

# **FOUNDATIONS**

## **of the Faith**

**A ministry of**  
**Cornerstone Bible Church**  
**869 Cole Drive**  
**Lilburn, Georgia 30047**

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# Introduction

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In the following pages, you have the privilege of coming to grips with the essentials of the Christian faith.

Perhaps this will be your first serious exposure to first-hand study in the Scriptures. If it is, don't worry—the questions are not difficult to answer if you have your Bible open. If you are an experienced Bible student, you can profit as well by a review of these matters. After all, the Apostle Peter told his friends, "I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know them, and are established in the present truth. . . Moreover, I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease" (2 Peter 1:12, 15).

The material is designed to be covered over a 13-week period in an adult Sunday School or Bible class setting, although it may be used in one-on-one discipling. The ideal situation includes an experienced teacher/group leader and five to twelve students. Open discussion of difficult topics will sharpen the students and challenge the teacher.

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# Foundations of the Faith

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## 1: What is the Bible?

The Bible is the most remarkable book in the world. The writing was done by about forty men of several countries and many occupations. They wrote over a period of some 1500 years and in three languages: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. Yet the Bible is a well-organized unity with one great theme—the kingdom of God—and one central figure, the Lord Jesus Christ. All of this would have been quite impossible unless the Bible had had one supreme Author, the Holy Spirit of God.

The story of how we got our Bible, our confidence in its truthfulness, and why its particular books are included in our English Scriptures form the subjects of this chapter.

### *Memory Verse for This Lesson*



#### **2 Timothy 3:16**

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”

## **SURVEY OF THE BIBLE: THE OLD TESTAMENT**

1. The first five books of the Old Testament were written about 1440 BC by Moses. They are sometimes called the “Torah,” or “Law,” and are sometimes referred to as the Pentateuch (PEN-ta-tuke), which means “five writings.” List them below in the order you find them in your Bible.

- \_\_\_\_\_ The book of beginnings (creation, man, sin, redemption, God’s nation)
- \_\_\_\_\_ God’s deliverance of His people from Egypt.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Priestly laws of worship through sacrifice.
- \_\_\_\_\_ God’s people continually disobey and wander in the wilderness for forty years.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Moses’ great discourses to prepare the people to enter the Promised Land.

2. The next twelve books in the Old Testament are **historical**. They were written between 1117 and 425 BC and describe God’s dealings with His chosen people Israel, the Hebrew nation. List these books in order:

- \_\_\_\_\_ The conquest and distribution of the Promised Land.

\_\_\_\_\_ The deterioration and deliverance of Israel following the conquest.

\_\_\_\_\_ A cameo of love, devotion, and redemption in the days of the Judges.

\_\_\_\_\_ The transition of leadership from judges to kings in Israel.

\_\_\_\_\_ The triumphs, transgressions, and troubles of King David.

\_\_\_\_\_ The story of the rise and fall of Solomon and the division of his kingdom.

\_\_\_\_\_ The deterioration of spiritual and moral life in Israel and Judah following the death of Solomon.

\_\_\_\_\_ A review of the accomplishments of David and his dynasty.

\_\_\_\_\_ The reign of Solomon and the succeeding kings of Judah down to the destruction of Jerusalem.

\_\_\_\_\_ The return from exile and the restoration of the people of God.

\_\_\_\_\_ Nehemiah rebuilds Jerusalem and renews the covenant.

\_\_\_\_\_ The fate of the people of God who remained behind in Persia.

3. The following five books are **poetic**, describing in hymns and songs God's greatness and His dealings with people. List them in order below:

\_\_\_\_\_ The suffering and loyal trust of a man who loved God.

\_\_\_\_\_ Songs of praise and instruction.

\_\_\_\_\_ God's practical wisdom for successful living.

\_\_\_\_\_ The emptiness of an earthly life without God.

\_\_\_\_\_ A portrait of married love, picturing the intensity of God's love for His people.

4. The five books of **Major Prophets** follow. A prophet was one who was commissioned by God to deliver His message to humanity. These five books are called Major Prophets because their writings are generally longer than the works of the so-called Minor Prophets. The books of the Major Prophets were written between 750 and 550 BC. List them in order below.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Prophecies of condemnation and comfort toward Judah and her neighbors.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Prophecies primarily related to the coming judgment against Judah.
- \_\_\_\_\_ An elegant mourning song concerning the destruction of Jerusalem.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Prophecies relating to the destruction and restoration of Judah.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Prophecies concerning Gentile nations and their relations with Israel.

5. The last twelve books of the Old Testament are called **Minor Prophets**. These books were written during the period 817-417 BC. List them in order.

- \_\_\_\_\_ A prophet understands God's love through the lens of his experience with his own unfaithful wife.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Prophecies concerning the Day of the Lord, a future time of judgment.
- \_\_\_\_\_ A farmer-turned-prophet gives predictions concerning the coming destruction of Israel.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Prophecies concerning the destruction of Edom, Israel's neighbor/cousin.
- \_\_\_\_\_ A reluctant prophet learns of God's grace and mercy toward those who disobey.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The judgment and restoration of Judah, and predictions of the Messiah.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The judgment of Nineveh.

\_\_\_\_\_ A troubled prophet learns of the plans God has for His people.

\_\_\_\_\_ More prophecies of the Day of the Lord.

\_\_\_\_\_ A prophet urges the reconstruction of God's temple in Jerusalem.

\_\_\_\_\_ Prophecies urging Judah to prepare for the coming of Messiah.

\_\_\_\_\_ A prophetic appeal to backsliders.

There are 39 books in the Old Testament. These, with the 27 of the New, make a total of 66 books in our Bible. You will find it of great value to memorize the names of these books in order. Begin now, one section at a time, as they are listed in this lesson.

## **SURVEY OF THE BIBLE: THE NEW TESTAMENT**

The New Testament describes the coming of Jesus Christ to earth to take on human flesh. In it we find the way of salvation, the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, the beginnings of the Christian church, instructions for Christian living, and God's plan for the future.

6. The first five books of the New Testament are **historical**. As you list them in order below, notice their descriptions at the right.

\_\_\_\_\_ The life of Christ written especially for Jewish Christians, emphasizing His claims to kingship.

\_\_\_\_\_ The life of Christ written to show how Jesus acted as the obedient servant of God.

\_\_\_\_\_ The life of Christ revealing Jesus as the perfect Man, emphasizing His humanity.

\_\_\_\_\_ The life of Christ revealing Jesus as the Son of God, stressing His deity.

\_\_\_\_\_ The beginning and spread of the Christian church.

7. What two reasons are given for the writing of John's Gospel (John 20:31)?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

8. The next 21 books are letters (**epistles**). They are written to individuals, to churches, or to believers in general. These letters deal with every aspect of the Christian faith and the responsibilities of believers. List them below in the order you find them in your Bible.

*Paul's letters (13):*

- \_\_\_\_\_ God offers His gift of righteousness to all humanity, made possible by the atoning sacrifice of His Son.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Paul rebukes carnal living and answers questions from the Corinthian believers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The relationship of the servant to the served.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Paul expounds what it means to be free from the Law.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Paul's explanation of the process of building up the body of Christ, the church.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Paul writes from prison to encourage one of his favorite churches.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The preeminence of Christ.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Christians are to live in a holy manner in expectation of the return of Christ.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Living in expectation of the return of Christ should not promote lackadaisical attitudes.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Paul writes to explain proper behavior in the church of Christ.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Paul, soon to be executed, writes to encourage patient endurance in the ministry of Christ.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Paul urges both the protection and the practice of sound teaching.
- \_\_\_\_\_ An appeal for the forgiveness of a runaway slave.

*General letters (8):*

- \_\_\_\_\_ A letter to a group of persecuted Jewish Christians urging them to continue to serve Christ.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The earliest New Testament letter, an appeal to add fruitful works to genuine faith.
- \_\_\_\_\_ What suffering in the cause of Christ is all about.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Guarding against false teachers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The basis and importance of fellowship with Christ.

- \_\_\_\_\_ The dangers of fellowship with false teachers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The virtues of fellowship with true believers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Defending the faith.

9. The last book of the New Testament is a book of **prophecy**. It describes future events—including the return, reign, and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ and the future state of believers and unbelievers. It is called

\_\_\_\_\_.

“If we abide by the principles taught in the Bible, our country will go on prospering... but if we and our posterity neglect its instructions and authority, no man can tell how sudden a catastrophe may overwhelm us and bury all our glory in profound obscurity.”

—Daniel Webster (ca. 1850)

#### Divisions of the Bible Summarized

|          |          |                                     |
|----------|----------|-------------------------------------|
| History  | 17 books | Rise and fall of Israel             |
| Poetry   | 5 books  | Words of praise or wisdom           |
| Prophecy | 17 books | God’s warnings, promises of Messiah |
| Gospels  | 4 books  | The Messiah is revealed             |
| Acts     | 1 book   | The beginning of Messiah’s church   |
| Letters  | 21 books | His teachings and principles        |
| Prophecy | 1 book   | The consummation of history         |

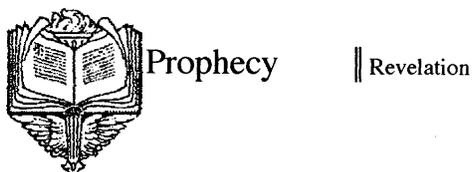
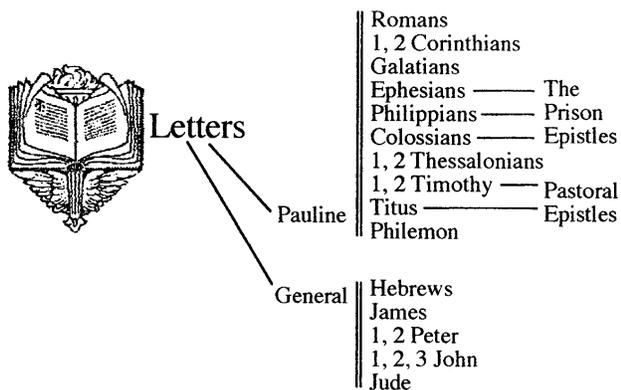
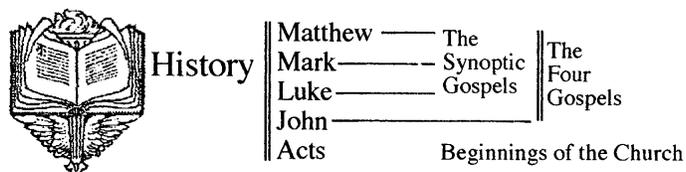
10. Who is the central figure of the Bible (John 5:39; Luke 24:25-27)?

\_\_\_\_\_

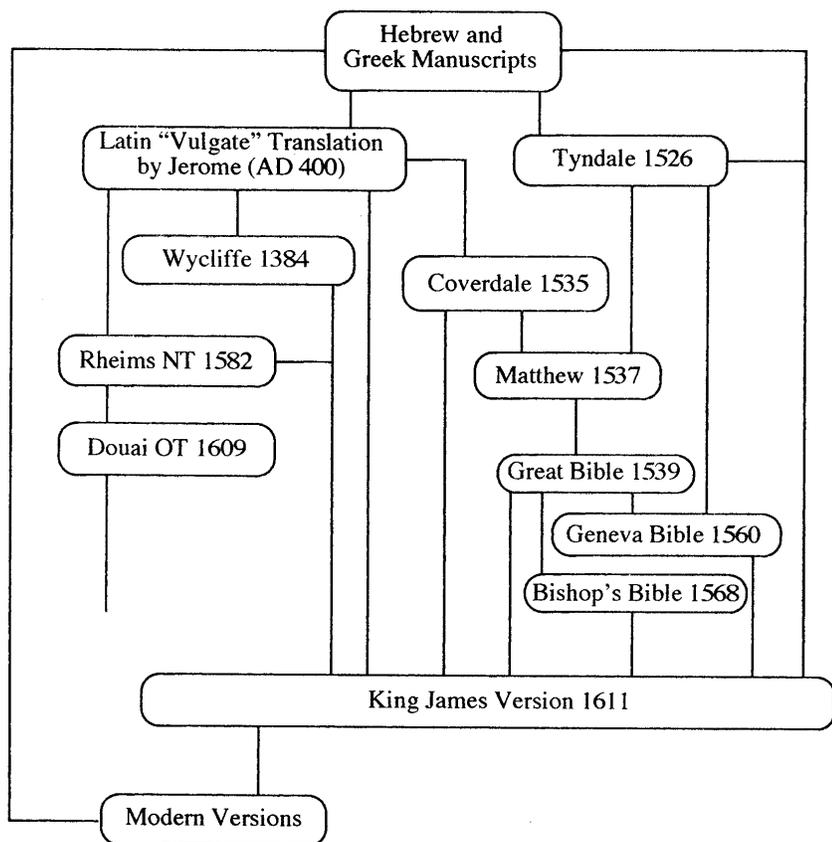
11. What does 2 Timothy 3:16 assert concerning the Bible? Check the correct answer:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Some of the Bible is inspired by God.
- \_\_\_\_\_ There are a few parts that are not inspired.
- \_\_\_\_\_ All the Bible is inspired by God.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Only the parts that speak to us in a personal way are inspired.

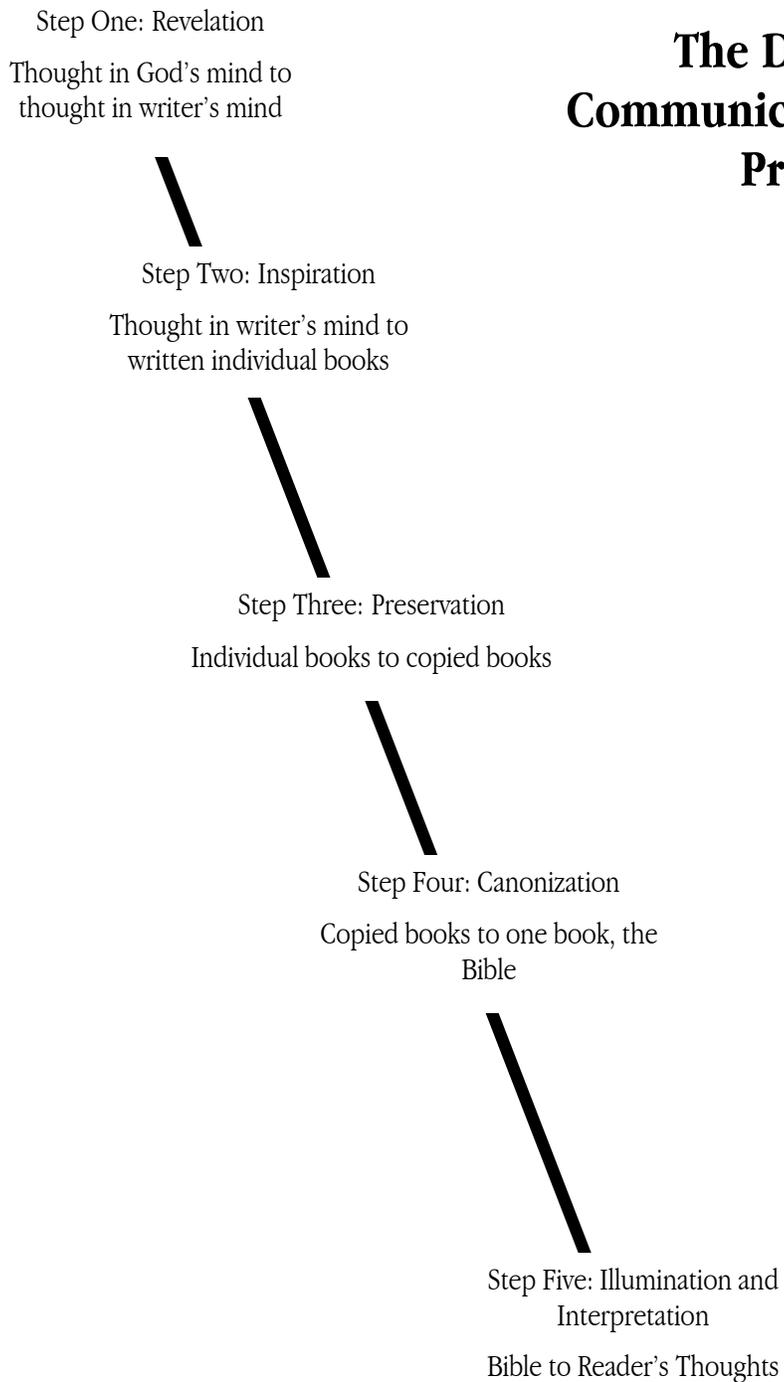
## A Summary of the New Testament



## How We Got Our English Bible



## The Divine Communication Process





## 2: What is the gospel?

In studying any subject, it is important to begin at the beginning. In studying the Bible, the beginning is the “gospel”—the good news that God has sent to men. It was this good news that “turned the world upside down” (Acts 17:6) in the first century.

### *Memory Verse for This Lesson*



**Romans 3:23**

“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

### THE PROBLEM

A man asked the question centuries ago—but it is wrestled with in the hearts of individuals today as much as ever: “How can a man be right with God?” (Job 25:4). Some answers people have given are listed below. In the blanks provided, add others that you have heard (or used!):

1. By going to church.
2. By being a good person.
3. By obeying the Ten Commandments.
4. By loving one’s fellow men.
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_

All of the items listed are, of course, commendable. But one nagging question remains: How can I know...

...when I have been going to church enough?

...when I have been a good enough person?

...when I have obeyed the ten commandments well enough (after all, no one could ever expect me to keep them all perfectly, could he—or could He?)?

In the plainest language, the common problem with all these answers is that they give no *sure* answer at all. And if I can't find a sure answer to this most vital of all questions . . . well, nothing else I do have answers for makes much difference, does it? And, after all, if I end up before God and *then* find out I haven't been good enough, it will be too late to do anything about it! What a cruel joke God will have played on me! But wait, the worst is yet to come . . .

## THE PROBLEM INTENSIFIED

Not only do I have a problem knowing when I have made the grade as far as God is concerned—according to the Scriptures, the standard is so tough . . . well, just take a look at the Book for yourself . . .

1. Look up the following Scriptures and summarize what they teach (one sentence only):

Leviticus 19:2

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1 Peter 1:15-16

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2. Now take a look at the standard that Jesus Himself described in two places.

Matthew 5:20:

**I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.**

The scribes and the Pharisees were super-saints (or so they thought). They contributed a tenth of everything they owned to God; they fasted regularly; they studied the Bible intensively; they prayed three times a day. Do you know anyone who can top that for being religious? Yet Jesus said that it wasn't good enough. So what is?!

Matthew 5:48:

**You shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect. (Matt 5:48).**

In this verse, Jesus says men must be *perfect*. Based on the words He used, does this mean (check one):

\_\_\_\_\_ “Perfect” in the sense that we are to be that much better than other people (relative perfection)?

\_\_\_\_\_ “Perfect” in the sense that we are to be morally spotless in the same sense that God Himself is morally spotless (absolute perfection)?

How many sins does this allow a person to have before he loses his “perfection”?

\_\_\_\_\_

This causes quite a problem for a person who sincerely wants to be right with God, doesn’t it? Have you ever met anyone who measured up to this divine standard?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Let’s look at what the Bible says about how men measure up to God’s standard. Look up the Scriptures below and summarize their teaching in one sentence:

Romans 3:23; Psalm 14:2-3; Galatians 3:22; Psalm 143:2

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. For an illustration of the reason why a holy God cannot accept a person with even one sin, consider this. Suppose you make an omelet for some guests. You put five eggs into the pan, all of which are fine. The sixth egg you stir in, however, is rotten. Would you serve that dish to anyone? Even though it is five-sixths good, the decay permeates it all and makes it useless. So it is with man. We may find someone who is five-sixths good, but that still means that he is morally impure—not in one-sixth of his being, but in all of it.

## THE PROBLEM SOLVED

So far we have been looking at things from man’s point of view. But, as in every story, there are two sides to this one, too. In the matter of man’s eternal destiny, God faced a great problem. Let’s see what the Bible says about the horns of this great “divine dilemma.”

5. God is loving and merciful—and therefore doesn’t want to punish us. Check the following passages and summarize what they tell you about God’s basic attitude toward humanity:

Jeremiah 31:3; Psalm 136:26; 1 John 4:8,10; Psalm 138:8

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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6. On the other side of the issue, God is just and holy—and therefore must punish our sins. Investigate the following references to see this alternative side of God's nature and summarize what you discover:

Exodus 34:7 ; Deuteronomy 4:23-24; Deuteronomy 10:17; Hebrews 10:28-31

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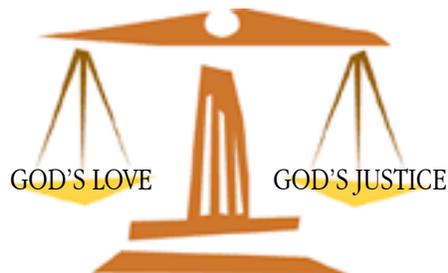
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You may find it helpful in considering these things to think of the parallels on the human level. A policeman, for example, may be a kind and loving person and yet find himself forced (however reluctantly) to shoot an individual committing a crime. In the same way, God takes no pleasure in the death (either physical or spiritual) of anyone—even the wicked (Ezek. 18:23,32). But the same God tells us that sin will be punished (Ezek. 18:24, Exod. 34:7).

We may diagram the balance of these two aspects of God's character this way:



God's choices apparently are to either . . .

. . . (1) compromise His **justice** by sacrificing everything to His love. He could do this by turning His head to men's sins and admitting them to His presence in a morally guilty state. But then He would be denying those passages that describe Him as holy.

. . . or . . .

. . . (2) compromise His **love** by sacrificing everything to His justice. He could do this by turning over all men who have sinned (meaning all men, period) to what

they deserve—eternal punishment. But then He would be denying the things He said about Himself in passages describing His awesome love for people.

The Bible tells us that the love that God has for man is so great that He solved this problem in the most amazing way—by entering into the world Himself in the person of Jesus Christ.

7. What do the following passages teach about Christ?

John 1:1,14; Hebrews 1:8; John 8:58 (comp. Exod 3:14); Colossians 2:9

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8. Today it is often asserted that Jesus never claimed to be equal with God. Look at John 5:18. Did Jesus' contemporaries understand Him to be claiming deity?

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9. Jesus paid the price to redeem us from the penalty of our sins. What was that price, according to 1 Peter 1:18,19?

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How did Christ pay for sin (Heb. 9:26)? \_\_\_\_\_

### **SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY**

1. What happens if, after having put your trust in Jesus Christ alone, you still don't "feel" like you have eternal life?

2. Sometimes people deny the reality of life after death, especially the reality of hell. Get a concordance and look up the word “hell” in the New Testament. On whose lips does this word occur more often than anyone else? How often did this same person speak of “heaven”?

3. What would you reply to someone who said that faith in Christ is not the key to eternal life—that such a plan makes eternal life too easy to gain?

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## 3: How can I be sure?

One of the striking differences between first-century Christianity and the modern church is that those early Christians were really convinced of their own relationship to God. They knew that they would spend eternity with God—and they *knew* that they knew. The pages of the New Testament ring with expressions like “These things have I written to you that you may know that you have eternal life” (1 John 5:13). Again, in Romans 8:39, Paul writes, “Nothing can separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Further, John asserted, “We know that we have passed from death to life” (1 John 3:14). The Apostle John agrees, giving us the memory verse for this lesson:

### ***Memory Verse for This Lesson:***



**John 6:47**

***“The one who believes in Me has eternal life.”***

One day a little girl came home from school and proudly announced, “Mommy, I’ve learned how to punctuate.”

Thinking this to be quite an accomplishment for a child of her age, her mother replied, “That’s wonderful, sweetie. Tell me, how do you punctuate?”

The little girl said, “Well, if something is definitely certain, you put a hatpin after it. But if it’s not really certain, or you’re just not sure about it, then you just put a buttonhook after it.”

We might say that people today (even church members) are either hatpins or buttonhooks—either sure or unsure of their eternal destiny. Which are you?

Sometimes people think that it is presumptuous to be certain of one’s eternal destiny. Most assuredly it is not. It would be presumptuous to have such an assurance if it were based on one’s appraisal of oneself as deserving eternal salvation—but the Bible insists that no one is deserving.

Then how is it possible to know that your life will be spent with Jesus Christ forever? Let’s look first at some items that can’t provide assurance.

## SOURCES OF FALSE HOPE

There are at least two false approaches to the matter of assurance. The first is to base one's confidence on performance of "religious" activities. The idea is, "If I can engage in enough good things, God will surely accept me." For an example of those who tried this approach, read Paul's warning to the Galatians in 4:8-10.

1. What were they doing that required Paul's rebuke (v. 10)?

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2. What does the apostle call this in verse nine?

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It is "becoming a beggar" to act as if we can commend ourselves to God by doing enough "religious" things.

The second false approach to the matter of assurance is to base one's hope on whether or not he *feels* assured of eternal life—in a word, to base our assurance on emotions.

It should be apparent that our emotions and impulses are not a sound basis for determining truth. The Scriptures have much to say under this heading, using words like "impulses," "desires," and "lusts." You may wish to examine, for instance, passages like Titus 3:3, 2 Timothy 3:6, 1 Peter 4:2, and Ephesians 2:3.

You will note without exception that these passages are all speaking in a pre- or non-Christian context. They teach us that it was normal to be led by our emotions as an unbeliever, but that it is not acceptable for Christians.

3. What is the part of man that God intends us to be led by (Rom. 12:2; Eph. 4:22-23)?

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## THE BASIS OF TRUE CONFIDENCE

There is only one true basis for hope; only one sure way of knowing that one possesses eternal life. That way is relying on the certainty of what God has said in His Word. To see the importance of this concept, look at Revelation 3:20.

In the passage, the Lord Jesus is speaking. He is, in the context, requesting an audience with certain defecting members of His church. However, the passage may legitimately be applied as a picture of how He comes into a person's life initially.

4. He stands at the door of the heart and knocks. If His voice is heard and He is invited in, what two things does He promise to do?

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(The latter term is virtually equal to "have fellowship with Him," as it has long been customary to combine fellowship with a meal.)

Now for the critical questions:

5. Is Jesus Christ a liar? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Does He mean it when He promises to come into your life if you invite Him in?  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Have you ever invited Jesus Christ into your life? \_\_\_\_\_
8. If your answer to question seven is yes, where is He right now, on the basis of what He said? \_\_\_\_\_

If your answer to question seven is *no*, then you will certainly want to make sure He is in your life by inviting Him in right now!

9. Does it make any difference whether or not you *feel* that He is in your life?  
\_\_\_\_\_ (note 2 Cor. 5:7). Once He is in your life, will He ever leave you again (Heb. 13:5)? \_\_\_\_\_ How do you know?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Now turn to 1 John 5:13.

10. Who is being addressed in this letter? How does John describe them?

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11. Why is he writing the things mentioned in the letter? \_\_\_\_\_

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12. Does John indicate that this certainty is to be based on anything other than the fact that these people have trusted in Jesus Christ?

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To sum up: the Scriptures teach that those who have trusted Christ as their Savior not only have eternal life, but that they may be assured of having it. This knowledge is not based on presumption, but upon what God Himself has said. In fact, to refuse to accept this assurance is unbelief, and, according to 1 John 5, is tantamount to calling God a liar. Paul wrote that he served God “. . . in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago . . . even His Word” (Tit. 1:2,3). We may crystallize the truth we have been teaching with this triplet:

God said it . . . in His Word.

I believe it . . . in my heart.

That settles it . . . in my mind.

Are you a hatpin or a buttonhook?

If you would like to settle the issue once and for all, you may wish to turn directly to Jesus Christ in prayer, and tell Him your heart’s desire is to know you have eternal life. You may wish to use words something like those below as you speak with Him:

“Lord Jesus, I recognize that I am a sinner. I need forgiveness for all my sins. I am now willing to leave them behind me and trust You to forgive them.

Thank You for dying on the cross for me. I now want you to come into my life to be my Savior. I want to follow You as my Lord. Thank You that according to Your Word, You now dwell within me. Thank you for giving me the gift of eternal life.”

You may wish to solidify this decision by recording it below.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

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## **SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY**

1. Can you think of any reasons why the Bible's teaching about the certainty of eternal life is not widely known today? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Can you list three areas of your life which should be affected by having a certainty of eternal life? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. Can you list the names of two people you know well who are not certain of their eternal destiny? Do you think it might be important to share this information with them? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. Are there other areas of life in which the Christian believer must deny the "evidence" of his feelings and trust what God has said in Scripture? What are they? \_\_\_\_\_

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# 4: What is God like?

*Plunge yourself in the Godhead's deepest sea; be lost in His immensity; and you shall come forth as from a couch of rest, refreshed and invigorated. I know nothing which can so comfort the soul; so calm indwelling billows of sorrow and grief; so speak peace to the winds of trial, as a devout musing upon the subject of the Godhead.*

—C.H. Spurgeon

Knowing about God is critically important for living our lives. The world becomes a strange, mad, and painful place, and life in it a disappointing and unpleasant business, for those who do not know about God. Not to know God is to stumble and blunder through life blindfolded, with no sense of direction and no understanding of what is happening around us.

## **Memory Verse for This Lesson:**



### **Jeremiah 9:24**

“Let him who boasts boast of this: that he understands and knows Me.”

*Our worship is only as pure as our high or low thoughts of God. Without a doubt, the mightiest thoughts the mind can entertain are the thoughts of God. This makes it immensely important that our ideas concerning God should correspond as nearly as possible to that which is true of God. True worship allows God to manifest His attributes in our lives.*

—A.W. Tozer

## **GOD'S ATTRIBUTES**

One of the best ways to study about God is to examine what the Bible teaches about His attributes. These are His dominant characteristics. They are summarized in the diagram on the following page:

|                  |                 |                                 |
|------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Sovereignty   | 4. Omnipresence | <b>Non-Moral<br/>Attributes</b> |
| 2. Eternality    | 5. Omnipotence  |                                 |
| 3. Omniscience   | 6. Immutability |                                 |
| 7. Righteousness | 9. Love         | <b>Moral<br/>Attributes</b>     |
| 8. Justice       | 10. Veracity    |                                 |

### Incommunicable Attributes

Some of God's attributes belong to God exclusively, and some find a limited existence in created beings like man. Those that belong to God only are listed below. These are sometimes called *incommunicable* or *non-moral* attributes.

1. God is *sovereign*. God is supreme in power, superior in position to all others. He never loses control of events.

*He does as He pleases in the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of earth (Dan 4:35).*

#### Application:

God's sovereignty assures the Christian that nothing can touch him except what God allows, and that ultimately His plans will triumph.

2. God is *eternal*. There never has been a time when God did not exist. He has no beginning and He has no end.

*The eternal God is your refuge. (Deut. 33:27)*

#### Application:

Being eternal, God is not bound by time. Having always existed, He sees the past and the future as clearly as the present. With this perspective, He has a better understanding than we do as to what is best for our lives. Knowing this, we should be willing to trust Him for our present and our future.

*Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. (Prov. 3:5-6).*

3. God is *omniscient*. God possesses all knowledge of things actual and potential. He never is surprised.

*The Lord searches all hearts, and knows all the imaginations of the thoughts (1 Chron. 28:9)*

**Application:**

Think of omniscience in relation to the eternal security of the Christian. If God knows all, then obviously nothing can come to light after salvation that He did not know about when He saved us. Knowing all about us, He still forgave all our sins.

4. God is *omnipresent*. God is infinitely and everywhere personally present through all space.

*“Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him?” says the Lord. “Do I not fill heaven and earth?” (Jer 23:24).*

**Application:**

God is everywhere present but God is not everything (that’s pantheism). If God is everywhere, it is foolish to think we can hide from Him. On the other hand, it also means that today a believer may experience the presence of God at all times and know the blessings of walking with Him in a very personal way.

5. God is *omnipotent*. God is all-powerful, having more than enough strength to do what He chooses to do.

*Nothing shall be impossible with God (Luke 1:37).*

**Application:**

Because God is all-powerful, the believer is kept secure in his salvation. Our salvation comes because the gospel is the power of God unto salvation (Rom. 1:16). Furthermore, God’s omnipotence is seen in His power to create (Gen. 1:1), in His preservation of all things (Heb. 1:3), and in His providential care for us.

6. God is *immutable*. God never changes in His nature or attributes.

*I am the Lord, I change not (Mal 3:6).*

**Application:**

The Bible contains thousands of things that God has promised to do for those who belong to Him. He can be trusted to keep His word. He is never a victim of His emotions.

Fill in the attribute described in the following passages:

**Prov. 15:3; Acts 17:27** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How does this attribute of God apply to you personally? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Exod. 3:14; Rev. 22:13** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Personal application: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Num. 23:19; Heb. 6:17-18** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Personal application: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Job 34:21; Matt. 12:25** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Personal application: \_\_\_\_\_

**Psa. 62:11; Rev. 19:6** \_\_\_\_\_

Personal application: \_\_\_\_\_

**Isa. 44:6; Rom. 9:20** \_\_\_\_\_

Personal application: \_\_\_\_\_

### Communicable Attributes

Those attributes of God that find some limited manifestations in man are often called *communicable* or *moral* attributes.

7. God is *righteous*. It is impossible for Him to do or to cause anything that is wrong.

*You are righteous, O Lord... (Psa 119:137).*

#### Application:

Because God is perfect, He demands perfection from those who would desire to be in His presence. Jesus said, "Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt. 5:48). This impossible standard shows us that salvation is not humanly possible (Matt. 19:23).

8. God is *just*. It is impossible for Him to do anything that is unfair, either to Himself or to man.

*Your judgments are upright (Psa 119:137).*

**Application:**

God's justice is applicable in the area of judgment. When people stand before God, they will receive full justice. No one will be able to claim that God has dealt inequitably with him.

9. God is *love*. His love is given freely and without any consideration of the loveliness or merit of its object.

*God is love (1 John 4:8).*

**Application:**

Godly love is that which seeks good for the object loved. Love expresses itself in action. God demonstrated His love for us in sending Jesus to die in our place (Rom. 5:8). How can we demonstrate that sort of love to someone else today?

10. God is *veracity*. He is absolute truth and utterly Self-consistent.

*"... a God of truth, and without iniquity" (Deut 32:4).*

**Application:**

In John 18:38, Pilate asked, "What is truth?" Man is constantly searching for truth, but in sources other than God. Jesus said, "I am the Truth." When a person comes to Jesus, his quest for truth ends and freedom begins.

Fill in the appropriate attribute:

**Psa. 89:14; Gal. 6:7** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Personal application: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Psa. 11:7; 1 John 2:1** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Personal application \_\_\_\_\_

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**Num. 23:19; John 14:6** \_\_\_\_\_

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Personal application: \_\_\_\_\_

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**John 3:16; Rom. 5:8** \_\_\_\_\_

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Personal application: \_\_\_\_\_

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## THE TRINITY

The Bible clearly teaches that, though God is one in essence, He exists in His unity in three distinct and equal Persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

1. What do John 6:27 and Ephesians 4:6 teach about the deity of the Father?

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2. What does Hebrews 1:8 assume about the Son? \_\_\_\_\_

3. What does Acts 5:3-4 teach about the Spirit? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Therefore, what must we conclude about the doctrine of the Trinity?

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# 5: Who is Jesus Christ?

Jesus Christ is the most amazing figure in the universe. He is unique—and what makes Him unique is the subject of this lesson.

## *Memory Verse for This Lesson*



### **John 1:1,14**

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God . . . and the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

## **THE HUMANITY OF JESUS**

Point #1: Jesus became fully human.

1. Where was Jesus born (Luke 2:4-7)? \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. Describe Jesus' human growth and development as a youth (Luke 2:40, 52).  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
  
3. What was Jesus' human response to lack of food (Luke 4:2)?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
  
4. What was His response after a journey (John 4:6)? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

5. What was His response when tired (Mark 4:38)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. What did He do when grieved (John 11:35)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. What was his response to the torture of the crucifixion (John 19:33a)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## **THE DEITY OF JESUS**

Point #2: Jesus was always fully God.

According to John 1:1...

8. How long has Jesus Christ existed? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

9. Where was Jesus Christ in the beginning? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

10. Who is Jesus Christ? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

The following passages provide additional light:

11. How did God choose to reveal Himself to man (John 1:14)?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

12. How did Jesus demonstrate that He was God? \_\_\_\_\_

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13. He had power over \_\_\_\_\_ (Matt. 8:23-27).

14. He had power over \_\_\_\_\_ (Luke 4:40).

15. He had power over \_\_\_\_\_ (Luke 4:33-36).

16. He had power over \_\_\_\_\_ (John 11:43-44).

17. What additional authority did Jesus claim in Mark 2:3-12?

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18. What was the response to Jesus of . . .

• the disciples (Matt. 14:33)? \_\_\_\_\_

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• the blind man (John 9:38)? \_\_\_\_\_

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• Thomas (John 20:28)? \_\_\_\_\_

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• the woman at the well (John 4:29)? \_\_\_\_\_

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• the centurion (Matt. 27:54)? \_\_\_\_\_

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19. What is your response? \_\_\_\_\_

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20. According to John 5:24, what three things are the result of hearing and believing?

- Present \_\_\_\_\_
- Future \_\_\_\_\_
- Past \_\_\_\_\_

21. What does Jesus promise His followers (John 10:28)?

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_

## THE MISSION OF JESUS

Point #3: Jesus had a mission to perform.

22. Why did Christ come into the world?

- 1 Tim. 1:15 \_\_\_\_\_
- Luke 19:10 \_\_\_\_\_
- 1 Cor. 15:3b \_\_\_\_\_

23. What did Jesus use to illustrate death producing life (John 12:24-25)?

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24. What did His death accomplish?

- 1 Pet. 3:18 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 Cor. 5:21 \_\_\_\_\_
- Gal. 1:4 \_\_\_\_\_
- Eph. 1:7 (1) \_\_\_\_\_
- Eph. 1:7 (2) \_\_\_\_\_

25. What three things did Paul consider “of first importance” in his ministry to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 15:3,4)?

---

1 \_\_\_\_\_

2 \_\_\_\_\_

3 \_\_\_\_\_

*He declares that He and the Father are one; that those who had seen Him had seen the Father also. He calls all men unto Him; promises to forgive their sins; to send them the Holy Spirit; to give them rest and peace; to raise them up at the last day; and to give them eternal life. God is not more, and cannot promise more, or do more than Christ is said to be, to promise, and to do. He has, therefore, been the Christian's God from the beginning, in all ages, and in all places.*

—Charles Hodge



## 6: Who is the Holy Spirit?

One of the unique features of Christianity is that it teaches that believers have a personal relationship with an invisible Person—Someone neither the world nor we can see with our natural eyes. Jesus Christ promised to make Christians His dwelling place, and He always keeps His promises. He comes to dwell in us through the third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit. We now give our attention to Scripture’s teaching on the Holy Spirit, and especially to four “treasures” He gave us at the moment we trusted in Christ.

### *Memory Verse for This Lesson:*



#### **Romans 14:17**

“The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”

### **THE PERSON OF THE HOLY SPIRIT: WHO HE IS His Personality**

The Holy Spirit is not an influence, but a Person; not an ooze, but an Individual; not an “it,” but a “He.” His personality is proved by His characteristics. Personality is commonly thought of as constituted by possessing three attributes: intellect (the ability to think independently), emotions (feelings), and will (the capacity to decide). The Spirit is said in the Bible to possess all three.

1. Match the Scripture and the attribute:

\_\_\_\_\_ 1 Cor. 12:11

\_\_\_\_\_ 1 Cor. 2:10-11

\_\_\_\_\_ John 14:26

\_\_\_\_\_ Eph. 4:30

\_\_\_\_\_ Rom. 8:25-26

- |   |
|---|
| <p>a. Intellect</p> <p>b. Emotions</p> <p>c. Will</p> |
|---|

2. The Spirit’s personality is also proved by His actions. List the **verbs** that describe the Spirit’s activity in each passage:

Rom. 8:26 \_\_\_\_\_

John 15:26 \_\_\_\_\_

Acts 8:29 \_\_\_\_\_

Rom. 8:14 \_\_\_\_\_

John 14:26 \_\_\_\_\_

John 16:8 \_\_\_\_\_

3. The Spirit's personality is also proved by the unusual grammar applied to Him in the Greek New Testament. The Greek word for Spirit is *pneuma*, a word that is in the neuter gender. In spite of that fact, several times masculine pronouns are used to replace the neuter noun. While this is somewhat irregular in grammar, it is a remarkable testimony to the fact that the Spirit is a Person. Examples:

John 16:13-14

However, when **He** [masculine], the **Spirit** [neuter] of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. **He** [masculine] will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. (John 16:13-14).

John 15:26

But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the **Spirit** [neuter] of truth who proceeds from the Father, **He** [masculine] will testify of Me. (John 15:26).

John 16:7-8

Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send **Him** [masculine] to you. And when **He** [masculine] has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. (John 16:7-8)

### His Deity

4. The Holy Spirit is God in every sense that the Father and the Son are God. This is proved, first of all, by His names. List the names of the Spirit beside the passages in which they appear:

1 Cor. 3:16 \_\_\_\_\_

2 Cor. 3:17 \_\_\_\_\_

Judges 15:14 \_\_\_\_\_

5. The Spirit's deity is also proved by His association with the other Persons of the Trinity. Compare Matthew 28:19 and 2 Cor. 13:14. What can you conclude from these verses?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. The deity of the Third Person is also proved by statements that attribute deity to Him. Compare the statement in Acts 5:3 with the assertion in Acts 5:4. What is the Holy Spirit called in verse three?

\_\_\_\_\_

But what is He called in verse four? \_\_\_\_\_

7. Now compare Exodus 17:7 with Hebrews 3:7-9, and 2 Timothy 3:16 with 2 Peter 1:21. To what conclusions can you come?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

8. The attributes of God are also ascribed to the Spirit. What attributes of deity are conveyed by the following texts?

Psa. 139:7-10 \_\_\_\_\_

Isa. 40:13-15 \_\_\_\_\_

Heb. 9:14 \_\_\_\_\_

## **THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT: WHAT HE DOES**

The list on the following pages is by no means a complete catalog of the benefits the Spirit of God provides for the Christian. The four selected are included because of their intrinsic importance, and because they have in common the fact that the benefits are permanent, and do not need to be sought after once a person comes to faith in Christ.

## The Work of the Holy Spirit in Convicting

The key passage on the Spirit's work of convicting is John 16:8-11:

<sup>8</sup> *And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:* <sup>9</sup> *of sin, because they do not believe in Me;* <sup>10</sup> *of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more;* <sup>11</sup> *of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.*

9. The word translated "convict" in John 16:8 (New King James Version) is the Greek word *elencho*. The standard Greek lexicon gives four basic shades of meaning for this term:

1. "to bring to light, expose, set forth;" 2. "convince someone of something; point something out to someone;" 3. "reprove, correct"; 4. "punish, discipline."

In John 3:20, the first meaning is appropriate. Which meaning is best for John 8:46? \_\_\_\_\_ For John 16:8?

\_\_\_\_\_

10. You may wish to commit to memory Charles Ryrie's definition of the word "convict": "To convict (John 16:8) means to place the truth of the gospel in such a clear light before the unconverted that it is acknowledged as truth whether or not Christ is received as Savior." Of course, this acknowledgement does not have to be aloud. A person may grudgingly admit the truth to himself whether or not he believes in Christ as a result of it.
11. According to John 16:8, exactly who is it that the Spirit convicts? \_\_\_\_\_

Thus, in this case, the Spirit has a ministry to everyone—not Christians only.

12. The Spirit is said here to convict the world of what three things?

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

The Spirit convinces people about *sin* (the fact that they are sinners and that they are responsible for their sin) because they do not believe in Christ. The Spirit singles out this sin of unbelief because (1) it is the symptomatic sin (John 3:16-21) and (2) it is the supreme sin (1 John 5:10; John 3:35-36), both to the sinner and to God.

The Spirit convinces men about *righteousness* (the fact that they fall short of God's righteousness) because the perfect Standard of God's righteousness has now ascended to His Father. That the Father received Jesus Christ at His right hand is sufficient indication of Christ's righteousness. Christ becomes the believer's righteousness the moment he believes in Him (1 Cor. 1:30; 2 Cor. 5:20-21).

The Spirit convinces people of their accountability to *judgment* (Rom. 3:19) because Satan has already been judged (condemned) by God. (The sentence has been passed; the carrying out of the execution is still future—see Rev. 20:10). The idea here is this: since the Prince or Ruler of this world has been judged and found guilty, how much more will the citizens of his world system be!

### The Work of the Holy Spirit in Regenerating

The key passage on regeneration is John 3:1-10.

13. Regeneration is the act of the Holy Spirit in giving new life to a person who puts his trust in Christ. In John 3:8, Jesus likens the new birth to the activity of the wind. Based on what He teaches here, check the statement either true or false:

**True    False**

- \_\_\_\_\_    \_\_\_\_\_ 1. You can see the new birth.
- \_\_\_\_\_    \_\_\_\_\_ 2. You can see the effect of the new birth.
- \_\_\_\_\_    \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Spiritual rebirth is a simple thing to understand and detect.
14. In John 3:3-4 and 3:6, spiritual birth is likened to physical birth. Which word below best describes what these two births have in common?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Progressive
- \_\_\_\_\_ Repeated
- \_\_\_\_\_ Instantaneous
15. Read Ephesians 4:24. What term in this verse is used to describe the effects of the new birth? \_\_\_\_\_

Look back at Ephesians 4:22. What term is used there to describe the spiritual side of the "old birth"? \_\_\_\_\_

### **The Work of the Holy Spirit in Sealing**

16. The key passage here is Ephesians 4:30. According to this verse, who does the “sealing”? \_\_\_\_\_
17. What is the tense of the verb “seal” in the passage? \_\_\_\_\_
18. What does this tell you that the author assumes about the sealing ministry of the Holy Spirit?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sealing is an accomplished fact for believers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sealing is an experience to be sought by believers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sealing is temporary.
19. According to this passage, what is the terminal date for the sealing ministry of the Spirit? \_\_\_\_\_
20. When do you think this is? (Hint: Rom. 8:23) \_\_\_\_\_

A good example of “sealing” today is the way the Post Office seals certified mail. When a letter is certified, only the sender and the recipient may open it. In this case, the sender and the recipient is the Lord Himself. You are God’s own letter to Himself, sealed by Him and for Him for security’s sake.

### **The Work of the Holy Spirit in Indwelling**

When a woman in his church meeting objected to some young Christians chewing gum “in the temple of God,” a well-known pastor is reported to have said, “Madam, it is the temples that are chewing the gum!” He was referring to one of the most amazing truths of the Christian faith—that God dwells personally in Christians, making them His temple.

The key passages on the matter of indwelling are John 14:17; Romans 8:9,11; 1 Corinthians 6:19; and 2 Timothy 1:14.

The word *dwell* as found in passages like Romans 8:9, 11, and 2 Tim. 1:14 comes from the Greek word for “house.” It means simply “to take up one’s residence in a place.”

21. An illustration of indwelling is found in 1 Corinthians 7:12-13. In this passage, the words “to live with” in the *New American Standard Bible* represent that same Greek word “to dwell” mentioned above. From this text we learn that the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the Christian is parallel to what human relationship?

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22. According to John 14:17, what did Christ promise to His followers?

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23. According to Romans 8:9, if a person does not have the Spirit living in him, he is:

\_\_\_\_\_ a Christian  
\_\_\_\_\_ an unbeliever

24. Now state the thrust of Romans 8:9 in positive terms in your own words:

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25. From 1 Corinthians 6:19,20, we may conclude (check one):

\_\_\_\_\_ The Holy Spirit leaves the Christian when he sins.  
\_\_\_\_\_ The Holy Spirit does not leave the Christian when he sins.

26. In Jude 19, those unbelieving false teachers being discussed are said to be “\_\_\_\_\_ of the Spirit



## 7: What is positional truth?

One of the most important concepts in the New Testament is positional truth. The concept refers to the fact that the Christian believer has a position in Christ. That is, the Father looks at each Christian as though he were personally present in Christ. Thus, what is true of Christ is true of the believer. He died with Christ, he was buried with Him, he was raised with Him, he is seated now in heaven with Him, etc.

At the foundation of this idea of positional truth is the biblical doctrine of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

### **Memory Verse for This Lesson:**



**1 Corinthians 12:13**

"For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one Body."

## THE CONCEPT OF SPIRIT BAPTISM

The English word "baptize" comes from the Greek *baptizo*, which has an illuminating and interesting history. In its use outside the New Testament, *baptizo* usually bears the meaning "to immerse." With related terms, it was used to describe the dipping of clothes into dye. It rarely meant "to bathe ritually" as we normally think of it.

In the New Testament, the usages of *baptizo* may be captured under two broad headings: literal and metaphorical. The literal use is, of course, the one with which we are more familiar, and signifies the action of ritually dipping a believer in water in obedience to Christ's command.

However, there is another category of meanings that is also quite common in the New Testament (27 times). This metaphorical use usually means "to re-identify; to change associations." You can see how the literal use of the term for dyeing clothes suggests this.

Good examples of the literal use of *baptizo* are found in Acts 16:15, 33, and 1 Corinthians 1:14. Good examples of the figurative or metaphorical use are seen in Mark 10:38-39 and 1 Corinthians 10:2. Both usages occur together in Matt. 3:11 and Mark 1:8.

Turn to 1 Corinthians 10:2, read it, and answer the questions below.

1. Who are the people being "baptized" here? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. When did this take place? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Do you think that this means that Moses ritually baptized the two million Israelites, using the Red Sea as his source of water?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Which of the phrases below helps to clarify the meaning if inserted in place of the words "baptized into"?

- "washed clean by"
- "preached to by"
- "identified with"

(Hint: Was it because of the people's faith that they were saved through the Red Sea? Contrast Exodus 14:11-12 with 14:13-14.)

Now look at 1 Corinthians 12:13. This is the central passage in the New Testament concerning Spirit baptism. From its teaching, decide whether the statements below are true (T) or false (F).

*Circle the correct answer.*

T      F      One effect of Spirit baptism is to make believers a part of Christ's body (the church, Col. 1:18).

T      F      It is possible to be a believer and not have been baptized in the Spirit.

T      F      Some Christians receive more of the Spirit than others.

T      F      Christians should ask God to baptize them in the Spirit.

Now turn to Romans 6:2-11.

This section is an explanation of the phrase "we who have died to sin" in verse two. How has the believer "died to sin"? He is still alive physically, but in terms of his position before God he has "died with respect to sin."

God has accomplished this in believers by means of Spirit baptism. Christians are “re-identified” with Christ *positionally*. The opposite of “positional truth” is “experiential truth,” truth that is discoverable with the senses.

5. According to Romans 6:2-11, what events of Christ's experience are we identified with?

- 6:3 \_\_\_\_\_
- 6:4 (cp. Col. 2:12) \_\_\_\_\_
- 6:8-10 \_\_\_\_\_

6. Note that an almost identical sequence is followed in Ephesians 2:5-6. What position with Christ does Ephesians 2:6 add to those already mentioned in Romans 6:2-11? \_\_\_\_\_

By this time, you should be aware of the basic thrust of the doctrine of Spirit baptism. Even where the words "Spirit baptism" or "baptism" are not explicitly used, the concept of identification with Christ may be present (e.g., Eph. 2:5-6).

Spirit baptism is a positional doctrine. That means that we cannot see, feel, touch, taste, or smell it, but as believers in Christ we have been baptized by the Spirit nevertheless. How do we know this? By faith, on the sure authority of the word of God (1 Cor. 12:13; Rom. 6:4-7, etc.).

If this seems strange to you, remember that it is roughly analogous to what happened when you entered the world. The most important facts about you were things you did not discover by personal investigation. Your name, the identity of your parents, the circumstances of your birth, and your family relationships were all told to you by others. You accept their testimony, and that is how it should be. Similarly, God places His stamp of ownership on every believer in Jesus Christ. We know what He did because He told us. We do not have to have a memory of the experience to know it's true.

Even though every believer has been baptized by the Spirit, not every believer will receive the benefits of the Spirit's work in the present life unless he acts on this truth by faith. Note that after Paul explains the doctrine of Spirit baptism (Rom. 6:2-10), he then tells how to make use of it: “Even so, consider yourselves dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 6:11). In other words, believe that it is true (for it is), and alter your conduct accordingly!

## THE BELIEVER'S POSITION IN CHRIST

Throughout the New Testament, the believer's position, his standing before God in Christ, is emphasized. We are righteous and holy before God in a way that we can scarcely comprehend. Positionally, we are absolutely and exactly all that we can be, because we are in Christ and His righteousness is imputed (reckoned) to us. "For He has made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5:21).

In Christ we are made perfect—righteous positionally. That is why we have the right to fellowship with God and to receive His unbounded love and kindness forever.

On the other hand, though our position before God is absolute righteousness in Christ, our practice (daily experience) falls far short of that. It is God's desire, often stated in the New Testament, that we become in experience what we already are in position. The Christian life, then, is the experience of becoming what you are!

The following material compares what we are positionally (left column) with what we should become experientially (right column).

### POSITION

**(What we are!)**

*Spiritually alive to God*  
Eph. 2:1, 4-5; 1 John 4:9; John  
11:25, 14:19; Acts 17:28

*Dead to sin*  
Eph. 1:7; Rom. 6:2-10

*Forgiven*  
Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14;  
1 John 2:12

### POSITION

**(What we are!)**

*Righteous*  
Rom. 1:17; 3:21-25;  
4:1-6; 5:17

*Children of God*  
Eph. 1:5; Gal. 3:25

*God's possession*  
Eph. 1:4; 2 Tim. 2:19

*Heirs of God*  
Rom. 8:17; Col. 1:12;

### EXPERIENCE

**(Acting like what we are!)**

*Live the life!*  
Phil. 1:21; Gal. 2:20;  
Rom. 6:11-13; Tit. 2:12

*Give no place to sin!*  
Rom. 6:11-15; Col. 3:3

*Count on it!*  
Rom. 8:1, 33-34

### EXPERIENCE

**(Acting like what we are!)**

*Live righteously!*  
2 Tim. 2:22; 1 Jn 3:7

*Act like God's children!*  
Eph. 5:1; 1 Pet. 1:13-14

*Yield to God!*  
Rom. 12:1; 2 Tim. 2:19-21

*Add to your inheritance!*  
Matt. 6:19-21; 2 Cor. 5:9-10;

|  |   |
|--|---|
| 1 Pet. 1:3-4   | 2 John 8; 1 Cor. 3:10-14  |
| <i>Blessed with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places</i><br>Col. 3:1-2; Eph. 1:3, 2:6-7 | <i>Love those things!</i><br>2 Pet. 1:3-4                                   |
| <i>Heavenly citizenship</i><br>Phil. 3:20; John 17:14-16;<br>1 John 5:4-5                      | <i>Live as a citizen of heaven</i><br>1 John 2:15; Col. 3:1-2;<br>Jas. 1:27 |
| <i>Servants of God</i><br>1 Cor. 7:22-23; Rom. 6:22  | <i>Act like servants of God!</i><br>Rom. 6:17-19, 12:11; Heb. 12:28         |
| <i>Free from the law</i><br>Rom. 6:14; 7:1-6   | <i>Fulfill demands of the law!</i><br>Gal. 5:1; Rom. 8:4                    |
| <i>Crucified to the world</i><br>Gal. 1:4, 6:14-15   | <i>Don't love worldly things!</i><br>1 Jn 2:15-17; Jas. 4:4; Rom. 12:2      |
| <i>Light to the world</i><br>1 Thess. 5:5; Matt. 5:14  | <i>Walk as children of light!</i><br>Eph. 5:8; Matt. 5:15-16                |
| <i>Victorious over Satan</i><br>Rev. 12:9-11   | <i>Don't live defeated lives!</i><br>Eph. 6:11-17; Jas. 4:7                 |
| <i>Cleansed</i><br>John 15:3   | <i>Cleanse yourselves!</i><br>2 Cor. 7:1; Phil. 4:8                         |
| <b>POSITION</b><br><b>(What we are!)</b>   | <b>EXPERIENCE</b><br><b>(Acting like what we are!)</b>                      |
| <i>Holy and blameless</i><br>Eph. 1:4; 1 Cor. 3:17   | <i>Live holy lives!</i><br>1 John 3:7; 1 Pet. 1:15-16; 2 Pet. 3:14          |
| <i>In Christ</i><br>Eph. 1:3; 1:10; 2:6, 13  | <i>Abide in Christ!</i><br>1 John 2:28                                      |
| <i>One with Christians</i><br>Eph. 4:4-6; 1 Cor. 12:13   | <i>Live out that oneness!</i><br>Eph. 4:3; John 17:21,24                    |
| <i>In grace</i><br>Rom. 5:1  | <i>Grow in grace!</i><br>2 Pet. 3:18  |
| <i>Granted joy</i><br>Rom. 5:2   | <i>Experience that joy!</i><br>1 John 1:4; John 15:11; 16:24                |

**EXERCISE IN POSITIONAL TRUTH**

From the section "The Believer's Position in Christ," select any four examples and complete the following:

Look up at least one verse for each position and each experience section you have chosen. Write out the verse in the space provided. After you have written out the verses, take time to meditate on them, then complete the personal application section.

• Position \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

• Experience \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

• Application \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

• Position \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

• Experience \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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• Application \_\_\_\_\_  
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• Position \_\_\_\_\_  
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• Experience \_\_\_\_\_  
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• Application \_\_\_\_\_  
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• Position \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

• Experience \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

• Application \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



## 8: What is spiritual growth?

Not everyone is alike in the family of God. As you have progressed in your own Christian life, you have noticed that some seem to be more serious about their Christianity than others. In fact, you may have some friends who once professed Christ, but who now have almost entirely abandoned Christian activities. How are you to view them—as false brothers who never were genuinely converted? Perhaps. But the Bible has a lot to say about how Christians differ in their growth and in their bearing witness of Christ with their lives. In fact, the very word “growth” presupposes change from worse to better, doesn’t it?

### Memory Verse for This Lesson:



#### 1 Peter 2:2

“Like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the Word, that you may grow.”

One of the key passages on growth is 1 Corinthians 2:14-3:4. It teaches us that in the realm of spiritual issues four kinds of people exist.

Read 1 Corinthians 2:14-3:4 and then answer the questions about each kind of person discussed there.

1. According to the passage, how does **the natural man** (person) relate to spiritual things? \_\_\_\_\_

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Essentially, **the natural man** has no capacity to receive spiritual truth and be changed by it. It is worth investigating the Scriptures to discover why this is so.

The word “natural” in verse fourteen is the Greek word *psychikos*; literally, “soulish.” It is found later in the New Testament in Jude 19 where it is translated “worldly-minded” in the *New American Standard Bible*. What other important fact does Jude 19 add to the description of the “natural” man?

14 But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. 15 But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no one. 16 For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, THAT HE WILL INSTRUCT HIM? But we have the mind of Christ. 1 And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ. 2 I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, 3 for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men? (1 Cor. 2:14-3:3).

(The *NASB* marginal note says, “Jude declares that these false teachers were not truly redeemed [cf. Rom.8:9].”)

Now turn to Romans 8:9; notice the second half of the verse. What can you learn by combining the teaching of Jude 19 and Romans 8:9 concerning the “natural” man? Is he a converted individual?

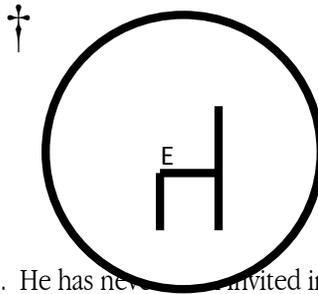
Does this give you any insights concerning the question of why some people have an extremely difficult time understanding the Bible?

At the risk of oversimplification, we may diagram **the natural man** in this way:

† = Jesus Christ

E = The self or ego

⌋ = The place of authority in the person's life (his “throne,” so to speak)



Note that Christ is outside **the natural man's** life. He has never been invited in (John 1:12-13; cp. Rev. 3:20). The power to live life properly related to God is not resident within this person.

3. The exact opposite of **the natural man** is **the spiritual man**. According to 1 Corinthians 2:15, what is the outstanding characteristic of this kind of person?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Do you think this means that he knows everything? In what kind of context is the statement made? \_\_\_\_\_

5. To get an idea of what the term “spiritual” signifies, look at 1 Corinthians 3:1. What two terms given there are placed in direct contrast to “spiritual men”?

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

6. Note especially the latter term. It is heavy with significance. In the physical realm, what is the opposite of a baby? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

The same is true in the spiritual realm. A spiritual man is one who is a spiritual adult—one who is mature in his faith.

7. Turn to Hebrews 5:14 and list what the “mature” man there and the spiritual man of 1 Corinthians 2:15 have in common:

\_\_\_\_\_

8. Another important use of the term “spiritual” occurs in Galatians 6:1. There we find that it is possible for a Christian to be “caught” or “captured” in a sin. What is Paul's solution to this situation?

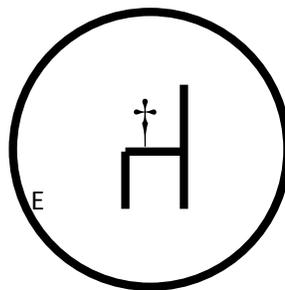
\_\_\_\_\_

9. What does this solution presume about the spiritual maturity of these “spiritual” individuals? Whom do you think should be sent into a spiritually dangerous situation such as that described in Galatians 6:1?

\_\_\_\_\_

On the basis of what we have studied, we may diagram the spiritual man in this way:

Note that Christ is not only *in* the spiritual man's life, but that He is in charge of it as well. The spiritual man puts Christ first, and himself second. Or, perhaps it is better to say that he advances his own interests by putting Christ first. It is fundamental



to all biblical morality that God never asks His children to sacrifice their long-range good for His sake. Christians are always better off themselves in the long run by choosing to put Christ first.

The third type of person discussed in our passage is the **babe in Christ**.

10. In 1 Corinthians 3:1, what term is the *opposite* of the **babe in Christ**?

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11. In the same verse, what term is the *synonym* of the **babe in Christ**?

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12. Why do you think Paul uses such a term? What does it tell you about the characteristics of a **babe in Christ**? \_\_\_\_\_

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13. What does the reference to “milk” in 1 Corinthians 3:2 signify (cp. 1 Peter 2:2)?

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14. Then what would the words “solid food” in Hebrews 5:14 mean?

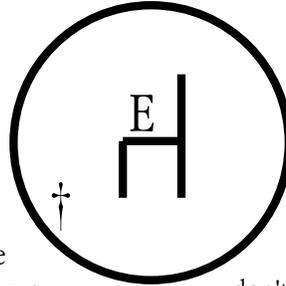
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A babe in Christ is thus characterized by four traits:

- He is a recent convert (implied in the word “babe”) and so has not had much time to grow.
- Because of this, he is still characterized by many features of his “old life” (the flesh), just as a baby is born with certain deficiencies.
- No guilt is attached to the babe in Christ's immaturity, just as no guilt is imputed to a baby for being messy.
- The babe in Christ has limited abilities as far as his understanding of Scripture goes; he can only handle “milk” and not “solid food.”

We may diagram the babe in Christ in this way:

Note that Christ is *in* his life, but that He has not been permitted to “assume the throne,” His rightful place. The passing of time combined with attention to Christian growth will move the babe in Christ gradually into the stage of being “spiritual.” Please note: when we say Christ has not assumed the throne in a believer's life, we don't mean to imply that the believer does not recognize Christ's right to do so, but only that he still has large “blind spots” of disobedience, attributable to his inexperience.



Note that in 1 Corinthians 3:1-2a, Paul is speaking in the past tense. He is reviewing his past dealings with the Corinthian Christians. He reminds them that when he first came to Corinth three years previously, he could not treat them as spiritual (mature) men, but rather only as newborn believers (babes). This was because they had not had time to grow.

However, in 1 Corinthians 3:2b, he chastens them because they are *still* in the state of immaturity—they are still characterized by much of their old life. To use his term, they are “fleshly,” or **willfully carnal** (characterized by the “flesh” or old life).

While no discipline was necessary for being a babe in Christ then, a rebuke is issued to them now, for they have had time to grow, and they have not (note the word *still* in v. 3).

15. According to 1 Cor. 3:2b and 3:3, what two evidences does Paul give for his contention that these Christians are still fleshly or carnal?

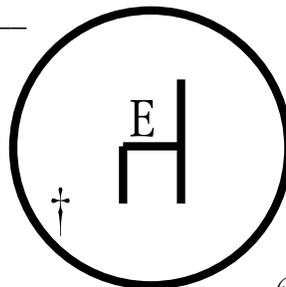
a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

16. Observe the expression “mere men” which occurs both in 3:3 and 3:4. As you study it in context, what can you conclude about how **willfully carnal** Christians look to those who observe their behavior?

\_\_\_\_\_

On the basis of our studies, we may diagram the “willfully carnal” man like this:



Which one of the previous three people had a diagram exactly like this one?

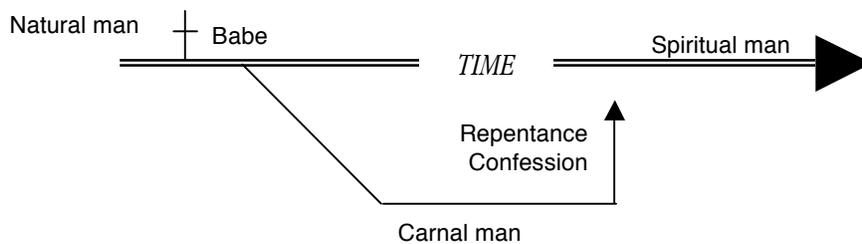
\_\_\_\_\_

Why do you think the differences between these last two kinds of people cannot be shown on the diagram we have been using?

What additional element must be added in order to portray the difference between them? \_\_\_\_\_

That's right. *Time* is the difference between a **willfully carnal** individual and a **babe in Christ**.

The diagram below adds time to the diagram and shows how an individual might progress over the course of time to arrive at the goal of Christian living: Christlike spiritual maturity.



On the basis of what you have learned in this chapter, can you explain the flow of this diagram?

Where would you place yourself on the chart?



## 9: Why should I obey?

We learned earlier in Foundations of the Faith that obedience to the law was specifically ruled out as a means of salvation. However, obedience is terribly important to the Christian—not as a means of salvation, but as a consequence of it.

### *Memory Verse for This Lesson:*



**Luke 6:46**

“Why do you call Me, Lord, Lord, but do not do the things I say?”

### THE IMPORTANCE OF OBEDIENCE

In Matthew 22:34-38, Jesus was asked, “Teacher, which is the greatest of all the commandments in the Law (Old Testament)?” This was a loaded question, since the rabbis had determined that there were over 600 positive and 300 negative commandments in the Old Testament. Yet without hesitation, Jesus gave a definite answer.

1. What was His reply? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Obedience means making Christ the Lord (“Boss”) of your life.

2. Why should the Lord Jesus be in charge of your life?

• 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

• John 15:13 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

See also 2 Corinthians 5:14 and Isaiah 64:8.

3. What is the most important key to having a productive Christian life?

• John 15:5 \_\_\_\_\_

• Philippians 4:13 \_\_\_\_\_

• Psalm 37:4,5 \_\_\_\_\_

4. What should you expect if you are serious about making Christ boss of your life?

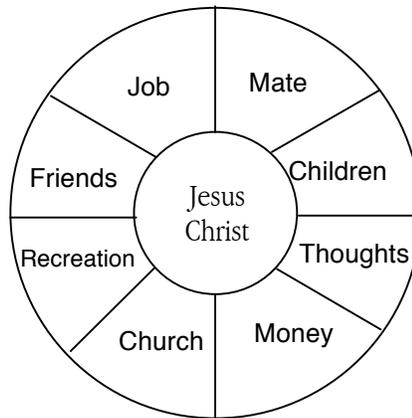
• Galatians 5:17 \_\_\_\_\_

• 2 Timothy 3:12 \_\_\_\_\_

• John 14:21 \_\_\_\_\_

What part of our lives does Jesus Christ want to rule? The answer is very simple: every part. The diagram below will help to illustrate.

The Lord Jesus Christ wants to exercise His lordship over every area of our lives. However, He does not force Himself on us. He wants us to allow Him into each new area willingly. The sections here are examples. Are there any of these areas that you have not yet yielded to the Lord? Are there others that are not shown here that you need to yield to Him (place under His authority)? On the lines below, pick out one area which you want to open up to Him, and write down specifically one step you will take today to make it happen!




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## THE DANGERS OF DISOBEDIENCE

Read 1 Samuel 15 in its entirety.

In 1 Samuel 15:18-23 we read Samuel's rebuke of Saul for his rebellion. Instead of complete obedience, King Saul substituted excuses and his own way of worship.

5. What was Saul's reply to Samuel's accusations?

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6. To what are stubbornness and rebellion compared by Samuel?

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7. What did disobedience cost Saul? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Read Zechariah 7:11-14.

8. How did the people react to God's instruction? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

9. How did it affect their prayers? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What was the result? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### **EXAMPLES OF OBEDIENCE**

Most of God's greatest servants were noted for their obedience. The Old Testament contains dozens of examples. Notice the Old Testament heroes of faith and obedience listed in Hebrews 11.

10. What were two of Abraham's great acts of obedience?

• Genesis 12:1-4; Hebrews 11:8 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

• Genesis 22:1-3, 9-12 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

11. What was God's promise to Abraham's son in Genesis 26:4,5?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

12. What was God's remarkable commendation of David in Acts 13:22?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST

13. What was Jesus Christ's main concern on earth (Heb. 10:7; John 6:38)?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

14. According to Romans 5:19,

•What was the result of Adam's disobedience? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

•What was the result of Christ's obedience? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## THE PROMISES AND BLESSINGS OF OBEDIENCE

15. What helps us receive answers to prayer (1 John 3:21,22)?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

16. What are two results of obeying God's truth (1 Pet. 1:22)? Underline the correct answer(s).

- a. It makes us more fervent in His service.
- b. It helps us love other Christians.
- c. It helps us become Christian leaders.
- d. It purifies our souls.
- e. It makes us more popular Christians.

17. Is it true that good intentions are to our credit, even when we fail to carry them out (Matt. 21:28-32)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

18. To what does Jesus compare the life of a person who hears and obeys His word (Matt. 7:24-28)? \_\_\_\_\_

*“Perfect obedience to the commandments of God must be the object of our constant endeavor.”*  
—Merrill Unger

19. Whom does God want to be obedient, to whom, and why?

                                WHOM                                TO WHOM  
Colossians 3:20 \_\_\_\_\_  
Why? \_\_\_\_\_

                                WHOM                                TO WHOM  
Ephesians 5:22-24 \_\_\_\_\_  
Why? \_\_\_\_\_

                                WHOM                                TO WHOM  
Hebrews 13:17 \_\_\_\_\_  
Why? \_\_\_\_\_

                                WHOM                                TO WHOM  
Ephesians 6:5-8 \_\_\_\_\_  
Why? \_\_\_\_\_

                                WHOM                                TO WHOM  
Romans 13:1-2 \_\_\_\_\_  
Why? \_\_\_\_\_

20. What should a wife do if her husband is disobedient (1 Pet. 3:1)?

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21. What if a servant or employee has an “impossible” employer (1 Pet. 2:18,19)?

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22. What blessings are reserved for the obedient Christian?

a. John 15:10 \_\_\_\_\_

b. John 15:14 \_\_\_\_\_

c. John 14:23 \_\_\_\_\_

d. 1 John 2:5 \_\_\_\_\_

There are certain problems that persistently cause Christians to stumble and to disobey the Lord. They are listed in the left-hand column of the table below. Below the table is a list of Scriptures. Find the text that gives the solution to the barrier, and summarize its teaching in the right-hand column.

| <b>Barrier</b>                   | <b>Text</b> | <b>Summary of Teaching</b> |
|----------------------------------|-------------|----------------------------|
| Temptation                       |             |                            |
| Fear of men                      |             |                            |
| Anxiety about personal needs     |             |                            |
| Shallow relationship with Christ |             |                            |

•Matt. 6:24-33 •1 Cor. 10:13

•John 14:24 •Luke 12:4-5

## THE RESULTS OF DISOBEDIENCE

23. When a Christian sins, what must he do to restore a right relationship with the Lord? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

24. Upon what Scripture do you base your answer? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

If a Christian fails to confess his sin—if he persists in being disobedient—he opens himself up to the possibility of divine discipline, for he is rebelling against his heavenly Father.

A key passage on God's discipline of His children is Hebrews 12:4-13. We might say that this passage explains how God "spanks" His children.

25. According to Hebrews 12:6, what is discipline a sign of?

\_\_\_\_\_

1 Corinthians 11:20-34 is another passage dealing with the same subject. The Corinthians were treating the Lord's table with disrespect (vv. 20, 27). For this, they were suffering discipline.

26. What had happened in the assembly because of this sin (v. 30)?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

27. From this, is it valid to conclude that weakness, sickness, and death always come from God's discipline? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

28. Can you think of examples of at least two persons in Scripture who suffered undeservingly? \_\_\_\_\_

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## 10: How should I worship?

So far we have been studying *about* God, and that is essential. Sometimes Christians forget, however, that what is really important is knowing God Himself. The Bible teaches us that we are to love Him first and foremost in our lives. It also teaches us that there is to be two-way communication between God and ourselves. We speak to God in prayer and He speaks to us through His Word.

### *Memory Verse for This Lesson:*



**Psalms 119:105**

“Thy Word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path.”

### **WE SPEAK TO GOD THROUGH PRAYER**

Read Ephesians 6:18, Philippians 4:6, and 1 Timothy 2:1.

1. From a study of these verses, what would you say was Paul’s attitude with regard to how frequent prayer should be? \_\_\_\_\_

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Prayer should be frequent for two reasons. First, it is the best and most direct way to have fellowship with the Living God. Second, it is the most effective means a believer has for getting important things done.

Prayer is closely related to the fellowship we can have with God. It puts us in touch with God and—very importantly—gives us the ability to open and keep open communication lines.

Our communication with God can be interrupted by sin in our lives. We are said to have forgiveness of our sins right now (Eph. 1:7), but we are also told that we must confess our sins in order to be forgiven (1 John 1:9). Both assertions are true. The first is true with regard to our eternal destiny (our sins can no longer keep us out of heaven). The second is true with regard to our enjoyment of God while living out our lives on earth (note the reference to “fellowship” in 1 John 1:6-7).

2. According to 1 John 1:9, what is the one condition which must be fulfilled in order for us to have fellowship with God moment by moment?

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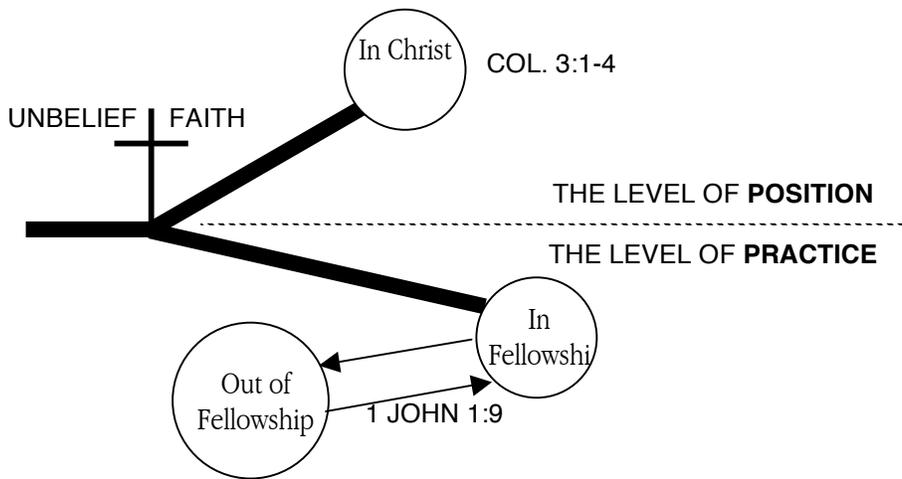


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Study the following chart. It attempts to visualize the dual nature of forgiveness as taught in Scripture. Do you follow the logic of it? If you have difficulty, ask your teacher.



“Confess” comes from the translation of the Greek verb *homologeō*, which means “to agree with, acknowledge.” Thus, confession requires that we agree with God that our recent behavior was wrong.

3. According to 1 John 1:9, what does God do when we confess our sins?

a. \_\_\_\_\_

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b. \_\_\_\_\_

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4. Why do you think the second item is important? \_\_\_\_\_

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(If you have trouble with this question, be sure to ask your teacher for a clarification.)

There is more to prayer, however, than restoration to fellowship. Think of your prayer life as a way to enjoy the Lord (Phil. 4:4). You should enjoy your prayer time with the Lord as you enjoy your conversations with friends. A study of the prayers of the Bible will show that no special tone of voice or flowery language (like King James English) is required.

Because prayer is not conversation between equals, however, certain principles hold true. The believer should always approach God in confident faith (Heb. 4:16), but ever in a spirit of humility (1 Pet. 5:5; Jas. 4:6).

5. What does the position of prayer in 1 Kings 18:42, Joshua 5:14, and Ezra 9:5 suggest about the believer's attitude in prayer?

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Prayer should be regular. The Lord Jesus Christ established a routine time each day to spend time with the Father (notice Mark 1:35). However, prayer ought never to be thought of as a duty to be performed but as a privilege to be exercised.

Prayer is by no means limited to regular "devotional" times, however. It should be part of our frame of thinking to turn immediately to prayer when confronted with a problem or question (1 Thess. 5:17; Eph. 6:18). Our reaction ought to be like Nehemiah's, who shot up a quick prayer to God (Neh. 2:4) during a breathing space in a conversation! It stands to reason that sometimes our prayers, like Nehemiah's, will be made with our eyes open (this is especially recommended while driving).

Prayer is made more effective by the manner in which we engage in it. Study the four passages below and select the adjective that best describes what made the particular prayer effective.

\_\_\_\_\_ James 5:16c-18

a. persistent

\_\_\_\_\_ Acts 12:1-17

b. persuasive

c. corporate

\_\_\_\_\_ Luke 18:1-8

d. fervent

\_\_\_\_\_ Mark 7:24-30

Our prayers do not always result in the answers we want in the ways we want them. There are a number of reasons put forth in Scripture which explain why this happens. See if you can discover them from the following texts:

Psalm 66:18; Isaiah 1:15 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

James 4:3 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2 Corinthians 12:1-10 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Matthew 21:22; James 1:6-8 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

1 Peter 3:7 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

1 Kings 18:41-45 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### **AN EXPERIMENT IN FAITH**

Why not try an experiment? See how frequently you receive answers from the Lord in your own prayer life by using the worksheet on the next page. Under "WE ASK" write the date and the specific request you made of the Lord. As answers come in (even negative ones), fill in the "HE ANSWERS" column. Try it for a month (you will need additional sheets, some are included at the end of the chapter that you can pattern after the one shown here) and then evaluate what has happened. Share the good news of your experience with another believer. You will encourage someone else to try it!

**We Ask**

**God Answers**

## GOD SPEAKS TO US IN THE WORD

The importance of studying the Scriptures can scarcely be overemphasized. The Bible fills many needs in our Christian lives. Some of these needs are revealed to us by the *metaphors* of Scripture. A metaphor is a figure of speech in which one item is equated with another because the second bears some important commonality to the first.

In each of the passages listed below, God's word is likened to something. Pick out what it is, and see if you can figure out why that particular symbol or metaphor is used. The first one is done for you as an example.

| SCRIPTURE    | FIGURE | WHAT IT TEACHES            |
|--------------|--------|----------------------------|
| 1 Pet. 2:2   | milk   | The Word is spiritual food |
| Heb. 4:12    | _____  | _____                      |
| Mark 4:4     | _____  | _____                      |
| Jas. 1:23-24 | _____  | _____                      |
| Psa. 119:105 | _____  | _____                      |
| Eph. 5:26    | _____  | _____                      |

The importance of the Word is vividly illustrated by the way the Lord Jesus Himself used it. Read the account of His temptation as found in Luke 4:1-12.

1. Jesus was faced with three separate temptations by Satan. What did He do to rebuff the devil in each case? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. If you have a reference Bible, check the marginal cross-references next to each quotation. What book of the Old Testament did the Lord Jesus quote from in each case? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Would you say that this book is a good one to be familiar with?

Are you familiar with its basic teaching? \_\_\_\_\_

If you have a systematic way to approach the Bible, and if it is helping you grow in your Christian life, don't change it! If you are like a great many Christians, however, you face one of two problems in Bible study: (1) you don't know how, or (2) you don't take the time to do it. If your problem is (2), the following will not help. If it is (1), however, you may find the following process useful.

Bible study may be thought of as a three-step process involving observation, interpretation, and application.

### Observation

Step One is to *read* and *observe* the passage. Ask, "What does the text *say*?" This is a critical step in Bible study and it must come first. Saturate yourself with the content of the passage and seek to become mentally aware of all the facts contained in it.

Bombard the text with questions. Assume as little as possible. Ask of the passage:

**WHO?** is speaking? is being addressed? is the key figure?

**WHERE?** is this incident taking place? Locate it on a map!

**WHEN?** did this happen? is it related to what happened before?

**WHAT?** is the central issue of the passage? is the subject?

**WHY?** did the Holy Spirit include this? is it included here?

### Interpretation

Step Two is to *interpret* the passage. Ask, "What does the text *mean*?"

You are to try to determine what the author really meant by the words which he wrote. Part of this step is *meditation*. Meditation involves mulling the words over in your mind and thinking deeply about what God is saying in this place. Pray and ask the Lord to illumine the text for you. This is also the place to use Bible study tools such as Bible dictionaries, concordances, atlases, and handbooks to help your investigation.

*Meditation is simply thought prolonged and directed to a single object. Your mystic chambers where thoughts abide are the secret workshop of an unseen Sculptor chiseling living forms for a deathless future. Personality and influence molded. —A.T. Pierson*

**Application**

Step Three is to *apply* the passage. Ask, “What does it mean to *me*?”

Application is the crowning glory and purpose of all Bible study. It brings God’s Word from the theoretical down to me personally. The proper objective of the process of study is worship. The Scriptures are important because God uses them to speak to me—today!

Get in the habit of using notes and symbols in the margins of your study Bible. Pay special attention to passages where the Scriptures address the following:

- Faith—What do I learn about personal faith for now and eternity?
  - Attitudes—Are there examples of good ones and bad ones in the passage?
  - Actions—What imperatives are given? Are there actions to avoid? To engage in?
  - Sins—Does the passage make me aware of any in my life? Confess them!
- 
- Examples—Are there good or bad examples in the text?
  - Challenges—What are some admonitions I should adopt in my own life?
  - Promises—Are there assurances from God about areas of my life which are producing anxiety?



# 11: What is the Church?

## THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH

The world's most important institution is the church of Jesus Christ. It will outlast kings, presidents, and empires. Jesus said that even the gates of death could not overcome it (Matt. 16:16-18).

### *Memory Verse for This Lesson:*



#### Hebrews 10:24-25

“And let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more, as you see the day drawing near.”

*The church is not a physical building, but a group of believers; not a denomination, sect, or association, but a spiritual body. The church is not an organization, but a communion, a fellowship of one body, and it includes all believers.”*

—John MacArthur

Turn to Ephesians 5:23. According to what you read there:

1. What is Christ's position in the church? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. How is the church described? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. How did Christ obtain the church (Acts 20:28)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. What has He done for us through His death (Eph. 1:7) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*“The church is the only fellowship in the world where the one requirement for membership is the unworthiness of the candidate.”*

—Robert B. Munger

Now look at an important passage on the subject of spiritual gifts and their role in the local church, 1 Corinthians 12:7-27.

5. Does every believer have some gift (ability) from the Holy Spirit (12:7)?

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6. Who decides which gifts are given to a believer (12:11,12)?

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7. For what purpose are the gifts given (see also 1 Pet. 4:10)?

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8. What is His desire (12:25)? \_\_\_\_\_ + \_\_\_\_\_

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9. Are there any unnecessary functions (members) in the body (12:20-22)?

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10. If any other Christian is helped or suffers, how does it affect us (12:26)? Check the correct answer.

\_\_\_\_\_ It has little effect on us unless we know him or know about it.

\_\_\_\_\_ It affects us most if he is a member of the same group or organization.

\_\_\_\_\_ In some cases it helps or hurts us, and in some cases it doesn't.

\_\_\_\_\_ It always affects us since we are members of the same spiritual body.

11. List all the spiritual gifts mentioned in the following passages:

1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 28: \_\_\_\_\_

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Romans 12:6-8: \_\_\_\_\_

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The church early on noted the fact that some spiritual gifts were apparently designed to confirm the verbal testimony of the apostolic church. These were the spectacular sign gifts such as miracles, healing, the ability to speak foreign languages without learning them (“tongues” in the biblical text), and the translation (“interpretation”) of those same languages into the language of church members. These are often called temporary gifts, since they apparently (with only sporadic local exceptions) ceased after the apostolic era.

Other gifts have proven more enduring. These gifts have permanent application to the continuing life of the church. They are listed below:

- Teaching—the ability to make the truths of Scripture clear and applicable to the lives of believers.
- Faith—the special ability to believe God for great things. Some people refer to this as the “gift of prayer.”
- Showing mercy—the ability to show compassion to those who have need—physical, spiritual, or emotional.
- Exhortation—the ability to encourage, console, or motivate to action. The gift is of special value in counseling.

- Giving—the ability to serve the church through material means: food, clothes, money, houses, or other goods.
- Administration—the ability to work behind the scenes to get things done so that the church is built up in various ways.
- Leadership—the ability to move believers to follow in ways that will benefit the cause of Christ.
- Helps—a general ability to assist in the work of the church. Sometimes called the gift of service.

## THE LOCAL CHURCH

The New Testament describes the local church as a group of believers in a certain place who have banded together for instruction, fellowship, worship, and service.

12. Where did believers meet before they had church buildings (Rom. 16:5, 1 Cor. 16:19)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

13. On what day did they meet (Acts 20:7)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

14. From Acts 2:42, list the four activities of the early church:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

15. To what event in the life of the church is 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 referring?

\_\_\_\_\_

The Lord's Supper is one of two ordinances given to the church by Christ, the other being water baptism. The Lord's Supper is an act of remembrance. It reminds us of

(1) Christ's death, (2) our present fellowship with Christ and others in His body, (3) our spiritual unity with all believers, and (4) Christ's return.

The Lord's Table has no saving power, but it is an avenue of blessing, making us more aware of Christ's presence and His forgiveness.

16. What is God's desire for the local church (1 Cor. 1:10)?

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## OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO THE LOCAL CHURCH

17. What does Hebrews 10:25 warn us not to neglect? \_\_\_\_\_

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*"Each Christian should select his church because he is convinced that within its particular structure he will find the greatest opportunities for spiritual growth, the greatest satisfactions for his human needs, and the greatest chance to be of helpful service to those around him."*

—Billy Graham

18. In Ephesians 4:2-3...

a. What is our responsibility (4:3)? \_\_\_\_\_

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b. What will promote unity (4:2)? \_\_\_\_\_

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19. How should those who are appointed to preach and teach the Word be supported?

• 1 Corinthians 9:14 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

• Galatians 6:6 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

20. Hebrews 13:7 instructs us concerning those who teach us God's Word (check the correct answer):

\_\_\_\_\_ That we should listen to their teaching and encourage others to come and hear them.

\_\_\_\_\_ That we should not hope to have the kind of faith they have.

\_\_\_\_\_ That we should observe their godly lives and follow their example of faith.

21. In Ephesians 4:11-12, we read that God gave certain gifted people to the church.

a. List them: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

b. What is their function (4:12)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

c. What is the function of the saints (4:12)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

22. What God-given means do we as members of the body of Christ have to do the “work of service” (Rom. 12, 1 Cor. 12, 1 Pet. 4:10)?

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23. In Colossians 1:18 and 1 Corinthians 12:27, the church is compared to a \_\_\_\_\_ of which Christ is the \_\_\_\_\_ and believers are the \_\_\_\_\_.

Read the following pages concerning believer’s baptism. If you have not followed the New Testament commands concerning baptism, make arrangements to be baptized as soon as possible. Any staff or board member will be glad to assist you.

## **BELIEVERS’ BAPTISM**

There are only two ordinances in the Christian Church: baptism and the Lord’s Supper. Since both are instituted in the gospels by our Lord Himself, we conclude that they are part of the message to us. Since they are celebrated in the Acts, we conclude that they belong to the practice of the church of Jesus Christ. Since they are explained in the epistles, we conclude that they are designed to be continued until Christ comes.

### **1. Why baptize?**

a. The Lord’s Commandment. “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matt. 28:19). The word of our Lord is sufficient warrant for baptism of believers.

b. The Practice of the Early Church. We read of the converts on the day of Pentecost, “They that gladly received His word were baptized.” In Acts 8 we read of Philip’s preaching to the eunuch from Isaiah 53. “As they went on their way, the eunuch inquired if he might be baptized. As soon as he confessed his faith in Christ, Philip baptized him” (Acts 8:38; see also Acts 10:44-48; 16:31-33; 18:8).

### **2. Who should be baptized?**

Baptism is limited to those who are disciples of Jesus Christ, who have received the truth of the gospel and made a personal decision regarding it. “Those who had received His word were baptized” (Acts 2:41). The eunuch confessed his faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and then Philip baptized him (Acts 8:36-38). The

jailer at Philippi was baptized; he and all his household. . . and he rejoiced, having believed in God with his whole household” (Acts 16:33-34).

### **3. What does baptism mean?**

Water baptism is symbolic of Spirit baptism, as explained in Romans 6:3-4: “Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.” Water baptism, then, is a declaration of the believer’s identification with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. The apostle could say, “I have been crucified with Christ” (Gal. 2:20). Going down into the water symbolizes identification with the death of Christ. Being submerged symbolizes His burial, and coming up from the water His resurrection.

### **4. How shall we baptize?**

By now you already have begun to realize that immersion best symbolizes the spiritual realities of Romans 6:3-4. Ancient documents make clear that the post-apostolic church practiced sprinkling, pouring, and immersion, though immersion seems to have been the favorite.

The real issue is not the mode of baptism, but the faith of the one being baptized. Nonetheless, when a choice is available, it seems fitting to prefer immersion for its symbolic advantages. The examples of baptism recorded in Scripture imply immersion. “And after being baptized, Jesus went up immediately from the water” (Matt. 3:16; see also Mark 2:9-10). Why would he have entered the Jordan River if John were baptizing by sprinkling? John 3:23 implies that an abundant supply of water was advantageous for John’s baptism—hardly necessary for sprinkling!



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## 12: How can I share my Faith?

Contrary to popular opinion, the greatest threat to the future of the Christian church is neither communism, secular humanism, nor atheism; neither is it any of the burgeoning numbers of modern cults. It is Christians failing to love people enough to share the good news of the cross with them and failing to love Christ enough to bear a consistent witness for Him.

### *Memory Verse for This Lesson:*



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#### **1 Peter 3:15**

“Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to every one who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence.”

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### **THE CHALLENGE**

1. What was the first thing Andrew did after he met Jesus (John 1:40-42)?

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2. In Mark 5:19, after Jesus had healed a man...

a. Where did He tell him to go? \_\_\_\_\_

b. What did He tell him to do? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. What was Peter's attitude toward speaking of Jesus Christ (Acts 4:20)? Check the correct answer:

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\_\_\_\_\_ He didn't speak unless asked.

\_\_\_\_\_ He was compelled to speak.

\_\_\_\_\_ He found it difficult to speak of such a personal matter.

4. What was Paul to tell people (Acts 22:15)?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

A witness in the courtroom is expected to tell what he knows about a given situation. The Christian witness is to tell others what he knows about Jesus Christ and what it means to have personally trusted Him.

5. Of what did Paul say that he was not ashamed (Rom. 1:16)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. Why was he unashamed? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## **THE CHRISTIAN'S LIFE AND HIS WITNESS**

The skeptic Voltaire is supposed to have said, "Show me your redeemed life, and I'll believe in your Redeemer." Some people you know have never read the Bible and seldom attend church. If you want them to know what Christ can do for them, then let them see what Christ has done in you. Since we are God's children living in a warped and wicked age (Phil. 2:15):

7. What kind of lives should we live? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

8. How should we appear to the world? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Now read Matthew 5:16.

9. What do people notice that makes a Christian's life shine?

\_\_\_\_\_

10. What can be the result? \_\_\_\_\_

*You are writing a gospel,  
a chapter each day,  
By the deeds that you do  
and the words that you say  
Men read what you write—  
distorted or true;  
What is the gospel  
according to you?  
—Anonymous*

## **THE CHRISTIAN'S WORD AND HIS WITNESS**

11. Who are the ones who should openly speak of their salvation (Psa. 107:2)?

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12. The blind man whom Jesus healed had little or no theological training, but he could give a simple and effective testimony. What two facts did he relate (John 9:25)? \_\_\_\_\_

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13. For what should we always be prepared (1 Pet. 3:15)? \_\_\_\_\_

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## **GOD'S WORD AND THE CHRISTIAN'S WITNESS**

14. What can God's Word do (Heb. 4:12)? \_\_\_\_\_

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15. What does the Bible say about the effectiveness of God's Word when it is used for God's purposes (Isa. 55:11)?

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16. How did Paul use the Scriptures in witnessing (Acts 17:2, 3)?

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17. With what types of people did he use the Word? \_\_\_\_\_

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18. What was the subject of Paul's witness?

a. 1 Corinthians 1:23, 24 \_\_\_\_\_

b. Ephesians 3:8 \_\_\_\_\_

19. Why is it important that we present Jesus Christ to those who don't know Him?

a. John 14:6 \_\_\_\_\_

b. Acts 4:12 \_\_\_\_\_

## **OBJECTIONS TO THE GOSPEL**

Don't be overcome by them! Many people whom you encounter will have objections to what they perceive is the Christian gospel (most of the time they are objecting to a caricature or false idea instead of the true gospel). Still more will have complaints to make against its messengers (these criticisms, unfortunately, are sometimes legitimate).

Remember, every unbeliever has what he or she considers to be a valid reason why they have not believed the good news. Otherwise, they would have believed it by now. Even though their "reason" may not be logically correct, the fact that you take them seriously as people and try to provide an answer is far more important than the information

you actually provide. Most of the time unbelievers think highly of the gospel because they think highly of the Christian who delivers it.

The apostolic church is our model for sharing Christ. In the blanks below, list the verb forms which describe what the early church had to do in order to communicate the gospel effectively. The first one is done for you.

• Acts 9:22 \_\_\_\_\_ *proving* \_\_\_\_\_

• Acts 9:29 \_\_\_\_\_

• Acts 26:22 \_\_\_\_\_

• Acts 26:28 \_\_\_\_\_

• Acts 18:28 \_\_\_\_\_

• Acts 19:8 \_\_\_\_\_

Learn how to refute them! Below is a list of the most frequently encountered objections to the gospel. Above the list are a number of biblical references. Write the number of the correct Scriptural reference next to the statement it refutes.

1. Hebrews 9:27
2. John 7:17
3. Romans 3:23
4. 2 Corinthians 6:2
5. Ephesians 2:8-9
6. Mark 2:17
7. John 14:6

\_\_\_\_\_ “If a person is doing the best he can, God will accept him. Sincerity is what counts.”

\_\_\_\_\_ “Surely there’s more than just one way. I think all religions lead to heaven.”

\_\_\_\_\_ “I’ll probably become a Christian some day.”

\_\_\_\_\_ “I’m too sinful to be saved. God wouldn’t accept me.”

\_\_\_\_\_ “I’m really not such a bad person.”

\_\_\_\_\_ “Maybe we’ll get another chance after we die.”

\_\_\_\_\_ “There are too many things in the Bible I don’t understand.”

## YOUR TESTIMONY

One of the greatest witnessing tools that we have is our testimony. There are several reasons for this:

- We are always prepared to give it. It is not too often that a person forgets his own testimony.

- We can be relaxed and natural about sharing it. Most of us have little difficulty getting excited about sharing the great things that God has done in our own lives.

- It is a true-life story. People want to know if Christianity works in real life situations.

In sharing your testimony, make it personal. Don’t preach. Tell what Christ has done for you. Use first person pronouns (I, we, my, our), not “you.” Make it short. Three or four minutes should be enough time to cover the essential facts. Keep Christ central. A good testimony always highlights what He has done.

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Use the Word of God. A carefully chosen verse of Scripture will add force to your testimony. The Word of God has a keen cutting edge (Eph. 6:17).

Prepare your own testimony using the worksheets on the following pages and the outline below.

*Before I knew Christ, I lived and thought this way.*

In this part of your testimony, the most important thing to share is your spiritual background: what you thought of God, religion, the Bible. You may want to mention other things that characterized your life: loneliness, depression, etc., and how these things affected your outlook on life. Spend the smallest portion of your time on this part of your testimony.

*How I received Christ.*

At this point you will want to share the plan of salvation and what you actually did to become a Christian. It is important to emphasize how you previously had a misconception about what a Christian is. You may even want to use some printed materials and say something like, "Let me share with you some principles that helped me come to know Christ."

*After I received Christ, these changes took place.*

The most important thing here is how your thoughts on God, religion, and the Bible have changed. Then show how this has affected the rest of your life (marriage, family life, temper, ability to love others, etc.). It is important to be realistic in this section. Do not make promises which the Word of God does not make. Spend the largest amount of your testimony on this section.

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**Testimony Worksheet**

Before I knew Christ, I lived and thought this way . . .

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How I Received Christ . . .

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After I Received Christ . . .

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“The Bridge To Life,” beginning on the next page, is reprinted from *Discipleship Journal* (a ministry of the Navigators). “The Bridge” is a time-proven yet simple method of sharing the gospel. It is not the only way to do it, of course. Other presentations often used include *The Four Spiritual Laws* (Campus Crusade) and *Steps to Peace With God* (Billy Graham Evangelistic Association). But “The Bridge” is effective. Learn it and make it part of your working capital as a Christian.

## **A TOOL FOR SHARING THE GOSPEL**

Issues: There may be a variety of needs your non-Christian friends and relatives have which must be met before they will entrust their lives to Christ. Perhaps they need to see more closely how Christians can truly love each other, or maybe they have physical or emotional needs that should be dealt with.

But one thing all of them need at some point is an understandable explanation of how salvation has been accomplished for them—the good news of Jesus Christ—and how they must respond in order to receive His salvation. Are you ready to provide them with this crucial information?

The Bridge Illustration is one of many effective methods of presenting the gospel. It has been used successfully for many years in several contexts, in groups and person to person. You’ll find it a useful tool in presenting the gospel in a concise way in a relatively short period of time.

Often a good time to introduce “The Bridge” is during a conversation with a non-Christian in which the two of you have already touched on spiritual matters. He may have asked you about some issue related to religion or God, or about why you believe the way you do.

After explaining that you are a Christian, you could ask, “How about you? Have you ever thought much about what it really means to be a Christian?”

If there is time to talk further and the person shows interest, you could say, “You know, there’s a little diagram that I think clarifies this thing of being a real Christian and knowing for certain you have eternal life. If you have a few minutes, can I sketch it out for you?”

If there isn't time to talk further then, you could volunteer to present the diagram at a later time and arrange to get together. When you present "The Bridge," it is much better to draw out the illustration in the person's presence rather than having it already drawn out or using a printed tract. Drawing out the illustration focuses his attention on each aspect of the gospel in a logical sequence, and helps him visualize the full picture. He also participates with you as he reads verses you show him in the Bible and as he responds to your questions.

In a sense, the illustration becomes a "third person" speaking to the non-Christian and confronting him with the claims of Christ. This should take some of the pressure off you, and allow the person to realize that the issue is between himself and God, not himself and you.

Also, after you have gone, the non-Christian can keep the diagram you have drawn and can review the gospel message later.

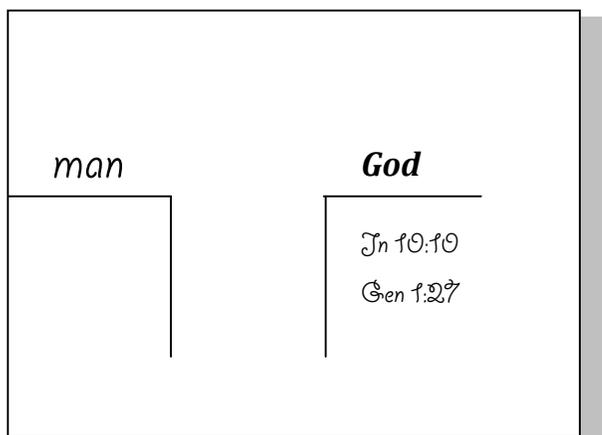
"The Bridge" can be presented adequately in fifteen to twenty minutes.

On the following pages are major points of the gospel that can be expressed as you draw the illustration, as well as suggested Scripture passages and questions. To learn how to share "The Bridge" with others, memorize the drawing itself as well as the most important Scripture passages (with their references). Then, become familiar with the information in the columns headed Major Points and Sample Questions.

"The Bridge" can be presented in four steps which focus on these topics: God's Love, Man's Problem, God's Remedy, and Man's Response. At the top of the next four pages is an example of the illustration as you would actually draw it while you explain these steps: I Share My Faith?

The illustration may be drawn on something like a 3x5 card or a napkin.

## God's Love



**Important Verses:**

(Look directly into the Scriptures to help the person see God's view of his life.)

John 10:10 (Jesus' words)

"I have come that they might have life, and have it to the full."

Genesis 1:27

"God created man in his own image."

Others:

1 John 4:8

1 John 3:1

**Major Points:**

(Speak simply and understandably, expressing these thoughts in your own words.)

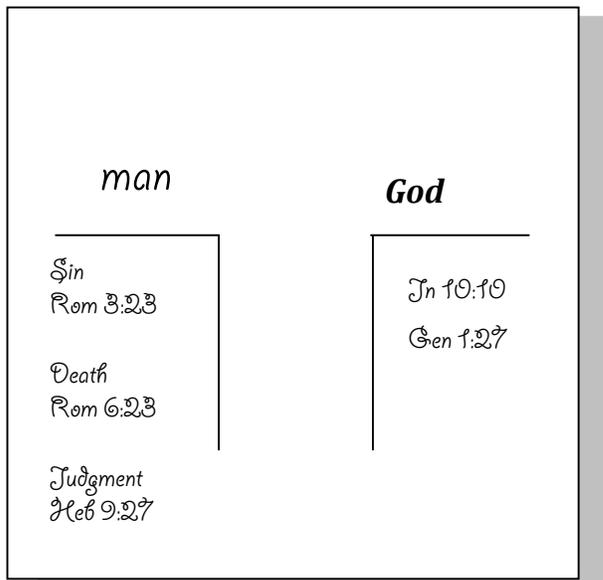
- The Bible teaches that God loves us.
- God desires that we live life to the full, experiencing such things as His love, happiness, peace, purpose in life, and fulfillment.
- God created man in His own image to be His friend and to experience His love.
- But God didn't make man a robot or puppet who would automatically respond to Him. God gave man a will and the freedom of choice.

**Sample Questions:**

(Use questions and dialogue to gain the best understanding of what the person thinks about his relationship to God.)

- What do you think it means to really live life to the full?
- Do you think that most people today are living life to the full?
- When you think of God, what qualities or characteristics come to your mind?
- When you think of human beings in general, what qualities or characteristics come to your mind?
- How are God and mankind different?

# Man's Problem



**Important Verses:**

Romans 3:23  
"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

Romans 6:23  
"The wages of sin is death."

Hebrews 9:27  
"Man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment."

Others:

Isaiah 53:6

Isaiah 59:1-2

Romans 3:10-12

Romans 5:12

2 Thess. 1:8-9

James 2:10

**Major Points:**

•Given the choice of either keeping God's commandments or living apart from God, mankind has chosen to disobey God.

•The result is separation. God is holy and perfect, but mankind is sinful and imperfect.

•The Bible says all of us have sinned. All of us have done things or had thoughts which grieve God.

•Sin is basically a matter of our will being contrary to God's will. It is rebellion or indifference to God.

•This separation means spiritual death. After we die we will face judgment and the penalty of an eternal spiritual death.

•All human beings are in the same sinking boat, unable to save themselves.

•It is God's opinion that counts—not ours. That's why we have to look to the Bible for answers.

**Sample Questions:**

•Have you ever wanted to talk to God but He seemed far away?

•Would you agree that everyone has sinned at some point in life?

•How would you define sin?

•Can you identify with this?

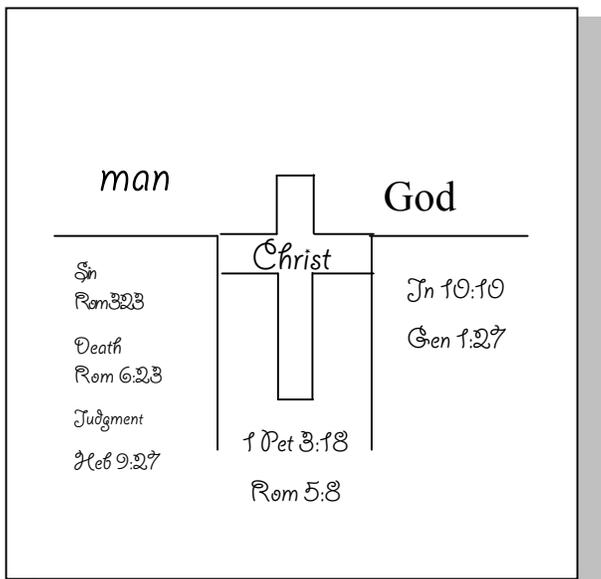
•In your opinion, what are the consequences of sin?

•When you think of death, what do you think of?

•Can dead men do anything to save themselves?

•Do you have any questions about what we've talked about so far?

# God's Remedy



**Sample Questions:**

•If spiritual death can be defined as separation from God, what is life?

•Why did Christ die?

•Are you familiar with the death of Christ as it is reported in the Bible?

•What is your understanding of who Christ is?

**Important Verses:**

1 Peter 3:18

"Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God."

Romans 5:8

"God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Others:

John 3:16

John 14:6

2 Peter 3:9

**Major Points:**

•In spite of the fact that we have turned our backs on God, He still loves us and desires that we know Him personally.

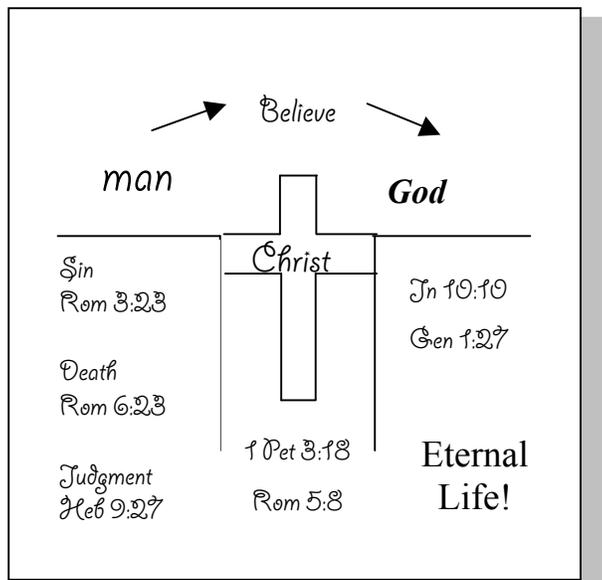
•Even at their very best, people are still imperfect and cannot attain on their own the perfection needed to bridge the gap between mankind and God.

•The Bible tells us that Jesus Christ is God, but that He is also man. When Christ died voluntarily on the cross, He died in our place. He paid the penalty and the judgment for our sin so that we could be forgiven. He died as our Substitute. In Christ, God is saying, "I want you to know that I love you."

•Christ is the only adequate bridge to cross the gulf between God and man.

•Other religions try to show that man in himself can bridge the gap from imperfection to true fulfillment. The Christian faith is unique in showing how God alone provides that bridge through His Son Jesus Christ.

**Man's Response**



### Important Verses:

John 3:16

"God so loved the world that He gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life."

John 5:24

"Whoever hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life." (Jesus' words.)

Others:

John 1:12

Ephesians 2:8-9

Revelation 3:20

### Major Points:

• Christ has made it possible to cross over to God's side, but we are not automatically there.

• We need to take action that demonstrates our faith in what Christ has done. In prayer we need to (1) acknowledge to God our sinfulness, (2) ask His forgiveness because of what Christ has done, and (3) ask Christ to take charge of our lives.

• Believing in Christ means trust and commitment — to accept the fact that He has died in our place, and to let Him become the person who controls our life.

• A gift can be free, but unless we reach out and take it, it is not ours. Eternal life in Christ is a gift from God. The right response is to accept and receive it.

### Sample Questions:

- What is given to us when we hear and believe?
- According to these verses, how does a person actually cross the bridge that Christ has provided?
- What does it mean to believe?
- What is the difference between knowing about a person and actually knowing him?
- Does this illustration of what Christ has done make sense to you?
- Do you have any questions about it?
- Where would you place yourself in this illustration — on the left side or the right side?
- Is there any reason why you shouldn't cross over to God's side and be certain of eternal life?

## A Prayer For Salvation

If the person you are sharing the gospel with indicates his readiness to repent of his sin and to trust Christ for salvation, suggest that the two of you pray together a prayer for salvation.

Discuss before you pray what the prayer can include, and perhaps write down the major points. You may want to first ask the person what he wants to include, then you could suggest other points.

This is an example of a prayer for salvation:

*"Dear Lord,*

*I acknowledge that I am a sinner and that I need your forgiveness.*

*I know that without your forgiveness I face your judgment and eternal death.*

*I believe you love me and showed your love by sending your Son Jesus Christ to die for my sins. I trust in this alone to put me in a right relationship with you.*

*I ask you to take over my life and live within me.*

*I know that I am not worthy of this, but I thank you for it."*

There are several ways to go about actually praying the prayer:

- Pray aloud one phrase at a time, with the other person repeating each phrase after you.
- Have a few moments of silent prayer first before saying the prayer of salvation.
- Have the other person pray aloud on his own the prayer you have written down, and then you pray after he has finished.
- Some people may prefer to pray alone. If so, leave the written prayer with the person to pray on his own after you have gone...

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## Guidelines for Presenting the Bridge

1. Rather than memorizing this or some other gospel presentation, learn the principles, ideas, verses, and key sentences. Make the presentation your own, and learn to adjust it to suit the personality and the needs of the person you are talking with.
2. Practice giving the presentation to another Christian.
3. Have an attitude of complete dependence on God. Pray silently before, during, and after you share the gospel with someone.
4. If possible, make your presentation of the gospel at a time when you aren't rushed and in a place where you are free from interruptions.
5. Draw the illustration as you talk. This helps maintain the non-Christian's attention.
6. Be sensitive to the person's response. Ask yourself such questions as these:
  - Are certain parts of the illustration difficult for him to grasp?
  - Does he have certain beliefs and practices that he is hesitant to change?
  - Does he seem to have absorbed about as much information as he can at this time?
7. You may want to list on the flyleaf in your Bible the verses used in the Bridge illustration, in case you forget them.
8. Keep the illustration as simple as possible.
9. Ask lots of questions, and listen carefully to the answers. Always respect the other person's opinion.
10. Don't argue about whether the Scriptures are reliable. If the issue comes up, just say you want to at least look together at what the Scriptures say.
11. Rather than quote the verses yourself, have the non-Christian read them aloud. But in case he would be embarrassed in trying to look them up, you will probably want to find each one for him.
12. Have the person agree with you on the meaning of each verse before going on to the next one. Ask, "Does this make sense?" or "Do you agree with that?"
13. Avoid religious jargon. Speak in everyday terms that you know a non-Christian can understand.
14. If a tough question arises, don't be afraid to say, "I don't know, but I'll try to find an answer."

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15. Relax, and use some humor if it seems natural. If you are nervous or uptight, the other person will be also.

16. Do not inconvenience the person with the amount of time you take.

17. Your ultimate goal is to bring the person to salvation in Christ. Proceed as far in the presentation as the Holy Spirit gives you freedom. If the non-Christian is open to receive Christ, then pray with him at that time.

18. Respond to various reactions in an appropriate way.

**His reaction:**

**Your response:**

Eager and positive.

Ask him to pray a salvation prayer with you (or if he prefers, by himself later). Make sure he knows how to receive Christ on his own.

Seriously considering  
but not ready.

Ask him to think about what you have discussed, and then talk to him about it later.  
You may want to get him involved in an evangelistic Bible study.

Skeptical or negative.

Maintain politeness and warmth, leaving a positive impression.

Remember that only the Spirit of God can convict someone of his need for salvation in Christ. Let your prayer and your speech reflect this fact.



## 13: What is Stewardship?

Stewardship is the process of holding valuable items in trust for someone else. For the Christian, it means that all we possess we hold in trust for God, to whom we shall one day give an account of our stewardship. A modern synonym of “stewardship” is “management.”

### *Memory Verse for This Lesson:*



#### **1 Corinthians 4:1-2**

“Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy.”

### **INTRODUCTION**

1. What are the three items we have to be stewards of?

a. Psalm 24:1 \_\_\_\_\_

b. 1 Corinthians 4:1-2 \_\_\_\_\_

c. Luke 16:1-2 \_\_\_\_\_

As we can see from these verses, everything belongs to the Lord. We are only his stewards, and we need to act in such a way that we discharge our stewardship responsibilities faithfully.

Read Matthew 25:14-30.

2. Why should a believer welcome an accounting of his stewardship if he has been faithful in the use of his time, talents and money (Matt. 25:23)?

## STEWARDSHIP OF TIME

Time is the one thing no one has enough of, but it is also the one thing that everyone has all there is of.

3. What was Jesus' response to the responsibility of time (John 9:4)?

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4. What kind of person makes the most of his time (Eph. 5:15-16)?

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*I have only just a minute  
Just sixty seconds in it:  
Forced upon me—can't refuse it  
Didn't seek it, didn't choose it  
I must suffer if I lose it,  
Give account if I abuse it,  
Just a tiny little minute  
But eternity is in it.*

—Author Unknown

Your stewardship of time should be measured not in length, but in depth; not in quantity, but in quality. It is not how long you live on earth that matters, but what you do with your time that counts.

5. On the left side list some activities that add quantity and length; on the right list activities that add quality and depth to your existence.

Quantity

Quality

|       |       |
|-------|-------|
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

6. If you are to be a wise steward of your time, what are some activities that you can give up or reduce in the left column?

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## STEWARDSHIP OF TALENTS

We should not confuse spiritual gifts with natural talents or abilities. Natural talents are things that are acquired by discipline and hard work, an example being proficiency on a musical instrument.

7. Can we by working hard receive a spiritual gift (1 Cor. 12:11)?

\_\_\_\_\_

8. The Apostle Paul had many spiritual gifts; what was one of his natural talents that helped finance his missionary work (Acts 18:1-5)?

\_\_\_\_\_

9. If you have a talent or special ability, how are you to use it (1 Cor. 10:31)?

\_\_\_\_\_

10. List some talents you possess: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

11. How can you as a wise steward employ them for the glory of God?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## STEWARDSHIP OF MONEY

Stewardship of money is a critical area in our Christian lives. The Bible has much to say about it.

12. What can we fall into if we want to “get rich” (1 Tim. 6:9)?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

13. What is the real issue in regard to money (1 Tim. 6:10)?

\_\_\_\_\_

14. How are we to obtain money (Prov. 14:23)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

15. How are we to use our money (1 Tim. 5:8)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

a. Whose needs are to be provided for? \_\_\_\_\_

b. What is the person compared to who refuses to meet these needs?

\_\_\_\_\_

16. Put 1 John 3:16-17 into your own words: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

17. How are we to give money for the support of God's programs?

a. Exodus 25:1-7 \_\_\_\_\_

b. 2 Corinthians 9:6-7 \_\_\_\_\_

Where is your heart? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

“Lay not up for yourselves treasure upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” —Matt. 6:19-21

Stewardship of time, talents, and treasure—according to the New Testament—is not the product of a grim, begrudging effort to serve God. It is, rather, a free, happy, life-fulfilling experience to those who love God and want to be agents of His purpose and will. The following pages give a summary of the biblical teaching on what might be called “the generous lifestyle.”

## **PART ONE: OUTLINE OF GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

### **I. The Frequency With Which Money Is Mentioned in Scripture**

#### **A. More verses on money than on Second Coming, resurrection, prayer**

- over 700 direct references in Scripture
- 2/3 of all the parables of Jesus involve money

#### **B. Its function in Scripture: Money openly declares things that are unseen.**

### **II. The Platform of God’s Plan of Economy**

#### **A. Plank #1: God possesses and presides over all the wealth in this world and the next.**

The earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. (Psa. 24:1)

All that is in heaven and in the earth is thine. Both riches and honor come from Thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength to all. (1 Chron 29:11-12)

#### **B. Plank #2: God wants His wealth in circulation.**

**1. The theme of the original creation: give**

**2. The introduction of a new theme: get (introduced by Satan)**

**3. The warnings against the new theme:**

There is a grievous evil which I have seen under the sun: riches being hoarded by their owner to his hurt. (Ecclesiastes 5:13)

Give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, they will pour into your lap. For by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you in return. (Luke 6:38)

#### **C. Plank #3: All of God’s wealth in this world He has legally entrusted to His children for management during this age—the principle known as**

**stewardship. You won't be an effective money manager for the Lord unless you are convinced of three things:**

1. *All that you have is God's.*
2. *You are only the manager (steward) of it.*
3. *You will one day give an account of how well you have achieved His purposes with it.*

**D. Plank #4: The generosity of believers is God's ordinary way of accomplishing His purposes in the world.**

He who is gracious to the poor man lends to the Lord, and He will repay him for his good deed. --Prov 19:17

1. *Because giving is the nature of God (sparrows, lilies). Those who give are aligning themselves with God's plan of economy.*
2. *To care for the downtrodden; to get the gospel out to the ends of the earth; to translate the Bible*

**E. Plank #5: God increases the wealth of those who have demonstrated trustworthiness with their stewardship.**

1. *God's ultimate purpose is not to enrich us. Not "God wants you rich." He doesn't. He wants you and me to be channels, not reservoirs. Our wealth is a means, not an end.*

2. *This principle solves the problem of motivation. There are those who say, "When you give, you ought not to give so that you can obtain more money, you ought to give just because it's a good thing to do." Then why is practically every exhortation to give in the Scriptures accompanied by a statement telling what the act can do for the believer?*

Give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, they will pour into your lap. For by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you in return. Luke 6:38

3. *Being enriched is ordinary and expected, but not automatic. If He doesn't enrich us, it could be because we haven't shown ourselves faithful, or for some other reason which we don't know.*

## **PART TWO: PRINCLIPLES OF GIVING**

The stewardship of money is a critical area of life; and the Bible has much to say about it. This stewardship falls basically into four categories: 1) how we feel about money; 2) how we earn money; 3) how we spend money; and 4) how we give money.

### **I. How We Feel About Money**

The Bible says that we are not to love money. To trust in money is idolatry.

No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. Matthew 6:24

In addition, we are told not to seek to be rich, but rather to seek to honor God.

But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of [all sorts of] evil: which while some have coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. 1 Timothy 6:9-10

## II. How We Receive Money

The primary way to earn money is by work. We may also receive money by making wise investments or by receiving gifts. For instance, in the Old Testament the first-born received a double share of all that his father possessed. These principles are seen in a number of Old and New Testament passages:

Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers and then at my coming I should have received mine own with interest. Matthew 25:27

He that tilleth his land shall have plenty of bread: but he that followeth after vain persons shall have poverty enough. Proverbs 28:19

In all labour there is profit: but the talk of the lips tendeth only to poverty. Proverbs 14:23

## III. How We Spend Money

We are to provide for the needs of our family and the needs of those around us. We are exhorted to pay our debts immediately, as well as to save.

But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever. 1 Timothy 5:8

Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his {compassions} from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? 1 John 3:16-17

Owe no man any thing, but to love one another; for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. Romans 13:8

Then she came and told the man of God. And he said, Go, sell the oil, and pay thy debt, and live thou and thy children off the rest. 2 Kings 4:7

The ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer. Proverbs 30:25

There is treasure to be desired and oil in the dwelling of the wise, but a foolish man spendeth it up. Proverbs 21:20

#### **IV. How We Give Money**

This is a major issue of Scripture. Here we are trapped between investing with God and keeping what we need to supply our family for the present and the future. Some say the solution to everything is just to accept the biblical pattern of ten percent. The problem with ten percent is that it isn't biblical giving. It can be giving for the wrong reason—giving to fulfill an obligation rather than the response of a loving, willing heart. In addition, it hinders what the believer might do by making him think he has done it all. If we trace the biblical teaching historically, we see that all biblical giving falls into two main categories: required giving and free-will giving.

Required giving is the equivalent of divine taxation. It was seen in the Old Testament economy when the Israelite government was under the jurisdiction of God Himself.

To fail to provide the required funds left one open to divine discipline. Most of the Old Testament references to tithing fall into the category of required giving. It is stretching a point to call this giving at all.

Free-will giving is directed toward the Lord, personally, in a response of love and sacrifice. The legislation which gives the institution of sacrifices makes a careful distinction between those offerings which were required and those which were voluntary.

### **A. The Mosaic Period**

#### *1. Required giving*

The first tithe (the word means "tenth") was ten percent of everything that the people had produced from the land and from their herds and flocks (Lev. 27:30-33). There was a second tithe in Deuteronomy 12:6-7 and a third one in Deuteronomy 14:28 (this last one took place every third year).

At the end of three years thou shalt bring forth all the tithe of thine increase the same year, and shalt lay it up within thy gates. Deuteronomy 14:28

The first was called the "Levites' tithe," the second was the festival tithe, and the third was a tithe for the poor. These were all funding the needs of the people of the state. All three of these are taxation, not free-will giving. The Israelite had no

option. Failure to give was disobedience. The effective annual income an Israelite had to set aside for all this was about 22 and 1/2 percent.

In addition, Israelites engaged in profit sharing on the corners of their fields (Lev. 19), a temple tax during one period of history (Neh. 10:33), and the Sabbath rest of the land every seventh year (Exod. 23).

## 2. *Free-will giving*

Free-will giving included first-fruits giving and free-will offerings. In Numbers 18:12 we read, "All the best of the oil and the wine and the wheat, these have I given thee." That is first-fruits giving.

Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase. Proverbs 3:9

Always, giving to the Lord was a matter of freely giving Him the best.

A second aspect of free-will giving was the free-will offering. Exodus 25:12 says, "The Lord spoke unto Moses, saying, 'Speak unto the children of Israel that they bring me an offering of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart.'" This willingness of heart is emphasized over and over again. The beauty of it is that giving in this way provides more than enough.

Then the people rejoiced for that they offered willingly; because with perfect heart they offered willingly to the Lord; and David the king also rejoiced with great joy. 1 Chron. 29:9

And they spake unto Moses saying, The people bring much more than enough for the service of the work, which the Lord commanded to make. And Moses gave commandment, and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp, saying, Let neither man nor woman make any more work for the offering of the sanctuary. So the people were restrained from bringing. For the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it, and too much. Exodus 36:5-7

## **B. The New Testament Era**

### 1. *Required Giving*

The New Testament says exactly what the Old Testament did. In Matthew 17:24 and 22:21 we are introduced to the subject of required giving:

And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute money came to Peter, and said, Doth not your master pay tribute? -- Matthew 17:24

Then saith He [Jesus] unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's. Matthew 22:21

What the passages teach is simply this: Jesus paid His taxes. He advocated what the Father instituted in the pre-Mosaic times—faithful payment of taxes. When we pay taxes to duly constituted authority, we are in the truest sense supporting God's design.

Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves judgment.

For this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Romans 13:1-2, 6

## 2. *Free-will Giving*

There are eight principles that the New Testament gives for Christian giving. These are determinative for believers who sincerely desire to please God in their personal lives.

**Principle #1: Giving is investing with God.** What we invest with God we receive dividends on—an eternal yield. If we give freely, God will supply our needs and will make everything increase to us.

Give, and it shall be given to you: good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye meet withal it shall be measured to you again.  
--Luke 6:38

But this I say, He which soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly: and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.  
--2 Cor. 9:6

**Principle #2: Giving is to be sacrificial.** It isn't the amount, it's what it costs you to give it.

And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much... And he saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: For all they did cast in of their abundance, but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.  
--Mark 12:41, 43-44

But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.  
—Heb. 13:16

**Principle #3: Giving is not a matter of what you have.** You may give more in amount while actually giving less in proportion—and it is proportion which God desires.

He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.

--Luke 16:10

How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. And this they did, not as we had hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God.

2 Cor. 8:2, 5

**Principle #4: Giving affects spiritual riches.** If we don't handle money wisely, we will never be given spiritual responsibility. If, however, we want God to give us responsibility in spiritual things, then we must prove that we can handle the world's goods.

If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?

--Luke 16:11

And he said unto him, Well done, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities. And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained thee five pounds. And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities.

--Luke 19:17-19

**Principle #5: Giving amounts ought to be personally determined.** Zaccheus gave fifty percent. The point is that giving is to be done spontaneously out of love and gratitude. Our example is Jesus Christ, who gave Himself.

Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

--2 Cor. 9:7

For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich.

--2 Cor. 8:9

**Principle #6: Giving is to be flexible enough to respond to needs, especially of other Christians.** Acts 2, 4, and 5 are illustrations of how believers gave to meet needs. In Acts 11, the Bible tells us that there was a famine and the saints collected money to take to those people.

As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

Galatians 6:10

And let ours {our people} also learn to maintain good works {to meet pressing needs}, that they be not unfruitful.

Titus 3:14

**Principle # 7: Giving is to be planned.** We need a church budget so that we can commit ourselves to important ministries. By planning our giving, we also learn the meaning of stewardship on a continuous basis. Giving is to be done systematically, proportionately, and faithfully.

Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come. 1 Cor. 16:1-2

**Principle #8: Giving generously results in blessing.** Paul said to the Philippians, "Because you have been so generous with me, God will take care of you."

And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work. --2 Cor 9:8

## PART THREE: APPLICATION

### I. Test Questions for Money Managers

#### A. Do you have a valid legal will which uses God's money wisely?

If you don't, your values need changing. You have violated one of the basic principles of management: the *accountability* principle.

Give an account of your stewardship. --Luke 16:2

Accountability means that I am always conscious of handling of someone else's money.

**B. Do you frequently pay bills late?**

If you do, your values need changing. You may be in the process of bringing Christ lower in the esteem of others. You have violated the *blamelessness* principle.

For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward.

--Titus 1:7

Blamelessness means that I remember that what I do that is dishonorable will bring Christ lower in the esteem of others.

**C. Do you have a systematic financial record-keeping system?**

If you don't, you don't know where the Lord's money is being spent.

You have violated the *faithfulness* principle.

It is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy..

--1 Cor. 4:2

Faithfulness means that I have worked out a set of routine ways of handling routine money management questions. Good financial records are a *spiritual* necessity.

**D. Do you give out of the beginning of your resources, or out of the end?**

If you give out of the end, you have violated the *firstfruits* principle.

Honor the Lord with your possessions, and with the firstfruits of all your increase; So your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats with new wine. Proverbs 3:9,10

**E. Do you have a plan for giving?**

If you don't, you are no steward. If you have to go through a decision-making process every time you give, you will begrudge every gift. Make your decisions about giving in advance, and you will find that giving becomes a pleasure. Begin now to give according to a plan. You can expect to find God giving you the questions to evaluate those causes to which you give:

1. Are they communicating a message true to the Scriptures?
2. Are people responding positively to the message?

3. *Are the lives of the organization's leaders an illustration of the message?*
4. *Is the organization reproducing itself?*
5. *Is there a standard of excellence along with freedom from waste?*

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