

**Finding The
Courage
To Be Holy!**

By Bill Fairchild, Jr.

Psalm 102:18

***“This will be written for a generation to come,
that a people yet to be created may praise the Lord.”***

The objective of the WalkingInSunlight.com literature is to help young people to acquire a better understanding of ... and appreciation for ... God, His Word, and the church He purchased with the blood of His Son.

Our goal is to prepare young people for their daily challenges of choosing what will bring them real happiness by arming them with the ability to use God's Word to answer every question.

Laying their own life questions and experiences alongside the proper scriptures will enable them to clearly see God's directions.

God's instructions are so clear that even children can understand how God wants them to behave and what He would have them choose when they look at the scriptures without prejudices.

■ These studies are made age-specific by **Discussion**.

■ **Read aloud every Scripture** – every student should look up every Scripture in their own Bible.

■ Allow adequate time for students to think about and answer **every question**.

■ **Listen** to what they say.

■ **Point them to God's instructions**, written and preserved for their benefit.

Hosea 4:1,6 *“Hear the word of the Lord, you children of Israel, for the Lord brings a charge against the inhabitants of the land: There is no truth or mercy or knowledge of God in the land.” “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me. Because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.”*

Each lesson may require several class periods.

It is an awesome privilege to help young people grow closer to God!

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FINDING THE COURAGE TO BE HOLY —

COURAGE

“REMEMBER THE ALAMO!”

This battle cry has been repeated and remembered through the years and has been the theme for movies, as it references a famous Texas battle.

The siege on the San Antonio Mission lasted from February 23 to March 6, 1836. Under the leadership of General Santa Anna, 5,000 Mexican soldiers surrounded the Alamo and attacked it regularly for 13 days. The volunteers inside the Alamo were outnumbered 30 to 1. Yet, they stood their ground bravely and fought valiantly. One by one, their numbers were thinned by the relentless barrage of cannonballs and bullets. The battle climaxed with a massive assault over the Mission walls and all the 182 men were killed.

The volunteers' strategy had been to delay the Mexican forces long enough for the Texas settlers to organize an army. Their supreme sacrifice did just that. A short time later, Texas troops under General Sam Houston mounted a surprise attack at San Jacinto, captured Santa Anna, and secured independence for Texas!

Even though the battle of the Alamo was lost, the war for Texas' independence was won ... all because of a band of dedicated men who were not afraid to take a stand, even when they were greatly outnumbered.

God wants his children to be courageous and to live lives that are holy and acceptable in His sight. You and I must have the courage to live the Christian life ourselves, to be the proper example and influence for others in the church, as well as out.

The apostle Paul told the Corinthians to *“Be watchful, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong”* (1 Cor. 16:13). Courage is defined as: “bravery, boldness, fearlessness.” It is the idea of firmness of mind and purpose and the casting aside of fear.

As we will see in this series of studies, courage is needed every day of our lives! For you see, courage will enable us to do the right thing when doing something wrong would seem to bring about more pleasure! Courage on the battlefield is one thing, but courage to live each day for the Lord is even more demanding.

Since this quality is so vital, let's study together this series of lessons on **Finding The Courage To Be Holy!**

We will then learn that God can and will strengthen us in everything we do ... if we will only have the courage to obey Him!

FINDING THE COURAGE TO BE HOLY —

WHEN YOU'RE OUTNUMBERED!

Text: Romans 12:1,2

INTRODUCTION:

1. Questions: What is peer pressure: **Discuss.**
 Can you remember the first time someone else pressured you into doing something you shouldn't have done? **Discuss.**
 Did you learn something from this experience?
 What makes pressure from others so hard to deal with? **Discuss.**

2. It is very important to most of us, if not all of us, to be accepted!

 Questions: Just how important is it to you to be accepted by your friends, family, etc? **Discuss.**
 How important is it to you not to be left out?
 How important is it that you're considered "cool"?
 Just how important is it for you to be accepted by the Lord? **Discuss.**
 Is popularity something you're concerned about?

3. When we aren't sure that we fit in, when we are pressured to do things that we know are wrong, when we feel there isn't anyone who understands, and when friendships become a problem ... then we are faced with peer pressure!

4. Making the decision to stand up for good and against evil requires courage.
 - a. And it takes real courage to do so when you're outnumbered. And you see ... God's people will always be outnumbered. Why? 2 Timothy 3:12.
 - b. Yet we have the assurance of Romans 8:31. **Discuss.**
 - c. One plus God always equals a majority!

5. Let's talk about finding the courage to be holy even when we're outnumbered.

DISCUSSION:

1. Consider the following scriptures:
 - a. Romans 12:1,2 What do the words "conformed" and "transformed" mean? **Discuss.**

- b. James 4:4 What does “*friendship with the world*” mean. **Discuss.**
- c. 1 John 2:15 What does this passage mean anyway? **Discuss.**
- d. Proverbs 1:10,15 **Discuss.** Is this good advice?
 Will you take it yourself?
 Would you recommend it to others?

2. Three Observations About Peer Pressure:

- a. First, pressure from others and the world is tremendously powerful and very hard to resist!

(1) It’s easy to give in and join the crowd.

Give some examples.

- b. Second, when the pressures build, we often find excuses that let us give in.

(1) We tell ourselves:

“Since everybody is doing it, it must be OK.”

“Nobody will know if I give in just this once.”

“I’ll try it once just to get them off my back.”

“I need to try it for myself to know if it is wrong.”

Questions: Is there anything wrong with these statements?

If so, what?

Do you ever use these lines yourself?

(2) Just remember: Joseph when he was pressured didn’t give in. Genesis 39.

(3) Neither did Daniel. Daniel 1.

- c. Third, when we do give in to peer pressure, we lose!

(1) You lose ... your principles, your uniqueness, your self-respect! **Discuss.**

Note Job 20:11; Psalm 25:7. **Discuss.**

- 3. Every time you or I give in to the pressures to do wrong, they become harder to resist when they come around again.

- a. If we’re not careful, we will turn into a chameleon ... a lizard that changes its colors to match its surroundings.

- b. I know people like this ... don't you?
Are you one yourself?
- c. You see, these people (young or old) fit into worship services, wild parties, family picnics, Bible studies, etc!
- d. Jesus doesn't call them chameleons ... He calls them hypocrites!

4. Three thoughts to hold on to:

Number 1: *Allow God to tell you who you are, rather than allowing other people to tell you who you are!*
Read 1 Peter 2:9-11; 1 Cor. 6:19-20.

Questions: What does it mean to allow God to tell you who you are?
How does He tell you? Note Psalm 119:104,105.

Number 2: *Keep in mind who "they" are!*
"They" are whoever is putting the pressure on you to go against what you know to be God's will!
Note Proverbs 29:25. **Discuss.**

- a. We must remember that God is infinite and eternal (Psalm 139) while "they" are just like us in that we're all flesh!
- b. Those who try to influence us to do evil are just a drop in the bucket ... not because they lack importance, but because in comparison with God ... their importance, even their collective strength, is nothing!
Note Matthew 10:28. **Discuss.**

Number 3: *You need to keep eternity in your heart! (Eccl 3:11)*

Question: What does this mean?

Answer: You see, when you're in the middle of these pressures, you have to remember that when you compare your life here on earth against life in eternity ... this little moment right now is not really so long and difficult!
Note 2 Cor. 4:17-18. **Discuss.**

APPLICATION:

1. Suppose you were offered \$1 million to resist some particular pressure (using bad language, drinking, etc.), for one week. Could you resist? The answer is: YES! Do you know why? Because you would be **focusing more on the reward** than on the pressure or temptation!
2. If God is telling you who you are and if you remember who these other people are ... what you begin to realize is what's really most important ... serving God and going to heaven ... not living in sin and being lost!
3. Five practical suggestions for finding the courage to be holy, even when you're outnumbered:

Number 1: *Resist it with all your might!
Be yourself. Be what God wants you to be.
Note 1 Cor. 10:13.*

Questions: What should this passage mean to each of us? **Discuss.**
Is this passage for adults only?

Number 2: *Don't put yourself into tempting situations. Note 1 Thess 5:22.*

Question: What does this passage mean?

Number 3: *Learn to say "**No**" and mean it!*

Questions: Why is it so hard to say "No"?
Someone will always be trying to influence you to do wrong. Say "no" and walk away, don't linger.

Number 4: *Make up your mind to do right ... even if no one else does!
Paul did in 2 Tim 4:16.*

Question: How hard is this to do? **Discuss.**

Number 5: *Have the right kind of friends!*

You see, you can tell a lot about someone by the people they associate with!

Our friends have a way of telling on us. Read 1 Cor. 15:33.

Questions: Explain this passage.
Does this principle work for the good as well as for the bad?
Explain.

4. We are all accountable to God (Rom. 14:12). We as Christians must stand up for the right, regardless of the consequences.
5. I challenge you to follow the examples of people like Joseph and Daniel who lived lives of purity, courage and integrity in foreign lands.
6. We must not forget who we are ... we are God's people! We can deal with pressure when we're outnumbered, but we must make up our minds to do so and look to the Lord for strength!
7. May God give **you** the courage not to go along with the crowd, but to go with Jesus Christ!

FINDING THE COURAGE TO BE HOLY —

WHEN YOU'RE DISCOURAGED!

Text: Psalm 50:15

INTRODUCTION:

1. Questions: What is discouragement?
Have you ever been discouraged?
What do you suppose discourages most people in life?
What discourages most Christians?
What discourages most young people?
What discourages **YOU**?

2. Questions: Do you ever feel that trying to follow Jesus can get a little lonely?
Do you ever feel that hardly anyone else at your school really cares about serving the Lord?
Do you ever feel that you're the only one trying to do what is right?
Do you ever feel that most of the other young people where you worship aren't really trying to please God?
Do you ever feel that when the chips are down, you're the only one willing to take a stand?

3. Questions: Are you ever discouraged with the way things are at home?
Are you ever discouraged with the way things are where you worship?
Discuss.
Do you ever become discouraged with yourself because you did some things you shouldn't have done or didn't do some things you need to be doing? **Discuss.**

4. Well, join the club! Welcome to the real world! Read Psalm 50:15 and define "*the day of trouble.*"

5. If you're tempted to become discouraged, if you're having a little trouble finding the courage to be holy in this life ... the life of Elijah will inspire you!

6. Let's talk about it!

DISCUSSION:

1. Discuss the events of 1 Kings 18 which led up to the events of 1 Kings 19.

2. Because Jezebel had made idol worship the state religion of Israel, very few people were following Jehovah ... the true God!

Questions: Does this resemble our times?
In what way? **Discuss.**

3. As Elijah looked around him ... he felt very much alone and very discouraged.

Questions: Would you have felt this way?
Why?

Following God had meant risking his life to deliver a message from Jehovah to the king.

4. Questions: Would you like to know where he got his courage?
You might be able to use this at school, or among your friends.

Answer: The Bible reveals Elijah's source of courage. Read James 5:17,18.

(1) He prayed earnestly from a righteous heart. What does this mean? **Discuss.**

(2) You see ... Elijah knew God and was conscious of God's love, care and concern! Note 1 Kings 18:15.

Questions: Are we conscious of these facts?
Do we ever lose sight of these things?
If so, why?

(3) Elijah knew God as He really is ... alive, all-powerful, always ready to listen and give aid. Note Eph. 3:20.

Questions: Do you want to be this courageous?
You can if you believe in God and what He says.

5. Read Psalms 37:28; Deut. 31:6; Psalm 118:6. **Discuss.**

6. As strong and courageous as Elijah was ... he became discouraged. 1 Kings 19:3-6, 8-16.

Questions: Have you ever come home from school completely discouraged, feeling as if all your teachers yell at you, your friends are ignoring you, and your parents don't understand you?
Have you ever left services feeling like you had let the Lord down?
Discuss.

And what about letting yourself down?
Or, that your congregation just isn't what it is supposed to be?

7. Let me tell you, this day in Elijah's life ... which had started out so good ... really turned sour!
 - a. After the **fire** from heaven had proven who was the true God and rain had fallen for the first time in three and one-half years, Elijah had expected the nation ... even the king and queen ... to turn to God.
 - b. Instead, Jezebel was determined to kill him by the next morning!
 - c. After a panicked run into the desert, Elijah fell beneath a scrubby bush. He had no food, no water. He begged God to let him die!

(1) I'd say he was pretty discouraged ... wouldn't you?
 - d. God didn't yell at him, or give him a long lecture, or write him off of His list of acceptable people ... He took care of him!
 - e. You see ... God understood how Elijah was feeling.
8. God also understands when the pressure on you is too great. He wants to meet your needs as well. How?

APPLICATION:

1. You must realize that it is never God's will for you to just sit around and mope, endlessly mulling over your problems and disappointments. **Pity Party!**
 - a. Read and **discuss** Heb. 12:12,13; Isa. 41:10.
 - b. Elijah was to **get busy**, and so should you and I!

Examples: If things aren't going well at home ... do what you can to help make them better.
If things aren't going well at church ... do what you can to help make them better. **Discuss.**

Read and **discuss** Gal. 6:9; Col. 3:23; 1 Cor. 15:58; "... always abounding in the work of the Lord."

2. If you have not been living as you should, or praying as you should, or studying as you should ... and you're discouraged about it ... then decide to make a change! Read Psalm 51:10-14.

Do Something About It!

Question: If you're not really bothered about these things, or if you are indifferent to them, then what does this say about your relationship to God?
Discuss.

3. We all get discouraged at various times in our lives for various reasons. But at all times and for all reasons ... we must never forget that God loves us.
 - a. Psalm 37:23,24
 - b. 2 Thess. 3:3
 - c. Jude 24, 25
4. Let's all decide to look to the Lord for the courage that we will need to live a holy life ... even when we become discouraged!
 - a. Learn to cultivate a genuine, meaningful, daily relationship with Jesus Christ.
 - b. Remember the words to the song I Need Thee?
Make them your words!
5. Then, with courage, we can face whatever it is that might try to discourage us ... and overcome it!
6. Oh yes, one more thought ... Elijah found out he wasn't the only one trying to do what was right (1 Kings 19:18) ... and neither are you (1 Peter 5:9)!

Just take a good look around, take heart, and get busy serving God!

FINDING THE COURAGE TO BE HOLY —

WHEN YOU'RE BEING TEMPTED (PART ONE)

Text: 1 Peter 1:14, 15

INTRODUCTION:

1. Questions: How important is it to please God in your life?
How do we know what really pleases God and what doesn't?
Note 2 Tim. 3:16,17 and 2 Peter 1:3.
What is meant by the expression in 1 Peter 1:14,15, "Be holy"?
2. Our primary concern should be in seeing what the Word of God says, and in conforming our practices to its teachings.
3. Nowhere does the Bible say: "You can't dance" or "You can't gamble" or "You can't drink or use drugs".
4. But, just as there are many scriptures which deal with the principles involved in drinking, etc., there are many which deal with the principles involved in dancing and immodesty.
5. Warning: Your soul's destiny may be involved, so note these teachings carefully!
6. You and I need to remember our calling.
 - a. 1 Thess. 4:7.

Question: What does this mean, "*our calling*"? **Discuss.**

 - b. 1 Peter 1:14,15.
 - c. 1 Peter 2:9-11.
7. So ... with these thoughts in mind and the realization that there is a very real temptation for us to dance or wear immodest clothing, let's look to God's Word so that we may find the courage to be holy!

DISCUSSION:

1. The Bible says we are to avoid the very appearance of evil ... 1 Thess. 5:22.

Question: What does this mean, anyway?

2. The Bible says youthful lusts are so dangerous that the only way to conquer them is to “*flee*” them ...
2 Tim. 2:22.

Question: What in the world are “*youthful lusts*”?
And how do we flee from them?

3. Sometimes folks say “dancing isn’t as bad as it appears to be” or “mixed swimming (boys and girls together) isn’t all that bad.”
 - a. This is an admission that the appearance is not good.
No one will affirm that the modern dance always appears good.
Just as no one will affirm that mixed swimming always appears good.
No one will affirm that wearing immodest clothing always appears good.
 - b. All of these areas war against our souls! Right or wrong? If not, explain your answer.
4. The Bible says we are to “*keep ourselves unspotted from the world.*” (James 1:27)

Questions: What does “*unspotted from the world*” mean?
Is it really possible to do this?

- a. Pure and holy religion is demanding. It isn’t easy to live in this world and not be defiled by worldliness.
- b. Yet, this is exactly what the Lord expects of each one of us!
- c. You see ... it is possible to refrain from worldly activities, because God provides “*a way of escape*” for every temptation ... 1 Cor. 10:13.

Question: What does this verse mean?

5. If you fall in love with the world, you fall out of love with the Lord! Note 1 John 2:15;
Matt. 6:24.
6. Before you go to a dance, or before you start to put on questionable clothing, ask yourself:

... Is dancing of this world?

... Does it promote one’s love for the world or for the Lord?

... Will the wearing of these kinds of clothes tell others I'm a Christian, or just another person of the world?

7. Please note James 4:4 and Rom. 12:1,2.

Those who dance, those who wear immodest clothing, are **CONFORMING** to the world. It is unthinkable that one could be **TRANSFORMED** into the "*mind of Christ*" while embracing a member of the opposite sex on the dance floor or laying beside a member of the opposite sex at the swimming pool in a swimsuit.

The desires these activities excite are to be satisfied only in the marriage relationship!

8. The Bible says to avoid (shun) the works of the flesh. Note Gal. 5:19-21.

- a. One of the words of this passage has dancing as a part of its meaning.
- b. Lasciviousness. It means "showing lust, lewd (not decent) movements of the body. Unchaste handling of the body."

Question: Does dancing do such things?

Just what kinds of movements would you call the dances of today?

- c. Note: This word strikes at the very root of the dance, because dancing does create lustful desires!
 - d. Since the modern dance must be included in the meaning of this word ... if we respect God's Word, we must refrain from this activity. If not ... why not?
 - e. For consecrated (define) Christians ... this one scripture should settle the issue!
 - f. The works of the flesh are deplorable to the Lord. The penalty for participation ... Gal. 5:21 ... "*they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.*"
9. The Bible also says women (young and old) are to dress "*modestly, with shamefacedness and sobriety.*" 1 Tim. 2:9 (KJV)
- a. "*Modest*" means well arranged, seemly, decent. Immodest is just the opposite.
 - b. "*Shamefacedness*" means bashfulness, shyness, easy to embarrass. It is the possession of a sense of shame, modest, reverence. It carries with it the ability to blush.

Note Jeremiah 8:12.

- c. “*Sobriety*” means good judgment, moderation.

If a Christian dresses within these boundaries, he/she won't have to worry about whether or not they are pleasing the Lord.

- d. When these unchanging principles are destroyed, immodesty results and sin comes!

10. Certainly, custom is involved to an extent to determine what is modest (i.e., floor-length garments at the turn of the century).

11. Fact: If one's heart is right and the affections are set in the right place ... there will be no problem!

- a. You see ... modesty will be sought after, rather than avoided or excused!

Question: If not, why not?

- b. The Christian will always seek clothing that will help make one more like God ... not more like the world ... and not to draw attention to certain parts of one's body or to expose the body.
- c. Can you truly say that the wearing of short skirts, swim suits, etc. in public is right?

****** Old Testament setting, priests to wear knee-length britches**

An interesting point comes from the Old Testament. God's priests in those days wore robes instead of trousers. God forbade them to build high altars that required steps, lest those below see their *nakedness* (Exodus 20:26). The priests could have reasoned, “They should not be trying to look up our robes! We're just trying to offer a sacrifice.” Later God told them to make linen breeches (*miknac*, “in the sense of hiding; drawers for concealing the private parts”) to wear under their robes (Exodus 28:42), to cover them in case they were in such a position. Does God care about what we wear? Boys and girls? Who are God's priests today (1 Pet 2:9-11)?

APPLICATION:

1. Questions that will help you to determine what is modest and what is not:
 - ... What would a member of the opposite sex think? Will it cause him/her to have unlawful desires?
 - ... What would I think if I saw others who claim to be Christians wear the same outfit?
 - ... Would I wear this if Jesus were literally, bodily present?
 - ... Will this create respect or raise eyebrows?
 - ... Will I be modest in this garment, even when reaching, stooping, or sitting?

2. Questions that will help you in resolving an answer to this issue of “can I dance?”
 - ... Is dancing a *“fruit of the spirit”*, or a *“work of the flesh”*?
 - ... Does dancing draw one nearer to God, or does it separate one from God?
 - ... Does dancing help one bring others to Christ, or does it serve as a hindrance and a stumbling block?
 - ... Would you want to be at a dance when Jesus comes?

3. My young friend, it takes a lot of courage to be holy in an unholy world. Even if everyone else is participating in evil ... you must have the conviction to say “**NO**” to the world and to say “**YES**” to the Lord!

4. Remember who you are supposed to be ... a child of the King!

FINDING THE COURAGE TO BE HOLY —

WHEN YOU'RE BEING TEMPTED (PART TWO)

Text: 1 Peter 2:9-11

INTRODUCTION:

1. Questions: Why would a person who is trying to please God ever want to take something or drink something that would be harmful to their body and mind?
Why would a Christian ever want to defend any sinful practice?
Why would a Christian ever want to be involved in any questionable practice? **Discuss.**

2. To drink or not to drink. To use drugs or not to use drugs. **The question is yours!**

- a. Your decision is important. In fact, it is really a matter of life and death.

3. **YOU** will have to answer “Yes” or “No” to both drinking and drugs. And you cannot afford to make the wrong decision.

Questions: Do you really think you will ever have to answer these questions?
Have you already had to answer once? Twice?
Do you think you'll have to answer again?

4. Read 1 Pet. 5:8.

Questions: What does this passage tell you about the Devil and his efforts?
Do you believe he will ever give up on trying to capture your soul?

Discuss.

5. Most spiritual battles are won or lost at the threshold of your mind. Note Proverbs 23:7; 4:23.

- a. The easiest time to say **no** to any temptation is **before** you begin to rationalize your way into wrongdoing!

6. Three out of four college students are drinkers. 25% of all alcoholics in this country are teenagers! Many start drinking before they even reach teenage status.

7. So ... with these startling facts, we need to look into God's Word to see how we can Find The Courage To Be Holy — even when we are tempted to drink or use drugs.

DISCUSSION:

1. What does the Bible say about strong drink, which is really a drug? Consider the following passages and **discuss**.

- a. Proverbs 20:1
- b. Proverbs 23:20,21
- c. Proverbs 23:31,32
- d. Habakkuk 2:15
- e. 1 Cor. 6:9-10
- f. 1 Cor. 5:11

2. Some principles to consider concerning drinking:

- a. It is unwise when you consider its characteristics, as you have just read in Proverbs 23.

(1) You see ... it really does cause a person to do crazy and foolish things.

Questions: Have you ever seen someone drunk?
It is really not a pretty picture, is it?
Read Isaiah. 28:7,8.

(2) It breeds false courage. Proverbs 20:1.

(3) It leads to sorrow and anguish ... broken homes, unhappy families, etc.

Questions: Do you know of a home like this?
The fact is ... it isn't very pretty either!

- b. Drinking destroys the body that really belongs to the Lord. 1 Cor. 6:19-20.

Questions: What does this passage really mean?
What makes us think we can live like we want to? **Discuss**.

(1) Note Rom. 14:21; 1 Cor. 10:31-33, 24.

(2) You see ... I must always set before others the kind of example that is safe to follow!

Questions: Is your life a proper example?
If it isn't, in whatever area of your life, don't you think it is about time to change?
Why can't all of us, young and old, decide right now to be a better example for others to imitate?

3. Some principles to consider concerning the use of drugs:

a. They are illegal

b. The Bible says to abstain from "the appearance of evil" (1 Thess. 5:22; Eph. 5:11). The use of drugs is surrounded by too many other evils.

Question: Can you think of a few examples?

c. The Bible teaches evil companions corrupt good morals (1 Cor. 15:33). Many drug addicts started by getting in with the wrong crowd.

Question: How would you describe the wrong crowd? **Discuss.**

d. The body is the temple of God and one must not do anything to harm it! 1 Cor. 6:19,20.

(1) Drug abuse affects the mind and the body!

Question: Do you know how? Or in what ways? **Discuss.**

APPLICATION:

1. Questions: Does a person really need alcohol or drugs to be happy?
Does a person really need alcohol or drugs to deal with the problems of life?
Does a person really need alcohol or drugs to get by?
2. The Christian's life should be full and satisfying because of the purpose given him/her by Christ. Read and **discuss** Gal. 2:20.
3. The Apostle Paul learned to be content in whatever state he found himself ... in Christ, not in drugs or alcohol (Phil. 4:11).
4. The Hebrew writer presents a sure formula to face life courageously in Hebrews 13:5,6.

Questions: How about it?
Does this sound like a formula that can work for you?
Would you be willing to give it a try?
If you've given up or doubted, would you be willing to try it again?

5. A truly devoted Christian does not drink or use drugs! We must all let our lights shine by refusing to follow the world's advice and example! Note 1 Tim. 4:12.

Questions: Do young people have influence?
If so ... how well are you using yours?

6. Someone once said that temptation (the enticement to do evil) is like a vacuum cleaner salesman ... the sooner you say no, the better!
 - a. You see, it is a lot easier to meet temptation at the door and say "**NO**" than to kick it out once it has gotten inside your mind!
7. May the Lord give your young heart the courage to be holy and pure in such an evil world ... the wisdom to see the ugliness of sin and the beauty of doing right!

FINDING THE COURAGE TO BE HOLY —

SO YOU WON'T MESS UP YOUR LIFE

Text: 1 John 1:4

INTRODUCTION:

1. Questions: Do you know what it means to appeal to someone? **Discuss.**
Do you know what it means to plead for something?
2. The final lesson in this series is really a plea ... an honest, heartfelt plea, that **YOU** will enjoy your teenage years and young adult years ... but that you will not make foolish, unwise decisions that can surely cripple your future happiness.
3. Questions: Have you given much thought to where you might be 10 years from now?
Have you thought about where you might be spiritually in 10 years, or 20 years ... if the Lord grants you life?
4. So many young and older adults look back over their teen years and say, "If only I had done this or that differently ..."
 - a. Note Jeremiah 3:25.

OBSERVATION:

There can be pleasant and unpleasant memories from these years. Peoples' lives can be fouled up by seemingly innocent decisions made during these teen years.

Question: Can you think of a few possibilities?

5. Well ... we don't want this to happen to you!
It is our desire for you to enjoy a clean, wholesome and fun teenage life.
6. But we also want you to make decisions and a commitment to the Lord that will insure that you have a productive and happy future.
7. Read Eccl. 11:9 -12:1. **Discuss** this passage.
8. Question: Did you know that God really wants **YOU** to be **happy**?

9. According to 1 John 1:4 ... He intends for His people to live in “fullness of joy.”
10. So ... let’s talk about Finding The Courage To Be Holy So We Won’t Mess Up Our Lives ... and find out what real happiness is.

DISCUSSION:

1. Many people have confused happiness with pleasure. In so doing, they will never find true contentment!

- a. Pleasure comes from the word “please” and is derived from those things which please the senses (sight, smell, touch, hearing, etc.).
- b. Now, there are good pleasures. Can you name a few?

How about sunshine, rain, flowers, food, laughter, clean recreation, etc?

These enrich our lives. But they only bring pleasure rather than inner happiness that the Bible speaks about.

- c. There are some bad pleasures as well. Can you name a few of these?

How about immorality, unwholesome entertainment, alcohol, drugs, and worldly living?

Questions: How long will the pleasure from these things last?

2. Real happiness and joy can be present even in the face of difficulties. Note the following:

- a. John 16:21.
- b. Phil. 4:11.
- c. You see, any person who has a high goal and is dedicated to reaching that goal will know struggle, opposition ... but can also experience joy.
- d. When they have reached the goal ... and have succeeded!

Examples: An athlete, an academic student, the musician, actor, etc.

3. Question: Is it really possible for you and I to have “*the peace that passes understanding*” (Phil. 4:7), the “*fulfulness of joy*” (1 John 1:4) God’s Word speaks of?

Answer: Yes, but we must follow God's instructions to obtain it!

4. Here are the instructions:

a. **Be obedient to God.** You cannot have real inner peace and joy without obeying God and his commands.

(1) Read and discuss Psalm 119:57-60.

(2) You see ... He made us and He really does know what is best for us and what will really makes us happy. Note Jer. 10:23.

Questions: Do you really believe this to be so?
How can a person be happy if they think they're going to be lost or know it to be so?
Who will be lost? Note 2 Thess. 1:7-9.

(3) Very simply ... obedience to the Creator is a prerequisite to true happiness. See Heb. 5:8-9.

b. **Live a righteous and holy life.** A sinful person is so far removed from real happiness.

(1) Read Psalm 32:1-5. **Discuss** the meaning of **versus 3 & 4**.

(2) You see ... sinfulness, disobedience to God, leads to depression, nervousness, insurmountable problems and feelings of worthlessness and misery!

Questions: Ever felt like this?
Do you possibly feel this way now?

(3) Let me tell you something: Really Happy people are those who are serving the Lord, using their talents unselfishly, are kind and responsible and have high moral standards!

Questions: So ... Are you really happy?
If not, why not?
Do you want to be?

(4) Well, read just a little bit more with me.

4. Every day you make decisions that will determine your happiness here and for eternity. So ... how can you make wise decisions?

APPLICATION:

Here are some questions to ask yourself about decision-making:

1. **What does the Bible say?** As God's Word gives direction, that should settle it for you. And, God's Word will meet all of our challenges and needs when it comes to making decisions!
2. **Will my decision bring glory to God?** Note 1 Cor. 10:31; Col. 3:17.
3. **What will be the results?** Note Proverbs 16:25.

Sometimes a thing may appear fine at the moment ... but with further investigation, it is found to be harmful.

4. **Can I ask God's blessing on this matter?** If an activity is right and proper, you could ask God's blessing on it!
 - a. Note: If you hesitate to ask God's blessing ... you should turn away from it!
5. **What would Jesus do?** This is the acid test in decision making! For you see ... Jesus always lived to please the Father!

Question: Should it be any different for us?

6. You have so much of life ahead of you ... if it is God's will!
 - ... Make the most of it! Live for God! Allow Him to lead your life!
 - ... Doing these things, you will have a glorious future both in this life and in eternity!
7. May the Lord bless you as you make these critical decisions we have been studying about.

May you find the courage in Him to be holy so that you won't mess up your life!

May you always remember who you are ... the price that was paid to redeem your soul ... and the greatness of being a child of the King.