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## What The Faith Is All About Leaders Guide

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# LEADER'S GUIDE FOR What the Faith Is All About

ELMER L. TOWNS  
prepared by Elmer L. Towns

## **How to Use the Living Studies Series**

We believe you have made a wise choice in selecting the Living Studies Series for your Sunday school elective studies or for your home study or church group. Each of these Living Studies Series consists of a textbook and a Leader's Guide.

Ideally each member of the class will purchase or be furnished a Living Studies textbook. The Leader's Guide is designed to provide creative content and methodology so that people with relatively little background in Christian education can conduct a good discussion group.

Each lesson, based on sound education principles, is designed for a series of forty-five-minute to one-hour sessions. The aim is to produce in-depth interaction with the material of the textbook and to achieve both informational (things they should know) and behavioral (things they should do) goals.

### **PREPARATION**

Before the classes begin, the leader should spend as much time as possible familiarizing himself with the textbook and the Leader's Guide. We have taken special care to limit the content of each session to the textbook itself and to relevant Scripture passages.

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

The value of the study is greatly enhanced when all group members are prepared, so the leader should emphasize reading the text and think of creative ways to give the assignments.

### **TEACHING METHODS**

A number of methods have been used in the Leader's Guide to present the material, including the following:

*Discussion.* Discussion questions are designed to involve group members in interaction with the material of the lesson. The leader should encourage the class to respond not only to the leader but to one another. The leader initiates discussion with a question (generally stated in italics in the Leader's Guide). A suggested answer to some of the discussion questions will appear in parentheses immediately following the question. The leader is responsible for starting, controlling, and ending discussion.

The leader should anticipate possible directions the discussion will take and offer leading questions to keep the discussion on track and avoid offending participants. Leader's comments, such as "No, that's not right," are bound to squelch discussion and hurt feelings. To an "off target" answer the leader might say, "Explain what you mean by that," or ask the class, "What do you think about that?" Remember that there is sometimes no single or perfect answer to a discussion question.

*Background Reports.* The leader may already be knowledgeable about the topic under discussion or he may have access to resource material or people to provide some of the historical or theological background to the subject. The leader may assign the research project to one of the group members. It may be presented as a short lecture or report. Such reports should be brief and to the point, in keeping with the overall lesson goals.

*Role Play.* Some group members are talented in presenting an ad-lib role-play, skit, or a short play that you as the leader may write. Some material may be given in the Leader's Guide.

Use role-plays to act out some problem or situation either mentioned in, or relevant to, the day's lesson. Role-playing provides excellent introductions to the lesson session.

*Question and Answer.* Questions are furnished in the Leader's Guide, but the leader may choose to prepare more of his own. Questions should be well worded in advance. Good questions and answers will make for good interaction. Questions should be designed so that the answer to one question provides an opening for the next question,

*Small Groups.* The group will occasionally be divided into small groups, from two to six members, to discuss certain problems or to research certain Bible passages. Most educators agree that it is not good to separate married couples. A discussion question or questions are assigned and a report from each group is prepared to give to the large group when the class is reassembled. A leader and/or reporter should be chosen or appointed for each small group.

### **CONDUCTING A GOOD DISCUSSION**

1. Open the discussion to the entire class. Try not to call on individuals by name. Acknowledge all contributions, even if they appear to have no apparent merit.

2. Don't allow a few to monopolize the time. Recognize those who raise their hands and tactfully ignore those who speak without being called upon. Don't be afraid to say, "Let's hear from someone who, hasn't spoken yet." Find a tactful way to speak privately to those who participate too much.

3. Let the group answer the questions, even if you know the answer. Use the Leader's Guide answers (those given in parentheses) only as a last resort. If the class members ask questions, try to allow other members to answer, even if the question was directed to you.

4. Watch the clock. Some group members will seem enthusiastic to continue, but think of others who will need to leave on time.

5. Maintain a relaxed atmosphere by being relaxed yourself. The best way to feel and look confident is to be well prepared in both study and prayer. Now, study the material well, pray about it, and get out there and lead a good discussion group!

## **SESSION ONE**

Understanding Christianity  
Towns, Chapter 1

### **LESSON GOALS**

1. To guide students to realize that Bible doctrine is imperative as a foundation for their Christian lives.
2. To lead students to commit themselves to applying biblical doctrine to their lives.

### **PREPARATION**

1. Before the session, prepare a flip chart (18" x 36" with the basic outline of chapter 1, leaving room to add additional comments during group discussion.
2. Different group members will be interested in the study of Bible doctrine at different levels. Prepare a bibliography of books for further reading for those eager to study more.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Small Groups. Take a few moments to allow students to get acquainted if they do not already know each other. As students arrive, introduce them to others and organize into small groups for discussion. Give each group the responsibility of preparing a statement which as fully as possible answers the question, "What is Christianity?" As the class assembles, call on a spokesman for each group to share their statement on the nature of Christianity. Emphasize the positive elements of each group report and point out to the class that the purpose of this first meeting is to establish the nature of Christianity.

### **THE LESSON**

Discussion. If students have not read the chapter, summarize the introduction briefly before beginning. Emphasize the author's statement, "The purpose of biblical doctrine is the communication of the gospel to the people at a point of need." (Use your flip chart to illustrate the three aspects of this statement and discuss the following relevant questions.)

The author suggests six areas of need common to mankind for which question the gospel can provide answers. There may be additional areas of need not mentioned here. List together a number of areas of need in men's lives (guilt, loneliness, alienation, etc.). Ask, How does the gospel meet these needs in the lives of men? (Forgiveness, friendship with God, union with Christ, etc.) Expand on the author's statement, "Sin produced the greatest need in man and doctrine is the channel through which God told how he would meet the need." How important then is doctrine in terms of formulating a Christian life-style? (Foundational.)

The author defines the word "communicate" as "to make common." How are Christians expected to make the gospel common to others? (To unsaved as a soul winner, to Christians in fellowship.) The author observes, "Every man is potentially a loner." How can we break out of this shell of loneliness to communicate the gospel? (Strength to do this is in Jesus Christ who forgives our sins, gives meaning in life, and gives us strength to rise above our circumstances.) Why must doctrine be both rational and logical? (Both the nature of God and man demand it.) How is a biblical doctrine formulated? (Collect facts, classify facts, write conclusions.) What is the ultimate communication of doctrine? (The worship of God.)

Using the outline of the text, explain the plan of salvation as found in the Bible. Have class members mark the following verses in their Bibles and explain how they can be used to

present the gospel to the unsaved. Rom. 3:23; Rom. 6:23; John 1:12; Rev. 3:20. If some members of your group are unsaved, you may wish to pray and invite them to receive Christ as their personal Savior.

### **APPLICATION/RESPONSE**

Small group discussion. Reassemble the class into small groups as at the beginning of this session. Ask group members to share with others how particular doctrinal truths have affected their lives for good. They may have helped solve spiritual problems, aided their growth as Christians, helped them overcome sin, etc. Then ask each group to compile a list of ways in which biblical doctrine may be applied to life. When the groups have completed their lists, have them share their conclusions with the rest of the class. Ask the class if there is value in studying Bible doctrine. (The list of benefits are good reasons to do so.) The author concludes this chapter stating, "The secret of doctrine is that it can be related to the needs of man." How is this statement fundamental to our study of doctrine? (Doctrine will never be practical until it is applied.)

Close in prayer, asking God to impress upon the group the need to study and apply Bible doctrine.

### **ASSIGNMENT**

Ask the class to read chapter 2 and the suggested daily readings from the text. Select several group members and ask them to prepare a testimony of how they have experienced growth in faith.

## **SESSION TWO**

Understanding the Faith  
Towns, chapter 2

### **LESSON GOALS**

1. To lead students to understand the nature and the six different kinds of faith.
2. To motivate each student to apply faith to his life and service to God.

### **PREPARATION**

1. *Room Decoration.* There are several biblical texts emphasizing the importance of faith. Before the group begins, decorate the room with posters, plaques, etc., which emphasize the importance of faith. Be sure to include references to all six kinds of faith identified in the chapter.
2. Collect several articles, stories, or books around the room containing accounts of heroic achievements, which the heroes attribute to their faith in God. This assortment may also include several accounts of how God answered prayer.

### **INTRODUCTION**

As the class begins, ask several class members who have arrived early to summarize some of the stories of faith they have read. Explain that the one who was central in each account was the one who attributes his success to faith. Optional: Summarize the biography of some great man of faith, such as J. Hudson Taylor, George Moller, or Bordon of Yale.

Explain that faith is important because “without faith, it is impossible to please God” (Heb. 11:6). The Christian's object in life is to please the One to whom he owes his salvation.

## **THE LESSON**

Bible search, small groups. The author identifies six kinds of faith in this chapter. Divide the group into six smaller groups to read several verses and define the type of faith in those verses. (Group 1: 1 Tim. 4:1; 5:8; 2 Tim. 4:8; Jude 3; Group 2: Eph. 2:8; Acts 16:31; John 3:16; Group 3: Gen. 15:6; Rom. 5:1; 8:34; Group 4: 1 John 5:4; Gal. 2:20; Eph. 3:12; Phil. 3:9; Group 5: 2 Cor. 5:7; 1 Pet. 2:2; Rom. 1:17; Group 6: Rom. 12:7; 1 Cor. 13:2.) When the groups come back together, ask each group to identify their faith before each of the following discussion questions.

### **Discussion.**

1. The author states that doctrinal faith is important as a foundation to our Christian lives. How was this true in the case of the apostle Paul? (Paul thought he was serving God when he persecuted the early Christians.)

2. The author states, “Personal salvation is expressed by the inner person and since the person is composed of intellect, emotion, and will, faith comes through a proper exercise of these three aspects of personality. “ Explain how saving faith is expressed in terms of these three elements of personality. (Must be grounded on correct knowledge, will have an emotional expression, must include an act of the will.)

3. The author suggests, “Imputed faith is where you are justified or declared righteous. “ How is justification similar to becoming a U.S. citizen? (Change applies only to legal standing in heaven—justification—or on earth—citizenship.)

4. The author points out, “The secret of victorious living is the faith of Jesus Christ which is allowed to flow through the believer. “-How do the Holy Spirit and the Bible fit into this statement? (The Holy Spirit is the agent of faith, the Bible is the instrument of faith.)

5. The author writes, “Like any other growing experience, living by faith is taking one step at a time. “ What are some specific steps the Christian can take to daily grow in faith? (Reading the Word of God, following biblical principles, seeking the Lord, being cleansed by the blood, surrendering, engaging in constant communion.)

6. The author states, “God has given some the gift of faith to enable them to carry out their ministry in a more effective way. “ How can a person with the gift of faith increase his ministry's effectiveness? (Through proper use.) How can one without the gift of faith gain this spiritual gift? (Through desire and prayer.)

## **APPLICATION/RESPONSE**

Read together Heb. 11:8-19 and 23-29. Ask, How are Abraham and Moses examples of faith? (Both men lived by faith.) How was their faith expressed? (Answered call of God, sacrifice of Isaac, protected baby Moses, rejected pleasure of Egypt, etc.)

The author concludes this chapter stating, “The ultimate expression of Christianity is an act of faith.” How does this conflict with a casual consideration of faith? (More than reliance or trust, it must be acted upon.) How does the contemporary Christian express his faith? (Know doctrine, become a Christian, live by daily faith, have imputed faith, let faith of Christ flow, serve God with the gift of faith.)

As this session ends, encourage each group member to evaluate his personal expression of faith. Ask several students to share how they have grown in faith. Ask God to give each group member stronger faith as you close in prayer.

### **ASSIGNMENT**

Have students read chapter 3 in the text and the suggested daily readings. Ask several students to prepare for a panel discussion on how God reveals himself.

## **SESSION THREE**

Revelation

Towns, chapter 3

### **LESSON GOALS**

1. To help students know God has revealed himself in the Bible.
2. To lead students to study the Bible to learn more about the nature and will of God.

### **PREPARATION**

Bulletin board. Before class begins, decorate a bulletin board in a prominent place in the room with pictures and/or sayings about the Bible. As the next four sessions deal with the doctrine of the Bible, you may want to leave this bulletin board unchanged for the next month. Contact those students participating in the panel discussion to be sure they are prepared for their part.

### **INTRODUCTION**

As group members arrive, they will no doubt be attracted to the bulletin board display focusing attention on the Bible. Encourage students to discuss the role of the Bible in our society and its importance to the way we live. As the session begins, review the account of Sir Walter Scott found in the beginning of this chapter. Explain that the Bible is God's revelation of himself to mankind.

### **THE LESSON**

1. Discussion. The author defines revelation as “the act whereby God gives men knowledge about himself and his creation which man could not otherwise know.” Project this statement on the overhead and use it as a starting point for the following discussion: How can we say revelation is an act of God when in fact nearly forty men were involved in its writing? (The message originated with God and concerns God.) Why must revelation find its origin in God? (Man cannot understand God apart from divine assistance.) What is the relationship of God and the human writers in this matter of revelation? (God is the creator of the revelation, which is communicated through the personality of the writer.) What is our relationship to revelation? (It is given to us.) What does the author mean when he states, “Because God is infinite, man could never understand him”? (Man is incapable of knowing God unless God reveals himself.) How is the Bible a book men could not write if they would and would not write if they could? (Men could not know God and would not write a book that is so self-condemning.) How is revelation both partial and complete? (Some things are not revealed, but all is revealed that will be revealed.)

On another transparency, write: “How important is revelation?” As you suggest the four reasons in the book, ask students the following questions: What does the author mean by the statement, “The records of history tell us of the death of Christ, but only the Bible tells us it was for our salvation”? (The Bible not only records history but interprets history and applies its real meaning to our lives.) The author suggests, “Men cannot arrive at the right ideas about God by themselves. “ How then can men be expected to worship God? (God has revealed himself as he is.) How is the doctrine of revelation foundational to all other doctrine? (Doctrine is what God has revealed about a subject.) How is revelation foundational to the Christian life? (The Bible is a life-style manual<sup>2</sup> Tim. 3:16-17.)

2. Panel discussion. Several students should be prepared to discuss how God has revealed himself. They should be prepared to answer the following questions during an open forum: How is general revelation different from special revelation? (Special revelation finds its source only in the Bible and person of Christ.) How does God reveal himself through natural phenomena? (Conscience, nature, history.) Is there anyone justified in blaming God for not hearing the gospel? Why or why not? (Everyone has a limited revelation of God.) Class members may ask questions, which puzzle panel members. Panel members should be reminded that “I don't know” is an acceptable answer.

The author states, “God has revealed his Word for a purpose. “ What are some of those purposes for which we have been given a Bible? (Sin, Christ, eternal life, will of God, wisdom, victory.)

The author suggests, “Reading and understanding the Bible is sometimes like eating a piece of meat. “ What does this mean to us as we approach Bible study? (Vile will not understand everything and should not get hung up on the “gristle.”)

### **APPLICATION/RESPONSE**

Question and answer. By way of review and application, ask the class the following questions: What is God's purpose in revealing himself and his will in the Bible? (To suggest a Christian life-style.) How is the Christian aided through revelation in living for God? (Doctrine—foundation for living, reproof-revealing sin; correction-revealing right responses; instruction in righteous-guidelines for a Christian life-style.) What did Moody mean by the statement, “This Book will keep you from sin or sin will keep you from this Book”? (The Bible will help the Christian overcome temptation if he can overcome the temptation to neglect the Bible.)

As you close the session in prayer, encourage students to ask God to help them live victoriously as they commit themselves to Bible study.

### **ASSIGNMENT**

Ask the class to read chapter 4 and the suggested readings in Towns' book before the next session.

## **SESSION FOUR**

Inspiration

Towns, chapter 4

## LESSON GOALS

1. To help students recognize the nature of the Bible. 2. To help students apply biblical principles in their lives.

## PREPARATION

A chalkboard would be useful in drawing the various charts recorded in this chapter.

## INTRODUCTION

Memory. Each chapter in the textbook begins with a “Bible in focus” verse. This verse capsulizes the central thrust of the chapter. One of key texts teaching inspiration is 2 Tim. 3:16, 17. Take a few minutes at the beginning of this session to memorize these verses. The key to Scripture memory is repetition and review. You may want to write the verse on the chalkboard and read it as a class, erasing various phrases after each reading. Explain that this verse is a significant text upon which the biblical doctrine of inspiration is based.

## THE LESSON

1. Discussion. The author defines inspiration as “the supernatural guidance of the writers by the Holy Spirit, which resulted in every word being accurate and reliable in the original manuscripts.” Write this definition on the chalkboard as the basis of the following discussion: How is it evident that God used human personalities in the inspiration process? (Gospels—Matthew, a Jew, wrote of the King of the Jews; Mark reflects Peter's activism through the use of “straightway/immediately”; Luke, a historian, appears to be more methodical; John, “the one whom Jesus loved,” has a greater emphasis on the love of God.) How can it be demonstrated that inspiration reaches beyond concepts to words? (“Words ... which the Holy Ghost teacheth” 1 Cor. 2:12, 13.) How is the inerrancy of Scripture implied by the doctrine of inspiration? (Error in the Bible would reflect a flaw in the character of God.)

2. Charts. Assign various students the verses listed on the charts in this chapter. As students read these verses, ask them to identify the element listed. Complete the chart on “The Manners of Inspiration/Revelation” before beginning the next. Fill in the chart on the chalkboard as the class provides answers. Emphasize the fact that God used different means to communicate his message to us. Also, demonstrate in the second chart that God communicated his truth to us through every sense thus giving as complete a revelation of himself as possible.

3. Discussion. The author states, “Since every author's personality is reflected in his journalism, the character of God is demonstrated in the book he wrote. “ How does the Bible demonstrate the character of God? (See chart in text.) What does the author mean with the statement “Only God could write a book like this one”? (Nature of the book reflects nature of God; book is not limited by cultural factors.) How does the influence of the Bible demonstrate its inspiration? (God uses the Bible to change human lives.)

4. Small Groups. Divide the group into smaller segments and have them study various parts of the section entitled “The Evidence of Inspiration.” Using the text and their Bibles, have each of the five groups study the attitudes of each of the selected writers and summarize the material to the class. In their group reports, encourage them to note which part of Scripture is attributed to these men and what their attitudes were toward revelation and inspiration. As each group makes its report, ask the following discussion questions: Why are the writings of Moses so important in the consideration of inspiration? (Law is foundational to all Scripture, Genesis is the seedbed of most biblical doctrines.) How does Jesus' statement in Mark 12:36 demonstrate the

harmony of divine and human authorship? (David and Holy Spirit both recognized as authors.) How important are claims to divine inspiration in the Bible? (They alone do not prove inspiration, but an inspired book would make such claims.) How does John demonstrate the inspiration of the final book of the Bible? (Title, 1:1; setting, 1:10; conclusion of epistle, 7:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22.) How can we demonstrate today that Paul's epistles should be considered part of inspired revelation? (Paul's claim. Peter's recognition.)

The author states, "God has inspired a single book for our edification." How does this relate to those religious groups claiming a separate revelation in addition to the Bible? (The Bible does not allow for another compatible "inspired" text; Rev. 22:18-19.)

### **APPLICATION/RESPONSE**

Paraphrase; small groups. Divide the class into small groups again and ask each group to paraphrase the passage learned earlier (2 Tim. 3:16, 17). The paraphrase should not use the original words but should convey the verses' meaning clearly. Have the class choose the best paraphrase or modify one group's work to represent a class effort.

Close the session by reading aloud the last paragraph of the text. Pray specifically that God would help each student to draw from the Word of God in the week to come.

### **ASSIGNMENT**

Ask the class to read chapter 5 and the daily readings for that chapter. Ask several students to prepare for a debate on inerrancy, and to write brief reports on books dealing with that subject.

## **SESSION FIVE**

Inerrancy and Canonicity  
Towns, chapter 5

### **LESSON GOALS**

1. To lead students to recognize the remarkable accuracy of the words in the Bible.
2. To motivate students to build their life upon solid foundation of bible principles.

### **PREPARATION**

1. Book reviews may motivate students to study certain books. It may be wise to have copies of the books available from the church library for those who wish to read them.
2. Before class, contact those who will debate to be certain they are well prepared to represent their position.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Begin the session by calling on those class members prepared to review books they have read. These books should deal with the inerrancy/reliability of the Bible. In addition to those books listed in the text, your pastor may recommend other good books to be reviewed. Reviewers should share an anecdote or two from each book, which demonstrates the reliability of the Bible.

## THE LESSON

1. Debate. One of the hottest issues in the church today is described, as the inerrancy debate. Have two class members stage a debate in which some of the leading arguments of both sides are presented. Their views should be clearly and logically presented so the class is not given a biased representation of one view over the other. Explain to the class you will be considering this issue today as it relates in a very practical way to one's approach to the Bible and also its authority in the Christian life.

2. Discussion. James Montgomery Boice is cited in the text as saying, "Inerrancy states that what is inspired is also authoritative. " How mandatory is the existence of a relationship between the inspiration of Scripture and the inerrancy of Scripture? (If a true God inspired error, he is not true.) How did Jesus argue inerrancy? (Accuracy of letter and verb tenses.) Why is it not possible to consider the Bible accurate when relating to God, salvation, and other doctrines, but inaccurate in areas of science? (Scripture as a unit is inspired and cannot be broken.) The author states, "The real issue of inerrancy is centered in the character of God." How does our view of God affect our attitude toward Scripture? (What is true of God is also true of Scripture.) Could God have accommodated himself to the superstitions of the times in his revelation? (No. Cf. Titus 2; Heb. 6:18.) What does the author mean when he states, "if God could lie, he would not be God"? (God is true by nature and thus incapable of lying by nature.)

3. Reports. Have several class members present brief reports on the reliability of the Scriptures in the light of science, history, archaeology, and prophecy. To insure that important elements of these reports are considered by the class, ask the following discussion questions after the appropriate report: How does the Christian deal with a scientific theory that apparently denies some part of the Bible? (Wait until the facts are in, the theory will fail.) How is the Bible considered an important historical document? (Eyewitness reports, Luke's historical method.) How important is archaeology in authenticating disputed parts of the Bible? (Archaeology seems to confirm the conservative approach to Scripture.) What place does prophecy have in demonstrating biblical reliability? (Forty percent prophetic, literal fulfillment against incredible "chance" or odds.)

The Bible of most Protestants contains sixty-six books. This is known as the canon of Scripture. Summarize this section of the text before discussing canonicity. If a large number of students have not read the chapter, take a few minutes to do this now.

4. Discussion. Why do Christians believe revelation is complete? (Implied in Scripture, Bible described as complete, warning in Rev. 22:18-19.) Why is the passing of the prophetic office an important argument for the closing of the canon of Scripture? (This was the office of revelation.) The author states, "There has been no large movement by Christians to recognize a new inspired book. " How is this an argument for a closed canon of Scripture? (Spiritual people would recognize a spiritual book.) How does the idea of a completion of doctrine suggest a complete canon? (There is no new truth to be revealed.) The author states, "When the Bible is read alongside its contemporary literature, the mark of God becomes even more obvious in its pages. " How does the Christian identify "the mark of God"? (Spiritual discernment, doctrinal content, positive influence on the lives of people, etc.)

## APPLICATION/RESPONSE

"There is no good reason for anyone to doubt the authority and accuracy of the Bible. " If this statement is correct, why do so many choose to reject this? (Ignorance, pride, immorality, unbelief.) What is the biblical approach to applying the Bible to our lives? (Live it, cf. 2 Cor.

3:2.) How can the contemporary Christian apply a book that is over 1,900 years to his life? (The principles of the Bible are timeless and eternal.) Why is it important for Christians today to apply the principles of the Bible to their; life-styles? (Commanded in Scripture; gives credibility to the gospel.)

As you close this session in prayer, challenge students to consider one area of their lives to which they are not applying biblical principles and encourage them to bring that area before God. Pray that God will help each student live in such a way that the Bible can be “read” in his life.

## **ASSIGNMENT**

Ask the class to read chapter 6 as well as the suggested daily reading and ask class members to think of the strategy by which they interpret the Bible.

## **SESSION SIX**

How to Interpret the Bible  
Towns, chapter 6

### **LESSON GOALS**

1. To lead students to understand the Holy Spirit's work in illuminating the Scriptures.
2. To motivate students to apply correct principles of interpretation to their Bible study.

### **PREPARATION**

1. Bring a large scratch pad to use in recording various important principles you may want to emphasize throughout the lesson.
2. Care should be given to arrange the room in a way that will encourage, rather than discourage, discussion. Chairs arranged in a circle or semicircle will accomplish this better than an arrangement rows and aisles.

### **INTRODUCTION**

As students arrive, remind them that they will be studying methods of interpreting the Bible. Ask them to take a few minutes to prepare a one-minute presentation on the key principles they apply in their personal Bible study. Begin the class by inviting several students to share these principles with the rest of the group. Be sensitive to those who may be embarrassed to discuss this subject before others.

### **THE LESSON**

1. Discussion. Write the author's definition of illumination on the scratch pad: “Illumination is the ministry of the Holy Spirit which enables all who are in a right relation with God to understand the spiritual message of the Bible.” Further explaining this definition, the author suggests, “Some things cannot be learned apart from supernatural aid.” What sort of things do we need the Holy Spirit to teach us? (Deity of Christ, spiritual truths of Scripture, doctrines as they apply to life.) What can the “illuminated” Christian expect? (Understanding of Scripture.) How is illumination related to inspiration and revelation? (The Holy Spirit, who inspired and revealed Scripture to the apostles, illuminates us as we study the Scriptures.) Why is

illumination “dependent on a man's relation with God”? (God will not force himself; sin can hinder our illumination; we must be willing to learn and apply lessons.)

2. Pairs. Ask each student to discuss with the student next to him or her the need for illumination by answering the following question: Why specifically do we need the Holy Spirit's ministry of illumination? After a couple of minutes, ask the students to share the results of their discussion with the class. Prepare a chart, which lists the four aspects of blindness.

3. Discussion. Ask the following questions to ensure that the class has an understanding of each aspect: What does the author mean when he speaks of “a partial and temporary blindness upon the nation of Israel”? (Most, not all Jews affected; the blindness will be removed.) How can the blindness of the Gentiles be overcome? (The light of the gospel.) What is the chief result of the satanic blindness on Jews and Gentiles? (Lack of understanding and faith in the gospel and Christ.) How does the Christian experience blindness? (Carnality, unconfessed sin.)

If students have not read the chapter, take a few moments to scan the rest of it before continuing the discussion. How is conviction an aspect of the work of illumination? (Holy Spirit causes us to see our sin.) How can this work be applied in the life of the saved? (Unconfessed sin, understanding the Scriptures.) The author states, “There are both spiritual and natural principles which must be obeyed when we come to study the Bible. “ What are the consequences of rejecting these principles and just “letting the Spirit lead”? (Miss the message of Scripture; extreme mysticism or liberal rationalism.) Why is it logical to assume God would have principles by which we should approach the Scriptures? (God is a God of principle.) The author writes, 'if God used the holy men of God to write his Book, he wants holy men of God to interpret his Book. Does this mean a new Christian cannot understand the Scripture? (No; holiness is not perfection, but a state of fellowship with God.) How can the Christian prepare for Bible study? (Prayer, cleansing, learning the Bible.) What is meant by “historical grammatical interpretation, “ as applied to Bible study? (Understanding Scripture in its correct historical context by applying correct rules of grammar to the text.) Expand on the author's statement, “The Bible should be interpreted in a literal way. How can expressions such as “the lamb of God” be interpreted literally? (Literally implies “as literally understood in the context.' To which sources can the Christian go to interpret the obvious symbols in Scripture as in Daniel and Revelation? (The Bible is the best interpreter of itself; check the context, i.e., Rev. 1:19-20.) How does the dual authorship of Scripture affect biblical interpretation? (Two authors-human and divine; two sets of principles-natural and spiritual.)

### **APPLICATION/RESPONSE**

Small groups. Divide the class into groups of four or five members each and ask them to outline how they would study a passage of Scripture. Encourage each group to appoint a leader who will keep the group on target and not allow the members to wander from their plan. Periodically remind the groups of the time remaining and encourage them to plan accordingly so as not to get bogged down at the beginning. About two minutes before the end of the session encourage the students to share with others in their group one principle they have learned from the study that they will attempt to apply to their lives this week. Then have each group dismiss in prayer, praying specifically for each group member.

### **ASSIGNMENT**

Ask the class to read chapter 7 and the daily readings. Make arrangements this week to obtain books from a bookstore or library for use on a browsing table.

## **SESSION SEVEN**

Who God Is

Towns, chapter 7

### **LESSON GOALS**

1. To lead students into knowledge of the nature of God.
2. To motivate students to worship and obey God and his Word.

### **PREPARATION**

Browsing table. Set up a browsing table of books dealing with various aspects of the doctrine of God. These books may be secured from the church library or a local Christian bookstore. Include as many books as possible from Towns' bibliography. Peruse the books to be aware of their content. Include books, which survey the doctrine of G as well as those that deal with specific issues in the doctrine of God.

### **INTRODUCTION**

As students arrive, encourage them to browse the books available on the table. If arrangements have not been made to secure these books during the session, be certain to identify clearly the name of the library or bookstore where they may be obtained.

Assemble the class and tell them you will begin a series of sessions 16 dealing with the doctrine of God. Ask them to tell you what comes to their minds when they think of God. The central question this session will attempt to answer is, "Who is God?" Ask the lass to write out their definition of God. Then have several students read their definitions and discuss them briefly. If students are reluctant to contribute, you may want to collect the definitions and read several to the class without identifying those who wrote them.

### **THE LESSON**

1. Discussion. The author states, "To understand the nature and existence of God is an impossible task. " What conditions lead him to this conclusion? (Limited minds of men, sin, finite words, limited revelation all hinder understanding, an unlimited God.) If understanding God is a worthy goal, how then does the Christian accomplish this goal? (Make limited observations.) How much authority can these conclusions bear on our life? (They are authoritative but not absolute.)

The first of the author's seven descriptive phrases for God is "God is Spirit. " How does the spirituality of God differ from the spirituality of man? (God has no physical body.) How does the Christian explain those passages, which speak of the hands, feet, eyes, etc. of God? (Anthropomorphisms-man projecting his own characteristics on God.) The author notes, "A spirit is also invisible" and claims God "was never visible to the nation." Yet several passages seem to indicate that men actually saw God. How can this apparent paradox be explained? (Men saw merely the reflection of God, but did not see him directly.) How do the Ten Commandments relate to the spirituality of God? (First two commandments ban the making and use of idols; one of the reasons is the spirituality of God.)

2. Study Groups. Appoint six chairmen and organize six study groups to consider the rest of the author's definitive terms concerning the nature of God. Have each group read the appropriate section of the text and those Scriptures referred to in those portions. Ask the chairmen to discuss each paragraph as a group and prepare a summary of that material for the

rest of the class. When the groups have completed their study, have each chairman share their findings with the rest of the class. Be prepared to emphasize any material the groups may overlook in their studies. Also, at the conclusion of this discussion, remind the class that none of these aspects of God exists independent of the others; all are true all the time with God. You may want to conclude this part of the lesson by reading the author's opening paragraph under the heading "Who is God?"

### **APPLICATION/RESPONSE**

Why is it so important that men gain even a limited knowledge of God? (Command of Scripture; to know ourselves; foundation for knowledge; eternal life; spiritual growth; love for God.) What was meant by the expression "the Hound of Heaven?" (Refers to God's seeking us.) How does knowledge of God aid in our understanding of ourselves? (We are in the image and likeness of God). What did Jesus mean when he referred to himself as "the truth" (John 14:6)? (Foundation of all truth in the universe.) How does the knowledge of God aid our spiritual growth? (Equated with eternal life, moves us to deeper spirituality, prerequisite to loving God.)

Ask a student to read Job 23:3 aloud to the class. Explain that there are many reasons why a person seeks knowledge. The wise men and Herod sought to learn where the newborn "King of the Jews" was but for different motives. Ask the class, How can one with correct motives come to know God? (By faith, desire, involvement.) Emphasize that our knowledge of God can grow. Close the class period by dividing into groups of two or three to pray together. Encourage students to pray for a deeper knowledge of the nature of God.

### **ASSIGNMENT**

Have the class read the next chapter and readings in the textbook. Ask them to bring records and tapes of hymns about God.

## **SESSION EIGHT**

The Attributes of God  
Towns, chapter 8

### **LESSON GOALS**

1. To lead students to understand the attributes of God.
2. To lead students to subject their lives to a holy, loving God who seeks their well being.

### **PREPARATION**

1. Collage. Make a collage of pictures and images reflective of various attributes of God. These pictures can be found in greeting cards, magazines, travel brochures, or calendars.
2. Music. Bring a record player and tape recorder to listen to songs describing the attributes of God. You may want to select several records or tapes out of your own music library to bring in case students forget their recordings.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Post the collage or collages in prominent places in the room before students arrive. As they arrive, focus their attention on the collages by asking them to list as many attributes of God as they can find in the pictures.

Before students arrive, play one of your recordings describing the attributes of God. As students arrive, you may want to play songs from their recordings. The object is to provide background music to focus attention on the attributes of God, so the music should be kept low.

The author notes, "Culturally, no society has ever advanced beyond its view of God." Begin the class with that statement, noting that some Christians may be guilty even of worshiping a false god because of ignorance, not knowing the attributes of God. A correct knowledge of God is an apparent source of true revival. Explain that this session will involve studying six of what may be an innumerable host of attributes of 18 God.

## **THE LESSON**

1. Discussion. The author identifies holiness as the first absolute attribute of God. How can holiness be defined in lay terms? (Separate, or cut off from, sin.) How is holiness "both passive and active" as it is demonstrated in God? (Cannot lie, must tell truth.) What is meant by the author's comment, "The holiness of God is the primary motive in all God's action"? (God's love or goodness will not deny his holiness.) How does the holiness of God affect the Christian life-style? (Demands a holy life.)

Henry Thiessen identified love as "that perfection of divine nature by which he is eternally moved to communicate Himself." What implications does that definition of love have on our idea of the love of God? (The doctrine of revelation is implied; idea of salvation in God giving himself for us; security of the believer as God protects those he loves; prayer is based on the idea of a loving God.) How does this concept of love affect the life of the Christian attempting to reflect the nature of God? (People become a priority over other interests, love for God must be primary.) The author suggests, "Perfect love is selfless. " How can this be achieved by the contemporary Christian in our community? (Must rely on God as his source of both love and strength, specific actions may vary from community to community.)

The author writes, "in a broad sense, the goodness of God includes all the positive moral attributes of God. " How is God's mercy an expression of his goodness? (Goodness to those who are in distress.) How is this also true of the grace of God? (Goodness to those who are ill-deserving.) What then does Eph. 2.4, 8 imply about the unsaved? (In need of both mercy and grace, therefore they are both in distress and ill-deserving.) Some critics may argue the benevolence and longsuffering of God actually destroys the effect of the holiness of God. How do holiness and goodness find harmony in God's benevolence and long-suffering? (Benevolence is his care for creation; long-suffering is God's patience. Neither of these eliminates the consequences of God's holiness; at best they may postpone it.)

2. Small groups. Divide the class into three groups to consider the comparative attributes of God as taught in Ps. 139. Appoint chairmen who will report the findings of the group. The groups should study verses 1-6 (omniscience), 7-11 (omnipresence), and 12-16 (omnipotence), and define and describe these attributes. After the groups report, briefly summarize these attributes of God, using the textbook as your major source.

## **APPLICATION/RESPONSE**

The author concludes this chapter, "When great men of God have been exposed to the nature and attributes of God in the past, it has been a time of personal renewal." Ask the class to suggest some reasons why this has happened. (Overwhelmed by God; challenged to a higher life-style; the desire to be more like God; a basic dissatisfaction with their personal life-style.)

Ask each student to suggest some practical steps to the person seated next to him of how a Christian can better reflect the absolute attributes of God. After a couple of minutes, call the class together and ask for several suggestions for each of the three attributes studied. You may wish to have a class member act as secretary and make arrangements to copy this list for the class. As you dose in prayer, ask God to help each class member to take steps to become more like God this week.

## **ASSIGNMENT**

Ask the class to read chapter 9 and the readings.

## **SESSION NINE**

The Law of God  
Towns, chapter 9

### **LESSON GOALS**

1. To assist students in gaining a deeper understanding of the nature and purpose of the law of God.
2. To lead students to apply the holy standard of the law of God to their lives.

### **PREPARATION**

1. Bulletin board. Before class begins, change the bulletin board to emphasize various aspects of the doctrine of God, particularly those which will be covered in the next several lessons.
2. Bring a large flip chart and several markers. This will aid in emphasizing important statements or charts in the lesson. Before the session begins, you may want to copy some key statements, including the chart, which compares the attributes of God to the law.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Begin the session by reminding the class that we live in a society and world governed by natural and civil laws. Explain how natural, social, and civil laws are important to our continued existence. When Christians think of law in theology, too often they are negative and critical, perhaps reflecting on extreme legalism they have encountered, similar to what Paul opposed in Galatians. (Remind the class that God originates the law and acts according to it. The law is not necessarily bad; it was the abuse of that law which Paul criticized.

### **THE LESSON**

1. Discussion. The author states: "The law of God is an extension of the will and nature of God." Write this statement on your flip chart as the basis of your discussion of the subject. Then lead the class in a discussion of the meaning of the law. Why are men judged on the basis of the law of God? (Nature of law implies a penalty for breaking the law; nature of God-his justice-demands he judge sin.) Why is the judgment of sin postponed often? How can we justify God's allowing "the wicked to prosper"? (Sin cannot be estimated until the entire intention, violation, and influence is evaluated. Equity of God demands he wait. Nature of law implies life is our trial.) How does the law of God affect our eschatology, our view of the end times? (Implies future judgment; implies rewards and punishment; implies both heaven and hell.) On

the surface, the law of God and love of God appear to be contradictory. How can these two be harmonized functionally as they relate to human experience? (Man can be saved because God loves him and Jesus has satisfied the demands of the law as our substitution.)

Explain to the class that there are several aspects of God's law beyond what is normally thought of in terms of the Ten Commandments. Write the form headings in the text and have students read those verses cited under the particular aspects of the law of God. As the verses are read, determine the key principle in that verse and record it under the proper heading. In this way, students will summarize the material in the textbook by studying the original and authoritative source.

Ask students to cast themselves in the role of legislators. If they were not a study group but rather a legislative body with both authority and responsibility to prepare laws, what sort of things would they want to be true of the laws they write? As they make suggestions, concerning the nature of civil laws, record these observations on a new page of your chart. Discourage the class from suggesting specific laws, particularly as they relate to controversial areas, such as abortion, morality, capital punishment, or civil rights, but rather encourage them to identify what would be true of any of their laws. Then ask the class to explain that what is true of their laws is also true of the law of God. Note the chart comparing the attributes of the law and God in the text. Remind the class that the law is good, holy, and spiritual, even in the New Testament, and that it is not the law but the abuse of the law that is criticized. Before we can know how to use the law, we must first understand its purpose. Have students find the following verses and record the five purposes of the law of God on your chart (see textbook): Deut. 29:29; Josh. 1:8; 1 Cor. 10:11; Rom. 5:13; Gal. 3:24.

### **APPLICATION/RESPONSE**

The author states, "The Christian is not expected to keep the law as the Jew in the Old Testament" but later notes, "This does not mean Christians are exempt from the law. " How can these two apparently contradictory statements both be true? (Christians obey laws differently from Jews.) If the class has not read this final chapter of the textbook, allow a couple moments to scan it now. Ask the class to identify the five "laws" to which the Christian is bound and have different students explain their nature. As you go to prayer to conclude this session, remind students they must live by the standard (law) of God as surely as they must live by the law of the land.

### **ASSIGNMENT**

Have the students read chapter 10 in the textbook and complete the daily readings. Ask students to identify the principles by which they identify the will of God.

## **SESSION TEN**

The Work of God  
Towns, chapter 10

### **LESSON GOALS**

1. To lead students to realize how God is presently involved in our world.
2. To guide students in determining the will of God for their lives.

## **PREPARATION**

Case study. Be sure to have an overhead projector on hand with extra pens and transparency sheets. It is wise to have an extra bulb on hand. Record a number of “cases” on separate pieces of paper describing situations demanding direction from God. These may be personal experiences or situations of which you are aware. Be certain not to betray a confidence or indicate the source of your “cases.”

## **INTRODUCTION**

Study groups. As students arrive, encourage them to meet in small groups and give them one of your cases. Ask each group to discuss the situation and suggest steps by which the individual in that situation can determine God's will for that situation. After the groups have compiled some answers, ask them to share both the cases and the principles with the rest of the class. As different groups report, different principles can be suggested. Record these on the overhead using different colors for different groups. Later, show how even your class finds that different principles relate to determining God's will.

## **THE LESSON**

1. Discussion. The author defines the work of God as “the outworking of his eternal plan for this life, based upon his wise and holy purpose, whereby God freely oversees all that comes to pass. “ How does God administer his plan? (Several ways are suggested in the introduction, including absentee landlord, master architect, divine chess player.) The author notes an apparent contradiction of Scripture, i.e., God choosing certain individuals for salvation but offering it to all. How can this problem be solved? (The sovereignty of God in Scripture relates to God's program, plans, and principles but is never applied before the fact to particular individuals.)

The author demonstrates the above principle by a summary study of a number of key words implying the sovereignty of God. Interrupt the J discussion at this point to study several of these words more closely. Print the English words on the overhead with the selected references. As students read aloud the passages, ask them to identify whether the verse speaks of God's sovereignty in terms of his principles, plans, or purposes and mark the verses accordingly. At the conclusion of the study, show how the Scriptures teach God's sovereignty in such a way that individual responsibility is not denied. If this principle is clearly understood by students, it will prevent their being confused by those who teach a fatalistic view of God both within and outside of Christianity.

Ask the class, On what basis does God sovereignly determine his work? (His wisdom; his nature.) How is God's sovereignty important to our Christian experience? (It is the basis of the security of the believer, prevents idea of justification by works.) The author identifies “the responsibility of all creation, to glorify God. “ How does this relate to evaluation of our life in determining God's will? (Doing the will of God will bring glory to God. If God is not being glorified by our life, we are failing to do the will of God.) How is the work of God “both passive and active”? (God may cause or allow experiences and opportunities or obstacles in our life.)

2. Small groups. Divide the class into three groups and appoint reporting chairmen. Under the heading "The Content of the Work of God," the author lists several Scriptures under three areas of life. Have each group study one of these areas to summarize for the class what God does in that area of life. As each group presents its report, be prepared to supplement with the material from the text. Then briefly lecture on the strategy by which God works using the material in the following section of the chapter.

## **APPLICATION/RESPONSE**

List the twelve principles for “Discovering God's (Plan for Your Life” on the overhead and discuss each principle briefly explaining it and clarifying any questions students may have. If some students have not purchased the textbook, you may want to encourage them to copy the list and keep it in their Bibles. After the principles are understood, distribute additional case studies not used earlier, and have groups of two or three determine the best way for that individual to solve the situation. After a few minutes, call the class together and have groups share the case and strategy they would recommend. Other class members may have insights. Explain that this exercise may help students apply biblical principles for determining God's will to the experience of others. As you close in prayer, ask; God to help students apply the same principles to their lives.

## **ASSIGNMENT**

Ask the class to read chapter 11 in the textbook and the daily readings. Select those who will participate in giving reports and a debate during the next session.

## **SESSION ELEVEN**

The Trinity  
Towns, chapter 11

## **LESSON GOALS**

1. To lead students to understand the triune nature of God.
2. To lead students to obey, each member of the Trinity as they seek to live a godly life.

## **PREPARATION**

1. Charts. Draw the two charts from chapter 11 on a chalkboard before the class begins. The charts will be used with class discussion.
2. Debate. Have a large table or two tables in the front of the class for use by the participants in the analysis debate.

Last week two students should have been asked to participate in an analysis debate. The purpose of the debate is not to defeat an opponent but to analyze both sides of an issue. The first student will present material on the topic of "The Father became the Son and he became the Holy Spirit." He will present material to defend the topic. The second student will refute the topic by giving the proper view of the Trinity. Make sure they have the sources necessary for adequate preparation.

## **INTRODUCTION**

One of the most important yet misunderstood doctrines of the Bible is the doctrine of the Trinity to emphasize the importance of this doctrine, have two students debate and analyze the statement “The Father became the Son and he became the Holy Spirit.” Both students should study several articles on the Trinity in various Bible dictionaries and encyclopedias. The student arguing the changing mode of the Trinity (called modalism) may argue that his explanation answers the problem of three Gods and is a logical expression of one God. The student who is answering this false teaching will want to demonstrate the importance of the Trinity in Scripture.

## THE LESSON

1. Lecture. The author cites two definitions of the Trinity in the first section of the chapter, the Athanasian Creed and Robert Dick's statement. As you read these to the class, emphasize the problem man has faced as he has tried to define one God, yet three coeternal and coequal persons. Explain that it is sometimes easier to understand what the Trinity is when we know what it is not.

Call upon five students to explain, in two or three minutes, the five erroneous views of the Trinity identified in the textbook. Of course they will want to read beyond the text, consulting some of the reference books used by the debaters. Each reporter should take one false view, clearly define it and show why such a view is unacceptable to the Christian. They may want to note important points or verses on the chalkboard.

2. Discussion. Having emphasized the difficulties and errors in theories concerning the Trinity, students may well wonder why the doctrine is so important. The following questions will reinforce the students' understanding of the biblical understanding of the Trinity: How do the names of God support the idea of a Trinity? (Elohim and Jehovah are both plural words used in Gen. 1:20; 3:22; 11:7; Isa. 6:8; three names of God in Isa. 54:5.) How does the pattern of worship in the Old Testament suggest a Trinity? (Thrice holy nature of God in Isa. 6:3; Jacob recognized God in three ways in Gen. 48:15, 16; three-fold blessing of the Aaronic Benediction in Numbers 6:24-26.) How is the doctrine of the Trinity developed in the Old Testament? (Jehovah has a Son who is God, the Spirit of God is distinguished from God; Isa. 48:16 identifies three who are God.) How was the idea of Trinity more fully developed in the ministry of Christ? (Trinity present at his baptism; Jesus taught the Trinity in the upper room.) How can it be demonstrated that the early church was a Trinitarian church? (Apostolic benediction in 2 Cor. 13:14; baptismal formula of the church in Matt. 28:19, 20.) What is the separate ministry of each person of the Trinity in accomplishing our salvation (Heb. 9:14-all three persons of the Trinity worked to accomplish the atonement.)

Many Christians fail to recognize that each member of the trinity is God, has always been God and does the work of God. To help some in your class who may have this problem, ask various students to read the verses listed on the chart "The Attributes of the Trinity." As the verses are read, complete the chart on the chalkboard demonstrating that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit all possess the attributes of deity. When the chart is completed, point out that there is no valid reason for considering any particular member of the trinity "more God" than any other. This is further verified when it is understood that the members of the Trinity work cooperatively in accomplishing the work of God. Follow the same procedure above in completing the chart on "The Work of the Trinity." Many students may be surprised that every member of the Trinity is involved in all the work of God.

## APPLICATION/RESPONSE

When the second chart above is completed, ask students how many realized the entire Trinity indwells them, gives them authority for ministry or keeps them secure? What does the work of the Trinity in the Christian life mean in terms of living victoriously? (God in His fullness dwells within so the student has that resource to draw on.) Which member of the Trinity is worthy of our worship? (All are as God although the Holy Spirit in this age tends to glorify Christ instead of himself; John 16:14.) Which member of the Trinity should the Christian obey? Which should have the most authority in the believer's life? (All have equal authority to demand obedience. They will never give conflicting instructions.) How can the Christian be sure he is

obedient to the Trinity? (When he is obedient to the will of God revealed in Scripture.) As you close the class in prayer, encourage each student to pray to the Father in the name of Jesus, through the power of the Spirit.

### **ASSIGNMENT**

Have students read chapter 12 and the readings in the textbook for the next session.

## **SESSION TWELVE**

The Father

Towns, chapter 12

### **LESSON GOALS**

1. To lead students to understand the nature of the first person of the Trinity, their Heavenly Father.
2. To help students worship their Heavenly Father.

### **PREPARATION**

Room decoration. Prepare sheets of paper with the words, “The best father is one who . . .” Class members will use these for their personal reflection. Also, have the statement printed on a poster or on the chalkboard when pupils first enter the class.

Decorate the room with pictures of men with their sons doing different things, such as camping, fishing, or playing ball. These pictures can be obtained from magazines and advertisements.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Sentence completion. As students arrive, distribute the pages pertaining to the ideal father. Have them prepare one or two sentences to determine the nature of the ideal father. Encourage students to discuss both the attributes and actions of an ideal father. After several minutes, collect the sheets and read several comments or have the students contribute their suggestions. These could be written on the chalkboard. Remind the class that God designed the family with a father at the head of it. Read the author's statement, “The biblical pattern of a the family, when practiced, is a tremendous aid for parents concerned about teaching children the fatherhood of God.” The father in the home should be a model for the child of what his Heavenly Father is like. The ideal father is one who best reflects the nature, character, and attributes of God the Father. Explain you will return to the descriptions of the ideal father at the end of the session.

### **THE LESSON**

1. Discussion. The author states, “When a father properly fulfills his role in the family, he is fulfilling a picture of the Heavenly Father's relationship to his children. How is this relationship established? (Spiritual~ birth by faith in Christ accomplished by the Father; John 1:12, 13.) How does God reflect the love a father should have for his children? (By giving, e.g., Luke 11:13, God's children call him Abba, that is, “daddy;” Rom. 8:15.) What are the essential

responsibilities of a father? (To love, protect, and provide for his children.) How does God's model help human fathers become better fathers? (Protection, 2 Chron. 20:17; ROM. 26 8:31; provision, James 1:17; teaching/training, John 14:26.) The author observes, "Some teach that the fatherhood of God means everyone is a child of God, hence everyone is going to heaven. " Why must the contemporary Christian reject this concept? (Denies the sin nature of man, eternal punishment for sin, the necessity of the atonement, the necessity of salvation.) How can God be considered a universal father, in the biblical sense? (Type of "founding father" of the creation.) How does this relationship change when applied to Israel? (God considered Israel his special son, Jer. 31:9). How is the father-son relationship uniquely applied to Jesus and God the Father? (Word used by Jesus in John 5:17 suggests "my Father of whom I am identical"; Jesus often recognized as the Son of God distinct from Christians who are the sons of God.) What does the author mean when he describes God as a protective father? (Ps. 68:5; orphans not necessarily saved but protected by God as a father would normally protect his children.) Which aspect of the fatherhood of God is the major emphasis of the New Testament? (Redemptive Father.)

2. Group studies. The author states, "There are many benefits provided for the Christian by the Heavenly Father." Five of these benefits are listed in the text. Divide the class into five small groups and appoint leaders for study. Assign each group the responsibility of studying one of these five benefits. Using both the texts and their Bibles, the group should seek to determine the means by which God offers this benefit and any conditions, which must be fulfilled on the part of the Christian. When the class is reassembled, have group leaders report their findings to the class. Highlight the important material in the text by asking the following discussion questions: How can we enjoy our fellowship with the Father? (Bible study and prayer.) How can the Christian be sure of the value of prayer? (Promise of Christ; Matt. 6:32; John 16:23.) How does the Father provide guidance for the contemporary Christian? (Bible.) How does our relationship with the Father assure our security? (Ability of God to save and keep.) What can the "heir of God" expect from God? (Mansion, place for him.)

### **APPLICATION/RESPONSE**

Every Christian is a child of God, but some in the class are also fathers. Bring out the sheets completed at the beginning of the session and review some of the characteristics of the ideal father. Discuss these with the class. Apply the suggestions for fathers in the class.

The author states, "When we have a correct understanding of God, we realize he wants both to be our Father and to be worshiped in majesty." Remind the class of the apparent contradiction of this statement. First God is worshiped because of his sovereignty. Second, the Christian has an intimate relationship with God as a father.

Close the session by dividing the class into prayer cells of two or three persons each. Encourage students to pray specifically concerning their application of this doctrine in their lives, i.e., as children of God and fathers in the home.

### **ASSIGNMENT**

Ask the class to read chapter 13 and the readings in the textbook. Assign responsibility to those involved in the panel discussion.

## **SESSION THIRTEEN**

The Names of God

Towns, chapter 13

### **LESSON GOALS**

1. To lead students to understand the meaning of the names of God used in Scripture.
2. To motivate students to honor the names of God and to not use the name of God in vain.

### **PREPARATION**

1. Map. Secure or draw a large map of the Holy Land. You will want to find out the geographical location of the places where God revealed his names. The map will help students picture some of the background setting of the revelation of God in his names.
2. Panel discussion. Contact those responsible for the panel discussion to be sure they are prepared. They should be familiar with the chapter in Towns' book. They may also want to check several Bible dictionaries for further insights on particular names of God.
3. Browsing table. Obtain books on how to name babies from public libraries or a bookstore. Specifically, these books should give the meaning behind the names of those in your class. These will be used to demonstrate the importance of names.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Place the books around the room. As students arrive, have them look up the meaning of their names as well as those of several close friends or relatives. Some may already know the meaning of their names. Remind the class, "Nothing sounds sweeter to a person's ears than the sound of his own name." Then ask various class members what their names mean. The answers will vary from a rather interesting extreme to the humorous side. Remind the class that while everyone's name means something, today it is not always reflective of that person's nature because parents name children for various reasons. This problem is not encountered with God because his name reveals something about his nature.

### **THE LESSON**

Panel. Have three students who have studied the primary names of God take their place in front of the room. Moderate the discussion and be prepared to ask the following questions if no one has any questions. Panel members should be reminded that it is perfectly permissible to answer, "I don't know" to any question that puzzles them. Begin by having each one define the names of God assigned to him and briefly explain the nature of its use. After each student has made his presentation, ask the following questions. 1. ELOHIM. How does the name of God assigned to you intimate the Trinity? (Elohim is a plural noun.) Who or what is this name usually used with? (Unsaved, inanimate objects.) What are some of the things God is said to have done? (Create the world; judging evil; inspiration.) 2. JEHOVAH. Why is there a problem correctly identifying this name of God? (Jews do not pronounce it to avoid breaking the third commandment.) Describe the treatment the Jew gave to this name of God. (Copyists changed clothes and pens when writing it; it was not pronounced.) Why has this name of God been called the "covenant name of God"? (Chiefly used when God relates to men as in covenants.) 3. LORD. What are the implications of recognizing God as Lord? (We are his servants to do his will; implies the possibility of knowing the will of God.) How did Peter violate the meaning of this name of God? (Acts 10:9-16-"not so, Lord" is a conflict of ideas.) What is meant by the

statement, “if he is not Lord of all, he is not Lord at all”? (Lordship implies total control of everything.)

As you lead the class in discussing the compound names of God, point out the places on the map where God revealed these names to his people. If students have not read these two sections on the compound names of God, encourage them to follow along in the text. How did the name “El-Shaddai” meet Abraham's specific need? (God was sufficient to overcome Abraham's inability to have a son.) What did the name “El Elyon” teach gentiles about the nature of God? (God was above the false gods of pagan nations and ruled all the possessions of those gods in heaven and earth.) How does “El Olam” affect our relation with God? (We can have confidence in God because he is not confined to time as we are.) Who does “Jehovah-Sabaoth” use to accomplish his purposes? (Angels, saints, sinners, heavenly bodies.) How can our faith grow as we apply the truth of “Jehovah-Jireh”? (Trusting God to provide all our needs.) How does the name “Jehovah-Rapha” relate to the contemporary Christian? (Emphasizes the need for good health and God is able to heal people.) How does the name “Jehovah-Nissi” give hope to the Christian? (God fights the battle with/for us.) How does one develop a relationship with “Jehovah-Shalom”? (Through faith in Christ, Rom. 5:1). What is the prophetic application of “Jehovah-Tiskena”? (Israel will recognize “The Lord our righteousness” at the return of Christ.) Which attribute of God is emphasized in the name “Jehovah-Shammah”? (The omnipresence of God.)

### **APPLICATION/RESPONSE**

Ask various students to identify and summarize the arguments against taking God's name in vain. How serious is this sin in the mind of God? (In same context as bestiality, homosexuality, and child sacrifice.) How do Christians dishonor the name of God? (In speech and action.) The author states, “As we apply these names of God to our Christian experience, our communion with God will grow deeper and our Christian life will be more fulfilling.” Make this the emphasis of your closing prayer.

### **ASSIGNMENT**

Encourage the class to read chapter 14 and the daily readings in the textbook. Assign those responsible for book reviews.

## **SESSION FOURTEEN**

The Preexistence of Christ  
Towns, chapter 14

### **LESSON GOALS**

1. To lead students to recognize the eternity of Jesus Christ. 2. To guide students to submit their lives to Christ as God.

### **PREPARATION**

Book reviews. Reproduce a bibliography of books dealing with the doctrine of Christ. This list can represent those listed in the bibliography and others your pastor or church leaders may

recommend. Contact those students reviewing books during the week to be certain they will be prepared for the session.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Begin this session by reading aloud the tract “The Incomparable Christ” or “One Solitary Life” produced by the American Tract Society. These tracts emphasize the tremendous influence of Christ's life and ministry. Explain that the next several sessions will be devoted to a study of the doctrine of Christ. Mention the bibliography that has been prepared for those desiring further study, but do not distribute them until the end of the class. Call upon two or three students to share the aspect of the life or ministry of Christ that was emphasized in the book he read. Be sure to identify the library or bookstore where these are available.

Optional. Some study groups will not allow new members to join in the middle of a study. As this session begins a new doctrine, this would be an ideal time for new members to join the study. Be sure to introduce and welcome any new additions to the group.

## **THE LESSON**

1. Discussion. The author states, “Conservative Bible scholars recognize that the Bible contains an abundance of evidence to confirm the deity of Christ. “How do the claims of Jesus support the deity of Christ? (If he was God, he would have said so.) How can it be determined conclusively that Jesus was claiming deity for himself? (The response of the Jews, attempting to stone him for blasphemy.) How does the Bible substantiate the claim of Jesus to deity? (Jesus is the central theme of Scripture; the Old Testament is Christ concealed; the New Testament is Christ revealed.) How does Christ's position in the Trinity demonstrate his eternity? (By nature and definition each member of the triune godhead is eternal.) How would a person explain when Christ began? (He was the creator and was himself never created.)

The author defines a Christophany as “the manifestation of God in 30 visible and bodily form before the incarnation.” Record this definition on your scratch pad and note Jesus sometimes had the appearance of an angel of the Lord and other times the appearance of a man. How can it be determined that Jesus was one of the men who met with Abraham in Genesis 18? (Referred to by a title of deity a dozen times. He was seen by Abraham and no one has seen God, but they have seen the Son.) How do we know Jacob met with Christ in Genesis 32? (Jacob said he saw God.)

2. Small groups. One of the titles given to Old Testament Christophanies is “the angel of the Lord.” Divide the class into small groups to study one of the five appearances cited in the chart in the text. Have each group list as many reasons as they can to demonstrate that the angel of the Lord was Christ. After each group has completed their study, call upon various group members to report the findings of their group. The chart from the text should have been copied on the chalkboard or flip chart. Use this chart to review the material on the angel of the Lord.

How does the title “son of God” reveal the deity of Christ? (A son is like his father in nature, therefore the son of God would have the nature of God and be deity.) The author identifies four theories pertaining to when Jesus became the Son of God. Identify their main teachings and explain their major weakness. (List these four on the flip chart: Incarnation, Baptism, Resurrection, Ascension.)

What is meant by the expression “Eternal Generation”? (God exists beyond time and is not limited to twenty-four-hour days.) What “day” is referred to in Ps. 2:7? (Eternal day.) How is

the sonship of Christ different from that of angels, Jews, and Christians? (Only begotten; Christ has the nature of God.)

### **APPLICATION/RESPONSE**

The author states, “When we consider that Christ met with men as he did throughout the Old Testament and then spent a life among men on earth, we cannot help but be impressed with the intense personal concern of Christ. “ How does Christ demonstrate his concern to us today? (Presence of Christ, the Bible for guidance, Holy Spirit, prayer opportunities, church for fellowship.) How can the Christian who is concerned with becoming more like Jesus demonstrate this concern of Christ to others? (Intercessory prayer, acts of service, providing guidance and counsel, building caring relationships.)

How does the fact that Christ existed before Bethlehem affect our view of Christ? What ought our response be to him in light of this truth? (The eternality of Christ demonstrates his deity. We ought to recognize that he possesses the authority of deity.) What are the consequences if Christ were not God? (He would be a liar or lunatic.) Why are these consequences unacceptable? (The sinless nature of Christ; the consistency of his truth; the accuracy of his statements; the results of his teachings.)

Close this session in prayer reminding the class it is God to whom they are praying. Ask God to help your students recognize the deity of Christ practically in their lives.

### **ASSIGNMENT**

Have students read chapter 15 in the textbook as well as the daily readings listed.

## **SESSION FIFTEEN**

The Offices of Christ  
Towns, chapter 15

### **LESSON GOALS**

1. To lead students to understand the three offices of Jesus Christ.
2. To help students apply the authority of Christ as revealed in his offices to their lives.

### **PREPARATION**

Chart. Prepare a flip chart including the important statements and charts of chapter 15.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Survey. As students arrive, ask them about various positions of responsibilities (offices) they hold in different social groups, at work, church, family, or in clubs. List some of these offices on the flip chart. Encourage each student to spend time with someone he does not know well and learn something about his or her job. When the class is called together, have each student introduce someone to the group, noting something about that person's job or responsibility elsewhere.

## THE LESSON

1. Discussion. How did the office of the prophet develop in Israel? (Promised by God as Israel prepared to enter the land.) The author states, “The prophets of God were often unpopular among their own people. “ What caused this reaction? (Message of judgment; sin of people.) How was prophecy more than predicting the future? (For-telling, foretelling, and forthtelling.) How did Christ exemplify the prophet in his ministry? (Word of God, prophecy, teaching and preaching ministry.) The author states, “Each one who has trusted Christ as personal Savior also has a prophetic office. “ How is this demonstrated in Scripture? (“Ambassadors for Christ,” 2 Cor. 5:20; soul winning, Acts 1:8; rebuking sin, Luke 17:3; warning, Ezek. 3:17; comforting, 1 Thess. 4:18; teaching, Matt. 28:20.)

How did the ministry of the priest compare with that of the prophet? (Priest spoke to God on behalf of men. He was often the instrument of forgiveness not judgment.) How is Jesus a priest of God? (He is our great high priest leading to forgiveness of sin. He was a priest after the order of Melchizedek. He has a ministry of intercession.) What are the responsibilities of the believer-priest today? (Intercessory prayer.)

What was the result of the doctrine of the kingship of Jesus in early Christianity? (Persecution from Rome.) How does the kingship of Christ relate to the deity of Christ? (King and God were considered the same is

32 Rome; also 1 Tim. 1:17 and Rev. 15:3.) What are the implications of this aspect of Christ's announced office in eschatology, the doctrine of last things? (King must have a kingdom and rule it.) How does the kingship of Jesus affect the Christian life? (King has subjects, Christians are responsible to obey Christ.) How would you compare the early Christian view of Christ with that of contemporary Christians? (Early Christians recognized him as absolute ruler.)

2. Paraphrase, small groups. Divide the class into three groups and appoint a leader of each group. Assign each group to review one office of Jesus Christ and study further that aspect of Christ's ministry. Then assign them the following passages to read and paraphrase in their own words: Deut. 18:15-19; Heb. 9:14-16; Acts 17:5-9.

## APPLICATION/RESPONSE

Reassemble the class in the same three groups with a further assignment. Explain that all doctrine has certain implications in the Christian life, especially as that doctrine relates to Christ who is the central focus of the Christian life. Have the groups prepare a list of at least five implications that their office has on the Christian life. Toward the end of this group time, have each group list its findings on a page of the flip chart.

Prayer is affected by each of the offices of Christ. As you pray to God, you do so because Christ is your priest and has spoken to you as prophet. Also, you are obeying the command of our king. Dismiss the class by prayer, including the three offices of Christ in the benediction.

## ASSIGNMENT

Have the students read chapter 16 in the textbook and the daily readings.

## **SESSION SIXTEEN**

The Virgin Birth  
Towns, chapter 16

### **LESSON GOALS**

1. To lead students to recognize the virgin birth of Christ as a divine miracle.
2. To motivate students to yield themselves more fully to God.

### **PREPARATION**

Dramatic reading. Before this session, arrange for three members to be prepared to read Luke 1:26-38 in a realistic way.

### **INTRODUCTION**

To begin the study, remind students that they will be discussing the virgin birth of Christ. Ask those who are mothers to reflect upon some of their thoughts as they anticipated the birth of their first child. Men should be encouraged to do the same from their perspective as a new father.

Explain that the virgin birth of Christ has been a test doctrine to evaluate orthodoxy over the years. Those who deny the virgin birth also deny other miracles and the deity of Christ. Because of the importance of this doctrine and the theological battles, which have surrounded it, it is sometimes forgotten that Mary and Joseph would have had some of the same concerns any parent would possess anticipating the birth of their first child.

### **THE LESSON**

1. Groups of two. The doctrine of the virgin birth is one of the five historic fundamentals of the faith. Divide the class into groups of two and ask, "Why is the virgin birth of Christ so important?" After allowing the groups several minutes to discuss possible answers, call the class together and share findings. Encourage class members to add other suggestions to their own list. Remind the class of the importance of this doctrine by stressing the negative side of the reasons given, such as, if there were not a virgin birth, then Christ would have been born in sin, -°: then Christ was not God, then the Bible is not reliable.

2. Discussion. Artificial insemination creates the possibility of a woman giving birth to a child without having sexual relations with a man. How is this different from the virgin birth? (The virgin birth does not involve the seed of man.) What does the author mean when he writes, "The virgin ' birth of Christ is not an independent doctrine which we can receive or reject without affecting our Christianity"? (Foundational nature of doctrine involving inerrancy, sinless character, atonement, etc.)

According to the author, how does Genesis 3.15 allude to the virgin birth? (Law of first reference, seed of the woman.) How would you argue the fairness of God in giving the virgin birth as a sign to Ahaz<sup>9</sup> (Ahaz rejected the sign before hearing it.) Some contemporary theologians argue Isaiah was not referring to a virgin but rather a young woman. Why do you believe he was referring to a virgin? (Culture, tradition, and the verse in Isaiah 7:14 repeated in Matthew 1:23.)

What is the significance of Luke's record of the virgin birth? (Luke was a doctor and historian.) How does Luke indicate he believed in the virgin birth? (Calls Mary a virgin; family tree of Mary; never called Jesus the son of Joseph.) How can we be certain the Apostle Paul believed in and taught the virgin birth? (Association with Luke, Galatians 4:4.)

## **APPLICATION/RESPONSE**

The virgin birth of Christ was first announced to Mary after she was engaged to Joseph, then it was announced to Joseph after he was considering breaking the engagement. Yet these two were prepared to allow God to alter their plans that his will might be accomplished.

Introduce the angel “Gabriel” and “Mary” (two class members) to show how things might have been. Have class members give a dramatic reading of the annunciation, Luke 1:26-38. (One member read the words of Mary, another the words of Gabriel, and a third, the introduction and conclusion.) What excuses could Mary have given not to be the mother of Jesus? Have the class suggest the answers. (“Joseph and I have some personal goals for our family and we were going to wait a few years before we had kids,” etc.) The point is to show Mary's willingness to become the virgin mother of Christ and this involved yielding her rights to God and changing her plans dramatically.

As you dismiss this session in prayer, ask class members to evaluate their willingness to do God's will regardless of the implications to their own life-style.

## **ASSIGNMENT**

Have students read chapter 17 in the textbook and the daily readings.

## **SESSION SEVENTEEN**

How Christ Became a Man

Towns, chapter 17

### **LESSON GOALS**

1. To help students understand the self-emptying of Christ when he became a man.
2. To lead students to obey Christ regardless of the cost.

### **PREPARATION**

Room preparation. Prepare seven posters (use felt-tip pen and paper) with the following terms on them: Kenosis, Incarnation, God-Man, Son of God, Son of Man, Deity, and Divine. Place these around the room. You may also wish to include definitions from various authors or the dictionary.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Things are not always as they appear: Before the class gathers, place various items around the room which are somewhat disguised. Such items may include a decorative room deodorizer, an autistic candy dish, etc. As students arrive, ask them to discover as many items as they can that are not what they appear. From the items, ask them to list other things that come to mind.

As you begin the lesson, ask students to share their list with the rest of the class. If some items are not mentioned, you may want to share them as well. Point out to the class that many of the items may not have been recognized if they had not been looking for their true nature and function. You may wish to relate the story of Thomas Jefferson that heads this chapter in the text.

People did not always recognize Jesus for who he really was because he was hidden in human flesh. Though Jesus was God, he was also a man. Many who met him during his earthly ministry recognized him as a man but failed to understand he was God. He was God and man at the same time.

### **THE LESSON**

1. Discussion. The author writes, “For Christ, who was God before time began, to take on “the form of a servant” was indeed a humiliating experience. “ What are some of the things Christ had to set aside in such an action? (Splendor of heaven vs. common life-style on earth; being served by angels vs. serving men, etc.) What is the issue at stake in considering the kenosis? (Can God be less than God?) How can this issue be resolved? (Understanding kenosis includes veiling of glory, accepting human limitations, voluntarily giving up independent use of some attributes by Christ.)

The author notes some define the term kenosis is such a way that they deny Christ's essential] deity. (Jesus gave up attributes, the right to be worshiped, divine self-consciousness.) You may want to compare various definitions of the kenosis at this point illustrating these weaknesses. How can we be certain Jesus was God and conscious of being God during his earthly ministry? (Theme of Gospel of John.) Have various students read key verses in John, which emphasize the deity of Christ (20:31; 1:1, 14).

Why was the glory of Christ hidden during his earthly life and ministry? (To show Father's glory; men could not have survived seeing glory of God directly; to accomplish his work of redemption.) The author notes, “When Jesus became flesh, he voluntarily subjected himself to its limitation.” What would that have specifically included? (Living in a physical world; eating; drinking; being weary; relating socially to unredeemed sinners; exposure to temptation; etc.) When the author notes Christ voluntarily gave up the independent use of his relative attributes, which are specifically referred to? (Omniscience; omnipotence; omnipresence.) How was Jesus able to express these attributes if he had set aside his own independent use of them? (Only in dependence upon the Father and/or Holy Spirit.)

2. Group studies. Divide the class into several groups and distribute lists of verses cited in the section, “Why Jesus Emptied Himself.” Ask the groups to determine why Jesus chose this course of action. When these groups have completed their studies, select a spokesman from each group to share their findings with the rest of the class. You should be familiar with this section in the text so as to fill in any gaps and strengthen points, which are presented weakly.

### **APPLICATION/RESPONSE**

The author concludes this chapter with a reference to the commitment of C. T. Studd, founder of the World Wide Evangelization Crusade. If have read his biography, share some of the highlights of his life. Studd gave up a sizable inheritance to serve God in both China and Africa. When others would remind him of his great sacrifice, he simply reminded them, “If Jesus Christ be God and died for me, then no sacrifice is too great for me to give for him.”

As you dose this session in prayer, ask your students what they would consider “too great a sacrifice” for Christ in light of the kenosis and challenge them to offer it to Christ regardless.

### **ASSIGNMENT**

Have students read chapter 18 in the textbook and complete the daily readings in the book.

## **SESSION EIGHTEEN**

The Perfection of Christ  
Towns, chapter 18

### **LESSON GOALS**

1. To help students recognize the two natures of Christ.
2. To motivate students to allow the indwelling Christ to work in and through them.

### **PREPARATION**

Chart. On a flip chart, list evidence that Jesus was both God and man. If you plan to fill in blanks on the chart during the discussion, be sure to have several markers available.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Have students suggest items in their home that have a dual use such as a couch that also serves as a bed, blenders which also serve as food processors, televisions that are computers, etc.

This session will examine the two natures of Christ. While not exactly like dual function items on the market today because they are not complete in the items they represent, Christ was completely God and completely man. Theologians call this mystery the hypostatic union.

### **THE LESSON**

1. Discussion. The author notes, “This union of divine and human is one of the most difficult doctrines to understand, yet one which is foundational to Christianity. “ Why is this union so imperative? (Jesus had to be both God and man to provide salvation for man.) What is meant by the term “incarnation”? (The miracle of God becoming man, yet remaining God.)

John used the term Word to identify Jesus. What are the possible sources of that expression? (Greek philosophy; Hebrew wisdom; expression of God.) What was John trying to communicate with the use of that title for Christ? (Deity of Christ.) How does John argue that Jesus is God in John 1:1-18? (The word is eternal, is a person, has face-to-face relationship with God; is deity, yet distinct in existence from God, while being one with the Father.)

2. Group paraphrase. Divide the class into several smaller groups and ask them to paraphrase John 1:1-18 in their own words. A good paraphrase should capture as much of the intended meaning of the passage, using different words from these in the text. You may have each group paraphrase the entire section or divide the text among the groups. Read the work of each group to the class, noting the strengths of each one.

3. Chart. Have different students read the following verses: Heb. 4:15; Luke 2:52; Matt. 4:2; John 4:6. As each student reads a verse, ask him how that verse characterizes Jesus as a man, then list his observation on a chart. Emphasize that in his humanity, Jesus experienced the same physical limitations common to all men. Point out to the class that the Bible portrays Jesus as both God and man. These two emphases are not contradictory but rather complimentary.

4. Lecture. The one area in which a group is most likely to stray from the orthodox doctrine of Christ is in the matter of the union of the two natures of Christ. Those with (liberal tendencies tend to deny the deity of Christ and view him only as a man. Reacting to that heresy, some overzealous conservative Christians have erred in emphasizing the deity of Christ and denying his humanity.

Following the section entitled “The Union of Natures” in the text, give a brief explanation of the union of the divine and human natures of Christ. Be careful not to fall into any of the common errors in understanding this doctrine. You may wish to consult with your church leaders for suggestions or further references on this subject.

5. Chart. Have various students read the following verses: Matt. 5:17; John 1:18; Heb. 5:1; John 1:29; 1 John 3:8; 1 Peter 2:21. As they read the verses, ask them to answer the question, “Why did Christ become a man?” List the reasons suggested from these verses on the chart.

### **APPLICATION/RESPONSE**

Remind the class that it has always been God's intention to dwell among his people. In the Old Testament, his presence was known in the garden of Eden, the pillar of fire, and the cloud that led Israel in the wilderness; God dwelt in the tabernacle and finally the temple. In the Gospels, God's presence among men came by way of the incarnation. Today, however, God dwells in the lives of Christians who are described as “temples of the Holy Spirit.” Have various students read 1 Cor. 6:19; John 14:23; and Rev. 3:20.

It is God's desire to be “at home” in the lives of his people. Unfortunately, we sometimes treat God as a houseguest. He is welcome in some areas of our life but not permitted to be involved in other areas. As you dismiss this session in prayer, challenge each student to evaluate his relation with Christ and urge him to make him more than a houseguest.

### **ASSIGNMENT**

Have students read chapter 19 and the daily readings in the text. Ask two students to give reports on the causes of Jesus' death.

## **SESSION NINETEEN**

The Death of Christ  
Towns, chapter 19

### **LESSON GOALS**

1. To lead students to know the major events surrounding the death of Christ and the words he spoke from the cross.
2. To motivate the pupil to prepare for his own death by receiving Christ or by dedicating himself to witness to someone.

### **PREPARATION**

Reports. Have several students prepare to report on the historical and social causes of the death of Christ. These students should be familiar with the chapter in the text and the Scriptures relevant to his death. Contact these students before the session begins to insure they are prepared.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Before the students arrive, decorate the room with such things as the obituaries section of the newspaper, brochures from a cemetery, news reports of traffic deaths. As the students arrive, tell them you will be studying the death of Christ. Ask them how many have been to a funeral,

have had a parent die, or have ever come close to death. When Jesus died on the cross, those involved with his life on earth may have had similar responses to the death of their son, brother, or friend.

## **THE LESSON**

1. Student reports. Biblical theology is founded upon historical events. Paul taught that Christ died (history) for our sins (theology). Have students describe the historical context of the death of Christ. These students should present their reports giving causes for the death of Christ.

As each student completes his report, ask the class any detail of importance that could be added. You may wish to draw a chronological chart of Jesus' last hours on earth. This may help students grasp the total picture.

2. Discussion. Some of the most-remembered statements a man makes are those he makes on his deathbed. While Jesus died, he uttered seven statements known as the seven last words of Christ. How did the death of Christ differ from what might have been expected? (The usual behavior of a condemned man is absent.) How do the seven words help us understand the death of Christ? (Reflect his purpose; give insight into how Jesus faced crucifixion.)

3. Small Group Studies. Divide the group into seven smaller groups. Have each group look at one of the seven statements in more detail. They should read the statement in its biblical context and seek to answer the following questions: What is the basic idea communicated by this statement? How does this statement differ from what might normally be expected from a crucified man? What does this statement reveal about the character of God? How can I as a Christian get meaning from this statement? In a smaller class, you may wish to have fewer groups, some looking at two statements.

Reassemble the class and review the seven last words. Ask the groups to suggest ways by which these words can be applied to the Christian life. Remind the class of the uniqueness of the death of Christ. The author notes, "The death of Christ was more than a fact of history." The events of these three days, his death, and resurrection are the central experience of biblical theology." Ask students to list several ways in which this is emphasized in the Scriptures. (Types in Old Testament, climax of the Gospels, basis of epistles.) When Jesus died on the cross, he died for the sins of the whole world.

## **APPLICATION/RESPONSE**

Depending upon the character of your class, you may wish to emphasize the need of receiving Christ as personal Savior. Take a few moments before closing to review the message of the gospel and explain how a person can be saved. As you close in prayer, encourage unsaved class members to surrender their lives to the Lord.

The death of Christ is a popular theme in gospel music. This session could be effectively concluded by singing a hymn together. This was how Jesus concluded his last session with his disciples before his death. As some groups may not desire to sing, this could be overcome by playing a record or tape. Before singing or listening, encourage the class to pay particular attention to the words in the light of this session.

## **ASSIGNMENT**

Have students read chapter 20 in the textbook and the daily readings.

## **SESSION TWENTY**

The Atonement

Towns, chapter 20

### **LESSON GOALS**

1. To lead students to understand the nature of atonement. 2. To lead students to adopt personal plans of evangelism.

### **PREPARATION**

Chart. Prepare a flip chart defining the various technical terms and Greek words used in this chapter. Sometimes there is a tendency to overlook technical terms in a popular survey of doctrine. However, these terms are the key to understanding the atonement. Refer to the flip chart often throughout the lesson as you make reference to the terms. This will help underscore not only the importance of these terms, but also their important message.

### **INTRODUCTION**

As students arrive, remind them that each represents one or more other person or organization in life. They may represent such groups as political parties, labor unions, corporations, or amateur sports teams. All married people represent their families and everyone is a representation of their parents. As representatives, what do they like or dislike about the organization they represent?

Explain that Christ acted as our representative or substitution when He died on the cross. The meaning of the death of Christ is usually summarized with the preposition "for," as "Christ died for our sins." This is usually expressed by the word atonement, which originally meant "to cover." The atonement means Christ's satisfaction of our sins.

### **THE LESSON**

Discussion. Commenting on the atonement, Thomas, Earl of Kinnoull, stated, "I have always considered the atonement to be characteristic of the gospel." Why is this doctrine such an important part of Christianity? (Solution to the weaknesses of human nature; message of comfort and hope; foundation of faith.) Because Jesus loves and died for the world, does this mean the world will be saved? (No, it means only that it is possible to be saved.)

How is the substitutionary nature of Christ's atonement emphasized in the Old Testament? (Type of sacrificial animals; laying on of hands on the Day of Atonement.) The author notes, "On the cross of Calvary, God placed our sin upon Christ and accepted him in our place as he provided for our atonement." For whom did Jesus die, according to the Scriptures? (Christians-Rom. 5:8; the church--Eph. 5:25; all people Heb. 2:9.)

Historically, conservative Christians have emphasized the blood of Jesus in their teaching. Why is this blood so important? (Price of redemption-1 Pet. 1:18; denial of blood a mark of false teachers 2 Pet. 2:1.) How does Galatians 3:10 shed light on our redemption? (It reflects purchasing a slave in the market place.) How is this key term changed three verses later in verse 13? (Ek-out of, to purchase a slave and take him home.) A third term, Lutroo, is used in Galatians 4:5. How does this expression complete the picture of our redemption? (To purchase and give freedom.)

The author comments, "When Jesus died on the cross, he satisfied the justice and holiness of God." Why was this satisfaction necessary? (Nature of God required a payment for sin, man

could not make a satisfactory payment himself.) How was this aspect of the atonement emphasized in the Old Testament? (Blood on mercy seat.) Why is sin so offensive to God? (Rebellion against him and rejection of him.) Why is the blood so important to God? (Represents life and death.) How did Jesus satisfy the demands of the law when he died? (He kept the law and paid the penalty for those who broke it.)

The author cites reconciliation as a fourth aspect of the atonement of Christ. How was the reconciliation of God and man accomplished by Christ's death? (Destroying the cause of enmity and placing man in a favorable light with God.) How does 2 Corinthians 5,19 insure that all are "savable sinners"? (Christ reconciled the world to himself.)

### **APPLICATION/RESPONSE**

As you bring this session to a close, emphasize again that Christ died, making it possible that all people might be saved. If people are not saved, it is because they have not been given the opportunity to be saved, or they have rejected the offer of Christ. The means by which God has determined how people should hear about salvation is through Christians telling the gospel to the unsaved. Each is responsible for reaching those in his sphere of influence.

Encourage each student to make a list of individuals he knows that are not saved. If the student is unsure of someone's salvation, that name should be added to the list. Distribute sheets of paper and ask students to write the names of people that come to mind as you announce the following categories: relatives, friends, school or work associates, neighbors, business associates, others you might meet in the course of a given month. Ask students to pray for this list of names and to look for opportunities to share the gospel with them. You may wish to have gospel tracts on hand or other materials to help them reach people.

Close in prayer for the friends and associates of the group, asking God to save them and help the students share the gospel with them.

### **ASSIGNMENT**

Have students read chapter 21 in the textbook and the daily readings.

## **SESSION TWENTY-ONE**

The Resurrection  
Towns, chapter 21

### **LESSON GOALS**

1. To lead students to understand the nature and result of the resurrection of Christ.
2. To help students apply the power of Christ's resurrection to their lives.

### **PREPARATION**

Chart Before the session, prepare a flip chart (18' by 36") with the heading, NATURE OF THE RESURRECTION. Number from 1 to 6, but leave blank spaces so that you can fill in the students' answers during the class. On a second sheet of paper, write THE RESULT OF THE RESURRECTION and numbers 1 to 6, leaving the spaces blank for class discussion.

## INTRODUCTION

After the students arrive, begin the class by asking if they have ever met anyone who was clinically dead but was resuscitated. (Resuscitation is reactivating the organs and bringing life back to the same body. Resurrection is a new quality of life in body and spirit in which the person is glorified.) Perhaps someone knows of a person whose heart stopped beating but was revived. At one time in medical history this would have been considered sensational, but it is commonplace today. Ask the class to define the difference between resurrection and resuscitation.

## THE LESSON

1. Lecture. If the students have not read the chapter, summarize briefly the problem some have in accepting the doctrine of the resurrection. Emphasize the author's point that people in Scripture rejected the fact of the resurrection and today people continue to reject the resurrection. It is not a fact that cannot be proven to them; people reject the resurrection because of the supernatural demands on their life. The resurrection is the "hinge" of history. It is the apex in Christianity.

2. Discussion, flip chart. The author suggests that there are six different qualities/characterizations of the resurrection. Introduce each one of the six areas with a question. As the students briefly give answers, summarize them on the flip chart. (1) How do we know that Jesus actually and physically died? (Predications, the descriptions at the cross; blood and water; they broke his legs.) Christ actually died and in resurrection his life was renewed. Write on the chart: "renewed life." (2) What is the primary characteristic of death? (Separation of body and spirit.) Write on chart: "reunion of body and spirit." (3) Because the body is overcome in the act of death, how is resurrection a victory over death? (Second death is done away with.) Write on the chart: "subjecting the power of death." In the physical life, Jesus was subject to physical limitations. (4) What attributes were restored to Jesus at the resurrection? (Glory, the comparative attributes, he was no longer physically limited.) Write on the chart: "glory." (5) What is the primary quality of resurrection life? (Spiritual life.) Write on the chart: "spiritual life." (6) What is the main description of a resurrected body? (Glorification.)

The resurrection of Christ accomplished a great number of things that affect our lives. Ask the class to list those things (benefits) that come directly from his resurrection. (1) Could we have eternal life without the resurrection? (No.) List on the chart under number one: "eternal life" (2) The second benefit to the Christian is power over sin and death. Write on the chart: "imparted power." (3) What would have happened if Jesus had not been raised? (The specific accomplishments of Calvary would not have been announced and manifested.) Write on chart: "manifest justification." (4) What would happen to Christians after they died if Christ had not been raised? (No hope for their body after death.) (5) Because of the resurrection, the Christian has Jesus Christ indwelling him. Could this have happened without the resurrection? (No.) In what ways does Jesus Christ indwell the believer? (Union with Christ because of resurrection.)

## APPLICATION/RESPONSE

Draw the chart from the textbook (entitled OUR UNION WITH CHRIST) on your flip chart/chalkboard. There are seven areas where the Christian is identified with Jesus Christ. Ask a different class member to read each verse and briefly summarize its meaning. Explain to the class that our spiritual life is reflective of our identification with the resurrected Jesus Christ.

## **ASSIGNMENT**

Ask the class to read chapter 22 of the textbook.

## **SESSION TWENTY-TWO**

The Ascension of Christ

Towns, chapter 22

### **LESSON GOALS**

1. To help students understand the nature and importance of Christ's ascension.
2. Impress upon them the necessity of an "action-oriented life" because of the ascension.

### **PREPARATION**

Before the beginning of class write on the board or flip chart the verses Acts 1:9-11. This verse will be used to make a comparison between the ascension and the second coming.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The five great events in Christianity are all concerned with Jesus Christ: the virgin birth, his death, resurrection, ascension, and his bodily return to earth. Out of all these events, less space is used in the New Testament to describe the ascension than the other events. Yet, even though less space is used to describe it, the ascension is an imperative doctrine; without it, Christianity would be meaningless.

Begin the class by asking the students to compare the similarities between the ascension and the second coming of Jesus Christ that appears in Acts 1:9-11. Obviously, the two events are tied together in ' Jesus. "He shall return in like manner," as he ascended. The students should arrive at the following similarities: (1) visibly, (2) bodily, (3) unexpectedly, (4) suddenly, (5) with the clouds, (6) at the Mount of Olives, (Zech. 14:4), (7) accompanied by angels.

### **THE LESSON**

1. Lecture. The ascension is the physical return of Christ to heaven where he returned to his former place of authority, reclaimed his former glory, began a new ministry of intercession, and bestowed on the believers new power, new spiritual gifts, and a new standing before God. Because Jesus ascended into heaven, the believers now have a new home. After his ascension, he sent the Holy Spirit to minister to them.

2. Discussion. Use a transparency or a flip chart to describe the ascension. Write across the top, THE NATURE OF THE ASCENSION. Ask the class the following questions. Give them a moment to reflect on the answers, then summarize the answer on the chart. (1) The kenosis experience of Christ was the voluntary limitation of his comparative attributes. What was he actually able to do after the ascension that he was not able to do before the ascension? (Christ was still omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent, but now he assumes full control that he had given up in the kenosis.) (2) After the resurrection, Christ had a resurrected body but lacked one thing that he received at the ascension. What was added at the ascension? (A glorified body. Read Rev. 1:13-17.) (3) The experience of the trial and death was humiliating for Christ because it was the ultimate in rejection and suffering. What was Christ's entrance in heaven like, after his

humiliation on earth? Describe. (Worship, joy, glorification, victory, gladness.) When he arrived in heaven, he did not simply take up his former task, he was given new responsibilities. (4) What new responsibilities did Christ assume at the ascension? (Intercessor and advocate.)

Not only did the ascension change the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, it changed Christians in that it has had a great influence on them. Write the statement, THE RESULT OF THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST on the chart, transparency, or chalkboard. Ask the following questions to the class to emphasize each result of the resurrection and summarize the results on the chart. (1) The disciples should have not been surprised at the ascension because Jesus promised he would go away (John 16:7). What was the main contribution of the Holy Spirit after the ascension? (To take the place of Christ as the comforter or paraclete.) Christ had been present on earth to help his disciples in their ministry, now he gives them a new spiritual enablement. (2) In what way are spiritual gifts a result of the ascension and how do they take the place of Jesus Christ? (Gifts are given at the ascension, Eph. 4:8; gifts enable us to do the work he has commanded.) (3) What spiritual power does the believer have as a result of the ascension? (To overcome sin, to serve Christ.) Christ predicted he would be ministering in heaven after he left earth. What is he doing? (Preparing us a home, interceding, our advocate.) Each believer has a new position in heaven. (5) What is the new position that the believer now enjoys? (The believer is united in Jesus Christ before God.)

### **APPLICATION/RESPONSE**

Christians should understand the nature and importance of the ascension. However, this knowledge is not just academic; it should motivate to action. After the ascension, the angels asked the disciples, “Why stand ye gazing up into heaven? . . .” (Acts 1:11). They were telling the disciples that they should become “action-oriented” on the facts that they had learned. Read the verse that was written on the board or flip chart at the beginning of the class and drive home the urgency of acting on the benefits of the ascension because: (1) time is short, (2) Christ is coming, (3) lost ones dying without the gospel, (4) Christ's accomplishments and new position demand our response.

### **ASSIGNMENT**

Ask the class to read chapter 23 of the textbook.

## **SESSION TWENTY-THREE**

The Present Ministry of Jesus Christ  
Towns, chapter 23

### **LESSON GOALS**

1. To help students understand that the present intercessory ministry of Christ is to help prevent sin and that his ministry as advocate deals with sin after it occurs.

2. To help students effectively deal with potential and actual sins. **PREPARATION**

Circular response. Point out to the class that everyone struggles with sin. God will not take away their sin nature, nor will God overcome their sin without human initiative. Have each person in the group respond to the following statement: “I want Christ to help me overcome sin ... “ In

circular response, everyone should say something; they should (1) give a testimony, (2) share a prayer request, (3) quote a verse, or (4) share a burden.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Explain that Christ the Intercessor deals with the believer's weakness and temptations; Christ the Advocate deals with the sinning Christian. These are the two present functions of Christ in his anointed office of priesthood.

## **THE LESSON**

1. Discussion. This lesson pants out five characteristics of the intercessory work of Jesus Christ. Develop the lesson by asking a question concerning each of these five characteristics. As the student gives the answer, summarize his answer on the chalkboard or have a transparency with the answers prepared that can be shown to the class. (1) Some may think that God has forgotten about them, how often does Christ intercede for each Christian? (He continually prays for Christians, Heb. 7:25.) Some Christians become passive in intercession. (2) Describe Christ's prayer life (Matt. 9:36, John 14:16, Rom. 31:32). (Christ is actively praying for us.) Some Christians ramble in prayer. (3) How active is Christ's intercession? (He prays specifically in heaven according to the example he made while here on earth.) Prepare a transparency showing the chart in the text on the prayer list of Jesus. (4) What is the primary thing for which Christ is praying in regard to Christians? (Prevention of sin.) (5) Christ should be an effective intercessor. Why are Christians living in sin? (Sinful nature, Satan, influence of the world.)

2. Question and answer. When the Christian sins, he has an advocate in Jesus Christ. Ask the class what is the meaning of the word advocate (lawyer, counselor, or barrister). Jesus Christ the advocate helps to provide restoration. Prepare a chalkboard or a transparency and use the following four questions: (1) What happens when a Christian sins? (Loses fellowship; remember that the Christian does not lose his salvation.) (2) After a Christian sins, what restores fellowship with Christ? (Confession, 1 John 1:9.) There has to be a basis for the advocate to represent sinning Christians to God. What is the basis for a Christian's restoration to fellowship? (Propitiation, 1 John 2:1.) When the Christian sins, he does not lose his relationship to Christ because the propitiation has been accomplished. Rather the Christian loses his fellowship with God. But once he confesses his sin, he is restored to fellowship based on the propitiation of Christ that has already been accomplished.

(4) How must a Christian confess his sins? (Individually, totally, sincerely, continually, and if he has wronged a brother, he must make restitution.)

## **APPLICATION/RESPONSE**

Ask the class to remember any occasion when they have had an argument with a dose friend or family member: How was the argument settled, and how was fellowship restored? Ask the class to describe their feelings (intimacy, happiness, unity). In the same way, when a Christian sins he can lose the peace and fellowship he had with God. After he confesses his sins and is restored to Jesus Christ, he can feel happiness and intimacy with God once again. As you dose in prayer, give the students an opportunity to confess their sins and renew their fellowship with Jesus Christ. This might be done in silent prayer.

## **ASSIGNMENT**

Ask the class to read chapter 24, of the textbook. Assign one or two students to tape some interviews from Christians they know on the question, "Describe what the Holy Spirit is like." Have the students edit the tape for playing in the next class.

## **SESSION TWENTY-FOUR**

The Person of the Holy Spirit  
Towns, chapter 24

### **LESSON GOALS**

1. To lead students to recognize the Holy Spirit as an equal member of the Trinity.
2. To motivate the students to be open to the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

### **PREPARATION**

Interview report. Last week one student was assigned to interview several people on the topic, "Describe what the Holy Spirit is like." Point out that not many people have a dear understanding of the Holy Spirit.

Remind the student to edit the tapes so that only the best parts of each interview are presented. Play two or three interviews, but be careful not to embarrass those who have been interviewed. There are probably mistaken concepts of the Holy Spirit that you will want to correct before the class continues. Once a student gets a false impression of any topic, it is difficult to change that person's opinion.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Write on the chalkboard the phrase, "The Holy Spirit is a Person." Then ask the class why many people are confused about the Holy Spirit. (He is spirit, he is called a ghost.) Remind the class that the Trinity is one God in three persons, and that the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity.

### **LESSON**

Ask the question, What groups tend to deny the Holy Spirit as a Person? (Liberals, cults.) Write on the chalkboard the following phrase, "A person has: (1) intellect, (2) emotions, and (3) will." Ask the class, How do you know the Holy Spirit has intellect? (He knows, speaks, has wisdom, and communicates.) How do you know the Holy Spirit has emotions? (He has love, anger; he can be grieved). How do you know the Holy Spirit has a will? (He guides, works-1 Cor. 12:11.)

A person can also be determined by his actions. What actions are done by the Holy Spirit that reflects that he is a person? Prepare the chart from the textbook on a transparency or flip chart with the heading, "The Acts of the Person of the Holy Spirit." If time is available, have different students read the verses for each action by the Holy Spirit. What are some illustrations where people have spoken to the Holy Spirit or treated the Holy Spirit as a person? (Acts 5:3, 4; Acts 16:7-10.) The fact that the Holy Spirit is equal with the other persons of the Trinity implies deity. "Where is the Holy Spirit associated with the Father and Son?" (Matt. 28:19.)

This next section of the lesson presents the deity of the Holy Spirit in four arguments; his name, his work, his attributes, and his place in the Trinity. Ask the following questions to develop this section: What names were given to the Holy Spirit to imply his deity? (Spirit of God, Spirit of Truth, Holy One, Eternal Spirit.) What did the Holy Spirit do that is usually attributed to deity? (Sanctification, conviction, regeneration, resurrection of Christ.) What attributes does the Holy Spirit have that make him recognized as deity? (Omnipresence, omnipotence, omniscience.) How is the Holy Spirit related to the other two persons of the Trinity? (Acts 5:3, 4; 2 Cor. 13:4; Matt. 28:19.)

### **APPLICATION/RESPONSE**

Bring the class to a conclusion by pointing them to future lessons on the Holy Spirit. Since the Holy Spirit is the person of the Trinity who is related to Christians, we ought to know more about him and what he does for us. The Holy Spirit is the one who leads the Christian, indwells the Christian, enlightens the Christian, empowers the Christian, convicts the Christian when he sins, and seals the Christian. Everyone in your class should be open to the working of the Holy Spirit in his or her life. Bring the class to conclusion by asking people to yield themselves to the ministry of the Holy Spirit. If a Christian is open to the Holy Spirit, his life will be transformed.

### **ASSIGNMENT**

Have the students read chapter 25 of the textbook.

## **SESSION TWENTY-FIVE**

The Present Ministry of the Holy Spirit  
Towns, chapter 25

### **LESSON GOALS**

1. To lead students to understand the three-fold work of the Holy Spirit; before conversion, in the experience of regeneration, and for the Christian life.
2. To motivate students to seek the Holy Spirit for the neediest part of their lives.

### **PREPARATION**

Chart. Draw a chart on the chalkboard, flip chart, or transparency. On the left-hand side of the chart, write the word BEFORE, at the center write a CROSS, at the right hand write the word AFTER. Point out to the students that this lesson involves the threefold work of the Holy Spirit, before we are saved, next in salvation as he brings us to God, and finally after we are saved the Holy Spirit has a ministry to the life of the Christian. (See chart in book, THE HOLY SPIRIT AND YOU.)

### **INTRODUCTION**

There are usually two abuses in reference to the Holy Spirit. First, some deny his influence and some even deny his existence. Others deny the Holy Spirit by the fact that they ignore him in their lives. The second abuse is those who pray to him, worship him, and seem to have a fixation of the Holy Spirit to the exclusion of the Father and the Son. These people seem

to forget that the Holy Spirit did not come to magnify himself; rather, he came to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ (John 16:13,14).

### **THE LESSON**

Discussion. The Holy Spirit has two primary relationships to the unsaved world. The Holy Spirit restrains sin and its influence in the world (1 Thess. 2:3-10). How does the Holy Spirit restrain sin in the world? (Through the influence of churches, Christians, righteous laws, the sovereignty of God.) The second work of the Holy Spirit is to re-prove/convict unsaved people of sin. Ask the class to share how they felt before they became Christians when they were convicted of their sin. (Guilty, fearful, uneasy.) Pant out to the class that the Holy Spirit convicts of three aspects of sin (sin, righteousness, and judgment-John 16:8).

After Christ died for the sinner, it is the Holy Spirit who effects regeneration in the life of the sinner. Ask the class to define the word regeneration. (The person is given God's life and God nature.) The second aspect of the Holy Spirit in salvation is when he indwells the believer, they become the temple of God (1 Cor. 6:19). Ask the class, What are the similarities between Solomon's temple in the Old Testament and the believer's temple in the New Testament? (The dwelling of God.) The third aspect of conversion is when the Holy Spirit baptizes us to Jesus Christ so that we are identified with him in death, burial, and resurrection--Rom. 6:5). This results in a new position for believers in Jesus Christ. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is a non-experiential act that has happened to all believers when they are placed into Jesus Christ. Because the Christian has a new position in Christ, what should be his attitude? (Conform his life to those expected of a child of God, pray, and claim the benefits that are his.) The Holy Spirit is the seal that guarantees salvation. Have the students look up Eph. 1:13, 14 and tell us how long this seal will last. (Until we are taken to heaven.)

The Holy Spirit works in the Christian life after salvation. First, each believer has the indwelling Holy Spirit. When the believer surrenders to the Holy Spirit, he can enjoy his fullness. Ask the class, What must we do to be filled with the Spirit? (Yield, seek, and separate ourselves from sin.) The last ministry of the Holy Spirit to be discussed in the text is illumination. The Holy Spirit's main duty is to help (enlighten) Christians to understand the Word of God. What must a Christian do to receive the illumination of the Holy Spirit on Scripture? (Read, study, memorize and seek the correct meaning of Scripture.)

### **APPLICATION/RESPONSE**

Doctrine should always affect the life of the believer. Today's lesson is based on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit and his ministry in the world today. As you come to the end of the class period, you VAN not know the needs of each student. Perhaps there are some there that have never been saved--they need the conviction/reproof of the Holy Spirit. Then they need conversion; hence, they need the Holy Spirit's ministry of regeneration. Some of your cuss may be saved, but they creed to be filled with the Holy Spirit or they need to have the Spirit illuminate the Word of God to them. End the class with silence, giving each student time to pray and apply the specific ministry of the Holy Spirit to his unique need.

### **ASSIGNMENT**

Ask the class to read chapter 26 of the textbook.

## **SESSION TWENTY-SIX**

The Nature of Man

Towns, chapter 26

### **LESSON GOALS**

1. To lead students to understand the biblical teaching of the nature of man.
2. To help students appreciate man as God's creation, made in his image.

### **PREPARATION**

Room decoration. Prepare a poster or write on the chalkboard in large letters the following question: WHAT IS MAN? Cut out a number of pictures of people, both men and women, young and old, representing several nationalities. Post them in the front of the room to illustrate the point of the differences of man.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Begin the class by reading Ps. 8:4. "What Is Man?" the question really is asking, "What is a person?" (The word man means mankind.) The question is seeking the differences between a person and a beast of the field or angels. The question is not concerned with the differences between man and woman. Note the following answers: Every person has different appearances; every person is different from animals; every person is different in the strength and use of the qualities he has. Today's lesson examines two characteristics of man: the material and the immaterial part of man.

### **THE LESSON**

Study groups. Divide the class into eight study groups. Ask each group to examine one of the six descriptions of the physical body given in Scripture. Note that the chart in the textbook designates several different types of bodies: human, beast, fish, bird, etc. Do not confuse this with the different descriptions of the human body. Six of the study groups will discuss man and his body, while two groups will discuss man and his immaterial nature. Write the following questions on small cards and distribute to the study groups. Each group should discuss a question and report back to the class.

Created body. What is the difference between the original body created for Adam (Gen. 1:26, 27) and the body that God has given to Christians today (Ps. 139:14)? (Adam did not have a sin nature; we are born with a sinful nature.)

Physical body. What is the main function of the physical body? (It is the container and expression of the immaterial man.)

Body of death. Why do all bodies deteriorate into death, rather than continue in a state of health? (Romans 5:12.)

Body of sin. In what sense is our physical makeup called the body of sin? (The sin nature.)

Body of humiliation. Why has Paul called our physical makeup a body of humiliation? (Because it is not what it shall be.)

Why should a Christian discipline his body? (Without restraints it will degenerate into excesses that will adversely affect the Christian life and destroy one's spiritual walk with God.)

The second part of our lesson deals with the immaterial nature of man, called the soul and/or spirit. Point out to the class that those who are called dichotomists believe that man exists

as a two-part being. Other people are called trichotomists, who believe that man is body, soul, and spirit. In reality, man has only two aspects, physical and immaterial; on the other hand, man has three functions, in body, soul, and spirit.

Previously a group was assigned to report on the function of the soul. The group that is reporting on the soul should have answered the following questions: What is the main purpose of the soul? (Gen. 2:7; 35:18; Song 1:7; the soul is the capacity that relates to this earth and other men.) Have the group that is reporting on the spirit answer the following question: What is the purpose of the spirit of man? (Gen. 1:8; 1 Thess. 2:8; the spirit is that capacity in man that relates to God.)

In summary, it seems as though the soul and spirit are similar in composition, yet the spirit deals with man's relationship to the nonphysical world or to God himself. The soul seems to relate to the physical world or to other men.

### **APPLICATION/RESPONSE**

The Christian who understands who he is and understands the composition of his nature has a better basis for growth and service. The Christian should understand that he is not the same as an animal, nor is he just higher than the animal. A person is created in the image of God and has the nature of God. Man lives above the physical properties of life and the circumstances that surround him. A great saint once panted out that fish and animals seem to be at peace with their circumstances and environment. He pointed out that a fish is never seen fighting the water, nor is a bird seen struggling with the air. Yet man is different. He can be at peace with his environment, or he can struggle with it. Why? Because man is created and given the commission, "Replenish the earth and subdue it" (Gen. 1:28). When man is seen in a struggle with time and the universe, he is attempting to conquer or subdue it. Why? Because man has the image of God in him, therefore, man fights against the march of time on earth for he will exist beyond this life, because he has an eternal soul. He will live beyond space for he will live in eternity.

End the class period by asking the students to dedicate themselves to God who is their maker and in whose image they are created.

### **ASSIGNMENT**

Ask the class to read chapter 27 of the textbook.

## **SESSION TWENTY-SEVEN**

The Freedom of Man  
Towns, chapter 27

### **LESSON GOALS**

1. To lead students to understand the origin of man's desire for freedom.
2. To help students to understand the image of God they have within them and to correctly glorify God in their lives.

## **PREPARATION**

Since today's lesson deals with the creation of man in the image and likeness of God as the foundation for freedom, place several items around the room that will illustrate image or likeness. First, have at least one mirror available. Second, have photographs of people and, if possible, obtain a small statue—a bust of a famous person. Use these objects to show the difference between the likenesses and the actual person.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Begin the class by referring to the mirror, pictures, and statues to explain the relationship between image and likeness, and the original source. That relationship illustrates the relationship between God and man. (Caution the class that the words image and likeness are not exact references to God, for no man has seen God. This class deals with similarities between God and man.)

## **THE LESSON**

1. Bible search, small groups. Bring several concordances to class and make them available to study groups. Divide the class into study groups of approximately three to five pupils each. Give half of the groups an assignment of looking up the word image in Scripture with the view of arriving at a meaning. Assign the other groups to look up the word likeness. Ask each group to read a verse that best characterizes the meaning of their assigned word.

2. Lecture. After the study groups have done their research and reported to the class, write Gen. 1:26 on the chalkboard or have it prepared on a transparency. Point out that the words image and likeness are both used in this verse. Note that the predominate result of the image of God in men is that they have dominion over the creation.

Point out that when man sinned, the image of God was marred, but not destroyed or obliterated. Note that God and man have three similar expressions; spiritual likeness, character likeness, and physical likeness (like Jesus Christ). Draw the chart from the text on a transparency or on the chalkboard. Explain to the students how the image of God can be regained. Note that spiritual likeness is regained through justification at conversion. Character likeness is regained through sanctification as we are continuously transformed into the image of Jesus Christ. Finally, physical likeness can be regained through glorification at the rapture.

Man is an extension of God and therefore is similar to him. The law of “like producing like” (Gen. 1:12, 21, 24, 25) explains this process. Man is like God because man was made by God.

One of the greatest driving forces of man is his desire for freedom. This is because man is created by God, who has complete freedom. In fact, men, whether or not they are Christians, rebel at being slaves. When a man who is a Christian reads the Word of God, he desires freedom. But freedom is not only the passion of Christians, for all men desire freedom. Freedom is a universal hunger within the heart of all men. Why? Because all men are made in the image of God.

Ask, What is the difference between freedom and liberty? (Liberty is man's ability to live under law and to develop his assets according to God given ability. With liberty, man has the ability to become what he desires. Freedom usually carries the idea of freedom from restraint.) There is no such thing as complete freedom, for all men live under the laws of the universe and are accountable to God. Point out to your class that even God does not have complete freedom.

God is bound by his own nature. He cannot make a square circle, he cannot cause yesterday to have never existed, nor can he go against his nature.

When we teach that man wants freedom (sometimes confused with the idea of liberty) we are teaching that man, who is created in the image of God, is expressing the desire placed there by God.

### **APPLICATION/RESPONSE**

Probably the greatest application of liberty or freedom is that freedom has its obligations. Therefore, the greatest obligation that God has given man is his freedom of choice to decide to be a Christian and his obligation to become a Christian. If man denies Christ, he will suffer the consequences of hell. When man becomes so free that he supplants God in his life, as men did at Babel, his freedom leads to bondage of ignorance and sin.

### **ASSIGNMENT**

Ask the students to read chapter 28 of the textbook.

## **SESSION TWENTY-EIGHT**

The Personality of Man

Towns, chapter 28

### **LESSON GOALS**

1. To lead students to understand the biblical explanation of the personality of man.
2. To motivate students to develop their personality for the service of God.

### **PREPARATION**

Room decoration. Cut out a number of Valentine hearts from paper and post them around the room. Put a scripture reference on each heart. These verses will be used for class discussion. Include the following: Jer. 17:9; Matt. 22:37; Mark 4:15; Acts 8:21, 27; 15:9; 16:14; Rom. 1:21, 24; 6:17; 10:1, 9; Gal. 4:6; Eph. 3:7; 4:18; 5:19; Heb. 4:12; 10:22.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Study groups. Point out to the class that the heart is a vital physical organ and without the heart man cannot live. Note the explanation in the text that the heart is many times used as a physical organ in the Old Testament, but never in the New Testament. Ask the class, Is the heart as vital for spiritual life as it is for physical life? (Yes.) Divide the class into study groups and have them discuss the verses posted on the paper hearts around the room. Ask them to summarize why the heart is important for our spiritual life.

After the class has discussed the verses, point out some of the following conclusions: (1) The heart is apparently the spiritual organ that responds to salvation. (2) The heart seems to be associated with sin in man. (3) The heart seems to determine our spiritual direction. (4) The heart is associated with the conscience or has spiritual discernment of right and wrong. (5) The heart is extremely important to spiritual development.

Point out to the class that the word heart appears 257 times in the New Testament, more frequently than all the other words for the immaterial nature of man (soul, spirit, conscience, mind, old man, new man, etc.). The mere weight of its use reveals the importance of the heart.

## **THE LESSON**

Charts. The class will be developed by the use of charts. These can be pre-drawn on transparencies or a flip chart. If these are not available, draw them on the chalkboard. As you explain the functions of the heart, have the students look up and read the verses.

Begin by using the following chart. This chart is not drawn in the textbook but is the outline of chapter 28. This will give the class an overview of the biblical functions of the heart. Point out that the biblical word heart and the modern designation of personality are similar in meaning.

1. The intellect (thinking)
2. The emotions (feeling)
3. The will (acting)
4. Moral awareness

The Intellect. The next chart is in the textbook under the heading, THE INTELLECTUAL ACTIVITY OF THE MAN. Point out that the heart is the center of thinking in man.

The Emotions. This chart lists ten functions of the emotions or feelings. Point out that since sin and emotions are identified with the heart, this may be the reason why we cannot always trust our emotions.

The will (volition). There is not a chart in the text to explain this point. Use the following chart.

1. Decision for conversion-Rom. 6:17
2. Decision for growth-2 Cor. 9:7, Heb. 11:6

The last chart relates to man's moral awareness or his conscience. Both seem to be centered in the heart. Since the word conscience means "to know with" (man knowing with himself), then it is understandable that this inner knowledge of moral responsibility is located in the heart, which is also the location of the mind.

## **MORAL AWARENESS**

1. Conscience in heart-Heb. 10:22
2. Knowledge of God in heart-Rom. 2:15

## **APPLICATION/RESPONSE**

The lesson can be a sobering experience for students if they have never realized that sin influences their personality. The strength of a man is his intellect, emotion, and will; yet influencing his strength (heart) is sin, "For the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jer. 17:9). The phrase "who can know it" implies people cannot know their hearts in light of the influence of sin. Since their thinking, feeling, and decisions are all influenced by sin, urge them to "prove all things" (1 Thess. 5:21) by the Word of God.

## **ASSIGNMENT**

Have the students read chapter 29, in the textbook.

## SESSION TWENTY-NINE

The Fall of Man  
Towns, chapter 29

### LESSON GOALS

1. To help students understand the origin of sin and its consequences. 2. To motivate students to live in obedience to the Word of God, so they can overcome temptation to sin.

### PREPARATION

Have Rom. 5:12 printed on the chalkboard, flip chart, or transparency so the students can see it as they arrive. Underline the following words in the verse: one man, sin, world, death, passed, all men. This lesson is concerned with answering three questions about sin: What is the origin of sin?, What are the consequences of sin to class members?, and What are the similarities between Adam and Christ?

### THE LESSON

1. Simile game. Ask the students to find as many similes (words meaning the same thing) as they can for each of the words underlined in Rom. 5:12. Rather than recognizing the person with the largest total for all six words, ask the person with the largest number for each word to read this list to the class. As each list is read, ask if anyone else has other words to add to the list. The purpose of this word game is to get pupils to interpret words, which leads to the meaning of verses. This exercise will help students identify the source of sin's entrance into the human race.

Read 1 John 2:15, 16 and draw a chart containing the three phrases on the chalkboard. Before you complete the chart, ask the students, Define lust (Desire.) Next to the three phrases on the chalkboard, explain how Adam, Christ, and humans are tempted in each area. The chart should look like this before you begin to fill it in.

Source of Temptation	Adam	Christ	Us
Lust of flesh			
Lust of eyes			
Pride of life			

Refer to the text and read each Scripture that relates to each open space on the chart. Fill in the specific thing that Satan employed for temptation. The purpose is to get students to see that they face the same type of temptations that both Adam and Christ faced. Point out that Adam fell but that Christ was victorious, and that he overcame temptation by the strength of the Word of God (1 Cor. 10:13).

2. Dramatic reading. There are two classifications for the consequences of Adam's fall: immediate and long range. First, explain the short-range results. Ask five persons to read Gen. 3:1-19; reading the words of God, Satan, Adam, Eve, and the narrator. Ask each person to read as if carrying on a conversation. After reading, ask the class to summarize these questions: What were the results of the fall to Eve? (Multiplied sorrows in birth, desire to husband, husband to rule over her.) What were the results to Adam? (Sorrow, cursed ground, lost complete dominion over creation.) What was the result of the fall to Satan? (Bruise Christ's heel meaning a temporary victory on cross, his head was crushed by Christ, constant battle with seed of woman.)

What was the result of the fall to the serpent? (Cursed above all created animals, to crawl on belly.)

3. Lecture. Next, discuss the long-range results of the fall on the human race. Adam our representative (federal head) is similar to an elected representative; he voted for sin, therefore all men suffer its consequences, physical death (Rom. 5:12). But remind the class not to blame Adam. He was also the seminal head, meaning we were in Adam and voted with him (Heb. 7:10). The first long-range result was physical death.

The next consequence of sin is the sin nature with which we are born (Ps. 51:5). The sin nature is the source of the lust of eyes, the flesh and the pride of life.

The third consequence of sin is spiritual death, which leads to eternal death (Rom. 6:23). Use the final chart to summarize the consequences of Adam's fall.

### CONSEQUENCES OF FALL

1. Physical death
2. Sin nature
3. Spiritual death

### APPLICATION/RESPONSE

This lesson should communicate to the students the dilemma that sin has caused for them. They should realize the source of sin and its consequences on their lives. But all is not dark-there is good news. Jesus Christ has overcome the consequences of the fall. Communicate to the class the similarities of Christ, the last Adam, to the first Adam. Note how the problems created by the first Adam are solved in the last Adam. (Many make the mistake of calling Christ the second Adam, but that leaves room for more Adams to follow. Christ is the last Adam, he is Alpha and Omega.)

Every class member will be tempted to sin by Satan. Have the class pray for wisdom to recognize Satan's subtlety, knowledge to understand their nature that is weak to temptation, and strength to overcome temptation.

### ASSIGNMENT

Have the students read chapter 30 of the textbook.

## SESSION THIRTY

The Nature of Sin  
Towns, chapter 30

### LESSON GOALS

1. To help students know the threefold nature of sin: personal sin, the sin nature, and imputed sin.
2. To give students a fear of sin's influence in their lives and a desire to overcome its power.

### PREPARATION

Write the following question on a chalkboard, flip chart, or transparency and have it available for the students to see as they enter the room: WHAT IS SIN? Have a dictionary available for

someone to look up the word sin. Begin the class with a circular response. Each person will be given an opportunity to answer the question by giving a definition or description to the word sin.

## **THE LESSON**

1. Circular response. Be careful that people are not put on the spot and embarrassed. Indicate to students that they should attempt to answer the question, What is sin?, with a simple definition, perhaps a descriptive word or situation. Or they could quote a verse that refers to sin. Accept any answers that are suggested. The class should analyze the following definition, "Sin is failing short of God's standard or violating his law." This definition included both volitional and those sins committed in ignorance. Most people only include the willful or deliberate violation of a moral law. Also a definition of sin is broader than just moral law. Sin is violating any one of all God's laws, whether moral, social, or psychological.

Some will answer the question with a description such as: blunders, errors, mistakes, weaknesses, or accidents. Finally, some will jokingly call sin, "Anything that is fun or fattening."

2. Discussion, chart. The text has one chart that relates the three aspects of sin: (1) personal, (2) sin nature, and (3) imputed sin. Draw the chart on the chalkboard, flip chart, or transparency. Use the chart as an overview for the entire lesson. Develop the lesson with questions.

Everyone is guilty of personal sin, which is an individual experience. Is sin an act or an attitude? (Both.) Is sin committed knowingly or unknowingly? (Both.) Why is sin described as "to fall short," as in Rom. 3:23? (Not lived up to God's standards.) Why is sin described as "to go astray" as in Isa. 53:6? (Gang the natural way of every day life, not following God.) What does sin mean when described as "to transgress," as in Ps. 51:1? (Overstepping the law) What does sin mean when described as "to trespass," as in Eph. 2:1? (To break or violate God's authority.)

The next area deals with the sin nature. Explain 1 John 1:8 and Eph. 2:3 to the class. Point out that the Bible also uses the terms "old nature," "one man," and "flesh" (this term also means physical body) to designate the sin nature within man. Ask the following question to answer the lesson: When does a person get his sin nature-at birth or when he commits his first sin? (At birth.) What comes first-man is a sinner because he sins-or man sins because he has a sin nature? (The second statement; because man has a sin nature, received at birth, he sins later in life.) Who is the only man born without a sin nature? (Christ, who knew no sin; 2 Cor. 5:21.) Would man be a sinner if he never committed his first sin? (Yes, because he is born in sin.)

The last area deals with imputed sin. Ask the students to define imputed (To charge to someone's account.) The doctrine of imputed sin means that the fact and results of sin are charged to the account of all people because of Adam's sin. Explain to class that the first two aspects of sin (personal and sin nature) are experiential, but the third area (imputed) is not experiential. When the primary act of imputation takes place the person's experience is not affected, but his account before God is credited with sin. However, the result of imputed sin is that man sins in his experiences.

## **APPLICATION/RESPONSE**

It is difficult to end a lesson on sin and leave the students with a black prospect because "the wages of sin is death." Emphasize the last column on the chart, which describes the remedy for sin. (1) Personal sin leads to lost fellowship with God, but the unsaved can be redeemed by the blood of Christ, and his lost fellowship can be restored. Perhaps some in the class are

unsaved and need salvation. Make an appeal for them to be saved. (2) The sin nature is a fact of life, but the child of God also has a new nature, which motivates him to righteousness. Point out to the class that Christians may have a struggle of sinful desires against righteousness desires. (3) Imputed sin is charged against our account because of the transgression of Adam. We did nothing to receive it. But in the same way, righteousness is charged to our account because of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 5:21). We did nothing to receive righteousness.

## **ASSIGNMENT**

Have the students read chapter 31 of the textbook.

## **SESSION THIRTY-ONE**

Conversion and Regeneration

Towns, chapter 31

### **LESSON GOALS**

1. To help students understand that regeneration is the divine work of God in man and that conversion describes man's believing response to the gospel.
2. To allow students to evaluate their conversion experience to make sure they have eternal life (2 Cor. 13:5).

### **PREPARATION**

Choose three people to give, at the beginning of class, a testimony of their conversion experience. The textbook indicates that conversion involves the total personality of man, which involves (1) knowing the gospel, (2) the experience of the emotions (feelings of love to God, or hate of sin), and (3) the will (a response to Jesus Christ). All three aspects are contained in a conversion experience involving mainly the emotions, while the will and intellect are still involved, but not as predominantly. The same can be said of some conversions that seem to involve a new intellectual understanding of the gospel. But even here the other aspects of personality are involved. Try to choose three people to give testimonies, one emphasizing each aspect of conversion.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Begin the class by writing two words on each side of the chalkboard: "

REGENERATION-CONVERSION. Ask, What is the difference between regeneration and conversion? (Regeneration involves the divine work God does to man, conversion is a human response of believing the gospel.)

1. Question and answer. Develop the lesson by the use of questions placed on the chalkboard, flip chart, or transparency. As each question is asked, summarize the answer for the class to see. Since regeneration is an act of God, what is involved? (Act to erase sin, a dynamic experience to give life, an intentional movement by God toward a person.) Since regeneration produces spiritual life in the recipient, what is the life he receives?" (The presence of Jesus Christ indwelling the person, the Holy Spirit indwelling the person, he is born again which means he has the life of God from above.) In the act of regeneration the person receives a new nature. What is the new nature? (The old nature desires to sin, the new nature desires to obey

God, new power and new attitude.) Since regeneration is described as a transformation, What is involved in transformation? (Person lives a different life, he has new desires and attitudes but it does not mean he is sinless or that his old nature is eradicated.)

2. Discussion. The second part of today's lesson involves conversion. Ask, What is conversion? (To turn, to change, to transport, to exchange.) Conversion that leads to regeneration does not involve outward reformation. List some of the things that are not involved in conversion. (Learning catechism, church membership class, praying, stopping sin, attending church, reading Scripture, etc.) Conversion is an experience that involves the total personality: the intellect, emotions, and will.

a. The intellect. What must a person know to be saved? (Propositional truth, the plan of salvation.) Point out to the class that there is a difference between the gospel and the plan of salvation. The gospel is defined as “good news, which is the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.” The plan of salvation is composed of the steps that a person must understand that leads him to salvation. What is the plan of salvation? (To know one's need; to know he is a sinner; to know the penalty that he will suffer is eternal death; to know the provision that Christ has died for sin; to know that he must respond to the gospel in order to be saved.)

Lead the class through the four verses in Romans called “the Romans Road of Salvation.” Have the students underline the four verses in their Bible. If time is available, have each person explain the plan of salvation to the person sitting beside him.

b. The emotions. Point out that many people have an emotional experience, but that does not mean that they are converted. An emotional conversion is described as “godly sorrow (working) repentance to salvation” (2 Cor. 9:10). Emotions involve loving God, and being sorry for sin. Ask, What emotions can accompany salvation? (Sorrow, guilt, fear of hell, dread, remorse.) What positive emotions accompany salvation? (Love, joy, excitement, peace.)

c. The will. Many churches have created an opportunity for people to make a decision of the will in receiving Jesus Christ. Some have asked for people to walk forward in evangelistic crusades. Others have asked people to repent from specific sins. Others have asked people to express their salvation in other tangible acts. Point out to the class that we are not saved by works (Eph. 2:8, 9). However, an expression of the will sometimes may resemble works, inasmuch as the person who is believing is expressing his faith by repenting from outward sin or by walking forward in a church.

## **APPLICATION/RESPONSE**

This lesson can have a twofold effect on the class. First, it can make some people unsettled in their minds about their salvation. As people examine their experience they may doubt if they have done the right thing to be converted. Therefore, in conclusion, review the difference between regeneration and conversion. If the Word of God has been planted as a seed and has grown in a person's heart, then he should have the fruit of eternal life (2 Pet. 1:4) and the inner assurance of salvation (Rom. 8:16). Tell the class that the Bible is the instrument of regeneration and without the Word of God, a person cannot be saved. Working with this instrument is the Holy Spirit who is the agent of regeneration who produces a new nature in the believer.

## **ASSIGNMENT**

Read chapter 32 of the textbook.

## **SESSION THIRTY-TWO**

Our Position

Towns, chapter 32

### **LESSON GOALS**

1. To help students to understand their exalted position because of their identification with Christ.
2. To motivate students to bring their daily sanctification into conformity with their perfection (standing) before God.

### **PREPARATION**

Write the following phrase on the chalkboard, flip chart, or transparency so that students may read it when they come into the room: Who is the most perfect person you have ever known?" Today's lesson deals with our position in Jesus Christ in the heavenlies by which we stand perfect in Christ. In order to get the students thinking about perfection, indicate to them that they will be given an opportunity to share their thoughts about the most perfect person they have ever met in life.

### **THE LESSON**

1. Circular response. Give each person in the group an opportunity to share with the rest of the class their answer to the question: Who is the most perfect person you have ever known?" After each person has had a chance to share briefly, you should also enter into the discussion and give your own feelings about the most perfect person you have ever met. (Some teachers may prefer to be the first to share in the circular response. Other teachers may feel that their testimony may inhibit class response, therefore they may prefer to speak last.)

2. Lecture. After the class has shared their ideas of the most perfect person in the world, announce to them that each of them is the most perfect person in the world ... if they are Christians. Most Christians do not realize that they stand perfect in Jesus Christ. The purpose of today's lesson is to help the Christian to see his perfection in Jesus Christ, then to motivate him to bring his life into conformity with his position before God. Write two words on the chalkboard: state and standing. The word state represents man's state on this earth. One way to help the class members to remember this designation is to remind them of what state they are now located. Also, the word standing is our standing before God. Under the word state place the following words: (1) growing, (2) struggling, (3) tempted, (4) sometimes defeated. Under the word standing write the following words: (1) perfect in heaven, (2) perfect in Christ, (3) new position, (4) in the heavenlies. Point out to the class that our position in heaven begins with justification, which is a non-experiential act. When we are justified, God credits to our account the righteousness of Jesus Christ. It is not something that we experience, nor do we seek it. God's act of justification is his declaration that we are righteous. Ask the following questions: (1) Who was the first person in the Bible who was described as being justified? (Abraham, Gen. 15:6; others were saved before this but he was the first one to be described as justified.) (2) Justification and righteousness are linked in the Scriptures. In what way are they similar? (Both come from the same word, cause and effect relationship.)

The act of justification is a double transference. First, our sins are transferred to Jesus Christ. This is called the act of imputation. Second, the righteousness of Jesus Christ is transferred to us so as far as the record is concerned we are as perfect as the Son of God. Ask the

class the following question. When you appear before heaven, and someone should ask why you should be allowed in heaven, what would be your answer? (Because I am as perfect as Jesus Christ.)

Chart. Have the chart entitled THE SEVEN TOGETHERS copied on the flip chart or transparency to use as a teaching tool. Pant out to the class that the word together reflects the basic nature of Christianity, God and man joined together. The first three pants on the chart refer to the death of Jesus Christ. We are identified with Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection (Rom. 6:5). The core of the chart is point (4) set together, whereby we have a new position in heaven Because of our new position we are (6) to work together, and (7) to live together because one day we will be (8) glorified together.

Have the students turn to Rom. 6:3-13 and circle the four most important words in this passage. These words are (1) know, (2) reckon, (3) yield, (4) obey. Write these four words on the chalkboard. Ask the following questions with each pant: What must a Christian know? (He should know his identification of death, burial, and resurrection with Christ.) What does the word "reckon" mean? (To count on or to rely on.) The Christian is to rely on Christ because he has taken away his sin. What must a Christian "yield" to Christ? (Himself, and the members of his body.) What is the impact of the word "obey"? (We obey the one who lives in our lives.)

Point out to the class that the word sanctification is not a negative phrase, nor does it mean "eradicating the old nature." Sanctification means to be "set apart" to God. Write three phrases on the chalkboard: Positional sanctification; Progressive sanctification, and Prospective sanctification. The first is past: "I was sanctified in Christ's death." The second is present sanctification. "I am in the process of being sanctified daily." The third is future sanctification. "I shall be completely sanctified when I am with him in glory."

### **APPLICATION/RESPONSE**

Review the words state and standing that were written on the chalkboard. Once again pant out the difference between our perfection in Jesus Christ, yet our constant struggle with temptation. When students can act upon their perfection in Jesus Christ, they manifest the Son of God in their lives.

### **ASSIGNMENT**

Read chapter 33 of the textbook.

## **SESSION THIRTY-THREE**

The Nature of Angels

Towns, chapter 33

### **LESSON GOALS**

1. To help students understand the character and appearance of angels as they are presented in Scripture.
2. To encourage students to serve God out of a free will as the angels A obediently do.

## PREPARATION

Bulletin Board. There are many pictures of angels in Christian literature, flannel graph pictures, church bulletins, and in children's Bibles.' Post as many pictures of angels as possible on the bulletin board or around the room. Write on the chalkboard: "What is an angel?"

## INTRODUCTION

Brainstorming. Write on the chalkboard the two following phrases, one to the left and the other on the right. Leave space under the phrases for additional work. The first phrase: wrong view of angels, and the second phrase: correct view of angels. Ask the students to list any false views of angels that they might know. When brainstorming, do not correct suggestions from any student lest the spontaneous flow of ideas be interrupted. Write whatever false views the class suggests on the board (cupid, saints who have died, people from other planets, disembodied spirits from a race previous to Adam, disembodied spirits of animals, spirits of good people on earth, or "My wife is an angel'. Next let the class list some biblical synonyms or phrases for a correct view of angels. These might be: messenger of God, created beings, God's servants, guardian angels, seraphim, cherubim, demons (bad angels), Michael, Gabriel, Lucifer.

## LESSON

1. Lecture. Write on the chalkboard the six phrases from the textbook that describe angels and list one verse with each phrase. Have a different student read each verse and explain it. Created beings, Job 38:4; incorporeal beings, Ps. 104:4; holy beings, Isa. 6:3; personal beings, Rev. 22:9; deathless beings, Luke 20:36; and unseen beings, Heb. 13:2.

Explain to the class that Lucifer was the highest of all created beings or angels. He possessed the highest place in heaven, Isa. 14:12 (This will be discussed later in Lesson 35). The other two named angels are Gabriel and Michael. Explain to the class the description of these two angels given in the text.

There are two groups of angels, seraphim and cherubim. Point out that they are both groups of angels, but that they have different duties. Apparently, the seraphim work related to the sacrifice and cleansing of Christians. In contrast, the cherubim deal with judgment. Note that angels are not limitless beings. Angels are not omnipotent (they do not have unlimited strength), nor are they omniscient (they do not know all things), nor are they omnipresent (they are localized beings, even though incorporeal beings with personality-intellect, emotion, and will). Even though angels are not unlimited in attributes, they seem to have greater power than possessed by any man.

2. Study questions.

a. What do angels appear to have? Have the students look up 2 Thess. 1:7; Matt. 28:2; Ps. 103:20 (The angels are mighty in power, but not omnipotent.)

b. How would you describe the intelligence of angels? (Obviously, angels have great wisdom, but they do not know when the Lord Jesus Christ will return; Matt. 24:36. They do not have full understanding of salvation for angels desire to look into or study the glories of salvation; 1 Pet. 1:12.)

c. How many angels are there in the world? (Actually, no one knows the answer to this but God. They are called an innumerable company; Heb. 12:22. If there is a guardian angel for each Christian, then the number of them would exceed into the millions. John counted an excess of two million angels; Rev. 5:11.)

## **APPLICATION/RESPONSE**

Lucifer, or Satan, apparently had a free will and sinned against God. When he fell from heaven, he apparently took one-third of the angels with him (Rev. 12:4). These are apparently demons or the messengers of Satan. Since that time, the free will of angels seems to have been preempted by God. They do not have the will to reject or disobey God. They follow God in unquestionable obedience.

Some Christians look inside themselves and see their sinful nature. They realistically struggle with the problem of doubt and rebellion. Some Christians mistakenly say, "I wish God made me obey him all the time."

But God has not made us as the angels. Christians should give unquestionable obedience to him as do the angels. But there are blessing and strength in having a free will.

As this lesson comes to an end, point out to the students that the angels cannot serve Christ in a creative or willing fashion as humans can. Ask them what they can do in serving Jesus Christ that angels cannot do.

## **ASSIGNMENT**

Read chapter 34 of the textbook.

## **SESSION THIRTY-FOUR**

The Work of Angels

Towns, chapter 34

## **LESSON GOALS**

1. To lead students to realize what angels can do for them today.
2. To motivate students to appreciate the protection and service that angels give them.

## **PREPARATION**

Write on the top of the chalkboard, flip chart, or transparency the following phrase: "What has an angel done for you lately?" This phrase should point the attention of your class members to the ministry of angels. Often people only think of angels as working in Bible times, but not in contemporary times. Therefore, the question should stimulate some thinking and discussion among class members.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Small groups. Ask everyone in the room to turn to his neighbor and share with him what he feels are the present duties of angels. Ask one of the persons in each group to make a list of their ideas. The textbook has suggested that angels presently have seven duties that relate to this world.

## **THE LESSON**

Group discussion. Before you call for responses from the groups, ask the class the following question: Why do Christians take the ministry of angels lightly? (We cannot see them; we cannot experience them; preeminence is given to Jesus Christ; the Bible emphasizes the Holy Spirit in us who ministers to us; the world seems to treat angels as though they are not real.)

Relate the story of the author who was surprised when his granddaughter at a moment of crisis believed that the angels had taken her great grandfather to heaven. The reaction of the author might not be that much different from most people's in the room. They do not think of angels as being those who transport saved souls to heaven. !

What has an angel done for you lately? Go back to the original j question and allow each group to share just one suggestion with the total class. Summarize these on the chalkboard or flip chart for all to see. Some of the suggestions might be similar in idea but expressed differently. The intent here is not to get a perfect listing but to stimulate class response. Your chalkboard might include the following: (1) angelic transportation at death, (2) angelic revelation-this is an act that no longer occurs, (3) angelic protection, (4) angelic emancipation, (5) angelic provision, and (6) angelic administration.

Some of the above phrases may need further explanation. The phrase "angelic revelation" may cause some confusion. There always seems to be someone who claims to have seen an angel or to have talked to an angel. But God would, only under very unusual circumstances, speak to his people today through angels, even though they are called messengers. God speaks primarily to his people through the Word of God, which is the revelation of God. The Bible is the final act of revelation (Jude 3) that contains all that man needs in faith and practice.

The phrase "angelic protection" applies to the title that men use-"guardian angels." The Bible teaches that children have their angels (Matt. 18:10), and Peter had his angel (Acts 12:15). The guardian angel is to protect the Christian from physical danger. Point out to the students that their protection does not involve spiritual danger, for Christians are protected spiritually by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ. They get victory through the Word of God.

Another duty of angels was emancipation or deliverance. In the Bible there were many illustrations of angels delivering God's people (Acts 5:19; 12:7). They continue to deliver people, but do so today in a different manner. In the scriptural stories, the angels used primary sources to deliver God's people, such as opening doors and leading people by the hand. However today, angels probably would use secondary sources. Usually in the act of deliverance, those who have escaped from danger were not aware that an angel had been involved in delivering them.

The same relationship applies to angelic provision. In the Bible, the angels prepared meals, provided food, and took care of the children of God. Angels may be used by God to take care of people today; however, angels would probably not work in a primary relationship but through secondary means.

In the Bible, the angels administered judgments for God. One day, when the unsaved are delivered to judgment, God will use angels (Matt. 13:41, 42).

### **APPLICATION/RESPONSE**

Ask the students to name the things they are prohibited from doing in relationship to angels. (Christians are not allowed to pray to angels or worship angels.) The assistance from angels seems to be sovereign, for God sent the angels as his messengers according to his desire. However, just because there is no illustration of someone asking God to protect him through the ministry of angels, this does not mean that we cannot do it today. But Christians should base their prayers upon that which is most certain. If we think that we need the assistance of angels, we should ask God for what we want, then let him use whatever means he chooses to answer.

### **ASSIGNMENT**

Read chapter 35 of the textbook.

## **SESSION THIRTY-FIVE**

The Nature of Satan

Towns, chapter 35

### **LESSON GOALS**

1. To help students understand the origin, person, and nature of Satan.
2. To instill in the students an abhorrence of Satan and his influence in their lives.

### **PREPARATION**

Gather pictures of the devil and post them around the room. Most contemporary pictures show the devil in a red suit with horns and pitchfork. A few pictures show him as a sinister looking angel or an evil looking man. Across the top of the chalkboard write DEVIL and then put an X through the D so that the students will see the word EVIL.

### **INTRODUCTION**

When it comes to the doctrine of Satan, there are perhaps more strange tales and false information about him than any other person in Scripture. Ask the class, Can you suggest reasons why Satan is so misrepresented? (Satan has deceived mankind so that people take him lightly; when people take Satan lightly, they will take temptation and evil lightly; people are humanistic and reject the spirit world, hence they reject Satan; others are fearful of the spirit world, hence, they may joke about Satan; because of ignorance of Satan.)

Next, ask the class to make a list of tales and misconceptions that the world has of Satan. Ask the whole group to respond or break into smaller groups. When students have a list, let one group or one person make one suggestion, so that all may participate (some may answer: “red suit with horns and pitchfork”; “the devil made me do it,” etc.).

### **THE LESSON**

1. Question and answer. Develop the class with questions that will guide the students thinking: Is Satan a real person? (The characteristics of personality are intellect, emotion, and will. If Satan is a person then the attributes of personality will be true of him as in Job 1:8; 2:1; Zech. 3:2, Matt. 4:7, 10. Satan is treated as a person and Jesus sometimes used a personal pronoun in conversation with Satan.) How did Satan demonstrate his intellect? (He had memory of Scripture, word selection in conversation, response to another person, as in Matt. 4:6. When the Bible uses the phrase “wiles” (Eph. 6:11), it is referring to the deception of Satan, which implies intellect.) How are the emotions of Satan reflected in Scripture? (This is more difficult to determine, however the statement “Satan hath desired to have you,” Luke 22:31, reflects his feelings. Also, the promise that Satan would be tormented, Rev. 20:10, and Satan is a fallen being similar to demons, James 2:19, reflect emotions.) How is the personal will of Satan seen in Scripture? (Five times in Isa. 14:12-15, the phrase “I Will” is found. Satan is accusing the brethren before God day and night, Rev. 12:10. It means that Satan can know something about us and express his will against us.)

2. Discussion. Prepare a chart on a flip chart or transparency from the text entitled THE FALL OF SATAN. Ask, Where did Satan come from? (He was a perfect angel created by God who fell from his place of honor.) Show the class the chart and point out that Satan exercised his will on five occasions against God. These are the five steps in the fall of Satan. Have one student

read the fall by Satan as found in Isa. 14:12-15. Then have another student read the place that Satan was seeking (right side of chart).

### **APPLICATION/RESPONSE**

Satan's desire is to deceive the people concerning sin and himself. He has been extremely successful in this attempt. Many people do not take Satan seriously. In the world, he is a caricature and a joking matter. In the church, many Christians do not avoid his influence in their life. Peter describes Satan as a roaring lion seeking to devour Christians (1 Pet. 5:8).

Bring the class to a conclusion by asking the following question: How does Satan seek to devour Christians? (Lead them into sin, destroy their testimony, destroy homes, destroy bodies, wrong emphasis on good works, wrong emphasis on church attendance, false doctrine, etc.) Because Satan has so many tools and is so devious, Peter warns us today "be sober, be vigilant" (1 Pet. 5:8).

### **ASSIGNMENT**

Have the class read chapter 36 of the textbook.

## **SESSION THIRTY-SIX**

The Works of Satan  
Towns, chapter 36

### **LESSON GOALS**

1. To help students understand the task of Satan in imitating and destroying the work of God.
2. To help students understand the influence of Satan in their lives so they can protect themselves.

### **PREPARATION**

Recorded story. The text contains the story of the devil playing chess with a young man. Have someone with a good reading voice record the story on cassette. Perhaps "dreary music" might be playing in the background. The music will create an effect on the class. Actually, it is never a joyful topic to study the works of Satan.

### **THE LESSON**

1. Study groups. Divide the class into five study groups to analyze the story that they have just heard. Ask them to make a list of things they can learn about Satan from the story. (Their list should include subtlety, intelligence, bent on destroying people, yet Satan is finite and he can be defeated.) Most of the class will miss one of the most important characteristics of Satan. He likes to imitate God. Just as God is the ultimate chess player who sovereignly controls the affairs of people, so Satan wants to imitate God. Share with the class that Satan has two basic desires: to imitate God and to oppose God. In both occasions, Satan works to destroy the work of God and the People of God.

2. Lecture from chart. The text outlines five areas where Satan works in opposition to God. Outline these five points on the chalkboard, flip chart, or transparency. Share the verses that are included with each of these points and explain them to the class. Most of the class members

will recognize the opposition that Satan has to Messiah both before Christ was born (Satan attempted to destroy the Messianic line) and while Christ was on earth (Satan tried to destroy Christ or tempt him to bypass the cross).

The opposition of Satan to Israel explains the holocaust in Europe during the last war. It also explains the seemingly continual and universe hatred of the world for the Jews. There is no other explanation for anti-Semitism other than Satan's opposition to God's people, the Jews.

3. Chart. Write "The counterfeits of Satan" on the chalkboard. Prepare on a transparency or flip chart the chart entitled "The Counterfeits of Satan." As you show the chart to the class, explain how Satan is trying to counterfeit the work of God in the world today. Perhaps even greater than opposing the Word of God, Satan would like to sit on the throne of God and receive the glory that is due God. Satan would like to be a counterfeit God.

4. Brainstorm. The chart in the book only suggests eight ways how Satan has counterfeited the work of God. Ask people to list as many other thoughts that come to their minds how Satan tries to counterfeit the person and work of God. Remember, when using brainstorming as a technique; accept any and all suggestions so that the class's spontaneous response will not be stopped.

### **APPLICATION/RESPONSE**

Write the phrase on the chalkboard, "How to win." Point out that people like to read books on how to win in sports, or how to win in business. Just as in sports and business, there are principles of how the Christian can win his battle with Satan. These principles will work if applied conscientiously.

1. The principle of respect. Christians must not be overconfident or slipshod in their relationship to Satan.
2. The principle of removal. Christians are taught to abstain from evil and live a separated life.
3. The principle of resistance. The Christian should resist any influence of Satan in his life.

### **ASSIGNMENT**

Have the class read chapter 37 of the textbook. Ask two students to prepare a debate for next week's lesson.

## **SESSION THIRTY-SEVEN**

Demons

Towns, chapter 37

### **LESSON GOALS**

1. To help students understand that demons are actual beings who carry out the evil purposes of Satan, that demons fell from angelic rank when Satan fell, and that they are ultimately to be cast into the lake of fire.
2. To motivate students not to think too lightly or too fearfully of demons.

## PREPARATION

1. Compile a list of schools, which use such names as demons, devils, etc., for their athletic teams. If possible, try to secure pictures of some of these school emblems where the mascot of a devil or demon is pictured. Also try to find magazine articles, books, clippings, or movie ads about demons or evil spirits, which present demons as objects of fear and dread.
2. Prepare copies of the Bible verses and small group assignment questions for Lesson, 1, below.

## INTRODUCTION

Begin the class by presenting the two kinds of material about demons. Some common appearances of the name “demon” or “devil” are intended to be harmless, playful uses of the words. On the other hand, some show an inordinate fear of the spirit world and the supernatural, partly because the presentations are not biblically accurate. Ask, Which of these two ideas presented gives a more satisfactory and reasonable view? (Some students may try to defend the playful uses of such names, for school teams. Others will feel that such uses demonstrate an unbiblical flippancy toward spiritual things. Explain to the class that there is no satisfactory answer to such a question as it is framed, but that it was used to stimulate thought.) Use this time to explain to the class that the purpose of this lesson is to put demons into a proper scriptural perspective.

## THE LESSON

1. Small groups. Divide the class into small groups of four to six people. Appoint a leader for each group and ask each group to select someone to keep notes and to report the group's findings to the main group.

Each group should take a few moments to read aloud and study the following verses which have been prepared in advance: Gen. 1:2; 6:4; Matt. 25:41; Luke 16:23; Rev. 12:4; 20:14. The groups should then attempt to answer the following questions:

a. There are at least four views (given in the textbook) about the origin of demons: (1) spirits of the dead; (2) children of angels and humans; (3) pre-Adamic spirits; and (4) fallen angels. What are some arguments for and against each view? Use the Scripture verses for discovery of the answers.

b. What view seems the most biblical and logical?

Reassemble the class after about fifteen or twenty minutes and listen to reports. Allow time for discussion, which may follow.

2. Discussion. Ask students to read aloud the following verses. If possible, have the verses listed on a chalkboard or overhead projector: Matt. 3:16; 8:28-32; 10:1; Mark 1:24; 5:3-6; James 2:19; and 2 Pet. 2:4. Then ask the following questions: What evidences are there that demons are intelligent beings? (They talked; they expressed emotions; they feared; they made choices.) What evidences are there of the spiritual nature of demons? (They are involved in spiritual warfare; they are called “spirits.”) How is the morality of demons described? (They are influenced toward evil; they do Satan's bidding; they are called “unclean.” In what sense should we fear demons? (They influence us toward evil and sin; they are called “evil spirits”; they are powerful; they are characterized by being our spiritual enemies.) In what sense should we not be overly fearful of demons? (Christ has defeated them; their doom has already been decreed; hell has been prepared for the devil and his angels—demons.)

## **APPLICATION/RESPONSE**

Ask, What useful truths about demons has this lesson provided you? (Allow time for testimony-style answers.) Ask several students to summarize the truths studied today about demons. You may use the outline in the textbook to tie the summary together.

## **CONCLUSION**

Ask, What was Jesus' admonition regarding spiritual warfare given in Eph. 6:12, 13? (We must use God's armor; spiritual warfare demands spiritual resources; to be victorious over Satan and his demons we must rely on Christ and the spiritual armor and weapons he provides.)

## **ASSIGNMENT**

Have students read chapter 38 of the textbook.

## **SESSION THIRTY-EIGHT**

Demon Activity

Towns, chapter 38

## **LESSON GOALS**

1. To communicate how demons influence people in the contemporary world.
2. To help students protect themselves from the influence of demons.

## **PREPARATION**

Write on the chalkboard, flip chart, or transparency the following: "How demons try to influence you." The lesson last week emphasized the real existence of demons in today's world. Today's lesson emphasizes their intent on both the saved and the unsaved world.

## **THE LESSON**

1. Small groups. Ask everyone to turn to his neighbor and suggest the first two or three ideas that come to mind concerning demons. The topic is "How I think demons influence people in today's world." Do not expect everyone to have a correct or complete list. Let each group reflect only one or two ideas about demons. Give everyone an opportunity to share his feelings.

2. Discussion. Ask the question, Why do people have wrong concepts of demons? (The answers are the same suggested for why people have wrong concepts about the devil. Deception by Satan to hide his real intent, the world treats demons as fairy tales, the world will not accept what it cannot see.)

Develop the lesson by correcting false teaching or false impressions about demons. List each of the works of demons on the chalkboard that are suggested in the text. Then point out the major false conception that people have about the work of demons.

a. Physical diseases. Obviously demons have caused some physical diseases, but they are not responsible for all physical diseases.

b. Mental diseases. Demons have caused mental disorders, but not all mental problems are attributed to them. Ask the class to list the causes of mental disorders. This may help correct any false impression.

c. Moral impurity. The same principle is true here as above. Demons cause some of the moral impurity, but not all. Ask the class to list the causes of moral impurity (sinful nature, circumstances, others, the course of this world, Eph. 2:2).

d. False doctrine. The root cause of false doctrine is Satan and demons, but there are many secondary sources by which false doctrine is generated. Satan's purpose is a substitute religion; hence, he motivates people in that direction. Ask, What are the secondary sources that generate false doctrine? (A person goes off on doctrinal tangents, humanism, ego, and desire to hear some new idea, sin in life, ignorance.) The influence of demons is not the usual perception of those who fell into false teaching, but it is the biblical explanation.

e. Spiritual battle. Some may think that demons never fight them because demons do not have physical bodies that can be seen. The teaching of Scripture is that we wrestle with Satan and his emissaries (Eph. 6:12).

f. Demon possession. The greatest false impression about demon possession is that it does not happen today in America. While not as evident in the civilized western world as in an uncivilized society, demon possession does happen when: (1) a person yields to Satan, (2) seeks his influence or control, (3) allows himself to be influenced by Satan and his demons through fellowship with ungodly sources. The text discusses that some people worship demons through divination, necromancy, magic, sorcery, witchcraft, and astrology. List these on the chalkboard, flip chart, or transparency. Explain them briefly to the class and warn of their evil influence.

### **APPLICATION/RESPONSE**

Quickly summarize how a Christian may protect himself from the influence of Satan: (1) know the enemy, his character and strategy; (2) flee the devil and his demons so that we are not exposed to or influenced by them; (3) be aggressive in Christian service through witnessing, and serving Jesus Christ (demons will flee as souls are saved and built up in Christ); (4) quote the name of Jesus (they flee from the blood of Jesus Christ) and quote the Word of God, when you feel influenced by demons; (5) keep your eyes on Jesus Christ and follow him, do not get a "demon fixation" so that you are always fascinated by fanatical teaching and paraphernalia; (6) live a pure life, knowing that holiness is your best guard against the influence of Satan; (7) tenaciously hold to fundamental doctrine, knowing that demons thrive in false teaching.

### **ASSIGNMENT**

Have students read chapter 39 of the textbook.

## **SESSION THIRTY-NINE**

The Nature of the Church

Towns, chapter 39

### **LESSON GOALS**

1. To help the students understand the biblical role model of the New Testament church.
2. To motivate students to appreciate God's provision of the church for their lives and to get them to respect their church.

## PREPARATION

Pictures. Get as many pictures as possible of churches and place them in the front of the room. Write on the chalkboard, flip chart, or transparency, “Which church is correct?” To further motivate the class, ask two other questions and put them on the board: “Why are there so many churches?” and “When does a church fit the New Testament role model?”

## THE LESSON

1. Brainstorming. To get the class thinking, begin by getting them to name as many churches (denominations) as they can (Baptist, Presbyterian, Methodist, Episcopal, Catholic, Assembly of God, Nazarene, etc.). When students realize there are many churches, they are faced with the question of why there are so many. There are both positive and negative answers. What are the good reasons why there are so many churches? (Different kinds of churches meet the needs of different kinds of people, different churches have different emphases: evangelism, Bible teaching, missions, music, fellowship, etc.) What are the negative results of so many churches? (Jealousy, arguments, confusion by unsaved, introduction of heresy, omission of the mission field because no one church is responsible for a total vineyard, unbalanced Christians, poor testimony to the world.)

2. Discussion. There are six points in the text that characterize a biblical church: Assembly of baptized believers, the presence of Christ, biblical discipline, organization, biblical ordinances, and spiritual gifts. Develop the lesson around these six criteria of a New Testament church. Use the following questions to lead the students to analyze each one.

a. Assembly of baptized believers. Ask, What does the word “assembly” mean for a church? (Called from the world, called to Jesus Christ, called to fellowship together.) Point out that the nature of a church is to assemble, which implies weekly attendance at the house of God. What happens when Christians stop assembling together? Next ask the question: Should people who are not believers in Jesus Christ be admitted to membership in the church?

b. The presence of Christ. Ask, In what way is Jesus Christ present in the local church? (He is the head over the body which is the church; indwells each believer; he identifies with the church.)

c. Biblical discipline. The text speaks of positive and negative discipline. Ask the class, In what way do we discipline in a positive manner? (Biblical teaching, living.) Next ask, How is negative discipline administered? (Admonishing Christians' impure life; admonishing heresy; and admonishing laxity.)

d. Organization. Point out that church organization is never an end in itself. Usually a group of people are organized for a purpose. What is the purpose of the church? (The great commission and the nurture of believers.)

e. Ordinances of the church. Ask, Why has the Lord given the church certain ordinances to be observed?” (To remind believers of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ; to teach, to exhort, to encourage believers in his return.)

f. Spiritual gifts. The text indicates that if a church fits the New Testament criteria, there will be manifestation of spiritual gifts. These usually involve spiritual gifts that are given to people, and they are in turn given to the church. Ask, What is symptomatic of a church that has no or few spiritual gifts? (The church may be sick and dying; those in the church are not exercising their gifts; the church is no longer a New Testament assembly in God's sight.)

## **APPLICATION/RESPONSE**

Paul exhorted that, “Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it° (Eph. 5:25). Since Jesus gave himself for the church, it must be of value or worth to him. Pant out to the class the things that Jesus has given for the church, in addition to his sacrificial death (his power, his protection, his peace and most importantly, his presence, for he lives in the believers, who are the church). Since the church is important to Christ, it ought to be important to us. Ask the students to assess their respect for the church. Should it not have a higher priority in their loyalty? Should they, not commit themselves to serve the Lord through it?

## **ASSIGNMENT**

Have students read chapter 40 of the textbook.

## **SESSION FORTY**

Church Membership

Towns, chapter 40

## **LESSON GOALS**

1. To communicate the necessity and qualifications of membership in a New Testament church.
2. To help students assess their attitudes and relationship to their church through membership.

## **PREPARATION**

Church documents. Secure a copy of your church's documents that relate to membership; specifically, the church constitution, statement of faith, application for membership (if the church has one), and a printed list of all those who are members of your church. Some churches have a photo album of their church family. Across the chalkboard, flip chart, or transparency write the following question, “Why do people join a church?”

## **THE LESSON**

1. Small groups. Begin the class by asking each person to turn to his neighbor and share with him what was the primary reason for joining the church where he is now a member. Point out to the class that not all have joined a church for the same reason. As a matter of fact, there may be several different motives within the class. No one has only one correct motive for joining a church. Since people express many desires, there are perhaps many felt needs in people that motivated them to place membership in their church. (Because God wanted me to; because I liked the pastor; because my friends are here; because I wanted to be obedient in baptism; because this church is closest to my house; because this is the only church in town to which I have always belonged, etc.)

After the students have been given an opportunity to share their testimonies why they have joined the church, summarize them on the chalkboard. Perhaps their answers will give others in the class an appreciation of their church.

2. Discussion. What are the benefits of church membership? This broad question may have been answered in testimony by the class. However, now you can answer by listing several reasons on the chalkboard, flip chart, or transparency. (1) Church membership makes people obedient to the Lord's command. (2) Church membership brings people into fellowship with

other Christians. (3) Church membership gives access to Christ-centered education. (4) Church membership opens up a believer to be strengthened in his total Christian life. (5) Church membership puts believers under the obligation to use their spiritual gifts in service for Jesus Christ. (6) Church membership helps the believer fulfill the New Testament example of unity with other believers.

Write on the chalkboard, "Entrance into church membership." Those reading the text will have different rules by which people join their church. Some will require membership classes, others will require an interview with the board/pastor, while others will require successfully passing the test of Bible knowledge and church polity. Many churches require the candidate to walk forward during an invitation at the end of a sermon and present himself as a candidate for membership. The text suggests four biblical principles that are necessary for church membership. Write these on the chalkboard, flip chart or transparency: belief, baptism, agreement with doctrine, and moral conformity. Explain each of these points carefully to the class noting the biblical basis.

### **APPLICATION/RESPONSE**

Write on the chalkboard, "No man can be Christian alone." At first glance, some will feel the statement means you cannot get saved without joining a church. That is not the intent. Even before man is saved, someone prays for him and shares with him the gospel. Even those who have not had a Christian witness to them have read the gospel in a Bible, or tract, which is the result of some Christian's translation and/or printing. No one can say he has become saved without the influence of another Christian. Explain to the class that every Christian needs others for encouragement, motivation, and prevention from discouragement or backsliding. Because every Christian needs others, God providentially saw man's need and provided a fellowship of believers. This fellowship is called the church. This lesson says no one should attempt "free lance" or "lone ranger" Christianity. Every class member should submit himself to a church and its standards as found in the New Testament, then faithfully fellowship with that church in its weekly opportunities and obligations.

### **ASSIGNMENT**

Read chapter 41 of the textbook.

## **SESSION FORTY-ONE**

The Aims of the Church  
Towns, chapter 41

### **LESSON GOALS**

1. To help the student understand that the Great Commission is the controlling purpose of the church.
2. To give the student the basis for evaluating the purpose of his church.

### **PREPARATION**

Write the following words in separate places on the chalkboard, flip chart, or transparency. If large cards are available, perhaps one word .s can be placed on different cards and posted in the

front of the room: objectives, purpose, aim, goals, commission. Also, there are many slogans available in the business world regarding objectives. If these are available, post these in the room. Some of these might read, "The world gets out of the way of the man who knows where he is going." or. "Aim is imperative."

Prepare copies of the questionnaire shown under Application/Response.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Small groups. Write on the chalkboard the following question, "What the controlling purpose of the church?" Have each person share his feeling with his neighbor. Point out that no one is wrong in his suggestion, however some purposes of the church have more priority than others. After the students have been given an opportunity to discuss, give individuals an opportunity to share with the whole class what is the controlling purpose of the church.

## **THE LESSON**

Lecture from chart The controlling purpose of the church is the Great Commission. Read Matt. 28:19, 20 to the class and point out that there are three aspects to the Great Commission. Prepare the following chart to give the class an overview of the purpose of the church.

## **THE GREAT COMMISSION**

1. To make disciples/evangelism
2. Baptism/Churching
3. Education/Teaching

Point out that the word "teach" in Matt. 28:19 actually is the word "to make disciples." The controlling purpose of the church is discipleship. There are three interpretations concerning discipleship. First, some people interpret discipleship only in a narrow sense to mean follow-up of new converts after conversion. This is important but on a limited perspective. Second, discipleship is narrowly interpreted to mean teaching Christians the deep truths of the Word of God, which is synonymous with the deeper life. But discipleship is the total ministry of the local church in reaching people for Jesus Christ, getting them saved, baptized (identifying them with the church) and teaching them all things that Christ commanded. This is the controlling purpose of the church, which is a broad meaning of discipleship.

Use the following questions to develop your lesson. Evangelism. How does vision fit with evangelism? (Vision is seeing what God can accomplish in the church, seeing the condition of the lost.) What is the biblical doctrine of reaching? (Making contact with the person and motivating him to give an honest hearing to the gospel.) When is a Christian a witness? (When he is communicating what he has seen, heard or experienced in Christ.) Baptism. The text indicates that baptism involves more than immersing people in water. What is the full meaning of baptism? (Getting people identified in a local church.) Education. Education has been called the process of "reproducing reproducers"

What are the four steps of educating people to reproduce themselves? (Teaching content, training, forming attitudes, and emphasizing completeness or maturity.)

## **APPLICATION/RESPONSE**

Evaluation. Conclude today's lesson by using the following questionnaire as a tool to help your students to evaluate their priorities to the local church. Each student shall have a copy and

be encouraged to fill it out. Assure them that it is not to be handed in, but it is to be used for self-evaluation only.

	weak								strong	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. TO GLORIFY GOD										
2. FOREIGN MISSIONS										
3. DISCIPLESHIP										
4. BIBLE TEACHING										
5. TO NURTURE CHRISTIANS										
6. SOUL WINNING										
7. TO WORSHIP GOD										
8. SOCIAL ACTION										

Ask the students to check the strength they give each priority in the purpose of the church.

### ASSIGNMENT

Read chapter 42 of the textbook.

## SESSION FORTY-TWO

Church Leadership  
Towns, chapter 42

### LESSON GOALS

1. To help students understand the biblical offices and duties of the church.
2. To motivate students to be aggressive in their support of the offices in their church.

### PREPARATION

Pictures and documents. Today's lesson discusses the biblical office and duties of the pastors and deacons. Post pictures of the pastor and deacons if they are available. These might be available from the church photograph album or the church office. Also, any documents having to do with the description of the pastor and the deacons can be posted the front of the room or displayed on a browsing table. These might, include the church constitution, church bulletin or newspaper, or any other documents that describe the duties of church leaders. On the chalkboard write the phrase, "Do you know your pastor and deacons?"

## **INTRODUCTION**

Sometimes teachers may ask the students to vote on a question to go their involvement and to create interest in a topic. When students lift their hand, they are going beyond academic awareness of the problem they are making a decision of their will concerning the information presented to them. Ask the students to vote what they feel is the best title to call the man who leads the congregation. Prepare the following titles on the flip chart, transparency, or write them on the chalkboard: Reverend, Pastor, Preacher, Bishop, Minister, Elder, Doctor, Teacher, Servant, and Steward. As the students vote on these items, tabulate the results and list for all to see. After this is done, ask the class, "Which of these titles are used in Scripture to describe the man who leads the church?" Prepare a transparency that lists the seven titles suggested in the textbook.

## **THE LESSON**

Discussion. The chart that lists the seven titles will read: (1) elder, (2) bishop, (3) pastor, (4) preacher, (5) teacher, (6) servant, (7) steward. Even though churches use other titles to describe their pastor, these are the titles used in the Scripture. Use the following questions to develop each point: What is the main qualification of the pastor that is communicated by the term "elder"? (The term elder reflects a pastor's maturity and spirituality.) What is the primary characteristic of the pastor that is reflected by the term "bishop"? (The word bishop shows the pastor's role in overseeing the flock of God.) Apparently the task of pastoring has a three-fold duty. What are these responsibilities? (First, the pastor is to be an example; second, to feed; and third, to protect the flock of God.) The pastor is the preacher of the Word of God. How is preaching defined? (Communication of the Word of God with persuasion through the personality.) Teaching is one of the main responsibilities of the Great Commission for the church. How does the pastor teach? (He teaches through his preaching ministry, through counseling, through personal soul winning.) In what way is the pastor the servant of the congregation? (He is sensitive to the poor, underprivileged, he gives himself as the slave/master in relationship to his flock.) What is the chief responsibility of the pastor/steward? (That he be faithful.)

The text also discusses two facts concerning the deacons, their qualifications, and their duties. The requirement for the life-style of the deacon is as high as that of the pastor. What is the biblical basis that requires deacons to live a life as exemplary as the pastor? (The word likewise.) Even though little is said in Scripture concerning the duties of deacons, what are the duties of deacons? (Harmony, use their wisdom to give advice, serve.)

## **APPLICATION/RESPONSE**

It is imperative that church members support their pastor and deacons. Read Heb. 13:7, 17 to show the necessity of support of church leaders

Close the lesson by calling for prayer for the pastor and deacons.

## **ASSIGNMENT**

Read chapter 43 of the textbook. Assign three students to serve on a panel discussion, each representing one type of church government and defending that position before the class.

## **SESSION FORTY-THREE**

Understanding Church Government

Towns, chapter 43

### **LESSON GOALS**

1. To help the students understand the different types of government found in churches and to understand their strengths and weaknesses.
2. To broaden the students' appreciation of the government found in churches other than their own, and to understand the biblical basis of their own church government.

### **PREPARATION**

Prepare a copy of the chart (THREE TYPES OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT) on the chalkboard or on a transparency. Have copies available for students as they arrive. Also, have a conference table in the front of the room with three chairs for each speaker. Have a name card in front of each speaker including the person's name and position that he represents.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Panel discussion. Three students were asked to represent the three types of church government in class today. Have each student speak from one perspective to defend his type of church government and communicate to the class why he feels it is a biblical position. In the panel discussion, ask the student to give the defense of his position. Begin the class by giving each panel member approximately two minutes to present his position. Then give the panel members an opportunity to interact among themselves. Finally, open the panel discussion to include questions from the class.

### **THE LESSON**

Lecture from chart. Prepare the chart in the textbook on the chalkboard, flip chart, or transparency. Inasmuch as the class has been spontaneous in its discussion of the three positions, now take time to systematically discuss the biblical strengths of each position. Point out to the class that the Bible does not give a clear picture of any one of the three positions, at least to the exclusion of the other. Be careful that some students may argue for a position that represents their past, rather than looking to the biblical basis of each position.

### **APPLICATION/RESPONSE**

As the lesson comes to a conclusion, show the chart to the class and suggest that perhaps the biblical position is to combine the strengths of each into a unified church government.

As this class has discussed church government, point out that they should not lose sight of the purpose of the church, which is "making disciples," Matt. 28:19, 20. Review the lesson that the Great Commission is the controlling purpose of the church. Point out that good efficient government is never the purpose of the church, nor is church government an end in itself. Church government must be efficient and give glory to God, but good government carries out a purpose.

### **ASSIGNMENT**

Read chapter 44 of the textbook.

## **SESSION FORTY-FOUR**

Understanding Baptism and the Lord's Table  
Towns, chapter 44

### **LESSON GOALS**

1. To help students examine the biblical basis for the observance of the church ordinances.
2. To give the 'students a desire to properly participate in the church ordinances.

### **PREPARATION**

Browsing table. Secure the platter used for the bread and the holder used for the cups in the communion service. Place them at one end of the browsing table. An unsliced loaf of bread might be broken on the platter. Also, secure booklets, tracts, and articles on baptism and place them on the card for baptism. Certificates of baptism might be placed on the table.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Testimony. Ask the class members to give testimonies at the beginning of class to share with the group their conversion experience and reactions to water baptism. Ask them to share any motives that individuals had in seeking baptism. Summarize some of the motives that were apparent.

### **THE LESSON**

1. Lecture. Today's lesson must be approached with sensitivity, for people have deep feelings concerning baptism. People may disagree in their interpretation of angels, heaven, or other details of theology that they have never seen. But when they discuss baptism they are talking about something tangible from their own experience.

Develop the lesson on baptism by pointing out the four sections: the definition of baptism, the nature of immersion, the candidate for baptism, motives for baptism.

Write on the chalkboard the following statement, "The first step of obedience." Point out to the class that baptism symbolizes the Christian's first step of obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ. The word symbol should be explained to the class. Point out that many church buildings have a cross that is symbolic of redemption. Even the steeple on the church is symbolic, pointing people toward God. Ask the class to suggest other symbols that are found in the church (the Lord's table, prayer over money as a symbol of offering it to God, bowing the head in reverence to God, etc.).

2. Testimonies. Next, call for testimonies concerning the Lord's Table. Most Christians have taken communion. Ask for testimonies concerning times when the Lord's Table was meaningful to them. After some have shared their testimonies, note the different results that people have in taking the Lord's Table. Some of the responses from class members might be summarized: fellowship with Christ, revealing of sin, restored fellowship, a sense of God's presence, call to service, a breaking of depression or sinful habit, or a time of renewed fellowship.

The ultimate step in the Christian life. Just as baptism is the first step of obedience, the Lord's Table is another step of obedience. Each time the Lord's Table is celebrated, it brings the believer back into communion with Jesus Christ. Ask the question, What are the different names that we give to the Lord's Table? (The Lord's Supper, Communion, Ordinance, Sacrament, Eucharist.) Point out which of these terms are biblical and their meaning.

## **APPLICATION/RESPONSE**

Prepare the chart, "The Symbolic Meaning of the Lord's Supper," on the chalkboard, flip chart, or transparency. Explain the different meanings and show the necessity for every Christian to be involved in the Lord's Table.

The text explains that there are three attitudes found among Christians toward the Lord's Table. First is "open communion," where everyone is allowed to the Lord's Table. Some in your class will believe in this position. The second is "dosed communion," which was practiced by many denominations in the past. However, this position is currently being modified, especially in light of the parachurch organizations and a desire by Christians to express unity in Jesus Christ. The third position is called "dose communion"; this recognizes that some should not partake because they have not met the biblical standards, yet the table is open to all who are in fellowship with Jesus Christ and have met his requirements.

Close the class by exhorting those who have not been baptized to be obedient to the Lord in this first step of fellowship. Then, exhort those to partake in the church's celebration of the Lord's Table the next time it is offered.

## **ASSIGNMENT**

Read chapter 45 of the textbook.

## **SESSION FORTY-FIVE**

Understanding the Nature of Prophecy

Towns, chapter 45

## **LESSON GOALS**

1. To give students an orientation to the study of biblical prophecy and events in the end times.
2. To motivate the students to further study of prophecy.

## **PREPARATION**

Bulletin board. Post on the bulletin board a number of newspaper and magazine articles, charts, or reports used to make predictions about the future.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Write on the chalkboard the statement, "Everyone is interested in the future." Then pant out the different clippings on the bulletin board that reflect the various segments of society that are concerned with "predicting" the future. Make the statement, "Since other people are predicting the future, we should not think it strange that God predicts the future." Yet, when Bible students talk about prophecy, some people in the world think they are on a tangent or they are using a "gimmick" to draw a crowd. Write the following statement on the chalkboard, "The only person who knows the future, has revealed coming events." Use the illustration from former years of television advertisement, "When (a stock broker) speaks ... everyone listens." Point out to the class that when God speaks about the future, everyone should listen.

## THE LESSON

Question and answer. Develop today's lesson by the use of questions. These can be written on the chalkboard, flip chart, or transparency. The advantage of writing out a question is that it guides the class discussion. Also, it lets the student know the question is important and was not simply "thought up" as the teacher was developing the lesson.

(1) Since prophecy is important, what percentage of the Bible contains prophecy? (Forty percent.) (2) When a man presumed to make prophecies for God, yet was false, what was his punishment? (Deut. 18:20.) (3) What is the primary topic of the predictions that God has made about the future? (Israel, the coming of Jesus Christ in his first and second appearing, judgment.) (4) What practical applications should prophecy have on the Christian? (The Christian should have a godly life, love, peace, hope, and be a witness to the unsaved.) (5) What are some abuses that people have followed when they studied prophecy? (Fixing dates, wrongly identifying people, claiming to have found some new knowledge that others may not know, or they have had a "prophecy fixation," which is emphasizing prophecy over, the vast majority of Scripture.) (6) What is the primary thrust of prophecy in the New Testament? (The revelation of Jesus Christ, Rev. 1:1.) (7) Why have people come up with wrong views of prophecy? (Because they do not have all data, they only have partial knowledge, people are biased, people use prophecy to prove a point, people have not followed the literal method of interpretation.) (8) Why have some people believed in the postmillennial school of prophecy? (They have felt that the world is getting better and better, they have interpreted prophecy by an allegorical method of interpretation.) (9) What is the basic teaching of premillennial's school of prophecy? (Teaches that Jesus Christ will return to the earth before the millennial reign of peace in the world for a thousand years that the millennial reign is for Israel, that the church will be raptured from the earth to be with Jesus Christ must be fulfilled in a future millennial reign.) (10) What are the dangers of an allegorical approach to interpretation of prophecy? (Allows people to think up an interpretation for prophecy rather than finding the meaning the author had when he wrote.) (11) What is meant by the phrase "literal interpretations"? (Literal interpretation means the normal meaning of words, the meaning of the author when he wrote the prophecy is the only meaning of the text.) (12) What has been the historic position of the church on interpreting prophecy? (The literal method, which involves interpreting Scripture from the perspective of grammar, context, and historical and social background.) (13) Why should prophecies be interpreted within their context? (The normal method of interpretation is to seek the author's meaning in the context of which he wrote.) (14) What is meant by double fulfillment of prophecies? (In certain Old Testament passages, the prophets spoke to a contemporary situation that would have a short-range fulfillment, but also there was a long-range fulfillment in the future. Hence, some prophecies were fulfilled within the life of the prophet, but also applied to the future.)

## APPLICATION/RESPONSE

Paraphrase in small groups. Write the verse, Rev. 1:3, on the chalkboard, flip chart, or transparency. Divide the class into small groups. Ask them to rewrite Rev. 1:3 into modern English, using synonyms in place of the main words that appear in the English text. This will help the student emphasize word studies and also help him to apply the Scriptures to his life. Point out to the students the key words in this verse: Blessed, readeth, hear, words, prophecy, keep, written, time, hand. This verse will help the students understand that the imminent coming of Jesus Christ is closer than they realize.

## **ASSIGNMENT**

Have the students read chapter 46 of the textbook.

## **SESSION FORTY-SIX**

Understanding the Signs of the Times  
Towns, chapter 46

## **LESSON GOALS**

1. To introduce students to the biblical “Signs of the Time” that suggest Jesus Christ is coming soon.
2. To motivate the student to love the appearing of Jesus Christ and prepare for it.

## **PREPARATION**

Draw a large clock on the board, position the hands a few minutes from midnight. Next to the clock write the words ARMAGEDDON, NUCLEAR HOLOCAUST, POPULATION EXPLOSION, NUCLEAR EXPLOSION, and TOXIC WASTE.

## **INTRODUCTION**

1. Small groups. Ask each one in the class to share with his neighbor the reasons he thinks the end of the world may be near. Ask them not to share biblical reasons. Some of their answers may be as follows: pollution explosion, nuclear war, population explosion, breakdown of society, spread of a disease that cannot be controlled.

2. Discussion. Write on the chalkboard, “Why signs?” Then ask the students to discuss why God has given signs. The key words that Jesus gave us concerning times was “Watch therefore,” Matt. 24:42. The students might suggest the following: (1) so that people may prepare, (2) to give credibility to Bible teaching, (3) so that God may be worshiped, (4) because it is the nature of God to reveal himself and his plans.

3. Brainstorm. Ask the class to brainstorm the different abuses that people have made concerning prophetic signs. The answers may include the following: (1) setting dates; (2) people have gone to isolated places with the intent of meeting the Lord; (3) refrain from work (2 Thess. 3:10-14); (4) ridiculing Christianity, such as the monk with the plaque, REPENT FOR THE END IS NEAR, (5) identifying current people with biblical predictions.

## **THE LESSON**

Lecture. Prepare a chart giving four major areas of the signs of his coming. They are as follows: the course of this age, Israel and prophecy, the growth of internationalism, and supportive conditions.

a. The course of this age. This section examines two Scripture portions that imply this age is following a course of events that will soon conclude. These are pictures reflecting the events of this age, not predicting the end.

b. Israel and prophecy. The best proof for the Bible and the existence of God is the promise God made to Abraham (Gen. 12:17). God has predicted two things concerning Israel: that Israel will return to the land (this happened when the nation of Israel was recognized in

1948), and that God will bless the world through the seed of Abraham. Israel has gone back to the land in unbelief, but God will regenerate the nation and turn them into believers (Ezek. 37:11-14).

c. The growth of internationalism. The world is moving toward one world government and the ecumenical movement of one world church. Both of these organizations are predicted in Scripture. Their growth is like a danger sign of a coming storm before its whole wrath is unleashed, a sign of its coming existence.

d. Supportive conditions. These signs are not found in Scripture but grow out of world conditions. They point to the coming of the end of the world. The possibility of pollution explosion, nuclear explosion, and population explosion all say that the end of the world could happen at any time. Point out to the class that God will not allow the world to be annihilated by these conditions, but that the coming of Jesus Christ will terminate the world. Second Timothy 3:1-5 points out the conditions in the world today that obviously describe the "last days." Point out to the class that God has prepared a "crown of righteousness." Close the class in silent prayer, asking the students to examine their motives concerning the coming of Jesus Christ. Then ask them to prepare their heart for his coming.

## **ASSIGNMENT**

Have the students read chapter 47 in the textbook.

## **SESSION FORTY-SEVEN**

Understanding the Rapture

Towns, chapter 47

### **LESSON GOALS**

1. To communicate to the student the nature and events of the rapture.
2. To help the student to understand the demands upon his life when he recognizes the imminent rapture.

### **PREPARATION**

Record player. As the students enter the class, have a record player or cassette recorder playing the popular gospel hymn, "The King Is Coming." Since you have several minutes of pre-session time, arrange for the song to be played two or three times. Perhaps play quietly as background music.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Write on the chalkboard the phrase, "The King is coming." Point out the biblical interpretation of this song refers to the coming of Jesus in his revelation.

### **LESSON**

1. Small groups. Next, write on the chalkboard the following phrase, "Because the Lord is coming, I feel . . ." Have each person turn to his neighbor and complete that sentence. Then announce to the class that people have mixed reactions concerning the coming of Jesus Christ. Some of the class may have shared the following feelings: anticipation, fear, happiness, sadness

because family members are not saved, disappointment because they are not able to accomplish the will of God, fearful for they are not ready to meet him.

2. Discussion. Ask the class, What is the nature of the rapture? (Being' caught up in the air, the dead shall be raised and glorified, imminently the blessed hope of the church.) Again ask the class, What is the distinction between the rapture and the revelation according to the pre-tribulation rapture view? (This view holds that Jesus Christ is coming secretly, and that later he will come openly.)

Draw the chart entitled, 'Two Distinct Events' on the chalkboard, flip chart, or transparency. Show the chart to the class and explain the distinction between the rapture and the revelation. Among certain Christians there is some confusion over the difference between the two.' This chart should make it clear that the rapture takes place before the tribulation.

Ask, What should be the Christians attitude in view of Christ's coming? (Those with dead loved ones should be comforted; Christians should exercise self-control; Christians should share the gospel with the unsaved; Christians should be ready to meet him.)

Point out that the rapture is not Christ's coming at the death of a Christian. Point out that no man knows the hour when Jesus Christ shall return, even Christ in his earthly ministry did not know the time. The rapture will come at an unexpected time, however, there will be "signs of his coming" that will give some general guidelines concerning the rapture. See chapter 46.

### **APPLICATION/RESPONSE**

When people get ready to go on a trip, they pack their clothes and get ready for the journey. Ask the class, What is involved in getting ready to take a journey? (Mental adjustment to travel, packing the suitcase, preparing several items, letting someone know when we will arrive, making preparations for travel.) In the same way, Christians should get ready for their journey to heaven. As you end the class, have them pray silently, as you ask the following questions: Are you ready for the Lord to come? Are you clothed in righteousness? Have you informed your loved ones that you are a Christian and that you are going to heaven, and that you want them to go with you? Do you have a biblical attitude toward your possessions on this earth?

### **ASSIGNMENT**

Read chapter 48 of the textbook.

## **SESSION FORTY-EIGHT**

Understanding the Tribulation

Towns, chapter 48

### **LESSON GOALS**

1. To help the student understand the horrible nature of the tribulation judgment upon the world.
2. To communicate to the student the fearful judgment of God on the unsaved during the tribulation, but that he may enjoy present security, knowing he is in Jesus Christ.

## **PREPARATION**

Bulletin board. Post pictures of war-devastated cities, people suffering, famine, disease, or pictures of calamities as a result of nature. Across the top of the bulletin board, post the word, 'Tribulation.'

## **INTRODUCTION**

Testimony. Have each student tell his neighbor, "The most awful experience in my life was . . ." Point out to the students that no matter how terrible the experience that they have suffered, nothing can be compared to the tribulation that is to come.

## **THE LESSON**

When dealing with the events of the tribulation, use the following chart to give the students an overview of the pre-tribulation rapture view. Even though some may criticize a time-line chart for its simplicity, many Christians want a simplistic overview to help them comprehend the events that will happen at the end of the world.

Develop the lesson by asking questions concerning each event that will come during the tribulation.

a. The seven seals. Ask the class, Which do you feel is the worst judgment of all of the seals? (Let the student share his answer.)

b. The 144,000. Point out to the class that these are Jewish evangelists that will spread the good news of the gospel around the world. Also, point out to the class that when Israel is re-gathered in the land, God shall send a revival among the Jews and many of will get saved. (See Ezek. 37; Rom. 11:25, 26.)

c. Two witnesses. Ask the class who they feel the two witnesses represent from the Old Testament. (Elijah and Moses.)

d. Seven trumpets. Ask the class which of these seven trumpets they consider to be the most severe. (Let the student share his answer.)

e. Battle of Gog and Magog. Point out to the class that many people confuse the battle of Gog and Magog with the battle of Anna

f. Seven Bowl judgment. Ask the class which of these judgments seem to be the most severe in their opinion? (Let the student share his answer.)

g. Battle of Armageddon. There have been many great battles, such as Gettysburg and Waterloo, but in eternity we shall look back and see that this was the most decisive battle in history. Point out that the termination of the battle of Armageddon is the return of Jesus Christ to defeat Satan and his allies.

## **APPLICATION/RESPONSE**

When the tribulation is properly understood, it leaves the students in a somber or grim mood. No Christian in his right mind can think happy thoughts about the tribulation. While the class is in a thoughtful mood, close in prayer, asking the class to pray for the following: (1) pray specifically for the salvation of the lost, (2) pray specifically that they will be ready for the Lord's coming, (3) praise God that he is still on the throne.

## **ASSIGNMENT**

Read chapter 49 of the textbook. Ask two students to prepare a dramatic reading of Isa. 2:1-5; 11:4-9; Rev. 20:1-6.

## **SESSION FORTY-NINE**

Understanding the Millennium

Towns, chapter 49

### **LESSON GOALS**

1. To communicate to the students the nature and events of the millennial reign of Christ.
2. To motivate students to allow Christ to control their lives now as he will certainly do in the millennium.

### **PREPARATION**

Record player. Before the beginning of the class, play quietly in the background Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus" on a record player or cassette recorder. As you come toward the time when the class begins, raise the volume until it captures the attention of the class. Then announce to the class, "Many think that will be the theme song of the millennium." Ask the students why. (Because both the millennium and the song center on Jesus Christ and are filled with praise to him.)

### **INTRODUCTION**

Dramatic reading. Two students have been alerted to read dramatically the following two passages. (1) Isa. 2:1-5, 11:49; (2) Rev. 20:1-6. Ask the students to describe the millennium after hearing the readings.

### **THE LESSON**

Most Christians accept the millennial reign of Jesus Christ, but they have not thought much about what will happen during that period of time. Point out that the word millennium means 1,000 years—the duration of the reign of Christ on earth.

Brainstorm. What will the millennium be like? Develop the lesson today by having people brainstorm, What would it be like if ... ? There are seven characteristics of the millennium given in the textbook. Write these seven points on the chalkboard, then allow the students to say, "What it will be like if . . ."

What would it be like to live where Satan is restrained? Students will come up with several answers to this, such as, "liberty to do what they want," "no temptation," "no evil influence on children," "no counterfeit religion," etc.

What would it be like to live under a universal reign of Christ? Some students' answers may be as follows: "everyone treated fairly"; "everyone has respect and worth"; "everyone has equal opportunity;" or "everyone has access to the King," etc.

What would happen if everyone lived in a desirable place? Everyone in the class has a place where they would like to go on vacation or to retire. Point out to them that God has promised that during the millennium people will live in Palestine and Jerusalem will be the capital. This is a desirable part of the world to live for many Christians. What if I lived in a desirable place? Some of the class's answers may be as follows: "I would be happy"; "there would be no lust or covetousness for what my neighbor has"; "I would be satisfied," etc.

What would happen if nature were delivered from its bondage? As the class answers this question, some of their answers may be as follows: "There would be no fear from wild animals or snakes; no threat of danger from nature; man and nature would work in harmony; every man's potential would be reached; the curse of work and man's dislike of work would be removed, hence he would enjoy working."

What if I lived where everything were right? When the Bible speaks of righteousness, it means we are living where everything is right. The students' answers may contain the following: "I would not be cheated or my possessions would not be violated"; "I would be happy and have peace"; "it would be exactly what I desire."

Prepare a chart from the text entitled, "A kingdom to be desired," and summarize its parts to the class.

### **APPLICATION/RESPONSE**

Summary. The text contains the chart, "The Sufferings of Christ and the Glory to Follow" Copy the chart onto the flip chart or transparency and show it to the class as a summary.

The millennium has a definite purpose in the plan of God. The textbook points out that the purpose of the millennium is to give rewards; to be an answer to the Lord's prayer; to be the kingdom to come; that creation will be redeemed and removed from bondage and the temple will be rebuilt. Point out to the class that they should submit to the kingship of Jesus Christ while in this life. While technically he will be King in the millennium, today Jesus is King over the creation (1 Tim' 1:17), but he also wants to rule in people's hearts. Today's lesson has focused on the future. Now bring the students' attention to the present. End the class by having prayer and by asking the students to do the following: to submit to Jesus Christ as their Lord and King, to purpose in their hearts to live today as though they are ready to meet Jesus Christ, to worship Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God and the King of the universe.

### **ASSIGNMENT**

Read chapter 50 of the textbook.

## **SESSION FIFTY**

Understanding the Judgments

Towns, chapter 50

### **LESSON GOALS**

1. To understand the nature of God's judgment and to survey the seven judgments taught in scripture.
2. To motivate the students to attempt to live godly lives in light of the judgment of God.

### **PREPARATION**

Browsing table. Leave several open dictionaries on a browsing table. In each one, highlight the word "judgment." Get a copy of a speeding ticket, usually called a "citation." Xerox some copies and also place them, on the browsing table. Make sure to blot out any name or reference to the person who received it. When most people talk about speeding tickets, they always find themselves joking or attempting to find out when their friends have gotten their last citation.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Some in the class will have gotten a speeding ticket and they may feel that it was undeserved. Do not ask for testimonies or for a show of hands as it may divert the class from the examination of judgment. However, point out that no one will ever appear before God in judgment and claim that the sentence was undeserved. As a judge, God knows all things. He will take all facts into account.

## **THE LESSON**

1. Discussion. Prepare a chart on the chalkboard, flip chart, or transparency to show these seven judgments by God: the cross, self judgment, the judgment seat of Christ, the nations, tribulation, the great white throne judgment, and the judgment of angels.

Develop the lesson by using questions to cause the students to analyze the issues.

a. The cross. Why did Christ have to suffer the judgment of God in our place? (Because God must judge all sin; because we were sinners deserving God's judgment.)

b. Self-judgment. There are two aspects to self-judgment. First, the Christian is expected to judge his life. Ask, Why did God ask Christians to judge themselves? (Man has the ability to judge because he is made in the image of God and has moral insight; because man has an obligation.) The second part of self-judgment is that if man will not judge himself, God must judge him. There are natural consequences for sin in this world. When the laws of nature are broken, man must suffer the consequences. The same can be said for the laws in society, psychology, or sociology. God may judge man with the use of secondary means or God may use direct means.

c. The judgment seat of Christ. Since God has judged the sins of a Christian, is this a second judgment? (The judgment seat of Christ is not a judgment of sins, but is a reward for good works; see application/response.)

d. The nations. At the second coming, Christ will judge the nations. What is the basis for this judgment? (The treatment of Israel.)

e. The tribulation. This class has already examined the tribulation (chapter 48). What is the special object of judgment in tribulation? (The unsaved world and the creation.)

f. The great white throne judgment. What are the bases for the judgment on the unsaved? (God will judge them on two bases. First, they will be punished if their name is not found in the Lamb's book of life. Second, they will be judged according to their works to determine the severity of their punishment.)

g. The judgment of angels. Who will be judging angels? (Christians will judge angels because in their freedom they obeyed Jesus Christ.)

## **APPLICATION/RESPONSE**

Prepare a copy of the chart, "The Believer's Rewards," found in the textbook. Explain to the class that five crowns shall be given to the believer. Briefly survey each of these crowns, noting the condition for receiving the reward. As you come to the end of the class period, point out that Christians will one day take their crowns and cast them at the feet of Jesus Christ (Rev. 4:10). Close the class in prayer, asking students to evaluate their service to Jesus Christ. Ask the following questions: How many crowns do you think you have received? Do you have a desire to win other crowns? Are you willing to cast all of your crowns at the feet of Jesus Christ? Whereas

some might not be willing to honor the Lord now in this life, once they appear in heaven their sin nature will be eradicated and they will worship Jesus Christ and cast their crowns at his feet.

## **ASSIGNMENT**

Read chapter 51 of the textbook.

## **SESSION FIFTY-ONE**

Understanding the Eternal Abode of the Unsaved  
Towns, chapter 51

### **LESSON GOALS**

1. To help students see the nature and permanence of punishment in hell.
2. To communicate to students the reality of punishment in hell so that they will witness for Christ.

### **LESSON**

1. Lecture. Post the following question in the front of the classroom: "Is hell real?" Many outside the church believe that hell is not a real place; some Christians even joke about hell. Ask the class why people do not take hell seriously. They may give you some of the following answers: the deception of Satan; people do not believe in the existence of that which cannot be seen; people reject or resist that which is potentially harmful; many joke about hell.

The textbook suggests six different names for hell found in Scripture. Prepare these titles on a chart, the chalkboard, or transparency. Explain the chart to give students an overview to the doctrine of hell. Have one student read the Scripture passage with each title. Then give an explanation why the name describes hell. (1) Shed/grave ("Paradise" or "Abraham's bosom" also describes the grave); (2) Hades, Luke 16:24; (3) Gehenna/hell, Matt. 5:22; (4) Lake of Fire, Rev. 20:15; (5) Second death, Rev. 20:14; 21:8; (6) Eternal retribution, punishment, Matt. 25:46.

2. Discussion. Ask the class, What does the world think hell is going to be like? They will give many answers, especially ideas that are reflective of what an unsaved person might say. Their answers might be as follows: "living with friends; it will be one all-night party; it will be a place where there is no heating bill," etc. Point out to the students that the text gives the characterizations that come from the Scripture. The Bible's description of hell is vastly different from the world's description.

Write the six characteristics of hell on a chart, chalkboard, or transparency. Use the chart to summarize the nature of hell to the class. Read each verse, then explain its meaning. The six characteristics of hell are: fire, Matt. 13:42; lost opportunities, Luke 16:25; torment, Luke 16:24; separation, Luke 16:26; darkness, Matt. 8:12; 22:13; hopelessness, Luke 16:26.

Many unsaved people say they are gang to hell because "my friends will be there." Such a statement does not recognize the terrible torment and irreversible destiny of hell. Prepare a chart from the text, "The citizens of hell," and explain it to the students. Remind them that next time they hear that statement about a person's friends being in hell, they should share with that person a true picture of the torment and inhabitants of hell.

## **APPLICATION/RESPONSE**

A lesson on hell is difficult to apply to the life of Christians. However, there may be someone in the class who is not saved. Make a gospel appeal for them to receive Jesus Christ as their Savior. After this is done, point out to Christians that since the unsaved will suffer punishment in hell, that should be motivation to share the gospel with them (Rom. 6:23).

## **ASSIGNMENT**

Read chapter 52 of the textbook.

## **SESSION FIFTY-TWO**

Understanding the Home of the Saved  
Towns, chapter 52

### **LESSON GOALS**

1. To help students understand the nature, inhabitants and activities of heaven.
2. To give students confidence as they think of their death, knowing that they will see God in heaven.

### **PREPARATION**

Browsing table. Prepare pictures, brochures, and advertisements promoting houses, apartments, and condominiums. An advertisement can make a temporary home look very attractive. Remember that God has a permanent home that is even more desirable. Usually, a realty office will supply advertisements to help decorate the classroom.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Testimony. Have each student share with his neighbor the completion of the following sentence, "When I get to heaven, one of the first things I want to do is . . ." The purpose of sharing is to focus the student's attention on the home to which he is going. As people move from one city to another, they begin focusing their attention on their next house long before they arrive. This class will focus attention on the Christian's home in heaven.

### **THE LESSON**

Question and answer. Develop today's lesson around three major questions. Write these questions on the chalkboard, flip chart, or transparency: "What is heaven like?", "Who will be in heaven?", and "What will we do in heaven?"

1. What is heaven like? The Bible gives us a description of heaven as a glorious city. The textbook gives eight points to describe heaven. Use the following questions to guide the students to examine each aspect of the description of heaven.

The following phrases were all used to symbolize the presence of the Lord: the presence of God, tabernacle, temple, and the church. The ultimate location for the presence of God is heaven. In what way are the tabernacle, temple, the church, and heaven similar? (They were all the centralized location where the presence of God dwelt.)

a. Heaven is eternal. How will we measure time in heaven? (There is no night, day, or sequence of time.)

b. Heaven has no death. What is the definition of death? (Death is separation.) There is no death in heaven for we will live forever with God.

c. Tears. Will there be any sadness in heaven? (No. God shall erase the memory of pain, sorrow, and former things; Rev. 21:4.)

d. Heaven is a place of recognition. Will we be recognized in heaven? (Yes, we shall know in heaven as we are known on earth.)

e. Heaven is gigantic. How large is heaven? (The largest city to have ever been built; see text for figures.)

f. Heaven will be beautiful and dean. How will heaven contrast to the modern inner city? (Heaven will be dean and transparent.)

g. The Tree of Life. What will be in heaven that was in the original garden of creation? (The tree and the river.)

2. Who will be in heaven? (Angels, saved Israel, the church, the triune God.)

3. What will we do in heaven? (Many think that Christians will be sitting on clouds and be strumming harps. However, heaven will be a very active place.) Prepare the chart “What to Do in Heaven?” from the textbook. Explain it to the students and summarize the things that Christians will be doing in heaven.

### **APPLICATION/RESPONSE**

The textbook includes the final statement of several Christians as they face death. Read these statements to the class. Ask, Have you thought about when you are going to die? Then point out to the class, “it is appointed unto men once to die” (Heb. 9:24). Inasmuch as every student must die (unless the Lord comes), then Christians should begin to mentally prepare for death. As you dose in prayer, ask the students to pray: that God would give them dying strength, that God would give them the confidence and courage to witness to others at their deaths, and that God would help them to prepare for death.