

Lesson 1: GOD'S CHILDREN WILL BE LIKE CHRIST

Beth Johnson

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2).

When 1 John 3:2 says we are the sons of God, John appears to be speaking of the resurrection. The only indication of being like Him was something John had never seen. John had seen the heart of Christ and therefore the Father (John 14:1-8), so he is not talking about growing in the heart of Christ in this verse. We must settle on the alternative idea of being like Him in the resurrection.

Paul had his hope set on the resurrection. He first described the resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15:37-44, and then he made the contrast between Adam and Christ very clear. We have been born in the image of the earthly in the fact that we are in Adam's physical image (1 Cor. 15:49). We are in the form of man (Phil. 2:6-8). Paul then noted there will come a time when we will be in the image of the heavenly (1 Cor. 15:49). The image of the heavenly was in full context of the resurrection. Paul also noted that Christ was the first fruits of our resurrection (1 Cor. 15:19, 23).

Jesus' resurrected body is glorious (Phil. 3:21). On the road to Damascus, Paul saw the resurrected Christ in a marvelously glorious body that was so magnificent that he was totally blinded by it. Moses saw God's glory when he saw the back of God, making his face to shine. The children of Israel could not look on Moses' face because it was so bright. However, when Paul saw the resurrected Christ, it must not have been the eternal body of Christ, since John says it does not yet appear what we shall be (1 John 3:2). If Paul had already seen what we shall be, then John would not have said it is unknown what we shall be.

Jesus asked the Father to give Him the glory He had before the foundation of the world. In the book of Revelation, we may have a picture of the kind of glory God has. "And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heavens fled away; and there was found no place for them" (Rev. 20:11).

When Christ returns, we shall see Him as he is; however, just seeing Him is not our only hope. We also have the hope of being like Him (1 John 3:2). The Holy Spirit testified through Paul that in the resurrection our physical bodies will be transformed to be like His glorious body (Phil. 3:21). All of God's children, from the least to the greatest have this hope of being resurrected in the image of His glorious body. John said that it does not yet appear what we shall be. However, he further testified that when we see

Him we will be like Him. What a marvelous hope we have in Christ—not only to inherit an eternal home in heaven with Him, but to have a body like His as well.

QUESTIONS:

1. In the resurrection, what body will Christians have? (1 Cor. 15:42-44)
2. Are the first fruits of the cotton crop the same as the rest of the crop? What about a wheat crop? What is the meaning of the term "first fruits" (1 Cor. 15:20, 23)?
3. Explain how Jesus was the first fruits of our resurrection (1 Cor. 15:20, 23).
4. Romans 8:18 speaks of a stark contrast between the glory that shall be revealed in us and something we have to endure. What is that? (Acts 14:22)
5. What was David prophesying about in Psalm 17:15?
6. What was the image of the earthy in 1 Corinthians 15:49?
7. What two kinds of bodies are described in Philippians 3:21?
8. According to Matthew 22:30-32, what will we be like in the resurrection?
9. Luke 20:36-38 also talks about the resurrection. How is that described?
10. Can we go to heaven in flesh and blood as we are today (1 Cor. 15:50-58)? Describe what will take place that day.
11. What will happen to the physical body in the resurrection when the corruptible physical body is transformed into an incorruptible body (1 Cor. 15:51-54)?

Lesson 2: WALK AS CHILDREN OF LIGHT

Beth Johnson

"For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:" (Eph. 5:8).

Light is the opposite of darkness. The Bible speaks of light as the symbol of God's presence and righteous works. "Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen" (1 Tim. 6:16). Physical light has been associated with God's presence, while spiritual light is associated with His knowledge, truth, and righteousness since creation. Darkness, on the other hand, symbolizes ignorance, error, evil, and the works of Satan.

God and His Word are frequently pictured as lights or lamps to enlighten and guide the believer down the dark roads of life. "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:" (1 John 1:5-6). "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path" (Psa. 119:105). The Psalmist also declared, "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?" (Psa. 27:1). Light is also used as a symbol of holiness and purity. Paul counseled the Christians at Rome to "put on the armour of light" (Rom. 13:12).

The New Testament presents Jesus as the personification of light or divine illumination: "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12). He is the one who brought the truth and knowledge of God into the world (John 1:18). Jesus plainly stated that those who rejected this divine light would bring judgment upon themselves. "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God" (John 3:19-21). Jesus and the New Testament writers extended the figure of light to include faithful Christians, who were called "children of light" (Eph. 5:8).

Hating the light will bring condemnation. Turning to the light brings salvation, as He said: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:" (Col. 1:13-14). Walking in the light is not just believing a certain doctrine. Walking in the light, which is God's word, is walking according to God's direction for us—

doing what He says. That light, when it enters our hearts, gives the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 4:6).

Jesus not only brought the light, but He walked according to the light and therefore is our example of what it means to be light. We need to grow in that light, both in knowing the light as well as becoming a light to others. God's prophesy (the word of God) is that light which shines and needs to grow brighter and brighter until the day star rises in our hearts! (2 Pet. 1:19). The more of God's truth and word we understand the brighter the light. Paul prayed that the Colossians would be filled with all knowledge and spiritual understanding, which would mean all light (Col. 1:9-10). Truly the day star comes closer and closer the more knowledge and understanding we add. When we live according to that light we do many good deeds which glorify the Father in heaven (Matt. 5:16). Our obedience glorifies our Father. We are admonished to walk as children of light (Eph. 5:8), which we do when we obey more and more of His commands.

QUESTIONS:

1. **RESEARCH QUESTION:** Many ancient cultures were fascinated with light and its implications. Using a concordance or a Bible dictionary, find as many examples as possible of ancient people whose religions called for the worship of light or the sources of light (stars, moon or the sun). As much as possible, give examples from scripture of what God thought of these people.
2. Who were the people who sat in darkness, and what "great light" did they see (Matt. 4:16; Luke 1:79)?
3. What is the light of the body? What happens to people whose "eye is evil" (Matt. 6:22-23; Luke 11:34-36)?
4. Why did men love the darkness (John 3:19)? Did they comprehend the light (John 1:5)?
5. What was Jesus called (John 8:12; John 12:35)?
6. What was the purpose of "the light" (John 12:46; Acts 26:18)?
7. **DISCUSSION QUESTION:** If we hate our brother for any reason, where are we dwelling (1 John 2:8-9)? Can we be saved in that condition? Please also consider 1 John 4:20.
8. If we walk in the light, what do men in the world see (Matt. 5:16)?
9. What does it mean that the day star can rise in our hearts (2 Pet. 1:19)?
10. How can the light of God shine more and more in our hearts and actions (Col. 1:9-10; Matt. 5:16)?

Lesson 3: HIS CHILDREN ARE FORGIVEN

Beth Johnson

“My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (1 John 2:1).

Nothing is more heartwarming than seeing a father fold a small child in his arms to protect him from harm and danger or to keep him from doing wrong. It is easy to see that the Father wants his child to be the best he can be and wants him never to be harmed in any way. In 1 John 2:1, we see this same analogy used for God’s spiritual children. By this, we feel assured that our Father in Heaven loves us very much. His focus is for us to be clean and pure and without sin. We are His children taken into his bosom for assurance of His love and concern for our eternal souls. The apostle Paul stated the same thing another way: “My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you” (Gal. 4:19).

The very first fact that presents itself verse twelve is that God’s children are forgiven. They have their sins washed away and stand clean before Him. They have made a covenant with the Father. If there were no forgiveness with God, there would be nothing but damnation for all of us. “If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But **there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared**” (Psa. 130:3-4). “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Heb. 2:14-15).

Notice the second part of the verse twelve is very clear about why they are forgiven. “I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you **for his name's sake.**” On Judgment Day, we will be happy to confess that Jesus is Lord! King David prayed, “For thy name's sake, O LORD, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great” (Psa. 25:11). Another time David states, “Nevertheless he saved them for his name's sake, that he might make his mighty power to be known” (Psa. 106:8). Paul tells the Ephesians, “And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you” (Eph. 4:32).

In 1 John 2:13, he addresses the children saying “Children, your sins are forgiven you and **ye have known the Father.**” What a beautiful picture of the family of God! Christ’s words bear the same message, “All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him” (Matt. 11:27). “All things are

delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him" (Luke 10:22). Paul reminds the Christians in Corinth, "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4:6).

"I write to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake" (1 John 2:12).

The context of 1 John 2:12 is in an immediate context of children, young men and fathers.

"I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake. I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father. I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one" (1 John 2:12-14).

The children have not grown to the point where they are strong enough to do what the young men are able to do—overcome the wicked one (stated twice). The fathers are further developed in that they know the Father or the Son (repeated). The children are undoubtedly thankful to have their sins forgiven so that there is no barrier between them and the Father. The Father will work with His faithful children if they are walking in the light.

The hope of all men is that there is forgiveness with God (Psa. 130:3-4). Our sins would otherwise hide His face from us that He would not hear us (Isa. 59:1-2). He further notes in Psalms 130:4 that God's willingness to forgive makes it possible for men to fear him. The fear of the Lord is to depart from evil (Pro. 3:7; 16:6, 17). If there were no forgiveness, what hope would any man have? What could righteous men do if their foundations were destroyed (Psa. 11:3)? Man cannot create himself or his world. Without God and without His law nothing could exist. In the same manner if God did not forgive sins what could the righteous do? One sin destroyed Paul's spiritual life (Rom. 7:7-9). He was dead in his sin (Col 2:13). Unless there is forgiveness there could be no life, no hope (Eph. 2:12-13). With no spiritual life, what could Paul do?

Surely the children the apostle John wrote of in 1 John 2:12 had hope because their sins were forgiven. If sins were not forgiven, there would be no spiritual life, no eternity, and no church. What would Christ be head over if there were no forgiveness? What would Jesus be king over if there were

no forgiveness? Jesus Himself was dependent on God's forgiveness. The children's sins are forgiven for Christ's name's sake.

QUESTIONS:

1. How does Jesus address his apostles (Mark 10:24; John 13:33 and John 21:5)?
2. Paul also addresses the members of the church at Corinth and in Galatia in the same manner (1 Cor. 4:14-15; Gal. 4:19). What reason does he give for addressing them that way?
3. What are the three members of God's family (age groups) addressed in 1 John 2:12-13?
4. What is expected of the children if they please the Father (1 John 3:7)?
5. In what way could they be deceived (1 John 3:7)?
6. Is there any room for hypocrisy (1 John 3:18)? How are His children supposed to love each other? How are they NOT supposed to show love?
7. Why have the children overcome them (1 John 4:4)? Should this give us hope also, if we are children of God?
8. What is the instruction to children (1 John 5:21)? Why would they particularly need to obey this command?
9. Of what did Ezekiel warn the children of Israel (Eze. 3:21)? Paul warned the Corinthians of the same thing (1 Cor. 15:34). What would be the result if they heeded the warning?
10. **DISCUSSION QUESTION:** Every father wants his child to be like himself, but even more the Father in Heaven wants us to be like Him and His Son, Jesus. Using 1 Pet. 1:15-19 and 1 Peter 4:1-3, **tell what motivation we have for becoming like our Father and our elder brother, Jesus Christ.**

Lesson 4: GOD'S REBELLIOUS CHILDREN

Beth Johnson

"Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me" (Isa. 1:2)

What a heart rending sound of grief and lamentation issues from the Father of Israel through the prophet Isaiah! He calls the heavens and the earth to be His witnesses of the wrong His children have done. Have we not all known of friends and even those of our own families being torn apart by the rebelliousness of an ungrateful child? Can there be any greater grief than that of parents whose time and labor of love is spurned by the object of their love? Yes, as Christians, we must consider how our Heavenly Father might feel if we go astray. By comparison we would be less honorable than the brute beasts with no conscience or moral capacity. Our Father says further, "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider" (Isa. 1:3).

Immediately our minds go back to such examples as Cain killing his brother Abel (Gen. 4:5-10), or Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron who offered strange fire on the altar (Lev. 10:1-3). We may remember Ishmael mocking his brother Isaac at the weaning celebration (Gen. 21:8-12); Joseph's brothers casting him into a pit and later selling him to traveling merchants (Gen. 37:18-28). Then read of Hophna and Phinehas, the sons of Eli who took bribes and lay with the women right in the gate of the temple (1 Sam. 2:22, 30-36) and the one supreme example of Absalom's rebellion against King David as he sought to steal the hearts of the people and wrest the throne from his father (2 Sam. 15:2-6). All of these examples and more are for our learning; they are meant for a mirror to view ourselves as we consider our own position before our God.

So what are a few of the warning signs of rebellion that we should be aware of? Do we love our brothers and sisters (both in the flesh and in the family of God) and do we forgive them from the heart when they trespass against us (Matt. 6:14; Matt. 18:23-35; Mark 11:25-26; Luke 6:37)? Are we disobedient and unthankful to the Father who created us (Rom. 1:18-23)? Do we even know or care about the purpose for our creation and calling (Luke 6:40; Col. 3:10)? Have we grown cold, weak and sickly in the faith or are we spiritually dead (1 Cor. 11:29-30)? Do we take the authority that belongs to our elder brother Jesus Christ and to our Heavenly Father and usurp it for ourselves?

We live in a time in which the accuracy, truthfulness, and authority of the Bible are under heavy attack. This attack comes from the outside, by the world, and also from within the Lord's church (Acts 20:29). We need a

stronger faith in the fact that every word of God is as pure, true and authoritative today as it ever was. It always will be no matter what any man says! What does God think of people who claim to be Christian and who say, "Lord, Lord," and then change His word to accommodate the wickedness of the world? They profess that they know God; but in works they deny Him, being abominable and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate (Titus 1:16). Though many such people are attacking the authority of God's word today, we know that God and His word have full authority which will never change. Let us hold fast and not waver in the face of these tests of our faith and always remember to believe and obey all of God's commands for us right down to the last jot and tittle! And finally, we all should remember the warnings our Father gives against such rebellion (Ezek. 18:24; Heb. 6:4-8; Heb. 10:26-34).

"For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, the dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire" (2 Pet 2:20-22).

QUESTIONS:

1. God makes a comparison between His rebellious children and brute beasts (Isa. 1:3). Why is that such a shameful comparison?
2. Read the account of the rebellion of the Israelites at Kadesh-barnea (Deut. 1:1-40). How did the people rebel and why?
3. Read the account of further rebellion against the command of God through Moses and tell the result (Deut. 1:41-46).
4. How did God describe King Saul's rebellion (1 Sam. 15:23)?
5. There are three basic parts to (Isa. 30:1). Separate them and explain the meaning and application of each part.
6. How are God's rebellious and disobedient children described (Rom. 1:28-32)?

7. What will happen to most men in the last days (Titus 1:15-16; 2 Tim. 3:1-5)? Does that describe you and me now?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

8. What are some ways in which Christians can be rebellious and disobedient (Titus 3:1-5)? Have we all been like that at one time or another? What is our hope (Acts 24:15; Acts 26:6-7; 1 Cor. 15:19; Eph. 4:4-6)?
9. How can we be sure we will not fall into the same temptations again (Heb. 2:1-4; 1 Pet. 2:1-12)?
10. Repentance is literally **a change of mind**, not just sorrow for sin, but a total change of mind from the old man (Rom. 6:6). Understanding the reason God gives for Jesus' death, what mind should we have toward ourselves and what mind should we have toward Jesus (2 Cor. 5:15; Mark 8:35)?

Lesson 5: GOD IS OUR FATHER

Beth Johnson

**“But now, O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay,
and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand”
(Isa. 64:8).**

In today’s world, it is very difficult for children to think of their fathers as those who would mold them into something he wanted them to be. Indeed it is difficult for modern day fathers to think that way. We have been so conditioned to believe every man is the master of his own destiny and has total rights over his own life that the idea of being putty in God’s hand is repugnant or only rarely comes to mind. As Christians, we should understand that our Father is our Creator, Master, Lord and Guide (Rom. 1:18-23). As our Father, He has the responsibility of training us to be faithful children who will submit to His authority and guidance (Heb. 12:5-11).

From our reading Old Testament scriptures, we can more fully appreciate God as the Father of the faithful in the New Testament. He knows all about His children, even numbering the hairs on their heads (Matt. 10:30). He protects His children and rescues them when they are in trouble or need guidance (Rom. 8:26-27, 34). He teaches them the way that they should go (Eph. 5:8; 1 Thess. 5:5) and supplies all of their needs (Matt. 6:33). In turn, our Heavenly Father expects honor from His children even though He does not always receive it (Isa. 1:11-17; Acts 7:38-39). Jesus sought to instill reverence and honor in the disciples when He taught them to pray: "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name" (Matt. 6:9).

The writer of the Hebrew letter said it so well. “If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live” (Heb. 12:7-9)? When we agree to be baptized into God's family we agree to submit to the Father's reproof, rebuke and correction as faithful children. We also agree that we will follow Him to be like Him (Eph. 5:1-2). He uses His scriptures to rebuke, chasten correct and instruct us in righteousness (2 Tim. 3:16).

Another concept gleaned from Isaiah 64:8 is the idea of being clay in God’s hands. The entire verse is acknowledging the power and authority of God—the fact that we are helpless to change ourselves to be useful tools without His divine guidance and molding through His inspired Word. Do we

really want to submit to His will so that we become what He wants us to be rather than what we might desire? We must soften our will, become humble and malleable in His hand. We must pray and be willing to be made vessels fit for honorable use (Rom. 9:21; 2 Tim 2:20-21). If we humbly serve Jesus according to our Father's will, He will honor us. (John 12:26) Let's glorify our Father together!

QUESTIONS:

1. Read Genesis 6:1-4 and tell me what two groups of people were marrying. Why was this event such a tragedy?
2. God the Father speaks of His work with the children of Israel (Isa. 45:11-13). List the things He did for them.
3. God, the Father also said, "Israel is my firstborn..." (Exodus 4:22). Later He speaks of calling His son out of Egypt (Hos. 11:1). Is "Israel" a person (singular) in these passages or a group of people? How can you tell?
4. Even under the Mosaic Law, to be children of God involved an obligation to be a certain kind of people (Deut. 14:1-2). What was the obligation?
5. Israel proved unworthy of her status. God said he had "...brought up children, and they have rebelled against me" (Isa. 1:2, 4; 30:1, 9). How did they rebel?
6. Notice the prophecy in Isaiah 11:10-12, which foretells of gathering the Israelites together as a nation, and relate this to the statement made by Caiaphas when he said Jesus must die for the people. (John 11:49-53)?
7. Why is it so very important, as children of God, that we love our brothers in God's household (1 John 3:10-18)?
8. Notice how the Father protected the children of Israel as they wandered through the wilderness for 40 years. He gave them a pillar of a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night (Exod. 13:21-22; Exod. 14:24; Num. 14:14; Neh. 9:12; Neh. 9:19-21). How was the pillar of fire symbolic of

His gift of light to Christians today (Matt. 4:16; Luke 1:79; Luke 2:25-32; John 1:1-12; John 3:19-21; John 8:12; 9:5; John 12:46)?

9. Through the prophet Isaiah, what did God promise to do for his children in New Testament times (Isa. 4:2-6)?
10. **RESEARCH QUESTION:** The phrase, **sons of God**, appears in the New Testament as a name for people who make a covenant with God (John 1:12-13; Rom. 8:13-14; Phil. 2:15; 1 John 3:1-2). This exact phrase never appears with this same meaning in the Old Testament, although the idea is implied. For example, the phrase is used in some sense to refer to a special group in Genesis 6:2, 4. In Job 1:6; 2:1 and 38:7 it is used to refer to beings in heaven, not on earth. God prophesied of the scattered children of Israel, whom He promised to gather together again, as His sons and daughters, no doubt referring to the New Testament church (Isa. 43:6; 45:11). Using the following scriptures: (Matt. 5:9; Luke 20:36; John 11:52; Rom. 8:16; Rom. 8:21; Rom. 9:8; Gal. 3:26; 1 John 3:10; 1 John 5:2), **relate this moral obligation as sons of God under the Old Law to being children of God under the New Testament.**

Lesson 6: HIS CHILDREN ARE PEACEMAKERS

Beth Johnson

“Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God” (Matt. 5:9).

God’s children need to be peacemakers at every opportunity; however, there is a limitation on who is qualified to make peace. Sometimes a self-appointed peacemaker really just likes a good fight and gets a personal thrill from dealing with the accusations leveled back and forth. In that sense, he becomes an agitator rather than a peacemaker. “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, **ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted**” (Gal. 6:1). If we meet the first qualification, and if we work by the principles in the second part of the verse, we should be ready to deal with those who are at odds with each other. Christians need to evaluate their own spiritual condition first and then follow the pattern set by the Apostle Paul for making peace (Phil. 4:1-3). Even "good" brethren today have differences with each other, much like the church at Philippi. The way Paul goes about trying to make peace between Euodia and Syntyche provides several lessons for us (Phil. 4:1-3). As disciples of Christ, we are to be known as "peacemakers." Learning from Paul, let us do what we can to make peace.

The first lesson, to be learned is that the peacemaker must love those on both sides of the controversy. Paul starts out by expressing his love in these terms: "my brethren"; "beloved and longed for"; "my joy and crown"; "dearly beloved." Paul loved the people at Philippi, and it is essential that we as peacemakers love the ones we are working with. Otherwise, we cannot be useful mediators. With mutual love for those on both sides, the arbitrator is in a position to render a fair evaluation of the problem and the solution.

Next, we see that the mediator should treat both sides equally. In the case of Paul, notice the use of the verb "beseech." Rather than command, ridicule or berate either of the two women for their quarrel, Paul chooses to plead. Rather than take sides, Paul treats them both tenderly. The church today needs individuals who will use tenderness and fairness in dealing with a dispute.

The next insight we can glean from Paul is that the peacemaker must seek for oneness of mind. Paul's objective is that Euodia and Syntyche "be of the same mind in the Lord." Paul had already expressed his concern that there be one mind in the congregation (Phil. 1:27; 2:2), but now he applies it especially to these two ladies. For Christians, seeking to "be of the same mind in the Lord" becomes easy if we all strive to have "the mind of Christ" (Phil. 2:2-5). We should not be content with only stopping the angry tirade.

As a peace maker, we should seek to go much further, dealing with the divisiveness that is the true cause of the problem.

Notice also, that the peacemaker should use assistance when available. Paul was not too proud to call for help. He sought out the assistance of his "true yoke-fellow." Peacemakers will gladly use the help others can give. If they are humble, they do not feel like they have to do it all alone. Their goal is to make peace, not a reputation for themselves!

Finally, we can learn from Paul that the peacemaker must see the good in each one and give credit when due. Paul did not forget how important these women were as they labored with him in the gospel. They also had labored with Clement and with Paul's other fellow-workers as well, whose names were in the "Book of Life." Peacemakers must remember the good in those with whom they deal. It is so easy to forget that those having problems likely have much good to their credit. If we recognize the good qualities even in those who disagree, it increases the likelihood that our advice will be heeded. By considering our own weaknesses and temptations first and then applying Paul's example in this passage, we may be useful to the Lord when called upon to bring divided people and congregations together.

QUESTIONS:

1. Consider Galatians 6:1 very carefully and list the parts to that command which make Christians qualified to be peacemakers.
2. Why did Paul and Barnabas quarrel (Acts 15:38-41)?
3. How was their quarrel resolved?
4. When the early church objected to having Gentiles come into the church, how was that dispute resolved (Acts 11:1-18)?
5. When members of the early church quarreled about the need for Gentiles being circumcised, how was that dispute settled (Acts 15:5-20)? Who was qualified to settle the dispute?
6. What is one way to get rid of strife and contention (Prov. 22:10)?

7. How can Christians be of one mind (Rom. 15:5-6; 1 Cor. 13:11; Phil. 1:27; Phil. 2:2; Phil. 3:8)? Is it possible for us to agree if we are truly humble and searching for truth (Eph. 4:11-15)?

8. How does contention come (Prov. 13:10)?

9. First of all, consider what is implied if someone has his name written in the "book of life" (Phil. 4:3; Rev. 3:5; Rev. 20:12; Rev. 20:15; Rev. 21:27; Rev. 22:19). Compare that idea with what happens to those whose name is NOT written in the book of life (Rev. 13:8; Rev. 17:8). What is the admonition (Rev. 20:15 & 21:27)?

10. **DISCUSSION QUESTION:** Explain the following three verses as they relate to our topic of study. "Whoso rewardeth evil for good, evil shall not depart from his house. The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water: therefore leave off contention, before it be meddled with. He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the LORD" (Prov. 17:13-15).