

# **Great Bible Themes**

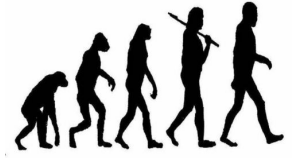
**Northeast Florida College Camp - 2013**

# Lesson 1- Creation of Man! (With Free Will)

Introduction - Two concepts to explain our existence:

## A. Concept #1 - We are the product of accident and chance

1. Somehow, non life became life. This is one of the most difficult thing for evolutionists to explain.
2. Through millions of genetic accidents (mutations) our "animal ancestors" developed, senses thoughts, emotions, etc.
3. Atheist Bertrand Russell said,



That Man is the product of causes which had no prevision of the end they were achieving; that his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, *his loves and his beliefs, are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms*; that no fire, no heroism, no intensity of thought and feeling, can preserve an individual life beyond the grave; that all the labours of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system, and that the whole temple of Man's achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruins—

\* **Thought question** - What about the above quote shakes you up? Why? Would the quote be true if there were no God?

## B. Concept # 2 - We are created by a loving God

1. Read Genesis 1:26
  - a. In whose image was man created? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Read Psalm 139:13,14 -
  - a. According to David, how are we made? \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_
3. What are some parts of our bodies, that are difficult to imagine being the result of accident but which indicate design? \_\_\_\_\_

\*Design demands designer - Our bodies are too complex and marvelous to be the result of accidental mutations.

C. These two diametrically opposed views to explain our existence explain many of the cultural clashes we see today.

\* **Thought question** - What are some areas or issues where you would expect there to be profound differences between those who believe we come from chance and those who believe we come from God?

1. Western Culture has been primarily influenced for almost 2,000 years by the concept that we come from a loving God. That is changing now!

\* **Thought question** - What are some changes we can expect in the next 100 years as our culture increasingly leaves the concept that we come from a loving God? How might morals and civil behavior be affected? (Romans 1:21-32 might give some ideas)

## I. Why did God create us? Short answer - For objects of love

A. Read Genesis 1:27, 28

1. In whose image did God create man? \_\_\_\_\_
2. In what two categories did God create human beings? \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

B. Read Psalm 8:3-5

1. What made David think of the insignificance of Man? (vs.3) \_\_\_\_\_
2. Though God made man a little lower than the angels, what did he crown him with? \_\_\_\_\_

\* God wanted to make man to crown him with glory and honor!

C. Read Hebrews 2:10,11

1. How did God want to perfect the author of our salvation (Jesus Christ)? \_\_\_\_\_
  2. What is Jesus Christ not ashamed to call us? \_\_\_\_\_
- \* We're a family! God wanted to have sons as a part of his heavenly family.

D. Illustration – When there is so much love in a family, parents want to produce more objects of love. They have children! Perhaps this concept of producing more objects of love is similar to God's desire to have more objects of love on this earth.

## II. God created man with free will

### A. Introductory questions

1. What are some things robots can do now? Write some now

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Can they love? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Did God want to make robots, or people capable of love? (Rhetorical question!)

### B. Love implies the ability to choose!

1. If you can't choose to accept or reject someone you can't love! Love is choosing to accept

2. Since God didn't want robots, he had to create us with the ability to choose – Free will!

### C. A few texts - Read each text and comment

1. Deuteronomy 11:26-28

- a. What two things did God place before his people? \_\_\_\_\_ and a \_\_\_\_\_

- b. What did they have to do to receive the first? \_\_\_\_\_

- c. What would they do to receive the second? \_\_\_\_\_

- d. Did they have a choice? \_\_\_\_\_

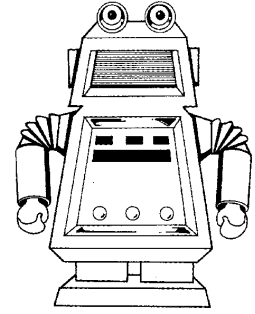
- e. Does man often make the wrong choice? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Deuteronomy 30:19 What did Moses tell the Israelites to do? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Joshua 24:15 What were the Israelites told to do? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Rev. 22:17 Who can come and partake of the water of life? \_\_\_\_\_

**Thought questions** – Can man choose to serve God or not to serve God? Could there be love if man didn't have this choice?



## III. Sin - When man chooses to not love

### A. The first sin - Read Genesis 3:1-6

1. What was the prohibition that God gave to Adam and Eve? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Who contradicted God about the results of eating of the forbidden tree? \_\_\_\_\_

3. What were some lies told about the consequences of sin? \_\_\_\_\_

4. According to verse 6, What were some things that made Eve think it would be good to sin by eating of the forbidden fruit? \_\_\_\_\_

**Thought questions** - Why is this first sin such a good representation for all sin that follows?

What are some things that this sin has in common with all others?

### B. Understanding sin

1. Read 1 John 3:4 What is sin? \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_. (NIV not as good here)

\* God has given us his word, his law so that we can live in harmony with him and show our love for him. However, we rebel and choose to ignore his law and do what we want. We sin.

2. Read Romans 3:23 How many have sinned? \_\_\_\_\_

### C. The consequences of sin

1. Read Isaiah 59:1,2 What do our sins (iniquities) do to our relationship with God?

\_\_\_\_\_

## Summary

### A. We've talked about two questions that must answer which will determine what kind of life you will have:

1. Are you the product of chance? Or, Are you the creation of a loving God?

2. What are you going to do about your sin?

\* The way you answer these questions will determine the outcome of your life – whether it will have meaning or be meaningless.

### B. We'll explore other basic Bible teaching that should help us deal with these two basic teachings.

## Lesson 2- Grace!

**Intro.** What are some things that fathers and mothers will do to save their children?

A. David Adams, a mechanic repairing cars out of his home, died for his son. The thirty-five-year-old father found himself running outside at the sound of gunshots toward his thirteen-year-old, Joseph, who was sitting on the porch of their home as someone on the street began firing at a nearby car. Adams immediately ran outside and threw himself in front of his son to protect him, ultimately taking a fatal shot for Joseph.

B. Do you know of any similar cases where fathers or mothers sacrificed all for their children?

### I. Definitions

A. Grace - unmerited favor, undeserved blessings

B. Mercy - Compassion, sometimes implies not receiving deserved punishment

1. Some have said that grace involves receiving blessings we don't deserve, mercy involves not receiving what we do deserve.

### II. The greatest expressions of grace and love - Immanuel, God with us

A. Preliminary questions

1. What is the most poverty stricken neighborhood you've seen on TV? \_\_\_\_\_

\* I think of Port-au-Prince, Haiti

2. How would you like to go and live there in a house with a cardboard roof, open ditches for sewers, etc. for thirty years?

3. What would be some things that would concern you about living in that neighborhood?

\_\_\_\_\_

B. God knew that man would sin. Therefore he made a plan to send his Son to the earth to live as a man, suffer as a man and die as a man.

C. Texts

1. Job 9:32-34 - Without Christ, man feels far from God. What did Job want? \_\_\_\_\_

\* How would you feel about going before a judge without a lawyer?

2. Matt. 1:23 - What would Mary's baby be called? \_\_\_\_\_ What does that mean? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Hebrews 2:17, 18 - Who did Christ have to become like to be a merciful and faithful high priest?

His \_\_\_\_\_

4. Isaiah 53:3 What are some words in this text that indicate that Christ had a life of suffering?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Hebrews 4:15 In what ways was Christ tempted? \_\_\_\_\_

6. Philippians 2:5-8 - What position was Christ in before coming to earth? \_\_\_\_\_

a. What did he go through on earth? \_\_\_\_\_

D. Illustrations-

1. Those who suffer great trauma in life, need help to get through their experience.

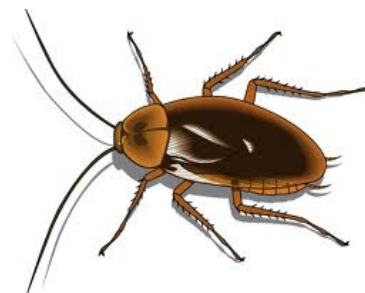
2. Who is in the best position to help someone who has lost a child to death? Someone who has never experienced that tragedy? Or, someone who has gone through that tragedy themselves?

3. Who is in the best position to emotionally help someone who has cancer? Someone who has never experienced that tragedy? Or, someone who has gone through that tragedy themselves?

4. Christ willingly left heaven and came to earth so that we could trust in him as our sympathizing God.

E. Illustration (from Caleb) - Imagine that there were great problems among cockroaches and the only way to solve the problem was for some human to transform himself into a cockroach, eat garbage like a cockroach, be treated like a cockroach and die like a cockroach.

1. Would you be willing to become a cockroach to help cockroaches?



### II. Thinking of God's grace - Christ's death on the cross

A. Read 2 Peter 3:9 Does God want us to perish? \_\_\_\_\_

B. But here God has a dilemma (He must deal with two apparently contradicting factors)

1. His justice and holiness demands punishment and separation from us.
2. But, He loves us and wants to be with us now and through all eternity.

C. The solution to the dilemma: That someone else satisfy the demands of justice.

1. John 3:16 Who did God send to earth to pay the penalty for our sins? \_\_\_\_\_

D. Robert Milligan wrote of an ancient king named Zaleucus who reigned in Locrida, a part of ancient Greece about 500 years before Christ. He made a law that it was illegal for anyone to be unfaithful to his wife and

that those who were guilty of violating the law would have two eyes thrust out.

1. However, his son was found guilty of being unfaithful to his wife. Thus, Zaleucus had a dilemma.

(a) Not demand punishment and have his subjects therefore lose respect for his laws, or (b) have his son blinded.

2. The king thrust out one of his own eyes, and then one of his son's eyes.

a. Therefore, the penalty was paid, and his subjects would have greatly respected his law.

(After all, the king gave up his own eye, to back up the justice demanded by the law.)

b. But his son didn't have to be blind

3. **Thought:** Do you think this illustrates in a limited way, God's dilemma?

a. God's laws are perfect and must be respected. A severe penalty, spiritual death is demanded.

b. But we, his children, have violated God's law and deserve spiritual death.

c. But God has given not his eye, but his Son, to suffer spiritual death in our place.

d. Seeing what God has paid to uphold the justice demanded by His law should make us respect His laws even more!

E. Read 1 Peter 2:24,25 What did Christ do with our sins when He died on the cross? \_\_\_\_\_

F. Read Romans 5:6-11

1. According to verses 6 and 8, How were we when Christ died for us? \_\_\_\_\_

2. How are we justified according to verse 9? \_\_\_\_\_

3. How were we reconciled to God according to verse 10? \_\_\_\_\_

\* **Thought questions** – What does this love that God has shown towards you mean in your life? How much have you allowed it to change your life and in what ways? How can you do a better job of appreciating His love on a personal level?

#### IV. Faith - our response to grace (Eph. 2:8-10)

A. Read Ephesians 2:8-10

1. By what have we been saved? \_\_\_\_\_ Through what? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Who is that salvation not of \_\_\_\_\_ Who is it a gift from \_\_\_\_\_

3. Why is it not of works? \_\_\_\_\_

B. Read how Jesus healed the blind man in John 9:6,7

1. Was the blind man healed by God's grace? (Was it a gift from God?) \_\_\_\_\_

2. Did he have to show some faith (even though it was incomplete) to accept that grace and be healed? \_\_\_\_\_

3. How did he show that he had enough faith to be healed? By \_\_\_\_\_

4. If he had not obeyed the instructions would he have had faith? \_\_\_\_\_

5. Even though the blind man had to accept Christ's grace through washing, does this mean that he earned his healing? Or was it by God's grace?

**Thought question** - Do you think the healing of the blind man gives a good illustration to show how we are saved by grace through faith, but that such doesn't exclude to the need to obey conditions?

C. Read Acts 22:16

1. Paul wasn't told to wash in the pool of Siloam to respond to God's grace, but what was he told to do? Arise and \_\_\_\_\_ and wash away his \_\_\_\_\_

2. If Paul had refused to be baptized, would he have had faith? \_\_\_\_\_



#### V. God's mercy during our spiritual growth

A. After accepting God's grace through "the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5), we are still often imperfect in our growth and practice.

1. However we trust in God's mercy to "not kick us out of the family" as we grow and mature in Christ.

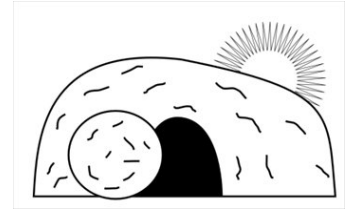
2. What are some examples of some with whom Christ showed a lot of mercy, even though their growth and understanding was often immature? \_\_\_\_\_

B. Read 1 John 1:9 What is Christ faithful to do when we confess our sins? \_\_\_\_\_

**Conclusion** - Have a prayer thanking God for his infinite grace and mercy.

## Lesson 3 - Resurrection!

Intro. Something that changed the history of the world happened in the first part of the first century. Shortly afterwards, Christianity began to explode in the Roman empire. How could it spread so fast with no armies, conquests or political power? A great event was the catalyst for the explosive growth—the resurrection of Jesus Christ, which was the centerpiece of the message of the earliest Christians!



### I. The fact of the resurrection - Why can we trust the witnesses that claimed to see Jesus alive after his death?

#### A. The great number of witnesses - Read 1 Corinthians 15:3-8

1. According to verse 5, who did Jesus appear to after his resurrection?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. According to verse 6, How many people did Jesus appear to on an occasion after his resurrection? \_\_\_\_\_
3. At the time Paul was writing, were most of those witnesses still alive? \_\_\_\_\_  
a. Do you see Paul's challenge to those who would doubt the resurrection? Go talk to them!
4. Who was the last one to see Jesus alive after his resurrection? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Read Acts 1:3 – Jesus appeared to the witnesses after his death over a period of how many days? \_\_\_\_\_

#### B. The sincerity of the witnesses (not only to the resurrection of Christ, but to his life)

1. The men and women who claimed to see Jesus alive after his resurrection weren't con artists, liars, criminals, but honorable people.
2. Read John 19:31-35 (Notice the detail that is characteristic of eyewitness testimony.)
  - a. What did they do to the legs of the thieves that were crucified with Jesus? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ (Imagine the sound!)
  - b. According to verse 34, What did one of the soldiers do to Jesus? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ What came out \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Who do you think is really talking in verse 35? (Who is "the one who has seen"? ) \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. Does this sound like sincere testimony? Or, someone who is trying to lie?
3. Read 1 John 1:1-3 (Written when Gnostics were denying that Christ had lived in the flesh.)
  - a. John was writing about what? What they had \_\_\_\_\_, what they had \_\_\_\_\_, what they had \_\_\_\_\_ and what their hands had \_\_\_\_\_.
  - b. Does this sound like lies or sincere testimony?

#### C. The change in the lives of the witnesses - From cowards to bold preachers

1. Read John 11:7,8 How did the apostles feel about going back to Judea? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Matthew 26:56 What did all the apostles do when Jesus was arrested? \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Compare with how they were after the resurrection!**

3. Read Acts 4:13 What qualities did the enemies of Jesus notice in the apostles after the resurrection? \_\_\_\_\_  
\* Why such a drastic change in a few months? We know!

#### D. The witnesses were willing to go through torture and horrible death to back up their testimony

1. Have different people read Acts 5:40; 12:1-3; 14:19; 16:23-25. What were some of the things that the apostles went through because of their testimony?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Read 2 Corinthians 11:24-28 Write down some of the things Paul went through because of his testimony that he saw Jesus alive after his resurrection. (Can't write all. Write some that grab your attention.)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. The big question – Would any sane person go through all this (and more) for what they knew to be a lie?

#### \* Thought questions

- Do you think God wanted these witnesses to suffer so much? Why would that help us?
- Briefly - What are some other evidences that back up the fact that Jesus was raised from the dead?

### II. The resurrection - The basis of early Christian teaching

#### A. Read excerpts from the following sermons

1. Acts 2:32; 3:15 - What did Peter emphasize here and what evidence did he give that others should believe it? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Acts 4:10 - Who point is Peter making from the resurrection here? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Acts 10:40 - What word does Peter use to show how God showed Christ after his resurrection? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Acts 13:30ff - What key point is Peter proving in this text? (summed in verse 30) \_\_\_\_\_
5. Acts 17:31,32 - What did Paul mention that made the Greek philosophers not want to listen more?  
The \_\_\_\_\_
6. Acts 23:6 According to Paul, why was he being judged? \_\_\_\_\_

**B. Thought questions**

1. Do you think that early evangelists thought they had a strong point when they talked about the resurrection?  
Were they sure of it?
2. How can we make the resurrection the key part of our teaching today?

**III. Our spiritual resurrection today - Romans 6:3-5**

**A. Read Romans 6:3-5**

1. Into what two things are we baptized according to verse 3? \_\_\_\_\_
2. According to the first part of verse 4, What happens to us first symbolically when we're baptized? We are \_\_\_\_\_ with Christ
3. What does Paul compare our baptism to here? \_\_\_\_\_

**Thought questions**

- \* In what ways do we die when we're baptized?
- \* Why is the term, "newness of life" so important?

**B. Read Colossians 2:12,13 (Can read a few verses before and after to get the context in mind.)**

1. How are we "buried?" in \_\_\_\_\_
2. Through faith in what are we raised? \_\_\_\_\_
3. In what ways were we dead before baptism? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What has God done for us? \_\_\_\_\_



**C. Read John 3:3-6**

1. What was necessary to see the kingdom of God? \_\_\_\_\_ again
2. Why did Nicodemus have a hard time understanding this? \_\_\_\_\_
3. In what two ways must we be born again? \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_
- \* Do you think the terms "born again" and "resurrection" are close? \_\_\_\_\_ Why?

**D. One of the key concepts of Christ's teaching is that you can change - You can have a resurrected life!**

- \* Illustration - Have you ever messed up so much in a class, that you wish you could just tear everything up and start again? They don't usually let you do that in school, but does God let us do that?
- \* How do you feel when knowing that God can give you a spiritually resurrected life, that you can start all over? (1) Relieved? (2) Anxious to accept it? (3) Indifferent? (Don't care) (4) Might accept a new life one day?

**IV. The final resurrection - More in lesson 5**

**A. Read John 5:28, 29 - What will determine what kind of resurrection you will have? (whether it will be a resurrection of life or of judgment?) \_\_\_\_\_**

**B. Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

1. Who will rise first when Christ comes again? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What should early Christians do with these words (verse 18) \_\_\_\_\_

**C. Thought questions**

- \* How much do you think of the final resurrection?
- \* Why don't we think of it more?

**Conclusion - The resurrection is the key doctrine of our faith. With it, everything stands. Without it, everything falls.**

**A. What are some songs about the resurrection? Sing one if you have time!**

## Lesson 4 - Love

Intro. This was last year's theme from 1 Corinthians 13, but it is so important, I think we need to go over it again from some different perspectives.

### I. Definitions (from the Greek language)

- A. *Agape* - A profound interest in the well-being of others
- B. *Phileo* - Brotherly love, affection

### II. True love is learned from God - "God loves each of us as if there were only one of us." Augustine

#### A. 1 John 4:7-11

1. How was God's love manifested? \_\_\_\_\_  
\* What famous verse does this remind you of? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is love not? \_\_\_\_\_ But what is it? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What did Christ come for our sins? the \_\_\_\_\_
4. Since God loves us, what should we do for each other? \_\_\_\_\_

#### B. Thought questions

- \* How has the concept of God's sacrificial love blessed our culture (generally) and Christians (more specifically)? What would our culture be like if there had been no example of God's love?
- \* Can there be a mature concept of true, unconditional love (care for others) without God? (Not saying that those who reject God can't love in a way, but they have no basis on which to promote that love.) What are some differences between the mature love of Christians, and the "love" of atheists and unbelievers?
- \* Why can rejection of God always be attributed to selfishness?

#### C. Romans 8:31-37

- a. What evidence did God give us of his great love according to verse 32? \_\_\_\_\_
- b. According to verses 38, 39, What are some things that **cannot** separate us from the love of God?

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

### III. Love should abound among God's followers.

#### A. Commanded

1. John 15:12 How are we to love each other? \_\_\_\_\_  
\* Why is this such a deep command?
2. Read 1 John 2:7-11
  - a. How did John describe the commandment he was giving in verse 7? \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. How did he describe it in verse 8? \_\_\_\_\_  
\* *Thought question* - In what way is the command to love old? In what way is it new? If you have trouble answering this, John 13:34 should help.
  - c. Where does one who loves his brother abide? \_\_\_\_\_ Where does one who hates his brother abide? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Read John 13:34,35
  - a. How were early Christians to be known? \_\_\_\_\_  
\* *Thought question* - Often we point out that true believers can be known by their public worship practices and organization. Is this wrong in and of itself? Why are public worship practices not a sufficient "mark" of true discipleship?

#### B. Exemplified

1. Read 2 Corinthians 8:1-5
  - a. Write down words which Paul uses to describe the generosity of Macedonian Christians?  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - b. According to verse 5, What did they give before giving money? \_\_\_\_\_  
\* *Thought question* - Why is verse 5 so important to understanding why they loved so much? Why is it so hard to be generous and loving when we don't do what the Macedonians did according to verse 5?
2. Acts 4:32-37
  - a. According to verse 32, what was the attitude of the early Christians towards their personal possessions? \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. According to verse 34, what did they sell to help the poor? \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. What man was evidently one of the first to do this? \_\_\_\_\_



\* Thought question - What is your most prized possession (computer? Iphone?) \_\_\_\_\_  
What type of need would make you willing to sell this to help others?

C. Non inspired, but inspiring stories about the love of early Christians

1. In the 3rd Century a plague affected the whole world. At its height, 5,000 people died each day in Rome. Alexandria, Egypt was especially hard hit. There, Christians had been cruelly persecuted. To avoid the plague, most of the pagan inhabitants who had money and power fled the city, leaving behind their sick loved ones often in the streets. When the Christians saw that their persecutors had left, they came out of hiding and began to care for the sick relatives of the same people who had been persecuting them. They knew that in helping those dying of the plague that they themselves ran a great risk of contracting the disease and dying but they helped as many as they could. Thousands died and were buried along with those they had tried to help. The pagans of Alexandria had never seen this type of love and many came to believe in Christ, not because of philosophical or scientific arguments for his divinity, but rather because they observed the love that they realized came from a supernatural source.
2. Tertullian (155-220 AD) said, "Our care for the derelict and our active love have become our distinctive sign before the enemy ... 'See,' they say, 'how they love one another and how ready they are to die for each other.'" (Apology 39)

**Thought question** - Do you believe that such unselfish love is generally characteristic of most Christians today? Why or why not? What can we do to do better?

**IV. Fighting self-centeredness - the enemy of love**

A. Read Philippians 2:3,4

1. What should never be our motive behind anything we do? \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_
2. Whose interests should we not look out for? \_\_\_\_\_

B. I have come to believe that every spiritual weakness in others and in myself comes from a shallow self-centeredness, a focus on self. The more pronounced that self focus is, the worse our spiritual problems. I've noticed that even those who are extremely shy or extremely socially inept are almost always very much self absorbed. They can improve only when they learn to worry less about themselves and more about others.

C. Discuss why self focus is the root behind each of the following spiritual problems.

- a. A lack of desire to attend worship services and be with other Christians
- b. An unwillingness to be different from worldly friends, a desire to be popular with them.
- c. Problems with pornography
- d. Extreme shyness that makes us want to avoid others almost all the time
- e. Little importance given to Bible study and prayer
- f. Little importance given to inviting friends to services and to Bible study.
- g. Constant negativity and complaining about others
- h. Worry, anxiety
- i. Obsession with physical appearance. Hours in front of the mirror!
- j. Lack of attention during Bible study

D. How can we do better and worry less about ourselves and more about others? List some practical things you can do?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

E. **Thought question** – If you do "Facebook," How can you tell from people's walls if they're "stuck a little on themselves" or if they're primarily concerned with helping others? What do they feature? Are they constantly bragging on themselves? Etc.

**Conclusion** - Prayer for help in getting over the fixation on ourselves to dedicate ourselves to serving God and others.



## Lesson 5 - Judgment and Eternity

Intro. Something in us rebels against the concept that this life here is all there is.

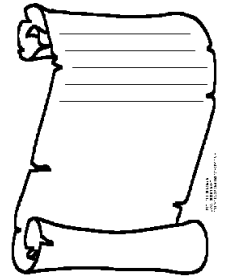
- A. A young Chinese student, looking at the coffin of her recently killed friend asked, "Is this all the life ends up being, a coffin?"
1. Something within her instinctively knew that life is too wonderful to have no meaning beyond the grave.
- B. Read Ecclesiastes 3:11
1. What has God put in our hearts? \_\_\_\_\_ (Does he put it in the hearts of dogs, cats, animals?)
- \* *Thought questions* - When do you think more about eternity? What occasions in life?
- C. There is much that we don't know about eternity and we shouldn't expect to understand everything about it, but we can know some things.

### I. Man has an eternal part, that survives the death of his body

- A. Read Matthew 10:28 - Is it possible to kill the body and not the soul? \_\_\_\_\_
- \* *Thought question* - Is man just a body then, or is he composed of something more?
- B. Read Philippians 1:21-25
1. How did Paul view death in verse 21? \_\_\_\_\_
  2. What word did Paul use in verse 23 to describe what he would do when he went to be with Christ? \_\_\_\_\_
- \* *Thought questions* - What would he "depart" from? With what do you think he would depart?
- \* Similar language is found in texts like 2 Peter 1:13-15

### II. All our actions on this earth have eternal consequences

- A. General verses
1. Read Matthew 12:36, 37 What will we be judged for? \_\_\_\_\_
  2. Read Matthew 16:27 According to what will we be judged? \_\_\_\_\_
  3. Read Romans 2:5,6 According to what will we be judged? \_\_\_\_\_
- B. Judgment - Read Revelation 20:11-15
1. According to what were the dead judged? (verses 12, 13) \_\_\_\_\_
- \* Where were these written according to verse 12?
- \* *Thought question* - How do you feel about the fact that every thing you do is written down by God? (Understand this is probably not talking about literal writing, but our deeds are noticed and recorded!)
2. What happened to all that were not written in the book of life? \_\_\_\_\_
- \* *Thought question* - Have you ever really wanted your name to be on a list (perhaps of those that made the team or those that would receive a privilege at school) and it not been there? How would it feel not to have your name written in God's book and be excluded from heaven?
- C. Read Acts 24:24,25
1. What three things did Paul emphasize when he talked to Felix \_\_\_\_\_
  2. What did Felix do when he heard what God had to say about those three topics? \_\_\_\_\_
- \* *Thought question*: Why do you think Felix responded that way?
- D. Thought questions:
- \* What are some ways that little toddlers have to protected because they don't understand the consequences of their actions? What are some dangerous things they like to play with?
  - \* Do you have some friends who like to do whatever they want to do without considering the consequences? What types of problems do you think they will have in life? Are you ever that way? (Be honest!)
  - \* What are some sinful things that our culture thinks they should be able to practice without suffering any consequences?



### III. Attitudes towards death

- A. *Thought questions*
1. Are you ever afraid of dying? \_\_\_\_\_ When do you fear it the most? \_\_\_\_\_  
Do you think you will fear death more when you are older?
- B. Ways people try to cope with their fear of aging and death
1. Ignore it
  - a. Who had that problem in the Bible? (Luke 12:16-20) \_\_\_\_\_

- b. Have you ever known anyone with terminal cancer who refused to accept that fact?  
\* *Thought question* - Why is it foolish to ignore death?
- 2. Try to hide their age?  
\* *Thought question* - Have you ever seen anyone who is 70 years old still trying to look like they're 15? (Granma in a miniskirt!) Why is that so absurd?
- 3. Depression, fear - Have you known people who are depressed because they fear aging and death?
- C. Ways God wants us to deal with age and death
  - 1. Prepare for it
    - a. Read Psalm 90:12 What did Moses say we should do regarding our days? \_\_\_\_\_ Them  
What does that bring? \_\_\_\_\_
    - b. Read Luke 12:37 What will the master do with those who prepare themselves? \_\_\_\_\_
  - 2. Rejoice in the blessings that come from it
    - a. Read Proverbs 16:31 - What is the silver head represent? \_\_\_\_\_
    - b. Write down the names of some elderly people you know (my name had better *not* be in the list) who are happy, contented and accepting of their age and proximity to death.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
    - c. *Thought question* - What do you think are some of their secrets?
    - d. Read Psalm 23:4 Why would David not fear when walking through the valley of the shadow of death? \_\_\_\_\_
- D. Someone once said, the attitude that we have towards death will determine our attitude towards life?  
*Thought questions* - Do you think this is true? Why or why not?

**IV. Two destinies - Eternal Life or Eternal Separation from God**

\* There is much we don't understand here about the exact nature of "paradise," heaven and hell, but what we can understand should change our lives completely.

A. Read Luke 16:19-31

- 1. Where did Lazarus go when he died? \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Where did the rich man go when he died? \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. What did the rich man want Lazarus to bring him? \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. Why was that impossible? \_\_\_\_\_  
\* After our eternal destiny is sealed, Can we change it? (yes or no) \_\_\_\_
- 5. What did the rich man then want Lazarus to do? \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. (Verse 29) Why did God not send Lazarus back to warn the rich man's brothers? They already had \_\_\_\_\_

B. Thought questions

- \* Were Lazarus and the rich man conscious after their deaths? Did they cease to exist?
- \* Do you think that the rich man would have done anything to change his eternal destiny?
- \* Did all the wealth he accumulated really matter? Does it matter now?
- \* What was the only thing that really mattered in this life?
- \* Does all the wealth you might accumulate or "fun" you might have really matter in the long run?
- \* What is really the only thing that matters in your life?



C. If you have any extra time, read Matthew 25:31-46

- \* *Thought question* - On what basis will we be judged according to this text?

**Conclusion** - Live in accordance with these great doctrines! Let us help! Let's stay in touch by every means possible (visits, electronic media, etc.)

