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"Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people"
(Proverbs 14:34).

The Good Life

Lesson Subject: God blesses individuals and nations who live righteously.

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Topic: Righteousness: National.

"Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance" (Psalm 33:12).

That is a good principle to consider the week before we observe the birthday of our nation. God promises to bless a nation for righteousness and to judge her for unrighteousness. Therefore, our nation is only as secure as she is good.

Each Bible-believing Christian must dedicate himself to promote the conservative Christian faith for the good of his nation. *"Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people"* (Proverbs 14:34). *"The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God"* (Psalm 9:17). It is imperative that Christians seek God for revival in our United States of America. America will be safe only if she is godly.

This study is entitled "The Good Life." It is based on the premise that the good life is a godly life.

The lesson text is taken from a section of Proverbs (10:1—22:16) which gives a series of 375 one-verse maxims. Each one sets out the blessings and fruit of righteousness and presents a contrast between the righteous and the wicked. They teach that "God blesses individuals and nations who live righteously. "

I. A RICH LIFE (Proverbs 10:22)

He who is truly good is truly rich! What are the riches which God gives? Sometimes, the Lord blesses righteousness with material riches. *"It is he that giveth thee power to get wealth"* (Deuteronomy 8:18). He promises to bless the righteous *"in all the work of thine hand which thou doest"* (Deuteronomy 14:29). Let the person who prospers materially know that God is making it so.

God's blessings are also spiritual. He has abounded to us in *"the riches of his grace"* (Ephesians 1:7) and He has blessed us in Jesus Christ *"with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places"* (Ephesians 1:3). Only in eternity will we know fully *"the exceeding riches of his grace"* (Ephesians 2:7). Look at your own life and know that every good thing given and every good act of giving is from the Father (James 1:17). "Count your blessings, name them one by one, / And it will surprise you what the Lord hath done."

II. A WISE LIFE (Proverbs 10:23)

He who is truly good is truly wise!

The wisdom recommended in the Bible is more than intellectual ability. It is a personal knowledge of God which is manifest in holy conduct before God and others.

True wisdom is in Jesus Christ, *"who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption"* (I Corinthians 1:30). *"All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge"* are in Him (Colossians 2:3). Not even a genius is truly wise until he submits to the lordship of Jesus Christ. We need that kind of wisdom today.

We need the fruit it produces in our hearts and in our society. *"The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be in treated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy"* (James 3:17). That is a mark of "the good life" which is given us in Jesus Christ.

III. A FULFILLED LIFE (Proverbs 10:24)

He who is truly good enjoys a life of fulfillment.

"Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart" (Psalm 37:4). What are the desires of the righteous? They are, above all else, desires for God and the things of God. The righteous person

yearns for God as one's body hungers for food and thirsts for water. *"As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God"* (Psalm 42:1, 2).

The righteous person's desire for God is satisfied in God. *"He satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness"* (Psalm 107:9). He satisfies them fully and forever. He does not give a drink of water, but puts an artesian well of water within which bubbles up and overflows (John 4:14; 7:38). One has said, "O God, Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our hearts can never find rest until they find it in Thee." There is no peace without Him, but all who come to Him find the rest for which their hearts long. That is the fulfilled life.

IV. A SECURE LIFE (Proverbs 10:25)

He who is truly good rests on God's everlasting foundation of security!

Every person needs a security he can never provide for himself. God warns, *"The way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps"* (Jeremiah 10:23). What anyone needs, God provides. He has laid in Zion a stone which is tried, precious, and a sure foundation (Isaiah 28: 16). Those who trust Jesus are *"built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone"* (Ephesians 2:20). *"Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ"* (I Corinthians 3:11).

The person who is built on Jesus Christ is secure. He is sufficient under all occasions, and he knows it. What is the basis of his security? *"Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God"* (II Corinthians 3:5).

V. A LONG LIFE (Proverbs 10:27)

He who is truly good will enjoy lengthened days. God warns that sin shortens life. *"Bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days"* (Psalm 55:23). God promises that righteousness lengthens life. *"If thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments. . . then I will lengthen thy days"* (I Kings 3:14). He promises of the righteous, *"With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation"* (Psalm 91:16).

Remember, however, that there is a depth as well as a length to life. Jesus not only gives life, He gives it *"more abundantly"* (John 10:10). Some

people have lost the meaning of life so that they do not wish life to continue. Jesus gives meaning to life so that each day is worth living. *"The blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it"* (Proverbs 10:22).

VI. A JOYFUL LIFE (Proverbs 10:28)

He who is truly good is filled with spiritual joy! To be a citizen in the kingdom of God is to know *"righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost"* (Romans 14:17). *"The fruit. . . is love, joy, peace"* (Galatians 5:22).

What is the joy that Jesus gives? There is joy in being saved (Isaiah 12:3; 35:10; 61:10). There is joy in spiritual strength (Nehemiah 8:10), in fellowship with God (Psalm 16:11), in answered prayer (John 16:24), in receiving the Word of God (Jeremiah 15:16), and in having the assurance of God's grace (I Peter 1:8). That is *"joy unspeakable and full of glory"* (I Peter 1:8).

The joy that Jesus gives is not dependent on circumstances, as is the joy of the world. It is spiritual, continual, and overflowing joy in the Holy Spirit. Jesus gives His peace and joy to those who are truly good.

VII. AN OVERCOMING LIFE (Proverbs 10:29)

He who is truly good receives the strength of the Lord to overcome!

A. Christians overcome in the strength of the Lord, not in their own strength. *"He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. . . . They that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength"* (Isaiah 40:29, 31). His help is not temporary or limited. *"The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms"* (Deuteronomy 33:27).

B. Christians overcome through all of life. He promises His care from the womb even to old age (Isaiah 46:3, 4). He promises, *"I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee"* (Hebrews 13:5).

C. Christians overcome all things in life. They can say, *"Thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ"* (II Corinthians 2:14). They can say with Paul, *"The Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom"* (II Timothy 4:18).

D. Christians overcome by spiritual enabling. They are *"strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man"* with a power *"that*

is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Ephesians 3:16, 20). *"Our sufficiency is of God"* (II Corinthians 3:5). Such an overcoming life is the normal Christian life. It is the life God has made possible to you.

VIII. A STABLE LIFE (Proverbs 10:30)

He who is truly good stands firm in all conditions. The Christian is stable because God stands with him (Psalm 16:8). *"Through the mercy of the most High he shall not be moved"* (Psalm 21:7).

"He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water" (Psalm 1:3). Though the earth is removed and the storms come, there will be no fear. *"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble"* (Psalm 46:1-3).

The Christian is stable because he trusts God. *"They that trust in the LORD shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed"* (Psalm 125:1). *"Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength"* (Isaiah 26:4).

IX, A SOUND LIFE (Proverbs 10:31)

He who is truly good speaks things that are wise! The mouth of the righteous is marked by wholesome speech: *"sound speech, that cannot be condemned"* (Titus 2:8). The talk of the righteous is marked by wisdom (Psalm 37:30; Proverbs 31:26), life (Proverbs 10:11), truth (Malachi 2:6), and no hypocrisy or lie (1 Peter 2:22).

The talk of the wicked is marked by potential of much evil (James 3:6); flattery and lies (Psalm 5 6); cursing, deceit, and fraud (Psalm 10:7); iniquity and deceit (Psalm 36:3); hypocrisy (Psalm 55:21); and kindred evil.

The mouth speaks forth what is in the heart; therefore, God can judge us by our words and judge us correctly (Matthew 12:34-36). A healthy heart produces a healthy conversation.

X. AN EXEMPLARY LIFE (Proverbs 10:32)

The truly good person will talk in an acceptable manner! What are the proper subjects of conversation for God's children? We can talk of God

(Malachi 3:16). We can teach our children spiritual truth (Deuteronomy 6:7). We can praise God (Ephesians 5:17). We can refrain from any sin of speech (Psalm 34:12-16).

That is "the good life." Does it seem to be beyond you? Then praise the Lord! It casts you upon His resources and He is the source from which the good life comes.

Righteousness is practical for a person and a nation. We want the good life for ourselves and for our nation. God blesses the person or the nation which is marked by holiness. Let us flee to Jesus for cleansing. Let us walk with Him for holiness.

QUESTIONS

1. What is the good life from the world's point of view?
2. What is the good life from the Christian point of view?
3. What riches come in the good life (verse 22)?
4. What is the "everlasting foundation" of the righteous (verse 25)?
5. Why does sin shorten life and righteousness lengthen it (verse 27)?
6. What is the joy experienced by the Christian (verse 28)?
7. How can you experience an overcoming life (verse 29)?