

TEXT Romans 12:1,2; 1 Thessalonians 5:15-22; 1 John 2:15-17

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES Matthew 22:37-40; 2 Corinthians 6:17,18; Ephesians 4:1-3

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to differentiate between loving the world and controlling the things of the world in their lives.

KEY VERSE FOR ANSWER Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. — Ephesians 5:11

KEY VERSE FOR SEARCH If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. — John 15:19

ANSWER TITLE: **Then What?**

SEARCH TITLE: **Christian Maintenance**

REFERENCE INFORMATION

Paul the Apostle, who wrote the Epistle to the Romans, was a man who had been educated “at the feet of Gamaliel” (Acts 22:3). He had great potential in the world, being a young leader, extremely zealous, intelligent, and ambitious. Some feel he would have had a great career as a lawyer or a leader in the Sanhedrin. But he met Christ on the road to Damascus. Later, in his letter to the Philippians, he said, “But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ” (Philippians 3:7,8). Paul preached tire-

lessly, founded many churches on three different missionary journeys, suffered greatly through persecution and privation, and finally died a martyr to the faith at the hands of Nero, the Roman emperor. But through Christ he won his crown!

Romans 12:1 says to “present your bodies a living sacrifice.” The phrase, “present your bodies,” is a metaphor taken from the bringing of sacrifices. The person picked out the choicest of his flock and presented it as an atonement for his sin. The “living sacrifice” is in contrast to the dead sacrifices offered under the Law, that we might live for God.

YOUR OPENER

Christian Maintenance

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KEY VERSE: If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. — John 15:19

RESPONSES

1. Many of the sacrifices that were given under the Law were presented to the priest at the Temple as living sacrifices. It was the priest's duty to kill the animal and make the sacrifice. God still looks for "living" sacrifices today—people whose whole aim in life is to serve God and do His will. Christians are not put to death as a sacrifice but, rather, they live a sacrificial life, consecrated to God for His use. As we present our lives to God we become dead to the world. "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it" (Matthew 16:25).

2. Your class should define the phrase as meaning, "something of highest spiritual purity." No sin is acceptable to God. Point out that Jesus died to save man from his sins and make him acceptable to God. Also, emphasize that to be acceptable to God there has to be a total commitment of everything that one has or is. That leaves very little that can be given to worldly pursuits.

3. Worldly pursuits will take over completely in the life of the one who does not exercise spiritual control with God's help. This spiritual control is a "reasonable service." Discuss with your class that when one considers the price paid for man's salvation, is anything given to the Lord more than reasonable service? "When ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do" (Luke 17:10).

4. In many instances, people who are conformed to the world think, look, and act differently than Christians. Ask your class to pinpoint some of these differences, focusing on the thought that as Christians we want to please God in all our ways. Additional references to substantiate the thought of being separate from the world: 2 Corinthians 6:14-17; Ephesians 5:11; 2 Timothy 2:4.

5. Open your discussion of this question by talking about what the word *renew* means. Why is a renewal of one's mind necessary? Is it important to us as Christians? Referring to the question and the Scripture given should bring out the importance of thinking the right kinds of thoughts. The students should see that they must take control of their minds by not letting their minds dwell on worldly things.

We exercised the power of choice when we sought forgiveness for sins, and were born into the family of God. The same choice must be maintained daily if we are to remain "sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world" (Philippians 2:15). That choice was—and remains—the choice to love the things of God in place of loving the things of the world by an ever closer companionship with Jesus Christ. John 3:31 says, "He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all."

1. What is meant by "present your bodies a living sacrifice"?

2. What is meant by "holy, acceptable unto God"?

3. Why should the control of worldly pursuits be considered as a "reasonable service"?

4. What is meant by "be not conformed to this world"?

5. How do Christians renew their minds? See Philippians 4:8.

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

6. As Christians, we want to bring our lives under the control of Christ. From Romans 12:2, what are three things we could ask ourselves about our plans as criteria for establishing whether God is really in control of our lives and plans?

7. As we continue the thought of Christian maintenance, how does the phrase, "See that none render evil for evil unto any man," apply?

8. Why can the Christian give thanks in everything (Romans 8:28)? Explain why this is important in the light of maintaining our Christian testimony.

9. What does it mean to "abstain from all appearance of evil"?

10. Explain why a person cannot love the things of the world and love God at the same time. See Matthew 6:24.

11. Explain 1 John 2:17 in your own words.

6. The very basic questions would be: Is it a good plan? Would it be acceptable with God? The most important question would be: Is this the perfect will of God for my life? Bring out through class discussion that it is a blessing to us as well as those around us if we submit to the perfect will of God (Psalm 40:8).

7. Zero in on the fact that the Christian has control so that when someone does an evil deed to him he does not repay in kind. Discussion of the question with your students should bring out that one who desires to maintain his Christian testimony will be aware of the opportunities to witness which result when one follows this command. The students may be able to give some examples of this. Other biblical admonitions concerning this are found in Proverbs 20:22, Matthew 5:39, and 1 Peter 3:9.

8. The Christian knows that since his life is in God's control and not controlled by the world, God will only let happen what is best. The Christian can give thanks because it is the will of God for him. Class discussion should bring out that this is important because it is a direct command of God. They may also mention that it is important because when others see a thankful attitude, and the results that God performs because of thankfulness, they may be persuaded that one's faith is of real value.

9. Your students' definitions will probably bring out that it is to cease or refrain voluntarily from anything that may even look as though it is sinful. The Apostle Paul wanted God to control the things in his life so that he would not do anything that might offend a brother. Ask your students why this command is so vital to one's Christian witness, bringing out that while they often may not have the opportunity to give a verbal testimony, their actions and the lives they live speak clearly to those around them. They certainly would not want an "appearance of evil" to taint their testimony.

10. The love of one of these will grow stronger as the love for the other grows weaker. Class discussion should bring out that if a Christian truly has a desire to deepen and strengthen his relationship with Christ, to grow in His grace and knowledge, then he will avoid doing anything that would lessen the love he feels for God. He must keep Christ first in his life.

11. Use this as your wrap-up. Let the students present their ideas and then point out that everything in the world will pass away, even the things that have a high value placed upon them. Only the things that are done for God will last throughout eternity.

YOUR WRAP-UP

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

What is meant by the word *world* in 1 John 2:15? Can a person love the things of the world and have the love of God at the same time? Why or why not?

Imagine a world in which the fruit of the Spirit isn't evidenced by anyone. What would it be like? Consider government, trade, traffic, school, families, etc.

Guarding our spiritual benefits may be likened to a priority listing. How can a person maintain a Christian standard and witness if things of lower priority begin to take precedence over concern for spiritual health?

What does a sinner do to guard himself against salvation? What can we do to strengthen our guard against sin?

What kind of sacrifice is acceptable to God? Explain the meaning of *reasonable service*.

What benefits come to those who do God's will, and what will their future be?

How old do you have to be to be saved?

What are the things that you do at school and home which show others that you are a Christian?

THINGS TO DO

Draw a picture of the "broad way" and the "narrow way," things you'll find along the two ways, and where each will lead you.

Have a team review when your lesson is finished. Divide your class into teams and let them ask each other questions about the lesson. Let each team have a few minutes together to come up with questions to stump the other team. For a different twist, let the students try to stump you!

Needed: a sheet of posterboard, marking pen, wrapped candy. On the top half of the sheet of posterboard, prepare a word-find puzzle. Use words that are from this lesson's Bible text (brethren, holy, service, good, rejoice,

love, pray, Jesus, thanks, prove, etc.). Use as many words as you have students or use two or three words per student. Just make sure each student has the same amount. Words may be written forward, backward, vertically, horizontally, or diagonally. On the bottom half of the sheet, list the words you have chosen to include in the puzzle. Tape a piece of wrapped candy or small prize next to each word. Let the students take turns finding a word of their choice. After they find and circle the word, they may take the prize or candy next to it. If you have used more than one word per student, let them each find one word, then after everyone has had a turn they can start on the next round. This can be a pre-session classroom game or used during a review of the lesson.

Answer for ANSWER

On Guard

Unscramble the words below and write them in the acrostic puzzle. As you decipher each word, read the reference verse (they are all from 1 Thessalonians 5) to see what things you should do to maintain your Christian life. When you finish, there will be a special word in the vertical stack of boxes. Write the word on the line below.

APRY		P R A Y		(verse 17)
TRISIP	S P I R I T			(verse 19)
DOGGO	G O D			(verse 15)
KANTSH	T H A N K S			(verse 18)
VOREP	P R O V E			(verse 21)
CEOJER	R E J O I C E			(verse 16)
SATBAIN	A B S T A I N			(verse 22)

Maintain and PROTECT your walk with God.

Read through the complete Bible text for this lesson and write down any other things you can do to keep your life in order.

