

LESSON GUIDE

PRESENTING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE AS A "JIGSAW PUZZLE"

The main purpose of this lesson is to present a practical overview of the Normal Christian Life. As the Christian acquires Biblical concepts and knowledge we want to help him to **mentally connect** the pieces to God's overall plan for his life.

We use the illustration of a **jigsaw puzzle**. Imagine trying to fit together the pieces of a puzzle without being able to refer to the picture boxtop. It is much less frustrating when the boxtop is available **for reference**. The second diagram, the Overview, would be like the **puzzle boxtop**, while the **pieces** would represent bits of Biblical knowledge.

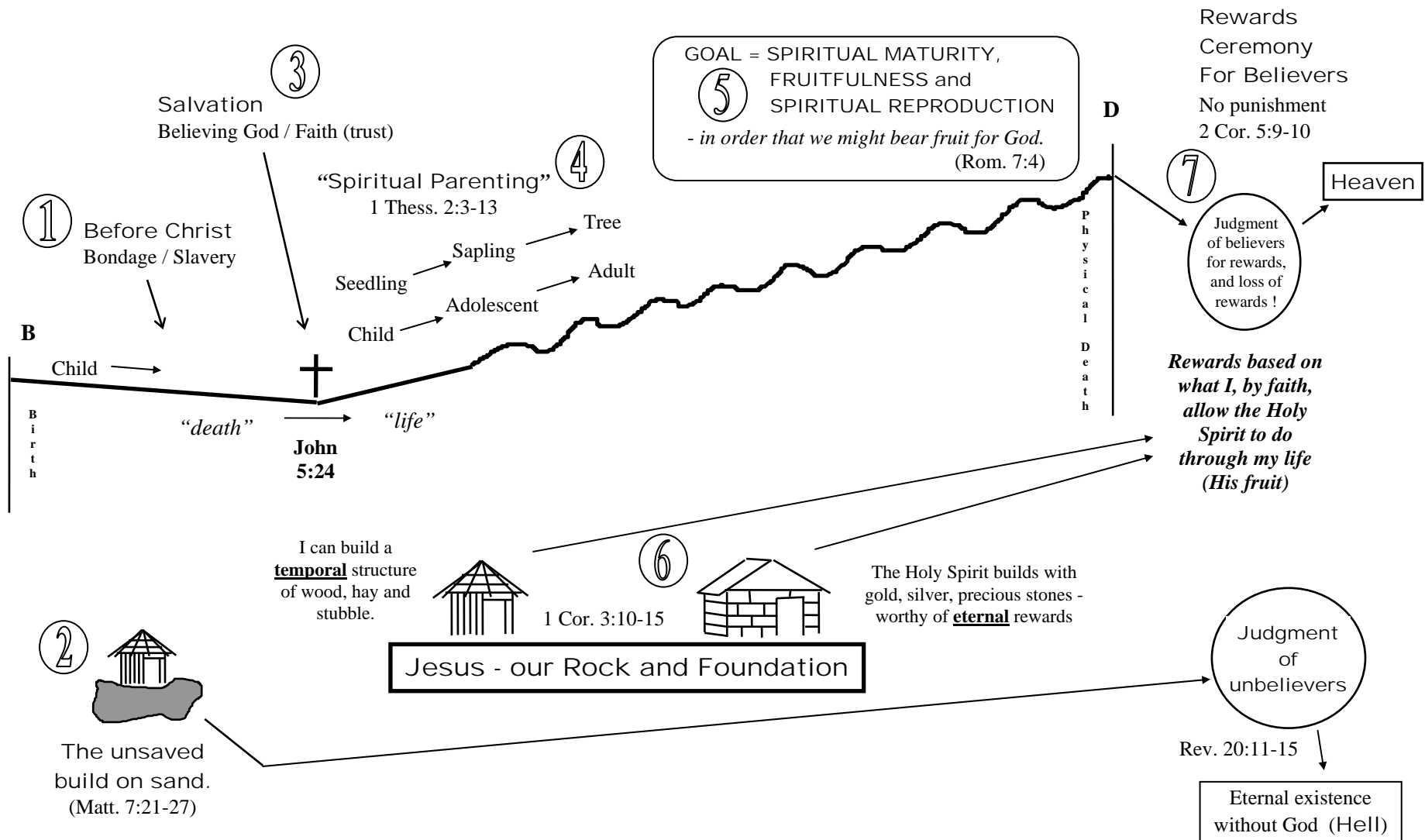
Typically a new Christian will begin to accumulate information from the Bible, friends, books, sermons, conversations, etc., but will have difficulty in knowing how this acquired knowledge fits into his everyday life here on earth, or worse yet he may arrive at wrong conclusions which can distort his understanding of God and the Christian life.

Many newer Christians become frustrated and try to return to their secular life, while others will **compartmentalize** their life, resulting in a perceived "spiritual life" and a "secular life". They will often then attempt to live an acceptable spiritual life before others, while at the same time concluding that Biblical principles somehow don't apply to their secular life. We need to help the disciple to view the various components of his everyday life as a **unit**, and God's involvement in every aspect of that life.

A goal is to help the disciple understand how to integrate Biblical knowledge into his daily relationship with God and others, and protect him from falling into the common practice of simply archiving Biblical information.

A growing Christian will become increasingly more aware of his need to continually walk before the Lord (24/7), seeking His approval, and less dependent on the need for approval from others.

ABBREVIATED OVERVIEW OF THE "NORMAL" CHRISTIAN LIFE



LESSON - GUIDE

OVERVIEW OF THE NORMAL CHRISTIAN LIFE

Note for discipler: It should usually take about one session to cover this lesson. We want to give the disciple a **preview** of the **normal** Christian life. Briefly explain each component, all of which will be covered later in more detail.

① **Birth to Rebirth** – We should each be able to easily identify ourselves as having gone through this period, alienated from God, living in spiritual darkness, and without hope.

② If a person rejects Christ and dies during this period, he is like a man who has built his house upon the sand, without a foundation. He will go to the **judgment of unbelievers** to spend eternity separated from God. It is important to understand that this judgment has **nothing to do with believers**, only unbelievers.

Matt. 7:24-27 (Jesus said) *“Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. “And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. “Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. “The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell—and great was its fall.”*

Rev. 20:11-15 (the apostle John wrote) *Then I saw a **great white throne** and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them.*

*And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone’s name was **not found written in the book of life**, he was thrown into the lake of fire.*

③ **The Cross** – This event is by far the most important happening in a human’s life. From God’s perspective the Christian has passed from “death” (without His life) to “life” (the Lord indwelling). From hopelessness to hopefulness.

John 5:24 *“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who **hears** My word, and **believes** Him who sent Me, **has** eternal life, and does **not** come into judgment, but has passed out of **death into life**.*

④ **The New Life** – It is important to understand that the event of salvation is the **entrance** into a new life with God, prepared by Him to completely meet our every need, as we fit into **His** design. We are introduced to the concept of fitting into **God’s plan** for our time here on earth, which is but a small part of His **eternal** plan for each of us. Two Biblical analogies can illustrate the Christian life: that of a plant growing from a seedling to a tree, and that of a human growing from a baby to an adult. Again, the event of salvation is just the **beginning** of the new life of learning to walk with God. During this period of time it is **very important** for a new believer to be **discipled** (“**spiritually parented**”).

Thessalonians 2:7-13 ... we proved to be gentle among you, as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children. Having so fond an affection for you, we were well-pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because you had become very dear to us. ... we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children, so that you would walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory. For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.

5 The Intended **Objective** (Goal) – Just as we would expect a healthy sapling to grow into a fruit-bearing tree, and a healthy infant to grow into an adult and become a parent, so God’s intention is to make of a healthy spiritual infant a **spiritually mature and fruitful** Christian.

6 **God’s Foundation** and **My Building Options** – God has laid a Foundation, Jesus Christ, which represents my salvation. This is equally true for **all** believers. However, **each** of us individually has a choice as to how we will build on that Foundation. The buildings represent **the use of my resources** (**time, energy, possessions**) during my physical life here on earth. If **I allow** the Holy Spirit, as the Master Building Contractor, to use my resources, **He** will use those building materials to **create for me** an **eternal** structure of gold, silver and precious stones. That which **I deny** Him use of will produce a structure of wood, hay and stubble.

1 Cor. 3:10-15 (Paul wrote) According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But **each man must be careful** how he builds on it. For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man builds on the foundation with **gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw**, each man’s work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man’s work. **If** any man’s work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a **reward**. If any man’s work is burned up, he will suffer **loss**; but **he himself will be saved**, yet so as through fire.

7 These verses speak of a future **rewards ceremony** called The Tribunal of Christ (or The Judgment Seat of Christ), at which time each believer will **individually** appear before Jesus Christ to be rewarded (**for eternity**) for what he/she has **allowed** the Holy Spirit to do through their life while living here on earth. There should be **no fear of punishment** at this event, although each of us needs to be aware of the potential for **loss of eternal rewards**, since all that is wood, hay and stubble will be turned into worthless ashes. It is important to note that **no unbeliever** will be present at this event.

2 Cor. 5:9-10 Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be **pleasing to Him**. For we must **all** appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that **each one** may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

Matt. 6:20-21 “But store up for yourselves treasures **in heaven**, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; **for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also**.”