

IN THE STEPS OF CHRIST

PERSONAL GROWTH IN GODLINESS

*The one who says he abides in Him
ought himself to walk
in the same manner as He walked.
(1 John 2:6)*

CHRIST BIBLE CHURCH
CRANBERRY TOWNSHIP, PA

In the Steps of Christ: Personal Growth in Godliness

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THE IMPORTANCE OF DISCIPLESHIP

INTRODUCTION TO THE CURRICULUM

The Definition of Discipleship

When most people hear the word *disciple* they immediately think of the twelve disciples of Jesus, the men who were chosen by Christ Himself and were appointed to follow Him and bear fruit (John 15:16). However, these twelve men are certainly not the only disciples of Jesus. For example, in John 6:60-66, “*many of His disciples*” had a difficult time with His teaching about the bread of life (v. 61), and “*as a result of this many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore*” (v. 66). Although the term *disciple* is used many times in the New Testament to refer to the twelve, in the most general sense, a disciple is a follower or student of a teacher. In this respect, *all* Christians are disciples of Jesus Christ!

The term *disciple* is also used as a verb. Here *discipleship* is defined as the process by which believers mentor and assist (i.e. disciple) other believers to greater levels of biblical knowledge and spiritual maturity. As modeled by Christ to His closest twelve disciples, the discipleship process includes teaching as well as living the Christian life together.

The Motivation for and Goal of Discipleship

Some people mistakenly contend that discipleship is something that pertains exclusively to new believers and those who are young in the faith. They correctly maintain that discipleship is based on the Christ’s injunction in the “Great Commission” to “*Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you*” (Matthew 28:19-20). They argue that this commission is a call to evangelize, and they are correct in recognizing that the Great Commission begins with evangelism. However, one aspect of “*go therefore and make disciples*” has escaped their attention. A significant part of the discipleship process is “*teaching them to observe all that I commanded you.*” This component of the Great Commission is not limited to new believers and those who are young in the faith; it applies to all believers. Learning to observe all that Christ commanded is a lifelong process. Therefore, discipleship begins at conversion and continues throughout the remainder of one’s life. No Christian ever ceases to be a disciple.

The Great Commission provides the Christian's lifelong motivation and goal in discipleship: learning to observe all that Christ has commanded. The apostle John stated it this way: "*the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked*" (1 John 2:6).

In the process of learning to obey (i.e. walking with Christ), disciples should eventually become disciplers. Colossians 1:28 lays out the perspective of the discipler: "*We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ.*" In this verse, there are seven keys to discipleship. First, notice that the subject of the sentence is "*we.*" Discipleship is not a "one-man act." It is to be done by every Christian. Second, the verb is "*proclaim.*" Proclamation of truth can be public or private. Regardless of forum, it is to declare or announce. Third, the content of the proclamation is "*Him.*" Everything we proclaim is centered on the Lord Jesus Christ. Fourth, our proclamation takes two forms: "*admonishing*" and "*teaching.*" Teaching refers to doctrinal instruction and the impartation of knowledge. Admonishing, on the other hand, implies personal and practical exhortation and warning. The discipler must both teach the truths of God's Word and admonish his disciple to implement them in his life. Fifth, the objects of the proclamation are "*every man,*" because all believers are to be disciplined. Notice Paul's emphasis on the phrase "*every man*" by repeating it three times in the span of one sentence! Sixth, the extent of discipleship is "*with all wisdom.*" Seventh, the goal of discipleship is "*that we may present every man complete in Christ.*" The idea of the word "*present*" is to place them before God as a pure and spotless offering. Paul uses the Greek word *teleios* to picture the disciple who is "*complete in Christ.*" The connotation here is that the discipler strives to bring the disciple to full maturity in Christ.

It is our prayer that this discipleship curriculum will help you to become more "*complete in Christ*" by proclaiming Him with all wisdom, teaching and admonishing you to walk "*in the steps of Christ.*"

THE IMPORTANCE OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH

INTRODUCTION TO THE TOPIC

The Definition of Spiritual Growth

The Bible declares all unbelievers to be “*dead in...trespasses and sins*” (Ephesians 2:1). It is only through the new birth that one receives spiritual life and vitality in Christ. Similar to its physical counterpart, spiritual birth marks the beginning a life-long process of maturation. Believers are not immediately perfected as a result of the new birth. On the contrary, at the moment a person is born again, he embarks on a journey of becoming increasingly like Jesus Christ. This process is known as spiritual growth.

“Sanctification” is the theological term commonly used in reference to spiritual maturation. It is a supernatural work of God in the believer which results in “*the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man*” (Ephesians 4:13), ultimately resulting in being “*conformed to the image of His Son*” Jesus Christ (Romans 8:29).

An Illustration of Spiritual Growth

One of the most joyful events in a couple’s life is when the newly born baby lays in the arms of mother for the first time. All the pain of labor pales in comparison to the joy that child brings. The happy moment anticipates years of additional joy watching the child take his first step, speak the first word, pray for the first time, wrestle with dad, and run with other children. Parents presume physical growth because growth is normal and necessary to live. When growth does not take place, there is cause for concern because something in the body is not functioning properly. The same is true with regards to spiritual growth.

The Importance of Spiritual Growth

When a believer in Jesus Christ does not grow spiritually, there is cause for concern, and something is wrong. Such was the unhappy situation at the church in Corinth. The apostle Paul and his team spent a year and a half ministering in the city. The Bible says “*many of the Corinthians when they heard were believing and being baptized*” (Acts 18:8). It must have been a wonderful ministry seeing God grant eternal life to so many. It also must have been hazardous, for the Lord said to Paul, “*Do not be afraid any longer, but go on speaking and do not be silent;*

for I am with you, and no man will attack you in order to harm you, for I have many people in this city.” (vv. 9-10). Paul continued to teach the Word of God so long as he was there.

Five years later word reached Paul that the church in Corinth was not doing well. There were factions, disputes among themselves, one case of sin that should have resulted in church discipline, questions about marriage, issues pertaining to liberties as believers, disunity in worship, and questions about Christ’s resurrection. How did this happen? Simply, they were not growing; they were not maturing spiritually in the Faith. Paul had to address the situation.

1 Corinthians 3:1-3 is not a word of comfort, but of chastisement. A disconnect between their position in Christ and their practice in life led Paul to call them “*men of flesh*” (so-called “carnal Christians”), comparing them to “*babes in Christ.*” Clearly, Paul did not expect them to behave as “*babes in Christ*” after four to five years in Christ. A “carnal Christian” is not a third class of humanity between being a non-Christian and being a “Spirit-filled Christian.” “Carnal Christian” is an oxymoron that cannot endure for long, for in 1 Corinthians 3:3 Paul places the behavior of the “*men of flesh*” who are still “*babes in Christ*” in the category of those who do not have the Spirit at all! From Paul’s perspective, to claim to be a Christian, while at the same time willingly and gladly remaining in infant-like states of immature sin, is a contradiction in terms that must be resolved in one direction or the other (cf. Rom 6:15-19). Jesus said succinctly, “*each tree is known by its own fruit*” (Luke 6:44).

All Christians are called to grow spiritually and to “*walk in the same manner as [Christ] walked*” (1 John 2:6). This spiritual development is inevitable in the life of a believer, because it is God Himself “*who causes the growth.*” (1 Corinthians 3:7). Due to this, Paul expected their faith to continue growing (2 Corinthians 10:15; cf. Colossians 2:19) and was abundantly thankful for it (2 Thessalonians 1:3).

Among the reasons why spiritual growth is important, none is greater than its purpose. According to Scripture, believers strive toward Christlikeness with the hopes of being “*a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work*” (2 Timothy 2:21). Simply put, walking as the Lord Jesus walked is pleasing to God (1 Thessalonians 4:1) and accords with His will (v. 3). Ultimately, all thoughts, words, and deeds ought to arise from a deep desire to glorify God (1 Corinthians 10:31). This passion and desire provides fuel for the spiritual development of the believer.

The Imperative of Spiritual Growth

Although all spiritual growth is ultimately the product of the work of God in the lives of believers, sanctification involves human responsibility (2 Corinthians 7:1; Colossians 3:5-17). Christians are commanded to grow spiritually and bear fruit. In the midst of a section of intense exhortation, Paul states, “*we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love*” (Ephesians 4:15-16). Throughout Scripture, believers are commanded to persist in doing good (2 Thessalonians 3:13), run with endurance (Hebrews 12:1), long for God’s Word (1 Peter 2:2), separate from sin (2 Corinthians 6:17), be transformed by the renewing of their minds (Romans 12:2), and “*grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*” (2 Peter 3:18). All of these imperatives and more are summed up in the one simple command to “*be imitators of God, as beloved children*” (Ephesians 5:1).

Since God causes sanctification and commands sanctification, He also gives us spiritual means by which believers may mature. These are the subject matter of this workbook. The twelve lessons within this course are categorized into four sections containing fundamental topics pertaining to how a believer can and ought to grow in Christlikeness:

1. Truths that Transform – Three convictions fundamental to spiritual growth and vitality, without which believers are hindered in sanctification
2. Foundations to Growth – Three topics which are pillars to spiritual growth
3. Attitudes that Stimulate Growth – Four attitudes that promote spiritual growth in believers and enable them to remain teachable, malleable, and focused
4. Spiritual Disciplines – Four basic spiritual disciplines necessary for believers to mature in Christ

UNION AND IDENTIFICATION WITH CHRIST

LESSON #1

Memory Verse: Romans 6:5

For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection

Union and identification with Christ is a topic that is often underemphasized in Christian churches. However, it is a vital and life-transforming truth. To live victorious Christian lives to the glory of God, it is imperative for believers to understand who they are in Christ.

I. Union with Christ

At the moment of salvation, the believer becomes individually and corporately united with Jesus Christ. On a personal level, believers are said to be “in Christ”, and Christ is said to be in them. This is also true on a corporate level, where the church, which is the body of Christ, is united to Jesus, who is the head of the church. It is important to understand that union with Christ is union with the Father and the Spirit as well. So, believers are united to the whole Trinity by a union that has always been guaranteed and can never be broken.

A. Union with Christ: Christ is in believers and believers are in Christ

1. According to Ephesians 3:17, where does the Son of God dwell? _____

2. What mystery did Paul speak about in Colossians 1:26-27? _____

3. What important benefit comes along with knowing Him who is true (1 John 5:20)?

4. How is the believer’s union with Christ described in John 15:4-5? _____

5. According to Galatians 2:20, where does Christ live? _____
6. How is Christ’s presence in the believer depicted in Galatians 3:27? _____

B. Union with Christ: Corporate as well as individual

1. According to Ephesians 1:22-23, Christ is the head of the church and the church is the body of Christ. How is the church described in verse 23? _____

2. According to Ephesians 4:15-16 and 1 Corinthians 12:12, 27, how does individual and corporate unity with Christ ensure that unity exists between believers? _____

3. What metaphor is used in Ephesians 5:28-32 to describe the unity of Christ and His church? _____

C. Union with Christ: Union with the Father

1. How is unity in Christ related to unity with the Father (1 John 2:24; 2 John 9)? _____

2. According to John 17:21, the Father is in the Son, the Son is in the Father, and believers are in the _____ and the _____
3. According to John 14:20, 23, who makes their abode/home with believers? _____

D. Union with Christ: Union with the Holy Spirit

1. According to 1 John 3:24 and 4:13, who has been given to believers? _____

2. In 1 Corinthians 12:13, Paul argues that everyone who believes is baptized into the _____ of Christ by the _____. He then describes this baptism as being made to _____ of the Holy Spirit.

E. Union with Christ: God's eternal and unalterable plan

1. According to Ephesians 1:3-4, Christians receive every spiritual blessing because God chose them in _____ before the foundation of the world.
2. On the basis of Paul's argument in Romans 8:38-39, what is able to separate the one who is in Christ from the love of God in Christ? _____

Indeed, expressions such as [in Christ, in the Lord, in Jesus Christ, in Him, etc.] occur 216 times in the Pauline corpus and twenty-six times in Johannine writings. Amply attested in the [New Testament], union with Christ proves to be a central verity, indeed a touchstone reality of the Christian life and experience...Union with Christ thus marks the end of the old existence and the beginning of the new...In identification with Christ, the old sinful nature du jure has been excised, and a radical change of life has occurred.¹

II. Identification with Christ

Since believers in Jesus Christ are intimately united with Him and the Spirit of God lives in them, they have a new identity. The writers of the New Testament consistently conveyed this truth as a statement of fact through the use of the indicative mood in the original Greek. Since believers are identified with Christ and given a new nature, it is their joy and obligation to be faithful. The writers conveyed this truth as a statement of command through the use of the imperative mood in Greek. The idea is that the believer is told who he is positionally in Christ (i.e. how God views him in Christ), and then he is admonished to practically act in accordance with his position. In other words, “here is what you are, and therefore, here is what you are to do.” Since these imperative (what you are to do) statements always flow from the indicative (who you are), we will study them together.

A. Christians are identified with Christ’s death and burial

1. How did Paul identify with the death of Christ in Galatians 2:20, and what did he do as a result? _____

2. What statement of fact did Paul make in Galatians 6:14? What practical result of this fact is stated in Galatians 5:24-25? _____

3. How does identifying with the death of Christ impact the believer’s life (2 Corinthians 4:10)? _____

¹ Bruce Demerest, *The Cross and Salvation* (Wheaton, IL.: Crossway Books, 2006), 313, 323, 334.

4. According to Colossians 3:3-5, how should the believer see his identity in Christ and what should he do as a result? _____

5. Read Romans 6:2-13 and answer the following questions.

a. What is the relationship between the believer's identity and action in v. 2? _____

b. With what do believers identify themselves in baptism (vv. 3-4) and how does it impact their lives (vv. 4-5)? _____

c. How and why are believers identified with the death of Christ (vv. 6-10)? _____

d. What are the practical commands resulting from this teaching and how can adherence to them change believers' lives (vv. 11-13)? _____

B. Christians are identified with Christ's resurrection and life

1. What two areas of identification with Christ did Paul speak of in Colossians 2:12-13 and what admonitions followed as a result in Colossians 3:1-10? _____

2. How are believers identified by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:22 and how should that identity influence their behavior (1 Corinthians 15:34, 58)? _____

C. Christians are identified with Christ's ascension

1. Read Ephesians 2:4-10 and answer the following questions.

a. Where does God view believers to be seated (v. 6)? _____

b. What benefits do Christians receive as a result (v. 7)? _____

c. What ought believers to do as a result (v. 10; cf. 4:1)? _____

D. Christians are identified with Christ's mind

1. Describe the way in which believers are identified with Christ and the resulting commands for each of the following passages.

a. 1 Corinthians 2:16 and 3:18-23 _____

b. Philippians 2:5 and 2:14-16 _____

c. Romans 12:2 and 12:16 _____

d. Ephesians 4:22-24 and 4:25-27 _____

E. Christians are identified with Christ's Spirit

1. According to Paul in 1 Corinthians 6:17, what is true for anyone who joins himself to the Lord? How should this be evidenced in the believer's life (vv. 18-20)? _____

2. According to Romans 8:9-13, how are Christians identified with the Spirit of Christ and what obligation are they under as a result? _____

F. Christians are identified with Christ's nature

1. How is the new nature described in 2 Corinthians 5:17? What responsibility and privilege come as a result (vv. 18-20)? _____

2. What is expected of those who have become partakers of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4-10)? _____

G. Christians are identified with Christ's holiness

1. In John 13:8-10, how did Jesus speak of the disciples' position before God (v. 10)? What did He command them to do as a result (v. 14)? _____

2. Describe the positional truth and practical command that are found in Hebrews 10:14 and 10:23-25. _____

3. According to Colossians 2:9-10, believers have been made _____ in Christ. Therefore, according to vv. 20-22, believers are to _____

4. How closely are position and practice tied together in Romans 8:1-2? _____

5. How did Paul describe the holiness of the believer and what command did he give as a result in Ephesians 5:8? _____

H. Christians are identified with Christ's victory over sin

1. According to 1 John 2:6, if someone abides in Christ, he ought to _____

2. For what reason did John argue that believers cannot make a practice of sin (1 John 3:9)? _____
3. What practical impact does abiding in Christ have (John 15:4-8; Philippians 4:13; cf. 1 Corinthians 10:13)? _____

4. According to 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, what victory does a Christian have over sin? What ought Christians to do as a result (v. 20)? _____

5. How does a believer's position with God and power from God affect evangelism (2 Timothy 1:7-8)? _____

6. How does a Christian's freedom impact his life (Galatians 5:1)? _____

7. How did Paul speak of victory in Christ in Romans 6:6 and 7:4? _____

...the new life in its moral manifestation is at one time proclaimed and posited as the fruit of the redemptive work of God in Christ through the Holy Spirit – the indicative; elsewhere, however, it is put with no less force as a categorical demand – the imperative...Now as regards the relationship to each other of these two different ways of speaking, it is immediately clear that the imperative rests on the indicative and that this order is not reversible. For in each case the imperative follows the indicative by way of conclusion.²

III. Personal Application

A. How does the knowledge that you are in Christ and Christ is in you deter you from sin?

B. How can you do a better job of identifying yourself as Christ identifies you? How will that identity help you to live a more holy and victorious Christian life? _____

² Herman Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1975), 253, 254-255.

FAITH IN THE PROMISES OF GOD

LESSON #2

Memory Verse: 2 Corinthians 1:20

For as many as are the promises of God, in Him [in Christ] they are yes; therefore also through Him is our Amen to the glory of God through us.

In this lesson we will examine some of the promises that God has made to believers. These promises should motivate us to persevere in our faith; they should help us not to grow weary and lose heart as we keep “*looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus*” (Titus 1:13).

I. The Promises of God to Believers

Throughout the Old and New Testaments, God repeatedly and consistently reveals Himself to be faithful to His children. God’s faithfulness is primarily seen in His promises to believers. All of these promises find their root in the one, great promise of eternal life through the gospel. These promises are discussed below.

A. The character of the Promise Giver

1. According to Hebrews 10:23, believers ought to hold fast to the confession of their hope without wavering. Why? _____

2. Titus 1:2 states that believers have hope for eternal life. Why can believers be certain that God’s promise from “*long ages ago*” will always stand? _____

3. Solomon stated that none of God’s great promises to Israel through Moses had failed (1 Kings 8:56). Why are God’s promises reliable (Job 23:14; 2 Peter 3:9)? _____

4. God did not make secret promises. How did God choose to reveal His promises to His people (Romans 1:2)? _____

B. The recipients of the promises – Read the following verses and list the recipient(s) of the promises.

1. Galatians 3:16 _____
2. Romans 9:4 _____
3. Acts 13:32 _____
4. Galatians 3:29 _____
5. Acts 2:39 _____
6. James 2:5 _____

C. The characteristics of the promises – Match the passages (left) to the characteristics (right).

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. 1 Kings 8:56 | Confirmed in Christ |
| 2. 2 Peter 1:4 | Good |
| 3. Romans 15:8 | Precious / magnificent |
| 4. 2 Corinthians 1:20 | Fulfilled in Christ |
| 5. Acts 13:23 | Certain in Christ |

Spiritual things, such as are deliverance from impiety, remission of sins, the gift of the Holy Ghost, and of life everlasting, we should desire absolutely, without any condition, by Jesus Christ, in whom alone all these are promised.¹

D. The content of the promises

1. A Savior
 - a. According to Acts 13:23, what did God do according to His promise? _____

 - b. What future promises did God give concerning the Savior (2 Peter 3:4, 13; 1 Corinthians 15:23; 2 Thessalonians 2:8)? _____

¹ John Knox, "A Treatise on Prayer," <http://www.reformation-scotland.org.uk/articles/treatise-on-prayer.html> (accessed June 4, 2010).

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2. Forgiveness of sins
 - a. Acts 13:38-39 says that every believer receives forgiveness of sins. Read Colossians 2:13. How many sins does God forgive when He saves people? _____

 - b. God promises not to remember a believer's sins any longer (Hebrews 8:12). According to Hebrews 10:17 and Psalm 103:12, to what extent does God grant forgiveness of sins? _____

 3. Reception of the Holy Spirit
 - a. When does a person receive the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13)? _____

 - b. According to Ephesians 2:18, we have _____ to the Father through the Spirit.
 4. Eternal life
 - a. What promise did God give in John 3:15-18 and 1 John 2:25 to those who place their faith in Jesus Christ? _____

 - b. God promises to preserve His children from the loss of their salvation. How is this expressed in John 10:27-29 and Hebrews 13:5? _____

 - c. Read the following verses and state how each promise relates to eternal life.
 - (1) James 1:12, 2 Timothy 4:8 _____
 - (2) 2 Corinthians 6:18 _____
 - (3) Hebrews 4:1 _____
 - (4) 1 Corinthians 1:9 _____
 - (5) 1 Peter 1:3-5 _____
 5. Sanctification and abundant life on earth
 - a. What hope do we have in the promise given in Romans 8:28-30 and Philippians 1:6? _____

- b. What is the scope of the promise found in godliness (1 Timothy 4:8)? _____

- c. How is God's promise of blessing and protection to the nation of Israel described in Deuteronomy 1:11? _____

- d. What promises are made to Christians in Matthew 28:20, John 14:27, 16:33, and Philippians 4:6-9? _____

- e. According to Psalm 34:15, Proverbs 15:29, John 14:13-14, 15:16, 16:23-24, and 1 John 5:14-15, what promise do believers have regarding prayer? _____

- f. What do 1 Corinthians 10:13 and 2 Peter 1:3 tell us about victory as a result of God's faithfulness during our times of trial and temptation? _____

- g. What did Jesus promise in Matthew 6:25-34 regarding God's provision of daily needs? _____

- h. What promise do believers have with reference to their understanding of spiritual matters (1 Corinthians 2:12)? _____

Finally, we confess that we have faith in the promises of God; we confess that we trust in the faithfulness of God. We confess that we know Him in whom we have believed and are persuaded that He is able to keep that which we have committed unto Him against that day. We stand upon the promises of God.²

II. Faith in the Promises of God

In order to live a healthy, vibrant Christian life, one must daily walk by faith in the promises of God. All believers can confidently proclaim with Paul, “*for we walk by faith, not by sight*” (2 Corinthians 5:7).

² Gordon Girod, “Is it a Terrible Faith,” <http://www.graceonlinelibrary.org/articles/full.asp?id=47%7C47%7C223> (accessed June 7, 2010).

A. Faith produces confidence in God's promises

1. Read Hebrews 11:1-6 and answer the following questions.

a. What does verse 1 inform us about faith's relationship to the present and the future (cf. v. 13)? _____

b. What does verse 3 inform us about faith's relationship to the past? _____

c. How instrumental has faith been in the lives of the saints throughout redemptive history (vv. 2, 4-5)? _____

d. How important is faith in the sight of God (v. 6)? _____

2. How is faith in God related to living by grace and hope (Romans 5:2)? _____

3. How is faith in God related to peace (John 14:1)? _____

B. Faith entails an unwavering focus on Jesus Christ

1. What role does the Scripture play in producing faith in a person (John 20:31, Romans 10:17)? _____

2. Read Hebrews 12:1-3 and answer the following questions.

a. Why is it important for contemporary believers to read the narrative accounts in God's Word which convey the faithfulness of bygone saints (v. 1)? _____

b. How should the example of the faithfulness of Christ motivate believers toward greater faithfulness (vv. 2-3)? _____

C. Faith enables joyful endurance during times of hardship and persecution

1. How did faith in the promises of God enable the apostle Paul to press on in the midst of difficulties (2 Corinthians 11:23-28; Philippians 3:7, 14; 2 Timothy 4:7)? _____

2. How did Moses exhibit faith while being mistreated (Hebrews 11:24-27)? _____

3. What drove the saints of old to endure hardships and persecutions (Hebrews 11:32-40)? _____

D. Faith generates devotion to God and impact on the world

1. List the types of devotion and impact in the passages below

a. 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12 _____

b. Luke 1:38 _____

c. Luke 1:45 _____

d. 1 John 5:4-5; Ephesians 6:16 _____

e. 2 Peter 3:13 _____

f. 1 Chronicles 17:26 _____

g. Hebrews 4:1 _____

h. 1 Peter 1:8; Romans 15:13 _____

i. Hebrews 6:11-15, 10:36 _____

2. Read Romans 4:18-25 and answer the following questions.

a. How is Abraham's belief described in verse 18? _____

b. What was Abraham's posture (v. 20), and the source of his confidence (v. 21)?

c. Why should we follow the example of his faith (vv. 23-25)? _____

*Standing on the promises that cannot fail,
when the howling storms of doubt and fear assail,
by the living Word of God I shall prevail,
standing on the promises of God.³*

³ R. Kelso Carter, "Standing on the Promises," <http://www.hymnsite.com/lyrics/umh374.sht> (accessed June 7, 2010).

III. Personal Application

- A. God promised that the sins of believers are forgiven. How often do you walk as if you are still defeated by your sins? How can you find rest in God's promise of forgiveness? _

- B. How does it help you in your spiritual walk to know that the promises of eternal life, fellowship with God, defeat of death are eternal and irrevocable? _____

- C. The Word of God contains many promises pertaining to our life here on earth, and we know that God is faithful to His promises. Yet many believers continue live lives of doubt and worry. Why do you think this happens and how can this change? _____

HOPE IN THE PLAN AND PROVIDENCE OF GOD

LESSON #3

Memory Verse: Ephesians 1:11

also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will

God has a sovereign plan which He freely decreed in eternity past according to His own will and good pleasure. This sovereign plan is actualized in real time through the active and passive providence of God. A proper understanding of the sovereign plan and providence of God is critical for believers to live godly lives that are secure, worry-free, and built upon a rock. Only when these truths are properly understood can believers have genuine hope, which is well founded and sure. Without an appreciation for these powerful, life-changing truths, the believer will be unable to live life to the glory of God.

I. God's Sovereign Plan

According to the Westminster Shorter Catechism, *"The decrees of God are, his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his will, whereby, for his own glory, he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass."* Because the all-knowing, all-powerful and immutable God definitively determined His eternal plan before the foundation of the world, we can confidently rest our hope that He will bring it to pass.

- A. The sovereign plan of God is in accordance with His freely-made and self-determined purpose
- Who has contributed to the sovereign plan of God (Isaiah 40:13-14)? _____
- B. The sovereign plan of God is consistent with His good pleasure
1. According to Psalm 115:3 and 135:6, what does God do? _____
 2. To what is God's good pleasure (or kind intention) linked in Ephesians 1:9? _____
-

C. The sovereign plan of God is all-inclusive, comprehensive, and universal

1. Read Ephesians 1:11. What does God work together according to His plan? _____

2. According to Romans 8:28, how many purposes does God have? _____
3. How many things were made for God's purpose (Psalm 119:89-91; Proverbs 16:4)?

4. Each of the following passages reveals something that is predetermined according to the sovereign plan of God. List these predetermined areas of life below.
 - a. Acts 17:26 _____
 - b. Romans 13:1 _____
 - c. Job 14:5 _____
 - d. John 21:17-19 _____
 - e. Ephesians 2:10 _____
 - f. Luke 22:22 and Acts 4:27-28 _____
 - g. Lamentations 2:17, Amos 3:6, and Revelation 17:17 _____
 - h. Ephesians 1:5 _____

D. The sovereign plan of God is eternal and immutable

1. How is the purpose of God described in Ephesians 3:11? _____
2. According to the purpose of God, when was His grace granted to believers in Christ (2 Timothy 1:9)? _____
3. How is God's plan regarding the death of His Son described in Acts 2:23? _____

4. Does the plan of the Lord ever expire (Psalm 33:10-11)? _____
5. What is said about the purpose and good pleasure of God in Isaiah 46:9-11? _____

E. The sovereign plan of God is unconditional and certain

1. According to Romans 9:10-16, how much control does man have over the sovereign plan of God? _____
2. How did Job and Isaiah express the fact that God's plan is unalterable (Job 42:2; Isaiah 14:24-27)? _____

F. The sovereign plan of God preserves human responsibility

1. Re-read Luke 22:22. How is human responsibility expressed in this passage? _____

2. How is human responsibility expressed in Acts 2:23? _____

G. The sovereign plan of God is directed toward His glory

1. According to what does God act (Isaiah 48:11)? _____

2. What is the goal of God's plan and purpose (Isaiah 63:14)? _____

H. The sovereign plan of God results in the good of believers

1. Re-read Romans 8:28. How does God's purpose impact His people? _____

2. How did Paul view his troubles in light of God's plan (2 Corinthians 4:16-18)? _____

I. The sovereign plan of God is unknown in its entirety but can be known in part¹

1. Read Deuteronomy 29:29 and answer the following questions.

a. Can man know everything there is to know about God's plan? _____

b. Can man know some things about God's plan? _____

2. For each of the following passages, explain the unknown aspect of God's will.

a. Daniel 3:16-18 _____

b. Acts 1:6-7 _____

c. James 4:13-15 _____

Providence is God's power in bringing the movement of the universe to its predetermined goal and design. It is the effecting or the outworking of His decrees...God controls the free acts of men, both predestining them and providentially bringing them to pass.²

¹ For more examples of known areas of God's will, please see lesson #5.

² Rolland McCune, *A Systematic Theology of Biblical Christianity* (Allen Park, MI.: Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary, 2009), 1:342-343.

II. God's Providence

God guarantees that His sovereign plan, which was decreed before time began, will come to pass, because He providentially works in time to bring it to pass. The Westminster Shorter Catechism states, "*God executeth his decrees in the works of creation and providence... God's works of providence are, his most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all his creatures, and all their actions.*" It is a great comfort to know that God's providence will ensure the fulfillment of His will and purpose. It helps believers to look at life with an eternal perspective and a lasting hope.

A. God directs people through providence

1. How do the following proverbs describe the directive providence of God?
 - a. Proverbs 16:1, 9, 33 _____
 - b. Proverbs 19:21, 20:24 _____
 - c. Proverbs 21:1 _____
2. How did God direct the hearts of the Egyptians to bring about His purposes (Exodus 12:36)? _____

B. God protects people through providence

1. What reason is given in Matthew 6:26 and 10:29-31 for believers not to fear? _____

2. According to Psalm 91:11, what is one way in which God protects His own? _____

C. God prevents human actions through providence

1. What action did God prevent in Genesis 20:6? _____

2. Read Acts 16:6-10 and answer the following questions.
 - a. Why did Paul and Timothy not speak in Asia or Bithynia (vv. 6-7)? _____

 - b. Why did they go to Macedonia (vv. 9-10)? _____

D. God allows human actions through providence

1. What types of human actions are described as having been allowed by God in Psalm 81:12 and Romans 1:24-28? _____

2. According to Psalm 76:10, why does God allow evil? _____

3. How does Acts 3:17-18 illustrate the fact that God uses human actions to fulfill His plan? _____
4. What type of action will God allow in the day of His power (Psalm 110:3)? _____

E. God controls circumstances through providence

1. How is God's providential control over nature and weather described in Jonah 1:4 and Job 37:9-13? _____

2. According to Philippians 1:12, what happened as a result of God's providential control over Paul's circumstances? _____

F. God's providence determines history

1. According to Daniel 4:35, Isaiah 10:13-17 and Psalms 124:1-3 and 127:1-2, what is the role of God and men in determining the result of any effort? _____

2. According to Job 14:5, _____ are determined by God.
3. What has God done so that man would seek and find Him (Acts 17:26-27)? _____

4. In what ways was Christ's death predetermined (John 7:30, 13:1, 17:1; Luke 22:21-22; Acts 2:23-24)? _____

*Let the people of God comfort themselves in all cases by this doctrine of the divine decrees; and, amidst whatever befalls them, rest quietly and submissively in the bosom of God, considering that whatever comes or can come to pass, proceeds from the decree of their gracious friend and reconciled Father, who knows what is best for them, and will make all things work together for their good. O what a sweet and pleasant life would you have under the heaviest pressures of affliction, and what heavenly serenity and tranquility of mind would you enjoy, would you cheerfully acquiesce in the good will and pleasure of God, and embrace every dispensation, how no matter how sharp it may be, because it is determined and appointed for you by the eternal counsel of his will!*³

III. Personal Application

- A. Hope is defined as “*confident expectancy...not wishful thinking, but a firm assurance about things that are unseen and still in the future*”.⁴ With this in mind, how can a deep knowledge of and hope in the sovereign plan of God enable believers to look forward with an eternal perspective, always rejoice “*in hope of the glory of God*” (Romans 5:2), and exhibit an attitude of perseverance and eager expectation (Romans 8:25)?

- B. How can a deep knowledge and trust in God’s providence give believers confidence and strength to live a victorious Christian life (c.f. Matthew 6:33-34; Psalm 16:8; Proverbs 16:3-4)?

³ Thomas Boston, “Important Lessons Drawn from the Decrees of God,” <http://www.puritansermons.com/boston/bost8.htm> (accessed March 22, 2010).

⁴ R.F. Youngblood, F.F. Bruce, R.K. Harrison, *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN.: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1995).

LOVE: THE GREAT COMMANDMENT

LESSON #4

Memory Verse: Matthew 22:37-40

And He said to him, "YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND." This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF." On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets."

In this frequently quoted passage of Scripture, Jesus reiterates the commands of Deuteronomy 6:5 in response to a simple question. The Bible frequently addresses love, and yet, human beings rarely understand the subject. In this lesson, we will attempt to understand love toward God and others from a clear and simple biblical perspective.

I. Loving the Lord Your God

Jesus said that the whole Christian life can be summed up by simply loving God. This love will be expressed in many ways. Here, we will examine only a few.

A. Love for God is expressed through active obedience to Him at all times

1. Deuteronomy 11:1 lists four ways that we can love God. What are they? _____

2. In Joshua 22:5, Joshua sends the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh on their way and gives them instructions on how to love the Lord. What were those instructions? _____

3. What is equated to loving the Lord in Deuteronomy 30:20, 1 John 2:5, 5:3? _____

B. Love for God is expressed through love of good and the hatred of evil

1. What do Psalm 97:10 and Romans 12:9 tell us about loving the Lord God? _____

2. According to 1 John 2:15, what is true about the one who loves the things of the world? _____

C. Love for God is expressed through love for others

1. What does 1 John 3:17 tell us about loving the Lord (cf. James 2:15-16)? _____

2. According to 1 John 5:1, what is true of everyone who loves the Father? _____

3. What is true of someone who does not love people (1 John 4:20)? _____

To Love God with all our heart, we must allow our hearts to be transformed by God, to desire the things God desires. We must reject worldly loyalties and be loyal to Christ alone. We must love the things and ideas that God loves, in the way God loves them. In short, we must become like Christ.

II. Loving the Lord Your God with All Your Heart, Soul, and Mind

In Scripture, the heart is depicted as the seat of the intellect, emotions, and will. Desires, loyalties, attitudes, thoughts, and affections are all attributed to the heart. The terms heart, mind, and soul are used interchangeably to signify loving God with the whole person.

A. Man is called to love God with his whole heart

1. According to Jeremiah 17:9, is man naturally able to love God with his whole heart?

2. From where do all evil thoughts come (Mark 7:21)? _____
3. What must take place for God to fill our hearts with godly desires (Psalm 37:4)?¹

4. According to Joshua 24:23-24, how did the allegiance and loyalty of the people change when they inclined their hearts towards God? _____

¹ Note that this verse assumes that the individual is saved, since an unregenerate person cannot delight himself in the Lord. Only through the life-changing power of God can one incline his heart toward God.

5. Reread Joshua 22:5. List the four actions in the verse and explain how they correspond to desires, allegiance, and loving what God loves. _____

6. How should our love for Christ compare to our love for other people/things (Matthew 10:37-39)? _____

B. Man is called to love God with his whole mind

1. Read 1 Corinthians 3:18-20 and answer the following questions.
- What must a person with worldly wisdom do in order to obtain spiritual wisdom (v. 18)? _____
 - How valuable is the wisdom of the world to God (v. 19)? _____
 - How useful is human reasoning for spiritual matters (v. 20)? _____
2. According to 2 Corinthians 10:5, what must a believer do in order to love God with his mind? _____
3. Per Romans 12:2, what must we do in order to love God with our minds? _____

We are in great danger of deceiving ourselves when we have too high an opinion of human wisdom and arts; plain and pure Christianity will be likely to be despised by those who can suit their doctrines to the corrupt taste of their hearers, and set them off with fine language, or support them with a show of deep and strong reasoning. But he who seems to be wise must become a fool that he may be wise. He must be sensible of his own ignorance, and lament it; he must distrust his own understanding, and not lean on it. To have a high opinion of our wisdom is but to flatter ourselves, and self-flattery is the very next step to self-deceit. The way to true wisdom is to sink our opinion of our own to a due level, and be willing to be taught of God. He must become a fool who would be truly and thoroughly wise. The person who resigns his own understanding, that he may follow the instruction of God, is in the way to true and everlasting wisdom. The meek will he guide in judgment, the meek will he teach his way, Ps. 25:9.²

² Matthew Henry, "Commentary on 1 Corinthians 3," Blue Letter Bible. 1 Mar 1996, http://www.blueletterbible.org/commentaries/comm_view.cfm?AuthorID=4&contentID=1737&commInfo=5&topic=1%20Corinthians (accessed March 22, 2010).

C. Man is called to love God with his whole soul

1. How does the soul's love for God pertain to salvation (Psalms 35:9, 62:1)? _____

2. How does the soul's love for God pertain to repentance (Psalm 41:4)? _____

3. Read Psalm 42:1-8 and answer the following questions.
 - a. How does the psalmist describe his great desire for God in vv. 1-2? _____

 - b. When his soul was in despair, what did he do in order to actively love God with all his soul (vv. 5, 6, 8)? _____

4. How is the soul's love for God described in Psalm 63:1, 5, 8? _____

III. Loving Your Neighbor as Yourself

Jesus stated that love for one's neighbor is the second greatest commandment. In fact, love for other people is evidence of love for God.

A. Our love for others must be God-honoring

1. What does it mean to love others as ourselves? (Matthew 7:12)? _____

2. Read John 13:34-35 and answer the following questions.
 - a. What does Christ command us to do (v. 34)? _____

 - b. To what extent should we do it (v. 34)? _____

 - c. What impact will it have on the world (v. 35)? _____

B. Our love for others must be practical

1. How did Jesus relate compassion to love for our neighbors (Luke 10:25-37)? _____

2. List ways that we can love our brothers and sisters in Christ according to the following passages of Scripture:
 - a. James 5:16 _____
 - b. Galatians 6:2 _____
 - c. Romans 12:10 _____
 - d. Philippians 2:3-5 _____
 - e. Romans 15:7 _____
 - f. Galatians 5:13 _____
 - g. Ephesians 4:32, Colossians 3:13 _____
 - h. Colossians 3:16 _____
 - i. 1 Peter 3:8 _____
3. According to Matthew 5:43-47 and Romans 12:10-21, how should we act toward our enemies? _____

4. What can we do to love those who do not know Christ (Mark 16:15)? _____

IV. The Law and the Prophets

A. The Law depends on love

1. Why do all the laws hang on these commandments (Romans 13:8-10)? _____

2. What does 1 Corinthians 13:3 say about giving without love? _____

The whole point of the commandments of God's Law, and the direction given through the prophets of God, is to make us into people that bear the fruit of the spirit in Galatians 5:22, for the glory and honor of God. God's laws and prophets, in one form or another, are directions of how to love God with all our heart, all our soul, and all our mind and how to love our neighbor as ourselves. It is indeed the very point of our existence.

B. The Prophets depend on love

1. What does 1 Corinthians 13:2 say about prophecy without love? _____

2. According to Micah 6:6-8, what does God require? _____

V. Personal Application

A. The Fruit of the Spirit is found in Galatians 5:22. Compare the fruit of the spirit with 1 Corinthians 13. How are some of the various fruits related to aspects of love in 1 Corinthians 13? How can you practically exhibit this fruit in your life? _____

B. How can you do a better job of desiring what God desires? How can you increase your love for the things and ideas that God loves? _____

C. Name some God-honoring and practical ways in which you can show love for your neighbors? _____

PERSONAL HOLINESS AND OBEDIENCE

LESSON #5

Memory Verse: 1 Peter 1:15-16

but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY."

We are to be holy in every aspect of our conduct. Holiness must be cultivated into every sphere of life. It is not to be compartmentalized into certain “religious” areas of our life. Holiness is a way of life that affects everything we do, rather than mere conformity to a list of rules.

I. The Definition and Scope of Holiness

What is holiness and what does it mean to be holy? Who is called to be holy? To what extent should a person be holy? Let’s find out.

A. The word holy in the simplest definition means “separate”

1. Read 1 Peter 2:9 and answer the following questions.

a. What type of race, priesthood, and nation are Christians? _____

b. Whose possession are believers? _____

c. For what purpose did God separate believers to Himself? _____

d. What did God separate Christians from in order that they may live in “*His marvelous light*”? _____

2. According to 2 Corinthians 6:14-17, from what are believers to separate themselves?

B. Holiness necessitates obedience to God by living morally pure lives

1. According to 2 Corinthians 7:1, what are believers to do? _____

2. How did Paul desire to present Christians before the Father (2 Corinthians 11:2)?

C. Holiness is for all people

1. What are the consequences for not being holy in the sight of God (Hebrews 12:14)?

2. According to 1 Peter 1:15-16, how much of our behavior should be holy? _____

II. The Necessity and Purpose of Holiness

Why are we to be holy? What purpose does it serve? Let's examine the reasons why holiness is critical in the life of the believer in Jesus Christ.

A. Holiness is God's command to be obeyed

1. What command is given in 1 Corinthians 15:34 regarding the relationship between holiness and sin? _____

2. In 2 Corinthians 7:1, believers are charged with "*perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*" According to the text, how does one accomplish this? _____

3. How is holiness described in 1 Timothy 5:22? _____

Imagine for a moment that God possessed omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence, but without holiness. Such a one could no longer be described as God. Holiness is the perfection of all His other attributes: His power is holy power; His mercy is holy mercy; His wisdom is holy wisdom. It is His holiness more than any other attribute that makes Him worthy of our praise.¹

B. Holiness is God's character to be emulated

1. According to 1 Peter 1:15-16, why must we be holy? _____

2. Read the following verses and summarize how God's holiness is described.

- a. Revelation 15:4 _____

¹ Jerry Bridges, *The Pursuit of Holiness* (Colorado Springs, CO.: Navpress, 2006), 25.

- b. Exodus 15:11 _____
- c. 1 Samuel 2:2 _____

C. Holiness makes the gospel attractive

1. In Titus 2:9-10, why did Paul urge bondslaves to be joyfully obedient to their masters in everything? _____

2. How does holiness allow the believer to be a light to the world (Philippians 2:14-16)? _____

Sound evangelical doctrine is useless if it is not accompanied by a holy life. It is worse than useless: it does positive harm. It is despised by keen-sighted and shrewd men of the world, as an unreal and hollow thing, and brings religion into contempt.²

D. Holiness brings joy

1. How much joy is experienced by God's holy ones (Psalm 16:11)? _____

2. How is joy related to obedience (John 15:10-11)? _____

3. God intends the Christian life to be a life of joy not drudgery. Anyone who would like to experience true joy must walk in holiness. According to Romans 14:17, what three qualities must those in the kingdom of God possess? _____

III. God's Role in the Pursuit of Holiness

The pursuit of holiness is that inward spiritual work which the Lord Jesus Christ works in us (through the Holy Spirit), when He calls us to be a true believer and throughout our lives thereafter. He separates us from our innate love of sin and the world and puts a new principle into our hearts.

² J.C. Ryle, *Holiness: Its Nature, Hindrances, Difficulties, & Roots* (Moscow, ID.: Charles Nolan Publishers, 2001), xvi.

- A. God gives believers knowledge that they were created to be holy
1. What does Ephesians 2:10 teach us about God's role in the holiness of the believer?

 2. According to Romans 8:29 and Ephesians 1:4, to what are believers predestined and chosen? _____
- B. God gives believers freedom from slavery to sin
1. How does one become "*freed from sin and enslaved to God*" (Romans 6:22-23)? _____

 2. Who sets sin's captives free (John 8:34-36)? _____
- C. God gives believers a discontentment with their own holiness
1. What was Paul's attitude toward his flesh (Romans 7:24)? _____

 2. What was David's attitude toward his sin (Psalm 38:18)? _____

- D. God gives believers holy aspirations
1. Why do believers desire holiness instead of practicing a lifestyle of sin (1 John 3:9)?

 2. Why are believers driven to obey Christ (John 14:15)? _____

IV. Our Role in the Pursuit of Holiness

What is true practical holiness from our perspective? How do we cultivate holiness in our lives for the glory of God?

- A. The pursuit of holiness requires knowing and loving Scripture
1. Believers are sanctified (i.e. made holy) through the Word of God, because it is _____ (John 17:17).
 2. For what reason does the psalmist say that he has treasured God's Word in his heart (Psalm 119:11)? _____

 3. What should be the believer's attitude toward the Bible (Psalm 1:2)? _____

4. Read Psalm 19:7-11. How are each of the following described and what impact do they have on a person's life?
- The law of the Lord (v. 7) _____
 - The testimony of the Lord (v. 7) _____
 - The precepts of the Lord (v. 8) _____
 - The commandment of the Lord (v. 8) _____
 - The fear of the Lord (v. 9) _____
 - The judgments of the Lord (v. 9) _____
 - How desirable are all of these things (v. 10) and why are they so desirable (v. 11)?

B. The pursuit of holiness requires praying and working in harmony with God

- According to Job 14:4, can anyone become holy by their own willpower? _____

- Since a believer cannot do it by his own willpower, how must he pray to God to work in him (Psalm 51:10)? _____

God works in us and with us, not against us or without us.³

C. The pursuit of holiness requires a radical commitment to obedience and a desire to flee from worldliness

- According to Philippians 4:8, on what should the believer's mind dwell? _____

- Read 1 Corinthians 6:9-20 and answer the following questions.
 - What types of people do not inherit the kingdom of God (vv. 9-10)? _____

 - How are Christians different from those who are on the path to hell (v. 11)? _____

³ John Owen, *The Works of John Owen, Volume VI, Temptation and Sin* (Carlisle, PA.: Banner of Truth, 1967), 20.

- c. How can a believer know where to draw the line between right and wrong in “gray areas” (v. 12)? _____
- d. How should the believer view his body (v. 13)? _____

- e. Who owns the body and will raise the body (v. 14)? _____
- f. Why should the believer flee immorality (vv. 15-18)? _____

- g. Who bought us, owns us, and therefore deserves to be glorified by us (vv. 19-20)? _____

- D. The pursuit of holiness requires striving to be like Jesus Christ
1. According to Romans 8:29, to what have believers been predestined? _____

 2. Whose life should a believer’s life reflect (1 John 2:6; 1 Peter 2:21; 1 Corinthians 11:1)? _____

 3. According to 1 John 3:3, why should the believer strive for holiness? _____

V. Personal Application

- A. Jesus said, “*My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work*” (John 4:34). How can you pray to God for growth in personal holiness and obedience?

- B. What are some ways in which you can be more vigilant about walking in separation from the sinful world in order to keep yourself from being defiled by it? _____

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

LESSON #6

Memory Verse: Galatians 5:22-25

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.

All believers in Jesus Christ have been chosen by God and have been appointed to bear enduring fruit (John 15:16). In order to grow in godliness, believers must properly understand how to bear spiritual fruit. This lesson is designed to help believers in this regard.

I. Good and Bad Fruit

There are only two types of spiritual fruit, good and bad. Every person bears one type or the other, but not both, depending upon whether or not he is a believer in Jesus Christ.

A. All people bear either good or bad fruit (i.e. godly or ungodly thoughts, attitudes, words, and behaviors)

- Read Matthew 7:15-20 and answer the following questions.

a. Is it possible for unbelievers to look good on the outside (v. 15)? _____

b. What examples did Jesus use (v. 16) to illustrate the relationship between the inner man (i.e. heart) and the outer man (i.e. actions/behaviors)? _____

c. Is it possible for unbelievers to truly be godly (vv. 17-18)? _____

d. What is the fate of the unbeliever (v. 19)? _____

B. The fruit of unbelievers

1. How did Paul describe the condition of individuals who do not believe in Jesus Christ (Romans 7:5)? What kind of fruit do they bear? _____

2. Read Matthew 3:8-11 and answer the following questions.
 - a. What can be expected from a person who has genuinely repented (v. 8)? _____

 - b. What will happen to those who bear no fruit (v. 10)? _____

 - c. In what does Jesus baptize believers in order to produce fruit in their lives (v. 11)?

C. The fruit of believers

1. According to John 15:4-5, what must be in place for a person to bear fruit? _____

2. Believers are only able to bear fruit to God because they are _____ to Him who was raised from the dead (Romans 7:4).
3. Who is the source of the fruit that believers bear (Galatians 5:22)? _____
4. According to Matthew 13:23, what type of person bears good fruit? _____

5. What will be inherited by those who bear good fruit (Matthew 21:43)? _____

6. In John 15:8, Jesus stated that bearing fruit brings _____ to the Father and provides proof of discipleship.
7. To what two things were all of the elect appointed (John 15:16)? _____

A heart not properly prepared will never bear spiritual fruit.¹

II. Walking by the Spirit

All believers are called to walk according to the Spirit and produce spiritual fruit. To do so, one must understand the direction and will of the Holy Spirit and act accordingly. As we yield to the will of the Spirit, He begins to produce fruit in our lives.

¹ John MacArthur, *The Gospel according to Jesus: What does Jesus mean when he says "follow me"?* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1988), 128.

A. The tension between the flesh and the Spirit

1. At the moment of salvation, the Spirit takes up permanent residence in the believer. He begins to work in our lives to conform us into the likeness of Christ (Romans 8:28-29). What type of relationship exists between a believer's flesh and the Spirit dwelling in him (Galatians 5:17)? _____

2. According to Paul's words in Galatians 5:16, how can believers refrain from carrying out the desires of the flesh? _____

3. What command did Paul give to believers in Ephesians 5:18? _____

B. The desires of the flesh

- It is critical to recognize the desires of the flesh, so that we would not gratify them. In Colossians 3:5-9 and Galatians 5:19-21, 26, Paul provides a representative list of the desires of the flesh. List them below. _____

C. The characteristics of the fruit of the Spirit

- As we have seen, the fruits of the Spirit are contrary to the desires/lusts of the flesh. List the characteristics of the fruit of the Spirit given in Colossians 3:10-15 and Galatians 5:22-23. _____

Notice that the “fruit” of verse 22 is singular in contrast to the “works” of verse 19, which is plural. The flesh manifests itself in many different ways, although not everyone practices all the works listed in verses 19-21. (No one could without destroying himself!) The Spirit, however, produces a single fruit, which signifies the unity of the spiritual qualities mentioned by Paul. When you walk by the Spirit, you will see not a few, but all facets of the fruit of the Spirit in your life. You either have all or none of it. That should produce a sense of relief because you don't need to run around and try to generate love or joy. You just need to walk by the Spirit and He will produce it all in you. God reduces everything to a common denominator--walking by the Spirit, which produces the fruit.²

III. The Fruit of the Spirit

The “fruit of the Spirit” is a list of *attitudes* or *character traits* seen as a result of the Spirit’s work. These attitudes will produce proper works in the life of the believer. In this section, we will examine some of them.

A. Love – A personal willingness to esteem and self-sacrificially serve others

1. What does God pour into the heart of every believer (Romans 5:5)? _____

2. According to 1 John 4:19, what do Christians do as a result of God loving them?

3. To what extent do spirit-filled believers love others (Matthew 5:38-48; Romans 12:9-21)? _____

B. Joy – Happiness that transcends circumstances, because it is rooted in spiritual truth

1. According to 1 Peter 1:8, what is the source of a believer’s joy? _____

2. How is a Christian’s joy made complete (1 John 1:1-4)? _____

3. Why are Christians able to experience joy even during trials (James 1:2-4; Acts 5:40-41)? _____

² John MacArthur, “Walking by the Spirit, Part 3,” <http://www.gty.org/Resources/Study+Guide+Chapter/1670> (accessed March 22, 2009).

-
-
- C. Peace – A calm disposition based upon being in a right relationship with God
1. According to John 14:27, why does a believer have peace in the midst of troubled times? _____
 2. What advice did Paul give in Philippians 4:6-9 so that his readers would experience the “*peace of God*” from the “*God of peace*”? _____

- D. Patience/longsuffering – Calm tolerance and steadfast endurance during times of difficulty
1. Of what can believers be confident when they wait patiently on the Lord (Psalm 40:1)? _____
 2. How does patience influence the manner in which believers interact (Ephesians 4:1-3)? _____
- E. Kindness/gentleness – Tenderness and compassionate concern for others
1. How did Paul and his co-laborers exemplify kindness and gentleness toward the Thessalonians (1 Thessalonians 2:7-8)? _____

 2. What did Paul command believers to do in Colossians 3:12? _____

- F. Goodness – Exemplary morality and character
1. According to Galatians 6:10, what does God command believers regarding goodness? _____
 2. How are Christians to pray for each other with regards to goodness (2 Thessalonians 1:11)? _____
- G. Faith/faithfulness – Confident trust in God in all circumstances which results in loyalty, dependability, stability, and trustworthiness
1. Who is the model of faithfulness (Romans 3:3)? _____
 2. According to Revelation 13:10, the _____ are characterized by patient endurance/perseverance and faith/faithfulness.
- H. Gentleness/meekness – Submissiveness to God, humility and consideration toward others
1. How can believers show themselves to be wise and understanding (James 3:13)? _____

2. How are believers instructed to correct others (2 Timothy 2:25), restore others (Galatians 6:1), and give reasons for their faith in Jesus Christ (1 Peter 3:15-16)?

I. Self-control/temperance – The ability to restrain passions and desires

1. How is a person who exercises self-control characterized in Proverbs 29:11? _____

2. According to 2 Peter 1:5-8, what are the benefits (v. 8) of possessing self-control and other spiritual qualities? _____

IV. Personal Application

- A. In what practical ways can you walk by the Spirit and battle against the temptations aroused by the sinful flesh? _____

- B. Which spiritual fruits do you exhibit most? Which do you have the most difficulty with, and how can you grow in these weak areas? _____

PASSION AND CONVICTION

LESSON #7

Memory Verse: 2 Corinthians 5:14-15

For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.

All Christians ought to be characterized by passion and conviction for God which results in godly zeal, longing for God, and glorifying God in everything. This lesson is designed to aid believers in the understanding and application of these important topics.

I. Godly Zeal

The Bible clearly calls believers to be zealous for God and plainly states the parameters that serve to differentiate between godly and ungodly zeal. Additionally, Scripture identifies sources, results, and examples of zeal.

A. The call to godly zeal

1. In what ways did Paul call believers to be zealous in Romans 12:10-11? _____

2. How did Peter describe the call for believers to zealously love each other (1 Peter 1:22, 4:8)? _____

3. According to Titus 2:14, for what should the redeemed be zealous? _____

4. What type of action should result from God's discipline in the lives of those He loves (Revelation 3:19)? _____
5. How did Jude call believers to zeal in Jude 3? _____

6. How did Paul describe his zeal for the lost in Romans 10:1? _____

B. Parameters of godly zeal

1. According to Romans 10:2-3, zeal for God is ungodly and dangerous when it is not combined with _____ .
2. Paul stated in Acts 22:3 that he was “*zealous for God*” before he was saved. What did his ungodly zeal lead him to do (vv. 4-5; Philippians 3:6)? _____

3. Before Paul was a believer, toward what was his zeal misdirected (Galatians 1:14)? _____

C. Sources of godly zeal

1. Why type of zeal does godly sorrow/grief produce in a believer (2 Corinthians 7:10-11)? _____
2. When Paul became a believer, his perspective was radically changed. As a believer, what was the source of his godly zeal (Philippians 3:12-14)? _____

D. Results of godly zeal – Match the verses (left) with the results of zeal (right)

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Psalm 119:139 | Giving |
| 2. Proverbs 28:1 | Being consumed by zeal |
| 3. 1 Chronicles 29:3 | Motivating others to good works |
| 4. 2 Corinthians 9:2 | Boldness |

E. Examples of godly zeal – For each of the following verses, list *who* is described as zealous and *how* he was zealous

1. Numbers 25:11-13 _____

2. 2 Kings 23:19-25 _____

3. Acts 18:24-26 _____

4. Colossians 4:12-13 _____

5. John 2:13-17 _____

If the outward performance of the religious zealot stems from the inward change wrought by the Holy Spirit then such action is heartily commendable.¹

II. Longing for God

Godly passion results from conviction. As conviction grows, believers long for God more than anything else. Accordingly, they long for the presence of God, the Word of God, and righteousness, while false converts are hypocritical in this respect.

A. Conviction regarding the things of God

1. Of what three things does the Holy Spirit convict the world (John 16:8)? _____

2. What actions resulting from biblical convictions are described in Ephesians 5:11?

3. How should biblical convictions guide our daily decisions (Romans 14:5)? _____

4. Christians are to hold fast to their convictions. According to each of the verses below, of what are believers to hold fast?
 - a. 1 Thessalonians 5:21 _____
 - b. Luke 8:15 _____
 - c. 1 Corinthians 15:2 _____
 - d. Hebrews 3:6, 14 _____

B. Longing for God more than anything else – Match the verses (left) with the expressions of longing for God (right)

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| 1. Psalm 42:1 | Not leaving your first love |
| 2. Psalm 73:25 | Loving God with the whole heart |
| 3. Psalm 119:10 | A soul that pants for God |
| 4. Mark 12:30 | Seeking God with the whole heart |
| 5. Matthew 10:37 | Singular devotion to God and desire for God |
| 6. Revelation 2:4 | Christ as the first priority |

¹ C. Mathew McMahon, "A Thought Concerning the Unconverted Religious Zealot," <http://www.apuritansmind.com/ChristianWalk/UnconvertedReligiousZealot.htm> (accessed August 16, 2010).

C. Longing for God's presence – How is desire for God's presence described in the following Psalms?

1. Psalm 26:8 _____
2. Psalm 27:4, 8 _____
3. Psalm 63:1-2 _____
4. Psalm 84:1-2 _____

D. Longing for God's Word – How is desire for Scripture described in the following Psalms?

1. Psalm 19:8-10 _____
2. Psalm 119:20, 97, 103, 167 _____

E. Longing for God's righteousness – How is desire for righteousness described in the following verses?

1. Matthew 5:6 _____
2. Matthew 6:33 _____

F. False converts are hypocritical in their longing for God

1. How did Jesus describe the difference between the hypocrite's appearance of longing for God and the true condition of his heart (Matthew 15:7-9)? _____

2. Although some false converts initially receive the Word with joy, what ultimately happens (Luke 8:13)? _____

3. How did Jesus respond to people who said they wanted to follow him but longed more for things of the world than for Him (Luke 9:59-62)? _____

The glory of God is a silver thread which must run through all our actions.²

² Thomas Watson, "Man's Chief End is to Glorify God,"
<http://www.puritansermons.com/watson/watson5.htm> (accessed August 16, 2010).

III. Glorifying God in Everyday Living

The primary duty of man is to glorify God in life. The Bible has much to say about why we are to do this and how we are to do this.

A. Why we are to glorify God in everyday living

1. What reason is stated for glorifying God in 1 Corinthians 6:20? _____

2. How are believers to act with respect to the promises of God (Romans 4:20)? _____

3. What reason is given in Ephesians 1:11-12 that Christians should give God glory?

4. Why does Psalm 115:1 state that God deserves to receive Glory? _____

5. We are to give God glory, because He is jealous about His glory. How is this jealousy expressed in Isaiah 48:11? _____

B. How we are to glorify God in everyday living – How do each of the following verses describe the way in which people are to glorify God?

1. 1 Corinthians 10:31 _____
2. Colossians 3:17 _____
3. Psalm 79:9 _____
4. Philippians 2:11 _____
5. Psalm 50:15 _____
6. Psalm 50:23 _____
7. 1 Peter 4:11-16 _____
8. 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12 _____
9. John 15:8 _____
10. Matthew 5:16, 1 Peter 2:12 _____
11. 1 Chronicles 16:24 _____

IV. Personal Application

- A. Luke 7:37-47 contains the account in which a sinful woman anointed the feet of Jesus with perfume. After Simon the Pharisee grumbled, Jesus told a parable to teach him a lesson. The point of the lesson was that the one who is forgiven much will love much (v. 47)? How can regularly recalling and rejoicing over your conversion generate passion and zeal in your life? How can you incorporate this practice into your life? _____

- B. How passionate are you for God? If you were to take your spiritual temperature, would you be hot, lukewarm, or cold? What actions will you take to grow in passion and conviction for God? _____

- C. How often do you think about glorifying God throughout the course of a day? What steps can you take to incorporate the desire for God's glory into all of your thoughts, words, and actions? _____

HUMILITY AND GRATITUDE

LESSON #8

Memory Verse: Hebrews 12:28

Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe;

Humility and gratitude are far too uncommon among believers. As those who have been saved by pure grace and mercy, Christians should be abundantly humble and shine as beacons of gratitude toward God. One must maintain a consistent attitude of humility and gratitude in order to continually grow in godliness. A proper understanding and observance of the two ordinances of Jesus Christ, believer's baptism and the Lord's Supper, produces humility and gratitude in the hearts of believers.

I. Humility

Humility is defined as "*a freedom from arrogance that grows out of the recognition that all we have and are comes from God.*"¹ To be humble is to have a proper view of God and self that allows oneself to see himself as God sees him. True humility motivates believers to focus on God and others more than self.

A. The call to humility

1. Read Philippians 2:3-8 and answer the following questions.

a. How does a humble person regard himself in relation to others (v. 3)? _____

b. How does a humble person regard his interests versus those of others (v. 4)? _____

c. What type of attitude should a humble person have (v. 5)? _____

¹ R.F. Youngblood, F.F. Bruce, R.K. Harrison, *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN.: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1995).

- d. How did Christ exemplify humility (vv. 5-8)? _____

2. According to Micah 6:8, what does God require of man? _____

3. How are believers called to show humility in service (Matthew 20:26-28)? _____

4. How are Christians called to walk in humility (Ephesians 4:1-2)? _____

- B. Blessings of humility – Name the blessings described in each of the following verses
1. Proverbs 22:4, 29:23 _____
 2. Isaiah 57:15 _____
 3. Isaiah 66:2 _____
 4. Matthew 5:3 _____
 5. Luke 14:11 _____
 6. James 4:6, 10 _____
- C. Examples of humility – For each of the following verses, list *who* is described as humble and *how* he was humble
1. Mark 10:45 _____
 2. John 13:3-17 _____
 3. Psalm 51:15-17 _____
 4. Joshua 7:6 _____
 5. 1 Chronicles 29:14 _____
 6. Isaiah 6:5 _____
 7. Matthew 3:14, John 3:27-30 _____

Biblical humility is also a recognition that by ourselves we are inadequate, without dignity and worthless. Yet, because we are created in God's image and because believers are in Christ, we have infinite worth and dignity...True humility does not produce pride but gratitude.²

² Ibid.

II. Gratitude

Gratitude, or thanksgiving, is defined as “*the aspect of praise that gives thanks to God for what He does for us.*”³ Thanksgiving is the outward manifestation of a grateful heart.

A. The call to gratitude

1. To whom is thanksgiving to be offered (Psalm 50:14)? _____

2. How is thanksgiving to be offered to God (Psalm 100:4)? _____

3. How many of our actions should be done in a thankful manner (Colossians 3:17)?

4. How often should we offer thanksgiving to God (Hebrews 13:15)? _____
5. For what should we be thankful to God (Ephesians 5:20; 1 Thessalonians 5:18)?

B. Sources and content of gratitude – Match the verses (left) with the sources and/or content of gratitude (right)

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| 1. Psalm 97:12 | His indescribable gift – Jesus Christ |
| 2. Psalm 107:1 | The remembrance of God’s holy name |
| 3. 2 Corinthians 9:15 | The goodness and mercy of God |
| 4. 1 Corinthians 15:57 | God’s grace in election |
| 5. 2 Corinthians 2:14 | Victory through Christ |
| 6. 2 Thessalonians 1:3 | The faith and love exhibited by others |
| 7. 1 Thessalonians 2:13 | The working of God’s Word in others |
| 8. 1 Timothy 1:12 | Triumph in Christ |
| 9. 2 Thessalonians 2:13 | The enablement of Christ |

C. Blessings of gratitude – For each of the following verses, list the blessing(s) associated with thanksgiving

1. Philippians 4:6-7 _____
2. 2 Corinthians 4:15 _____
3. 2 Corinthians 9:10-12 _____

³ Ibid.

D. Examples of gratitude – For each of the following verses, list *who* is described as grateful and *how* he was grateful

1. Matthew 11:25 _____
2. Revelation 4:9-11 _____
3. 1 Timothy 1:12 _____
4. Daniel 2:23, 6:10 _____
5. Jonah 2:9 _____

The ends of the [ordinances] are to be marks and badges of Christian profession and fellowship or fraternity, to be incitements to gratitude and exercises of faith and a godly life; in short, to be contracts binding us to this.⁴

III. The Two Ordinances: Water Baptism and the Lord's Supper

One way in which Christians can grow in and demonstrate humility and gratitude is through a proper understanding and observance of the two ordinances of Jesus Christ.

A. Water Baptism

1. What does water baptism signify?
 - a. Baptism by immersion⁵ is a picture of the believer being united with Christ in the likeness of His _____, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6:1-7).
 - b. Water baptism is a physical depiction of Spirit baptism, which is the Holy Spirit's one-time placing of the believer into the _____ of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13). Thus, each believer is to be baptized only once, and it ought to be done as soon as possible after conversion.
 - c. Water baptism also identifies the new believer with the local church. According to Acts 2:41, those who believed were baptized. Then after they were baptized, these three thousand people were _____ to the church.

⁴ John Calvin, "Heads of Agreement on the Lord's Supper," <http://homepage.mac.com/shanerosenthal/reformationink/jcsupper.htm> (accessed August 19, 2010).

⁵ Baptism is to be administered by immersing the whole body of the person in water. Note the references to going down into the water and coming up out of the water (Matthew 3:16; Acts 8:38-39). Baptism by immersion is also indicated by the fact that John only baptized in places where "there was much water" (John 3:23).

2. Who should be baptized with water?
 - a. All who have been saved, who have received the _____ (Acts 10:47-48).
 - b. Were the people in Acts 8:12 baptized before or after they believed the gospel?

3. Why should believers be baptized?
 - a. By being baptized, _____ set an example for believers to follow (Matthew 3:13-17).
 - b. Jesus ordained baptism (i.e. made it an ordinance). According to Matthew 28:19, what should accompany the making of disciples (i.e. conversion)? _____
 - c. After conversion, baptism is the first act of humble obedience and gratitude in following Christ. How was this demonstrated by the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8:36-39? _____

B. The Lord's Supper (Communion)

1. What does the Lord's Supper signify?
 - a. Matthew 26:26-28 contains an account of the institution/ordination of the Lord's Supper.⁶ Read this passage and answer the following questions.
 - (1) The bread signifies the _____ of Christ.
 - (2) The cup signifies the _____ of Christ.
 - (3) The bread and cup signify Christ's sacrifice for the _____ of sins.
 - b. According to 1 Corinthians 11:26, all who partake of the Lord's Supper _____ the Lord's death until He comes.
2. Who should partake in the Lord's Supper?
 - a. 1 Corinthians 5:7-8 indicates that those who profess "*Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed*" are welcome to "*celebrate the feast*" but must do so in _____ and _____. Therefore, the Lord's Supper is only for believers, because the sacrifice of Christ is meaningless to unbelievers.
 - b. Only believers should partake because it involves the _____ in the body and blood of Christ (1 Corinthians 10:16).
 - c. What reason is given in 1 Corinthians 10:21 for unbelievers to be forbidden from participating in communion? _____

⁶ Participation in the Lord's Supper ought to result in the giving of thanks out of a grateful heart (v. 27).

3. How and when should believers partake in the Lord's Supper?
- a. Read 1 Corinthians 11:20-31 and answer the following questions.
- (1) Jesus taught that, in taking communion, believers are to "*do this in _____ of Me*" (vv. 24, 25).
 - (2) What must those who eat the bread and drink the cup be willing to profess and proclaim (v. 26)? _____
 - (3) Partaking of the Lord's Supper must be done in a worthy manner. As a result, all unbelievers, as well as any believer who eats the bread and drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, "*shall be _____ of the body and the blood of the Lord*" (v. 27).
 - (4) What did Paul instruct people to do before partaking (vv. 28, 31)? _____

 - (5) What are the consequences of not obeying Paul's instruction (vv. 29-30, 32)? _____

- b. The frequency that one should partake in the Lord's Supper is not specified in Scripture. What general guidelines are provided regarding when to partake (Acts 20:7) and how often (Acts 2:42; 1 Corinthians 11:26)? _____

IV. Personal Application

- A. How do the attitudes of humility and gratitude keep us from discontentment, pride, self-will, and stubbornness? How can we implement the principles found in Matthew 18:1-6 into our daily lives? _____

- B. How have you grown in humility and gratitude as a result of participation in the two ordinances of the church? How can you direct your focus to grow even more in these areas? _____

WORSHIP

LESSON #9

Memory Verse: Revelation 15:4

Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship you, for your righteous acts have been revealed.

Worship is that task which under girds all other tasks in the Christian life. It is the one, true essential endeavor and eternal call. Since “*Worship is honor and adoration directed toward God,*”¹ everything we do is a potential act of worship. Nothing in a believer’s life ought to be separated from this one all-consuming joy which God has laid our hands.

I. Characteristics of Worship

Worship is the one activity in which we are always participating. At any given moment, people are either worshipping God or something else. True God-pleasing worship glorifies Him, focuses on Him, and is done in spirit and truth.

A. Worship is continuous

1. In Deuteronomy 6:4-9, Moses commanded the people to worship God by loving Him with all of their heart, soul, and might. How does verse 7 indicate that worship ought to be continuous? _____
2. How do the following passages speak to the continuous nature of worship?
 - a. Job 27:10 _____
 - b. Psalm 35:28 _____
 - c. Psalm 104:33 _____
 - d. Psalm 145:1-2 _____

B. Worship exalts and glorifies God

1. How is worship described in Psalm 92:1? _____
2. What is to be ascribed to God (1 Chronicles 16:29)? _____

¹ John MacArthur, *The Ultimate Priority* (Chicago, IL.: Moody Press, 1983), 14.

3. “_____ *the LORD our God and _____ at His holy hill, for holy is the LORD our God*” (Psalm 99:9).

C. Worship is focused on God – List the aspect of God considered in the following passages

1. Revelation 4:11, 14:7 _____
2. Exodus 15:11, Revelation 15:4 _____
3. Isaiah 25:1 _____
4. Psalm 138:5 _____
5. Psalm 118:1 _____
6. Psalm 115:1 _____
7. Psalm 138:2 _____
8. Psalm 28:6 _____
9. Psalm 8:1 _____
10. Psalm 145:3 _____
11. Psalm 57:5 _____
12. Isaiah 24:14 _____
13. Psalm 21:13 _____
14. Psalms 18:46, 96:2; 1 Peter 1:3-5 _____
15. Psalm 71:6 _____

D. Worship is done in spirit and truth

1. Read John 4:23-24. What two qualities does Jesus say is essential in true worshippers?

2. In Romans 1:21-25 Paul references a cause of false worship. What was the cause? Was their false worship caused by a lack of fervor, or a lack of truth? _____

3. How did the Pharisees fall short of worshipping in both spirit and truth (Matthew 15:7-9)? _____

4. Read Romans 12:1-2 and answer the following questions.
 - a. What motivation does Paul stress as the impetus for offering up our bodies (v. 1)?

- b. Spiritual worship is described as believers presenting themselves to God as _____ and _____ and _____ sacrifices to God (v. 1).
- c. How does verse 3 describe worship in truth? _____

II. Components of Worship

Worship is adoration of and reverence for God. It consists of many aspects, including praise and thanksgiving, fear of and delight in God, blessing, and rejoicing. All God-centered worship flows out of a heart that desires to magnify, exalt, and glorify Him.

A. Worship consists of praising God

1. How is the praise of God related to thanksgiving (Psalm 69:30)? _____

2. According to Isaiah 43:21 and Revelation 19:5, what should be characteristic of God's chosen people? _____

B. Worship consists of fearing/reverencing God

1. According to Psalms 2:11 and 5:7, how are believers to enter into the Lord's presence? _____

2. What are believers commanded to do in the fear of God (Psalm 22:23)? _____

C. Worship consists of delighting in God

1. How is delight in God expressed in Job 22:26? _____

2. How can we delight in the splendor and majesty of God (Psalms 104:1, 145:5)? _____

D. Worship consists of rejoicing in God – How do the following passages describe the joyful worship of God?

1. Isaiah 61:10 _____
2. Psalm 63:5 _____
3. Psalm 98:4 _____

- E. Since worship is a continuous activity, everyone worships every moment of every day. Therefore worship is all-encompassing, and all topics previously discussed flow into worship. Among other things, worship consists of union with God (see lesson #1), faith in God (see lesson #2), hope in God (see lesson #3), love of God (see lesson #4), obedience toward God (see lesson #5), the fruit of the Spirit (see lesson #6), passion for God and conviction regarding God (see lesson #7), and humility and gratitude for God (see lesson #8).
- F. Worship flows out of a heart that desires to magnify, exalt, and glorify God – How do the following passages describe the magnification, exaltation, and glorification of God?
1. Nehemiah 9:5 _____
 2. Psalm 34:3 _____
 3. Psalm 57:5 _____
 4. Psalm 71:8 _____
 5. Psalm 86:12 _____
 6. Psalm 113:4 _____
 7. Revelation 5:13, 7:11-12 _____

Corporate worship is not what most people think it is. Many people understand worship in the church as a casual to formal activity that takes place once a week. Worship is often seen as the form, the style, rather than the substance. But what is true in our individual lives under the New Covenant is also true in the corporate assembly of believers: worship is not primarily an external activity.²

III. Categories of Worship

God-pleasing worship is characterized by both private praise and adoration and corporate praise and adoration.

A. Private worship

1. Enoch is known for his private worship. According to Genesis 5:24, how did Enoch worship? _____

² Ibid., 103.

2. Daniel was faithful to worship God privately. How does Daniel 6:10 describe Daniel's practice of private worship? _____

3. In the Old Testament, a physical temple was where God was to be worshiped. According to 1 Corinthians 3:16, where is the God's temple now located? _____

B. Public worship

1. According to Hebrews 10:25, what are believers to avoid? _____

2. The early church worshiped God in great unity and fellowship. According to Acts 2:42, in what four activities did they engage? _____

3. What corporate worship activity is spoken of in Philippians 4:15? _____

4. List eight corporate worship activities which Paul exhorts the Colossian Church to engage in according Colossians 3:14-16. _____

5. What three duties was Timothy, the pastor of the church, to accomplish during corporate worship (1 Timothy 4:13)? _____

6. What do Romans 15:5-7 and Psalm 35:18 teach us about corporate worship? _____

C.H. Spurgeon said, "Why is it that some people are often in a place of worship and yet they are not holy...? It is because they neglect their [prayer] closets. They love the wheat, but they do not grind it; they would have the corn, but they will not go forth into the fields to gather it; the fruit hangs upon the tree, but they will not pluck it; the water flows at their feet, but they will not stoop to drink of it." ³

³ Ibid., 119.

IV. Personal Application

A. How did the study of the characteristics and components of worship impact your view of worship? What can you do differently in order to offer more God-centered, God-honoring worship to your Creator, Lord, and Savior? _____

B. Worship never stops. If one stops worshipping Christ, he begins worshipping someone or something else. We are defined by what we worship. If we are selfish, we are engaging in self worship; if we are greedy, we are worshipping money or resources; when we are lazy, we worship ease and comfort. Christians by definition only worship Christ when engaged in honoring and adoring Him. How can you keep Christ in focus all of the time?

C. Our private worship life feeds our corporate worship. When we meet corporately, we ought to be meeting with other believers who have also prepared themselves for worship. How do you privately prepare yourself for public worship? What can you do differently?

D. Read the accounts of how David (1 Chronicles 29:10-13), Ezra (Nehemiah 8:6), Mary (Luke 1:46), the shepherds (Luke 2:20), Abraham (Romans 4:30), and Paul (Romans 11:36) worshipped God. How can you follow their example? _____

BIBLE STUDY

LESSON #10

Memory Verse: 2 Timothy 2:15

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.

Effective personal Bible study is essential to personal growth in godliness. In order to derive the greatest benefit from the study of Scripture, believers must learn to study God's Word in the most advantageous manner. This lesson details the three steps to life-changing Bible study: observation, interpretation, and application.

I. Observation – The act of taking notice

Personal Bible study must begin with observation of the text. Good observation requires attention to detail. The key question to answer in this step is, "What does the text say?"

A. The purpose of observation

1. The purpose of observation is *"to enable one to become saturated with the particulars of a passage so that one is thoroughly conscious of their existence and of the need for their explanation."*¹
2. "_____ my _____, that I may behold Wonderful things from Your law" (Psalm 119:18).

B. The process of observation

1. Read the entire book in which the passage is found several times. Through repeated reading the interpreter becomes aware of the general purpose of the book, the various themes it contains, the various issues addressed by the author, the key characters, the structure of the book, and the repeated words or phrases.
2. Determine the author's purpose for writing the book. It is of great importance for the reader to understand the overall purpose/theme of the book before turning to examine specific passages. In some cases, the purpose will be clearly stated by the author.

¹ Robert Traina, *Methodical Bible Study* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2002), 31.

However, most books do not contain an explicit purpose statement (e.g., Matthew). List the stated purpose of the author for the following books.

- a. Luke (Luke 1:1-4) _____

 - b. John (John 20:30-31) _____

 - c. 1 Timothy (1 Timothy 3:15) _____

3. Construct a working outline of the book. Outlining allows the interpreter to get a “bird’s-eye” perspective of where a specific passage fits into the overall structure and argument of the book.
 4. Research the historical background of the book. After becoming thoroughly acquainted with the contents and structure of the book, the interpreter must then probe beyond the general content to the historical context. At this stage, the interpreter must first note what is obvious about this historical background of the book itself based on information related to the author of the book (who wrote it), date of the book (when was it written), place of writing, the original recipients (to whom was it written), and the historical contents (what events are recorded). After gleaning as much information as possible from the book itself, the interpreter will benefit from good resources, including:
 - a. Bible dictionaries, handbooks, and encyclopedias²
 - b. The “Introduction” section of a commentary which addresses background matters
 - c. Books that specifically deal with introductory matters, such as authorship, occasion, purpose, outline³
 5. Examine the text. After becoming familiar with both the general contents and the historical context of the book, the interpreter should observe the text itself by seeking to answer the following questions:

² Good examples include: Merrill F. Unger, *The New Unger’s Bible Dictionary, revised and updated*, ed. by R. K. Harrison (Chicago, IL.: Moody Press, 1988); Walter A. Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (Grand Rapids, IL.: Baker, 1984).

³ Good examples include: Gleason L. Archer, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction, revised and enlarged edition* (Chicago, IL.: Moody Press, 1994); D. Edmond Hiebert, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Chicago, IL.: Moody Press, 1975-77).

- a. Who – What individuals or groups are identified in the text? How are they described? What is said about them? What do they do?
- b. What – What is happening? What is being described? What is being emphasized/deemphasized? Affirmed/denied? Praised/condemned? What appears to be missing from the text? What is usual/unusual?
- c. Where – What is the geographical setting of the passage? What locations are identified? Where are the characters of the passage? From where did they come? Where are they going? Where is the writer? Where are the original readers?
- d. When – What is the timing of the events or statements made in the passage? When were the statements made? When did the event happen? How do these events or statements relate to the timing of other events? What happened prior to the events or statements of this passage? What happened after?
- e. Why – What are the cause-and-effect relationships? Why did this happen? Why did Jesus give this answer? Why did God act in the way?
- f. How – What are the means by which things described were accomplished? How did they occur? Who was responsible?

The process of 're-creation' involves such a complete identification of the interpreter with the authors of the Bible that he relives the experiences which were entailed in its writing. It means recapturing the attitudes, motives, thoughts, and emotions of its writers and those concerning whom they wrote.⁴

II. Interpretation

Interpretation is the process of “re-creating” the meaning intended by the author. The key question to answer in this step is, “What does the text mean?”

A. The purpose of interpretation

1. The purpose of this step is to enable one to determine the intent of the author of Scripture, and thus, to determine the meaning of the passage.
2. “Give me _____, that I may observe Your law And keep it with all my heart” (Psalm 119:34).

⁴ Traina, *Methodical Bible Study*, 94.

B. The principles of interpretation

1. Authorial intent as the source of meaning

- a. The text represents the author's intention "frozen" forever in the words of the text; the interpreter therefore endeavors to understand the author, his context, and the audience he addressed in order to best understand the text itself.
- b. What do we learn from 2 Peter 1:20-21 about the writing of Scripture and its proper interpretation? _____

2. The singleness of meaning

- a. This principle of interpretation insists that a biblical text has one meaning and one meaning only. There is only one correct interpretation, and it is the interpreter's responsibility to arrive at that interpretation. Consequently, to reject the principle of single meaning is to plunge the process of interpretation into easy-going subjectivism, where each interpreter defines his own meaning for the passage (e.g., allegorizing or spiritualizing).
- b. J. C. Ryle wrote, "I hold undoubtedly that there is a mighty depth in all Scripture, and that in this respect it stands alone. But I also hold that the words of Scripture were intended to have *one definite sense*, and that our first objective should be to discover that sense, and adhere to it rigidly."⁵

C. The practice of interpretation

1. Study the words and their meanings (lexical study). The interpreter seeks to understand the correct meaning of each word based on the author's use of the word in the given context (*uses loquendi*).
2. Study the grammar (syntactical study). The interpreter seeks to understand the relationship between words and phrases in a sentence. While a word standing by itself may have a range of meanings, how it is used in relationship to other words in the sentence (grammar) will help determine which precise nuance of the word is intended by the author.

⁵ J.C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on the Gospels* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 1953), 2:383.

III. Application – The aim of accurate interpretation

Application is the practicing of biblical truth in everyday life based on the truth obtained from observation and interpretation. Although there is only one meaning to a passage, there are numerous ways that meaning can be applied to individuals' lives.

A. The purpose of application

1. The purpose of the application step is to determine the significance that a text of Scripture has to one's own life.
2. According to Psalm 19:7-11, the Bible can significantly impact a believer's life. What are some of the application areas listed in this passage? _____

B. The priority of application – List the admonitions to believers in the following passages:

1. Proverbs 22:17 _____
2. Proverbs 23:12 _____
3. Romans 12:1-2 _____
4. Ephesians 4:1 _____
5. James 1:21-25 _____
6. 2 Peter 1:4-10 _____

C. The pursuit of application

1. True application comes only when the believer relies upon the guidance and illumination of the Holy Spirit.⁶ The application process must therefore begin with prayer.
 - a. What does 1 Corinthians 2:14 tell us about the Holy Spirit's ministry of illumination? _____
 - b. How did the psalmist pray for application in Psalm 119:5? _____

2. Biblical truth is not applied until it is believed and lived out. The believer must study and meditate on Scripture in order to be transformed in his thinking and behavior.
 - a. What connection is made between meditation and application in Joshua 1:8? _____

⁶ Illumination is the ministry of the Holy Spirit whereby He opens the eyes of individuals to understand spiritual truth.

- b. How does the psalmist describe the man who delights in God's Word and meditates on it day and night (Psalm 1:1-3)? _____

- c. Per Psalm 119:11-16, how should we regard the ways of the Lord? _____

3. Avoid treating the Bible like a "magical" book. Resist the temptation to flip quickly to passages in order to find quick and easy answers. True application comes only after the hard work of serious study and careful interpretation. Bypassing these steps will result in misapplication and confusion.
- a. According to Ezra 7:10, to what level of depth did Ezra look into God's Word?

- b. What approach is taken by those who delight in the works of the Lord (Psalm 111:2)? _____

4. The application of a text should not go beyond what the text says. If a passage comments on an issue only to a point, do not press the application of that passage beyond that degree.
- a. How much latitude did God give Israel regarding the observation of His commandments (Deuteronomy 4:2, 5:32)? _____

- b. What are the consequences of adding or subtracting from God's Word (Proverbs 30:5-6; 1 Corinthians 4:6; Revelation 22:18-19)? _____

5. Be careful to distinguish between that which is merely descriptive (describing an event, person, etc.) and that which is prescriptive/normative (to be followed by all people everywhere). Which of the following passages are descriptive and which are prescriptive/normative?
- a. 1 Samuel 25:42-44 _____
- b. Genesis 2:24 _____
- c. Genesis 9:20-21 _____
- d. Ephesians 5:18 _____

-
-
6. Applications should be made to one's life immediately. Postponing or avoiding scriptural-based change allows the heart/life to become dull and unresponsive to the Spirit (Hebrews 3:13).
 - a. According to Romans 12:11 and Hebrews 6:11-12, how should we serve the Lord? _____

 - b. How is the fear of God contrasted with hardness of heart in Proverbs 28:13-14?

IV. Personal Application

A. Pertaining to step 1 in the process of observation, read through the book of Philippians and answer the following questions:

1. What is the general purpose of the book? _____

2. What themes are contained in the book? _____

3. What issues are addressed by the author? _____

4. Who are the key characters? _____

5. What is the structure of the book? _____

6. Are there any repeated words or phrases? _____

B. Pertaining to step 3 in the process of observation, construct an outline of Philippians on a separate sheet of paper.

C. Answer the questions outlined in step 5 of the process of observation for Philippians 1:1-11. _____

D. Based on the purpose, principles, and practice of interpretation outlined above answer the following questions. To what good work was Paul referring in Philippians 1:6? Examine Paul's use of the term "day" in Philippians 1:5, 1:6, and 1:10. On the basis of these references, what was Paul trying to convey to the Philippians? _____

E. What is your motivation for applying the Word of God to your life and how much of a priority is it? How can you increase your reliance on the guidance of the Holy Spirit for illumination? How will you pray for more focus in this area? _____

F. How are you doing with regard to meditation on and study of the Word of God? What principles have you learned from this study that you can immediately apply? _____

PRAYER AND FASTING

LESSON #11

Memory Verse #1: 1 Thessalonians 5:17

pray without ceasing;

Memory Verse #2: Matthew 9:14-15

Then the disciples of John came to Him, asking, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but Your disciples do not fast?" And Jesus said to them, "The attendants of the bridegroom cannot mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them, can they? But the days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast."

Prayer is personal communication with God and is sometimes connected with fasting in Scripture. In this lesson we will seek to develop a fundamental and biblical understanding of both prayer and fasting.

I. Prayer

The Bible calls Christians to pray as a way of life. Continually recurring, persistent, incessant prayer is an essential part of Christian living; it flows out of humble dependence on God. The goal of all prayer is to bring glory to the Father.

A. What to pray – Prayer includes Adoration/praise, Confession of sin, Thanksgiving, and Supplication/petition regarding specific personal needs and the needs of others including salvation for the lost and our spiritual growth. These can be easily remembered by the acrostic **A.C.T.S.** List the type(s) of prayer described in each of the following passages.

3. Psalm 100:4 _____
4. Psalm 116:17 _____
5. Psalm 118:21, 136:2 _____
6. Psalm 130:2; Daniel 6:11 _____
7. Proverbs 28:13 _____
8. 1 Chronicles 29:10-13 _____
9. Philippians 4:6 _____

B. Why to pray

1. Is prayer an optional activity for Christians or is it commanded? (Isaiah 55:6; Matthew 7:7-8)? _____
2. Match the passages (left) with the motives¹ for prayer (right).

a. Psalm 20:1	Desire for the Lord's glory
b. Psalm 32:2-5	Desire for fellowship with God
c. Psalm 42:1-2	Desire for the needs of us and others to be met
d. Psalm 51:10	Desire for wisdom
e. Luke 11:2	Desire for deliverance from trouble
f. Luke 11:4	Desire for relief from fear and worry
g. Luke 15:3-7	Desire to offer thanksgiving for past blessings
h. Ephesians 1:11-18	Desire to be freed from the guilt of sin
i. Philippians 4:6	Desire for the salvation of the lost
j. James 1:5	Desire for the spiritual growth of believers

C. When to pray

1. According to the following verses, what times of day are appropriate for prayer?
 - a. Psalm 5:3, 88:13, 143:8 _____
 - b. Psalm 88:1 _____
 - c. Psalm 55:17 _____
 - d. Luke 6:12 _____
2. From the above verses, we conclude that all times are appropriate for prayer. In fact, the Bible indicates that we are to pray always. According to 1 Thessalonians 5:17² and Ephesians 6:18, how often should we pray? _____

D. Where to pray

1. According to 1 Timothy 2:8, where should people pray? _____

¹ John MacArthur, "Praying Unceasingly," <http://www.gty.org/Resources/Sermons/52-28> (accessed September 3, 2010).

² The Greek word used for unceasing in 1 Thessalonians 5:17 is *adialeiptos*, which essentially means "constantly recurring." The verse means that prayer, like breathing, is to be a way of life. Prayer should be a constant attitude maintained through total dependence on God.

2. The Bible also indicates that prayers ought to be offered both alone in private (i.e. individual prayer) and in public meetings by groups of believers (i.e. corporate prayer). For each of the following passages, list the type of prayer described: individual prayer or corporate prayer.
- Psalm 95:6 _____
 - Matthew 6:5-6, 14:23 _____
 - Luke 5:16 _____
 - Acts 4:24-32, 12:12 _____

E. How to pray

- Prayer is only to be offered to God and Christ. How is this truth expressed in Psalm 5:2, Matthew 4:10, and Acts 7:59? _____

- What do the two parables recorded in Luke 11:5-13 and 18:1-7 tell us about persistence in prayer? _____

- What role does humility play in effective prayer (2 Chronicles 7:14; Psalm 51:16-17; James 4:8-10)? _____

- Although we are to be humble, why are we told to draw near to the throne of grace with confidence/boldness (Hebrews 4:14-16)? _____

- Why is it important to approach God with faith (Hebrews 11:6; James 1:6-7)? _____

- List the posture(s) of prayer described in each of the following passages.
 - Lamentations 3:41; 1 Timothy 2:8 _____
 - Mark 11:25 _____
 - Ps 95:6; Ephesians 3:14 _____
 - Numbers 16:22; Matthew 26:39 _____
 - John 17:1 _____
- Should we pray aloud or silently (Psalm 55:17; 1 Samuel 1:12-15; Acts 1:13-14, 16:25)? _____

8. Why is it important to allow Scripture to inform our prayers (Psalm 119:9-18, 145:18)? _____

9. To pray in the name of Jesus is to pray according to His will. What does the Bible teach about this concept (John 14:13-14, 15:16, 16:23-27; James 4:13-15; 1 John 5:14-15)? _____

10. What can we learn about the value of praying for others (i.e. intercessory prayer) from Luke 22:32, Acts 12:5, and 1 Timothy 2:1? _____

In My name...is not a magical formula of invocation. But the prayers of believers, as Christ's representatives doing His business, will be answered. John expanded this teaching in his first epistle. He wrote, "If we ask anything according to His will...we have what we asked of Him" (1 John 5:14-15).³

F. Answers to prayer

1. In order to have our prayers answered, we must be in right relationship with God (i.e. saved). What do Proverbs 15:8, 15:29, and 28:9 say about God's posture toward the prayers of unbelievers? _____

2. What does 1 Peter 3:12 say about God's posture toward the prayers of believers? _____

3. Are prayers from believers *always* answered (1 John 5:14-15)? _____

4. Are our prayers always answered in the way we expect and want (2 Corinthians 12:7-9; Deuteronomy 3:23-27; Habakkuk 1:2)? _____

5. What does James 4:2-3 teach about the importance of praying with proper motives? _____

³ Edwin A. Blum, "John," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*, ed., by John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck (Colorado Springs, CO.: ChariotVictor Publishing, 1983), 323.

6. If we pray with faith and intensity for current health/wealth, will we always receive it (James 1:12, 1 Peter 1:6-7, 4:12-13; Philippians 3:10; Matthew 5:10-12, 6:19-21)?

7. Why can we be sure that God’s answer is the best for us and His glory (Romans 8:26-28)? _____

8. Will insincere prayers be answered (Matthew 6:7, 18:10-14, 23:14)? _____

Weak prayers come from weak people; strong prayers come from strong people. The energetic prayers of a righteous man are a potent force in calling down the power of God for restoring weak, struggling believers to spiritual health.⁴

II. Fasting

The Bible does not give much direct instruction regarding the topic of fasting. The majority of what can be learned about fasting comes from the examples of those who fasted.

A. Motivations for fasting

1. In Mat 9:14-15 who is the bridegroom Jesus mentions? With what did Jesus associate fasting in this passage? _____
2. Fasting is sometimes done in times of seeking guidance. How is this modeled in Acts 13:1-4 and 14:23? _____
3. Biblical fasting is seen in times of deep struggle when people were humbled, pulled into the presence of God and all thoughts of worldly things took a back seat, including food. One or more of the following was the driving force for this:
 - a. Lamentation (sorrow): Joel 1:14-20, 2:12-17; 2 Samuel 12:15-17
 - b. Need for protection (fear): 2 Chronicles 20:3; Ezra 8:21-23; Esther 4:12-17
 - c. Humiliation and confession: 1 Kings 21:27-29; Ezra 10:6
 - d. Search for revelation or direction: Daniel 9:1-4
 - e. Need to make a wise selection: Acts 13:1-4, 14:23

⁴ John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: James* (Chicago, IL.: Moody Press, 1998), 280.

B. Attitudes that accompany fasting – List the attitudes that accompany fasting in each of the following passages.

1. Matthew 6:16-18 _____

2. 1 Samuel 7:5-6 _____

3. 2 Samuel 12:16 _____

4. Isaiah 58:1-14 _____

III. Personal Application

A. There are many excellent examples of prayer in the Bible. What can be learned from Hezekiah (Isaiah 38:1-20) and David (2 Samuel 12:13-23) with regards to how God answers persistent prayers, from Asa (2 Chronicles 2:12-13) about not receiving due to not asking, and from Nehemiah (Nehemiah 1:4-11) and Jacob (Genesis 32:9-12) about praying according to the promises of God? Write down some promises that you can recite in prayer and some prayer requests about which you would like to be more persistent in your prayer. _____

B. Have you become calloused because of the vast amount of suffering or wrong you see every day? Does this callousness reduce the sorrow you feel over the sins, fears, afflictions and needs of yourself and others? How can you remedy that so you are even lead to set aside food until you are deeply and intensely drawn into the presence of God through prayer? _____

CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

LESSON #12

Memory Verse: Acts 2:42

They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Fellowship has been defined as “*a common life together.*”¹ Acts 2:42 informs us that those in the early church were continually devoting themselves to fellowship. In this lesson, we will examine Scripture to see what such devotion involves.

I. Christian Fellowship is Mandatory

God has called Christians into fellowship. This call is not to be seen as optional and not to be taken lightly. Christians have fellowship with one another, because they have fellowship with God. This type of fellowship does not exist between believers and unbelievers.

A. Christians are called into fellowship with the Trinity

1. Christians have fellowship with the _____ and with His Son _____ (1 John 1:3).
2. With whom does God call the elect into fellowship (1 Corinthians 1:9)? _____
3. In 2 Corinthians 13:14, Christian fellowship is referred to as the fellowship of the _____.

B. Christians are called into fellowship with other Christians

1. Hebrews 12:22-24 describes salvation as fellowship with the entire heavenly host. What groups are listed in this passage? _____
2. Christians are called only to fellowship with other believers. What is said about this in 2 Corinthians 6:14-17 and Ephesians 5:11? _____

¹ John MacArthur, *The Master's Plan for the Church* (Chicago, IL.: Moody Press, 1991), 68.

[Fellowship] is not primarily an activity; it is a relationship...We must grasp the idea that fellowship means belonging to one another in the Body of Christ, along with all the privileges and responsibilities that such a relationship entails.²

II. Christian Fellowship is Meaningful

Fellowship is not something Christians do, but a relationship they have. Believers are those who are in fellowship because of a common calling in Jesus Christ. Not only is fellowship sharing together in relationship, but it is also sharing in the sense of entering into a spiritual partnership with a common goal and common work. Believers partner with each other in worship to God, outreach to the world, and ministry to one another.

A. Fellowship is sharing together through relationship

1. Read 1 John 1:3-7 and answer the following questions.

a. What should Christians do in order to bring new converts into fellowship with themselves and God (vv. 3-5)? _____

b. How does a believer's walk/life relate to fellowship (vv. 6-7)? _____

2. Jesus prayed that believers would have the type of unity with each other that He has with His Father (John 17:20-21). Read the following passages and describe the kind of fellowship required among believers to accomplish unity in the church

a. 1 Corinthians 1:10 _____

b. Ephesians 4:1-3 _____

c. Philippians 2:1-5 _____

3. What was Paul hoping to receive upon a visit to the Roman church (Romans 15:32)?

² Jerry Bridges, *The Crisis of Caring: Recovering the Meaning of True Fellowship* (Phillipsburg, NJ.: P&R Publishing, 1985), 17.

- B. Fellowship is sharing together through partnership
1. Christian fellowship entails partnership in worship to God
 - a. What is stated about fellowship regarding participation in the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 10:16-17)? _____

 - b. Read the following verses and list the aspect(s) of worship given, which are to be done within the context of the church fellowship.
 - (1) Psalm 22:22 _____
 - (2) Psalm 34:3 _____
 - (3) Psalm 111:1 _____
 - (4) 2 Corinthians 1:11; Ephesians 6:18 _____
 2. Christian fellowship entails partnership in outreach to the world
 - a. What command did the church receive as her mission (Mark 16:15; 2 Timothy 1:7-8)? _____

 - b. In what did Paul consider the Philippians as partners since their conversion (Philippians 1:3-5)? _____

 - c. Read Philippians 1:27-30 and answer the following questions.
 - (1) How should believers be united together in the gospel (vv. 27-28)? _____

 - (2) In what else related to outreach do believers have fellowship (vv. 29-30)? _____

 3. Christian fellowship entails partnership in ministry to one another³
 - a. One of the benefits of fellowship is the accountability that comes with it. What does James 5:16 instruct regarding fellowship and accountability? _____

 - b. What ministry to one another is described in Ephesians 4:32? _____

³ Notice the use of the phrases "one another" and "each other" in the passages of this section.

- c. What type of partnership-oriented attitude/action did Paul prescribe in Ephesians 5:21? _____

- d. Partnership in ministry involves believers demonstrating warmth toward one another through encouragement, sympathy, empathy, etc. Read the following passages and list the specific areas of tender ministry to one another mentioned.
- (1) Hebrews 10:25 _____
- (2) 1 Thessalonians 4:18, 5:11 _____
- (3) Philippians 2:1-5 _____
- (4) Romans 12:10, 15 _____
- (5) 1 Corinthians 12:26-27 _____
- e. Partnership in ministry also involves sharing both material and spiritual resources with each other. List what the following passages encourage believers to share with one another.
- (1) Romans 12:13 _____
- (2) Acts 20:35 _____
- (3) 1 Timothy 6:17-18 _____
- (4) Philemon 6, 17 _____
- (5) Hebrews 13:16 _____
- (6) James 1:27 _____
- (7) Colossians 3:16 _____
- (8) Galatians 6:6 _____
- (9) 2 Timothy 2:2 _____

Another wonderful mark of loving fellowship is companionship. Companionship is not something we directly do or give. It is the by-product of other things, things as simple as standing with a friend who is in trouble or sitting with someone who is sick, or as complex as mutual ministry. The main ingredient of companionship is togetherness; it cannot be experienced from a distance or secondhand.⁴

⁴ John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: 1 Corinthians* (Chicago, IL.: Moody Press, 1984), 482.

III. Christian Fellowship is Modeled

There is no shortage of examples of authentic, God-honoring fellowship in the Bible. In this section, we will examine a few.

A. Fellowship between believers was modeled in the Old Testament

1. With whom did David claim to have fellowship (Psalm 119:63)? _____

2. What is said about the fellowship Daniel had with his three companions (Daniel 2:17-18)? _____

B. Fellowship between believers was modeled in the early church

1. What is said about the fellowship of the believers in the early church (Acts 1:14)?

2. Read Acts 2:42-47 and answer the following questions.
 - a. To what four things were the early believers continually devoted (v. 42)? _____

 - b. What two characteristics of fellowship are mentioned in verse 44? _____

 - c. To what extent were they willing to share with each other (v. 45)?⁵ _____

 - d. How did they share life together from day to day (v. 46)? _____

 - e. How does verse 47 describe their partnership in worship and evangelism? _____

3. Describe the fellowship modeled by the following people and groups:
 - a. The apostles (Galatians 2:9) _____

 - b. Timothy (Philippians 2:19-22; 1 Thessalonians 3:1-2) _____

 - c. The Macedonian churches (2 Corinthians 8:1-4, 8:14-15, 9:13) _____

⁵ The book of Acts contains a history of the early church. One must take care not to assume that a *description* of what happened is always a *prescription* of what to do and how to do it.

IV. Personal Application

A. How seriously do you take your call to be in fellowship with God and with other believers? Hebrews 13:16 indicates that fellowship involves sacrifice. What are some ways that you intend to do good and share with others as a sacrifice? Do you open yourself to others and share your life with them? _____

B. How are you partnering with other believers in worship and outreach? In what ways are you ministering to and taking care of your brothers and sisters in Christ? _____

C. The support system within the loving family of believers is a tremendous demonstration of God's grace. Are you keeping yourself accountable to other believers through confession and prayer? Are you actively encouraging others and sharing your spiritual and material resources with them? _____

D. Who in your life has been a positive example of Christian fellowship? How can you emulate this person and be a model of fellowship for others? _____

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