

## I. Read Luke 12:8-12

- A. In verse 8, Jesus makes an important promise to all those who trust Him. What is it?  
**He promises to claim the elect as His own before the angelic hosts. This is *probably* an eschatological reference to The Great White Throne Judgment.**
- B. Read Revelation 20:11-15, and discuss how Luke 12:8-9 might relate to it.  
**Suppose that at the Judgment Seat of Christ, angelic beings brought accusations against one who had trusted in Christ: “This man was a drunkard!” or “This woman gossiped!” or “This woman committed murder!” Christ will step forward and confess that that one is His, covered by His atoning blood. Remember that Satan is the “accuser of the brethren” (Revelation 12:10). In the heavenly realm, Christ continually intercedes for the saints (even now), confessing that those who have trusted in Him are blameless!**
- C. Read Romans 10:9-10 and discuss the role of one's confession of Christ in salvation.  
**The desire and willingness to confess Christ as Savior is the natural consequence of genuine faith. It is doubtful that one who refuses to confess Christ publicly at the point of or during the *process* of conversion is truly regenerate. This does not, as some insist, require altar calls and invitations at the end of a church service, but it does require a willingness to follow Christ publicly. It has more to do with the change of patterns (behavior and priorities) in one's life than it does with a one-time confession, such as is common in the American revivalist tradition.**
- D. Another application of Luke 12:8-9 involves our willingness to *take God's side* against a culture or individuals who are in opposition to God and the things of God. This is truly where the rubber meets the road in the Christian walk. It may be relatively easy to confess Christ and/or join a church in a society that is still nominally Christian, but it is a different matter to take unpopular stands on specific issues. What are some examples of this?  
**abortion, homosexuality, divorce, the compassionate use of one's wealth, sexual libertinism**

Why do many fail to grasp the importance of approaching one's faith in a very practical manner?  
**Many have misunderstood the Christian faith. They have succumbed to a pietistic view of reality in which the material world and spiritual reality are viewed as completely separate. This is the heresy and error of Gnosticism, which embraces the dualism of the ancient Greeks. Those given over to pietism see spiritual matters such as faith, witnessing, prayer, and church as separate and superior to concerns about the culture, physical needs, politics, education, work, etc. Confessing Christ in the most comprehensive sense means to apply one's faith to *all* aspects of life! James said it clearly — faith without works is dead!**

- E. In Luke 12:10, Jesus is warning against a serious sin. It is important to remember the context of His warning. He is rebuking the Pharisees, scribes and lawyers for their hypocrisy while, at the same time, encouraging His followers to stand with Him. The sin He warns against is *blasphemy against the Holy Spirit*. Read the following note before going on.

***NOTE: The Unpardonable Sin – Jesus' solemn warning about a kind of sin that will not be forgiven, either in this world or the next, is found in three Gospels: Matthew 12:31-32; Mark 3:28-30; Luke 12:10. It is specifically “blasphemy against the Spirit.” This blasphemy is an act performed by speaking, understood as an expression of the thoughts of the heart (Matthew 12:33-37; cf. Romans 10:9-10). In this particular context, the opponents of Jesus were saying that the Power doing good works among them was not God but the devil. Jesus distinguishes between this***

*blasphemy and other sins, both other sins of speech and other sins in general. As the Bible teaches, God forgave sins of incest, murder, lying, and even Paul's persecution of the church, which Paul did while "breathing threats and murder" against God's people. (Acts 9:1)*

*What makes the unpardonable sin different from others is its relation to the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit's work to enlighten the mind of sinners (Ephesians 1:17-18), to reveal and teach the gospel (John 14:26), persuading souls to repent and believe the truth (cf. Acts 7:51). The Spirit not only explains the Word of God, but He opens the mind so that it is perceived (2 Corinth. 3:16-17). When His influence is deliberately and knowingly refused, in opposition to the light, then the unforgivable sin can be committed as a voluntary, informed act of malice. In response, there is a hardening of the heart from God that rules out repentance and faith (Hebrews 3:12-13). God permits the decision of the human will to be permanent in this case. God does not do this lightly or without cause, but in response to an offense against His love.*

*A person who wants to repent, that is, to reverse the sins he may be guilty of, has not suffered this hardening and has not committed the profound act of hatred that God has determined He will not forgive. Anyone who has been born again will not commit this sin, because the Spirit lives in that person, and God is not divided against Himself (See 1 John 3:9). (This note is excerpted from the New Geneva Study Bible.)*

Can a Christian commit the unpardonable sin?

**No! If you are genuinely concerned that you have committed this sin, that concern itself demonstrates that you have not. The reprobate are not concerned about things like that!**

- F. In Luke 12:11, Jesus encourages His followers with the assurance that He will equip them, as they are in need, with the ability to speak boldly. This is a truth that Christians can count on in all areas of life. Read Philippians 4:13, 2 Corinth. 12:9-10; John 14:15-18, 16:5-15 and discuss the *means* of equipping according to God's provision.

**God promises to help believers meet the challenges that He allows us to face. This could include persecution, tribulation, tragedy, temptations and struggles of all kinds. In Luke 12:11, Jesus is, in particular, promising that God will equip His people to speak His truth boldly and clearly. This is often a matter of bringing His Word — the Scriptures — to one's mind at just the right moment. This, of course, assumes that one has read and studied His Word. It is not a matter of new special revelation! Further application can be seen in the way God strengthens believers beyond what they might expect as they go through trials and tribulations. His promise is not necessarily to remove the trials, but rather to equip one to get through them. The Apostle Paul experienced this on many occasions. In order to demonstrate this truth to us, He often puts us in situations or circumstances that are beyond our control — forcing us to depend on Him for strength! The *means* of equipping is the knowledge that God is sovereign, that He providentially provides and cares for us, that He loves us as His own children, and that He has given us the gift of the Holy Spirit at our regeneration and conversion to carry us through the challenges of life.**

- G. Corrie Ten Boom's father explained to her as a small child that he did not give her a train ticket until it is time to take a trip and board a train. His explanation was in response to her anxiety about what trouble the future might bring. What was he really saying to her?

**He was explaining to her that God does not give us the grace or strength to weather a storm until it's time. What may seem beyond our ability to cope with at the present time may become a matter of God's special empowerment and grace at a point in the future when it is necessary. For example, you may think that the loss or death of your spouse or a child would**

**be too difficult to bear. Yet, our hope is in the fact that when these kinds of struggles occur, God gives us our ticket (the grace to bear it), but not before.**

H. Share an instance when you have experienced God's grace and/or strength, beyond your personal ability.

\* **Requires a personal testimony.**

I. What do you fear the most?

**Surveys tell us that speaking in front of people is the number one fear for most folks — even before death. No matter what one's fear is, God can help one face it successfully.**

How should Luke 12:11 give you comfort as you consider this fear?

\* **Requires a personal testimony.**