagerly
- b. learn to recognise the devil’s attacks and to resist him
- c. memorise 1 Peter 5:10-11

Commented [Advisor304]:

TO START THE MEETING

START WITH PRAYER

SAY:

“Today we discuss the final lesson of this course! I hope you have enjoyed it. But remember, you will gain little benefit if it is just for head knowledge. When you put it into practice in daily life, then you will get the real benefit!”

“We are on a lifelong journey, to paradise. We have a glorious destination, but on the journey we must fight our enemy the devil. Let’s learn now about our spiritual *hajj*.”

LESSON REVIEW

- Check that members can give correct answers to the Review questions.
- For question 4 of the Lesson Review, we will discuss it later in the meeting.

SAY:

“Our **Practical Task** last week was to ask our friend what gifts we have. What did they say to us?” [each member should speak]

Commented [Advisor305]:

READ the shaded portions of points 1 and 2.

ASK:

- “These days Arabs and Jews both want control of Jerusalem (?al-Quds). Which side should Christ’s followers take?” [discuss together. Different Christians have different opinions on this. In my personal opinion Christ’s followers should be on the side of justice. We should say this clearly, because in our country people think that Christians always take sides with Jews against the Arabs.]

Also, Christ changed the *qibla* so Jerusalem is not the centre our faith.

Remember too that some of the Arabs follow Christ, and some of the Jews also follow Christ. Christ’s people from either nation are our spiritual brothers and sisters]

Commented [Advisor306]:

READ the shaded portion

ASK:

- “What is your answer to this question?” [discuss together]

5 For me, sometimes this journey is hard and I become anxious. At other times, the path is easy and I become too confident in my own abilities. What about you?

Read 1 Peter 5:6-7 In this passage,

- a) Which verse do we need when we are too anxious, v.6 or v.7? _____
 b) Which verse do we need when we are too proud, v.6 or v.7? _____
 (Choose v.6 for one answer and v.7 for the other answer)



God's word meets our every need. In 1 Peter ch.5, we need v. 6 when we are proud, and v. 7 when we are anxious. In the Bible whenever you find verses to meet different needs, store them up in your heart. They will be ready to help you on the relevant occasion

Resist the Devil

6 Also, on this spiritual pilgrimage we have an enemy, called the devil or Satan. He tries to block our path and to harm us.

Read 1 Peter 5:8-9. To what animal is the devil compared in this verse? _____

7 The lion is a dangerous animal. It prowls around by the edge of the flock, ready to attack any sheep which are:

- weak, or
- not alert, or
- separated from the flock.



It is the same with us. In what ways can Christ's followers become

- weak? _____
- not alert? _____
- separated from the flock? _____

Write one example in each space, and bring them to the discussion time.

8 In the beginning the Lord made every creature good, including the angels. One of these was the devil. But later he rebelled against God. Ever since that time he has tried to destroy God's work. He "prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour" (1 Peter 5:8).

What advice does 1 Peter 5:8 give us concerning this 'roaring lion'?
 'Be _____ and _____'

Commented [Advisor307]:

READ 1 Peter 5:6-7 and keep the passage open

ASK:

- "Which of these verses do we need when we are too proud, v.6 or v.7?" [v.6. It says 'humble yourselves under God's mighty hand']
- "Please describe an occasion when you were too proud, and God brought you low to teach you humility." [discuss together] "On such occasions does God bring us low because He hates us, or because He loves us?" [because He loves us. Remember what we learned in lesson 3: 'God the Father disciplines us for our good']
- "Which of these verses do we need when we are too anxious, v.6 or v.7?" [v.7. It says 'cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you']

Commented [Advisor308]:

READ 1 Peter 5:8-9 and keep the passage open

ASK:

- "Who is like a lion, according to v.8?" [the devil]
- "Are we able to resist him, according to v.9?" [yes, if we 'stand firm in the faith']

Commented [Advisor309]:

READ the shaded portion

ASK:

- "In your experience, in what ways can Christ's followers become weak?" [discuss together. In my experience, one way is when they stop praying and reading God's word. Another way is when they hide for too long that they are Christ's followers]
- "In your experience, in what ways can Christ's followers be not alert?" [discuss together. In my experience, this happens when they do not realise the devil is tempting them. Then they easily can fall into sin, such as pride, anger or sexual sin]
- "In your experience, in what ways can Christ's followers be separated from the flock?" [discuss together. In my experience, this happens when they stop joining other believers for fellowship, for example because they are married to a non-Christian]

9 Satan is our enemy. We should be self-controlled and alert because he attacks us in different ways. Sometimes he attacks us through outer difficulties, and sometimes through inner temptations.

After Mahboob in Pakistan became Christ's follower, he faced many difficulties. First his beloved wife Samira left him. Then Samira's brothers beat Mahboob and forced him to divorce her. Then they made him give back the money they had spent on their sister's wedding. Then they lied to the judge, and Mahboob had to pay back even more than the original amount. Then Mahboob's family condemned him for the divorce, and for not being a good follower of their religion. Everyone rejected Mahboob. He was miserable and depressed.

Who attacked Mahboob through these severe outer difficulties? Not just humans but also _____

10 Yes, Satan tries to hurt our bodies, minds or spirits. He is cruel, like a lion. But this lion is on a long chain. The devil is not free to do whatever he wants. God has put limits on his power.

In the Old Testament, we read about hazrat Job. He was a wealthy man with a large family. The devil wanted to attack him, but first the devil had to get God's permission. God said 'yes', but with limits.

Then Satan attacked Job with many sufferings. Job lost his wealth, his health and all his children. What a great blow! But the Lord did not let Satan step over the limit of what Job could endure. Job kept trusting God despite his losses. And in the end God used it for good.

Circle the correct answers:

- a) Who attacks us to harm us? [the devil / God]
 b) Who uses it for good in our lives? [the devil / God]

11 Thankfully our Father God does not allow us to be tested beyond our limit. He knew what *hazrat Job* could endure, he knows what Mahboob can endure and he knows what we can endure!

1 Peter 5:9 says "your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings".



➤ **Stop and Pray** right now, for "your brothers (and sisters) throughout the world" whom Satan is attacking through their difficult circumstances, including brother Mahboob in Pakistan.

12 The devil also attacks us by tempting us to do wrong. A lion creeps up on any animal which is unaware of danger. The devil creeps up on us and places temptations within us. We are attracted by these temptations and fall into his clutches.

The devil uses both outer difficulties and inner temptations. For each of the examples below, write 'difficulty' or 'temptation' as appropriate.

Commented [Advisor310]:

READ the shaded portion

ASK:

- "Look what happened to hazrat Job. In your opinion, why does God our Father allow the devil to harm us or our family?" [discuss together. Sometimes this is very hard to understand. But remember, God does not always protect us from all hardship, sometimes he protects us in our hardship. He uses it for good, to purify the gold of our faith. And he stands alongside us in the fire]

Commented [Advisor311]:

READ the shaded portion

SAY:

"Sometimes our hardships seem so great that we think we can endure no more! But listen to this strong promise from God's word: 'God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.' (1 Corinthians 10:13)"

ASK:

- "Can you describe an occasion when you thought you could endure no more? How did God give you strength to stand up under it?" [discuss together]

Akhtar is gripped by pornography



b) _____

Gul's husband divorces her



a) _____

Shireen plots revenge for an insult



d) _____

Ifikhar loses his job



c) _____

13 But we are not afraid of Satan. What command does 1 Peter 5:9 give us? _____ him, standing _____ in the faith'.

14 Yes, we can resist the devil's temptations and we can stand firm! We ourselves don't have the strength for this, but our Lord Jesus himself lives in us and he gives us the strength. "The one who is in you [Christ] is greater than the one who is in the world [Satan]" (1 John 4:4). Christ defeated the devil on the cross.

Who has the strength to resist Satan? (tick one)

___ a) we ourselves

___ b) Jesus Christ living within us

Commented [Advisor312]:

READ the shaded portions

ASK:

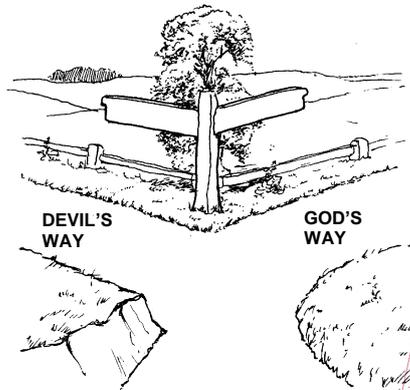
- "In our own strength, are we able to resist the devil?" [no]
- "In Christ's strength, are we able to resist the devil?" [yes. God's word says "The one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world"]

15 The strength to resist temptation comes from Christ. But the choice to resist temptation is our own.

On life's pilgrimage, many times I come to a fork in the road. At each fork, Satan tempts me to go his way, and at the same time God tests me to go his way.

Who must make the choice between these two ways? (*tick one*)

- a) God
- b) I myself
- c) Satan



16 At the fork in the road, if I choose God's way I will make progress in my journey. But if I choose the devil's way, and I keep walking that way, I will stray further and further from God's path.

Whenever that happens, what must I do? I must retrace my steps and come back to God's path. I must sincerely repent and ask for God's forgiveness. He will definitely forgive me because this is His promise. Then he puts me back on His path, to continue my pilgrimage once more.

Whom do we resist, standing firm in our faith? The _____

Our Destination in Heaven

17 God will protect us on our *haji* till we reach our destination. In the box below, underline the words 'steadfast', 'strong', 'restore', 'firm' and 'power':

"And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will Himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen." (1 Peter 5:10-11)

18 During our pilgrimage we have 'suffered a little while'. But far more important is our 'eternal glory' in Christ! Put a circle round these two phrases in the box.

19 Do you ever doubt if you will reach your destination in heaven? Do you fear falling off a narrow bridge before reaching paradise? Read again the words in the box. Whose strength will get you safely to paradise, God's strength or your own strength?

20 Now memorise 1 Peter 5:10-11.

21 Our *haji* on this earth may be long or short, but at last we will reach our destination in heaven.

My friend Umar was dying of cancer. He belonged to Christ, and was eagerly waiting to be with Him in paradise. Before Umar died, he recited this verse to me: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him" (1 Corinthians 2:9).

After that I never saw Umar again. But I know he is now so happy, at home with his heavenly Father and free from pain!

Commented [Advisor313]:

LOOK at this picture

ASK:

- "Whenever I come to a fork in the road, what choice do I have?" [*I can choose to go either the devil's way or God's way*]
- "The devil tempts us to go his way. Who must make the choice to resist this temptation - us or Christ?" [*we must make the choice. If we go the devil's way it is our fault, not Christ's*]

LOOK back at the picture in point 12

ASK:

- "For Akhtar in part b), who must make the choice to turn away from pornography?" [*he himself*]
- "If he makes that choice, who will give him the strength to turn away from pornography?" [*Christ*]
- "For Shireen in part d), who must make the choice to stop planning revenge?" [*she herself*]
- "If she makes that choice, who will give her him the strength to turn away from revenge?" [*Christ*]

Commented [Advisor314]:

READ the shaded portion

READ the Lesson Review, question 4. ('Are you fully certain that when you die, God will accept you into paradise?') //seems to be in wrong place if either wrong answer then talk with advisor

ASK:

- "What answer did each of you give for this question?" [*each and every member should give their own answer from one of the following://rephrase, these sound like right answers!*]
- 'Yes, I am fully certain'
- 'I hope so but I am not sure?'
- 'I think God will torture me for some time before letting me into paradise'

Commented [Advisor315]:

READ the shaded portion

READ all together in one voice
1 Peter 5:10-11

ASK:

- "So can we be certain that God will accept us into paradise?" [*yes we can! Christ is our bridge to paradise. So long as we trust in him, he will not let us fall off!*]

Commented [Advisor316]:

READ the shaded portion

ASK:

- "Do you, like Umar, look forward to being in paradise?" [*discuss together*]

Where is the destination of our *hajj*?

- ___ a) Jerusalem
- ___ b) another city
- ___ c) our homeland in heaven

22 The last two chapters in the Bible, Revelation chapters 21 and 22, give an amazing description of our heavenly city. Read both chapters when you get the chance. Here is just an excerpt:

“Now the dwelling of God is with men, and He will live with them. They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain... No longer will there be any curse... The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and His servants will serve Him. They will see His face... And they will reign for ever and ever.”
(Revelation 21:3-4, 22:3-5)

- a) Read this passage aloud.
- b) Now read it out again, but wherever it has the word ‘they’, instead say the word ‘we’.
(e.g. “We will be His people, and God Himself will be with us and be our God”).

This is the destination of God's chosen people! How much we long, with all our hearts, to complete this hajj and to be with our Lord for ever!



LESSON 20 PRACTICAL TASK

Each day this week, take one phrase from Revelation 21 and meditate on it slowly:

- Day 1: “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and He will live with them.”
- Day 2: “They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God.”
- Day 3: “He will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”
- Day 4: “There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain... or any curse.”
- Day 5: “The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and His servants will serve Him.”
- Day 6: “They will see His face.”
- Day 7: “And they will reign for ever and ever.”

Commented [Advisor317]:

READ the shaded portion

ASK:

- “Which words from this passage are the most exciting for you?” [members should each say their favourite part]

SAY:

“What wonderful promises are in this passage! I will read it again, inserting the word ‘we’ wherever it says ‘they’.

“While I read it, please keep in front of you the picture of the child on the next page. Imagine God wiping away all our tears in paradise!”
//sort out

READ slowly for the group:

“Now the dwelling of God is with men, and He will live with us. We will be His people, and God Himself will be with us and be our God. He will wipe away every tear from our eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain... No longer will there be any curse... The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and we His servants will serve Him. We will see His face... we they will reign for ever and ever.”

Commented [Advisor318]:

READ the shaded portion

SAY:

- “For this Practical Task, each day this week just take one phrase. During your prayer time think deeply on it. Roll it around your mind like a child rolls a toffee in its mouth, enjoying its sweet flavour for a long time.”

Commented [Advisor319]:

TO FINISH THE MEETING

ASK:

“Now we have finished the whole course! To celebrate, shall we have a meal together next week, and a time of thanksgiving to God? And we could each give testimony of what God has done in our lives during this course. Would you like to do that?”

[Discuss this suggestion. It would be an excellent way to finish the course, if the members agree. If not a meal, then at least suggest a gathering for testimony and praise]

CLOSE IN PRAYER

All members should have 1 Peter 5:8-11 open. Different members should give prayers, based on the different parts of this passage. Pray for our ‘brothers’ around the world who are undergoing the same kind of suffering’ (v.9)



“God will wipe every tear from our eyes”

LESSON 20 REVIEW

- 1 a) To which city did the people of the Tawrat do *hajj*? _____
b) Where is the destination of our *hajj*, as Christ’s followers?
Our homeland in _____
- 2 When the devil tempts us,
a) who must make the choice to resist temptation: us or Christ? _____
b) who gives the strength to resist temptation: us or Christ? _____
- 3 Write again the verse you memorised (*see question 18*):
“And the God of all grace, _____

To him be _____ . Amen” (1 Peter ____: ____)
- 4 Are you fully certain that when you die, God will accept you into paradise? Give your personal answer:
___ a) Yes, I am fully certain
___ b) I hope so, but I am not sure
___ c) I think God will torture me for some time before letting me into paradise

If you are not sure how to answer this last question, please talk privately with your advisor! This is very important.

Commented [Advisor320]:

LESSON 20 REVIEW

CORRECT ANSWERS:

Question 1
a) Jerusalem
b) heaven (or paradise)

Question 2
a) us
b) Christ

Question 3 *the memory verse is:*
'And the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will Himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. To Him be the power for ever and ever. Amen'
(1 Peter 5:10-11)

Question 4
personal answers
(but we will discuss this point together)

LESSON 20 ANSWERS

- 1 Jerusalem
- 2 b)
- 3 c)
- 4 personal response
- 5 a) verse 7 b) verse 6
- 6 a lion
- 7 for discussion
- 8 self-controlled, alert
- 9 the devil or Satan
- 10 a) the devil b) God
- 11 pray for those fellow-believers
- 12 a) difficulty b) temptation c) difficulty d) temptation
- 13 resist, firm
- 14 b)
- 15 b)
- 16 devil
- 17 underline the words in the box
- 18 circle the words in the box
- 19 God's strength
- 20 memorise the verse
- 21 c)
- 21 a), b) read the passage aloud

Congratulations, you have finished this course!

If you put it into practice in your daily life, it will be of lasting benefit. But if you do not put it into practice you will gradually lose the benefit.

So ask God to fill you more and more with His Spirit, to make you daily more like Jesus Christ. And whatever He tells you to do, do it!

“Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace at all times and in every way” (2 Thessalonians 3:16)



Supplement 1: My Dedicated Time with My Lord

These steps are to guide you each day in your dedicated time with God.

- At each step, pray with your own words, or using the sample prayers.
- You may stand, kneel, sit or bow down, as God's Spirit leads you.
- You may use these steps on your own, or together with other believers.

Step 1:

Prepare

- **I confess my sin and ask God to cleanse me. This is my spiritual wuzu.**

Sample prayer:

"O Holy God, you know all my inner secrets.
Please remind me now of my wrong deeds, words or thoughts since my last prayer time
[...name them here...].

I have hurt and dishonoured you in these ways.

I am sorry; please forgive me and cleanse me within.

Thank you for your promise to forgive all who truly turn back to you.

I receive your forgiveness now, through the sacrifice of Jesus the Messiah. Ameen"

- **I ask God to speak with me through His word and help me understand it.**

Sample prayer from Psalm 27:8:

"My heart says of you, 'Seek His face!' Your face, Lord, I will seek."

Step 2:

Read

- **I read a passage of the Bible**, maybe a few verses or half a chapter
- I stop at a phrase which **especially leaves its impression on me**. It may be a promise to assure me, an example to follow, or a command to obey.
- I do something to help me remember this **remember this important point** God taught me today. e.g. write the verse in a notebook, or memorize it.
- **I place a book-mark** in the passage, to mark where to continue reading tomorrow with the next section.

Commented [Advisor321]:

[On this page we continue the discussion from lesson 6]

ASK:

- "What is Step 1 in our dedicated time with our Lord?" [Prepare]

Commented [Advisor322]:

READ the shaded section.

ASK:

- "What should we do in this Step?" [Firstly, confess our sins and ask God to cleanse us. Secondly, ask God to speak to us through His word and help us understand it]

Commented [Advisor323]:

ASK:

- "What is Step 2 in our dedicated time with our Lord?" [Read]

- "What should we do in this Step?" [read a passage of the Bible]

SAY:

- "Let's practise this Step with a passage of the Bible. Turn to 1 Peter 1:13-15" [everyone should find the place in their Bibles or New Testaments]

Commented [Advisor324]:

READ the passage 1 Peter 1:13-15

ASK:

- "Which phrase especially leaves its impression on you?" [Different members will choose different phrases]

- "This phrase is what God is pressing on your heart today. What will you do to remember this important point? [e.g. write it in a notebook, or colour it in their Bible, or memorise it]

- "What will you do to obey this thing God has told you today?" [various responses. We grow spiritually not just through reading God's word but through obeying it]

SAY:

- "No baby would suck milk into its mouth and then spit it out again! But that is what we do if we read God's word and then disobey it!"

Step 3:

Pray

- First, **I thank God for His word and I ask His help** to put into practice what I learned today

Sample Prayer from Psalm 119:103,105

“How sweet are Your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth... Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path”.

- Then **I thank and praise my Father God**

Sample Prayer

“Dear heavenly Father,

You are my Creator and my Master, You are faithful and strong.

You love those who don’t deserve it, You came to me in Jesus my Saviour and made me Your child. Thank you!

Thank you too for meeting my needs and answering my prayers [...mention one thing God has provided for you..].

I praise and thank you my Father, Ameen”

- Then **I pray for my own needs**: my material needs, my social needs and my spiritual needs. **I also listen** to anything God wants to say to me.
- Then **I pray for the needs of others**, perhaps using this rota:

<u>Day</u>	<u>People I will pray for</u>
Friday	My close family members
Saturday	My wider family and relatives
Sunday	Followers of Jesus in my country & worldwide
Monday	My friends who do not know Jesus
Tuesday	Any poor and sick people I know
Wednesday	The government and leaders of my country
Thursday	Christ’s kingdom to spread around the world

- Finally I may choose to pray **the Lord’s Prayer**:

“Our Father in heaven,

Hallowed be your name,

Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

Forgive us our debts, as we have also forgiven our debtors,

And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one.

For yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory. Amen”

Now, I go out into my daily life, strengthened by God’s Spirit to obey His word!

Commented [Advisor325]:

ASK:

- “What is Step 3 in our dedicated time with our Lord?”

[Pray]

////////

- “
-

Commented [Advisor326]:

TO FINISH THE MEETING

SAY:

- “Now you know what to do for this dedicated time with God. Your Practical Task is to actually do this, every day this week. Do it for 15 minutes each day.”

[Tell members to read through the whole of 1 Peter during the next two weeks, reading a few verses each day. Afterwards they can choose whichever book of the Bible they prefer.]

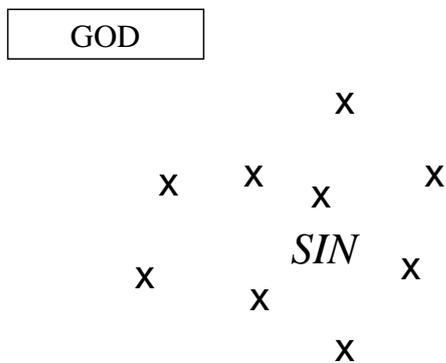
CLOSE IN PRAYER

Ask God to help us find the best time and place to dedicate with Him each day.

Supplement 2: How to reach God

Imagine //a son or daughter // you are coming home to your own village after many years overseas. You are longing to see your dear parents again. As you come towards the village you can see them waving to you in the distance. But there was a war while you were away, and there is now a minefield lying between you and your parents. If you try to cross that minefield you will be destroyed.

It is like that with us and Almighty God. We want to reach Him and live in His intimacy. But between us and Him there is gap we cannot cross, like a minefield. It is called 'Sin'.



+ a picture of a woman!



*//there is no way through unless someone makes a way through
//or the bridge to paradise which is as thin as a human hair and nearly everyone falls off.*

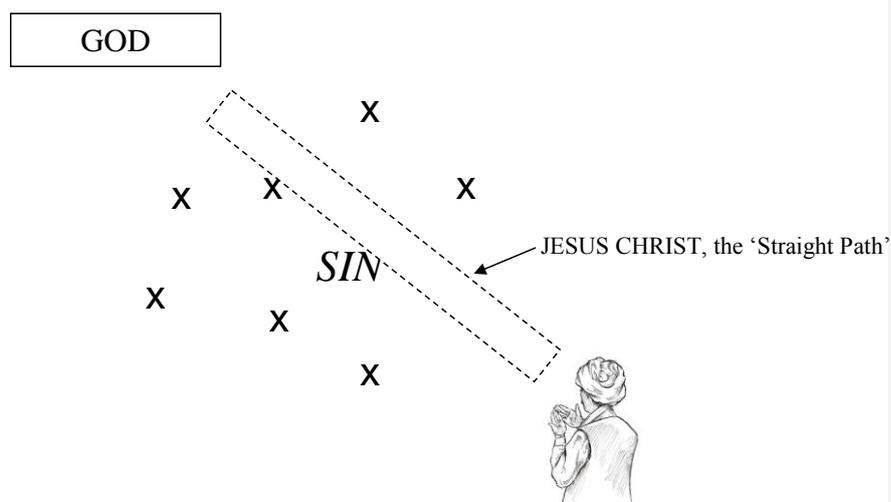
We cannot cross the minefield of Sin. But God Himself sent Jesus Christ to rescue us and bring us to Himself. 1 Peter 3:18 explains what Jesus our Saviour did:

“For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God”
(1 Peter 3:18)

Here we see four wonderful truths:

1. ‘Christ died’ He really did die on the cross, and afterwards God raised him to life again, and gave him a place of highest honour in heaven.
2. ‘for sins once for all’ This was God’s plan from the beginning. God told the people of the Tawrat to make animal sacrifices to take away sin temporarily. But he also told them that the Messiah will make a perfect, permanent sacrifice ‘once for all’.
3. ‘the righteous for the unrighteous’ We are all sinful and we are ashamed and we deserve to burn in the hell-fire. But Jesus the Messiah was without sin, as all the books say. He, the righteous one, took our sin with its punishment and shame when he died on the cross!
4. ‘to bring you to God’ God created us not just to obey Him, but to love Him and know Him personally. We cannot come into His intimacy through our own efforts, but Jesus has made the way. He himself is the ‘Straight Path’ to bring us to God!

Jesus crossed the minefield of sin. He died there and rose again. Now he has made a Straight Path for us to cross too.



+ a picture of a woman!

Will you follow this Straight Path which Christ made at great cost? The choice is yours:

- You can say “I don’t need this Path, I can find my own way instead”. But you will be destroyed in the minefield.
- You can say “I’ll think about it and maybe follow this Path another time.” // might want to wait for family to do this with you but don’t let this prevent you from ever taking the step.
- You can say to the Lord Jesus Christ, “Thank you for making the Path back to God. Yes, I accept it gratefully. I am sorry for all the wrong things I have done. Please forgive me, make me clean and fill me with your Spirit in my life. I will follow and obey you as my Master. Amen”

//you and your family

Further Information for the Advisor

A) The Design of This Course

This course is based on the apostle Peter's first letter, which he wrote to strengthen new believers in a hard situation. My prayer is that this course will strengthen the learners in your group too. 1 Peter includes many other important topics for growing as Christ's disciples. These topics are included in this course, linked with teaching from other parts of the Holy Bible.

We want learners to fill their minds with God's truth so that it changes their attitudes. Therefore they memorise one verse in each lesson of this course.

However, when we read or even memorise words, sometimes they just pass through our minds without sticking. So this course is not like a normal book. It is for active learning, not for passive reading. Learners should not merely *read* and *remember*, but also *understand* what they read, *think* about it, *pray* about it and *put it into practice*.

Therefore this course combines three methods:

1. Homework Learners first read 2-3 sentences, and then answer a question:
 - Some questions help them remember what they have just read;
 - Some questions help them understand and apply the teaching to their lives;
 - Some questions help them think about their past experiences, and their attitudes, in order to discuss these things in the group.
2. Discussion. This course is not for learners just to read on their own! Their homework is just a preparation for the discussion. During the discussion, learners speak their own opinion and listen to the opinions of others. This breaks down old attitudes and motivates the learners to live more for their Lord Jesus Christ. Also, they do their homework better because they know they will have to talk about it in the group.
3. At the end of each lesson comes a practical task which learners should go out and do before the next meeting. This is very important. It prevents the lesson from being just theory and makes it a part of their lives. This course suggests a 'practical task' to go with each lesson. But you know the needs of your group best, so you are free to give them a different practical task from the one in the book, if you prefer.

So remember the design of this course:

- the homework helps learners remember and understand, and think about their experiences;
- the discussion helps learners express their opinions and learn from others;
- the practical task helps learners act on the lesson in their daily life

homework + discussion + practical task → growing in Christ

B) Religious Terminology

To help a learner understand new ideas, it helps them to make a connection with their old ideas. This connection serves as a bridge, to take them from their familiar world to the new world.

Therefore this course uses familiar religious words from the old religion, as a 'bridge' or 'hook' to take the learner to the new faith. When we use these words it is not to teach the old

meaning. No, we want to teach the new meaning. For instance, when we talk about Christ's *shariah*, it helps the learner realise that their new way of life is very different from their old *shariah*. It is the same with words like *shahaadah*, *namaz*, *zakat*, *roza* and *hajj*. We are not teaching the old meaning, instead we just use these words to bring learners across the bridge to the new meaning!

C) How to lead Group Discussion

Remember these points:

- Don't talk too much yourself! You should ask questions, not give a lecture. Good questions should:
 - be easy to understand
 - open up discussion (not close it off with a one word answer like 'yes' or 'no')
 - be relevant to the lesson
- Give an opportunity for every member to take part in discussion. Tell the talkative ones not to speak too much. Help the shy ones by asking them easy questions (and don't allow others to answer on their behalf!)
- If the students cannot understand a question, do not give the answer yourself, but ask the same question again in a different way.
- Don't let the discussion stray away from the main point.
- If a member gives an answer which is 'wrong' or does not help the discussion, do not shame them by saying 'you are wrong'. Instead, ask what other members think. Usually they will correct it themselves. Or you can say, 'Thank you for your contribution, which we appreciate, but have you considered this aspect too?' Then give a better answer.
- Concentrate on the practical aspect of each lesson, so that each member of the group goes away with something to apply to his or her life.
- Let the members ask you questions. If you don't know the answer, tell them you will find out before the next meeting. They will respect you more for this than if you pretend to know the answer. Make sure that you fulfil this promise by bringing your answer to the next meeting.

D) The Introductory Meeting

Here are some guidelines for how to lead the very first meeting, which will be a short one just to give learners the course books and to explain the course method.

1. If this is a new group, introduce yourself and the members to each other.
2. Start the meeting with prayer.
3. Give a course book to each member.
4. Ensure that any non-reader or slow reader is linked with a partner to help them.
5. In their books, all members should open the page 'List of Contents'. Ask one member to read out the list of topics to the group.
6. SA Y: "The purpose of this course is to help us grow as Christ's followers. We are all learners together, me as well as you. Together, we want to:
 - understand God's will in our lives,

- trust Him with gratitude,
- put Him first in everything,
- live close to Him with the help of His Spirit,
- play our part in the community of Christ's followers.

Is this what you want too?" *[discuss this together]*

7. SAY: "To achieve this purpose, this course uses three methods in combination:

- the homework helps us remember and understand, and think about our experiences;
- the discussion helps us express our opinions and learn from others;
- the practical task helps us act on the lesson in our daily lives.

All three of these are important. Just the homework and discussion are not enough on their own. We need to put what we learn into practice!"

8. Ask everyone to look in their books at the page 'Guidelines for the Student'. Ask each student to read out one sentence, in turn. Check that everyone understands these guidelines.

9. Ask everyone to look at lesson 1, 'Becoming Christ's Follower'. Read out the heading 'The purpose of our lives' and the next two paragraphs.

Point to the picture of the teacher, and ASK: "Do you agree with the first man or the second man? What is the purpose of your life?" *[discuss this point]*.

10. Continue in this same lesson and read question 1 together. Show the members how to tick the correct answer. Then show them how to check their answer at the end of the lesson, where it says 'Lesson 1 Answers'.

11. SAY: "Now *read* question 2 quietly on your own, then *write* your answer in the blank space, then *check* you have the correct answer." Give them time to do this. Help them with any words they find difficult. Make sure that any non-readers still understand what is happening.

12. SAY: "The book is your teacher. That is why it gives you the answers at the end of each lesson, so you can *check* your own answers. But this does not mean you should just copy from the book! First write your own answers, then check if you got them right".

13. ASK: "At the end of lesson 1, what answer does it give for question 5?" *[personal response]*. "What answer does it give for question 13?" *[personal response]*

SAY: "When the answer says 'personal response' or 'for discussion', there is no 'right' answer. Instead, you should write your own personal opinion. Does this mean you should leave these questions blank and not write anything?" *[No it doesn't mean this! Each member should still write their own opinion and be ready to talk about it in the discussion]*.

14. ASK: "Why is it important to write our personal answers to such questions, and not leave them blank?" *[because when we write something it makes us think more deeply about it. And we will remember it better. Also, we have something ready to tell to others in the discussion.]*

15. SAY: "Before our next meeting, please complete the whole of Lesson 1 in your own time. At the end, please do the Lesson Review. The questions in Lesson Review are a summary of the ones in the lesson. Therefore we have not given you the answers. They are for you to check yourself that you remember the lesson well."

16. Collect the money for the books from the group members (it is good for them to pay even a little bit for the books, if possible).

17. Fix the time and place of the next meeting. Close in prayer.