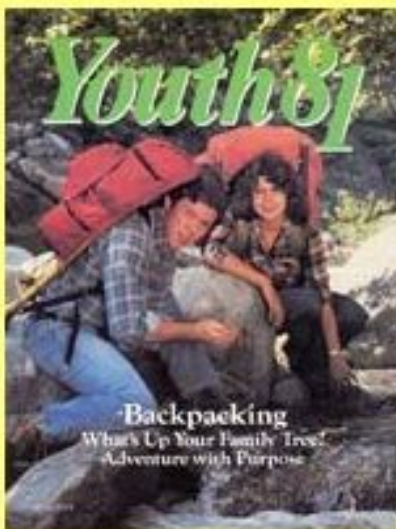


Church of God

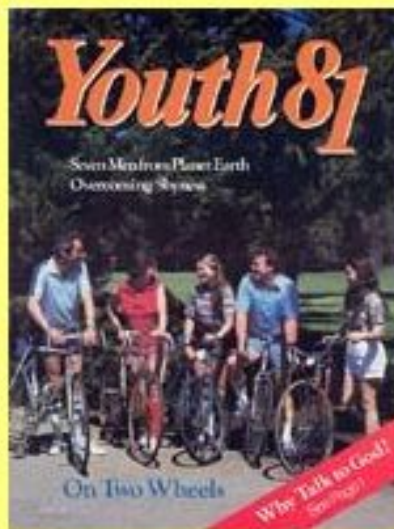
# Teen Bible Study

Lessons Harvested from Youth Magazine

*45 Topics Covered!*



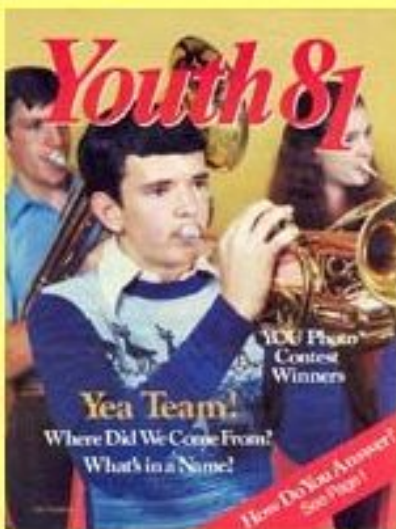
Youth 81 (Prelim No 06) Jun-Jul



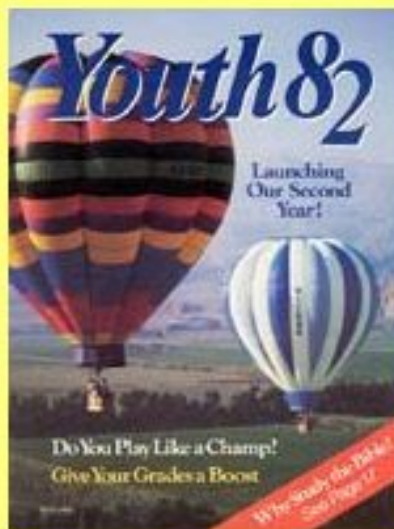
Youth 81 (Prelim No 07) Aug



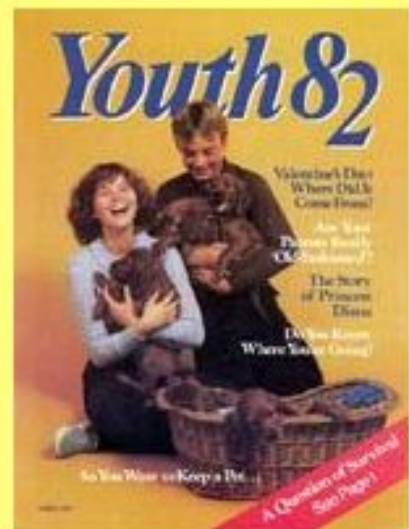
Youth 81 (Prelim No 08) Sep



Youth 81 (Prelim No 10) Dec



Youth 82 (Prelim No 01) Jan



Youth 82 (Prelim No 02) Feb

# *Topics*

01 - Why Should I Study the Bible? .....	3
02 - How We Got the Bible .....	5
03 – Is God Real to You? .....	7
04 – Your Awesome Potential Part 1 .....	9
05 – Your Awesome Potential Part 2 .....	11
06 – How to Guarantee Job Success .....	13
07 – Are the Ten Commandments for Teens Today? .....	15
08 – Why the Fourth Commandment is So Important .....	17
09 – Why Obey God Today? .....	19
10 – The Surprising Origin of Christmas .....	21
11 – To Tell the Truth .....	23
12 – Who and What is God? .....	25
13 – Here’s Proof Jesus Christ Lived .....	27
14 – What Was Christ Really Like? .....	29
15 – A Gold Mine in Your Home! .....	31
16 – Setting Goals for Success in Life .....	33
17 – Preparing for Success .....	35
18 – Here’s to Your Good Health .....	37
19 – Drive, Drive, DRIVE Toward Success! .....	39
20 – Resourcefulness – The Key to Solving Problems .....	41
21 – Never Give Up! .....	43
22 – The All-Important Seventh Law of Success .....	45
23 – A SNEAK PREVIEW of Your Awesome Future .....	47
24 – How God Can Become Real to You .....	49
25 – Let God Talk to You .....	51
26 – Here’s How to Talk to God .....	53
27 – THINK Before You Speak .....	55
28 – Why Be THANKFUL? .....	57
29 – Why Keep the Eighth Commandment? .....	59
30 – Money Tips .....	61
31 – “Honor My Parents – Are You Kidding?” .....	63
32 – Making Wise Decisions .....	65
33 – The Surprising Origin of Easter .....	67
34 – Make the Most of Your Summer Job .....	69
35 – Why is the World in Such a Mess? .....	71
36 – A Brighter Tomorrow .....	73
37 – A Sneak Preview .....	75
38 – HAPPINESS – A Choice You Can Make! .....	77
39 – What’s in a Name? .....	79
40 – How to Keep Your Cool .....	81
41 – The REAL Star Wars .....	83
42 – ‘What Do You Think?’ .....	85
43 – What Shape Are You In? .....	87
44 – Let’s Be Honest! .....	89
45 – What’s Your Hurry? .....	91



# Teen Bible Study

## Why Should I Study the Bible?

Prepared by Richard H. and Richard A. Sedliacik

Have you ever thought about what a privilege it is to be a teen in God's Church today?

Because at least one of your parents is a member of God's Church, you have access to understanding that is unavailable to other teenagers in the world.

You can know how to have a successful, happy life. You can be learning the true values in life now and avoid making the mistakes that can wreck, or seriously hinder you from experiencing the satisfying life God wants you to have.

As a part of this very special group of teens, you can know the incredible human potential — of one day becoming a spirit-born member in the universe-ruling Family of God!

You are also able to prepare now to be a leader in the wonderful world tomorrow. Christ will come in your lifetime soon, and He will call many like you who learn of His ways to be leaders then.

But you can't fully understand the way that leads to all these wonderful things unless you study God's Instruction Book for man. This Book, the Holy Bible, is the foundation of all true knowledge. In God's Word you will discover the keys to living a successful and joyful life here and now, and for all eternity.

Find your Bible and get ready to begin the first of many Teen Bible Studies written especially for you. Be sure to look up and read in your Bible each scripture reference given in answer to the questions asked. And why not try to follow the principle illustrated by the first question to get the most out of these studies?

1. What did God command that every king of Israel was to do when he ascended the throne? Deut. 17:18. Why? Verses 19-20.

As a potential leader in the world tomorrow, you need to begin preparing by regularly studying the Bible. These monthly Bible studies will certainly help you in your study of God's Word. And writing out the scriptures that answer the questions will prove to be an effective aid to remembering and review-

ing the important concepts you'll be studying.

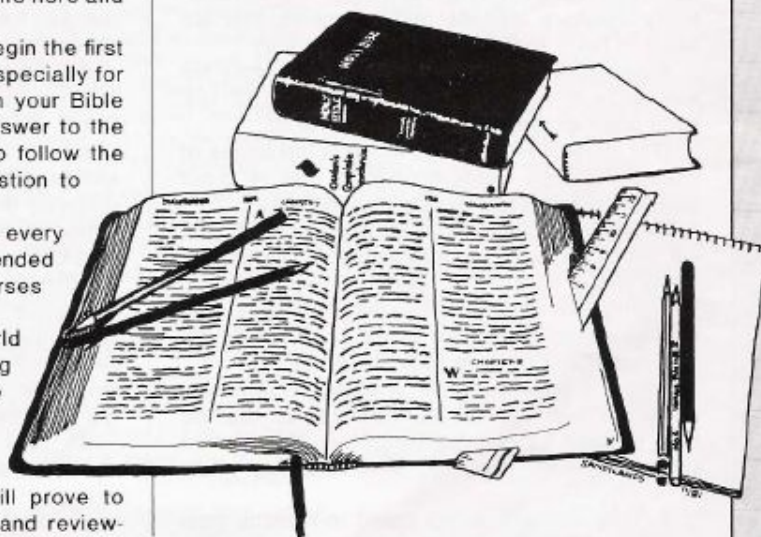
2. What are we told about the wisdom of King Solomon? I Kings 3:5-13. How really great was his wisdom? Chapter 4:29-31. Based on the wisdom God gave him, what is Solomon's advice to you? Eccl. 12:1.

Solomon instructs young people to remember the God who created the vast universe and all that it contains — the twinkling stars we see at night, our life-sustaining sun, the majestic snowcapped mountains and stately trees, the interesting animals, the countless varieties and numbers of fishes in the sea, the food we eat and the air we breathe.

Remembering God means being thankful to Him for your very existence, for your parents, the material things you possess. It means being grateful for the knowledge God has revealed to your parents through His Church, and for the fact you are especially blessed to have access to this same, wonderful knowledge.

3. Will God grant His wisdom, knowledge and understanding to those who seek it? Prov. 2:1-6.

The Proverbs are rich with wisdom and





# Teen Bible Study

understanding. Take time often to read and reread and think about these golden nuggets of truth inspired by God for both young and old alike.

4. What comparison does Solomon draw between the vital knowledge, guidance and wisdom of God's Word and a treasure chest full of precious things? Prov. 8:10-11, 3:13-18.

Imagine yourself owning a huge chunk of gold worth millions of dollars, or a sparkling red ruby the size of an egg. Solomon says that the knowledge, instruction and wisdom you will gain by studying the Bible are worth far more than all the gold, silver and precious gems in the world!

5. What does God promise those who do remember Him and strive to please Him? Prov. 3:1-6. Does He also promise to give them the "desires" of their hearts? Ps. 37:4-5.

Do you want to have a successful life with many loyal friends? Do you look forward to continued good health, a meaningful career filled with challenging opportunities, a beautiful marriage, happy children and ultimately becoming a member of God's Family? In His inspired Word, God shows you the way to all of these blessings.

6. Are the mistakes and sins of others recorded in the Bible so that people today can learn *not* to repeat them? I Cor. 10:1-11, especially verses 6 and 11.

God does not want us to suffer the same fate as those who disobeyed Him in times past. He wants us to be obedient and blessed.

Stories of the great men of God — men like Abraham, Moses, David and Daniel — also teach many valuable lessons and principles that we need to learn and apply in our lives today.

Abraham obeyed God's laws and taught his son Isaac to obey them (Gen. 26:5, 18:18-19). Both were exceedingly blessed by God.

The story of Moses' life, found in the books of Exodus through Deuteronomy, is one of great humility, submission and service to God.

David displayed great trust in God to help him kill the giant who taunted and dishonored the living God (I Sam. 17:45-49).

Faithful Daniel was thrown into the lion's den, but was protected from harm by the God he worshiped and obeyed (Dan. 6:16-22).

When Daniel's three friends, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, were thrown into the fiery furnace for obeying God, they also trusted God and were delivered from the fire (Dan. 3:14-27).

7. Why did God select David to replace Saul

as king of Israel? Acts 13:21-22. What did David do every day? Ps. 119:97. Why? Verses 98-100. Did David learn about God as a youth? Ps. 71:17.

Imagine David as a teenager herding sheep on the lush hillsides of Judea, thinking about God's creation and His awesome power. David thought a lot about God's commandments and how to apply them in his daily life. His basic motivation and intent in life was to always serve and obey God.

8. How did David continue to respond to and view God's Word when he was older? Ps. 119:101-105. Will David rule over the nations of Israel in the world tomorrow? Ezek. 37:24-25.

By studying your Bible, you can also learn God's way of life that leads to true happiness and joy here and now. And just as David, you too may one day become a leader ruling with Christ in the world tomorrow (Rev. 3:21, 5:10).

9. Who else learned the Scriptures as a youth? II Tim. 3:15.

Timothy, one of the dedicated men of God in the early true Church, was taught the Old Testament Scriptures by his mother and grandmother (II Tim. 1:5). He grew up to be very useful in helping to spread the Gospel message as a minister of Jesus Christ.

10. Was King Josiah a righteous ruler? II Kings 22:1-2. What did he begin to do when he was 16 years old? II Chron. 34:3. What reforms did his zeal for God's ways lead him to accomplish when he was just 20 years of age? Verses 3-7.

Josiah became king when he was only 8 years old. And he began to seek and obey God with all his might while in his teens.

Before Josiah ascended the throne, the nation had forgotten God and was deep in idol worship. Once Josiah understood God's Law and his responsibility toward God, he tore down the idols and temples dedicated to false gods. He then restored the true worship of God to the entire nation. No king was more zealously dedicated to God before or after Josiah! (II Kings 23:25).

Although you are not a ruler today, one day you could be. By learning and heeding God's instructions *now*, you will be better prepared to help teach God's way of life to others in the world tomorrow, after God calls you to become one of His children in His universe-ruling Family.

So take advantage of every opportunity to learn God's way. Let these monthly Bible studies help you increase in the wisdom and understanding of God! □



# Teen Bible Study

## How We Got the Bible

Prepared by Richard H. Sedliacik and Staff

*Youth 82*, in conjunction with the Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course Department, presents short monthly Bible studies designed especially for teens.

When God created man, He planned to teach him what he needed to know. God taught Adam the basis of how to live a successful, happy and abundant life. And He revealed the wonderful future He had in store for him and his children.

Over hundreds of years God inspired certain men to write these teachings down and preserve them for our time. We have these lessons today in a special book — the Holy Bible.

The story of the Bible's origin is a fascinating one. So find your Bible, some paper and a pen or pencil and let's learn how God prepared and preserved His Instruction Book for us today. Be sure to look up each scripture given in answer to the questions.

1. On the sixth day of recreating the earth's surface, God created Adam and Eve. The next day, the Sabbath, God taught them many things. What was one very important thing He taught them? Genesis 2:16-17.

God spoke with Adam and Eve and taught them His way of life. One of His instructions was a warning not to take of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. But they disobeyed God by taking and eating that forbidden fruit. By doing so they rejected instruction from God and brought the penalty of eternal death upon themselves and all their descendants — all mankind.

From that time on, God taught only a few other people His laws — those whom He called for special reasons and to perform specific jobs for Him. The rest of humanity has followed the ways that seem right to men (Proverbs 14:12).

2. Did God talk to Moses as a friend? Exodus 33:11, first part.

Did God later also talk to the children of Israel? Deuteronomy 5:1-4, especially verse 4.

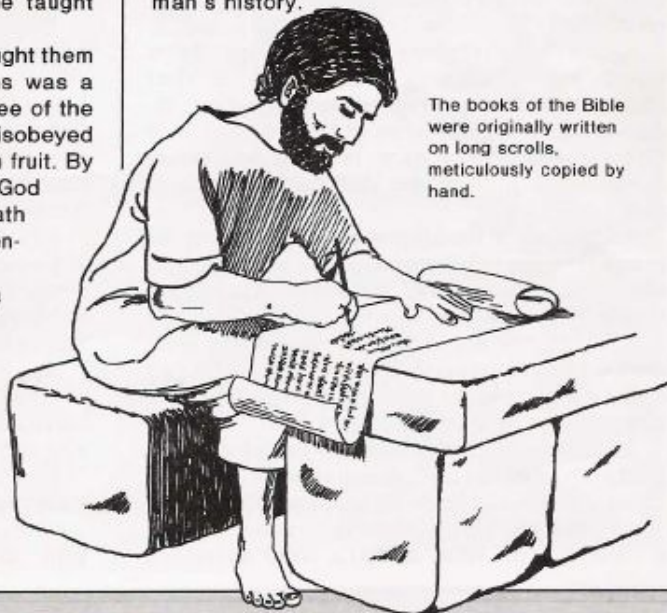
Moses was tending sheep in the desert near Mt. Horeb when God told him to go to Egypt and lead the children of Israel out of captivity and into a new land where they were to live (Exodus 3:1-10). As Israel left Egypt and traveled through the wilderness to this new land, God began to teach them His way to a happy, abundant life by giving them the Ten Commandments (Exodus 19:16-19, 20:1-17).

3. After God finished speaking the Ten Commandments, what did the people say? Exodus 20:18-19, Deuteronomy 5:23-31.

Israel became fearful of God and did not want Him to talk to them anymore. And so God gave the rest of His law to Moses, and then Moses taught it to the people (Deuteronomy 6:1).

4. Did Moses write God's laws down? Deuteronomy 31:9, 24. What else did Moses write? Numbers 33:1-2.

Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible that together were called "the law" or the Torah. These books cover more than 2,000 years of man's history.



The books of the Bible were originally written on long scrolls, meticulously copied by hand.

Illustration by Greg Sarrabian



# Teen Bible Study

5. How did Moses know exactly what to write? Exodus 34:27, 17:14.

Moses was not an eyewitness to everything he reported in his writings. The creation and Flood were obviously before his time. He wasn't around when Abraham, Isaac and Jacob lived. It was God who told Moses what to write. And after Moses died, God inspired other men to write down the things He wanted preserved for the instruction of future generations.

6. Why did God inspire history to be included in the Bible? I Corinthians 10:11-12. For whom are these lessons of history recorded? Romans 15:4.

God wants us all to learn from the mistakes and sins of ancient Israel. He wants us rather to obey Him and be blessed, just as He would have blessed Israel if they had obeyed.

7. Approximately one third of the Bible is prophecy — the foretelling of future events. Is biblical prophecy also inspired by God? II Peter 1:20-21. Why did God make prophecy a part of the Bible? Amos 3:7, Revelation 1:1.

God reveals to us world events that will happen in just a few short years. This is so we can be spurred on to obey Him and escape the terrible time of trouble that is coming upon the world. The prophecies also picture the coming wonderful world tomorrow so we can look forward to it.

8. Just before Christ returns to earth, is God sending someone to prepare the way for His Second Coming? Malachi 3:1-2. What is the job of this messenger? Malachi 4:5-6, Ezekiel 33:7, Isaiah 58:1.

Before God intervenes in the evil ways of this world, He is warning the nations of that intervention through His servant, Herbert W. Armstrong. The good news of the restoration of God's government on earth is being proclaimed to the world through the Worldwide Church of God.

9. Did some of the prophets not understand the things they wrote? Daniel 12:8-9, Luke 10:24. At what time did God say He would reveal their meaning? Daniel 12:4, 9.

Most of prophecy is for this "time of the end" we are living in today. God has shown His Church today the meaning of what many prophets wrote and really desired to understand.

So you see, the entire Bible we have today has been written for us. Let's examine what God says about this special Book He prepared for us.

10. How much of the Bible is inspired by God? II Timothy 3:16. What is God's Word described

as? John 17:17. What will never happen to God's Word — the Holy Scriptures? John 10:35. Can we absolutely depend upon God's Word? Titus 1:2.

Since the entire Bible is the inspired Word of God, we know it is true. And we can rely upon His Word because God cannot lie.

Maybe you are now wondering how God preserved His inspired Word until today. This is also an interesting story.

The books of the Bible were originally written on long scrolls. There were very few copies since each scroll had to be copied by hand, letter by letter. Imagine how long it would take to write out the entire Bible by hand!

The men whose job it was to copy the books of the Bible from scroll to scroll were called scribes. They were very careful in their work. For thousands of years, through persecution and war, until this very day the Jews have preserved the Hebrew Scriptures (what we know as the Old Testament) as God intended (Romans 3:1-2).

Jesus said, "My words shall not pass away" (Matthew 24:35) — and they have not passed away. The words of Christ — the New Testament writings — were recorded in Greek. And the Greeks faithfully copied, generation after generation, the New Testament in the very language in which God inspired it to be written.

But God was planning to call people from all nations to form His Church just before Jesus returns. These people would need their own copies of God's Word in their own language to study daily. Therefore, God stirred up men to translate the Bible into other languages.

Then, about 500 years ago, the printing press was invented. One of the first books ever printed was — you guessed it — the Holy Bible. Now it began to be easier to have one's own copy of the Bible. Since then the technology of printing has advanced to where hundreds of millions of Bibles have been produced, more than any other book in history.

11. Understanding that the Holy Bible we have today was inspired by God and caused to be preserved for us, what does God expect us to do? II Timothy 2:15. And what are we to do with this knowledge? James 1:22.

God not only expects us to study the Bible, but also to act on what we learn from His Word so we may understand His wonderful plan for our lives now and for all eternity.

So study the Bible regularly (Acts 17:11) and put its lessons into practice — knowing that it is the inspired Word of God preserved for you! □



# Teen Bible Study

## Is God Real to You?

Prepared by Richard H. Sedliacik and Staff

*Youth 82*, in conjunction with the Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course Department, presents short monthly Bible studies designed especially for teens.

Are you like many people who say, "I believe in God, but He seems so far off — so unreal to me?"

They wonder: "Where is God? Has He gone off somewhere? Why doesn't God materialize or reveal Himself in some way? How can an invisible God be real to me?"

But think about it for a moment. These same people believe in what they can't see. Air, wind and electricity simply cannot be seen. Yet these things are very real to them.

God is composed of spirit and therefore cannot be seen by human eyes. But He has definite form and shape, inhabits a specific place and shines as the sun in glory! This study will show there is a way God can become very real to you. You can even know Him personally!

But before you read further, be sure to get your Bible and a pen or pencil. Look up and read in your Bible the scripture references given in answer to the questions. Then write them down in a notebook so you can review your studies later. Writing out the scriptures will also help you to remember what you have learned. Now let's begin.

1. In the first three chapters of Genesis we learn that Adam and Eve sinned against God by partaking of the forbidden fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. What did they then do when they heard God coming? Genesis 3:8.

They hid from God! God had been teaching the first man and woman in the Garden of Eden. He wanted them to get to know Him and His way of life. But when they rebelled against their Creator, they felt guilty and wanted to hide from Him.

2. What did the Israelites do after God spoke His Ten Commandments to them from Mt. Sinai? Exodus 20:18-19.

When the people saw the thunder and lightning and other evidence of the almighty God "they removed, and stood afar off." Here was man plainly seeking to cut off all personal communication with God. Here was man telling God to get lost!

This is typical of how all mankind has been reacting to the presence of God since that incident in the Garden of Eden. Ever since Adam, the world in general has been playing the game of "hide-and-go-seek" with God!

3. What is God compared to? I John 1:5. Is this why men try to hide from and even deny the reality of God? John 3:19-20. Has mankind cut itself off from God because of its sins? Isaiah 59:2.

Since Adam and Eve, men have been tricked by Satan into sinning. Therefore mankind is accustomed to living a way of life the Bible refers to as "darkness." But God never sins. His way of life can be compared to a bright light that shows the way out of darkness, or sin.

4. What is one of the reasons Jesus Christ was sent to earth? John 1:18.

Jesus, one of the two eternal members of the God Family, became flesh and blood. He came to earth to reveal the Father to us, as well as to die for the sins of all mankind, opening the way to receiving the Holy Spirit and complete understanding of the reality of God and His purpose for mankind.

5. Besides these many revelations from God that are recorded for us in the Bible, is there a tangible way we can understand the invisible things of God and the absolute reality of His existence? Romans 1:19-20.

Think about the physical universe and all that it contains. Look at the intricacy of nature around you. Think about your marvelous body and the incredible complexity and capabilities of your mind. Here is awesome proof of the reality of the great, all-knowing, universe-ruling Creator!

From the forces that bind atomic nuclei and run gigantic stars, to the laws that sustain incredibly huge galaxies; from our marvelous, life-sustaining earth, to the vastness of space; from the existence of physical laws like gravity and inertia, to the order and harmony they sustain; from the beauty of creation, to a mind that can try to comprehend it — all testify to the presence and power of our almighty Creator and shout the conclusive evidence of His existence!

6. Since the evidence of God is clearly seen



# Teen Bible Study

everywhere by His creation, why isn't God real to the world today? Has mankind become willingly ignorant of the reality of God? Romans 1:21-25. (Reading the rest of this chapter will show some of the results of this choice.) How does God describe one who refuses to accept such obvious proof of His existence? Romans 1:22, Psalm 14:1.

The apostle Paul clearly shows that mankind has become willingly ignorant of the reality of God's existence.

Yes, the ancient philosophers knew God. They examined the world in which they found themselves and discovered order, harmony, system and design. God was in this sense revealed to them. How? Because the existence of order, harmony, system and design absolutely demand a supreme Architect and Designer — a supreme Creator!

But these same men flatly rejected the evidence rather than answer to a higher authority. For if they admitted God exists, they would have to obey Him! And so they held back or suppressed the truth in unrighteousness (Romans 1:18). They convinced themselves, against the facts and their own better judgment, that God doesn't exist. Those who reject such obvious evidence indeed look foolish and silly to God.

7. How did God show His incredible greatness, power and wisdom to Job? Job 38:1-6. (God's speech to Job continues through the end of chapter 41.)

Many today are like Job. He thought he knew a lot about God. He was pretty well convinced about the reality of God's existence. But after a long series of eloquent arguments between Job and his friends, God personally spoke to Job from a whirlwind and pointed out a few things he had never considered before.

God focused Job's mind on His material creation by asking him some embarrassing questions.

Before hearing these questions, Job had talked about God, heard about Him and discussed Him at great length. But the real God was not absolutely real to him. This really shook Job up as he finally came to see God in a completely new light (Job 42:1-6).

Now Job came face to face with God through His material creation. He saw for the first time the true picture of the awesome Creator, the almighty God. His conscious mind had not really grasped the reality of this God of whom he spoke. Job was now humbled and deeply convinced of the absolute reality of the great, all-powerful Creator, God!

8. Can those who seek to become personally acquainted with this same God really find Him? Isaiah 55:6-7. But must one put forth effort — stir himself up — to seek Him in a personal way? Isaiah 64:7. Is God not far from anyone who will earnestly seek Him? Acts 17:26-27.

God is not uninterested or unavailable to His human creation. He is not too busy to hear the prayers of sincere people who really want to know Him. But one must stir himself up to seek God. God is there — He is real — but He must be sought! We must put forth a concerted effort to seek Him in a personal way.

You definitely can get to know God! God is there in heaven and once real personal contact is established, He will be real to you in an intimate way.

9. Does God promise to bless those who truly seek Him wholeheartedly, and desire to actually do His will? Psalm 119:2, 1 John 3:22.

God is as near as the next fervent, sincere prayer. Those who seek God earnestly — with zeal and persistence — will be blessed, both in this life and on into eternity.

Once you come face to face with the reality of God's existence and have a glimpse of our heavenly Father's goodness and power, you can begin to trust Him to bless you (Hebrews 11:6).

10. But do you realize that our conversation with God is not one sided? Do you know God speaks to us today? Read Hebrews 1:1-2 to find out how God speaks to mankind.

God has revealed His will and plan for man through His Son who came down to earth and lived among men. He then inspired various men to record the words of Jesus for us today (II Timothy 3:16-17). Now we are able to learn of God and His purpose for mankind through His written Word.

In a very personal way, God reveals Himself and speaks to us through the pages of the Holy Bible. We become acquainted with God by talking to Him in prayer and by reading what He says to us in His written Word.

By reading the Bible, we can come to know the mind of God. We can understand His character and how He thinks. And through His inspired written Word, God shows us how we can have happy, productive lives and tells us what He has promised to do for us if we will obey Him.

So get acquainted with the great Creator, Ruler and Sustainer of the entire universe. Begin to understand the living God's great love and wisdom. Then you will know how much He takes *delight* in the youth who will seek to know Him, talk to Him, love and obey Him! □



# Teen Bible Study

## Your Awesome POTENTIAL

Prepared by Richard H. Sedliacik

Can you imagine what it would be like to zip through space to any place in the universe in an instant? Or to have strengths and abilities far greater than Superman? Can you even begin to grasp what it would be like to live forever?

Believe it or not, that is your awesome potential!

Ponce de Leon, a Spanish explorer who lived in the early 1500s, searched in vain for the mythical Fountain of Youth. But you can find the source of eternal youth because God has revealed it to us.

What is it?

To find the answer to this exciting question, we must go back to the very first chapter of Genesis and learn the purpose for our lives. We need to know why God created us and gave us life and breath.

But first, do you have your Bible in front of you? And do you have a pen or pencil and paper? It's important to always look up and read every scripture given in answer to the questions asked in these "Teen Bible Studies." And copying the answers in a notebook will aid you in learning the material and reviewing your studies later.

Now that you have your Bible, your pen and paper, let's begin.

1. What do the very first words of the Bible tell us about God? Genesis 1:1.

The original Hebrew word for God in verse one is *Elohim*. *Elohim* is a uniplural or collective noun, like the words *church*, *family* or *kingdom*, all of which are composed of more than one member. In other words, the name *Elohim* stands for a group composed of two or more individuals. *Elohim*, as intended in Genesis 1:1, is the God Kingdom or God Family.

2. But who are the individuals presently composing *Elohim*? John 1:1-2. Was it the "Word" who created all things? Verse 3. What did the Word later become? Verse 14. Who, then, is the Word? Ephesians 3:9, last part. And who is the other divine member of the God Family? I Corinthians 8:6.

John 1:1 and Genesis 1:1 are two accounts that bring us back to the same time in prehistory

— the original creation of the universe. Both verses reveal that the two supreme Beings of the God Family created all things.

The Greek word translated into English as *Word* in John 1:1 is *Logos*. It means spokesman or one who speaks. It was actually the *Logos*, the Spokesman — the Word of the God Family — who "spoke, and it [the creation] was done" by the power of the Spirit of God (Psalm 33:6-9, 104:30). And so everything was created and made by the divine Being who later became the human Jesus Christ.

The Word, then, is the divine Personage who was made flesh nearly 2,000 years ago. He was begotten (conceived) in the virgin Mary by God who, through this miraculous begetting, became His Father. Yet, at that prehistoric time of the first verse of John 1, the Word was not yet the Son of God. He became God's Son later, through being begotten by God and born of Mary as a human being.

3. Is the God Family eternal, or ever living? Psalm 90:2, 102:25-27.

Both members of the Godhead have always existed. Our finite human minds can't quite understand how these immortal supreme Beings could have always existed, but neither can we quite understand what electricity is. Yet, we know electricity exists and is very real!

But what does all of this have to do with your awesome potential? Everything! For God is in the process of expanding His universe-ruling Family. And you can become a member of that eternal Family!

Man is not just another animal as evolutionists claim. God's purpose for creating man far surpasses anything ever imagined by the mind of man. Let's return to the first chapter of Genesis and begin to understand the most astounding revelation of your Bible.

4. After what "kinds" were the animals, fish and fowl created? Genesis 1:20-25.

These verses plainly state, without any interpretation, that God created fish to reproduce after their own kind, birds after their kind and cattle after the cattle kind. Each kind may have



# Teen Bible Study

many varieties within it, but all creatures reproduce only after their own kind. That is why dogs reproduce dogs, monkeys reproduce monkeys, sheep reproduce sheep.

5. But what about man? After whose "image" and "likeness" was man created? Genesis 1:26-27.

In God's pattern for all life, like reproduces like. And just as each created form of plant or animal life reproduces after its own kind, so humans reproduce humans. But unlike any of the animals created by God, man was created in God's likeness.

These scriptures refute the theory that man is merely the highest of the animals, having evolved from lower mammals. They clearly state that God created man after His own image and likeness. God made man like Himself — in the same form and shape. And He is now in the process of creating man after His own kind!

Notice again what God said in Genesis 1:26: "Let us make man in our image." The original Hebrew here indicates far more than merely the outward form and shape of God — His likeness. *Image* also refers to mind and character. God intended for man — to whom He gave the gift of a thinking, reasoning mind — to develop the very mind and character of God!

Each animal was created with a brain suited for its needs. But animals do not have the attributes of mind and character that God gave only to man. It is these special qualities that separate men from animals.

The attributes of human mind and character truly make man God's unique physical creation. God has shared some of His own qualities with human beings and expects them to develop the "image" of God's perfect mind and holy character.

Simply stated, God is reproducing Himself. The awesome potential of all human beings — past, present and future — is that of becoming the literal children of God — members of His own spirit Family!

Notice the overwhelming evidence of God's breathtaking purpose for you.

6. Is God still in the process of forming and molding man as a potter works with clay? Isaiah 64:8. Did Job realize God was forming a special creation in his life? Job 14:14-15.

Notice the latter part of verse 15: "Thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands." Job knew he was a piece of divine workmanship in the hands of the Master Potter.

What God created at the time described in the

first chapter of Genesis was a physical creation. Man, made of the dust of the ground, was the material being that God planned to mold, shape and form into a perfect spiritual creation. He pictures us as the clay, Himself as the potter who is forming us into the spiritual image of Himself.

7. Are true Christians clearly being fashioned by God for a specific purpose? Ephesians 2:10.

"We" in New Testament language usually refers to Christians, as Paul intended in verse 10. Christians are God's "workmanship." They are being created "unto good works."

God, through the Holy Spirit He puts within Christians (after their repentance and baptism), is forming in them His perfect spiritual character. With their obedient cooperation, He is creating in them His own character and image. He is creating them to be the supreme masterpiece of all His works of creation — individuals who will ultimately be capable of exercising the awesome powers of the God Family! (More about these powers next time.)

And so man, the material creation, is only the first phase of this creative process. Now the clay model has to be fashioned and molded by experience, with the aid of God's Holy Spirit, into the finished spiritual masterpiece possessing the very character of God. An analogy of this process would be a caterpillar going through a metamorphosis and emerging a beautiful butterfly. Man must undergo a spiritual metamorphosis or change into perfect spiritual members in the divine God Family!

8. Does God plainly show that it is His purpose to increase His divine Family by bringing many sons into it? Hebrews 2:9-10, Revelation 21:7. Isn't Jesus Christ actually the first of many sons of God? Romans 8:29, Colossians 1:18.

To be "conformed to the image" of Christ means to become like Him — to be glorified as He is glorified — to be a part of the divine Family of God as much as Christ now is.

9. But what must happen to flesh-and-blood human beings before they can enter God's Family? I Corinthians 15:49-53, John 3:3-8.

Jesus said we must be "born again" — changed into spirit. Yes, born again — this time born of the Spirit of God as divine Sons in the Family of God!

Next time we'll study more about this incredibly wonderful truth. And we'll see how exciting it will be as a powerful spirit being, living and working together with Jesus Christ and other born-again members of God's universe-ruling Family. □



# Teen Bible Study

## Your Awesome POTENTIAL, PART II

Prepared by Richard H. Sedliacik

In our previous study we learned that God is in the process of expanding His Family — that God is actually reproducing Himself through human beings!

Exactly how is God accomplishing this miraculous feat? When can we become members of His Family? What is it like to have a spirit body? And what will you be doing forever as a member of God's Family? This exciting study reveals the answers!

But first, be sure to get your Bible, a pen and paper. Look up the scriptures given in answer to the questions and then write them in a notebook for later review.

As we learned in last month's Bible study, God uses human reproduction to picture the process by which He is reproducing Himself. Recall that Jesus told Nicodemus we must be "born again" to enter the Kingdom, or Family of God (John 3:3-8).

Each human since Adam and Eve started from a tiny ovum, the size of a pinpoint, produced in his mother's body. But unless the ovum is fertilized by a life-giving sperm cell from the human father, within a short time it dies. A human life can only begin when that sperm cell impregnates the ovum.

Spiritually speaking, each human mind is like an ovum. Each of us was born incomplete — able to live only a relatively short span of years. We were made to need the impregnating spiritual life of God's Holy Spirit in our minds so we can begin growing spiritually before being born of the Spirit and living forever!

1. Are true Christians already, during this life, children of God? I John 3:1-2. Have they already inherited the Kingdom of God, or are they only heirs to it? Romans 8:14-17.

Although they are now the children of God, Christians are as yet only heirs — ones who shall inherit the Kingdom of God. Why only heirs? Because they are now only Spirit-begotten (impregnated) children. It is when they are born of God that they become members of the Family of God.

2. But must the spiritually begotten child of God grow spiritually before being born of God, much like a newly begotten human baby must begin to grow physically in its mother's womb until it is large enough to be born? II Peter 3:18, I Peter 2:1-2.

After God the Father begets one by imparting His spiritual life to the person's mind upon true repentance and water baptism, that person must begin to grow in spiritual character. This growth comes through Bible study, prayer and walking with God in obedience to Him.

And so all Spirit-begotten Christians are now the unborn children of God the Father in the same sense that an unborn human fetus is the child of its human parents.

3. When will the Christian's spiritual birth take place? I Corinthians 15:50-53, I Thessalonians 4:15-17. Will those thus resurrected be like God? I John 3:2. Of what is God composed?

John 4:24. Are they therefore to become composed of spirit at the resurrection? I Corinthians 15:42-49. Compare this with Philipians 3:20-21.

When Jesus Christ returns to the earth, the Spirit-begotten sons of God who have died down through the ages will be resurrected, or instantly changed if alive, into spirit beings. And God's own offspring will then have eternal life within themselves — just like Jesus Christ their elder brother!

4. To what did Jesus compare one who is



Rosette Nebula, just part of the vast universe you're destined to help rule!



# Teen Bible Study

born, not just begotten, of the Holy Spirit? John 3:8.

When you are born of the Spirit of God, you will be invisible to mortal eyes like the wind unless you choose to be seen. The effects of the wind are easily discernible, but the wind cannot be seen.

5. After His resurrection, was Jesus, with His spirit-composed body, able to suddenly appear and disappear? Luke 24:36-37. Was He able to pass through walls? John 20:19, 26. Can one composed of spirit transform himself into mortal flesh and bone when necessary, and even eat? Luke 24:38-43.

6. Are spirit bodies capable of traveling through space at incredible speed? Compare John 20:17, 19-20 with Matthew 28:9, noticing that Christ traveled to the Father in heaven and returned to earth on the same day!

7. Was Jesus "glorified" again after His resurrection? John 17:4-5, Hebrews 2:9. Had He previously given His disciples a fleeting glimpse of this glorified condition? Matthew 17:1-2. How do Christ's and the Father's glorified bodies appear today? Revelation 1:13-16.

To be glorified means to be given great power and brightness. Christ's glorified face and powerful spirit body radiate light as the sun in full strength, with eyes blazing like flames of fire!

8. Will God also glorify all of His Spirit-begotten children at the resurrection by giving them this same great power and glory? Romans 8:17, Colossians 3:4. What other scripture gives us an idea of this glorified condition? Daniel 12:2-3.

9. What will they begin to do after becoming part of His spirit Family? Revelation 3:21, 2:26, 5:10, 20:4-6.

The Kingdom of God is a ruling Family. And those who become a part of that Family are destined to rule the earth with Jesus Christ for 1,000 years. They will become kings and priests, various administrators and administrative assistants in the world-ruling Kingdom of God!

Thousands of millions of people will learn to live God's way and be born into His ruling Family during this period. Then, after the Millennium, still more thousands of millions of people who died not having known God's way of life will be resurrected from the dead and given the opportunity to become sons of God. This period of judgment (Revelation

20:11-13) apparently will last 100 years (Isaiah 65:20). These people will be added to God's Family at the end of God's plan for physical mankind.

It has been estimated that 40 thousand million people may have lived since Adam until now. It would be difficult to accurately estimate the number of people who will yet be born and then ultimately enter God's Kingdom during the Millennium and Great White Throne Judgment periods.

But let's say that 200 thousand million are ultimately born into the God Family. Since God is always busy working, creating and sustaining what He has created (John 5:17), He knows His sons could not be happy unless busy with work and productive activity. And so what could possibly keep this incredibly huge Family of God busy for eternity?

10. Just how great is the authority Jesus Christ has already inherited? Hebrews 1:1-2, Matthew 28:18. Will those who are born into God's Family share in that inheritance as co-owners and corulers with Christ? Romans 8:16-17, Revelation 21:7. Does the Bible clearly show that God's government will expand for all eternity? Isaiah 9:6-7, Revelation 22:5.

The Moffatt translation renders "all things" in Hebrews 1:2 as "the universe." Believe it or not, you were born to rule! Incredible as it may sound, your ultimate potential and that of every human being is corulership of the universe with Jesus Christ and God the Father! It's mind-boggling and breathtaking — yet it's true.

But is there really enough out there for that many spirit beings to rule?

Astronomers estimate there are more than 40,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 [40 sextillion] stars in the universe, a figure virtually impossible to comprehend. If the previous estimate of 200 thousand million sons of God is accurate, that means each member of the God Family would be responsible for maintaining and developing 200 thousand million stars and their attendant planets — a galaxy twice the estimated size of our own Milky Way galaxy!

This is *your* awesome potential — the glorious destiny God has in store for those who seek to do His will and follow His way. A never-ending future filled with exciting challenge, scintillating interest and eternal happiness and joy! □



# Teen Bible Study

## How to Guarantee Job Success

Prepared by Richard H. Sedliacik

Like many other teens in the Northern Hemisphere, perhaps you are seeking or have found a summer job. Did you know the Bible reveals principles that will guarantee success and happiness on your job? Why not study these important keys to success so you will be prepared for a rewarding and fulfilling summer?

Before you begin, be sure to get your Bible, a pen and some paper.

1. When God put Adam in the Garden of Eden, did He put him to work? Genesis 2:15.

In the first two chapters of Genesis, God reveals Himself to us as a worker. Within six days His creative work unfolded. And when He created the first human beings in His own image, He made them workers, too. He put the man into the Garden of Eden to cultivate and beautify it.

2. Does the commandment to rest on the Sabbath have another side? Exodus 20:9.

"Rest" from what? Work, of course. Though many have not realized it, the Fourth Commandment also instructs mankind to labor during the other days of the week.

The Sabbath commandment actually dates back to creation week. It was given to keep man in a close spiritual relationship with his Creator who is a worker — who created and now sustains His creation. And God intends for us to become like Him!

3. Was Jesus Christ sent to this earth to work? John 9:4. Did He reveal that the Father is still busily engaged in His job? John 5:17.

4. Does God intend for us to enjoy and profit from the work we do? Ecclesiastes 2:24, 3:22.

5. How zealously should we do all of our work? Ecclesiastes 9:10.

God works with zeal. We are to become more like God by working diligently at whatever we set our hands to do — whether we are working for an employer, our parents,

for ourselves and even in doing our school work!

Editor in Chief Herbert W. Armstrong once knew a philosopher and writer named Elbert Hubbard. Mr. Hubbard realized the importance of working diligently. He said: "If I worked for a man, I would work for him. I would not work for him part of the time, and against him the rest of the time. I would either work for him all the time, or I would not work for him at all."

6. Will diligent effort always prove its worth? Proverbs 10:4-5, 13:4. Will the hard worker have the necessities of life? Proverbs 20:13, 28:19.

7. Are those who refuse to work forever wishing for the things that the diligent possess, but always ending up empty-handed? Proverbs 13:4, 21:25.

8. Does the slothful person look for all kinds of dangers to justify his lack of effort? Proverbs 22:13, 26:13-15. Does he always have clever excuses or hard-luck stories about why he shouldn't work? Proverbs 26:16. Is his love of sleep and lack of effort the cause of his poverty? Proverbs 6:10-11.



Ants can teach us a key to job success (Proverbs 6:6-9)  
Youth 82 photo

9. Does laziness tend to become habit-forming? Proverbs 19:15.

Some use the slightest little excuse to flop down on the couch and watch television when they ought to be working or doing something constructive.

10. Does it take effort, and sometimes



# Teen Bible Study

even physical discomfort, to avoid being lazy? Proverbs 20:4.

**11.** How does the condition of the yard, the house or the farm of the lazy person usually reveal what kind of individual he really is? Ecclesiastes 10:18, Proverbs 24:30-34.

Take a look around your room. Do your bed and desk and chest of drawers give you away? If so, take instruction from God's words of wisdom.

God wants us to take care of what we have and be neat: "Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks, and look well to thy herds [or whatever possessions you may have]. For riches are not for ever..." (Proverbs 27:23-24).

**12.** Is there profit in all labor? And nothing but poverty in a lot of talk? Proverbs 14:23.

If you want to find summer work you can start profiting from this principle right now. How?

By making a "job" out of getting a job. Seek advice on what types of employment are presently in demand. Then ask yourself what kind of work you would like to do. And of course ask God to help you find a job.

**13.** What did Paul teach regarding service to one's employer — one's boss, foreman or supervisor? Colossians 3:22-24, Titus 2:9-10.

Though Paul's instruction was specifically to Christians who were bond slaves at that time, the principles certainly apply today. Whatever you do, work as if your immediate boss were Jesus Christ Himself — "do it heartily, as to the Lord." Be cooperative and zealous on the job. Be alert to please your boss by doing the job his way. And show your willingness to go beyond what is required.

**14.** Can one expect to be paid a good salary if he is not worth it? See the principle in Mark 4:24.

The way to receive a greater reward is to be worth more! Be a valuable employee. Don't just plod along in your summer job with a ho-hum, humdrum, every-day-the-same-routine attitude. Be energetic! Produce! Study in order to improve your skills.

**15.** What is a sluggard like to those who hire him? Proverbs 10:26.

He simply doesn't get the job done. Therefore he isn't paid much, if he can hold a job at all.

**16.** To whom is the sluggard instructed to go to study and learn about the initiative he lacks? Proverbs 6:6-9.

Many have not really understood the main point of this passage. Notice verse 7. The ant not only works, but does so with "no leader, no foreman or chief" (Moffatt version).

Ants have a built-in, programed ability to work diligently without prodding. Mankind, with the God-given ability to think and reason, should not only be able to do as well, but far better than these lower forms of life. An employee should work diligently whether or not the boss is looking!

**17.** Notice Proverbs 12:24. Who will become the leaders directing the rest of the workers? And what will be the lot of the slothful? Same verse.

"The slothful will be put to forced labor" (Revised Standard Version). Do your job without being told. Or do it immediately when told how. Get it right the first time.

Be the kind of person who increases his superior's production and the production of all his fellow workers. When the time comes for raises and promotions, this is the man or woman who will be remembered. Also, you can just about be guaranteed a job with the same employer next summer if you set this kind of example!

**18.** Will the person who is a self-starter and really applies himself on the job eventually find himself in the company of important people? Proverbs 22:29.

**19.** Was Joseph an industrious young man who was given greater responsibilities? Genesis 39:2-6, 22-23, 41:40-44.

Are you willing to put forth the effort to be like Joseph? He was diligent. And though he was severely tried and tested for a time, he still obeyed God and God blessed him. He eventually became prime minister of the entire land of Egypt, and will undoubtedly be given a high position in the soon-coming Kingdom of God (see Hebrews 11).

If you will really believe God and set yourself to follow the principles we've just studied, and to please God in other facets of your life, He promises to bless you.

The apostle Paul sums it up in Hebrews 11:6: "He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder [both spiritually and physically] of them that diligently seek him." □



# Teen Bible Study

## Are the Ten Commandments for Teens Today?

Prepared by Richard H. Sedliacik

Imagine a huge boulder, balanced precariously at the edge of a cliff. What happens if it's given a push?

Even in our imagination we firmly believe that gravity will send it plummeting to the valley below. It's a physical law — we don't expect it to go floating into space.

There are other laws — just as sure as gravity — that show you how to have a happy, interesting and fulfilling life.

Jesus Christ came to this earth to show both young people and adults how to live happy and abundant lives here and now (John 10:10, last part of the verse). He also revealed how we may become born-again members of God's universe-ruling Family!

But before we go further, be sure your Bible, a pen or pencil and some notebook paper are before you so you can look up, read and write out the Bible verses answering the questions.

1. In what one word is the very nature and character of God summarized? I John 4:16. How did Jesus Christ sum up the Ten Commandments — the law of God? Matthew 22:35-40.

God's law is the way of God's love. It is the way the two members of the God Family have always lived. Thus God the Father and God the Son live in total harmony. The Father is the head of the God Family and Christ does exactly what the Father tells Him to do (John 8:29, 10:30).

These two divine beings lived the way of love before they created angels and before they brought the material universe into existence. God's way of love resulted in joy, peace and great accomplishment.

God's law of love also regulated the conduct of angels toward one another and toward their Creator when He placed a third of His angelic host on the earth to finish its creation. That is until Lucifer, the great and beautiful archangel whom God placed over the angels to guide their activities on earth, turned to rebellion

against God's government — His way of life — and sinned!

2. What is the Bible definition of sin? I John 3:4. Does the Bible clearly tell us that Lucifer and his angels sinned? Ezekiel 28:14-16, II Peter 2:4.

Sin is the transgression of God's law of love — the way of peace, cooperation and harmony — the way of service and concern for others equal to one's love for self.

God reveals in His Word that Lucifer became the first sinner. Vanity, lust and greed welled up within him. He became dissatisfied with rulership over the one planet. He wanted to rule the universe. Thus he organized his angels into an army and ascended to heaven in an attempt to take over God's throne of rulership over all. But Lucifer and his angels failed and were cast back to this earth (Isaiah 14:12-14, Jude 6). Lucifer became Satan, God's adversary, and his angels are now called demons. Together



they attempt to thwart God's plan and have deceived the world about the necessity of obeying God's law.

3. Are all 10 points of God's great law conveniently listed for us in the Bible? Exodus 20:1-17, Deuteronomy 5:6-21. How can we know that there are 10? Exodus 34:28, Deuteronomy 4:13, 10:4.

4. Did the patriarch Abraham — the father of the faithful — know of God's law

Illustration by Ken Tavel



# Teen Bible Study

and think it was important to keep it? Genesis 26:5. Did God teach David His way of life from his youth? Psalm 71:17. What was his attitude toward obeying God's law? Psalm 119:97-100, 105.

Both Abraham and David were commandment keepers. They had great respect for God's law. That is one vital reason why they will hold very responsible positions in the future government of God on earth.

5. Did Christ obey the Ten Commandments? John 15:10. Did He teach others to obey them? Matthew 19:16-19.

These verses in Matthew 19 clearly show that Jesus specifically referred to the Ten Commandments, though He did not mention every one.

6. Does the Bible show that the very Church Jesus built would be teaching obedience to and actually be keeping the Ten Commandments and other instructions of Christ? Revelation 12:17, 14:12. (Chapter 12 personifies God's Church as a woman.)

God's Church today echoes the words of David and follows God's law as the Christian standard to live by.

7. Is the law of God holy, just and good? Romans 7:12. Does peace of mind come from keeping the Ten Commandments? Psalm 119:165. Does God bless those who obey Him? Deuteronomy 11:26-28, Psalm 1:1-6.

The youth or adult who keeps God's law has a clear conscience. He is at peace with God, with himself and with his neighbor. He has "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding" (Philippians 4:7).

God's law was given to make man happy and to lead him into the peaceful, full, abundant life — and above all to lead him into eternal life. But because of disobedience to our Creator's holy, righteous law, the world is filled with strife, poverty, ignorance and suffering today — the opposite results of the love of God!

8. How did Jesus summarize the Ten Commandments? Turn to Matthew 22:35-40 once again.

As the essence of God's spiritual character is love (I John 4:16), the Ten Commandments are expressions of the very character of God. Jesus showed that the Ten Commandments are in reality a guide to teach us how to love. The first four commandments show us how to love God, while the last six show us how to love

our neighbor — all fellow human beings.

The love of God is manifested first of all in adoration and worship of God and literal obedience to Him, and then in outgoing concern, compassion, kindness and service toward fellow human beings.

9. Could there be any truth whatsoever in the widespread belief that having "love" nullifies the need to literally keep God's law? I John 5:2-3, John 14:15, 15:9-10, II John 5-6.

The apostle John placed a great deal of emphasis on love. But not once did he or any other writer of Holy Scripture — all of whom were inspired by God (II Timothy 3:16) — say that love put away, superseded or destroyed the law of God. John, who was a close friend, disciple and apostle of Jesus Christ, made it plain that one who truly has the love of God will be obeying the commandments of God!

10. Is it possible to earn one's salvation by obeying God? Romans 6:23. Yet can anyone enter God's glorious, universe-ruling Kingdom — the very Family of God — as a lawbreaker? Matthew 7:21, 19:16-17.

You cannot earn your salvation by keeping the law of God. Eternal life is not for sale. It is clearly a gift from God! No one can earn immortality in 10,000 lifetimes of keeping the Ten Commandments! But neither can anyone enter into eternal life as a sinner (I John 3:4, Romans 6:23). No rebel will ever be born into God's Family!

Obedience to the Ten Commandments helps one to grow more like God, whose very character is love, until he is finally born into God's spiritual Family at the resurrection. Of course, you'll need to receive God's Holy Spirit to enable you to build God's spiritual character and complete the process, but that can come later when you are an adult.

Meanwhile, you can be striving to follow God's way to the best of your ability. God will take a special interest in you, as He does in all who obey Him. He will help you and work personally with you. And you will be building the habit of obedience to God while you are still young.

The young people who choose to begin obeying God now can begin to reap the blessings of living by God's law of love and be spared the misery, heartache and suffering of living a life of sin! □



# Teen Bible Study

## Why the Fourth Commandment Is So Important

Prepared by Richard H. Sedliacik

In last month's study we learned about the absolute necessity of keeping the Ten Commandments. Although all 10 are very important in God's sight, He puts special emphasis on the Fourth Commandment — the keeping of His holy Sabbath day.

Do you know why God's Sabbath is so important? This study will show you where to find the answers.

But before we begin, get your Bible, some notebook paper and a pencil or pen. Be sure to turn to and read each Bible verse given in answer to the questions. We also suggest that you copy these scriptures in a notebook for easy review later. Now that you have your tools for study, let's begin.

1. On what day of creation week did God rest? Genesis 2:1-3, Exodus 20:11. Did God rest because He was tired from all the work He had done during the previous six days? Isaiah 40:28.

God is composed of spirit and never becomes tired as do physical human beings. Therefore, by the very act of resting on the seventh day of the week God made, or created, the Sabbath. (The seventh day of the week was, and still is, what we know today as Saturday. For more information on this subject, send for your free copy of *Which Day Is the Christian Sabbath?*)

2. Who in the God Family made that first Sabbath? Ephesians 3:9, Mark 2:28.

Jesus Christ is the Lord of the Sabbath because He made it! As other scriptures prove conclusively, He was the Lord God of the Old Testament era and the very Creator of all things. (This is explained in more detail in our free reprint *Is Jesus God?*) By ceasing to do any labor on the seventh day of creation week, Christ set apart that 24-hour period and every seventh day afterward for a special and holy use.

3. For whom did Jesus say the Sabbath was specifically made? Mark 2:27. Would that include youths of various ages? Exodus 20:8-10, especially verse 10.

"The sabbath was made for man," declared Jesus. Every future seventh day was singled out at creation to be observed by man forever and was to benefit everybody who would ever live, regardless of age.

4. How did Christ intend the Sabbath to benefit man? Deuteronomy 5:14. Notice the word *rest*.

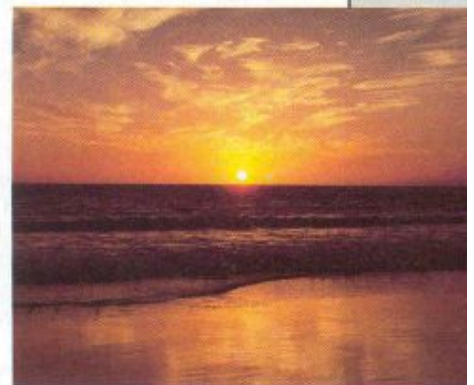
The word *Sabbath* means "rest" in the original Hebrew language. Physical rest and mental relaxation and refreshment after a busy week at school and/or on the job are obvious reasons for the Sabbath.

Most of you are under pressure from time to time — term paper deadlines, studying for tests, extracurricular activities, job related assignments, to name just a few. God knew we would need periodic rest and change from physical work.

But the purpose for keeping God's Sabbath goes far beyond merely resting on this day. The seventh-day Sabbath has to do with God's great purpose for creating man.

Man desperately needs this time each week in which to have additional close spiritual contact with God — time to think more about God, to pray and worship Him (both in private and in fellowship with others), to read and study the Bible to grasp more fully our awesome potential that we discovered in previous studies!

5. Is the Sabbath a time to pursue our



Sunset — the beginning of a new day according to the Bible. Youth 82 photo



# Teen Bible Study

own interests and pleasures? Isaiah 58:13. Will God bless the faithful Sabbath keeper? Verse 14, chapter 56:2-7.

God made the seventh day of the week holy — and He commands us to keep it that way. The Sabbath, then, is holy time. And it was made to be a great blessing.

Hobbies, special interests, sports and other recreation are for the first six days of the week. The Sabbath is special time God claims — puts His name on — then gives back to us entirely for our own good. Then, to top it all off, He promises blessings now and a great future reward for cheerfully and truly keeping the Sabbath!

**6.** Was the observance of the Sabbath day to be a special sign of identification between God and His people Israel? Exodus 31:13, 16-17.

So that Israel would especially remember that the Eternal God is Creator, Sustainer and Supreme Ruler over all His creation, God singled out Sabbath observance as the one great sign by which they could always be reminded of who He is and who they were — His chosen people.

Sabbath keeping was to be a sign to identify the people of God of all generations, including "spiritual Israel" today (Galatians 3:28-29) — Spirit-begotten members of God's one true Church.

Today the Sabbath also reminds us of our Creator who not only created the material universe, but who is also creating in Spirit-begotten Christians His holy, righteous spiritual character that will endure forever when they are born into His divine Family! Thus the Sabbath reminds us every week of the Creator God of all the universe and His wonderful purpose for mankind.

**7.** Was Sabbath keeping also a testing point to see if Israel would obey God? Exodus 16:4-5, 22-23.

How many do you know who keep God's seventh-day Sabbath? The Sabbath commandment is the one almost no one will keep unless they truly want to follow all that God commands!

**8.** Did Jesus Christ keep the Sabbath? Luke 4:16, 31.

Jesus regularly attended church (synagogue) services on the Sabbath day "as his custom was." He fulfilled His own command to meet for worship services every Sabbath day! (Leviticus 23:3).

**9.** Was it the apostle Paul's "manner," even as it was Christ's custom, to keep the Sabbath? Acts 17:1-2. What other evidence is there that the early New Testament Church of God observed the Sabbath? Acts 13:14-15, 42, 44, 18:1, 4, 11.

There is no question that the early true Church observed the seventh-day Sabbath. Those who are striving to obey God today will also be keeping the same day Jesus, Paul and the entire Church kept!

**10.** What is God's warning to us in Hebrews 3:8-13, 18-19? (Notice the word *rest* in verses 11 and 18.) Was rebellion, especially Sabbath breaking, the reason God prevented the ancient Israelites (who originally came out of Egypt) from entering His "rest"? Ezekiel 20:12-13, 15-16.

The land of Canaan — the promised rest into which Israel finally entered (Joshua 1:13) — is spoken of in the Bible as a type or example of the Christian's spiritual rest — of someday soon being born into the Family of God and living forever!

**11.** If we believe and obey God, will we enter God's rest — eternal life in God's Kingdom? Hebrews 4:3, first nine words.

The equation is clear: Real belief in God equals active obedience regardless of age. The youth who really believes the truth of God will be keeping God's Sabbath as outlined in the Fourth Commandment.

God's Sabbath is not to be treated lightly or forgotten. We are commanded to "Remember the sabbath day . . ." (Exodus 20:8) for it is a memorial of God's restoration of the earth and the creation of man. And the Sabbath pictures the coming eternal "rest" that true Christians will enter when born into God's Family.

**12.** Did God command the entire nation of Israel to meet together (a "convocation") on the Sabbath? Leviticus 23:3, Numbers 28:25. What are New Testament Christians admonished regarding the assembling of themselves? Hebrews 10:25.

Both children and adults are to rejoice in God's Sabbath and enjoy fellowship with each other on this day. And all are to learn what a pleasure and great blessing it is to keep God's Sabbath holy — the day that reminds us of the Creator God of the universe and His great plan for mankind! □



# Teen Bible Study

## Why Obey God Today?

Prepared by Richard A. Sedliacik

Youth is a time to enjoy yourself, but it is also a time when you begin to plant the seeds of success or failure. These are the years when choices can be especially critical to future success and happiness.

How can you avoid making decisions that lead to unhappiness, frustration and disappointment? What can you be doing today to prepare for a happy and productive life both now and in the future?

Before reading further, be sure to get your Bible and a pen or pencil. Look up and read each scripture reference given in answer to the questions. And why not write out each scripture as the kings of ancient Israel were instructed to do (Deuteronomy 17:18-20)? This will help you remember the important concepts you will be studying.

1. How did the apostle Paul describe the time in which we are now living? II Timothy 3:1-4.

The conditions in today's perilous, lawless and pleasure-seeking society were prophesied more than 1,900 years ago. We are constantly reminded of the slums, decay, disease, sorrow, anguish and crime that run rampant in the world today.

People of all ages, especially in the Western world, seek the temporary and fleeting thrills that do not result in lasting happiness. Millions end up suffering from the harmful effects of tobacco, alcohol and drugs. Venereal disease is a growing health problem that afflicts hundreds of thousands of young people in the United States and around the world.

2. Why do some people live happy and productive lives while others suffer frustration and sorrow? Galatians 6:7-8.

There is a cause for every effect! Decisions you make today can lead to

success and happiness, or to frustration and heartache in the years to come.

3. Young people naturally desire to enjoy themselves. But is God concerned about how they go about it? Ecclesiastes 11:9-10. What should a person begin doing early in life? Ecclesiastes 12:1.

King Solomon, known for the great wisdom and understanding God gave him (I Kings 3:5-13, 4:29-31), instructs young people to remember the God who created the vast universe and all that it contains. Besides acknowledging that He exists, remembering God also means being thankful to Him for your existence, for your parents and for the material things you enjoy.

4. What does God promise those who do remember Him and strive to please Him? Proverbs 3:1-6. Does God promise to bless those who earnestly seek Him and desire to obey His law? Psalms 119:2, 34:7-10, 112:1-3, I John 3:22. Will He even grant the desires of our hearts if they are good for us? Psalms 37:3-4.

God wants us to live successful, happy lives — to enjoy good health, a challenging career, a beautiful marriage and happy children. He promises blessings and special protection to those who seek to do His will and keep His commandments!

5. Are various Bible examples preserved for us so that we can see the end results of both obedience and disobedience to God? I Corinthians 10:6, 11. How can we learn from these scriptures? Same verses and II Timothy 3:16.

6. What did God offer the people of ancient Israel if they would obey His commandments? Leviticus 26:3-13. And what would they bring upon themselves for disobedience? Verses 14-20. (Read verses 21-39 for additional



Why is it important to obey God now, in our modern world? (Photo by Nathan Faulkner)



# Teen Bible Study

details.) Did God leave it to the people to choose the way of life they would pursue? Deuteronomy 11:26-28, 30:19-20.

God commanded the people of ancient Israel to choose the blessings that would come from obedience to Him. But Israel chose to disobey God. The people, therefore, suffered from terrible troubles including wars, famine, diseases, and were eventually taken captive just as God warned them. Their suffering resulted from the choice to follow their own ways, rather than obey God.

7. What did God warn Adam and Eve? Genesis 2:16-17. What choice did they make? Chapter 3:6. What was the result of their disobedience? Verses 16-19, 23-24.

Adam and Eve were driven out of the Garden of Eden because they chose not to obey God! They came under a curse for their disobedience to God and their lives became difficult and unhappy.

8. Why was Abraham blessed greatly by God? Genesis 22:15-18, 26:3-5.

Abraham obeyed God's laws and taught his son Isaac to obey them too (Genesis 18:19). God, therefore, prospered him and made promises of national greatness to him and his descendants.

9. Were Daniel and his three friends given positions of great responsibility because of their obedience and trust in God? Read Daniel 1, especially verses 19-20. Also notice chapter 2:48-49. Did God protect them from harm? Daniel 3:14-28, 6:16-23.

Sometimes it is not easy to obey God as these four men discovered. But they chose to obey God regardless of the consequences. They knew that obeying God was the most important thing in life!

10. Why did God select David to replace Saul as king of Israel? Acts 13:21-22. What did David do every day? Psalms 119:97. Why? Verses 98-100. Did David learn about God and begin to obey Him as a youth? Psalms 71:17.

David often thought about God's commandments and how to apply them in his daily life. His basic motivation and intent in life was to serve and obey God.

11. How did David respond to and view God's law when he was older? Psalms 119:60, 101-105. Will David be king over Israel in the world tomorrow? 1 Chronicles 28:4, Ezekiel 37:24-25.

12. Did King David instruct his son Solomon

to keep the commandments of God? 1 Kings 2:1-3. Why? Last part of verse 3.

13. Did King Josiah — a descendant of David — and the people of Judah make a covenant to keep the commandments of God? 2 Kings 23:1-3. What reforms did his zeal for God's way lead him to accomplish when he was just 20 years of age? 2 Chronicles 34:1-7.

Josiah became king when he was only 8 years old. At age 16 he began to develop a burning desire to follow the example set by his ancestor David. He began to seek and obey God with all his might!

14. Is it God's will for us to keep His commandments today? 1 John 5:3. How are they described? Romans 7:12.

15. Did Jesus Christ set an example of keeping God's commandments? John 15:10. Did He clearly show that we are to keep the Ten Commandments? Matthew 19:16-19. What kind of life does Christ want us to experience? John 10:10, second part of the verse, 1 John 2.

Jesus Christ came to earth about 2,000 years ago to show mankind how to live life to the full. God wants everyone to follow the way that leads to happiness, abundance and eternal life!

If people everywhere obeyed God's laws, there would be no war, no unhappy families, no divorce, crime, violence or stealing. People would be honest and concerned for each other's welfare and property.

16. What did Solomon conclude is the whole duty of man, whether young or old? Ecclesiastes 12:13-14.

We have seen that it is extremely important to remember God while one is young — to begin learning and following the ways that will lead to an abundant, happy life both now and in the future.

Why not take that first step? Start obeying God now — no matter what obstacles are in your way. It will take effort on your part, but keep trying, and God will back you all the way.

God wants you to have all the benefits that come from following His wonderful way of life. And you will have a head start over those today who don't know or don't care about God's way. You will be recapturing true values and building lasting character by living the way that will soon be the standard of society in the world tomorrow! □



# Teen Bible Study

## The Surprising Origin of Christmas

Prepared by Richard A. Sedliacik

Hundreds of millions of people around the world are now preparing for the Christmas holiday season. Little children, filled with anticipation and excitement, are wondering what Santa Claus will bring them this year.

Entire families will soon be busy putting up Christmas decorations. Holly, mistletoe and evergreen will deck the house. And just the right tree will be chosen and decorated with tinsel and ornaments.

Christmas is the season for giving and receiving presents. A time to sing carols, admire colorful twinkling lights, roast chestnuts in the fireplace, to burn the yule log. It's the season when family and friends get together for a sumptuous meal.

Yet, paradoxically, Christmas is also the time of year when murders, suicides, family fights, depression and drunkenness reach a peak!

Stop and think for a moment. Very few have ever reflected on why they believe what they do — why they follow the customs they do, or where those customs came from. Having been born into this world, we naturally accept the customs and beliefs of society without question.

Have you ever wondered how and when Christmas originated? Does it really celebrate the birthday of Christ? Was Jesus really born Dec. 25? Did the original apostles, whom Jesus taught personally, celebrate His birthday?

Before reading further for the surprising answers, be sure to get your Bible and a pen or pencil. Writing out the Bible verses given in answer to the questions will help you to

remember what you have learned. Now let's begin this eye-opening study.

1. First, let's consider the date of Christ's birth. What does the Bible tell us about conditions surrounding the time when Christ was born? Luke 2:6-8, especially verse 8.

This biblical account is referred to in many encyclopedias and other historical sources to point out that Christ's birth could not have occurred in the month of December. The shepherds in Judea always brought their flocks in from the mountainsides and fields and corralled them no later than mid-October! They did this to protect the sheep and themselves from the cold rains that followed. The Bible itself shows that winter in Judea is the rainy season (Song of Solomon 2:11, Ezra 10:9, 13).

Check an encyclopedia in your library and you'll find that the exact date of Christ's birth is unknown. If Jesus Christ had intended for us to celebrate His birthday, then He would

have told us to do it and given us the exact date in the Bible — which He didn't.

You will also find no biblical record of Christ, His apostles or His Church observing His birthday. Rather, we are told to commemorate the date of His death! (1 Corinthians 11:24-26.)

Since Jesus was not even born in December, do we dare assume that the customs of this most-observed religious holiday stem from "Christian" origins?

Shocking as it may sound, Christmas customs and practices date long before Christ! According to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*: "Christmas customs are an evolution from times that long antedate the

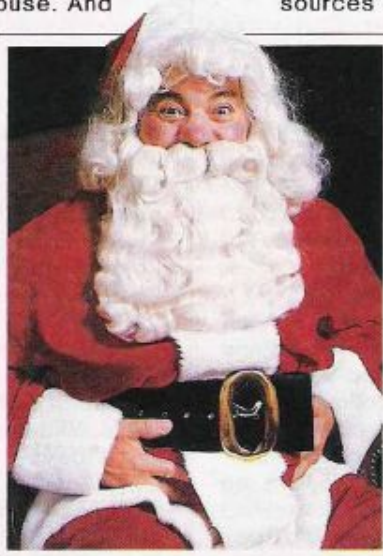


Photo by Warren Wilken



# Teen Bible Study

Christian period — a descent from seasonal, pagan, religious and national practices, hedged about with legend and tradition" (15th edition, article on "Christmas").

The *Encyclopedia Americana*, 1944 edition, further explains: "It was, according to many authorities, not celebrated in the first centuries of the Christian church, as the Christian usage in general was to celebrate the death of remarkable persons rather than their birth . . . A feast was established in memory of this event [Christ's birth] in the fourth century. In the fifth century the Western Church ordered it to be celebrated forever on the day of the old Roman feast of the birth of Sol [the sun], as no certain knowledge of the day of Christ's birth existed."

These authoritative reference works further state that many familiar Christmas trappings such as the holly wreath, mistletoe and the yule log are relics of pre-Christian times!

2. A common custom during the Christmas holidays is to cut down an evergreen tree and decorate it. Does the prophet Jeremiah make reference to such a practice occurring during his time — hundreds of years before Christ? Jeremiah 10:2-5. Whose custom was this? Verses 2-3.

God's Word shows it is the custom of the heathen to cut down trees, decorate them and put them in their homes! And God warns His people not to learn that way or follow it.

3. One of the traditional customs of Christmas is the buying and exchanging of gifts. Many believe they are following an example set by the wise men who presented gifts to the infant Jesus. But why did they present gifts to Christ? Matthew 2:1-11.

The wise men were not starting a new Christian custom of exchanging gifts with friends to honor Christ's birthday. They were following an ancient Eastern custom of presenting gifts to a king when they came into his presence. They were approaching Christ — "King of the Jews" (verse 2).

These gifts obviously were not given on Christ's birthday because the wise men came a number of days, or even weeks, after Christ was born.

4. Many who understand Christmas evolved from pagan customs originally honoring the sun god will tell you they observe it to "honor" Christ. But what does God say about following the customs and

traditions of the heathen? Deuteronomy 12:29-31.

God plainly warns His people not to adopt the practices of pagan nations. God will not accept this kind of worship, even though intended in His honor!

5. Did Christ say it is possible to worship Him and still do it all in vain? Matthew 15:9. What did He tell His disciples about following man's ideas about how to worship God? Mark 7:7-9.

God does not want people trying to honor Christ by following traditions and customs devised by men. Notice again God's command, "You shall not worship the Lord your God in that way" (Deuteronomy 12:31, New King James Version).

6. Those who celebrate Christmas end up breaking many (if not all) of God's commandments. What are these commandments? Read Exodus 20:1-17.

Christ's name is used in vain because He certainly never put His name on Christmas; lying is involved by telling youngsters about Santa Claus; and coveting material things seems to be the true "spirit" of the holiday. More murder, suicide, drunkenness and a host of other sins are committed during the Christmas season than at any other time of the year!

7. Are there specific days of the year that God does command His people to observe and keep holy? Read Leviticus 23:1-36. Is there evidence that Jesus kept these very same days? Luke 2:41-43, John 7:1-2, 14, 37.

These and other scriptures show that Jesus Christ and the Church He founded kept God's festivals. These annual feasts were given to teach us how God is accomplishing His great master plan for mankind. It is through the knowledge of these days that we can understand what man is, the purpose of life and all about the soon-coming Kingdom of God!

If you would like to know more about God's days and how they are observed today, why not write for our free booklet *Pagan Holidays — or God's Holy Days — Which?* Also, be sure to request *The Plain Truth About Christmas*. This free booklet goes into much more detail about the true origins of Christmas and related customs than could be presented in this short study. □



# Teen Bible Study

## To Tell the Truth

Prepared by Richard A. Sedliacik

Have you ever wondered what life would be like if everyone told the truth?

No one would be afraid of being cheated anymore. Manufacturers would no longer mislead consumers with false and deceptive advertising. Politicians wouldn't make promises they knew they couldn't keep. You could trust all your friends to tell the truth and keep their word.

How refreshing it would be if people everywhere always told the truth!

God's Word, the Bible, has much to say about telling the truth. In this study we will learn something about the basic nature and character of God. We'll discover who the very first liar was and examine the first lie recorded in the Bible. Then we'll learn about some of the many blessings and opportunities that automatically come to those who build a reputation for being truthful.

But before starting this study, be sure to get your Bible, a pen or pencil and some notebook paper. Look up, read and then write down the verses that answer each question. This will help you to remember what you are learning.

1. What are some of the qualities and characteristics of God? Deuteronomy 32:4, Revelation 15:3. What is one thing God will never do under any circumstance? Titus 1:2, Hebrews 6:18.

God reveals Himself as a God of truth. You can always rely on what He says. God can be trusted to keep all of His promises because He has willed never to lie!

2. Did Jesus Christ, the Son of God, always speak the truth? Matthew 22:16.

Christ exemplified the very character and nature of God the Father throughout His life. This is because He also was God — the "Word" or spokesman of the God Family before He became a human being (John 1:1-3, 14).

3. What is the origin of the Holy Bible? II Timothy 3:16. What did Jesus, who spoke and lived by the truth, define as truth? John

17:17. Under inspiration of God, did King David also define God's laws as being the truth? Psalm 119:142, 151.

God's Word, the Holy Bible, contains essential truth inspired by God that reveals a way of life based upon the Ten Commandments. This is the way the two members of the God Family have always lived from eternity.

God is love (I John 4:16) and the fulfilling of God's law is love (Romans 13:10). Therefore, the Ten Commandments express the character of God. The Ten Commandments tell us how to show God's outgoing love to both God and other people (Matthew 22:37-39).

4. Did Jesus teach obedience to the Ten Commandments? Matthew 19:17-19. Did He keep them Himself? John 15:10.

5. What does the Ninth Commandment say? Exodus 20:16.

Bearing false witness (lying) is the very opposite of God's nature and character. Since God wants us to develop His character (Matthew 5:48), it is His desire that we learn to

always tell the truth. Intentionally misleading or deceiving others does not show the true love and concern that God wants each of us to be developing toward our parents, teachers and friends.

6. Who was responsible for telling the first recorded lie? Genesis 3:1-5, especially

The collage contains several advertisements:

- SECRET BABY**: SPECIAL REPORT ON MEDICAL MIRACLE. I know I have lived before.
- STOP PAIN**: Simple Machine Can... It Ends Misery of Everything From Headaches to Terminal Cancer.
- VITAMINS TO MAKE YOU YOUNG AGAIN**: RAPID LOSS UP TO 100 POUNDS OR MORE GUARANTEED.
- THERE IS LIFE AFTER DEATH**: Outmeal cookies cure insomnia. Father's Secret Survey proves.
- WHY WE'RE ALL GOING TO HAVE MORE MONEY**

Wouldn't it be great if you could believe everything that you saw in print?



# Teen Bible Study

verse 4. Who was this serpent? Revelation 12:9. Is he identified as the "father" of all lies? John 8:44. What has he since done to the entire world? Look at Revelation 12:9 again. Has all mankind therefore disobeyed God's Commandments, including the ninth? Romans 3:12-13, 23.

God reveals the existence of a super-powerful spirit being — an archangel — who rebelled against God and all that He stands for (Isaiah 14:12-15, Ezekiel 28:13-17). Now known as Satan, his character is the diametric opposite of the faithful and true nature of God!

Taking on the identity of a serpent, the devil lied to Eve in the Garden of Eden. He told her that she would not die, implying that God was a liar when He warned her that she would die if she ate of the forbidden fruit (Genesis 2:16-17). Believing Satan, Eve ate the forbidden fruit and shared it with her husband Adam. Thus they chose to disobey God. The result? They were driven out of the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:23-24) and died as God had said (Genesis 5:5).

As the god of this world or age (II Corinthians 4:4), Satan has also succeeded in spiritually blinding mankind into also disbelieving God and living contrary to God's law.

7. Is lying one sin that God especially hates? Proverbs 6:16, 19. Is it an absolute abomination to Him? Proverbs 12:22. But does God take great delight in those who deal truthfully? Same verse.

God is extremely concerned with the truth. That is because all forms of lying destroy character, in the long run hurting the one who tells lies as well as others. Even so-called white lies fall into the same category with outright, bald-faced lies! Telling a white lie is a false statement made to another person with the intention to mislead. God hates that and so should we.

8. How did King David, a man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22), view lying? Psalm 119:29, 163. What was his advice to those who seek to please God? Psalm 34:11-13.

King David realized the importance of telling the truth. He knew from personal experience that God blesses and grants special favors to those who strive to be truthful.

9. There is often a temptation to mislead and deceive others, and many succeed

initially. But what do these lies become like to those who speak them? Proverbs 20:17. Can it be dangerous to fool others, even in fun? Proverbs 26:18-19.

In today's society young people are constantly bombarded with pressures to compromise their character and integrity. Situations often arise in the classroom, on the playing field, on the job or at home where there is a temptation to lie or twist the facts in your favor. But what happens when those you lied to realize that they've been deceived? The liar often lives in fear that his lie will be discovered.

Honesty is always the best policy, even if it hurts. This is because the Ninth Commandment is a part of God's great spiritual law. If it is broken, it exacts penalties just as surely as the penalty you would suffer if you broke the physical law of gravity by jumping off a 10-story building!

10. Will special benefits and opportunities come to the young person who chooses to speak and live by the truth? Proverbs 3:3-4. What will be the attitude of those in authority toward one who carefully guards his tongue? Proverbs 22:11.

A young person who is careful about what he says and strives to tell the truth will be building a reputation for honesty among his peers, instructors and superiors at school and on the job. They will know that his word is good — that he can be relied on to do what he says he will. Such a person will often be favored and rewarded in different ways, including higher pay. And his parents will entrust him with greater privileges because they know his word is good.

11. Will there be any liars in God's Kingdom? Revelation 21:8. Will those who sincerely strive to keep God's Commandments, including the ninth, become the sons of God? Verse 7. Will they live with God in the New Jerusalem? Verses 1-2, 27, chapter 22:14. Will they dwell in God's presence forever? Psalm 15:1-2, Proverbs 12:19.

God, who cannot lie, has promised sonship to those who receive His Holy Spirit and really try to obey Him. As Spirit-born members of His universe-ruling Family, they will live and rule with God and Christ forever. What an awe-inspiring, incredibly wonderful future awaits those who learn to obey God and tell the truth! □



# Teen Bible Study

## Who and What Is God?

Prepared by Richard A. Sedliacik

Imagine yourself suddenly whisked into the vast reaches of the universe. Stars and galaxies whiz by as you travel at mind-boggling speed through space and time.

Appearing suddenly before you is a dazzling throne with a vast sea of sparkling, shimmering crystal before it. A giant rainbow encircles the throne. Lightning bolts shoot from the throne accompanied by deafening claps of thunder.

Sitting on the throne is a being whose face radiates light as bright as the sun in full strength. His eyes are like flames of fire!

You're awestruck by the incredible sight before you! Terribly curious, you begin to deluge this great being with questions. Who is he? What is he? What is he really like? How long has he existed? What kind of powers and abilities does he have? What has he done and what is he doing today?

As he begins to answer your questions you realize that you have come into the presence of none other than the supreme Architect, Creator and Sustainer of the universe! The One who designed the great star systems and brought them into being, setting each star and planet in its exact place. You are speaking with Almighty God!

Perhaps you have wished that you could take such a thrilling journey. Though physically impossible, you can still learn the answers to the above questions by studying what God has revealed in His inspired written Word — the Holy Bible. So find your Bible, a pen or pencil and some paper. This is so you can read and write out the Bible verses that answer the questions asked in this study.

Now let's begin a most fascinating and eye-opening study. Let's learn *who* and *what* God is!

1. What does the very first chapter of the Bible reveal about God? Genesis 1:1, 26.

The original Hebrew word for God in verse 1 is *Elohim*. *Elohim* is a uniplural or collective noun, like the words *church*, *family* and *team*, all of which have more than one member. The

word *Elohim* in Genesis 1:1 tells us that God is a family! Notice how verse 26 bears this out: "Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image . . .'"


2. Who are the members of the God Family? How many are there now? John 1:1-3, 1 Corinthians 8:6. Was the "Word" mentioned in John 1 made flesh and did He live as a human being? John 1:14.

At the prehistoric time described in John 1:1 (before the material universe was created), there existed only two divine beings. One is God. And with God was another Being — the Word — who also is God. He is the One who was later miraculously begotten in the virgin Mary by God the Father and who became the human Jesus Christ, the Son of God. At the time described in John 1:1-3, the Word was not yet the Son of God and God was not yet His Father.

3. Have both members of the God Family always existed? Psalm 90:2, 102:25-27, 1 Timothy 1:17.

The Bible reveals that both members of the God Family are immortal. There has never been a time when they did not exist. It's impossible for us to understand how these two divine beings could have always existed, but neither can we really understand what electricity is. Yet we know electricity exists and is very real.

4. In whose image and likeness was man



**THE AMBASSADOR COLLEGE**  
**Bible**  
CORRESPONDENCE COURSE

ENROLL IN FREE BIBLE COURSE

This short Bible study is a sample of the study method used in each monthly lesson of the newly expanded Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course. You can enroll in this free course by writing to the *Youth 83* office nearest you. See the inside front cover for addresses.



# Teen Bible Study

made? Genesis 1:26. Therefore do both members of the God Family have the form and shape of a human being? Same verse.

5. Even though God looks like a man, what is He composed of? John 4:24. Is He therefore invisible to human eyes? Colossians 1:15, 1 Timothy 1:17.

6. Are the Father's and Christ's appearances described as glorious? John 17:5. How did John describe Christ's dazzling appearance that was revealed to him in a vision? Revelation 1:13-18. Are the universe-ruling headquarters in heaven also spectacular? Revelation 4:2-6.

Both God the Father and Christ the Son have faces (though shaped like human faces) that radiate light as bright as the sun in full strength! Their eyes are like flames of fire, their feet like burnished brass and their hair as white as snow.

7. Did the God Family create all things? Ephesians 3:9, Colossians 1:15-17, Genesis 1:1, John 1:3. How was the universe and everything that exists created? Psalm 33:6-9, 104:30, Hebrews 11:3.

God the Father and Christ work together as a team. They thought out, planned and designed the entire universe. Then by the incredible power of their Spirit it was all brought into existence.

8. Thinking about God's marvelous creation, what did the prophet Isaiah say about the awesome power and majesty of God? Read and summarize Isaiah 40:12-26. But just how great and powerful is the Almighty God? Are there any limitations to what God can do? Matthew 19:26.

9. Some astronomers estimate there are more than 40 sextillion stars in the universe. Does God call them all by name? Psalm 147:4-5, Isaiah 40:26. Does He even know the number of hairs on our heads? Matthew 10:30. Is God aware of all that happens on earth? II Chronicles 16:9, Job 34:21-25. Can anyone hide his thoughts from God? I Chronicles 28:9.

God's abilities and understanding are infinite. As the Creator of the universe, He knows its deepest secrets, unfathomable to man. He created and upholds the forces that bind atomic nuclei and run gigantic stars, and the laws that sustain incredibly huge galaxies. And He can even be aware of small details about each of us such as the number of hairs on our heads!

10. Is the God Family able to travel through space at incredible speed? Compare John 20:17, 19-20 with Matthew 28:8-9.

Notice that Christ traveled to the Father in heaven and returned to earth on the same day!

11. Does God ever become tired so that He needs to rest? Isaiah 40:28.

12. Does God have perfect character? Matthew 5:48. How does the Bible basically define the nature and character of God? I John 4:16. What is the love of God? I John 5:3. Is this why Jesus summed up the Ten Commandments the way He did? Matthew 22:36-40. Will God's character ever change? Malachi 3:6, Hebrews 13:8.

The character of both God the Father and Jesus Christ is perfect, holy and righteous. Their character can be summed up in the one word *love*. God's law is a reflection of God's character. It is the way of love — the way of giving, serving, helping — of outgoing concern for others. God has an outgoing concern for all of humanity!

13. Is it God's plan to increase the size of His Family by bringing more members into it? Hebrews 2:8-10, Revelation 21:7. Is Jesus Christ the firstborn of many children of God? Romans 8:29. Will they, like Christ, one day be given the same great power and glory of God? Romans 8:17-18, Colossians 3:4. When will this occur? I Thessalonians 4:16-17, I Corinthians 15:50-53.

The awesome potential of all human beings — past, present and future — is that of becoming, through a change of composition by a resurrection, the literal children of God — spirit members of His own divine Family!

14. Does God plan to eventually create new heavens and a new earth? Hebrews 1:10-12, Revelation 21:1-5. Did Isaiah clearly indicate that the government of God will expand not only on the earth, but also to other parts of our galaxy and throughout the universe? Isaiah 9:6-7.

God promises that there will be no end to the increase of His government! Those who are striving to follow God's way and develop His character with the help of His Holy Spirit will one day be born into His divine, ruling Family! They will then be like God — with eternal, indestructible spirit bodies radiating power and glory, shining as the stars forever! (Daniel 12:2-3). □



# Teen Bible Study

## Here's Proof Jesus Christ Lived

Prepared by Richard A. Sedliacik

Have you ever wondered if the Christ of the Bible really lived? Whether He performed such astonishing miracles as raising men from the dead, healing the blind and lame, and even walking on water?

Did Christ really walk the dusty roads of Palestine during the time of the Roman occupation more than 1,900 years ago?

The Bible bears record of a man named Jesus Christ. But is there proof outside the Bible that He really lived? That He performed miracles? That He was condemned to death by the Roman governor Pilate as recorded in the Bible?

It might surprise you to learn that such proof exists. Christ's existence can be proven not only from within the pages of the Bible itself, but also from the words of Roman historians and others who wrote about Him.

Before beginning this fascinating study, be sure to get your Bible, some paper and a pen or pencil. To benefit most from these studies, you should write out the Bible verses given in answer to the questions. This will help you remember what you are learning.

Before examining other historical evidence of Christ's existence, let's see some of the evidence the Bible itself has to offer.

1. Does the Bible record Christ's existence as a human being during the days of the Roman Empire? Matthew 1:16, 18, 21, 2:1-6, Luke 20:20-25, John 11:47-48.

The entire New Testament is a record of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ and the Church He founded. The written accounts, or gospels, of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John (Jesus' disciples and apostles) clearly show that Christ was born during the days of Herod, king of Judea, and that He lived during the time of the Roman Caesars and Roman occupation of Palestine.

2. Was Christ's miraculous birth to a virgin in the town of Bethlehem of Judea predicted hundreds of years earlier? Matthew 1:22-23,

Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 2:5-6, Micah 5:2.

These are merely two of the more than 300 prophecies and references to Jesus Christ in the Old Testament that are mentioned in the New Testament as having been fulfilled by Him. These prophecies, as historians and archaeologists will admit, were all written hundreds of years before Christ was born!

3. Did Christ show that the Scriptures of His day (now called the Old Testament of the Bible we have today) spoke about Him? John 5:39 and Luke 24:25-27, 44. Also read Matthew 26:55-56 and Luke 4:17-21.

Now let's notice several more specific Old Testament prophecies about Christ and see how He fulfilled them.

4. Was Christ to be betrayed by a friend for 30 pieces of silver? Psalm 41:9, Zechariah 11:12-13 compared with Matthew 26:14-16.

5. Would Jesus suffer a painful and agonizing death, with His hands and His feet pierced?

Isaiah 53:7-9, Psalm 22:14-17, Zechariah 12:10 compared with Matthew 27:31, John 19:1, 34 and 20:24-29.

6. And yet would the bones in His body not be broken? Psalm 34:20 compared with John 19:33, 36.

7. Would lots be cast for Christ's robe? Psalm 22:18 compared with Matthew 27:35.

The New Testament accounts of Christ's



Jesus Christ is mentioned in several historical sources besides the Bible. (Photo by Hal Finch)



# Teen Bible Study

life show that He fulfilled each and every one of these and other prophecies written hundreds of years before His birth!

8. While on earth, did Jesus perform many miracles? Matthew 11:4-5, 15:30-31, 14:25-27, Luke 17:12-14, John 11:11-14, 38-44.

9. Did the religious leaders of the Jews, who were envious of Christ's miracles and fame, claim that His power was from a source other than God? Matthew 12:24.

Although the religious leaders hated Christ and denied that He was the prophesied Messiah, they were forced by the very fact of His miracles and influence among the people to give recognition to Him in their records.

Jesus is often referred to in the Jewish *Talmud*. The *Talmud* is a record of Jewish debates, doctrines, stories and traditions covering a period from before the birth of Christ to the centuries immediately following. In the *Talmud* Jesus is scornfully referred to as "that man," "dead dog," "the hanged one" and "the sorcerer." (The *Jewish Encyclopedia* lists the places where Jesus is referred to in the *Talmud*.)

The *Talmud* records Jesus' healing of the blind, the lame and the leprous. It also mentions His walking on the sea. But the *Talmud* also speaks of Jesus as having learned sorcery in Egypt (recall Matthew 12:24), in an attempt to discredit His miracles and His claim to being the very Son of God. The *Talmud* also records a full list of references to Jesus' mother, Mary, but in a very derogatory sense.

10. The envious religious leaders finally succeeded in having Jesus arrested by the Roman authorities under trumped-up charges that He was plotting the overthrow of the Roman government, and other false accusations. Did Pontius Pilate, governor of Judea, find Jesus guilty of anything worthy of death after examining Him? Luke 23:13-23. Nevertheless, did Pilate give in to those who hated Christ and who demanded His crucifixion? Verse 24.

This event was recorded by the Roman historian Tacitus, who lived less than a hundred years after Christ. He wrote that "Christus [the Latin spelling of Christ], from whom the name [Christians] had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty [crucifixion] during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus . . ."

(*Annals*, XV, 44).

As a Roman historian, Tacitus had access to government records of the Roman Empire. He was able to examine official historical documents showing that Christ was crucified!

Suetonius, another Roman historian and a contemporary of Tacitus, also refers to Christ. He tells us that in A.D. 49 the Emperor Claudius banished all Jews from the city of Rome (an incident also mentioned in Acts 18:2) and that Christ's followers were blamed: "He expelled the Jews from Rome, on account of the riots in which they were constantly indulging, at the instigation of Chrestus [a common misspelling of the name of Christ]" (*The Lives of the Caesars*, Book V, 25).

Reference to Christ is also made by the non-Christian Jewish historian Flavius Josephus of the first century A.D. Writing about the death of James, Josephus called him "the brother of Jesus who was called Christ" (*Antiquities of the Jews*, XX:9, 1).

These men were non-Christians — their writings are neutral, historical evidence of Jesus' life and crucifixion by the Romans.

An early reference to Christ also was made by Pliny the Younger, who was governor of Bithynia in Asia Minor. He wrote many letters to the Emperor Trajan concerning how Christians should be dealt with. One such letter, written about A.D. 111-113, provides conclusive evidence concerning Christ's existence and that of His followers (Christians) who were put to death for not renouncing their belief in Christ and their refusal to curse Him.

In this letter, Pliny describes Christians as coming together at fixed seasons and singing a hymn to "Christ, as to a god." This phrase clearly shows that Pliny considered Christ to have been a historical figure. He had no reason to doubt Christ's existence for he knew that Jesus was a real person who had lived and taught in the Roman Empire less than a hundred years earlier!

But what was the historical, literal Jesus of the Bible really like? Was He the pale-faced, delicate and effeminate-looking person so often portrayed by most of professing Christianity today? Or was He a real he-man who radiated true manliness and would command our respect if we met Him today? We'll find out in our next study. □



# Teen Bible Study

## What Was Christ Really Like?

Prepared by Richard A. Sedliacik

What was the historical, literal Jesus Christ of the Bible really like? Was He the pale, weak, long-haired, effeminate-looking man pictured by artists centuries after His death?

It may come as a surprise, but this is *not* the Christ described in the Bible! The real Jesus was a rugged, dynamic individual who radiated true manliness — someone who would command our respect if we met Him today.

He spoke with an unmistakable ring of authority in His voice. He had great wisdom and knowledge, yet remained humble, warm, easy to get along with, nice to know!

In previous studies, we learned that Jesus Christ was the Word (Spokesman) who existed with God from eternity as the second member of the all-powerful God Family (John 1:1-3). Together they planned and created the entire universe.

But the Word divested Himself of His former glory and came down to this earth as a human being to give His life in payment for the sins of mankind (Philippians 2:5-8, John 1:14, 3:16, Romans 5:8-9). He was miraculously begotten in the virgin Mary and born as the human Jesus, the Son of God (Matthew 1:18-21).

In our last study we learned of the historical proof that Jesus Christ was a real person who lived and taught more than 1,900 years ago. In this month's study we'll learn the plain truth about what the most important person in all human history was really like!

But before beginning this eye-opening study, be sure to get your Bible, some paper and a pen or pencil.

1. What was Jesus like as a young person? Luke 2:40, 52. Was He obedient to His parents? Verse 51. Was He exceptionally intelligent? Verses 42, 46-47. As an adult, were people amazed at His God-given wisdom, knowledge and understanding? John 7:14-17, Matthew 13:54.

2. Did the prophet Isaiah, writing hundreds

of years before Christ came to earth, say that He would be especially handsome? Isaiah 53:2. Did Judas have to use a special sign to point out Jesus to His enemies? Matthew 26:48-50.

Jesus Christ was of quite ordinary appearance. He looked like any other average man in His community. He did not stand out in a crowd.

3. How can we know that Jesus did not have long hair? I Corinthians 11:14.

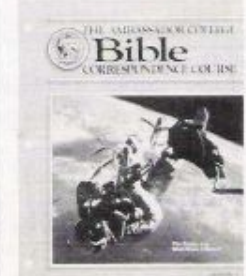
The apostle Paul knew what Christ looked like because he had seen Him (I Corinthians 9:1, 15:8). Paul would not have said that it is a shame or dishonor for a man to have long hair if Christ's hair had been long!

4. Did Jesus have an occupation that demanded much physical exertion and strength? Mark 6:3.

Jesus was a carpenter by trade. He worked with heavy stones and timbers for much of His life before beginning His 3½-year ministry at age 30. His hands must have been calloused and His muscles strong. As there were no electric tools back then, sawing and drilling were done by hand. This was hard work!

5. What other clues are there that Christ was a physically strong and healthy man? Mark 15:15, Matthew 4:1-11.

A physically weak person could not have survived the Roman scourge — a horribly severe beating during which pieces of flesh



THE AMBASSADOR COLLEGE  
**Bible**  
CORRESPONDENCE COURSE

**ENROLL IN FREE BIBLE COURSE**

This short Bible study is a sample of the study method used in each monthly lesson of the newly expanded Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course. You can enroll in this free course by writing to the Youth 83 office nearest you. See the inside front cover for addresses.



# Teen Bible Study

were ripped from the body — and then experience the excruciating pain of crucifixion. Nor could a weak person have fasted for 40 days before going on to win the most decisive spiritual battle of all time!

**6.** Was Jesus a leader of strong and rugged men? Luke 5:8-11. What did He nickname two of His disciples, giving us a clue to their personality? Mark 3:17.

Jesus was a real man — a rugged outdoorsman who could lead other equally rugged and masculine men like Peter, a strong, hardworking commercial fisherman.

**7.** Did Jesus have a powerful voice that could be heard by multitudes of people? Matthew 15:10.

**8.** Was Christ capable of expressing a wide range of emotions, including anger? John 2:13-17, Mark 11:15-17. Did He boldly thunder out in anger and righteous indignation when denouncing the hypocritical scribes and Pharisees? Read and summarize Matthew 23:13-33.

Jesus twice chased the money changers out of the Temple! He was angry at those who were polluting God's Temple, making it a house of merchandise and a den of thieves!

On other occasions, Christ boldly stood before the religious leaders of His day and publicly branded them as the hypocrites that they were!

**9.** But was Jesus equally capable of expressing feelings of sorrow and agony? Isaiah 53:3, Luke 22:44. Was He full of love, mercy and compassion? Mark 6:34, John 15:9-13. And did He cry? John 11:35.

Christ was loving, kind and helpful to His fellow human beings. On many occasions He healed the blind, lame, leprous, deaf and dumb, cast out demons and fed the hungry crowds who listened to Him teach about the good news of the Kingdom of God (Luke 9:11).

Yet Jesus always gave God the credit for these miracles (John 5:30, 14:10), realizing that the power to perform these spiritual works came from His Father in heaven through the Holy Spirit.

**10.** Was Jesus willing to spend time with people from all walks of life, including children? Matthew 9:11, Luke 7:36, Mark 10:13-16. Did He love to serve people? Acts 10:38.

Jesus knew how to conduct Himself in any

social situation. On many occasions He enjoyed good food and drink (Luke 7:33-34), yet He always exercised perfect self-control.

**11.** Did Jesus have clear understanding of human relationships and knowledge in many different fields? Luke 21:1-4, 12:13-21, Matthew 20:1-16, 23:23, Luke 19:12-26. (You may want to summarize in your own words the verses given in answer to these questions.)

Jesus' parables revealed His knowledge of financial matters, relations between employer and employee, and people's attitudes toward money, among other things. He used this knowledge to make spiritual points. He also knew at least three languages (Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek) and understood the Scriptures like no one else!

**12.** Did Christ teach obedience to the laws of the ruling government? Matthew 23:2-3, 17:24-27, 22:17-21.

Jesus taught His disciples to obey the laws of the land. He also set the example of paying tribute, or taxes, to the Roman government.

**13.** Did Jesus keep God's commandments? John 15:10. Did He instruct others to do likewise? Matthew 19:17. Because He was human, was He tempted to sin as we are? Hebrews 4:15.

Like any ordinary person, Jesus was tempted in all points. But He always rejected these temptations to sin because He called on the full power of God's spiritual strength (John 3:34) for the help needed to obey God perfectly.

**14.** Does Christ teach His true followers to strive to develop the character of God? Matthew 5:48. Should they be striving to live as Jesus lived, following His example? 1 Peter 2:21, 1 John 2:6.

Jesus is our perfect example of how to live and enjoy life. And He lived it abundantly! His entire life, glimpses of which we have just seen, was one of obedience to God and service to humanity.

The Jesus of your Bible is a true hero anyone would admire and look up to — someone we would want to imitate — an example to follow in all areas of life!

Why not read the gospels of your own Bible (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) and come to know more fully the real personality and spiritual character of Jesus Christ? □



# Teen Bible Study

## A Gold Mine in Your Home!

Prepared by Richard A. Sedliacik

The Homestake Mine in Lead, S.D. — the most famous gold mine in the United States — has yielded fantastic wealth. Since 1877, more than 1,000 tons of the most-sought-after, highly prized metal on earth have come from this mine.

Have you ever dreamed about owning a gold mine like this?

What would you do if you were told about a major deposit of gold nearby — just waiting to be discovered? Chances are you'd spend your entire savings as well as countless hours searching for it!

Believe it or not, you have a gold mine that's just waiting to be discovered! But it's not filled with this precious yellow metal. It's a gold mine of wisdom and common sense written by the wisest man who ever lived.

That gold mine is the book of Proverbs! It contains priceless wisdom that shows us how to live successful, happy lives — how to have and enjoy good health, a challenging career, a beautiful marriage and happy children. It also gives us keys to building meaningful and lasting friendships.

Before reading further, be sure to get your Bible, a pen or pencil and some paper so you can read and write out the Bible verses that answer the questions asked in this study.

1. Who wrote the book of Proverbs? Proverbs 1:1. Who was Solomon? Same verse and I Kings 2:12. Was he the wisest of all men? I Kings 4:30-34. How did Solomon obtain this wisdom? I Kings 3:5-13, 4:29.

After Solomon became king of Israel, God appeared to him in a dream and asked him what he wanted most. God granted Solomon his wish and gave him the greatest wisdom and understanding of any man on earth!

2. To whom did Solomon write the book of Proverbs? Proverbs 1:1-4. Does he repeatedly show that the book is primarily intended for young people? Proverbs 1:8, 2:1, 3:1, 11, 21, 4:1.

3. Why is the book of Proverbs addressed to young people? Proverbs 1:33, 2:1-12, especially verses 10-12, 3:2-4.

Solomon recognized the vital importance of the proper teaching a young person needs before going out to face the world on his or her own. He recorded his God-given wisdom so that we all might learn to lead happy and productive lives.

4. Are true wisdom, knowledge and understanding more valuable than material possessions — than even silver, gold and precious stones? Proverbs 3:13-18, 8:10-11.

Few people have ever had both wisdom and riches. Solomon did, and he realized that wisdom was his most valuable possession!

5. Solomon often spoke about the company one keeps. Does he caution us to choose our friends carefully? Proverbs 22:24-25, 24:1. What further advice does he give about our association with others? Proverbs 24:21-22, 20:19, 14:7.

People tend to imitate the traits, attitudes and values of those with whom they associate. This is why Solomon cautions us about associating with those who would cause us to compromise God's standards of morality, quality and excellence.

6. Will one who associates with wise men become wise himself? Proverbs 13:20. Is a good friend one who sharpens our wits and helps us to grow? Proverbs 27:17.



Could you be fabulously wealthy — and not even know it? (Photo by Hal Finch)



# Teen Bible Study

We can be positively influenced by friends who are known for their wisdom and good judgment — those who are striving to do what's right and who are truly concerned for our welfare. On the other hand, we can be negatively influenced by those who do not have high standards of conduct and who seem to be concerned only about themselves.

7. What advice does Solomon have for building meaningful and lasting friendships? Proverbs 18:24. Does a real friend show love and concern for others and try his best to avoid offending them? Proverbs 17:17, 18:19.

The way to have friends is to show yourself friendly, going out of your way to encourage, help and serve others.

8. Solomon also has much to say about the end results of one's actions. Will a person ultimately pay the consequences of improper conduct? Proverbs 6:12-15. Will a wicked person's devices ultimately boomerang to ensnare him? Proverbs 5:21-23.

9. But will a person who walks uprightly reap blessings from God? Proverbs 3:33-35, 11:27.

There is a cause for every effect! Decisions and actions of today can lead to success and happiness, or to frustration and heartache in time to come. Solomon shows that we reap what we sow, whether good or bad.

Now let's notice what Solomon tells us about the value of correction and discipline.

10. Will a really wise person appreciate correction and instruction? Proverbs 9:8-9, 12:1, 13:18. How will wise parents deal with their children? Proverbs 3:12, 22:6, 29:17. And will a wise child heed his or her parents' correction and instruction? Proverbs 13:1, 15:5.

Though correction is often hard to take, it is for our own good. There are many people, including our parents, relatives and teachers, who are older, wiser and know more than we do. It is definitely to our advantage to heed their instruction and correction.

11. Why is it so important to listen to advice and take correction? Proverbs 14:12. Before making important decisions, is it wise to seek advice and counsel? Proverbs 11:14, 15:22, 12:15, 19:20.

Sometimes what we think is a good

decision is not necessarily the best course of action. That is why advice from our parents, teachers and elders is so important. In many cases they have gone through similar experiences and are more than willing to give us the guidance we need to make the right decisions. They want to help us avoid making mistakes that could prove costly.

12. It is becoming increasingly difficult to find people who are diligent in their work. Does Solomon show that diligent effort will always prove its worth? Proverbs 10:4-5, 13:4.

13. Who will become the leaders directing the rest of the workers? Proverbs 12:24. And what will be the fate of the slothful or lazy? Same verse.

"The slothful will be put to forced labor" is how the Revised Standard Version renders this verse. Those who work diligently and with zeal will be recognized. They will eventually be given higher pay and greater responsibility because they have become valuable assets to their employers!

If you are working at a summer job or already have steady employment, be the kind of employee who increases production. When the time comes for raises and promotions, this is the person who will be remembered.

14. Though hard work will lead to financial security, what should such a blessed person's attitude be toward money? Proverbs 11:28. Is it important to know how to use financial resources correctly? Proverbs 3:9-10, 21:26, 28:27. Does Solomon advise us to beware of deficit spending? Proverbs 22:7.

As we have seen from this brief study, each proverb condenses the meaning and power of thousands of words into just a few short and simple sentences. But we have only scratched the surface of this God-inspired gold mine of wisdom!

So be sure to continue studying the book of Proverbs. (Using a modern translation will be helpful.) Think about each proverb and how you can apply the principles you learn to your daily life. Talk about these principles with your parents, remembering that "iron sharpens iron."

Remember — now is the time to tap the priceless wisdom that will help you have a long, successful, happy and rewarding life! □



# Teen Bible Study

## Setting Goals for Success in Life

Prepared by Richard A. Sedliacik

"No human need ever become a failure!" Editor-in-Chief Herbert W. Armstrong proves this in his booklet, *The Seven Laws of Success*, and shows how to be successful in life.

This booklet is so valuable, you couldn't afford to buy it. But if you don't have a copy, you can't afford to be without it, so we'll give you one — free.

Mr. Armstrong learned through many years of study and experience that there are definite laws that, if followed, will lead to true and lasting success in life.

What are these laws? How can we make them work for us? In this first of a series of studies on these laws

of success, you will learn about the important first law and how to apply it in your life.

But before beginning, be sure to get your Bible, a pen or pencil and some paper. Writing out the Bible verses that answer the questions will help you remember the important principles you'll be learning.

1. Does God want us to have a successful and happy life? Ill John 2, John 10:10.

Contrary to what some have assumed or been led to believe, God wants us to enjoy a productive, satisfying life! The question is, how do we go about experiencing this kind of life?

2. Do prudent or wise men understand their way — where they are headed in life? Proverbs 14:8. Do they carefully plan for the future? Proverbs 4:26, 14:15.

It is vitally important to know where you are headed — where you are going in life. And the key to this is setting meaningful and worthwhile goals. Only then will you be on your way to achieving true success!

And so the first law of success is to have the right goal — the goal that will help you to

achieve the purpose for your very existence! Only after having the right goal in mind can you then begin to work toward setting and achieving secondary goals.

3. What did Jesus Christ say should be our most important goal in life? Matthew 6:33. And what is God's righteousness? Psalm 119:172.

4. Did the patriarch Abraham

pursue this supreme goal? Hebrews 11:10, 13-14, 16. Did he strive to be righteous? Genesis 26:5. Does Luke 13:28 show that Abraham will indeed be in God's Kingdom? Did the apostle Paul also strive to enter the Kingdom of God? Philippians 3:11-14, II Timothy 4:7-8.

The first law is not merely choosing any goal — it is having and diligently pursuing the right goal. It is setting as one's life aim the Kingdom of God and His righteousness.

That goal — the purpose of your existence — as explained by Mr. Armstrong in "Keep Your Eyes on the Goal" (March-April Youth 83), "is that you be born of God, to share with Him the glory of creation, to inherit His divine nature, to be like Him — to do what He does, to accomplish what He accomplishes, enjoy what He enjoys —



U.S. President Ronald Reagan and former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill: These men set, and achieved, great goals — part of the first law that leads to success.

Photos: left, Gene Hogberg; right, Blair — Camera Press



peace, happiness, joy, resplendent glory in life everlasting."

This supreme goal sets the direction of your life's journey. That's why it's so important to set the right goal early in life — to channel your life's ambitions into achieving it! Other lesser goals must then fit in with the one, main goal God wants all humanity to eventually achieve — that of ultimately becoming members of His universe-ruling Family!

Once we understand the true purpose for life, and make the attaining of it our primary goal, then we can begin to set secondary goals. These secondary goals fall into three distinct categories: long term, intermediate and short term.

Long-term goals include the plans and desires you hope to fulfill in five years or more. Such goals might include acquiring the education necessary for a career, becoming a successful homemaker, learning to play the piano or becoming an expert in some trade or profession.

Intermediate goals are the goals you hope to achieve between the next six months to five years. Typical goals in this category would be improving your vocabulary and writing ability, traveling or learning to sew and cook.

Short-term goals would include your plans for the next six months. Examples would be to maintain an A or B average in each class, to develop a more friendly and enthusiastic personality, to improve your speaking ability, to establish and maintain an exercise program or learn a new sport.

Establish goals for school, work, sports, music and your social life. Then establish priorities for your goals. Place the most important things first, remembering that these secondary goals should contribute to the main goal in life discussed earlier.

5. Will God help you to achieve your goals if you trust and obey Him? Psalm 37:4-5, 23, 31, Proverbs 3:5-6, 16:9. What important principle of life should we also apply in accomplishing our goals? Ecclesiastes 9:10.

As you set your various goals, be sure to

ask God to guide you and grant you the wisdom to crystalize your goals — to truly seek His will in doing what's best for you.

6. When setting various goals, especially long term, is it wise to seek counsel and advice from others with experience and knowledge? Proverbs 11:14, 15:22.

When setting major, lifetime goals such as deciding on a career, be sure to obtain advice from experts. They will be able to help you determine if your goals are realistic — if you have the aptitudes necessary to be successful in a particular field.

7. Should one carefully "count the cost" to be sure he is able to achieve his ambitions? Luke 14:28-30.

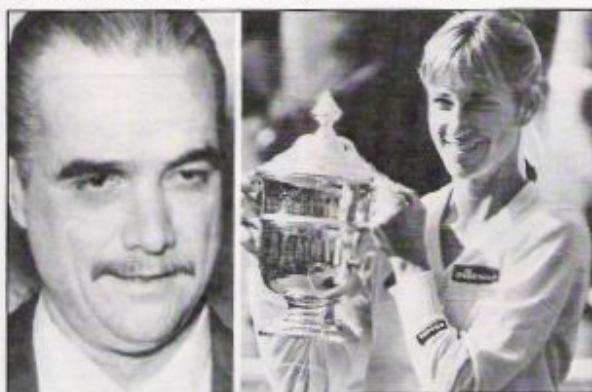
In setting secondary goals, be sure to use balance, moderation and common sense. Some of your ambitions may be premature, financially infeasible or beyond your ability to achieve.

8. Once we establish practical, worthwhile goals for ourselves, they will help focus our attention and give us energy, direction and motivation in life. Did Jacob have a goal that inspired him to work hard? Genesis 29:18-20. Did his goal so impress and inspire him that seven years of work seemed like only a few days? Verse 20.

The successful people of history had their eyes focused on a goal. The goal fired them with enthusiasm, energy and zeal. It motivated them to achieve.

It is also important to review your goals often. As you get into the habit of reviewing your goals, you will find yourself acquiring the ability and the knowledge you need to reach them. Like a magnet, you will attract to yourself information, facts, concepts and ideas from your daily experiences and encounters with others. You'll start absorbing answers, tips and helps from lectures, conversations and general reading that would otherwise go unnoticed.

Remember: The extent to which one succeeds in life is determined first of all by the goals he sets! Now is the time to begin applying this first great law of success. Life will take on exciting new meaning and purpose if you do! □



Is there more to success than what billionaire Howard Hughes achieved monetarily or what Chris Evert Lloyd has been achieving in tennis?



# Teen Bible Study

## Preparing for Success

Prepared by Richard A. Sedliacik

Why do so many people fail, while only the few are really successful? Could it be luck, or are there definite reasons?

*Youth 83* Editor-in-Chief Herbert W. Armstrong shows that there are specific steps that lead to true success in his booklet, *The Seven Laws of Success*. (Send for a free copy if you haven't already.)

In this series of studies we're backing up the material in that booklet with other useful and important information to help you not only avoid failure, but achieve tremendous success.

Last month, in the first of this series, we learned that there are definite laws that, if followed, lead to true and lasting success in life.

As we discovered, the first of these laws involves knowing where you are headed — where you are going in life. The key to this is setting meaningful and worthwhile goals.

We learned of the absolute necessity of having the right overall goal in life — that of ultimately becoming a member of God's universe-ruling Family! Only after having this No. 1 goal in mind can a person begin to work toward setting and achieving secondary goals.

But once we have the right goal as our life's aim, and appropriate secondary goals as discussed in the previous study, what next?

The next logical step is the preparation necessary to achieve these goals. This involves education — the second vital law of success!

In this study you will learn why this second law is so important, as well as how to apply it

in your life. But, before you begin, don't forget to get your Bible, a pen or pencil and some paper. Reading and writing out the Bible verses that answer the questions asked in this study will help you to remember the important principles you'll be learning.

1. Should we desire to become educated — to receive instruction and knowledge? Proverbs 22:17-18, 23:12, 23. Does a prudent, or wise, person want to be well educated? Proverbs 15:14, 18:15.

As the wisest (I Kings 4:29-31) and one of the most educated men of his day, Solomon advised young people to apply themselves diligently to learning and instruction. He understood that in so doing, a person will be laying a vital foundation for future success in life!

A quality, well-rounded and balanced education is essential to achieving real success. Not only does it include learning the skills necessary to earn a living, it also includes learning *how* to live.

Such an education involves understanding the meaning and purpose of human life and how to attain it. It also includes learning the true values in life, as well as the laws that God has set in motion to produce real and lasting happiness.

2. Where do we find this all-important knowledge? II Timothy 3:15-17. Were the Scriptures written for our learning? Romans 15:4. Should we take time to study God's Word? II Timothy 2:15.

God's instructions to mankind have been preserved for us in the Bible. In it God has revealed the most essential and most basic knowledge we need to know — knowledge that

If your goal is to play the flute, you must prepare yourself—learn proper techniques.

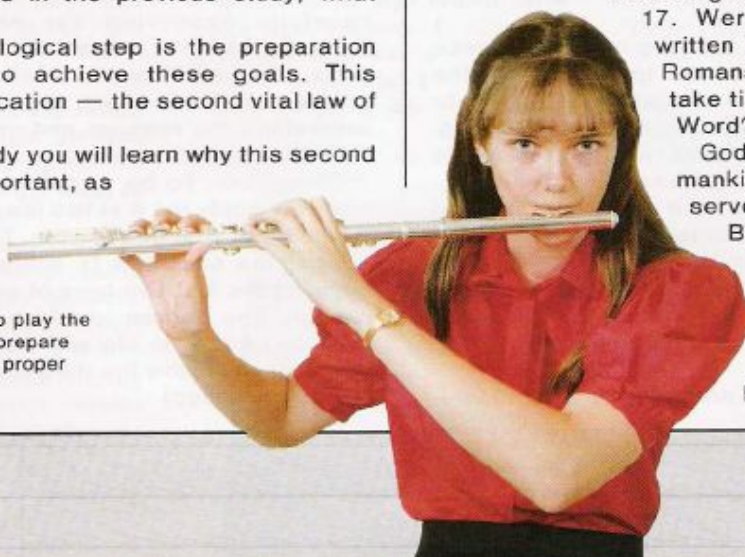


Photo by Nathan Faulkner



could not be obtained anywhere else.

As the foundation of all knowledge, the Bible shows us the way to peace, happiness, abundant well-being and lasting success. It contains vital instruction on subjects such as sex, marriage, money management, jobs and getting along with others.

Also found in the Bible are accounts of great men and women — men like Abraham, Moses, David, Christ; women like Ruth, Hannah and Sarah. Take time to read about the lives of these individuals and you will learn valuable lessons and principles that you can apply in your life.

3. Does God want us to be continually learning more about His way of life — the way that leads toward the No. 1 goal in life? Colossians 1:9-10, II Peter 3:18.

Once one has come to understand that he should be preparing for his primary goal in life, he should then focus on preparing to achieve his secondary goals. But whatever these goals, he must acquire the education, training and experience necessary to achieve them.

Suppose you have musical talent and want to become a professional musician. You must develop your talent through many years of diligent study and practice before being able to perform with a high degree of proficiency.

No matter how much natural ability a person has, it must be developed. And development comes through further training and education — through application of the second law of success.

Like many young people, you probably hope to eventually have a satisfying and rewarding career that pays well. You might like to become a teacher, businessman, engineer, computer programmer, forest ranger or perhaps a journalist. Specialized education is necessary to prepare you to enter any of these, and many other professions.

Talking to your school's career guidance counselor will help you to understand the type and amount of education necessary to enter a profession you might be considering. Also, be sure to speak with professionals already active in their respective fields.

4. Were Daniel and his three friends skilled and well educated young men? Daniel 1:3-4, 6. Were they selected, therefore, to receive additional education that prepared them to assume top government positions in the Babylonian Empire? Verses 4-5, 17-20, 2:48-49.

As young men preparing for the future,

Daniel and his three friends took their education seriously. Because of this, and their obedience to God, they were greatly rewarded for their efforts, illustrating the principle found in Proverbs 22:29.

Follow the example of these men by learning all you can while in school. Apply yourself diligently in all your classes. Be interested in what you study. Don't study just to pass a test. Study to learn. Think of interesting ways to apply what you're learning. Strive to make your learning experiences, both in and out of school, enjoyable and exciting. Doing well in school will help you to lay a vital foundation for future success!

5. A large part of education involves listening to the advice and counsel of others. Will a wise person hear and by doing so increase learning? Proverbs 1:5. Will he obtain a multitude of counsel? Proverbs 11:14, 12:15, 15:22, 19:20.

Education not only involves listening to the instruction and counsel of others, it also involves being well informed through reading. Whether in or already out of school, take time to read profitable, useful and educational material.

Books, especially autobiographies and biographies of successful men and women, can inspire, stimulate and motivate you to greater achievement and success! Biographies of such people as Benjamin Franklin, Abraham Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt, Henry Ford, Thomas Edison, Winston Churchill, Dwight Eisenhower, Queen Elizabeth, Golda Meir, Anwar Sadat and others are profitable reading.

Keeping up with world news by reading a daily paper and a weekly newsmagazine is also valuable and worthwhile. This will help you to better understand world events and the problems facing society today.

6. Can important lessons be learned by carefully observing our environment? Proverbs 24:30-34, especially verse 32.

Be alert and aware of all that occurs around you. Think about, analyze and try to understand the reasons and causes behind even the common, ordinary events.

Remember: To be a real success in life, you must apply the first two laws of success. You first set your goals in life. Then you must acquire the education to achieve them. But applying the first two laws of success is not enough. The degree to which you become truly successful in life will also depend on how well you follow the third law of success! (To be continued) □



# Teen Bible Study

## Here's to Your Good Health

Prepared by Richard A. Sedliacik

It's not natural to be sick!

*Youth 83* Editor-in-Chief Herbert W. Armstrong explains this and how health is related to success in his booklet, *The Seven Laws of Success*. You can call or write for a free copy if you haven't already — the phone numbers and addresses are on the inside front cover.

In this series of studies we're backing up the material in that booklet with other useful information to help you achieve true and lasting success.

The first of the laws that lead to success, as you will recall from the previous studies, is to set meaningful and worthwhile goals. Then you must prepare yourself to achieve them through proper education — the second law.

But your degree of success also depends on how well you follow the third law of success — good health.

In this study, you will learn vital guidelines for healthful living. Following them will help to ensure radiant health both now and in the future, enabling you to be much more successful in life.

Before beginning this study, be sure to get your Bible, a pen or pencil and some paper. Reading and writing down the Bible verses that answer the questions asked in this study will help you to remember the important principles of health you will be studying.

1. Does God want us to enjoy life by being in good health? Ill John 2.

God inspired the apostle John to show that He intends for people to live happy, healthy and successful lives. He wants us to be bubbling over with health, energy and

enthusiasm — free from aches, pains and sicknesses of all kinds.

But why are so many in our society today suffering from poor health?

2. Is there always a cause for every effect? Galatians 6:7. Did Solomon and Job show that the things we do now will affect us later? Proverbs 11:18, 22:8, Job 4:8.

The principle revealed by these verses shows that our decisions and actions each day add up and can end up having a major effect on our futures. This is true in all areas of life — including health! Our bodies, consisting of many complex and interrelated systems

(Psalm 139:14), are finely tuned and regulated by physical, natural laws that must be followed to achieve and maintain good health.

The seemingly small decisions we make each day (such as the kinds and amounts of food we eat, and the amount of sleep and exercise we get) have a cumulative impact on our health and well-being.

3. Will following God's laws — including the laws of physical health — bring about long life, good health and happiness? Proverbs 3:1-2, 7-8, 4:20-22.

Since God created the human body (Genesis 2:7), He knows what is best for it. He has revealed guidelines for healthful living in the pages of the Bible — His instruction book for mankind. Following the laws of health that God has set in motion will help you to maintain vibrant health and contribute to your overall success in life.

4. The prophet Daniel, who lived thousands of years ago, understood there were certain health laws he should follow. Was he



A variety of foods in a well-balanced diet — a key to maintaining good health.



careful about the foods he ate? Daniel 1:8-16, especially verses 12-15.

To maintain good health we should try to eat a variety of foods every day including lean meat, whole grain cereals and breads, dairy products, as well as fresh fruits and vegetables. Such a well-balanced diet will provide the essential elements our bodies need to be healthy.

Also, one should try to limit the intake of food that has little nutritional value (often called junk food) such as soft drinks, candy and pastries.

5. Should we strive for moderation and balance in all areas of life? I Corinthians 9:25. (*Temperate* means "marked by moderation; not extreme or excessive.") What does the Bible warn are the consequences of overeating and drunkenness? Proverbs 23:20-21.

Not only is what you eat and drink important, so is the amount. God created food to be enjoyed (Psalms 103:5, 104:14-15). But He wants us to strive for moderation in our eating and drinking habits.

6. Does the Bible recommend exercise for good health? I Timothy 4:8.

Correctly translated, this verse shows that bodily exercise profits "for a little while" — that is, during this physical life. In other words, even though developing godly character is more important, exercise does help in maintaining good health.

Take part in a variety of sports and develop a sensible exercise program that will keep you in good physical condition. Exercise not only will build up your resistance to disease, it will help you to look and feel better and be more alert and energetic.

7. Is there a connection between our state of mind — the way we think — and our physical health? Proverbs 11:17, 14:30.

Good physical health involves good mental health and positive emotions as well. Your mind and body work together. The way you think can make you sick!

Just as negative emotions — such as fear, worry, distress, anger and hostility — can wear down the body, so positive emotions can build it up. Many do not realize this and end up suffering from various ailments. Good health, as the Bible reveals,

depends to a large extent on peace of mind and contentment.

8. What does the Bible say we should think about? Philippians 4:8. What are the benefits of having a positive outlook on life? Proverbs 15:13, 16:24, 17:22.

A person can definitely help maintain good health by having a positive, cheerful outlook on life — something so few seem to possess today.

Another key to good health is doing your best to avoid accidental injury. To reduce your chances of having an accident, be careful! Think about what you are doing while you're doing it — whether driving a car, climbing a ladder or participating in sports. Think ahead about what could go wrong and how to prevent it.

Many also seriously jeopardize their health and future success by smoking or experimenting with drugs. Much information is available on these subjects. Suffice it to say that it is best to avoid those things that can permanently damage one's health and potential for real success.

9. Another part of good health is getting sufficient sleep. How can you be sure to enjoy good, sound sleep? Proverbs 3:21, 24,

Psalms 127:2, Ecclesiastes 5:12. But what can result from getting too much sleep? Proverbs 6:9-11, 24:33-34.

Nothing can take the place of regular sleep in enabling your body to recuperate after an eventful day. Generally, getting seven to nine hours of sleep is best for most people. But just as too little sleep is bad for your health, so is too much sleep. Staying in bed too long can cause sluggishness and depression. And it will hinder you from accomplishing your goals.

In this study we have covered the basic keys to good health. Strive to diligently apply these principles daily. The rewards of a strong, graceful, energetic and healthy body will more than repay your efforts!

For additional information on how to enjoy a more healthful life both now and in the future, be sure to write or call for our free booklet, *Principles of Healthful Living*.

Remember: The extent to which you succeed in life is in large part determined by your health. Now is the time to begin applying this third law of success! □



Photos by Neil Finch



# Teen Bible Study

## Drive, Drive, *DRIVE* Toward Success!

Prepared by Richard A. Sedliacik

"Without *energy, drive, constant propulsion*, a person need never expect to become truly successful." So says Editor-in-Chief Herbert W. Armstrong in his booklet, *The Seven Laws of Success*. (If you don't already have a free copy of this booklet, call or write the office nearest you. Check the inside front cover.)

Just what is drive? Why is it essential for success? And how can we apply it in our lives?

In this series of studies, we have learned that there are definite laws that one must follow to achieve true and lasting success.

The first of these laws is to set meaningful and worthwhile goals. Then one must prepare himself to achieve them. This involves education — the second law of success. Third comes good health.

But following these three laws is not enough. After all, success is accomplishment — it is doing.

Like a salmon fighting its way upstream, one must drive himself forward to accomplish his goals. He must put a constant prod on himself, applying the fourth law of success — drive!

In this fourth study on the seven laws of success, you will learn why drive is absolutely essential for real success, and how you can develop it in your life.

But before you begin, be sure to get your Bible, a pen or pencil and some paper. Writing out the Bible verses that answer the questions asked in this study will help you to remember the important principles you'll be learning.

1. Just how much effort and energy is required to become successful in all that we undertake? Ecclesiastes 9:10, Colossians 3:23.

Throw yourself wholeheartedly into all that you do! Whether in your studies at school or in your work on the job, put all your energy into it. If you're active in sports, strive to do your best. And if one of your goals involves

music — practice, practice, practice!

Whatever your goals, put all your energy, willpower and effort into accomplishing them.

Halfhearted effort may carry one partway toward his life's goals, but it won't get him far enough to actually reach them. Your accomplishments will largely be a reflection of your drive and determination to achieve your goals.

2. Will the person who really applies himself become a successful leader? Proverbs 12:24. Will he find himself in the company of successful people? Proverbs 22:29. But what happens if one lacks drive and initiative — refuses to put forth effort? Proverbs 10:4, 13:4, 24:30-34.

Those who are universally acclaimed as being successful have one thing in common — they drive themselves. They put a constant prod on themselves. They refuse to give in to the urge to slow down and take it easy. To become truly successful, you must also propel yourself forward energetically.

But this kind of drive also includes your attitude of mind. You need to have a deep, inner enthusiasm for all your work and for life itself.

Former U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt was a man who radiated enthusiasm. He generated enthusiasm in others. His life was one of activity and great accomplishment. Illustrative of his attitude was a statement he made to an audience at the Sorbonne in Paris, France:

"It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better.

"The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, and comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows



the great enthusiasms, the great devoting; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat."

How can you generate this kind of enthusiasm? One way is to think about your goals as if you had already reached them — to picture the benefits their accomplishment will bring to you and others. You will then have a clear mental picture of what you want to accomplish.

Picturing the benefits will help you desire your goal more. And desire is the fire that ignites enthusiasm.

Enthusiasm in turn leads to positive action that, if continued, leads to success. And success produces confidence that leads to even greater success!

3. Will some goals and projects we undertake not be all pleasure — will some tasks involved in achieving them be difficult? Proverbs 20:4. Should we nevertheless drive ourselves to accomplish them? Proverbs 14:23.

Don't let the immensity or difficulty of any goal or project overwhelm and discourage you. Don't procrastinate, quit or make excuses. If necessary, break the project down into smaller parts and concentrate on one part at a time. Then put all your energy and mind power into the task at hand and complete it with zest! If you cannot finish it, at least get started. Then be sure to return and complete it later. As Proverbs 14:23 shows, you will profit from your efforts in the end.

4. Does the principle revealed in Proverbs 13:20 and 27:17 show that friends can be a great influence to spur us on to do well and be successful?

You may have noticed that when you're in the presence of some people, you tend to be invigorated and motivated to accomplish. This is because we tend to follow the example of those with whom we associate

more closely. Search out and be friends with those who are an inspiration and who are themselves success oriented.

5. Regarding the overall purpose of life — that of becoming a member of God's universe-ruling Family — did the apostle Paul drive himself so that he might attain this No. 1 goal in his life? Philippians 3:11-14, II Timothy 4:7-8. And did he encourage others, including the young man Timothy, to do the same? I Corinthians 9:24-27, I Timothy 6:12.

6. Did Jesus Christ, who knew firsthand what it was like to be a member of the God Family, exert great energy and effort to reenter the Family of God? Hebrews 4:15, 5:7, Luke 22:41-44. Does He want us to also strive to eventually enter the Kingdom of God? Matthew 6:33.

Paul and Christ knew and thoroughly understood the great purpose in life — the purpose for their very existence! It was their No. 1 goal and they, with the help of God's Holy Spirit, pursued that goal with all their might! They set us an example.

7. Will God help us to have the energy, drive and motivation to achieve our No. 1 goal in life, as well as our secondary goals, if we

seek Him wholeheartedly and desire to actually do His will? Isaiah 40:28-31, Psalm 119:2, Philippians 2:13, I John 3:22, Hebrews 11:6.

God is the ultimate source of the motivation and drive we need to achieve the purpose for our existence — our No. 1 goal in life.

If you trust God and do your part, He will also help you to attain your other goals and ambitions — as long as they are within the limits of His overall will as revealed in His Word — the Holy Bible.

Remember: To be truly successful in life, you must put a constant prod on yourself. You must drive yourself to accomplish. Begin now to apply this fourth law of success, along with all the others. You will be amazed at the results! □



Former U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt practiced the fourth law of success — drive! (Wide World Photo)



# Teen Bible Study

## Resourcefulness— The Key to Solving Problems

Prepared by Richard A. Sedliacik

Life is full of unexpected problems, obstacles and setbacks. Things don't always go as planned. To successfully overcome many of these difficulties, you must have resourcefulness — the fifth law of success!

*Youth 83* Editor-in-Chief Herbert W. Armstrong shows in his booklet, *The Seven Laws of Success*, that definite laws govern true and lasting success in life.

In this series of studies we're backing up that booklet with additional important and useful information that will, if applied, help you to be an outstanding success.

We have covered the first four of these laws and learned how to apply them in our lives. They are: setting meaningful and worthwhile *goals* in life; *preparing* yourself to achieve them through study and training; doing your best to keep in *good health*; and *driving* yourself forward to accomplish your goals with enthusiasm and energy.

Important as these laws are, they are not enough. You also need resourcefulness.

But what exactly is resourcefulness? Why is it essential for success? How can you develop and apply it in your life?

Before beginning this study, be sure to get your Bible, a pen or pencil and some paper. Reading and writing out the Bible verses in this study will help you to remember the important principles you'll be learning.

1. Can everyone expect to have problems in life? Job 5:7, 14:1. Did many heroes of the Bible face seemingly insurmountable problems and obstacles during their lives? Hebrews 11:32-38.

The quest to reach our goals and to succeed in life will not always be easy. As with the men and women of God in ages past, we will encounter obstacles and problems. How you react to and deal with difficulties is crucial to your future success.

To be successful, you must be able to make the right decisions and take the right courses of action to hurdle the obstacles that prevent you from accomplishing your goals. This often requires resourcefulness.

Resourcefulness is the ability to deal promptly and effectively with difficulties. In an emergency, it's keeping calm, quickly assessing the situation and taking the right action. It often involves devising a creative, ingenious or unique solution.

2. Did David show resourcefulness when confronting the Philistine giant Goliath? I Samuel 17:4-11, 38-40, 48-49.

King Saul and the Israelites were fearful, not knowing how to successfully respond to Goliath's challenge. When David learned of their plight, he did not panic. He kept calm and took decisive action!

David knew he would have little chance of defeating the giant if he was burdened down with Saul's heavy armor. Besides, David had not been trained to use such armaments, and so the traditional method of fighting in armor would be totally unworkable. A new approach was needed. David decided to use



How would you solve the problem of finding the volume inside a light bulb? (Photo by Hal Finch)



his own tried and tested weapon — a sling. He boldly and courageously confronted the giant and slew him with one well-placed stone that sunk deep into his forehead.

3. Was David also resourceful in fleeing from King Saul, who viewed him as a rival to the throne and tried to kill him on numerous occasions? Read and summarize the following scriptures: I Samuel 23:19-29, especially verse 22, 24:1-22, 26:1-25.

4. Did David and his friend Jonathan devise a clever and ingenious method to communicate a message when direct communication was dangerous? Read and summarize I Samuel 20:1-42, noting especially verses 19-22.

It required imagination, daring and resourcefulness for David to flee from the king of a mighty nation and to remain hidden from an army combing the countryside in search of him. Each time Saul was about to capture him, David used his wits to escape the life-threatening crisis.

A resourceful person thinks his way through, over or around the obstacles or difficulties that block his path. If one method doesn't work, he tries another.

A resourceful person is fully alert and aware of his environment and thinking about what is occurring around him. He will accomplish what needs to be done — by strategy, skill or a new approach. He is alert to other possibilities and realizes that usually several solutions exist.

The American inventor Thomas Edison is said to have once asked a mathematician to calculate the cubic capacity or volume of a light bulb. The mathematician measured the bulb, calculated its curvature and pondered his data.

Mr. Edison returned and saw him still poring over his data. "Haven't you finished that yet?" Mr. Edison asked. "Here, let me show you how to do it." Mr. Edison then took the bulb, filled it to the brim with water, and poured it into a square basin. It took him only a few minutes to find the answer.

To be resourceful, we must think and be observant, for often a solution can be staring us in the face, but we don't notice it!

5. How did Jesus Christ, the most resourceful person who ever lived, display this important trait when answering the cunning questions of His enemies? Luke 20:20-26, John 8:3-11.

Whenever the Pharisees and other religious leaders sought to trap Christ in His words, He would successfully turn the tables on them. He would use their clever questions

to His advantage, often to illustrate an important spiritual principle or truth.

6. Did Christ resourcefully overcome even the most severe temptations? Matthew 4:1-11. Did He allow any obstacle to keep Him from reentering the Family of God? John 17:4-5.

Christ ingeniously answered Satan's clever challenges by quoting the appropriate scriptures. He successfully overcame all obstacles and finished the work that His Father sent Him to do.

7. When faced with a difficult problem, is it wise to avoid jumping to conclusions — to refrain from making rash decisions? Notice the principle in Proverbs 21:5.

Take the available time to carefully analyze the situation and get the facts. A hasty solution could end up not working because you have not really understood the facts pertinent to the problem.

8. Is it advisable to seek expert advice about how to handle a crisis or emergency? Proverbs 11:14.

There is an old saying that "two heads are better than one." Advice and assistance from others — especially from your parents, teachers and experts in a particular field — are often of great help in solving a problem or overcoming an obstacle blocking your path. A competent adviser can often steer us in the right direction by giving us ideas we would not think of ourselves.

9. Is it also important to seek God's inspiration, as well as direct intervention, in overcoming difficulties and problems? Proverbs 3:5-6, Psalm 50:15, II Chronicles 14:9-13.

No matter how intelligent, alert or resourceful a person may be, he or she still needs God's help to be truly successful. The real-life heroes of the Bible were not only resourceful, they also relied on God to help them surmount the sometimes humanly insurmountable obstacles they faced.

10. Is there any need to fear or panic when faced with difficulties, if one is striving to do God's will? Isaiah 41:10, Proverbs 11:8, Psalms 34:17-19, 46:1.

11. Will God give us, if we ask, the wisdom we need to make the right decisions in resourcefully overcoming any obstacle in our path? James 1:5-7, Proverbs 2:6.

No matter how urgent the crisis or how bleak the situation may appear, if we are doing our best to please God, He will show us the way out. Ask God daily to give you the ability to resourcefully solve the problems you encounter in life! □



# Teen Bible Study

## Never Give Up!

By Richard A. Sedliacik

"Nine in 10, at least once or twice in a lifetime, come to the place where they appear to be totally *defeated*! All is *lost*! — apparently, that is. They give up and quit, when just a little more determined hanging on, just a little more faith and *perseverance* — just a little more stick-to-itiveness would have turned apparent certain failure into glorious success."

In his booklet, *The Seven Laws of Success*, Youth 84 Editor-in-Chief Herbert W. Armstrong explains that perseverance — never quitting or giving up — is the sixth key to success.

As previous installments in this series have shown, there are seven definite laws that one must follow to achieve true and lasting success. The laws we have studied thus far are: setting goals, education, good health, drive and resourcefulness.

Before beginning this study on the important sixth law of success and how to apply it in your life, be sure to get your Bible, a pen or pencil and some paper. Reading and writing out the Bible verses that answer the questions will help you remember the important principles you'll be learning.

1. Should we strive for excellence in all that we attempt to accomplish? Ecclesiastes 9:10, Colossians 3:23. Will doing this lead to a successful and productive life? Proverbs 10:4, 13:4, 12:24, 22:29.

To excel in anything — whether sports, art, music, science, a foreign language or even a hobby — takes time, patience, much effort and lots of practice.

Many people do not realize this. They have good intentions and resolve to go all out when first starting. But when they meet with unexpected problems, or the progress isn't as rapid as they hoped for, they become discouraged and quit.

To achieve your goals, you must have perseverance — the desire to stay with a job until it is finished!

In athletics, it is enduring to the finish in

the 2-mile run as your lungs are burning and heaving for air. On the piano, it is continuing the hours and hours of practice required to master a difficult piece of music with all its precise demands. In art, it is taking the time required to become proficient enough with oils, pastels or watercolors to produce a beautiful painting. Whatever your goal, both drive and a persevering attitude are necessary for successful achievement.

2. Many allow themselves to become discouraged when difficulties arise because of their own shortcomings or unforeseen circumstances. But did Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived, advise us to bounce back and keep going? Proverbs 24:16.

A young man who kept going in spite of obstacles was Eddie Arcaro. He was determined to become the best jockey to ever ride a horse. Mr. Arcaro lost his first race. Then he lost his second race. In all, he lost 250 *consecutive* races before winning. In spite of this incredible string of losses, his determination saw him through and he became the leading jockey of his day!

3. If discouragement, pain or failure makes you want to quit, consider the biblical example of Joseph. Read and summarize the major events in his life as recorded in chapters 37, 39-41 of Genesis. Did he exemplify the opposite of the trait described in Proverbs 24:10?

Life went fairly smoothly for Joseph until



Handcrafting a model ship is a long and intricate project that requires stick-to-itiveness!



age 17 when he was sold as a slave in Egypt. Later, just as things were brightening up for Joseph, Potiphar's wife made a play for him. But he refused her advances and he ended up being thrown in the dungeon!

But Joseph patiently endured, trusting in God to deliver him. God worked things out beautifully for Joseph in the long run, and accomplished His will through him. He was made ruler of Egypt, directly under the pharaoh. Would you, like Joseph, have patiently endured all the affliction, discouragement and suffering without giving up or losing faith?

4. It is extremely important to follow through and finish whatever you start. Did Jesus Christ set an example in this regard? John 17:4. And did the apostle Paul persevere and finish the job God gave him to do, despite many difficulties? II Corinthians 1:8-10, 11:24-28, II Timothy 4:7.

Do your best to follow through and finish what you start. Don't let the immensity, or difficulty, of any goal or project overwhelm and discourage you. If necessary, break the project down into smaller parts and concentrate on one part at a time. Doing things one step at a time, setting many small goals

10 brass gun barrels was the goal for one evening. By setting small goals like these, the builder could see progress, which helped him to successfully complete this magnificent project!

5. Is applying the principle found in Proverbs 16:32 necessary for those who intend to persevere?

Every lastingly successful person has learned to guide, direct and master his thoughts and emotions. He has learned to say no to himself, especially when tempted to give up and quit.

A major key to persevering — not quitting or giving up — is intensity of desire. Be enthusiastic about the goals you have set for yourself and visualize what it will be like when you have achieved them. Keep your eyes on the goal. It takes discipline to avoid being distracted by other activities and to stick with a project and complete it!

A danger mentioned in a previous study is not setting *realistic* goals. Some of your ambitions might be premature, financially unwise or beyond your ability to achieve. You need to be reasonably sure that you can attain the goals you've set for yourself.

It's important to realize that some ideas won't work. But don't discard a worthwhile idea as too difficult until you've given it serious, resourceful thought. It's all right to revise goals, but it should be done after serious examination from all sides.

6. What encouraging admonition is given in Galatians 6:7-9 about attaining the most important goal in life? (Notice especially verse 9.) Also notice Matthew 24:13.

Many of you are striving to build righteous character by keeping God's commandments to the best of your ability because you want to attain the No. 1 goal in life — sonship in the Family of God.

Hang in there and continue to do your best, even when tempted to compromise and give in. God has promised to help you achieve the awesome purpose for your life!

As British statesman Winston Churchill once said: "Never give in, never give in, never, never, never, never — in nothing great or small, large or petty — never give in except to convictions of honor and good sense."

Don't allow difficulties, setbacks or other obstacles to cause you to give up and quit. *Persevere* through thick and thin. You'll be so glad you did! □



More than 1,000 hours of careful craftsmanship went into this 3½ foot high sailing ship — an example of persistence. (Builder and photographer — Warren Watson)



along the way to attaining a major goal, will help you to persist and achieve your goals.

Take for example the museum-quality sailing ship model illustrating this article. Built from scratch, it took more than 1,000 hours to cut and hand tool each piece and then to assemble them.

Rather than try to tackle the enormous project all at once, the builder set for himself a series of little projects or goals to accomplish each time he worked on the ship. Tying 100 knots in the rigging or tooling



# Teen Bible Study

## The All-Important Seventh Law of Success

Prepared by Richard A. Sedliacik

Why are only the very few really successful? Is it mere chance — can it be luck? Or are there definite reasons?

In this series of studies expanding on *Youth 84* Editor-in-Chief Herbert W. Armstrong's booklet, *The Seven Laws of Success*, we learned of the existence of seven definite laws that lead to success in life. In order to achieve real success, all seven of these laws must be followed.

Many of those considered successful in this world have applied the first six laws. They set goals, obtained the necessary education and preparation to achieve them, maintained good health, had tremendous drive, were resourceful and had perseverance. But they weren't really happy and did not attain real success. Why?

What they lacked was application of the seventh law of success. This all-important law is having *contact with, and the guidance and continuous help of God*.

Though this law of success was reserved until last in this series of studies, it is far from being least. It is first in vital importance!

In this study, you will learn what the Bible says about this most important law and how to apply it in your life. But before you begin, get a Bible, a pen or pencil and some paper. Writing out the verses that answer the questions will help you remember the important principles you'll be learning.

1. Does God want us to lead happy and successful lives? Ill John 2, John 10:10, last part. Does every good and perfect gift come from Him? James 1:17.

Few have realized that the living God plays a great part in the success of our lives. If we are to enjoy the good things of life — freedom from fears and worries, peace of mind, protection, happiness, abundant well-being — we must come to understand that the source of these is the great God!

God is more than willing to help us attain the No. 1 goal in life — the very purpose for our existence, which we learned about in the

first of this series of studies. God wants us to become members of His universe-ruling Family! He also wants us to attain our other goals. But we must do our part.

2. What must we do to receive God's guidance and direction? Proverbs 3:5-6, Psalms 37:4-5, 119:2, II Chronicles 15:2. Will those who seek God and trust in Him lack any good thing? Psalm 34:8-10.

God promises to guide those who seek Him wholeheartedly and desire to do His will. He will help them to have the energy and motivation to achieve their goals.

3. Is God far from anyone who will earnestly seek Him? Acts 17:27. Can those who seek to get to know God really find Him? Isaiah 55:6-7. Does God want us to make our requests known? Philippians 4:6.

God wants to hear what we have on our minds — He wants to know how we feel and what we think. He wants us to seek Him in sincere, heartfelt prayer — to ask Him for guidance in every phase of our lives.

Think of God as the genuine friend that He is, because He understands your deepest fears, anxieties and frustrations. He really wants to help you succeed. If you trust Him, He will enable you to have courage and motivation to tackle any problem or fear.

4. Did the apostle Paul say He could do all things — that is, overcome any obstacle — through God's help? Philippians 4:13. Are all things possible with God? Matthew 19:26, Ephesians 3:20.

Nothing is too difficult for God. He expects us to ask Him and sincerely do our part the best we can, though. For example, He can help you in developing a more friendly and enthusiastic personality, as well as help you in your schoolwork, your job, sports, music and your social life. Ask Him to help you achieve your goals in all of these areas.

In addition to prayer, there is something else God expects us to do to receive His guidance and direction.

5. Is following God's way of life, as



# Teen Bible Study



God's Word is compared to a treasure chest full of precious things. (Photo by Warren Watson)

defined by His laws, vital to success in life? Joshua 1:7-8, Proverbs 3:1-2, Ecclesiastes 12:13, Matthew 19:16-19.

God is with those who serve Him — who keep His commandments. He intervenes on their behalf. He helps them to prosper and experience real success, both now and ultimately for all eternity as members of His Family.

6. What did David say about those who delight in God's law — will they succeed in whatever they undertake? Psalm 1:1-3. Will they obtain wisdom and understanding — essential for success — by keeping God's commandments? Psalm 119:97-100, 104.

7. Has God promised to give us the wisdom we need to make the weightier decisions of life, if we ask in faith? James 1:5-6, Hebrews 11:6.

Each day we are faced with numerous decisions — such as deciding what time to get up, what to wear, what to eat. Then there are the more important decisions in life, such as choosing an occupation or career, which college to attend, where to live or whom to marry. These are decisions that can affect us for the rest of our lives. We need help, not only from wise advisers, but also from God.

God, who is the supreme source of wisdom, can steer us in the right direction. He promises to guide us if we will ask Him. Therefore ask God, in prayer, for the wisdom you need to make important decisions in your life.

8. Is God's Word like a light that shows us the way to go? Psalm 119:105. What comparison is drawn between the vital

knowledge, guidance and wisdom contained in it and a treasure chest full of precious things? Proverbs 3:13-18.

God's Word is far more valuable than all the gold, silver and precious gems in the world. In it are guidelines dealing with every aspect of human life — health, finances, social relationships — everything pertaining to a truly happy, successful life.

The primary way God guides us — reveals His will for us — is through His inspired Word, the Bible. Search for and meditate on the principles that will give you the insight necessary to make the right decisions.

As you do this, also strive to follow God's way to the best of your ability. If you do, He will take a special interest in you. God will help and inspire you. He will give you additional strength and the desire to do what is right and pleasing to Him. And He will give you the strength to resist the things you know are harmful, and that can seriously hinder your chances for future success.

9. Will God ever leave or forsake those who strive to do His will? Hebrews 13:5-6.

It is important to realize that having God's guidance does not mean you will not have problems and difficulties to overcome. Everyone does. But you can be confident that God will always be on your side and will help, provided you strive to do your best to follow His way as revealed in the Bible.

In this series we learned the seven laws that lead to real and lasting success — the ways that lead to an abundant, happy life both in this physical life and in the glorious life to come.

If you haven't done so already, why not begin to apply the principles outlined in this and the previous studies? It will take effort on your part. But once you have started, don't give up. You'll soon begin to experience the happy, productive and successful life God wants each of us to have.

You'll find that life is really worth living!

(If you haven't already done so, be sure to call or write for Mr. Armstrong's free booklet *The Seven Laws of Success*. Check the inside front cover for the telephone number or address nearest you.) □



# Teen Bible Study

## A SNEAK PREVIEW of Your Awesome Future

Prepared by Richard A. Sedliacik

Would you like to have a brilliant, clear-thinking mind with perfect memory and instant recall? Perfect, vibrant health and a body that will never wear out?

Would you like to know the secrets of the universe? Travel through space faster than the speed of light? Live a life of unending challenge forever?

Believe it or not, such a thrilling future is in store for those who seek to please God and do His will. Let's learn more about your awesome potential — about the incredible future God has in store for you. The possibilities that lie ahead are infinitely greater than you have ever imagined!

Before beginning this study, be sure to get your Bible, a pen or pencil and some paper. Reading and writing out the Bible verses given in this study will help you to remember what you have learned.

**1.** To fully understand the awesome future God has in store for each of us, we need to first understand something about *who* and *what* God is. What does the first chapter of the Bible reveal about God? Genesis 1:1, 26.

The original Hebrew word for God in verse 1 is *Elohim*. *Elohim* is a plural noun, like the words *church*, *family* and *team*, all of which are composed of more than one member. The word *Elohim* in Genesis 1:1 actually shows that God is a family! Notice how verse 26 bears this out: "Then God said, 'Let Us make man in *Our* image . . .'"

**2.** Who are the individuals presently in the God Family? John 1:1-2, 1 Corinthians 8:6. Was the Word mentioned in John 1 made flesh and did He live as a human being? John 1:14.

At the prehistoric time described in John 1:1 (before the creation of the material universe), there existed only two divine Beings. One is God. And with God was the Word, who also is God. He is the one who was later miraculously begotten in the virgin Mary by God the Father to become the

human Jesus Christ, the Son of God. At the time described in John 1:1-2, the Word was not yet the Son of God and God was not yet His Father.

**3.** Have both members of the God Family always existed? Psalms 90:2, 102:25-27, 1 Timothy 1:17.

The two members of the God Family are immortal. There has never been a time when they did not exist. It is impossible for us to understand how these two divine Beings could have always existed, but neither can we really understand what electricity is. Yet we know electricity exists and is real.

**4.** Is God going to expand the size of His Family by bringing many more members into it? Hebrews 2:9-10, Revelation 21:7. Is Jesus Christ the firstborn of *many* children of God? Romans 8:29.

To be conformed to the image of Christ means to become like Him — to be glorified as He is glorified — to become part of the divine Family of God as much as Christ now is! Incredible as it may sound, that is our amazing potential!

**5.** But what must happen to us before we can enter God's Kingdom — His Family? Read and summarize 1 Corinthians 15:49-53 and John 3:3-8.

Jesus said we must be "born again" — meaning changed into spirit. Yes, born again — this time born of the Spirit of God as divine sons in the Family of God!

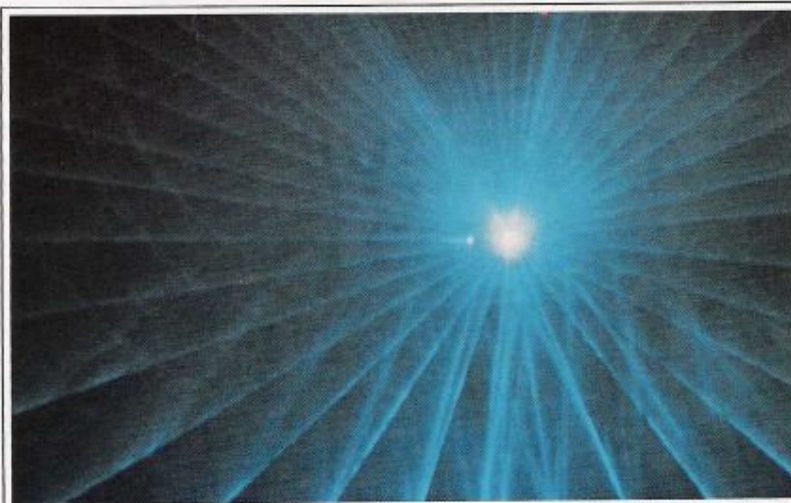
**6.** Will those who become members of God's Family be like Him? Psalm 17:15. Of what is God composed? John 4:24. Will they be composed of spirit also? 1 John 3:2, Philippians 3:20-21.

Those who are born again as members of God's Family will have eternal life inherent within themselves because they will be composed of spirit — just like Jesus Christ and God the Father!

**7.** To what did Jesus compare one who is born of the Spirit? John 3:8.

When you are born again, born of the





Nothing in this physical universe moves faster than light. But can you imagine traveling faster than this laser, crossing our galaxy in seconds? (Photo by J. Pavlovsky — Sygma)

Father's before He became a human being. After His resurrection, He was restored to the same power and glory. Christ's face and powerful spirit body now radiate light as the sun in full strength, with eyes blazing like flames of fire!

Spirit of God, you will be invisible to human eyes. The effects of the wind are easily discernible, but the wind itself cannot be seen.

8. When changed into spirit, will we have the amazing ability to suddenly appear out of nowhere and even pass through solid objects? Notice what Jesus with His spirit-composed body did in Luke 24:36-37 and John 20:19, 26. Will we also be able to transform ourselves into mortal flesh and bone when necessary, and even eat if we so desire? Summarize Luke 24:38-43.

9. Will our spirit bodies be capable of traveling through space at incredible speed — undoubtedly faster than light? Read and compare John 20:17, 19-20 with Matthew 28:9.

Earlier on the day after His resurrection, Christ would not let anyone touch Him because He had not yet ascended to His Father's throne in heaven. But later that day Christ allowed His disciples to touch Him. This shows that He had traveled to heaven and returned to earth on the same day!

"Truth is stranger than fiction," goes the old saying. The incredible, exciting truth about your awesome potential as revealed in the Bible pales into nothingness any science fiction thriller you could ever read or see!

10. Was Jesus to be glorified again at His resurrection? John 17:4-5. Had He previously given His disciples a fleeting glimpse of this glorified condition? Matthew 17:1-2. How does Christ's glorified body appear today? Revelation 1:13-16.

To be glorified means to have great power and brightness. Jesus Christ had a glorious, powerful spirit body like His

11. Will God also glorify all those who become members of His divine Family by giving them this same great power and brightness? Romans 8:17, Colossians 3:4, Daniel 12:2-3.

This glory will be so great it will make them shine like brilliant stars. But that's only part of what God has in store for those who seek to do His will while yet human beings!

12. What will those who become members of God's spirit Family begin to do? Revelation 3:21, 2:26, 5:10, 20:4-6.

The Kingdom of God is a *ruling* Family. And those of us who become a part of that Family are destined to rule with Jesus Christ. We will rule over and teach God's wonderful way of life to billions of humans in the world tomorrow!

13. Just how great is the authority Jesus Christ has inherited? Hebrews 1:1-2, Matthew 28:18. Will those who are born into God's Family share in that inheritance as coowners and corulers with Christ? Romans 8:16-17, Revelation 21:7. And will God's government continue to expand throughout the universe for all eternity? Isaiah 9:6-7, Revelation 22:5.

The Moffatt version of the Bible renders "all things" in Hebrews 1:2 as "the universe." Incredible as it may sound, your ultimate potential and that of every human being is corulership of the universe with Jesus Christ and God the Father!

This is the awesome potential God has in store for those who seek to follow His way of life. A never-ending future filled with exciting challenge, scintillating interest and eternal happiness and joy.

(To learn more about the purpose for your life, write for our free booklets, *Why Were You Born?* and *Your Awesome Future*.) □



# Teen Bible Study

## How God Can Become Real to You

By Richard H. Sedliacik

Are you like many people who say, "I believe in God, but He seems so distant — so unreal to me"?

Have you wondered: "Where is God? Has He gone off somewhere? Why doesn't He show Himself in some way? How can an invisible God be real to me?"

But think about it for a moment. Almost everyone already believes in some things that can't be seen. Air, wind and gravity are invisible. Yet these are quite real.

God is composed of spirit and therefore cannot be seen by human eyes. But He does have definite form and shape, and lives in a specific place. This study will show how God can become *very real* to you, and how you can even come to know Him personally!

Before you begin, be sure to get your Bible, a pen or pencil and some paper. Look up, read and then write down the Bible verses in this study. This will help you remember what you will be studying.

1. In the second chapter of Genesis we learn that God warned Adam and Eve not to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil that was in the Garden of Eden. In spite of the warning, they disobeyed — sinned — by taking the forbidden fruit (Genesis 3:1-6, 17). What did they do when they heard God walking in the garden? Genesis 3:8.

They hid from God! God had been teaching the first man and woman. He wanted them to get to know Him and His way of life. But when they disobeyed, they felt guilty and wanted to *hide* from Him.

2. In the days of Moses, what did the Israelites do after God spoke to them from Mt. Sinai? Exodus 20:18-19.

When the people heard the thunder and saw the lightning and other evidence of the almighty God, "they trembled and stood afar off." Here were human beings wanting to cut off contact with God. They were telling God, who was very real to them then, to leave them alone.

This is typical of how mankind has been reacting to God since the incident in the Garden of Eden. Ever since Adam, the world in general has been playing the game of hide-and-seek with God.

3. What is God compared to? I John 1:5. Is this why people have tried to hide from God and even claim He does not exist? John 3:19-20. Have they cut themselves off from God because of their sins? Isaiah 59:2.

Everyone since Adam and Eve has sinned by breaking God's law (Romans 3:23, I John 3:4). Humanity is accustomed to living a way of life the Bible refers to as "darkness." But God never sins. His way of life is like a bright light that shows the way out of darkness, or sin. But because people like the darkness, they hide from the light of God.

4. What is one of the things Jesus Christ did while on earth? John 1:18.

Jesus, one of the two eternal members of the God Family, came to earth to reveal God the Father to us, as well as to die for the sins of all mankind.

5. Besides the many revelations from God that are written in the Bible, is there another way we can understand the invisible things of God and the absolute reality of His existence? Romans 1:19-20.

Think about the physical universe and all that it contains. From the forces that bind atomic nuclei and fuel gigantic stars, to the laws that sustain incredibly huge galaxies; from our marvelous, life-sustaining earth, to the vastness of space; from the beauty and intricacy of the observable creation, to our incredibly complex minds that can try to comprehend it — all are awe-inspiring evidence of the existence and power of an almighty, universe-ruling Creator!

6. Since the evidence of God is clearly seen everywhere in His creation, why isn't God real to most people today? Have they become *willingly ignorant* of the reality of God? Romans 1:21-25. How does God describe one who refuses such obvious



proof of His existence? Verse 22, Psalm 14:1.

The ancient philosophers knew that a Creator God exists. They examined the world around them and discovered order, harmony, system and design. God was in this sense revealed to them, because the existence of order, harmony, system and design absolutely demand a supreme Architect and Designer — a supreme Creator!

But these same men flatly rejected the evidence rather than answer to a higher authority. For if they had admitted God exists, they would have had to *obey* Him! So they "suppressed," or held back, the truth in unrighteousness (Romans 1:18). They convinced themselves, against the facts and their own better judgment, that God doesn't exist. Those who reject such obvious evidence indeed look foolish to God.

7. How did God reveal His incredible greatness, power and wisdom to Job? Job 38:1-6. (God's speech to Job continues through the end of chapter 41.)

Many today are like Job in this way. He thought he knew a lot about God. He was pretty well convinced about God's existence. But then God personally spoke to Job

true picture of the awesome Creator, the almighty God. Job was now humbled and deeply convinced of the *absolute reality* of the great, all-powerful Creator God!

9. Can those who seek to become personally acquainted with this same God really find Him? Isaiah 55:6-7. But must one put forth diligent effort to seek Him in a personal way? Hebrews 11:6, last part. Is God not far from anyone who will earnestly seek Him? Acts 17:27.

Yes, you can get to know God. God is interested in and available to His human creation. He is not too busy to hear the prayers of people who really want to know Him. But one must put forth effort to seek God.

10. Will God bless those who truly seek Him wholeheartedly, and desire to actually do His will? Psalm 119:2, 1 John 3:22.

God is as near as the next fervent, sincere prayer. Those who seek God earnestly will be blessed, both in this life and on into eternity.

Once you come face to face with the reality of God's existence and have a glimpse of His goodness and power, you can begin to *trust* Him to bless you (Hebrews 11:6).

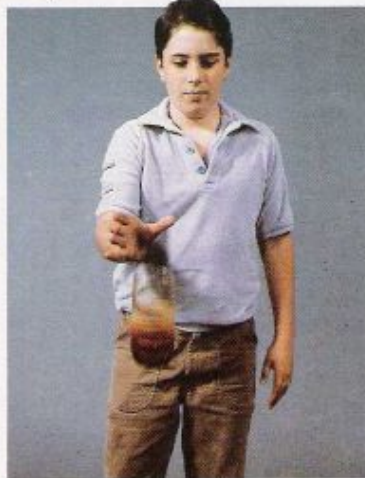
11. But do you realize that our conversation with God is not one-sided? How does God speak to us today? Hebrews 1:1-2.

God has revealed His will and plan for humanity through Jesus Christ. He then inspired various men to record the words of Jesus for us today (II Timothy 3:16-17). And so we are able to learn about God and His purpose for humanity through His *written Word*.

In a very personal way, God reveals Himself and speaks to us through the Bible. We become acquainted with God by talking to Him in prayer and by reading what He says to us in the Bible.

By reading the Bible, we can come to know the mind of God. We can understand His character and how He thinks. Through His inspired written Word, God shows us how we can have happy, productive lives — He tells us what He has promised to do for us if we seek to do His will.

So get acquainted with the great Creator, Ruler and Sustainer of the entire universe. Begin to understand the great love and wisdom of the living God who takes great *delight* in those who seek to know Him, talk to Him, love and obey Him! □



Gravity — we all believe in it even though we can't see it. Although we can't see God, He can be real to us, too. (Photos by Hal Finch)



from a whirlwind and pointed out a few things he hadn't considered before.

God focused Job's mind on His physical creation by asking him a series of questions about the creation he could not answer. Before these questions, Job had talked about God at great length. But God had not been absolutely real to him.

8. Was Job really shaken up after he finally came to see God in a completely new light? Job 42:1-6.

Job had now, for the first time, come to a



# Teen Bible Study

## Let God Talk to You

By Richard A. Sedliacik

Did you know that God will talk to you today — if you let Him? But how does God talk to us? What does He have to say? And why is it important that we listen to Him?

God does not speak to us today in an audible voice. He talks to us through His written Word — the Holy Bible. In a real sense, the Bible is God's Instruction Book for humanity.

Just as a manufacturer sends along an instruction manual describing what his product is intended to do, how it does it and how it is to be maintained, so God has an Instruction Manual for humanity, His supreme physical creation. In it God tells us what we are, why we are and how to live so we may achieve His awesome purpose for our lives!

As the foundation of all knowledge, the Bible contains information we desperately need to know. It is full of knowledge that could not be obtained anywhere else.

In this study, we'll learn why it is so important to let God talk to us today. Before you begin, be sure to get a Bible, pen or pencil and paper. Look up the scriptures that answer the questions. Writing out the verses will help you remember the principles God wants you to learn.

1. How did God reveal His will thousands of years ago? Genesis 17:1-3, Exodus 33:11 (first part), Deuteronomy 5:1-4 (especially verse 4), Hebrews 1:1. How did God later speak to humanity? Hebrews 1:2. Where are the words of God and Christ preserved for us today? II Timothy 3:16, Romans 1:1-2, Zechariah 7:12.

In the days of the patriarchs and prophets of the Old Testament, God at times spoke to His servants face to face. At Mt. Sinai (Horeb), He thundered out the Ten Commandments to the nation of Israel.

Jesus Christ came to earth to further reveal God's will and plan for humanity. His words were recorded in the New Testament, which includes other vital information God inspired His servants to write.

God caused these inspired writings to be

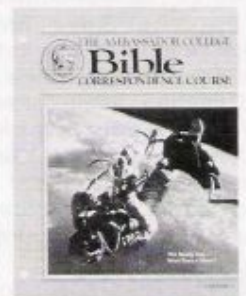
preserved and put together to form the Holy Bible we have today (see, "Inside the World's Best-Seller," on page 11). Therefore, when you read the Bible, realize that God is talking directly to you!

2. What is God's Word called? John 17:17. Can we absolutely depend on what God tells us in His Word? Titus 1:2, John 10:35 (last part). Will God's Word stand forever? Isaiah 40:8, I Peter 1:25.

God has revealed Himself as a God of truth. Since the entire Bible is the inspired Word of God, we know that it is true.

3. In His Instruction Book for humanity, God gives us the rules and guidelines for leading a happy, interesting and fulfilling life. Where is the foundation for these instructions found? Read and summarize Exodus 20:1-17. How are these foundational principles summarized? Matthew 22:36-40.

God's Word reveals a way of life based on the Ten Commandments. They show us how to love God and our neighbor. God amplifies them throughout the Bible and shows us how to apply them.



**ENROLL IN FREE BIBLE COURSE**

This short Bible study is a sample of the study method used in each monthly lesson of the Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course. You can enroll in this free course by writing to the Youth 84 office nearest you. See inside front cover for addresses.

No matter what your age, reading the Bible is a way you can listen to what God has to say to you. (Photo by Craig Clark)





4. Does God tell us He will bless and look favorably on those who treat His Word with respect and awe? Isaiah 66:2. Will things go well for those who seek to learn and do what God says? Psalm 1:1-3 (especially last part of verse 3), Luke 11:28.

5. What does God think of David, one of the kings of Israel? Acts 13:22. Just how valuable did David consider God's Word? Psalm 119:72, 162.

David knew from practical experience that God's Word contains a priceless storehouse of wisdom and understanding!

6. Did David let God talk to him through His Word? Psalm 119:9-10. Did he often think about how to apply it in his life? Psalm 119:97. What fantastic benefits did he receive as a result? Read and summarize verses 98 to 105.

David diligently studied the portion of God's written Word available to him in his day. Wherever he was, David thought about God's law and how to apply it to his life and the society in which he lived.

Because he listened to God's instructions, David was exceedingly blessed. He became wiser than his enemies and understood more than his teachers. David proved that God's Word is true by putting it to practice in his life.

7. Does God want us to prove that His Word is true? I Thessalonians 5:21. What does God want us to do with the precious knowledge He conveys to us? James 1:22.

God wants us all to have happy and successful lives (John 10:10, III John 2). That is why He has given us His Instruction Book that contains the vital keys for successful living. In it God reveals to us vital instruction on subjects such as marriage, sex, money, work and getting along with others. As we learn and apply these principles in our lives, we prove that His Word is true by the blessings that result.

8. How will following God's way of life affect our understanding of His Word? Psalm 111:10.

A vital key to understanding the Bible is to read it with the attitude of applying what you learn to your daily life.

9. Is God's Word useful for correction and reproof — for showing us where we are wrong and what to do about it? II Timothy 3:16, Hebrews 4:12.

God wants us to avoid developing habits that will hurt us. By letting God talk to us in His Word, we can discover harmful practices and attitudes in our lives and learn how to correct them.

As you read the accounts of Old and New Testament personalities, think about how you can apply the lessons you learn from them. God had portions of their lives recorded so that we could profit from their experiences (Romans 15:4, I Corinthians 10:6, 11).

10. Notice now an important example King David set for us today. Did he ask God to help him understand His truth and apply it in his life? Psalm 119:18, 33-34.

When you read and study the Bible, first ask God to help you understand the true meaning of His Word. Ask Him for guidance in understanding His message for you. Then begin your study, thinking about how you can apply what you learn.

But where is a good place to begin reading and studying the Bible? One way to begin your study of God's Word is to read it all the way through from Genesis to Revelation. This will give you a broad overview of what is in the Bible.

11. Many also find it helpful to study one subject at a time. But does all the information on any one subject always appear in one place? Isaiah 28:9-10.

God has caused the Bible to be written so that the truth about any one subject is often revealed "here a little, there a little." So if you want to learn what God has to say about a subject, find the passages in the Bible relating to that subject. A good concordance (a book that shows where specific words appear in the Bible) is essential in this method of study. The marginal references in your Bible are also helpful.

Another study aid is the Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course. Each lesson puts together relevant scriptures about a major biblical truth. See the box on page 23 to learn how to enroll in this free course.

12. Will the knowledge of God that we may come to know and understand today, spread throughout the world in the soon-coming world tomorrow? Isaiah 2:2-3, 11:9.

Through His servants the prophets, God has revealed what life will be like in the future. They reveal a utopian paradise of peace, happiness and joy because everyone will know, understand and practice the way of life God reveals to us in the Bible. The whole world will then be listening to and applying what God has to say to humanity.

Now is the time to let God talk to you. Begin tapping the priceless knowledge that will help you to experience a successful, happy and rewarding life! □



# Teen Bible Study

## Here's How to Talk to God

By Richard A. Sedliacik

Did you know that God is eager and anxious for you to talk to Him?

God talks to us through the Holy Bible. But communication is a two-way street. God also wants us to talk to Him.

But how? Through prayer! Prayer is personal, intimate, understanding communication with the Supreme Power of the universe.

In this study, you will learn how to establish direct, personal contact with God. You'll learn step-by-step how to talk to God in a meaningful and effective manner.

But before you begin, be sure to get your Bible, a pen or pencil and some paper. Reading and writing out the Bible verses that answer the questions asked in this study will help you to remember the important principles you will be learning.

1. Does God want us to seek Him and make our requests known? Isaiah 55:6-7, Philippians 4:6.

God wants us to tell Him, as we would a close friend, how we feel and what we think. We do this through heartfelt prayer.

Prayer is simply our part of a two-way conversation with God. God speaks to us through the Bible and we speak to Him through prayer. In this way we get to know God, and He comes to know us.

2. Does God hear and delight in the prayers of those who seek to please Him and do His will? 1 Peter 3:12, Psalm 34:17, Proverbs 15:8, 1 John 3:22, 5:14-15.

3. Did Jesus Christ, who talked often to His heavenly Father, have absolute confidence that God always heard His prayers? John 11:41-44.

4. Did one of Christ's disciples, who was well aware of His closeness to the Father, ask Him to teach them how to pray? Luke 11:1. (Christ's instructions on prayer are found in Luke 11 and Matthew 6.)

Jesus gave His disciples a model prayer after which to pattern their own prayers.

5. Did Jesus tell His disciples to repeat

His example prayer over and over again, or did He tell them to pray in a similar way? Matthew 6:9. Had He just before this told them not to repeat the exact same prayer every time? Verse 7.

Christ was simply outlining the correct approach to God in prayer and the basic things we should include in our prayers. Let's study Christ's inspired guide to prayer and learn how to talk to God.

6. Did Jesus say to pray in a private place? Matthew 6:5-6. And did He set an example by spending the first part of His day in prayer — before anything else could interrupt? Mark 1:35.

It is important to pray in a private place — perhaps in a bedroom, a spare room in the attic or even a closet. One should also set aside a regular time to pray. For many people the morning is best — before the school or work day gets started.

7. Notice how Jesus began His sample prayer. To whom did He say we should pray? Matthew 6:9.

Jesus came to reveal the Father to us (John 1:18), and He always addressed the Father in His prayers.

God the Father sits on a majestic throne in heaven surrounded by dazzling beauty (see Revelation 4:1-11). When we talk to Him, we are having a personal audience with the Supreme Ruler of the universe!

8. Should we "hallow," or honor, the Father's name when we pray to Him? Matthew 6:9, last part. Did David, a man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22), address God in an attitude of praise, worship and adoration? Psalm 18:1-3.

As we begin our prayers, we should not only address and think of God as our Father, but also honor and praise His name, His office, His character and His great love for mankind. We should be sure to thank Him for our very existence, for our parents and the material things we possess.

9. How did Jesus continue His sample



prayer? Matthew 6:10, first sentence.

When we pray "Your kingdom come," we are asking for and looking forward to the time when God's literal government will be established on this earth through the return of Jesus Christ as "King of kings and Lord of lords" (Revelation 19:16). There will be peace, happiness and prosperity in the world tomorrow because all mankind will know and follow God's way (Isaiah 11:9). The Ten Commandments will then be the standard for daily life everywhere.

**10.** What did Jesus say in the second part of Matthew 6:10?

Be sure to ask God to help you understand and do His will. Ask Him to help you study and understand the Bible, which reveals what we are, why we are and how to live so we may achieve His awesome purpose for our lives.

**11.** What is the next request of Jesus' sample prayer? Matthew 6:11. Can we ask this in confidence if we are seeking to do God's will to the best of our ability? Matthew 6:33, 1 John 3:22.

We need to ask God to supply our daily needs. Go into detail about what they are.



God wants us to talk to Him — to tell Him, as we would a close friend, how we feel and what we think. (Photos by Nathan Faulkner)



Be sure to ask God to bless your parents so they may provide the family with adequate food, clothing, shelter and other necessities.

God knows of these needs even before we ask Him (Matthew 6:8). However, He has not promised to automatically supply what we do not ask for (James 4:2-3).

Christ set the example of praying for others' needs as well (John 17:20). This is a vital part of God's way of give.

**12.** Should we also ask God to forgive us

of our sins? Matthew 6:12. (The word *debts* here refers to sins.)

All of us sin daily by breaking God's commandments in one way or another. We need to recognize and repent of our daily sins, and then ask our loving and merciful Father to forgive us (Psalm 86:5).

**13.** But must we also be forgiving toward others? Matthew 6:12, 14-15.

Remember that God will forgive us only if we are willing to forgive others. So we should ask God to help us be forgiving and merciful, especially to those who may have offended or hurt us in some way.

**14.** What is the last request of Jesus' example prayer? Matthew 6:13, first sentence. But doesn't the Bible state that God does not tempt anyone? James 1:13. Is it rather the devil and his demons who are out to tempt and harm us? 1 Peter 5:8.

Jesus' statement in Matthew 6:13 is better translated: "Bring us not into sore trial, but deliver us from the evil one [Satan the devil]."

We should pray daily and earnestly that God would not allow us to be brought into any severe trial or temptation, and that He would give us the help to master wrong desires and to do His will.

**15.** Before closing our prayers, in whose name should we acknowledge that we are praying? John 16:23, second sentence.

All our requests should be made in Jesus' name. We can rightfully ask the Father for things "in Jesus' name" when we know it is His will — that His authority stands behind our requests!

**16.** How did Jesus say we should close our prayers to the Father? Matthew 6:13, last part.

Jesus' inspired outline of prayer ends with praise and adoration of the Father just as it began. This reminds us once again to whom we are praying and of the character and office of the true God who rules His vast creation.

Finally, as Jesus shows by this example prayer, we are to conclude with the word *amen*. *Amen* simply means "be it so."

If you haven't begun to do so, start now to establish direct contact with the Creator, Ruler and Sustainer of the entire universe. Talk to God every day. You'll begin to experience the truly successful life God wants you to enjoy. For God takes great delight in all those who talk to Him! □



# Teen Bible Study

## THINK Before You Speak

By Richard A. Sedliacik

Do your words sometimes get you in trouble? Have you ever said something you wish you hadn't? Perhaps you were angry and made some cutting remarks, only to regret them later.

What we say and how we say it can have a big effect on our lives, and the lives of others. Saying the right thing at the right time can even mean the difference between success and failure. That's why it's so important to think before we speak!

In this study, you'll learn vital tips from the Bible about the wise use of your tongue. Applying them will improve your ability to get along with others and help you make more friends.

But before you begin this study, be sure to get your Bible, a pen or pencil and some paper. Reading and writing out the scriptures that answer the questions asked will help you remember the important principles you'll be learning.

1. Can our words have a great impact on the lives of others? Summarize James 3:2-10. Can improper or careless words result in anger and fighting? Proverbs 18:6-7, 12:18 (first part). But can the right words be soothing and of great benefit? Proverbs 12:18 (last part), 12:25, 15:4, 16:24.

Each day we come in contact with many people — family, friends, teachers, employers and others. What we say and how we say it not only affects them, but also us, either positively or negatively. And once spoken, our words cannot be taken back!

King Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived (1 Kings 3:11-12), knew and understood the importance of being careful with words. He gave specific guidelines about what to say and what not to say, how to say it and when to say it.

2. Did Solomon show that there is a time for everything, including a time to speak and a time to keep silent? Ecclesiastes 3:1, 7. Should one say the first thing that comes to

mind, or think about it first before saying it? Proverbs 29:20, 15:28, James 1:19.

It is tempting, especially when angry, to say the first thing that pops into your mind. But don't! Pause for a few seconds and think about what to say. You may decide to keep your mouth closed and wait for a better time and place to respond. Be sure that whatever you do say is fit for the occasion.

3. Will the person who gives a right answer at the appropriate time experience joy and delight? Proverbs 15:23, 25:11. Will he spare himself from trouble? Proverbs 21:23.

4. Notice what effect words can have on an angry person. Will a soft (gracious and polite) answer calm him, whereas an insult only make him angrier? Proverbs 15:1.

Harsh words will usually lead an angry person to think his anger is justified. This could further upset him and even cause him to harm you in some way. By staying calm and not raising your voice, you will avoid unnecessary quarrels and friction.

5. Did Solomon stress the importance of always telling the truth? Proverbs 19:9, 20:17, 12:19, 22. Is being truthful one of the Ten Commandments? Exodus 20:16.

There is often a temptation to mislead and deceive others, or to twist the facts in one's favor. But don't do it! Honesty is always the best policy, even if it hurts.

Also avoid making rash or hasty promises that you know you won't be able to keep. Think twice before you promise to do something you may have to back out of, thereby making yourself a liar and hurting your credibility (Ecclesiastes 10:1). Make sure you will be able to follow through with your promises.

6. Some people, it seems, are always talking, rarely giving anyone else a chance. They don't seem to know when to stop. But is the person who spares his words wise? Proverbs 15:2, 10:19, 17:27-28.

If you are the type that dominates



conversations, next time stop and think before you speak. Ask yourself: "Is my comment going to be helpful?" If in doubt, don't say it — just go ahead and listen.

Most people who talk a lot are not good listeners because they are too busy thinking about what to say next. Therefore they miss important details, and will often interrupt with their own comments, or try to answer a matter before they even know the issues (Proverbs 18:13). Being a good listener goes a long way to building friendships, and you'll find yourself learning a lot more in the process!

7. Occasionally we meet boasters who brag about their abilities, importance or lofty plans for the future. Should a person think twice before boasting? Proverbs 27:1, James 3:5. Should he let someone else praise him instead? Proverbs 27:2.

How much more rewarding and satisfying it is to receive recognition from someone else — perhaps an employer or a teacher — than to praise oneself. People will be more likely to believe good words spoken about you by others rather than by yourself.



In a crowd of people, all kinds of conversations can be heard — good and bad. (Photo by Warren Watson)

8. Is it best to avoid certain topics in our conversations? Ephesians 5:3-4, 11-12.

9. Will a wise person refrain from criticizing or putting people down and gossiping about them? Proverbs 11:12-13. What harm can be caused by gossip? Proverbs 16:28, 17:9, 26:20-21.

One can end up hurting the reputation of another (often unjustly), and even separate good friends through gossip. Before repeat-

ing a matter, be sure it is truthful and won't harm the person you're talking about.

If you know of something that could hurt the credibility and reputation of another, don't repeat it. If you can't say something nice about another person, why say anything at all?

10. Should we rather try to build up and encourage others? I Thessalonians 5:11, Ephesians 4:29.

Show concern for others. Help and encourage them to do their best and excel in all areas of life. By looking for the good character traits in other people, we won't be so quick to find and point out their faults and shortcomings.

11. What is the great principle we should apply in our speech? Matthew 7:12.

We should treat people the way we would like to be treated. This often also has a benefit for us because people tend to treat us the way we treat them. Our manner of speech will often determine this. Being friendly, honest and sincerely striving to encourage others will tend to motivate them to do the same for us.

12. Was King David careful about what he said? Psalm 39:1. Did he look to God for help to control his tongue? Psalms 19:14, 141:3.

13. Will God also give us the wisdom we need to temper our speech, if we ask Him? James 1:5, Proverbs 2:6-7, 3:5-6, Isaiah 50:4.

Ask God daily for the wisdom to say the right thing at the right time. He will give you that wisdom, if you sincerely desire it, and are trying to do those things that please Him (I John 3:22).

14. Will the person who thinks before he speaks, who says what is proper and truthful, experience numerous blessings and benefits? Proverbs 13:3, 16:13, 22:11, I Peter 3:10-11.

A person who is careful in what he says will enjoy peace of mind and be blessed in other ways, knowing that he has not offended others by careless or unkind remarks. He will not have to worry about lies catching up with him.

But as the Bible and human experience show, failing to exercise control over what we say can create needless difficulties for ourselves and others.

So guard your mouth. Try to always say the right thing at the right time. Be sure to think before you speak! □



# Teen Bible Study

## Why Be THANKFUL?

By Richard A. Sedliacik

Each year, many countries around the world celebrate a day of giving thanks.

For example, in Canada it's the second Monday in October. In the Virgin Islands it is celebrated Oct. 25, at the end of the hurricane season. Liberia has chosen the first Thursday in November, while the United States commemorates the fourth Thursday of that month.

The custom of Thanksgiving Day in the United States began with a group of settlers known as the Pilgrims in 1621. Those who survived their first year in the new world held a festival in gratitude for a successful harvest. They recognized God as the source of their blessings, and gave Him thanks for their still being alive and having food to eat.

But the giving of thanks to God should not be limited to one day a year. It should be a daily occurrence, for each of us has so incredibly much to be thankful for!

In this study, we'll discuss some of the things for which we should be grateful, as well as some of the ways we can show our appreciation for the many blessings that the Almighty showers on us daily.

But before you begin this study, be sure to get a Bible, pen or pencil and paper. Reading and writing out the Bible verses given in this study will help you remember the important principles you will learn.

**1.** Just how great and powerful is God? Revelation 1:13-16, Job 42:1-2, Psalm 147:5, 4, Jeremiah 23:23-24, Matthew 19:26. Is He the source of every good thing that we enjoy? Nehemiah 9:6, Psalm 104:24, James 1:17.

God is the Creator, Sustainer and Ruler of the entire universe, estimated by astronomers to contain more than 40 sextillion stars! (That's the figure 40 followed by 21 zeros.) He made the star systems and planets, the seemingly limitless variety of plant and animal life on the earth, as well as human life — the most intricate and complex

of all His physical creations!

**2.** Do the angels in heaven, who are very much aware of God's supreme power and glory, thank and praise God for all His wonderful works? Revelation 4:8-11, 7:11-12, 11:16-17.

**3.** Does God want us to thank Him for all the many blessings and opportunities He has given us? Ephesians 5:20, 1 Thessalonians 5:18, Psalm 92:1.

Consider for a moment just a few of the things we have to be thankful for. We are alive and breathing. We have minds that can think, reason, plan, design and come to conclusions based on acquired knowledge. These incredible blessings are from the Creator God!

Furthermore, God gives us air to breathe, food to eat and water to drink. Other gifts from God include the ability to see a beautiful sunrise or sunset, to hear a symphony orchestra, to taste a delicious, mouth-watering piece of apple pie or to smell a rose! Our talents and the ability to develop them were also given to us by God.

**4.** Was King David a man who was well aware of and thankful for the many blessings he received from God? Psalms 28:6-7, 30:12, 103:1-5. Was he a man after God's own heart — a person in whom God delighted because he did God's will? Acts 13:22.

One of King David's greatest qualities was his gratitude toward God. Even amid sorrows, trials and persecutions, he constantly praised God. He often sang psalms of thanksgiving and appreciation for God's mercy, goodness and boundless blessings. David knew that when he faced difficulties God would deliver him, and was he ever thankful for that!

**5.** Are young people encouraged to rejoice — to be thankful and happy — during their youthful years? Ecclesiastes 11:9. Is it also important for them to



remember God in their youth? Ecclesiastes 12:1.

While we are still young, we should thank God for the strength, health, energy and vitality that He has given us.

Besides thanking God for all He has given to us, we should also show our gratitude to other people for the good things they give us.

For example, our parents deserve a great deal of credit and thanks. Young people who are truly thankful will honor and respect their parents. They will cheerfully and promptly do household chores without being told to, and will help in other ways. They will thank their parents for the time they spend with them and for all of the things that they receive from them.

A grateful young person will demonstrate his or her appreciation for summer employment by working enthusiastically for the employer. And he or she will show appreciation for receiving an education by diligently studying class assignments.

There are many other ways to express our gratitude and appreciation. The easiest, simplest and least costly is simply to smile and say "thank you." Sending thank-you cards is another good way to show appreciation. Small acts of kindness count much, and may even be remembered for a lifetime.

6. Will the young person doing his or her best to live God's way enjoy peace of mind and abundant well-being? Psalms 119:165, 128:1-2.

A young person who understands and follows God's way of life, as revealed in the Bible, can be especially thankful for the blessings that will come.

God gave His law to promote the health, happiness and welfare of each of us. God's law is the way to success, accomplishment and joy.

It is the way to freedom from every headache and heartache, from every war and financial panic — literally from every sorrow that faces humanity today.

Those who know and understand the priceless knowledge God has revealed to us in the Bible can be exceedingly thankful. If we diligently follow God's way early in life, we can avoid making mistakes that lead to unhappiness, frustration and disappointment later in life. We will enjoy a happy and productive life both now and in the future!

7. One important way to express thanks for the many blessings God has given us is to share them with others. Did Jesus stress

the benefit of giving? Acts 20:35. And is it important to give cheerfully? II Corinthians 9:7. Will a generous person be blessed? Proverbs 22:9. Will God see to it that he or she does not lack the necessities of life? Proverbs 28:27.

The truly thankful people experience the joy of giving. They appreciate their blessings and want to share the generosity that has been expressed toward them by God, parents and friends. They will spend time helping others — including fellow classmates, the elderly and those less fortunate than themselves.

8. When we acknowledge God in all our ways, what has He promised to do for us? Proverbs 3:6. ("To give thanks" is one

meaning of the word *acknowledge*.)

Giving thanks to God for His many blessings should be a regular part of our daily lives. If we acknowledge God and try to the best of our ability to please Him, we will have His continued blessings, including His guidance and direction.

God shows that being really thankful to Him and expressing it is a wonderful way of life — a way of life filled with great rewards! □



God has given us so much, and He encourages us to rejoice — be thankful and happy — in our youth. (Photo by Nathan Faulkner)



# Teen Bible Study

## Why Keep the Eighth Commandment?

By Richard A. Sedliacik

Has your wallet, purse or bicycle ever been stolen? Has your home been burglarized?

If so, you are not alone. For example, during 1983 in the United States alone, a theft occurred every five seconds!

If people everywhere could be trusted not to steal, there would no longer be a need for keys, locks, hidden television cameras, burglar alarms, guards or guard dogs. We would feel free to leave our belongings right in the open. And lost items would be returned to their rightful owners if at all possible.

Is such a world possible? Yes! Your Bible shows that a time of universal honesty is indeed coming in the near future.

In this study, we'll learn about some of the ways people steal without realizing it. We'll also learn some basic principles about the Eighth Commandment and discover the benefits that come from keeping it.

Before you begin this study, be sure to get your Bible, a pen or pencil and some paper. Look up, read and then write down the verses that answer each question. This will help you to remember the important principles you'll be learning.

1. What is the Eighth Commandment? Exodus 20:15. Did Jesus Christ teach obedience to the Ten Commandments? Matthew 19:17-19. Did He follow them Himself? John 15:10. And did Jesus' apostles continue to teach obedience to God's commandments after His crucifixion? 1 John 5:2-3, 2:4.

The Eighth Commandment — "You shall not steal" — is a law of God intended to protect all private property and possessions.

Obvious forms of breaking this law include shoplifting, pickpocketing, robbery, rigged scales, evading taxes, padding insurance claims and passing bad checks.

Other forms of stealing include plagiarism (using someone else's written work as one's

own), the destruction of another's property (through vandalism or arson), cheating on exams, photocopying music and duplicating copyrighted tapes without permission.

Less obvious forms of stealing include wasting an employer's money by daydreaming on the job or through shoddy workmanship, borrowing items without asking (or forgetting to return them) and not attempting to return a lost item to its owner.

2. In addition to the Ten Commandments, God gave instructions about how to make restoration when a commandment was broken. What did God instruct should be done when theft occurs? Read and summarize Exodus 22:1-15.

The principles outlined in these verses, if applied today, would dramatically reduce all kinds of theft!

3. Do the Ten Commandments tell us how to show love to God and other people? Matthew 22:37-40. Is refraining from stealing a way of expressing love to others? Romans 13:9.

"God is love" (1 John 4:16) and the fulfilling of God's law is love (Romans 13:8, 10). The Ten Commandments express the character of God.

Since God wants us to develop His character (Matthew 5:48), it is His desire that we learn not to steal. Taking anything that belongs to someone else is the opposite of the nature and character of God. A thief simply does not have the true love and concern for others that God wants each of us to be developing. God wants us to give and share (Acts 20:35), rather than take from others.

4. Will a person striving to keep the Eighth Commandment, as well as the other nine, be successful in life? Read and summarize Psalm 1:1-6 and Joshua 1:7-8. What specific benefit will he or she enjoy? Psalm 119:165. But what kind of life can a thief expect? Proverbs 29:24, 22:22-23.

The person who keeps God's command-



ments lives without a guilty conscience. He or she has peace of mind and contentment. But those who cheat or steal certainly don't have peace of mind. They are in constant fear of being caught.

Thieves can end up losing everything in one fell swoop when their stealing finally catches up with them. They can severely damage their chances for success in life and destroy the good name they once may have had!

5. What does God say of those who are faithful (trustworthy) in the smallest of matters? Luke 16:10, Matthew 25:21.

In God's sight, those who are trustworthy in the smallest things can be trusted with greater responsibilities. Even small, seemingly unimportant deeds such as telling a store clerk about an undercharged item or returning excess change, are noticed by God. And bosses, parents, teachers and friends can't help but notice someone who is consistently honest — who resists the temptation to steal even the smallest of items. Promotions, higher pay and other opportunities flow to such people.

A man known for his integrity and honesty

ment stationery or stamps for strictly private matters.

6. Will those who work diligently to obtain their needs, rather than steal to get them, suffer from poverty or hunger? Proverbs 12:11. Just how much effort should we put into everything that we do? Ecclesiastes 9:10.

To become successful requires determination, diligence, sacrifice and hard work. But many are unwilling to put forth this kind of effort to obtain what they want. Instead, many resort to playing the angles, cheating and outright stealing.

Those who practice the principle in Ecclesiastes 9:10 not only experience material blessings, they don't have to live with the fears and worries of those who obtain things illegally.

7. What should a person caught in the grip of cheating or stealing do? Ephesians 4:28. Should he also seek advice and counsel? Proverbs 11:14, 12:15.

If you are finding it difficult to be honest, the first thing to do is face up to it by admitting it to yourself. Then seek wise counsel from your parents, minister or another respected person. Finding someone to confide in and asking for help can be of great benefit.

Above all, ask God for help. He is more than willing to give us the strength necessary to overcome any harmful habit, including stealing, if we ask Him (Matthew 7:7-8).

8. Will there be any thieves in the coming Kingdom of God? 1 Corinthians 6:9-10. What will become of those who refuse to obey God's commandments? Revelation 21:8. But will those who sincerely strive to keep the commandments receive eternal life as sons of God? Matthew 19:16-17, Revelation 21:7.

God has promised membership in His Family to those who strive to obey Him in everything they do. As members of His universe-ruling Family, they will live and rule with God and Christ forever.

Your Bible shows that an awe-inspiring, incredibly wonderful future awaits those who learn to follow God's way of life!

(To learn more about the Eighth Commandment and how to apply it in your life, be sure to call or write for our free booklet, *The Ten Commandments*. Check the inside front cover for the telephone number or address nearest you.) □



If people everywhere could be trusted never to steal, there would no longer be a need for locks!

was Abraham Lincoln, the 16th president of the United States. As a young store clerk, Mr. Lincoln is said to have walked more than two miles one night just to return 6¼ cents to a woman he had accidentally overcharged.

Harry S. Truman, another former president of the United States, was careful to avoid taking even the smallest items that were not his. He reportedly refused to use govern-



# Teen Bible Study

## Money Tips

By Richard A. Sedliacik

Money! Like most people, you are probably concerned about it.

Do you have the money to buy the things you'd like to have and do the things you'd like to do?

You may be surprised to learn that the Bible contains many tips and principles about money and its wise use. In this study, you'll learn about the most important ones. Following them will help you achieve some of your immediate goals, as well as help you enjoy success in the future.

Before you begin this study, be sure to get a Bible, a pen or pencil and some paper. Reading and writing out the Bible verses that answer the questions asked in this study will help you to remember the important principles you will be learning.

1. Is God the Creator of all things? John 1:1-3, Ephesians 3:9. Does He therefore own everything? Psalm 24:1, Deuteronomy 10:14. Does God want to share His great wealth with us? John 10:10, III John 2.

God is the source of everything physical and spiritual. And God wants each of us to enjoy many of the good things in life.

2. What will following the laws and principles God has revealed in the Bible lead to? Psalms 1:1-3, 112:1-3. What will God do for those who respectfully trust in Him? Psalms 34:8-10, 84:11-12.

God promises to bless us materially if we seek to please Him wholeheartedly. He will intervene on our behalf and help us to prosper, provided we are doing our part.

3. What important principles are revealed in Proverbs 24:27 and 18:15?

Put in modern perspective, these two proverbs are saying that we should adequately prepare ourselves before taking on the responsibilities of a family.

Many who marry while in their teens experience rough times financially. You probably know of such people. It is wise for young men to spend their teens and early 20s acquiring the education and marketable

skills necessary for a successful career before establishing a home and family.

Young women can be planning ahead by learning homemaking and other skills at school and at home. Knowing how to sew and cook nutritious meals can save a family a considerable amount of money.

4. Is there a sure way to become poor? What is the result of excessive eating and drinking, as well as laziness? Proverbs 23:21, 24:30-34. And what about only wanting to have a good time? Proverbs 21:17.

5. But what will be the reward of the diligent, hard worker? Proverbs 13:4, 12:24. How diligent should we be? Ecclesiastes 9:10.

Diligent, hard work leads to material blessings. Build this habit now by wholeheartedly applying yourself in everything you do. Work hard while in school to master the subjects you are studying. And if you have a job, strive for quality and excellence, doing your work to the best of your ability. You will be laying a good foundation for future success!

6. What principle can we learn from the ant? Proverbs 6:6-8, 30:24-25.

Not only do ants illustrate the principle of diligence, they also show the importance of saving. They store up food for the future. You can follow their example by saving a certain amount of money each time you receive your paycheck or allowance. Spend this savings only when really necessary — on things you've planned for, not on impulse as so many do today.

Although budgeting is not specifically mentioned in the Bible, it is implied in the principle of saving up for the future. Budgeting is simply deciding in advance how you want to save and spend your money. Each time you receive a paycheck or your allowance, you can divide up your money into predetermined amounts for items you would like to buy, including a certain amount



for entertainment. A budget will help you to be in complete control of your money!

7. You have probably heard of various get-rich-quick schemes that promise a big return in a short period of time. Did Solomon warn against such schemes? Proverbs 28:19-20, 22.

There are those who think that gambling or investing in schemes that promise a big return in a short period of time is the way to prosperity. But most usually end up losing their money because they don't realize the odds are stacked against them!

8. Rather than wait and save up the cash to buy something, an easy way of borrowing the money is through the use of credit cards. But is this wise? Does the borrower in reality become servant to the lender? Proverbs 22:7.

Beware of unwise and unnecessary debts! When you are in debt to others, they have power over you. Should economic hard times strike, indebtedness can be especially burdensome, since you are obligated to make the monthly payments whether you have an income or not!

But we have yet to discuss the most important financial law. God promises certain blessings if we follow that law, and challenges us to prove whether or not He will keep His promise.

9. Does God promise to bless us financially when we pay what is rightfully due Him? Malachi 3:10. Also notice Proverbs 3:9-10. Is one actually stealing from God when he does not pay Him His tithe? Malachi 3:8-9.

God is the Creator and Owner of all things, including all of humanity. And He allows us to produce various products from His earth, and to raise the food we eat. In return God expects us to give Him only 10 percent (that's what *tithe* means) of what we produce or earn, all of which ultimately comes from Him.

Since we cannot pay God's tithe to Him personally, we are to pay it to His chosen representative on earth, whom we have proven to be faithfully proclaiming His truth to the world (Matthew 28:19-20).

10. Should we be careful not to work just for money — to make the accumulation of wealth our main goal in life? Proverbs 15:27, 23:4-5, Luke 12:15. What is of much greater value than money? Proverbs 3:13-18, 16:16, 22:1, Psalm 119:72, Matthew 6:19-21. What does Jesus Christ promise us if we seek the true riches? Matthew 6:33.

Some make prosperity their No. 1 goal in life. They believe that a lot of money is the way to happiness. But money alone will not make you happy nor will it solve every problem you'll face now or as an adult.

Jesus taught that following God's way of life should be our main goal. The strong family ties, good friends and sound personal character that result are far more important than a lot of money, and will give you more satisfaction and enjoyment in the long run than the material things you can buy!

11. What important principle did Jesus reveal about wisely handling the relatively limited resources and responsibilities we all have in life? Luke 16:10. Also notice Proverbs 28:20, first part.

How we handle our money says a lot about

our character. Wisely manage the small amount of money you have now and you will be developing habits that will enable you to handle more in the future.

Why not start applying the principles outlined in this study? You'll find they really work. Begin building good money management habits that will last a lifetime!

(For additional tips on how to wisely handle your money, be sure to write for our free booklet, *Managing Your Personal Finances*.) □



Do you have the money to buy the things you'd like to have? The Bible has many tips and principles about earning and using money. (Photo by Nathan Faulkner)



# Teen Bible Study

## “Honor My Parents – Are You Kidding?”

By Richard A. Sedliacik

How would you describe your relationship with your parents? Do you get along well?

Or do you find yourself frequently involved in misunderstandings, hurt feelings and arguments — maybe even shouting matches?

A good relationship with our parents is vital to success and happiness in life. In this study, we'll learn just how important it is to honor our parents, and about the benefits that result.

But before you begin, be sure to get a Bible, a pen or pencil and some paper. Reading and writing out the Bible verses that answer the questions asked in this study will help you remember the important principles you will be learning.

1. What instruction does God give us about our relationship with our parents? Exodus 20:12. Did Jesus Christ uphold the Fifth Commandment? Matthew 15:4, Luke 18:20.

God wants human family life to be happy, pleasant and fulfilling. To help ensure strong, stable families, He commands all people to honor their parents. To honor means to esteem or to hold in high regard, to prize or to reverence. Included in its meaning is respect mingled with love and devotion.

Though many of us do not live in an ideal family situation, we should still try our best to honor and respect our parents (or guardians), considering the many things they have likely done for us over the years. God wants us to honor them despite their faults or whether we feel they deserve it, and, as we'll see, promises to bless us if we do.

Most parents truly care for their children. They want to see them do well, be happy and have a better life than they had. We can be grateful for this.

2. Was Christ, who set an example for us to follow (1 Peter 2:21), an obedient child? Luke 2:51. How did He honor His real Father

— God in heaven? John 8:28-29, 49, 15:10. Did Christ honor His mother by making sure she would be provided for after His death? John 19:26-27.

Jesus set us an example by being in subjection to His parents. He also had loving concern for them that lasted throughout His life.

And through obedience to His heavenly Father, and to His human mother and human guardian (Joseph) as well, Jesus grew in wisdom and maturity even as a youth (Luke 2:40, 52).

3. What responsibility has God given our parents? Proverbs 22:6. Does this include discipline and correction? Proverbs 3:12, 29:15, 17.

When we were born, we knew absolutely nothing. It is the God-given duty of parents to teach and guide their children, as well as discipline them, while they are growing up.

4. Will a wise child heed his or her parents' advice and instruction? Proverbs 1:8-9, 6:20, 13:1, 19:20. Just how valuable is following our parents' teaching? Proverbs 3:1-2. What does the Bible call the person who hates correction — who despises his parents' instruction? Proverbs 15:5.

Our parents have had valuable experiences and learned lessons from their mistakes. They desire to pass this information on to us so we will not make the same mistakes. Their instruction will give us a solid foundation on which to build a happy and successful life!

5. Is God highly pleased with young people who obey their parents? Colossians 3:20.

Honoring your parents also means to obey them to the best of your ability within the circumstances you find yourself. It means respecting their wishes and doing what they say, even though you may think your way is better.

Enthusiastically comply with their requests, and do what they ask you right



away. Volunteer to do more than asked of you. Think of additional ways to please your parents. And be sure to observe family rules cheerfully.

By doing what your parents want with a good attitude, you will be helping to build positive and strong family ties. And your cooperative spirit will tend to spread to other family members as well.

6. Just how important is it for families to live together in unity and harmony? Psalm 133:1, Matthew 12:25.

Cooperation and teamwork are vital to any organization — including the family. We honor our parents as we strive to help the family work together. So when you see an opportunity to help out, go ahead and do it willingly and cheerfully. And support your parents' plans by doing your part to make them succeed.

Doing everything you can to make your home as pleasant a place as possible will pay off in many ways. Not only will home be a more enjoyable place to live, you'll find that all of your outside relationships will be more peaceful and rewarding when you know everything is fine at home.

work and have many things on their minds. We should be willing to overlook their shortcomings and faults, and forgive them when they fall short. Realizing that none of us is perfect, we can be more kind and loving toward our parents.

8. What reward do parents receive from a wise son or daughter? Proverbs 10:1, 23:24-25.

Parents are pleased with children who follow their instruction and strive to be successful. They receive happiness and great satisfaction from a son or daughter who diligently applies himself or herself in school, at work and in other facets of life.

9. What warning is there to those who break the Fifth Commandment by disrespecting their parents? Proverbs 19:26, 20:20, 30:17. But what is God's promise to those who honor and obey their parents? Deuteronomy 5:16, Ephesians 6:1-3.

God assures us that keeping the Fifth Commandment will result in long life! Respecting and heeding the wisdom of your parents makes it possible to avoid many mistakes, thus promoting a longer and happier life. It helps you to avoid the recklessness, violence, wrong associations and rebellion against authority that can end in untimely death.

But even more important, being subject to your parents shows an attitude and willingness to be subject to your greater Parent in heaven. Since God is our spiritual Father, we should always honor Him. Honoring your parents, as well as your Father in heaven, carries with it the fantastic prospect of living happily forever!

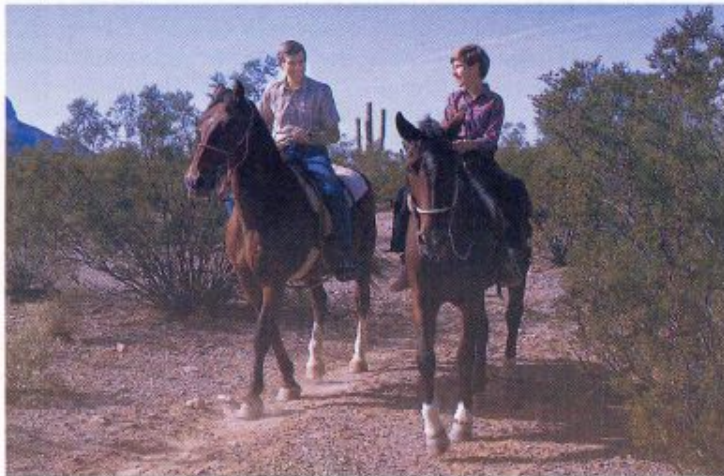
10. Is God willing to give us the help we need to honor our parents? Matthew 21:22, Philippians 4:13.

No matter what your relationship with your parents may be, you can improve it. It might be hard to do, requiring considerable effort in some

cases, but go ahead and try!

Begin to practice the principles you've learned from the Bible. You have nothing to lose and everything to gain. And by all means ask God for the help you need. He has promised to give you that help if you will ask Him.

Keeping the Fifth Commandment will help you develop a close, loving relationship with your parents. It will add to peace and harmony at home. And your life will be more interesting, happier and exciting! □



God wants human family life to be happy, pleasant and fulfilling. In the Bible, He shows how!

7. What other vital principles, if put into practice, will help contribute to peace and harmony in the home? Matthew 7:12, Romans 12:10, 1 Thessalonians 5:15, 1 Peter 3:8-9.

Being a parent is a demanding and difficult job. Therefore, our parents may not always be able to act the way they would like.

They get tired, experience pressures at

Photo by Hal Fench



# Teen Bible Study

## Making Wise Decisions

By Richard A. Sedliacik

Will you go to college or continue your education in some other way? What career will you choose? Whom will you marry and where will you live?

These and other decisions we face can affect us for the rest of our lives.

If we make wise decisions, our lives will be happier and we'll have peace of mind. But making the right decisions is not a matter of luck or chance. It is a matter of knowing and applying the keys to successful decision making. Few realize that the Bible contains the all-important guidelines we need to make truly wise decisions!

Before we begin this study and learn these keys to wise decision making, get a Bible, pen or pencil and some paper. Writing out the verses that answer the questions will help you remember the priceless principles you'll be learning.

1. Who was the wisest of all men? I Kings 4:30-34. How did Solomon obtain his wisdom? I Kings 4:29. (Read also I Kings 3:5-13.) Did he write the book of Proverbs? Proverbs 1:1.

2. What key principle did Solomon give for making wise decisions? Proverbs 3:5-6. Will God grant His wisdom, knowledge and understanding to those who seek it? Proverbs 2:1-6.

The primary way that God directs us, provided we are striving to please Him, is through the Instruction Book He has given to humanity — the Holy Bible. God inspired the Bible to be written for our benefit (II Timothy 3:16-17).

3. Is God's Word like a spotlight that shows us the way to go? Psalm 119:105. What comparison is drawn between the vital knowledge, guidance and wisdom contained in God's Word and a treasure chest full of precious things? Proverbs 8:10-11. (See also Proverbs 3:13-18.)

God's Word is far more valuable than all the gold, silver and precious gems in the world! In it are principles that can help us make wise decisions in all areas of life.

A gold mine of wisdom and understanding is to be found especially in the book of Proverbs.

It contains priceless wisdom that can guide both young and old alike in making decisions that lead to lifelong success and happiness, including good health, a challenging career, a beautiful marriage, happy children and lasting friendships.

4. Did God also have the lives of Old and New Testament personalities recorded so we could profit from their experiences? Romans 15:4, I Corinthians 10:6, 11.

By reading about the lives of the great men and women of the Bible — men like Abraham, Moses, David, Christ and women like Ruth, Hannah and Sarah — we can learn valuable lessons and principles that will help us in making decisions and in other areas of our lives.

5. How did King David refer to the Word of God that was available to him? Psalm 119:72, 162. Did he obtain wisdom and understanding from following God's instruction? Psalm 119:97-100, 104.

David knew from practical experience that God's Word contains a priceless storehouse of wisdom, knowledge and understanding! He diligently studied the portion of God's written Word available to him in his day.

David thought about God's law and how to use it in making wise decisions. Therefore, he was exceedingly blessed, becoming wiser than his enemies and understanding more than his teachers.

Now, let's examine some additional keys for wise decision making, contained in the book of Proverbs.

6. Is it important to avoid making rash or hasty decisions? Notice the principles in Proverbs 21:5, 4:26 and 14:15.

An important rule to follow in good decision making is to avoid being hasty. A hasty decision can end up creating unnecessary difficulty because you have not really understood the facts before making a





Will you go to college? That's just one of the decisions young people face. (Photo by Warren Watson)

decision. Take time to carefully analyze the situation and get the facts. Think through the end result of the various alternatives you might have.

Also, don't allow others to pressure or rush you into a decision you may regret. They may not always have your best interests in mind.

7. Before making important decisions, is it wise to seek advice and counsel from others with knowledge and experience? Proverbs 11:14, 12:15, 15:22, 19:20.

There is an old saying that "two heads are better than one." Advice and assistance from others — especially from your parents, teachers and experts in a particular field — are often of great help in solving a problem or making a wise decision. A good adviser can often steer us in the right direction by giving us ideas we would not think of ourselves.

Sometimes what we think would be a good decision may not necessarily be the best.

That is why advice from our parents, teachers and elders is so important. Often they have gone through similar experiences and are more than willing to give us the guidance we need to make the right decisions. They want to help us avoid making mistakes that could prove costly and cause much heartache.

8. Is it also to our benefit to get to know and associate with those who are wise? Proverbs 13:20, 27:17.

Seek friends who are known for their

wisdom and good judgment. Such friends sharpen our wits and can help us to make wise decisions.

Reading autobiographies and biographies of successful men and women can also help us in making wise decisions. We can glean from their experiences important traits and ways of doing things that we can apply in our lives.

Men and women known for their wisdom and common sense, whose biographies are profitable reading, include Benjamin Franklin, Abraham Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt, Henry Ford, Thomas Edison, Winston Churchill, Dwight Eisenhower, Queen Elizabeth, Golda Meir and Anwar Sadat, to name just a few.

9. Should a person carefully "count the cost" to be sure he or she is able to follow through with a decision? Luke 14:28-30.

In making decisions such as whether to buy a new or used car and what make, deciding on a career or whether to live on your own, *count the cost!* Decide whether your plans might be premature, financially inadvisable or beyond your ability to achieve. Sometimes it is best to hold off on a decision and wait till the circumstances are more favorable.

10. Has God promised to give us the wisdom we need to make wise decisions, if we ask Him? James 1:5-6.

God, who is the supreme source of wisdom, will guide us as we apply the keys to decision making that He reveals in His Word. He will steer us in the right direction. But we must ask Him for that help!

Even though we may do our best to follow the keys discussed in this study, we still will sometimes make a bad decision because of unknown factors or circumstances beyond our control.

When this happens, don't get discouraged. Chalk it up to experience and learn whatever lessons you can from the entire situation.

To briefly summarize what we've learned, remember to avoid making hasty decisions. Be sure to get the facts. Seek counsel and advice from qualified experts. Study God's Word and ask Him for guidance and wisdom.

By following the all-important keys outlined in this study, you'll begin to experience the happy, productive and successful life God wants each of us to have! □



# Teen Bible Study

## The Surprising Origin of Easter

By Richard A. Sedliacik

What do you think of when someone mentions Easter — brightly colored eggs, bunny rabbits, hot cross buns, Easter parades and sunrise services?

Have you ever wondered whether these traditional customs of Easter have any logical connection with the resurrection of Jesus Christ?

Few have ever thought about why they believe what they do — why they follow the customs they do or where those customs came from. Most grow up accepting the customs and beliefs of society without question.

Just how and when did Easter originate? Does it really celebrate the resurrection of Christ? Was Christ even resurrected on a Sunday morning? Did the original apostles, whom Jesus taught personally, celebrate Easter?

Before reading further for the surprising answers, be sure to get your Bible, a pen or pencil and some paper. Reading and then writing out the verses that answer each question will help you to remember what you are learning. Now let's begin this eye-opening study.

1. It is commonly believed that the Good Friday-Easter Sunday tradition began with the apostles of the New Testament Church. What do we find in the Bible about the observance of Easter? Acts 12:4, Authorized Version.

This is the only verse in the Authorized or

King James Version of the Bible where the word *Easter* is mentioned. However, as any authority of the Greek language knows, it is a mistranslation.

The original Greek word here is *pascha*, meaning Passover. In every other place in the New Testament where *pascha* is used, it is

always translated Passover. You can find examples of this in Matthew 26:2, 17-19, Mark 14:12 and I Corinthians 5:7.

Virtually all other translations of the Bible correctly render *pascha* as Passover in Acts 12:4.

The Revised Authorized Version (which is also called the New King James Version), for example, has "...intending to bring him before the people after Passover."

Besides this mistranslation, you will find absolutely no biblical record of Christ's apostles and later true Christians ever observing Easter.

According to an article in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, "There is no indication of the observance of the Easter festival in the New Testament,

or in the writings of the apostolic Fathers... The first Christians continued to observe the Jewish [that is, *God's* — Leviticus 23:1-2] festivals, though in a new spirit, as commemorations of events which those festivals had foreshadowed" ("Easter," 11th edition).

2. Did Christ instruct His apostles to observe His resurrection or, rather, to



Have you ever wondered what rabbits and eggs had to do with Christ's resurrection?



commemorate the date of His death? Luke 22:8, 13-20, I Corinthians 11:23-26.

The evening before His crucifixion, Jesus established the New Testament Passover for Christians.

He introduced the new symbols of unleavened bread and wine in place of the slaying of the lamb. Then He commanded His true followers down through the ages, "This do . . . in remembrance of Me" (I Corinthians 11:25).

Another reason why Easter Sunday was not celebrated by the early Christian Church concerns inconsistencies in the tradition that Christ was resurrected on a Sunday morning.

3. What did Jesus say about the length of time He would be in the grave? Matthew 12:39-40, Mark 8:31. Did He fulfill that sign "as He said"? Matthew 28:6.

The only sign Christ gave to prove He was the Messiah was the length of time He would be dead and buried — a period of three days and three nights, or 72 hours.

But according to the Easter tradition, Christ was crucified Friday afternoon and resurrected Sunday morning — a period of only a day and a half, or 36 hours!

Since Christ did fulfill His sign (Matthew 28:6), the Good Friday-Easter Sunday tradition is just that — a tradition and not a fact!

If you would like to learn about the facts that prove Jesus was crucified on a Wednesday, and rose from the dead 72 hours later — late Saturday afternoon — write or call for our free booklet *The Resurrection Was Not on Sunday!*

But what about the various customs and traditions associated with Easter? Most assume that the customs of this most-important religious holiday of the Western world came from Christian origins.

Shocking as it may sound, Easter and its customs date long before the birth of Jesus. Easter was observed nearly 2,000 years before the beginning of the Christian era!

Easter is actually a slightly changed English spelling of the name of the ancient Assyrian goddess *Ishtar*. It was pronounced by the Assyrians as we pronounce Easter today.

*The New Funk & Wagnalls Encyclopedia* (article "Easter") tells us that Easter "embodies traditions of an ancient time antedating the rise of Christianity . . . [It] was celebrated on the day of the vernal equinox [about March 21, the beginning of spring in the Northern Hemisphere], and

traditions associated with the festival survive in the familiar Easter bunny . . . and in the equally familiar colored Easter eggs originally painted with gay hues to represent the sunlight of spring. Such festivals [as Easter], and the myths and legends which explain their origin, abound in ancient religions."

Encyclopedias and other reference works show that the traditions associated with Easter, such as colored eggs, hot cross buns, the Easter bunny and attending sunrise services are pre-Christian and pagan in origin!

4. A traditional custom of Easter today is to attend an Easter sunrise service. Does the prophet Ezekiel refer to such a practice occurring during his time — more than 500 years before the birth of Jesus? Ezekiel 8:16.

Does God approve of this custom? Verses 15, 17.

It was an ancient heathen custom to gather at sunrise and have a ceremony to worship the rising sun.

Such services were being observed in Ezekiel's day by the nation of Judah, which had borrowed some of the heathen customs, in spite of God's command not to follow pagan practices in worshiping Him!

5. Many who understand that Easter evolved from pagan customs originally honoring a pagan goddess will say they observe it to honor Christ. But what does God warn about learning and following the customs and traditions of the heathen? Deuteronomy 12:29-31, Jeremiah 10:2.

God plainly commands His people not to adopt the practices of pagan nations. God will not accept this kind of worship, even though intended in His honor!

6. Did Christ say it is possible to worship Him and still do it in vain? Matthew 15:9. What did He tell His disciples about following man's ideas about how to worship God? Mark 7:7-9.

God does not want people trying to honor Christ by following traditions and customs devised by men. Notice again God's command, "You shall not worship the Lord your God in that way" (Deuteronomy 12:31).

Be sure to request your copy of *The Plain Truth About Easter*. This free booklet goes into much more detail about the true origins of Easter and related customs than we could present in this study. (Check the inside front cover for the telephone number or address nearest you.) □



# Teen Bible Study

## Make the Most of Your Summer Job

By Richard H. Sedliacik

Like many other teens in the Northern Hemisphere, you may be looking for or may have already found a summer job.

In this study, we will learn vital keys from the Bible about job success. Applying these principles will help you have a fulfilling and profitable summer!

But before you begin this study, be sure to get a Bible, a pen or pencil and some paper. Look up, read and then write down the verses that answer each question. This will help you remember the important principles you'll be learning.

1. When God put Adam in the Garden of Eden, did He put him to work? Genesis 2:15. What job did God give the human race? Genesis 1:26-28.

In the first two chapters of Genesis, God reveals Himself to us as a creator — a worker. Within six days His creative work unfolded. And when He created the first human beings in His own image, He made them workers, too.

God told the parents of mankind to subdue the earth — to develop, care for and produce from their environment. He then put the man into the Garden of Eden to begin working at cultivating and beautifying it.

2. Does the commandment to rest on the Sabbath have another side to it? Exodus 20:8-9.

Rest from what? From work, of course. Though many have not realized it, the Fourth Commandment also instructs us to labor during the other days of the week.

The Sabbath commandment actually dates back to creation week. It was given to keep man in a close spiritual relationship with his Creator, who is a worker — who created and now sustains His creation. And God intends for us to become like Him!

3. Was Jesus Christ sent to earth to work? John 9:4. Did He reveal that the Father is still busily at work? John 5:17.

4. Does God intend for us to enjoy and profit from the work we do? Ecclesiastes

2:24, 3:22. How should we do all of our work? Ecclesiastes 9:10.

God works with zeal. We are to become more like God by working diligently at whatever we set our hands to do — whether we are working for an employer, our parents, ourselves or even doing schoolwork!

Philosopher and writer Elbert Hubbard realized the importance of hard work. He said: "If I worked for a man, I would work for him. I would not work for him part of the time, and against him the rest of the time. I would either work for him all the time, or I would not work for him at all."

5. Will hard work always pay off? Proverbs 10:4-5. Will the hard worker have the necessities of life? Proverbs 20:13, 28:19.

6. Are those who refuse to work always wishing for the things that the diligent possess, but always ending up empty-handed? Proverbs 13:4, 21:25.

7. Does the slothful person look for all kinds of dangers to justify himself? Proverbs 22:13, 26:13-15. Does he always have clever excuses or hard-luck stories about why he shouldn't work? Proverbs 26:16. Is his love of sleep and lack of effort the cause of his poverty? Proverbs 6:10-11.

8. Does laziness tend to become habit forming? Proverbs 19:15.

Some use the slightest excuse to flop down on the couch and watch television when they ought to be working or doing something constructive.

9. Is there profit in all labor? And nothing but poverty in a lot of talk? Proverbs 14:23.

If you want to find summer work, you can start profiting from this principle right now. How? By making a job out of finding a job. Persist and be resourceful. Seek advice on what types of employment are in demand. And ask God to help you find a job.

Then, using whatever leads you have, go out and visit prospective employers. A



positive and enthusiastic attitude will show the employer you really want to work for him. (For tips on job interviews, see last month's article, "So, Do I Get the Job?")

Once you have a job, there are other valuable principles in the Bible that will help you be successful.

**10. What did the apostle Paul teach**



Your summer job can be fulfilling and profitable if you use these keys. (Photo by Hal Finch)

**about serving a foreman, supervisor, employer? Colossians 3:22-24, Titus 2:9-10.**

Though Paul's instruction was specifically to Christians who were bond slaves at the time, the principles certainly apply today. Whatever you do, work as if your immediate boss were Jesus Christ Himself: "Do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men." Be cooperative and zealous on the job. Be alert to please your boss by doing the job his way. Show your willingness to go beyond what is required.

**11. Can someone expect to be paid a good salary if he or she is not worth it? See the principle in Mark 4:24.**

The way to receive a higher wage is to be worth more! Be a valuable employee. Don't just plod along in your summer job with a ho-hum, humdrum, every-day-the-same-routine attitude. Be energetic and productive!

**12. What is a lazy person — a sluggard — like to those who hire him? Proverbs 10:26.**

He simply doesn't get the job done. Therefore he isn't paid much, if he can hold a job at all.

**13. To whom is the sluggard instructed to go to study and learn about the work habits he lacks? Proverbs 6:6-9.**

Many have not really understood the main point of these verses. Certainly it teaches the quality of hard work. But notice verse 7. The ant not only works, but does so with "no leader, no foreman or chief" (Moffatt translation).

Ants have a built-in, programed ability to work diligently without prodding. Humans, with the God-given ability to think and reason, should be able to do far better!

An employee should think ahead to see what needs to be done, always working diligently whether or not the boss is looking.

**14. What kind of employee will end up directing the rest of the workers? Proverbs 12:24. And what will happen to the slothful? Same verse.**

Do your job without being told. Or do it immediately when told how. Get it right the first time. Be the kind of person who increases his or her superior's production and the production of fellow workers. When the time comes for raises and promotions, this kind of person will be remembered. Also, you can just about be guaranteed a job with the same employer next summer if you set this kind of example!

**15. Will the person who is a self-starter and really applies himself or herself on the job eventually be in the company of distinguished people? Proverbs 22:29.**

**16. Was Joseph an industrious young man who was given greater responsibilities? Genesis 39:2-6, 22-23, 41:39-44.**

Are you willing to put forth the effort to be like Joseph? He was a hard worker who served and obeyed God. And though he was severely tested for a time, he did the best he could even in limited circumstances. He obeyed God, and God blessed him greatly. He eventually became prime minister of the entire land of Egypt, and will be given a high position in the soon-coming Kingdom of God (see Hebrews 11).

If you will really believe God and set yourself to follow these principles, and strive to please God in other areas of your life, He promises to bless you!

The apostle Paul sums it up in Hebrews 11:6: "He who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder [both spiritually and physically] of those who diligently seek Him." □



# Teen Bible Study

## Why Is the World in ***SUCH A MESS?***

By Richard A. Sedliacik

Have you ever started watching a movie when it was halfway over? If so, you were probably frustrated because of not knowing what events led up to the moment you came in. You didn't know who the characters were, or what the story was about.

Being born into today's world is much like coming in at the end of a movie. You find yourself in a world that is filled with awesome progress — of incredibly complex marvels of science and technology. Men have even gone to the moon and back!

Yet, at the same time, you find you are living in a world that is threatened with the possibility of total annihilation from nuclear warfare! Poverty, disease, hunger and illiteracy plague more than half the world. Millions are discontented and unhappy, having no hope for the future.

Have you ever wondered how and why the world became this way?

The astounding answers are revealed in the pages of the Bible. So be sure to get your Bible, a pen or pencil and some paper. Reading and writing out the Bible verses that answer the questions asked in this study will help you remember what you'll be learning.

1. What did the apostle Paul call the world of his day? Galatians 1:4. How did he describe "the last days" — the time in which we are now living? II Timothy 3:1-4. Did Jesus Christ warn that the existence of all human life would be threatened at this same time? Matthew 24:3, 21-22.

More than 1,900 years ago, Jesus foresaw our age of technological advancements and scientific discoveries. He was obviously talking about our 20th century, because man did not have the ability to kill all life on this planet until just a few decades ago!

2. Does the Bible reveal that there is a cause for every effect, and therefore a reason for the frightening state of today's world? Proverbs 11:18, 22:8, Galatians 6:7.

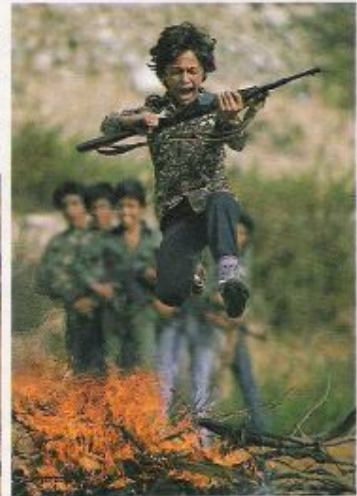
Individually and collectively, we always eventually reap what we sow. The war and suffering we see in the world today are the results of humans having chosen to follow a certain way of life.

3. Has God revealed a way of life that will result in abundant blessings and happiness? Read and summarize Deuteronomy 28:1-14, noticing especially verses 1-2, 14. How did Jesus summarize that way? Matthew 22:36-40. What are some of the results of not following God's way? Deuteronomy 28:15-19.

There are just two ways of life, each producing opposite results. One is the way of give, and the other is the way of get. The way of give is the way of outgoing love and concern for others. It is the way of God's great law, which can be summed up in the one word *love*. "God is love" (I John 4:8, 16), and His law reflects that love (I John 5:3).

If humanity had been following God's way

Hunger and war are symptoms of a sick world. How did our world get to be in such a mess? (Photos: left, *Youth 85*; right, Adams — Liaison)



of give, we would be living in a world of universal peace, happiness and prosperity! Instead, humans have followed the way of



get — of selfishness and greed, of wanting and taking what belongs to others.

Believe it or not, this get way of life and the chaotic state of the world today are the results of a decision made in the Garden of Eden nearly 6,000 years ago! Let's learn what happened and how it has influenced the course of history ever since.

4. What kinds of trees did God cause to grow in the Garden of Eden? Genesis 2:8-9. What instructions did God give Adam regarding these trees? Verses 15-17.

In the beautiful garden where God placed the humans He created, there were many trees with fruit they could eat. But God gave Adam and Eve special instructions regarding two trees. These had great symbolic meaning.

One was the tree of life. Eating its fruit symbolized obedience to God's law of love and receiving the gift of God's Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit would have given Adam and Eve spiritual understanding of God's revealed give way of life. This tree also pictured eternal life, which God would have eventually given to them if they had chosen to follow His way of life.

The other tree was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Taking its fruit symbolized disobedience to God's law. It pictured the way of get that leads to death. It is the way of deciding for oneself what is right and what is wrong — of relying totally on the self rather than God.

5. Was Eve cleverly deceived into disbelieving God and disobeying His direct command? Genesis 3:1-6. Did Adam also choose to disobey God by eating the forbidden fruit? Verse 6.

6. Who was this serpent who lied to Eve, influencing her to disobey God? Revelation 12:9. Is he identified as the father of all lies? John 8:44.

The serpent who lied to Eve and subtly deceived her into disbelieving God's instructions was none other than Satan the devil, the former Lucifer (a powerful spirit being) who long before had rebelled against God (Isaiah 14:12-15, Ezekiel 28:13-15).

7. What happened to Adam and Eve after they disobeyed God? Genesis 3:22-24.

When Adam and Eve rejected God and His way of life, they cut themselves off from God (Isaiah 59:2). And so God cut them and their descendants off from access to the tree of life and all that it represented.

This limited mankind to knowledge of the physical and material — the things that humans can discover and understand with

their own human intellect through reasoning and experimentation.

8. What does God say humanity has been lacking that has caused the destruction and suffering in the world? Hosea 4:6, Isaiah 59:8.

Beginning with that fateful day in the Garden of Eden, when Adam and Eve sinned, God set aside 6,000 years for man to learn through experience the lessons of living without the spiritual knowledge and understanding of His way of life, and without His guidance and help.

Ever since Adam and Eve rejected God's spiritual knowledge of how men should live with one another, humanity has continued to reject God and His way of life, and has been suffering as a result.

As human history has shown, physical knowledge alone cannot solve such basic problems as how to get along with one's neighbor, because these problems are spiritual in nature. This is why humanity now finds itself on the brink of total destruction!

9. Have humans continued to be influenced by the devil, as Adam and Eve were? Read Revelation 12:9 again. Is he the invisible ruler of this world who influences people to disobey God? II Corinthians 4:4, Ephesians 2:2.

Mankind has been under the invisible and unrealized sway of Satan for almost 6,000 years. During this time, he has been deceiving mankind into disobeying God and following the wrong choice made by Adam and Eve.

Human beings have been organizing their own societies, their own governments and their own religions according to the way that seems right to them, but that has led to death (Proverbs 14:12). Following the way of get has led to warfare, as well as the poverty, starvation, crime, terrorism and all other types of violence and suffering we see in the world today.

But God reveals that a time is coming when the cause of war and all human suffering will be eliminated. A world of peace, prosperity and happiness is coming where God's way of give will be followed by all! In next month's study, we'll learn how that world of peace will come about in our lifetime.

(For a more detailed account of how and why this world became the way it is, request Editor-in-Chief Herbert W. Armstrong's fascinating free booklet, *Never Before Understood — Why Humanity Cannot Solve Its Evils.*) □



# Teen Bible Study

## A Brighter Tomorrow

By Richard A. Sedliacik

"World peace is possible *only* through world government." That is the conclusion voiced by many leaders in government, science and education.

Yet, these same people generally admit that such a utopia is merely wishful thinking. This world's nations could not agree on who would rule or how.

What about it? Are world government and universal peace impossible?

Believe it or not, a world full of peace, happiness and prosperity is not only possible, it is coming — and in our time!

Before you continue, be sure to get your Bible, a pen or pencil and some paper. Reading and writing out the Bible verses in this study will help you remember what you'll be learning.

1. More than 1,900 years ago, God sent a special messenger to earth with important news for humanity. Who was that messenger and what was His message? Mark 1:14, Matthew 9:35.

Jesus Christ was an advance news broadcaster — telling us the news before it happens. Christ's message was big news — a sensational announcement of the most colossal future event ever to occur in human history! His message was the Gospel (meaning "good news") of a coming government — the Kingdom of God — a literal, world-ruling government to be established on earth.

2. Who will be the head of that future world-ruling government? Luke 1:30-33, Revelation 11:15, John 18:36-37. Where did Jesus Christ go after being brought back to life? Acts 1:11. Will He return to the earth? Same verse and John 14:3. Will He restore all things? Acts 3:20-21.

After being killed and then resurrected,

Christ went to His Father's throne in heaven from which they rule the universe (Hebrews 1:1-3, 8:1). Christ is now looking forward to His return to restore the government of God over the entire earth.

The government of God at one time did exist on earth, perhaps millions of years ago, when God placed a third of His created angels on earth. But His government ceased to be administered here when the archangel Lucifer (now Satan), whom God made ruler over the earth, rebelled against God and attempted to replace Him as ruler of the entire universe (Isaiah 14:12-14).

3. Though we will not know the day or the hour of Christ's return (Matthew 25:13, 24:36), can we still know generally when it will occur? Matthew 24:32-33. What signs did Jesus say would precede His Second Coming? Read and summarize verses 3-31.

4. Just how bad will world conditions become immediately before Christ's Second Coming? Matthew 24:21. What would happen if these days of world peril or tribulation were allowed to continue? Verse 22.

5. Has there ever been a time of trouble as will occur just before Christ's return? Matthew 24:21, Mark 13:19. Also read Jeremiah 30:7, Daniel 12:1 and Joel 2:2.

Each of these references shows that this future time of crisis will have no equal. Therefore, they can only be referring to the same great climactic period of worldwide trouble! They refer to events soon to occur, for only in this age of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons has

The United Nations' flag symbolizes man's hope for peace. But how will peace really come?





the destruction of all human life been possible.

**6.** Will Christ intervene in world affairs to cut short this time of great tribulation, and thus prevent the annihilation of all humanity? Mark 13:20.

Just before all human life would otherwise be blasted out of existence, Christ will return! He will intervene at the last moment to save humanity from extinction.

**7.** Will the entire world see Christ at His return? Matthew 24:27, 30. Will a mighty trumpet blast announcing His return be heard by all? Matthew 24:31, 1 Thessalonians 4:16.

The greatest event in human history will be the return of Jesus Christ to this earth! It will be a dramatic, earth-shaking event. The whole world will hear and see Jesus coming in great power and glory.

**8.** Who will come with Christ? Matthew 25:31, Revelation 19:14.

Who else will accompany Christ as He descends from the sky? Zechariah 14:5 (last part), 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17.

Christ will be accompanied by a powerful army composed of millions of angels, as well as the "saints" — members of His true Church who will have just become spirit members of God's divine Family.

**9.** Will Christ be welcomed by everyone, or will many view Him as an invader from outer space and attempt to fight Him? Revelation 17:14. But will Christ (the Lamb) totally defeat them? Same verse and Revelation 19:11-16.

Many of earth's inhabitants will refuse to yield to Christ's authority, perhaps thinking He is an enemy alien. They will be angry at Christ and attempt to fight Him. He will therefore have to subdue the world and force humanity, at first, to submit to His rule.

The nations will finally come to learn, through experience, that the returned Christ is a loving ruler, and that His righteous rule leads to peace, happiness and prosperity.

**10.** What is one of the first things that will

be done after Christ returns? Revelation 20:1-3.

Satan, who is responsible for having influenced humanity to sin (Ephesians 2:2, Revelation 12:9), will be banished! His evil influence will no longer be around.

**11.** Will the immortal saints assist Christ in ruling the nations of mortal human beings for a thousand years? Daniel 7:22, Revelation 2:26-27, 3:21, 5:10, 20:4.

In the coming government of God, all in Christ's administration will be spirit beings, appointed by Him to many different positions of responsibility.

**12.** Will Christ and the saints rule righteously and with true justice? Isaiah 11:2-5, Matthew 20:25-28.

Christ and His assistants will rule with godly love — with outgoing concern for the welfare of their subjects. Their rule will be for the good of all the people!

**13.** Will the knowledge of

God's way be taught in the wonderful world tomorrow? Isaiah 2:2-4. Will that knowledge eventually spread over the entire earth? Isaiah 11:9.

After establishing His government over the nations, Christ and His assistants will begin to reeducate the world, teaching God's law of love. The nations will convert their weapons of warfare into instruments for peaceful productivity.

The various physical laws that regulate our minds and bodies, as well as God's spiritual law — the Ten Commandments — that regulates our spiritual well-being, will be taught and followed throughout the earth. The result will be vigorous, vibrant health. And people's lives will become filled with enthusiasm, dynamic interest, constructive activity, happiness and joy!

Your Bible shows that a brighter tomorrow really is on the horizon! A utopia of peace, prosperity and happiness is coming soon! (For more information, write or call for two free booklets: *Are We Living in the Last Days?* and *World Peace — How It Will Come.*) □



The United Nations General Assembly can't bring world peace — but peace is coming, and soon!



# Teen Bible Study

## A Sneak Preview

By Richard A. Sedliacik

Imagine living in a world with newspaper headlines such as these:

"Streets Safe Day or Night!"  
" 'Incurable' Diseases Cured!"  
"Zero Divorce Rate!"  
"Wild Animals Become Tame!"  
"Military Drafts Eliminated!"  
"World Peace at Last!"

Does it all sound too good to be true?

Your Bible foretells that a literal utopia will soon become reality on this earth — very likely in your lifetime!

Before we learn some of the exciting details of what this new world will be like, be sure to get your Bible, a pen or pencil and some paper. Reading and writing out the Bible verses that answer the questions asked in this study will help you remember the amazing things you'll be learning.

Let's first understand how this golden age will begin.

1. Will Jesus Christ, who is now at His Father's throne in heaven, return to this earth and set up the world-ruling government of God? Matthew 24:21-22, 29-30, Zechariah 14:3-4, 9, Daniel 2:44.

The perplexing problems of today's world — such as the threat of nuclear war, famine, poverty, immorality, crime, pollution and slums — have proven too big for humanity to solve. But the solutions are coming soon.

The Bible shows that after a period of great world trouble (called the Great Tribulation), Jesus Christ will return to prevent humanity from completely destroy-

ing itself. Christ will then set up the government of God on earth.

2. Will those who survive the coming time of trouble want to learn God's way of life? Isaiah 2:2-4, 11:9. Will they come to see "eye to eye" — to cooperate with one another? Isaiah 52:7-8.

In the world tomorrow, God's way of giving, helping and serving will spread everywhere as people are taught to live God's way of life. All crime, war, sickness and poverty will vanish as people learn to follow the way of God's law.

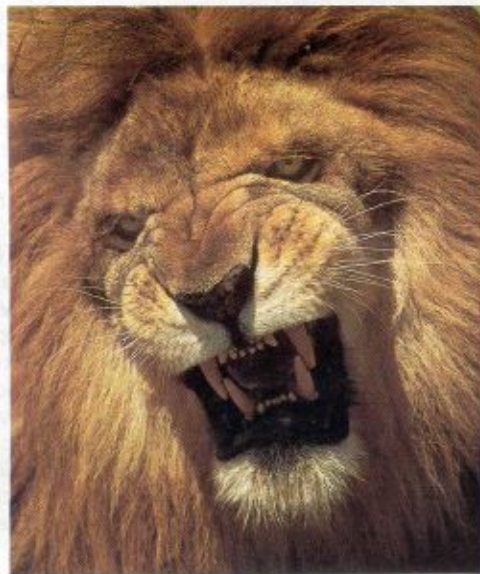
3. Where will the world headquarters of God's government — the future capital of the earth — be established? Zechariah 8:3, Jeremiah 3:17. Will it be an example to the entire world? Isaiah 62:1-2, 7.

The city of Jerusalem will become the headquarters of God's world government. No city of the past or present could equal the splendor and magnificence it will have.

4. What will the cities of tomorrow be like?

Amos 9:14, Zechariah 1:17, Isaiah 60:18. Will there be happiness and joy in these cities? Zechariah 8:4-5, Jeremiah 33:10-11.

After Jesus Christ returns, many of the cities of this world, which will have been destroyed during the coming Great Tribulation, are going to be rebuilt (Ezekiel 36:33-35, Isaiah 61:4). Although we don't know many of the details of what these cities will be like, we do know that they will be well planned, because "God is not the



"Wild Animals Become Tame!" That's not a headline you see in the newspaper — yet!



author of confusion" (1 Corinthians 14:33).

The Bible also shows that there will be no poverty or violence in the new cities of tomorrow. And the evils that now result from overcrowding will not exist, because there simply will be no overcrowding (Isaiah 5:8).

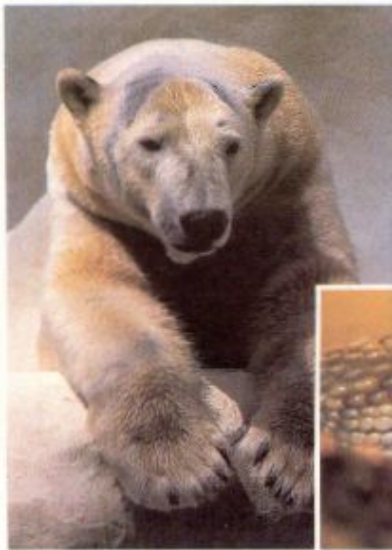
5. Will the old waste places and deserts be made fertile, and will beautiful forests spread in tomorrow's world? Read and summarize Isaiah 41:17-20, 35:1-2, 6-7.

Just imagine such a fabulous scene. Dry, sandy deserts will become green, fertile gardens of grass, trees and shrubs, with bubbling springs and brooks!

Today, most of the earth is unproductive — only about 10 percent of the land surface is actually good for growing food. There are many deserts, mountainous regions and wildernesses.

In the world tomorrow, much of the earth's land surface will become productive. Beautiful forests, farming areas, fish-filled lakes and streams will be found all over the world, with no more polluted rivers or ravaged landscapes.

6. Will there be one universal language



How would you like to have a pet bear or viper? In the world tomorrow, you could! (Photos by Kevin Blackburn)



understood and spoken by everyone in the world tomorrow? Zephaniah 3:9.

One of the major barriers to cooperation among peoples and nations is lack of understanding. Can you imagine the advantages when all people everywhere can speak, read and write in one common language?

7. Will people own property in tomorrow's world and receive fair rewards for work they put in? Micah 4:4, Isaiah 62:8-9, 65:21-22.

8. Will God cause the laws of nature to help those who obey Him? Ezekiel 34:26-27, Malachi 3:10-12, Isaiah 30:23-24. Will there be great rejoicing about the abundance of crops and cattle? Jeremiah 31:12. Will there actually be a *superabundance* of food? Amos 9:13.

God will cause ideal weather to bless people for doing what He says. No longer will there be upset weather, droughts, floods, insect damage or agricultural diseases.

9. Will people live without fears or worries? Look at Micah 4:4 again.

Life will be enjoyable, comfortable and satisfying for people living in the world tomorrow, as they reap the benefits of living God's way of life.

10. What about the health of those who live in tomorrow's world? Will the deaf, blind, lame and dumb be miraculously healed? Isaiah 33:24, 35:5-6, Jeremiah 30:17.

Sickness and disease plague millions in the world today. But in the wonderful world tomorrow, the miraculous healing of all diseases and the teaching and practice of God's laws of health will result in radiant health for everyone!

11. Will God even change the nature of wild animals so that they will be peaceful? Isaiah 11:6-8.

Imagine living in a world where animals such as the bear and lion are tame and friendly. No one will be afraid to take a walk in the forest at night or accidentally step on a poisonous snake!

12. Will God's Spirit be available to all in the world tomorrow? Ezekiel 36:26-27, 11:19-20, Joel 2:28-29.

The Holy Spirit — God's own nature of outgoing concern for others (1 John 4:16, Romans 5:5) — will be available to everyone. Because of having and using His Spirit, people will come to truly love God and fellowman. It is this change in human nature that will make tomorrow's world so wonderful.

Many of you now reading this study will live on into this new world of peace, happiness and abundance. You will have a chance to be pioneers in the wonderful world tomorrow!

In this short study, we have seen only a brief glimpse of what conditions will be like in the world tomorrow. To learn more, be sure to request our colorful free book, *The Wonderful World Tomorrow — What It Will Be Like*. See the inside front cover for the phone number or address nearest you. □



# Teen Bible Study

## **HAPPINESS— A Choice You Can Make!**

By Richard A. Sedliacik

Do you have control over whether you are happy? You can!

Your teen years are a time to enjoy yourself, and to begin to plant the seeds of happiness. These are the years when choices can be especially critical to future success or failure.

How can you avoid making decisions that lead to unhappiness, frustration and disappointment? What can you be doing today to prepare for a happy and productive life both now and in the future?

Before reading further, be sure to get your Bible, some paper and a pen or pencil. Look up and read each scripture reference given in answer to the questions. And why not write out each scripture as the kings of ancient Israel were instructed to do (Deuteronomy 17:18-20)? This will help you remember what you'll be learning.

1. How did the apostle Paul describe the time in which we are now living? II Timothy 3:1-4.

The conditions in today's dangerous, lawless and pleasure-seeking society were predicted more than 1,900 years ago. We are constantly reminded of the slums, decay, disease, sorrow, anguish and crime in the world today.

People of all ages, especially in the Western world, seek temporary, fleeting thrills that do not result in lasting happiness. Millions end up suffering from the harmful effects of tobacco, alcohol and drugs.

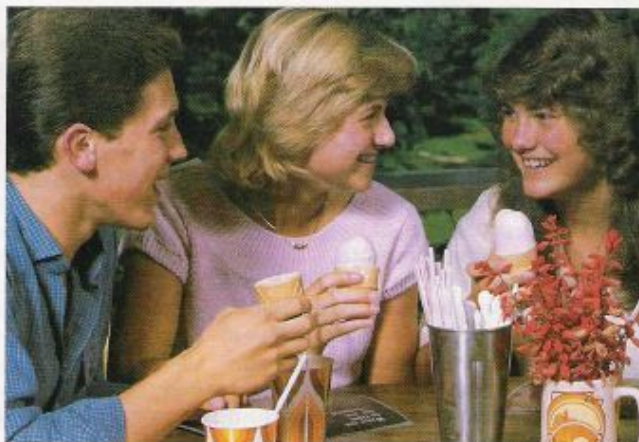
2. Why do some people live happy and productive lives while others suffer frustration and sorrow? Galatians 6:7-8.

There is a cause for every effect! Decisions you make today can lead to success and happiness, or to frustration and heartache in the years to come.

3. We all want to enjoy life. But is God concerned about how we do it? Ecclesiastes 11:9-10. What should a person begin doing early in life? Ecclesiastes 12:1.

Besides acknowledging that God exists, remembering Him also means being thankful to Him for your existence, for your parents and for the material things you enjoy.

4. What does God promise those who do remember Him and strive to please Him? Proverbs 3:1-6. Does God promise to bless those who desire to obey His law? Psalms 119:2, 34:7-10, 112:1-3, I John 3:22. Will He even grant the desires of our hearts if they are good for us? Psalm 37:3-4.



Happy, successful lives — that's what our Creator God wants us to choose. (Photo by Nathan Faulkner)

God wants us to live successful, happy lives — to enjoy good health, a challenging career, a beautiful marriage and happy children. He promises blessings and special protection to those who seek to do His will and keep His commandments!

5. Are various Bible examples preserved for us so that we can see the end results of both obedience and disobedience to God? I Corinthians 10:6, 11. How can we learn from these scriptures? Same verses and II Timothy 3:16.

6. What did God offer the people of ancient Israel if they would obey His



commandments? Read and summarize Leviticus 26:3-13. And what would they bring themselves for disobedience? Summarize verses 14-20. (Read verses 21-39 for additional details.)

Did God leave it to the people to choose the way of life they would pursue? Deuteronomy 11:26-28, 30:19-20.

God commanded the people of ancient Israel to choose the blessings that would come from obedience to Him. But Israel chose to disobey God.

Because of their disobedience, they suffered from terrible troubles including wars, famine and diseases. They were eventually taken captive just as God warned them. Their suffering came because they chose to follow their own ways, rather than obey God.

7. What did God warn Adam and Eve? Genesis 2:16-17. What choice did they make? Genesis 3:6. What was the result of their disobedience? Verses 16-19, 23-24.

Adam and Eve were driven out of the Garden of Eden because they chose not to obey God! They came under a curse for their disobedience to God and their lives became difficult and unhappy.

8. Why was Abraham blessed greatly by God? Genesis 22:15-18, 26:3-5.

Abraham obeyed God's laws and taught his son Isaac to obey them too (Genesis 18:19). God, therefore, prospered him and made promises of national greatness to him and his descendants.

9. Were Daniel and his three friends given positions of great responsibility because of their obedience and trust in God? Read Daniel 1, especially verses 19-20. Also notice chapter 2:48-49. Did God protect them from harm? Read and summarize Daniel 3:14-28, 6:16-23.

Sometimes it is not easy to obey God as these four men discovered. But they chose to obey God regardless of the consequences. They knew that obeying God was the most important thing in life!

10. Why did God select David to replace Saul as king of Israel? Acts 13:22. What did David do every day? Psalm 119:97. Why? Verses 98-100. Did David learn about God and begin to obey Him as a youth? Psalm 71:17.

David often thought about God's commandments and how to apply them in his daily life. His basic motivation and intent in life was to serve and obey God.

11. How did David respond to and view God's law when he was older? Psalm

119:60, 101-105. Will David be king over Israel in the world tomorrow? Ezekiel 37:24-25.

12. Did King David tell his son Solomon to keep God's commandments? I Kings 2:1-3. Why? Last part of verse 3.

13. Did King Josiah — a descendant of David — and the people of Judah make a covenant to keep the commandments of God? II Kings 23:3. What reforms did his zeal for God's way lead him to accomplish when he was just 20 years of age? Read and summarize II Chronicles 34:1-7.

Josiah became king when he was only 8 years old. At age 16 he began to develop a burning desire to follow the example set by his ancestor David. He began to seek and obey God with all his might!

14. Is it God's will for us to keep His commandments today? I John 5:3. How are they described? Romans 7:12.

15. Did Jesus Christ set an example of keeping God's commandments? John 15:10. Did He clearly show that we are to keep the Ten Commandments? Matthew 19:16-19. What kind of life does Christ want us to experience? John 10:10 (second part of the verse), III John 2.

Jesus Christ came to earth about 2,000 years ago to show mankind how to live life to the full. He wants everyone to follow the way that leads to happiness, abundance and eternal life!

If people everywhere obeyed God's laws, there would be no war, no unhappy families, no divorce, crime, violence or stealing. People would be honest and concerned for one another's welfare and property.

16. What did Solomon conclude is the whole duty of man, whether young or old? Ecclesiastes 12:13-14.

We have seen that it is extremely important to remember God while we are young — to begin learning and following the ways that lead to an abundant, happy life both now and in the future.

Why not take that first step? Choose to obey God now — no matter what obstacles are in your way. It will take effort on your part, but keep trying, and God will back you all the way.

God wants you to have all the benefits that come from following His wonderful way of life. And you will have a head start over those today who don't know or don't care about God's way. You will be recapturing true values and building lasting character by living the way that will soon be the standard of society in the world tomorrow! □



# Teen Bible Study

## What's in a NAME?

By Richard A. Sedliacik

Even though your parents probably gave you your name when you were born, during the years since then you have been giving *yourself* a name. Now when people think of your name, they also think of the reputation you've been building.

Having a good name — a good reputation — can lead to many benefits and privileges at home, at school and at work. It can greatly improve a person's chances for success in life.

What can we all be doing now that will guarantee us a good name — one that will gain the respect of parents, teachers, bosses and also friends?

Before beginning this study to learn the answers, be sure to get a Bible, a pen or pencil and some paper. Reading and writing out the Bible verses that answer the questions asked will help you remember the important principles you'll be learning.

1. Just how important is it to have a good name? Proverbs 22:1.

King Solomon, the wisest of all men because of the wisdom given to him by God (1 Kings 3:11-12), said a good name is worth more than great riches. He knew from practical experience and observation the value of a good name. He knew that many advantages and privileges come to the person with a good reputation.

2. Does a good name come from doing what is right and pleasing in God's sight?

Proverbs 21:21, 11:27, 14:9, 20:11.

Whether young or old, those who are sincerely trying to do what is right will be respected more and more by God and others. When their names are mentioned, they are remembered for the good they have done and the character they have developed as a result.

3. But what about the young person or adult who doesn't care about doing what God says? Will he or she be respected? Proverbs 12:8, 13:5, 10:7.

Realizing how important it is to follow the principles God has given us in the Bible, let's learn about some specific things we can be doing to build a good name.

If you begin to do these things now, you will start building the kind of reputation that will stand you in

good stead for the rest of your life!

4. How does the Fifth Commandment read? Exodus 20:12. Will the young person who respects and honors his or her parents be gaining favor in their eyes? Proverbs 10:1, 23:24-25, 15:20. What about those who disrespect their parents? Proverbs 20:20, 17:25, 28:7, 19:26.

A wise young person will be striving to honor and respect his or her parents, following their instructions and advice to the best of his or her ability.

A positive and cooperative attitude will bring privileges and opportunities a foolish



A person's name is a pretty important thing — especially when it stands for a good reputation!



son or daughter would not be given.

Such favor does not come overnight. It is the result of consistent, trustworthy conduct over a period of time.

You probably have already shown considerable respect for your parents. Why not begin now to show them even greater respect? This will build even greater respect for you in return!

5. Just how important is it to be truthful and to think twice before we speak? Proverbs 12:22, 10:18, 17:27-28, 15:1, 23.

A hasty remark can get you into trouble and end up seriously hurting your reputation, as well as that of others. Think before speaking — don't always say the first thing that comes to mind. It might be better to say it later or not even say it at all!

Gossip and slander will hurt the reputation of the person who spreads it in the end. Avoid such talk completely! Work at being known as cheerful and helpful — a person who has positive, encouraging words to say to and about others.

6. Will bragging and boasting about ourselves end up getting us into trouble — will shame come to the person who is filled with pride? Proverbs 27:1-2, 20:6, 11:2, 16:5, 18. But will God (and humans) honor the humble — those who are less concerned about themselves or their accomplishments and more concerned for others? Proverbs 18:12, 29:23.

Pride causes people to do and say things that bring shame and troubles on themselves.

Vain people are mostly concerned about themselves and talk mostly about themselves, their accomplishments, plans and goals. They have little, if any, concern for others. Solomon warns that such an attitude will not only ruin reputations, but be devastating to character!

Those who are humble, who realize they don't know it all, who admit mistakes when they make them, who listen to advice and correction, who are concerned about others, will receive the honor of both God and man.

7. Will a diligent, hard worker who does excellent work be looked up to by others and even stand before important people? Proverbs 22:29. But what about those who are lazy and irresponsible? Proverbs 10:5, 26, 25:19.

Good grades, awards, praise and promotions go to those who are known as diligent, hard workers who excel in what they do! Adults respect and admire young people

who are serious about their work, who are careful to do it right, who will not compromise standards of quality and excellence. Such people eventually become known by influential people. The lives of Joseph and Daniel are certainly classic examples of this.

8. So far, we have learned about the kind of actions that will earn a young person a good name. We have seen some of the many benefits that result. But what happens to the person Solomon calls a "fool"? Proverbs 3:35, 14:33, 35. Will he bring shame and reproach on his parents? Proverbs 17:21.

The fool does not enjoy the benefits of the wise person. Unless he changes his ways, he will eventually bring reproach and destruction on himself. No wise person wants to be in the company of a fool (Proverbs 13:20).

9. As a young man, did David have a good name — a sterling reputation? I Samuel 16:18. Did he continue to have a good name throughout the remainder of his life, enjoying the respect of God and man? I Samuel 18:30, Acts 13:22, 7:46.

Even as a young person, David was respected. His basic motivation in life was to obey God to the best of his ability. On many occasions, he resisted the temptation to be revengeful — to act rashly and harm Saul, the king of Israel who wanted to kill him out of jealousy. Most important of all, David was highly regarded by the almighty God Himself!

10. What kind of reputation did Jesus Christ have as a young person of age 12? Luke 2:40. Did He continue to grow in favor with God and man? Verse 52.

As a young man, Christ took life seriously and prepared Himself for His future work. The way He acted and the words He spoke earned the respect and admiration of the adults who knew Him.

What is the basic reason heroes of the Bible, such as Joseph, Ruth, Daniel, Esther, as well as David and Christ, have such good names?

As young people and adults, they worked hard to obey God and treat people with kindness and respect. They followed the principles for successful personal relationships explained in the Bible.

Remember: You were given a name by your parents, but what pops into the minds of others when your name is mentioned is largely determined by you! So do your best to make your name a good one! □



# Teen Bible Study

## How to Keep Your Cool

By Richard A. Sedliacik

Has losing your cool ever gotten you into trouble? Have you ever become angry, perhaps at an insult or threat, and then said things you regretted later?

Losing your temper can be the cause of fights, accidental injuries and destroyed relationships that could be impossible to restore.

In this study, you'll discover vital tips from the Bible about how to successfully deal with anger. Applying them will improve your ability to get along with others and help you develop lasting friendships.

Be sure to get your Bible, a pen or pencil and some paper. Reading and writing out the scriptures that answer the questions asked will help you remember the important principles you'll be learning.

1. Let's first learn something about God's character. Is God slow to anger, full of compassion and mercy? Psalm 103:8, Joel 2:13, Nahum 1:3. What causes God to become angry? Psalm 7:11, Romans 1:18. But does He stay angry forever? Psalms 103:9, 30:5, Micah 7:18.

One reason God is slow to anger is that He has great understanding. He realizes that we are not perfect, and is therefore compassionate and merciful toward us.

God does, however, get angry at sin because of its harmful effects. God punishes in love so people will quit doing the things that cause their problems. If God became angry quickly, no one would live long enough to achieve His wonderful purpose for our lives.

2. What kind of character does God want us to be building? Matthew 5:48. Are there important reasons God wants us to learn to control our emotions, especially anger? Proverbs 14:17, 19:19, 29:22.

God, who has given each of us a full range of emotions and the ability to express them, wants us to lead happy and successful lives (John 10:10, III John 2). He wants us to become more like Him in every way.

One thing God especially wants us to learn to control is anger. Not only can anger lead to hurt friendships, rash words and actions, it can also lead to hatred, hostility and even murder.

A person who is hot tempered seems to always be fighting and getting into trouble. He has few friends and many enemies. He says and does many foolish things that he may regret the rest of his life.

3. Did Christ say that anger could be a crime as bad as murder? Matthew 5:21-24.

Because we often do what we've been thinking about, uncontrolled anger, under certain circumstances, can lead to murder! An example of this was when Cain, the oldest son of Adam and Eve, became the first murderer when he allowed his anger toward Abel, his brother, to get out of control (Genesis 4:3-8). But God considers even the hateful thought a sin.



4. What did Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived (I Kings 3:11-12), tell us about keeping our cool? Proverbs 14:29, 16:32, 19:11.

The person who is slow to anger shows great understanding. He does not jump to conclusions, saying the first thing that comes to mind. He keeps in control, considers the facts and realizes that his first impressions may be wrong.

5. Can hostile words stir up anger and worsen a tense situation? Proverbs 15:1.



Anger is often inflamed by the words we may say when provoked: "Who do you think you are — you can't treat me like that!"

Instead of making a hasty statement like that, try to see the situation from the other person's viewpoint. Try to keep calm while doing so. See if you can find a reason for the person's actions and think of ways to deal with it: "Maybe he's having a rough day" or "She must be very unhappy or else she wouldn't do such a thing."

Sometimes the best thing to do about



anger is nothing. Ignore the insult, and it will often turn out to be unimportant and quickly forgotten. Keeping quiet also gives you time to cool down and decide if the matter is worth discussing.

6. Should we strive to overlook the offenses of others and be quick to forgive mistakes? Romans 12:17, Ephesians 4:31-32, Matthew 6:14-15.

What we might have thought was a deliberate attempt to offend us might have been just a simple mistake. Our friends generally don't intend to hurt us. Give them the benefit of the doubt. Overlooking offenses will smooth our relations with others and will help us have greater peace of mind.

7. Will God, in due time, repay those who hurt us — who try to get us angry? Romans 12:19. How should we treat even our enemies? Romans 12:20-21, Matthew 5:44-45.

Sometimes it is hard to do this, especially when someone has done something bad to us on purpose. But God still wants us to be willing to forgive him or her. Resist the temptation to get angry and repay the person in some way. Ask God for the help you may need to control your attitude so you can treat your enemies kindly. In so doing, you will not react in the way they expect, and in time you might even gain a friend.

8. When we do become angry, should we

be sure that it does not cause us to break God's law? Ephesians 4:26.

There are certain things we should become angry about. God hates sin because of the evil it causes, and so should we. But we must be careful not to allow such anger to cause us to be hateful or hurt others for their wrongdoing. Remember that God will repay the person in His due time and His own way.

9. How fast should we get over angry feelings? Look at Ephesians 4:26 again.

We should never allow anger to fester or boil, going to bed smoldering with pent-up rage over things that have happened during the day. If you are angry with your parents or a brother or sister, do your best to solve the problem before going to bed. If you are upset with a friend, a quick, peacemaking telephone call might help the situation.

Going to bed with a calm, tranquil mind is a wonderful experience, and helps us enjoy a good night's sleep.

10. Are there many health benefits that can come to us from controlling our emotions? Proverbs 14:30, 11:17, 17:22.

Emotions often directly affect and cause certain physical symptoms. Negative emotions such as anger or resentment can cause many ills, including headaches, ulcers and heart attacks.

A relaxed attitude, free of resentment, dissatisfaction or anger, helps us enjoy a longer, healthier life.

11. Is it important that we do our best to stay away from those who are often angry and involved in contention? Proverbs 17:14, 22:24. Why? Proverbs 22:25.

Solomon warns us to avoid angry people — not to keep company with them if possible. We are influenced by our friends more than we may realize, and there is a good chance their anger will rub off on us.

12. For many, feelings of anger are a deep-rooted habit, extremely difficult to overcome. But has God promised to give us the wisdom and strength we need to overcome this bad habit, as well as any others we may have? James 1:5-6, Philipians 4:13.

You may think it is impossible to overcome a quick temper or feelings of anger and hostility. But with God's help, all things are possible. So ask Him for that help — for the ability to keep your cool under trying circumstances, to overlook the offenses that others may give you! You will enjoy a much happier and rewarding life when you do! □



# Teen Bible Study

## The REAL Star Wars

By Richard A. Sedlaciak

Audiences around the world flocked to see the *Star Wars* science fiction movies. These action-packed stories told of an evil emperor and his thwarted attempt to conquer an entire galaxy.

Believe it or not, a literal "star war" actually did take place, long before George Lucas' films or U.S. President Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative. Rulership of the entire universe was at stake! The cataclysmic results of this titanic war can still be seen today.

Who was involved in this intergalactic battle? When did it occur? Why did it occur? What were the results? And what impact does it have on us today?

The startling answers are revealed in the Bible! So be sure to get your Bible, a pen or pencil and paper. Reading and writing out the Bible verses that answer the questions in this study will help you remember what you'll be learning.

1. Let's begin by going back into pre-history. Before the physical universe existed, there lived two all-powerful, divine spirit Beings. What does the Bible say about them? John 1:1-3, 14.

One of the Beings is God. And with God is another Being who *also* is God, referred to as the Word. He is the Spokesman of the two, the one who later became the human Jesus Christ. These supreme, all-powerful Beings have always existed, and always will (Psalm 90:2, 1 Timothy 1:17).

2. Who created the entire universe, including the earth? Genesis 1:1, John 1:3, Ephesians 3:9 (last part), Colossians 1:15-17. How was this accomplished? Psalms 33:6-9, 104:30.

The original Hebrew of Genesis 1:1, as we have shown before, reveals that God is a *Family*. The two Superbeings composing this divine Family together thought out, planned and designed the entire creation. Then the Word (Christ), through the awesome power of the Spirit of God, brought the entire universe into existence!

But, the earth, stars and galaxies were not the first things that were created.

3. What did God create even before the physical universe? Job 38:4-7. What are these "stars"? Revelation 1:20.

In Job 38:7, "morning stars" and "sons of God" refer to angels. Thus even before the physical universe was created, God created millions or perhaps even billions (see Revelation 5:11) of spirit beings known as angels. They are called the "sons of God" in the sense that each angel was created by God as a separate, immortal spirit being.



The battles portrayed in the *Star Wars* movies can't compare with the star war that really occurred!

4. Many types of angels were created, but the most powerful and beautiful was a super archangel named Lucifer. What does Ezekiel 28:12-14 tell us about him?

This cherub's name in Hebrew meant "Bringer of Light" — *Lucifer* in Latin. He was a spirit being of awesome, majestic beauty, dazzling brightness, great knowledge, wisdom and power.

5. Was Lucifer one of the anointed cherubs who covered God's throne in heaven? Ezekiel 28:14, Exodus 25:18-20.

The "mercy seat" described in Exodus 25 was symbolic of God's heavenly throne.



Lucifer was stationed at the very throne of God, where he was trained in the administration of God's government.

We don't know how long this training lasted, but in time he and a third of the angels were sent to earth by God to beautify and improve it — to make it even more beautiful than it already was. Lucifer was placed on a throne on earth and given the responsibility of directing this effort.

As long as Lucifer administered God's government on earth, there was peace, happiness and joy. That was because God's government is based on His law of love — the way of give, which is outgoing concern for the good and welfare of others.

6. But what eventually was found in Lucifer? Ezekiel 28:15. (Iniquity means lawlessness, wickedness, sin.) Did he become vain and corrupt? Verse 17.

Lucifer allowed his beauty and perfection to fill him with vanity. He became envious of God, resentful of God's authority over him. Thoughts of vanity, envy, lust and greed,



*Star Wars.* Those words bring to mind the fictional characters in George Lucas' blockbuster films. But truth is stranger than fiction — and the real star war was far more incredible. (Photos courtesy Lucasfilm Ltd.)

then resentment and rebellion caused his mind to become perverted. His thinking became totally warped.

7. Did Lucifer leave earth and ascend to heaven in an attempt to exalt his throne — which was in "Eden, the garden of God" (Ezekiel 28:13) — above all the angels ("stars") of God? Isaiah 14:12-14.

8. Did he convince other angels to follow him in his rebellion and thus *sin* against God? Jude 6, II Peter 2:4. How many of God's angels did Lucifer cause to turn traitor? Revelation 12:3-4.

9. Did Lucifer actually want to be like the most high God? See Isaiah 14:14 again.

Lucifer had nothing less in mind than knocking God off His throne and becoming supreme ruler himself! He was no longer satisfied with ruling over one planet. After swaying one third of God's angels to his side, Lucifer and his army swooped up to

heaven in an attempt to depose the Creator and Ruler of the universe!

10. But did their attempt to seize control succeed? Read Isaiah 14:12 again. (Also see Revelation 12:7-9, which describes another war in heaven to occur in our time.) How did Jesus describe Lucifer's fall from heaven? Luke 10:18.

Lucifer and the angels who followed him grossly underestimated God's incredible power and were cast back to earth. Jesus saw him fall from heaven like lightning!

Lucifer deliberately became his Maker's enemy, and so God changed his name to what he became — Satan, which means adversary, competitor, enemy. And the angels who were cast down with him became known as demons.

11. What happened to the earth as a result of Lucifer's rebellion? Genesis 1:2.

A better translation is: "The earth *became* waste and empty [chaotic, in confusion and in a state of decay]." God's beautiful earth suffered terrible devastation because of Lucifer's rebellion.

Not only did this titanic "star war" wreak havoc on earth, it also brought destruction to other planets. It caused the decay and barren landscapes seen in photographs of our moon, Mercury and Mars.

12. Sometime after this destruction, did God renew the earth and create plant, animal and human life? See Psalm 104:30 again. Also summarize Genesis 1:2-31.

13. Was Satan (the serpent — Revelation 12:9) in the Garden of Eden, trying to influence Adam and Eve to disobey God? Genesis 3:1-6. Was this because God has allowed him to continue as the invisible ruler of this world? II Corinthians 4:4. When will Satan's rule end? Revelation 20:1-3.

Satan is responsible for deceiving humanity and influencing people to sin (Revelation 12:9, Ephesians 2:2). That is why this world has had suffering, war and death for nearly 6,000 years since Adam.

The Bible reveals that Jesus Christ came to earth nearly 2,000 years ago and qualified to replace Satan as ruler of the world. He will soon return and banish Satan and his demons so they will no longer be able to influence humanity. Peace, happiness and joy will return to earth when God's government is restored by Christ!

(For a more detailed account of the events discussed in this study, request Editor-in-Chief Herbert W. Armstrong's book, *Mystery of the Ages*. It is available in paperback, absolutely free.) □



# Teen Bible Study

## 'What Do You Think?'

By Richard A. Sedliacik

What do you do when you're just not sure what to do?

Let's say you face a tough choice between two options, and you can see good points about both, or maybe neither one looks very good. So what do you do? Like most of us, you probably find someone and ask, "What do you think I should do?" or "What would you do if you were in my situation?"

Instinctively we seem to agree with the old saying, "Two heads are better than one."

But why is advice important? When should we seek it? Whose advice should we listen to? And whose should we *not* listen to?

Following good advice can make our lives smoother and happier, sparing us from many of the pitfalls we might otherwise experience. In this study you'll learn the real value of seeking and following good advice.

Before you begin this study, be sure to get a Bible, pen or pencil and some paper. Reading and then writing out the Bible verses that answer the questions asked in this study will help you remember the important principles you'll be learning.

1. King Solomon was the wisest man who ever lived. This was because God gave him his wisdom. What is Solomon's advice to a young person concerned about his or her future? Proverbs 19:20.

Life is full of decisions. From the simple, day-to-day decisions of what to eat and wear, to the more complex such as deciding on a career, whether to go to college, where to live or whom to marry.

Some of the decisions we make while we're young will affect us for the rest of our lives. Realizing that we all need advice in making many of our decisions, Solomon advises us to *listen* to the counsel and instruction of others!

2. Is it wise to seek out several sources of advice — is there safety in a number of counselors? Proverbs 11:14, 15:22.

No matter who we are or how much we

may know, we need advice. Recognizing this, successful businessmen and corporate executives seek advice before they make major decisions. They realize that good decisions require the input of others.

It is true we can learn from our own mistakes. But just think how much further ahead in life we'll be if we learn from the mistakes of others. If we could skip the mistakes that have been made over and over again by other people, our lives would be much happier and more successful.

3. Some people, however, are too proud to take advice from others. They ignore or ridicule what others have to say, almost as if they believe that they alone have all the right answers. But what do the proverbs say about a person who is wise in his own eyes? Proverbs 26:12, 16:18, 12:15, 28:26.

Some people seem to think they have nothing to learn. They think they know it all. They have the classic "Don't tell me what to do!" attitude. Feeling self-sufficient, they do not listen to anyone.

If we're honest, we'll admit that we usually don't know all the facts. Others may come up with ideas and solutions we might not think of ourselves. By listening to them with an open mind, we can profit from their mistakes and experiences.

No one can guarantee that you will get perfect advice. But you can be more confident about your decisions by choosing wise counselors — people who are balanced,



"Two heads are better than one" in solving a problem! That's why we ask people, "What do you think I should do?"



who have a good reputation and who know you.

4. What is one excellent source of wisdom and instruction? Proverbs 13:1, 1:8.

Our parents, more than any other people, are concerned for our welfare and future happiness. They have had many good and bad experiences while going through life. We can learn from those experiences. But only if we find out what they are.

Even when we may not think our parents are right, we are usually better off listening to them anyway. After all, they have seen and experienced a lot more in life than we have.

If you are thinking about a career, in addition to talking with your parents it is wise to talk to qualified experts — those who work in the profession you are interested in. Listen to the advice these experts have to offer. They will be able to help you determine if your career plans are realistic — if you have what it takes to be successful in a particular field.

5. Is timing an important point to consider when seeking advice? Notice the principle in Ecclesiastes 3:1.

When looking for advice from your parents, or anyone else for that matter, choose the right time and place. Use common sense as to when to approach them — particularly when important decisions and weighty matters are involved. Choose a time convenient for them, when they can concentrate on what you have to say.

Once you have chosen the right time, be sure to tell the whole story. Don't hide certain facts, since this can prevent your receiving the best possible advice. Then listen, concentrating intently, even if you disagree. By all means be sure you understand what you are being told.

6. What is an excellent, yet often overlooked source of useful, practical wisdom? Job 12:12.

The elderly men and women around us, such as grandparents, are often storehouses of wisdom, waiting to be tapped! Elderly people have the overview of several decades and therefore may have a great deal of advice that can prove quite helpful to you.

Not only can we get advice by speaking to others, we can also learn from what they have written. *The Plain Truth* magazine, sister publication to *Youth 86*, offers valuable instruction and advice on a variety of subjects of interest to people of all ages.

7. Did King Rehoboam of ancient Israel

fail to listen to good advice? Read and summarize I Kings 12:1-14. What was the sad result? Verses 15-24.

After King Solomon's death, the people of Israel came to King Rehoboam and asked him to lighten the burden of heavy taxation Solomon had placed on them. Rehoboam knew he was inexperienced and needed counsel. So he gathered the counselors of his father and asked their advice. Being older and wiser, they told him to be gentle with the people and be their servant. In return Israel would serve him.



But Rehoboam was too self-willed to listen to their wise counsel. He preferred the advice of friends his own age who told him the things he wanted to hear. They said he should be tough on the people. "Show them who is the boss!" they urged.

Of course, this appealed to Rehoboam, who was enjoying his newly-attained power. "I'm king," he thought. "They have to do what I say." So he levied heavier taxes on the people and greater burdens than Solomon. His foolish decision provoked a rebellion that split the nation into two kingdoms.

So be careful about whose advice you follow. Don't assume that friends who are the same age as you have any better answers than you could have come up with yourself.

8. Who does the Bible say is the great Counselor? Isaiah 9:6. Therefore should we also be sure to seek and listen to God's advice? James 1:5, Luke 11:28. Where is that advice found? II Timothy 3:16-17.

God, the all-powerful, all-wise Creator, reveals His wisdom and advice through His inspired Word, the Holy Bible. It is in reality God speaking to us! Carefully listen to the advice contained in the Bible, especially in the book of Proverbs, which was written primarily for young people.

Seeking and listening to good advice is vital to leading a happy and successful life. So don't hesitate to ask for it when needed. You'll really be glad you did! □



# Teen Bible Study

## What Shape Are You In?

By Richard A. Sedliacik

Study after study is showing that the health of young people in the Western world is appalling!

One study of a group of 1,800 U.S. fourth graders revealed that nearly half *already* exhibited at least one major symptom of such potentially fatal illnesses as heart disease, arteriosclerosis and stroke.

"I don't think people realize how serious it is," says California Superintendent of Public Instruction Louis (Bill) Honig. "If you look at the data, there's been a strong slide in physical fitness. Young people are in worse shape than ever. It's scary."

What about your health? Are you concerned about it? You should be! Many people are abusing their health and don't even realize it!

Few know that the Bible reveals sound, basic principles for healthful living. Following them will help to ensure radiant health both now and in the future, enabling you to be happier and much more successful in life.

Before beginning this study, be sure to get your Bible, a pen or pencil and some paper. Reading and writing out the Bible verses that answer the questions asked in this study will help you remember the important principles you'll be learning.

1. Does God want us to enjoy life and be in good health? John 10:10 (second part), III John 2.

God intends for people to live happy, healthy and successful lives. He wants us to be bubbling over with health, energy and enthusiasm — free from aches, pains and sicknesses of all kinds.

But vast numbers in our society today are suffering from poor health. Why?

2. Is there always a cause for every effect? Galatians 6:7. Did Solomon show that the things we do now will affect us later on? Proverbs 11:18-19, 22:8.

The principle revealed by these verses shows that our decisions and actions each

day add up and can end up having a major effect on our futures.

Our bodies, consisting of many complex and interrelated systems (Psalm 139:14), are finely tuned and regulated by physical, natural laws that must be followed to have good health.

The seemingly small decisions we make each day — such as the kinds and amounts of food we eat, and the amount of sleep and exercise we get — add up to have a large effect on our health and well-being.

3. Will following God's laws — including the laws of physical health — bring about long life, good health and happiness? Proverbs 3:1-2, 7-8, 4:20-22.

Since God created the human body (Genesis 2:7), He knows what is best for it. He has revealed guidelines for healthful living in the pages of



the Bible — His instruction book for humanity.

4. Was the prophet Daniel careful about the foods he ate? Daniel 1:8-16, especially verses 12-15.

Like Daniel, we too should be concerned about the food we eat. Nutritionists point out that to maintain good health, we should try to eat a variety of foods, including lean meat, whole grain cereals and breads, dairy products, as well as fresh fruits and



vegetables. Such a well-balanced diet will provide the essential elements our bodies need to be healthy.

Also, we should try to limit the intake of food that has little nutritional value (often called junk food) such as soft drinks, candy and products made almost exclusively of highly processed white flour. In substantial amounts these foods have been shown to be harmful to the human body.

5. Should we strive for moderation and balance in all areas of life? I Corinthians 9:25. (*Temperate* means "marked by moderation; not extreme or excessive.") What does the Bible warn are the consequences of overeating and drunkenness? Proverbs 23:20-21.

Not only is what you eat and drink important, so is the amount. God created food to be enjoyed (Psalms 103:5, 104:14-15). But He wants us to strive for moderation in our eating and drinking habits.

6. Does the Bible recommend exercise for good health? I Timothy 4:8.

Correctly translated, this verse shows that bodily exercise *profits* "for a little



Are you concerned about your health? Did you know that the One who created our bodies is? (Photos by Warren Watson)



while" — that is, during this physical life. In other words, even though developing godly character is more important, exercise does help in maintaining good health, as scientific research has conclusively proved.

Take part in a variety of sports and develop a sensible exercise program that will keep you in good physical condition. Exercise not only builds up your resistance to disease, it also helps you to look and feel better and be more alert and energetic.

7. Is there a connection between our state of mind — the way we think — and our physical health? Proverbs 11:17, 14:30.

Good physical health involves good mental health and positive emotions as well. Your mind and body work together. The way you think can make you sick!

Just as negative emotions (fear, worry, distress, anger, hostility) can wear down the body, so positive emotions can build it up. Many do not realize this and end up suffering from various ailments. Good health, as the Bible reveals, depends to a large extent on peace of mind and contentment.

8. What does the Bible say we should think about? Philippians 4:8. What are the benefits of having a positive outlook on life? Proverbs 15:13, 17:22.

A person can definitely help maintain good health by having a positive, cheerful outlook on life — something so few seem to have today.

9. Another aspect of good health is sufficient sleep. But what can result from getting too much sleep? Proverbs 6:9-11.

Nothing can take the place of regular sleep to enable your body to recuperate after an eventful day. A good night's sleep helps you to be in a more positive attitude, feeling refreshed, alert, clearheaded and able to meet the challenges of the day. Generally, seven to nine hours of sleep is best for most people.

But just as too little sleep is bad for your health, so is too much sleep. Staying in bed too long can cause sluggishness and depression. And it will hinder you from accomplishing more in life.

10. Many today are seriously risking their health and future success by smoking or experimenting with drugs. Do activities such as these violate the principle in I Corinthians 6:20?

God wants us to glorify Him in the use of our bodies — to keep them in the best condition possible. He wants us to stay away from those things that can permanently damage our health!

In this study we have covered some basic keys to good health. Work hard to apply these principles daily. The rewards of a strong, graceful, energetic and healthy body will more than repay your efforts!

For additional information on how to enjoy a more healthful life both now and in the future, be sure to write or call for our free booklet, *Principles of Healthful Living*. □



# Teen Bible Study

## Let's Be Honest!

By Richard A. Sedliacik

Have you ever wondered what life would be like if everyone were honest and told the truth?

No one would be afraid of being cheated anymore. Manufacturers would no longer mislead consumers with false and deceptive advertising. Politicians wouldn't make promises they knew they couldn't keep. You could trust all your friends to tell the truth and keep their word.

How refreshing it would be if people everywhere always told the truth!

The Bible has much to say about telling the truth. In this study we will learn something about the basic nature and character of God. We'll discover who the first liar was and examine the first lie recorded in the Bible. Then we'll learn about some of the many benefits that automatically come to those who build a reputation for being truthful.

Before you begin this study, be sure to get your Bible, a pen or pencil and some paper. Look up, read and then write down the verses that answer each question. This will help you to remember the important principles you'll be learning.

1. What are some of the qualities and characteristics of God? Deuteronomy 32:4, Revelation 15:3. What is one thing God will never do under any circumstance? Titus 1:2, Hebrews 6:18.

God reveals Himself as a God of truth. You can always rely on what He says. God can be trusted to keep all of His promises because He has willed never to lie!

2. Did Jesus Christ, the Son of God, always speak the truth? Matthew 22:16.

Christ exemplified the character and nature of God the Father throughout His life. This is because He also was God — the "Word" or Spokesman of the God Family before He became a human being (John 1:1-3, 14).

3. What is the origin of the Holy Bible? II Timothy 3:16. What did Jesus, who spoke and lived by the truth, define as truth? John 17:17. Under inspiration of God, did King

David also define God's laws as being the truth? Psalm 119:142, 151.

God's Word, the Holy Bible, contains essential truth inspired by God that reveals a way of life based on the Ten Commandments. This is the way the two members of the God Family have always lived.

"God is love" (I John 4:16) and the fulfilling of God's law is love (Romans 13:8, 10). Therefore, the Ten Commandments express the character of God. The Ten Commandments tell us how to show God's outgoing love to both God and other people (Matthew 22:37-39).

4. Did Jesus teach obedience to the Ten Commandments? Matthew 19:17-19. Did He keep them Himself? John 15:10.

5. Exactly what does the Ninth Commandment say? Exodus 20:16.

Bearing false witness (lying) is the opposite of God's nature and character. Since God wants us to develop His character (Matthew 5:48), it is His desire that we learn to always tell the truth. Intentionally misleading or deceiving others does not show the true love and concern that God wants each of us to be developing toward our parents, teachers and friends.

6. Who was responsible for telling the first recorded lie? Read and summarize Genesis 3:1-5, especially verse 4. Who was this serpent? Revelation 12:9. Is he identified as the "father" of all lies? John 8:44. What has he since done to the entire world? Read Revelation 12:9 again. Has all mankind therefore disobeyed God's commandments, including the ninth? Romans 3:12-13, 23.

God reveals the existence of a superpowerful spirit being — an archangel — who rebelled against God and all that He stands for (Isaiah 14:12-15, Ezekiel 28:13-17). Now known as Satan, his character is the exact opposite of the faithful and true nature of God!

Taking on the identity of a serpent, the devil lied to Eve in the Garden of Eden. He



told her that she would not die, implying that God was a liar when He warned her that she would die if she ate of the forbidden fruit (Genesis 2:16-17). Believing Satan, Eve ate the forbidden fruit and shared it with her husband Adam. Thus they chose to disobey God. The result? They were driven out of the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:23-24) and died as God had said (Genesis 5:5).

As the god of this world or age (II Corinthians 4:4), Satan has also succeeded in spiritually blinding all mankind into also disbelieving God and living contrary to God's law.

7. Is lying one sin that God especially hates? Proverbs 6:16-19. Is it an absolute abomination to Him? Proverbs 12:22. But does God take great delight in those who deal truthfully? Same verse.

God is extremely concerned with the truth. That is because all forms of lying and cheating destroy character, in the long run hurting the one who tells lies as well as others.

Even so-called white lies fall into the same category with outright, blatant lies! Telling a white lie is a false statement made to another person with the intention to mislead. God hates that and so should we.

8. How did King David, a man after God's

9. There is often a temptation to mislead and deceive others, and many succeed at first. But what do these lies become like to those who speak them? Proverbs 20:17. Can it be dangerous to fool others, even in fun? Proverbs 26:18-19.

In today's society young people are constantly bombarded with pressures to compromise their character and integrity. Situations often arise in the classroom, on the playing field, on the job or at home where there is a temptation to lie or twist the facts in your favor. But don't do it!

Honesty is always the best policy, even if it hurts. This is because the Ninth Commandment is a part of God's great spiritual law. If it is broken, it exacts penalties just as surely as the penalty you would suffer if you broke the physical law of gravity by jumping off the top of a 10-story building!

10. Will special benefits come to the young person who chooses to speak and live by the truth? Proverbs 3:3-4. How will those in authority feel toward a person who carefully guards his or her tongue? Proverbs 22:11.

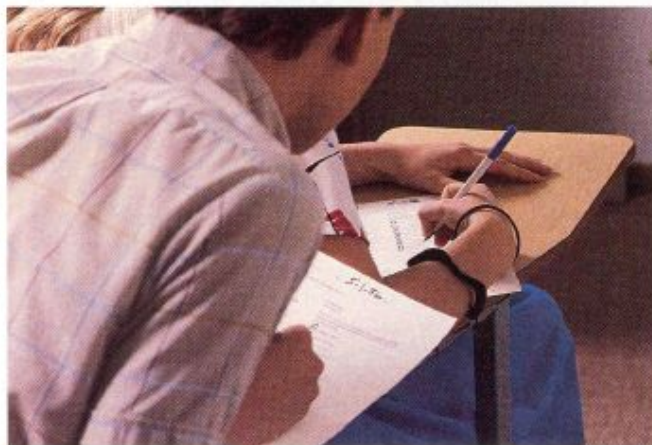
A young person who is careful about what he or she says and who strives to tell the truth will be building a reputation for honesty among friends, instructors and superiors at school and on the job. They will know that his or her word can be relied on. Such a person will often be favored and rewarded in different ways, including higher pay. And his or her parents will know they can entrust him or her with greater privileges.

11. Will there be any liars in God's coming Kingdom? Revelation 21:8. Will those who sincerely strive to keep God's commandments, including the ninth, receive eternal life as children of God in His ruling Family? Matthew 19:16-17, Revelation 21:7, 5:10. Also notice Proverbs 12:19.

God, who cannot lie, has promised membership in His Family to those who strive to obey Him in everything they do. As members of His universe-ruling Family, they will live and rule with God and Christ forever.

What an awe-inspiring, incredibly wonderful future awaits those who learn to obey God and tell the truth!

(To learn more about the Ninth Commandment and how to apply it in your life, be sure to call or write for our free booklet, *The Ten Commandments*.) □



Cheating — trying to deceive the teacher — is harmful to the cheater. So God forbids lying and cheating.

own heart (Acts 13:22), view lying? Psalm 119:29, 163. What was his advice to those who seek to please God? Psalm 34:13, 15:1-2.

King David realized the importance of telling the truth. He knew from personal experience that God grants special favors to those who strive to be truthful.



# Teen Bible Study

## What's Your Hurry?

By Richard A. Sedliacik

*Patience!* It's a quality we admire and want others to have — especially toward us. But there seem to be so many things that make us rush, hurry and feel impatient.

We in the Western world live in an "instant" society — we have instant coffee, instant tea, instant film and we want instant success.

Life seems to be a constant rush from one activity to another. People are in a frenzied hurry to do things, to experience all they can — to have it all, *now!*

Are you always in a hurry? Are you impatient in lines? Do you become upset in traffic jams or at friends who keep you waiting? How often do you say, "I want it now!"

Why the hurry? Why don't we slow down and really *enjoy* life?

In this study we'll examine some of the pitfalls of haste and learn about the benefits of exercising patience. We will come to understand why we need to have patience and how to begin developing this important characteristic.

1. What basic principle about patience does Solomon reveal in Ecclesiastes 3:1? What happens to those who ignore this advice? Proverbs 21:5.

During your lifetime, you will be able to do, experience and possess many things. You may acquire an education and the skills for a successful career, own a car and perhaps a home, travel to faraway places, be married, have a family.

As Solomon went on to show in Ecclesiastes 3, verses 2 through 8, there is a *right time* for everything we do. Some

people, however, attempt to acquire and do all they can almost immediately, without considering the proper timing. In their haste to have it all now, they end up paying a stiff price.

In life we should take things one step at a time. We need to be patient — to slow down and do the right thing at the right time in the right way. Those who do so have a

much happier life than those who are always in a hurry.

2. One important area of life many people rush into is marriage. Should we be patient, however, and first prepare for the responsibilities that come with marriage? Notice the principle found in Luke 14:28 and Proverbs 24:27.

Not realizing that marriage is serious business, many young people rush into it much too soon. Unfortunately, they realize their mistake after it's too late. The principle of counting the cost means it is much wiser to wait and get married *after*

you have gained the necessary skills to fulfill your responsibilities.

For men, that means waiting until you have completed your education and training for a lifelong career. Proverbs 24:27 uses the example of a farmer preparing his fields — his livelihood — first. Only after you are financially secure, with a stable job, is it the right time to seriously consider marriage.

For women, that means taking time to complete your education, to prepare to fulfill the demanding role of a wife, mother and homemaker. Don't rush into the lifelong commitment of marriage. Prepare first.



Photo by G.A. Beluche, Jr.



3. Should we wait and keep our bodies sexually pure for a future mate? I Corinthians 6:18, II Corinthians 12:21, Ephesians 5:3.

Sex belongs in marriage! God, who wants the best for us in life, tells us to wait to enjoy the pleasures of sex with our future marriage partner. Those who in haste do not wait until they are married, end up hurting themselves and their prospects for real happiness in a future marriage.

Fornication — premarital sex — not only can snare someone into marrying the wrong person, it can result in the spread of sexually transmissible diseases, an unwanted pregnancy and a generally miserable and unhappy life.

Those who exercise patience and wait, who ask God for guidance in finding the right mate at the right time, will experience the many joys He wants us to have in marriage.

4. Should we take time to put quality into everything we do? Ecclesiastes 9:10, Colossians 3:23.

People are usually in a hurry to get things done. There is an old saying, however, that anything worth doing is worth doing *well*! But that takes time. To excel in whatever you do — sports, hobbies, job, school — takes time, patience and hard work.

Some people, wanting instant results, do not have the patience to hang in there and succeed. Others try to do their tasks or assignments in the shortest amount of time possible with the least amount of effort — cutting corners and omitting vital steps, hoping they will barely pass inspection or receive a passing grade.

Resist the temptation to take shortcuts. Take time to put quality into every project you set your hand to do. Take time to do a first-rate job all the time! Be patient, realizing it takes time to do a really good job.

5. Should we strive to be patient with others? I Thessalonians 5:14, last part.

We all want others to be patient with us when we make mistakes or have difficulty understanding something. Let's be the same toward others. When someone cuts in line or irritates you in some way, patiently endure it. Work on not getting angry or frustrated if the line you are in isn't moving along as fast as you might like.

6. What does the Bible say about those who are hasty with their words? Proverbs 29:20. Also notice Ecclesiastes 5:2 and James 1:19.

Wait! Think before you speak. Don't just say the first thing that pops into your mind when responding to someone's remarks. Try not to be hasty, jumping to conclusions and snapping back with a remark you'll be sorry for later.

It takes patience, as well as wisdom, to choose the right time and place to speak. Some things are best discussed later, at a more appropriate time and under more favorable conditions. As Solomon said, "A word spoken in due season, how good it is!" (Proverbs 15:23).

7. Does God want us to patiently wait for Him to answer our prayers? Luke 18:1-7, especially verse 7, and Psalm 37:7, first part.

Jesus showed we should be persistent in our prayers. God wants to know how important the things we ask Him really are to us, and often expects us to ask more than once. So keep praying to God even though He may not answer right away. God has the supreme wisdom to answer our prayers in the way and at the time that's best for us.

8. Was Joseph an excellent example of patience, trusting God to intervene in his life? Read and summarize the major events in Joseph's life as recorded in chapters 37, 39-41 of Genesis. Did David also have to patiently wait on God? Psalm 40:1.

Like Joseph and David, no matter what our circumstances in life, God wants us to wait patiently on Him. If you are treated unjustly by others, don't be revengeful or try to pay them back (Proverbs 20:22). Patiently wait for God to intervene and deliver you, for He has promised to do so if you will trust Him.

9. Will God give us the help we need to be more patient in all areas of life, if we ask Him in faith and are striving to do what is pleasing in His sight? Matthew 21:22, I John 5:14-15, 3:22.

God, who is extremely patient, wants us to be more like Him (Romans 15:5, Matthew 5:48). He wants us to develop this important characteristic of His nature, and will help us do so. But we must first ask Him for that help!

So why not resolve to be more patient, trusting in God to help you? Try not to be in such a hurry about everything. Slow down and enjoy the beauty of God's creation and the companionship of family and friends.

You'll experience a much happier and productive life, with greater peace of mind! □