

Being A Christian...

What It Means

“Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit.”

John 15:2

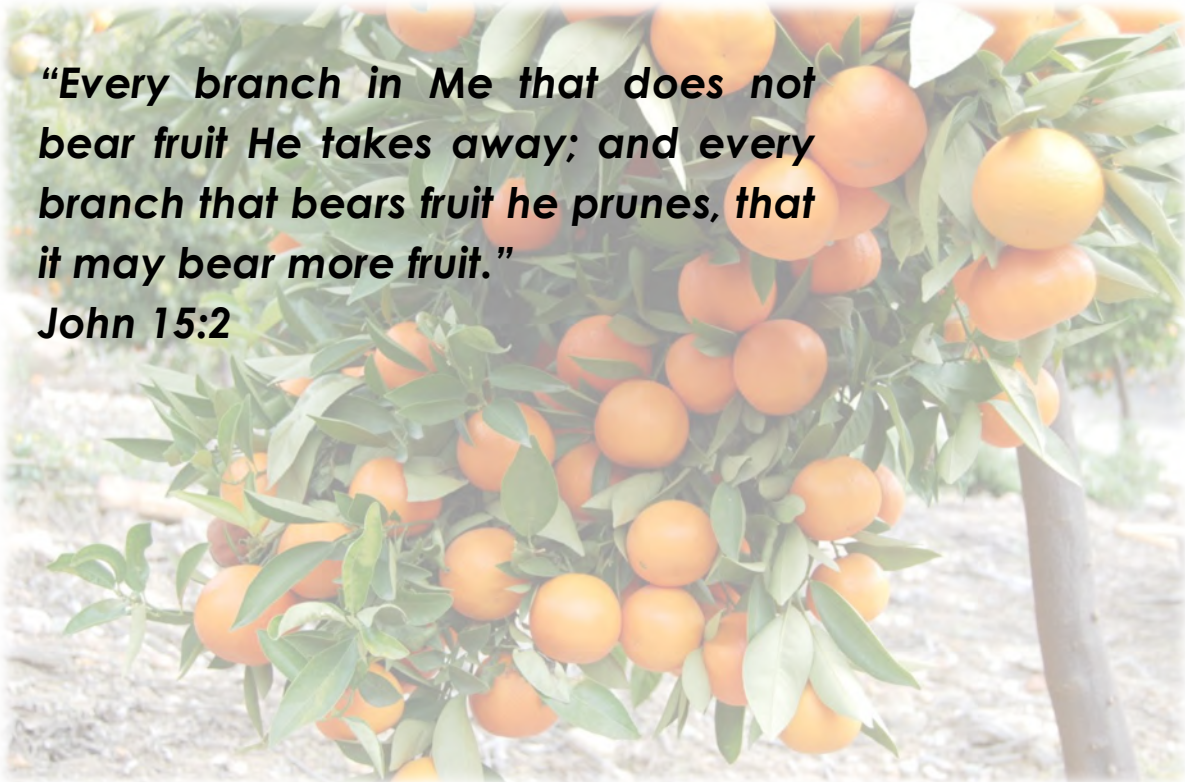




TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction

Being a Christian Means ...

Lesson 1 I am Different!

Lesson 2 I Trust in God!

Lesson 3 I Love the Unlovable!

Lesson 4 I'm Honest with God!

Lesson 5 Building on the Right Foundation!

INTRODUCTION

When you are trying to decide what to do with your life, the possibilities will at first seem limitless.

“Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.” (John 15:2)


Misconceptions ... these are the things that create confusion, misunderstanding and wrong conclusions. If a young person for instance has the misconception about life and its responsibilities, they may think they should receive everything they want and ask for. And when they don't get it, they become pouty and even angry. You see, this is a misconception that will create problems for so many if allowed to prevail.

The folks who were the religious leaders living in the days when Jesus walked on the earth had a number of misconceptions about what it really meant to obey and serve Jehovah God. They were convinced that doing the outward things of the Law of Moses along with their own traditions, the offering of various sacrifices, the keeping of various holy days, and tithing of all they possessed ... these were all that mattered to God! They were wrong, very wrong!

Just as they were wrong so long ago, we can be wrong today when we develop a misconception of what being a follower of Jesus Christ is all about, about what constitutes holiness. Having the misconception that pleasing God is all about the outward things we do without employing our heart. Real joy, happiness and peace comes from a proper understanding of just what the Lord really expects of us as His people, whether we are young or older.

The young elementary-age boy was standing at the chalkboard when his teacher admonished him for being what she considered to be an underachiever. He thought about her words for a moment and responded in this way, “Ma’am, I am not an underachiever ... you’re an over-expecter!”

Now, we can all relate to this young boy's response can't we? While it is true that God has expectations of each one of us, it is just as true that He doesn't expect more of us than we can be, do or accomplish! God requires things of us throughout our lives and we need to understand this truth. You see, He is God the Creator and we are His creation! He does not expect perfection, but He does expect us to give our best.



Living and walking your faith takes courage! Being a Christian is not for wimps or the faint-hearted. But it is not an impossible thing to do either. With the Lord on our side, His Word planted in our heart and a resolve to give the Lord our very best, we can walk through this life, not perfect, but *“humbly, righteously and godly.”*

In this study we will look more closely at the attitudes of the heart and the demonstration of our faith by doing what the Lord tells us about What It Means to Be a Christian.

Living the good life, the holy life begins with what is inside our hearts!

Bill Fairchild, Jr.

Lesson 1 BEING A CHRISTIAN MEANS I AM DIFFERENT!

Read the Text: Matthew 5:13-16

INTRODUCTION

1. Questions:
 - a. Does being a Christian mean we have to look and act different than everyone else?
 - b. Does being a Christian mean being a good person?
 - c. Can we have friends who aren't Christians?
2. Life without certain vital ingredients ... like salt and light ... is flat.
3. Is it really possible for us as followers of Christ to help those who aren't, without having something "different" to offer? Discuss.
4. Ever eat "salt-free" potato chips or pretzels? What's wrong with them?
 - a. Something was missing. Salt!
5. Jesus compares the life of real Christians to salt. He calls them "*the salt of the earth.*"
 - a. People who don't know Jesus Christ have something missing in their lives.
 - b. Did you know that we can bring their lives to fullness, just like salt does to food? Discuss.
6. Jesus also compares the life of real Christians to light. He calls them "*the light of the world.*"
 - a. People who don't know Christ are in spiritual darkness.
 - b. Did you know that our lives can help remove the blindfolds from their spiritual eyes so they can see? Discuss.
7. Let's talk about how salt and light make a "difference" in the world.

DISCUSSION

1. Perhaps we need to ask the question: "Who wants to be different?"
2. Questions:
 - a. What does the word "different" mean? Define and discuss. _____

- b. What does the word “conformed” mean? Define and discuss. _____
3. List some ways we tend to conform to the standards of our friends, family and society.
- a. The list might include clothes, hairstyles, activities, etc.
- _____
4. Discuss what happens when we don’t conform (i.e. may feel left out, might face punishment, etc.). _____
5. Do you ever feel funny about being “different”? Be honest!
6. Our generation uses the word “different” sometimes as an insult, like saying about somebody who’s unpopular, “He’s really different.”
7. Please read Matthew 5:13-16 again. Now read Romans 12:1, 2.
- a. Jesus calls us to be different from the world, but it’s a call to a good difference!
- b. Read 2 Corinthians 4:17; Galatians 6:15; Ephesians 4:24; 1 Peter 2:2, 9.
8. As followers of Christ, we’re special and we have special blessing such as peace with God, hope of Heaven, fellowship with other Christians, and someone who hears and answers our prayers. Discuss. _____
9. Simply stated: We have potential in Jesus Christ!
- a. Christ gives us the ability to help others ... the ability to do good for others!

SALT AND LIGHT MAKE A DIFFERENCE

1. What are the characteristics of salt?
- a. It adds flavor; creates thirst; and acts as a preservative.
- b. Discuss. _____
2. As followers of Christ, we should be like salt:
- a. Because we should create a thirst for more information. You see, our lives should cause people to wonder about what makes us so different! Discuss.

- b. Because Christians add the flavor of the Christian life to the world!
Discuss. _____
- c. Because Christians serve as a preservative against the world's evil!
Discuss. _____
3. What are the characteristics of light?
- a. To shine; give direction; help people to see clearly, etc.
4. As followers of Jesus, we are to be "light".
- a. Because when we are light-radiating Christians, living as we should, others will see our good deeds and give praise not to us but to God!
- b. Because our lives will help point the way to knowing our Father in Heaven!
Discuss. _____
- c. Because we can show the way out of darkness and fear.
Discuss. _____
5. What are some ways Christians keep their light hidden? Discuss each of the following:
- a. By keeping our mouths shut even when an obvious opportunity to share the gospel with others is possible.
- b. By avoiding non-Christians altogether.
- c. By going to the other extreme and always associating with non-Christians and never being willing to be "different" for Christ. Read 1 Corinthians 15:33.
- d. By approving of other's sins.
6. Is it possible for us to be obnoxious in forcing our light on others? Discuss.
- a. Define self-righteous. Read Luke 18:9-14 and discuss.
- b. A condemning attitude will always turn people off, even if what we say is true!
- c. Self-righteousness just doesn't add up to a good example for others to see when it comes to viewing Christ who Himself had a humble and gentle spirit. Read Matthew 11:29.
- d. Stop to consider that someone in darkness is lost ... and let your care for them shine!
- e. On the other hand, we can be so afraid of turning off our friends, etc., that we don't say or do anything for the Lord. And that amounts to "hiding our light under a bushel."

7. Jesus said for us to put our lights on a stand so that it will give light to everyone in the house!
 - a. He said not to hide it, but He also didn't say to shove it at everyone in the house.
 - b. If you put your light where it can be seen ... it will affect others in the right way!

APPLICATION

1. Do you think most young people use all of their potential for helping other people?
Discuss. _____
2. What keeps most of us from letting our light shine?
 - a. How about fear of what others think; fear of being different; risk of failure; an uncaring attitude). Discuss. _____
 - b. Can you list others? _____
3. What kind of person would YOU like the Lord to help YOU become?
 - a. Happy, healthy, successful, loving, caring, helpful to others?
 - b. How about somebody who makes a difference in this world?
4. Please think about one or two particular things YOU can do this week to let your light shine for Christ and be the salt in somebody else's life!

"Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established." Proverbs 16:3

Lesson 2 BEING A CHRISTIAN MEANS I TRUST IN GOD!

Read the Text: Matthew 6:25-34

INTRODUCTION

1. Questions:
 - a. Why can't we be happy more often?
 - b. Do we always have to trust God and have faith in Him?

2. Worrying is distracting!
 - a. Define worrying. _____
 - b. Define distracting. _____

3. Please list some of the things we most often worry about. _____
_____ Read some aloud.

4. Having listed these "worries" and reading them out loud ...
 - a. How do you feel after hearing about all these worries? _____

5. Did you know just thinking about worries can be discouraging? Discuss.
 - a. You see, there isn't one positive thing on this list and just seeing and hearing so many bad things in one place has a negative effect on us.
 - b. For example: We could worry while here at this class about failing a class at school, failing a grade at school, getting in trouble for not being prepared for class, someone we know getting sick or dying, and this will distract us from having a good time! Discuss.

6. Now list some things you have to be glad about, the opposite of worry! (i.e. home, family, health, friends, etc.) _____
_____ Read some aloud.
 - a. How has this new list changed the mood of everyone, including you, in this class? Discuss.

7. What we concentrate on does have an effect on the whole way we look at things and on the way we look at life. Read Proverbs 4:23; Proverbs 23:7.

- a. The Lord knew this ... and He gives us all something better to concentrate on ... His love and care for us!

8. Let's talk about what it means to really trust in God and what that can do for us.

DISCUSSION

1. You know, we can wad up and throw away a list of worries. But it isn't as simple to erase worries from our minds, is it?
 - a. Discuss why this is so. _____
2. Often we have real concerns that we should be thinking about, things that are just too big to forget! Discuss.
3. There are two ways of handling concerns:
 - a. We can continue to worry about them.
 - b. Or we can trust the Lord with them!
4. Worrying keeps us from trust! But it also keeps us from studying, doing what we should and noticing other people's problems and needs. Discuss.
5. Define "fretting." _____
 - a. Fretting is a big distraction!
6. Read Matthew 6:25-34. In the blank after each of the following "thoughts" write the number of the verse that it illustrates. (Hint: There can be more than one verse for an answer.)
 - a. "I've outgrown my shoes. My toes are curling up in my Nikes. How can I afford new ones?" _____
 - b. "The flowers out there are beautiful. God made them that way. And they didn't have to shop at the clothing store to get that way." _____
 - c. "Help! I lost my lunch money. I'll starve. I'm getting weak already" _____
 - d. "Okay – so I don't have steak every night and don't have the latest designer clothes. But I have Jesus Christ and that's more important!" _____
 - e. "My friends are always talking about how to get enough money to get the latest electronic games, CD's, etc. Who needs it?" _____
 - f. "I never see a nervous bird (except when I shoot at them with my BB gun). God takes care of them, and they don't worry about it." _____

- g. "Oh, no. I have to see my school counselor on Friday. I am scared to death and it's only Thursday." _____
- h. "I've decided to put God first and let Him take care of the other details of my life!" _____

7. We all have our times of feeling great trust in God and then times of getting shaky in our trust. Discuss.
- a. Look at point 5.h. again. If this is what we really decided to do, then we'll have an attitude of commitment and trust in God even though our feelings go up and down each day.

COMPLETE TRUST

1. Please read the following Scriptures and discuss the qualities of God that make Him completely trustworthy:
 - a. Matthew 6:32 (God understands our needs.)
 - b. 2 Peter 3:9 (God is patient with us and is true to His word.)
 - c. Psalm 32:10 (God's love is unfailing.)
 - d. Psalm 103:13 (God's compassion for His children.)
2. Can you think of any other qualities that lead us to trust the Lord?
 - a. He knows us completely. Psalm 103:14. He created us. He offers peace. He forgives our sins. He won't turn away when we come to Him.
3. You see, trust in God is not just a good feeling ... it is a decision based on who God is. Hebrews 11:4.
 - a. Jesus Christ is our primary reason for trusting God. Why? Because He is living proof that God loves us. John 3:16.

MAGICAL PROTECTION

1. Now that we know we should trust Him, what should we trust Him to do for us?
 - a. Many have the false idea that if they trust the Lord, they will be safe from illness, accidents, always have enough money, and never have any family problems.
 - b. The fact is: The Scriptures do not promise this kind of magical protection! Discuss.

2. You see, as Christians, we live in the real world too! To expect God to always shield us from harm is foolish and will lead to great disappointment when the bad or unpleasant things do take place.
3. Just as Jesus is our proof that God loves us and is trustworthy, Jesus is also proof that God allows painful things to happen in our lives.

Read and discuss Hebrews 4:15 _____
and 1 Peter 2:21. _____

a. Jesus is our perfect example of how we are to live as God's person in this world!

4. Never forget this point: God does promise us that He will be with us in times of trouble! We have His comfort and His wisdom for what to do in difficult situations! Read and discuss:
 - a. Psalm 23 _____
 - b. 1 Peter 5:7 _____
 - c. 1 Corinthians 10:13 _____

APPLICATION

1. Select one item from your worry list above and think about how your life would be different if you didn't worry about that item, but trusted the Lord with it.
2. God doesn't surround us with an invisible bubble to keep anything bad from happening ... but He does offer us His love, strength, and wisdom to successfully live our lives and find Heaven as our home!
3. Real trust in God is better than tension!
4. Being a Christian means I have learned to trust God completely!

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths." Proverbs 3:5, 6

Lesson 3 BEING A CHRISTIAN MEANS I LOVE THE UNLOVABLE!

Read the Text: Matthew 5:43-48

INTRODUCTION

1. Questions:
 - a. Why is it so easy to love those who love us? Discuss.
 - b. Why is it so easy to be kind to those who are kind to us? Discuss.
 - c. Why is it so hard to love those who don't love us? Discuss.
 - d. Why is it so hard to be kind to those who aren't kind to us? Discuss.

2. What is an enemy? Discuss
 - a. Why is it so hard to love your enemies? Discuss. _____
 - b. Can we choose to just ignore Christ's teaching on this subject and hope to meet with the Lord's approval? Discuss. _____

3. How can I learn to love unlovable people? Discuss. _____
 - a. Do I have to love everybody just because I'm a Christian? _____
 - b. Is this teaching just for "adults only"?

4. Have you ever felt left out ... ever pushed away where you weren't wanted?
 - a. How did it make you feel? _____

5. Being treated rudely or unkindly is just not a pleasant experience! Discuss.

6. Do young people ever treat each other rudely or unkindly? Discuss.
 - a. What are some examples? _____
 - b. Have you ever been treated unkindly? How did it make you feel? _____
 - c. Have you ever treated someone else unkindly? How do you suppose it made them feel?

7. When other people treat us cruelly, it hurts and we don't like it, do we?
 - a. How about when we treat them this same way?
 - b. Is there any difference? Discuss.

8. The Bible says we are to be kind and caring to all people. I don't know about you, but I know this is sure hard for me to do!
9. Let's see what the Lord teaches about loving those who are hard to love.

DISCUSSION

1. Read Matthew 5:43-48
 - a. What are some rewards of loving people who love us back?
 - b. Actually, there's no special reward in this because it's easy to love people who love us back.
2. What might be some unexpected rewards of loving people who don't love you? Discuss.
 - a. Something to think about: You may learn patience, you may win the person over, but most importantly you follow the example of Jesus. 1 Peter 2:21.
3. What does Matthew 5:43-48 say about unattractive and even bad people?
 - a. It says that God loves everyone and we should do the same! Discuss.
 - b. Read and discuss Galatians 6:10 and Romans 12:17-18, 21.
4. Why is it so wrong to dislike somebody? Discuss.
 - a. Looking down on someone else is inconsistent with how God looks upon others.
 - b. Read 1 John 3:14, 15 and discuss.
 - c. This is especially true with reference to other Christians.
5. The world loves people who are rich, good looking, popular, talented, and powerful.
 - a. God loves these people too! But for different reasons.
 - b. What are God's reasons for loving people? Discuss the following:
He created them, He understands them, He sees their weaknesses and wants to forgive them of their sins, and they are precious to Him as well.
6. This is why we should love people ... not for what they can do, but for what they are: Creations of God!

7. We all need to remember that God also loves the poor, the unpopular, the klutzy and the nobodies for exactly the same reasons He loves everybody else!

APPLICATION

1. Read the following passages of Scripture and see how answering the following questions about each passage shows Jesus' example in loving the unlovable people in His world:
 - a. Who was the unlovable person(s)? Why?
 - b. What was the person's need?
 - c. How did Jesus show love by meeting that need?
 - d. What was the result?

2. Matthew 8:1-4.
 - a. Who/Why? The man with leprosy was unlovable because he was physically deformed and had an illness other people were fearful of catching.
 - b. What? He needed not only to be healed physically, but to be restored to human contact.
 - c. How? Jesus healed him, and by touching him, convinced him he was an acceptable human being.
 - d. Result? Jesus told him to go show himself to the priest and offer the gift Moses commanded for a testimony to show himself clean and reenter society.

3. Matthew 8:28-34.
 - a. Who/Why? The two demon-possessed men were unlovable. They were so violent that no one would come near them.
 - b. They needed to be rid of the demons inside them.
 - c. Jesus cast out the demons, sending the demons into a herd of pigs.
 - d. As a result, the people of the town begged Jesus to leave the region. Why do you suppose they wanted him to leave? _____

4. Luke 23:26-46.
 - a. Who/Why? These people who put Jesus to death on the cross hated Him, despised Him and did everything they could to make His life miserable.
 - b. They needed to be forgiven!
 - c. Jesus asked the Father to forgive them. He demonstrated the right attitude!

- d. He died for them!
 - e. Were their sins forgiven? If so, when? Read Acts 2:37-42. _____
5. Is there someone you've not been treating fairly or kindly?
- a. Why not decide now to start doing better.
6. Is there someone who hasn't been nice to you or kind to you?
- a. Why not decide today to have a better attitude toward them.
7. When we do things as God would have us to, we become more like Him and more pleasing to Him. What a thought!
8. Yes, being a Christian means I've learned to love even the unlovable!

"And be ye kind one to another, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." Ephesians 4:32

Lesson 4 BEING A CHRISTIAN MEANS I'M HONEST WITH GOD!

Read the Text: Matthew 6:5-15

INTRODUCTION

1. Questions:
 - a. Who is your closest friend?
 - b. What helped you develop the close relationship you have?
 - c. Do you ever wish you had a closer relationship with God?

2. Developing a close relationship with God involves many of the same things it takes to have a close relationship with your best friend.
 - a. It means spending time together sharing experiences, thoughts, feelings, fears, joys, etc.
Discuss.

3. What is prayer? Discuss.
 - a. In the following space, put your definition of what prayer is. _____

4. Prayer is honest communication with the Lord, without show or hypocrisy!
 - a. That's why prayer is so important. It gives us an opportunity to talk with God, to get to know Him better, and to develop the ability to share everything with Him!
 - b. You see, relationships don't develop through silence.
 - c. To know God, to become His friend (and for Him to become yours) means communicating with each other.
 - d. By the way, how does God communicate with us? _____

5. Is God someone we can talk to about anything? _____
 - a. What should we pray for anyway? _____

6. Let's see what the Lord has to say about talking with God honestly in prayer.

DISCUSSION

1. Read Matthew 6:5-13. Discuss the text.

a. What was the problem with the way some were praying?

2. What are some phony ways people pray to God? _____

a. What's wrong with offering a phony prayer? _____

b. Can we ever fool God? _____

3. What should be our real intentions when we pray? _____

a. Are these always our intentions?

b. What does God really want to hear us pray for and pray about? _____

4. What are some things Jesus said we should pray for? Read Matthew 6:9-13.

5. Do you think it is possible for God not to answer your prayers? _____

a. Why? _____

b. Compare your answers with 1 John 5:14, 15 and Matthew 7:7-11.

6. Do these passages mean we can pray to get the answers to a test we haven't studied for, etc.?"

Read James 4:3. _____

7. We all need to be very careful that as we pray, we are praying for the right reason ... honest communication with God!

a. Not to be heard by other people instead of by the Lord! Discuss.

b. Not to get things for ourselves selfishly! Discuss.

8. When do you think God wants to hear from us? Discuss _____
- a. David was a man “after God’s own heart” (Acts 13:22).
What does this mean? _____
 - b. Now look at the following verses and note when David prayed:
 - 1) Psalm 4:8 _____
 - 2) Psalm 5:3 _____
 - 3) Psalm 61:1,2 _____
 - 4) Psalm 69:13 _____
9. God is always ready to hear from you ... wherever you are, however you’re feeling, whenever you call on Him!

APPLICATION

1. Stop and think about what’s happening in YOUR life right now!
 - a. What do YOU need?
 - b. What are YOU concerned about?
 - c. What can YOU thank the Lord for?
 - d. Is there a sin problem in YOUR life?
 - e. Who are YOU concerned about?
2. Make time today to talk with God about these things honestly!
3. Make it a daily habit to talk with God and He can become your closest friend ... which is exactly what He wants to be! Always there for you!
4. Yes, being a Christian means I’ve learned that I need to be honest with God, and that I can be!

“For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.” 1 Peter 3:12

Lesson 5 BEING A CHRISTIAN MEANS BUILDING ON THE RIGHT FOUNDATION!

Read the Text: Matthew 7:24-27

INTRODUCTION

1. Questions:
 - a. Have you ever been disappointed by someone?
 - b. Has someone ever let you down?
 - c. How did this make you feel?
2. Can we really count on the Lord?
 - a. How can we start growing in the Lord?
 - b. How can we keep growing in the Lord?
3. God has given each of us the ability to choose which ground we will build our lives on ... temporary things ... or Christ. Discuss.
 - a. And that's what this lesson is all about ... building!
4. Let's see what the Lord has to say about building our lives.

DISCUSSION

1. What are some shaky foundations that young people try to build their lives on? Discuss.

- a. What about looks, sports ability, brains, popularity, a music or movie idol, etc?

- b. How would they go about this? _____

2. What's wrong with these foundations for life? Discuss. _____

- a. They won't last; they don't reflect God's values; they can be easily lost in a moment; they depend on human abilities instead of on God's strength!

3. What's the only firm foundation for life? _____
 - a. Do you really believe this to be true?

4. Read Matthew 7:24-27.
 - a. Do you remember the song "The Wise Man Built His House Upon The Rock"?
 - b. Do you remember the hand motions that go along with it?
 - c. Is this Bible story just a little Bible story for kids to sing about in their Bible class or at home?
 - d. If not, why not? Discuss

 - e. Actually, it is a story for mature people who are making big decisions about what to base their lives on ... Jesus Christ or the world!
 - f. Each of you is beginning to make these decisions on almost a daily basis.
 - g. Just how important is this issue of building? Discuss.
 - h. Read Ecclesiastes 11:9 and 12:1.

5. What is it about Jesus that makes Him a solid rock foundation to build our lives on?
 - a. He is forever.
 - b. He is unchanging.
 - c. He is good.
 - d. He cares.
 - e. Can you name more? _____

6. Look again at Matthew 7:24-27.
 - a. What's the difference between the problems that came to the person who had built his house on the rock, and the person who had built his house on the sand? Discuss. _____
 - b. The answer is there is **no** difference! Exactly the same words are used to describe what happened to both houses.

7. What does this tell you about what might happen to a Christian in his life?
 - a. Christians are subject to the same problems and hurts as other people!
 - b. The difference is in their reactions ... what happens to the houses!
 - c. And the difference in their reactions is because of the firm foundation Christians are to have!

APPLICATION

1. If you were a neighbor of the wise man, and the foolish man, and you saw what's described in this parable, what would you think? Discuss.
 - a. The wisdom of the wise man and the foolishness of the foolish man would be very obvious!


2. How would this change your own plans for the future if you were going to build a house in the same neighborhood?
 - a. Would you follow the example of the wise man? _____
 - b. Why would you build on the firm foundation? _____

3. What does all of this tell us about the effect our Christian lives can have on others?
 - a. They will see what Christ does for us and hopefully want to have Him themselves!
 - b. Read Matthew 5:13-16

4. Sometimes as Christians, we do fail and sometimes meet up with situations where we can't seem to cope.
 - a. Jesus Christ still offers His firm foundation!
 - b. If a Christian's "house" collapses ... it is because other things have crept in and replaced the foundation of Christ. Read Luke 8:14. Discuss. _____
 - c. Even if you stumble and fall, you can be picked up by deciding to get up and start building again on the solid rock!

5. Each of us has the choice of building on Jesus or building on any of a million other things.
 - a. God gives us the freedom to choose.
 - b. But He also makes the results of that choice clear in the Scriptures, such as the one we've just studied.
 - c. Read Galatians 6:7-8 as well.

6. Each day of your life, ask yourself:
 - a. "Where have I been building my house?"
 - b. "Where do I really want to build today?"

- 
7. Yes, being a Christian means that I learn to be a good builder, building my life on the greatest and surest foundation of all ... Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God!

“Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek Him with the whole heart. Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently.” Psalm 119:2, 4