
TRUSTING GOD

WHEN IT'S HARD TO TRUST



BY CHARLES WILLIS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Worry
2. Sadness
3. Discouragement
4. Loneliness
5. Addiction
6. Anger
7. Pride
8. Fear
9. Growing Old and Terminal Illness
10. Temptation
11. Guilt and Forgiveness
12. Change

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INTRODUCTION

When life is good, it is easy to proclaim our trust in God. As life weighs down upon us and difficulties heap up, it is harder to live our life trusting in God's way. We tend to try to solve all our problems for ourselves rather than trusting in God for help and deliverance. Again, this is easy to talk about even in these lessons, but more difficult to apply to our life when we are dealing with troubles.

Sadly, some leave the Lord entirely when the burdens of life become so heavy. Others develop a weakened faith. It is exactly in these times of problems that we must turn to God for help. There is help from no other source. We must trust in His promises to hear us and deliver the faithful to the heavenly home. He does not promise to deliver us from all afflictions in this life, but promises us eternal life. One of the reasons we struggle with these things is because we are focused on the present existence rather than the eternal.

Everyone struggles in this life, some more than others. Everyone has dealt with the troubles in this workbook to one degree or another. Books have been written dealing with each topic, some from a spiritual viewpoint, some from a worldly viewpoint. This study will only be a cursory look at each topic. It may be you are struggling with one or many of the topics in this study. Hopefully the examination of Scripture will be helpful to you. Ideally, it is my hope that we will be examining these topics while we are not dealing with them. It is the intent of this study to prepare us for such a time when we need to demonstrate our trust in God because of difficulties that come upon us.

Trust requires faith. Faith requires obedience. "Trust and obey, for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus" is a very true sentiment, one that cannot just be applied to a new convert. It is my firm conviction that God's ways are best for us and if we will obey His ways, especially when it is hard, God will bless us. This will be a challenging study because it demands we examine our application of truth in our life. May we all attempt to grow in our faith and trust in God as we consider these topics.

Charles Willis

Lesson # 1

WORRY

Everyone has experienced worry. It is difficult for us to not worry over some large matters; however, some are consumed with worry, even over the smallest of matters.

1. Define worry.

Worry is a thought process and a habit. It is a way we learn to think, which we can learn to change. We can control worry by our thinking and our trust in God. A strong faith drives worry out of our mind. A weak faith invites worry. Doubts can grow in the presence of worry.

2. How does Peter demonstrate this point (Matt. 14:28-31)?

Our passage through life will also bring periods of storms which will try our faith. When faith diminishes, anxiety grows. Worry feeds upon itself. The problem, for most, is trying to solve problems on their own rather than trusting in God.

3. What do the following passages reveal about what our attitude should be?

A. Philippians 4:6

B. 1 Peter 5:7

C. Matthew 6:25-31

D. Jeremiah 17:7-8

E. Proverbs 3:5

Jesus said worrying about your height will not change it (Matt. 6:27). We at times become fixated on things we can't change. It is a matter of perspective and a choice of how to deal with things either with worry or contentment. It is not wrong to have some confidence in self, but only because of what God does through us. As Paul said, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:13). Rather than worry about what cannot be changed, we must trust in God and get busy changing the things we can.

4. How do the following passages teach us to avoid worry?

A. Luke 14:28-30

B. Psalm 55:22

C. James 4:2

D. Counting our blessings helps greatly in
keeping things in perspective.
Psalm 68:19

E. Matthew 6:34

5. What is the secret of contentment?

A. Philippians 4:11-13

B. 1 Timothy 6:6-8

C. Hebrews 13:5-6

6. What is the cure for worry (Matt. 6:31-34)?

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Try to list three things you worry about which you cannot change.

Discuss how fellow Christians can help us overcome worry.

Lesson # 2

SADNESS

This is a very broad topic which will include sadness, grief and depression. Often these are connected and lead to each other. We are sometimes too quick to tell a Christian who struggles with sadness that they need to “rejoice in the Lord always” (Phil. 4:4). While there is always a reason to rejoice in our salvation through Jesus, the sadness can be very real. Solomon wrote there is “a time to weep and a time to laugh; a time to mourn and time to dance” (Eccl. 3:4). Not every moment should be mourning (as in depression), but it is not wrong to be sad, or even depressed for a time.

“When the heart is sad, the spirit is broken” (Prov. 15:13). An extreme end of this sentiment is the desire to die. Many have felt this degree of sadness and longed to pass into the eternal realm. I do not speak of suicide, but of great sadness, grief, and depression. We are wrong to think this is not part of the human experience or that we should not have such feelings.

1. For the following passages, please tell who was struggling with sadness, grief or depression, and what their situation was.

A. Lamentations 3:14-20

B. 2 Samuel 12:15-23

C. Job 30:27-31

D. Genesis 23:2 (also Jer. 16:7; Ezek. 24:17)

E. Nehemiah 2:1-3

F. 1 Samuel 1:8

G. 1 Kings 21:5

H. Isaiah 53:3

Scripture presents many who are in the midst of great sadness, grief, and depression. It is a reality that everyone will experience to some degree. What is vital is determining how to deal with these emotions, just as we must righteously deal with other emotions and feelings (such as anger, love and pride). Many do not deal with these sentiments in a godly way and so suffer even more, some to the point of suicide because they feel there is no hope or any way out. For believers, God does not leave us alone for we are told He will never leave us or forsake us (Heb. 13:5).

2. What does God do for us?

A. 2 Corinthians 7:6

B. 1 Thessalonians 4:13

C. Revelation 21:4

3. When is mourning good?

A. Ecclesiastes 7:2-4

B. Matthew 5:4 (compare with Job 5:11)

C. Joel 2:12

4. What words of positive encouragement are given in Scripture for those struggling with sadness, grief and depression?

A. 2 Corinthians 4:8-9, 16-18

B. 1 John 1:9

C. Hebrews 11:6; 1 Timothy 1:1

T What can brethren do to help a brother or sister who is struggling with sadness, grief and/or depression?

H

I How does faith help a person through dark and difficult times, such as when a loved one dies?

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Lesson # 3

DISCOURAGEMENT

The Source of some sadness is discouragement, which also brings additional problems in relationships and unproductive thoughts. Feelings of self-worth are brought low by discouragement. Rather than being encouraged to do more, we can be discouraged and we then choose to do less or even quit. Sadly this is true about relationships in the church. When some become discouraged they quit working, and some just give up on God completely out of frustration and disappointment.

1. For each example, give the source of discouragement and how to overcome it.

A. 1 Kings 19:3-18 (Elijah)

Source:

How Overcome:

B. Psalm 42:9-11; 43:5 (David)

Source:

How Overcome:

C. Genesis 30:1 (Rachel)

Source:

How Overcome:

D. Nehemiah 2:3 (Nehemiah)

Source:

How Overcome:

E. Colossians 3:21 (Children)

Source:

How Overcome:

F. Acts 15:36-39

Source:

How Overcome:

I have been discouraged by brethren, and I have discouraged brethren. I suspect all men can say this. We are not to be a discouragement, yet we sometimes are discouraged because of mistakes we make, because of sin with our tongue, and sometimes because of a desire to hurt our brother. Most who have been a Christian for several years have felt as if they had been betrayed or greatly offended by a brother.

Even more is the discouragement felt by those more mature when they see their weaker brethren falling to temptation and choosing to rebel against God. This is the discouragement surely faced by Moses as he came down from the mountain to discover Aaron had led the people in building a golden calf which they were worshipping. Discouragement is real, and it can hound a person and beat them down till they just don't want to try any more. This must be why Scripture constantly states we are to encourage each other.

2. READ 2 Corinthians 4:8-18

A. When facing persecution and death, why was Paul not discouraged?

B. Why do we not lose heart?

3. What do we all need to overcome discouragement (Heb.10:32-39)?

4. How do we keep from being discouraged?

A. Philippians 4:13

B. Isaiah 40:28-31

C. Jeremiah 29:11-13

D. Joshua 1:9

Though Elijah grew discouraged, even to the point of death, God was not finished with Him. There was work that remained for Elijah to accomplish. He had to overcome his disappointment and get busy. Labor in the kingdom of God will often be of great help in overcoming disappointment. Romans 8:28 is a very true statement if we will just allow God to use us: "God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God." When we cannot see anything but the disappointment, we must trust in God and continue serving Him in obedience. His will is being accomplished in our life, and He may have big plans for us. As the Hebrews writer said, we must endure.

Provide three methods through which we can encourage the saints (rather than discourage).

T A.
H B.
I C.

If you are personally the cause of discouragement in another, what should you do?

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K How does trust in God help overcome discouragement?

Lesson # 4

LONELINESS

God created man to be a social being. Instructions of how to interact within that community are major points in God's law. Some people just want to be left alone. They enjoy solitude and privacy; however, many do not desire to be alone and they are. Loneliness affects thousands every day.

1. What did God say about man (Gen. 2:18)?
2. What are some things that cause us to be alone?
 - A. Genesis 35:19-21
 - B. Leviticus 13:46
 - C. Jeremiah 15:17
 - D. 1 Thessalonians 3:1-2

Loneliness becomes a problem for many because they have little to do or think about so they dwell on their loneliness. Some have spiraled into depression because of extreme loneliness. Most struggling with loneliness have not even considered how they need to trust in God as a solution. Many try to seek companionship, regardless of the beliefs of the other person. God

has not left us without help.

3. What is a poor use of time and loneliness (1 Tim. 5:13)?
4. What are some constructive uses of time alone?
 - A. Matthew 14:23; 1 Timothy 5:5
 - B. Philippians 4:8
 - C. 2 Timothy 2:15
 - D. 2 Timothy 4:2
 - E. Ephesians 5:16
5. How can Christians avoid loneliness?
 - A. Hebrews 10:25
 - B. Acts 9:36-39
 - C. 1 Corinthians 15:58
 - D. 1 Timothy 5:5
 - E. John 8:29; 16:32

Many who have lost a spouse (by divorce or by death) struggle to accept the remainder of their life with no close companion. We know many who never marry, but it is difficult to return to a life without a spouse when you have enjoyed that companionship for many years. The warning to

younger widows is about feeling sensual desires in disregard for Christ (1 Tim. 5:11). Widows are permitted to remarry (1 Tim. 5:14) but only “in the Lord” (1 Cor. 7:39).

6. What should be the focus of the unmarried person (1 Cor. 7:32-35)?

7. What is God’s promise to the faithful (Heb. 13:5-6)?

It is easy to get wrapped up in ourselves and withdraw into ourselves as a result of loneliness. We see no way out of this state and resign ourselves to what most consider a miserable existence. It is at this moment we must trust God. Believe He is with us, know that He is because of our obedience, and begin doing the things of God. It may be that you need to increase your doing of good works to overcome loneliness. Rather than withdrawing, what is needed is more inclusion and involvement in the lives of others. Being the servant of God is the answer to loneliness. Become a Dorcas!

T What can you do for others to help them overcome loneliness?

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Why is this more a problem for older people?

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Lesson # 5

ADDICTION

Over the last fifty years many physical changes in the body have been proven to be a basis for addiction. Evil men have profited from addicting chemical substances which they have created with the sole intent of selling to others. In America, and across the world, drug addiction is a real issue and there seems to be no serious desire for societies to help stop the flow of these substances. Some are now legalized for medicinal purposes and must follow strict guide lines. Others remain illegal.

1. Define addiction.

2. From the following passages create a list of things to which people are addicted.

A. Galatians 5:20

B. Hebrews 13:4; Romans 1:24-28

C. Proverbs 23:20-21, 29-35

3. What sort of happiness do addicts find (Prov. 23:29-35; Joel 1:5)?

Some addictions are based on chemical reactions in the body. Others are habits of behavior and thinking. These mental addictions can become just as problematic, and can be sinful as well.

4. How can we know if we are addicted (Rom. 6:12-18)?

5. How does Scripture indicate an admission of addiction is necessary if we desire to overcome it (Matt. 6:24; 1 Cor. 6:9-10)?

The only solution to the problem of sin is God's salvation found in Jesus. We are washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of Jesus (1 Cor. 6:11). A turning away from sin (even sinful addiction) is necessary "in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 3:19). Any addiction will take work from the individual. We must choose, and continue to choose to be the slave of righteousness. A continual return to sin (living in sin) can be a type of addiction.

6. Who should help the addict overcome his addiction (Gal. 6:1)?

7. To what does God want the Christian to be addicted?

A. 1 Corinthians 16:15

B. Colossians 4:2

C. Romans 12:10

D. 1 Corinthians 7:35; 2 Corinthians 11:3

E. Acts 6:4

8. What intoxicates the Christian (Eph. 5:18-21)?

T Other than what has been presented in this lesson, what other reasons could be argued for why a Christian should not be addicted to anything but God?

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I Counseling is generally considered an aspect of treatment for those who are addicted. Discuss the need and the role of spiritual counseling for an addict. What part does the church play in helping an addict overcome his addiction?

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Lesson # 6

ANGER

Very few people think about God while in the angry moment. When “seeing red” many just seem to turn their brain off. The world calls this a “blind rage.” As Christians we must not let God leave our thoughts, and we must instead trust in God. His word is to guide us and become our will. Living angry every day is not God’s will for us. Frequent bouts with intense anger should not be considered normal. Anger is habitual and is used by many as a coping mechanism for life. Generally, it is a poor substitute to fill the void which godliness should fill.

1. What are we to put away (Col. 3:8)?
2. Is it a sin to be angry? (Gen. 6:5-7, 19; Mark 3:5; 11:15).

There are many things which cause men to become angry. Some so habitually allow anger in their heart, that the slightest thing triggers intense rage. This is not like God. His anger is caused by men’s sin. Furthermore, He is patient and long suffering. God never loses control even when angered. It is the thinking of man that contends getting angry is a profitable thing.

3. Give three points about anger from Ephesians 4:26-27.
 - A.
 - B.
 - C.
4. Why must we be slow to anger (James 1:19-20). Explain.
5. How are the ‘hot-tempered’ and the ‘slow to anger’ contrasted?
 - A. Proverbs 14:17
 - B. Proverbs 14:29
 - C. Proverbs 15:1
 - D. Proverbs 15:18
 - E. Proverbs 29:22
6. How does God think of those who are slow to anger (Prov. 16:32; 19:11; 29:11)?
7. Who should be thought of as ‘bad company’ that corrupts good morals (Prov. 22:24-25)?

Because so many struggle with anger, it is helpful to consider what Scripture says about managing conflict. These principles are true about conflict with anyone, but we must be certain to apply them toward conflict with brethren.

8. When is the right time to confront someone (Prov. 27:5-6; Matt. 5:21-24)?

9. What principle must we abide by (Matt. 7:3-5)?

10. How we start a conversation about a conflict is very important. What is God's instruction in this regard (Gal. 6:1; 2 Tim. 2:24; Eph. 4:2)? What does this practically mean to you? How do you start such a conversation?

11. How does the principle in Proverbs 17:27-28 apply to a conversation regarding a conflict?

12. What do these passages reveal about self-examination?

A. Proverbs 16:2

B. 2 Corinthians 13:5

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What does it mean to trust in God (and His ways) when we struggle with anger?

How can we help each other in overcoming anger?

Lesson # 7

PRIDE

One of the most difficult of all human characteristics to remove from our heart is pride. Everyone has struggled to some extent with pride, and many are consumed with pride. This is an old problem, and a persistent one. Haman is a great example of pride in thinking the king was going to honor him greatly, only to find out he was to lead the donkey (Esther 3-7).

Generally, even in our society, pride is viewed poorly when recognized in others. Rarely does a person admit they themselves are guilty of pride. It repulses us to see how pride causes some to act and speak. If this character trait repulses us, imagine how God feels.

1. What does God think about pride?
 - A. Proverbs 8:13
 - B. Proverbs 16:5
 - C. Proverbs 6:16-17
 - D. Mark 7:21-23
 - E. James 4:6

Too often, we struggle with pride in our own life, and fail to adopt the character of God. We do

not trust His way, or His word. Pride rises up and overwhelms us.

2. What does pride lead to?
 - A. Proverbs 13:10
 - B. Proverbs 16:18-19
 - C. Psalm 10:3-11
 - D. 3 John 9-10
3. How does Satan use pride?
 - A. 1 John 2:15-17
 - B. Genesis 3:1-6
 - C. Matthew 4:5-7
 - D. 1 Timothy 3:6

We still struggle, even while knowing all the bad things God has revealed about pride. We understand it is an avenue for Satan to tempt us. Yet we know God “will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it” (1 Cor. 10:13). Sadly, we sometimes do not take the way of escape.

Pride is not always a “one-time” temptation but becomes a habitual attitude in our heart. To a degree, it causes our heart to grow hard because we do not think of others first, but ourselves. Therefore, the way of escape may also need to be more “long-term.” The “quick fix” may not be the answer for most people, but rather a studious, careful self-examination and application of Scripture to our own heart.

4. What ways of escape does God reveal to us for overcoming pride?

A. Romans 12:3; Galatians 6:3

B. Philippians 2:3-8

C. Romans 12:16

D. 1 Corinthians 13:4

Rather than be consumed with pride, or even struggle with pride, “He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” (Micah 5:8). Humility is the trait we must strongly develop, for “God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble...humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord and He will exalt you” (James 4:6, 10).

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How does pride demonstrate a lack of trust in God?

Why is ‘religious pride’ so disgusting to men and God (see Luke 18:9-14)?

Lesson # 8

FEAR

Fear is “the affection of the mind that arises with the awareness of approaching danger” (New Unger’s Bible Dictionary); “To be afraid of, expect with alarm (fear the worst),” also “to be afraid of, apprehensive” (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary). While the Bible uses the word “fear” as a reverential respect of God, this lesson will deal more with the feelings of apprehension and alarm.

Everyone has fears to one degree or another. Fear of heights ranks #5, fear of darkness, ranks #4, fear of spiders ranks #3, fear of death ranks #2, but most people do not realize that fear of public speaking ranks #1 worldwide. In fact 75% of men and women have this fear (that’s three out of four people). [<http://www.speech-topics-help.com/fear-of-public-speaking-statistics.html>] Within each of us are some of these fears to some degree. Some take these fears to extremes and our society calls them “phobias” or “disorders.” Only by learning to trust in God can we overcome our fears.

1. The one talent man suffered from a fear of failure (Matt. 25:25). What does God reveal to His people about success? (1 Cor. 15:58; Is. 55:11; Ps. 1:3)

2. How does fear keep us from fulfilling our responsibility? (Matt. 25:15; Deut. 1:21-33; Ex. 3:11-13, 4:10-13; Judges 7:3; Luke 5:10)

3. How does fear lead us into ignoring God’s word? (Matt. 6:1-6, 16-18; 23:1-7; Is. 51:7; Matt. 26:69-75; Gal. 2:11-14; Prov. 29:25)

Fear warps our thinking and causes our personality to be governed by fear. King Saul, near the end of his life, grew mad with fear that the throne would not pass to his son Jonathan because David was God’s anointed one. This is why he was trying to kill David. Saul became consumed with a kind of “madness” that seemed to be driven (in part) by his fears.

From the example of Saul we can easily learn that sin can and should cause us to fear God. When God’s judgment of death was passed on Saul because of his sin, he “immediately fell full length upon the ground and was very afraid” (1 Sam. 28:20). As Jesus said, we should not “fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matt. 10:28).

4. Why would any many have an apprehensive fear of God (1 John 4:20)?

Trusting God in obedience results in comfort and peace in our heart. Isaiah says, “it is the Lord of hosts who you should regard as holy, and He shall be your fear, and He shall be your dread. Then He shall become a sanctuary” (Is. 8:13-14). The fear of eternal punishment is relieved by the clear conscience (1 Pet. 3:28) that has been forgiven by God’s grace through Jesus Christ. Then God’s love for His obedient children creates a peace in our heart so that God is our Sanctuary. “For you have not received a spirit of slavery” (Rom. 8:15). Other fears which men possess are helped through this confident trust we are to have in God.

5. How does trust in God help us overcome fears?

A. 1 Peter 3:13-15

B. 2 Timothy 1:7

C. Psalm 56:11; Proverbs 3:25-26

D. Psalm 46:1-3

E. Matthew 8:26

6. What part does prayer hold in helping us overcome fear?

Paul address our fear in one simple statement: “If God is for us, who is against us?” (Rom. 8:31). If we have the confident knowledge that God is for us (because of our trusting faithfulness), what is there to fear from anyone else? What man can do seems pitiful compared to what God can do. With God on my side the eternal victory is always assured. “The Lord is for me; I will not fear; What can man do to me?” (Ps. 118:6).

We live with some fears, but fear should not govern the life of a Christian. Great comfort, peace and assurance is found in Christ! “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding” (Prov. 3:5).

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How can we help other saints grow to trust God and not fear?

Discuss how the fear of speaking before others must be overcome to obey God’s word in evangelism. Try to include methods or ideas which have helped you overcome this.

Lesson # 9

GROWING OLD
AND
TERMINAL ILLNESS

Growing old, or being diagnosed with a terminal illness, are events in our life that force us to consider more fervently our transition to the permanent spiritual existence. Some choose to stop trusting God in these situations when they both should cause us to desire to trust God even more. It is hoped through a study of the passages in this lesson that we will all be prepared to grow old and/or face an illness in a way that pleases God.

1. How does Ecclesiastes 12:1-8 describe growing old? What problems associated with age are described?
 - A. 1 Timothy 5:1-2
 - B. Leviticus 19:32
 - C. Proverbs 23:22
2. What is supposed to be the attitude of the younger toward those who are older?
 - A. 1 Timothy 5:1-2
 - B. Leviticus 19:32
 - C. Proverbs 23:22

3. For what should we be known as we grow older (Titus 2:2-3)?

As the body continually declines, we grow unable to physically do all that we once did, but that does not mean we are unuseful in the Kingdom of God! God chooses for elders to oversee a congregation (2 Timothy 3, Titus 1) and have wives that are “dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things” (2 Timothy 3:11). Only in their older years are these qualified to serve God. In every congregation there are elderly individuals who do not serve in a special role in a congregation, yet those who are younger respect their great faith, wisdom and knowledge. As we age we should work to wield our influence on those who are younger.

4. What does Psalm 92:12-14 indicate about the work an older believer can do?

Our body eventually grows to have need of physical assistance. God has not abandoned those who are faithful. What provisions has God commanded for the aged?

A. 1 Timothy 5:8

B. 1 Timothy 5:16

C. Is. 46:3-4

For many, age is accompanied by illness, even terminal illness, but disease and death are not limited to the elderly. Many families struggle in their faith because of a terminal illness of a loved one in their immediate household or of a close

relative. People struggle to understand why the loved one has been struck with such a malady, or why God does not heal them (especially when they are younger).

Job epitomizes the struggle against terminal illness when he said, “Why did I not die at birth, come forth from the womb and expire...why is light given to him who suffers, and life to the bitter of soul, who long for death, but there is none, and dig for it more than for hidden treasures, who rejoice greatly, and exult when they find the grave? Why is light given to a man whose way is hidden, and whom God has hedged in? For my groaning comes at the sight of my food, and my cries pour out like water. For what I fear comes upon me, and what I dread befalls me. I am not at ease, nor am I quiet, and I am not at rest, but turmoil comes” (Job 3:11, 20-26). When a person struggles so much with their physical health that they become deeply depressed and distraught, it can seem that God does not care.

5. What does God say to the one who is terminally ill?

A. 1 Peter 4:1-2

B. 1 Peter 4:19 (also 1 Peter 2:23)

6. How does trust in God enable a person with a terminal illness to face death without fear?

A. Romans 8:38-39

B. Revelation 21:3-4

C. 1 Corinthians 15:54-57

D. 2 Corinthians 4:16-5:1

E. Psalm 9:9

F. Psalm 23:4

T Hebrews 6:19 says “this hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil, where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us.” Discuss the connection between our trust in God and our hope.

I
N
K How do these things change when we grow older or are diagnosed with a terminal illness?

Lesson # 10

TEMPTATION

One of the hardest times to trust God is when we are tempted. "Each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust" (James 1:14). This means the temptation is appealing in some way and appears desirable or even perhaps enjoyable. These can be temptations of the flesh, the eyes, or pride of life (1 John 2:16). Sin appeals, but it is a deceitfulness that can harden our heart (Hebrews 3:13). God informs us of eternal consequences for our sin (Rom. 6:23), but we must trust God in doing what He says when the appeal to sin is strongest.

1. How do the following verses indicate we must trust God?

A. 1 Corinthians 10:13

B. 2 Peter 2:9

C. James 4:7

One reason we give in to temptation is a lack of trust in what God has promised. We feel alone in this battle and think God expects us to stand without help. This is not true, but is how we feel.

2. What help has God revealed/provided for us that we might overcome?

A. Philippians 4:13

B. Colossians 1:10-12

C. Hebrews 2:18

D. James 5:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:14

3. What can we do to help in time of temptation?

A. Matthew 6:13

B. Matthew 26:41

C. Luke 22:46

One of the greatest concepts in Scripture that helps us in learning to trust God during times of temptation is to prepare prior to the time of temptation. Satan is the one who tempts us (Luke 22:31-32; 1 Corinthians 7:5) and his method is to attack at times when we least expect it, but most often temptation is easily seen and recognized. If we are prepared for the assault, we will be able to overcome.

After reading Ephesians 6:10-17, answer the following questions.

4. How do we obey the instruction in 6:10?

5. Give the meaning of “stand firm” (6:11, 13, 14).
6. When is the “evil day” (6:13)?
7. Explain how the gospel armor helps us in preparing to overcome temptation.
 - A. Truth (6:14)
 - B. Righteousness (6:14)
 - C. The Gospel of Peace (6:15)
 - D. Faith (6:16)
 - E. Salvation (6:17)
 - F. Word of God (6:17)
8. To what point are we to resist temptation?
 - A. 1 Peter 5:9-10
 - B. Hebrews 12:4
9. From Revelaton 2-3, please relate what is the stated reward for those who overcome. Seven churches are addressed in these two chapters, and the statement to examine is at the end of each congregation’s message.

T Discuss the connection between resisting, standing firm and overcoming.

H

I How can a consideration of ‘trusting in God’ help in a time of temptation?

N

K

Lesson # 11

GUILT
AND
FORGIVENESS

D. Colossians 2:13

E. 1 John 1:9

F. 2 Corinthians 5:17

G. Hebrews 10:22

H. Hebrews 9:14

Guilt is an action of our conscience. It is when our heart condemns us (1 John 3:20). Guilt can overwhelm us and is a strong negative feeling. Some believe their guilt is so great they cannot be forgiven, either by man or by God. They fail to trust in God's saving grace, either initially or as a fallen child of God.

1. What causes our conscience to condemn us?

A. 2 Corinthians 7:8-10

B. 1 John 3:20-21; Romans 14:22-23

2. What does God say that should cause us to trust Him when we seek forgiveness?

A. Acts 3:19

B. Hebrews 8:12

C. Luke 15:20-24

3. Define "forgiveness" (NAS) or "remission" (KJ) as found in Matthew 26:28.

God's word assures our heart that we are clean and forgiven. What troubles some, perhaps even more, is forgiving themselves. Paul continued to call himself the chiefest of sinners, though he knew of God's forgiveness. Unlike Paul, some who cannot forgive themselves refuse to trust God's word about their forgiveness, not believing Him, and so fail to serve God because of their guilt. We must trust all that God has said. Even when it is difficult for us, we can trust God's forgiveness. We should bear a guilty conscience no longer.

While most do not struggle in regard to God's forgiveness, many do struggle in forgiving others. They fail to trust God when they refuse to forgive.

4. What has God revealed about forgiving one another?

A. Colossians 3:13

B. Ephesians 4:32; Matthew 18:23-35

C. Matthew 18:21-22

D. Matthew 6:14-15

5. Describe how our trust in God motivates our actions.

A. Matthew 5:21-26

B. Matthew 18:21-22

C. Matthew 18:35

T

Discuss how trust in God grows as faith grows (consider Abraham sacrificing Isaac in Genesis 22).

H

I

How does humility effect our ability to trust in God and His ways about guilt and forgiveness?

N

K

Lesson # 12

CHANGE

We are creatures of habit. We love routines and structure in our daily lives. A break from the routine is sometimes nice (like a vacation), but a change to the routine is not usually welcomed. Just consider how you feel when daylight-savings-time begins and your routine has to start an hour earlier.

Even change for the better is difficult for most people. Change is uncomfortable and we do not like to be uncomfortable (physically or mentally). Spiritual matters impinge upon our mental comfort and forces us to make changes in our habits and manner of life. To take uncomfortable steps requires trust in God that the changes are worth the effort.

1. What changes did Saul have to make in his life to become the apostle Paul, and how does he demonstrate a trust in God?

Discuss how we must trust God in each of these difficult areas of change that are demanded from the believer.

2. Romans 6:17-18
3. Ephesians 5:3-5

4. Ephesians 4:22-31
 - A. Laying aside falsehood (v.25)
 - B. Be angry, and yet do not sin (v.26)
 - C. Steal no longer (v.28)
 - D. No unwholesome word from your mouth (v.29)
 - E. Put away all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, slander, and malice (v.31)
5. Compare the changes we must make with those made by Josiah (2 Kings 23:4-25).

The change away from worldliness is necessary, but hard. In a similar way some have trouble putting on the ways of God. Discuss how we must trust God in each of these difficult areas of positive changes from 2 Peter 1:5-7.

6. Moral Excellence
7. Knowledge
8. Self-control
9. Perseverance
10. Godliness

11. Brotherly Kindness

12. Love

A few other areas of positive changes need to be considered, for they are also difficult for many people.

13. Ephesians 5:22-33 and 1 Peter 3:1-7

14. James 5:19-20

Trusting God when it is difficult is necessary for every Christian. What is difficult for one, may not be difficult for another; but we all struggle in some area to trust God as we ought. "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make your paths straight" (Prov. 3:5-6).

T How does the five talent man demonstrate we are to trust in God to stretch and grow into
H uncomfortable areas? (Matt. 25:15-20)
I
N
K