

Building a Biblical Faith
Lesson 2 – Protect and Nourish Your Faith
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Introduction: We need God's wisdom and help to maintain a Biblical faith.

- A. Far too many Christians are overconfident or even indifferent concerning the need of protecting and nourishing their faith.
 - 1. In Jesus' warning to Peter we see that God expects us to be aware of the danger of losing our faith and thus to be prepared! **(Lk 22:31-32)**
 - a. Jesus expected Peter upon his return to help other Christians from falling by strengthening them!
 - b. Jesus later gave great emphasis to the proper feeding and preparation of other Christians. **(Jn 21:17)**
 - 2. We are not surprised to see Peter's emphasis in his epistles. **(2 Pt 1:10-15)**
- B. There is a wisdom that is needed in order to build faith. **(Jas 1:3-5)**
 - 1. Consider the example of one who wishes to plant a vegetable garden.
 - a. If he took seed and threw it on the ground, what will he get?
 - b. Does God's seed thrive in any soil? **(Lk 8:11-15)**
 - 2. We can have a strong faith and then neglect it and go a long way before the roof caves in! Brethren we must not be overconfident.
 - 3. We can in ignorance do things that hinder and even destroy faith. (Ex. Refrigerator) **(1 Tim 1:3-4)**
 - 4. The things we will study will produce the fruits that God tell us it would. We neglect these things at our own peril. **(Gal 6:7-8)**
 - a. Building faith is more difficult than sowing the wild seeds of the world.
 - b. Because we know a living God we will seek these things with diligence. **(Heb 11:6)**

I. We must protect the conscience.

A. What is a conscience?

- 1. What is a conscience? "συνείδησις suneidesis {soon-i'-day-sis} α AV - conscience 32; 32 α 1) the consciousness of anything 2) the soul as distinguishing between what is morally good and bad, prompting to do the former and shun the latter, commending one, condemning the other.
- 2. The conscience is a judge based upon previous training and experience. **(Rom 2:14-15)**
 - a. Often a good conscience will make you feel bad by just thinking of doing something!
 - b. A conscience can be trained in a wrong way. You may do bad and feel good or do that which is not sin and feel bad! **(Acts 23:1, 26:9; 1 Cor 8:7)**
 - c. A weak conscience is one that has been improperly trained.
- 3. The conscience is a great gift from God that we must carefully protect!

B. What are the elements of a good conscience?

- 1. The first step is a consciousness of God. **(Rom 1:20-22, 28)**
- 2. We then must have the revelation of God in His word. **(Jn 16:8-13)**

3. We then find the forgiveness of God! (**Heb 9:9,14; 10:22**)
4. After obtaining a good conscience we must keep it. (**1 Tim 1:19**)
 - a. The neglect of the conscience will lead to a shipwreck of the faith!
 - b. How many do we know who have compromised their conscience and now teaches and practices things they once never dreamed they would?

C. How can we fail to have a good conscience?

1. We may fail to instill in our hearts what is right. (**Heb 8:10; Jas 1:22-25**)
 - a. Here is where our love for God causes us to meditate upon what is pleasing to Him. (Ex. Things you change when you fall in love.)
 - b. There are times when Christians love the world more than God. In this kind of heart they proclaim freedom from "rules." (**1 Jn 2:15-17**)
2. We may weaken and even destroy the conscience through doing those things we know are wrong. (**1 Tim 4:1-2; Tit 1:15-16**)

D. A Good conscience will give you great blessings.

1. You can know that you have acted properly. (**Rom 9:1; 2 Cor 1:12**)
 - a. There is a great strength in looking at others and knowing you have done what was best before them! (**Acts 23:1**)
 - b. There are limitations to this confidence. We must always seek out to test our confidence by God's word. (**1 Cor 4:3-4**)
2. You can be strong in adversity. (**1 Pt 2:19; 3:16**)
 - a. What is the source of our strength in these times? We can know that God is with us! (**1 Pt 3:12-14**)
 - b. In times of grief we can take great comfort in knowing the great God whom we serve will not forsake us.
3. What about those who do not have a good conscience? Their religion is a terror and a burden to them. (**Prov 28:1**)

(Proverbs 28:1 NKJV) "The wicked flee when no one pursues, But the righteous are bold as a lion."

"As Augustine noted, "at times a man's slave, worn out by the commands of an unfeeling master, finds rest in flight. Whither can the servant flee? Himself he carries with him wherever he flees. An evil conscience flees not from itself; it has no place to go to; it follows itself. Yea he cannot withdraw from himself, for the sin he commits is within. He has committed sin to obtain some bodily pleasure. The pleasure passes away; the sin remains. What delighted is gone; the sting has remained behind. Evil bondage!"

E. How to keep a good conscience.

1. Be willing to do anything to keep it. (**Acts 24:16**)
 - a. The word "exercise" means: " take pains, labour, strive. Old word in Homer to work as raw materials, to adorn by art, then to drill. Our word ascetic comes from this root, one who seeks to gain piety by rules and severe hardship." - Robertson's Word Pictures.
 - b. Notice the time element: "always." A good conscience is often lost by the "small" compromises!
 - c. Please understand that the world and also weak Christians will not

understand you! They will indeed think your behavior is strange.

(1 Pt 4:4)

2. By always seeking to know the will of God. **(1 Tim 1:5)**
 - a. Too many of us become too busy for daily meditation upon God's word.
 - b. Are you willing to test all things by His word? **(1 Thess 5:21)**
3. By being urgent to seek forgiveness for our sins. **(1 Jn 1:7-9)**
 - a. We should also quickly seek the forgiveness of men as well. **(Mt 5:23-25)**
 - b. Let us have the kind of tender heart that will admit wrong and repent!
4. By hating and avoiding all sin. **(Heb 1:5)**
 - a. How does a false teacher become the way that he is? **(1 Tim 4:1-2)**
 - b. This is why we must watch our influence with other Christians!
(1 Cor 8:7,10-12)
 - c. We must even work to consider the conscience of an unbeliever!
(1 Cor 10:25-29)

Class Discussion:

Briefly discuss the challenges Christians face in these areas:

1. **Our entertainment** - TV, Movies, Internet...
2. **Our clothing** - School, Sports, Swimming...
3. **Our Morality** - Dating, Pornography, truthfulness... **(Col 3:9; Eph 4:25)**

When we look back upon our lives and see a trend downward, then we have failed to protect our hearts!

The Man in the Glass

When you get what you want in your struggle for self
And the world makes you king for a day,
Just go to a mirror and look at yourself,
And see what THAT man has to say.
For it isn't your father or mother or wife
Who judgment upon you must pass;
The fellow whose verdict counts most in your life
Is the one staring back from the glass.
Some people may think you a straight-shootin' chum
And call you a wonderful guy,
But the man in the glass says you're only a bum
If you can't look him straight in the eye.
He's the fellow to please, never mind all the rest
For he's with you clear up to the end,
And you've passed your most dangerous, difficult test
If the man in the glass is your friend.
You may fool the whole world down the pathway of years
And get pats on the back as you pass,
But your final reward will be heartaches and tears
If you've cheated the man in the glass.

II. We must choose associates that will build our faith.

- A. The choice of friends will reveal your values as well as your future! (**Prov 27:17**)
1. Wise men know this! (**Prov 22:10-11**)
 2. Let us consider the example of Jonathan and David.
- B. What made David and Jonathan great?
1. Men of faith will have occasions in life where their faith stands out. (**Jas 2:18**)
- C. Jonathan's faith caused him to be placed at great risk. (**1 Sam 14:1,8-10**)
1. All Jonathan needed to know was the will of God!
 2. This stand of faith would cause a victory for the people of God. (**1 Sam 14:14-15**)
 3. Sadly, Jonathan had a faith that his father could no longer understand. Often they would now be in conflict. (**1 Sam 14:39, 43-45**)
 4. Jonathan's faith caused him to have the right kind of influence! That would make a difference in his choice of friends.
 5. What would a young person do who live by faith today?
- D. David also placed himself at risk against Goliath.
1. Did Saul understand this kind of faith? No, he had turned to a self-centered "faith" which was no faith at all. (**1 Sam 17:32-37**)
 2. David even let Goliath know who was to get the glory. (**1 Sam 17:45-47**)
 3. If Saul had this kind of faith the later bitterness and envy would have not risen up to destroy him. (**1 Sam 18:7-8**)
- E. Why did David and Jonathan become friends? (**1 Sam 17:57-18:1**)
1. Here were men of faith and because of that they were men of principle.
- "A friend is one who makes me do my best." - Oswald Chambers
2. They made a commitment to the genuine good towards each other that no force on earth could move. (**1 Sam 18:3-4**)

There is no friend like an old friend
Who has shared our morning days,
No greeting like his welcome,
No homage like his praise. - Oliver Wendell Holmes

Class Discussion:

1. What can we as parents do to help our children find the right associates?
2. What is the most important associate we will chose in life?
3. What is the most important element in finding the right kind of friend?
(**Ruth 3:11**)

III. We must come to love worship.

- A. God has designed worship as the primary means of keeping our hearts right!
1. God gives worship a very strong emphasis. (**Jn 4:23-24**)
 2. Our society is ill equipped to learn how to worship!
- "We are called to an everlasting preoccupation with God." - A. W. Tozer
- B. The main reason there is weakness and carnality in the church is our failure to worship.

1. Could we come to services and the end result be worse for us? (1 Cor 11:17)

2. What does God see and think about our worship? (1 Cor 11:27-31)

“If we haven't learned to be worshipers, it doesn't really matter how well we do anything else.” - Erwin W. Lutzer

3. Occasionally I hear of a brother who had great Bible knowledge who fell into a web of sin. How did that happen? First look to his worship.

“Worship renews the spirit as sleep renews the body.” - Richard Cabot

C. We must have a worship that looks upon God and exposes our hearts! (Heb 4:12-13)

1. What do you think of when approaching God in prayer? The Lord's supper? Singing? Bible Study? (Mt 15:8-9)

2. Proper worship tests the heart! (1 Cor 14:24-25)

3. Many people try to stay busy and avoid their consciences. These people do not like to be alone with God! This is why a neglect of worship will lead to an indifferent hardness.

“It is the responsibility of gospel preachers to make people miserable who continue to sin. If unrepentant sinners sit comfortably through worship periods week after week, something is wrong. Peter brought the People at Pentecost to see their sin. The people were miserable as a result, asking, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Peter showed them the way out of their misery in the words, "Repent and be baptized...in the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 2:36-38). Three thousand obeyed and replaced their misery with joy in the Lord. Misery! Followed by salvation in Christ.” --- Bill Hall, Evangelist.

Class Discussion:

1. What is the key to learning how to worship in the public assemblies?
2. What are some attitudes and actions we should avoid in worship?
3. How can we get the most out of worship?

Conclusion: We must take the time to build faith.

A. We must come to count the cost and do whatever is necessary to build our tower of faith. (Lk 14:28-30)

B. When we put on the armor of God then we will see the protection and assurance that only God can give! (Eph 6:13,16)

Choose Your Friends With Care

David Padfield

The first seven chapters of Proverbs contain Solomon's wise counsel aimed at "his son" (Prov. 1:8; 2:1; 3:1). He deals with temptations and problems all young people face, such as sexual immorality, choosing a mate and determining the value of an education. Modern parents would do well to read and explain these chapters to their children.

Choose Friends Carefully

Solomon addresses one of the most important choices a young person can make, i.e., their choice of friends (Prov. 1:8-19). It is unfortunate that important decisions in life have to be made

by those who lack the experience and wisdom needed to help them make the proper choices. This is why parents need to help their children choose their friends. Solomon instructs us that “the righteous should choose his friends carefully, for the way of the wicked leads them astray” (**Prov. 12:26**). I have observed in the public schools that the worst children are often the easiest to make friends with. Friendships are so important; we must not let them develop “by chance.”

Choosing the wrong sort of friends is worse than having no friends at all. Paul warns us that “evil company corrupts good morals” (**1 Cor. 15:33**). Friends have much influence over us. Their ideas soon become ours. My mother used to tell me that “birds of a feather flock together.” Solomon expressed the same thought when he said, “He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will be destroyed” (**Prov. 13:20**). Through the pen of the wise man, God tells us to “make no friendship with an angry man, and with a furious man do not go, lest you learn his ways and set a snare for your soul” (**Prov. 22:24-25**).

Be A Friend

“A man who has friends must himself be friendly, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother” (**Prov. 18:24**). If you want good friends, be one yourself!

A true friend is one who will strengthen us spiritually and draw us closer to God. “As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend” (**Prov. 27:17**). When a godly friend sees error in our life, he will not hesitate to admonish us. Some folks get upset when confronted with the truth, but those who desire to live for the Lord will rejoice in the fact that another cares for their soul. “Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful” (**Prov. 27:6**).

While we might enjoy our friends because we have similar interests and life-styles, the real delight of friendship comes from their counsel. “Ointment and perfume delight the heart, and the sweetness of a man’s friend does so by hearty counsel” (**Prov. 27:9**). You can be open with a friend, and know his advice comes from a desire to see you prosper in the Lord.

Marry A Friend

Your spouse will be the closest earthly friend you will ever have. Since marriage is a lifelong commitment, great care must be taken in choosing this friend for life. Since friends exercise such great influence over us, parents need to encourage their children to marry a Christian. I would not want to spend my life with one who did not share my hope of eternal life. The prophet Amos asked, “Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?” (**Amos 3:3**). Can you and your spouse agree on how to worship God?

The Friend Of God

Jesus said, “You are My friends if you do whatever I command you” (**John 15:14**). We often boldly sing, “I’ll Be A Friend To Jesus” -- but do we meet the standard of friendship our Lord laid down? We are the friends of Jesus only to the extent that we are willing to submit our will to His.