

VICTORIOUS OVERCOMER SERIES

QUARTER 4 LESSON 1

DOCTRINAL FOUNDATIONS

THEME OF THE WEEK: Hebrews 6:1-3 gives us a list of six foundational teachings and then tells us to leave them to go on to maturity. It would seem obvious, since this is the case, that we can't move on to maturity (perfection NKJV) until these foundations are laid. Therefore, for the next eight lessons, we will examine each of these basic teachings.

MEMORY VERSE: "Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary *principles* of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment." Hebrews 6:1-2 (NKJV)

Hebrews 6:1-2 tells us that there are a few Bible teachings that are the first things for Christians to learn after they are saved. These teachings are called elementary principles. Do people go to elementary school first or high school? (Answers.) Of course elementary school comes first. The word *elementary* means the simplest or most basic of something. The word *principle* means a basic law or teaching. So an elementary principle is a very basic law or teaching. But the Bible calls the elementary principles you will be learning about over the next eight weeks, your Christian foundation. A building is built on a foundation. If the foundation is weak, the building may fall down.

Let's read Hebrews 6:1-2 together several times. **(Read out loud with them, having them look at the words as they read.)** Okay, so this is saying that this is a first-thing-to-learn list that is a foundation for our Christian maturity. Maturity means growing up. Tell me where the foundation of a house is found. Is it found on the roof? Where is it? **(Answers.)** That's right. It's found on the bottom of the house. Everything else is built on that foundation. If the foundation itself is made of weak materials and falls apart, then the house that is sitting on it may crack or even fall down. Your growing up as a strong Christian depends on having the right stuff in your foundation. A young person may become a mature Christian, and an old

person may stay a baby Christian all because of the ingredients they put into their Christian foundations. Let's read Matthew 7:24-29 together. **(Read and discuss briefly.)**

For the next seven weeks we are going to take the time to talk about the six foundation stones listed in Hebrews 6:1-2. Let's quickly read over those again. **(Read.)**

We cannot say everything the Bible has to say about each one, but, when we are finished, you will understand some important ideas about each of these six elementary principles. You should recognize, when you are reading other parts of your Bible, that you are reading about one of the six foundation principles. The more understanding you get about each of these six principles, the stronger your foundation will grow. What are the six elementary principles of our Christian faith? Let's read again, but this time start with the words "*the foundation of...*": "the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment."

Next week, come ready to work on the foundation of your spiritual house.

VICTORIOUS OVERCOMER SERIES

QUARTER 4 LESSON 2

DOCTRINAL FOUNDATIONS: REPENTANCE FROM DEAD WORKS AND FAITH TOWARD GOD

THEME OF THE WEEK: Hebrews 6:1-3 gives us a list of six foundational teachings and then tells us to leave them to go on to maturity. It would seem obvious, of course, since this is the case, that we can't move on to maturity (perfection NKJV) until these foundations are laid. Therefore, for the next eight lessons, we will examine each of these basic teachings.

MEMORY VERSE: “Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary *principles* of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.” Hebrews 6:1-2 (NKJV)

Last week we began to look at the foundation stones of our personal spiritual houses. How many can you remember? **(Answers.)** Let's see how many you got right – let's read Hebrews 6:1-2 together. **(Read.)**

This week we're going to talk about “repentance from dead works’ and “of faith toward God” because these two work together. If you work, you are doing something, right? Dead works means that, yes, you are doing work, but that that work is useless—it doesn't count. That work isn't getting you anything. Would you rather work to get something or to get nothing? What if you even get in trouble for doing some work? How many of you would cut all your neighbors' lawns all summer for free—no money, no thank you, no anything—your neighbors don't even want you to cut their lawns? When people do dead religious work that God never meant for them to do, they don't get anything out of it – no rewards, no thank you, and if Jesus is not their Savior – no heaven either.

You would get nothing from your neighbor if you cut his lawn without asking him if he wanted it cut. Maybe he would even get angry about it –

especially if you cut down his flowers or baby trees. Many people are like that with God. They think they are doing something for God, but they are doing the opposite of what God wants them to do. The Bible tells us about a man named Saul or Paul who thought he was doing God a favor by persecuting Christians. Only by knowing God and His Bible can we know how to please Him.

People are doing dead works when they try to work their way to heaven without asking Jesus to be their Lord and Savior (Isaiah 64:6; Ephesians 2:8-9). Also, dead works can be anything that's not what God would have us to do (Isaiah 64:6; Romans 8:8; 2 Corinthians 7:10). The world, our flesh, and the devil can all keep us very busy doing activities that God would not have us doing.

Remember, repentance means not only asking God to forgive us for our sins but also turning ourselves away from doing those sins. As we are turning away from sin, we are to be turning toward God. We have faith that He can save us—body, soul, spirit, and in every other possible way.

Hebrews 6:1 says what?: “repentance from dead works and of faith toward God.” This means that we turn away from dead works and turn toward God – trusting or having faith in Him, *totally*.

The Bible says “without faith it is impossible to please *him* (God)” (Hebrews 11:6); that without faith we can't even hope to receive anything from God (James 1:6-8). That sounds kind of tough but faith just means trusting God. Do you trust God? Yes? Well then, you have faith. Need more Faith? Then study God's Word (Romans 10:17). The Bible also says faith works by love (Galatians 5:6). If you were baking a cake and forgot to mix in some baking powder, you'd get a flat, hard cake. Faith without love is flat and hard – it just doesn't work. Ask God to work His love into your heart. Then mix that love with your faith and watch what miracles can get cooked up in your life.

This week we talked about the first two parts of the six parts of Hebrews 6:1-2, repentance from dead works and faith toward God. Let's read Hebrews 6:1-2 together.

Next week we'll talk about the doctrine of baptisms.

VICTORIOUS OVERCOMER SERIES

QUARTER 4 LESSON 3

DOCTRINAL FOUNDATIONS: THE DOCTRINE OF BAPTISMS

THEME OF THE WEEK: Hebrews 6:1-3 gives us a list of six foundational teachings and then tells us to leave them to go on to maturity. It would seem obvious, of course, since this is the case, that we can't move on to maturity (perfection NKJV) until these foundations are laid. Therefore, for the next eight lessons, we will examine each of these basic teachings.

MEMORY VERSE: “Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary *principles* of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.” Hebrews 6:1-2 (NKJV)

Right now we are in the middle of learning about the foundational teachings of Hebrews 6:1. Remember that the foundation of a house is on the bottom. It's what everything else is built upon. These teachings or doctrines are the foundation stones of your Christian faith. Walking in God's plan for your life and understanding other Bible teachings rest on the foundation of your understanding these six foundational teachings. Let's read again Hebrews 6:1-2 together. **(Read aloud with people.)**

Last week we talked about repentance from dead works and of faith toward God. How would you explain “repentance from dead works”? **(Allow time for answers.)** How would you explain “faith toward God”? **(Allow more answering time.)**

Now we are going to talk about the next foundation stone. Who remembers what it is? **(Help them arrive at baptisms.)** Baptisms! This is a big subject, and we'll start out by looking at some definitions.

First of all, the word *baptism* is from the Greek word *baptizo* which means to cover, dip, or immerse. If you jump into a pool, you are covered or immersed in water. This word means exactly that idea—you are immersed in something. Actually you can be immersed or baptized in several different things.

Here is a list of the things that you can be baptized in or into:

#1 - The Body of Christ

#2 - Suffering

#3 - Water

#4 - The Holy Spirit and Fire (Spiritual Fire)

(Repeat this list several times – a couple of times without the group, then a couple of times with the group.)

#1 – The Body of Christ: we are baptized into the Body of Christ when we ask Jesus to be our Savior and Lord—that is, when we are born again or saved—when we ask Jesus to be our Savior and Lord (1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Ephesians 4:4-6).

#2 – The Baptism of Suffering: the Baptism of Suffering is not sickness, sin, or spiritual death – Christ suffered for those things so that we would not have to (Isaiah 53:5), but as Christians we will sometimes suffer for our faith. Jesus called suffering a kind of a baptism (Luke 12:50; Romans 8:17; Philippians 3:10; Colossians 1:24). We are not to desire suffering, but, when it does come, we are told to rejoice (Romans 5:3; Matthew 5:10-12) because God will reward us.

#3 – Water Baptism: If you'll remember our teaching on Water Baptism, when we are water baptized we are identifying with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Christ commands us to be water baptized and it is our pleasure to obey our Lord (Matthew 28:19).

#4 – The Baptism of the Holy Spirit and Fire: The last baptism the Bible speaks about is the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and Fire – Spiritual Fire. After we are born again, we are commanded to be baptized with God the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18). He is a gift that God has given to us. When we ask God to fill us with the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit and His cleansing fire will fill us up and cover us. Along with the power of God's Holy Spirit, come His gifts (1 Corinthians 12:1-11).

Interestingly, some churches don't even recognize some of these baptisms, but the Bible considers them part of the foundation of our Christian faith. We should not ignore these foundation stones, but we should treasure them.

VICTORIOUS OVERCOMER SERIES

QUARTER 4 LESSON 4

DOCTRINAL FOUNDATIONS: LAYING ON OF HANDS

THEME OF THE WEEK: Hebrews 6:1-3 gives us a list of six foundational teachings and then tells us to leave them to go on to maturity. It would seem obvious, of course, since this is the case, that we can't move on to maturity (perfection NKJV) until these foundations are laid. Therefore, for the next eight lessons, we will examine each of these basic teachings.

MEMORY VERSE: "Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary *principles* of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment." Hebrews 6:1-2 (NKJV)

Who can tell us what we've been studying for the last several weeks? Let's read Hebrews 6:1-2. **(Read together.)** What does it mean to "repent from dead works"? **(Allow for answers.)** What does it mean to "have faith toward God"? What does the word *baptize* mean? **(The correct answer is "to be covered or immersed in")** We learned about four different kinds of baptisms. Who can name one kind for us and tell us what it means? **(Go through all four in this way.)** Again, let's read Hebrews 6:1-2 together. This week we're going to talk about the laying on of hands.

To begin to understand the laying on of hands, let's read Luke 6:19 and then Luke 8:42-48. **(Read to the people. Be sure to explain that Him refers to Jesus, multitudes to people, etc.)** We can see from these two Scriptures that power flowed out of Jesus into the people who came to Him for ministry and who desired for Jesus' power to flow from Him to them.

Okay, so Jesus is God, so we're not really surprised when power flows from God to people, are we? But the Bible also speaks about power flowing from God's

servants to other people who want God to minister to them (2 Timothy 1:6). The power that flows from God's servants comes from the Holy Spirit Who is in them. That power flows through them very much in the same way that electricity flows through an electrical cord. That cord has no power unless it is plugged into a wall outlet. The Holy Spirit in us is our power source. That power can flow through a servant of God and right out of his or her hands into another person. God gives or imparts certain things to us through the laying on of hands. These include the following:

- 1) Healings (Mark 16:17-18; James 5:14-15)
- 2) Giftings (1 Timothy 4:14)
- 3) Ministries (the power to do certain jobs God calls us to do) (1 Timothy 4:14; 1 Timothy 5:22)
- 4) Blessings in general (Genesis 48:13-20)
- 5) Setting people apart for God's work or before sending them away to do works for God (Acts 6:5-6; Acts 13:2-4)
- 6) The Baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:15,17-20; Acts 9:17)

Mark 16:17-18 tells us that God will use regular Christians to lay hands on the sick so that sick people will get better. This is a ministry you can ask God to use you in. When you see, receive from, or are a part of the laying on of hands, remember this is all just another one of the ways God uses to bless His People. This is supposed to be such a normal and usual way for God to minister to and through us that He has made it one of the Hebrews 6:1-2 foundation stones of our Christian faith.

Again let's read that Scripture together. **(Read Hebrews 6:1-2.)** Next week we'll learn about the resurrection of the dead.

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QUARTER 4 LESSON 5

DOCTRINAL FOUNDATIONS: THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

THEME OF THE WEEK: Hebrews 6:1-3 gives us a list of six foundational teachings and then tells us to leave them to go on to maturity. It would seem obvious, of course, since this is the case, that we can't move on to maturity (perfection NKJV) until these foundations are laid. Therefore, for the next eight lessons, we will examine each of these basic teachings.

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This week we are going to talk about a really exciting topic for Christians—the resurrection of the dead. First, let's read Hebrews 6:1-2 and quickly review. **(After reading the Scripture, ask them what they can remember about repentance from dead works, faith toward God, the four baptisms, and the laying on of hands—being sure to carefully guide the answers.)**

“Of resurrection of the dead”—what do you think that means? **(Let them get their mental juices flowing.)** Resurrection of the dead, of course, means that people who have died will be raised from the dead. When people die, their spirits go to either heaven or hell. A day will come when Jesus Christ will return to the earth only long enough to gather up His people, both living and dead, and take them out of the earth. This event is called the catching away or the rapture of the church. Those of us who are still alive will suddenly find ourselves lifted up and flying away to meet the Lord in the air. But how can these flesh and blood bodies fly off to meet Jesus and then return to heaven with Him? Well, actually they won't. The Bible says we'll all be changed in the twinkling of an eye – that means super fast. Our bodies will be changed into glorified bodies, bodies that are very much like the body Jesus now has.

The bodies of already dead saints (by saints we mean all Christians and Old Testament lovers of God)—all of these people will be raised up out of their graves. Remember, their spirits go to heaven as soon as they die, but God somehow takes what's left of these people's bodies, even if they are only dust scattered across the earth, and He will reunite their bodies with their spirits into a new form – their glorified bodies. You will love your glorified body. Your glorified body will be beautiful, healthy, sinless, able to hang out in heaven, will never die, and who knows, maybe it will make you like Superman: faster than a speeding bullet, able to leap tall buildings in a single bound and so forth. Whether or not that is the case, you will certainly be very excited about your new body (Philippians 3:21).

Just as the spirits of the godly dead are with Jesus in heaven, the spirits of the godless dead are in hell. The godless dead will also be reunited with their bodies in what may be called “the resurrection of the wicked dead.” This resurrection will happen 1000 years after the resurrection of the righteous dead. After the wicked dead are resurrected, they will be judged by God in what is called the Great White Throne Judgment, after which, they will be thrown into the Lake of Fire where they will spend eternity.

I know which resurrection you want to be a part of. If Jesus Christ is your Lord and Savior and you are living in obedience to your Lord by finding out, according to the Bible, how He wants you to live and you live that way, then you can know you will participate in the resurrection of the righteous dead. It's your responsibility to make sure that you don't leave here without making sure Jesus is your Lord.

(Scripture references: Job 19:25-27; Isaiah 26:19, Daniel 12:2; John 5:25-29; John 11:25; Romans 8:23; 1 Corinthians 15:20-26, 50-58; 2 Corinthians 5:8; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Hebrews 9:27; Revelation 20:11-15.)

VICTORIOUS OVERCOMER SERIES

QUARTER 4 LESSON 6

DOCTRINAL FOUNDATIONS: ETERNAL JUDGMENT

THEME OF THE WEEK: Hebrews 6:1-3 gives us a list of six foundational teachings and then tells us to leave them to go on to maturity. It would seem obvious, of course, since this is the case, that we can't move on to maturity (perfection NKJV) until these foundations are laid. Therefore, for the next eight lessons, we will examine each of these basic teachings.

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Let's read Hebrews 6:1-2 together. **(Leader, after reading these 2 Scriptures as a group, then mention each one individually, looking for feedback on each one. Review of these is critical.)**

This week we are going to discuss the last item on the list: eternal judgment. What does eternal mean? **(Answer: forever)** What does *judgment* mean? **(Let them try to answer, then you say something like the following:)** Judgment can be thought of as a decision given by a court of law – such as: “You're guilty – go to jail.” Or “You're innocent – you are free to go.” Eternal judgment, then, would be God's judgment for each individual who has ever lived. Every human being who has ever lived will hear either “You are guilty, go to hell.” Or “You are innocent – you are free to live with God.” One way the Bible says it for the innocent is like this: “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Matthew 25:34). One way the Bible says it for the guilty is like this: “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matthew 25:41). The eternal destiny of the innocent—the righteous people—is to live forever with God and his angels. The eternal destiny of the

guilty or unrighteous people, as well as the devil and his angels, is to spend eternity in the lake of fire separated from God (Matthew 25:34,41; Revelation 20:10-15).

To be righteous means to be right with God. To be unrighteous means to not be right with God. According to the Bible what makes people righteous is that they ask Jesus to be his or her Lord and to continue living for Him by obeying His teachings. Of course, no one acts right all the time, but 1 John 1:9 tells that when we don't act right—that is, when we sin, we can [and should] ask for God's forgiveness, trusting for Christ's Blood to wash away our sins.

Again, to be unrighteous or guilty means to not be right with God. People cannot get right with God without accepting God's way of getting right with Him – that is by asking Jesus to be their Lord. Peoples' future destinies are decided in their lifetimes by whether they accept or reject Christ. The Bible does not teach that people get a second chance after they die (Hebrews 9:27).

If someone is a Christian, he or she will be judged at the judgment seat of Christ. This will be a happy time when Christians will receive rewards for the good things they have done (2 Corinthians 5:9-10). If someone is not a Christian, he or she will stand before God at the great white throne judgment. The terror of this judgment will be beyond any words to describe it for the non-Christian. This person's reward will be to be thrown into the lake of fire for not accepting Christ's free gift of eternal life (Revelation 20:10-15). Make sure you know which judgment seat you will stand before. Pray to receive Jesus as your Savior and Lord right now if you've never done that before. (Leader, be sensitive to the need of a salvation prayer.)

Before we leave this important subject, let's read our memory verse together one last time. **(Read aloud together.)** Next week we will talk about the second coming of Christ.

What have you learned this week?

VICTORIOUS OVERCOMER SERIES

QUARTER 4 LESSON 7

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

THEME OF THE WEEK: This week we will talk about the Second Coming of Christ. **(We strongly urge teachers to look up all Scripture references ahead of time so that when people ask you questions, you will be able to answer their questions according to what Scripture says. For the purposes of this lesson, we have chosen to capitalize the names of all Bible events)**

MEMORY VERSE: “For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.”
1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 (NKJV)

This week we are going to learn about one of the most exciting truths the Bible teaches Christians. Jesus came the first time about 2000 years ago as a little baby. Someday He will come again, and, when He does, He will rule and reign as King. Christ, a Prophet, King, and Priest is so much more; He is the Son of God (Acts 3:20-26; Revelation 19:16; Hebrews 7:22-24, Matthew 16:16-17), and He will never come again as a human being. Some people think He will, but this is a trick the devil can use to get people to follow a false savior. Christ will come again in the same way He left—in the clouds (Acts 1:11). The Bible says no one except Father God—not even Jesus—knows when Jesus is coming again (Matthew 24:36).

We are told to occupy or stay busy working on this earth until He comes back (Luke 19:13), but we are told to look forward to and be excited about His return (Revelation 22:20). He will reward us for our faithfulness when He comes (Luke 19:11-27; Revelation 22:12).

The Second Coming of Christ will happen in two parts. The first part is called the Catching Away or Rapture of the Church (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18), and the second part can be called the Revelation or Revealing of Jesus Christ (2

Thessalonians 1:7-10) and also the Day of the Lord (2 Peter 3:10). Many people call just the second part the Second Coming of Christ.

Seven years before Christ returns to rule and reign on the earth, a dark and terrible time will begin. That terrible time is called the Great Tribulation. You can read about that period in the Book of Revelation in your Bible. Before Christ returns to rule and reign on this earth, an amazing miracle will happen. That miracle is called the Rapture by many people, although the Bible calls it the Catching Away (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17). Christ will Catch Away or Rapture His saints (a saint is a Christian, Romans 1:7) up into the air to meet Him there; then He will take us back to heaven to be with Him until it's time for Christ to return to earth to rule and reign here.

Can you imagine what the non-Christians who are left behind on this earth are going to say and think? Do you think they may say that aliens from outer space have invaded and carried people away? Who knows? But they are sure to come up with some explanation. Some people will pray to receive Jesus as Lord and Savior after the Rapture, but those new Christians will have to stay here on earth during the Tribulation period (Revelation 7:9-10, 13-17). The last three and a half years will be the worst part of the Great Tribulation (Daniel 9:20-27; 12:6-13; Revelation 12:1-17).

Most Christians believe the Rapture or Catching Away will happen just before the seven year long Great Tribulation period begins. Some Christians believe the Rapture will happen half way through the Tribulation and a few believe the Rapture will happen at the end of the Great Tribulation—right before Christ returns to rule and reign. It is really fascinating to study this, which we hope you will do. You can learn more about these subjects at your local church.

Next week we will learn more about the Rapture and the Second Coming of Christ.

What did you learn this week? (More Scripture references for study: Matthew 24:1-51; Matthew 25:1-13; 1 Corinthians 15:50-58; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11; Revelation 20:6.)

VICTORIOUS OVERCOMER SERIES

QUARTER 4 LESSON 8

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST (Continued)

THEME OF THE WEEK: This week we will talk about the Second Coming of Christ. **(We strongly urge teachers to look up all Scripture references ahead of time so that when people ask you questions, you will be able to answer their questions according to what Scripture says. For the purposes of this lesson, we have chosen to capitalize the names of all Bible events)**

MEMORY VERSE: “For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.”
1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 (NKJV)

Last week we began to talk about what things will be like before, during, and after the time when Christ comes to rule and reign on the earth. Let’s review some important ideas. **(Leader: See last week’s lesson for Scripture references.)** What is the Second Coming of Christ? **(The answer should be something like this: When Jesus comes back to rule and reign on the earth.)** What is the Rapture or the Catching Away? **(Something like: That’s when Jesus catches away all Christians to meet Him in the air and then takes them to be with Him in Heaven.)** What is the Great Tribulation? **(Something like: That’s a terrible time on the earth right before Christ returns to rule and reign here.)** How long will it last? **(Answer: Seven years.)** How long is the worst part of the Great Tribulation? **(Answer: The last half of the seven years. Half of seven is three and a half, so that makes the worst part three and a half years long.)**

Remember that the Second Coming of Christ will happen in two parts: the first part is the Rapture or Catching Away of the Church; the second part is the Revelation of Jesus Christ when He shows or reveals Himself by returning to earth to rule and reign for one thousand years. That one thousand years is called the Millennial Reign of Christ.

The Millennial or one thousand year Reign of Christ will be a happy time for the people who are living here then and also for those of us who were born before that time. We will, of course, have wonderful, glorified bodies and will help Jesus rule and reign, as we have talked about in other lessons.

The Book of Revelation, chapters 20-22, tells us a few details about this time period. At the end of the Millennial Reign of Christ, God will make a new heaven, a new earth, and a New Jerusalem. How exciting this will be for those of us who love our Lord!

For people who do love God, they will want to learn to hear from Him for themselves. Next week we will begin the first of five lessons about that.

What did you learn about last week and this week?

VICTORIOUS OVERCOMER SERIES

QUARTER 4 LESSON 9

YOU CAN HEAR FROM GOD FOR YOURSELF (Part 1)

THEME OF THE WEEK: As the title states, we can hear from God for ourselves. One of the greatest safety measures anyone can take is to learn how to hear and follow the leading of God's voice and to allow His voice to come before and be more important than all others.

MEMORY VERSE: "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God," (Romans 8:16 NKJV)

1 John 5:7 says, "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one." God is Three Persons in One: Father, Son-Jesus, and Holy Ghost. Genesis 1:26-27 says that God created us in His image! God created you to be three persons in one. One part you can see is your body, of course. The other two parts are invisible. One part is your soul. Your soul is made up of three parts: your mind, your will, and your emotions. So far we have mentioned the body and the soul. The third part of who you are is your spirit man. The spirit man is the part of you that can get born again. Your spirit man is the part of you that is in contact with the Holy Ghost or Holy Spirit part of God Who lives inside you (Romans 8:16).

Over the next several weeks, as we learn about different ways of hearing from God, remember that the most important way God speaks to people is through His Word, the Bible. Any other way God speaks to us will and must be in agreement with the Bible or it won't be God who is speaking. If you ever get confused about what you think God is telling you, talk to your pastor, group leader, or another mature person in your church that you trust.

You can hear from God because your spirit is in touch with the Holy Spirit who lives inside you. Your spirit man is also known as "the hidden man of the heart" (1 Peter 3:4). Say this with me "I am a spirit, I have a soul, and I live in a body." **(Teacher, say several times together.)** It takes all three of these parts—your

body, your soul, and your spirit, to make you who you are, though your spirit and soul together make up the really you part of you.

When God speaks to us, He speaks to us through our spirits (Romans 8:14, 16). Proverbs 20:27 says “The spirit of man *is* the candle of the LORD searching all the inward parts of the belly.” The New King James Version says, “The spirit of a man is the lamp of the LORD, Searching all the inner depths of his heart.” That means God uses our human spirits within us like candles or lamps for us to see by.

Notice that Scripture didn’t say the soul is the candle. Your soul, remember, is your mind, will, and emotions. If you are following your own mind or your own will power or your own feelings, you are just figuring things out on your own. That’s not where the light of the Lord is. The light of the Lord for you is your human spirit.

The order is supposed to go this way: the Holy Ghost or Holy Spirit speaks to your human spirit; your human spirit speaks to or lights the way for your soul; your soul tells your body what to do.

Next week we will learn more about how God speaks to us through our human spirits.

VICTORIOUS OVERCOMER SERIES

QUARTER 4 LESSON 10

YOU CAN HEAR FROM GOD FOR YOURSELF (Part 2)

THEME OF THE WEEK: As the title states, we can hear from God for ourselves. One of the greatest safety measures anyone can take is to learn how to hear and follow the leading of God's voice and to allow His voice to come before and be more important than all others.

MEMORY VERSE: "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God," (Romans 8:16 NKJV)

The usual way that Christians hear from God is by the inward witness. Romans 8:16 (NKJV) says, "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God." We are focusing on the part of that Scripture that says the Holy "Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit." If you tell me that you are thinking about doing something and I say "I bear witness with that," I am saying that I agree with you. If I say I don't bear witness, that means, I don't agree.

Remember, the Holy Spirit, Who always knows what is best for you and Who even knows the future, lives inside you. The Holy Spirit will bear witness with your spirit about whether something is right or wrong, a good idea or a bad idea. Your human spirit will then show your soul a "yes" or a "no" or maybe something like "yes, but wait" or "yes, but move carefully – I will give more instructions as you go along." The inward witness is an inward, spiritual knowing or spiritual feeling, but it's not just an emotion or some kind of feeling in your body.

Some people have described the inward witness as being like a stoplight in our spirits. Green means "yes or go," yellow means "move cautiously or carefully," and red means "no or stop." With the inward witness, you know something is a good idea or a bad idea, but you don't hear any words from God about the situation.

The word *perceive* or *perception* means to become aware of something.

Your body perceives through the senses of taste, feel, sight, smell, or sound. Our spirit man can sense or perceive things too.

The Bible tells about how following the inward witness can even save people's lives. The Apostle Paul, after being arrested by the Jewish religious rulers for preaching about Jesus, was sent to see the Roman king or Caesar in Rome by way of a ship across the Mediterranean Sea. After they had sailed part way, Paul, while they were in port at an island, warned the Roman centurion who was in charge, that Paul perceived great danger if they were to keep sailing. Paul didn't say God told him there was great danger, but that he (Paul) *perceived* there was great danger (Acts 27:10). Learning to listen and obey your inward witness can save you from a lot of trouble. It could even save your life.

Let's try a little practice session of listening to your inward witness. Everybody, get quiet—close your eyes and pray in the spirit with me for a couple of minutes. **(Do so.)** Now, keep your eyes closed. Don't think about your neighbor. I'm going to say some things that even your mind knows is either right or wrong, but pay attention to how you "feel" on the inside when I say each thing.

Here goes:

"Jesus is Lord and rules over your life. He loves you and someday He's going to welcome you into heaven where you'll walk with Him on a street of pure gold."

Okay, didn't you feel good inside when I said what I said? Didn't your spirit man agree with what I was saying? That was a "yes" answer or a green light in your inward witness.

Here's another:

"The devil loves you. God's just not being fair to the devil and is treating him mean. The devil is inviting you to get run over by a truck so you can go to hell to be with him – day after tomorrow. He says Jesus hates you and is going to send you to hell anyway no matter how hard you try to please Him. The devil says you'll really like your new flaming-red bedroom."

Okay, didn't you feel nasty inside when I said what I said? You knew what I was saying was wrong. That was a "no" answer or a red light in your inward witness.

Here's another:

"Go home and yell at your mom, slap your little brother, kick your dog in the stomach, squash some baby birds with a hammer, and then go drown the neighbors' new kittens."

How did you feel when I said that? **(Answers.)**

Now pretend this thought goes through your head:

“That new kid at school is a nice guy, but he seems really lonely. I think I’ll invite him to come to church with me.”

What did you feel? **(Answers.)** A yucky, sick feeling means “no.” A warm, happy feeling means “yes.”

Of course, these were easy because your mind already knows what is right or wrong here, with or without the inward witness. But our reason for doing these exercises was to get you to pay attention to what you were feeling or sensing on the inside. Remember those feelings the next time they come to you. When our minds already know the right or wrong thing to do, those feelings can come to us to encourage us to go or to stop. When we have no idea what God’s will is, the inward witness can help us to make a right choice. If you think about it, you will realize that you have felt the inner witness before. That was your spirit man (or maybe your conscience) trying to get your attention. Make it a point to listen to your spirit man and to your conscience from now on.

What did you learn this week?

VICTORIOUS OVERCOMER SERIES

QUARTER 4 LESSON 11

YOU CAN HEAR FROM GOD FOR YOURSELF (Part 3)

THEME OF THE WEEK: As the title states, we can hear from God for ourselves. One of the greatest safety measures anyone can take is to learn how to hear and follow the leading of God's voice and to allow His voice to come before and be more important than all others.

MEMORY VERSE: "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God," (Romans 8:16 NKJV)

For the last couple of weeks, we've been learning that we can hear from God for ourselves. Early in the Old Testament, when God was still giving the law to Moses—the children of Israel, because they were afraid of God, asked that God not speak to them anymore. They requested that God speak to Moses and that Moses speak to them—not God. After this, because it was what the people wanted, God seems to have honored their request and spoken to the leaders and had the leaders speak to the people on God's behalf (Exodus 20:19-21).

In Old Testament times, God's Spirit would come mainly to prophets, kings, and priests to rest upon them and equip them for service. If any of these people of God displeased Him greatly, God's Spirit might depart from them (1 Samuel 16:14; Psalm 51:11).

It is not this way with us. Jesus promises the gift of the Holy Spirit for all people who will believe and confess that Jesus is Lord (Acts 2:38). In addition to that wonderful promise, the Lord promises that He will never leave us nor forsake us (Hebrews 13:5). He even promises that no one can take you out of His hand (John 10:29). To be sure, some people choose to jump out of God's hand, but that isn't God's fault.

According to the Bible, every Christian has the Holy Spirit living inside him or her (John 14:16-17) and is a king and a priest or perhaps a kingdom of priests (1 Peter 2:5,9; Revelation 1:6; 5:10) and is anointed to hear His voice (1 John 2:20) for

service. Not only can we hear from God, God expects us to hear from Him. God is speaking. Are we listening?

We learned last week that the usual way for God to speak to us is by the inward witness. Who can tell me what the inward witness is? **(Teacher: Review enough for them to remember that the Holy Spirit speaks to their spirits which, in turn, speaks to their souls with a “yes” or a “no.”)** It is important to know that a “yes, but wait,” is not the same as a “no.” A “no” is a “no” and is final. We do well to not keep pushing God to say “yes” when He has already said “no.” An Old Testament prophet named Balaam got in a lot of trouble with God for doing that (Numbers 22-25; 31:8; Jude 11; Revelation 2:14). If you get no answer from God about some particular question, then wait; He may not be ready to speak to you about that answer yet. But He will answer. Matthew 7:7, 8, 11b says, “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened....your Father who is in heaven give[s] good things to those who ask Him.” and James 1:5-6a (NKJV) says, “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith.”

The other two ways that God often speaks to His kids are through the inward voice and also by the voice of God speaking directly to our human spirits. We will begin to look at these other two areas next week.

What did you learn this week?

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QUARTER 4 LESSON 12

YOU CAN HEAR FROM GOD FOR YOURSELF (Part 4)

THEME OF THE WEEK: Aside from communicating to us through His written Word, the Bible, God uses three major ways of communicating to His people: the inward witness, the inward voice, and the voice of God.

MEMORY VERSE: “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God.” (Romans 8:14 NKJV)

Who remembers what the inward witness is? **(Teacher: review enough for them to remember that the Holy Spirit speaks to their spirits and that their spirits, in turn, speak to their souls with a “yes” or a “no” answer.)**

A second way God leads His kids is through the inward voice. The difference between the inward witness and the inward voice is that the only words we “hear” on our insides is a “yes” or a “no” with the inward witness, but with the inward voice we “hear” *words* with our spirits. Really, even the “yes” or “no” of the inward witness isn’t in words, but it’s really just a knowing that we recognize as a “yes” or a “no.” You may hear someone say that he got a check in his spirit about something. That means he got a “no” answer in his inward witness.

With the inward voice, you hear the voice of your spirit speaking words to your soul. They aren’t physical words that you hear with your physical ears because your spirit man doesn’t have a physical voice. He has a spiritual voice and he’s not speaking to your body, he’s speaking to your soul. Your soul can hear your spirit man if he wants to, or your soul can choose to ignore your spirit man. Remember, your soul includes your mind, your will, and your emotions. You are in control of your mind. You can make up that mind to get your will and your emotions obedient to your spirit man. Your mind can choose to keep your spirit man in control. It’s really up to you, but your mind is wise to keep your spirit man in control because your spirit man is who can hear from God.

Your physical voice uses a voice box or a larynx to make sounds. Many people believe that a person's spiritual voice is his conscience. Your conscience is that part of you that feels clean, innocent, and healthy when you do right or it feels dirty, guilty, and sick when you do wrong. Think about a time when you did something bad that nobody knew about but you. Think about how rotten you felt on the inside. That is your conscience. Your conscience will never lead you wrong. You know your conscience exists because you hear its still, small voice on the inside of you. It tells you what is right or wrong. When you follow the voice of your conscience, you are automatically following God. When you disobey the voice of your conscience, you are automatically disobeying God. When you follow your conscience, you will have peace of mind, but, when you disobey your conscience, your mind will feel troubled. We all know we live in a world with many temptations. Many times we know what we should or should not to do, but sometimes we don't. Sometimes we can feel confused about what is or is not pleasing to God. At those times you need to carefully listen to the voice of your conscience. Ask God what to do. He will show you, and one of the ways He may use to show you is through your inward voice, which we may also call the voice of your conscience. At times like this, God will show you what to do and may even tell you why with some words you can sense on the inside of you.

The Apostle Paul said "Men *and* brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day (Acts 23:1b NKJV)." A good conscience is a happy conscience. We each have the choice of keeping a tender conscience or of searing it. When you obey your conscience, you will keep it tender. To be tender means to be able to feel. When your conscience can feel what is right or wrong, it will speak to you to tell you what the correct thing to do is. If you ignore your conscience whenever it tries to speak to you, it will lose its ability to feel. The Bible says this is like searing our consciences with a hot iron (1Timothy 4:2). If a part of somebody's body is burned badly enough, nerve cells will be permanently destroyed so that that part of the body doesn't have any or much feeling anymore. The way people sear their consciences is by ignoring them. After a while, they don't feel bad anymore about the nasty ways they act or talk. When your conscience or inward voice stops speaking to you, you are in big trouble. If it's been a while since you've bothered to pay attention to your conscience, ask God to help you get your conscience tender again. Keep your conscience tender by doing what it tells you.

What did you learn this week? What is another name for your conscience?
(Answer: inward voice.)

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QUARTER 4 LESSON 13

YOU CAN HEAR FROM GOD FOR YOURSELF (Part 5)

THEME OF THE WEEK: Aside from communicating to us through His written Word, the Bible, God uses three major ways of communicating to His people: the inward witness, the inward voice, and the voice of God.

MEMORY VERSE: “Behold I [Jesus] stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.” (Revelation 3:20 NKJV)

Over the last several lessons, we have learned the usual ways that people can hear from God for themselves. First, we learned about the inward witness—that “yes” or “no” knowing in our spirits. Second, we learned about the inward voice or conscience which includes a “yes” or a “no” with some extra words. We could say that the inward voice or conscience equals the inward witness plus words. The inward voice or conscience speaks words to us so that we can know what we should or should not do. The third usual way that people can hear from God is when God speaks to them directly. We will call this the voice of the Spirit of God.

It shouldn't surprise people that God sometimes speaks directly to people. God even sometimes speaks to people in a voice that can be heard with their physical ears. After all, He is God, isn't He? Usually though, when He speaks to us, we don't hear His voice with our physical ears but with our spiritual ears. God says He is a Spirit and He is looking for people who will worship Him in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). God expects us to develop our spiritual ears.

Do you remember that you are a spirit, have a soul and live in a body? Let's say that a couple of times together. **(Teacher: Have people repeat the following several times with you.)** “I am a spirit, I have a soul and I live in a body.” You are a living human spirit—on the inside. The Holy Spirit also lives inside you, if you are a Christian. This is why the Bible calls you the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 6:19; 2 Corinthians 6:16). The Holy Spirit within you sometimes

speaks with much authority to your human spirit; your human spirit then speaks to your soul. This is the voice of the Spirit of God.

When God leads you by the voice of the Spirit of God, the way you can tell the difference between God's direct voice and the inward voice of your spirit is that God's voice seems to carry more weight. His voice seems more in charge, more authoritative.

Let's read 1 Samuel 3:1-18 together. **(Read.)** This voice was certainly God's voice, not the inward voice of a human spirit. Whether God spoke audibly (out loud) or not, we can't really know for sure. It certainly seemed to be out loud to Samuel, but we should also notice that Eli could not hear the voice.

As you learn to be sensitive to the inward witness, the inward voice, and the voice of the Spirit of God, you will not have to live in darkness as to the will of God for your life. Don't forget, however, to judge any of these three ways of hearing from God by what God's Word, the Bible, says (Galatians 1:6-9). The Bible is the most important way that God speaks to His people. Anything God ever speaks to you will be in agreement with the Bible. Anything that is not in agreement with the Bible either comes from our imaginations or from an evil spirit (2 Peter 1:20; 1 John 4:1). Learn God's Word, the Bible, for yourself and also be sure to talk to spiritually mature people in your church if you're not sure you're hearing right.

What did you learn this week? **(Teacher, included below are more Bible references concerning the voice of God: 1 Kings 19:11-16; Psalm 95:7-11; Proverbs 8:4; Ezekiel 10:5; John 10:4; Hebrews 3:7,15.)**