

SOCIAL STUDIES 1201

PERSONAL AND SOCIAL CHALLENGES

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PERSONAL AND SOCIAL CHALLENGES

The United States Congress set forth the unanimous Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776, which states “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” Upon these principles the democratic system of government has been soundly established, and further developed by the Constitution proclaiming the government’s purpose in declaring, “We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this *Constitution* for the United States of America.”

The first ten amendments to the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, limit the powers of the Federal government, but not the powers of the states, although they do protect individuals against denial by the states of certain rights included in the Bill of

Rights. For example, the Supreme Court has decided that neither the Federal government nor the states can deprive any individual of his freedom of religion, speech, press, petition, assembly, or of several other rights that pertain to the fair treatment of the accused person. The first amendment, adopted in 1791, states: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.” The granting of such freedoms imposes responsibility upon those residing in a democratic society and presents both personal and social challenges. Such freedoms can either be abused or can provide protection for the exercising of responsible thoughts and actions. In this LightUnit you will examine some challenges concerning self: maturity, mental health, and career; the family institution; education; and the problem of discrimination.

OBJECTIVES

Read these objectives. The objectives tell you what you will be able to do when you have successfully completed this LightUnit.

When you have finished this LightUnit, you should be able:

1. To define personality and maturity in terms of God’s Word and self-discovery.
2. To list the possibilities for mental imbalance and mental health.
3. To list at least four guidelines to be considered concerning career.
4. To define conjugal and consanguine family orders.
5. To outline God’s divine order for the home, including the roles of men and women, guidelines for choosing a marriage partner, and Scriptural methods of child discipline.
6. To list contributing factors to the breakdown of family life.
7. To summarize briefly the history of education from the giving of the Law to Israel, to the development of synagogues, to the Protestant Reformation, and into the twentieth century.
8. To explain how Supreme Court rulings have influenced public schools.
9. To define the purposes of education from a democratic perspective and also from a Biblical viewpoint.
10. To summarize some constitutional legislation designed to curb discrimination in America.
11. To explain Scripturally God’s covenantal teaching on the subject of discrimination.

I. SELF: MATURITY, MENTAL HEALTH, AND CAREER

Our society is a complex mixture of people representing different races, religions, and creeds, forming a milieu of challenges directed toward each individual. "Survival of the fittest" may adequately express the general sentiment about living in today's

multi-faceted society. This section deals with issues confronting you as a maturing adult, encouraging you to Scripturally assess your life in terms of maturity, mental health, and career in light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

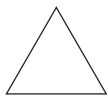
SECTION OBJECTIVES

Read these objectives. When you have completed this section, you should be able:

1. To define personality and maturity in terms of God's Word and self-discovery.
2. To list the possibilities for mental imbalance and mental health.
3. To list at least four guidelines to be considered concerning career.

VOCABULARY

Study these words to enhance your learning success in this section.



allogenic

autogenic

psychosomatic
self image

Note: All vocabulary words in this LightUnit appear in **boldface** print the first time they are used. If you are unsure of the meaning when you are reading, study the definitions given.

PERSONALITY

What is your **self image**? What does God say concerning you? What is your level of maturity? In this section perhaps you will gain increased insight into your own unique personality.

A dictionary definition of the word *personality* includes such meanings as *the quality or fact of*

being a particular person or habitual patterns and qualities of behavior of any individual as expressed by physical and mental activities and attitudes. You are a composite of many influences—heredity, environment, education, and God's own unique creative pattern.



Complete this activity.

On another piece of paper, write the first five thoughts that come to your mind when you ask yourself the question: Who am I? In this same exercise, list five values that you hold dear in your life.

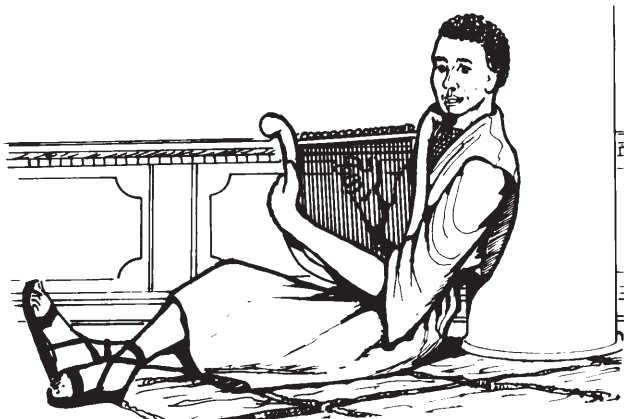
Your self image. Day by day you are bombarded with opportunities, decisions, temptations, and challenges that run the gamut of your life experience. Your reactions are determinants of your overall character and maturity. By examining the lives of Biblical characters, you may discover how they attained self-understanding.

Moses resided in the courts of Pharaoh almost from the time of his birth, being raised initially by his own Jewish mother, who became a servant of Pharaoh's daughter. Though considered royalty, he did not renounce his Hebrew heritage. When he witnessed Egyptian cruelty toward a Jewish brother, Moses murdered the offender. Having fled to Midian



in fear of his life, he lived as a lowly shepherd for forty years until he received God's commission to become deliverer of God's chosen nation, despite their opposition and rebellion. During the remaining course of Moses' life, he proved fallible by such errors as his refusing to trust God for the ability to speak to his people and accepting his brother Aaron as a substitute. He failed to enter the promised land because he disobeyed God at the waters of Meribah-Kadesh (refer to Deuteronomy 32:50-52). Yet Moses is regarded, with great esteem and admiration as God's man (Deuteronomy 34:10): "And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face."

David is remembered as the man after God's own heart, yet a review of his life uncovers heinous offenses against his Lord. Recounting David's life, you recall such commemorable events as his



David Playing on the Harp

slaying the Philistine giant, Goliath; his covenant with Jonathan; careful reverence of Saul's anointing; recovery of the ark of the covenant; and numerous military conquests. Among the glorious triumphs, miserable failures are intertwined, such as the murder of Uriah and the adulterous relationship with Bathsheba and irresponsibility in rearing and disciplining his sons, Absalom and Amnon. David found forgiveness for his sins by his heartfelt repentance as evidenced in Psalm 51:3, "For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me." Posterity remembers David, as Solomon summarized in conversation with God (1 Kings 3:6), "Thou hast shewed unto thy servant David my father great mercy, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee."

Despite their mistakes and heartaches, both Moses and David had the assurance of right standing before Almighty God, for they had received His directive words and purposed to live according to His promises. They were confident in the Word of God and the enforcement empowering those confirmations existing under the Old Covenant. In the New Testament, the Word of God became flesh: Jesus Christ, who was fully human yet without sin, always obeyed His Father's will as He said in John 5:19, "The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise."

Moses, David, and Jesus knew and understood themselves through comprehension of God's Word to them. What, then, does God say concerning you? First and foremost, God loves you (refer to John 3:16; Jeremiah 31:3; Romans 5:8; Ephesians 2:4; 1 John 3:1). The Scriptures give assurance that God cares for you (1 Peter 5:7); He knows all about you (Psalm 139); you are forgiven and cleansed when you acknowledge your trespasses (1 John 1:9); He supplies our food and clothes when we seek "first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness" (Matthew 6:33); He strengthens us "with all might . . . unto all patience and longsuffering" (Colossians 1:11)—our lives are ever His concern. What other Scriptures can you list that reveal your personality from God's viewpoint?

Your maturity. Through the working of God's Spirit, men of God grew and matured in remarkable ways. Maturity is the state or quality of being fully developed or perfected, as the Church is encouraged in Ephesians 4:13-15, "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, . . . unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, . . . may

grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.” The ultimate example of maturity is our Lord Jesus Christ, whose personality cannot be explained by environmental conditions. Jesus, as a youth growing up in Nazareth, was subject to His parents, “And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man” (Luke 2:52).

Maturity is not a matter of chronology, but of wisdom, knowledge, self-understanding, and God-confidence, all perfected in the life of Jesus. Maturity does not occur in a passing moment, but develops progressively, as 2 Corinthians 3:18 declares, “But

we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” Therefore, the same Spirit within Jesus also (John 14:26) “shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever” Jesus has spoken to you as one of His beloved disciples; and as you behold more of His glory issuing forth from the revelation of God’s written Word, the Holy Spirit works within you manifesting more of Jesus in your own life, bringing you to maturity.



Answer these questions.

1.1 What single factor caused Moses, David, and Jesus to know themselves?

1.2 How does maturity develop?



Complete these activities.

1.3 The ultimate example of maturity is _____

1.4 Define *personality*. _____

1.5 Name two instances of disobedience in Moses’ life.

a. _____

b. _____

1.6 List five of David’s accomplishments.

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

e. _____

1.7 List two of David’s offenses.

a. _____

b. _____

- 1.8 In your own words, list ten Scriptural statements that reveal God's opinion of you, giving at least one Scripture reference per statement. For example: My past, present, and future belong to God—Psalm 31:15, "My times are in thy hand."

a. _____
b. _____
c. _____
d. _____
e. _____
f. _____
g. _____
h. _____
i. _____
j. _____

POTENTIALITY

In autumn of 1960, a Presidential commission under Eisenhower's administration published a report that became known as *Goals for Americans*, which stated, "The paramount goal of the United States was set long ago. It is to guard the right of the individual, to ensure his development, and to enlarge his opportunity. It is set forth in the Declaration of Independence: The way to preserve freedom is to live it. Our enduring aim is to build a nation and help build a world in which every human being shall be free to develop his capacities to the fullest. We must rededicate ourselves to this principle and thereby strengthen its appeal to a world in political, social, economic, and technological revolution."

This mighty vision of democratic America outlined the fundamental concern for development of every individual's spiritual and intellectual capacities at the onset of one of the most violent, riotous, change-producing decades of the modern world. The challenges resulting from the 60's and 70's have left their imprint on a frightened world of turmoil and devastating ruin on the one hand, and on a confident optimism on the other. For those who see the world from a secular viewpoint, there is little hope of improvement; yet for those whose frame of reference is from a heavenly perspective, there has never been a more exciting time to be alive. Your possibilities are tremendous. You can choose a life

of mental, spiritual, and physical poverty, or one of soundness and clear direction.

Your mental health. First, consider your potentiality for good mental health. A Christian physician, S. I. McMillian, stated in his book, *None of These Diseases*, that "about nine million Americans suffer from emotional and mental illnesses. As many hospital beds are filled by the mentally deranged as are occupied by all medical and surgical patients combined. In fact, one out of every twenty Americans will have a psychotic disturbance severe enough to confine him in a hospital for treatment. Mental disease is indeed the nation's number one health problem." During most of its history, medical science has been chiefly concerned with conquering the physical diseases that cripple and kill. As these efforts meet with increasing success, attention is turning more and more to the emotional disorders that also can severely handicap a physically healthy person. Medical science now recognizes such emotions as fear, hatred, resentment, sorrow, envy, and many others as being directly responsible for a majority of sicknesses, with estimates ranging from 60 percent to almost 100 percent. There has been a resulting increase of mental hospitals, psychiatrists, psychologists, and psychological theories based on various humanistic philosophical presuppositions.

The general attitude toward the mentally ill has turned from gross misunderstanding and unrestrained cruel treatment or solitary confinement for the “irrational brutes” of former days to a “sympathetic understanding” which resembles the pampered privileges given to persons suffering from physical illnesses. Often the concept of sickness as the cause of personal problems vitiates all notions of human responsibility, as people claim their problems are **allogenic** (other-engendered) rather than **autogenic** (self-engendered) so that people no longer consider themselves responsible for what they do wrong.

Often the term *mental illness* is used quite ambiguously. Organic malfunctions affecting the brain that are caused by brain damage, tumors, gene inheritance, glandular or chemical disorders may be correctly called mental illness; but, at the same time, numerous other problems have been similarly classified when no evidence exists that they have been engendered by disease or illness. The misnomer may have been occasioned by **psychosomatic** illnesses, which are genuine physical disorders directly resulting from inner psychical difficulties. For example, worry may cause ulcers; anxiety may produce high blood pressure; fear may lead to paralysis; and any form of emotional stress may cause toxic goiter, arthritis, heart troubles, migraine headaches, apoplexy, or other serious illnesses. Apart from organically generated difficulties, the “mentally ill” are often people with unsolved personal and spiritual problems.

The Scriptures plainly speak of both organically based problems and problems stemming from sinful attitudes and behaviors. There is no capsule you can take for peace, but the Bible contains directives which can relieve a long gauntlet of psychosomatic illnesses that appear to be increasing despite all efforts of modern medicines and therapy groups. Second Timothy 1:7 guarantees the fact that “God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind”; for fear, anxieties, and emotional stress are not of God. God’s plan for His children is to trust Him completely and not to worry. Third John, verse 2, says: “Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.”

What Scriptural guidelines should be followed for sound mental health? For the Christian the answer lies in the person and promises of our Lord Jesus Christ who said (John 14:27): “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be

troubled, neither let it be afraid.” Compare Isaiah 26:3, “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.” A personal daily relationship with Jesus, while living within the context of a loving, caring brotherhood enables the believer to cast his cares upon Jesus. Think about I Peter 5:7, “Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.” Remember also that which is stated in Proverbs 15:13, “A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken,” and in Proverbs 17:22: “A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones.”

Your mind operates much as a computer in that the information which comes out is directly dependent on the input. If you program it with garbage, it will produce garbage. Romans 12:2 instructs, “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.” The renewing process can progress when we, like David, fill our minds and hearts with the Word of God (Psalm 119:11): “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.” If minds are programmed with the Word, actions and thought patterns are altered, as we are told in Proverbs 16:3, “Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established,” and in Philippians 4:8: “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, . . . whatsoever things are pure, . . . lovely, . . . of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.” To ensure continued soundness of mind and clear conscience, God has provided the wonderful gift of forgiveness when we repent of sin, as David expressed in Psalm 32:1, 2: “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.”

Your career. Through the exercise of a sound, rational mind functioning in harmony with God’s revealed Word, the future becomes a bright challenge instead of devastating fear. As a maturing teenager, you need to become aware of your gifts and interests in seeking a life’s vocation. You need to realize your first commitment is to Christ and His church. As you ponder your future seek the advice and prayers of your church community. God has a position for each of His children to fulfill, both in the family unit and in society by way of a career. God has dealt to each person special interests and talents not to be hoarded selfishly, but to be developed and used in service to the glory of God. Men especially have the responsibility of providing

for their family, as I Timothy 5:8 explicitly states: “But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.” The present trend is for more and more women to live independently and pursue their own career. Christian girls need to weigh carefully the temptations of being alone in a permissive society and carefully consult parents and the church before launching out in a career.

Your educational training is a prime channel for God’s preparatory work, but schools have never been designed to provide a substitute for life experiences, and it would be unrealistic to expect them to do so. Schools are designed to teach intellectual skills and to open up for students important fields of knowledge, promoting the practical application of acquired knowledge to everyday living situations. Many of you will spend at least one-third of your adult life working, traveling to and from work, and getting ready for work. The vocation you pursue and your worldview will be major factors in determining the lifestyle you will lead—when you eat and sleep, where you live, who your friends and associates will be, what you enjoy doing during leisure periods, what your short- and long-range goals include, and what you buy. Regardless of which vocation you choose, you will continue to experience a vast range of emotions—satisfaction, amusement, involvement, anger, joy, frustration, sorrow, and boredom—all of which must be handled in accordance with God’s Word.

In this world of social mobility and easily accessible transportation and communication, vocational experiences may be many. No law insists on a person’s maintaining only one lifework; you may choose to change. As God’s plan for your life continues to unfold, you may participate in many varied occupations—from dishwasher, to executive businessman, to pastor, to missionary. Wait for the Lord to open the doors of opportunity, as Proverbs 3:5, 6 instructs, “Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths,” because (Proverbs 4:18) “the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.” Usually the Lord does not arrange our steps as we would, nor does He

allow us to progress as rapidly as we think we should. Remember to act responsibly in small jobs and services as Jesus taught in the parables of the pounds (Luke 19:11-27) and of the dishonest steward (Luke 16:1-13), saying in Luke 16:10, “He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.”

In choosing a vocation or from among job opportunities within that vocation, remember that, according to Proverbs 11:14, “where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counselors there is safety”; and in Proverbs 12:15, we are informed that “the way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise.”



Counsel may come in the form of tests for vocational aptitudes and preferences or through advisers. Part of God’s plan for His Church includes dependence on one another. God has set forth those who are mature in the ways and workings of God to advise and counsel (Proverbs 19:20), so “hear counsel, and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise in thy latter end.” As you seek the Lord concerning His future direction for your life, continue to pray as David did in Psalm 90:17: “And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.”