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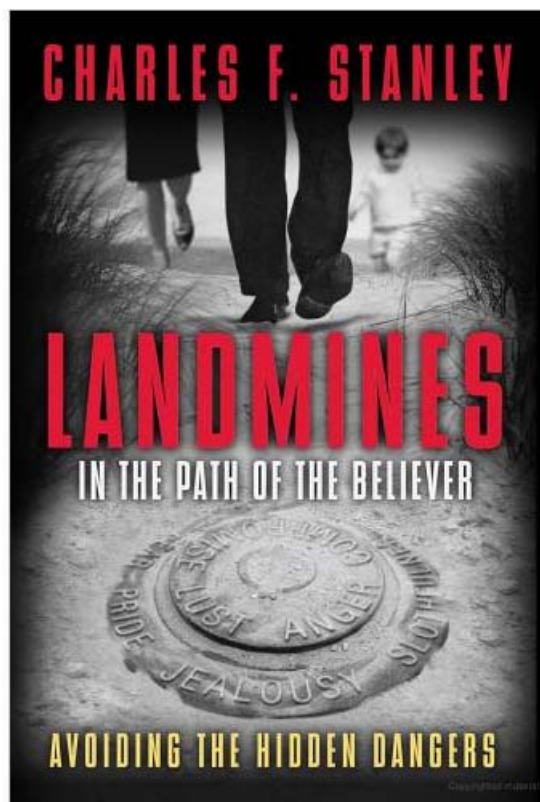
Ready or Not -- Watch for the Landmines!

EPHESIANS 5: 15

WEEKLY SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

AUGUST 1, 2010

LESSON #1 FROM THE *MASTERWORK* SERIES STUDY OF:



Ready or Not -- Watch for the Landmines!

EPHESIANS 5: 15



Had you been on the British Coast in 1845 you might have seen two ships boarded by 138 of England's finest sailors setting sail for the Arctic. Their task? To chart the Northwest Passage around the Canadian Arctic to the Pacific Ocean. The captain, Sir John Franklin, hoped this effort would be the turning point in the Arctic exploration. History shows that it was. Not because of its success, but because of its failure. The ships never returned. Every crew member perished. And those who followed in the expedition's path to the pole learned this lesson: **PREPARE FOR THE JOURNEY.**

Apparently, Franklin didn't. Though the voyage was projected to last two to three years, he only carried a twelve-day supply of coal for the auxiliary steam engines. But what he lacked in fuel, he made up for in entertainment. Each ship carried a "1,200 volume library, a hand-organ, china place settings for officers and men, cut glass wine goblets and sterling silver flatware."

Was the crew planning for an Arctic expedition or a Caribbean cruise? Judging from the supplies, one would have thought the latter. The sailors carried no special clothing to protect them against the cold. Only the uniforms of Her Majesty's fleet. Noble and respectful, but thin and inadequate. The silver knives, forks, and spoons were as ornate as those found in the dining rooms of the Royal Navy officers clubs: heavy at the handles, intricately designed. Years later, some of these place settings would be found near a clump of frozen, cannibalized bodies.

The inevitable had occurred. The two ships had sailed ill-prepared into the frigid waters. Ice coated the deck, the spars, and the rigging. The sea froze around the rudder and trapped the ship. The sailors set out to search for help, wearing their uniforms and carrying their belongings. Inuit Indians reported seeing a group

dragging a wooden boat across the ice. For the next 20 years, remains of the expedition were all over the frozen sea. The boat, or a similar one, was later discovered containing the bodies of 35 men. Other Indians discovered a tent on the ice and in it, 30 bodies. Franklin died on the boat! Search parties would later find a piece of the backgammon board Lady Jane Franklin had given her husband as a farewell present. Many miles from the vessel, the skeleton of a frozen officer was discovered, still wearing trousers and jacket of "fine blue cloth...edged with silk braid, with sleeves slashed and bearing 5 buttons each. Over his uniform the dead man had worn a blue greatcoat, with a black silk neckerchief.

STRANGE how men could embark on such a journey ill-prepared, more equipped for afternoon tea than for the open sea. Stranger still how we do the same. Don't Franklin's men remind you of us? We sometimes act as if the Christian life is a retirement cruise. We have little fuel, but lots of entertainment. We are more concerned with looking snappy than with being prepared. We give more thought to the table settings than to surviving the journey. We give little thought to the destination, but we make sure there's plenty of silver to go around.

And so when the freeze comes, we step out on the ice with forks, games, and skimpy clothing and pass our final days walking against the wind, often blaming GOD for getting us into this mess. But GOD is not to blame. If we sail unprepared it's in spite of - not because of - God. He left detailed instructions about this voyage. His Word is our map; the Holy Spirit is our compass. He outlined the route and described the landmarks we should seek. He even told us what to pack for the trip in **GALATIANS 5:22-23**: *"²²But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!"* Did you catch all nine? LOVE, JOY, PEACE, PATIENCE, KINDNESS, GOODNESS, FAITHFULNESS, GENTLENESS, SELF-CONTROL.

This week we began a new five-week Bible study by Dr. Charles Stanley from his book *Landmines in the Path of the Believer*. While there are certainly times when each of us feels as though he or she is walking across a minefield, we don't have to live in fear of the enemy's threat because there are biblical principles for clearing the landmines out of your life. As Christians, we know that we have the Holy Spirit within us and, just as we've been reminded, that we are filled with His fruit. So, over the next five weeks we'll spend time talking about nine primary landmines that every Christian must identify and defuse in order to live a victorious life, according to Dr. Stanley. Those landmines are: **DISAPPOINTMENT, PRIDE, JEALOUSY AND ENVY, INSECURITY, COMPROMISE, UNFORGIVENESS, FEAR, IMMORALITY AND LAZINESS.**

Today we wrap up Week One and you've had a chance to read and think about the truth concerning two spiritual landmines—disappointment and pride. Many people mistakenly think that Satan uses obvious means to draw us off course, according to Dr. Stanley in the *Introduction* to his book. However, his most devastating weapons of warfare are barely visible. They lay hidden below the surface of our spiritual landscape. Yet when we move in their direction, they explode beneath us, inflicting deep heartache, sorrow, and brokenness. Sometimes the injury seems beyond repair, but it never is when God is involved.

I hope that before you began your bible study of Lesson One this week that you gave some thought to the questions on Page 107. The writer asked you to read **1 PETER 5:8** and then to jot down how aware YOU are of the adversary in your life. What does that scripture verse say? Anyone? Listen to the **CEV** translation: *"Be on your guard and stay awake. Your enemy, the devil, is like a roaring lion, sneaking around to find someone to attack."*

What response did you write down about being *more spiritually alert*? Let me give you some added assurance as we begin this

new study. Don't ever forget a prior memory verse about this from **LUKE 18: 27 (NIV)**, "*Jesus replied, "What is impossible with men is possible with God."* Or listen to these words from **LUKE 1:37 (NIV)**, "*For nothing is impossible with God."*

So, knowing that we come face-to-face with our enemy regularly, we need a plan. As Dr. Stanley pointed out in Day One, "*wars are not won by rushing into battle without a plan or a map of the combat zone.*" However, we can't go through life blindly—failing to consider the consequences of our actions and the responsibility we have been given as members of the body of Christ. Turn to **EPHESIANS 5: 15** and tell me how your translation says this:

NIV: BE VERY CAREFUL, THEN, HOW YOU LIVE—NOT AS **UNWISE** BUT AS **WISE**,

CEV: ACT LIKE PEOPLE WITH **GOOD SENSE** AND NOT LIKE **FOOLS**.

GW: SO THEN, BE VERY CAREFUL HOW YOU LIVE. DON'T LIVE LIKE **FOOLISH** PEOPLE BUT LIKE **WISE** PEOPLE.

ESV: LOOK CAREFULLY THEN HOW YOU WALK, NOT AS **UNWISE** BUT AS **WISE**,

TLB: SO BE CAREFUL HOW YOU ACT; THESE ARE DIFFICULT DAYS. DON'T BE **FOOLS**; BE **WISE**:

MSG: SO WATCH YOUR STEP. USE YOUR HEAD.

What would be some things in the **wise** column? What about in the **unwise** column? (**DISCUSS**) Now, let's read the next verse.

How does your translation have EPHESIANS 5:16?

NIV: MAKING THE MOST OF EVERY OPPORTUNITY, BECAUSE THE DAYS ARE EVIL.

CEV: THESE ARE EVIL TIMES, SO MAKE EVERY MINUTE COUNT.

ESV: MAKING THE BEST USE OF THE TIME, BECAUSE THE DAYS ARE EVIL.

MSG: MAKE THE MOST OF EVERY CHANCE YOU GET. THESE ARE DESPERATE TIMES!

You'll recall that last week we talked about what you would do if you found out that you were going to die—or if you had 30 days to live, because we all know that we **ARE** going to die. So, with that and this verse in mind, what is one thing that you do to make the most of **your time**?

Now, look at the next verse, **EPHESIANS 5:17 (CEV)**, *"Don't be stupid. Instead, find out what the Lord wants you to do."* I love the way the CEV just says it like it is. Can anyone think of a principle that relates to **finding** God's Will? Remember the words of the Psalmist in **PSALM 37:4** that we learned in our John Piper study about *Desiring God*, *"Delight thyself also in the Lord; and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart"* God does not say He will fulfill all the desires there! If you are living a godly life, He will give you the right desires.

Now, as you studied your lesson this week, you may have thought of some things that you face individually that seem impossible for you to deal with or handle. Yet, you know that God has promised to be your strength in tough and difficult times. So, where's the problem? Turn to **1 CORINTHIANS 10: 13 (NIV)** and read that verse. This is your memory verse for our entire study, so I encourage you to memorize this verse. But, let me **misquote** the verse and see if you can catch me. Listen: *"No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will **make you strong** so that you can stand up under it."* What was wrong with that? Yes, I changed the last sentence. The last part of the last sentence should have read, *"he will **also provide a way out** so that you can stand up under it."* **What's the difference?**

Let's look at the first landmine that Dr. Stanley talks about in our study: **disappointment**. Turn to **PSALM 57:1 (NLT)** and follow along: *"Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me, for in you my soul takes refuge. I will take refuge in the shadow of your wings until the disaster has passed."* **What do you do when you face the landmine of disappointment? What should you do?**

In 1984, 1988, and 1992 American speed skater Dan Jansen suffered a series of disappointments in his attempts to win Olympic gold. How did he keep coming back time and time again? He says he learned to keep things in perspective. In **Full Circle**, Jansen writes: *"When I was nine years old, I was competing at the youth national championships in Minnesota. I was in good position to win my first national title when, coming around a turn, I tripped on a rubber hose they had set up as a lane marker. That slip cost me the title by one point. I started crying. I was crying as Mom took off my skates and during the award ceremonies. I was still crying when we got in the car and when we pulled into our driveway six hours later. My father hadn't spoken a word to me all the way home. But as we got out of the car, he said quietly, "You know, Dan, there's more to life than skating around in a circle."*

As bitter as any loss may be, when we **know** the Lord there is always much more to life than any disappointment we are now facing. It's during these times that we are to draw closer to Him and stand strong in our faith. Sometimes it's hard to know whether you are being killed or saved by the hand of the one turning your life upside down. When you are on your back being turned every which way but loose, you don't know whether God is doing you in or delivering you. When He puts you to lie there, you don't know which way is up, and you are lying flat on your back. Guess what, sometimes God makes us to lie down. God will take the credit for putting us on our backs to fix whatever is wrong and make us totally anemic within ourselves. He will put us in a place where there's only room for one God.

Listen to these reassuring words from **HEBREWS 12:11 (NLT)** telling us not to give up: *"No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening—it's painful! But afterward there will be a peaceful harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way."*

Let's look at our **second landmine—PRIDE**. Of all the sins in God's Word, pride is the most destructive—it's one of the seven deadly sins, according to Proverbs 6:16-19 Listen to what **PROVERBS 16:5 (NIV)** says, *"The LORD detests all the proud of heart. Be sure of this: They will not go unpunished.* And then in **16:18**, it says, *"Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall."* I read this week that *pride is the dandelion of the soul. Its root goes deep; only a little left behind sprouts again.* **So, what's the big deal with pride?**

Chuck Swindoll has a great quote about pride: *"Pride is the only disease known to man that makes everyone sick except the person who has it."* Why is it difficult to see pride in the mirror? Did you hear about the turtle who wanted to spend the winter in Florida, but he knew he could never walk that far? Seems he convinced a couple of geese to help him, each taking one end of a piece of rope, while he clamped his viselike jaws in the center. The flight went fine until someone on the ground looked up in admiration and asked, "Who in the world thought of that?" Unable to resist the chance to take credit, the turtle opened his mouth to shout, "I did—" and down he went. Pride before the fall literally, eh?

This week on Day Four you read about King Nebuchadnezzar from Daniel 4 and how he let his pride get in the way—and the consequences. God gave King Neb the opportunity to repent and turn away from his pride, but he waited too long. God waited a whole year on the king and did exactly what he told King Nebuchadnezzar he would do. See, your sins will find you out. As we learned in our study of Elijah, God finally draws the line and says, *"That's enough!"* As Dr. Stanley commented, Neb's life was totally caught up in pleasing himself. **And when we look at the world today, does this seem familiar? How do prideful people make you feel? Anyone have a story about pride that they can relate?**

I hope you spent a little extra time on Day Four this week and looked at the list of the consequences of pride on Pages 115-116. By looking through that list, hopefully you were able to pick out the consequence that has the most serious consequence in your mind. Then, the question becomes, what will you do in light of that? Don't forget that pride was the very landmine that caused Satan's fall from heaven. When pride grabs a hold on your heart, Christ is not Lord!

So, the bottom line here has to be *HOW, then, are we to successfully deal with pride* in our individual life? I can't help but recall a prior memory verse from **2 CHRONICLES 7: 14 (NKJ)** that offers a great solution not only to us individually—but to our nation: *"If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land."*

What do you love about a humble person? Why do you want to be humble?

This is a time for action. Even if you've accepted Christ as your personal Lord and savior, just as we talked about initially, you must choose to turn every area over to Him and allow Him to live His life through you. But don't wait too late! We never know when the time is up. General William Nelson was a Union general in the Civil War. Though he faced death every day, he never prepared for his own. Who knows what he was thinking as he rode into battle after battle? Maybe he was too busy staying alive to prepare for death. All that changed, however, one day as he was relaxing in a house with his men. A brawl broke out, and he was shot in the chest. Knowing he was dying, he had only one request: "Send for a clergyman."

What had happened? Why the urgency? Did the general suddenly learn something about God that he had never known? No. But he did learn something about himself. He realized death was near. Suddenly one thing matters. Why hadn't it mattered before? Couldn't he have said yes to God the week before or that very morning? Absolutely. Why didn't he? Why was the salvation of his soul so urgent after the shot and so optional before it? Why had he postponed his decision to accept Christ until his deathbed? BECAUSE HE ASSUMED HE HAD TIME. A dangerous assumption. *Teach us how short our loves really are,*" prayed Moses, *"so that we may be wise"* (Psalm 90:12).

What fear strikes a man when the end is near and he's not prepared. What fear must have struck the crew of Sir John Franklin when they became stuck in the ice. What anxiety to search for food and find silver, to dig in the closets for coats and find uniforms, to explore the ship for picks and axes and find backgammon games and novels.

Don't you know they would have swapped it all in a heartbeat for what they needed to get home safely? By the way, what supplies are you taking? Are you carrying your share of silver and games? Don't be fooled; they may matter **here**, but they matter not when you reach your Father's house. What matters is if you are known by the Father. Don't let the enemy fool you anymore. IT'S NOT WHAT YOU HAVE; IT'S WHO YOU KNOW. BE PREPARED. YOU DON'T WANT TO BE LEFT OUT IN THE COLD!

Let's Pray.



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1. We sometimes act as if the Christian life is a _____. We have little fuel, but lots of entertainment. We are more concerned with looking snappy than with being _____.
2. Nine primary landmines that every Christian must identify and defuse in order to live a victorious life: _____, _____, jealousy and envy, insecurity, compromise, unforgiveness, fear, immorality and laziness.
3. **1 PETER 5:8 (CEV)** says, "Be on your _____ and stay awake. Your enemy, the devil, is like a roaring lion, _____ around to find someone to attack."
 - ✿ **LUKE 1: 27 (NIV)**, "For nothing is _____ with God."
4. As bitter as any loss may be, when we _____ the Lord there is always much more to life than any _____ we are now facing. It's during these times that we are to draw closer to Him and stand strong in our faith.
5. **HEBREWS 12:11 (NLT)**: "No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening—it's _____! But afterward there will be a _____ harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way."
6. Our **second landmine** is _____. Of all the sins in God's Word, pride is the most _____—it's one of the seven deadly sins, according to Proverbs 6:16-19.
7. When **pride** grabs a hold on your heart, _____ is not _____!