

Women's Ministries Seminar Series

WOMEN DISCOVERING JESUS



A Twelve-Lesson Course of Study
By Lea Hardy

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Table of **CONTENTS**

Lesson One: Jesus is My Friend	3
Lesson Two: Jesus is My Elder Brother	6
Lesson Three: Jesus is My Peace	9
Lesson Four: Jesus is My Role Model	12
Lesson Five: Jesus is My Confidence Builder	15
Lesson Six: Jesus is My Confidant	18
Lesson Seven: Jesus is My Comforter	21
Lesson Eight: Jesus is My Mentor	24
Lesson Nine: Jesus is My Defender	26
Lesson Ten: Jesus is My Magistrate	29
Lesson Eleven: Jesus is My Redeemer	32
Lesson Twelve: Jesus is My Hope for the Future	36
Bibliography	39

Lesson One:

JESUS IS MY FRIEND

INTRODUCTION

The little community of Lake Rice, Canada, knew Joseph Scriven as a somewhat eccentric man in his sixties. He often helped others by doing carpentry work for them, but there was one odd standard: he worked only for those who could not pay. A bachelor, he lived around his friends until his death in October 1886. Most people did not know that Scriven had graduated from Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland. After his plans to marry his sweetheart ended in tragedy when she drowned the day before the wedding date, Scriven migrated to Canada to start a new life. But he never recovered from the pain and shock. Some years later he wrote a poem to comfort his mother, who still grieved for her son. He called the poem, "What a Friend We Have in Jesus." No one knows how that poem ever got set to music, but people had been singing it for about ten years before a friend found the original manuscript in Scriven's room. When asked if he had written the poem, Scriven replied that it had been a joint effort between himself and the Lord.

"What a Friend we have in Jesus!
All our sins and griefs to bear;
What a privilege to carry
Everything to Him in prayer!"

Most of us have sung that old hymn many times. The words bring comfort to the sorrowing, and new hope to the friendless. JESUS is our Friend! What joy that causes!

FRIENDS

Solomon, who was famous for his wisdom, has much to say about friends. Let's look for a few moments at some of his wise advice.

1. When can we count on the love of a friend? (Proverbs 17:17)
2. How can we have friends of our own? (Proverbs 18:24, first part)
3. Solomon mentions a Friend that sticks closer than a brother (Proverbs 18:24, last part). Whom do you think he means?
4. In Proverbs 27:9, what quality of friendship do you see mentioned?

In Matthew 15, versus 21-28, we find the experience of a woman who came to Jesus on behalf of her demon-possessed daughter. At first Jesus ignored her or treated her coldly, both to test the woman and to show His disciples how unfairly the Jews behaved toward the Gentiles. But this mother's faith was very strong; she *believed* Jesus could help. And of course, He did heal her daughter, because Jesus never turns away from a call for help. Read the following paragraph, which is taken from the book *Desire of Ages*, by Ellen White:

"The Saviour is satisfied. He has tested her faith in Him. By His dealings with her, He has shown that she who has been regarded as an outcast from Israel is no longer an alien, but a child in God's household. As a child, it is her privilege to share in the Father's gifts. Christ now grants her request, and finishes the lesson to the disciples. Turning to her with a look of pity and love, He says, 'O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt.' From that hour, her daughter became whole. The demon troubled her no more. The woman departed, acknowledging her Saviour, and happy in the granting of her prayer." (p. 402).

JESUS, OUR BEST FRIEND

5. Jesus showed the Canaanite woman that she was a beloved child of God as He shared His healing power. Then Mrs. White says that the woman "departed, acknowledging her Saviour. . ." Do you think that she told her family and friends about this wonderful Jesus, her new Friend?
6. Can you think of anything that Jesus has done for you? If you can, what do you think Jesus wants you to do about it?
7. What commandment did Jesus give in John 15:12?
8. What is the greatest love that one person can show for another? (John 15:13)
9. Who has shown that love for you?

A story is told of a woman who many years ago was expecting her first child. During her pregnancy, she became very ill and the doctor finally told her that she was simply not strong enough to carry the child to term. It was his advice that she end the pregnancy to save her own life. Her husband wept as he urged her, "Darling, there may be another child, but there could never be anyone to take your place. Please do as the doctor says."

But the woman asked, "Doctor, if I am very careful, is there a chance that this baby will be all right?" Reluctantly the doctor admitted that such a chance existed, but warned again that it would surely kill the mother to give birth.

"My child must have a chance," insisted the woman.

This brave woman had a praying family, and through their prayers and God's grace, a healthy child was born, and the mother lived to see her grandchildren. Her own daughter often told others the story of her miraculous birth, and always added, "But Mother *was willing* to die for me!"

SHOWING OUR FRIENDSHIP

10. How can we show Jesus that we are His friends? (John 15:14)
11. Jesus tells us in John 15:15 that He considers us friends and that He wants to prove that by telling us all that we can know about His Father and about Himself. Where can we learn about God?

A circle of friends is the happiest place to learn about God. He wants us to draw close to other Christians as we draw closer to Him. Discuss in your group how you can do this.

WITH MY FRIEND, JESUS, I CAN FACE LIFE UNAFRAID

I asked for a friend;
God sent me One.
I cried for love;
God sent His Son.

Lesson Two:

JESUS IS MY ELDER BROTHER

INTRODUCTION

At the end of World War II, Amy had just entered her teens. She lived with her parents in a small town in the northeastern United States and was the youngest of their five living children. Amy's three sisters were married with families of their own, and her brother had been overseas for several years. She had written childish letters to him ever since he had been called to military duty, and he had faithfully responded. The war years had been long and lonely for families all over the world. But now it was over. Big Brother John was coming home!

It was a joyous homecoming, with family and friends gathering for a big celebration. Amy and John began a new and close relationship, spending much time in each other's company. Amy noticed that John and their father seemed to especially enjoy one another. They had a lot in common and liked to talk and work together. Both men were thoughtful of Amy's feelings and needs and Amy's relationship with her father was made more complete by the presence of her older brother.

JESUS IS OUR ELDER BROTHER

1. What claim to His identity did Jesus make? (Mark 14:61,62)
2. What right did He give those who received Him and believed in His name? (John 1:12)
3. If Jesus is the Son of God, and if we, His followers, are the children of God, can you see that Jesus is our elder brother?

In Matthew 12:46-50, we find another instance when Jesus claimed us as his brothers and sisters. As you read this text, remember that Jesus was not denying His earthly relationships; He was pointing out to His followers that *all* people have the chance to be part of His family. The NIV states it like this:

"While Jesus was still talking to the crowd, His mother and brothers stood outside, wanting to speak to Him. Someone told Him, 'Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you.' He replied, 'Who is my mother, and who are my

brothers?’ Pointing to his disciples, He said, ‘Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.’”

HIS EARTHLY MISSION

4. Jesus was always sought out by the multitudes. On one occasion, His disciples were concerned that He had not had time to eat, and they said to Him, “Rabbi, eat something”(John 4:31, NIV). What was Jesus’ reply?
5. Whom do you believe “sent” Jesus to earth, and why was Jesus so interested in doing His will? (John 17:1-3)
6. How does this help you to understand how we should obey the will of God?

OUR LORD’S PRAYER

7. Read Matthew 6:1-8. Several times in these verses, Jesus speaks of God. What does He call Him?
8. We find what we call *The Lord’s Prayer* in Matthew 6:9-13. How does Jesus say we should address God?
9. Jesus called God *Father*, and says that we are to also call Him *Father*. It is a wonderful privilege to have such a loving and merciful Father. What other privileges are we to have as sisters of Christ? (Romans 8:16,17)

Janet’s mother abandoned her when she was only three weeks old. Because of legal delays, Janet passed the age when adoption was likely, and resigned herself to living in other people’s homes. Some were kind to her; others were not. But Janet always did the best she could and tried to be cheerful. When she was sixteen, the wealthy Carver family took her in as a kind of companion/maid for Mrs. Carver. Over the months, Janet proved herself trustworthy, gentle, and thoughtful. Mrs. Carver’s son, Damon, who had all along felt that the family should adopt Janet, renewed his persuasion. Mr. and Mrs. Carver could see how right Damon was, for they had come to love Janet greatly. Before starting adoption proceedings, however, Mr. Carver had a serious talk with Damon. “Son,” he began, “as our only heir, you will inherit a vast fortune. If used wisely, this wealth will take care of you and your descendants for many years to come, and will enable you to do a great deal of good in the world. Do you realize that our adopting Janet will cut your fortune in half?”

Damon smiled, “Father, my sister and I will share whatever comes our way, equally, and in love.”

“How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!” (1 John 3:1, NIV)

Some of you may have sisters who were born to the same parents you were. You may also have sister who have been "born" into your family by adoption. Or perhaps you were the one who was adopted. Whatever the circumstances, you are now part of one family. Unfortunately, in earthly adoptions there are sometimes problems, such as jealousy or feelings of superiority. Isn't it wonderful that no such emotions exist in the family of God? Read what Ellen White says in *The Desire of Ages*, p. 638:

"All who have been born into the heavenly family are in a special sense *the brethren of our Lord*. The love of Christ binds together the members of His family, and wherever that love is made manifest, there the divine relationship is revealed. 'Everyone that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God'" (1 John 4:7, emphasis supplied).

**AS MY ELDER BROTHER, JESUS HELPS ME BECOME
A CHERISHED DAUGHTER OF OUR FATHER GOD.**

Jesus, my Brother,
hold me close in Your arms.
Introduce me to our Father.

Lesson Three:

JESUS IS MY PEACE

INTRODUCTION

“For to us a Child is born, to us a Son is given, and the government will be on His shoulders. And He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, *PRINCE OF PEACE*” (Isaiah 9:6, NIV).

Isaiah, an Old Testament prophet, foretold the miraculous birth of Jesus. Among other titles, Jesus is called the *Prince of Peace*. A prince is someone who is in charge of a territory, with all the rights and responsibilities of his position. Jesus, as Prince of Peace, therefore, is in charge of *peace*. He can give peace to the hearts of each of us, His sisters. Like all good friends and elder brothers, He is anxious to bestow this gift upon us. We need only accept it. In this lesson, we will explore how we can have a wonderfully peaceful attitude.

A GIFT FOR US

1. What gift did Jesus promise His followers? (John 14:27)

It is interesting to read this text in different versions of the Bible. For example:

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid” (NIV).

“I leave behind with you—peace; I give you my own peace and my gift is nothing like the peace of this world. You must not be distressed and you must not be daunted” (Phillips).

“Peace is my parting gift to you, my own peace, such as the world cannot give. Set your troubled hearts at rest, and banish your fears” (NEB).

Each translation, while repeating the same thought, adds its own shade of meaning. In each, however, we find that Jesus is giving to us, His sisters, His own peace. “The believer... is to accept Christ as his [her] peace, for with Christ is God and peace” (Ellen White, *Selected Messages*, Book One, p. 395).

2. What does it mean to you to have peace? What other words could you use instead of peace?

One word that reminds us of peace is *rest*. Jesus tells us, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls." (Matthew 11:28, NIV). Have you ever been so weary that you felt ill, yet you could not sleep because you were worried about someone or something? Jesus wants us to accept Him as our peace; He wants to give us rest. "Learn from Me," He says, "for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find *rest*..." There is nothing quite so comfortable as turning our problems over to Jesus and trusting Him to take care of them. We find true rest in this way.

ZECHARIAH PROCLAIMED THE PEACE OF JESUS

Before Jesus was born, His mother Mary's aged cousin, Elizabeth, became pregnant. Elizabeth's husband was Zechariah, the priest. Although doubtful at first that the miracle of birth was possible to a couple of their years, Zechariah finally believed that God had given the gift of a son, and he named the child John as he had been told to do. Zechariah knew that God wanted this child to grow up to be a strong evangelist, preparing people for the ministry of Jesus. Read the "Song of Zechariah" as found in Luke 1:68-79. In his song, he foretells John's work as well as that of Jesus.

3. What does Zechariah call Jesus in Luke 1:78?
4. Where does Zechariah say that Jesus will guide people's feet? (Luke 1:78-79)

Margaret was very ill. Her worried husband had taken her to the best doctors in the world, but no one could find the cause of her illness. Many different remedies were tried; none helped. Her family and friends were concerned that she would not live, and a circle of prayer was formed. Everyone who knew Mary prayed for her recovery. Soon after the prayer circle was formed, Joan, one of the women in Margaret's church, felt very impressed that she should visit Margaret and speak of the peace of Jesus.

"How can I speak of peace to a dying woman?," she wondered. But the feelings were so strong that she quickly went to the hospital. There she found Margaret barely conscious. The hand which Joan took in her own was hot and dry and Margaret's eyes seemed glazed.

"Margaret, Margaret, I must speak with you," said Joan softly. She watched Margaret's disinterested gaze slide toward her, then continued. "My dear, I feel very strongly that I must speak to you of the peace that Jesus offers. Can you hear and understand me?" Margaret's eyes closed briefly, then reopened. She nodded slightly.

"My friend, Jesus wants to take your burdens. He wants to give you His peace, His rest. Is there anything on your heart that would prevent Jesus from entering there?"

Tears trickled down Margaret's wasted cheeks. Haltingly she whispered a secret from her past that had tortured her for many months. "Jesus cannot help me; He cannot erase that sin from me. He cannot...."

"But He *can!*," insisted Joan, wiping the tears from Margaret's face. "He *can* take away this burden from you. If you but confess to Him, ask Him to forgive you, He will forgive you. The Bible says that 'He will again have compassion on us; [He] will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea' (Micah 7:19, NIV). Would you like to pray right now?"

At Margaret's nod, the two women prayed together for the peace that would be brought by the forgiveness of Jesus. From that time, Margaret's health began to improve. Her doctors shook their heads at what seemed to them her unexplainable recovery.

The Bible tells us that "A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones" (Proverbs 17:22, NIV). There is nothing that crushes the spirit worse than a guilty conscience, a burden of shame. And there is nothing that cheers like having the peace of Jesus within the heart. Will you ask Jesus to enter *your* heart today?

JESUS CALMS THE STORM

5. Read Luke 8:22-25. In what danger did the disciples find themselves in this passage?
6. In your opinion, why was Jesus able to sleep through the fierce storm?
7. It sometimes seems to us in reading the Bible story that the disciples should have known Jesus as their peace, and should not have panicked. But often in moments of stress, we also forget His presence. Read the following paragraph from *The Desire of Ages*, page 336. Underline the words that tell you how having Jesus in our hearts gives us peace.

"How often the disciples' experience is ours! When the tempests of temptation gather, and the fierce lightnings flash, and the waves sweep over us, we battle with the storm alone, forgetting that there is One who can help us. We trust to our own strength till our hope is lost and we are ready to perish. Then we remember Jesus, and if we call upon Him to save us, we shall not cry in vain... He never fails to give us the help we need. Whether on the land or on the sea, if we have the Saviour in our hearts, there is no need of fear. Living faith in the Redeemer will smooth the sea of life, and will deliver us from danger in the way that He knows to be best."

8. Share with the members of your study group a time when you were aware of the peace which only Jesus can give.

THE PEACE THAT JESUS GIVES TO MY HEART IS THE ONLY TRUE REST.

The gift of God is peace, sweet peace,
The peace only Jesus can bring.
He took my burdens all away,
and gave me a new song to sing.

Lesson Four:

JESUS IS MY ROLE MODEL

INTRODUCTION

Meggie, five years old, wanted to be *just like* her mother. She carefully watched and listened so that she could act just like Mother and talk just like Mother. Mother often sang as she did her housework; Meggie chirped her little songs. Mother played the piano; Meggie was often seen at the keyboard, carefully touching the keys. Mother was a good cook; Meggie donned her little apron and “helped” in the kitchen. Having a good role model, Meggie grew up with many of the same skills that her mother possessed. What makes little girls want to be “just like Mother?” It is probably the love relationship between the two which creates admiration and the desire to be similar.

Jesus wants a love relationship with us. And when we desire to be like Him, we can see what a perfect Role Model we have in Christ.

OUR ROLE MODEL

1. Where did Jesus live for a time, and what gives Him the qualifications to be our role model? (John 1:14)

The NIV says, “...the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.” Being full of the grace and truth of God, Jesus showed many qualities that are worthy of our emulation. In this lesson, we shall explore a few of them.

SUBMISSION

2. Perhaps the most difficult trait for us to acquire is that of submission. Shortly before Jesus’ death, He demonstrated the most difficult submission to His Father. Read about it in Matthew 26:39, 42, 44. How was He showing a submissive spirit?
3. The apostle Paul advises women to be submissive to their husbands. In what way does he limit this submissiveness? (Colossians 3:18, 19)

Verse 18, in the NIV says, “Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.” Phillips puts it, “Wives, adapt yourselves to your husbands, that your marriage may be a Christian unity.” Regardless of the words used, it is clear that we are to obey our

husbands *in the Lord*, that is, when they do not require disobedience to the commands of God. Again, we are following the example Jesus gave us as He submitted to His earthly parents and to civil command when it did not oppose His Father's will. When man and woman were created, it was as equals. Sin has brought many problems to earth, including troubles that result because some men abuse their privileges. Nevertheless, we are to try to make our homes happy and loving, keeping in mind that obedience to God comes before obedience to man.

COMPASSIONATE UNDERSTANDING

4. What distressing physical condition had a certain woman suffered, and for how long? (Mark 5:25)
5. How had she tried to obtain relief, and with what results? (Mark 5:26)
6. When this woman heard about Jesus, she tried to reach Him, but had great difficulty because of the crowds. What was she finally able to do, and what happened? (Mark 5:27-29)
7. Read the rest of the story in versus 30-34. How did Jesus react to this woman's problem?

In Ellen White's *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 344-345, we find a commentary on this Bible story: The Saviour could distinguish the touch of faith from the casual contact of the careless throng. Such trust should not be passed without comment. He would speak to the humble woman words of comfort that would be to her a wellspring of joy—words that would be a blessing to His followers to the close of time.

"Looking toward the woman, Jesus insisted on knowing who had touched Him. Finding concealment vain, she came forward tremblingly, and cast herself at His feet. With grateful tears she told the story of her suffering, and how she had found relief. Jesus gently said, 'Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace.'"

WITNESSING AND TEACHING

8. What method did Jesus use when he spoke to the people? (Matthew 13:34)

Another word for *parable* is *story*, or *morality tale*. Sometimes the word *lesson* is used. Our text tells us that Jesus taught in parables. In other words, He used stories to teach the lessons He wanted people to understand.

9. What evidence do we have that Jesus was teaching His disciples as well as other people? (Matthew 15:15)

10. What did Jesus want His disciples (followers) to do with the messages He gave to them? (Matthew 28:19, 20)

“Christ commissioned His disciples to do the work He had left in their hands, beginning at Jerusalem... But the work was not to stop here. It was to be extended to the earth’s remotest bounds. To His disciples Christ said, ‘You have been witnesses of My life of self-sacrifice in behalf of the world. You have witnessed My labors for Israel... You have seen that all who come to Me, confessing their sins, I freely receive... To you, My disciples, I commit this message of mercy. It is to be given... to all nations, tongues, and peoples...’” (*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 821, 822).

An iceberg is a massive expanse of ice that has broken away from a glacier and floats in the sea. Ships’ captains are aware that by far the larger part of the iceberg (perhaps 90%) is *below* the surface of the water. What can be seen is called the “tip of the iceberg.” What we have done with this lesson is to show only the “tip” of the personality of Christ. We have touched briefly on three of the countless facets of His personality. He is our Role Model in all phases of our lives. By studying the first four books of the New Testament (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John) and by reading *The Desire of Ages*, we can gain a better understanding of the character of Jesus. As we expand our knowledge of Him, we can begin to ask ourselves, “What would Jesus do?” when we are faced with hard problems.

USING JESUS AS MY ROLE MODEL WILL HELP ME TO MAKE BETTER DECISIONS

A girl was given a beautiful, expensive piece of cloth from which to make a very special dress. Eagerly she slashed into the fabric, cutting this way and that. When she tried to put the pieces together into a garment, she found that she could do nothing with it. Finding the girl crying, her mother helped her to sew the ragged pieces together again into one large length, joining the pieces so skillfully that the seams scarcely showed. Then the mother and daughter carefully pinned a pattern onto the cloth and cut around it. When the dress was complete, the daughter turned to her mother and exclaimed, “Why, what I really needed was a pattern!”

So it is with us. Jesus is our role model, our pattern. And despite the tears and tatters of life, when we follow Him we will be made perfect. Jesus will help patch together the torn fabric of our lives, and by following the Pattern, we will be beautiful.

Lesson Five:

JESUS IS MY CONFIDENCE BUILDER

INTRODUCTION

Maria was a shy, quiet young woman. She had grown up in an abusive home, had run away with an abusive man, and had reached depths of degradation she wouldn't have believed possible. She felt that she was ugly and stupid and could expect nothing better from life.

Then Maria met Joyce, a Christian woman who could see through the pain in Maria's eyes. Joyce could see that there was a beautiful person inside. Joyce told Maria of Jesus, a Friend who loves without exception. The thought that Someone could love *her* was new to Maria, and it brought the first glimmer of hope to her heart. With Joyce's help, she began to believe in her own worth; she began to see new hope for a fulfilling life.

CONFIDENCE

1. We have learned in previous lessons that Jesus is our Friend, our Elder Brother, and he gives us peace. What confidence in Jesus does the apostle Paul express in Philippians 4:13?

If you are using a version other than the King James, the verse may use the pronoun *Him* rather than the noun *Christ*, but the KJV makes it clear by stating, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

When we are inclined to feel we cannot follow the commands of God, or we cannot tolerate a bad situation in which we find ourselves, we can remember this verse and be encouraged.

2. The Old Testament prophet Isaiah also gave verses to encourage us in life's troubles. Find one of them in Isaiah 43:2. What is the promise?

It is encouraging for us to know that Jesus is always with us; He will not forsake us. Sometimes, however, even the disciples, those close followers of Jesus, forgot how much He loved them. Once when Jesus needed some time alone to talk with His Heavenly Father, He sent the disciples across the sea ahead of Him. Read about their difficulty in Mark 6:47-49.

3. Since Jesus was obviously coming to their rescue, why do you think He would have walked on by the boat? (verse 48)
4. What words of comfort did Jesus speak? (verse 50)

Angie, a young girl, lived with her family in an old house far out in the country. One night after a school program, Angie was frightened as she found herself coming home alone to a dark house. Apparently everyone in the family had gone out. With trembling legs and a pounding heart, Angie quietly let herself in and crept up the stairs toward her bedroom. As she was tiptoeing down the hall, she thought she heard something. Angie stopped still and held her breath. Her scalp prickled and she felt she might faint. "Is that you, Angie?" Called a familiar voice. Her father!

"Yes, Dad," she replied cheerfully. Unafraid now, Angie continued to her room and was soon fast asleep. What a difference it made to know she was not alone!

GIVEN THE ABILITY

5. In the Bible story we read in Mark 6, Jesus had given the disciples a task to do: taking the boat across the sea. We are all given tasks to do, but sometimes we don't think that we can do them. For example, we may be asked to teach a Bible class, or sing in a church choir. The worst part is that our own families often discourage us. What did Jesus say about a prophet (teacher) and his own family? (Matthew 13:57)
6. When Jesus wants us to do something, He gives us the ability to perform the task. What does He say in Matthew 19:26?
7. Jesus admonishes us to change a bad habit or lifestyle. During His ministry on earth, a woman taken in adultery was brought to Jesus. After dealing with her accusers, what did Jesus tell her to do? (John 8:11)

"The woman had stood before Jesus, covering with fear. His words, 'He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone' had come to her as a death sentence. She dared not lift her eyes to the Saviour's face, but silently awaited her doom. In astonishment she saw her accusers depart speechless and confounded; then those words of hope fell upon her ear. 'Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.' Her heart melted, and she cast herself at the feet of Jesus, sobbing out her grateful love, and with bitter tears confessing her sins."

"This was to her the beginning of a new life, a life of purity and peace, devoted to the service of God. In the uplifting of this fallen soul, Jesus performed a greater miracle than in healing the most grievous physical disease; He cured the spiritual malady, which is unto death everlasting. This penitent woman became one of His most steadfast followers. With self-sacrificing love and devotion she repaid His forgiving mercy" (Ellen White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 462).

“. . . for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23, NIV). This tells us that we are all sinners. That is bad news. But the *good* news is that Jesus will not leave us alone; He will enable us to forsake sin. He will enable us to be His witnesses and to work for Him.

WOMEN AND JESUS

8. Many women helped Jesus in various ways during His earthly ministry. Do you feel that He wants women to work for him today?
9. In whose image were man *and woman* created? (Genesis 1:27)
10. Being created in God’s image, having Jesus as a Friend, Elder Brother, and Role Model, should give us all the confidence we need. Ellen White says, “All His biddings are enabling” (*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 333). Is Jesus prompting you to do something for Him right now?

THROUGH THE CONFIDENCE JESUS BUILDS IN ME, I KNOW THAT I AM A WORTHY WOMAN, A DAUGHTER OF GOD.

He asks my service, desires my heart,
carries my burdens, creates in me
the yearning to do His will,
to be all that He designed me to be.

God made me a woman; I rejoice in that.
I praise Him for the time He gives
to carry out His purpose.
God made me a woman, and I am glad.

(From “*God Made Me a Woman*” by Lea Hardy, 1992).

Lesson Six:

JESUS IS MY CONFIDANT

INTRODUCTION

Elizabeth and Lee had been happily married for several years. She found him to be quite predictable, kind, thoughtful, and loyal. Then suddenly, Lee began acting in a very strange manner. He began staying out late several nights each week, and he started locking a drawer in his desk. He evaded Elizabeth's questions concerning his behavior.

Elizabeth kept her concerns to herself for a time, but at last her imagination took control of her better sense and she confided her worst suspicions to Kim, a close friend. Was it possible, she wondered, that Lee was seeing another woman? Was he keeping the other woman's letters in that locked drawer? In tears, she wondered these things aloud to Kim.

Although Kim was Elizabeth's friend, she felt she just *had* to talk to someone else about Elizabeth's problems. That person talked to another person, and it wasn't long before the entire small community "knew" that Lee was seeing another woman and that the marriage would probably not last long.

When Elizabeth's birthday arrived, she was too distraught to even think about it, so when Lee came home with a large, burlap-wrapped gift, she was completely surprised. Removing the burlap in the living room, Elizabeth discovered a beautifully carved chest, just what she had wanted. Soon the mysteries surrounding Lee's behavior became very clear. He had been spending the evenings working in a friend's shop, trying to finish the lovely chest in time. He brought the plans home each night and locked them in his desk where he could take them out and study them, making sure he knew what he would do next.

It took some time and some hurt feelings to undo the harm done by Elizabeth's lack of confidence in Lee. Unfortunately, many times friends are eager to exhibit that they were the "first to know" bad news. What a wonderful blessing it is that Jesus can be our Confidant! He will never betray our trust as we learn to confide in Him and bring Him all our burdens.

CONFESSION

1. What does the wise man, Solomon, advise concerning sin? (Proverbs 28:13)
2. Another Bible writer, John the Beloved, told us what Jesus will do if we confess our sins. What is that? (1 John 1:9)

Read the following paragraphs taken from Ellen White's book, *Steps to Christ*, pp. 37-38, and then answer questions 3-5:

"The conditions of obtaining mercy of God are simple and just and reasonable. The Lord does not require us to do some grievous thing in order that we may have the forgiveness of sin. We need not make long and wearisome pilgrimages, or perform painful penances, to commend our souls to the God of heaven or to expiate our transgression; but he that confesseth and forsaketh his sin shall have mercy...."

"True confession is always of a specific character, and acknowledges particular sins. They may be of such a nature as to be brought before God only; they may be wrongs that should be confessed to individuals who have suffered injury through them; or they may be of a public character, and should then be as publicly confessed. But all confession should be definite and to the point, acknowledging the very sins of which you are guilty."

3. What is necessary for us to obtain mercy?
4. What is a characteristic of true confession?
5. When should we confess to anyone other than God?

OUR CONFIDANT

6. What makes Jesus the best Person to talk to about our troubles? (Hebrews 4:15)

The above text is given in different versions as follows:

"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin" (NIV).

"For ours is not a high priest unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who, because of his likeness to us, has been tested every way, only without sin" (NEB).

Yes, Jesus is able to sympathize with us, to offer us the kind of help we need. We are warned particularly as women that we should not share our problems with a man other than our husband, as this opens the door to many temptations. Some even feel that if we complain about our husband to another man, we are breaking our marriage vows. If we *must* talk to someone, let it be to a trusted woman friend. But, as we have seen in the introduction to this lesson, even this has its dangers. Jesus is the *only* Confidant who can be completely trusted to have our best good in His heart.

7. Although we can read God's messages through the Bible and see His goodness in the beautiful world around us, how only can we truly communicate with Him? (Psalm 5:1-3)

"There are few who rightly appreciate or improve the precious privilege of prayer. We should go to Jesus and tell Him all our needs. We may bring Him our little cares and perplexities as well as our greater troubles. Whatever arises to disturb or distress us, we should take it to the Lord in prayer. When we feel that we need the presence of Christ at every step, Satan will have little opportunity to intrude his temptation. It is his studied effort to keep us away from our best and most sympathizing friend. *We should make no one our confidant but Jesus.* We can safely commune with Him of all that is in our hearts" (Ellen White, *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 2, pp. 200-201, emphasis supplied).

JESUS IS MY TRUE AND RELIABLE CONFIDANT

I told Jesus all my troubles;
I told Jesus all my woe.
All my burdens burst like bubbles.
And my faith has learned to grow.

Lesson Seven:

JESUS IS MY COMFORTER

INTRODUCTION

In the mid-1800, in a little Pennsylvania town, Pastor Elisha Hoffman ministered to the poor and underprivileged. One day as he visited with a burdened woman, he tried to comfort her with prayer and Bible texts. The despairing woman seemed not to really hear him, for no matter what he said, she kept moaning, "Oh, what can I do? What can I do?"

Finally, Pastor Hoffman said to her, "The very best thing you can do is to tell Jesus all about it." To his surprise, the woman's face lighted up, and she started repeating, "Yes, I must tell Jesus! I must tell Jesus!" As the minister left her home, and for hours afterward, he could see her joyous face as she repeated those words, "I must tell Jesus."

Pastor Hoffman went home and, unable to get her words out of his mind, wrote a song. That song is sung in many places today and is a source of great comfort to those who sing it.

I must tell Jesus all of my trials;
I cannot bear my burdens alone;
In my distress He kindly will help me;
He ever loves and cares for His own.

I must tell Jesus! I must tell Jesus!
I cannot bear my burdens alone;
I must tell Jesus! I must tell Jesus!
Jesus can help me, Jesus alone.

JESUS OFFERS COMFORT

In lesson four, we studied about a woman who suffered from a bloody flow for twelve years. Jesus healed her when she simply touched His robe. Although the woman was timid about admitting that she had touched Him, when she spoke to Jesus of her sickness, he had cheerful words for her.

1. What did Jesus say to this woman? (Matthew 9:22, KJV)
2. In the KJV, the translation reads, "Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith had made thee whole." Read the versions given below and underline the word or phrase used instead of "comfort."

NIV: "Take heart, daughter; your faith has healed you."

Phillips: "Cheer up, my daughter, your faith has made you well."

3. Name the things that the apostle Paul mentions in Phillipians 2:1 that we may obtain from Christ.
4. What further advice does Paul give in Phillipians 2:2, 3?

Ellen White, in *The Ministry of Healing*, says, "Through His human agencies He desires to be a comforter such as the world knows not" (p. 105).

5. In what way does it comfort you to know that Jesus lived a humble life, and why?

THE FATHER ALSO COMFORTS

6. What further words about comfort do we find in II Thessalonians 2:16,17? (KJV)
7. Does it surprise you that God the Father loves us and wants to comfort us?
8. Again we find different words used instead of "comfort" in other versions of the Bible. The NIV uses the words "good hope" and "encouragement." Do you feel that it would be comforting to you to have hope and encouragement?

Sometimes our earthly comforters change toward us, move away, or become negative through trials of their own. Isn't it a wonderful thing to realize that the comfort of God the Father and of Jesus is an eternal comfort? They want to make us steady and happy in Them.

On page 125 of *Steps to Christ*, we find these words of comfort:

"If we do not have the pleasures of this life, we may still be joyful in looking to the life beyond.

"But even here Christians may have the joy of communion with Christ; they may have the light of His love, the perpetual comfort of His presence. Every step in life may bring us closer to Jesus, may give us a deeper experience of His love, and may bring us one step nearer to the blessed home of peace."

ANOTHER COMFORTER

9. When Jesus was about to leave His earthly ministry to return to Heaven, what promise did He make to His followers? (John 14:16)

The Comforter Jesus spoke of in this verse is the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Godhead. The Holy Spirit is able to dwell in all of our hearts if we only ask Him to, and don't crowd Him out with sin. Living in us, He enables us to follow Christ's example.

10. Jesus told the disciples that the Holy Spirit would do something important for them and for us. Find out what it is in John 16:13-15.

Lisa was brought up in a Christian home, but she married a man who was not a Christian. In an attempt to keep peace in her home, Lisa abandoned her early teaching and followed the ways of her husband. Several years passed and Lisa appeared to have forgotten those teachings. But God had not forgotten Lisa. A series of meetings was held in a church in town, and the Holy Spirit impressed Lisa to attend. She was reminded of many of the things her parents had taught her as a child. At the end of the series, a beautiful book was given to those who had attended all of the meetings. Lisa was given a book. Taking it home, she found a quiet place where she could be alone, and reverently opened the volume. The words of the book, and the lovely pictures, made a way for the Holy Spirit to speak to Lisa. Soon tears streamed down her cheeks, and she determined to follow Jesus for the rest of her life. What comfort she found as she put those holy principles into her daily experience!

**JESUS IS THE PERFECT COMFORTER, AND THROUGH HIS
HOLY SPIRIT ENCOURAGES ME DAY BY DAY.**

"I must tell Jesus! I must tell Jesus!
I cannot bear by burdens alone;
I must tell Jesus! I must tell Jesus!
Jesus can help me, Jesus alone."

Lesson Eight: **JESUS IS MY MENTOR**

INTRODUCTION

Elsa liked to spend time alone, writing about what she could see in the beautiful countryside where she lived. Sometimes she also wrote about her feelings, or about things that happened in her life. Elsa was very private with what she wrote; she never showed her poems or essays to anyone, except her father. Her father enjoyed reading the writings and he told Elsa so. But she knew Father loved her, and she thought he was probably prejudiced in her favor.

As time went on, and Elsa entered college, she still did not know what she wanted to do with her life. Then she met Professor Harding, her English instructor. Professor Harding was a woman of keen insight, and she observed that Elsa had a gift for writing. By inviting Elsa to her home for an afternoon or evening and showing special interest in Elsa's talent, Professor Harding was able to gain Elsa's confidence. Gradually the old poems and essays came out of hiding.

Through the patient instruction of her mentor, Elsa developed into a fine writer. Years later she could say, "All that I have become, I owe to the encouragement and instruction of my dear friend, Professor Harding."

WHAT IS A MENTOR?

The dictionary defines the word *mentor* as "a wise and trusted counselor or teacher." This definition will be used throughout the lesson as you search the texts for answers.

1. Is there someone in your life who could be called your mentor?

A PROPHECY OF JESUS

2. The Old Testament contains prophecies that foretold Jesus' birth and mission on earth. What words do you find in Isaiah 9:6 that indicate Jesus was to be a mentor?

A TEACHER FROM GOD

A rabbi today is an ordained spiritual leader of Jewish congregations. The word *rabbi* is of Hebrew origin, and in Jesus' day was used to mean *my master* or *teacher*.

3. One night a man named Nicodemus came to talk to Jesus at night. What two terms did he use to address Jesus? (John 3:2)
4. What reason did he give for believing that Jesus came from God? (John 3:2)

All through the Scriptures, we find instances of Jesus teaching the people. He taught by the sea, on the mountain, in the villages, and in the country. By His purity and truth, He made enemies among those not ready to accept Him. Those men tried to find something wrong in His teaching. One time they sent temple guards to find Jesus and arrest Him, but the guards returned without Jesus. Scan the story in John 7:25-47.

5. What was Jesus doing in the temple courts? (John 7:28)
6. What did the chief priests and Pharisees ask the guards when they returned? (John 7:45)
7. What was the reply of the guards? (John 7:46)

"Hardened as were their hearts, they were melted by His words. While he was speaking in the temple court, they had lingered near to catch something that might be turned against Him. But as they listened, the purpose for which they had been sent was forgotten. They stood as men entranced. Christ revealed Himself to their souls. They saw that which priests and rulers would not see—humanity flooded with the glory of divinity. They returned so filled with this thought, so impressed by His words, that to the inquiry, 'Why have ye not brought Him?' they could only reply, 'Never man spake like this Man'" (Ellen White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 459).

8. As you read the above paragraphs, can you see how Jesus places a high value on all people and their talents? Does He fit the definition of "a wise and trusted counselor and teacher" for you?
9. Do you want to accept Jesus as your Mentor?

JESUS IS MY MENTOR, MY WISE AND TRUSTED COUNSELOR AND FRIEND.

Teach me, Jesus, every day.
Teach me what You'd have me say;
Teach me what You'd see me do;
Teach me to be true to You

Lesson Nine:

JESUS IS MY DEFENDER

INTRODUCTION

Janette hurried toward home, her braids flying behind her. Only a few yards back, a bigger boy taunted her. He had done this before, and Janette was frightened. She knew no reason for this boy's cruelty, only that he made fun of her poor clothes and rundown house. He was always threatening to do unkind things to her.

Just as the bully was getting closer, a teenage girl stepped out of a doorway and fell into step beside Janette. Putting an arm around the younger girl, she called back over her shoulder, "Just go back where you belong! This little girl is my friend, and you know better than to torment my friends!"

To Janette's surprise, the boy soon disappeared around a corner. Looking up into the older girl's face, she whispered, "Oh, I thank you! But how can you be my friend? I never even saw you before!"

With a smile the girl replied, "I'm your friend because I want to be, and because you need one. I don't think that boy will bother you again, but if he does, or if anyone else does, you just knock on that door where I came out. Everybody knows me, and they won't hurt you when they know I am your defender."

There are at least two ways to define the word *defender*. One is to serve as guard and protector, such as Janette's teenage friend did for her. Another way to defend is in a court of law, where there is a *defense attorney*; one who provides vindication for the accused, justifying his or her behavior. In this lesson, we will consider Jesus in both roles—as defender and as defense attorney.

JESUS

In previous lessons, we have seen some of the prophecies that pointed to the birth of Jesus. Through Bible teaching, we know that Jesus existed as the Son of God from the beginning in heaven.

1. What did John call Jesus in John 1:14?
2. What does John say that the *Word*, or Jesus, did "in the beginning?" (John 1:1-3).

3. How does John show the relationship between God the Father and God the Son (Jesus)? (John 1:1).
4. Do you see how verses of the Old Testament which mention God could refer to Jesus?
5. How did David, the writer of many of the Psalms, view the Lord? (Psalm 5:11,12; 89:18).
6. What did Jesus warn His disciples that they would have in this world? (John 16:33).
7. Why did He say they should be of good cheer? (John 16:33).

“. . . by passing over the ground which man must travel, our Lord has prepared the way for us to overcome. It is not His will that we should be placed at a disadvantage in the conflict with Satan. He would not have us intimidated and discouraged by the assaults of the serpent [Satan]. 'Be of good cheer,' He says, 'I have overcome the world'" (Ellen White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 122).

IN A COURT OF LAW

Some of us are fascinated by the ways in which laws are enforced. In many lands, being accused of criminal behavior means that a person must be "tried" in a court for the crime. That person is tried in front of a judge and perhaps a jury to decide whether or not she actually committed the crime, and if so, what the punishment must be. It is very important to have a good defense attorney to plead the case of the accused. The defense attorney usually tries to prove that the client is innocent, or should at least have a very light punishment. Unfortunately, not all attorneys are honest, and some use dishonest ways to assure that their clients have no punishment at all. When this happens, the accused often pays the lawyer a very large sum of money.

It is also true that sometimes the prosecuting attorney is not an honest person, and will try very hard to prove that an innocent person is guilty. This was the way it was in the time of Jesus. Some of the priests and pharisees wanted to get rid of Jesus, so they used every excuse they could find against Him. Read about one such instance in Luke 13:10-17.

8. In this story what was Jesus doing?
9. Who was there who needed special help?
10. What did Jesus do?
11. How did the man in charge of the synagogue react?
12. How did Jesus defend the woman and His own action? (verses 15 and 16).

Verse 17 (NIV) says, "When he said this, all his opponents were humiliated, but the people were delighted with all the wonderful things he was doing." While Jesus would never unnecessarily shame anyone, it was His responsibility to show people where they were doing wrong, where they had begun to follow man's tradition instead of God's merciful way.

13. What did Paul give as a reason that we should not judge one another? (Romans 14:10).
14. Rather than fear that judgment day, we can take great comfort from knowing Who our Advocate (Defender) is. Find out in 1 John 2:1.

"No sooner does the child of God approach the mercy seat than he becomes the *client of the great Advocate*. At his first utterance of penitence and appeal for pardon, *Christ espouses his case and makes it His own*, presenting the supplication before the Father as His own request..."Ask in My name," Christ says. "I do not say that I will pray the Father for you; for the Father Himself loveth you, because you have loved Me." (Ellen White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 364, emphasis supplied).

In lesson ten, we shall see that Jesus is not only our great Defender, He is also our Magistrate. Isn't that exciting news?

**JESUS IS THE GREAT DEFENDER, WHO WILL NOT ALLOW ME
TO BE TRIED BEYOND THAT WHICH HE CAN HELP ME TO STAND.**

No temptation has seized you
except what is common to man.
And God is faithful;
He will not let you be tempted
beyond what you can bear.
But when you are tempted,
He will also provide a way out
so that you can stand up under it.

I Corinthians 10:13, NIV

Lesson Ten:

JESUS IS MY MAGISTRATE

INTRODUCTION

Raya couldn't believe her eyes! There, sticking out of the bakery trash was a whole loaf of bread! Quickly running from the alley, she slipped the loaf under her clothing and started for home, her heart racing. Wouldn't her children be surprised!

As Raya reached the road, however, she heard angry voices behind her. Suddenly, rough hands grabbed her shoulders.

"Thief!" shouted her accuser. "You stole that loaf of bread from my bakery!"

"No, no," protested Raya. "I don't steal. Please, sir!" But the callous policeman pushed and dragged her along, the irate baker berating her all the way.

Sometime later, facing the stern magistrate, Raya trembled as the baker made his accusations. Then she felt the magistrate's level gaze turn to her. "And what can you tell me about all this?" he asked.

Raya's story tumbled from her lips: no work, hungry children, and the loaf of bread in the trash. Turning again to the baker, the magistrate questioned, "Could this woman's story be true?"

Ashamed, the baker admitted that it probably was.

"Then I sentence you thus," said the magistrate. "You, Raya, are free. And you Sir Baker, must give this woman work each day to provide food for her family."

It would be hard to say who was more astonished, Raya or the baker. But until the hard times were over, Raya kept the bakery clean, and her family's food was assured.

BIBLE MAGISTRATES

The Bible tells us about magistrates during the years before and after Christ's time on earth. Sometimes magistrates were just and good; sometimes they were not.

1. Acts 16:16-19 tells the story of a slave girl who made money for her owners by fortune telling. Paul and Silas were in the city and the girl followed them. Finally, Paul told the evil spirit in the girl to leave her, which it did. This made her of

- less value to her owners, who became angry. What did these owners then do? (Acts 16:20-21).
2. Verses 22-24 tell what the magistrate did to Paul and Silas. Was he acting as a just judge, or did he perhaps fear the influential men who accused Paul and Silas?
 3. The rest of the chapter tells of the way God miraculously intervened. Find the change in the magistrates and the reasons for this change in verses 38 and 39.
 4. Jesus told His disciples a parable (story) about a certain magistrate and a widow. Find the story in Luke 18:1-5. Why did this magistrate grant the widow's request?
 5. Jesus told this story to show the difference in how His Father will answer prayer, not because of much asking, but because He wants to help the person who prays. What does Jesus say God will do? (Luke 18:8).

TODAY AND THE FUTURE

6. In his letter to the Hebrews, who does Paul say will judge His people? (Hebrews 10:30).
7. What advice are we given in James 5:7-9, and why?
8. One of Paul's sermons is recorded in some detail in the Bible. What reason does he give to repent of sins? (Acts 17:31).

Some people are very fearful of the judgment of God. Jesus does not want us to be afraid of the Father God, for all three members of the Godhead love us. Because He wants us to understand that all people must be judged before Jesus can come to take His people to live, there are many verses in the Bible to give us comfort. We will discuss some of those verses.

9. In Acts 17:31, Paul said that the Man who will judge the world with justice has been appointed and raised from the dead. Peter spoke of the same events in Acts 10:36-42. Whom does Peter say will judge the living and the dead?
10. What further reasons for conflict and hope are given in verse 43?

"The humble Nazarene asserts His real nobility. He rises above humanity, throws off the guise of sin and shame, and stands revealed, the Honored of the angels, the Son of God, One with the Creator of this universe. His hearers are spellbound. No man has ever spoken words like His, or borne Himself with such a kingly majesty. His utterances are clear and plain, fully declaring His mission, and the duty of the world. 'For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: that all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father which hath sent Him... For as the Father hath life in Himself,

so that He hath given to the Son to have life in Himself; and hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man” (Ellen White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 210; John 5:22, 23, 26, 27 quoted).

11. What did Jesus say about judging? (John 5:30).
12. In his second letter to his young friend, Timothy, Paul wrote of a wonderful event to which he looked forward. What was the event, and why did he look forward to it? (II Timothy 4:8).

There is much sin and suffering in the world. All around we see the results of war, selfishness, and greed. Satan tries hard to discourage each of us. He tries to take our minds away from the promise that Jesus gave to return and take His faithful followers to live with Him forever. Satan wants us to be afraid of Jesus’ coming, to fear the judgment. We need always to be reminded that we have nothing to fear from One whom we have accepted as our Friend, our Elder Brother, our Defender, our Magistrate.

I CAN TRUST JESUS, MY MAGISTRATE, TO JUDGE ME FAIRLY.

“Everyone who does evil hates the light,
and will not come into the light
for fear that his deeds will be exposed.

But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light
so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done
has been done through God.”

John 3:20, 21 NIV

Lesson Eleven:

JESUS IS MY REDEEMER

INTRODUCTION

Rhona's frightened face surfaced again before the relentless current pulled her under the water for what seemed like the hundredth time. She was too weak to struggle any longer. The blackness began to descend. Just before she completely lost consciousness, she felt strong arms push her to the surface. She fainted as she was being towed to shore.

When Rhona opened her eyes, she was on her stomach. A heavy weight regularly descended on her back, then lifted as river water spewed from her mouth. She began to cough and struggle. She heard a chuckle, and the weight left her. Turning over, Rhona discovered a young man smiling down at her. "Good! You're gonna be fine," he stated simply.

Looking around, Rhona realized that she was in unfamiliar territory. Sudden panic struck, and she fought to rise. "Lemme go," she sobbed. "They sent me with a note, and I fell in the river!" She searched her garment in agitation. "Oh, I lost the note!" she wailed. She then began to run upstream.

Her rescuer ran with her, bit-by-bit gathering the information that she was a slave girl. She was terrified of the consequences at having failed in her assigned task. Gradually, he calmed her and offered to go with her to meet her owners.

"But who are you," she objected, "and how could you help?"

"My name is Paul," he rejoined. "I was freed by my former owner. I will talk to your master and perhaps he will listen."

Rhona's owner was ready to whip her for carelessness, but when Paul offered to take the message while Rhona lost no more time from work, the owner agreed.

Although weeks went by when Paul was unable to see much of Rhona, their friendship and regard grew. It was with great sorrow that he heard the news that Rhona was to be sold, with several other slaves, on the next market day.

Paul was there, watching Rhona's humiliated stance and anguished expression as she waited her turn for auction. Finally, Rhona stood before them all, embarrassed, her brown eyes filled with tears. Paul bit his lip and waited while the bids flew. The bids

shrunk to two bidders. At last, one bidder withdrew. The other assumed a triumphant grin and started for the auction block. The auctioneer intoned, "Going, going..."

Paul's voice rang out with a slightly higher bid. "GONE!" shouted the auctioneer, "To the new bidder." He motioned Paul to pay the treasurer, gathered his papers, and left.

Rhona's astonishment was mirrored in the eyes of most of the bidders. Where did an ex-slave get that kind of money? For Rhona's ears only, Paul explained that it had taken every bit of the money he had saved since his freedom, that he had waited until the bidding had stopped in order to capitalize on the surprise generated by his bid, hoping that the auctioneer would close the bidding. His ruse had worked, and now Rhona was his. His, he explained, so that he could free her. He had saved her from the river, he had redeemed her life from the slave owners, and now he would set her free.

PROPHECY: A RIGHTEOUS KING

1. In the days of the Old Testament prophet Jeremiah, what message did God give to the people? (Jeremiah 23:5,6).
2. What further detail does the prophet Micah add? (Micah 5:2).
3. King Ahaz also received word from God regarding this prophecy. What was he told? (Isaiah 7:13, 14).

"The plan for our redemption was not an afterthought; a plan formulated after the fall of Adam. It was a revelation of 'the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal' Romans 16:25, RV. It was an unfolding of the principles that from eternal ages have been the foundation of God's throne. From the beginning, God and Christ knew of the apostasy of Satan, and of the fall of man through the deceptive power of the apostate. God did not ordain that sin should exist, but He foresaw its existence, and made provision to meet the terrible emergency. So great was His love for the world, that He covenanted to give His only begotten Son, 'that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life,'" (John 3:16, Ellen White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 22).

PROPHECY REVEALED

4. Years later, the prophesied birth took place. You may read about it in Matthew 1:18-25. What did the angel tell Joseph in a dream, and why? (Matthew 1:20-23).
5. What did Jesus say at one time that revealed He knew why He was on earth? (Matthew 18:11, KJV. Some versions omit this verse).
6. In His prayer for all followers, what does Jesus say about His work? (John 17:4).

"In stooping to take upon Himself humanity, Christ revealed a character the opposite of the character of Satan. But He stepped still lower in the path of humiliation. 'Being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross,' (Phillipians 2:8). Christ took the form of a servant, and offered sacrifice; Himself the Priest, Himself the victim. He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him," (Isaiah 53:5).

"Christ was treated, as we deserve, that we might be treated, as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share. He suffered the death, which was ours, that we might receive the life, which was His. 'With His stripes we are healed,'" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 25).

PROPHECY VERIFIED

7. What testimony did John, the beloved disciple, give in 1 John 4:14?
8. Paul also testified of Jesus' saving and redeeming power. What does he say in Galatians 3:13?
9. In Galatians 4:4, 5, when does Paul say that God sent Jesus to earth?

As we study history, we find that the time that Jesus was born was a time *politically* right. The nations were united under one government, one language was widely spoken, and the Jews gathered in Jerusalem for the annual feasts, from whence they could spread the news about the Messiah as they returned home.

The time was *spiritually* right, for many people were turning from heathenism and searching for knowledge of the living God.

The time was *humanly* right, for faith and hope had grown dim as the Jews drifted away from God. As always, God's timing was perfect.

10. In the following excerpt from *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 827-828, underline the words or phrases that tell you what Jesus wants to do for you right now.

"The Saviour longs to manifest His grace and stamp His character on the whole world. It is His purchased possession, and He desires to make men free, and pure, and holy. Though Satan works to hinder this purpose, yet through the blood shed for the world there are triumphs to be achieved that will bring glory to God and the Lamb. Christ will not be satisfied till the victory is complete, and 'He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied,' Isaiah 53:11. All the nations of the earth shall hear the gospel of His grace. Not all will receive His grace; but 'a seed shall serve Him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation', (Psalm 22:30)."

It is easy to imagine the rest of the story, this lesson started with, as we find Rhona and Paul falling deeply in love, marrying, and having a fulfilling life together.

There is a spiritual parallel. Jesus saved us from eternal death when He died for us on the cross of Calvary. He redeemed us from the Prince of this earth, Satan. To redeem means literally *to buy back*. We belonged to Christ originally; Satan claimed us as his through sin, and Jesus bought us back. Now He wants us to be His Church-Bride, and live with Him eternally. Praise the Lord, oh my soul!

JESUS, MY SAVIOUR/REDEEMER, CLAIMS ME AS HIS OWN.

“For God did not send His Son into the world
to condemn the world,
but to save the world through Him.”

John 3;17, NIV

Lesson Twelve:

JESUS IS MY HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

INTRODUCTION

When the Lord shall come in glory,
While unnumbered angels sing,
And the earth itself shall tremble
At the presence of the King,
Oh, the glory of that moment!
When the dead in Christ shall rise
And with all the righteous living,
Meet their Saviour in the skies!

Through those gates of pearl we'll enter
And we'll walk the streets of gold,
Singing praises to our Maker
For the wonders we behold.
We shall stand with our Redeemer,
We shall see His blessed face,
And we'll never cease to praise Him
For His wondrous saving grace.

There will be a grand reunion
With the loved ones gone before;
What delight in simply knowing
We'll be parted nevermore!
All our sorrow will be ended,
All our illness passed away,
Only love and joy and rapture
In our Lord's eternal day.

By A. G. Beman

THE PROMISE

Jesus had spent over three years in earthly ministry. He knew that He was nearing the end of His time here, and He tried to prepare the disciples. They were unable to accept the idea of being without Christ, and asked why they could not go with Him. He had lived with them, worked with them, taught them His ways. He had, in fact, just taught them to humble themselves to each other. They shared what was to become known as the Last Supper. The disciples loved Jesus *so much*, why must they be separated?

1. What precious promise did Jesus give His disciples at that time? (John 14:1-3).

INSTRUCTION OF JESUS

2. Where did Jesus go? (John 16:16)
3. Why? (John 14:3)
4. What work did Jesus leave to be done? (John 13:34, 35; John 14:15; John 15:12; Matthew 28:19, 20)
5. How do we know that Jesus meant to invite everyone to love one another and follow Him? (John 17:20-23; Titus 2:11, 12)

"All may find something to do. 'The poor always ye have with you' (John 12:8), Jesus said, and none need feel that there is no place where they can labor for Him. Millions upon millions of human souls ready to perish, bound in chains of ignorance and sin, have never so much as heard of Christ's love for them. Were our condition and theirs to be reversed, what would we desire them to do for us? All this, so far as lies in our power, we are under the most solemn obligation to do for them. Christ's rule of life, by which every one of us must stand or fall in the judgment, is, 'Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them,'" (Matthew 7:12, Ellen White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 639).

6. What evidence do we have that the apostles felt they had fulfilled their mission and were looking forward to Jesus' return?

Paul (II Timothy 4:6-8):

John (Revelation 22:20):

7. What hope can we share with Paul? (Titus 1:2, Titus 2:13,14)
8. What help can we depend upon? (John 14:16; Titus 3:3-6)

"When we realize that we are workers together with God, His promises will not be spoken with indifference. They will burn in our hearts, and kindle upon our lips. To Moses, when called to minister to an ignorant, undisciplined, and rebellious people, God gave the promise, 'My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.' And He said, 'Certainly I will be with thee,' Exodus 33:14; 3:12. *This promise is to all who labor in Christ's stead for His afflicted and suffering ones*" (Ellen White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 641, emphasis supplied).

9. What is the promised reward? (Titus 3:7)

Ellen White describes in detail the joys of heaven, including these words found in *The Great Controversy*, pp. 676-678:

"All the treasures of the universe will be open to the study of God's redeemed. Unfettered by mortality, they wing their tireless flight to worlds afar—worlds that thrilled with sorrow at the spectacle of human woe and rang with songs of gladness at the tidings of a ransomed soul. With unutterable delight the children of earth enter into the joy and the wisdom of unfallen beings. They share the treasures of knowledge and understanding gained through ages upon ages in contemplation of God's handiwork. With undimmed vision they gaze upon the glory of creation—suns and stars and systems, all in their appointed order circling the throne of Deity. Upon all things, from the least to the greatest, the Creator's name is written, and in all the riches of His power displayed.

"And the years of eternity, as they roll, will bring riches and still more glorious revelations of God and of Christ. As knowledge is progressive, so will love, reverence, and happiness increase. The more men learn of God, the greater will be their admiration of His character. As Jesus opens before them the riches of redemption and the amazing achievements in the great controversy with Satan, the hearts of the ransomed thrill with more fervent devotion, and with more rapturous joy they sweep the harps of gold; and ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of voices unite to swell the mighty chorus of praise."

10. As a woman precious to your Lord, do you want to be one of the redeemed, saved by Jesus, your Friend, your Elder Brother, your Comforter, your Counselor and loving Magistrate?
11. Will you ask Him to come into your heart right now?

JESUS IS MY HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

"Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth
and under the earth and on the sea,
and all that is in them, singing:
'To Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb
be praise and honor and glory and power,
forever and ever!'"

Rev. 5:13, NIV

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WOMEN'S MINISTRIES DEPARTMENT
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD
20904 USA | Ph: 1-301-680-6636
www.adventistwomensministries.org