

The Happiest People in the Word.

Youth's Bible Study Course

"Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." Psalms 16:11.

DEDICATED

To Christian young people around the world, with the prayer that this course will help them to know that "those who in everything make God first and last and best, are the happiest people in the world."

Introduction: When Granny 'Temcat' was just a young girl we all loved stories very much! Oh, not silly stories, or fiction stories—we loved true stories and especially ones about real Missionaries. Elder Eric B. Hare was a really, truly missionary and a wonderful storyteller and when we got to hear him tell his stories we were so happy. We children used to have some of these 'Hare' stories on old 78 rpm records, and we would play them over and over, and if he came to our camp-meeting in person it was such a thrill!

This Youth Course contains much from selected material by dear old Elder Hare, mostly from his book, 'Fullness of Joy'. I assure you it will help answer many questions that young people tend to have about just what it means to 'follow Jesus' and live the 'Christian life'.

How to use this course: The most important rule to follow whenever we want to learn about the Bible and the Christian life, is always pray first, and ask our kind Heavenly Father to send the Holy Spirit in the name of Jesus to help us and teach us. This is the secret to learning things that even the greatest 'authorities' fail to understand!

This is a "Read and Listen" course with audio files of each lesson. You can read or listen; the best way is to do both! This also helps with your reading skills.

Each lesson has a memory verse: learning these by heart can certainly be a help to one's Christian Life! Read through the lesson and seek to see the purpose of each story and what it tells us about serving Jesus.

In our day we all tend to have the habit of quickly scanning through something just to get the 'story' and then hurrying on to the next thing. This is largely because we are surrounded with so much 'media' and entertainment, and voices everywhere, all seeking to be heard and all saying something different!

We never learn the deeper things of life by scanning though them in this way. We need to think, what is this teaching me, and how does it apply to my life? When finished reading it through carefully, then answer the questions in the little quiz at the end.

Lesson 1: The Happiest People

Memory Verse: "These things have I spoken unto you, . . . that your joy might be full." John 15:11.

The river steamer left Moulmein jetty at eight-thirty in the morning. It was loaded high with bags of rice, salt, and lentils; drums of oil, fish paste, and kerosene; wagon wheels, sheets of iron roofing, nails, cement, and everything that jungle people need. It was crowded too with passengers, Burmese, Karens, Talaings, Shans, Telugus, Bengalis, and Chinese. They were Buddhists, spirit worshipers, Hindus, Mohammedans, Confucianists, and Christians. They laughed and talked. They sang and prayed. They ate and drank. They read and slept.

The steamer chugged courageously enough against the muddy brown current of the mighty Salween River, but its progress was slow. The day was weary and hot, and by the time we reached the little village of Wootchy, the sun was setting; there were still ten miles to go, and the captain was cross and irritable.

"Jildy! Jildy! (quickly! quickly!)" he shouted as the long, narrow gangplank was pushed down onto the sandbank. "Jildy! Jildy!"

And forty passengers began to scramble aboard, with their pigs and chickens in baskets or on poles and their babes on their backs.

The clerk's assistant, from a pile of rice sacks, clanged a big brass bell and shouted, "Tick-ut, tick-ut," while the captain pulled the whistle and accompanied his staccatoed toots with his never-changing cry of "Jildy! Jildy!" And up the gangplank they came, "Jildy! Jildy!" one by one, one by one, till there was only one lone passenger left on the sandbank—a little old lady—and she made no attempt to come on board. Everybody on the boat opened his mouth to shout, the clerk's assistant got ready to give his bell an extra-loud clang, the captain took a deep breath in order to shout his hottest invective, but nobody said a word, the bell did not clang, the curse was not uttered, for suddenly everybody realized that the lone little old lady was blind.

It was one of those helpless moments when everyone knew that somebody ought to do something, but was waiting till someone else would do it. A hush settled down over the whole ship as a strong young man threw his bundles on the deck

and bounded back down the gangplank. Going to the little old lady, he stooped and said loud enough for all to hear, "Put your arms around my neck, Mother, and don't be frightened." Then he picked her up and carried her on board.

The passengers cheered and clapped their hands; the clerk's assistant clanged his bell and called, "Tick-ut, tickut." The captain pulled the whistle cord and called, "Jildy, jildy." But there was a noticeable softness in their voices, and many a tear was brushed away as the people turned to each other and murmured their approval of the beautiful thing they had seen.

I wiped away my own tears, swallowed hard, then started downstairs to speak with the hero of the day. At the foot of the stairs I found the little blind woman, frightened with the recent applause. She too was brushing tears away from her poor sightless eyes, and I said, "Oh, don't cry, Auntie, don't be sorry. We didn't mean . . ."

"But I'm not sorry, Thara," she interrupted recognizing my voice. "I'm the proudest, happiest mother in all the land." Can you believe that she was?

It is difficult for us young people to realize that tears can be a sign of joy. We think of the cross that must be carried, we think of the self that must be denied, we think of the will that must be surrendered in the Christian life, and we are tempted to think life must be sad and sorrowful. But listen, in Messages to Young People, on page 38, I read: "Do not for a moment suppose that religion will make you sad and gloomy and will block up the way to success. . . . No, no; those who in everything make God first and last and best, are the happiest people in the world."

There are tears in the Christian life, but with the comfort and support of our Saviour and friend, they become tears of joy. Someday soon Jesus will wipe all tears away. There are tears in the broad way that leads to death also. They are tears of regret, and sorrow, and remorse. There is no one to wipe these tears away. Listen to the witness of Bible writers, that those who walk the narrow way, the path of life, shall be happy.

"He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him," says David. Psalm 126:6.

"Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation," says Isaiah. Isaiah 12:3.

"That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth,... might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not,

yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory" 1 Peter 1:7, 8, says Peter, and thousands of voices bear witness to the truth of these statements.

Away over in Bombay in the year 1944 there lived a man, Mr. Soans by name, who was an expert welder in the largest electrical shop in that city. He attended a series of meetings held by George Hamilton, accepted the truth, and joined the church.

"I'm a Seventh-day Adventist now," he explained to his manager. "Would you kindly arrange my work so that I could have my Sabbaths off?"

"We'll have none of this Sabbath nonsense," said his boss firmly. "You either work on Saturday or get out of here." To his great surprise, neither his years of service nor his expert ability availed anything, and with a heavy, sorrowful heart he went out to look for a job.

Up and down the streets of Bombay he walked. From shop to shop he went, but there was nothing for a man who wanted to keep Saturday. One week went by; then two weeks. Satan pressed home his temptations. "Your God doesn't hear your prayers. He's going to let your wife and children starve." But resolutely determined to obey God, Brother Soans trudged on looking for work.

Then one day into the inner harbor of Bombay came an ammunition ship loaded with bombs, shells, and mines, and with bales of cotton and bars of gold. The coolies swarmed over the ship, uncovered the hatchways, and got ready to unload. As one coolie was working at the hatchway, his lighted cigarette fell from his mouth and tumbled down, down, down, till it came to rest between two bales of cotton in the bottom hold. Too frightened to speak, the coolie said nothing. The unloading progressed without unusual incident; all the next day nothing was noticed; but on the third day some of the crew thought they could see a little smoke. Investigation was made, and the bottom hold was found to be one red-hot smoldering mass.

Quickly the alarm was sounded, and soon seven fire engines were pumping water into that ship, but to no avail. The water was turned to steam by the intense heat. They could not put the fire out.

Hurriedly the fire officials and ship's officers got together and decided that the only way to save a terrible explosion was to sink the ship. They sent for four expert welders to come from the largest electrical shop in Bombay to burn holes in the side of the ship under the water line. The men came. They prepared their apparatus, threw over their rope chairs, and began to work.

And while they were working on April 15, 1944, the fire reached the magazine, [where the ammunition and gun powder were] and there was one of the most

awful explosions that ever occurred away from the front lines of battle. Up went the ship like a huge volcano and rained down rubbish and rubble for a distance of three miles. Thousands of windows were smashed, hundreds of lives were lost, a ten-thousand-ton victory ship berthed beside the fated vessel was lifted out of the water and thrown upon the concrete wharf.

And Brother Soans was still walking around looking for work. He heard the terrible noise, and saw the volcano-like eruptions. Wondering what it could be, he ran in the direction of the harbor. For a while he stood there viewing the wreckage and piecing together the story. Then hurrying back to Pastor Hamilton as fast as he could, he exclaimed, "Pastor, Pastor, I'm the happiest man in the world! If it hadn't been for the Sabbath making me lose my job, I would have been one of those men detailed to sink that ship, and my life would have been snuffed out as theirs has been. I'm the happiest man in the world."

Soon after this event Brother Soans opened his own welding shop, and when I last heard of him he was making three times as much money as when he lost his job. It is true--the Christian's tears turn into joy.

Likewise, we young people should not be deceived by laughter and excitement. All laughter is not joy. The old patriarch Job says, "The triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment." Job 20:5.

A number of years ago, while my family and I were living on our Karen Mission station in Burma, our three little nephews, Edwin, Wilfred, Buddy, and their mother came to visit us. One day seven-year-old Wilfred was blowing soap bubbles in a room next to my office. He was having tremendous success, and wanted me to join in this pleasure. "O uncle, come and see," he called with great enthusiasm. "What a beauty! O uncle!" But I was very busy and made no response.

"O uncle! there's another! What a beauty! O uncle, Come quickly!"

His enthusiasm was contagious, and I rose. "Come on, uncle! There's another. Oh, what a beauty." I went to the door, and encouraged by my movement Wilfred shouted still louder. "There's another, O uncle!" I opened the door, but as I did so I heard the words, "O uncle, it's busted!"

That's what Job meant. Probe into the reasons for the great army of alcoholics or into the background for the thousands of suicides every year, and you will find that the pleasures of life for these unfortunates proved disappointing, that laughter and excitement yielded only fleeting satisfactions, and they sought a way of escape.

But in contrast to the transient pleasure of the wicked, Christ Himself says, "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." John 16:22.

A number of years ago I was ingathering in Moulmein. In Steel's rice mill I met the chief engineer, Mr. Sinclair, and showed him some pictures of our dispensary work a hundred miles north among the spirit worshipers. The whistle blew as we were talking. "Come and have lunch with me," said Mr. Sinclair, "and tell me some more about your work in the jungle."

While we lunched together I told him about the girl with the "burnt" finger, and how Brother Baird and I had amputated the arm at the elbow and saved her life.

"Wonderful!" he exclaimed, "tell me some more."

So I told him about the man who said he had been "stung with an elephant," and how Brother Baird and I washed his bowels and put them back and sewed him up. I told him how the man had prayed his first prayer, "God of the white man, make me better," and how God answered that prayer and saved that man's life.

"That is remarkable!" said Mr. Sinclair, with great feeling. "But I don't see how you men can do it! I don't see how you can be happy away up there in the never-nevers--and no whisky and sodas!"

"Mr. Sinclair," I replied, "no whisky and soda could ever give you the 'kick' we get going from village to village and seeing the mothers running toward us with happy healthy babies in their arms, and hearing them say, 'Can't you remember this one! It was nearly dead, and you were kind to it, and now look at it! If it hadn't been for you, our baby would have died.'"

"Yes, yes, it must be wonderful," agreed Mr. Sinclair, "but what do you do with no jazz orchestra and dances?"

I told him about my brass band of twenty-five instruments, and my choir of eighty-three voices that could sing anthems in six parts. I assured him no jazz orchestra could ever produce music like my choir and brass band.

He said, "Mr. Hare, I suppose you're right, but you have no movies and no shows! How do you pass the time away?"

"We have the comedy and tragedy of real life up there in the jungle," I assured him.

Then I told him about the little old woman who came to the dispensary one day with her face all scarred like a crazy patchwork quilt. It didn't look like smallpox

scars or tiger-claw scars, and I was puzzled. She smiled at me and said, "Thara, don't you remember me?"

I said, "No, Auntie, I can't remember anyone with such a strangely scarred face."

"Well," she said, "now do you know me?" And she threw the shawl from her left arm and showed me the stump where her arm had been hacked off just below the elbow. Then I remembered. Before I could stop her she was kneeling at my feet sobbing out her thanks.

"Oh," she said, "if you hadn't come that night when that Indian marijuana fiend ran amuck, and slashed my son's neck and cut off two of his fingers, and split my forehead and cut my cheek till it showed the teeth and tongue, then hacked off my left arm and slashed my right arm till you could see the bone in two places, I surely would have died. But you weren't afraid of the night. You weren't afraid of the tigers. You came, and now my son and I both live."

And I said, "Mr. Sinclair, you can have all the farce and mockery of unreal life they give you in the movies, but give me the real joy and the real sorrow of real life."

He agreed, but couldn't seem to understand what life would be like up there. "No clubs, and no association," he murmured, "just two white men among all those jungle people."

I saw he was deeply impressed, and continued: "Mr. Sinclair, a few weeks ago we closed our school for the year. I was working late at my desk that last night. It was long after midnight when I heard a timid knock on my door. I called, 'Come in,' and in a few seconds one of my big boys stood beside me. He tried to talk, but the words wouldn't come. I thought he was in trouble, so I put my hand on his shoulder and said, 'I'll understand, Mghko, I'll understand.'"

Then the words came, "Oh no, Thara, it's not that. I'm not in trouble, but," he hesitated, "tomorrow we are going home, and I just wanted to come and say Thank you before I left. You know I had no hope of heaven when I came to school, but you and Mamma have been kind to me, and patient with me. I haven't always tried as hard as I should, but if I ever get to heaven, it will be because you and Mamma have been kind and patient."

Pausing to control my emotion, I added, "Mr. Sinclair, the drunken applause of associates in a club can't compare with the association of those to whom you have showed the way of life eternal."

For a moment Mr. Sinclair struggled with his own emotions before he made any response. Then he said, "You're right, Mr. Hare, you're right. Do you know, I'd give the world to experience a joy like that?"

"Mr. Sinclair," I replied, "that's what it takes; that's what I gave. I gave the world for that joy."

Dear young people, that is just what it costs for everyone. It costs the world. You can have the pleasure and excitement of the world if you wish, or you can have the joy of serving Jesus, but you can't have both.

David prayed, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." Psalm 119:18.

That you may find the path of life and the fullness of joy, will you not make this song the prayer of your heart?

"Open my eyes, that I may see,
Glimpses of truth Thou hast for me;
Place in my hands the wonderful key
That shall unclasp, and set me free.
Silently now I wait for Thee,
Ready, my God, Thy will to see;
Open my eyes, illumine me, Spirit divine!"
Clara H. Scott.

JOY IN SERVING JESUS

There is joy in serving Jesus,
As I journey on my way,
Joy that fills the heart with praises,
Ev'ry hour and ev'ry day.

There is joy, joy,
Joy in serving Jesus,
Joy that throbs within my heart;
Ev'ry moment, ev'ry hour,
As I draw upon His pow'r,
There is joy, joy, Joy that never shall depart.

There is joy in serving Jesus,
Joy that triumphs over pain;

Fills my soul with heaven's music,
Till I join the glad refrain.

There is joy in serving Jesus,
As I walk alone with God;
'Tis the joy of Christ, my Saviour,
Who the path of suff'ring trod.

There is joy in serving Jesus,
Joy amid the darkest night,
For I've learned the wondrous secret,
And I'm walking in the light.
Oswald J. Smith.
(The Rodeheaver Co. owner)

Lesson 1 Quiz:

Write Yes or No:

1. _____ God is angry if we are happy.
2. _____ Mr. Sloan, the welder, lost his job to keep God's Sabbath.
3. _____ Do you think that the coolie who dropped his cigarette should have told somebody?
4. _____ Even in this world, Jesus often turns our sadness into joy.
5. _____ According to what happened to the jungle lady, do you think Marijuana is a good thing to use?
6. _____ Can we have all the pleasures of this world and still be a true Christian?
7. _____ David said in his psalm that there are wonderful things in God's law.
8. _____ Laughter and joking brings real happiness.
9. _____ Religion makes us sad and gloomy.
10. _____ Helping others can bring us great joy.