

Lesson 3

Chapter 2 - *Scripture Memorization: A Must In These Last Days*

Read Chapter 2 and then apply it to your life as you work through these questions.

1. We are faced with a future more uncertain than we have ever known. What is your personal reaction to what you see happening in the world around you? Do you feel ready, spiritually, to resist the evil that aggressively threatens our whole way of life? What disturbing apprehensions linger in the back of your mind?

2. *In the end, there are (only) two things in this whole world that will endure against the backdrop of eternity—two things that will last forever . . . (Pg 29, Par 2)* What are they? How do you see them functioning separately and together in this world and in your life?

Only the Word of God and the soul of man will endure forever.

The Word of God:

For the greater part, *words* are the vehicle that God has given to communicate with Him and with each other. And for the greater part it is "words" that God uses to communicate with us His children. According to II Timothy 3:16, our great, eternal God breathed *His words* into the minds of men for them to speak forth and to record. His message in Scripture could thus be clearly and adequately communicated to all mankind. We are told that *the Word of God is living and powerful* (Hebrews 4:12). It is pure truth. It is the only pure truth that exists in this changing world. It cannot be challenged. It cannot be altered. It does not end. Jesus said, *Heaven and earth will disappear but my Word will remain forever*. It will live throughout time and eternity. It is very real. Yes, it is living. Yes, it is powerful. But even the omnipotent, eternal Word as it exists on inert pages of paper has no identity. *Life* does not exist on paper. It is only the potential for life that exists in the book. It is only as this Word is applied to the heart and soul of man that it comes to life and thus achieves its intended identity and fulfillment.

The Soul of Man:

And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. (KJV) When God *breathed into his nostrils the breath of life . . . man became a living soul*. God created man perfect, and sinless. In that perfect state he could have lived forever, communing freely with God in His perfect garden. However, when Adam and Eve chose the way of sin and disobedience over God's perfection, their communion with God was broken and both body and soul were destined for *death*.. Every man from then on was destined to be born with a limited life span on this earth after which his doomed soul would suffer what the Bible calls the second death, eternal punishment, that is **if God did not intervene**.

But God did intervene and provided a way of forgiveness. Through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, man is given opportunity to reestablish communion with his God. Although his sin wrenched body will one day pass into oblivion, man is given the ability to regain eternal *life* for the soul that dwells within and will one day be given a new

body that will live on forever. But how could man possibly know of such a plan for salvation

and everlasting life if God Himself had not communicated this to him through His eternal Word?

The Word of God and the Soul of Man: So God breaths physical life and an eternal soul into every man when he is born. This gives him life for this world. But to receive *everlasting* life, the kind that will *live* on forever in communion with His great Creator when life on this planet is completed, he must open his heart to Jesus, God the Son, as He is portrayed in the Living Word. It is then that the Holy Spirit can breath spiritual life into his being. It is then that the powerful living Word can take root in His life and in his soul. He is then reborn into a new *spiritual* dimension and God's Word becomes an umbilical cord whereby he can again commune directly with his Great Creator. Through it he can be regenerated and through it he can be nourished throughout his remaining time on this earth.

Although both of these eternal entities, the *Word of God* and *soul of man*, are breathed by the great Creator into two vastly different entities, their identity and purpose are realized only as they meet in the life of a Christian. In other words they both originate in heaven but arrive on earth via different channels where they realize fulfillment only as they function in union and communion with each other in the life of a believer.

(This is a very profound subject. If you wish to pursue it further you may include a discussion regarding the Logos and the Rama.)

3. In the midst of a world in turmoil, where is the only place we can look for spiritual stability, sustenance and direction? Is the security of this vital Source an integral part of your life or is it just a familiar philosophy you know about but have never put to the test? (Try to be as honest with yourself and transparent as you can. You need not share this with anyone but the Lord if you so choose.)

4. Read paragraphs 1 through 5 on page 31. Jesus Himself drew a parallel between physical and spiritual nourishment, and stressed the vital need for both. How many parallels can you draw between the two types of nourishment *physical bread* and *every Word that comes from the mouth of GOD?*

Physically and spiritually: (Pg 31)

1. . . . *we must have nourishment (physically/spiritually) in order to function*

2. . . . *if we don't "eat" regularly and adequately (physically/spiritually), we'll be weak and sickly.*

3. *A healthy body lets us know in no uncertain terms when it needs food.* The dehydration of our spiritual being may not be quite so obvious.

4. . . . *the body's natural hunger for food gradually diminishes as we approach starvation until both the desire and capacity for food almost disappear.* If you deprive your body of healthy food, your taste and appetite for it diminishes as your body slowly deteriorates.. Not so obvious is the spiritual parallel, but this is also true in the spiritual realm.

You've undoubtedly heard the story of the unsuspecting frog that is oblivious to its pending doom as its pot of water slowly but steadily progresses to the boiling point. Could this allegory

be applicable to the church today? Could it be that God's army has gradually but progressively slid into a mind set of apathy and smug confidence perhaps unaware of a world that is fast changing

around them. In our lethargic comfort-zone, could it be that we have become oblivious to the fact that the water of our culture is becoming dangerously hot for Christians. Starvation is like that frog in the pan of heating water. It is progressive but could be so slow we might be almost oblivious to what is happening. Our appetite and natural taste buds diminish as our stomach shrinks and our desire for food dwindles. This parallel also exists as it relates to spiritual starvation.

5. As you contemplate the answers you have given above, what diagnosis would you apply to your own spiritual status? How does your attitude toward Scripture compare with the psalmist's expression in Psalm 119:20? You may want to look at the circle you drew for question #2 in Lesson 2 and apply approximate times to the activities to help with your diagnosis and prognosis. For your own evaluation and not for anyone else's eyes, compare, specifically, the length of time you spend on care and nourishment of your physical being with that of your spiritual needs.

God made us with a body that requires constant care and nourishment to maintain a healthy existence and the attention we give it cannot be hidden for long from those around us. Not quite so obvious is the care and nourishment we give to the inner man.

A rancher in Texas purchased a new car which he drove happily, taking great pride in its outward appearance, but giving little attention to its internal needs. When his beautiful vehicle eventually "collapsed" he had it towed to the dealer expecting the warranty to take care of it. However, when the dealer examined the internal workings of the car, he found that the oil had never been changed and the crankcase was thick with sludge. Needless to say, the warranty could not apply because the owner had not kept up "reasonable maintenance".

Is there a lesson in this for us. We take great pains to "maintain" the outer, physical part of our "house", but what reasonable "maintenance" do we apply to the inner workings of our soul and spirit?

There are a lot of parallels that can be applied to this story if we choose to pursue them:

What is the spiritual sludge that clogs up our crankcases?

What is the spiritual equivalent to an "oil change"?

Would our warranty be valid?

We can seemingly get by with ignoring internal care for awhile, but, eventually it catches up with us?

6. A) What trends are mentioned in this chapter and what others do you see as a pattern in western culture warning that the climate for Christians is dramatically changing and without a spiritual revival, we cannot expect it to be reversed.

In recent years we've seen Judeo-Christian principles plummet from being the accepted standard of behavior and ethics to the present climate of skepticism, even animosity.

Nero blamed the fire of Rome on Christians in order to create prejudice preparatory to launching his cruel persecutions. Hitler blamed the Jews for misfortunes in Germany preceding the holocaust. It's interesting that in recent years we have seen so called "Right

Wing Extremists" accused by some of everything from the assassination of John Kennedy to the Oklahoma City bombing. And often, it seems an effort is made to include the "Christian Coalition" and/or the "Moral Majority".

We see the effort more and more to cast Christians as vicious, mean, narrow-minded extremists, trying to tell everyone else how to live and "forcing" their beliefs on others. (Pg 33, Par 4-5)

We (are seeing) absolutes disappear and moral standards decline to base animal instincts.

The above are specifics taken from the book. There are many other aspects that are emerging almost daily that you and your class may wish to build on further. e.g. the promotion of political correctness that is fast become censorship for Christian expression. In Canada it is against the law to say anything against homosexuality. At this writing in the United States there are various laws being pushed in Congress one going so far as to make it a felony to even *think* that homosexuality is wrong. Many European countries either have broad pro-homosexual laws or are contemplating legislative action to promote them. For a more comprehensive list of spiritual and moral decline, see Supplemental Lesson 1, at the end of this manual.

