

UNIT 4

VIRTUES OF GODLY WISDOM

Hymn Part 2 **CHRIST'S LIFESTYLE**

*“... who, being in the form of God, thought
it not robbery to be equal with God.”*

PHILIPPIANS 2:6



DAY 1
Cleansing Your Mind with God's Word

DAY 2
Pure

DAY 3
Peaceable

DAY 4
Gentle, Entreatable, and Merciful

DAY 5
Fruitful, Steadfast, and Honest

Why You Will Find This Unit Helpful

God's goal is for you to become like His Son, Jesus. That is a high standard, and it is unreachable without God's help. God wants you to have the virtues of Christ. The good news is that He stands ready to help! In this unit you will study eight virtues of Christ. He is your Model. God will work in you and with you to give you the mental quality of discernment. As you begin to measure your thoughts and actions against the perfection of Christ, God will be at work renewing your mind to reflect the virtues of Christ.

Lifelong Objective

In Christ you will develop the mental quality of discernment and use it to become pure, peaceable, gentle, entreatable, merciful, fruitful, steadfast, and honest.

Summary of God's Work in You

Christ's lifestyle in you springs from the mental quality of discernment. God's goal is your virtue. Your growth in Christ's character can be measured only by Christ's perfection. Christ enables your virtue in His office as Model. He makes your virtue possible.

Unit Learning Goals

- You will understand the importance of God's Word as a tool for cleansing your mind and keeping you from sin.
- You will demonstrate your submission to God's cleansing work through His Word.
- You will understand the difference between the eight virtues of godly wisdom in James 3:17 and their opposites and perversions.
- You will know eight virtues of godly wisdom.
- You will demonstrate a spiritual hunger for Christ to establish these virtues in your mind.

What You Will Do to Begin Developing the Virtues of Godly Wisdom

- You will study eight virtues, along with their opposites and perversions.
- You will become familiar with the Lifelong Helps on pages 224–59.
- You will focus your attention on one of the virtues and begin using the helps to move toward maturity in that virtue.

Scripture Memory Verse

"The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy" (Jas. 3:17).

Lifelong Helps Related to This Unit

Christlike Virtues (pp. 227–39)

The Mind of Christ Cards Related to This Unit

3B. Unit 4: Scripture Memory—James 3:17	
7A. Eight Virtues of Godly Wisdom	
8A. Pure	10A. Merciful
8B. Peaceable	10B. Fruitful
9A. Gentle	11A. Steadfast
9B. Entreatable	11B. Honest

Optional DVD Message by T. W. Hunt

- Session 2, Part 1, Chapter 5: His Lifestyle

DAY 1
CLEANSING YOUR MIND WITH GOD'S WORD

Today's Bible Meditations
"... who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God"

(Phil. 2:6).

"Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish"

(Eph. 5:25-27)

Name of Christ
for Today
The Word (John 1:1)

Prayer to Begin
the Lesson

Jesus, You are the Word of God. You are God. I want my life to be saturated with You. Please cleanse me and fill me with Yourself. Amen.

1. Begin today's lesson by reading the Bible verses and the name of Christ for today. Work on your memory verse. Then use the suggested prayer in the margin to the left to begin your study.

Hymn Part 2: Christ's Lifestyle

If God came to earth and walked among us, how would He behave? What would His actions be like? We have the answer to that question in the poem found in Philippians 2:5-11. God came to earth in the person of Jesus Christ. He came to act out in visible form God's purpose for humanity: "Being in the form of God, [He] thought it not robbery to be equal with God" (Phil. 2:6). Because we can see the actions of God in Christ's lifestyle, we can learn about His mind: "As he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Prov. 23:7). Outward actions reflect inner thoughts. During the next two units we will look at the virtues of Christ that were reflected in His lifestyle.

2. Read the account of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness. As He was tempted by Satan, Jesus responded in a way that tells us something about His mind. As you read the following verses, underline the words of Jesus.

Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungered. And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" [see Deut. 8:3]. Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him, "It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God" [see Deut. 6:16]. Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, "Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve" [see Deut. 6:13]. Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him (Matt. 4:1-11).

3. In all three responses Jesus used a phrase to begin His response. What was it?

Jesus quoted Scripture when He was tempted to sin. He said, "It is written. . . ." Jesus had memorized Scripture. By knowing God's commands, Jesus knew how to respond in each temptation so that He did not sin. The psalmist said, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Ps. 119:11).

4. Why should we become familiar with what God has said in the Bible?

One thing we learn about the mind of Christ is that Christ filled His mind with the Scriptures. Jesus knew the will of His Father and was prepared to resist temptation when it came. Scripture helped Jesus keep His mind clean and unpolluted.

God's Word Cleanses

The Word of God has a cleansing effect on the mind. Jesus told the disciples, "You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you" (John 15:3, NASB). Later Jesus prayed, "Sanctify [the disciples] in the truth; Thy word is truth" (John 17:17, NASB). The Lord cleanses the church by "the washing of water with the word" (Eph. 5:26, NASB).

Our minds are often so mixed with the world's way of thinking that we need to be reoriented to God's way of thinking. We begin by a thorough cleansing with God's Word. God's Word cleanses as it washes away things that are wrong or impure. God's Word cleanses as it replaces wrong with right ways of thinking. One step in developing the mind of Christ is to let God cleanse your mind through His Word.

God's Word cleanses as it washes away things that are wrong or impure.

Humanism Hindered Me

After I had been working on my areas-of-bondage lists, I began studying what the Bible says about each of the 17 virtues of James 3:17 and Galatians 5:22-23. These virtues partially represent that ideal mind of Christ toward which I was striving. I knew once I was free from the bondage of sin, God would move me toward these virtues in my life. Using my concordance, I compiled passage after passage about the virtues mentioned in the two Scriptures.

In the process I began to discover factors that hampered my gaining the virtues. At various points in my education, I had been exposed to aspects of humanism in subtle ways. Humanism teaches that we have a capacity for self-realization through reason. It glorifies what man can do apart from God. At that time I had difficulty believing that the biblical virtues are simply a gift, native equipment born in us at spiritual birth (as implied in 1 Cor. 2:16 below). My humanistically trained mind wanted to work hard to achieve the virtues.

The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things. . . . For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:14-16).

5. Correctly identify the two statements below by marking them *God's perspective* or *humanism's perspective*.

_____ I can develop these godly virtues in my life by study and hard work.

_____ Godly virtues are a gift to me at spiritual birth and show when I allow Christ to live His life in me.

I needed God to do a work in me that would allow Christ's presence and mind to show through my life.

Knowledge helps, and my Bible studies defined the virtues enough to enable me to recognize them. My spiritual knowledge was growing, but I had been taught to be proud of knowledge. When we achieve certain things in the world system, that act of achieving becomes a part of our subconscious mind. The virtues could not be developed by hard work, as humanism teaches. I needed God to do a work in me that would allow Christ's presence and mind to show through my life.

A Special Vow

For some reason I could not simply let go and let God have His way. But I earnestly wanted to. In order to overcome the deep, subconscious presence of humanism, I made a vow to the Lord: from that time on, I would not read anything but the Bible until God signalled me that I had begun to think in biblical terms. I determined to saturate my mind with God's way of thinking. Other Christians may not need to go to such an extreme, but certain aspects of humanism were radically rooted in me. Even today I believe the vow was inspired by the Lord and was a necessary part of my development at that time.

That period lasted four years. During that time I read nothing but the Bible. I did not even read commentaries. I memorized several books and many passages and chapters of the Bible. I studied exhaustively, prayed constantly, and found a real change taking place in the deepest parts of my mind. I felt that I was actually understanding the deeper meaning and implications of the virtues in James 3:17 and Galatians 5:22-23. The Word of God reaches into the deepest recesses of the mind. God's Word affects every part of our mind, including the subconscious, especially when the Word is stored there.

I want you to allow God to begin a cleansing work in your mind through His Word. I am providing several opportunities in this course for you to begin this process. The following are some ways you can allow God the opportunity to cleanse your mind with His Word.

6. As you read the following list, check the box beside the items you do already. Circle any item to which you sense God wants you to devote more time and attention.

- Daily read a part of God's Word.
- Closely study passages to learn what God may want you to believe or do in response to His Word.
- Study related topics in Scripture to understand more clearly what God is saying on a particular subject.

- Memorize verses, passages, chapters, and even books of the Bible.
- Meditate on God's Word. Think about what He is saying to you through it.
- Pray through passages of Scripture, discussing with God the implications for your life.
- Discuss God's Word with other believers. God may give you insight through a fellow believer.

7. Pray as you conclude today's study. Ask God to use the reading, studying, and memorizing of Scripture in this course to cleanse your mind. If you sense God calling you to devote more time to His Word (instead of sports, TV, movies, or other reading), tell Him about your intentions.

DAY 2 PURE

1. Begin today's lesson by reading the Bible verse and the name of Christ for today in the right margin. Work on your memory verse. Then use the suggested prayer in the margin to begin your study.

During the remainder of this week, we will study the virtues of godly wisdom listed in James 3:17. We will look at three aspects of each virtue:

1. What it is (Christlike virtue)
2. What it is not (satanic opposite)
3. How it can be distorted (perversion)

Each virtue is a Christlike quality. For each virtue Satan has one or several opposites. For example, lust is the opposite of purity. The carnal mind tends to adopt this opposite quality. In the same way, Satan also has a perversion of each virtue. We who attempt to develop the virtues into maturity are in danger of perverting them. For example, in trying to develop purity, we can get sidetracked into being puritanical.

The mental quality God will develop in you is discernment. This is a spiritual process of discerning right actions and thoughts from wrong actions and thoughts. God wants to help you know the difference between pure, lustful, and puritanical. The Holy Spirit will help you begin to discern between Christlike virtues, satanic opposites, and perversions.

2. Read the chart on the following page. Ask God to guide you to the virtue He would like to work on first in your life. Circle the one you sense God wants you to focus on first.

Today's Bible Meditation
 "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Phil. 4:8).

Name of Christ for Today
 A Refiner and Purifier
 (Mal. 3:3)

**Prayer to Begin
 the Lesson**
*Purest Lord Jesus, I worship
 and adore the purity I see in
 Your life. I want to be pure
 as You are pure. You are a
 Refiner and Purifier. Refine
 and purify me so that I can
 be like You. Burn away
 anything in my life that is
 impure. Amen.*



SATANIC OPPOSITES	CHRISTLIKE VIRTUES	PERVERSIONS
Lustful	Pure	Puritanical
Fussy	Peaceable	Compromising
Harsh	Gentle	Unkind restraint
Unapproachable	Entreatable	Yes-person
Merciless	Merciful	Indulgent
Fruitless	Fruitful	Fruit-obsessed
Wavering	Steadfast	Inflexible
Lying	Honest	Brutal

I have prepared a special tool for each of these virtues to help you in your study. Titled “Lifelong Helps for Developing the Mind of Christ,” it is located at the back of this book. Though the helps are certainly not complete, they serve as a starting point as you allow God to bring these virtues to maturity in your life.

3. Turn to pages 227–39 and find the page for the virtue you circled above. Place a bookmark at this place or fold down the corner of the page so that you can refer to it this week. Write the page number here: _____

4. Now turn to the perforated cards at the back of the book. Tear out the card that relates to the virtue you have selected. Carry it with you this week to focus your attention on this virtue, its opposites, and its perversions.

Pure

One Friday morning in October 1973, I was reviewing the insights I had gained on purity. My heart was filled with gratitude as I observed that God had enabled me to make progress in purity of heart.

Pure
blameless, clean, chaste,
pristine, spotless,
unblemished, innocent,
unadulterated, stainless,
not contaminated,
beyond reproach

Opposites of Pure
lustful, carnal, fleshly, lewd,
contaminated, tainted,
corrupt, depraved,
immoral, impure

5. Read the list of words in the left margin to help you understand what *purity* is and what it is not (opposites). Below write your definition of *purity*.

Purity is _____

As I reflected on the progress I had made, I became keenly aware that my environment contained an abundance of impurities. Immediately I thought of a friend whose speech reflected an impure mind. I had been offended by his occasional lewd comments. I prayed for the Lord to purify his mind. Then I thought of another friend who had a different kind of impurity. I sensed that she cultivated friendships for what they could do for her. She had impure motives. I asked the Lord to purify

her. Next I thought of a fellow who seemed to be backsliding and was showing a distaste for spiritual matters. I began praying for him.

The longer I thought about it, the more impurity I seemed to find in the people I knew. I was thinking about believers! The list of impure people grew long, and the kinds of impurity grew complex. The longer I prayed, I realized that I was experiencing grief. I knew this particular grief usually indicated some sort of sin in my mind. So I asked the Lord to show me if I had sin in my heart. He spoke quite clearly!

One satanic opposite of purity is lust, which spiritual Christians try to avoid. God gave us a perfect example of purity in the Lord Jesus, so we are to flee lust and pursue the goal of Christlikeness. But Satan has a perversion of purity. We overshoot our goal. Instead of being pure, we become puritanical—my source of grief. God was showing me that I was becoming puritanical.

We encounter many degrees of this perversion. It often involves pride and may involve scorn for others. In its early stages, however, it may surface as a simple opinion. I think I was in the opinion stage at that time. I honestly did not feel any scorn in my heart for the persons involved. I felt genuine affection. But God convicted me that I was nevertheless judging them.

I was heartbroken. I asked the Lord, “How could I go so wrong when I have read nothing but the Bible for more than a year?” Then I remembered that the Pharisees knew far more of their Torah than I did my Bible. Yet they were puritanical. I had defined the virtues in biblical terms, but I was using my progress as the measuring stick for their definitions. Puritanicalism is using self as a measure of purity rather than Christ.

6. Read the list of words in the margin to help you understand the perversions of *purity*. Can you think of an experience when you observed this kind of behavior? If so, who was involved and when?

Perversions of *Pure*
puritanical, pharisaical, rigid, severe, overly strict, prudish, austere, self-righteous

Jesus Is the Standard

All the virtues must be defined in terms of the life and personality of Jesus. Jesus is the definition of the virtues. The Bible has a purpose in telling us to “consider” Him (Heb. 3:1) and to “fix our eyes” on Him (Heb. 12:2, NASB). All the biblical passages on purity are important, but understanding them apart from their manifestation in the life of Christ can lead to perversion.

Jesus was absolutely pure. I am sometimes asked if Jesus was ever tempted to lust. Without doubt He had that opportunity. Luke 8:3 tells of a group of women who followed Jesus and supported Him from their own means. Few men have had more adoring women around them than Jesus. Yet Peter, who was in Jesus’ inmost circle and watched Him closely for 3½ years, described Him as a “lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Pet. 1:19). John, another of Jesus’ inner circle, said that “in him is no sin” (1 John 3:5). Those who knew Him best recognized that Jesus had perfect mental self-command.

Jesus knew no lust, but neither was He puritanical. Puritanical people are narrow in their selection of friends. Jesus befriended so many tax collectors, prostitutes, and down-and-outs that He was called a Friend of sinners. He accepted invitations to eat with self-righteous Pharisees as well as with sinful tax collectors. Jesus never yielded to lust or to any other impurity, yet He also never perverted purity. Jesus was simply and absolutely pure.

 7. What is one virtue of the mind of Christ?

P _____	Peaceable	Gentle	Entreatable
Merciful	Fruitful	Steadfast	Honest

How did Jesus live such a clean life? He constantly practiced the presence of God! Jesus was never out of the conscious presence of the Father. His Father was His constant, conscious point of reference (see Luke 2:49; John 4:34; 5:19-23; 6:38; 17:4). In the same way, you can practice the continual presence of Christ. Christ is with you always (see Matt. 28:20). He is your reference point.

 8. Turn to pages 227-28 and scan the *Pure* list in the Lifelong Helps. Notice some practical suggestions for practicing the presence of God. Conclude your study today by asking God to enable you to be more aware of His presence in your life moment by moment.

DAY 3
PEACEABLE



Today's Bible Meditation
“Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant” (Matt. 20:26-27).

Name of Christ for Today
The Prince of Peace
(Isa. 9:6)

 1. Begin today's lesson by reading the Bible verses and the name of Christ for today. Work on your memory verse. Then use the suggested prayer in the right margin to begin your study.

Peaceable

The second virtue is *peaceable*. *Peaceable* describes a way of acting. The opposite of *peaceable* is *fussy*. Seeking peace can be perverted into compromise. Jesus cautioned:

Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I came to SET A MAN AGAINST HIS FATHER, AND A DAUGHTER AGAINST HER MOTHER, AND A DAUGHTER-IN-LAW AGAINST HER MOTHER-IN-LAW; AND A MAN'S ENEMIES WILL BE THE MEMBERS OF HIS HOUSEHOLD (Matt. 10:34-36, NASB).

In all His peacefulness Jesus drew hard lines. He did not compromise on His expectations to maintain peace. We must not misuse or distort His qualities or His ideas. We must not go beyond being *peaceable* to compromising.

2. Read the list of words in the margin to help you understand what *peaceable* is and what it is not (opposites). Below write your definition of *peaceable*.

Peaceable is _____

3. Read the list of words in the margin that help you understand the perversions of *peaceable*. Can you think of an experience when you observed this kind of behavior? If so, who was involved and when?

Jesus Was Peaceable

A quarrel broke out among the disciples when James and John requested favored positions in the Kingdom. Competition is found throughout history wherever fallen man expresses himself. Pride feeds the need to compete for position, power, or fame. Pride characterizes human life as we know it and does not make for peace. But in this situation Jesus was peaceable:

Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him. And he said unto her, "What wilt thou?" She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom. But Jesus answered and said, "Ye know not what ye ask ... to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father." And when the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren. But Jesus called them unto him, and said, "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:20-28).

Jesus pointed out that "whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant." Jesus announced that He "did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:28, NASB). Our world is full of quarrels and war because we are seeking positions. Peace comes when we mutually serve one another, just as Jesus served others.

4. What are two virtues of the mind of Christ?

P _____	P _____	Gentle	Entreatable
Merciful	Fruitful	Steadfast	Honest

Prayer to Begin the Lesson

Prince of Peace, I live in a world that knows very little of peace. I ask You to shape my life to be peaceable like You. Then as You see fit, place me among people who need a peacemaker. Work through me to show peace to my world. Amen.

Peaceable

peaceful, friendly, harmonious, orderly, quiet, content, reconciling, calm, agreeable, compatible

Opposites of *Peaceable*

fussy, nitpicky, ornery, contentious, combative, competitive, argumentative, cantankerous, controversial, litigious, contrary, mean, cranky, disagreeable, picky, obstinate

Perversions of *Peaceable*

compromising, wishy-washy, goes with the flow, people pleaser

Competition in the body of Christ does not reflect this quality of being peaceable. If we were like Jesus, all our attributes would harmonize with those of others in the body of Christ, and peace would prevail. Our attributes, callings, gifts, and functions complement one another and work together when we are like Jesus. Differences in personality will blend together so that they will cause praise rather than blame.

5. In the following statement, circle the word or words in parentheses that make the sentence true.

If everyone in the body of Christ lived like Jesus, our attributes would (compete with, complement) one another.

Our attributes would complement one another. My love, joy, and peace work with your love, joy, and peace to accomplish great things for the Kingdom, even though we function differently. On one hand, we are to be Christlike, and in that measure we bear certain similar attributes. On the other hand, we are also to make an individual contribution. No one can make that unique contribution except the one God designed to do it (see Eph. 2:10). Competition in the body of Christ is unnecessary. It is not a part of the divine design to bring in the Kingdom.

6. Yesterday we asked you to identify one virtue in your life that God wanted to work on. We suggested you mark the Lifelong Helps at the back of your book for that virtue. As you conclude today's study, turn to that page and prayerfully read the corresponding section "Becoming _____." Ask God to show you any attitudes or actions that are not like this virtue. Seek God's forgiveness. Then ask God to renew your mind and actions so that you will more nearly reflect that virtue in your life.

DAY 4

GENTLE, ENTREATABLE, AND MERCIFUL

Today's Bible Meditation
(to be selected at the end of today's lesson)

Name of Christ for Today
A Merciful and Faithful High Priest (Heb. 2:17)

1. Begin today's lesson by reading the name of Christ for today in the left margin. Work on your memory verse. Then use the suggested prayer on the following page to begin your study.

Gentle

The third virtue in James 3:17 is *gentle*. Several Greek words are often translated as *gentle*. Matthew 16:15-23 describes gentleness in action. Jesus was gentle and showed accomplished skill in dealing with Peter. Jesus could gently beckon Peter to walk on water and moments later reprimand Peter's little faith (see Matt. 14:28-32). He could lavishly call Peter blessed for his insight, only to rebuke him for refusing to embrace God's plan for Jesus:

He saith unto them, "But whom say ye that I am?" And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And

Jesus answered and said unto him, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. ..." From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. But he turned, and said unto Peter, "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offense unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men" (Matt. 16:15-23).

Prayer to Begin the Lesson

Lord Jesus, You are my High Priest. You are perfectly merciful and faithful. Because You have been merciful and faithful to me, help me be merciful and faithful to others. Amen.

2. What are three virtues of the mind of Christ?

P _____	P _____	G _____	Entreatable
Merciful	Fruitful	Steadfast	Honest

Satan's opposite of gentle is harsh; the perversion is negligence. Think of a good parent dealing gently with a child. But suppose, in the attempt to be gentle, the parent was too lax for the child's good. The perversion could be negligence, or it could even be an unkind restraint.

3. Read the list of words in the margin to help you understand what *gentle* is and what it is not (opposites). Below write your definition of *gentle*.

Gentle is _____

Gentle

fitting, equitable, fair, moderate, forbearing, considerate, humane, reasonable, pleasant, nurturing, tender, delicate, tactful, affable, amiable, genial, gracious, considerate, kindhearted

4. Read the list of words in the margin that help you understand the perversions of *gentle*. Can you think of an experience when you observed this kind of behavior? If so, who was involved and when?

Opposites of *Gentle*

harsh, caustic, rough, abusive, hard, stiff, bitter, cruel, fierce, violent, blunt, brash, rude, short, snippy, grating

Perversions of *Gentle*

unkind restraint, negligent, laxity, derelict, heedless, careless, delinquent, neglectful, inattentive, reckless, unchecked, unbridled, reticent

Entreatable

The next virtue in James 3:17 is *entreatable*. An entreatable person is glad to serve. He or she does not object to being asked to do a favor for someone. The opposite of this virtue is *being unapproachable*. We encounter people who retreat from every opportunity to serve. The perversion is to be a yes-man or a yes-woman.

Entreatable
 approachable, cordial,
 affable, helpful, accessible,
 available, open, reachable,
 cooperative, willing,
 inclined, amenable,
 accommodating,
 responsive

5. Read the list of words in the left margin to help you understand what *entreatable* is and what it is not (opposites). Below write your definition of *entreatable*.

Entreatable is _____

Opposites of Entreatable
 unapproachable,
 distant, cold, cool,
 reticent, uncooperative,
 inaccessible, closed,
 unresponsive, frigid,
 restrained, introverted

6. Read the list of words in the left margin that help you understand the perversions of *entreatable*. Can you think of an experience when you observed this kind of behavior? If so, who was involved and when?

Perversions of Entreatable
 yes-person, pushover,
 easy mark, dupe, chump,
 stooge, sucker

Jesus was approachable and entreatable. On the way to heal the daughter of Jairus, He interrupted His trip to minister to the woman with the issue of blood (see Mark 5:34). Jesus knew a delay would result in the little girl's death, which gave Him something different to deal with.

A certain woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years, And had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse, When she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched his garment. For she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole. And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague. And Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, "Who touched my clothes?" And his disciples said unto him, Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me? And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing. But the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth. And he said unto her, "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague" (Mark 5:25-34).

Jesus never turned down a request for healing, although He tested the faith of the Syrophenician woman (see Matt. 15:21-28) and delayed going to Lazarus in order to perform a greater miracle (see John 11:4). When others were rebuking Bartimaeus, Jesus heard him (see Mark 10:48-49). Jesus came when the centurion called for Him (see Matt. 8:5-7). The whole story of Jesus is one of constant availability.

Merciful

The fifth virtue is *merciful*. This, of course, is an attribute of God, and therefore of Jesus. The opposite of *merciful* is *merciless*. The perversion is *indulgent*. Christians are rarely merciless, but we often meet the perversion.

7. Read the list of words in the margin to help you understand what *merciful* is and what it is not (opposites). Below write your definition of *merciful*.

Merciful is _____

Merciful

caring, forgiving, gracious, decent, chivalrous, noble, forbearing, sympathetic, tolerant, compassionate, charitable, benevolent

8. Read the list of words in the margin that help you understand the perversions of *merciful*. Can you think of an experience when you observed this kind of behavior? If so, who was involved and when?

Opposites of *Merciful*

merciless, unmerciful, unsympathetic, compassionless, hardened, uncaring, pitiless, spiteful

Perversions of *Merciful*

indulgent, lenient, permissive

We want mercy as Christ demonstrated. Mercy is often equated with compassion. The repeated healings Jesus performed clearly demonstrate a profound sympathy for the hurt, the impaired, and the suffering. At times Jesus was determined to heal in spite of official opposition (see Mark 3:1-5). Matthew often mentions the compassion a large crowd aroused in Jesus (see Matt. 9:36; 14:14; 15:32). The tears at Lazarus's tomb were partially a result of the empathy He felt for Mary and Martha. Through Jesus we know the great, compassionate heart of God.

Mercy is supremely demonstrated in forgiveness. Forgiveness requires a personal greatness and stature beyond compassion. In forgiveness a person who has been offended pardons the offender. Sin is a dreadful offense to the absolute holiness of God. Because of this, God often exercises mercy in unsuspected ways. We exercise mercy in a supernatural way when we are able to convince an errant human of the reality of God's mercy. Jesus performed a miracle in the heart of the sinful woman who washed His feet when He told her, "Your sins have been forgiven" (Luke 7:48). The ultimate reach of mercy is shown in Jesus' great prayer from the cross: "When they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him. ... Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots" (Luke 23:33-34).

9. What are five virtues of the mind of Christ?

P _____ P _____ G _____ E _____

M _____ Fruitful Steadfast Honest

10. Turn in the Lifelong Helps to the virtue you are focusing on this week.

Read the Scriptures for Meditation and select one that is particularly meaningful. Write it in the left margin under "Today's Bible Meditation" at the beginning of this lesson. Spend time with God seeking to understand the verse and the virtue. Ask God to assist you in making that virtue evident in your life.

DAY 5

FRUITFUL, STEADFAST, AND HONEST

Today's Bible Meditation
"I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work"

(John 9:4).

Name of Christ for Today
A Sure Foundation
(Isa. 28:16)

Prayer to Begin the Lesson

Jesus, You are steadfast—a Sure Foundation, a Solid Rock. I often waver in the practice of my walk of faith. I pray that You will firmly plant my feet on Your solid foundation so that I can be strong and productive in my faith. Amen.

Fruitful
productive, fertile, prolific,
constructive, high-yield

Opposites of *Fruitful*
fruitless, unproductive,
nonproductive,
ineffective, ineffectual,
unyielding, worthless,
empty, hollow, profitless

Perversions of *Fruitful*
fruit-obsessed,
success-driven, obsessed
with numbers, vain, showy

1. Begin today's lesson by reading the Bible verse and the name of Christ for today. Work on your memory verse. Then use the suggested prayer to begin your study.

Fruitful

The sixth virtue in James 3:17 is *fruitful*. The opposite is *fruitless*, and the perversion is to be *fruit-obsessed*. The term can apply both to the fruit of the Spirit (see Gal. 5:22-23) and to bearing fruit by bringing persons to God. In the latter sense Jesus' own fruitfulness is the most easily demonstrated of the virtues named in James 3:17. Two thousand years of Christian history have produced millions of fruits of the Lord Jesus. He changed the course of world history. Jesus was the most fruitful Man who ever walked the earth. Here is one example:

They bring unto him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech; and they beseech him to put his hand upon him. And he took him aside from the multitude, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spit, and touched his tongue; and looking up to heaven, he sighed, and saith unto him, "Ephphatha," that is, Be opened. And straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain. And he charged them that they should tell no man: but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published it; and were beyond measure astonished, saying, he hath done all things well: he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak (Mark 7:32-37).

2. Read the list of words in the left margin to help you understand what *fruitful* is and is not (opposites). Below write your definition of *fruitful*.

Fruitful is _____

3. Read the list of words in the left margin that help you understand the perversions of *fruitful*. Can you think of an experience when you observed this kind of behavior? If so, who was involved and when?

4. What are six virtues of the mind of Christ?

P _____

P _____

G _____

E _____

M _____

F _____

Steadfast

Honest

Steadfast

The seventh virtue in James 3:17 is *without wavering*, or *steadfast*. The opposite is *wavering*, and the perversion is *inflexible*. Jesus was neither of these. Once Jesus set His face toward the cross, nothing—not the pleas of a beloved disciple or the dread of the process—detected Him from carrying out the divine intention. He did not waver. Notice the agony of facing the cross and His reverent submission to the Father's will:

He went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.” He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, “O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done” (Matt. 26:39,42).

Jesus was steadfast, but He was not inflexible. Entreatable persons cannot be inflexible. They can be interrupted. For example, Jesus' prayer time was interrupted by Simon and his companions (see Mark 1:35-37).

5. Read the list of words in the margin to help you understand what *steadfast* is and what it is not (opposites). Below write your definition of *steadfast*.

Steadfast is _____

Steadfast
firm, unshakable, sure,
never-failing, enduring,
abiding, resolute, constant,
adamant, devoted, staunch,
steady, immovable,
resolved, uncompromising

6. Read the list of words in the margin that help you understand the perversions of *steadfast*. Can you think of an experience when you observed this kind of behavior? If so, who was involved and when?

Opposites of *Steadfast*
wavering, unsure,
unstable, vacillating, weak,
wobbly, waffling, fickle,
volatile, flimsy, shaky,
faltering, halting, hesitant,
indecisive, reluctant,
wayward, capricious

Honest

The last virtue in James 3:17 is *without hypocrisy*, *honest*, or *sincere*. The opposite is *lying*, or *hypocritical*. No one can attribute any lie or playacting to Christ. Christ is Truth (see John 14:6). The perversion of honesty is being *brutal*. Brutality is a real possibility to those who are required to deal with apathetic Christianity or unreal Christianity. We must watch our exasperation with those who lack sincerity. This is not to say that honesty must never confront. Real honesty can be courageous and bold with genuine integrity. Jesus insisted on inner perfection and confronted inner hypocrisy with crisp honesty (see Luke 11:37-54). Only wisdom knows how to integrate honesty, integrity, and confrontation. Notice how Jesus identified the hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees:

Perversions of *Steadfast*
inflexible, rigid, narrow-minded, obstinate,
stubborn, unbendable,
bullheaded, hardheaded,
hard-line, inelastic,
despotic, authoritarian,
tyrannical, severe, iron-handed, intransigent

As he spake, a certain Pharisee besought him to dine with him: and he went in, and sat down to meat. And when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that he had not first washed before dinner. And the Lord said unto him, "Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness. Ye fools, did not he that made that which is without make that which is within also? But rather give alms of such things as ye have; and, behold, all things are clean unto you. But woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over them are not aware of them." Then answered one of the lawyers, and said unto him, Master, thus saying thou reproachest us also. And he said, "Woe unto you also, ye lawyers! for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers. Woe unto you! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them. Truly ye bear witness that ye allow the deeds of your fathers: for they indeed killed them, and ye build their sepulchres. Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute: That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation. Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered." And as he said these things unto them, the scribes and the Pharisees began to urge him vehemently, and to provoke him to speak of many things: laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him (Luke 11:37-54).

7. Read the list of words in the margin to help you understand what *honest* is and what it is not (opposites). Below write your definition of *honest*.

Honest is _____

8. Read the list of words in the margin that help you understand the perversions of *honest*. Can you think of an experience when you observed this kind of behavior? If so, who was involved and when?

9. What are eight virtues of the mind of Christ?

P _____
G _____
M _____
S _____

P _____
E _____
F _____
H _____

10. Conclude this unit of study by asking God to continue molding and shaping your life to discard every behavior or attitude that does not measure up to the standard set by Christ. Ask God to perfect these virtues in your life.

Honest
sincere, true,
genuine, ethical, sound,
trustworthy, upright,
straightforward, factual,
candid, forthright,
real, plain-dealing

Opposites of Honest
lying, dishonest,
hypocritical, counterfeit,
fake, fraudulent, crooked,
deceitful, scheming, shady,
unscrupulous, corrupt

Perversions of Honest
brutal, cruel, callous,
pitiless, unkind, ferocious,
hard-hearted, indifferent,
ruthless, spiteful,
unrelenting, vicious