

CHILDREN OF THE HEAVENLY FATHER

INTRODUCTION

The Overall Perspective

When the Lord taught His disciples the constitution of the kingdom of the heavens in Matthew 5-7, He spoke to them as though they were already regenerated sons of God. He taught them that God was their "Father" (Matt. 5:48; 6:1, 4, 6, 8, 9, 14-15, 18, 32; 7:11). According to time, however, they were not actually regenerated until after His resurrection, about three years later (John 20:17).

Although the children of the saints are "holy" (1 Cor. 9:14) positionally, they are still unsaved and unregenerated dispositionally until they receive the Lord Jesus as their personal Savior (John 20:31). We hope that through the teaching of the Word they will become "wise unto salvation" (2 Tim. 3:15).

As we teach each lesson, on the one hand we must impress the children in a positive way that God is their dear, loving, faithful, and trustworthy Father. This is to encourage them from the perspective of their position. On the other hand, we want to impress them with God's standard, requirement, and righteousness. This is to warn them, make them sober and aware of their need of Jesus as their Savior and Lord. This is from the perspective of their actual condition, for many of them may not yet be born again.

CHILDREN OF THE HEAVENLY FATHER

Lesson One

THE HAIRS OF YOUR HEAD ARE ALL NUMBERED

Burden to Impart:

Our heavenly Father values us more than we could ever imagine.

Memory Verse: "But even the hairs of your head are all numbered"
(Matthew 10:30).

Facts to Teach:

1. Since this is the first lesson of this series we must firstly teach the children about the Fatherhood of God.
 - a. Because God is the Creator, He is the source and origin of all life in the universe (Psa. 36:9; John 1:4).
 - b. Because God has given life to all intelligent beings--both heavenly (angelic) and earthly (human)--He is the "Father of every family in the heavens and on the earth" (Eph. 3:15).
 - c. When we receive God's Word and believe in God's Son (Rom. 10:8-9; John 1:12-13), we are born of Him and He becomes our Father in a very special way. Then God the Creator becomes our heavenly Father.
2. After teaching this first point the foundation is laid to infuse and impress the children with the objective of the lesson--the Father values us.
 - a. We always keep a careful account and a close watch on everything we value and love.
 - b. Although the shepherd has 100 sheep, he counts all of them (Luke 15:4-6) and knows all of them (John 10:14, 27).
 - c. Although a man may be very rich and could lose count of all of his riches and possessions, he could never forget the number of children he has, or their names.
 - d. Although there is a world full of people, our heavenly Father knows us, loves us, and values us to such an extent that even the hairs on your head are numbered.

Lesson dialogue:

How important are you? Do you know that you are very important? Who loves you the most? Your mother? No. Even your dearest, dearest friend--would he or she love you enough to count all the hairs of your head? No. It would take months to do. And then, would you count his or hers?

But our hairs are all numbered by our heavenly Father. And not only ours, but those of every one of His children. He cares for you from your head to your feet. Everything about you is important to Him, even every hair upon your head.

He also knows how many steps we take (Job 14:16). He is counting every step, waiting for us to come to Him. The most important steps we take in our whole life are the ones we take coming to our Father God. So our Father waits and counts every step we take.

CHILDREN OF THE HEAVENLY FATHER

Lesson Two

CONSIDER THE LILIES

Burden to Impart:

As children of the heavenly Father we should not worry or be anxious.

Memory Verse: "And why are you anxious concerning clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they do not toil, neither do they spin" (Matthew 6:28).

Facts to Teach:

1. As human beings, whether young or old, we all experience anxiety and worry. This is neither healthy nor pleasant. However, neither is it necessary. Anxiety comes from the human life. Because our human life is mortal, it also is fragile and causes us feelings of insecurity, uncertainty, and fear. This causes anxiety. Also, because our human life is unable to foresee or prevent outward circumstances that may arise to threaten us or harm us, we become anxious and worry.

2. However, because we are children of the heavenly Father, we actually do not need to worry (Matt. 6:26). We are of great value to Him. Not only did He give us our life, He maintains our life. He will take care of both our inward need (what we shall eat and drink) and our outward need (our clothing, etc.). The birds have neither the intelligence nor the ability to build barns to store up their food, yet after thousands and thousands of years they are still on the earth. The heavenly Father provides for their nourishment each day.

3. God does not even forget about the grass' need. The grass covers the dry ground but it is so ordinary and plain. God has provided the beautiful lilies to clothe the grass and beautify it. There are many lilies on the shores of Galilee. They are a common flower in Palestine, growing in the deep broad valleys (S.S. 2:1) and even in the thorny shrubs (2:2) and pastures of the desert (2:16; 6:3). Our Lord took note of these and compared them to the gorgeous robes of King Solomon. Therefore, many were brilliant in color (scarlet, as in Song of Songs 5:13). They did not toil, nor spin, yet they grew and were beautiful.

4. So, if our heavenly Father would take care of the life of the birds (which are not worth very much) and even clothe the ordinary grass of the fields (which is worth even less) with the beautiful lilies--how much more He would take care of us, His dear children, and all of our needs! To worry and to be anxious is an insult to Him. We should simply trust in Him.

5. A story illustrating the Father's care for us: There was once a poor Dutch widow who had four little children to care for, the oldest being a boy of eight years. One evening she had no bread to give them. They all knelt down while she prayed, for she

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Lesson Two (Continued)

trusted in God. Then her 8-year-old boy said, "The Bible tells us that God sent ravens to take food to a good man." "Yes," answered the mother. Dirk said, "I'm going to open the door so they can fly in." So he did.

The bright light from the lamp shone out into the darkness. The Dutch magistrate saw the light and stopped to look in. He saw a very clean and tidy room with the little family. He said, "Why is your door open, since it is so late at night?"

The mother told him that her little Dirk had prayed that the ravens might fly in and bring some bread. Now, it just so happened that the magistrate was dressed all in black, with a black hat. The children said, "He is a big raven." "Yes," said the magistrate. He brought them a large supply of bread and food. They went to bed knowing that God cares for his own children.

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Lesson Three

YOU ARE THE SALT OF THE EARTH

Burden to Impart:

As children of the heavenly Father, we are different than the worldly people.

Memory Verse: "You are the salt of the earth, but if the salt has become tasteless, with what shall it be salted? It is no longer good for anything but to be cast out and trampled underfoot by men" (Matthew 5:13).

Facts to Teach:

1. What is salt used for? Salt is mainly used for putting taste into food when it is cooked. Without salt, food is tasteless and cannot be enjoyed. Also, salt is used for preserving food so that it will not spoil and rot. Before the refrigerator was invented the most common way to preserve meat was to dry it out and heavily salt it.

2. Ever since Adam sinned, the whole world has begun to corrupt. All people sin and disobey God. They ignore God's Word and do whatever they want to, whether it is right or wrong. The more a person sins the more corrupt they become. In God's eyes they become rotten.

3. As children of the heavenly Father we are different. We are the salt of the earth. Just as the presence of salt prevents meat from rotting, we as God's children influence the world of people around us to help preserve the world from being totally corrupt and sinful.

4. Sometimes our friends and classmates want us to do something with them that is not right, or something that is not pleasing to God. At times they even want us to do something with them that is sinful. We should not go along with them. Rather, we should be different. Don't be afraid to be different! Don't be ashamed to be different! You are different! You are children of the heavenly Father; you are the salt of the earth.

5. Two scriptural examples are:

a. A warning example of a woman who did not obey God's Word to forget the sinful world, not even to look back at it, is Lot's wife. When she looked back at Sodom (the very sinful city where she had come from and where all her friends, etc. were) she became a "pillar of salt"--she was good for nothing (Gen. 19:17, 26).

b. A positive, inspiring example of some children being different than the rest are Daniel and his friends, who would not eat the meat sacrificed to idols (Dan. 1:8) nor bow down to the idols (Dan. 3:1-18). They were very different, even at the risk of their lives. But God was with them and preserved them. Dare to be a Daniel.

Song: Dare to Be a Daniel

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Lesson Four

LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE BEFORE MEN

Burden to Impart:

As children of the heavenly Father we should let our life be a testimony.

Memory Verse: "You are the light of the world...Thus let your light shine before men, so that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in the heavens"
(Matthew 5:14a, 16).

Facts to Teach:

1. All the physical universe was at one time just darkness, until God said, "Let there be light" (Gen. 1:3). So all light comes from God. This is why He is called the "Father of the lights" (James 1:17). Darkness is just the absence of light. But light overcomes darkness.

2. In the same way that the physical universe was darkness until God created the light, all the world of mankind was in darkness until one day God came into the world as a man. The Lord Jesus once said, "I am the light of the world; he who follows me shall by no means walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12).

3. When we believe in the Lord Jesus and receive the Lord Jesus He begins to shine in us, to enlighten our understanding, and to change our way of thinking. Because we are children of the heavenly Father we are like His is, and we become the light of the world. Because we are not ignorant of God (Eph. 4:18), because we are the sons of light (1 Thes. 5:5), we think, feel, and act differently than the rest of the world, which is in darkness (Eph. 4:17).

4. Because the people around us are in darkness and do not know Christ, they do things that are wrong and sinful. They might not even care if what they do is right or wrong, good or bad. They only hope no one will catch them in it. They might even pretend that they are happy when they do these things. Actually, inside their hearts they are not happy, they are sad. But they do not know how to be different. They are in darkness. They are ignorant. They do not know God. They are not children of the heavenly Father.

5. We must let the light that is in us shine to them. By our actions, our words, our reactions, our attitudes, and our behavior--our "good works"--those around us will realize that we are children of the heavenly Father. As they see our "good works" they will give thanks and glory to our heavenly Father, for when people have the light shining they are happy and feel blessed. Surely that was a happy day when the time of darkness in the universe ended. Surely, when those around us who are in ignorance and darkness see the wonderful light of our heavenly Father shining out through the way we live and walk, it will be even a happier day for them!

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Lesson Four (Continued)

Song:

1. This little light of mine,
I'm gonna let it shine.
This little light of mine,
I'm gonna let it shine,
Let it shine, let it shine,
Let it shine.
2. I won't let Satan blow it out!
3. Hide it under a bushel--No!
4. I'll let it shine 'til Jesus comes.

CHILDREN OF THE HEAVENLY FATHER

Lesson Five

WHERE OUR TREASURE IS, OUR HEART IS ALSO

Burden to Impart:

As children of the heavenly Father, we must consider, what do we value?

Memory Verse: "For where you treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matthew 6:21).

Facts to Teach:

1. What is a "treasure?" A treasure is something of worth, deserving special value and attention. It is something very dear and precious to us. It is something that is so dear to us that we would not want to lose it for anything in the world.

2. For many centuries the greatest treasure of the people of this world was gold, silver, and jewels--diamonds, rubies, etc. The more treasure they had the richer they were. Many people today consider money, dollars, as their treasure. Some people consider their favorite things as treasures--their houses, cars, bikes, skateboards, toys, clothes, etc.

3. When things of this world become our treasures, then our heart will be very involved with them and consequently, with this world. Our heart is made up of our mind, emotion, will, and conscience. When something on this earth becomes a treasure to us, our heart (thoughts, feelings, and choices) becomes filled with concern for those things, even to the point of worrying about them. This makes our heart selfish, not wanting to share with others.

4. As children of the heavenly Father, what is our treasure? Where is our treasure? We can easily know, for where our treasure is, there is our heart also--our thoughts, desires, choices. The greatest treasure in the universe is the Lord Jesus. We should love Him above all things; with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength (Mark 12:30). Also, the Lord's Word is a great treasure. King David said that the Lord's Word was more to be desired than gold, even the finest gold (Psa. 19:10).

5. When the Lord is our treasure we will enjoy spending time to be with Him (in children's meeting, in the home meetings), to talk with Him (to pray), and to please Him (by doing the things that make Him happy and give us a good conscience). When the Lord's Word is our treasure we will enjoy reading the Bible and learning from the Word of God.

6. Lastly, the Lord's people are a "special treasure" to Him (Exo. 19:5) and should also be a treasure to us. We should treasure the church; all the brothers and sisters and children in the church. The Gentile churches showed their love and concern for the Jewish churches

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Lesson Five (Continued)

when they were very poor by sending them gifts and money (Rom. 15:26). Also, the brothers and sisters shared all their things with each other (Acts 2:45; 4:34-35).

7. As we give our time to the Lord to be with Him and to learn of Him, and as we share what He has given to us with His other children, we will begin to highly value both Him and them. Then the Lord and His people will become a treasure to us.

8. A story on the negative side, a warning:

There was a young man who was very diligent and hard working. He made a million dollars. The next year he made two million dollars. Each year his money increased until he had many millions of dollars. He had no love for the Lord and had no care for God's people. He used all of his "treasure" just for himself, for his own pleasure here on the earth. One day Death knocked on his door. "Wait," he said, "I'm not ready." Death said, "Come along," and took him. This man had no treasure stored up in heaven, for all of his heart's love was for his own richness here on the earth. He lost everything.

9. An illustration on the positive side, an incentive:

A person whose treasure was completely with the Lord is the poor widow who gave all her living to the Lord (Mark 12:41-44).

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Lesson Six

DO NOT LOOK AT THE SPLINTER IN YOUR BROTHER'S EYE

Burden to Impart:

As children of the heavenly Father we should not criticize others.

Memory Verse: "And why do you look at the splinter in your brother's eye, but do not consider the log in your own eye?"
(Matthew 7:3).

Facts to Teach:

1. Since Adam disobeyed God in the garden, sinned, and fell, every human being began to have faults. We all have faults. Adam even told God that his wife was actually the cause of his failure, that Eve was really the one to blame. So we can see that we are not the first ones to see others' faults.

2. What is our attitude when we see some faults in another person? Do we desire to help them? Whenever we see someone's faults, shortcomings, or mistakes, we usually criticize him and tell him how wrong he is, or how bad a mistake he has made. Perhaps we don't realize or understand that we can hurt people by doing this. When we speak or criticize in a way that only exposes others we do not help them. We damage them.

3. Some people think they are very smart because they can see many faults in others. However, it is very easy to see other's faults, yet not see our own. I may judge someone for certain faults that he has without even realizing that I do the same things, and sometimes even worse. This is the reason the Lord spoke such a parable in Matthew 7:3. He wanted us to realize when we see the faults of another person, we may have even worse ones. Moreover, we must consider, what kind of concern do I really have? Is it to help my brother, or just to criticize him? If we are truly desirous of helping him we will first remove the log in our own eye (that is, we will first acknowledge our own shortcomings, faults, and failures). Otherwise we will only criticize others without helping them.

Song: John 13:34-35 (Hymns 1342)

A new commandment
I give unto you
That you love one another
As I have loved you.
By this shall all men
Know you are my disciples,
If you have love one to another.
(Repeat the last three lines)

CHILDREN OF THE HEAVENLY FATHER

Lesson Seven

DO NOT SOUND A TRUMPET BEFORE YOU

Burden to Impart:

We should not call attention to ourselves when we do good deeds. We should do them in secret to please our heavenly Father, not in public to glorify ourselves.

Memory Verse: "But take heed not to do your righteousness before men to be gazed at by them; otherwise you surely have no reward with your Father who is in the heavens"
(Matthew 6:1).

Facts to Teach:

1. As children of the heavenly Father we will often be led to do some deeds of righteousness. Because our Father is compassionate toward others, we will also feel the desire to help others and do good toward them. One way we may help others and show kindness is by giving them a gift when they are in need. Another way might be by praying for them.

2. Our Father is in "secret." This is His nature. He is a God who hides Himself (Isa. 45:15). Although He watches over us so carefully and supplies all of our needs, we are almost unaware of Him, for He does it all secretly. He wants us to do our deeds of righteousness, love, and kindness in the same way, in secret. In this way the person who does the deed will not be glorified, but the One who led them to do it and supplied them to do it, the heavenly Father.

3. During Jesus' time some people would give alms to the poor, not because they cared for the poor but because they wanted everyone to see their good deeds and glorify them, perhaps saying, "My! What a godly man! How generous he is! How kind he is! He is truly wonderful!" In order to be sure that their deed would be noticed, they would have someone "sound the trumpet" just before they put some money into the beggar's cup. When all turned around to see why the trumpet sounded they would then give their gift. This was all just a show and they were like stage actors, the hypocrites. They only did their good deeds to glorify themselves, not God.

4. As the children of the heavenly Father, our desire is to glorify Him and express Him. In this way others will believe in Him, love Him, and follow Him also. However, we often find another kind of desire rises up whenever we are going to do some righteous deed, the desire to "show off" and glorify ourselves. Instead of doing the deed in secret so that the thanks and praise will go to God, we might purposely let it be known that we did it. Then we get the credit, the thanks, and the glory. This is just a vainglory, the glorifying of our flesh. Whatever we do in the way of glorifying ourselves will not be rewarded by God. But all those deeds of righteousness that we have done in secret will one day be rewarded by our heavenly Father who sees in secret; even giving a glass of cold water to a disciple (Matt. 10:42).

CHILDREN OF THE HEAVENLY FATHER

Lesson Eight

WATCH OUT FOR THE WOLVES IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING

Burden to Impart:

As God's children, though we are to be harmless and guileless, we must nevertheless be prudent (Matt. 10:16) so that others do not take advantage of us or harm us.

Memory Verse: "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but within are ravening wolves" (Matthew 7:15).

Facts to Teach:

1. The Lord Jesus told us that all those who believe in Him and follow Him are like sheep (John 10:27). Sheep are noted for their harmlessness, meekness, and innocence. Sheep have no claws to attack or harm. Nor are their teeth used for tearing flesh, only for chewing grass. Thus they are harmless. Sheep do not resist or fight if they are attacked. Even a flock of hundreds of sheep, if attacked by one vicious animal, will not resist. They will only try to run away. Thus they are meek. When sheep are led gently they will even go willingly to the slaughter (Acts 8:3). This shows their innocence. God wants all of His children to be like the sheep: harmless, meek, and innocent.

2. Most of the people in this world are not like sheep, they are more like the wolves. Wolves are not harmless, they are devouring. They are constantly on the search for a good meal, some animal that it can overpower, kill, and devour. They are not meek. They attack and hunt (Gen. 49:27). Wolves are not innocent. They use great skill and scheming to gradually wear down their victims until they finally are conquered. Wolves especially prey on animals that cannot defend themselves, such as lambs, deer, moose, elk, chickens, etc.

3. If we live as children of our heavenly Father we may become the target of those people in the world who are wolves. They will see that we will not attack them to harm them, nor will we resist and fight to defend ourselves. Because we will only try to run away, they might especially feel safe to trouble us or lead us into danger. So we must be on the alert!

4. Some wolves would be so crafty as to put on a sheepskin after killing it and use it as a disguise to be among the flock. Inside is a hungry wolf, outside it appears as an innocent sheep. The Lord Jesus told us to watch out for false disciples. They are like wolves. They may act nice and even pretend to be a friend, but they are actually an enemy! They like to lead others into wrong things that will eventually cause their destruction.

5. As the Father's dear children, we need to always be alert and always practice wisdom (Matt. 10:16) with those who want to be our friends or leaders. We need to consider, "Is this person a wolf or a sheep?" How can we know? By their "fruits" (Matt. 16-20). A real sheep

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Lesson Eight (Continued)

is innocent, meek, and harmless. A real sheep is gentle and peaceful. A real sheep would never oppose us when we want to do what is right and good. A real sheep would never discourage us from wanting to follow the Lord Jesus. We must be on the alert if anyone acts especially nice to us, or wants to be our friend or leader. We must try to know them by their "fruits," by the way of life they live. Even if we feel pretty sure, it is still a good idea to talk it over with our parents.

CHILDREN OF THE HEAVENLY FATHER

Lesson Nine

ENTER IN THROUGH THE NARROW GATE

Burden to Impart:

As children of the heavenly Father we should believe in Christ and follow Him according to His Word. We should ask ourselves, "Which path am I taking?"

Memory Verse: "Enter in through the narrow gate, for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter through it" (Matthew 7:13).

Facts to Teach:

1. The Lord Jesus told us that in the whole world there are only two paths. Everyone has to choose which gate they will enter, the narrow gate or the wide gate. Everyone must also choose which path they will walk on, the constricted path or the broad path. As children of the heavenly Father, which path are you taking?

2. What is the wide gate? What is the broad way? This is the way of life that the world has chosen. It is the "easy way," the loose, careless, undisciplined way. This is the way of life we were all born with. This is the way of life of all those who are not children of the heavenly Father. Those who walk on the broad way feel that they are the "boss," they are their own master, they can do whatever they decide to do. After all, they think they are in charge! They live according to themselves and do just what they want, what they like. They feel that their choice is "the" choice. They also feel that they are "all right" and "everything is just fine, for I am in control." Little do they know that everything is not all right. They are on the wrong path, a path that leads to ruin and destruction. One reason they feel that they are O.K. is because so many others are on the same broad path. They have a lot of company and friends who think and feel the same as they do! The broad path is the path of our own way. It is also the way that the world is walking. It is a life that is neither for God nor is according to God's will. (There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death. Prov. 14:12).

3. Now, what is the narrow gate? What is the constricted way? The Lord Jesus said: "I am the door" (John 10:7) and "I am the way" (John 14:6). Actually, in God's eyes there is only one door and one way, Christ. Only Christ is the true door and only Christ is the true way. Any other door, any other gate, is only a false one, a cheating one. Any other way does not lead to life, but to destruction.

4. We enter into Christ as the narrow gate by believing in Him. Only the Lord Jesus can save us from our sins today and from destruction tomorrow. God has provided only one Savior, His beloved Son, to die on the cross for us so that His precious blood could wash

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Lesson Nine (Continued)

away all of our sins and He could come to live within us. Have you believed in Him yet? Have you called upon Him yet and asked Him to be your own personal Savior? (Lord Jesus! Only You are my Savior! Save me today!)

5. By believing in Christ and receiving Him we enter the narrow gate. Then we must walk the constricted way. The constricted way is also Christ. He is now our Lord. We follow Him. We live according to him. What He wants is what we choose. What He says is what we will do. We live differently than the world, for Jesus is our Lord, not the world or we ourselves. This way is constricted. Not many people find it. But those who do find it, find that it leads to life.

6. *Life* is God Himself. To have God's presence and to have God living within us is *life*. This also fills our hearts and mind with peace and joy. *Life* also means that in the future we will enjoy the heavenly kingdom of Christ together with Him when He returns.

7. Example: The prodigal son in Luke 15 left his righteous father and his home to travel on the broad road of sin. Soon he lost everything. The wrong kind of friends stole all that he had--all but his life. He eventually had to live with the pigs and eat their food. By God's mercy, he came back to his father and the narrow way. More than he lost was restored to him and he experienced a new life. He would never travel the broad way again.

CHILDREN OF THE HEAVENLY FATHER

Lesson Ten

THE PRUDENT MAN BUILT HIS HOUSE UPON THE ROCK

Burden to Impart:

As children of the heavenly Father we should live our lives according to the Lord's solid Word. We must always ask ourselves this question, "What foundation am I building upon?"

Memory Verse: "Everyone therefore who hears these words of mine and does them shall be likened to a prudent man, who built his house on the rock" (Matthew 7:24).

Facts to Teach:

1. After telling His disciples how the children of the heavenly Father live and behave themselves, the Lord Jesus gave the two parables. Both parables were about men who had built themselves a house. The difference was not in the house, but in the foundation, what the house is built upon. Even though the houses may have appeared to be exactly the same, the foundation underneath the houses was very different, for one was sand, and the other was rock. Although the foundation cannot be seen, the builders know what they are made of.

2. In the first parable a wise man built his house on a rock. This is a very solid foundation. To do this he firstly had to work very hard to dig away all the dirt, mud, and sand until he found solid rock for his foundation. When the terrible storm later came it tested his building, especially the foundation. The rain poured down from heaven, the wind blasted from the air, and the floods pounded from the earth. (Some tests that come to us are from heaven--from God; some are from the "air"--from Satan; and some tests come from the earth--from men.) Although the stormy test was so terrible, the house was not moved, for it was built upon a solid, unshakeable foundation, a rock. The wise man and everyone in his house were saved. They passed through the stormy test safe and sound.

3. In the second parable a foolish man also built his house. However, he wanted to save some time and energy. He wanted to build it as easily and quickly as possible, so he took the "easy way." He used sand as his foundation (Luke 6:47-49). Later on a terrible storm arose (as they always do in life) and beat upon that house. What a test! He never expected that such a storm would ever come! The rains poured down like an ocean! The winds beat and pounded on the house and the rivers beat upon the house. Although the house of the foolish man looked very beautiful and strong, it could not stand up to such a test, for its foundation was only sand. The whole house crashed down to the ground and all were lost!

4. The Lord used these two parables to show us, His dear children, that we too are all building our own houses. We begin building our house as little children and continue for the rest of our lives. How are we "building" our house? We are building our house by the way we

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Matt. 7:24-27

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Facts to Teach:

1. After telling His disciples how the children of the heavenly Father live and behave themselves, the Lord Jesus gave the two parables. Both parables were about men who had built themselves a house. The difference was not in the house, but in the foundation, what the house is built upon. Even though the houses may have appeared to be exactly the same, the foundation underneath the houses was very different, for one was sand, and the other was rock. Although the foundation cannot be seen, the builders know what they are made of.

2. In the first parable a wise man built his house on a rock. This is a very solid foundation. To do this he firstly had to work very hard to dig away all the dirt, mud, and sand until he found solid rock for his foundation. When the terrible storm later came it tested his building, especially the foundation. The rain poured down from heaven, the wind blasted from the air, and the floods pounded from the earth. (Some tests that come to us are from heaven--from God; some are from the "air"--from Satan; and some tests come from the earth--from men.) Although the stormy test was so terrible, the house was not moved, for it was built upon a solid, unshakeable foundation, a rock. The wise man and everyone in his house were saved. They passed through the stormy test safe and sound.

3. In the second parable a foolish man also built his house. However, he wanted to save some time and energy. He wanted to build it as easily and quickly as possible, so he took the "easy way." He used sand as his foundation (Luke 6:47-49). Later on a terrible storm arose (as they always do in life) and beat upon that house. What a test! He never expected that such a storm would ever come! The rains poured down like an ocean! The winds beat and pounded on the house and the rivers beat upon the house. Although the house of the foolish man looked very beautiful and strong, it could not stand up to such a test, for its foundation was only sand. The whole house crashed down to the ground and all were lost!

4. The Lord used these two parables to show us, His dear children, that we too are all building our own houses. We begin building our house as little children and continue for the rest of our lives. How are we "building" our house? We are building our house by the way we

(Continued)

CHILDREN OF THE HEAVENLY FATHER

Lesson Ten

live and behave ourselves every single moment of every day. The solid rock upon which we should make our decisions and live our life is the Word of the Lord Jesus. He once told us that "heaven and earth will pass away, but His words will never pass away" (Matt. 24:35). His words are everlasting, unchanging, solid, and dependable. We should live by His words and behave ourselves according to His words. His words are truth and His words are life. They will enable us to endure and pass through any kind of test. This is why we learn His Word, memorize His Word, and hide it in our heart. We want to be wise children of the heavenly Father.

5. To ignore the Lord's Word, and to live and behave ourselves according to our own thoughts and ideas or the world's concepts and standards, is not wise. That is foolish. Man's ideas and concepts are like sand--something that changes, shifts, and moves according to the environment. They will only deceive us for a time. When the test comes, the result will destroy us. As children of the heavenly Father, WHAT FOUNDATION ARE YOU BUILDING ON?

6. Illustrations:

El Capitán in Yosemite is the largest single solid granite rock in the world. It towers above all else around it and is an example to us of our Rock, the Lord Jesus, and His unchanging Word.

Also, Gibraltar in the Mediterranean guards the entrance to two continents. It has been there for a very long time.

In contrast, some towns that have been built upon sand have been completely swallowed up by the shifting sand, and nothing is left!

Song: (to be sung with hand signs)

1. ///
 And the house upon the rock stood firm.
2. ///
 And the house upon the rock stood firm.
3. ///
 And the house upon the sand went crash!
4. ///
 And the house upon the sand went crash!
5. ///
 It will stand through every storm!