

Exalting the Lord Jesus through receiving His love, grace, truth and power.

Lesson # 1 — Introduction: The Theme and Purpose of the Class

Explanation: The truth I want to teach, discuss and test — is the evident principle that Christianity has been designed to be **effortless** — because it is based on the transforming love of God (which we are to receive and then give back).

When we love a person we have no difficulty in talking to them, wanting to be with them, and sacrificing for them. That activity is **effortless, intuitive, spontaneous and joyful**.

I am convinced that Christianity is supposed to be that way — even though we may be in trials, dire circumstances, and under attack. Note the *“inexpressible and glorious joy”* of 1 Peter 1:6-9.

The “key” to effortless Christianity is not focusing on a doctrine, gift, methodology or some transforming experience. All of these are important in their place but they are not the “key.”

The “key” is a Person: Jesus Christ. He is the revelation of God to us (Heb 1:1-3). He alone is *“the way, the truth, and the life”* (John 14:6). And He said, *“Apart from me you can do nothing”* (John 15:9). Only He can lead us into the truth through the ministry of the Holy Spirit (John 14-17), and that truth is Who He is, what He has provided for us in His redemptive work, what He wants to do in our life, and how we are to relate to Him.

We cannot enter into effortless Christianity in our own strength, wisdom, or by our own effort — no matter how devoted, loving, sacrificial, wise, or strenuous that may be (Galatians 3:1-5). Only the Lord Jesus, through the Holy Spirit can produce it in us through teaching us the Scripture, and the Biblical meaning of such passages mentioned above, and *“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love”* (Galatians 5:6).

Effortless Christianity is entirely about the Lord Jesus, His work, His Word and His desire to teach us how to receive and live in His manifest presence.

I am convinced that one of our main problems in living the Christian life is that we do not **receive** what He desires us to have — on a day by day — basis. We have the tendency, and many of us have been taught, to live an impersonal, idea-oriented, will-centered life.

True Christianity, however, is highly personal. All of its facets revolve around the Lord Jesus **as a Person** — not simply good ideas and doctrines **about Him**. We know this but somehow it is difficult for most of us to enter into any daily, practical and personal relationship with the Lord Jesus — that goes beyond saying/singing words and believing truths as doctrine/ideas. As a result our daily life is largely powerless, fruitless, and joyless. **It is not supposed to be that way!**

Since effortless Christianity has to do with the Lord Himself — primarily His person, as well as His work and His Word — the following suggestions may be helpful

Spend some time each day concentrating on the Lord Jesus. Go to a quiet place where you will not be interrupted. Try to lay aside the problems and pressures of the day. Slowly read a passage like Revelations 5. Then fix your thoughts on the Lord Jesus. Think of His infinite greatness, His goodness, and His work for you in the Crucifixion and Resurrection. Then speak to Him reverently by saying something like the following:

**Lord Jesus, I love You and I worship You.
I want to love You more but I cannot do this on my own.
I need just You, I invite You to come and love me.
I need to know You and Your love in all my experiences**

(Repeat such words a few times slowly and reverently. When a distracting thought comes, do not pay attention to it and turn your thoughts back to the Lord Jesus. Watch for the tendency to repeat good words while thinking of something else. It may be difficult at first but keep at it. **Do not be in a hurry.** Use the following sentences as you need them.)

**I praise You Lord Jesus and I want to love You the way You should be loved.
I open my heart to You. I thank You for loving me and for dying for me.
I ask You to come and teach me how to receive Your love so I can love You more.
I receive Your love by faith. Cleanse me from all that would hinder my love for You.**

(It is important to **receive** His love and grace. Enlarge on these sentences as you need to. Apply similar wording in worshipping God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. It is important to concentrate on God **as a Person**. Do not try to imagine some image or symbol of God. Speak to Him as you would a friend who was with you — and you are blind. See Revelation 5 and Hebrews 4:16 as a Biblical basis for this approach. Many such passages will be discussed in this series.)

Assignment for this week and for preparation for next Sunday.

1. Read Rev. 5 a few times as preparation for your prayer time. Meditate on why and how the Lord is worshiped. Note the words that were used.
2. Use the suggestions given above in your personal worship.
3. Look up the word “thirst” in the Scripture. See how many you can find and what the person “thirsted for.” We’ll talk about it in the next class.
4. Please pray for the class and for me each day. And, come expecting the Lord to be here and look forward to how He will minister to you.

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