

Lesson 91

TEXT Philippians 3:7-15

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES 2 Kings 18:5-7; Job 13:15; Psalm 37:37-40; 1 Corinthians 2:9; 2 Timothy 1:12

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to explain the importance of placing their entire selves at God’s disposal, and allowing Him to direct their future.

KEY VERSE FOR ANSWER In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. — Proverbs 3:6

KEY VERSE FOR SEARCH I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. — Romans 12:1

ANSWER TITLE: **A Secure Future**

SEARCH TITLE: **Future**

REFERENCE INFORMATION

God created the first man and woman. He let them know there would be a future. In Genesis 1:28 He told them to be fruitful and multiply. But He also showed them very soon that obedience was essential for their future good (Genesis 3:16-19). Through disobedience they were sent away from all the good things they had known, into a life of hard labor. In Genesis 4:7 the Lord told Cain that if he did well God would accept him, and if he did not do well sin was lying at the door, showing him that the future depended upon what he chose.

Saul of Tarsus was a young man who took advantage of the opportunities presented to him. He was raised a Pharisee and sat under the teaching of Gamaliel, an eminent doctor of the law in that day. Saul was given authority by the Jewish rulers to persecute and imprison

Christians, which he zealously did. When he was converted on the road to Damascus, his entire viewpoint was changed. The advantages that he had once thought very worthwhile, he now felt were worthless when compared to knowing Jesus. His determination was to forget the things of the past and to look forward to what lay ahead.

The Apostle Paul (as Saul was known as after his conversion) had given up everything of natural worth, because he had seen (through the revelation of the Holy Spirit) what things God had in store. “I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name’s sake” (Acts 9:16). Though he wasn’t anxious to experience suffering (who is?), his one aim was not to look back but forward to the things God had in store for him—whether in this world or in the world to come.

YOUR OPENER

Future

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KEY VERSE: I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. — Romans 12:1

RESPONSES

1. After your students have discussed this question they should conclude that the supreme sacrifice was made at Calvary, and since we were bought with such a great price, the reasonable thing to do is to glorify God in body and spirit, which are God's. To reinforce your answer, see 1 Corinthians 6:19,20.

2. As your students discuss their examples, you may want to remind them of the subjects that were covered: heart, tongue, feet, hands, will, ears, eyes, mind, relationships, family, money, and time—all of which can glorify God if fully consecrated to Him. When they consecrate their future to Him, they will be consecrating all of these.

3. As the students bring out examples, they should realize how important it is to live the consecrated life and to realize the true meaning of sacrifice.

Paul encouraged the Christians in Rome to present their bodies “a living sacrifice.” This metaphor referred to the bringing of sacrifices to the altar of God. The person making an offering selected the choicest of his flock, one without blemish, and brought it to the altar and presented it there as an atonement for his sins. We, too, are included in Paul's exhortation. When Jesus, the Lamb of God, died to take away the sin of the world, He made it possible for Christians to be living sacrifices to God. We are to give ourselves wholly to the Lord, just as the burnt offering was wholly given on the altar—no part held back for any other use. The whole man—body, mind, and soul—is to be given to God. When this has been done, we can live a holy life, one that is “wellpleasing” to God (Hebrews 13:21), and we can know that our future is in God's hands.

1. At the end of the key verse we read: “. . . which is your reasonable service.” After reading the introduction to this lesson, how could offering this type of complete sacrifice be considered “reasonable service”?

2. Review the lessons from this quarter, and give several ways we can glorify God in our body and spirit.

3. Excerpts from Adam Clarke's commentary on Philippians 3:13,14 give some clarification: “Whatever gifts, graces, or honors I may have received from Jesus Christ, I consider everything as incomplete till I have finished my course, have received this crown, and have had my body raised and fashioned after His glorious body. The sole business of my life is to forget those things which are behind and reach forth to those things which are before. In other words, my conduct is not regulated nor influenced by that of others. If others think they have time to loiter or trifle, I have none. Time is flying. Eternity is at hand and all is at stake.” Give an example from daily life (either hypothetical or real) that would give the impression that one is living by this Scripture.

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ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

4. In verses 12 and 13 of our text, Paul says he had not yet “attained,” meaning he had not yet reached the goal. But a very good formula is given in verses 13 and 14 to help one in reaching the goal. What is it and what does it have to do with our future?

5. A traditional phrase in Christian churches is, “I will go where You want me to go, I will say what You want me to say, and I will do what You want me to do.” While these are noble words of actions which will affect your future, what might be some indication that you really meant what you said?

6. Many times we feel the excitement of a revival and determine in our minds that we are going to consecrate everything to God, including our future. But Satan is also aware of these good intentions, and after you tell the Lord that your life is totally submitted to Him, Satan will try to cause you to ease up and be less “radical” about all this. You see, Satan knows total commitment to Christ means NO commitment to him, so a war will take place. However, Jesus said, “In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). How far-reaching might the results be if we turn back from a total commitment of our future to the Lord? See Psalm 106:15.

In concluding this lesson as well as this quarter, it is obvious that we must first decide where we will place Jesus in our lives. Jesus teaches that we should love Him more than anyone or anything—no other relationship can compare with our relationship with Him. We must be willing to say from the depths of our being that He will have preeminence over all others. We must be willing to say, “For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Philippians 1:21). This is the only proper response that we can give God for the great things He has done for us. There is no way to be holy other than by being instruments set apart by God to fulfill His purposes in our world. Holiness is not a “better than you” attitude, but a willingness to let God set you apart for His work. Will you let Him? We do not know what the future holds, but we can know the One who holds the future.

4. Your students should discover in these verses that one needs to forget the things that are behind and reach forth to those things that are before and then press toward the mark. In other words, one must put some effort into this Christian race if he is to gain the prize. This would mean that whether we make the goal or not will depend on how we plan for the future, what value we put on our relationship with Jesus Christ, and how much we let the cares of this life affect our services to God.

5. As the students discuss this question, they should conclude that while they may say they have consecrated their future to God, it is their day-to-day decisions which indicate the depth of their consecration.

6. Your students should see that spiritual leanness may occur. Trials and problems may come up that had not been foreseen. Others would undoubtedly be affected. Ultimately, even one’s salvation could be lost.

YOUR WRAP-UP

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

Why did the Apostle Paul say that fame, the good will of people, and his early religious training were of no worth? (Philippians 3:7)

Why is it important to ask God to control our future?

How are the past, present, and future different?

Why should we be concerned about the future?

Discuss what is meant by presenting “your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God.”

What do you think verse 7 meant to Paul? “But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.”

In what ways has God directed your life so far?

Name some of the benefits we will receive if we let God direct our lives.

What are some of the things you do today that will affect your future?

How do you think Christ would live in our culture today? In what things do you think He would be involved?

What do you think are the most important things for your future?

How do you want your future to turn out?

What can you do to make sure your future is happy?

If you give God your heart, what does it have to do with your future?

Do you think Mrs. Hamilton and her children, in our ANSWER story, will have a happy future? Why?

THINGS TO DO

Bring a map to class and discuss a possible route you would take on a trip. Then explain that God has a plan all mapped out for your life.

Show your students a toy piano and tell them that if you take lessons and are faithful to practice, you will be a

future piano player. Lots of work goes into being a player, it doesn't just happen. Bring out the point that our lives, to be happy, must have a spiritual beginning. Through prayer, we can have a successful future.

Have each one in class tell what he thinks are the keys to a happy future. You might like to cut keys out of construction paper, and have your students write their replies. Place the keys on a board to display the students' ideas.

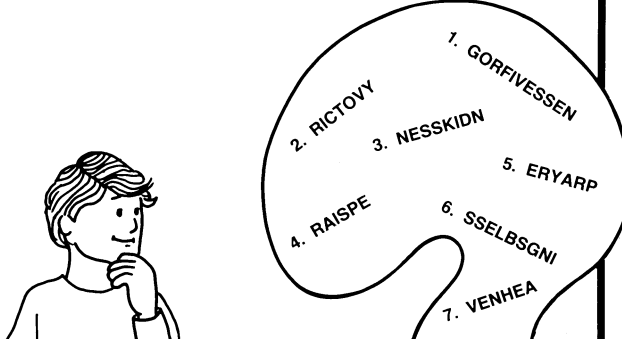
Bring a pair of binoculars to class and explain how far you can see through them, comparing it with how far God sees into the future.

Have someone in the class tell of a Bible story character that he thinks had a good future. If there's time, let everyone in the class think of one.

Answers for ANSWER

What Next?

Probably everyone has plans for the future. Find out what plan **you** should follow. Unscramble each word in the question mark. (These are words that **could** be in your future.) Write them in the boxes below. The best plan will be in the shaded boxes.



1. GORFIVESSEN
2. RICTOVY
3. NESSKIDN
4. RAISPE
5. ERYARP
6. SSELBSGNI
7. VENHEA
8. ENDSFRI

1.	F	O	R	G	I	V	E	N	E	S	S	
2.	V	I	C	T	O	R	Y					
3.	K	I	N	D	N	E	S	S				
4.	P	R	A	I	S	E						
5.	P R A Y E R											
6.	B L E S S I N G S											
7.	H E A V E N											
8.	F R I E N D S											