

## **Fishers of men by God's grace and for His glory**

### **Introduction**

Below are brief introductions to our lessons this week for each adult class.

### **Adult Topical Class (Bible Studies for Life – Dealing with Temptation)**

**Teachers:** Craig Pleasants & Bob Kemble

**Lesson Title:** Avoiding a Critical Spirit

**Focal Scripture:** Numbers 12:1-15

**Theme:** Guard your heart against criticizing others.

**Lesson Overview:** In today's "cancel-culture" society criticizing others seems to have developed to a fine art, with many being quite prideful about making their point at someone else's expense. This week we close out our quarter with a special one-week lesson focused on guarding our heart from an unhelpful critical spirit, as we examine the scripture passage of Miriam and Aaron's criticism of Moses. There is a place for honestly confronting others in a Biblical, loving, and gracious way; but we can in comparing ourselves to others allow our pride, envy, or jealousy to lead to a judgmental spirit. Miriam and Aaron found themselves in such a place where all they could see was God's apparent favor of Moses at their expense. God was so angered by their unfounded criticism that He called them both out and afflicted Miriam with leprosy. Moses pleaded for healing on behalf of Miriam and in God's mercy she was healed after seven days of isolated reflection. May we honestly evaluate our hearts and pray for discernment to align and base our personal preferences and positions solely on God's Word, and learn to love, forgive, and encourage those around us.

*<sup>31</sup>Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour (harsh words), and evil speaking (slander), be put away from you, with all malice (malicious behavior): <sup>32</sup>And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted (compassionate), forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. Ephesians 4:31-32*

### **Adult Bible Book Class (Explore the Bible – John 12-21)**

**Teachers:** Janice Willis & Thomas Littleton

**Lesson Title:** Do You Love Me?

**Focal Scripture:** John 21:15-23

**Theme:** Believers are offered God's grace even when they fail.

**Lesson Overview:** We wrap up our study in John in the closing chapter where Peter and several other disciples, after an unsuccessful night of fishing, encountered Jesus on the shore, and heeding His instructions led to a miraculous catch of fish. Our focal passage for this week is Jesus' conversation with Peter, after they had dined, where He asked him three times if he loved Him. In this exchange we see Peter's remorse for having recently denied Jesus three times and Jesus extending grace and restoration before commissioning him for kingdom work feeding His flock, the church, "*which he hath purchased with his own blood*" (Acts 20:28). This scene offers us hope that even when we fail, through Jesus we can experience forgiveness and be restored to useful Christian service, to follow God's plan and purpose for our lives.

Only when we love and abide in Jesus are we able to “*bear much fruit*” (John 15:8) via a strong and effective witness to the world.

<sup>9</sup>*In this was manifested (shown) the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup>Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation (atoning sacrifice) for our sins. **1 John 4:9-10***

### **Closing Thoughts**

<sup>13</sup>*Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.*

### **Matthew 5:13**

As a boy growing up my grandfather taught each child and grandchild a specific skill related to the annual hog-killing. My assigned task was salting the meat. In preparation the old contaminated salt from the previous year was thrown out and new fresh salt staged. That step, together with meticulous application, was vital to the effective preservation of the meat. Jesus’ point in the verse above was if Christians become too much like the world or make no effort to affect the world around us, we are of little value to God. Jesus continued with the following:

<sup>14</sup>*Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. <sup>15</sup>Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. <sup>16</sup>Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. **Matthew 5:14-16***

As pure, uncontaminated salt is effective for its intended purpose; a light that is not hidden provides effective illumination. We hide our light when we remain quiet when we should speak up, when we go along with the crowd, when we ignore the needs of others, or when we allow sin to shade or dim our light. Instead, we are to live for Christ and allow His light to be unshaded and clearly reveal the truth of the Gospel to a dark world. Let us pray for God’s help that we may effectively live our motto as “Fishers of men by God’s grace and for His glory.”

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Please prayerfully consider meeting with us this week for 10:00 am Sunday School as we fellowship, encourage, and study God’s word together.