

TITLE: Disciples' Principles of Faith

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DISCIPLES' PRINCIPLES OF FAITH

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Preface

The purpose and goal of this book is to help disciples of Christ in their faith and walk with God. These two areas will be the focus of attack by the antichrist and Satan in the last days and, if we hope to stand firm during the trials and tribulations, we must be strong in Christ Jesus, being equipped with the full armor of God (Eph 6:10-11).

The Word of God is where we find doctrinal truth concerning our faith walk in Christ. The Word and our studying of it, is where we find love, hope, mercy and grace. It is the foundation stone for our walk here on earth. But this kind of study does not come easy, and it is sometimes difficult to understand. Theology is not to be our enemy, but it is the means by which God gives us **knowledge, wisdom and understanding**. Also, it is the way used by God to help break the cords and chains so that the enslaved captives can be set free (Isa 58:6; John 8:36).

“Disciples’ Principles of Faith” is the title of this book for several reasons. One, because we must first come into a personal relationship with Christ Jesus through faith, committing to follow Him only. This is what makes us His disciples. Second, this personal relationship results in a walk of faith and trust, both in God and in His Word. Third, it takes the discipline of study and daily application of God-given principles by which the Word commands us to live. Paul tells Timothy, *“to study to show himself approved, a workman that does not need to be ashamed, one who is in a right way dividing the word of truth”* (2 Tim 2:15).

David exhorts us to meditate on the Word of God, to reflect on it, and let it become deeply rooted in our hearts. The person who does this is like a tree planted by the rivers of water. He will bear fruit, his leaves will not wither, and whatever he does shall prosper – all because he delights and meditates on the law of the LORD (Ps 1:1-3). Without being grounded and rooted in the Word, you cannot produce fruit. The ground provides sustenance and strength. The root channels life-giving nutrients into the growing plant. In order to **live, grow, mature, and bear fruit**, grounding and rooting are the foundation stones. Do not fear the Word of God; it is a light unto our path, a guide and roadmap to help us get through the challenges faced here on earth (Ps 119:105).

What follows is an overview of the major doctrines of the Christian faith, a study of theology. The word **theology** simple translated means, a **“study of God”**. I exhort you to please take time each day to draw closer to the teaching and truth of God’s Word. **Get into the Word of God so that the Word of God can get into you.**

The purpose of this book is not to try proving or defending these doctrines. The goal is to help the believer in Jesus Christ to grasp the disciplines one needs to understand, so we can be true disciples, those who can then be called **“Christ-like”** or Christian (Acts 11:26). The early disciples were known as people **“who were of the Way”** (Acts 9:2) because their lives exemplified the teachings of Christ in all that they did and in how they communicated with those around them. Our hope is that these words will help build a strong foundation on the Rock of Jesus Christ in terms of what disciples should believe and live by as they fulfill God’s will for their lives here on earth.

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Introduction

At the birth of the church, because there was a lack of books concerning the Christian faith, the early disciples developed a statement containing many of the doctrines of faith. It was known as the **Apostles Creed**.

*I believe in God the **Father** Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth:
And in Jesus Christ his only **Son** our Lord,
Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,
Born of the Virgin Mary,
Suffered under Pontius Pilate,
Was crucified, dead, and buried:
He descended into hell;
The third day he rose again from the dead;
He ascended into heaven,
And sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty;
From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.
I believe in the **Holy Ghost**;
The holy Catholic Church;
The Communion of Saints;
The Forgiveness of sins;
The Resurrection of the body,
And the Life everlasting.
Amen.*

This was a statement used by the disciples in order to remember the basic fundamentals of their faith. It was also a tool for sharing their faith about Jesus Christ with others. It can be broken down into three parts, highlighting the Triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Then later in time, around 325 AD, the early church fathers created and developed what is known as the **Nicene Creed**:

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things, visible and invisible; And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten by the Father before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made. Who, for us became man for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried; and on the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended to the heavens, and sits on the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again, with glory, to judge the living and the dead; whose kingdom shall never end. And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life; who proceeds from the Father (and His Son); who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets. And I believe one holy catholic and apostolic

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church. I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

This was the way disciples could know the truth of who God is and how to discern false teaching. When one understands theology or doctrine, one then is able to stand strong in his faith. Such knowledge enables one to become bolder in the proclamation of his faith, for the purpose of teaching others about God and man.

What follows is not so much a systematic study of doctrine but, rather, just a short form overview of what a disciple should believe and how he should live. The simplicity of this book is deliberately meant to open the door for the disciple to begin the process of thinking and understanding the meaning of being a true follower of Jesus Christ. When one clearly believes in his heart and has an understanding of what it means to be a disciple, one will soon begin to see the fruit of the Spirit flowing out through one's life into all the activities in which one is involved throughout the day.

But before we get started, we should take a moment to define several words:

Disciple: Follower, believer, supporter, devotee, student, learner. A disciple is one who follows after the imparted knowledge of a teacher; disciples emulate the lifestyle of the teacher. In the New Testament people were called by Christ to follow Him and in so doing they became His disciples. (Both men and women can be called disciples).

Theology: The study of God. This can come in a variety of forms and methods, but the goal is to seek the truth of who God is, and how He personally interacts with man here on earth and with all of His creation.

Doctrine: A system of teaching concerning God's truth and about who God is, also containing laws and regulations to help guide the believer in Christ Jesus. The disciple is to hold firm to the doctrines of the Word of God; they are there to nurture us and help to bear fruit for the honour and glory of Christ Jesus; they are the foundational teachings of the church of Jesus Christ, with which we are to train and correct other disciples (1 Tim 3:16-17).

Faith: Confidence, trust, assurance, belief, obedience. For disciples, faith is putting complete trust and confidence in Jesus Christ, stepping out into the unknown and believing that He can carry us through this life, until we meet Him face to face in glory. Hebrews chapter 11 is a testimony chapter of faith, referring to people who are "heroes of faith".

Discipline: Regulation, order, control, obedience, correction, punishment; discipline can also mean a form of training. A disciple comes under the discipline of their teacher. The disciple is subject to the way, truth and life of Christ Jesus (John 14:6).

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Principle: Rules, tenets, code, guideline; they are like signposts on a highway to help guide us on our life journey here on earth. These teachings are there to bring us into an ever-greater personal experience with God Almighty, and of knowing His personal will and direction for our lives.

These words are to be deeply rooted together, for the disciple needs to be spending time learning the theology and doctrines of the Bible. The challenge is that this takes discipline and time. Going to church on Sunday or attending a midweek meeting, by themselves, will not bring the disciple of Christ into a deeper understanding of the Word of God. The Word must get into our hearts before it will enable us to make any changes in our thinking or actions. The most important point concerning theology is that of having a relationship with Christ – a relationship which is truly built on faith. We must make a deeply conscious decision on how we handle and believe in this book called the Bible. We need not fret because the Father has sent the Holy Spirit to comfort and teach us; it does mean, however, that we need to pray and study together. (Luke 12:12; John 14:26; 1 Cor 2:12-13)

Paul, several times in his writings, tells Timothy about the importance of sound doctrine.

Let us hear what Paul says to the young man Timothy:

*If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good **doctrine** which you have carefully followed.*
1 Tim 4:6

*Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to **doctrine**.* 1 Tim 4:13

*Take heed to yourself and to the **doctrine**. Continue in them, for doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.* 1 Tim 4:16

*Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and **doctrine**.* 1 Tim 5:17

*Let as many bondservants as are under the yoke count their masters worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and His **doctrine** may not be blasphemed.* 1 Tim 6:1

*If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the **doctrine** which accords with godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, useless wrangling of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself.* 1 Tim 6:3-6

*But you have carefully followed my **doctrine**, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance,* 2 Tim 3:10

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*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for **doctrine**, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2 Tim 3:16-17*

*For the time will come when they will not endure sound **doctrine**, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to fables. 2 Tim 4:3-4*

Paul wanted Timothy to know that, whatever one does, it must be built on sound doctrine. Knowing this exhortation from Paul to Timothy, let us begin our **journey into studying** the doctrines of the Bible. It is hoped that after each chapter, the reader will pray and commit to following these truths no matter what the cost may be.

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Chapter One

Teachings on the Bible

*"And that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. **All scripture is inspired by God** and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."*

2 Timothy 3:15-17

Introduction

The Bible is a collection of divinely inspired books, 66 in number, 39 of which are found in the Hebrew or the Old Testament section of the Bible. The Greek section, or what is also known as the New Testament, is made up of 27 books. The Bible was authored by at least 40 people and later was canonized by the church fathers around 300 AD. Today it is translated into hundreds of languages worldwide. There is another title by which the Bible is known: the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. God is a covenant-making God and, throughout history, He has entered into covenants with His children. It was the way God chose to reach out to man and make a binding agreement between Himself and mankind. The complete Bible, written over thousands of years, is a testimony of God not only creating man, but also walking with him, both physically and spiritually. The Bible is a history of God reaching out to man, giving to him an opportunity to see His redemptive story that was brought about through His Son Jesus Christ.

It is key that, as we study theology, to understand the meanings of various words relating to the doctrine being discussed. We should not just have a superficial understanding, but an in-depth knowledge to see the wisdom of these written words as He built for us a picture of what we should believe in and live by.

Description

The Word: A single distinct meaningful element of thought expressed by speech or writing. Jesus Himself announced that He was the Word (John 1:1). Ps 119:1-172 gives to us the big picture of the awesomeness of the Word. Isaiah tells us, *"The grass withers, the flowers fade, but the word of God stands forever."* (Isa 40:8). The Word (Scripture) is to be the disciple's standard by which he lives. The Word is to be the way, truth and life in all areas; we are called to be obedient to the Word and live out our lives according to it.

The Word of God: God communicated Himself and His will to humanity through the writers of the books of the Bible. The Word (Scripture) is to be the disciple's standard by which he lives. Again, we are called to be obedient to the Word and to live out our lives according to its teaching. Christ has sent the Holy Spirit to help us fulfill His high calling which He has given to us through His Word.

The Bible: It means Holy Script or Scripture, Word of God. The Bible is made up of 66 books from the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures; the word Bible comes from the Greek word *biblia*

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which means books. For the disciple it is the infallible Word of God given or breathed forth by God to man who, in turn, wrote these things down so that we could understand and come to know God better and more fully.

Scriptures: Sacred writings, the precious Word of God, God's authority, His divine and inspired Word, Revelation of God. The number of scriptural books varies in the Christian church (apocryphal books are sometimes included), but the standard number is 66. We have the Old Testament or the Hebrew Scriptures, and then we have the Greek New Testament which was written in the years following the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Covenant: Agreement, contract, treaty, promise, pledge. In the Bible, this word relates to an agreement that is made between God and man; some covenants are for a period of time, others are everlasting. Communion is a time to remember a covenant that Christ made between the disciples and Himself.

Testament: Either of the two major portions of the Holy Bible, the New Testament or the Old Testament Scriptures. Both testaments provide historical evidence concerning people and events. They recount for us the actions of God in the history of mankind.

Revelation: It is a disclosure or the revealing of something that was unknown, often a divine truth that is made known to man. Jesus was God's divine **revelation** to mankind; He **revealed** to us the full nature of God the Father. The entire 66 books of the Bible reveal to us the complete plan of God's **redemption**. It is a **revelation** that starts on the first day of creation and will end when all things, as we know them, have come to an end and God's new kingdom and new earth will be fully established. The purpose of the Bible is to reveal, to make known, to show the great depths of God's love and how He is reaching out to mankind ... to redeem us back from a life of sin and death. It reveals God's Good News story and truth about how a person can have eternal life through Jesus Christ as our personal Lord and Saviour.

God desires that men and women would have the ability to know personally who He is and why He has done what He has done throughout the ages. His Word shows us a divine purpose and goal for all that He does and has done.

Infallible or Infallibility: These two theological terms describe the fact that the Bible or the Word of God is trustworthy, accurate, reliable, perfect, correct, exempt from liability or error; that the Bible does not contradict itself or teach one truth in one part, then teach an opposite or different truth in another part; the Bible is trustworthy, balanced and truthful in all areas.

The Word of God should be seen as a complete structure, held together by truth. Each word of the Scripture is like a brick in the building, built on the firm foundation of Jesus Christ and strengthened and secured by God Almighty Himself. Many have tried to say that

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the Scriptures are full of errors and contradictions but, in reality, the Bible is firmly unified together by the Holy Spirit Who gives to the Word its power and authority to change people's lives.

Inerrancy: Another theological term used to describe the Bible or the Word of God; it means "**without error**". The original manuscripts were free from error and contradiction; the Bible is trustworthy, balanced, and truthful in all areas. Throughout history mankind has struggled with this doctrinal term. It seems so concrete, a word that has very little flexibility to it. You will either accept its definition concerning the Word of God or you will reject it. Throughout history many have tried to show that the Scriptures are full of error while others have tried to burn or destroy it. They have tried to and still are trying to remove the Scriptures from the face of the earth, but no matter what they do and how hard they try to destroy it, it remains alive and trustworthy. It is a sword that can penetrate deep within the heart of man (Eph 6:17). **As disciples we must understand that it is not the Word of God that needs to change, it's man himself who needs to change.** For Isaiah tells us, "*but the Word of God shall stand forever*" (Isa 40:8). The key question is "What are we standing on and what are we basing our lives on?" Are we depending on the science of the world that proclaims that it is without error, or are we building on the foundation of the Word of God, believing in our hearts in the inerrancy of the Word of God and that it is true truth?

For our modern age today, and even for the church, this Word becomes very difficult because if you state that you believe in the inerrancy of the Word of God you are then stating that it is without error, that it is truthful from beginning to end. It is God Almighty's divinely written word that expresses to mankind how they should live before God and how they should live towards one another. When one believes in the Word of God it does not give us the freedom to pick and choose what we desire to believe and what we do not want to believe. As disciples, we must look at the Word of God as the complete truth and revelation of Who He is and what He will do and how He will judge mankind concerning the past, present and future.

Authority: It means power, ability, influence, weight; in God there is all authority over everything in heaven and on earth (1 Cor 15:24). Christ, at the end of His earthly ministry, gave authority to the disciples (Matt 10:1; Tit 2:15). **When the disciple abides in Christ (John 15:1-11), he becomes the channel of Christ's authority and power to flow through, not because of who we are, but because of Who He is in us (Luke 9:1).** We become His ambassadors of reconciliation to a lost world (2 Cor 5:20).

These descriptive words are essential and we must take time to understand as a disciple of Christ, if we hope to have a clearer outlook of what this doctrine concerning the Bible means and why it is so important for us in our walk of faith with Jesus Christ. These words are to help us to see the bigger picture concerning how unique and special the Bible is. These words also show to us the extent of God's desire to communicate with man here on earth.

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The apostle Paul spent considerable time instructing Timothy concerning the importance of the Word of God, and how this Word of God would enable him to be a worker who did not need to be ashamed (2 Tim 2:15). There is a great need for people in the church to get back to studying the Word of God. In the last days the Antichrist will come and, because people will not have a firm foundation in the Word of God, we are told that they will be led into deception, following other gods. (Matt 24:11; 2 Pet 3:17)

Then he goes on and tells Timothy why this Word is so important and why it must be proclaimed to all who will hear. He tells Timothy, *“Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all suffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables”* (2 Tim 4:2-4). The Word was not only to be learned and obeyed, but it was given so that we could give it away to others. We also need to be faithful in communicating this Word to other people. We need to communicate and apply the Word to our lives according to how it was written by the Holy Spirit in the former days, and according to His still small voice as He now speaks to us.

Now let us look at 10 areas where the Word can help disciples in their everyday walk here on earth. If we hope to have a victorious life, we need to clarify these principles within our minds so they will be foundational within our hearts. When our hearts have become firmly rooted, then even our thinking and countenances will change; others will see Christ in us.

Principle One: THE WORD AS INSPIRATION

“All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”

2 Timothy 3:16-17

Definition:

1. **Inspired:** God-breathed; gave rise to, animated, breathed out, influenced, prompted by or emanating from a supernatural source.
2. **Inspiration:** motivation, stimulation, encouragement, or an idea. A theological term that explains the supernatural process whereby God influenced Biblical writers to record the words of Scripture, the result of which was the Word of God.

The idea of inspiration gives to us a picture of how God moved upon men and women who were inspired by the Holy Spirit to write down and record both events and teachings about God and mankind. God through the Holy Spirit illuminates or sheds light on the Scripture so that as we read it, it speaks to our hearts and touches us with truth and conviction. The Word itself brings life and, out of that life, we can be encouraged and uplifted. Through these words coming to us through inspiration, we have peace and insight into who we are and understand the nature of our

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purposes here on earth. The Word of God is there to move man from just thinking of things here on earth to thinking about things in heaven. It moves us from the physical realm to seeing and understanding a little bit more of what the spiritual realm is all about and how it can affect our daily lives.

Everything God has made here on earth has come from God speaking it into being. From the first day of creation to the present day, God speaks into men's and women's hearts. His inspired words have affected countless numbers of people through the ages. The Bible is known as The Word or The Scriptures. God has given Scripture to us by inspiring people to write down what he has impressed on their hearts and minds.

God's word speaks directly from God to the heart of man. It is living and gives life to those who obey it and live by it. God's Word is meant to bring us back into a personal relationship with Him. It is also to show us the way out of a life of sinfulness and bondage. The Word has been described by many other names, but most important to the believer is that it has been and still is **inspired by God**. One author has said, *"In the production of Scripture both God and man were active participants. God was the source of the content of Scripture, so that what it says is what God has said. But the human author also actively spoke; he was more than a recorder. Yet what he said came from God. Although actively speaking, he was carried along by the Holy Spirit."* (P. 1823 of the New American Standard Bible footnotes)

The Old and New Testaments carry the stories of thousands of people, spanning thousands of years, relating to the reader the message of God's grace and love for mankind. It is a redemptive story that includes laws, commands, promises, poetry, letters and biographies. It is also full of prophecy that was spoken to His people and fulfilled by God. Scripture points to two climactic events. One was the first coming of Christ as Messiah and Servant to a lost world followed by His crucifixion and resurrection from the dead. The second will be His coming back as King of kings to judge and then to set up His Kingdom here on earth.

The inspired Word of God is the truth and the hope by which we all can live. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, it has the power to break the binding cords and ropes of this world. It also has the power to defeat the enemy – Satan and his entire host cannot stand up against the inspired and anointed Word of God.

Throughout history many have tried to destroy the Bible and to destroy those who live by it and proclaim it; however, all they have succeeded in doing is fan the flames of revival for God. The harder people have tried to stamp out God's word, the more it has persisted and spread.

The Scriptures are still relevant for today. They bridge time, culture, tradition, and race. No matter who you are or where you live or what you struggle with, the Scripture is inspired by God for us. The Word is there to remove fear and build faith. Where we feel weak and helpless it will make us strong and bold. It will take our dead hearts that are full of sin and renew them, molding them into the likeness and the image of God. It is also a mirror that will show us the real us (James 1:23).

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Related Scriptures:

Ex 34:27-28; Josh 24:26; 1 Cor 14:37; 2 Pet 1:20-21; 3:15-18

Principle Two: SCRIPTURES AS A FOUNDATION STONE

*Whosoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like: He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the **foundation** on the **rock**. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was **founded** on the **rock**.*

Luke 6: 47-48

Definition:

1. **Foundation:** a basis upon which something stands or is supported. *Synonyms:* base, basic, bedrock, bottom, groundwork, substructure, underpinnings.
2. **Rock:** solid mineral deposit, something very firm. *Synonyms:* boulder, stone, anchor, bulwark, cornerstone, foundation, protection, support, tower of strength.

One of Jesus' parables warns about how and where we should build the "house" of our life. If we do not make sure that what we build on is a sure foundation, then when the winds and waves come, it will not stand (Matt 7:24-27). We always need to be "foundation inspectors". It is important that we ask Christ through prayer to examine our hearts. Scripture is the blueprint by which we measure and can ensure our spiritual foundation and, accordingly, structure our lives.

The most important thing that we should ever do in our spiritual lives is to take time to pray and study the Scriptures. Learn the words and their meanings. Discover the living truths of the Bible, because these will be **foundation stones** that will support any further construction. The stones or pillars must be firmly established on the rock of the Word. We should not focus on the structure until we are sure of firmness of the foundation upon which we are building.

A period of time must pass before the true strength of the foundation is known. Only after settling and after a few storms have beaten the house, can the truth be known concerning the footing upon which the house sits. It is also wise to regularly check the foundation for cracks and shifting. The larger the structure, the larger the underground foundation needs to be. That is why Paul warns Timothy not to put a novice in a leadership position (1 Tim 3:6); when tough times come, such a novice will not have the foundation necessary to withstand the trials and temptations.

A building is a place for warmth and protection, a place for fellowship and encouragement. But to be a good strong building, able to withstand challenges of the world, there are some very key parts that are critical to maintain the structure. The foundation (God's Word) is what everything else is built upon. Then come the walls to protect and keep out the elements, and the roof that helps protect and keep everything dry and in place (prayer, study, and discipleship equipping, etc.).

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Two things we as disciples need to be doing. One is checking our spiritual foundation for shifting or cracks. Second, we need to ask ourselves if we are growing and expanding in our Christian lives, and how are we adding onto what we have already built? We must also ensure that our doctrines and beliefs all line up with the Scriptures. In the light of God's Word, we must inspect and see for ourselves what we are building. This is critical for stability in our daily walk. Each day we need to pray and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal or make known to us the cracks and shifting that may be taking place in our lives (John 16:13).

Related Scriptures:

Ps 18:30; 119:89; Isa 40:8; Rom 10:17; Eph 2:20; 1 Tim 3:16-17; 2 Pet 1:20-21

Principle Three: *THE WORD AS LIGHT*

*"Your **word** is a lamp to my feet and a **light** to my path."*

Psalm 119:105

Definition:

1. **Light:** the illumination derived from a light source; dawn; daybreak; something that provides information or clarification; a state of awareness or understanding. *Synonyms:* blaze, brightness, brilliance, gleam, glow, illumination, radiance, shine, beacon, lamp, torch, insight, knowledge, understanding, guidance.

The darkness of the world cannot drive out light. **Light always drives out darkness.** The Word within our hearts makes us a lighthouse to a lost world, but the light must be empowered by the Holy Spirit before it can shine out.

God does not want us to wander around in the darkness where we can stumble and fall. Therefore, so that we can see where we are going, he gave us the Scriptures so that we can walk in their light. (Ps 119:105, 130). As we walk in the light of God's Word, we learn to avoid sin and build proper attitudes and character in preparation for eternity.

Sin acts like a shield or a hindrance that will block out the light. Confession of sin removes the scales from our eyes and enables us to see clearly. We need to pray that our spiritual eyes will be open to the Word of God so that we can receive the true understanding of what God's will for our lives may be.

Light is revealing because nothing can be hidden when the light is shining. Scripture's light is there to reveal to us the areas of our lives that are not aligned to God's will. The Word of God is a light illuminating the pathway before us and allowing us to clearly see how we can walk according to God's will for our lives.

Lighthouses are found in or beside lakes, seas, and oceans. Their purpose is to give warning of danger to sailors. They also act as direction markers. During challenging weather, they shine a light that can be seen for miles, and they are often equipped with warning sounds so that even if

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you cannot see the lighthouse, you can hear the warning and adjust accordingly. God's Word is a light giving us direction as we travel the sea of life. It speaks to us, giving us the knowledge of the direction, we should walk.

A flashlight or, as some call it, a torch, helps an individual to see his way in the dark. It can point out the dangers that lie ahead. It can help assure us of secure footing while we walk. Nevertheless, we should not use God's Word as a flashlight to shine in other people's eyes. Even though it is light, if used in the wrong way, it can cause people to stumble. The light of the Word should be used in such a way that it can help many along their journey in life.

As God's Word fills our lives with light, we become lesser lights to help others see the way to Christ. The Scripture is there for us each day to get the needed light for the journey that lies in front of us. We will not see spiritually unless we have the light of God's Word illuminating our minds and hearts and leading us to needed changes.

Related Scriptures:

Ps 119:103; 119:105; Prov 6:23; 2 Cor 4:4; 4:6

Principle Four: THE WORD AS NOURISHMENT

*"In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, constantly **nourished** on the **words** of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following."*

1 Timothy 4:6

Definition:

1. **Nourishment:** food or other substances necessary for life and growth. *Synonyms:* food, sustenance, nutrition, provisions.
2. **Food:** material, of plant or animal origin, that contains or consists of essential nutrients. *Synonyms:* bread, chow, cuisine, diet, grub, nourishment, nutrition, refreshment.
3. **Meditation:** reflection upon; contemplation. *Synonyms:* thought, thinking, pondering, consideration, reflection, deliberation, study, concentration, prayer.

The spiritual man needs food just as the physical man does, and the only way to feed the spiritual man is by studying and obeying the Word. The Scripture is spiritual nourishment, and the Holy Spirit is the one who gives understanding (John 14:26).

Devotional time is so important to the believer because this is the time when we feed our spirits. As disciples we cannot remain spiritually healthy if we do not get into the Word of God. We also need to eat a variety of different types of food. We cannot just eat the same food over and over if we are to get a balanced spiritual diet. We should set up a regular time each day for getting into God's Word and then take the time to let that Word affect our thoughts and attitudes. King David taught about this in Psalm 1, telling us that when we meditate on God's word, we will be firmly planted.

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Paul told Timothy the importance of giving the Word of God first place in his life, saying that all teachings must be measured against that standard. He warned of many false teachers proclaiming very, very false doctrines to the people of Christ. The true Word of God will nourish and build faith in Christ's disciples. Our walk must be based on sound doctrine (2 Tim 4:3); religious talk is not sufficient. When we feed on the true Word of God, it will be demonstrated by the way we live.

The Bible can be compared to a food menu. There can be various kinds of food to choose from on this menu; there can be something light for a snack or a full main course with meat and all the trimmings. People, in order to have the energy to live, must often eat and drink. It is the same when it comes to Scripture. We must work at choosing a diet that will strengthen and mature us, giving us the health to work and produce more fruit. We can make choices, but we should be praying for God's guidance and direction on what to eat and then follow a systematic plan that will help us learn about all of God's word, not just part of it. We also need to set aside quality time to meditate on God's Word each day, taking the time to reflect on what we have read.

Just as we eat at least two to three times a day and most likely have snacks between meals, we should do the same in our spiritual lives. We should be carrying around a little pocket Bible so that we can eat and snack throughout the day. We should also be spending little moments of time in prayer throughout the day. This is what will build strength and will protect us from the attacks of the enemy.

Related Scriptures:

Job 23:12; Matt 4:4; 1 Peter 2:2; James 4:8

Principle Five: THE WORD AS WISDOM

*"Let the **word** of Christ richly dwell within you, with all **wisdom**, teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God."*

Colossians 3:16

Definition:

1. **Wisdom:** experience and knowledge together with the power of applying them critically or practically. *Synonyms:* prudence, sense, reason, clear thinking, good judgment, experience, carefulness, tact, balance, stability, caution.
2. **Knowledge:** awareness or familiarity gained by experience; specific information; facts or intelligence about something. *Synonyms:* learning, facts, instruction, enlightenment, light, doctrine, principles, awareness, insight, attainment, education, know-how.
3. **Understanding:** the ability to understand or think; intelligence, the power of apprehension; the power of abstract thought. *Synonyms:* intelligence, comprehension, conclusion, perception; to apprehend, grasp, figure out, identify, follow, master, learn, discern, be instructed in, see the light.

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4. **Direction:** the act or process of directing; an order or instruction; guidance on how to reach a destination or do something. *Synonyms:* formal instruction, advice, notification, orders, assignment, plans.

The Word of God is a treasure of wisdom, knowledge and understanding (Prov 2:1-11). The Bible has answers to many of our daily questions and challenges. We must learn to see God's Word as a resource and building manual for our lives. We need to have faith and trust in the Scriptures of God.

There are four important things that the Word of God can give us: they are wisdom, knowledge, understanding and direction for our lives (Neh 8:1-12). We must see that the Word of God is a tool that helps us come into a deeper personal relationship with God. But this will mean seeing things in a different way than that which the world offers. We can have knowledge (Col 1:9) about something, but that does not mean we understand it. What we need is to have wisdom from above (James 1:5), from God who desires to instruct us in such a way that we can have true comprehension, because when we understand (Prov 9:10; Heb 11:3), there can be a greater level of faith and peace in our hearts.

Wisdom is our teacher, and the things that we learn from the Scripture are to be used to teach others. Wisdom is not for just the purpose of building up our own selves, but it is there for the community of people and for the body of Christ, the church. Our goal should be to learn all we can from God, then make it practical and real in our lives so we in turn can help and encourage others. We should not try to find peace through ignorance, but we need to seek and to knock on the doors of the Word of God, so we can receive His blessing of understanding (Matt 7:7-8).

The purpose and goal of all wisdom is to give insight and direction to the disciple of Christ. God is not trying to hide Himself from us. He desires to reveal all if we will look to Him and call upon His name. If we lack wisdom, we are to ask of Him, and He will give it to us generously (James 1:5). If we seek God's truth, we will find it, and if we knock, His Word will be opened to us (Matt 7:7). We need to see the Word of God as a door into knowledge, wisdom and understanding and, as we go through that door, it will give us clear direction for our lives.

As a parable of Jesus states, when a person finds a pearl in the field he goes and sells all, so he can become owner of that field and in turn owner of the pearl (Matt 13:46). Christ and the Scriptures are worth all our efforts. We need to see the great value in seeking wisdom from God.

Without getting into the Word of God daily we will find ourselves walking in darkness, confused and not sure of who we are and what our purpose is here on earth. We need to come to God boldly and ask Him for wisdom, knowledge and understanding. He desires in His heart to "father" us and shepherd us in our daily walk. Admitting that we do not know and understand everything is the first step to receiving greater wisdom from God. Take time to research and to study God's Word daily. Keep a diary and write down the things that God shows you from His

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Word and how He personally directs your life. By the end of the month, you will have a new perspective as to how much Christ loves you and cares for you.

Related Scripture:

Ps 111:10; 119:18; 119:98-99; Matt 22:29; Luke 24:44-45; 2 Tim 3:15-17

Principle Six: THE WORD AS TRUTH AND FREEDOM

*"... if you continue in My **word**, then you are truly disciples of Mine: and you will know the **truth** and the **truth** will make you **free**."*

John 8:31-32

Definition:

1. **Truth:** fidelity to a standard; that which is considered to be supreme reality and to have the ultimate meaning and value of existence. *Synonyms:* accuracy, actuality, exactness, fact, genuineness, precision, reality, truthfulness, devotion, faith, honesty, loyalty, principle.
2. **Freedom:** the condition of being free from restraints; the capacity to exercise choice. *Synonyms:* autonomy, deliverance, emancipation, independence, liberty, release, immunity, privilege, ability, opportunity, power, directness, openness, boldness, forwardness.

God's word has many different purposes and goals for the disciple of Christ. One is to bring grace to us (John 1:17). The second is to present to us Godly truth that will stand the test of time (Isa 40:8; John 14:6). The third is to set the captive free from sin and bondage (Rom 6:18, 22). As we move forward in our spiritual freedom, the Word of God is the source from which all these needs can be met.

The disciples of Christ often found themselves confused when it came to Christ's teaching. He would teach them the truth, but their minds and hearts did not understand. As He prayed for them and showed them how He was the Messiah, the One Who was prophesied about in the Hebrew Scriptures, they began to see the truth. Each day Christ testified more and more about the Father and His relationship to Him and how the Word of God in the Old Testament spoke of Him.

The true fruit of discipleship was that Christ could see the words of God active in their lives, or to put it another way, by their fruit (John 12:33). "True truth", when taken into your heart, will begin to change you from the inside out. Both your thinking and your actions will change, all because of the truth of the Word of God.

History has provided many testimonies of the fact that the Word of God can change people's hearts and lives. The Word of God has set some of the hardest criminals free from the burden of sin. The Word gives us true life, full of grace and mercy. It builds faith and encouragement in the hearer. It gives us strength to stand. It gives us hope for the future.

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To the disciples, the Word of truth is the foundation God gives us by which we serve and encourage others. Each day we need to pray that God will teach us His way and give us the strength and ability to walk in it. Jesus tells us that He is the way of truth, the mind of truth and the life of truth for all who will receive Him (John 14:6). We also need to pray that we will accurately handle God's truth in our lives and in the lives of others through teaching and mentoring (1 Tim 4:11; 2 Tim 2:2). We need to be careful how we minister that truth to others, because one day we will be held accountable. The truth that we teach and live by is the same truth that we also will be judged by (James 3:1). That is why we must clearly understand God's gracious redemptive work. The truth can and does set us free.

The context of John chapter 8 shows how the religious people wanted to stone a woman caught in adultery, but Jesus wanted to show that the greater sin is unbelief in Him and what the truth of God teaches. As we work with people each day, how do we find ourselves evaluating those around us? Is it based on truth, or on hearsay, or just on our own first perceptions? We often make decisions about people and things too quickly and do not investigate circumstances to find out the full truth. Too many live in this world bound by "truths" that are not real and have only shifting sand as their foundation (Matt 7:26). The Word of God is the only true truth that we can totally commit to and rely on. God's Word gives to us liberty and freedom for our hearts and lives. Truth, plus application, equals freedom in Christ.

Related Scripture:

2 Sam 22:23; Jer 23:28-29; Ps 43:3; 86:11; 119:142, 151, 160; John 1:14, 16-17; 3:21; 14:6; 2 Tim 2:15; Tit 1:1

Principle Seven: *THE WORD AS DISCIPLINE*

*"And that from childhood you have known the **sacred writings** which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. **All scripture** is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for **reproof**, for **correction**, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."*

II Timothy 3:15-17

Definition:

1. **Discipline:** training that is expected to produce a particular character or pattern of behavior, especially that which is expected to produce moral or mental improvement. *Synonyms:* training, teaching, instruction, direction, order, authority, strictness, routine, drill, self-control.
2. **Reproof:** an expression of reproof; a rebuke. *Synonyms:* reproach, admonishment, disapproval.
3. **Correction:** that which is offered or substituted for a mistake, fault, or abnormality; an improvement. *Synonyms:* righting, amendment, repair, remedy.
4. **Train:** to coach in or accustom to some mode of behavior or performance; to make proficient with specialized instruction or practice; to focus or direct. *Synonyms:* to teach, coach, tutor, school, educate, practice, prepare.

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5. **Equip:** to supply with material necessities such as tools, gear, provisions, or furnishing; to prepare in an intellectual, emotional, or spiritual way. *Synonyms:* provide, furnish, supply, issue, stock, provision, arm, endow, prepare, and qualify.

To be a true disciple of Christ one must walk in the disciplines of the Bible. The words “discipleship” and “discipline” both come from the same root, giving the idea of following the teaching of another, to be mentored in their attitudes, ways and actions. To be blunt, being a disciple of Christ takes work, because it demands reproof, correction, training and equipping (2 Tim 3:16-17). The basis for this is the Word of God and the work of the Holy Spirit in one’s life.

Accomplishment cannot be achieved without effort and work, without putting one’s life under the disciplines of the Word of God. We often like the results of discipline, but we do not like the road of discipline that we must take to get there. The first important truth we do need to accept is that these Scriptures are inspired by God for a purpose in our life as well as in the life of the church. We must accept them in faith as pure truth from God for the purpose of teaching, training, reproof and correction. By means of at least 39 authors over a period of thousands of years, the Word came to us, focusing on a Redeemer and Messiah Who, in the fullness of time, would come and walk amongst us here on earth. If we do not, right from the beginning, start with the acceptance of God’s Word as truth, then the rest of our journey will head off in the wrong direction.

Paul reminded Timothy of the importance of Scripture in the life of his mother and grandmother, and that it now needed to be treasured in his own life (2 Tim 1:5). He needed to see the value of the Scripture and be a good steward of its use in his life and the lives of those whom he would teach and serve.

We also need to see how Scripture is totally suited for the job of equipping people for the work of service. In all ways we are to use it to minister to each other, because our goal is not here only for our time here on earth. Scripture is also for completing and maturing us in Christ for when we will reign with Him in heaven.

Discipline in this case is not used to tear down or to destroy. It is for building character and for encouragement of the disciple of Christ. We should not see it as a negative, but as a positive. Discipleship should build peace, faith, hope and love in our heart, as we see where we are wrong and change to live God’s way.

Athletes put themselves under discipline for long periods of time to become better at their specific sport. The doctor disciplines himself so he can serve and help people to live. The disciple of Christ must discipline himself by the Holy Spirit’s power to be changed by God so he can help others, not only break free from sin and bondage, but to prepare them for the kingdom of heaven. This is where many disciples fail ... they start the race well, but then do not discipline themselves for the long haul and, down the road, they end up sitting on the sidelines or just giving up because they have not developed spiritual stamina and skills (Heb 12:1).

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The Word of God is a Book of Truth, but it is also a road map for understanding life. It directs us step by step into deeper truth. It is there to give us life and hope. It is there to empower us with a purpose for living and existence. We need daily to ask Christ to speak into our hearts and to show us what kind of lesson He wants us to learn today, so that we can become better equipped disciples in His Hands. We need to ask Him to open our eyes and ears, so we can discern His correction, reproof, training and equipping in our lives. When we do this, we will begin to see things in our lives and around us in a whole new way. The seemingly disjointed pieces will begin to show themselves as a beautiful picture being painted by the Master Artist Himself, Jesus Christ. We also need to know that we are going to be held responsible for how we handed this Word of God off to the next generation. This is the most important ministry that we are all commissioned to do.

Related Scripture:

Deut 11:1-2; Eph 6:4; Col 2:5; 3:16; 1 Thes 2:13; 1 Tim 4:6-8; 2 Tim 4:2

Principle Eight: THE WORD AS A SWORD

*"... **sword** of the spirit, which is the **word** of God."*
Ephesians 6:17

*"For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any **two-edged sword**, and piercing as far as the division of the soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and is able to judge the thought and intentions of the heart."*
Hebrews 4:12

Definition:

1. **Sword:** a weapon with a long blade for cutting or thrusting; military power. *Synonyms:* blade, trusty steel.
2. **Battle:** a general military engagement or an extended contest or controversy. *Synonyms:* attack, combat, encounter, engagement, fight, fray, skirmish, war, clash, conflict, crusade, disagreement, strife, struggle, combat.

A sword is only as good as its handler. The more one is trained and equipped, the more he will be able to use it for God's glory. We are told that the sword of the Spirit is the Word of God. The Bible is our sword for both defensive and offensive purposes. As disciples we need to see that we are in a spiritual battle for life and death here on earth.

The Word of God, pictured as a sword, is not used in the context of fighting physical battles but spiritual ones. It is difficult for humans to think of things in the spiritual realm. This sword is "the sword of the Spirit" which is the Word of God (Eph 6:17). We are in a battle each day. Our enemy, who is the prince of this world, is out to steal, destroy and kill. Satan and his host will show no mercy or love because they desire to take freedom and life away from us (Eph 6:11-12).

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The sword is used for both offence and defence in warfare, so we must understand its ability and what it can do in the swordsman's hand. Remember, the enemy also knows how to twist the Word for his advantage (remember the temptation of Jesus in Matt 4:1-11). The sword is also part of the complete spiritual armour which God wants us to put on each day (Eph 6:13-17).

The sword, as a physical weapon, is used both for protection and battle purposes against an enemy. It can also be used for hunting and protection against wild animals. Nevertheless, a sword is only as good as the sword handler. If one does not learn the proper use of the sword, one can be defeated very easily in a battle. We must know the Word of God if we are to be effective with it against the enemy's army. Understanding God's Word will give us the strength to use His Word against our spiritual enemies. There are too many swords rusting in the closet and on the shelf. There are too many soldiers going into battle with no understanding of how to use God's sword. This is why disciples and their churches are so weak. We must rise up, pick up the Bible as our sword, and begin to fulfill Christ's great commission, *"to go out and make disciples of all nations, ... teaching them to observe all that I commanded ..."* (Matt 28:18-20).

Either you learn how to use the sword of God's Word or the enemy will turn it around and use it on us. Each day we need to pray and look into the Word and study it, so we can see and know the enemy's tactics. We need to see his game plan, but we also must understand that God has defeated Satan through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. Each day we need to battle in the spiritual realm for our family, friends, neighbors, city, country and world. If we do nothing, the enemy will bind and destroy wherever he can. We must wake up to the fact that we are not fighting against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers in high places (Eph 6:11-12). We have little time left. As disciples we are not asked by God to think about fighting; but we are commanded to pick up the Word of God and go out and fight, not in our strength and power, but in the strength and power of the Holy Spirit. The Word of God commissions us and empowers us for battle.

Related Scripture:

Ps 119:9; 119:133; Isa 49:2; 1 John 2:14

Principle Nine: THE WORD AS HOPE

*"For whatever was written in early times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the **Scriptures** we might have **hope**."*

Romans 15:4

Definition:

1. **hope**: an eager, confident expectation that sustains a person while he or she is waiting patiently for the future fulfillment. *Synonyms*: ambition, anticipation, belief, confidence, desire, dream.

Many people live in the past or in the present, but the Word of God allows us to see into the future. For too many people in this world, things seem hopeless. They look at their lives and

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they see a dark tunnel of despair, but the Bible points us toward a better place called heaven. God is a God who keeps His promises and covenants with His people. The testimony of the Bible is a book of pure hope for the disciple of Christ.

Hope is having a confident expectation based on thousands of years of proven accuracy of the written Word. The Holy Spirit used men to write down for us a vision of God Who desires to have a personal relationship with us. No matter what we face or suffer through, we know this is not the end but, through Christ, just a stepping stone to a greater future.

Man has a great need to have hope. It is because of hope that we set our goals and vision for our lives. Hope is having confidence that we can walk life's journey and come out the other side complete and whole in Christ. When things become hopeless, this is the time that people give up and lose the will to live. In this world, with all its wars and destruction, with all the negative news about climate change and all the medical challenges that people are going through, it sometimes is hard to hold on to hope about the future.

But God the Father and the Son, Jesus Christ, paint a different future. Our goal is not to focus on what we have accomplished here on earth, but to prepare ourselves for what Christ has promised for us in heaven. As we get more of the Word of God into our hearts, our level of hope, peace and encouragement will begin to grow. God has given to mankind and to those who believe, many precious promises that provide great hope for one's life and for the future.

Hope must start from God's Word and move to your heart. When it is firmly planted, it will begin to have a positive influence on your thinking which will, in turn, change your view on life. Then, lastly, it will change your outward countenance and actions; it is like a chain reaction. We are not to look at our ability, but we are to have hope in God's ability (2 Tim 1:12). We also have to remember that we are what we think, so whatever you are focused on will determine, every day, the level of hope in your life. The Word of God is a storehouse of hope. We need to study it so it can become part of us.

Related Scripture:

Ps 119:42-43, 49; Acts 26:6; Col 1:23; Eph 1:18

Principle Ten: THE WORD AS TREASURE

*"Your **word** is a **treasure** in my heart that I might not sin against you."*

Psalm 119:11

Definition:

1. **Treasure:** any collection of objects of value; a place where valuables are stored *Synonyms:* cash, fortune, funds, riches, valuables, wealth, things, cherish, love.
2. **Possession:** control or occupancy of; self-control. *Synonyms:* control, ownership, assets, belongings, effects, estate, property, things, wealth.

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We are asked by Scripture to evaluate where our treasures are. Many have built up great treasure on earth, not realizing that it will all pass away. Others are just focused on themselves as the ultimate treasure. But the Word of God tells us that the most precious treasure is the acquisition of the Word of God in one's heart. It is an eternal and everlasting treasure, a gift from God that can never be destroyed.

If we are in the last days, it is time for the church to begin to evaluate and reflect on where our treasure chest is being built (Matt 6:21). Christ warns and teaches us to invest in heaven, and the Word of God shows us where we should be investing our time and money. The greatest return will not be here on earth but will come in heaven (Matt 6:19-21). Could it be that sometimes our eyes have been blinded to the real truth about God and His Word?

We also need to see that, because we may not see God's Word as a treasure, we then do not spend enough time in it, which in turn allows sin to begin to creep back in and take over. Only the Word of God can remove the areas of darkness in our lives. It is the Word of God that sheds light on who we are (John 1:1-5). We also need to be careful that we are not just hearers of the Word, but that we are doers also (James 1:22). It is not good enough to think about doing good things, but we need to get up and move out and start investing our lives in God, His Word, and His people (Matt 28:19-20).

There is a concern that we, as disciples, have invested more into a religion than into Christ and His Word. There will be a day of reckoning, a day when God will look into the account of our lives (1 Pet 4:5-6). What did we do with that which God has given us? Did we invest the fruit of His Spirit? Did we invest the gift and talents that He has given us for the kingdom? Did we invest heavily into the treasure of His Word? We will not be able to blame others. It is up to each one of us what we do with the treasure that God has given us (Col 2:1-3).

What am I building and where are my treasures being stored? Jesus shows us that our treasure can be stored up in heaven when we invest and build for Him and His ministries (Matt 6:19-20). Christ treasures us and values us very much, so we in turn should value and treasure His Word. The Word of God is a treasure for which we are to be good stewards here on earth. Prayer is like going to heaven and asking the Lord what we should do with what He has given to us through His Word.

Related Scripture:

Job 23:12; Prov 2:1; 7:1; Matt 6:19-21; 19:21; Luke 12:34; Col 2:3; 1 Tim 6:19; 2 Tim 1:14

Conclusion

*"Your **Word** is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."*

Ps 119:105

*"The grass withers, the flowers fade, but the **Word** of God stands forever."*

Isaiah 40:8

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*“In the beginning was the **Word**, and the **Word** was with God, and the **Word** was God. It was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men, and the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.”*

John 1:1-5

*So Jesus was saying to those Jews, who had believed Him, if you continue in **My word**, then you are truly disciples of mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.*

John 8:32

Psalm 119 tells us what the Word of God can do for the believer. It relates to us that Scripture can be a light unto our feet and a light for our path. The disciple of Christ is on a journey here on earth, a journey that is full of shadows and darkness; in order to be able to walk this journey without stumbling, we need the Word of God as our Divine light. But then the Gospel of John (1:1-5) explains to us really Who this Word is. It is not just a bunch of words on a page assembled together as a book, but we are told that this Word is the living Word of God, a title showing us how trustworthy and truthful the Bible is. Jesus Christ as the Word becomes a light for our hearts to follow ... a light which will guide us on our journey here on earth. Finally, Jesus tells the disciples that, if they are truly His and following after His Word, the truth of the Word of God will set them free. There is nothing with which Satan binds us from which Christ and His Word cannot deliver us. If we call upon His name and believe in our hearts and confess with our mouths (Rom 10:9-10), we will be set free (John 8:33)!

In each of these points there is something we need to actively do to be involved in God's Word. Discipleship ministry is not to make people comfortable in a building, but it is to get us out into the highways and byways where the bountiful harvest is (Matt 9:35-38). The Word of God is the way and the truth; it gives us the life that we are to live (John 14:6).

We must choose to get the sword out of its sheath and then use it. We need to discipline ourselves in the use of the sword. We cannot expect that others are going to do all the fighting for us. We need to go out as light and as salt into a lost world (Matt 5:13-16). We are commanded to go out and make disciples (Matt 28:19-20), and this can only be done through equipping others with the Word of God (2 Tim 3:17). The Word is our strength and source of life.

The words “power” and “authority” are often linked to what the Holy Spirit does here on earth. The Holy Spirit is the power of the Godhead, moving to and fro throughout the earth (2 Chr 16:9). He was sent by the Father in heaven to empower disciples (Acts 1:8; 2:1-3) so that they would be able to overcome the trials and the snares of Satan here on the earth. The Word of God shows us that the triune God, Who is Creator of heaven and earth, has all authority over everything throughout this universe. But because God moved with His authority and power upon men and women to write down His words, people now have a record before them, showing where they came from, and what God's ultimate purpose for them is to be. If we open up our hearts to

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the Word of God, we will quickly see the authority and power that these words have, because they have been anointed by God as His personal testimony to all creation.

Today, *“Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the **implanted word**, which is able to save your souls. But be doers of the **word**, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.”* (James 1:21-22). James wants us to know that the Word of God is powerful, and that it brings about cleansing to the hearer; it also has the ability to overcome all wickedness if we just **believe it and apply it** to our lives. This Word has been implanted within our hearts and it has the truth, that, if heeded, can save our souls. But so often what happens is that people just hear the Word of God and do not live it. They fall into a delusion thinking that they truly are Christians but, in reality, they are just hearers and not doers. Or to put it in another way, there are a lot of people in churches today who are more spectators than active participators. What God is interested in, is a heart that is totally given over to Him, to His will and to His Word.

Discipleship Application

It is important for the disciples of Christ to take the doctrines of the Bible seriously and to commit to them and apply them to their personal lives. As we stated above, James exhorts us not just to be hearers of the Word but doers also. Then we see from the book of Deuteronomy, *“Therefore you shall lay up these **words** of mine in your heart and in your soul, and bind them as a sign on your hands and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall teach them to your children speaking of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.”* (Deut 11:18). The key point we are to get from the Scripture is that wherever we go, wherever we stay, and whoever we are with, we should be sharing the Word of God with them. But before we can share the Word with them, we must make sure that this Word has been deeply rooted in our own hearts (Col 2:7), where it becomes alive. It is key that we allow the Holy Spirit to come in and fill our hearts with truth.

The only way that we are going to be able to overcome the sins of this world is by studying the Word of God and ensuring that the Word of God is deeply implanted in our hearts. The Word of God is what truly sets the captive free (John 8:31-32). The Word of God shows us the way to eternal life, and it is the Word of God that testifies about Jesus Christ, Who shed His blood, died on the cross and Who exemplified to all, life over death. Therefore, the Psalmist can boldly state, *“Your Word have I hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against you.”* Ps 119:11

Can we personally state that we believe that **the Holy Bible is the inspired Word of God and is the final authority in all matters of Christian life and doctrine?**

Commitment and Prayer

Dear God,

I ask you today to help us to believe and to have faith in your complete Bible, trusting that it truly will be a light in my heart and a light for the pathway in which you have called me to walk. I

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pray that your Word will come alive as I read it and that it will transform my heart into a deeper faith and walk with you; that I will experience its full love, mercy and grace as I go through each day with you. I pray that your Scriptures will truly become the foundation stone by which I live my life, and that you would help me to take key Scriptures and memorize them so that they may be hidden in my heart and that, this in turn, will give me the strength to overcome the bondage of sin in which Satan so desires to entangle me. I believe that your Word empowers a disciple to be able to live a life that will both bear fruit and bring honour for your glory.

A prayer from my heart to your heart Oh Lord,

Signature and Date.

Testimony

"A sense of the power and wisdom of God, and of our inability to comprehend His greatness should inspire us with humility, and we should open His **Word**, as we would enter His Presence, with holy awe. When we come to the **Bible**, reason must acknowledge an authority superior to itself, and heart and intellect must bow to the great 'I Am'."

- **Frances Bergstresser** (a handwritten thought in the back of her Bible. She went home to be with the Lord Jesus at the age of 102, Feb. 12, 2016)

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Chapter Two

Teachings on God

God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM"; and He said, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, I AM has sent me to you." God, furthermore, said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is My name forever, and this is My memorial-name to all generations."

Exodus 3:14-15

Introduction

The key to a strong discipleship walk is for us to personally get to know Who God is. Throughout the history of man, God has revealed His character and nature to man through His different names which, taken together, show us the overall bigger picture of Who God is. The compound names of Jehovah portray some aspect of His character as meeting human need. The Hebrew Bible gives to us the descriptive titles of how we are to know and understand God. Throughout this chapter we will see God as our Provider, Healer, Banner, Sacrifice, Peace, Lord, Righteousness, Shepherd and ever-present Help.

Description

The first list of names here is important to define because they are used extensively throughout the Bible as names that identify when God speaks to us, and how we should speak to and hear from Him.

The first name is

El: translated "**God**"; mighty; strong, prominent, used about 250 times.

Elohim: translated "**God**"; the plural form of EL, indicating the trinity; idea of greatness and glory, creative, governing power, omnipotence and sovereignty; used some 2570 times in Scripture; indicates plurality in unity; relates to His work.

The second name:

Yahweh: translated "**LORD**" or "**GOD**"; to be, being, to live, life, self-existent; used some 6823 times in the Old Testament; God of revelation.

I Am: "The name "**I AM**", which is Yahweh (Jehovah), is the first-person form of the Hebrew verb "to be." The name "**I AM**" is often expanded to mean "**I AM (who I am).**" In context, the name is better understood as an affirmation by God of His eternal presence with each generation of His people: God is One who is always present". (page 510, of The Revell Bible Dictionary, 1990)

The third name:

Adonai: translated as "**Lord**", master, sir, lord, owner; used some 350 times; confirms the idea of the trinity. A circle best represents God because there is no beginning and no end, and He is all-inclusive. We are in the middle of that circle and as long as we stay there and stay in His will, we

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will see the amazing fullness of Who God is and what He can do. The names of God show us His character and nature. They also show how God comes to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, three aspects and functions but one God.

The names above help us to get an overall view of Who God is. The Scripture verse from Exodus chapter 3, where God proclaims Himself as the great “**I Am**”, opens the door for the believer to add any descriptive word after the title. Example: “**I am**” your healer; I am your deliver; I am your mediator; I am your Saviour; I am your all in all.

Trinity of God

Another description of God which we often use is the word trinity, meaning three in one. The disciple of Christ does not worship three different gods, but we worship one God who **functions** in three different aspects; as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. As Creator, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit work together in unity and harmony.

The word “trinity” itself is a theological word that is not used in the Bible, but it was a word that our early church fathers used to help the early disciples understand that we worship one God. Often many of the Jews and religious people during, and after, the time of Christ tried to say that we worship three gods. The Hebrew Scriptures clearly proclaim that there is only one God Who is in heaven and Who has created all things and rules over all things.

There are several places in Scripture that show the three titles of Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Matt 28:19-20). Again, we see them functioning in three different ways, revealing to us how the Godhead works in ministering to us as people here on the earth. There is a complete oneness of the Godhead that we must understand and, because of this, we see from the beginning to the end of the Bible a unique God who also desires to be one with us in our hearts.

Sometimes a picture can help us better understand the workings of the Godhead. John 15:1-11 helps picture for us how the three work and minister together and how we ourselves can be **grafted** into this oneness with God Himself. The Scripture states that the “vine dresser” is the Father who does the pruning and nurturing of the vine. Then we are told that the “vine” is Jesus Christ and that He is rooted back in history to Jesse (Is 11:1; Acts 13:22-23; Rom 15:12). Next, we can see, indirectly, that the life that comes up through the vine from the roots is the Holy Spirit who gives life and food to the entire plant. Then the picture moves on, showing that we who were once wild branches can be engrafted into this wonderful vine and that, as we are grafted, we can then bear fruit that will bring glory to our heavenly Father.

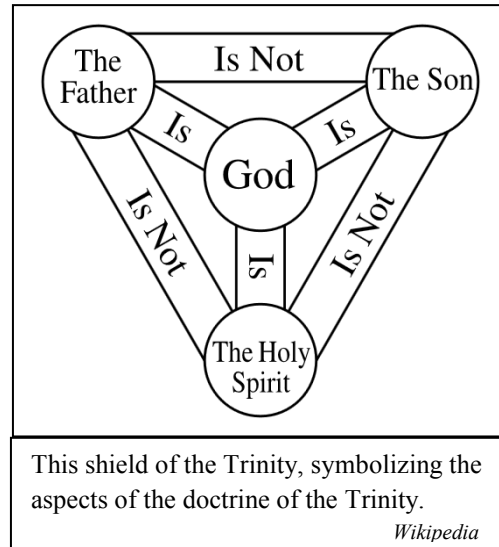
There are other Scriptures that help us to see this relationship of oneness that we define as the trinity in theology. The first one is Matthew 3:16-17, “*When he had been baptized, **Jesus** came up immediately from the water; and behold the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the **Spirit of God** descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven saying, this is My beloved **Son**, in whom I am well pleased.*” The second one is Matthew 28:19, “*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the **Father***

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and of the **Son** and of the **Holy Spirit**,” and the third one is 1 John 5:7, “For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the **Father**, the **Word**, and the **Holy Spirit**; and these three are one.”

The diagram below helps picture for us the three function and ministry outreach to mankind but remain complete and whole as one God.

Trinity Diagram:



ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

What follows are some of the attributes of God which take us into the very heart of Who God is and how He desires to minister to His people. Not only do these words give us a clear understanding of Who God is, but they help us to see the bigger picture of how He relates to us personally. Because of our finite minds as created beings some of these attributes will be hard to completely understand or to fathom the totality of what they mean. What we will do here is basically sum up these words in more of a definition form and will not take time now to show how they apply to God and to us.

Holy: He is Sacred, consecrated, sanctified; the idea of holiness is to be clean, without sin; Jesus was sinless and pure; that is why He could be our High Priest; the disciple is also to live a holy life, not through human ability or strength, but by taking on Christ's righteousness; we are to be separate from the sin and evil of this world; God is our Holy One (Ps 99:9; Lev 11:44; 19:2; 20:26; 1 Pet 1:16).

Immutable: He is unchangeable, constant, permanent, fixed; the unchangeableness of God; God's nature, character and promises never change; they are fixed for all eternity (Gen 6:6; Hos 11:8). For the disciple this is a key foundation stone that can help us to have a bold faith in the God we serve. Because He never changes, His words are like an anchor that allows us to stand firm for Him.

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Infinite: He is boundless, endless, measureless, perfect, limitless; has no beginning or end; a term to express who God is; the One Who was, and is, and will be for all time: past, present and future. He is outside of the bounds of time and is immeasurable in every respect of Who He is (Ps 147:5). The challenge disciples have here on earth is that we are bound by time and seasons, but the freedom we have comes in knowing that our times are in His hands and that He is not bound by earthly time but He Himself, as the infinite God, will one day take us to heaven where time will be no more.

Omnipotence: He is God of all power, supremacy, control, influence, utmost, above all. He is the God of gods, the Creator and Ruler of the entire universe (Rev 19:6). When Christ was preparing to leave this earth, He told the disciples that He would give them power because they would find ourselves involved in spiritual warfare.

Omnipresence: He is God, being everywhere present at all places and at all times. The uniqueness of God is that He is always able through the Holy Spirit to be in every place. That's why as, as disciples, we can call upon His name and He hears us because He is ever present with us when we have invited Jesus Christ into our hearts. God places Himself within us because we are His temple here on earth.

Omniscience: He is God, one Who is all-knowing, totally informed. He is not caught unawares by our struggles or whatever is facing us. He knows the beginning from the end. He knew us before we were even born. He even knows the number of hairs on our heads. That is why it is important for disciples to get in step with God's will, not their own. God knows exactly what we need, both in this present day and in the days to come.

Righteous: He is virtuous, moral, just, upright and honest, both as God and in His relationship with man. God's completely and wholly righteous. There is no possibility of evil or wickedness in His being. He is totally holy and pure. We as disciples are told that our own righteousness is as filthy rags; that is why we need to rely totally on the righteousness of Christ. When we do this, God sees us as acceptable and worthy to enter into His presence. (Ex 9:27; Ezra 9:15).

Sovereign: He is a supreme ruler, a monarch over a kingdom. He possesses royal power and authority, having an army to defend his royal position throughout His kingdom. For disciples, Christ is our sovereign King and Lord, the One to Whom we are committed to serve all our lives. We are also part of His sovereign army. (Gen 15:2; 2 Sam 7:18; Ps 68:20; Jer 44:26)

Transcendence: He has the quality or state of being able to go outside of, or beyond, a certain normal or physical boundary. God is inside, outside and above the realm of this world. While He has created the world, He also stands outside the sphere of this world (Ps 97:9; 99:2; Eph 1:21, 4:6).

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It is important that the disciple of Christ takes time to understand the larger picture portrayed by these words because they help to describe all aspects of the triune God. They picture for us Who the Father God is, Who the Son of God is, and how the Holy Spirit represents God today in our lives.

Names of God

There are nine other descriptions that the Bible gives to us which I believe will help give us a broader picture of Who the God is we serve. These titles concerning God also provide us with a window through which we see how He desires to reach out and minister to us here on earth and how He prepares us for an eternal life in His Kingdom.

Principle One: **THE LORD WILL PROVIDE**

*“Abraham called the name of that place **The LORD Will Provide** (Jehovah Jireh), as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it will be **provided (JEHOVAH-JIREH).**” Genesis 22:14*

Definition:

1. **Provider:** is, one who furnishes, supplies or gives to another as a means of subsistence. *Synonyms:* benefactor, donor, giver, source, supplier, breadwinner, earner, mainstay, supporter, and wage earner.

The Old Testament idea of God's provision is that He is there and helps us through our times of testings and trials. He provides ability to prove who we are in God and enables us to fulfill His call on our lives by supplying our needs for the journey we walk in Him.

We have the account of Abraham offering up his only son Isaac, the long-awaited gift from God to Sarah and Abraham. Now God was asking Abraham to sacrifice him. Abraham knew that the fulfillment of the covenant of God was going to come through this son, so his faith and obedience were going to be challenged. God wanted to take Abraham deeper in his faith and wanted to see if Abraham would be fully obedient to Him. God did not want Isaac to be sacrificed, but He did want Abraham and his son to know that He was **JEHOVAH-JIREH**, the **All-providing One**.

In the New Testament God revealed Himself in a physical and more personal way to the disciples. God provided Jesus as our salvation, a way of escape from the bondage of sin. As our God, He desires to meet our spiritual and physical needs. The disciple must have faith to believe that God does and will provide all his needs. It is easy for people to get needs confused with wants.

Being our provider does not just mean giving us money, but providing for all the needs that we struggle with: physical, spiritual, emotional and material. As a child trusts in the parents to meet his or her needs, we can look to our heavenly Father to provide for our personal needs. Do we look to our resources, our ability, or to our strength, or do we put our trust in God Who

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provides? God desires to provide for us what we need, but He usually gives more than we need so that we can bless others with His provision.

Today God desires to be our Provider, to help us each day physically and spiritually, but there are some important principles that must be in place before He opens the door of provision. First, we must be obedient like a child to the Father, and secondly, we must have faith that He is able to provide for us. The Bible is full of examples of God providing and making a way of escape, but it starts by people entering into a personal relationship with Him. We need to have a salvation experience of inviting Christ into our lives; we must trust His sacrifice and shed blood for payment of our sins (Rom 10:9-10). God's resources are unlimited but to have them we must rely upon Him. **Jehovah-Jireh** has provided everything we need pertaining to life and godliness; however, these provisions are personally useless without faith and obedience.

Related Scriptures:

Gen 22:8; I Kin 17:4, 9; Ps 78:20; 1 Cor 10:13; Gal 3:5; Phil 4:19; 1 Thes 5:24; 1 Tim 6:17; 1 Pet 4:11; Heb 11:40

Principle Two: **THE LORD WHO HEALS**

*"... I will put none of the diseases on you which I have put on the Egyptians; for I, the **LORD**, am your **healer (Jehovah-Raphe)**".*

Exodus 15:26

Definition:

1. **Heal**: to restore to health, cure, to set right, repair. *Synonyms*: make well, mend, regenerate, restore, treat, alleviate, compose, harmonize, reconcile, settle, soothe.

The world and man are in great need of a healer. We are in the last days of a disease that will lead to death and destruction. Without looking to God for our complete healing there is no hope. This section will look at two areas of healing, the physical and the spiritual. Because of sin we are sick and diseased inside, but God proclaims to the people that He is **JEHOVAH-RAPHE, the LORD who heals**.

The people of God had gone through a great time of deliverance from the 400 years of slavery. God had just divided the waters, so the people could cross over on dry land. They had just seen their enemies destroyed. But after a time of rejoicing it was not long before they were back to complaining and discontentment. They had water, but it was bitter to the taste. They turned on the servant of the LORD and wanted him to do something about it. We are told that it was a test of the people's faith in the LORD and again they failed the test. But Moses rose up and called on the LORD and the LORD revealed to the people another picture of Who He is. He was going to show them that, not only was He a Deliverer, but also a Healer.

It is important at this point to see God as healer in the bigger picture. Most people look to God as healer of their physical bodies, but He is much more than that. He wants to be healer of

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the total man, in body, soul and spirit. It is our spirit that will live for eternity, not our bodies, which will return to dust. It is key to seek out God's healing in all areas of our life.

Sin is like a sickness that entered humanity at the time of Adam and Eve and the only way to be delivered from that illness that will lead to death, is to turn to Christ. We are told that it was by His stripes that He took on His back the punishment for us so that we could have healing for our body, soul and spirit (Is 53:5; 1 Pet 2:24).

The medications that we swallow to bring healing to our bodies and our minds are not the total answer. Each year people spend billions of dollars to get some type of relief from pain and sickness. Much sickness comes from our minds and the struggle we face each day through stress and anxiety. What is needed is to call on the Great Physician who knows how to heal us from the inside out.

God is there to take the bittersweet, that which is broken, and restore it. He is able to keep sin from corrupting and sorrow from crushing us. Jesus becomes and is our river of life and our tree of life. The LORD desires to heal our physical man, but His greatest goal is to heal our spiritual man. We can call upon Him in prayer to touch our body, mind and spirit. But we must come to Him in faith and obedience, believing that He is able. The key to all healing is to know what God's will for what I am now facing, whether it is a challenge in my body, soul or spirit. Healing flows from a personal relationship with Him. It is because we are grafted into His side as a branch that we can call upon His name in these areas. **Jehovah-Raphe** is the one who can take the bitter things of life and make them sweet; however, the sweetness may not be here on this earth.

Related Scriptures:

Deut 32:39; 2 Chr 7:14; Ps 41:4; 147:3; Jer 3:22; 17:14; Mal 4:2; Matt 4:23; John 12:40; 1 Pet 2:24

Principle Three: **THE LORD IS MY BANNER**

*"Moses built an altar and named it, **The LORD My Banner (Jehovah-Nissi)**".*

Exodus 17:15

Definition:

1. **Banner:** a strip of cloth, either hung overhead or carried between poles, bearing a message or slogan; the flag of a nation, state, army or sovereign. *Synonyms:* banderol, burgee, colours, ensign, fanon, flag, pennant, pennon, standard, streamer.
2. **Flag:** a piece of cloth, which may have various colors and designs, used as a symbol, standard, signal, and especially as a national emblem. *Synonyms:* banderol, banner, colours, ensign, pennant, standard, streamer.

As disciples, we should be recognized by the banner or flag of the One to Whom we belong. In times of war, the flag represented the army for which you were fighting. We are to be under God's banner just as Joshua and the Israelites fought under the upraised staff of God when

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defeating Amalek; they learned they could trust God's leading in battle. So, Moses spoke of Jehovah as the **LORD is my banner, JEHOVAH-NISSI**.

The banner or standard is the rallying point around which military troops traditionally gather. The flag of each country of the world represents who they are and for what they stand. Even ships on the high seas demonstrate their identity by showing a variety of flags and colours that other ships can see. Just as we are to have a flag or banner to show who we are fighting for in times of war, we also need to understand that God's people need to rally around, and under, His banner.

The "banner" was very important in the time of Moses; in his case, Moses carried the staff (representing God's power) God had used in the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt. In the times of Moses, the banner was very important, and in this case, Moses used the staff that God had used in their deliverance from Egypt to represent His power. When Moses could no longer hold up the staff in the battle against the Amalekites, Aaron and Hur assisted him (Ex 17:12). Battles and warfare are a team effort. As a church, we are to rally around Christ Who is our Head. He will lead us into the battles that He knows we are to fight. We are not alone but we are part of a large army.

There were three ways that a banner was used among the people of Israel. One was as a standard of victory. When the battle was over it would be lifted over the area of battle and the soldiers would know that the battle was over and that they had won. The second use was as a standard of deliverance from punishment because the people had sinned against God. Moses fashioned a standard for the people to look upon, so they would live. The third use was as a standard of love and forgiveness (Song 2:4). God was going to bring out of the root of Jesse a standard and banner of His salvation and victory over sin (Isa 11:10-12).

God says that He, in all His glory, character and power, is our banner. We serve a living God Who is in the world today and Whose flag we carry and wave high. The flag does not represent our ability and strength but, rather, the power and authority under which the soldier serves. In the New Testament Christ becomes the banner or standard that was lifted on our behalf. He was lifted up and hung on a cruel tree (Luke 23:33). Jesus told the people that just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so the Son of man would be lifted up (John 3:14). Christ also claimed that if He was lifted up from the earth, He would draw all men unto himself (John 12:32).

As disciples, we should be people who demonstrate a banner that reflects and expresses Who we are serving. We are to carry Christ's banner of love, mercy, forgiveness and hope. That is why Christ told the disciples that they would be known by their fruit (John 12:33). Christ has been lifted up for us and we must rally around Him in unity and harmony. We must humble ourselves and come under His authority as our commander and chief. We need to show and proclaim that **Jehovah-Nissi** is our banner of redemption, power and victory; however, we must rally around that banner, Jesus Christ, with faith and rejoicing.

Related Scriptures:

Num 21:8-9; Ps 60:4; Song 2:4; Isa 5:26; 11:10-12; Jer 4:6; John 3:14; 8:28; 12:32

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Principle Four: *THE LORD SANCTIFIES*

*"You shall consecrate yourselves therefore and be holy, for I am the LORD your God. You shall keep My statutes and practice them; I am the **LORD who sanctifies (Jehovah-Mekaddesh) you**".*

Leviticus 20:7-8

Definition:

1. **Sanctify:** to receive for sacred use; consecrate; to make holy; purify. *Synonyms:* consecrate, bless, hallow, make sacred, dedicate to God, purify, cleanse, free from sin, absolve, unburden.

God, as our Sanctifier, is the One Who sets us apart. He calls us out of slavery, bondage and death, to join with Him in a place of eternal life. We are born into trespasses and sin and we need to move from the place of eternal destruction into the place of becoming a new creation in Christ (2 Cor 5:17). As disciples, we must undergo the process of change. **JEHOVAH-MEKADDESH** is here to bring us into a place of sanctification, to be set apart as servants for His glory and honour. God is our sanctifier, our Holy One, and we cannot come into the presence of God without ourselves coming under His cleansing power in our lives. We need to be washed and cleansed by the blood of the Lamb (1 Cor 6:11). Change starts first with our hearts and then moves into our attitudes which, in turn, changes both our outward countenance and our actions. We need to undergo the refiner's fire, a purifying of the gold, a sifting of the wheat from the chaff. This takes coming before God with an open heart and laying our total will and life at His cross. We must humble ourselves and pray and, as we do, the Holy Spirit begins to wash through our lives, cleansing us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:7-9) and transforming us into new creations (2 Cor 5:17).

God calls us to Himself, but we must make a move toward Him. When Moses came to the burning bush, God spoke to him and told him to remove his sandals because where he was now standing was Holy Ground (Ex 3:5). In later times the priest could not enter the Holy of Holies without a proper time of purification and then only once a year. But now we are able to enter the Holy of Holies because of what Christ has done for us. His shed blood made it possible for us to enter in. At the moment of His death the veil was rent in two from the top to the bottom, giving us direct access to God through Christ (Luke 23:45).

God expects three things from us. One is obedience, the second is service and the third is for us to witness of Him in our words and actions. We were clothed in sin and, as Paul explains to the Colossian church, we must take off the old nature and put on Christ (Col 3:10). Also, as Paul tells Timothy, we need to become vessels of honour for God's glory (2 Tim 2:20-21).

Just as the Levitical priest had to be set apart and sanctified for the work of the ministry, men and women are called to be set aside as disciples for the work of service. We are to be people who come before God in worship and fellowship. Each disciple is an important part of the body of Christ, His bride - the Church. The idea and concept of the word "church" means to be

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“called out ones”. As disciples we are called to be sanctified and separated from the things of this world. There needs to be a place and time when change occurs. We cannot go on as we were, but the old is put away and we now become new in Christ (2 Cor 5:17). It is by our fruit that others will be able to tell that we are no longer living for ourselves, but for our LORD Jesus Christ (Matt 7:16; John 15:8). **Jehovah-Mekaddesh** is the One Who declares us holy, sets us apart, and expects us to be what He has declared us to be.

Here are two important questions. What are some of the things that have changed in my life since I asked Christ to be my LORD and Saviour? Do I clearly understand my position in Christ as a sanctified believer and all which that means?

Related Scriptures:

Ex 31:13; Eze 37:28; John 17:17-19; 1 Cor 1:2; 6:11; 2 Tim 2:21; Heb 2:11; 1 Pet 1:2

Principle Five: **THE LORD IS PEACE**

*“When Gideon saw that he was the angel of the LORD, he said, “Alas, O Lord GOD! For now, I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face.” The LORD said to him, “Peace to you, do not fear; you shall not die.” Then Gideon built an altar there to the LORD and named it **The LORD is PEACE (JEHOVAH-SHALOM)**”.*

Judges 6:22-24

Definition:

1. **Peace**: an agreement or treaty to end hostilities; freedom from quarrels and disagreement; harmony. *Synonyms*: accord, agreement, amity, concord, harmony, armistice, conciliation, treaty, truce, calm, composure, contentment, relaxation, quiet, silence, stillness.

The world is seeking for peace. People are sometimes willing to give up anything, including their freedom, with the hope of getting a few moments of peace within their hearts and lives. The world offers all kinds of solutions for gaining peace. The disciple is to be an ambassador of God’s peace to a lost world. We should reflect, to an anxious and burdened world that, in the midst of any storms, God can bring peace to any heart that calls upon His name. He is **JEHOVAH-SHALOM, “The LORD is Peace”**. The people of Israel found themselves under attack and bondage. Over and over again they forsook walking with God. One generation would be forgiven, and the next generation would backslide and fall away from the worship of God and obedience to His Word. They could have had peace in their country if they would have submitted their lives to the LORD. They found themselves not having faith but being full of fear. They could not trust that God would look after them and protect them, nor did they trust in the covenants of God. The people had lost their purity, peace, prosperity, and liberty. They were no longer setting themselves apart from the things and people of the world but were joining in all the pagan activities both in life and in worship.

This time God was going to raise up a farmer named Gideon to bring deliverance to the people of God. But the problem was that Gideon didn’t have any faith either. He, too, was full of fear. Even when God sent His Holy angel, Gideon struggled with what the LORD wanted him to do

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(Judg 6:11-15). The angel of the LORD needed to assure Gideon that He would give him peace and that he would not die.

True peace brings harmony and fulfillment to our lives and to the body of Christ, His Church. Only by having a personal relationship with Christ Jesus Himself can true, genuine peace be attained (Col 3:15). God is the peace that passes all understanding. Science will never be able to understand or unlock the formula to peace because only God can give it. The Good News of the Gospel is that Christ, through His death on the cross, paid the price for our peace with God. The only thing we must do is accept that payment. Christ promised the disciples that if they would just have faith in Him, He would bring them peace (Matt 10:34), a peace that would pass all understanding (Phil 4:7).

We are to greet each other with the peace and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. He stands up for us in the midst of any storm and speaks peace into the most challenging situations we will ever face (Luke 8:24). We must stay centered and focused on Christ Jesus our Lord.

The mind is the place where the biggest war of life rages. The many storms of life start in the mind. Many sicknesses and anxieties have their roots in the mind. God can and will bring peace if we will submit ourselves totally to His will and guidance. He can bring that peace that will go beyond all understanding. The key to having peace in one's mind is to understand the importance of the helmet of salvation. Paul told the Ephesian church that they were in a spiritual battle and that they should put on the full armour of God (Eph 6:10-20). The helmet is there to protect our mind from the attacks of the enemy. The world can only offer a false sense of peace that seems to work for a season, but over the long haul, is very empty. For those who have read the book of Revelation, the Antichrist is going to offer the world a false peace, but Christ on the other hand will restore true Peace. We can always, at any time, have peace from **our Jehovah-Shalom**.

Related Scriptures:

Lev 26: 6; Num 6:26; Ps 29:11; Isa 26:12; 66:12; Luke 2:14; John 14:27; Acts 10:36; Rom 5:1; 8:6; 15:33; Eph 2:17; Phil 4:7; Col 3:15

Principle Six: **THE LORD OF HOSTS**

“For thus says the LORD of hosts, Once more in a little while, I am going to shake the heavens and the earth, the sea also and the dry land. I will shake all the nations; and they will come with the wealth of all nations, and I will fill this house with glory, says the LORD of hosts. The silver is Mine and the gold is Mine, declares the LORD of hosts (Jehovah-Sabaoth)”.
Haggai 2:6-8

Definition:

1. **LORD:** a ruler or master, a nobleman, a head of a household, a man of renowned power.
Synonyms: commander, governor, leader, master, overlord, ruler, sovereign, earl, noble.

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2. **Host:** a large number of people or things, an army. *Synonyms:* multitude, abundance, throng, army, gathering.

We not only see God as Saviour, but we must also relate to Him as our Lord. He is the **LORD of HOSTS (Jehovah-Sabbaoth)** over all created things, the heavens, the world and all that exist on it and in it; His is also over all that is in the spirit realm, above and below. As disciples we turn over all ownership of who we are. We, and all we possess, belongs to God because He is the **LORD of HOST** in all aspects and in all areas.

The people of Israel had fallen away from walking with the LORD and, because of their wicked ways, the temple had been destroyed. The people were now being allowed to go back to Jerusalem and about 50,000 people headed back to their homeland. Haggai reminded the people that what was happening to them (small harvests, insufficient food and clothing) was because they were disobedient to Jehovah God. People had forgotten what the LORD had done for them and, because of this, they ended up turning and going in the wrong direction. The people needed to remember that God was with them and that He was LORD of all. He IS the LORD of all power and might, of all things, material and spiritual, heavenly and earthly; the sole Ruler of the world and therefore of them, too.

The lesson here is that we as disciples need to understand that the **LORD Sabbaoth** has the power over us all. In becoming a disciple, one gives over ownership and control to the One who has bought and paid for our lives. Many people look to Christ the Saviour as “fire insurance”, but they continue controlling and making all the decisions for their lives. But we are to allow the **LORD of Hosts (Jehovah Sabbaoth)** to exercise His power in our lives as we let Him control all areas of our daily experience. When God becomes our LORD, then we become stewards of His world and His provisions, taking up the ministry of stewardship. God trusts us to use all that He gives us to bring glory to His Name. Discipleship means that we follow in the footsteps of the One we have made Lord, trusting in His power over our country, home, circumstances, life, and ministry. Jesus is to be our personal Lord. He is the one who is LORD of the armies of heaven and earth; the One Who rules over everything and the Lord of all power, Who enables us to be all He made us to be. It is He who leads us into battle against sin and the power of evil.

How big is the God we serve? Since He controls all that exists, cannot He also take care of us? We no longer live but it is Christ who now lives in us (Gal 2:20). The pressure of trying to be His servants by ourselves is released because all that we need or care about is provided, and He enables us to bless, encourage and build up others. To be a testimony of His presence in everything we do and say, the Lord needs to be totally 100% LORD in everything we are and have. Because He is the **LORD of Hosts**, then all the power of His Holy realm is there for us to call on, not because of who we are but because of Who He is in us. **Jehovah-Sabbaoth** is the divine Maker and Controller of all things, the One Who provides a place of safety and victory for those who walk rightly before Him.

Related Scriptures:

1 Sam 1:3; 17:45; Ps 84:1; Jer 11:20; Hag 2:23; Zech 7:9; Mal 4:1-3; Matt 28:18; 1 Thes 5:9

Principle Seven: **THE LORD IS OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS**

"In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely; and this is His name by which He will be called, 'The LORD our righteousness' (JEHOVAH TSIDKENU)".

Jeremiah 23:6

Definition:

1. **Righteousness:** standard of what is right and just; moral rightness, virtuousness. *Synonyms:* blamelessness, faithfulness, goodness, honesty, honour, integrity, justice, purity, uprightness, virtue.

Scripture is full of references to God as the righteous one, the **LORD our righteousness, JEHOVAH-TSIDKENU**. There is nothing that we can do to obtain righteousness on our own. We cannot buy it or obtain it through good works. Righteousness can only come through admitting and confessing our sinful life before Christ Jesus. Then, because of what He did on the cross, we can be clothed in God's righteousness (Phil 3:9).

Jeremiah wanted the people of Israel to understand that they needed to know God as the "**LORD of Righteousness**". No person can obtain righteousness on their own. God is just and right and, because of that, He will bless and treat justly all who humble themselves before Him as LORD. God had not forgotten His people, but He was going to show them that because of the covenant with David, He would raise up a Righteous Branch who would come forth and be their King (Jer 23:5). The Jews had been ruled by others. They had been scattered to all other countries. They had turned away from God, but because of His righteousness and love for His people, He was going to call them back to the land that He had given to them. He was going to give them new shepherds to teach, guide and equip them for service and worship of Him.

The coming of the law in the Old Testament was to show us that we did not have the ability to be righteous before God. Therefore, Christ did not come to destroy the law but to fulfill it so that we would have hope of standing before God, not in our righteousness, but in Christ's righteousness (Gal 2:21). God is the only One who could pay the price that was needed for salvation. Therefore, Christ came as a Redeemer, to purchase our freedom from sin with His shed blood (1 Pet 2:24). We are to be temples of righteousness for God's Glory. Just as the temple of God was a place where the LORD'S righteousness dwelt, we are now, through Christ, to be the temples of God's righteousness (Eph 2:21-22).

In Ephesians we are told to put on the breastplate of righteousness. The breastplate was the piece of armour that covered a soldier's vital organs, especially his heart, protecting him during battle. As believers, we wear a breastplate of God's righteousness which He has given us in Christ (Eph 6:14) as we do battle against our spiritual enemies.

The believer accepts Christ as Saviour and Lord. Without going through Christ as the only way, truth and life we have no hope (John 14:6). Isaiah told us that our righteousness is like filthy rags (Is 64:6). Because of His righteousness, only Christ can wash us and cleanse us from all

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unrighteousness (1 John 1:7). In some ways it brings peace to the disciple's heart that we do not have to strive to become righteous. But what we do need to do is become obedient and live by faith under the banner of Christ's righteousness.

Related Scriptures:

Deut 9:5-6; Ps 7:8-10; 11:7; 23:3; Matt 5:6 & 10; Acts 3:14; Rom 1:16-17; 3:22; 5:17-18 & 21; 6:18; 2 Cor 5:21; Eph 4:24; Phil 3:9

Principle Eight: *THE LORD IS OUR SHEPHERD*

"The LORD is my shepherd (JEHOVAH-ROHI), I shall not want".

Psalm 23:1

Definition:

1. **Shepherd:** herdsman; one who tends, feeds and guards sheep; one charged with the religious care and guidance of others. *Synonyms:* caretaker, protector, guide.

The Lord desires to shepherd us in our daily thoughts and actions. When we become part of His flock He looks after us in a variety of ways. The people of Israel were people whose heritage began as shepherds of flocks of animals. They therefore saw God as the **Great Shepherd, JEHOVAH-ROHI**. Most of the patriarchal leaders were shepherds. They all had been trained in the responsibility of looking after and caring for sheep and other livestock.

What makes a true shepherd is that he has a heart for the sheep. He builds a relationship with them. He understands how they think and act. The shepherd/sheep relationship is the picture that God wants us to understand. Yahweh is the shepherd King, our **Jehovah-Rohi**. The shepherd knows the sheep by name, and they know His voice. When the shepherd is near there is peace; fear is not present because the shepherd is willing to lay down his life for the sheep (John 10:11).

The prime meaning of **Jehovah-Rohi** is the LORD who leads and feeds. God wanted the people to know that He was always there to go before them and provide their needs. They would never be out of His sight. He had chosen them and now He would care for them all the way, as long as they trusted and obeyed His leadership. The Bible is full of the shepherd and sheep illustrations that we are to learn and grow from because, as we do, our relationship with God will become more personal and loving. God will become a trusted Companion to us.

Psalm 23 gives us a job description of what a shepherd should do. It demonstrates God as an example to us of how leaders should minister to their sheep. A shepherd is to lead, protect, feed and care for the sheep. He is to be willing to lay down his life for the sheep, and when there is one missing, he leaves the flock to look for the one that is lost and brings it back (Matt 18:10-14).

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Psalms 23 provides many principles for the ministry of shepherding. The principles in this Psalm were well understood by the shepherds of that time. We must see that this beloved Psalm 23, that so many have memorized, has great truth and reality for our everyday walk. The shepherd prepared the ground and took them to still waters. He protected them with a rod, staff and sling. He nurtured them with the staff and anointed their head with oil. He also became the gate at night to the sheepfold (Ps 23:1-6). These and many more important principles we need to understand and apply to our lives and ministry today.

Scripture shows how God put in place shepherds (leaders of his people), but He would also remove those shepherds who were not obedient to Him. He warned us of the hireling and the ones who come in sheep's clothing to hurt, kill and scatter the sheep (John 10:12-13).

In the New Testament the Gospel shows us that Christ takes it one step farther by proclaiming to all who would hear that He was the good shepherd, the One Who would lay down His life for the sheep (John 10:11). He also pointed out the religious leaders who should have been caring for the sheep but who were, in reality, blind (Matt 15:14; 23:16) and destructive shepherds.

Christ is our chief shepherd (1 Pet 5:4). The Hebrew people knew that the Messiah Who was to come would shepherd them and lead them out of bondage and destruction. They prayed and looked for that day. But they did not realize that the Messiah Shepherd would first come as a **servant**, as the book of Isaiah prophesied, and that He then would come again the second time to take His bride, the church, to be with Him in glory as their **King**. We are all, in some form or fashion, shepherds. The group of people that we look after may just be our families. Others will have greater responsibilities. But we do have a responsibility to help and care one for another. Christ gives the example that we are to follow (1 Pet 2:21). We need to care for others as Christ cares and loves us. He desires with all His heart to be our **Jehovah-Rohi**, the One who leads, feeds, defends, cares for, heals, trains, corrects, and because of His great love, was willing to die for us in the process.

Related Scriptures:

Gen 49:24; 2 Sam 5:2; Ps 78:70-72; 100:3; Isa 40:11; Jer 3:15; Eze 34:7-10; 34:11-16; Matt 9:36; 26:31; John 10:1-18; Heb 13:20; 1 Pet 2:25; 5:4

Principle Nine: **THE LORD WHO IS THERE**

"The city shall be 18,000 cubits round about; and the name of the city from that day shall be, 'The LORD is there' (JEHOVAH-SHAMMAH)".

Ezekiel 48:35

Definition:

1. **Presence**: the fact or condition of being present, the state of being in one place and not elsewhere; the condition of being within sight or call, at hand. *Synonyms*: occupancy, residence, inhabitant, existing, being.

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Some disciples, each day, fail to remember one very important principle: whatever they are doing, whatever they are thinking, God is seeing, God is there. Mankind and God are not separated by some great gulf. Our relationship can be distant and even cold because of sin, and He may not fulfill all our desires just because we call, but He is there in all His glory waiting for us just to whisper His name. Nothing can separate us from the Love of God, Paul tells us (Rom 8:35, 39). Ezekiel ends his book by telling the people another name for God: **JEHOVAH- SHAMMAH**, "**the God who is there**".

The full Godhead, the trinity of all creation, is there for us like a father concerned for his children. He was uniquely present in the beginning, is still present now, and will be present at the end of all things. After the people returned from exile, God directly portioned out the land and the city of Jerusalem to the people, and in the end the city was given the name of, "**The LORD is there**" (**JEHOVAH-SHAMMAH**).

When the time had come, God called the people back from their foreign exile to their land and to Jerusalem, back to the temple of God. The LORD was going to personally get involved in dividing up the land for the people and giving to the people clear boundaries to live within.

Ezekiel wanted to teach them about God's presence, that He was where they were; about His promise, that the covenant that He had made with the people was still in place; and of how His power was still sovereign over all the land and the people. In spite of all that had happened over the years and their turning their backs toward Him, He was still with them. He was the **Jehovah-Shammah**, "**the God who is there**".

In the New Testament we are told a name of Christ, the name "Immanuel" which means, "God with us" (Matt 1:23). The LORD desires to be with and walk with us in everything we say and do; each day we need to humble ourselves and commit afresh to His sovereignty over our lives.

Today we disciples need to remember that God is here in every aspect of our lives. He is concerned about our coming in and our going out. He is with us everywhere that we are. But He also gives to us boundaries by which to live. We must see daily that our heavenly Father is present in our lives, that He keeps His promises and that He desires to fill us daily with His power (Eph 5:18). We are called to walk personally with Him as disciples and corporately as a church in all that we say and do. We do not need to fear God but to have faith in Him. He has our good at heart. We need to rise and proclaim **Jehovah-Shamma** to the world as the LORD Who is here with us.

Related Scriptures:

Ex 29:45-46; 33:14-15; Ps 16:11; Isa 7:14; Matt 1:23; 28:20; 1 Cor 3:16; 6:16

Conclusion

If one could draw a circle around God in all His uniqueness, the outer rim would represent His Divine love, grace and mercy for all mankind. This magnificent and awesome God is the One who created all the heavens and the earth. He has had us in His mind from the very beginning and

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to the very end of times here on earth. He is actively speaking, ministering and giving us a way out of destruction into everlasting life.

As disciples, we often do not understand who our God is. We tend to put God into all kinds of little boxes, instead of trying to form an overall picture of Who He is. Just as God called the people out of Egypt and shepherded them each day, we also need to have faith and trust Him that He can guide and lead us each day. He does, after all, know us by name.

The name **"I Am"** can have many descriptors added after it; all these titles represent Who God is. Whatever you need or struggle with, He can provide help for you. If you need a healer, I Am. If you need comfort or peace or love or joy, He Is. The different names of God reveal Him in some aspect of His character and dealings with mankind. He is everything good and can supply all we may need. That is why God told Moses to tell the people of Israel that whatever was needed in their lives, God could and was able to be and do (Ex 3:2-22). God was going to set the people of Israel free, and bless them abundantly as His children. Whatever the enemy threw up, God overcame and defeated in the very midst of all people.

Discipleship Application

As Christians we need to see that God is **all** to those who trust in Him and call upon Him for everything (Matt 7:7-8). The more we know Him the greater the freedom we will have from sin, fear, powerlessness, anxiety, etc. The clearer the understanding we will have about what our God is capable of doing for us and in all of life, the better it will be for us. We need to build our personal relationship with God and let Him build His character into us. As we do that, He will produce rich fruit in us, and we will have confidence and power to share Him with others.

Can we personally state, that we believe:

In the one true God, in the Trinity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Commitment and Prayer

Dear Triune God,

I thank You for creating all mankind and giving us an opportunity, even though we have fallen away through sin and disobedience, to be able to still come to You as our Creator. We see from Your Scriptures Your awesomeness and fullness. You truly are all things to us; one Who has no beginning and one Who has no end. We can see from Who You are how much You show forth grace and mercy and peace to all who receive. We also see how You put a little bit of Yourself into our hearts when we confess our sins and make You Lord and Saviour of our lives. Thank You for not giving up on us but through Your Spirit continuing to move and speak into our hearts and draw us closer to Your heart. I pray that You keep us in the palm of Your hand and that You would help us to walk and follow You and live according to Your will so that our lives will bear fruit and glorify Your name.

A prayer from my heart to your heart Oh Lord,

Signature and Date.

DISCIPLES' PRINCIPLES OF FAITH

Chapter Three

Teachings Concerning Jesus Christ

*“Behold the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name **Immanuel**, (Isa 7:14)” which is translated, “**God with us**”.*

Matthew 1:23

*“Paul, a bondservant of **Jesus Christ**, called to be an apostle, separated to the **gospel** of God which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scripture, concerning His Son **Jesus Christ our Lord**, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead”.*

Romans 1:1-4

Introduction

God’s plan to bring about restoration was birthed at the beginning of creation and carried out in the fullness of God’s time. The plan sent His Son Jesus Christ to earth, carrying the name **Emmanuel** or “God with us” (Matt 1:23). Christ’s birth was designed to fulfill the Old Testament prophecies. The goal was to bring to the world the opportunity to have a personal relationship with God and be able to walk and live in His presence once again, not unlike Adam and Eve before the fall.

The life of Jesus Christ has been recorded for us in the Gospels of the Bible. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John give testimony to this unique gift that was sent. These four books of the New Testament (known as the “Good News or Gospels” Mark 1:1) paint a unique picture of Who Jesus Christ is, His nature and the purpose of His life and that He is truly God.

Description

Immanuel / Emmanuel: the meaning of this name of Christ is "God with us". For the disciple this name carries so much personal meaning because now the living God, through Jesus Christ, can personally indwell our hearts.

Jesus: “Yahweh Saves” In Hebrew and Greek the word means Saviour; Jesus is the Greek name for the Hebrew name, Joshua. For us as disciples, it is like we were drowning in a lake of sin, and when we call upon His name, He saves us from our sins.

Christ: “Anointed One” or “Messiah”, Christ has come as our Messiah to redeem us and to save us from the curse of death and destruction. He has come to anoint us with His presence and to anoint us with the power of His Holy Spirit.

Gospel: Good news of Jesus Christ; also a title given to the first four books of the New Testament (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John); Christ's coming to earth is made up of ten

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powerful realities: The Living Word, His virgin birth, His earthly life, His death, resurrection, ascension, the sending of His Holy Spirit, birth of the church, His second coming and the kingdom of heaven.

The good news of Jesus Christ spans both the Old Testament and New Testament. The Old Testament gives us prophecies concerning the coming of the Messiah whose name would be Emmanuel, "God with us". It also gives to us insights of how God was going to redeem this lost world and that redemption would come through His only begotten Son (John 1:14; Matt 3:16-17). As we move to the New Testament, we begin to see the fulfillment of the Old in the New as one complete an awesome story about Jesus Christ. We begin to see the bigger picture of what God has in mind for His creation.

Principle One: *PROPHECY OF JESUS*

Throughout the whole Bible we have markers that point and foretell of One Who would come as a Messiah. They declare how He would come, why He would come. The Bible has a clear purpose and goal for why it was written and kept from destruction up until this present day. We are told amazing truths that present a lineage that takes us back to before creation and then presents, as a picture, a "Branch" that would come from Jesse, King David's father ... a Righteous Branch Who would bring salvation and anointing to all who would receive Him as their Lord and Saviour. "Behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "When I will raise to David a **Branch** of righteousness; A King Who shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth" (Jer 23:5). (Branch: Isa 11:1; Zech 3:8; 6:12)

What you find below are prophecies that were given by various prophets over hundreds of years, as recorded in the Hebrews Scripture and fulfilled by the coming of Jesus Christ.

Prophecies		Fulfilment
1. Gen 3:15	Would be the 'Offspring of a Woman'	Gal 4:4
2. Gen 12:3	Promised Offspring of Abraham	Matt 1:1
3. Gen 17:19	Promised Offspring of Isaac	Luke 3:34
4. Num 24:17	Promised Offspring of Jacob	Matt 1:2
5. Gen 49:10	Will descend from the tribe of Judah	Luke 3:33
6. Isa 9:7	The Heir to the throne of David	Luke 1:32-33
7. Mic 5:2	Place of birth	Matt 2:6
8. Dan 9:25	Time of birth	Luke 2:1-2
9. Isa 7:14	Born of a virgin	Matt 1:18
10. Jer 31:15	Slaughter of infants	Matt 2:16
11. Hos 11:1	Escape into Egypt	Matt 2:14
12. Isa 9:1-2	Ministry in Galilee	Matt 4:12-16
13. Deut 18:15	As a Prophet	John 6:14
14. Ps 110:4	As a Priest, Like Melchizedek	Heb 6:20
15. Isa 53:3	His rejection by Jews	John 1:11
16. Isa 11:2	Some of His characteristics	Luke 2:52

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17. Zech 9:9	His triumphal entry	John 12:13-14
18. Ps 41:9	Betrayed by a friend	Luke 22:47-48
19. Zech 11:12	Sold for thirty pieces of silver	Matt 26:15
20. Zech 11:13	Money to be returned for a potter's field	Matt 27:7
21. Ps 109:7-8	Judas's position to be taken by another	Acts 1:18-20
22. Ps 27:12	False witnesses accuse Him	Matt 26:60-61
23. Isa 53:7	Silent when accused	Matt 26:62-63
24. Isa 50:6	Struck and spit on	Mark 14:65
25. Ps 69:4	Hated without cause	John 15:23-25
26. Isa 53:4-5	Suffered vicariously	Matt 8:16-17
27. Isa 53:12	Crucified with sinners	Matt 27:38
28. Ps 22:16	Hands and feet pierced	John 20:27
29. Ps 22:6-8	Mocked and insulted	Matt 27:39-40
30. Ps 69:21	Given gall and vinegar	John 19:29
31. Ps 22:8	Hears prophetic words repeated in mockery	Matt 27:43
32. Ps 109:4	He prays for His enemies	Luke 23:34
33. Zech 12:10	His side to be pierced	John 19:34
34. Ps 22:18	Soldiers cast lots for His clothes	Matt 27:35
35. Ps 34:20	Not a bone to be broken	John 19:33
36. Isa 53:9	To be buried with the rich	Matt 27:57-60
37. Ps 68:18	His ascension	Luke 24:50-5

ISAIAH: PICTURE OF THE SUFFERING SERVANT

THE PROPHECY

- 1) He will be exalted (52:13)
- 2) He will be disfigured by suffering (52:14; 53: 2)
- 3) He will be widely rejected (53:1, 3)
- 4) He will bear our sins and sorrows (53:4)
- 5) He will make a blood atonement (53:5)
- 6) He will be our substitute (53:6, 8)
- 7) He will voluntarily accept our guilt and punishment (53:7)
- 8) He will be buried in a rich man's tomb (53:9)
- 9) He will justify many from their sin (53:10, 11)
- 10) He will die with transgressors (53:12)

THE FULFILLMENT

- Phil 2:9
- Mark 15:17, 19
- John 12:37, 38
- Rom 4:25; 1 Pet 2:24, 25
- Rom 3:25; 5:6, 8
- 2 Cor 5:21
- John 10:11
- John 19:38-42
- Acts 13:38-39; Rom 5:15-19
- Mark 15:27, 28; Luke 22:37

Principle Two: *GOSPEL OF JESUS*

The Gospel of Christ pictures for us ten major truths that would change the direction of all mankind. These ten points are also theological and doctrinal points that the disciple should memorize and stand firm on when speaking to those with whom he is sharing the Gospel. Plus, we need to be clear on these principles when we are dealing with people who would try to dilute or deny their truth.

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1. *Living Word* – John 1:1-5

From the very beginning it was the Living Word that spoke everything into being; all that was created was created by God Almighty. When God spoke, dramatic things took place. Right from the beginning of time God walked with man as the Living Word, a Word that could be spoken to nations, but also personalized to His individual children. It is important for all disciples to understand that the Gospel of the Good News reaches right back to the creation of the world. His crowning event and the most exciting good news was God speaking into being a man and a woman, who were made in His image (Gen 1:27). Our God is the One who speaks life-giving words to that which He has created. (“Then God said”: Gen 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26)

2. *Birth* – Matt 1:18-25; Luke 2:1-20

After two and a half thousand years of prophetic proclamation, God sent His Son to be conceived by a virgin woman through the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35). He was born in Bethlehem and was heralded to the shepherds through a host of angels (Luke 2:1-20). Later, wise men came and presented Him gifts (Matt 2:1-12). As this was happening, the enemy was seeking to destroy Him (Matt 2:13-18).

3. *Life* – Matthew, Mark, Luke, John

For the first thirty years of His life, Jesus lived as a carpenter’s son in Galilee. Once the fullness of time was reached, He left home and was baptized by John the Baptist (Matt 3:13-17). This began His earthly ministry of proclaiming the Kingdom of God and illustrating how we as a sinful people could come into a personal relationship with God. He challenged the religious ways of His day and proclaimed that He was the light of the world (John 8:12). He told how the Father had a plan of redemption and grace – He would pour out His life as a drink offering.

The people desired to make Him king because of all the miracles He performed. Christ did not allow this to happen. His life modelled one of a servant (Matt 20:28). Our lives need to be ones of service and commitment to Him as Lord and Saviour (Phil 2:9-11).

4. *Death* – Matt 27: 45-54; Mark 15:33-39; Luke 23:44-39; John 19:28-37

The enemy constantly sought to destroy Christ. It seemed that he won when Jesus, like a criminal, was beaten and hung on a cruel cross. Jesus shed His blood and gave His last breath into the hands of the Father in heaven (Luke 23:46). For three days He remained (Luke 24:7) in the depths of the earth where the key to life and death (removed in the Garden of Eden) was taken back from Satan (Rev 1:18).

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5. *Resurrection* – Matt 28:1-10; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24:1-10; John 20:11-19

If Christ remained in the grave, He would have been no different than any other man. On the third day, death could not hold Him, and God's resurrection power now filled His body and He rose from death, victorious over its hold (Luke 24:7). Jesus broke the chains of sin and death once and for all, and the bridge between God and mankind was restored.

Because of this reality, our relationship to God was no longer external but became internal. We could now, through confession of our sins and by faith, have Christ Jesus living in us for all eternity. After His resurrection, He appeared to the disciples and many others to bear testimony of the things that had changed (Luke 24:13-43).

6. *Ascension* – Luke 24:50-53; Acts 1:9-11

Not only was Christ resurrected, He ascended up into the clouds, being seen by many, is now in paradise, to prepare a place for us (John 14:2) and is interceding on our behalf with the Father. Relationship was being restored on all levels. The Kingdom of Heaven and the kingdom of earth was now totally under the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ.

7. *Holy Spirit* – Acts 2:1-39; 10:44

Next came the fulfillment of a promise that Christ made to the disciples (John 14:16). On the day of Pentecost came the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and fire (Acts 2:1-4). God's very presence was now coming into the heart of every believer. The power that God granted (to overcome the grip and strongholds of this sinful world) would now be in man's heart. The Holy Spirit would become our Teacher and Comforter, never leaving or forsaking us. We could have life abundantly because of His presence in our lives (John 10:10).

8. *Church* – Acts 2:38-47 to Acts 28:31

On the Day of Pentecost, Christ sent forth the power of the Holy Spirit and, at that moment, the Church was born. Christ not only wanted us to have a personal relationship with Him, but also desired for us to build relationships with other believers. The Church was to be His body (Rom 12:5); He would be the head of this organism and, from Him through the Church, would flow the witness to a lost world (Acts 1:8). It would be a light to all who would desire to give their lives to Christ; a place of refuge and safety for the pilgrim who was travelling through this world.

Jesus would empower His body in unity and harmony, equipping them for various types of ministries and service (2 Tim 3:17). The life blood of the body would be the Holy

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Spirit, evidenced by the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23) displayed through the church as a body and people as individuals.

The church was to be a place of rest and peace, a place to be restored, built up, trained and equipped for service (1 Cor 12:12-31). We do not have to feel alone or abandoned, as we are now part of a worldwide family. We have been adopted into the family of God, having brothers and sisters who can help and care for us as we walk with Christ (Rom 8:15-17).

9. *Second Coming* – Acts 1:11; 1 Thes 5:1-11

Jesus told the disciples on the day of His ascension that just as they saw Him go, He would come back again to personally receive His own (Acts 1:11). We were now His children and joint heirs with Him (Rom 8:17). He is our King and we are His ambassadors, proclaiming the grace, love and mercy of our God to all who will receive it (2 Cor 5:20).

10. *Heaven* – Matt 3:2; Acts 7:49; Rev 4:1-11; 21:3; 21:9-27

Jesus tells the disciples in John chapter 14 not to worry because, He was now going to prepare a place for us (John 14:1-3). What a beautiful day it will be, when we enter the gates of heaven; streets paved with gold and everywhere one looks, mansions prepared for our arrival. We will also, for the first time, meet Jesus face to face and He will then welcome us personally into His Eternal Kingdom. We will become part of the greatest celebration ever – The Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Rev 19:7)

What Christ did for us was truly “Good News” for all mankind. It displayed a heart relationship of love, mercy and grace to all who would receive it as a gift (no strings attached). Out of the Gospels came two doors for us to journey through – one of restoration and the other of fellowship / relationship. The disciples of Christ experience so much because we confessed our sins and invited Christ Jesus into our hearts (Rom 10:9-10). People, salvation is for all (John 3:16), but we must make a move first, by coming to Him as our Lord and Saviour.

Related Scriptures:

1 Cor 15:2; 2 Cor 9:13, Gal 1:7, 1 Thes 2:4, Mark 16:15-18, Luke 24:45-49, Acts 1:1-11

Also see the disciples Gospel Creed in Appendix Number 1.

Principle Three: *BEATITUDES OF JESUS*

Matt 5:3-11 list the beatitudes, ways of thinking, teaching of Jesus, proper attitudes for living. These have to do with teaching that should guide and direct our thinking and our walk with Christ. The way we think has a dynamic effect on how we live each day. They are short statements communicating God's approval and blessing on how we should deal with things in our Christian walk. These verses tend to start off with the word "blessed". The truth is these statements come

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with a blessing from God when activated in one's life. This section is found in a larger portion of Scripture that runs from Matthew 5:1 to the end of chapter 7:29. This section is known as the Sermon on the Mount. This whole section of teaching deals largely with directives we should keep in mind as we interact with other people as well as when we are praying to God on how we should live for Him.

1) Poor in spirit (5:3) for theirs is the kingdom of heaven Isa 57:15

- The world wants us to focus on ourselves, doing that which feels good for us, catering to our spirit of pride, but what we should be focusing on is the Kingdom of Heaven. We shouldn't be trying to build up our own ability but, rather, submitting ourselves to Christ and His will for our lives. In this world it may seem that we are poor but in Christ we have things because we are "King's kids", children of God (1 John 3:2). Paul tells us that God will use the poor of the world to confound the wise (1 Cor 1:27). James also picks up on this and tells that God has chosen the poor of this world to be rich in Him (James 2:5-6). The way we overcome worldliness is by humbling ourselves before the Lord (James 4:7-10).

2) Mourning (5:4) shall be comforted Isa 61:1, 2

- Sometimes one's personal goal is to have happiness at any cost, but happiness often is a fleeting feeling based on an emotion. Happiness presents the challenge of a goal line that can never be reached. It seems that when you think you have achieved a state of happiness, it only lasts for a few moments of time. What we need to do is entrust our lives to God Who can comfort and encourage us in all situations (2 Cor 1:3-7). He can fill our lives with peace and contentment (Phil 4:7).

3) Meekness (5:5) shall inherit the earth Ps 37:5-11

- Meekness is a state of gentleness and humility; it is not weakness as man would have us think. It is a sense of calmness and security, knowing that God is in control and is able to work all things out (Phil 2:13). Man strives for power, to have others fear and emulate them. The key is to put God first and, whatever you do, do for His glory. We need to cast all our cares on Him, to join ourselves together with Him and His will (Matt 11:27-30). It is at that point where we then shall inherit the earth.

4) Righteousness (5:6) shall be filled Isa 11:4-5; 42:1-4

- We are told that our righteousness is like dirty rags (Isa 64:6). The way we can obtain righteousness is to put on Christ's righteousness (Phil 3:7-11), clothing ourselves in Him. The world tries to make themselves righteous by what they

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do, but this is a goal that is impossible to reach because, before God, we are all sinners (Rom 3:23). When we put on Christ's righteousness we become filled with the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, and it is at that point we become satisfied and at peace with who we are in Christ (John 16:5-13).

5) Mercy (5:7) shall obtain mercy Ps 41:1

- Mercy is showing compassion and forgiveness to others and to one's self. Our strength and ability does not come through ourselves but through Christ Who fills us with His presence. We are not trying to obtain our will but God's will for others and for ourselves (Eph 5:1-2). It is interesting to note that when we show and have the attitude of mercy towards others, God pours it back on to us. (Rom 11:32; 2 Cor 4:1; Eph 2:4-5)

6) Pure in heart (5:8) shall see God Ps 24:3, 4

- God always looks at the heart of man because it's what comes out of the heart that shows who we truly are (Pro 27:19). The heart is the place where faith must dwell and manifest itself to God and to others. When our heart is pure it aligns the rest of our being into a position where we can be in the presence of God. Man often is deceptive, trying to fulfil his own desires and will, but a disciple of Christ should not be filled with the world's attitudes, but rather with the heart of God in all areas of life. We are told that we shall see God and the work of His hands in our lives. Not only that, but for the believer there is a day coming when we will see Him face to face (1 John 3:1-3).

7) Peacemaker (5:9) shall be called children of God Isa 57:18,19

- To be a peacemaker, one needs himself to be confident and at peace with who he is, and this can only be possible by the presence of God flowing through one's life (Matt 10:13). The world is full of turmoil and is at war with itself. Our goal is to be a restorer (Gal 6:1), rebuilding what the enemy has corrupted and destroyed. We are to be ambassadors of Christ Jesus (2 Cor 5:20). To be a peacemaker is a lifetime journey, serving and walking hand-in-hand with God each day (Heb 12:10-11), discerning His will for ourselves and for others. The ultimate goal that God has for people is the tearing down of the dividing wall which has kept man separated from God (Eph 2:14).

8) Persecuted (5:10) shall have the kingdom of heaven Isa 52:13

- Today there is great persecution of the disciples and the church and often it is because of He who dwells in us (Rom 8:17-18; Phil 1:29; Heb 2:10; 1 Pet 5:10). Christ warned us that just as He suffered and was persecuted, that we, too, would also undergo suffering and persecution (Matt 10:16-26). The enemy

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wants to destroy the believer and the church. But our goal is not to focus on or try to hang on to this life here on earth, but to be prepared for the Kingdom of Heaven (2 Tim 3:12). All things will pass away and we will become new creations in Christ Jesus (2 Cor 5:17). This is not our home, but we are ambassadors here on earth, representing another kingdom (2 Cor 5:20).

There are more Beatitudes found in Luke 6:20-22; Rev 1:3; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7; 22:14 plus several other places throughout the New Testament.

Principle Four: *TEACHING OF JESUS*

It has been said many times that Jesus was a master teacher and that He taught with authority and power (Matt 7:29). He used a variety of teaching methods to instruct the people with truths concerning God and His kingdom. Teaching is a way that we pass on information or instruction to another. Jesus set the example and we as disciples also need to be teachers. It is something we are all to do, but it is also one of the spiritual gifts that God gives to the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:28). While we are to teach others, we ourselves must also be taught. The learning process never ends. There is always more to learn.

What follows is a list of the various teachings that have been recorded for us in the Gospels.

Matthew:

- Sermon on the Mount: Matt 5-7
- Beatitudes: Matt 5:1-12
- Lord's Prayer: Matt 6:5-15
- Anxiety and Worry: Matt 6:25-34
- Judging: Matt 7:1-6
- Tree and Fruit: Matt 7:15
- Sending out the Twelve: Matt 10
- Cost of Discipleship: Matt 16:24-28
- Discipline and prayer: Matt 18:15-20
- Divorce: Matt 19:3-12
- Wealth: Matt 19:16-30
- Greatest Commandment: Matt 22:34-40
- Scribes and Pharisees: Matt 23:13-36
- Lord's Supper: Matt 26:26-30
- Great Commission: Matt 28:19-20

Mark:

- Divorce: Mark 10:1-12
- Rich young ruler: Mark 10:17-31
- Give to Caesar: Mark 12:13-17
- Christ's Return: Mark 13:24-27
- Disciples' Commission: Mark 16:14-18

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Luke:

- Lord of the Sabbath: Luke 6:1-5
- Golden Rule: Luke 6:31
- Seventy Disciples: Luke 10:1-16
- Worry: Luke 12:22-34
- Call to Repentance: Luke 13:1-5
- Discipleship: Luke 14:25-35
- Second Coming of Christ: Luke 17:22-37

John:

- Word of Life: John 1:1-4
- Born Again: John 3:1-21
- Living Water: John 4:1-26
- Scripture and Moses: John 5:39-47
- Bread of Life: John 6:25-59
- Light of the World: John 8:12-20
- Son of Man: John 8:21-30
- Truth and Freedom: John 8:31-47
- Good Shepherd: John 10:1-18
- Resurrection and Life: John 11:1-46
- Jesus and the Disciples: John 14:1-6
- The way and the truth and the life: John 14:5-14
- Jesus and the Father: John 14:7-15
- Jesus and the Holy Spirit: John 14:16-31
- Vine and Branches: John 15:1-17
- Disciples and the World: John 15:18-26
- Prayer: John 16:23-28
- Time: John 21:18-23

Principle Five: *MIRACLES OF JESUS*

A miracle is a supernatural event, a wonder, a phenomenon, or something we marvel about. The Bible also uses the words "signs and wonders". It can also be thought of as something beyond human ability, scientific knowledge, or conventional logic. Everywhere Jesus went, we are told that that signs, wonders or miracles followed. But, for the disciple, even in this area there are lessons to be learned; Jesus was going to commission and empower His disciples to do the same things He did (Mark 16:15-18).

What follows is a list of the various miracles that have been recorded for us in the Gospels.

Synoptic Gospels:

- Man with leprosy: Matt 8:1-4; Mark 1:40-44; Luke 5:12-14
- Peter's mother-in-law: Matt 8:14-15; Mark 1:30-31; Luke 4:38-39
- Calming the storm: Matt 8:23-27; Mark 4:37-41; Luke 8:22-25

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- Two men possessed with devils: Matt 8:28-34; Mark 5:1-15; Luke 8:27-39
- Man with palsy: Matt 9:2-7; Mark 2:3-12; Luke 5:18-26
- Jairus's daughter: Matt 9:18-26; Mark 5:21-43; Luke 8:40-56
- Woman with bleeding: Matt 9:20-22; Mark 5:25-34; Luke 8:43-48
- Man water with a withered hand: Matt 12:10-13; Mark 3:1-5; Luke 6:6-11
- Feeding of 5,000: Matt 14:14-21; Mark 6:30-44; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-14
- Walking on water: Matt 14:22-32; Mark 6:47-52; John 6:16-21
- Boy with devil: Matt 17:14-21; Mark 9:17-29; Luke 9:38-43
- Two blind men (including Bartimaeus): Matt 20:29-34; Mark 10:46-52; Luke 18:35-43

Matthew:

- Roman centurion's servant: Matt 8:5-13
- Two blind men: Matt 9:27-31
- Dumb, devil possessed man: Matt 9:32-33
- Blind, dumb, devil possessed man: Matt 12:22-23
- Canaanite woman's daughter: Matt 15:21-28
- Feeding of 4,000: Matt 15:32-39
- Fish with coin: Matt 17:24-27
- Fig tree withers: Matt 21:18-22

Mark:

- Devil possessed man in synagogue: Mark 1:21-28
- Canaanite woman's daughter: Mark 7:24-30
- Blind man at Bethsaida: Mark 8:22-26
- Feeding of 4,000: Mark 8:1-9
- Fig tree withers: Mark 11:12-14, 20-25

Luke:

- Devil-possessed man in synagogue: Luke 4:31-37
- Huge catch of fish: Luke 5:4-11
- Roman centurion's servant: Luke 7:1-10
- Widow son at Nain: Luke 7:11-17
- Blind, dumb, devil-possessed man: Luke 11:14
- Crippled woman: Luke 13:10-17
- Man with dropsy: Luke 14:1-4
- Ten men with leprosy: Luke 17:11-19
- The high priest's servant: Luke 22:50-51

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John:

- Water into wine: John 2:1-11
- Nobleman's son at Capernaum: John 4:46-54
- Sick man at the pool of Bethesda: John 5:1-15
- Man born blind: John 9:1-14
- Lazarus: John 11:1-44
- Huge catch of fish: John 21:1-11

Principle Six: *PARABLES OF JESUS*

Parables are said to be earthly stories with heavenly meanings. They can be pictures or stories from nature, history, or from culture and tradition. Parables illustrate moral or spiritual lessons. Jesus taught the people with many parables. Even when He was using this method of conveying heavenly truth, often the disciples did not understand and had to pull Jesus aside to give them the meaning of what was being said (Matt 13:10-11).

What follows is a list of the various parable teachings that have been recorded for us in the gospels.

Synoptic Gospels:

- Lamp under a bushel: Matt 5:14-16; Mark 4:21-22; Luke 11:33-36
- New cloth on an old garment: Matt 9:16; Mark 2:21; Luke 5:36
- New wine in old wineskins: Matt 9:17; Mark 2:22; Luke 5:37-39
- Sower and the seed: Matt 13:3-8; 18-23; Mark 4:3-8,14-20; Luke 8:5-8,11-15
- Mustard seed: Matt 13:31-32; Mark 4:30-32; Luke 13:18-19
- Husbandmen: Matt 21:33-40; Mark 12:1-11; Luke 20:9-18
- Fig tree: Matt 24:32-35; Mark 13:28-31; Luke 21:29-33

Matthew:

- Wise and foolish builders: Matt 7:24-27
- Leaven: Matt 13:33
- Tares and wheat: Matt 13:24-30, 36-43
- Hidden treasure and pearl: Matt 13:44-46
- Fishing net: Matt 13:47-50
- Owner of a house: Matt 13:52
- Lost sheep: Matt 18:12-14
- Unmerciful servant: Matt 18:23-35
- Laborers in the vineyard: Matt 20:1-16
- Two sons: Matt 21:28-32
- Wedding banquet: Matt 22:2-14
- Faithful and wise servant: Matt 24:45-51
- Ten virgins: Matt 25:1-13

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- Talents: Matt 25:14-30
- Sheep and goats: Matt 25:31-46

Mark:

- Growing seed: Mark 4:26-29
- Watchful servants: Mark 13:34-37

Luke:

- Wise and foolish builders: Luke 6:47-49
- Canceled debts: Luke 7:41-43
- Good Samaritan: Luke 10:30-37
- Persistent friend: Luke 11:5-8
- Rich fool: Luke 12:16-21
- Watchful servants: Luke 12:35-40
- Faithful and wise servant: Luke 12:42-48
- Unfruitful fig tree: Luke 13:6-9
- Leaven: Luke 13:20-21
- Honor at a banquet: Luke 14:7-14
- Great banquet: Luke 14:16-24
- Cost of discipleship: Luke 14:28-33
- Lost sheep: Luke 15:4-7
- Lost coin: Luke 15:8-10
- Prodigal (lost) son: Luke 15:11-32
- Shrewd steward: Luke 16:1-8
- Rich man and Lazarus: Luke 16:19-31
- Obedient servants: Luke 17:7-10
- Persistent widow: Luke 18:2-8
- Pharisee and the publican: Luke 18:10-14
- Ten pounds: Luke 19:12-27

John:

- Good Shepherd: John 10:1-18

Principle Seven: *THE I AM'S OF JESUS*

“Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I Am.”
John 8:58

God has always been the Saviour of His people; delivering them from slavery, giving them victory over their enemies, providing forgiveness for sin. As evidence of this love, He sent Jesus to pay for all sins for all time for those who believe and follow Him. Various aspects of His character and nature are taught to us through the titles of the “I AM” names that Jesus used of Himself. Hopefully we will see Christ in a much newer and fuller way than before. Additionally, we will see

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how these "I AM" names are linked back to Exodus chapter 3:6, 14 where God states, "*He said also, I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. ... God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM"; and He said, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, "I AM sent you."*"

Definition

I AM: The name "I AM", like Yahweh (Jehovah), is the first-person form of the Hebrew verb "to be". The name "I Am" often means "I AM (who I am)." **One who is present.**

The Gospel of John has recorded these "I AM" statements or names. When Jesus used these titles concerning Himself, it infuriated the Pharisees and the Sadducees because they knew from the book of Exodus that this "I AM" title was the name of their One and only God, Jehovah. By making these declarations He was truly stating to the whole world that He was the One and only God and that there was none other but Him.

1. I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE

"Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst". ... "I am the bread of life".

John 6:35 & 48

Definition:

1. **Bread:** a food made of flour or meal from grain with added liquid, shortening and a leavening agent. *Synonyms:* loaf, biscuit, cake, roll, bun.

There are two basic staples that one needs to survive physically on earth. One is water and the other is bread. Jesus wanted the disciples to see that He had come to a lost world as bread for all mankind, and that we need to see Him and understand Him as the true "**bread of life**".

From day one man has always known the importance of having daily bread. Without it life cannot be sustained. But the Scripture adds another dimension to the importance of bread. We see it used by God to feed His people. Each day, except for the Sabbath, God rained down manna from heaven while the Israelites were in the wilderness (Ex 16:35). Then, when the tabernacle was built, they had the "table of showbread", and in later years the bread became part of the sacred worship in the temple (Ex 25:23-30; Matt 12:4). As we move into the New Testament, Christ also instructed His disciples to speak about bread in their prayer life. He taught them to say, "Give us this day our daily bread" (Matt 5:11). Jesus was also the One Who elevated the symbol of bread into the spiritual realm. Each day mankind also needs to have spiritual bread if he hopes to survive spiritually. The day after Jesus did the miracle of feeding the five thousand, He taught the disciples the importance of not looking to Him only for physical bread but also for the spiritual bread, which is of greater importance for life. He clearly stated that He was the "bread of heaven" (John 6:35, 48). The religious leaders got very angry when Jesus declared; "I am the Bread of Life".

Finally, at the end of His earthly ministry, in the upper room, Jesus spoke to the twelve of how His life was now going to be broken for them. He was now going to be the showbread. The

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bread that the Father in heaven sent was going to be physically broken for them. This would be the ultimate price of love that He could give to them, and because of this one act, they could have eternal life. He also commanded them to continue with this fellowship time of communion until He returned for them. He is to be our spiritual bread and sustain us in our everyday walk and life (Matt 26:26-30; Luke 22:14-21).

Our physical bodies require bread and we often desire it with great joy and pleasure. But one needs to see that God the Father has also created within us a spiritual hunger, a hunger that can only be satisfied by Christ. He has come as the bread of life from heaven for our spiritual need. Just as we would die if we didn't eat regularly, the same is true of our spiritual man. We must partake of the bread of heaven daily if we hope to have the strength to overcome the things of this world. We need to receive this wonderful bread from heaven, but we also must give it out to others. Worldwide, people are hungry and thirsty, and this need requires us to do something about it through the strength and power of Christ.

Related Scriptures:

Ex 12:20; 25:30; Deut 8:3; Ps 105:40; Matt 4:4; 6:11; John 6:32-33; 1 Cor 11:23-24

2. I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

*"... I am the **Light** of the world; he who follows me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the **Light** of life."*

John 8:12

*"... I am the **Light** of the world"*

John 9:5

Definition:

1. **Light**: something that makes vision possible; a heavenly body; candle; electric lamp.
Synonyms: brightness, shining, gleam, brilliance, radiance, enlightenment, understanding, comprehension, insight, awareness, knowledge.

Jesus came to a dark world to shed light so that we could see the way clearly. Jesus is the Light Who reveals all things for us. As He proclaimed, He truly is the Light of the world (John 1:4-5).

Just as the people of Israel needed to be guided by God both day and night through the wilderness, we also need to be guided through this dark world (Ex 13:21). The more corrupt the world becomes, the harder it is to see the Truth. God is light, and He is there to shine a clear pathway for us (Ps 119:105). But time seems to darken our eyesight and scales begin to cover our eyes; the result is that we can only see things dimly, as in a poorly lit room.

We are called to reflect the light of Christ to a lost world. When Christ comes into our hearts, He does not want us to keep this light for ourselves or to hide it under a bushel basket, but

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He wants us to climb up to the top of the mountain so that all may see (Matt 5:15). Our little light can make a great difference if we will just let it shine forth for Christ.

Darkness cannot dispel darkness, but light can repel any darkness. Darkness can produce fear and anxiety whereas light can produce faith and freedom. We need light in order to see what is in front of us so that we will not stumble. Light is life; light causes growth and nurtures the seed as well as the plant so that it will, in season, produce fruit.

A lighthouse is very important to sea travelers and their ships. The same is true when it comes to our journey through life. We need people who will shine for Christ so that we can see and find our way through this world (John 3:19). We are also warned that there is a day coming when the earth will fall into a time of great spiritual darkness.

I need to evaluate how I look at and see things. Are my eyes seeing things through a veil of darkness or am I looking at things through the eyes of Christ? We need to walk in the Light, so we do not stumble (Eph 5:8-13). Christ's light gives us boldness to stand strong as a testimony of Who Christ is. We must be a reflection of Christ so that others can also be drawn to Christ.

Related Scriptures:

Ps 27:1; 36:9; 43:3; 119:105, 130; Isa 60:19; Matt 5:16; Luke 8:16-17; John 1:4-9; 12:35-36; 12:46; 2 Cor 4:4-6; Eph 5:8; 1 John 1:5-7

3. I AM THE GATE

*"So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the **door** of the sheep."*

John 10:7

*"I am the **door**; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture."*

John 10:9

Definition:

1. **Gate:** opening for passage in an enclosed wall, fence or barrier; a means of entrance. *Synonyms:* barrier, doorway, entrance, exit, opening, portal, entryway.
2. **Door:** a moveable piece of firm material; means of access. *Synonyms:* entrance, exit, opening portal, entry.

We are confronted by all kinds of gates and doors each day. Doors can keep things out of sight, and they can keep people or things from entering. Christ wanted to picture for the people of His time, and also for us today, that He was the only Door into the kingdom of heaven (John 14:6).

To be able to go almost anywhere you must pass through various types of doors. Doors protect and keep us warm, but doors also hinder us and keep us in or out. Like thieves and robbers, there are always people who try to "break in" in other ways than through the "Door".

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Jesus talked about doorways that were broad and led to destruction and doorways that were narrow and led to life and freedom. He pictured Himself as the Door to the sheepfold. Jesus is the Shepherd for the sheep and the Door to the sheepfold that will keep the enemies out. The doorway was also a place of inspection and healing; a place where the sheep would personally come into contact with the shepherd each day. And, after all the sheep were in and cared for, the shepherd would lay across the doorway as the door. The door was to keep the sheep from wandering and to protect them from the wild animals.

Again, Jesus was taking an earthly picture and giving it a heavenly meaning. In heaven there is only one door to get in and that is through Christ Jesus. Heaven is not a place you can sneak into. Jesus is the doorway that leads to eternal life. Jesus proclaimed to all the religious leaders, "I am the Door". There is no other way.

We also are like a door. We have the ability to be open or closed. We can either be a blockage and hindrance to people or a place of safety and refuge. Christ set us an example and He is still calling us to let Him come into every area of our lives. Do not close out the work of the Holy Spirit but open all doors so as to be cleaned and healed and delivered.

Related Scriptures:

Ps 100:4; Matt 7:13; 16:18; John 10:3; Rev 3:20

4. I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD

*"I am the good **shepherd**; the good **shepherd** lays down His life for the sheep."*

John 10:11

*"I am the good **shepherd**, and I know My own and My own know Me."*

John 10:14

Definition:

1. **Shepherd**: a man employed in leading, feeding and guarding sheep; one charged with the religious care and guidance of others. *Synonyms*: herdsman, herder, sheepman.

From cover to cover the Bible teaches us how God is a Shepherd to His sheep. In the Old Testament He was the Shepherd to the Israelites but, in the fullness of time, He came to earth to be a real flesh and blood Shepherd to whoever would call upon His name. The triune God was now showing us His true nature. The job of the shepherd was the least of all jobs. It mostly fell on the youngest of the family, like David, for example. It paid little but carried great responsibilities. It was important to protect oneself and the sheep from all kinds of challenges and enemies. Jesus spoke of Himself as the Shepherd of our lives.

The role of a shepherd is not an easy life. It seems sheep are the most vulnerable and helpless animals of all. They are skittish and fearful. They need a lot of attention. The Scriptures tells us that the people of the world are like sheep without a shepherd, wandering aimlessly and open to all kinds of challenges (Matt 9:36). We are in need of a true Shepherd.

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There is a relationship that grows between the shepherd and the sheep. He gets to know them, and they begin to know his voice (John 10:3, 27). He calls them by name and most often they come. A **true shepherd** is willing to lay down his life for the sheep (John 10:11). We are warned that there are other kinds of shepherds, called hirelings, who work just for money, and when trouble arises, they are nowhere to be found (Matt 7:15). The true shepherd cares for the sheep in every detail. He watches over them, anoints them with oil, makes sure that they have proper food and water, keeps away the enemies and provides shelter for them to sleep (Ps 23:16). When one is missing, he knows of it and goes out to look for that lost one because he has great love and concern for them (Matt 18:12).

The shepherd had three tools for his trade. The **rod** was like a **club** that was used to protect the sheep, and the **staff** was used to guide and rescue the sheep (Ps 23:1-6). He also had a **sling** for fighting enemies of the sheep and it could also be used to help herd and move the sheep.

The shepherd would lead the sheep, going before them. He would choose the ground where they would graze and get the place ready where they would sleep at night. Jesus, as our shepherd, came to give us life and to protect us from our enemies (John 10:11). Jesus freely laid down His life for us as sheep. We are worth the cost.

Some of us, as leaders, are called to be under-shepherds, whether it is just in our own families or small house groups, but we all have a responsibility to help the sheep that are around us. We need to be hearing their voices and cries so that we can help where needed. We should lead in such a way that others can follow. Paul told the church, "follow me as I follow Christ." As disciples, we all need to come to the place of being willing to lay down our lives for others.

Related Scriptures:

Ps 23:1-6; Isa 40:11; Heb 13:20; 1 Pet 5:4

5. I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

*"... I am the **resurrection** and the **life**; he who believes in Me will **live** even if he dies, and everyone who **lives** and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?"*

John 11:25-26

Definition:

1. **Resurrect:** raise from the dead, restore to life, breathe new life into. *Synonyms:* revive, restore, regenerate, revitalize, stimulate, re-establish.
2. **Life:** the course of an existence; a period from birth to death. *Synonyms:* existence, being, living, creation, energy, spirit, fire, destiny, providence.
3. **Death:** the act of dying; termination of life; extinction. *Synonyms:* demise, end, passing, loss of life, eternal rest, destruction.

Christ wanted to show to all mankind that death and life are in the hands of God. Jesus is the Lord of all life and He has the resurrection power to overcome the sting of death. Even we

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who have eternal life do experience death, but that death is only physical. Christ desires to give to us eternal life (John 3:36; 5:24).

The disciples needed to understand that life and death were in the hands of Jesus Christ. This lesson was going to be taught to them from the life and death of Lazarus. It seems that, at each step Jesus made concerning Lazarus, the disciples challenged His actions. What Jesus was trying to do was to get the disciples to truly understand and believe in Who He was and is.

Mary and Martha also responded to Jesus in two different ways. One ran out to see Him and the other stayed home. Eventually they both confessed their faith in Him. They did believe that He could heal. Even the religious people there felt the same way. But Jesus was now going to stretch their faith more by showing them that He had the power over life and death (John 11:25).

The time had now come to remove the stone that was holding Lazarus in the tomb. After the stone was rolled away, Jesus called Lazarus out, and as he struggled to come out (because he was bound in grave clothes), He commanded the disciples to go over and unwrap them for Lazarus.

This miracle would also prepare the disciples for what was going to happen to Christ in the future with His own death. He was going to show them His power once and for all as He proclaimed, "I am the resurrection and the Life". Christ Himself resurrected from death. Even though man crucified and killed His body He was able to rise again because of the power of God that filled His life (Matt 28:1-8).

The reason that this teaching is so important to disciples is because it has to do with our understanding of life and death from the perspective of God. One day we will all die physically, but what happens to our spiritual man will be determined by our actions here on earth (Phil 4:3). There is a real heaven and a real hell, places of final eternal destination (1 Cor 15:35-58). We must understand that we can begin to experience the resurrection power and eternal life right now, here on earth (Rom 6:23; Phil 3:10).

Related Scriptures:

Prov 4:23; Matt 16:25; 20:28; John 3:16; 10:10-11; John 15:13; Rom 6:4; Phil 3:10;
1 Pet 1:3; 1 John 3:16

6. I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE.

"Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me".

John 14:6

Definition:

1. **Way:** a thoroughfare used or designed for traveling, of going from place to place; a method of attaining or accomplishing something. *Synonyms:* method, process,

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procedure, technique, system, plan, strategy, means, approach, habit, custom, conduct, behavior, style, character.

- 2. Truth:** the quality or state of being truthful; the real state of affairs; conformity or agreement with fact or reality. *Synonyms:* sincerity, honesty, accuracy, correctness, validity, authenticity, fact, principle.
- 3. Life:** the course of an existence; a period from birth to death. *Synonyms:* existence, being, living, energy.

People are always looking for direction. The disciples of Christ were no different. They wanted to know clearly, which way they were going. What truth should they believe in? Where was life for them going to end? These questions are no different today, and then, as now, Jesus provides our way, our truth to live by, and gives us the life eternal (John 14:1-6).

Jesus wanted to teach the disciples that He was the only way to the Father. He is the foundation stone and Rock of all knowledge and truth about God. He is the road map Who leads us to the right way, He is the truth that we can trust, and He is the only One Who offers us eternal life if we will just believe in Him (Rom 10:9-10). The key is that we must commit our ways and lives totally over to His Lordship.

Mankind is searching for all kinds of truth and for ways to have a happy life. We want to be free from the bondages of this world, but often we are looking in all the wrong places. Earth's answers cannot produce spiritual freedom and life. There is nothing we can do of ourselves to personally attain freedom and eternal life. But Christ has come to set things straight. Eternal life was not going to happen by our efforts, but it would be a reality because of His work on the cross, which would open the door for us to enter into a new way of living.

The Bible is our road map and direction for Life. It is our root and heritage. Jesus is the Truth, the lifeblood for living. He is the source of all strength and power. He is the Head Who gives direction and life to the church. Jesus also sends the Holy Spirit to give us life, to teach us Divine Truth and to walk with us as we travel along the way.

The way will not be easy, and it will be costly and full of all kinds of challenges, but He will walk with us. As the God of grace, He is willing to pour grace out on us if we will just receive it. His desire is to give us life more abundantly, to set us free from the captivity of this world (John 10:10).

Each day is a new travel opportunity for you. Each day is a gift from God to you. You will have to decide which way you will go (Matt 7:13). Then, as you start out, you will be bombarded by all kinds of voices claiming that they are speaking the truth. You can stake your life on Jesus as the real Truth about God and as the only real way to God – our life in all fullness.

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Related Scriptures:

Deut 30:19; 32:4; Ps 37:5; 119:160; Jer 21:8; Matt 7:13; John 1:14; 4:24; 5:24; 8:32; Acts 9:2; 1 Cor 10:13; 2 Cor 3:6; Eph 4:15; Col 3:4; 2 Tim 2:15; Heb 10:20

7. I AM THE TRUE VINE

"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser."

John 15:1

*"Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. **I am the vine**, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing."*

John 15:4 & 5

Definition:

1. **True:** steady, firm, dependable in allegiance or devotion to a loved one, friend or leader, group or cause; in accordance with fact or reality. *Synonyms:* correct, accurate, verifiable, faithful, literal, proper, legitimate, authorized, heartfelt, devoted, steadfast, reliable, dependable.
2. **Vine:** grape, any climbing or trailing woody-stemmed plant, sometimes bearing fruit, as coiled about a support.
3. **Sap:** fluid that carries nourishment; active strength of the Body. *Synonyms:* life blood, life source, vigor, vitality.
4. **Grafting:** to insert a shoot from one plant into another so that they join and grow together, the point of union. *Synonyms:* implanting, splicing, affixing, inserting, joining.
5. **Abide:** bear, endure, dwell, remain, last. *Synonyms:* to remain constant, continuous, durable, enduring, eternal, everlasting, fast, firm, permanent, persistent, steadfast, surviving, unending.
6. **Relationship:** a connection by way of relation; a state of affairs existing between those having relations or dealings. *Synonyms:* connection, link, correlation, bond, kinship.

We are called to live a moment-by-moment lifestyle that will model and reflect Jesus Christ to a lost world. The only way that this is possible is for us to be **grafted** into the true vine of Christ (Rom 11:17-24). We must have a personal relationship with Christ our Creator. We need to become one with Him and His Body the Church.

The picture of Christ as the true vine was given out of His desire to have a personal relationship with His disciples. This relationship is to bring man together with the **Vinedresser Who** is the Father, with Christ Who is the vine, and with the Holy Spirit Who is the life source flowing through us all. Without being part of Christ, we cannot produce anything.

Abiding as a branch is critical to a fruitful journey here on earth. We are taken out from our old way of life and are **grafted** into the side of Christ to become a new creation in Him (2 Cor 5:17). The branches will need to be **pruned** once in a while to keep producing fruit, but when a

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branch does not produce it is then removed and burned. Fruit is produced from a living and active branch.

We also are given historical roots because when we become part of Christ's vine, we also become part of **His heritage**, taking us back to the root of Jesse (Rom 15:12). I am no longer just an individual, but I am now part of a unique people called out for service by Christ. We have become joint heirs with Christ (Rom 8:17). What makes everything work is a heart of love. We are to abide in Christ's love which allows us to be overcomers in this world; nothing can stand up to or stop the love of Christ (John 15:4; 1 John 2:28).

This grafting-in also makes us part of a **family**; we are joined together with many other branches into what we know best as the Church. Together we begin to mature and grow, to work in harmony and unity with other disciples of Christ. By love we have all been grafted into Christ.

Finally, if we keep this relationship flourishing, we can ask anything of the Father, and it will be done for us (John 15:16). This happens because we are in relationship with Christ. We will also have the mind of Christ. The goal of our walk with Christ is that we can glorify the Father.

Personal relationship with Christ is what brings love, grace and peace to the disciple's heart. It all starts by being **grafted into the True Vine**. More than just being part of a vine, we also produce fruit that will bring glory to God (Rom 7:4). We are to produce **fruit** that will last, and we will be known by our fruit (Matt 7:16-17). This is what makes a true disciple. Because of our abiding relationship with Him, each day we need to ask ourselves what we are producing for Christ. (Matt 7:7; Luke 11:9; John 14:13; Eph 3:20).

Related Scriptures:

Ps 80:14; Matt 26:29; Mark 14:25; Luke 22:18

8. I AM THE FIRST AND THE LAST / I AM THE ALPHA AND THE OMEGA

*"And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. But He laid his right hand on me, saying to me, do not be afraid; **I am the first and the last. I am** he who lives, and was dead, and behold, **I am** alive forevermore. Amen. ..."*

Revelation 1:17

*"Then He said to me, "It is done. **I am the Alpha and the Omega**, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost."*

Revelation 21:6

*"Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done. **I am the Alpha and the Omega**, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.*

Revelation 22:12-13

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Definition:

1. **Alpha & Omega:** the beginning and ending, the principle element, the most important feature. The first and the last letter of the Greek alphabet, which means He is not only the beginning and the end but all parts in between.
2. **Beginning:** the point at which something starts to exist; the act or action of calling or being called into existence. *Synonyms:* birth, inception, genesis, rise, start, first part, origin, source, root.
3. **End:** cessation of a course of action, pursuit or activity; something completed. *Synonyms:* termination, finish, border, boundary, climax, culmination.

The last of the “**I Am**” passages is found in the book of Revelation where the Apostle John was given a vision and wrote down for the church the greatness of our Lord and King to inspire us as disciples to bow down and worship Him with all that we are. John paints for us a picture of Jesus Christ as the **Alpha and the Omega**, the One Who is the **first and last** of all.

The book of Revelation has as a theme the call to worship Christ as Lord and King. John shows to the disciple a full picture of what is happening in the heavenlies; Christ is preparing a place for us and soon will be returning for the church. John uses the first letter of the Greek alphabet and the last letter to show that Christ was there at the moment of creation and will also be there in the end when time will be no more.

In the last chapter of the Bible, we once again see the river of life and the tree of life that were first introduced to mankind in the book of Genesis. Man was driven out of the garden because of sin, but now because of the work of Christ, His grace and righteousness, we are once again able to come into the throne room of our King. Jesus tells the believer, “I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost” (Rev 21:6).

Because of the three times that the phrase “**Alpha and Omega**” is used, we can see that the Father and the Son are all One. God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit have no beginning nor end, and we must understand that they have been with us at our beginning and will also be so at the end when we go to reign with Him for all eternity (Rev 22:5). Because Christ is the Beginning and the End, He is also all things in between. He is the great “**I Am**”. He is all that we need for our lives. We should never forget this. Just as the “**I Am**” was for Moses and for the people of Israel, He is the same for the disciples and for the church today. The time will draw to a close for all things pertaining to our life here, and then will come the time when all pain and suffering will come to an end, when the lion will lay down with the lamb. We will come to that place where we will truly be able to worship face-to-face the Lamb Who sits on the throne.

The reason this last “**I Am**” is so important for the disciple is because it shows Christ as God, one with the Father and the Holy Spirit, and that they are the all-inclusive One for all time. God has been before time and will be there after time is no more. We also need to see that He has not forgotten us, but, in the fullness of time, He is coming back for us as Lord God, the Almighty King. We as disciples need to be ready for His great return. Christ told the disciples on the day He ascended into Heaven that He would come back again in like fashion for His bride, the Church. On

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that day we will be presented to Christ and will have to give an account of that which was given to us as Christ's stewards.

One final thought concerning God: as the great "**I Am**" we need to understand that whatever we need in life, **He is**. Do you need healing? **He is** your Healer. Do you need peace? **He is** your peace. Do you need encouragement? **He is** your encourager. **He is** everything and all that we need.

Related Scriptures:

Rev 1:8; 4:8; 11:17; 15:3-4; 19:6; 19:15-16

These eight "**I Am's**" picture for us several truths about the fullness of Who Christ is. First, Christ is the center of all these teachings, and we must see Him as the One that we must go to if we are going to experience eternal life. Second, He desires and seeks us out to have a personal relationship with Him. Third, so much of Who Christ is as our God is foundational, built from the teaching of the Old Testament. Christ wants us to see Him as part of the total triune God.

*"That day you will know that **I am** in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you."*

John 14:20

Principle Eight: NAMES AND TITLES OF JESUS

Throughout the Old and New Testaments, we are given many prophetic and given names of our Lord Jesus Christ. We will not list them all, but we will give reference to some that are important for our overview about Christ and the doctrine of Christology.

There are almost **200 names and titles** that are given to Christ Jesus and they describe various aspects of Who He is and how He ministers to us. Here is just a sample of some of these names that are recorded in the Word of God: Redeemer, Prophet, Son of God, Holy One, King, Stone, Rose of Sharon, Emmanuel, Counsellor, Mighty God, Prince of Peace, Jehovah, Messiah, Judge, Jesus, Son of Righteousness, Son of David, Son of Man, Master, Saviour, Word, Light, Lamb of God, Bread of Life, I Am, Door, Good Shepherd, Resurrection, Vine, Way, Truth, Life, Prince, Lord, Deliverer, Second Adam, Chief Corner Stone, Mediator, God, Daystar, Eternal Life, Advocate, Alpha and Omega, Almighty, Lion of the Tribe of Judah, Root of David, Rock, Word, Lord of Lords, King of Kings.

It is important for the disciple of Christ to understand Who Jesus is as described by these various names. The various names of Jesus have built within them teachings that give us the power to not only withstand the devil, but to break his strongholds both in our lives and in the lives of people around us. We should never underestimate the power that comes through the names of Christ. These names are like puzzle pieces that, when they are all put together as one big picture, show to us the magnificence and glory of Who Christ Jesus is. He is the One to Whom we bow our knee and serve with all our hearts.

Principle Nine: *KEY FUNCTION AND MINISTRIES OF JESUS*

We will take a little time to reflect on at least a few of these important names because they have powerful meanings and concepts that will help the disciple to grow and mature more in Christ Jesus.

1. **Messiah / Christ**

The word Messiah means "**the anointed one**"; the Hebrew word is often translated "**Messiah**" in the Old Testament. In the New Testament the Greek word is most times translated "**Christ**" (John 4:25). Christ's baptism showed that Jesus was the Messiah, anointed with the Holy Spirit and with power (Matt 3:10, 16). It is sometime sad that the use of the word "Messiah" is not translated more often in the New Testament, because the purpose of this title is to remind disciples that we are committed to, and serve, the "**Anointed One**" (Acts 10:38). Think about this for a moment: we are called as disciples of Christ but think how you would feel if it was translated this way: you are a "**Disciple of the Anointed One**". When we speak His name, we should realize that we are talking to One who can intervene and deal with every challenge we face, because He is the "**Anointed One**", God (1 Cor 3:23; Col 3:3). What if, every time we saw the name of Christ, we would think of His unique anointed power, a power that can flow from Him into our lives, if we would just call upon His name (Rom 10:13; Phil 3:10).

The beauty of this name is that when we become personally connected to Christ our Messiah, we have Him and "Anointed Self" living in us (Rom 8:17; 10:9-10; 12:5). The Messiah died for our sins so that, through faith in Him, we can have an anointed eternal life, starting the day we receive Him into our hearts as our personal Saviour and Lord. (John 4:42; 1 Cor 15:3-5; Gal 5:20; Eph 3:17; Heb 9:28). We should always, each day, feel free and blessed, that we can call upon the "**Anointed One**", to move through every challenge or struggle that we may be facing (1 John 2:27). We are made to be over-comers, not through our strength and ability, but by the power of the "**Anointed One**".

2. **Advocate**

Jesus is our **advocate** on high (1 John 2:1). The word **advocate** means a supporter, backer, promoter, believer, sponsor, advocacy, helper, defender. This is a law court term where you have someone who stands before the judge and speaks on your behalf. Because we have been charged with disobedience and are born into trespasses and sin (Eph 2:1) there is no way that we can be set free on our own. The death sentence is already pronounced on our lives (James 1:15). We have been found guilty on all charges. We need to realize that we are all sinners (Rom 3:23); if we say we have no sin then we are deceived (1 John 1:8). And because of that deception is that we stand guilty and we will not have an advocate before the Father. The punishment will be carried out, meaning that we will spend an eternity of suffering and death (Rom 6:23; 2 Cor 1:9).

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One of the main reasons that Christ came to this earth was to pay for the sins of mankind. Because of his act of love by shedding His blood (Eph 1:7) and dying on the cross, He can now become our **Advocate**. His shed blood was the price that was required for our sins (Col 1:14; 1 John 1:7). Jesus stepped forward into the courtroom and offered Himself as our **Advocate** because He Himself knew no sin (2 Cor 5:21). As Jesus' disciples, we have put our faith in Him and asked for his forgiveness (Rom 10:9-10), He stands before the Father interceding on our behalf (Heb 7:25). By faith in Christ, we become joined with Him (Rom 8:17) and He is our Advocate before the Father. Death is replaced with eternal life (John 3:15; 17:2-3; 1 John 5:11-13). This is a truth that the disciple needs to proclaim to people of the world (Rom 10:14-117), that there is One who will stand before the Heavenly Father as their **Advocate**. His goal is to make it possible for us to be set free from sin and death. **All**, and again I say, **all** peoples, no matter what state they are in, can be set free, if they just make Christ their personal Lord and Saviour (Gal 5:1) He will truly **Advocate** on your behalf.

3. Deliverer

There are many, many people in this world who are struggling with some type of bondage, either outwardly or inwardly, but are afraid to admit it. The Bible tells us that there is One Who is called "**Deliverer**". He is able to save, and to set free, to release us from the enemy. The Scriptures state, "that out of Sion the **Deliverer** will come" (Rom 11:26) and His name is Jesus Christ. Jesus is our **Deliverer** Who has come to set us free from sin and death (1 Thes 1:10). We were in bondage to Satan and this world (Rom 8:21); Christ came to the earth to shed His blood so that we could be set free from an eternal bondage and damnation (John 8:32-36; Gal 5:1).

The prophet Samuel knew that God was the One who can deliver and be a protector of His people (2 Sam 22:2). The key is that we need to have faith that God is able to deliver us from all things. Also, King David stated that God was His **deliverer**, his high tower, a fortress, a place where one can seek refuge, a place where we can be shielded and protected (Ps 144:2). If we would just call upon the Name of the LORD, there is no situation in life from which He could not deliver us (Ps 40:17, 70:5). We as disciples need to realize that Christ give us hope and the power to overcome, not because of who we are, but because of Who He is. He has the ministry of deliverance, that of binding and loosening things both here on earth and in heaven (Matt 18:18). He is the "**Almighty God Our Deliverer**". There is nothing that can bind or separate us from God (Rom 8:35), absolutely nothing. Why? Because, as already stated, we have a **Deliverer** (Jesus Christ) Who can set us free; He has reconciled us by the power of His shed blood (Col 1:20-22).

4. Redeemer

Seldom do we know the full depth of meaning of this word. It refers to one who buys back, rescuing something or someone; someone who gives of themselves or their possessions to get that which was lost or is now desired, to deliver, to rescue, to save, to give ransom for. To really get the full impact of what Christ has done, you have to look at where you are now and where you were before Christ entered your life. We need to have our eyes opened to see what

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Christ is doing and what it cost Him to **redeem** us back from death and sin (Gal 3:13). The illustration of a pawnshop helps to illustrate. You were sold into a lost world and were told that you had little value, worthless. But with Christ, He sees you with potential and value and asks the clerk, "How much for that one (you)? What would it take to **redeem** that one back to life again?" Now the reality is that Christ came to pay a price that we could not pay, and that price was to die on the cross and shed His blood for our sins (Gal 4:5).

Christ came, sent forth by the Heavenly Father with a goal to **redeem** us back from the penalty of death and destruction (Titus 2:14). This truth is so important to all peoples ... that is why it needs to be proclaimed. Each day we, as disciples, need to understand that we have a God Who has a goal and purpose in His heart to **redeem** us, no matter how far we have gone astray or how far we have sunk into sin. The Father sees value and purpose, so much so, that Christ (The Anointed One) was sent forth to this world so that, if we would just believe and have faith in Him, He would **redeem** us (1 Pet 1:18-19). Through the power of the Holy Spirit, He can reach into any situation and buy us back from the devil's hold of death and destruction.

There are some people in the Bible who knew and saw that God was a **Redeemer**. Job said, "for I know that my **Redeemer** liveth" (Job 19:25). In the depth of all Job's struggles and against the counsel of others, he kept focused on this powerful truth. David said, "O LORD, my strength and my **Redeemer**" (Ps 19:14). David faced a lot of outward and inward challenges, both as a fugitive and as a king. He made a lot of mistakes, but he knew that this was the only truth which could bring him true strength and peace. Isaiah prophesied to all, "O LORD, Thou art our Father, our **Redeemer** from everlasting is Your name" (Isa 63:16). Isaiah saw into the heavenlies and knew that the only hope Israel had was to trust in the Heavenly Father Who was, and still is, the true **Redeemer** of all. As disciples, we need to have this truth deeply embedded into our minds and hearts. The planted seed can produce a bountiful harvest of fruit: peace, love, faith, hope (Rom 15:13) and, mostly, freedom from worldly bondages (John 8:36). The first step that all must go through is to be **redeemed** by the blood of the Lamb (Rom 10:9-10). This is the only way you can be **redeemed** (John 14:6). Then ask God to empower you with His Holy Spirit, Who will equip you for the journey that lies ahead of you (Luke 11:13; Acts 1:8).

Remember that Christ has the power to bring about deliverance and **redemption** for all who have been bound by sin and death (Luke 4:18). Jesus Christ is the One Who rescues us from everlasting destruction, He helps us escape the chains and cords that have bound us, He has set us set free, and He has bought us back by shedding His blood and dying for us on the cross (Eph 2:14-18). Christ is and always will be our **Redeemer** (Isa 60:16)!

5. Mediator

What a wonderful truth that we have ... a real person and God, "One" who has stepped forward and now **mediates** on our behalf. **Mediator** means an interceder, a peacemaker, a go-between, an intermediary, and an arbitrator. Paul tells Timothy, "*For there is one God, and one **Mediator** between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all ...*" 1 Tim 2:5-6. Paul wanted Timothy to know that whatever he faced, he did not stand alone but

had a **Mediator** who stood in the gap for him. We do not have to face our enemy alone, but through Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit (Rom 15:13) we can beat back the powers of the enemy. Paul tells the Galatian church that our **Mediator** is ready to work and serve on behalf of all peoples (Gal 3:20). The goal is to reconcile and bring peace (Matt 10:34) between the two parties, to pull down the dividing wall that would separate us from a personal relationship with God (Eph 2:14-16). He **mediates** on our behalf and, because of His action and love for us, our names can be written down in the Lamb's Book of Life (Rev 21:27).

For the disciple, Christ is the **Mediator** between us and the heavenly Father ... He stands in our place and makes it possible for us to enter into the Holy of Holies (Heb 9:11-15). Because of His death and resurrection, He has introduced a new and better covenant (Heb 9:15). Hebrews states, *"But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also **Mediator** of a better covenant, which was established on better promises"* (Heb 8:6). The old has passed away and, through Christ Jesus we have become a new creation (2 Cor 5:17), washed by the blood of the Lamb (Heb 12:24). Disciples of Christ do not stand alone, but we are joint heirs with Jesus Christ (Rom 8:17; Gal 4:7) who **Mediates** and makes intercession on our behalf (Heb 7:25). We don't need to be full of fear but should be full of faith (James 1:6) and trust in our **Mediator**, knowing that He is aware of exactly what we need. We need to set a goal of praying to our **Mediator**, Jesus Christ, as often as we can (Phil 4:6-7) so that we can be comforted, taught and guided by Him (Matt 6:33).

6. Saviour

A **saviour** is someone who rescues or delivers us from harm or loss. Jesus was sent by the Heavenly Father to a sinful and lost world to make a way of deliverance and redemption for all who would receive Him (John 3:16). His death on the cross and His resurrection three days later seal, once and for all, the fact that He was the sacrificial Lamb, the **Saviour** of the world (Isa 53:7; Rev 12:10-11). As our sacrificial Lamb, He made it possible for us to be clothed in His righteousness (2 Pet 1:1), making it possible for us to one day stand whole and pure before the Father in Heaven (Jer 23:6; 1 John 2:1). He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life; there is no other way by which people can be saved (John 14:6). To those who personally receive Him into their hearts, He becomes their **Saviour** (Rom 10:9-10).

Throughout history people have been looking for something or someone that could deliver them from the bondages of this earth and to give them life eternal. Trying many alternatives, many gods were created, yet the emptiness in the human heart could not be filled by these man-made things. From the times of Abraham to the people of Israel, they knew that there was only one God and one way. He would be the One Who created them and would sustain them if they would have faith and commit to trusting Him in all things. King David proclaimed, *"The LORD is my rock and fortress and deliverer; The God of my strength, in whom I will trust; the shield and horn of my salvation, my stronghold my refuge; my **saviour** ..."* 2 Sam 22:2-3. Isaiah also prophesied about a coming **Saviour** who would set the people free from all sorrow and bondage and, most of all, death itself. Here are just a few partial verses: *"He will send them a **Saviour** and a Mighty One, and He will deliver them"* Isa 19:20; *"that I the LORD am thy **Saviour***

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*and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob” Isa 49:26; “know that I the LORD am thy **Saviour** Isa 60:16”; “so he was their **Saviour**” Isa 63:8.*

As we move into the New Testament it becomes clear to some that Jesus Christ, the Messiah, was the long-awaited One Who would be the **Saviour** of the world (1 John 4:14). Here again are just a few verses proclaiming this truth from the Gospels: *“spirit hath rejoiced in God my **Saviour**” Luke 1:47; “is born this day in the city of David a **Saviour**” Luke 2:11; “the Christ, the **Saviour** of the world” John 4:42. Then Paul, as he traveled and taught the churches, continued to share about the importance of understanding that Christ is the **Saviour**: *“Christ is the head of the church: and He is the **Saviour** of the body” Eph 5:23. Again, listen to what Paul says to Timothy, “For to this end we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the **Saviour** of all men, especially to those who believe” 1 Tim 4:10.**

For disciples of Christ it is important to remember that Christ has come to **save** us and to rescue us from ourselves and from this lost world (1 John 4:14-15). He is the only **Saviour** (Acts 13:23), the only One who can do this and, because of this, our names can be written in the Lamb’s book of Life (Rev 21:27). Remember the Name Joshua (which is Jesus in the Greek) means **“Saviour”** or **“The LORD saves or the LORD is salvation”**.

7. Lord / LORD

The word “lord” often meant master, owner, noble, aristocrat. In England the title of lord is still used; for example, the lord of a manor. These titles are usually bestowed on an individual by a king or queen. In the olden days a lord would own a large piece of land and, usually, everything and everyone in that territory belonged to the landlord. He was to take care of the people and protect them, but in return he would collect some type of tax from the people. Over history the word has taken on a more negative meaning, often implying one who is harsh and brutal to the people, causing the people to suffer.

Throughout the Bible the word **LORD / Lord** are titles given to God which means Supreme Being, God Almighty. The word in the Old Testament could be found written three ways. 1. **lord**: used as a title given to a leader of people, a chief, “sir”, an honoured one, a benevolent and caring one (Ps 12:4; Matt 21:40; John 13:16; Rev 17:14). 2. **LORD**: Yehowa: in Hebrew this title is used for the name Yahweh, to be, life, self-existing, used 6823 times, spelt with all capital letters. The Almighty One, Ruler over everything created (Gen 4:3; Ex 5:2; Josh 24:15; 1 Sam 16:7; 2 Sam 16:7; 1 Chr 16:11; Ps 23:1; 24:8; Isa 12:2; 42:8; 60:16; Jer 23:6; Zeph 3:17; Mal 3:6). 3. **Lord**: translated from Hebrew as Adonai, used 360 times, means **Lord**, master, sir, owner, noble, aristocrat (Gen 15:8; Deut 10:17; Ps 136:3; Isa 6:1; Amos 9:1; Matt 22:37; Rom 1:4 14:9; 2 Cor 3:17; Phil 2:11; Col 1:3; 2 Tim 4:8; 1 Pet 2:3; 2 Pet 3:9). The word **Lord** is used as a title to show that He is part of the Godhead (Mark 12:39)

In the New Testament, Christ is to be the **Lord** and Saviour (Acts 16:31) in all areas of a disciple's life. He is to be the Head over all things (Luke 2:1). He is the Head and **Lord** over the church (Eph 1:15-23). He is the King of kings and **Lord** of lords (Rev 17:14). It is to Christ our

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Lord that one day every knee will bow and confess Him as **Lord**. (Phil 2:10-11). You will also see in the Bible that the word **Lord** is closely connected to the titles of Saviour and King.

For the disciple the meaning takes on the idea of dying to self and our will, being born again into Christ Jesus (John 3:1-16) and His will for our lives (Mat 6:10). We are giving over ownership to Christ: *"It is no longer I that live but Christ in me"* (Gal 2:20; Phil 1:21). We serve in the name of our **Lord** Jesus Christ (1 Cor 1:2). Our victory here on earth comes through having a personal relation with our **Lord** Jesus Christ (1 Cor 15:57; 1 Thes 5:9).

8. Priest

In the Old and New Testament, the **priest** was a man who functioned as a pastor or minister; he helped lead, guide and nurture the people and ministered at the temple. He was to be called by God for service; He was responsible for making sacrifices on behalf of the people as well as for himself (Gen 14:18; Ex 31:10; Lev 4:20; 6:7). There were various levels of the priesthood but, in all cases, they were to be God's representatives and servants.

Again, it was prophesied that there would be One who would become a **High Priest** for all, after the order of Melchizedek (*Ps 110:4; Heb 5:6; 7:17, 21*). The book of Hebrews spends much time showing the reader, that Christ Jesus was, and is, the **High Priest** Who entered the Holy of Holies once and for all, becoming our sacrificial Lamb (John 1:29), shedding His blood for the remission of our sins (Heb 3:1; 4:14-16; 13:11-12).

We too, as disciples, are to be **priests** unto our God (Rev 1:4-6; 5:10), to go into the Holy of Holies, that being made possible by Christ Jesus (Matt 27:51; Heb 6:19-20), where we can offer up prayers, worship and confession for ourselves and others. We can come into the very presence of our **Great High Priest**, all because of His shed blood and righteousness (1 John 2:1). The disciple of Christ functions as a servant on behalf of Christ, as a **priest** for the people of God, teaching and proclaiming truth (Matt 28:19-20), praying for the sick and, through the name of Christ, setting people free from various bondages (Mark 16:15-18); this, not in our ability and strength, but in the strength and ability of our **High Priest Jesus Christ** who give us the authority to do so (Matt 10:1). We go out with the Good News, filled with the power of the Holy Spirit, proclaiming that Christ, our **High Priest**, has come to this earth to set the captives free (Luke 24:46-49; Rom 8:2; Gal 5:1).

9. King

Christ, Who is God, is our **King**, Ruler, Sovereign One; One who oversees, has the power and authority over the people of this earth and its various kingdoms. The Psalmist proclaimed that God is the **King** of all glory (Ps 24:7) and that one day the **King** Himself will set up His rule here on earth. Christ is to be esteemed as the **King of kings** and the Lord of lords (1 Tim 6:15; Rev 19:16 Rev 17:14). Our **King** is a king who is eternal, immortal and invisible (1 Tim 1:17), He sits on an eternal throne with all power and majesty (Heb 1:3, 2).

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Many countries have a king as their leader, but do not realize that these leaders have been put in place by God Almighty (Ps 95:3); but we as followers of Christ, serve another **King**. We, as disciples here on earth, are Christ's ambassadors, proclaiming the truth about His Kingdom (Eph 6:20; 2 Cor 5:20). When we accept Christ as our personal Saviour, He becomes **King** over every aspect of our lives.

Our **King** was born from a line of kings (Jer 10:10; 23:5) and was born in Bethlehem the city of King David (Luke 2:4, 11). There is soon a day coming when Christ will return. The first time He came as a servant (Matt 20:28), showing the way to the heavenly kingdom (Matt 6:13), but the next time He will come as **King** of kings (Rev 19:11-16). In Psalm 24:1-10 we are given a wonderful exhortation concerning God and His Kingdom. Note especially verses 7-10:

Lift up your heads, O you gates!
And be lifted up, you everlasting doors!
And the **King** of glory shall come in.

Who is the **King** of glory?
The LORD strong and mighty,
The LORD mighty in battle.

Lift up your heads, O you gates!
Lift up, you everlasting doors!
And the **King** of glory shall come in.

Who is the **King** of glory?
The LORD of hosts,
He is the **King** of glory.

Christ is preparing His eternal Kingdom right now (John 14:1-3). We will be clothed in His righteousness, we will have a new name, and we will be part of a new Kingdom. We also will participate as His bride (Rev 19:7) in the best celebration ever, the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. But while we are still here as Christ's disciples, we are encouraged to continue to seek His Kingdom (Matt 6:13, 33). As disciples, we are not just eagerly anticipating a future kingdom, but we are part of Christ's kingdom right now here on earth. We are told to remember the Kingdom of God is at hand (Rom 14:17). We need to keep our **King** and His kingdom before us and in our hearts each day, endeavoring to walk in His ways. We need to continue to live in light of what our **King** continues to do for us, we should, by His power, make every effort to avoid sin." Paul warns us, that if, we remain part of this world with its sin nature and kingdom, we will not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven (Gal 5:21).

There is so much more that can be written concerning these names. In a deeper and more personal way, it would be good for disciples to take the time to connect these names with the role of Christ. These titles can revolutionize one's Christian walk and help the believer to overcome the

challenges and snares, which may come both from the enemy as well as our personal life struggles.

Principle Ten: *FIVE MAJOR EXHORTATIONS OF CHRIST TO HIS FOLLOWERS*

- 1. Love God and your neighbour.** We all know this command that is given to us both in the Old Testament and by Jesus in the New Testament. Jesus tells the lawyer that all the commands of God can be boiled down to two and that we must live these two out in our lives if we hope to be with Him in heaven. First, we are to love God with all our body, soul and spirit. This would mean dying to ourselves and living for God with all that we have and with all of who we are. Secondly, we are to love our neighbour as ourselves. God does not just want us to look heavenward and love only Him, but He wants us to take the love that we have been given by Him and give it out to others. We are to have a dual vision looking both towards heaven and towards our neighbours round about us. We also need to see that our neighbour is not just a person whose house is next door, but our neighbors are also the people on our street, our neighbourhoods, our city, our country and our world. God has a lot of love to give out and He wants to use us as vessels to pour out His love to all those around us, every moment of each day. (Lev 19:18; Deut 6:4-8; Matt 4:43; 22:34-40; Luke 10:29; Rom 13:9-10; James 2:8)
- 2. Be baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.** God also wants us to demonstrate our faith in Him to others. We are commanded to be baptized, a decision that should follow soon after we've invited Christ into our hearts as Lord and Saviour. Baptism is a picture of how we've died to ourselves and now live for Jesus Christ. It is also a testimony to those who view our baptism, by which we show that our lives no longer belong to us but belong to Christ, just as Christ Himself was baptized showing He was not living for Himself but living for His Father. He was showing to a lost world that He did not come to condemn the world but to serve the world so that as many as would believe could have eternal life. (Matt 28:19-20; 3:13-17; Rom 6:3-4; Gal 3:27; Col 2:12)
- 3. Take communion: bread and wine in fellowship with others in Christ's Church.** On the last day prior to His crucifixion, Christ went to Jerusalem with His disciples and they celebrated the Passover together. The purpose of the Passover was to cause people to remember what God had done. The Jewish people had to cleanse their houses of leaven which, we are told, pictures how sin can infiltrate one's own house. The second picture was the sacrificing of the Lamb and the blood to be put over the doorpost. The door allowed people to enter and exit their homes. It was the place where people would come to call on their neighbours and visit them. But during the Passover it became the place where the death Angel saw the blood and, instead of coming in, he moved on to the next home. Finally, the Passover reminded them, by eating bitter herbs, of the trials and bondage that they had gone through over the years and that now God had come to set them free. Now Jesus was taking the Passover and taking the disciples to a deeper understanding of what He was about to do. He took the unleavened bread and broke it and gave it to His disciples, reminding them that this was His broken body. He also took the cup which represented His

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blood and told them that this would now be a new covenant and, as they partook of it, they would remember Jesus' commitment to them. The Redeemer had now come, but there was going to be a time of great sorrow and bitterness before the door of victory would be open to all who would believe. We are commanded by Christ to continue to have the Lord's supper until He returns. This is an action that we should be participating in and doing, not as a religious event, but as a time of reflecting and meditating on His deep love, grace and mercy that He has so generously given to us (Ex 12:1-30; Matt 26:26-30; 1 Cor 11:23-34).

- 4. Go make disciples.** Christ also commanded the disciples, both then and now, that we were to go out and make more disciples. Christ is a living entity and because He is living, He wants to see fruit come forth here on this earth; fruit that will show that we are truly disciples of Christ. A commitment to this doctrine is also a commitment of service, going wherever God commands us to go and proclaim His gospel and discipling others in the Christian faith. Disciples cannot come to a place of maturity unless they are disciplined in the teachings of the Word of God. Jesus states that we are to go out and make disciples, baptizing them and teaching them. Also, we are to go to all the nations and that, wherever we would go in His Name, He would be with us, providing for us and looking after us. All we have to do is trust and believe in Him as our Lord God. (Matt 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-18)

- 5. Building the body, the church.** Christ desires to build His church, not a building of various construction materials, but a church that's built with living people who have been redeemed by the shed blood of Jesus Christ. We are the "called out ones", called out from the world into the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. We need to be connected and ensure that others are connected. This is how the body grows and matures, developing people who will bear fruit for God's glory. The church is key to the kingdom of God advancing here on earth. The people are a lighthouse, to be a testimony of unity and harmony, a place from where the fruit and the gifts of the Holy Spirit radiate. The church is to have one foundation, built upon the rock of Jesus Christ. The church is the bride of Christ and, one day, we will be gathered together with Him at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. The church is made up of God's children and is the reason for which Christ came and died on the cross. As disciples we need to value and defend the Church of Christ at all costs. (Matt 16:18; Acts 2:47; 16:5, 20:28; 1 Cor 12:28; Eph 1:22; 5:23, 25; Col 1:18; 1 Tim 3:15; James 5:14; Rev 2:7)

Conclusion

What we have studied above is a quick overview of the doctrine of Christology. There is so much more that could be said but the most important thing is that we understand how Christ affects our lives each day as we walk here on the earth. Our relationship with Christ can be pictured like a marriage. We're to become one, intertwined with each other's thoughts and actions, putting the other above oneself, wanting to bless the other and help them in their daily walk.

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The more we can understand about Christ and Who He is in our hearts, the more faith we will have to serve Him and to be a witness for Him to this lost world. Christ, as part of the Triune God, wants to empower us both with His words from the Scriptures and by speaking through the Holy Spirit into our lives. Our challenge: Will we be obedient? Will we walk away from sin and deception? Will we turn our lives over to Christ and let Him completely set us free? Christ is not just a name, and is not just a person. He is the divine Son of God Who was sent here to earth to shed His blood so that we could enter into a deep personal relationship with Him.

The understanding of this doctrine is so important to the disciple because it's from this understanding that we mature and grow in Christ, but it is also the way we can help others come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. It is key that we see the bigger picture, the Oneness that there is between God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, how they work in unity and harmony both in heaven and on earth. This unity and harmony should also be the goal of the Church of Jesus Christ, His body.

Discipleship Application

Will I lay down my life and totally surrender to Christ? He is ready to step into our lives and meet all our needs. We are His children and He wants to take us by the hand and walk with us through this world. We also can see from this teaching that when we understand Who Christ is, we can then see more clearly what our place should be. We need to submit to Him as Lord and become a true servant and friend of Christ. Our lives must bear fruit, and if we stay connected to Him in prayer and in action, we will produce fruit that will last, fruit that will bring glory to God.

Like in any relationship, there is a give and take between the two partners. It is quite obvious what Christ Himself has done for us, and that He is willing to continue to give to us as we become willing to surrender our all to Him. But in this relationship, as we have seen, once we surrender to Christ, there are also things that we need to be doing as His disciples here on earth. Each day we need to be asking: how can I live this doctrine out in my life? What is God calling me, through Jesus Christ, to do? How can I love Him but at the same time also love my neighbor? Have I taken the step of baptism that will show to others that I've died to myself? Do I take time to get to the church, especially on Communion Sundays, to partake of the Lord's Supper which is there to help me remember what He is done for me? Am I also making time to mentor and disciple others in their faith in Jesus Christ? We are part of the body, the Church, and the church is a place where we can exercise the fruit and gifts of the Spirit of God, allowing them to flow through us as fruit to encourage others around us.

Amazing grace is extended as God desires to take away the reliance on **self-righteousness** and put into man's heart **God's righteousness** in order to give us a way, a truth and a life (John 14:6) that is full and unique, with purpose and value in Christ Jesus.

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Commitment and Prayer

Dear Lord Jesus,

I come to You now to thank You for showing me more of Who You are. Thank You for Your love and grace. Thank You for desiring to have a personal relationship with me. I pray that You will draw me closer to Your heart, so I can be in step with Your will and purpose for my life. I need You every hour and I need to see and hear Your still small voice moment by moment in my heart. Help me to remain committed to follow Your call. I want with all my heart to produce fruit for Your Kingdom. I also pray that my heart will be soft enough to go wherever You want me to go. I thank You Lord that we can study Your Word and see how great You are and how loving You are towards the people of this world. Lord, I pray that I will not forget the teaching concerning You in my life and that, through Your names and Your descriptions, I can learn more about Your ministry and what You desire to do through my life. Help me to be a clean vessel for Your Spirit and a bridge for people to walk across where they can come into a personal relationship with You. Also, I commit myself into Your hands to be used according to Your will.

Sincerely your servant,

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Chapter Four

Teachings on the Holy Spirit

*“Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. Guard, through the **Holy Spirit** who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you.”*

II Timothy 1:13-14

This chapter will give to the disciple a clearer picture of Who the Holy Spirit is and how He desires to work through our lives. We will see through His titles and names a glimpse of what His character and nature are. We will see Him first as part of the Triune God Whom we worship and serve. We also will see Him as power and authority, as One Who personally desires to have a relationship with us, as the One Who baptizes and fills our lives. Finally, we will learn how He places in us a desire to serve and for this service He fills us with His fruit and gives us gifts to minister to others. The Bible is full of testimonies of the Holy Spirit empowering people for service. Thus, it is important that we know how He does this in our lives.

Our view and understanding of Who the Holy Spirit is and what He does will determine what kind of disciples we are for Christ. Therefore, a disciple needs to understand how the individual Christian needs to give over total control of his life to the Holy Spirit and how the church needs to be filled by the Holy Spirit for the work of service. The Holy Spirit abides with us and we need to yield to Him. This is a daily personal commitment and act of our wills.

A house can be swept and cleaned, but if no one lives in it, it has not yet become a home. A temple is only a building until people come in and worship; then it becomes a place where God's Spirit dwells. What goes on in the heart will come out in our attitude and walk and will give testimony to the identity of who lives inside.

Description

1. **Holy:** sacred, consecrated, sanctified; the idea of holiness is to be clean, without sin; The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are sinless and pure; that is why Jesus could be our High Priest; the disciple is also to live a holy life, not through human ability or strength, but by taking on Christ's righteousness; we are to be separate from the sin and evil of this world; God is our Holy One (Ps 99:9); the Sabbath was also to be a Holy Day unto the Lord, a day of rest and meditation, a day for disciples to examine themselves.
2. **Spirit:** essence, life force, power, Holy Ghost. Often the word "Spirit" is ascribed to the name of the third person of the trinity. He is the teacher and empowering one, the comforter and encourager sent by the Father. He provides disciples with gifts so that there will be fruit, and so that the church will be empowered for service. Also, "spirit" can refer

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to the non-physical part of a person, the seat of emotions; sometimes equated with the soul. Can represent the third part of man (body, soul, and spirit); that is, the heart of man where Christ, through the Holy Spirit, comes and dwells.

- 3. Holy Spirit** is God, third Person of the Godhead / Trinity. In the New Testament He becomes known as the teacher, comforter, the guarantor, the One Who empowers and fills us for service; the evidence of the filling of the Holy Spirit is seen by the "fruit of the Spirit" in our lives, as demonstrated by our service in the Body of Christ. Holy Spirit gives us gifts as He pleases so that, together, we can minister, with different gifts, to one another in the church.

There are other key Scriptures that link together the Old Testament to the Gospel books and the beginning of the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts. Then, from the epistles of the New Testament, we will see how the Holy Spirit is to minister and work through the disciples and His church.

*"It will come about after this that I will pour out **My Spirit** on all mankind; And your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on the male and female servants I will pour out **My Spirit** in those days."* Joel 2:28-29

*"... not by might nor by power, but by **My Spirit**, says the Lord of Hosts."* Zechariah 4:6

*"... I ask the Father and He will give you another **comforter** ... He abides with you and will be in you,"* John 14:16-17

*"But the **Helper**, the **Holy Spirit**, whom the **Father** will send in **My name**, He will **teach** you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you."* John 14:26

*"For John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the **Holy Spirit** not many days from now."* Acts 1:5

*"But you shall receive power when the **Holy Spirit** has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."* Acts 1:8

*"And they were all filled with the **Holy Spirit** and began to speak with other tongues, as the **Spirit** gave them utterance."* Acts 2:4

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The Holy Spirit has been sent by the Father to empower and minister to the individual disciple of Christ and together with others as a body of believers in the church. He is the One Who always keeps us in fellowship and relationship with the triune God. He is the third member of the Godhead, the One Who indwells and empowers the believer for service. The Scripture (mentioned above) shows for us the personal relationship that we can have with God through the Holy Spirit. The Scriptures remind us that we are not to walk in our power but in the power and strength of God Almighty.

Principle One: HOLY SPIRIT AS GOD

*“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the **Holy Spirit**, be with you all.” II Corinthians 13:14*

As disciples of Christ, we believe that God has three different aspects as to His nature (Matt 28:19). Because of man’s limited understanding about this infinite God, He reveals Himself in ways that we can somewhat understand. He has revealed Himself to us as the Father, as the Son and as the Holy Spirit. Therefore, we call Him the “Triune God”.

Through His position as God, we can learn more about the Holy Spirit: He is the third member of the Godhead, the One Who indwells and empowers the believer for service. He is Elohim, which is translated as God; the plural form of EL, indicating the trinity because it is the plural form of God’s name (El- Elohim). He is part of the Trinity: the union of three persons in one Godhead, so that all three are one God as to substance but persons as to individuality. They are three-in-One God with three specific functions by which the Godhead ministers to us.

The Holy Spirit is the active, empowering Person of the Godhead. He is the power of God manifested to everything here on earth and throughout the universe. He has been part of the creation as the breath of God and in the New Testament as the power that raised Jesus from the dead. He was there all through creation (Gen 1:2; 2:7). He came as an agent of deliverance in the book of Judges. With the kings, He was the one who anointed them for the position of leadership, and in the books of the prophets He guided and counseled and spoke into their hearts what to say. In the New Testament He was the power behind the conception of Christ (Luke 1:35), the worker of the miracles, and in the book of Acts the One Who filled the disciples and empowered them for the work of service and ministry (Acts 2). He is the anointing that unifies and empowers the church for service and harmony worldwide.

Since the time of Christ’s death and resurrection we have been commanded to walk a life in the Spirit (Gal 5:16, 25). God desires to personally be in us to teach and empower us so that we can overcome the things of the world and be cleansed from our sins. The Holy Spirit washes over us and in us for the purpose of making us righteous before a mighty God.

The Holy Spirit is also the One Who encourages our faith to be strong and bold in Christ. We see this through the life of Stephen. Stephen, at the time of his martyrdom, could by the

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power of the Holy Spirit, see into the heavenlies where he saw Christ standing at the right hand of the Father (Acts 7:56).

Paul was praying that the church would overcome the world and walk in the fullness of the Godhead. There was so much that they could do if they would just focus on the triune God Who loved them and cared for them and for His church.

Where the presence of God is, you have the anointing and presence of the Holy Spirit. He is there as God, to work in and through our lives (Rom 15:19). He is the One Who Christ has sent to empower, comfort, teach and to indwell us for the purpose of service. He speaks in our hearts, reminding us when we are in-step or out-of-step with God's will for our lives. The Holy Spirit is here to bear witness to your spirit that you are a child of God. He takes that which was once dead and breathes life into it. Through the Holy Spirit you have become a new creation through Christ Jesus.

Related Scriptures:

Gen 1:2 (Elohim); Judg 6:34, 11:29, 15:14; I Sam 10:10, 16:13; Isa 11:2, 44:3; Hag 2:5; Matt 1:18-20, 28:19; Luke 11:13; Heb 10:15

Principle Two: NAMES & SYMBOLS

In the Bible there are dozens of names that give title to and symbolize for us the character and nature of the Holy Spirit. The reason why He has so many names and titles are so that we can understand Who He is. These descriptive words express the many features, aspects, and abilities of the One being portrayed. As disciples it is very critical that we know and understand the Holy Spirit Who desires to work in and through our lives.

Definition:

1. **Name:** the word by which a person is called or known; having an established reputation. *Synonyms:* designation, title, distinction, eminence, esteem, honour, character, credit, reputation, call, label, classify, designate, identify.
2. **Title:** claim; right; a legal right to the ownership. *Synonyms:* label, designation, name, crown, entitlement, ownership, privilege, right.
3. **Symbols:** something that stands for or suggests something else by reason of association; a visible sign of something. *Synonyms:* emblem, token, sign, representation, figure, image, metaphor, allegory, badge, stamp, seal.

What follows are some key names that the Scriptures use to identify the third party of the trinity known as the Holy Spirit:

God – Spirit of God, “My Spirit”

Genesis 1:1

Matthew 3:16

John 1:32

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Helper, Comforter, Advocate, Counsellor

John 14:16
John 14:25
John 15:26
John 16:7

Spirit of Truth

John 14:17
John 15:26
John 16:12

Holy Spirit

Matthew 28:19
Acts 1:5,8
Romans 1:4
Ephesians 1:13-14

These titles and names will help us to get a better grasp on Who the Holy Spirit is and how He works through us. We are to be His vessels, and the clearer our understanding of how He works, the greater our potential for Him to flow through us. Each designation shows a part of the Holy Spirit's nature and character; each part fits together to make up the whole picture and is used to describe how He works.

Jesus knows our every need and we clearly see that reality when He returned to the Father. He did not leave the disciples as orphans, but He kept the right of ownership in our lives by sending His Holy Spirit into our lives to comfort and to continue to teach us about the truth of God Almighty. Christ knew we could not overcome the things of the world in our own strength, so He sent the Holy Spirit to empower us.

We as disciples need to be tutored daily by the Holy Spirit, but before He can completely do His will in us, we have to know Who He is and how He ministers to us. This we can see and learn from His various names and titles by which He is called. They draw for us the bigger picture of Who He is.

The more we understand Who the Holy Spirit is, the more we will know how to let Him flow through our lives. We are to be channels of love and grace for God to this lost world. We are to be a part of the body of Christ whose heart has been lit by a fire from on high. To overcome darkness, we must shine with the power and anointing of the Holy Spirit. We also need to see the Holy Spirit as more than just a name, but as One with Whom we can have moment-by-moment fellowship. The Holy Spirit is not here to condemn us or to fill us with fear. He is here to break the cords and ropes that bind us and to grow the seed of faith into a mature plant that will bear fruit.

Related Scriptures:

John 6:63, 14:16, 26; Rom 15:19; Eph 1:13, 4:3, 6:17; I Pet 1:2

RELATED RESEARCH:

Other names of the Holy Spirit:

Paraclete or comforter

- to call to one's aid
- to minister to us, to care for us, to develop us, to lead us and even rescue us when we are in trouble.
- also means advocate, or One Whom we call to our aid to plead our cause

Scripture: John 14 :26; 15:26; Eph. 3:16, Rom. 8:26

Wind or breath

- passed over the earth in the days of creation.
- like a rushing mighty wind on the day of Pentecost
- separates the wheat from the chaff
- fans the dying coal into a blaze again
- purifies as it blows away debris
- can move things such as clouds and ships
- can refresh and cool
- can come from any direction

Scripture: Gen. 8:1; Ezek 37:9; Acts 2:2

Fire

- consumes and purifies
- brings warmth and comfort
- provides light in dark places
- spreads over to other locations
- burns up the sacrifice
- can protect and ward off enemies

Scripture: Gen 3:24; Rom 12:1; Acts 2:2

Dove

- came upon Christ during His baptism
- represented a sacrifice
- clean and gentle
- a picture of peace
- a picture of hope

Scripture: Matt 3:16; John 1:32, 33

Rain, cloud and dew

- brings refreshing
- breaks up or softens hard ground
- gives life to the seed
- purifies and cools

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- covers over
- forms into rivers and lakes

Scripture: Ps 72:6; Hos 14:5

Seal

- denotes ownership and responsibility
- guarantees security
- authenticates
- confirms
- establishes
- ratifies or validates

Scripture: Eph 1:13; 4:30; 2 Cor 1:22

River

- brings life to a dry land
- can flow out of one's heart
- gathering place for refreshing
- can be used for washing
- used for baptism

Scripture: John 7:38

Oil

- used for light
- used for cooking
- used for anointing
- used for lubricating
- used as a food to nourish and sustain

Scripture: Ex 30:30; Matt 25; 2 Cor.1:21; James 5:14

Water

- refreshes
- sustains lives
- cleans and purifies

Scripture: Ezek 36:25-27; John 3:5, 4:14, 7:38-39

Functions of the Holy Spirit:

inspiring He is the inspiring **One** Who gives to the disciples words of encouragement and hope for our daily walk. *Scripture: 2 Timothy 3:16*

enlightening He is the enlightening **One** Who gives to the disciples wisdom and understanding so that we can have a light for our path as we walk together with Christ here on earth. *Scripture: John 9:25*

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- drawing** He is the drawing **One** Who calls disciples to a personal relationship with God, to all who believe and follow the Son of God. *Scripture: John 6:44-45*
- convicting** He is the convicting **One** Who gives to disciples a way of escape from our sins and helps us to walk a spiritually clean walk for the Lord. *Scripture: John 16:8*
- regenerating** He is the regenerating **One** Who gives to the disciple a way in which one can become a new creation in Jesus Christ. *Scripture: John 1:12-13*
- sealing** He is the sealing **One** Who gives to disciples a cover and a mark that shows to all that we belong to Christ. *Scripture: Ephesians 1:13*
- witnessing** He is the witnessing **One** Who gives to the disciple a testimony to Who the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are. *Scripture: Romans 8:16*
- assuring** He is the assuring **One** Who gives to disciples faith and comfort and guarantees that we will go to heaven. *Scripture: Romans 8:15*
- indwelling** He is the indwelling **One** Who gives to the disciple fullness and strength to be a servant for Jesus Christ. *Scripture: Ezekiel 36:27; 1 Corinthians 6:19*
- mortifying** He is the mortifying **One** Who gives to the disciple the ability to humble himself to the point of making Christ his Lord and Saviour. *Scripture: Romans 8:13*
- uniting** He is the uniting **One** Who gives to the disciple the position of unity and harmony both with Christ and within His body the Church. *Scripture: 1 Corinthians 6:17*
- transforming** He is the transforming **One** Who gives to the disciple the ability to undergo a metamorphosis, moving one out of the old and into a new way of living. *Scripture: 2 Corinthians 3:18*
- guiding** He is the guiding **One** Who gives to the disciple direction and truth on how to walk for Jesus Christ. *Scripture: Romans 8:14*
- teaching** He is the teaching **One** Who gives to the disciple understanding and truth; one Who instructs us through the Word of God. *Scripture: Nehemiah 9:20; John 14:26*
- interceding** He is the interceding **One** Who gives to the disciple a connection and bridge into the very presence of the Father. *Scripture: Romans 8:26-27; Ephesians 6:18*
- sanctifying** He is the sanctifying **One** Who gives to disciples the cleansing of Christ's righteousness, covering us from head to toe and making us a new creation in Christ. *Scripture: 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14*

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Principle Three: ANOINTING, POWER & AUTHORITY

*“in the **power** of signs and wonders, in the **power of the Spirit**; so that from Jerusalem and round about as far as Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.” Romans 15:19*

Definition:

1. **Authority:** the right to expect obedience, command and give final decision; power to influence through an opinion; person in command. Synonyms: charge, command, control, domination, dominion, force, government, influence, jurisdiction, might, power, right, strength, supremacy.
2. **Power:** ability to compel obedience, producing an effect; a delegated right or privilege. Synonyms: ability, capability, capacity, competency, potential, energy, might, muscle, strength, vigor, weight, authority, command, control, dominion, influence, rule, sovereignty, privilege.
3. **Unction:** the act of anointing, as with oil, that awakens or is intended to awaken deep sympathetic feelings; soothing or comforting.
4. **Anoint:** the act of applying oil to or upon a person or thing. Synonyms: consecrate, bless, ordain.

There are many reasons why we need to have the Holy Spirit in our lives. The main one, of course, is to bear witness that we are disciples of Christ. From this point we will see that He is there to move us, to empower us and to give us authority to overcome the enemy of this world. We need to understand that greater is He that is in us than He that is in the world (1 John 4:4).

The biggest battle that we face each day is the one between our head and our heart. Which one drives us? Which one is the more powerful? Anyone who has authority or power cannot demand it, but it is given to them by someone else. Jesus sent out the disciples by His authority and power (Matt 10:1). The authority which was given to Him by the Father is now given to us. But it is only supplied when there is a need to be met. It is also by this power which comes through the Holy Spirit that we are to take the Gospel message out to a lost world.

Paul was able to do what he did because of the anointing, power, and authority of God. He learned how to walk in the presence of God, to be close to God's heart so he would then know what God's will was for himself and for those around him. The Holy Spirit is like a fresh spring of water, and we need to know how to tap into His flowing refreshment. So often we have not because we ask not, or we ask amiss (James 4:1-3). We must get in step with the Holy Spirit, and as we do, we will then discover His anointing power and authority flowing through our lives.

A policeman, within himself, has no power or authority, but it is given to him by his leaders and government because of the position that police hold among the people. They can arrest, stop and, if need be, kill the wrongdoers. We are like policemen. As disciples of Christ, we are given authority by God to overcome the strongholds of the world, including our enemies through the anointing and power of the Holy Spirit who was sent to us by Christ.

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It is the Holy Spirit working in us and through us that makes the difference in how our lives impact our jobs and the people with whom we work. Discipleship is not a twice a week meeting, but it is a relationship with God Almighty Who equips us and empowers us for service. We need to take that which He has placed in our vessel and allow it to work. We are to walk in His power and authority moment by moment each day (Gal 5:25). We need to learn how to hear the voice of the Spirit speaking into our lives and then to be faithful to carry out what He says, because as we are faithful in little things, He will entrust us with greater things (Luke 16:10, 19:17).

The key to discipleship is not to do things in our power and strength, but in His power and strength (Acts 1:5). We are God-centered, not self-centered. We are to be God-powered, not self-powered. Our lives need to be moved moment by moment by the unction and prompting of the Holy Spirit. It is no longer we who live, but it is the power and the authority of the Spirit working in us and through us. He wants to work through us to touch the lives of those around us.

Related Scriptures:

Zech 4:6; Acts 1:8, 6:8, 10:38; Rom 13:1; 15:13; 2 Cor 1:21; 1 Thes 1:5; 1 John 2:20, 27

Principle Four: COMMUNICATION / COMMUNION

*“But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, **praying** in the **Holy Spirit**,”*
Jude 20

Definition:

1. **Communication:** the act or action of imparting or transmitting and receiving; access between persons or places; interchange of thoughts or opinions. *Synonyms:* transmission, conveyance, disclosure, broadcast, connection, dialogue, talk, conversation.
2. **Communion:** an act or situation involving sharing; possession in common; joint ownership; fellowship of members in a church. *Synonyms:* fellowship, kinship, friendship, togetherness, harmony, understanding, connection, communication.
3. **Prayer:** supplication; asking or entreating. *Synonyms:* communication, devotion, invocation, litany, appeal, petition, plea, request.

Prayer is communication between ourselves and God. The Holy Spirit is that Person Who links us with Christ in a personal relationship. We are called to always have an attitude of prayer (Eph 6:18). We should be praying without ceasing (1 Thes 5:17), moving forward in Christ's will and not in our will. We should be communicating with God in a way that is anointed by the Holy Spirit. Prayer is our daily communion time with the triune God who lives and dwells in our hearts.

Jude's advice to build themselves up by praying in the Holy Spirit was sound, because that communication with God enables us to know His mind via His Spirit (Jude 1:20).

A question that the disciples had for Christ was one based on prayer. They saw that Christ prayed and fasted, but they did not understand the meaning of it or how prayer worked. This is

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when He taught them what we know as the “Lord’s Prayer” (Matt 6:9-13). Prayer is an intimate, personal communication and communion with God. It is our time of drawing closer to Him and He to us (James 4:8). In everything we do, communication is important between parties because it gives us understanding of what and how and why we are to do certain things.

Jesus had been with the disciples physically. In John 16-17, He was going to return to the Father in heaven, so now there was going to be a new way of communication. It would be personal and relational. It was being set up by Christ in such a way that we could enter into the Holy of Holies from wherever we are. The Holy Spirit would be the channel for Christ’s wisdom and for His power. It seems that throughout history mankind had learned about communicating somewhat with the Father in heaven. Then they learned to communicate with Jesus here on earth, and now we need to learn how to communicate with God through the Holy Spirit.

Paul encouraged us to learn how to pray in the Spirit (1 Cor 14:15; Eph 8:18). Often prayer was a thing of the flesh, with lots of repetition and long impressive-sounding words, prayers from the head but not from the heart. Christ wanted us to pray from the very depths of our hearts, and if we allow Him, the Holy Spirit helps us to speak to the Lord things that we do not always understand or that do not make sense to us. The Holy Spirit will teach us and guide us in our prayer life (Luke 12:12; John 14:26).

The phone that we use so often has built within it a transmitter and a receiver. It is made so we can hear, and we can also talk to the one who is connected to us. As humans we are built to transmit and receive spiritually, and when we give our lives over to Christ, He activates and make the line alive by the power of the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, the key to this is that we need to open the line and we also need to be willing to hear.

We are told by Christ that often we have not because we ask not (James 4:2). We need to be coming into the very throne room of God and laying our requests at His feet, and the only way this can be done is to pray in and through the anointing of the Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit Who makes our time of communication with God alive and real (Matt 21:22). Prayer is the disciple’s time of intimate and personal fellowship with our Creator and Lord. We need to be thinking and walking in His presence if we hope to overcome the things of this world. We need to come to God in faith believing, and the way we can do this is by making sure that the Holy Spirit is indwelling our hearts and minds. We need to remember also that prayer is not only for the purpose of praying for our own needs and wants, but it is for lifting up before God our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ who are entangled in the grips of the world and Satan. And, of course, it is a primary means of worshipping God and giving thanks to Him.

Related Scriptures:

1 Cor 14:15; Eph 6:18; Phil 4:6; James 5:15-16

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Principle Five: BAPTISM & FULLNESS

*“And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be **filled with the Spirit,**”*
Ephesians 5:18

Definition:

1. **Baptism:** immersion into water, to purification or cleansing; identification with. *Synonyms:* immersion, purification, beginning, dedication, initiation, introduction, rite of passage.
2. **Fullness:** the quality or state of being full; containing all that possibly can be placed or put in. *Synonyms:* brimming over, furnishing, replenishment, satisfaction, saturation.

It seems that the last 200 years or so have led to a lot of confusion concerning the ministry of the Holy Spirit's personal work in our lives. There have been hundreds of books written with a large variety of conclusions. My desire is not to prove one point or another but just to show the disciple the importance of daily walking in the anointing and power of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:16:25). What needs to be crystal clear is whether or not you have a personal relationship with the Holy Spirit in your life. If you do, keep building that relationship, and if you are not sure or do not, it is time to cross this bridge and allow God to baptize and fill you with His presence (Acts 8:15; 11:16).

It is important to realize that you cannot be full of two different things at the same time. If you have more than one thing in your cup, something becomes diluted. What is in your cup? It can be the world, your own selfishness or God's Holy Spirit. That which is poured in will be poured out. We are warned that fresh water and saltwater cannot come out of the same spring (James 3:12). Having been identified with Christ's death and resurrection and placed into the body of Christ by the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Rom 6:3-4; Eph 1:13-14; 1 John 4:13), we are also to be daily filled by the Holy Spirit by yielding ourselves to Him in obedience. The Greek word here means “to make full”. One author state, *“The Greek present tense is used to indicate that the filling of the Spirit is not a once-for-all experience. Repeatedly, as the occasion requires, the Spirit empowers for worship, service and testimony”* (NASB Study notes. p.1725). Again, the word filled describes a continuous tense: “being filled” which is done by yielding to Him continuously (Eph 5:18).

We need to understand what the baptizing and filling picture means to us as disciples. The first is washing or covering over - dying to self and being covered in Christ's righteousness (2 Cor 5:21), and the second is a pouring in and filling up. The question we need to ask ourselves is simple: have we, by faith in Christ, been washed and cleaned by God's Holy Spirit, and are we now allowing Christ to continuously fill us with His Holy Spirit? It is important to hear what Scripture says, not what men teach. God's Word is our authority, and our salvation rests on our having God's Spirit by faith in Christ.

We are like a cup that the Holy Spirit wants to fill up. We are a container that can house His presence, and, as we move from place to place, He moves with us. We should not be satisfied

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with a drop in the bottom of the cup, but we should desire to be running over. The Holy Spirit wants us to have an abundance of His blessing and power. Just as water can quench our thirst, the Holy Spirit can also meet our needs.

The purpose of the fullness of the Holy Spirit is so that He can comfort, teach, give direction, empower, and give us boldness and faith to serve God. Without Him we can do nothing, and what we do will be done in our own ability and strength which, we are told, is like filthy rags (Isa 64:6). We need to let go and let God do all the work in and through our lives.

There is much discussion on what the evidence should be concerning the power of the Holy Spirit in one's life. Some say it is certain gifts, but I would argue that it should be first the fruit of the Spirit as Paul taught the Galatian church (Gal 5:22-23). All service must come from a heart full of the Holy Spirit, and the evidence of that is the fruit for which Jesus commands us to look (Matt 7:16; John 15:16). In addition, the gifts are given as He desires for ministry in the church and then out to the world. The key is not all kinds of formulas or timelines. It just simply boils down to whether we are, or are not, filled and covered over by God's Spirit. Have I died to self (1 Cor 15:36) and does He now reign totally and completely in my life so that others see it?

When our lives have been emptied of the world, it is especially important that we be filled by the Holy Spirit. Our temple is not to be empty but full of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 3:16; 2 Cor 6:16). You might think that I am trying to avoid some thorny issue. My goal is not to fill my time with argument but to see people anointed and empowered by God going out into the harvest field where they are greatly needed (Matt 9:35-38). We are filling up our time and lives with so much of the world and other things that we have no time for service. We also need to see that God is not going to give us something to keep just for ourselves. The Holy Spirit is like water that needs to be poured in and flow out so that you will not become stagnant (John 4:10; 7:38; 1 Cor 3:6). It is like the manna in times of old (Ex 16:4-5): we must go to the source each day and collect from God what is needed. That's why Paul teaches us the importance of being filled daily (Eph 5:18).

Related Scriptures:

Matt 3:11; Luke 1:67, 4:1; Acts 1:5-8, 4:8, 31, 6:3; 7:55; 11:24; 13:9; 19:4; Rom 6:3-4; 1 Cor 6:19; Eph 1:13-23; 1 John 4:13

Principle Six: SEAL & VESSEL

*"In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were **sealed** in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory."*

Ephesians 1:13-14

Definition:

1. **Seal**: something that confirms, ratifies or makes secure; something that gives character to a person so that he may be recognized as belonging to an indicated agent.

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- Synonyms:* a lid, cork, fastener, plug, security, water-proofing, assurance, authentication, confirmation, stamp, validation, insignia.
2. **Vessel:** receptacle for something; a container that holds something within it. *Synonyms:* receptacle, bowl, pan, box, pot, barrel, drum.
 3. **Temple:** consecrated place; shrine; an edifice dedicated to the worship of a deity; a place in which the Divine presence specially resides. *Synonyms:* house of God, shrine, sanctuary, church.

The seal makes us aware of ownership. We are secure in Jesus Christ and know His presence because of the stamp of the Holy Spirit's presence in our daily walk with Christ. We are so blessed to be a part of the family of God. He desires that personal relationship with each one of us and, to prove to us His commitment, He has given us His Holy Spirit as a seal or promise to dwell in us until we can personally be with God.

The use of a seal is a very old tradition dating back thousands of years and is also used all around the world today on documents in sealing letters, and even for keeping containers and trucks sealed as they move from place to place and from country to country. Jesus' tomb was sealed to prove that the body of Jesus was inside (Matt 27:66). The seal verifies ownership and responsibility for what is being sent. The Holy Spirit has been sent by Christ to seal our vessel or temple as belonging to Him and none other. The seal is to keep intruders out and to keep inside that which is of God. The seal of the Holy Spirit is the assurance that we are part of the family of God and that, when we die, we will spend all eternity with Jesus in His kingdom.

The signet ring was used a lot in the olden days to seal important letters. They would use hot wax on the closure part and then take a ring that had a seal engraved on it and push it into the hot wax to show who it was from. When the person received the letter with the seal unbroken, they could be confident that no one had opened it and that the contents of the letter were still safe. We, too, are Christ's letter bought and sent out with His authority. We have been sealed by the Holy Spirit as proof that we belong to Christ.

We are called to be temples of the Holy Spirit. Our bodies house the very presence of God, but going out and sinning can break fellowship. Sin can separate us from fellowship with a Holy God (Isa 59:2). We are vessels for God's glory, but if we do not keep them clean through the blood of Christ, the presence of the Holy Spirit cannot be poured through us.

Within us we carry a place of safety, a place for worship and communion. We come to the Holy of Holies where God meets personally with us. We carry within such a great treasure, a treasure that all believers have, a treasure that cost Christ His life here on earth.

The first thing we should be doing each day is cleansing ourselves of the things of the world and asking Christ to pour more of His Spirit's power into us, because when we do this, we will find more boldness and courage to stand up for Jesus Christ. This is our pledge of allegiance to our King. This is what keeps us headed toward our eternal inheritance (Eph 4:30).

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A seal is a mark of ownership (1 Cor 1:22). It implies the idea of belonging. Christ knew that we would need help, training and comfort, that we would struggle with loneliness and that we could not face the challenges of the world by ourselves. Christ made it possible to have a personal relationship with Him and we are sealed not just by a vow, as in marriage, but by the Holy Spirit (Eph 1:13). Because of the Holy Spirit's daily presence in our lives we know that we are His and He is ours for all eternity. Words of commitment are nice but having the other Person with us at all times gives to us peace, assurance and hope for now and for the future.

Related Scriptures:

1 Kings 21:8; Ps 31:12; John 6:27; Rom 5:5, 9:21; 1 Cor 3:16-17; 6:19; 2 Cor 1:22, 4:7; Eph 2:21; 4:30; 1 Thes 4:4; 2 Tim 2:19, 21

Principle Seven: CHURCH / BODY

*"But you will receive power when the **Holy Spirit** has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."*

Acts 1:8

*There is one **body** and one **Spirit**, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; ... for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the **body** of Christ; ... from whom the whole **body**, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the **body** for the building up of itself in love.*

Ephesians 4:4, 12, 16.

Definition:

1. **Church:** called out ones, belonging to the Lord; the Body of Christ. *Synonyms:* assembly, gathering.
2. **Body:** the main part of something; the trunk or main mass of an organism. *Synonyms:* figure, form, shape, association, collection, company, corporation.

The Day of Pentecost was the same day that the church of Jesus Christ was born into the world as a testimony to the resurrection power of Jesus Christ. The church was going to now be the Body of Christ in all its fullness to the world (1 Cor 12:27). It would become the temple that the Holy Spirit would indwell, move and work through. As disciples of Christ we are a part of this unique organism of people who have been called out by Christ for a testimony of what true resurrection life and power can be. We are to function together by the power of the Holy Spirit as a community of believers walking in unity and harmony.

Christ has commissioned His Holy Spirit to work through both the disciples and the church. Both have weaknesses and make mistakes but, by the power of the Holy Spirit both can overcome Satan and this world's bondages. It is important for both to stay close to the heart of God. We are to work together as a team in unity and harmony, and this is made possible by all the individual

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parts staying connected to the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, He was sent to us, because Christ knew what our greatest need would be.

When the Church and the disciples stay under the umbrella or covering of the Holy Spirit, the Church becomes alive and powerful. The Holy Spirit is the One who flows through the veins of the Church. He is the one Who gives cohesiveness to the Body of Christ. Acts demonstrates the beginning of the ministry of the Holy Spirit, illustrating the way He works (Acts chapter 2). Many times, the book of Acts is subtitled "The Acts of the Church" when it really should be titled "The Acts of the Holy Spirit through the Church and the Disciples". The Holy Spirit has been sent as Christ has promised, and now the disciples are being trained how to walk in His anointing and power (Gal 5:25).

The world is like one big farm and God is looking for farmers who will work, operate, undertake and carry out the job under the anointing of the Holy Spirit. The church is a lot like little farmyards. They are different in size and in the way they do things, but they all have the same common goal which is to produce a harvest. Churches around the world are all different in shapes and sizes. They even function differently when it comes to leadership and gifting, but what should be the common denominator is that they are under the headship of Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit (Eph 1:22; 5:23). There can be no harvest if the workers (the disciples) do not submit themselves to the leading and guiding of the Holy Spirit. If we work outside of the ministry of the Holy Spirit, then we are just building and working in the flesh and in our own strength (James 2:26). God, by the Holy Spirit, brings the increase (1 Cor 3:6).

The world-wide Church is a relationship of disciples from every country, linked together by the Holy Spirit. The Church has the power to even push back the gates of hell. It has the ability to go into dark lands and to become a lighthouse for God's glory. When the Holy Spirit is in the disciples and in the church, there will be a demonstration of God's presence at work, bringing in the harvest through the laborers who are being equipped and trained (Acts 1:8).

The disciples need to be team members within a church. We are a vital part of the whole network of Christ's servants (1 Cor 12:12). We are interconnected with other body members and with Christ through the Holy Spirit (Ron 12:5). We need to be equipped and trained so we can serve one another. **We should be asking the Holy Spirit daily how we can serve in the body of Christ and how we can be agents and ambassadors of reconciliation and change to a lost world** (2 Cor 5:20; Eph 6:20). Everyone who is a part of the Body of Christ has a ministry. It is important that we learn to know the role of the Holy Spirit by reading the Word and consulting mature disciples who can help us to understand. Then it is important that we get busy in the Church, because that is the only way that we can experience true life that is worth living. We are the body, but Christ is the head, and He relates to us by and through the Holy Spirit (Eph 4:4).

RELATED SCRIPTURES FOR THE LESSON:

Acts 1:2, 5, 8, 16; 2:1, 4, 33, 38; 4:8, 25, 31; 5:3, 32; 6:5; 7:51, 55; 8:15, 16, 17, 19; 9:17, 31; 10:38, 44, 45, 47; 11:15, 16, 24; 13:2, 4, 9, 52; 15:8, 28; 16:6; 19:2, 6; 20:23, 28; 21:11; 28:25. Rom 12:5; 1 Cor 12:27, 28; Eph 1:22-23; 3:10; 5:23-24

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Principle Eight: FRUIT

*“But the **fruit of the Spirit** is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”*

Galatians 5:22-23

Definition:

1. **Root:** the portion of the plant that grows below ground and functions as an organ of absorption; a basic cause, source or origin (social, ethnic or cultural); rooted - fixed or firmly established. Synonyms: source, origin, beginning, genesis, foundation, heart, essence, ancestors, heritage, birthplace.
2. **Vine:** any climbing or trailing woody-stemmed plant, sometimes bearing fruit, as coiled about a support (such as grapes).
3. **Branch:** a stem growing from the trunk or a limb of a tree; to spring off or out from. Synonyms: limb, arm, offshoot.
4. **Fruit:** represents the mature edible product of a plant; “offspring,” or the “fruit of a womb,” of any creature; the “product” or “result” of an action. Synonyms: product; result; reward; earnings.
5. **Sap:** fluid that carries nourishment; active strength of the body. Synonyms: life blood, life source.
6. **Graft:** to insert a shoot from one plant into another so that they join and grow together; the point of union. Synonyms: implant, splice, affix, insert, join, transplant.
7. **Abide:** bear, endure, dwell, remain, last. Synonyms: remain constant, continue, endure; remain fast, firm or permanent; persist, be steadfast, survive.

To be filled with the Spirit means that the believer will demonstrate the fruit of the Spirit in his or her life. The New Testament pattern for living is set in Matthew 7:16: **“You will know them by their fruit.”** The first evidence of being filled with the Spirit is godly living. God wants mature Christians who manifest the fruit of the Spirit listed in Galatians 5:22-23: **“love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control”** (Christian Worker’s Handbook. Billy Graham. p.158.). We are challenged by God not only to be fruit inspectors, but more than anything else, to be producers of fruit.

To be able to produce fruit you have to be a complete plant; it starts from a germinating seed which produces roots, then shoots, then a growing plant and, in due time when the plant is mature, produces fruit. So, we can see that producing fruit is a process of time, nurturing and maturing. The Bible tells us that we were once wild branches and were producing the fruit of the world, but then one day we invited Christ into our lives and, at that moment, He grafted us into Himself (John 15:1-17). His life and strength began to flow through our branches. The life of the Holy Spirit would become the sap that would bind us to Christ and in time would produce what we call the fruit of the Spirit. This is unique fruit because it is only **one fruit** that carries within itself all kinds of characteristics. It is also produced through relationship - we abide in God and He abides in us (John 8:31-32). The stronger the relationship, the more fruit that will be produced.

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The fruit is the by-product of a healthily maintained tree. The branches must keep a relationship with the trunk and with the roots if they hope to produce any type of fruit. The life originates from the roots, produces the branches and, in due time, produces a fruit within which are more seeds to produce more trees and fruit. The fruit is there for **nourishment** for those who pick it and for **regeneration** for those who want to plant. We are told that we will be known by our fruit, whether we are disciples of Christ or disciples of the world (John 15:7-8).

The fruit of the Spirit includes character qualities that God possesses and that the Holy Spirit imparts to us as we live in trusting obedience to God (*The Holy Spirit*, Anders, P146). Nine qualities embody the fruit of the Spirit. Billy Graham, in his book titled *The Holy Spirit*, observes that this **one fruit** is characterized by nine specific pieces that can be divided into three clusters of three.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1) Love, Joy, Peace | (God first) |
| 2) Patience, kindness, goodness | (others second) |
| 3) Faithfulness, gentleness, self-control | (self third) |

We can see that we start by putting **God** first, then **others** second, and **ourselves** last. We see this concept also with the idea of **Joy**. If you want to experience true joy you must follow the same pattern that the word itself spells out. **Jesus** first, **others** next, and **yourself** last. The purpose of the fruit can be twofold. First, it is to nourish others, and second, it is there to produce more plants. It is not there for the benefit of the tree. The only benefit that the tree gets is having the **JOY** of producing it, of seeing and having the **JOY** of others eating from it and having the **JOY** of continue to grow to the point where one day it will produce more fruit. We also experience the fruit within ourselves as it flows through us, in turn becoming a blessing to others.

There are three important steps that we must implement if we hope to see the fruit of the Spirit flowing in and through our lives.

1. We must consciously **surrender** ourselves to the Holy Spirit. Ask yourself: have you ever realized that you belong to God, that your body is the actual residence of the Holy Spirit? Have you ever offered your body (life) to God as Romans 12:1 demands?
2. Next, we must see ourselves as having **died to sin** but having become **alive to Christ**. Paul said in Galatians 2:20, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me... and the life which flows out through me is of Christ Jesus.
3. Then, we determine by faith to bring ourselves under the **Lordship of Christ**. This happens progressively as we allow our minds to be brought under His control. Our actions respond to the Spirit's control over our thoughts: "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God" Rom 12:1-2.

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When we become children of God, we become vessels or temples where God dwells. His very presence produces fruit that will touch the lives of all those around us. It is like a spark of fire that ignites the wood which begins to burn and attracts attention. Others will also be touched and ignited by the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

The fruit should be the first evidence of a life that has been baptized and filled by the Holy Spirit. That is why Christ tells us that we will be known by our fruit (Matthew 7:16). The world is looking for real fruit, fruit that they can freely pick and use. We must understand that more of the fruit of the Spirit must be flowing through our lives, growing and becoming the foundation to all that we do for Christ. We also must realize that everything that we do in Christ and that which we do in the world will produce some type of fruit. Remember, Paul tells us that whatever we plant, in due season we will reap (Galatians 6:7-10); he points out that we also have the blessing of planting, sowing, and reaping a harvest from those lives around us.

Related Scriptures:

Gen 1:11-12, 29; Ps 1:3; Isa 3:10, 37:31; Matt 3:8-10; 7:16; 7:17-20; 12:33; 7:20; Luke 3:8; John 4:36; 12:24; 15:2, 4, 5, 8, 16; Rom 8:23; 1 Cor 15:23; Phil 1:11; Col 1:6 & 10

FOR FURTHER STUDY:

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT DEFINED

1. LOVE

- Love is the steady direction of our will toward the lasting good of another. (The Holy Spirit, Anders, pg.147)
- No mark distinguishes the Christian more than love.
- God calls us to 'Christ-like love'.

2. JOY

- Joy is a deep sense of well-being that is not dependent upon favorable circumstances, but rooted in a fundamental acceptance of, and confidence in, the will of God (The Holy Spirit, Anders, pg.151).

3. PEACE

- Peace is the absence of anxiety and the presence of trusting assurance in the promises of God. (The Holy Spirit, Anders, pg.153)
- SHALOM: unity, completeness, rest, ease, security (The Holy Spirit, Graham pg.286).

4. PATIENCE

- Patience is the ability to endure unpleasant people and circumstances for a higher cause (The Holy Spirit, Anders, pg.160).
- Long-suffering (KJV) "hanging in there".
- To remain steadfast even when provoked.

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5. KINDNESS

- Kindness is treating others well in word and deed (The Holy Spirit, Anders, pg.162).
- Gentleness, love-enduring, loving kindness, tenderness.

6. GOODNESS

- Goodness is doing that which is beneficial for others (The Holy Spirit, Anders, pg.165).
- Righteousness imputed and demonstrated.

7. FAITHFULNESS

- Is being reliable in doing what you should do (The Holy Spirit, Anders, pg.166).
- Trustworthy perseverance / dependability.

8. GENTLENESS

- Gentleness is treating others carefully, with respect and sensitivity (The Holy Spirit, Anders, pg.167).
- Meekness is not weakness or timidity, but love under control / tamed.

9. SELF-CONTROL

- Self-control is the ability to resist immediate gratification for the sake of a higher goal (The Holy Spirit, Anders, pg.169).
- Temperance (KJV)
- Strength in mastering of one's thoughts/actions.
- Temperance/self-control in every aspect of the Christian's life can offer the only true anchor in turbulent times.

DIFFERENT KINDS OF FRUIT

Rotten or worldly fruit

Artificial fruit

Real fruit

THREE TYPES OF FRUIT

The Weeds

hatred
sorrow
anxiety, strife
impatience
pride
evil
infidelity
self-seeking
lack of control

The Artificial Fruit

limited love
happiness, not real joy
numbness, carelessness
laziness, insensitivity
manipulation by kindness
hypocrisy
half-heartedness
false modesty
choosing lesser gods

The Fruit of the Spirit

love
joy
peace
patience
kindness
goodness
faithfulness
meekness
self-control

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Principle Eight: SERVICE

*“who also made us adequate as **servants** of a **new covenant**, not of the letter but of the **Spirit**; for the letter kills, but the **Spirit** gives life.”*

II Corinthians 3:6

Definition:

1. **Serve:** to be a servant; to offer habitual worship and obedience to; to work through or perform; to wait on, to be used to or answer the needs of. *Synonyms:* work, labor, give a helping hand, assist, be useful, be valuable.
2. **Servant:** a person bound to do the bidding of a master or superior, one that must work for another and obey him. *Synonyms:* helper, worker, steward, slave, supporter, follower.

We need the Holy Spirit to empower us so that we can serve one another. We need to be **filled daily** so that we will have God’s strength to get along with one another. The nature of man is that of desiring to be served rather than to be the one who does the serving. This was why the Jewish people misunderstood Jesus (Matt 20:28). They thought that the Messiah would come as a king, not realizing that the prophets, and especially Isaiah, proclaimed Him as One Who would come as a servant. So, to lovingly serve each other, we need to be empowered by God – thus the need for the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

The filling of the Holy Spirit is to help you be a better servant in the body of Christ. The Holy Spirit is given to help you, but also to serve others through you. Freely you have received, now freely give (Matt 10:8). We do what we do because the Holy Spirit has been poured out in love into our hearts.

In times of old, an earring was placed in the servant’s ear to show his ownership by another. A servant had little personal control because he now was a servant, and the ownership of his life was now in the hands of another, having been surrendered to a new lord. He was no longer lord of his life; someone else now held the keys to his life.

We freely choose to become Christ’s servants. We do it out of love from a heart that is grateful for what He has done for us. Because we are servants of Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit gives us the power and gifts for service. The gifts of the Spirit are for serving and ministering to each other in the church and for helping those to whom Christ calls us to reach out and go (1 Cor 12:3-11). We serve not in our power and strength but in His power and strength, not in our ability but in His ability, not for personal glory but for His glory (1 Pet 4:11).

Often churches struggle with unity and harmony because the disciples do not completely surrender their lives to Christ as Lord and Saviour. We are often too busy serving ourselves instead of serving Christ. When it comes to ministry the way to success is to be a servant of all. Leaders in the church need to learn about the “ministry of the towel” (John 13:5). The disciples struggled with this, but Jesus told them if He did not serve them, they would not be part of His kingdom.

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The best thing we can accomplish with our lives is to be servants, ones who submit to the desire and will of their Owner. But to be good servants we must be filled with a serving heart. Christ came to serve, not to be served (Matt 20:28). We are also **called to serve** but, to be able to do it rightly, we need to be **empowered for service** (Phil 3:10). The only way we can serve each other is through the Holy Spirit, because our fleshly nature pushes us to serve our own desires.

Sometimes we struggle with serving because we have not yet met, truly and completely, the author of service ministry. The deeper our personal relationship with the Holy Spirit, the more we will see things as He sees them, and the greater our desire will be to serve God and others. Position is not important at all. It is being obedient to the will of God that counts, because when we are faithful in all the little things in our lives, then the Holy Spirit can entrust us with greater things (Matt 25:23). Those of us who struggle with serving others need to come to Christ daily and ask Him to fill us more with His Spirit. This will then help us to turn fear into faith. We can come up with many reasons why we should not get involved, but we do not realize that these reasons are the things that hold us back from a deeper and more intimate relationship with our God. We need to step out in faith and begin to commit ourselves to serve wherever He calls us, and no matter what the cost may seem to be. We also need to realize that the size of ministry or service is not what is important, but just being willing to serve in whatever He leads us to do. Again, the size of service is not important; faithfulness and obedience are. **We do need to be empowered for service, but we also must be equipped for service (1 Tim 3:17). We should get equipped, trained and mentored as a disciple whenever and wherever it is possible.**

Related Scriptures:

Josh 1:2, 7, 5:14, 22:5; Ps 116:16; Matt 20:26; 23:11-12; Mark 10:43; Rom 7:6; 12:1, 7, 11; Gal 5:13; Eph 4:12; 1 Tim 4:6; 2 Tim 2:4; Heb 3:5; 9:14; 2 Pet 4:10-11

Principle Nine: MINISTRY, EQUIPPING & GIFTS

*“Therefore, I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the **calling** with which you have been **called**, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the **Spirit** in the bond of peace. There is **one body** and **one Spirit**, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all. But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s **gift**. ... And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the **equipping** of the saints for the work of **service**, to the building up of the **body** of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a **mature man**, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.*

Ephesians 4:1-7 & 11-13

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Definition:

1. **Ministry:** the performance of any service or function for another; a person or thing through which something is accomplished. *Synonyms:* administration, council, government, holy order, the church.
2. **Equip:** to supply with resources, fit out, to provide for. To provide with what is necessary, useful or appropriate. *Synonyms:* provide, furnish, supply, issue, arm, endow.
3. **Gift:** something that is voluntarily transferred by one person to another without compensation; the act, right, or power of giving or bestowing. *Synonyms:* bequest, bonus, bounty, contribution, donation, grant, gratuity, offering, present, ability, attribute, capability, power, talent, turn.

As you know, the church is the Body of Jesus Christ and He is our Head (1 Cor 12:12-27). In the body each part has an important ministry, no matter how small or mediocre the job may seem. The thing to realize is that God has given gifts to that body as well as to us who make up that body, to serve Him. It is important to know and understand these gifts and to learn their proper use so we can mature and so we can also be of help and service within the body of Christ.

The Holy Spirit has been given to us by Christ to empower us for ministry and to become our teacher so that we can learn how to work and function within the Body of Christ with the gifts that He has given to us (1 Cor 12:7, 11). **The gifts are for the purpose of ministry and for building up and encouraging the body of Christ. They need to be administered through the fruit of the Spirit. No gifts should ever be allowed to function outside of the direct result of the fruit of the Spirit.** Today there are many believers who have no concept of the meaning of spiritual gifts and no inkling of what their gifts might be, and no understanding of how gifts are used in service to others. Consequently, they cannot live the spiritual life in its full expression.

We are all called to be ministers for Christ, and Christ knew that for us to do so we would need the Holy Spirit in our lives so that we could have clear direction and insight on how to minister, both to those in our family and those around us (Eph 4:1-6). To do this we will need training and equipping from the Holy Spirit and from our leaders with whom we serve. We are to work within the Body of Christ so that we may learn truth about Who Christ is and how He desires, through the Holy Spirit, to flow and work through us.

It is also important that we learn from God and others so that we can be equipped for the work of service. Ministry takes time to learn and, in the process, making mistakes and sometimes totally failing sometimes happens. It is also a time that Christ builds faith within us. Christ does give us gifts, but they are usually not in the finished form. We must exercise these gifts, so that we can become strong and mature in their use. Discipleship is disciplining ourselves in the character and nature of Christ.

The word "gift" signifies that what is given to us by someone; indeed, it can be something undeserved. The Holy Spirit knows the needs within the church, plus He knows what we can handle and wisely use for Christ's glory (Rom 12:3-8).

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When one is given a gift box, the gift can be fully assembled or come with instructions on how to put it together and use it. A gift is given to us by someone else. Christ has given to us the Holy Spirit Who has the ministry of giving gifts to the disciples. They are given with a purpose and one of the main goals is to bless, strengthen and help others. Nevertheless, gifts also need to be **nurtured** and **learned** about, so we can get the full potential from them.

These three words - **ministry, equipping and gifts**, must work in harmony and unity with each other, and must always be seasoned by the fruit of the Spirit. Ministry is for the service of others, and if we are going to serve them well, we must understand our God-given gifts and talents. They are given to us so that we can help, encourage, strengthen and bless others. The gifts are not there for our own convenience or encouragement, but for the strengthening of the church and for the furtherance of the Gospel of Christ. We are all part of the same body, and as we work with each other as disciples, our foundation is the grace and love of Christ. **We must have the view each day of how we can take that which we have been given and use it to equip and mature someone else for the kingdom of God.**

Related Scriptures:

Rom 12:5-8; 1 Cor 12:4-11; 12:27-28; 14:1, 12; 2 Cor 5:18; Eph 4:12; Col 4:7; 2 Tim 4:5; Heb 2:4; 13:20-21; 2 Pet 4:10-11

FOR FURTHER STUDY:

A) What is a Spiritual Gift?

Definition: A spiritual gift is a God-given ability for service. This simple definition incorporates the source of gifts (God-given), the meaning of gifts (abilities), and the purpose of gifts (service).

1. A spiritual gift is primarily an ability given to an individual. It is not an office in the church.
2. There are benefits that would come to the church of Christ if every member would realize that he could use spiritual gifts all the time and under many different circumstances.

B) Distribution of Spiritual Gifts:

1. Gifts are sovereignly dispensed by the Spirit.
2. Gifts are not rewards.
3. Gifts are given for a "purpose" - to build up the body.
4. Gifts are given to every believer - you have at least one gift, if the Spirit of God is in you.
5. Every believer has a unique ministry.

C) The Development of Spiritual Gifts:

1. Gifts are not given in polished form.
2. Christians must exercise their gifts.
3. The believer himself may have a part in the development of his spiritual gifts.
4. Yielding cannot make up for lack of proper development of gifts, though proper development can never take place without yielding.

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5. Two guidelines for proper development of spiritual gifts:
 - a. The first is expressed this way: "but covet earnestly the best gifts".
 - b. The second guideline is: "be attentive to the ministry of others."

These two very simple matters - lack of attendance and lack of attention are still reasons today why some never fully develop their spiritual gifts.

D) How Can I Discover my Gifts?

1. Be informed - in other words, know what spiritual gifts are. You will discover that you have a gift or two already.
2. Be willing - if we are unwilling in any area, then God may not be able to let us use some gift, but if we are willing to do anything or go anywhere, the Lord may bring to light gifts of which we never dreamed.
3. There are many ordinary laymen and women who miss the full use of their gifts simply because they will not tie themselves down to a regular Sunday school class or even to a simple administrative job in the church. We must be completely and unreservedly willing to do anything if we would know the fullness of our spiritual gifts.
4. Be active – the exercise of one gift may lead to the discovery of other gifts.
5. Three things to do:
 - Pray - to tell Him you want to know your gifts.
 - Consider your past - probably He has already tried to show you.
 - Try different ministries - get involved in the church.
6. Three results will happen:
 - You will have enjoyment.
 - There will be results.
 - God's people will recognize your gifts.

GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. Prophecy:

The gift of prophecy is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to receive and communicate an immediate message of God to His people through a divinely-anointed utterance.

Prophets were both foretellers (predicting the future) and forth-tellers (exhorting at the present time); yet both spoke messages that they had received by direct revelation from God.

According to Acts 21:8, 9 this gift was not restricted to males, for we read that Philip the evangelist had four daughters who were prophetesses.

2. Helps or Service:

The person with this gift has the ability to faithfully and diligently serve in the background, in very practical ways, to assist in the Lord's work and to encourage and strengthen others spiritually. Such persons are the backbone of the church and will do all sorts of odd jobs in the church so that the work of the ministry will function smoothly and effectively.

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Possible examples of this gift in action in the Bible could be Phoebe, Priscilla, Aquila and Urbane.

3. Teaching:

This person is marked by two characteristics:

- a. He is strongly motivated to a personal study of the Word of God.
- b. He will have the ability to effectively communicate the truths and principles gleaned from the Word, so others may profit. Teaching brings responsibility.

4. Exhortation:

This gift is a double-edged gift. This person will be able to effectively urge another to pursue some course of action or conduct. He complements the work of the teacher. Whereas the teacher will bring us to say, "I can see that," the exhorter will bring us to say, "I'll do that." He drives home the spiritual truth and spurs people to action. This person will also be able to effectively encourage or comfort another in the light of a past tragedy or trial. The root of the word "exhort" can also be translated "encouragement." These are the people from whom we seek counsel and guidance.

5. Giving:

This person has the ability to give of his substance to the work of the Lord or to God's people, consistently, liberally, sacrificially, and with such wisdom and cheerfulness that others are encouraged and blessed. It is to be done with no thought of return or gain for self.

6. Administration or ruling:

This person has the ability to organize and administer with such efficiency and spirituality that a project is not only satisfactorily completed, but it is done harmoniously and with blessing. These people have the ability to turn chaos into something beautiful. This person is able to give vision and direction. He or she is able to organize and direct people to a specific goal and see that it is done decently and in order.

7. Mercy:

This person has the ability to identify with and comfort those who are in distress – for example, those whom others find difficult to be near, such as a retarded child. Their deeds are toward those who are unable to repay, such as the poor, or the aged. This gift will be evident in sympathy, understanding, compassion, patience, and sensitivity toward underprivileged and over-anxious people. This person will be drawn to those passing through periods of severe pressure or emotional anxiety, the bereaved, the ill, the depressed, the poor, the widowed, the orphaned, the mentally retarded, and many others.

8. Apostleship:

Apostleship can have both a general and a limited meaning. In a general sense the word means one who is sent, or a messenger. The Latin equivalent is the word missionary. In a general sense every Christian is a missionary or an apostle, because he has been sent into this world for a testimony. However, in the specialized sense of the gift of apostleship it refers to the Twelve (and perhaps a few others like Paul and Barnabas). They were the leaders who laid the foundation of the church and they were accredited by special signs.

9. Evangelism:

The evangelist has the capacity to present the gospel message with exceptional clarity and an overwhelming burden.

- a. He has a consuming passion for souls. He has a concern for the unsaved. He would rather witness than eat.
- b. He has a clear understanding of the gospel message.
- c. A gifted evangelist has the ability to present the gospel message clearly.
- d. The evangelist has great joy in seeing men and women come to a personal and saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

10. Pastor:

The word “pastor” means to shepherd; therefore, the gift of pastor involves leading, providing and caring for, and protecting the portion of the flock of God committed to his care. In Ephesians 4:11 the work of teaching is linked with that of pastoring, and in Acts 20:28, the duty of caring and feeding the flock is added.

11. Wisdom:

This is the gift of receiving, knowing, and presenting the wisdom of God, the revealed truth of God, as presented by the apostles and prophets. If you speak with the wisdom of God, it denotes the highest mental excellence. If you speak in the power of the Holy Spirit the Lord will give you wisdom. Stephen was full of faith and power and they were not able to resist the intelligence and the wisdom resulting from the inspiration of the Spirit, with which he spoke. If you read Stephen’s defence, you find that in 52 verses he preached from Abraham to Jesus. God gave him the wisdom needed. He didn’t even use notes. That was heavenly wisdom.

12. Knowledge:

This is the ability to understand correctly and to exhibit clearly the spiritual wisdom of God revealed to and by the apostles. It is to know something that is revealed spiritually. Without a light in the jail, Paul saw that the jailer was going to kill himself. Peter knew by a word of knowledge that Ananias was lying. Words of knowledge may not be heeded. Today God also gives us knowledge when we call on Him through prayer. He is there to help direct our path, to give light to those areas of darkness or to things that are unknown.

13. Faith:

Faith is a Spirit-given ability to see something that God wants done and to sustain unwavering confidence that God will do it, regardless of seemingly insurmountable obstacles. Though all logic seems stacked against some course of action, this faith makes decisions which seem senseless, then sees them through despite overriding objections and massive roadblocks. This gift sees the will of God accomplished despite all natural resistance.

14. Miracles:

Working of miracles. The Greek word for miracles is “dunameon,” a word that stresses the element of power in mighty works. It is often used of the miracles of Jesus. During ministering to

others, the Holy Spirit may use the disciple to do something miraculous outside of that what man may deem possible or believable.

15. Healings:

In Biblical times there were special acts of divine healing, and undoubtedly there were hundreds of instances where the apostles were able to demonstrate the divine power that was within them by restoring health to those who had various physical disabilities. Certain people have the gift of healing. This is different from James 5:14-15 and Mark 16:16-18 which talk about elders and all believers. It is scriptural to lay hands on the sick, anoint with oil, and pray. The gift may be a special filling at a special time, or even for specific illnesses. Healing must bring glory to God. Healing may even be done for unbelievers. You can pray to receive this gift.

16. Discerning of Spirits:

The early church in Corinth needed discerning of spirits. We need it even more. Cults, religions that do not worship Jesus, false teachings, etc., abound today. We need much discernment and are told in 1 John 4:1 to be careful to try the spirits, using the gift of discernment. In Acts 8:23, Peter perceived the bad spirit in Simon. In Acts chapter 8 we read how Phillip preached in Samaria and great things happened. Even Simon, the sorcerer, believed, yet Peter through the gift of discerning of spirits, saw into Simon's heart and spoke to his problem. In Acts 16 we read of the possessed slave girl who followed Paul around saying: "These men are the servants of the most High God, who proclaim to us the way to salvation" (verse 17). Every word the slave girl said was true, but her purpose was to discredit the message of the apostles by making the people think that they were in league with demon spirits, who were making the announcements through a demon possessed medium. People would conclude that they were doing miracles by the devil, and so discount the Gospel. Paul spoke in the name of Jesus to the demon (not the girl), and commanded it to come out, and it did so. Gifts of discerning of spirits, and the power to do something about it, are shown in Acts 1:8 and Mark 16:17-18.

17. Tongues:

The gift of tongues, together with interpretation of tongues, equals prophecy. The gift of tongues is for edifying the church. The gift may be exercised up to three times in one service. The gift of tongues is not an irresistible impulse of the spirit that drives a man headlong into ecstatic speech. The spirit of the prophet is subject to the prophet. The gift of tongues is not given to all people.

18. Interpretation:

The gift of interpretation is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to make known in the vernacular the message of one who speaks in tongues.

Information compiled and provided by Rev. Harry Bartel, Steinbach Manitoba, Canada

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Principle Ten: WALK, WORK & WARFARE

*“But I say, walk by the **Spirit**, and you will not carry out the desires of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the **Spirit**, and the **Spirit** against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. But if you are led by the **Spirit**, you are not under the Law. Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the **Spirit** is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the **Spirit**, let us also walk by the **Spirit**.”*

Galatians 5:16-25

Definition:

1. **Walk:** to move onward or about; to pursue as a course of action or way of life. *Synonyms:* advance, amble, go, hike, march, move, step.
2. **Work:** activity in which one exerts strength or faculties to do or to perform; a sustained physical or mental effort. *Synonyms:* effort, exertion, grind, labour, sweat, toil, travail, calling, craft, duty, job, occupation, office, pursuit, trade, assignment, chore, commission.
3. **Warfare:** military operation between enemies; armed contest to destroy another; the process of struggling between competing entities. *Synonyms:* armed conflict, struggle, battle, blows, campaigning, clash, combat, conflict, contest, discord, fighting, hostilities, strategy, strife, war.

The Holy Spirit desires to walk with us and to work through us. We have been given a choice, a free will, and it is up to us to decide how we will respond to His leading in our lives. When it comes to the work and walk of our ministry with the Holy Spirit, we can ourselves be the biggest hindrance to what God may want to be doing in us and around us. **The question is whether or not we will die to our desires and walk and work in step to how the Holy Spirit is leading and speaking to us, because if we do not, we will be overcome by the enemy in our daily struggles and battles.**

Each day is a challenge to the believer. Things seem to change faster than we can plan. We sometimes get attacked from all sides. Christ knew that the disciples would face all kinds of difficulties, and that's why, before He left, He told the disciples that He would send to them another Comforter who would walk with them and teach them all things (John 14:16).

Jesus also instructed the disciples that they must die to self because self-will runs contrary to God's will (John 12:24). We must be “broken open” so that the true life of Christ can be released, and so we may produce more fruit for God's kingdom. He knew that we would need wisdom, strength and power. He knew that we would be in an everyday battle of good versus evil,

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fighting a **spiritual warfare** (Eph 6:10-12). The work and ministry of the Holy Spirit is to equip us, to train and prepare us for life here on earth and also for the life that we will have in heaven for all eternity.

There is a need in the disciple's life to have spiritual eyes to see what is really going on around us in the spiritual realm. Do we remember the story of Elijah and his servant? Elijah asked God to open up his servant's eyes because all he could see were the physical armies; he was unaware that God's heavenly armies also surrounded them (2 Kings 6:16-17). Another account was the archangel trying to come and speak with Daniel. The angel gave the account about the battle that was going on in the heavenlies and why he was late in coming (Dan 10:13).

The disciples are also challenged not to get entangled in the things of this world (Heb 12:1), because if we do, they will hinder us and keep us from doing the Lord's will for our lives. Sin, pride and disobedience are like a cord or ropes that can tie us to things, which in turn keeps us from doing the will of God. Jesus told Peter that whatever he bound on earth would be bound in heaven, and whatever he loosed on earth would also be loosed in heaven, (Matt 16:18-19).

Each day we fight at least **two types of battles**. One is between our head and heart, and the second is between us and the world. Paul tells us that our battle is not a flesh and blood battle, but a spiritual battle between life and death. We are fighting against principalities and powers in high places. We are at war with a real enemy who seeks to maim and destroy us (Eph 6:10-20). We must stand our ground in Christ and protect our temple from the enemies of the cross.

A building stands because of a firm foundation and a properly built structure. It is the draftsman who knows what is needed in the construction so that it can withstand the inevitable challenges (Matt 7:24-27). We are the building and the Holy Spirit is the draftsman. He knows what is needed to help us keep standing in the face of what Satan and the world can throw at us.

We live in a real world that is divided into two dominions. There is the world with all its temptations and desires, and there is the spiritual realm within which our minds and hearts battle. These spiritual forces are real, and they have power to bind and destroy. As a disciple you must watch for attacks. You must be like a watchman in a strong tower keeping both your physical and spiritual eyes open for the enemy. The enemy desires to stop us, to trip us up concerning our God-given purpose. He wants to dishearten and discourage us through mistakes and stumbling. He wants to fill our hearts with condemnation and guilt. But there is hope. By staying close to the heart of God, He will keep the Holy Spirit watching over us and guiding in such a way that even if we are in a storm or battle, we can have perfect peace.

Related Scriptures:

Matt 16:18-19; John 11:9-10; 12:24-26; 1 Cor 15:31, 36; 2 Cor 2:14-16; 3:3-6; Eph 4:1-3; 5:8; 6:12, 18; Phil 1:6; Heb12:1

Conclusion

In studying the theology of the Holy Spirit, it is important that we look at the bigger picture of Who He is, how He serves and how He works through our lives. His various names give to us a better understanding of how He works and ministers to people. He has been sent by the Heavenly Father to be our Teacher and to empower us for service. We cannot do the ministry that Christ requires us to do without first being filled with His Spirit (Eph 5:18). We cannot do things in our strength and ability, but we need to look to Him to do them in His strength and ability through us. We need to pray each day that the Holy Spirit fills us and flows through us to touch lives to whom He desires us to minister.

It is also important that, as we seek the anointing of the Holy Spirit in our lives, we must first ask Him to fill us with the fruit of His Spirit. The gifts of the Spirit will not work if they are not first built on the foundation of the fruit of the Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit must flow out through our lives and through the gifts that Christ gives to us so that, with them, we can minister to others.

The gifts of the Spirit are given to us so that we may minister both in the church and to others around us. As God wills, He gives the unique gifts of His Spirit not for us to use on ourselves, but rather so that we can be interconnected with other disciples and together, through unity and harmony, use our gifts to build a strong body for Jesus Christ (1 Cor 12:1-31).

Discipleship Application

The key to walking in the anointing of the Holy Spirit is to have a personal understanding and relationship with Him. He affects all of our daily walk, so to walk in strength and boldness we must draw from Him Who guides, anoints, and comforts us. We need to be baptized and filled with His presence. Only through His power will we be able to function and serve one another in the body of Christ. We also need to clearly see Him as God, part of the Triune God Who created all the heavens and earth. God does not come and minister to us as three different 'pieces', but where the Father is, the Son is there also and where the Father and Son are, so is the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

Commitment and Prayer

Dear Lord Jesus,

Help me to walk in Your fullness, not in my strength and righteousness, but in Your strength and righteousness. I thank You for Your grace that makes it possible to be filled daily by Your Spirit. Please guide me, Holy Spirit, through the Word, that I may flow with Your fruit and with Your gifts. Lord, each day I need your comfort and instruction so that I may not fall into the traps of the enemy. Holy Spirit guide me each day so that my life can be a testimony of you as the way, truth and life. I need Thee every hour. I desire to humble myself and draw closer to You in a deeper personal relationship. Here am I Lord, use me according to Your will and may my life bear fruit that will bring honour and glory to Your name.

Sincerely your servant, _____

Chapter Five

Teachings on Man and Woman

*“In the beginning God **created** the heavens and the earth....God created **man** in His own image, in the image of God He **created** him; **male** and **female** He **created** them. God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”*

Genesis 1:1 & 27-28

Introduction

Right from the first chapter of Genesis we learn that God created all things. All creation was put in place during those seven days. God designed and created all the beauty of the earth, including man and woman (Gen 1:1-31). As disciples, we need to see the bigger picture of how we fit into all creation. Even though we are individually made, we fit into God’s overall plan and purpose. When we understand this, we are then able to move forward in God’s strength and boldness. Also, by studying the subject of creation we can see how we are made in His image, with talents, gifts and uniqueness all coming from God’s heart of love. We will see that from the day of creation to now, God has moved throughout history to draw us into a personal and eternal relationship with Him. The word “stewardship” plays an important part regarding God as the Creator and us as the created ones. We are called to be stewards of God’s creation.

Description

1. **Creator:** one that creates, produces, or constitutes: *Synonyms:* author, writer, designer, deviser, maker, producer, originator, inventor, architect, mastermind.
2. **Creation:** the act of creating; the art of bringing into existence from nothing; the thing created. *Synonyms:* establishment, formation, foundation, initiation, production, fashioning, building, origination.

The creation story which is found in Genesis chapter 1 teaches us that God created the heavens and earth within six days, resting on the seventh day. Also, on the sixth day He created man and woman and gave humanity dominion over all the earth. They were created, as we are told, in the image of God but also created to look after the creation that God had made for them. He surrounded them with His beautiful handiwork, filling the seas and the earth with life and filling the heavens with stars and beauty.

What follows here is an overview of the six days of creation.

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In the beginning God Created:

Day One Gen 1:1-5

- Spirit of God moved
- God created the form of the earth and heaven
- God created light
- God called light day and darkness night *it was good*

Day Two Gen 1:6-8

- God created separation of the water
- God created the heavens
- God called the expanse heaven *it was good*

Day Three Gen 1:9-13

- God created land and sea
- God called dry land earth and the waters sea
- God created plants and trees to bear fruit *it was good*

Day Four Gen 1:14-19

- God created sun, moon and stars
- God created different light
- God created days, seasons, years *it was good*

Day Five Gen 1:20-23

- God created creatures in the water; fish and water animals
- God created birds
- God called them to be fruitful
- God blessed them *it was good*

Day Six Gen 1:24-31

- (A) God created creatures on the land
- God created crawling things
- (B) God created man – male & female
- Made man in His likeness and image
- God blessed them *it was very good*

Day Seven Gen 2:1-3

- God created rest for all his work was done *it was blessed and sanctified*

It is important that we understand that all creation was made by a Creator Whose name is God. For one to be created he has to have a Creator that has formed him and made him into a certain image. The earth did not come about by a Big Bang theory or through an Evolutionary process. The Bible clearly states Who created the heavens and the earth and as disciples of Christ

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and believers in the Word of God, we must hold fast to this doctrinal teaching of creation. Our focus in this chapter is not to deal with all God's creation, but to look more carefully at what God did on the sixth day when He made His most precious creation, man and woman. Why? Because they were made in the image and likeness of the triune God.

Principle One: THE CREATION OF MAN AND WOMAN

*“And the LORD God formed **man** of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and **man** became a living being.”*

Genesis 2:7

*“And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from **man** he made into a **woman**, and he brought her to the man. And Adam said: this is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called **woman** because she was taken out of **man**.*

Therefore, a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.”

Genesis 2:21- 24

*“In the day when God created **man**, He made him in the likeness of God. He **created** them **male** and **female**, and He blessed them and named them **Mankind** in the day when they were **created**.”*

Genesis 5:1

We see from the Scriptures that man was taken from the dust of the earth (Gen 2:7, 3:19). Like a potter taking clay and forming it into an image, God created man. But as man looked around, he saw that there was no mate for him, no companion that looked like him (Gen 2:20). But God wasn't finished. He put Adam into a deep sleep and instead of making a new being He took a rib from Adam and out of that He fashioned a woman which we know as Eve (Gen 2:21). They were the last of God's creation. He had made everything else in heaven and on earth; His last, and ultimate, creation was man and woman.

Definition:

1. **Man:** created by God in His image and likeness, a gentleman, guy, chap, male. The sex that has the ability to father young by fertilizing the female. The Scriptures gave specific responsibilities to men; they are accountable for the nurturing of children in the fear of God.
2. **Woman:** an adult human female, created by God from man; the final and glorious creative act of God. The woman was created by God to be a helpmate to man, a person who could enter into a marriage union with a man and become one with him. God meant for them to serve uniquely together with a united heart, the two becoming one, thus fulfilling God's will and plan. Only one man and one woman can make a marriage, bearing children God according to His plan and will, a blessing to the Creator.

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It is important to remember here that both man and woman was created by God. Man was created from the dust of the earth and from man God created woman which also tells us that she came from the dust of the earth. That is why when we die the Bible tells us that we return back to the dust (1 Cor 15:47-49). Our physical body may decay and die, but the spiritual part of man and woman lives on for all eternity (1 Cor 15:50-58). God created man and woman uniquely so that they could serve one another and look after one another and, if God willed it, to have children together.

This new creation (man) had a uniqueness about it that only God Himself could form because He had a plan and a destiny for this particular creation. He gave them beautiful bodies, a mind that could think and a spirit that knew the heart of God. This couple had the opportunity to walk in the very presence of God day after day and to speak with Him those things that were on their hearts (Gen 3:8). He even created a garden for them that had rivers, beautiful flowers, fruits, animals, birds and fish. His full creation laid before their eyes; they could see, hear, taste, smell and enjoy everything that God had created for them (Gen 2:8-15).

In the very beginning of time God created and breathed life into all creation but the crowning work of this creation was man and woman (Gen 2:7). As humans we need to recognize that we were created by God. The created need to come under the authority and will of the Creator. Within creation God laid out parameters and boundaries by which man could hope to maintain a deep relationship with their Creator. Man has been created in the image of God (Gen 1:27). He was created for a purpose and God hoped that we would love Him and be grateful for Who He is and all that He has done. He also envisioned for us that we would be fruitful and multiply throughout all the earth (Gen 1:28). The creation story is where the journey began for all mankind; the journey continues even now. Creation is the foundation that gives us direction and reason for living.

As disciples of Christ Jesus, we must not only see Him as our Saviour and Redeemer, but as God He is also our Creator ("Let **US** make" Gen 1:26). We should not only worship Him because of what He did on the cross for us, but we should also worship Him because He is the One Who created us and made us part of who He is (Gen 1:27). We have come out of the very heart of God and for thousands and thousands of years He has continued to love us in spite of our sinfulness because we are His children, He birthed us and breathed life into our very beings (Gen 2:7). This alone should cause us to want to give Him praise and thanksgiving for what He has done for mankind throughout the history of this earth.

Principle Two: CREATED IN HIS IMAGE

*"Then God said, Let Us make man in Our **image**, according to Our **likeness**; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. God **created** man in His own **image**, in the **image** of God He **created** him; male and female He **created** them."*

Genesis 1:26-27

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*“In the day when God created man, He made him in the **likeness** of God. He **created** them male and female, and He blessed them and named them Mankind in the day when they were **created**.”*

Genesis 5:1

Definition:

1. **Image:** representation of the external form of something; character or reputation of a person or thing. *Synonyms:* resemblance, portrayal, representation, reflection, likeness, impression, vision.
2. **Likeness:** the same as; identical to; in the manner of; in a similar way to; characteristic of. *Synonyms:* copy, portrait, uniformity, conformity, form, shape semblance, resemblance.
3. **Unique:** the only one of its kind. *Synonyms:* individual, special, unrepeated, exclusive, rare, unusual, notable, extraordinary.

God's greatest or crowning achievement was when He created man. The Scriptures tells us that He created man in His own image (Gen 1:27). We all have been patterned after God Himself. We can be like Him in the areas of character, thinking, emotions and even through our actions. We are a direct work from His hands. He knows us from the moment of our conception (Jer 1:5).

We are created in His image (Gen 1:26). We are a portrayal and representation of the One Who created us. This is an amazing thing: the Creator tells us that we are made in His image. We should also be aware that, because we are made in His image, we have certain responsibilities.

We also should see the plurality of God in all creation; the triune God speaking into being all creation below the earth, on the earth and above the earth. God gives to us this detailed testimony how the “Us” and “Our” (Gen 1:26-27) created and formed the earth, created everything, and most of all, made man and woman in His image and likeness. At the end of creation, He blessed it so that it would grow, mature and multiply throughout all the earth.

As disciples, just as we are made in God's image, we also need to see that we are to be a reflection of Christ to a lost world. Christ is the image of God. We are created by God and through salvation in Christ, become a vessel of Christ's Spirit. This likeness and image do not come to completion until we have received Christ personally into our lives. Then, through the work of the Holy Spirit, we become spiritually a new creation (2 Cor 5:17).

Men throughout history have often formed their own images to worship. We are not to worship an image (Ps 97:7; Rom 1:23), but the Creator Who made the heavens and earth. Our life journey has as its foundation stone Jesus Christ and our task is to become more like Christ. His image is what we are to pattern our lives after.

To illustrate this, we could look at the concept of what a model represents. A model is a replica or a likeness of what is real. We are told that we are to model Christ to a lost world. The

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model has to be molded from a pattern that reflects what the true and real thing is. The model has to look like the real thing before it can be categorized as a model.

We are called to live a moment-by-moment lifestyle that will model and reflect Jesus Christ to a lost world. We mirror Christ to others. As they look at us, they should see Christ in us. Each has been created for a purpose, and as men and women we are given different functions and ministries to balance and strengthen the body of Christ. We are all joint heirs with Jesus (Rom 8:17), but we are not all from the same mold. We have talents and character traits that God has created and will use in such a way that we will minister and serve each other.

As disciples we must be transformed and conformed into the image of Christ. Our outward creation is a vessel that carries inside God's new creation (Rom 12:1-2). We become like Him in attitude and actions. When people look at us, they should see Christ Jesus in our lives. We are to become a new creation in Christ (2 Cor 5:17). The old was corrupted by sin and death, but the new is to become who Christ is. Through Adam sin and death entered the world, but through Christ, the second Adam, we have grace, hope and eternal life and will not experience spiritual death (1 Cor 15:22).

RELATED SCRIPTURES:

Gen 9:6; Rom 1:23; 8:29; 1 Cor 11:7; 2 Cor 3:18; Col 1:15; 3:10

Principle three: CREATED AS A THREEFOLD PERSON

*Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely: and may your whole **spirit, soul, and body** be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He whom calls you is faithful, who also will do it. 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24*

Definition:

1. **Body:** bulk, essence, group, organization.
2. **Soul:** immaterial part of a human being; the actual person. The soul is the part that is dominated by the mind which, in turn, is controlled by the will or nature of man.
3. **Spirit:** essence, life force, power.
4. **Trichotomy:** a teaching concerning the various parts of a person, that a person is made up of a body, soul (emotion thought and will) and spirit.

Like God Who has three roles or functions as Father, Son and Holy Spirit (yet as One), man and woman also have been created with a body, soul (mind) and a spirit, each having a specific purpose as a unit. The body is the physical skin, organs, and bones, that house who we are. It gives us structure and appearance, each one being uniquely different from any other. The mind or the soul is the place of thinking, the command centre for the body, sending forth electrical impulses or signals to all parts of the body, giving it the ability to move, think and create. The spirit is often linked to the very centre of man, the essence of who we are. Some say it is the heart, others say it is the loins or reproductive area. Whichever it maybe it seems to be a place that can connect to God. When our spirit comes alive through faith in Jesus Christ, we become connected or engrafted

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into each other (John 15:5-7) and to the ministry of the Holy Spirit who fills us with resurrection power (Phil 3:10).

In the Old Testament the Bible sometimes uses the terms soul and spirit almost interchangeably with each other. But in the New Testament they are separated more clearly, being more descriptive as to how they interact with each other and with God.

Body: The body often carries out the desires of the flesh - those things that the mind creates or commands it to do. The body is subject to the mind, and therefore, when the mind is full of sin, the sin nature can express itself through the body. Our bodies are a unique creation of God; they have a variety of abilities when properly trained. The body can have poor function as a result of infection and sickness; it can become limited in its mobility and ability. But in all that we do, we must present our bodies as living sacrifices to God (Rom 12:1).

Soul: The mind can be a place of joy and peace, but it can also a place of torment and heartache. The mind becomes vulnerable to worry and stress. It is the battleground for all kinds of thoughts, both good and bad. It can also be destroyed by abuse and different kinds of substances. Therefore, Paul exhorts us to put on the helmet of salvation because our minds get attacked from without and from within (Eph 6:17). Thoughts tend to go in circles within one's mind and, with some people, drive them to the point of acting out unthinkable things through their bodies (Rom 1:29-31). This is where the enemy of our soul, Satan, loves to attack and cause us to fall into deceitful and terrible habits, trying to bring us into bondage and submission to his authority - with the goal that we would self-destruct (Eph 2:2-3). The mind is the seat of our sin nature and self-will. This area can only be set free through the blood of Christ Jesus and the daily infilling of the Holy Spirit (Eph 5:18).

Spirit: Because of sin the spirit of man is dead in trespasses and sin (Eph 2:1), but Christ's death and resurrection made a way, through His shed blood, to resurrect our spirit from eternal death to eternal life with Him (Rom 6:11). Through Christ we can now abide together as one with Him. We enter into a personal relationship, being interconnected with Him. He clothes us in His righteousness and extends to us, through faith, mercy and grace. Christ brings for us a hope of life that is free from bondage and death, a place where we can dwell with Him for all eternity.

As disciples, God wants the complete man (body, soul, and spirit) to live uprightly in unity and harmony as a fit vessel for service. The enemy wants to divide and destroy, to break us up from the inside out with fear, stresses, and anxieties. The Spirit of God (Holy Spirit) comes in through our body, to our minds and then to our hearts. Then, when the heart changes, it impacts our minds and changes our outward appearance – giving us a different outlook on life and even shining forth the presence of Jesus Christ to others.

The disciple of Christ is part of the body of Christ which is His Church (1 Cor 6:15, 12:12). The various disciples are all important parts of the body of Christ and must work together in unity and harmony if the body is to function properly. Christ is the head of the body (Col 1:18). The soul of the disciple must become broken before God so He can create within us a whole new person

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(John 12:24). The spirit of the disciple must become engrafted into Christ (Rom 11:17-36). This then makes him a channel for the work of the Holy Spirit Who flows through him. The Holy Spirit is the Teacher and empowering One, the Comforter and Encourager sent by the Father (John 14:16-17; Acts 1:4-5). He provides the disciples with fruit and gifts, so that it is possible to bear fruit themselves. But we also need to know that within us there can be a war between our will and God's will for our lives. Each day we should lay ourselves on the altar of Christ, so that we can be empowered and filled with His Spirit for service.

Related Scriptures:

body: Rom 6:12; 8:10, 23, 12:1; 1 Cor 12:27; Gal 6:17; Heb 10:10; James 2:26

soul: Gen 2:7, Deut 4:29; 10:12; 26:16; Ps 19:7; 23:3; 42:5; 143:8; 1 Cor 15:45; Heb 4:12; James 1:21; 1 Pet 1:9, 2:11

spirit: Ps 31:5; 51:12; Pro 1:23; Isa 57:15; Matt 5:3; Acts 4:32; Heb 4:12; 6:19; James 2:26

Principle Four: CREATED BY DESIGN

*"Your hands **made** me and **fashioned** me; Give me understanding, that I may learn Your commandments."*
Psalm 119:73

*"For You **formed** my inward parts; you wove me in my mother's womb. I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully **made**; wonderful are Your works, and my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from You,"*
Psalm 139:13-15

Definition:

1. **Design:** to mark out; to conceive and plan out in the mind. *Synonyms:* create, plan, devise, invent, originate, make, design, build.
2. **Fashion:** act of making; to give shape & form to. *Synonyms:* style, look, tendency, custom, practice, manner, produce, make, shape, form, mold, forge, hew, carve.
3. **Plan:** a drawing or diagram showing the parts or details of something; a method for accomplishing an objective. *Synonyms:* idea, proposal, project, program, system, method, strategy, way, objective, goal, target.
4. **Purpose:** an object or result aimed at. *Synonyms:* aim, design, function, idea, intention, object, point, principles, reason, desire, goal, hope, target, single-mindedness, steadfastness, will, results.

Every human being has a starting point. There was a moment of time when you were conceived (Ps 51:5). The moment of conception was the moment of your creation. At that

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moment God breathed life into your soul. He designed the features and details of your life. He enacted a sequence that would make you who you are for the rest of your life.

God has a plan for everyone. He has created according to a plan, and out of that divine plan He is fashioning us into His image for a purpose (Job 10:8). He designs us and from that design He now takes all the time that we have on earth to fashion us for His glory. During the six days of creation, He left to the end the greatest of His work, creating man and woman to become carriers and proclaimers of Who He is (Gen 1:26-27). He made us unique from all other living things that He created.

From the first day of His creation man has gone on for generations living and producing other generations because of God's great love for us. He knows us at the moment of our conception, and as a Father He watches over us to guide and instruct us. We have been made from dust and fashioned into a temple exhibiting His love and glory. He has entrusted us to be stewards of the whole world, to foster and to use for life and pleasure. He created us as a physical body that can move around, a soul that can think, and with the capacity to be filled with His Spirit (Eph 3:19, 5:18).

He has designed us, and now each day He continues to fashion us for a purpose and reason. He loves us so much that He desires each day to walk with us and work through us to touch and minister to others. We are designed to be an extension of His arms and hands to others.

God has a plan and purpose - like a blueprint. He is the Architect, the Designer behind all creation. He has a specific blueprint for our lives. A blueprint is a drawing of both the overall picture and of a detailed plan that shows how the little intricate pieces all fit together. We are being made from a divine blueprint. God knows all the complicated details, even the number of hairs on our heads. But we also must see that our personal blueprint fits into a bigger blueprint of the church worldwide. God will not always show us the total blueprint for our lives, but we must be assured that He does have one.

We need to have our eyes open to see, as King David did. His relationship with God allowed him to have much wisdom and understanding about Who His Creator was and how much He loves and cares for us. He has made us and formed us for a purpose and for a specific ministry that, in the end, will glorify His name (Ps 119:73).

As disciples of Christ, we need to see that God does not do things randomly or by chance. He has a plan and purpose for our lives that is tailor-made for us (Ps 33:11). The chief Designer, the Architect, knows each step that we must go through, so that as He builds Himself into our lives, we will begin to experience growth and maturity leading to fruit from both our physical and spiritual labours (John 15:1-11). The key for us is to have the faith to trust that He knows what is right for us. We also need to build a close relationship with God, so we can hear and understand what it is that He is trying to say to us (Ps 139:13-15).

Related Scriptures:

Gen 1:1, 26-27; 2:22; 5:1; Ex 35:35; Job 10:8; 31:15; Ps 33:15; Eph 2:10; Col 1:16; 2 Tim 4:4

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Principle Five: CREATED FOR RELATIONSHIP

*“The one who keeps His commandments **abides** in Him, and **He in him**. We know by this that He **abides** in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.”*

1 John 3:24

Definition:

1. **Relationship:** a connection by way of relation. *Synonyms:* connection, link, correlation, bond, kinship.
2. **Friendship:** the state of being friends; one that seeks the society or welfare of another whom he holds in affection; respect or esteem for one whose companionship and personality are pleasurable. *Synonyms:* close relationship, attachment, association, bond, tie, link, union, companionship, fellowship, rapport, understanding, harmony, unity, intimacy.
3. **Communication:** act of transmitting and receiving; exchange of information or opinions. *Synonyms:* connection, contact, conversation, link, transmission, disclosure, information, message, news report, word.
4. **Know:** to have information secured in the mind or memory; to perceive directly; to be acquainted. *Synonyms:* be aware, realize, be conscious, be informed, notice, perceive, see, recognize.
5. **Abide:** to dwell; to remain; to endure. *Synonyms:* to be constant, continuous, durable, enduring, eternal, everlasting, fast, firm, permanent, persistent, steadfast, surviving, unending.

The moment that man and woman were created was the moment that they began to have a relationship with God (Gen 3:8). The Creator and the created were to build a relationship of love. But it would be built on the premise that the created would obey the Creator. As created beings we would have to learn and understand God's ways and to trust that whatever He spoke into our lives would be true and good for us (Gen 2:16-17).

We know the phrase how “sin separates” us from God. God's greatest desire was to have a personal relationship with mankind. This can be easily seen through the entire Bible from Genesis to Revelation. The biggest battle we face is deciding with whom we are going to develop a personal relationship. Will it be with Satan and his fallen angels, or with God through Christ Jesus and His Kingdom? It is our free choice (Deut 30:19). God desires to have a relationship with us: will we desire to have a lifelong relationship with Him?

We do not see the word “relationship” in Scripture very much, but the concept is portrayed through the word “abiding” (1 John 3:24). We are to abide with the Father, with the Holy Spirit and with Christ (John 14 & 15). Our relationship is pictured for us as a branch being grafted into a vine. Life comes up through the vine, out into the branches, and out of that relationship will come fruit (John 15:1-11).

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Another word that reflects the whole area of relationship is the word “know” (Eph 3:19; Phil 3:10; 1 John 3:24). Getting to know another must happen through communication. Friendship is the open speaking and sharing of one heart with another. The more we love one another, the deeper the relationship and understanding that we will have towards each other. We get to know the other in such a way that we will understand or know the desire of the other before they even speak it.

Jesus told the disciples in John 15 that He did not want them to think of themselves as His slaves, but to be His friends. Friendships are made out of choices. For instance, one such choice may be deciding to go and work with a friend through the bad and the good times. Friendship is the foundation of a strong relationship. When one is a friend, one is in tune with the heart of the other (John 15:15).

Jesus tried to teach the His disciples and followers about the relationship of man to God through friendship. He used a parable that pictures some key truths. The friend can come at any time; he can ask help of his friend; he can even be persistent with his friend. Jesus placed this parable into the teaching of the subject of prayer. Strong relationship and friendship with God come out of strong and consistent communication (Luke chapter 11).

We must realize that we have been created for relationship and for friendship (James 2:23). God never intended us to walk alone, but together with Him and with others. We should also vow in our hearts to talk with our Creator daily to get to know Him as He knows us.

The day that Christ was hung on the cross and died was a day during which another special and often unnoticed event took place. It happened in the temple. The moment that Christ died, the veil in the temple was torn in two from the top to the bottom, signifying a new way of worship and a new way of coming into God’s presence (Matt 27:51). From then on, we can enter His presence through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. If we choose faith in Christ, we can all be priests who can go into the Holy of Holies because of what Christ personally did for us on the cross. The door was opened. All who believed could now enter into a personal relationship with God (Rom 10:9-10). There are no classes of people or nations or races now; we are all invited through Christ to come in as family. He wants us to know Him as a friend and this can only happen through having a personal relationship and through communicating with Him. He wants to walk with us as He did with Adam and Eve in the coolness of the day (Gen 3:8).

Related Scriptures:

Ex 33:11; Ps 9:10; Pro 17:17; 18:24; Isa 66:18; Mic 4:12; John 15:15; 1 Cor 13:12; Eph 1:18; James 2:23, 4:4; Phil 3:10-11; 2 Tim 1:12; Titus 1:16; 1 John 2:3, 2:5, 5:13-15, 20

Principle Six: CREATED FOR PROCREATION

*“Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she **conceived** and bore Cain, and said, I have acquired a man from the LORD.”*

Genesis 4:1

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*“so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing **fruit** in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.”*

Colossians 1:10

Definition:

1. **Procreate:** to produce offspring; to give rise to. *Synonyms:* reproduce, multiply, propagate, breed.
2. **Multiply:** to add a number to itself; to increase the amount; make more numerous. *Synonyms:* increase, grow, accumulate, proliferate, mount up, breed, reproduce, procreate.
3. **Family:** members of a household; a group of persons of common ancestry. *Synonyms:* relations, kin, kindred, connection, clan, tribe, roots.
4. **Fruit:** the mature edible product of a plant; “offspring,” or the “fruit of a womb,” of any creature; the “product” or “result” of an action. *Synonyms:* reward; earnings; product; result.

We are called upon by our Creator to reproduce (Gen 1:22, 4:1). We are not to keep what and who we are for ourselves, but as God’s creation, we are to produce fruit in all areas of our lives. We plant, but God brings the increase (1 Cor 3:6). God desires us to be sowers and reapers for His glory. Often the word “procreation” is used in the physical sense, but God also wants us to reproduce in the spiritual sense (Gal 6:6-9). The idea coming from the Bible is that we are to produce fruit that will last (John 15:8).

We are promised that we will reap fruit from our labours. We are not all blessed with the same kinds of fruit. Some will reap the “fruit” of children, others will not. We are created to reap, I believe, in all areas of our lives, not only from our bodies, but also from our souls and, most of all, from the Spirit.

Family is the foundation of society. When a man and woman come together in marriage, they become a family. God has created man and woman; we need each other to build and strengthen the family unit. Scripture tells us that the man shall leave his mother and father and the two shall become one, a unit, a family where God desires to be the center (Gen 2:24). A true marriage occurs only when, through vows and commitment both to God and to each other, a man and woman are united by God. We have physical families and a spiritual family; the church is to be a family.

God wants His children to be multipliers. We may have the fruit of our loins, but we also have the fruit of our hands and the fruit of our spirits. We are to be fruitful, producing and multiplying, bringing glory to God.

We can see from this verse that real genuine fruit comes out of relationships with each other and with God (Col 1:10). We are to walk in such a manner that our lives will produce fruit.

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Jesus told the disciples that they would be known by their fruit (Matt 7:16; John 15:8). We should see fruit from our labour, but fruit will also come by increasing our knowledge of God.

Paul cautioned the church “to be careful what we sow” because whatever we do sow, we will also reap (Galatians 6:7-8). We can sow life, or we can sow destruction. We are given freedom to create, but like everything else, we need to be responsible.

The best tree one can have is a tree that produces fruit. If we plant an apple tree we desire, hope and expect that it will produce apples. We are all like trees, and God desires us to produce fruit, but it will mean pruning and will require time and faith (John 15:1-11).

There is an old saying that a family that prays together stays together, but one could also say that a family that prays together will see fruit harvested together (John 4:34-38). The key is to be people who are reproducing. Some will be sowers of seed and others will harvest that crop, but it is God who gives the increase (1 Cor 3:6). We can only reap where the land has been readied and seed has been planted.

Related Scriptures:

Gen 1:28; 9:1, 7; Lev 26:9; Ps 127:3, 5; 22:27; Gal 6:7-8; Eph 3:15; Col 1:6

Principle Seven: CREATED FOR STEWARDSHIP

*“Of this church I was made a **minister** according to the **stewardship** from God **bestowed on me** for your benefit, so that I might fully carry out the preaching of the word of God”*
Colossians 1:25

Definition:

1. **Rule:** a prescribed suggestion, or self-imposed guide for conduct or action. *Synonyms:* regulation, directive, order, act, law, statute, edict, mandate, command, decree, direction, procedure, practice, principle, standard.
2. **Steward;** a person appointed to manage another’s property. *Synonyms:* manager, agent, overseer, caretaker.
3. **Minister:** a high officer of state who heads a division of government activities; a diplomatic representative to a foreign state; a member of the clergy. *Synonyms:* administration, council, government, holy order, the church.

We are created to rule and to be good stewards of God’s creation (Gen 1:28). We have been put in the middle of God’s creation, and we are to live and rule wisely. We are to look beyond who we are and the things that we desire, and to work in harmony with all the other parts of God’s creation.

We have been created to exercise stewardship over God’s creation. We are not owners of that creation, but we are to be good caretakers on behalf of the Lord of creation. Man was to

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subdue and use God's creation to produce fruit for His Kingdom. God has given us a responsibility, and we have been entrusted with His creation, to look after and care for it.

Humankind has been put in charge of all things on this earth (Gen 1:26, 28; 2:15). Satan is the ruler of the air and desires to become our ruler and ruler of this earth. But under Christ we have been created to take up various positions to help manage and to bring order to a world that is in chaos because of sin. That's why when the times of grace are finished, Christ will set up a new heaven and earth (1 Pet 3:13; Rev 21:1). All things will be put back in order. Even time will be no more, but during the present there will be all kinds of turmoil, sickness and destruction.

Our Creator has given us a position of great responsibility, and for those who are disciples of Christ there is yet another level of responsibility and stewardship. Christ is the King of kings, but He has given us leadership and service responsibilities. Our leaders need to be seasoned in love and grace. As we rule others, we must always remember that we, too, are under a Ruler Who one day will come back and judge us for what we have done (2 Tim 4:1). All who lead, and guide others will need to answer for what and why we did what we did here on earth (James 3:1). That's why it is so important to remain close to the heart of God, so we can know His will for our lives and ministry.

In the time before Israel had kings, God ruled over the nation and the people through leaders whom He appointed and through whom He spoke. They were to serve and be obedient to His laws and commands, and they were to keep the covenant that had been made between them and God. But it did not work because man's heart was so rebellious and wicked (Pro 17:11; Isa 65:2; Eze 2:3-8). Then God sent His Son Christ. He would establish a new order. Jesus first fulfilled all the laws and covenants of the Old Testament (Matt 5:17). Then, through His life, He established a new covenant (Heb 12:24). Now in the church age Christ is our Ruler, and we are to serve Him as our Priest (Heb 3:1) and King (1 Tim 1:17).

Stewardship principles need to be taught in the church to everyone, from young adults to our seniors. We need to be reminded again about the supreme Lordship of Jesus Christ. John 14:6 must motivate and burn deep in every disciple's heart. Christ is the only way. He is the only truth and there is no life other than that which Christ has offered; everything else is death.

Today we do not use the word "ruler" or even "stewards" much, but we do use the word "leader". During the time of creation, man was given charge to rule over God's creation wisely (Gen 1:27-30). We were entrusted with all that He had made. Every day each one of us leads others or rules over others, but we are told that we should do it in love (1 Cor 13:1-13) and in the fear of God (Ps 19:9, 111:10). God will judge us on how we have looked after all that He has entrusted us with, both as individuals and as a church. We need to be responsible for all that surrounds us, no matter how big or small it might be.

Related Scriptures:

Gen 1:26, 28; Judg 8:23; Rom 15:12; Eph 3:2; Col 1:16; 1 Pet 4:10

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Principle Eight: CREATED FOR ETERNAL LIFE OR ETERNAL DEATH

*“for the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is **eternal life** in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
Romans 6:23*

*“And this is the testimony: that God hath given to us **eternal life**, and this life is in His Son”
1 John 5:11*

*“But he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is subject to **eternal damnation**” Mark 3:29*

*“Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the **damnation of hell**?” Matt 23:33*

Definition:

1. **Eternal:** Everlasting, undying, unending.
2. **Eternal life:** Time without end, perpetuity, infinity.
3. **Damnation:** Place of eternal torment; the wicked will be judged and will spend all eternity in a place that God has prepared for them.
4. **Hell:** Sheol, Gehenna, abyss, hades, place of torment, bottomless pit, everlasting fire, inferno, underworld, place of damnation; this is a place of suffering and punishment for the wicked.

There is one key thing about their lives that most people do not think about. The moment they are conceived is the same moment that they enter into what is known as eternal life (1 John 5:11). We often think of our lives here on earth as finite; we are born and begin the progression of years. If everything goes well, hopefully we will live a long life – anywhere beyond the age of 75. The thing that we do not understand is that yes, our physical body dies but our mind and our spirit continues on. Our minds and spirits are eternal. How will we live here on earth (Deut 30:19-20) and which eternal destiny will we choose? That is the challenge. We can choose to live for ourselves, thinking that there is no real God and that we do not have to worry about eternity. The Bible, though, tells us that we can choose to have eternal life or eternal damnation. God has given us our free will (Rom 8:2). We make the decision.

The Bible teaches that those who turn to Jesus as their personal Lord and Saviour, confessing their sins and inviting Him into their hearts, will have eternal life (Rom 10:9-10). We see, in many Bible passages, that those who confess their sins and believe in their hearts that Jesus is Lord will experience a new birth, a new life, a life of eternity that starts right here on earth (John 3:1-16). Many do not recognize that as Christian disciples of Christ living here on earth, they are already part of the eternal timeline that God gives to us through Jesus Christ. When we physically die, yes, our bodies decay, but those who believe and have put their trust in Christ go to heaven to spend all eternity with Him (Rom 6:23; 1 John 2:25).

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We need to remember that damnation is a real event and a real place. Damnation is a place that has been created for Satan and his evil army of demons, but it is also a place for those who have not put their lives into the hands of Jesus Christ. It is a place of everlasting torment, the Bible tells us; it's a place of fire, crying and even gnashing of teeth (Matt 8:12; 13:42; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30). There are no second chances. The moment one dies the end results are sealed for all eternity.

Jesus even told of the story about a man who was wealthy and had many things but the one thing he lacked was God in his heart. Jesus tells us, that after he died, he appealed to heaven before Father Abraham and asked whether he could send Lazarus back to earth and tell his brothers what was awaiting them. But as the story continues, we are told that there's a great gulf between heaven and hell. He again asked that, if he could not go back, could Lazarus at least dip his finger in water and cool his tongue, for rich man was being tormented in the flames. The truth is it's an eternal torment and destruction and there is no coming back from that place (Luke 16:19-31).

The disciple must take this doctrine seriously, not only for the sake of his own life, but for the sake of the lives of his family, friends and others around the world. That is why Christ commissions and commands us to go out and preach and teach the Good News to all nations (Matt 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16). We cannot keep our faith a secret because, for all of us, all eternity is what lies ahead. We need to get the Gospel of Christ out onto the highways and byways so people can at least have the choice to decide what they will do with Jesus Christ. If our names are not found written in the Lamb's Book of Life (Rev 21:27) we will then find ourselves cast out into outer darkness for all eternity (Matt 25:31-46 recounts sheep and goats parable, describing when Christ will judge the nations).

Related Scriptures:

Matt 19:16; 23:14, 33; Mark 3:29; 10:17; 12:40; 3:29; Luke 10:25; 20:47; John 3:15; 4:36; 17:2, 3; Rom 5:21; 13:2; 1 Cor 11:29; 2 Thes 2:12; 1 Tim 6:12; Tit 1:2; 1 John 2:25, 5:13; Jude 1:21

Conclusion

When we grasp the reality of the great love that God has for us, we see how He has pursued us for fellowship and friendship, and it really is amazing what He has done to show us grace and mercy. We truly can see that, all through recorded history, the Creator has desired to have a relationship with His creatures. We are of great worth and value to Him. We are created for a purpose, designed for a reason to which He hopes we will surrender our wills and lives. The end result of the creation of man and woman is that we can be forgiven for our sins of disobedience, which came upon all creation through Adam. That was not the end! Christ, as the second Adam (Rom 5:14; 1 Cor 15:22, 45), came to set us free by the shedding of His blood (Eph 1:7; 1 John 1:7) - that whosoever would believe in Him can have eternal life (Jude 1:20-21).

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Discipleship Application

We are formed from the dust of the earth, and one day our physical bodies will be returned to the earth (1 Cor 15:45-48). God created each one of us as a vessel for a purpose (2 Cor 4:7). We are created in the image of God to house and to carry about within us that which He is. We are to be a temple for His glory (1 Cor 3:16-17). We are the clay that He takes up and begins to mold with loving hands (Isa 64:8; Rom 9:21). He makes us unique and special. The clay needs to be worked and purified by firing (Mal 3:2) so that it can be used by the master (2 Tim 2:21). It is important for the clay to remember with Whom it is in relationship. It is the **Creator** who made us, “**not**” and again I say, “**not** the created, making the Creator (Rom 1:18-25).

Today, can I say that I believe in the literal creation story that is given to us in the book of Genesis chapter 1 to 2:25, and that we were created by a **Creator** Who is God Almighty?

Commitment and Prayer

Dear Lord Jesus,

I come to You now, to thank You for creating me and molding all Your people into Your image. Help me to see others around me as You see them, unique and special. Lord, I pray that You will help my attitude to change concerning all Your creation, to see that I am responsible, not only for myself but also for others around me. Help me not to destroy that which You have created. Lord, I am thankful that You molded and made me for relationship. Help my relationship to grow deeper and more mature in You. I pray that I will be able to hear Your still small voice each day calling to me and directing my pilgrimage with You. Help me to remain committed to follow You, wherever You lead me. I also pray that my heart will be soft enough to go wherever You want me to go.

Sincerely your servant,

Chapter Six

Teachings on Sin

*“So the Lord said to Cain, why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, **sin** lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it.”*

Genesis 4:6-7

*“Jesus answered them, most surely, I say to you, whoever commits **sin** is a slave of **sin**.”*

John 8:34

*“He who **sins** is of the devil, for the devil has **sinned** from the beginning. For this purpose, the son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.” 1 John 3:8*

Introduction

Sin is a topic that both Christians and non-Christians often do not want to talk about; if we do, then we must make a decision to either stay the way we are or to change our lives so that they fall in line with God's teaching and His will for our lives. We need to come to a clear understanding that sin is a real experience that can come with many different kinds of consequences affecting the body, soul and spirit. Jesus mentions that whoever commits sin becomes a slave of that sin (John 8:34). Sin has been the most destructive weapon Satan has been able to use against mankind, bringing forth the fruit of destruction and death.

At the very beginning of time when man and woman were created by God, they were created perfect. At that point they were sinless and living with freedom in the Garden and enjoying all that God had created for them. Because they were created by God with free choice, they could choose how they would live and whom they would obey. The word 'sin' does not show up in the Scriptures until we arrive at the story of Cain and Abel (Gen 4:7). They had both just presented an offering to the Lord God and, because of God's response to their offerings, they both walked away with different feelings in their hearts, and Cain's feelings eventually caused him to kill his brother, Abel. It is interesting to note that God warns Cain (before he kills his brother) that this anger that he has in his heart meant that sin was lying at the door of his heart. God warns him and tells him that he must make a choice and that he needs to rule over sin and not let sin overrule him (Cain and Able account, Gen 4:1-15).

The other key point is that, because of the disobedience of Adam and Eve in the garden, the sin nature or seed of sin was implanted into mankind (Rom 5:18-19). We do not have to start doing sin to become a sinner. We are already born into trespasses and sin (Eph 2:1-2). The moment of conception is the same moment that we become corrupted with the sin nature itself (Ps 51:5). Sin has corrupted man through his whole being. The DNA of sin rages war within us trying to destroy all that we can be in God (Rom 5:12).

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Description

1. **Sin:** to offend, to transgress, to trespass or do wickedness. An act of disobedience toward God and His laws. Something that is corrupt and transgresses the moral laws of God. A falling away from or missing the mark of God's commands.
2. **Disobedience:** defiance, breaking the rules, insubordination, rebellion, challenging authority.

It is so important that we understand this doctrine. And if there's an area over which Satan wants to have victory in our lives, it is by getting us to be disobedient to God our Creator. Satan himself is a created being, a fallen angel who tried to overthrow, through disobedience, God's will for his life. Disobedience often bears the fruit of rebellion and we are told that even angels rebelled with Satan and, because of this, God removed them from the heavenlies (2 Pet 2:1-4). Since that day there has been a spiritual war that has taken place and continues to the present time (Eph 6:12). Satan desires that people will come under the spell of his will, falling down before him and worshiping him only.

Principle One: SIN / SINNER

*"So Samuel said: has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams. For **rebellion** is as the **sin** of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, he has also rejected you from being king. Then Saul said to Samuel, I have **sinned**, I have transgressed the commandments of the LORD and your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice."*

1 Samuel 15:22-24

*"Wash me thoroughly for my iniquity, and cleanse me from my **sin**. For I acknowledge my **transgressions**, and my **sin** is always before me. Against You, You only, have I **sinned**, and done this evil in Your sight- that You may be found just when You speak, and blameless when You judge. Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in **sin** my mother conceived me."*

Psalms 51:2-5

Definition:

1. **Transgression:** indiscretion, sin, misbehaviour, disobedience, wrongdoing; an offence, a crime or breaking of the law, disobedient to authority, sin against God.
2. **Rebellion:** revolt, insurrection, uprising, mutiny; to rise up against authority, one who resists the rule of law. People are also known to rebel against the truth and laws of God.

One must ask the question, "Why is the word 'sin' so important to the disciple of Christ and to the people of this world?" First, sin is deliberately acting in disobedience toward God and His laws. Sin can result from how we treat people around us, how we think about things and how we live our lives (Num 5:5-7). Sin is anything outside of the will of God. God calls us to obey Him

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and His Word, but we are often like little children who desire to follow their own wills rather than the will of their parents. As disciples of Christ, we are called and commanded to obey the ways and teaching of God.

One of the unique things about how God created us was that He gave us a free choice or, to put it another way, a free will (Phi 2:13). The dictionary defines free will as: Autonomy, self-rule, freedom, independence; thinking or desiring to act according to one's own beliefs. In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve exercised their free will, the result of which was disobedience to God, thus plunging all of mankind into sin (Gen 3:1-24).

Because of this free will choice of Adam and Eve, that sin was imputed to us. Sin imputed means reckoned or charged to one's account. There are various views on imputed sin, but the most common is that all have sinned (Rom 5:12) because sin has come through Adam and Eve's disobedience to God when they ate of the tree of knowledge of good and evil (Gen 3:1-24). This sin introduced death into their world; thus, the death penalty came upon all who are born. In Adam, all humanity was present at that time. Because of one, sin entered the world; because of One (Jesus Christ and His death on the cross) we can, through faith, have forgiveness for our sins (1 Cor 15:21). There is nothing we have to do to deserve eternal punishment. The soul of man is born in corruption and sin and this is what makes every man and woman a sinner before God our Creator (Rom 6:23; 1 John 5:16).

The disciple of Christ must understand the power of the "sin nature" and, because of this, we are called, commanded and commissioned by Christ to go out and preach the Good News (Mark 16:15-16). The purpose is that people can be set free (Gal 5:1) from eternal death and live eternally with Christ Who, through the shedding of His blood (which has made a way of escape), brought us back from separation from God to being children of God (1 John 3:2). When we accept and encourage others to accept Christ as their Saviour by faith (Rom 3:23; 6:23; 10:9-10), He then seals the new believer with the Holy Spirit (Eph 4:30), showing to our enemies that we are children of God and that we have been made alive (Eph 2:1).

Principle Two: FALL OF MAN AND WOMAN

"So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to her eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her and he ate."

Genesis 3:6

Definition:

1. **Fall:** to drop from one position to another, collapse, to be captured or defeated, yield to temptation.

Unfortunately, the fall of man and woman began just after God had created them. God had placed them in the Garden of Eden that He had prepared for them. He gave them instructions how to enjoy the Garden, but He also gave them instructions concerning two trees that were in

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the midst of the garden (Gen 2:8-9). One was a tree of knowledge of good and evil and the second was a tree of life. They were not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil (Gen 2:9).

Adam and Eve had it all. They walked with God in the coolness of the day; they had one-on-one fellowship with Him (Gen 3:8). They had been created in the image of God and, at that point, they were perfect. They loved God and He loved them as His own beloved children but, like all children, they had a free will to make choices, and one day a serpent came to tempt Eve and to challenge her thinking about Who God their Creator really was (Gen 3:1). Satan is a liar and he desires to deceive people with half-truths or made-up truths that, in the end, lead to destruction. He confronts Eve in three different ways, testing her and trying to convince her that a truly loving God would not do what He said He would do if they ate of that fruit. So, it was not long after her conversation with the serpent, that she took of the fruit of the tree of good and evil (Gen 3:6). The tree itself was not evil but what was evil was her disobedience to God and, because of that, her eyes, which were the windows to her heart, were opened to good and evil. (Gen 3:7)

It is interesting to note that, after they had just disobeyed God by eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, the first two things they did were to try to hide themselves from God and cover themselves with clothing because now they felt naked before each other, before God's creation, and before God Himself (Gen 3:7, 10). It does not take long for sin to manifest itself. When one disobeys God in one's heart it does not take long before it shows up in one's attitude and actions. Adam's attitude had also now changed because, when God spoke to him, the first thing he did was to blame Eve, trying to show that it was her fault (Gen 3:12). But he, too, had a free choice and he chose to eat of the fruit and, because of this, all mankind would be born with a sin nature (Gen 3:8-13).

When Eve gave the fruit to Adam and, because of his disobedience he also ate of it, not only did he commit sin but, within him, the seeds of sin and evil were passed on to all the generations that would follow after him (Rom 5:14; 1 Cor 15:22). He now carried within him the sin nature for all mankind. Man is born with a sin nature. He does not have to do anything to become a sinner; he or she is a sinner from the moment of conception (Ps 51:5). We have become sinners because of Adam and Eve's disobedience in the Garden of Eden. Because we all come from these first parents we, too, carry their sin nature in our lives. This curse can be broken only by believing in and receiving Jesus Christ personally into one's life.

This is what Paul is stating in the book of Romans 5:18, 19: *Just as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. For as by one man's **disobedience** many were made **sinners**, so also by one man's obedience many will be made righteous.* "Sin came by one man's **disobedience** and we all became **sinners**, but because of one man's righteous gift to all mankind we, through accepting Him, could once again be justified and made righteous before our heavenly Father.

Not only did this sin of disobedience bring about corruption but is also took away from man the ability to have eternal life. It also brought a curse upon men who, from that day forward,

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would have to toil for their food; women would now have pain and suffering through childbirth (Gen 3:16-19).

As disciples, we need to be empowered by the Holy Spirit Who makes it possible, because of the blood of Christ, to break the curse of sin on our lives (Gal 3:13-14). Yes, as a human race descended from the first Adam we have fallen because of sin, but the second Adam has come, the One Who knew no sin. He redeemed us from the punishment of sin (1 Cor 15:22, 45). Sin needs not reign in our bodies but, as we die to self and live for Christ, we are then set free from the eternal curse of sin and death (1 Cor 15:50-58).

Principle Three: TEMPTATION

*“Watch and pray, lest you enter into **temptation**. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”*

Matthew 26:41

*“Blessed is the man that endureth **temptation**; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. Let no one say when he is **tempted**, I am **tempted** by God; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself **tempt** anyone. But each one is **tempted** when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desires had conceived, it gives birth to **sin**; and **sin**, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.”*

James 1:12-15

Definition:

1. **Temptation**: a desire to do something wrong, a testing, allurements, enticement, something that appeals or attracts us to stray off a good path.

Satan often tempts us by offering pleasure and self-gratification (Gen 3:1-6). The use of temptation is the first step in getting us to move away from God's will and moving into sinful thoughts and actions. Temptation is not the sin but acting on that temptation is what makes it sinful.

Since the temptation of Adam and Eve, Satan has continued to use the same method upon all mankind to try to deceive them and to get them to fall into even deeper depths of sin (James 1:15). Sin will come before us each day but, when we are confronted by sin, the key is that we do not obey it or follow it. The Scripture says that we need to flee from it as quickly as possible (1 Tim 6:11). Satan's biggest weapon is to speak quietly into our mind over and over again, trying to convince us that what we might or might not be doing is okay, and that others are doing it and it's not hurting them, so why would it hurt us (1 John 3:8). But the truth of the matter is that all sin brings damage to one's mind and heart because once it's been birthed into one's life it will eat away like cancer until it is confessed (James 1:15). Like a drug, it doesn't take long before one moves from one level into deeper and more powerful addictions.

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What we will see below is a chart that will show Satan's method on how he tempts and continues to tempt until we fall into sin. Again, we need to remind ourselves that sin is making a 180° turn away from the will of God. The key word is the word 'obedience' and we need to ask, every moment of the day, whose voice are we obeying (Josh 24:24).

Satan's Temptation of Jesus; Matthew 4: 1-11

The Temptations

Temptation	Real needs used as basis for temptation	Possible doubts that made the temptations	Potential weakness Satan sought to exploit	Answer
Make Bread	Physical Need: Hunger	Would God provide food?	Hunger, impatience. Need to "prove his Sonship,"	Deut 8:3 "Depend on God" Focus: God's Purpose.
Dare God to rescue you (based on misapplied Scripture Psalm 91:11,12)	Emotional need: Security	Would God protect?	Pride, insecurity, need to test God	Deut: 6:16 "Don't test God" Focus: God's Plan
Worship me! (Satan)	Psychological Need: significance, power	Would God rule?	Desire for quick Power, easy solutions, need to prove equality achievement with God	Deut 6:13 "No compromise with evil." Focus: God's person

** LIFE APPLICATION BIBLE*

As if going through a final test of preparation, Jesus was tempted by Satan out in the wilderness (Matt 4:1-11). Often it seems that after the disciple has had some type of victory or blessing Satan comes to rob and destroy that which we have received from God.

There are three specific parts of the temptation that are listed by Matthew. They are familiar because we face the same kinds of temptations. As the chart shows, temptation is often the combination of a real need and a possible doubt that creates an inappropriate desire. Jesus demonstrates both the importance and effectiveness of knowing and applying Scripture to combat temptation.

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Two Adams

Temptation: The Two Adams Contrasted

Both Adam and Christ faced three aspects of temptation. Adam yielded, bringing upon humankind sin and death. Christ resisted, resulting in justification and life.

1 John 2:16	Genesis 3:6 First Adam	Luke 4:1-13 Second Adam-Christ
“The lust of the flesh”	“the tree was good for food”	“Command this stone to become bread”
“The lust of the eyes”	“It was pleasant to the eyes”	“The devil...showed Him all the kingdoms”
“The pride of life”	“A tree desirable to make one wise”	“Throw yourself down from here”

*Life Application Bible

One can quickly see from these charts that Satan is attacking the three areas of one's being, the body, soul and spirit. His method has not changed for thousands of years and he is still going after people using the exact same pattern, but the key to each of his methods is that of appealing to our lusts or fleshly desires (James 1:15; 1 John 2:15-17). Our deep passions and desires are to be focused on God, not on following our own wills and hungers. We are not to fulfill the desires which Satan tries to convince us will make us happy. We need to be in prayer and in the Word of God, always seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness (Matt 6:33).

Principle Four: BATTLE FOR THE MIND AND THE HEART

*“Blessed is the man who endures **temptation**; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. Let no one say when **tempted**, I am **tempted** by God; for God cannot be **tempted** by evil, nor does He Himself **tempt** anyone. But each one is **tempted** when he is **drawn** away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desires have conceived, it gives birth to **sin**; and **sin**, when it is full-grown, brings forth death”.*

James 1:12-15

*“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And **do not** be conformed to this world, but be **transformed** by the **renewing of your mind**, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God”.*

Romans 12:1-2

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Definition:

1. **Mind:** think, attitude, opinion, brain, will, thought, emotion, intellect, intelligence, wits, psyche; point of view; it is thought that that the mind is the seat of the will.
2. **Transform:** change, convert; a major alteration, a complete makeover, such as the conversion experience.

There is an "18-inch" battleground in which all believers wage war each day. The battle for the mind and heart started right back with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Satan appealed to Eve's body, mind and heart. Just like then, and still today, Satan continues to whisper lies and falsehoods into our minds to try to get us to stumble and fall, to turn us away from God's will and instruction. Satan wants to fill our minds with sinful thoughts because he wants to plant seeds that can lead to destruction and death. Paul warns us about how we plant things in our lives (Gal 6:6-7).

Our human nature starts at conception and reigns supreme over one's life from when we were born and until we either make a change for Christ Jesus, or when death's door opens for us. It does not take long for a child to begin to express its desire and will. Occasionally we call some children "strong willed". But for one to have victory over sin (our strong self-will), one must first die to self-will and live a life according to God's will. We must come to the place where we say, "It is no longer I that live but Christ Who lives in me" (Gal 2:20). We battle with sin, so often not realizing that the root cause is that of "self-will", doing what is pleasing to one's own lusts and desires. Victory comes by giving one's life to Christ and allowing His Holy Spirit to fill (Eph 5:18) and empower us (Acts 1:8). We become new temples for Christ Jesus (1 Cor 3:16) and His Spirit to indwell (1 Cor 6:19; Eph 2:21). Romans tell us that we are not to be conformed to this world but to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. By doing so, Scripture tell us that this proves that we are in step with the perfect will of God (Rom 12:2).

When considering the mind and heart, there is another challenge; people's minds and hearts may be either carnal-minded (Rom 8:7) or double-minded (James 1:8). A carnal mind is demonstrated by a person whose outward life does not line up with the truth in his heart. They live a sensual and sinful life on the inside, but outwardly try to show that they are spiritual. This is sinful and destructive, both to the individual and to those who interact with them. A double-minded person is one who thinks in two different directions at the same time. They try to live a religious life, but at the same time, live in the ways of the world. They eventually become overstressed and may even have mental breakdowns. Through his devices of getting people to live by double standards, the devil will lead people into deep bondage of different kinds of sin. Remember, the devil wants to divide people's thinking so that they are unable to make proper decisions. James talks about these kinds of people; they are like a wave that is being tossed to and fro (James 1:6). Sin is often birthed in the mind. The enemy wants to cause confusion between people and often within the body of Christ.

Because our minds are a battleground for sinful thoughts. Paul encourages the Ephesian church to put on the full armour of God (Eph 6:10-17). One of the key pieces is the helmet of salvation (Eph 6:17). Why? Because our thoughts need protection and salvation. We are in a

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battle. The enemy wants to inject things into our minds that will cause us to lose the victory in Christ Jesus. We become overcomers by praying in the Spirit (Eph 6:18). The things that, in faith, we speak about with Christ, push back and tear down the enemy's strongholds in our lives. Christ has given us authority to bind and loosen (Matt 18:18) the things that control and keep our lives in disobedience to the will of God for our lives (Matt 7:21), thus overcoming the works of the devil. The key to victory over sin in one's mind and heart is to take up our cross and follow Jesus (Matt 16:24).

Principle Five: FRUIT OF SIN

*"Then, when desires had conceived, it gives birth to **sin**; and **sin**, when it is full-grown, brings forth death."
James 1:15*

Definition:

1. **Fruit:** harvest, results, crop, outgrowth, product
2. **Cloth:** outer garment, bodies covered with material, something others may see

Everything we do produces some type of fruit, either good or bad. Paul tells the Galatian Church that they are to have the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22) flowing through their lives, but Paul also warns the disciples that there are things that they should take off, things that, if not dealt with, will corrupt one's life. When sin is allowed to grow, it begins to produce all kinds of seeds not only within our lives, but also within the lives of our family and those around us. Seeds of sin seem to grow anywhere and multiply at an alarming rate, just like a virus. We always need to be careful about what we say and how we do things because, in due time, these will produce a harvest which will determine our eternity (Gal 6: 7-8).

Let us look at two areas in which Paul lists for the disciples the various kinds of fruit born of sin. These are things that people can often see in us, or coming out through our actions, as we live our daily lives.

The Colossian church:

Put Off: *Therefore, put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desires, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them. But now you yourselves are to **put off** all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds. Colossians 3:5-9*

Put On: *"And have **put on** the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of him who created him, where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all. Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, **put on** tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, long-*

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suffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another: even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of our Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.” Colossians 3:10-17

The Ephesian Church:

Put Off:

*“that you **put off**, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lust, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind,
Ephesians 4:22-23*

Put On:

*and that you **put on** the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.
Ephesians 4:24*

There is another list that Paul gives to the Roman Church showing what happens to people when they begin to follow the life of sin and death. Romans 1 describes to us how man and woman, when they get bound up in sin, begin a spiral downward to death and destruction. They get out of control to the point that they even lose control of their minds and begin to do all kinds of evil and sinful things. Romans 1:21-32: *“Because, although they knew God, they did not glorify him as God, nor were they thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things. Therefore, God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their heart, to dishonour their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. For this reason, God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise, also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil mindedness; they are whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to their parents, and undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.”*

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These are just some lists of the various sins that can be found in one's life. There are many more throughout the Bible. Some sins, in our eyes, appear to be only minor in nature and others seem very corrupt and drastic in their wickedness. But we need to understand that all sin is equal in God's eyes; a sin is a sin. It is being disobedient and, no matter what it is, it still creates a barrier between God and man, breaking fellowship in our communion with Jesus Christ and with His body of believers.

Clothed in Righteousness

*"That you **put off**, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you **put on** the new man which was created according to God, in true **righteousness** and **holiness**."*
Ephesians 4:22-24

Before we can enter the Holy of Holies, which Jesus made possible for us when He died on the cross, we must first confess our sins and personally invite Him into our hearts as our Lord and Saviour (Rom 10:9-10). It is at that moment that we begin to be clothed by His righteousness. It is also at that moment that Jesus begins the nurturing process of sanctifying us so that we may be able to walk in holiness before our God (1 Cor 6:11; 1 Thes 5:23). The Holy Spirit walks with and guides us (Gal 5:25) in our journey of sanctification (Rom 15:16). The discipleship walk is a journey of action. We are not just to be hearers of the Word but doers also (James 1:22-23). Our faith is to be active and living, empowered by the Holy Spirit (Eph 6:10).

Principle Six: SIN AND GRACE

*"Moreover, the law entered that the offense might abound. But where **sin** abounded, **grace** abounded much more, so that as **sin** reigned in death, even so **grace** might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."*

Romans 5:20-21

Definition:

1. **Sin:** to offend, to transgress, to trespass or do wickedness. An act of disobedience toward God and His laws. Something that is corrupt and transgresses the moral laws of God. A falling away from or missing the mark of God's commands.
2. **Grace:** favour, blessing, adornment, mercy, kindness; express gratitude, give thanks.

We must realize that we do not have the strength or the ability to overcome sin within ourselves. The sin nature that was within us must be put to death (1 Pet 2:24). Jesus said unless a grain or seed falls to the ground and dies it will produce nothing, but if it does die it will begin to produce multiple seeds (John 12:24).

What Christ has done for us makes it possible to break the chains of sin and darkness, so that we can walk each day in His righteousness (Phil 3:9). Throughout the book of Romans Paul tells us about Jesus' grace and how that, if we have faith in Him, we can then begin to be clothed

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by His grace which comes to us because of **His** righteousness, not ours (Rom 1:5; 3:24; 4:16; 5:20; 6:15; 11:6). The Bible tells us that our righteousness is like filthy rags (Isa 64:6). But Jesus wanted newness of life for us, a life that is eternal with Him (1 John 5:11). Jesus tells us that it's by grace that we are saved and that it is the gift of God (Eph 2:8).

We do not merit the grace of God; from the moment we were born we already had the death penalty assigned to us. Our wages are sin and death (Rom 6:23). People do not realize that we do not have to do any sinning to be sinners; we are already sinners by nature. But it's by having faith in Jesus Christ we can experience His amazing grace (Rom 3:23-24). The concept of grace came to the world through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ; the heavenly Father extended grace to mankind through sending His Son as our Redeemer (Gal 3:13; Tit 2:14); Christ brought us a way whereby all mankind could be saved (John 1:17). It is also said that we live in the age of grace, a time determined by the Father during which mankind will have to choose whom they will serve. Following earthly life comes the day of judgment. Remember we are justified by His grace (Titus 3:7).

Principle Seven: END DESTINATION OF SIN AND MAN

*"There is a way that seems right to man, but its **end** is the way of death."*

Proverbs 14:12

*"For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross: whose **end** is **destruction**, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame who set their mind on earthly things. For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to his glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself."*

Philippians 3:17-21

*"For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; if it begins with us first, what will be the **end** of those who do not obey the gospel of God?"*

1 Peter 4:17

Definition:

1. **Destination:** goal, target, aim, objective, purpose; a place that one is moving towards, death is a final destination to life on earth.
2. **End:** conclusion, results, goal, finishing point, end of life, last breath, termination, close, expiration, completion, final; it is all over, there is nothing more ahead.

Almost all things have a beginning and end to them, and if sin is not dealt with, the end destination is eternal death in hell (Rom 6:23; 1 John 5:16-17). After we die everyone will come before the judgment seat of the Lord. Our entire lives have been recorded, and on the basis of what we have done and not done, our eternity would be determined (Rom 14:10; 2 Cor 5:10; James 2:6). If we have not believed in the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour, we will be sent to a

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place where there will be nothing but crying and gnashing of teeth, a place where all hope is lost (Matt 8:12).

Sin carries with it the penalty of death (Rom 6:23). It can destroy us not only here on earth, but for all eternity. We should not think too lightly concerning this doctrine of sin because the effects of sin are lasting and eternal if we do not deal with it.

Therefore, we must get the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ out to the lost world because, if we do not, millions upon millions will perish. Only through Jesus Christ do we have hope, and this hope comes by faith in Him. He was sent by the Father to bring us redemption and grace through His shed blood on the cross (John 3:16). Jesus will come again but this time He will come as King and Lord upon this earth (Rev 17:14) and He will bring judgment (Heb 9:27; 1 Pet 4:17; 2 Pet 2:9; Jude 1:15). The Bible tells us that in those last days every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord (Phil 2:10).

The lust of the flesh is very powerful; it binds us in so many areas. But we need not be focused on the things of earth; we need to focus on the things that are above (Col 3:1). Jesus reminds us that we are in a race and we need to keep our eyes focused on Him (Heb 12:1-2). It is a race that is challenging but we are called, not to run the race in our strength and ability, but to do it in His strength and ability. We must keep an eye on our final destination which is eternal life with Jesus Christ in heaven (Heb 12:1-2). Remember again the Scriptures: *"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord"* (Rom 6:23).

Conclusion

"But now Christ is risen from the dead, and is become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all died, even so in Christ all shall be made alive."

1 Corinthians 15:20-22

"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled."

2 Corinthians 10:3-6

"This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare."

1 Timothy 1:18

"Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places."

Ephesians 6:11:12

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We can see from these four passages that, through Adam's seed, we all are born into sin; we are all sinners before God our Creator. There is only one way that we can be released from our sin nature and that comes through the man Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son (John 14:6). It's by His shed blood on the cross and His resurrection from the grave that, through Him, we have the ability not only to confess our sins (1 John 1:9) but also to put on His righteousness (Eph 6:14).

Paul tells Timothy that he is to wage a good war. He was not speaking to him concerning a physical war but a spiritual war, a battle for the hearts of men and women (2 Tim 2:3-4). Paul tells the Ephesian church to put on the full armour of God and then explains to them the nature of the battle. He describes that we are fighting against all kinds of spiritual temptations and even spiritual beings whose desire is to capture and/or destroy us (Eph 6:10:20).

One day we will all die; what we do here on earth will determine where we will spend our eternity. Our physical bodies will return to dust but our necessary decision is what will happen to our spiritual man. We've been given a free will to choose to either go the way of the world or to go the way of Jesus Christ; one way leads to destruction and the other way leads to eternal life (1 Cor 15:50-58).

Discipleship Application

*But if you do not do so, then take note, you have **sinned** against the LORD; and be sure your **sin will find you out.***
Numbers 32:23

People must realize that this sin nature that we were born with will continue to bind us and destroy us if we do not do something about it. We might be able to hide our sins from the world and even from the church, but the Bible is clear that eventually our sins will be found out (Num 32:23). The problem is that when we come before the Father and have not dealt with our sins, putting them under the blood of Christ and confessing and asking for forgiveness (Acts 13:38; Eph 1:7; 4:32; 1 John 1:9), we must then be judged and punished for what we have done.

The life of sin is a downward spiral towards destruction and death (Rom 1:18-32). Step-by-step it is turning our lives over to Satan who, in the end, desires to destroy us. Sins of disobedience are like ropes and chains that bind us and the more we try to struggle the stronger they hold us. The only hope that we have is to come to Jesus Christ and give our lives to Him; we need to confess our sins to Him because He states that when we do so, He is faithful and just to forgive us of our sins (1 John 1:9). He alone is able to set the captive free (Luke 4:18).

Commitment and Prayer

Dear Lord Jesus,

I want to thank You for what You have done for us here on earth; You were willing to come as the Son of God so that we, through faith in You, could have eternal life. Lord, thank You for

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making a way that we could be redeemed from the penalty of sin and death. Thank You for showing us Your grace and mercy and love by being willing to die on the cross and to have Your blood shed for the remission of our sins. Lord, I ask for Your help each day that You would forgive me as I confess my sins to You. I know that I am weak and sometimes not able to share my heart openly. But You know our hearts. You know what we struggle with and You said that as long as we bring it to You, You would forgive us and wash us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. I pray, Lord, that I would be able to die to myself each day, denying my will and living according to Your will, that I would put on the helmet of salvation to protect my thoughts which, in turn, will help me with my attitude and actions. Father, I pray that You would also help me to forgive those who have sinned against me or hurt me by what they have said and done. I pray that You will give me a heart that is full of forgiveness just like You forgave us when we sinned and were disobedient. I thank You, Lord, for the truth of this doctrine and I pray that I may be able to continue to live by it each day of my life.

In your name I pray, Jesus.

Related Scriptures:

Gen 39:9; Ex 10:16; 29:36; 32:30; Lev 4:32; 1 Sam 12:23; 15:23; 2 Sam 12:13; Ps 32:1; 51:2-5; 119:11; Isa 1:18; Jer 31:34; Matt 26:28; Mark 1:4; 4:12; John 8:34; Rom 3:23; 4:7, 6:12, 23; 8:10; Heb 10:17; 12:1; James 1:15; 1 Pet 2:24; 1 John 1:7-10; 2:1, 2; 5:17; Rev 1:5

Sinner:

Ps 1:1; Ps 25:8; Matt 9:13; Mark 2:17; Luke 5:32; Rom 5:8, 19; 1 Tim 1:15

Chapter Seven

Teaching on Salvation

*“Nor is there **salvation** in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be **saved**.”*

Acts 4:12

*“But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of **salvation**. For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain **salvation** through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we shall live together with Him.”*

1 Thessalonians 5:8-10

Introduction

The purpose of the Father for sending His Jesus Christ, and then sending His Holy Spirit, was to complete the mission of reaching out to mankind with the Gospel of the Triune God. Man had fallen deeply into sin – with the result of destruction and death. The world had become full of hopelessness. Satan and his army were trying to subvert God’s creation, mankind, to a life of disobedience and rebellion. We are told in John 3:16 that God sent His Is a Gift of Love and That Whosoever Would Believe on Him Would Have Salvation. It Would Be Given to All Who Would Receive It, Because of the Shed Blood of Christ. Why? So That, One Day, They Would Have Eternal Life with God in His Everlasting Kingdom in Heaven (Rom 6:23).

Salvation is the cornerstone upon which many of the doctrines, in which we believe, are built. Because we are born into sin, we are condemned to death and a hopeless eternity; Christ came to bring us salvation and eternal life (John 3:15). Sin has bound us and has destroyed us from the inside out. There was no way of escape; our righteousness was, and is, as filthy rags (Isa 64:6). Christ was sent by the Father to make a way for us to be rescued, to bring deliverance and salvation to all who would invite Him to be Lord and Saviour of their lives. As disciples of Christ, we become His ambassadors, going out to the world to offer a message of hope and salvation (2 Cor 5:20). The Good News is that of deliverance from a life of sin and death and hope for eternity (Rom 11:26; 1 Thes 1:10).

Description

Salvation means to keep safe or rescue from harm or danger. To redeem or deliver, to recover or escape from harm. The idea is that someone must intervene to deliver from danger or loss.

Lamb and the High Priest:

Before we get into the teaching about salvation, we need to step back in time and look at some of the historical things about which the people of Israel knew and by which they tried to live. After they came out of the land of Egypt, God gave them “The Laws” that were to serve as a schoolmaster, helping to teach them, dealing with the whole area of disobedience and sin (Gal 3:24). Then, later in time, we see that God-designed tabernacle taken down and moved from place to place as the people journeyed through the wilderness. God was with them, in their very midst. They were to worship Him and sacrifice to Him those things that He had commanded (Book of Exodus). Later in time, King Solomon built the Temple in which the same kinds of ministry and service were done to honor God and make atonement for their sins (Lev 17:11).

But it's important that we go back even further in time, prior to the time of the high priest, and remember the last plague that hit Egypt – the death plague of the firstborn (Ex 12:29-30). Here we are presented with a picture of how God's children, before anything else, would have to go through their houses and remove all the yeast from their homes (Ex 12:15). This is a picture of the importance of removing sin from our lives. The next thing they had to do was to take the best Lamb that they had, sacrifice it, take its blood and place it on the doorposts of their homes. Then, when the death Angel came by, he would not enter that home because it was covered by the blood (Ex 12:17). Only by the covering of His blood and His forgiveness for our sins (Col 2:13) can we, as disciples of Christ, live eternally with Him.

The high priest, one could say, was the “go-between” for the people of Israel and their relationship with God Almighty. He was responsible to put on the robes God required, sacrifice a pure lamb, and go into the Holy of Holies and spread the blood of the Lamb on the mercy seat of God.

It was not until the coming of Jesus Christ that God's divine purpose would be revealed. Not only was God sending forth His Son, but His Son would become the sacrificial Lamb Who would shed His blood for the remission of sins (Mark 1:4). He would also be the high priest representing Earth's people before the Father in heaven (Heb 4:14, 7:3). Because of Jesus's death and resurrection, we too can now come before the Father. It is not because of our blood or our holiness, but because of His blood and holiness, that we can enter into a personal relationship with God our Creator.

Christ became the one and only sacrifice, and only through Him could men have salvation (1 Cor 5:7; Heb 9:26; 10:12). Jesus was quite clear that He was the only way, truth and life (John 14:6). And, at the last Passover in which Jesus participated, he both taught and showed the disciples that His body would become the broken bread and that His blood would be represented by the cup. The disciples were commanded to regularly participate in this ceremony in remembrance of Him (1 Cor 11:26).

There are three words that we need to define and connect in order to clearly understand the teaching of salvation. The first word is **Savior**; a savior is someone who rescues or delivers from

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harm or loss. We need to understand that Jesus was sent by the Heavenly Father to make a way of deliverance and redemption for a sinful and lost world – for all who would receive Him. His death on the cross made Him our sacrificial Lamb, and His resurrection three days later made it possible for us to be clothed in His righteousness. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life; there is no other way by which people can be saved (John 14:6). To those who personally receive him into their hearts, He becomes their Savior. The second word is **salvation**: deliverance from sin and its consequences, to be rescued or to escape. We need to understand that Christ came to deliver us from the eternal penalty of sin – death – and to set us free as a new creation in Him, giving us a brand-new life! We were drowning in sin, but Christ rescued us. Christ's purpose in coming to this earth was to pay the price for our sins and to give salvation to all who would believe on Him as Lord and Savior. The third word, which is closely related to the above two words, is **save**: to rescue from danger or loss, to redeem, to restore. Because we were born into sin and condemned to death and a hopeless eternity, Christ came to bring us salvation. Sin had bound us and was destroying us from the inside out. There was no way of escape. Our righteousness was, and is, as filthy rags. Christ was sent by the Father to make a way for us to be rescued, to bring deliverance and salvation to all who would invite Him to be Lord and Savior of their lives. As disciples of Christ, we become His ambassadors, going out to the world to offer a message of hope and salvation (2 Cor 5:10). The Good News is one of deliverance and hope from a life of sin and death.

To understand the teaching concerning the word “salvation”, imagine looking at a puzzle that has many pieces that need to be put together before we can see the big picture. The word “salvation” can be defined in very simple terms – inviting Christ into one's heart/life as one's personal Lord and Savior. Often it is done through a sinner's prayer where the person asks for forgiveness of sin and then makes a covenant with the Lord to follow Him and to fulfill His will for his life (Rom 10:9-10). But there are many other pieces connected to this word “salvation” which help us to better understand what Christ has done and what He offers to all those who will receive Him through faith.

Love, Hope, Grace and Mercy:

If one was looking for keywords dealing with the teaching of salvation, they would have to be these: love, hope, grace, and mercy. From the time God breathed life into man and woman on the sixth day, He has never stopped loving His creation. God loves his creation! The best way to explain the God's “love” is that it's like a one-way street where God continues to give, expecting nothing in return. But, when His love connects with our hearts, pouring into them the love that passes all understanding, our thinking and interactions begin to change dramatically. In his letter to the Corinthian church, Paul devoted a whole section to the theme of love (1 Cor 13:1-13). Disciples are given clear teaching as to what the love of God is, and how we should exemplify that love to others – “a love that never fails” (1 Cor 13:8). The Bible teaches us that love covers a multitude of sins – therefore “love” is key to salvation (1 Pet 4:8).

What the coming of Christ did for the world was to again bring back to us a **hope** that things would change, that things would get better, and that the destruction caused by Satan and the world would one day come to an end. Hope is believing in things that are not yet seen; it is having

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faith in what someone has promised by making a covenant. Christ would fulfill all that He said He would do (Rom 8:24). Through His broken body and shed blood, Christ has made a way of hope for all mankind. Our challenge, if we desire to have the power that comes through hope, is that we must choose to believe (Rom 10:9-10). Another thing that hope can do is bring to one's life a focus. Paul tells us that we are in a race and that we need to be careful not to get entangled, but to keep focused on the prize set before us (Heb 12:1). Hope is believing that we can run that race, not in our power and strength, but in Christ's power and strength (1 Tim 1:1). Then, one day, if we do not lose heart, but continue to persevere, we will cross that finish line (Col 1:5).

One other topic introduced after Christ's death and resurrection was the whole teaching concerning grace (John 1:17). Paul spoke a lot about this in the book of Romans, and often linked it to the word "righteousness" (Rom 1:5; 3:24; 4:16). Many preachers and teachers have said that the age of grace started after the coming of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, but God's grace has been extended to mankind right from the time of creation to the present day (Titus 2:11). The words "grace" and "love" are two sides of the same coin. One can easily observe that Paul was called of God to preach the teaching of grace to the Gentiles (Acts 15:12). The Gentiles were considered heathen – outside of the family of God – but Christ wanted everyone to know that, through grace, the dividing wall between Jews and Gentiles had been torn down (Eph 2:14). Because of grace a Gentile, through faith in Jesus Christ (not through any works he had done), could enter the Holy of Holies and enjoy a personal relationship with God Almighty, his Creator.

Another important word which helps us understand salvation is the word **mercy**. The dictionary defines mercy as showing compassion, pity, kindness, sympathy; kindness toward an enemy; the power to forgive or spare someone from punishment. In many of the Psalms the word mercy is used (Ps 4:1; 9:3; 13:5; 23:6; 103:8; 136:1). King David said that he would sing of the mercies of the LORD forever (Ps 89:1). As Christ has shown His mercy to us, we should also be merciful to others (Col 3:12). In court cases, when someone is found guilty by the judge, the guilty person will often plead for mercy. The person, because of what he has done, knows that he is guilty and deserves to pay the penalty that the judge issues. So, just as love and grace are provided by God the Father, mercy is also extended to all those who come to him in the Name of His Son Jesus Christ (Eph 2:4). Even though we were born into trespasses and sins, and stand before a just God who could condemn us to an eternal death, we can experience mercy because of what the Son has done for us (Titus 3:5).

The following principles are intricately interwoven with the word "salvation". The doctrine of salvation is a key foundation stone for the disciple's walk with God; salvation is what we need to proclaim to a lost world. It has been part of God's divine plan and, like a cord, it is woven throughout the entire Bible. Today the Holy Spirit is still drawing people to salvation in Jesus Christ (John 12:32).

Principle One: SALVATION AND ATONEMENT

*"For the life of the flesh is in the **blood**, and I've given it to you upon the altar to make **atonement** for your souls; for it is the **blood** that makes **atonement** for the soul."*

Leviticus 17:11

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*“70 weeks have been decreed for your people in your holy city, to finish the transgressions, to make an end of sin, to make **atonement** for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy place.”*

Daniel 9:24 NASB

*“And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the **atonement**.”*

Romans 5:11

Definition

1, Atonement means to reconcile, to be penitent; it also means compensation, to make amends or recompense; it is the removal or forgiveness of sin through a sacrifice, resulting in our acceptance before God (Ex 32:30-32); something that makes up for a wrong or harmful act. Once a year, the priest was to go into the Holy of Holies with the blood of the Lamb and sprinkle that blood on the mercy seat (Lev 16:15). The mercy seat was a gold-plated box on top of the Ark. It had two cherubims, one on each end of the lid. Inside was Aaron's rod, the stone tablets with the 10 Commandments, and a few pieces of manna (Heb 9:4). This represented the presence of God, and it was upon the ark that the blood of the slain lamb was sprinkled (Lev 4:32-34). It was by this action that atonement could be made for man's soul due to his sinfulness (Lev 5:9-13).

Daniel prophesied that, in the last days, the coming Righteous One would bring in everlasting righteousness; He would be able to go into the Holy Place and, once for all, offer up His blood as an atonement for our sins (Dan 9:24). A price had to be paid, and it could only come through a perfect and holy sacrifice. Therefore, in the fullness of time, the Heavenly Father sent His Son to become that Lamb Whose blood would be shed to make atonement for a lost world. Because of His sacrifice salvation is available to us (1 Pet 1:19; Rev 5:6, 12; 7:10).

In the New Testament Christ became the sacrificial Lamb Who atoned for all who would put their trust in Him (Rom 5:11). He shed His blood as the price needed to pay for our personal sins (Heb 9:22). Not only was Christ the sacrificial Lamb, but He also was the high priest Who would bring His blood before the Father. For those of us who believe, we are covered by the blood of Christ and, when the Father looks at us, He sees us through the blood of Christ (1 John 1:7). It is important to understand that, without the atoning work of Jesus Christ, there is no possible way that sinful man or woman could have salvation.

Related Scriptures:

Ex 30:10; Lev 1:4; 4:35; 10:17; 12:7; 17:11; Num 15:25; 28:22; Neh 10:33

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Principle Two: SALVATION AND REDEMPTION

*“But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, none of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood he entered the most Holy Place once and for all, having obtained eternal **redemption**.”*

Hebrews 9:11-12

Definition

2.Redemption is defined as the act of being saved from error or evil; deliverance, ransom, salvation. It can imply the idea of something that was old, and even broken, being restored back to its original condition. God’s intention was to make it possible that we could enter into that personal relationship that we had in the Garden of Eden before Adam and Eve sinned.

Hebrews tells us that Christ came as a high Priest and that He was also the tabernacle – the tabernacle made by the hands of the Creator; yet, at the same time, He Himself was the Creator, the Triune God. No longer would there be need for the blood of goats and lambs, for He was going to take His blood into the Holy of Holies. Because of His doing so, He has made it possible to be eternally redeemed (Heb 9:11-12).

Through redemption – Christ’s amazing gift of love through His sacrifice – He saves us from the penalty of our wicked ways. In faith we can choose to believe in Christ’s redemptive sacrifice which will save us OR we can choose to suffer the results of not accepting His redemption for our salvation (Eph 1:7). This brings to mind the words of the hymn “Redeemed by the Blood of the Lamb”.

While we understand that salvation is our response to Christ’s call to our hearts, it is more than that. It does not just bring us into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, but it also redeems a variety of things that have been broken over the years, things which have caused separation between ourselves and God. We must clearly understand that we have salvation and *“redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace”* (Eph 1:7).

Related Scriptures:

Lev 25:24; Ps 49:8; 130:7; Luke 21:28; Rom 3:24; 8:23; 1 Cor 1:30; Eph 4:30; Col 1:14; Heb 9:12

Principle 3: SALVATION AND JUSTIFICATION

*“But God demonstrated His own love towards us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us much more than, having now been **justified** by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.*

Romans 5:8-9

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*“Moreover, whom he predestined, these he also called; whom he called, these he also **justified**; and whom he **justified**, these he also glorified.”*

Romans 8:30

*“Knowing that a man is not **justified** by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be **justified** by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be **justified**.”*

Galatians 2:16

Definition

1. **Justice, justification and justified** are often used as law court terms. The accused is brought before a judge and the judge will hear the evidence presented by an accuser. In the spiritual realm this accuser is Satan, and he wants to accuse us so that we will be found guilty and be sentenced to death and hell. From the beginning of creation, Satan and his demons have roamed this earth trying to bring accusations against people, trying to divide people groups and to bring destruction to the heart of man (Job 1:6-12).

But it's important for the disciple to understand that God the Father Himself is the final Judge of all things. Because we are born with a “sin nature”, we already stand guilty before a Holy God. But this is not the end! Christ came to be an advocate for us and, although we are found guilty, He will plead on our behalf, having taken the punishment for us (1 John 2:1). He paid the price on the cross of Calvary and, because the price was His precious blood, when we call upon His name as our Lord and Savior, we can stand justified before the Father. We must understand that there is nothing we can do or nothing that we can say on our own behalf when we stand justified before a holy God (Rom 3:24).

The only way we can stand justified is through Christ's shed blood; through faith in Christ Jesus, we become justified before the Father in heaven (Rom 5:9). Again, we can see how the word “justified” is deeply connected to the Word “salvation”. The only reason we can experience salvation is because Jesus Christ Himself has made the way for us and, if we follow Him, we too can be made “just”, because He Himself is just and we are in Him and He in us (Rom 8:30).

Here on earth, people spend a lot of time trying to justify themselves for their actions. So often we blame others for the way we were raised, for the way we now live, and for how we think and act in our homes and outside our homes. But somewhere along the line we have to recognize that we have already been condemned and found guilty, and that there is nothing we can do to change that fact. We have no such ability within ourselves. That's why we must call on Jesus, the One Who was perfect and Who paid the price for us (Gal 2:16; 3:24). We need to come to Him and say, “Yes, Lord, I am guilty. Please forgive me of my sins and bring me back so that I can stand justified (‘just’) before the Father.”

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The book of Micah tells us what the Lord requires of us he writes, *"He has shown you, O man what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do **justly**, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?"* (Mic 6:8)

Related Scriptures:

Job 9:20; Isa 43:26; Matt 11:19; 12:37; Acts 13:39; Rom 3:24, 28; 4:25; 5:1, 9, 18; 8:30, 33; 1 Cor 6:11; Gal 2:16; 3:8; 3:24; 1 Tim 3:16; Tit 3:7

Principle Four: SALVATION AND RIGHTEOUSNESS

*"He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive blessings from the LORD, and **righteousness** from the God of His **salvation**."*

Psalms 24:4-5

*"My **righteousness** is near, My **salvation** has gone forth, and My arms will judge the peoples; the coastlands will wait upon Me, and on My arm they will trust. ... But My **salvation** will be forever, and My **righteousness** will not be abolished....But My **righteousness** will be forever, and My **salvation** from generation to generation."*

Isaiah 51:5-6, 8

*"... Now this is his name by which he will be called: THE LORD OUR **RIGHTEOUSNESS**."*

Jeremiah 23:6

*"And that you put the new man which was created according to God, in true **righteousness** and holiness".*

Ephesians 4:24

Definition

1. **Righteousness** means to be virtuous, moral, just and honest, both with God and man. Or to put it another way, as disciples of Christ, we should walk uprightly and straight before God, standing tall in His uprightness. We need to recognize that it is impossible for us to live by our own righteousness. For as long as we live here on earth, we have that sin nature in us that will, somewhere along the line, cause us to think and to sin in areas that God sees, but others may not. Therefore, we need to put on Christ's righteousness (Eph 6:14) so that, while we are still sinners here on earth, we are clothed with the righteousness of Christ's blood.

The Scriptures quoted above point out several things that we need to apply to our lives. His righteousness is near. People seek the righteousness of Christ in various places around the world – while it is right before us, at hand. We just need to take it. Also, His righteousness reigns forever; it's an eternal righteousness and will never be abolished. Also, He will make his salvation known from generation to generation, giving people the opportunity to make a choice – a choice of

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deciding whom they will serve and whom they will follow (Deut 30:19-20). It is never too late to decide for Jesus Christ while we are still here on earth. Even the thief, nailed to the cross beside Jesus, with likely only a few hours to live, decided for Jesus Christ. Jesus told him, "Today I will see you in paradise with Me" (Luke 23:43). The thief deserved death. He was getting what was due him, but now he would have eternal life because he had put his trust in Jesus Christ and, at that moment, had become clothed in Christ's righteousness.

It is important to state two things here. First, the Bible tells us that all our righteousness is as filthy rags (Isa 64:6). Second, He did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to Himself (Matt 9:13; Mark 2:17; Luke 5:32). Many people try to live good and moral lives, trying to be generous in giving, obeying the laws of the land, trying to be good citizens of their countries (Rom 3:10), and even going to church. But none of these "good things" will make us righteous before God; there's nothing, within our own ability, that we can do to make ourselves righteous. What we need to do is cry out to our Creator Who made the heavens and the earth, and ask Him to forgive us and clothe us with His righteousness. We need to confess and "put on" Christ (Rom 10:9-10). We need to be baptized and fully immersed in His righteousness.

The question we need to ask is "Are we standing in a right relationship before a Holy God today?" If we are, then that is what is going to bring us peace within our hearts, helping us to have a heart of faith rather than a heart of fear. We will know that we are redeemed through salvation, made righteous by the One Who is called the Righteous One (Jer 23:6).

Related Scriptures:

Gen 7:1; 15:6 (Rom 4:3, 22; Gal 3:6; James 2:23); Ex 23:8; Ezr 9:15; Deut 25:1; 1 Kin 8:32 (2 Chr 6:23); Ps 1:6; 5:8; 9:8; 15:2; 23:3; 24:5; 40:9; 50:6; 85:10; 96:13; 97:12; 103:17; 111:3 (112:3, 9; 2 Cor 9:9); Ps 132:9; Prov 10:25; 12:28; 15:9; 21:21; Isa 45:19; 51:5, 8; 54:14; 59:17; 61:3; 62:2; 64:6; Jer 23:5, 6; 33:15; Dan 9:24; Hos 2:19; Amos 5:24; Mic 6:5; Zeph 2:3; Matt 5:6, 10; 6:33; 9:13 (Mark 2:17; Luke 5:32); Matt 10:41; 23:28; John 16:8; Rom 1:17; 3:10, 25; 5:21; 6:13; 10:4; 10:10; 14:17; 1 Cor 15:34; 2 Cor 6:14; Gal 5:5; Eph 5:24; 5:9; 6:14; Phil 1:11; 3:9; 1 Tim 6:11 (2 Tim 2:22); 2 Tim 3:16; 4:8; Heb 11:7; 12:11; James 3:18; 5:16; 1 Pet 2:24; 3:12, 14; 2 Pet 3:13; 1 John 2:1; 3:10; Rev 19:11

Principle Five: SALVATION AND DELIVERANCE

*"Return, O LORD, **deliver** me! Oh save me for Your mercies' sake!"*

Psalms 6:4

*"And it will be for a sign and for a witness to the LORD of hosts in the land of Egypt; for they will cry to the LORD because of the oppressors, and He will send them a **Saviour** and a **Mighty One**, and He will **deliver** them."*

Isaiah 19:20

"I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who

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*will **deliver** me from this body of death? I thank God - through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.”*
Romans 7:23-25

*“Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead, who **delivered** us from so great a death, and does **deliver** us; in whom we trust that He will still **deliver** us,”*
2 Corinthians 1:9-10

Definition

1. **Deliverance** means liberation, escape, relief, freedom; to get out of bondage or slavery, to be set free.

If there was ever a need in our day and age for a deliverer who would come to bring deliverance to people, it is now. The world is full of bondage and corruption. People are doing all kinds of terrible things, yet with the hope that, somehow, they could be set free. Suicide rates are higher than they've ever been in the history of the world – many people think that the only way they can be delivered from a problem with which they're struggling, is to take their own life or to try to have someone else take it for them. The hands of Satan and his host are more and more tightly gripping the hearts of people, the purpose being to bring destruction and death (Rom 6:23). One has only to watch the news at night to see how people are doing terrible things, both to themselves and to others, hoping to somehow get free of themselves.

People sometimes cry out to God for a time of revival, but revival can only take place when people are willing to call upon Jesus Christ for deliverance from all the sin and corruption into which they have gotten themselves (Rom 7:23-24). Truth be told, many Christians today are living in bondage and need to call on Jesus Christ to deliver them and set them free (John 8:33; Rom 8:2; Gal 5:1). Christians become bound by things that the world says are alright to do, but which Scripture teach that, in so doing, we will become bound to do the things of this world. Eventually, if they are not dealt with, they will bring death (2 Cor 1:9-10).

The word “**deliver**” means to convey into the hands of, to take something from someone and give it to another; it can also mean to betray someone into the hands of another. Judas delivered Jesus into the hands of the religious leaders and, by doing so, betrayed Him and the disciples who were his friends (Matt 26:47-49). But the purpose of Christ's coming was to deliver us from our enemies. We were bound by sin, but Christ is our Deliverer, coming to set us free from the strongholds of Satan (Rom 7:23-25).

Therefore, the teaching of salvation is so important because it explains how Christ, as a result of our commitment to Him as Savior, also gives us the power to be delivered of habits and thoughts that would so easily entangle us and try to destroy us (Heb 12:1). Salvation opens the door to our Deliverer and, if we will just take the time to call upon His Name, He will set us free. He will deliver us from the bondage to which we are chained or tied (Rom 6:18; 8:2; Gal 5:1).

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Christ declared that he came to set the captive free (John 8:36). All we must do is to have faith in Him, trusting that He is able to do what he promised. But there is one other key truth that we need to understand: He does it together with us. He gives us the power to overcome and to be delivered, but we have to choose to walk away from that sin and to break free from Satan's attempts to convince us that there is no way for us to become free (1 Cor 10:13). We must work together as one, empowered by His Holy Spirit. And, as we allow the Holy Spirit to fill more of our lives (Eph 5:18), we will see, being produced in our lives, more of the fruit of the Spirit than the fruit of the world (Gal 5:22-23).

Related Scriptures:

Gen 14:20; 32:11; Ex 3:8 (Acts 7:34); Jos 8:7; 2 Sam 22:20; 2 Kin 18:32 (Isa 36:18); Ps 18:17; 22:4, 8; 34:4; 39:8; 59:1; 91:3; 116:8; 119:170; 143:9; Prov 2:12; 11:8; 28:26; Isa 46:4; Jer 1:8; Dan 3:17; Matt 6:13 (Luke 11:4); Acts 7:25; Rom 4:25; 8:21; 1 Cor 11:23; Gal 1:4; Col 1:13; 2 Tim 4:18; 2 Pet 2:9

Principle Six: SALVATION AND OUR MEDIATOR

*"For there is one God and one **Mediator** between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time,"*

1 Timothy 2:5-6

*"And for this reason He is the **Mediator** of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance."*

Hebrews 9:15

*"To the general assembly and the church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the **Mediator** of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks between things than that of Abel."*

Hebrews 12:23-24

Definition

1. **Mediator** means interceder, a peacemaker, one who is a go-between, an intermediary, an arbitrator. For the disciple, Christ is the Mediator between us and the heavenly Father. He stands in our place and makes it possible for us to enter the Holy of Holies (Heb 9:15). We must realize that here on earth we cannot do such a thing by ourselves. We have the sentence of death already upon our lives and the only way we can be set free from that, is for Someone to step in; an intermediate on our behalf. When salvation has taken place in our lives, it immediately joins us to Christ our Mediator.

Therefore, the Scripture tells us that, because of Christ's death on the cross, He mediated a new covenant between God and man (Heb 12:23-24). Because we could not keep the law, the

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old covenant condemned us to death. The new covenant through Jesus Christ, however, opened the door and made it possible for us to have an eternal inheritance. Christ gave Himself as a ransom for all (1 Tim 2:5-6). The key is that we must accept Him personally as our mediator Who stands before the Father on our behalf. If we don't accept Him personally, then we have no defense. The Father will have no chance but to find us guilty and condemn us to an eternal death.

Christ's mediation on our behalf was accomplished by what He has done on the cross. A perfect sacrifice was needed – a Lamb Whose blood would be sprinkled on the mercy seat (1 Pet 1:19). As Our Mediator and High Priest, He was able to establish a new covenant, allowing whoever would believe, to come into the presence of God Almighty (Heb 13:20). This reality demonstrates why prayer is so important. Prayer is simply talking to Jesus and asking Him to mediate on our behalf before the Father. We are told to have an attitude of prayer throughout the day (Eph 6:18; 1 Thes 5:25; 1 Tim 5:5).

We need to understand the importance of this principle: because of salvation we have a Mediator Who speaks on our behalf and directs how the Holy Spirit will carry out the will of the Father in our lives here on earth. Salvation brings us into a family, but it's more than that – we become integrated into one Body where Christ is our Head (Eph 4:15). We become networked together, doing things together and facing the world together with Jesus Christ, Who is the Head of His Body the Church (1 Cor 12:12-27). We do not face the world alone. Because He is the Head, He mediates on our behalf. It is like a marriage where we become one with Him and can communicate back and forth, knowing each other's hearts.

Related Scriptures:

Gal 3:19, 20; Heb 8:6

Principle Seven: SALVATION AND SANCTIFICATION

*“Speak also to the children of Israel, saying: Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the Lord who **sanctifies** you.”*

Exodus 31:13

*“That I may be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the Gospel of God, that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, **sanctified** by the Holy Spirit.”*

Romans 15:16

*“To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are **sanctified** in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place called on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:”*

1 Corinthians 1:1-2

*“And such were some of you. But you were **washed**, but you were **sanctified**, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Holy Spirit of our God”.*

1 Corinthians 6:11

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*“But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brothers and beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for **salvation** through **sanctification** by the Spirit and belief in the truth,”*

2 Thessalonians 2:13

*“By that will we have been **sanctified** through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once and for all”.*

Hebrews 10:10

*“Therefore, Jesus also, that He might **sanctify** the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate.”*

Hebrews 13:12

*“But **sanctify** the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed.”*

1 Peter 3:15

Definitions

1. **Sanctification:** A process of purifying, to be made clean, consecration, to be made holy. This is an act of consecration of God's grace on one's life through the power of the Holy Spirit. Salvation is what brings us into a personal relationship with Christ while sanctification is the process of changing us into His character and image.
2. **Sanctified:** To be cleaned, purified, perfected. Sanctification is a process that begins with a personal relationship with Christ Jesus. The Holy Spirit, at the time of salvation, begins a work of making one new; we have died to sin and the world and are now being prepared for our presentation in heaven as the bride of Christ, holy before the Father.
3. **Sanctifying:** To clean, purify, to perfect, consecrate, hallow, separate. The Holy Spirit, at the time of salvation, begins a work of making one new; we have died to sin and the world and are now being prepared for our presentation in heaven as the bride of Christ, holy before the Father.

When we take time to look at the verses shown above, there are some interesting truths that come from the Scriptures. Again, we see the idea of salvation and sanctification being tied together as one; we need to be sanctified by the Spirit and by the Word of God itself (2 Thes 2:13). We also can see that there is a need for sanctification, not only for the individual, but also for the entire church (1 Cor 1:1-2). When the church has disciples who are not getting their “temples” cleaned for God (1 Cor 6:19; Eph 2:21), then the whole church is affected. Rather than the church walking and “flowing” with the Spirit of God, it may be operating in a carnal way. This is what Paul was teaching the Galatian church in the fifth chapter of Galatians, verses 1-26. He wanted the

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church to walk, live, and be led (Gal 5:16, 18, 25) by the Holy Spirit, away from the sinful dirtiness of this world, and be prepared to live as a free child of God (Gal 5:1).

Paul also taught the church in Rome that true sanctification can come only through the Holy Spirit (Rom 15:16). The non-Christian Romans worshiped many gods, each of which had different purposes. Because there were so many gods, the people offered up many sacrifices, hoping to bring themselves into a right standing with their gods; somehow, they hoped they could be made clean (sanctified), freed from the sins they had committed against themselves and others. Salvation is available to bring about change, but first it must start within our hearts, then become fixed in our minds, finally changing even our outward countenances. Others will see and bear witness to the change in us. Salvation is all about change and a new life – an eternal life in Christ Jesus (1 John 5:11).

Sanctification can be thought of as cleansing one's body, putting on clean clothes, and then donning the full armor of God. As previously stated, sanctification is an ongoing process, not just something we do once, making it effective for the rest of our lives. It may have to be done a number of times each day, because sin soils us, and hinders our access to our Holy God. Yes, we have been sanctified by Christ, but we need to come to Christ for daily washing – the washing comes through prayer, the reading of God's Word, and spending time in meditation with Him (Heb 10:10; 1 Tim 4:5).

Also, Peter (1 Pet 3:15) wanted believers to know that their hearts needed to be sanctified by the Lord God, the reason being that they would be ready to give a defense (or testimony) on behalf of Jesus Christ. Because of their heart sanctification, they'd be able to speak a word of truth to their listeners; a word that would come in meekness from a good conscience and would bring honor and glory to Jesus Christ. When our hearts are sanctified, the words we speak become powerful to the hearer because we are clean channels before God, allowing the Holy Spirit to flow through us and touch the lives of those around us (Rom 10:14-17).

Just like it doesn't take much to become soiled in the physical realm, the same is true in the spiritual realm. Every day, our contact with others, and the different voices emanating from the spiritual realm, can tarnish and dirty us. Therefore, we need to keep wearing the full armor of God, especially the helmet of salvation – because our thoughts need constant sanctification and protection by the blood of Christ Jesus (Eph 6:10-20). We need to get into the Word of God as much as possible. When we get into the Word, it gets into us, and that's what makes us clean (Eph 5:26; Tit 3:5; Heb 10:22), preparing us to stand before our Heavenly Father. It's as if the Word of God is soap and the Holy Spirit is the Person who scrubs us so that we can be made clean, sanctified before our Holy God (1 Cor 6:11).

Related Scriptures:

sanctification

1 Cor 1:30; 1 Thes 4:3; 4:4; 1 Pet 1:1

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sanctified

Gen 2:3; Neh 3:1; Isa 5:16; John 10:36; Acts 20:32; Rom 15:16; 2 Tim 2:21

sanctify

Gen 2:3; Ex 13:2; Ex 19:10; Ex 28:41; Lev 10:3; Lev 11:44; Lev 21:8; Lev 27:14; Num 8:17; 11:18; Deut 5:12; 15:19; Josh 3:5; 7:13; 2 Chr 29:15; 30:3; Job 1:5; Isa 5:16; 29:23; 66:17; Ezek 20:12; Joel 1:14; John 17:17; Acts 26:18; 1 Cor 1:2; 6:11; 7:14; Eph 5:26; 1 Thes 5:23; 1 Tim 4:5; Heb 2:11; 10:29

Conclusion

Salvation is the first step that all people must take if they hope to be set free from sin and death. This is the plan that God has made, that we must come to Christ and ask for forgiveness of sins and ask to be covered by His shed blood so that we can once again come back before the Father clothed not in our righteousness but in the righteousness of Christ. It is because of what Christ has done that we can have the free gift of eternal life but there are some steps that we must take before we can have that free gift. He freely offers it to us, but we must choose and make a choice to take it. Moses stated these words that I believe are appropriate for us today. He states, *“but the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it. See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil, in that I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that you may live and multiply; and the LORD your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess. But if your heart turns away so that you do not hear, and are drawn away, and worship other gods and serve them, I announced to you today that you shall surely perish; you shall not prolong your days in the land which you crossed over the Jordan to go in and possess. I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessings and cursing; therefore **choose** life, that both you and your descendants may live; that you may love the LORD your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days; and that you may dwell in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them.”* (Deuteronomy 30:14-20). Moses wanted to make clear to the people that God was their leader. He is the One Who had delivered them. He was the One Who had kept them and looked after them. What He demands from every individual person is for them to make a choice and to live by that choice. Will we enter into a commitment, a personal commitment, that we only ourselves can make?

The apostle Paul shares the following Scripture (Romans 10:8-10, 13) with the Roman Christians so that they would clearly understand Who has come to be their Savior. It was only through Christ's shed blood and faith in him whereby one could have salvation, and be eternally saved. *“But what does it say? The word is near you, in your mouth (and in your heart that is, the word of faith which we preach): that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be **saved**. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto **salvation**. ... For whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be **saved**.”* In our hearts, we must make a choice to believe and then, with our mouths, confess and testify what we believe and, by which testimony, we live.

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Discipleship Application

When attempting to understand the word **salvation**, we need to realize the wide breadth of ideas that are all woven together. We have salvation when we repent of our sin and, through faith, trust in Jesus Christ and His shed blood (Rom 11:20). We have redemption as a result. Men and women must take that first step of faith (2 Cor 5:7) and obedience, placing their lives into the hands of Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. This may seem like a simple act, but it is an act requiring faith and belief. Because of His grace, mercy, and love for all mankind, Christ offers salvation freely, but we must make the choice. That decision requires us to die to self and our will, and then live for Christ and His will (John 12:24). When we make the decision to become a disciple of Christ, confessing our sin and disobedience to Him, we accept His will for our lives (Matt 6:10). Then, wherever He leads us, we will follow (Mark 8:34; John 12:26; 1 Pet 2:21), whether through hardships or blessings. Knowing that, because of our new personal relationship with Him, He gives us the power and strength through the Holy Spirit (Rom 15:13) to live and be a **witness of salvation** to a lost world.

Commitment and Prayer

Dear Lord Jesus,

Thank You for coming to the earth, knowing that You would face all kinds of challenges and disappointments, and in the end, You would face death itself. I am so grateful today for the resurrection power that we receive through salvation and all that which is involved within this redemptive plan – a plan whereby, through Your love, mercy and grace, You justify us before our heavenly Father and clothe us with Your righteousness. That, through Your plan of salvation, we could be delivered from everything with which Satan has tried to bind and deceive us. I also want to say Thank You for being the Mediator for us before the Father in heaven. From the moment that we confessed our sins and invited You into our lives You've been walking with us through the process of sanctification through which we can become cleansed, washed and made holy before our God. I thank You that You have chosen never to leave us nor forsake us. And, thank you that if we just wait upon You and listen for Your still small voice, allowing Your Spirit to fill and empower us, we will be able to overcome the challenges that we face here on earth. We pray that You would help us each day to put on the helmet of salvation and that You would guide our thoughts and actions as we walk here on earth.

Your servant,

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Related Scriptures:

Saviour

2 Sam 22:3; Ps 106:21; Isa 19:20; 43:3, 11; 45:21; 49:26; 60:16; 63:8; Jer 14:8; Obad 1:21; Luke 1:47; 2:11; John 4:42; Acts 5:31; 13:23; Eph 5:23; Phil 3:20; 1 Tim 4:10; 2 Tim 1:10; Tit 2:13; 2 Pet 1:1; 1 John 4:14; Jude 1:25

Salvation

Gen 49:18; Ex 14:13; 15:2 (Ps 118:14; Isa 12:2); 1 Sam 2:1; 2 Sam 22:3 (Ps 18:2); 2 Sam 22:47 (Ps 18:46); 1 Chr 16:23 (Ps 96:2); 2 Chr 6:41; Ps 3:8; 13:5; 18:35; 20:5; 25:5; 27:1; 37:39; 40:10; 51:12; 61:10; 62:2; 62:7; 68:20; 85:7; 85:9; 98:3; 116:13; 119:155; Isa 12:2; 45:17; 49:6; 52:10; 59:17; Lam 3:26; Jonah 2:9; Luke 1:69; 2:30; 3:6; 19:9; Acts 4:12; 28:28; Rom 1:16; 10:10; 11:11; 13:11; 2 Cor 6:2; Eph 1:13; 6:17; Phil 2:12; 1 Thes 5:8; 5:9; 2 Thes 2:13; 2 Tim 3:15; Tit 2:11; Heb 2:3; 5:9; 1 Pet 1:5, 9; 2 Pet 3:1, 5; Jude 1:3; Rev 7:10; 12:10; 19:1

Save

Gen 45:7; Deut 20:4; 1 Sam 14:6; 14:23; 17:47; 2 Sam 22:4 (Ps 18:3); 2 Kin 19:19 (Isa 37:20); 1 Chr 11:14; 16:35 (Ps 106:47); Ps 3:7; 7:1; 20:6; 54:1; 55:16; 138:7; Prov 20:22; Isa 33:22; 59:1; Jer 15:20; 17:14; 30:10 (46:27); Jer 31:7; Ezek 34:22; Eze 36:29; Zech 8:7; Matt 1:21; 10:22 (24:13; Mark 13:13); 14:30; 16:25 (Mark 8:35; Luke 9:24); 18:11 (Luke 19:10); 19:25 (Mark 10:26; Luke 18:26); 24:22 (Mark 13:20); Mark 16:16; Luke 9:56; John 3:17; 5:34; Acts 2:21 (Rom 10:13); 2:47; Acts 4:12; 16:31; Rom 5:10; 8:24; 10:9; 1 Cor 1:18; 1:21; 5:5; Gal 6:14; Eph 2:5, 8; 1 Thes 2:16; 1 Tim 1:15; 2:4; 2 Tim 1:9; Tit 3:5; Heb 7:25; James 1:21; 5:15; 1 Pet 4:18; Rev 21:24

Chapter Eight

Teachings on Discipleship

*“Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed him, if you abide in My Word, you are My **disciples** indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”*

John 8:31-32

*“By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My **disciples**.”*

John 15:8

*“... So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the **disciples** were first called **Christians** in Antioch.”*

Acts 11:26

Introduction

When you have made a commitment to Jesus Christ through prayer, confessing your sin and inviting Him into your heart as Lord and Savior (Rom 10:9-10), it is at that moment that you become a disciple of Jesus Christ. That same moment initiates your journey with Christ; you can then become a true servant of His. When becoming disciples, there are some new principles that need to be applied to our lives.

You may be asking the question, “What does my decision to follow Christ mean?” In some ways it’s like building a house – you have established the foundation and now need to build the rest of the structure. Another example, it is like seeds that have been planted in the garden of your heart. In order to see those seeds, mature and bear fruit, key steps need to be taken.

You may be asking the question, “What does my decision to follow Christ mean?” In some ways it’s like building a house ... the foundation has been established and now the rest of the structure needs to be built. The seed has been planted in the garden of your heart; now steps need to be taken to ensure that the seed matures and bears fruit.

Description

1. **disciple:** one who is a follower, believer, supporter, devotee, student, and a learner. A disciple is one who follows after the imparted knowledge of a teacher; disciples emulate the lifestyle of the teacher; in the New Testament people were called by Christ to follow Him and, in so doing, they became His disciples. (Both men and women can be called disciples).
2. **Christian:** to be Christ-like in character and example. We must see that a disciple of Christ is one who has shown that he is a true follower of Christ; such a person is called a Christian. A Christian is one who demonstrates Christ-likeness in his or her daily life. The name "Christian" can be applied to such a genuine follower of Christ Jesus. People will recognize the genuineness of such a person.

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Your decision to become a follower of Christ represents the birth of a new relationship and a new family. It is made you what the Bible calls a “disciple”. The Scripture mentioned above (John 15:8) states that the disciple will be known by his fruit. Every disciple, having given his heart to Jesus Christ, will have the fruit of the Spirit flowing from his life, touching the lives of other people. He will be like a river of living water (John 7:38).

As for relationships:

Your commitment opens the door for a personal relationship/fellowship (1 John 1:7) with Jesus Christ. He desires to be with you every step of the way – to walk with you through both the good and hard times of growing and maturing. He is with you everywhere you go. Your journey can be guided by the Word and by the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:16). It's a living relationship, an intimate and personal walk connecting you with Christ and His Body, the Church.

As a family member:

You are born into a new family upon your commitment to Christ – a body made up of brothers and sisters and people of like faith (Rom 12:4). You are not alone in your earthly journey. Christ has made you part of His Body, the Church (1 Cor 12:12-27). You are a unique member, and gifted for service (1 Corinthians, chapters 12 & 14). The church is a place to go for help and encouragement, as well as to be strengthened in your walk with Christ.

As a disciple:

Your commitment has also made you a student of Christ. This simply means that you have decided:

- To follow the teachings and ways of Jesus Christ (Matt 4:19; 16:24; Mark 8:34).
- To come under His discipline and training (Prov 22:6; 1 Tim 3:15, 4:13; 2 Tim 2:15).
- To take on a new lifestyle and direction (1 Cor 5:17; Eph 4:24; Col 3:10).
- To die to self, giving everything to Christ (John 12:24; 1 Cor 15:31; Phil 1:21).
- To serve in and on behalf of the church Christ body (John 12:26; Gal 5:13; 1 Cor 12:12-27).
- To walk in the power of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:16, 25).

No more is the disciple a slave to the ruler of this world but, through faith, has become a servant of Jesus Christ. We now serve Him because of our commitment and love for Him. It is key that the disciple be aware “it is no longer he that liveth, but it's Christ Who lives in him (John 14:19; Acts 17:28; Gal 2:20). We freely choose to serve Him and commit to doing His will in our lives here on earth. In the first part of Ephesians 1, Paul tells the Ephesian church about the kind of relationship we have with Christ. He makes clear to the church that they are **in** Christ and that He is **in** them. We become one with Him (John 17:21; Rom 12:5; Gal 3:28). But the biggest challenges we face revolve around our wills – we like to do what feels good for us, and we like doing the things we enjoy and which bring happiness to us. However, in Christ we have died to ourselves, surrendering our wills to Him. The problem is that Satan still wants us to use our wills to serve ourselves.

In essence, we have become children of God (Gal 3:26). We are now new creations (2 Cor 5:17). In some ways, we are like babies, needing training and nurturing in our new faith. Following are

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some brief points which, if applied to our lives, will help in our growing and nurturing as disciples of Jesus Christ.

Principle One: A DISCIPLE NEEDS TO DIE TO SELF

"Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if dies, it produces much grain."

John 12 :24

"Foolish one, what you sow is not made alive unless it dies."

1 Corinthians 15:36

The key to our discipleship walk is to be willing, each day, to die to self, making Christ Jesus truly the Lord of our lives. Salvation is not just fire insurance that we get to keep us from going to hell. As a seed that is planted in the ground and dies, and from that seed grows a plant with roots, a stem, leaves, and eventually fruit – so is salvation. Christ desires that we produce fruit (John 15:8, 16). Both internally and externally, we need to make Christ Lord of everything in our lives. We are to die to our wills and live according to His will and plan for our lives.

John 15:1-11 explains our relationship with Christ as that of being grafted into the vine. Christ is the true vine and, when we are grafted into Him, we become part of Who He is. His life and Spirit should be flowing out through us. Again, our purpose is to die to the worldly tree of which we were a part, and be grafted into God's heavenly tree, Jesus Christ. He does that so that will bear fruit and show that we are His (John 15:8). But we are cautioned that, if we do not let Christ flow out through us and bear fruit that brings glory to His name, we will be cut off and thrown into the fire (John 15:6).

Both of the above examples require a transformation. There needs to be new life brought about by the power of the Holy Spirit. In order for a plant to produce fruit, it needs an outside source which feeds it and gives it strength. Similarly, it is so critical that we be filled with the Spirit daily (Eph 5:18). We, as disciples, must die and then live for Christ. That is what it means to be called a Christian, one who is "Christ -like", walking and living like Christ Jesus, the One Whom we serve.

Principle Two: A DISCIPLE NEEDS TO BE OBEDIENT

*"... bring every thought into captivity to the **obedience** of Christ, and being ready to punish all **disobedience** when your **obedience** is filled."*

2 Corinthians 10:5-6

When we receive Christ as Lord in our lives, we have been set free. But this new life requires obedience and sacrifice. We are not under the Old Testament law, but we are called to live in obedience to the commands of Christ. Several of these are key to the disciple's daily walk here on earth. We do these things, not because we have to, but we do them because we love him

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– after all, He first loved us and died for us. Because of that sacrifice, we give ourselves over to Him to serve as He desires to do through us. We need again to reflect on the Lord's prayer which states, "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Why? "For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever" (Matt 6:9-13). The following words are some of the major areas to which we are called to be obedient if we are truly followers of Christ Jesus.

Word: The Word is the life source and empowerment for us. It is the foundation upon which we build our lives. We need to study the Word – not just read it. We need to get wisdom, knowledge and understanding from it (Pro 2:1-11). It is to be a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path (Psa 119:105). The Word should be our total life source for all that we think and do. When seasoned with prayer and empowered by the Holy Spirit, through Christ the captive is set free (John 8:32-36). (Verses concerning the Word: John 8:31; 2 Cor 6:7; Col 3:16; James 1:22; 1 John 2:5). (See Chapter One for more detail).

Baptism: Baptism is a testimony to others about what has taken place in our hearts. It shows that we have died to self and have been raised in the newness of life in Jesus Christ. Baptism is not salvation but, rather, is a living testimony of that which has taken place in one's life. We are commanded to be baptized, thus following the example of Jesus Christ. We should not wait years to be baptized; the Bible demonstrates that we should repent and be baptized every one of us (Acts 2:38). A true disciple of Christ is a baptized believer. Being immersed in the waters represents complete death. Being raised up out of the waters shows to others the newness of life that now dwells within a disciple. (Verses concerning baptism: Rom 6:3-4; Gal 3:27; Col 2:12; see chapter 9 for more detail).

Communion: This is an event that draws us back to what Christ did on the cross for us. We are called to celebrate Communion often. There are at least two reasons for this: the first is to draw disciples back to the basics of what our relationship with Him is all about and the second is to connect us with other disciples in the Body of Christ. We are to remember His broken body by the breaking of bread, and we are to remember His shed blood by drinking from the cup. Communion was, and is, a time to remind disciples of the covenant Christ has made between Himself and His followers (Matt 26:26-30; Mark 14:22, 26; Luke 22:14-20; 1 Cor 10:16; 11:23-26; see chapter 9 for more detail).

Fellowship: This is a time where believers gather together. It is also a testimony to the lost of how Christ can bring together a diverse group of people into a place of harmony and unity under His Headship. It is a time for worship, prayer, and for instruction in the Word. It is a time when the gifts of the Holy Spirit are active in the disciple's life and are being used to serve other members in the Body of Christ. Because of today's powerful trend resulting from the spirit of individualism, many tend to avoid fellowship. But the Word commands us not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together (Heb 10:25). We need each other; where two or three are gathered together, we are promised that Christ will be in our midst (Matt 18:20). The enemy destroys by dividing and conquering, but Christ wants to liberate and bind His disciples together in fellowship with Him. Togetherness can generate greater authority and power. We need to remember that "greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:4). An army is

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strong only by coming together and, in unity, focusing on the enemy in battle. (See chapter 9 for more detail).

Fellowship: A time when we gather together with other believers. Fellowship is also a testimony to the lost of how Christ can bring together into harmony and unity, under His leadership, a diverse group of people. It is a time for worship, prayer, and instruction in the Word. It is a time in the disciple's life when the gifts of the Holy Spirit are active, being used to serve other members of the Body of Christ. Because of a strong spirit of individualism, there is a powerful trend today to stay away from fellowship with others. But the Word commands us not to forsake from assembling together (Heb 10:25). We need each other, and are promised that where two or three are gathered together in Christ's name, He will be in our midst (Matt 18:20). The enemy destroys by dividing and conquering; Christ wants to liberate His disciples by binding them together in fellowship with Him. Great authority and power can emanate from togetherness. Remember: "Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:4). An army is strong only by coming together and, in unity, focusing on the enemy in battle. (See chapter 9 for more detail).

Proclaiming the Gospel: This is not a suggestion, but a command to every follower of Christ Jesus. We are commanded to go (Matt 28:19-20). That does not always mean that we need go to some foreign country, but it does mean we need to go to our neighbors and communities. People need to hear the Gospel of Christ. How will they hear unless we go and tell them (Rom 10:14-17)? It also means helping those financially who are being called of God to go abroad to bring the Good News to other lost people in different countries. Going does cause challenges, heartaches, and sometimes it may even cost one's life. Christ warned us that just like they persecuted Him, they will persecute us (Matt 5:10-11; 10:10-26; John 15:20). There is no greater gift one can give than to lay down one's life for another (John 15:13). We need to remember that, as disciples, we are not just to go but, while we are out amongst others, we are to be making disciples for Christ Jesus (Matt 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-18; Acts 1:8). (See chapter 9 for more detail).

Principle Three: A DISCIPLE NEEDS TO STUDY THE BIBLE

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

2 Timothy 2:15

Paul, a preeminent Biblical figure, told a good friend that it was important to study the Bible because it was the Word of God (2 Timothy 2:15). The Bible is God's "love letter" to us and it is His way of sharing His heart. Paul goes on to tell Timothy that, because the Bible is inspired, it becomes the basis for teaching others, for bringing about correction in our lives, and providing training in righteousness. This creates the end goal of being adequately equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

King David was another Biblical figure who knew the importance of studying and meditating on the Word. He tells us that the person who meditates (or reflects on the Word of

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God) is like a tree planted by the riverside. This tree will bear fruit and its leaves will not wither, prospering in all it does (Psalms 1:2-3). Later, in the 119th chapter of Psalms, David tells us that the Word is a lamp to our feet (v. 105) which will help you keep us from sinning (v. 11). As we study Scripture, it gives light and understanding to the simple (Psalms 119:30).

Jesus proclaims Himself to be the Living Word (John 1:1-3) Who bridges us to the Father in Heaven. He taught the disciples that He is the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6). The Word (Jesus) is Who sets the captive free (John 8:31-32). As the Word becomes evident in our lives, people will see the change, proving that we are Christ's disciples (John 8:31). The Word of God is the Rock on which we must build our lives. All other things are as shifting sand (Matt 7:24-27). James exhorts us not to be only hearers of the Word, but also doers (James 1:22). Our faith in Christ should lead us to action.

Finally, Hebrews tells us that the Word equips us for battle (Hebrews 4:12). We are in a spiritual war (Ephesians 6:12). The enemy wants to deceive, divide, destroy and kill, but the Word of God helps us to overcome. John tells us, "Greater is He Who is in you than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:4).

We must daily get into the Word so that the Word can get into us.

Principle Four: A DISCIPLE NEEDS TO PRAY

*Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by **prayer** and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.*

Philippians 4:6

Prayer is simply a two-way communication between ourselves and God. Relationships are built through communication, expressing the heart of the speaker – both verbally and non-verbally. Prayer means seeking, asking, knocking and approaching God (Matthew 7:7). Prayer is the door through which we enter in order to learn the Father's will for our lives.

Often we don't know how to pray. The disciples asked Jesus how they are to pray. His response was the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13). This prayer is a pattern of how to pray through life's journey. As a template, it can help us each day to pray for a variety of things, both for ourselves and for those around us. It also helps us to remember Who God is and that it is He Whom we serve with all our heart.

Again, referring to King David, we see the importance of prayer. He asked the Lord to give ear to his prayer and consider the groaning of his heart (Ps 6:1-10). He expressed that only God was King and Lord. David waited eagerly to hear what the Lord would say and watched for what He would do (Psalms 5:1-3). Meditation was a large part of David's life; much of his meditation time resulted in hymns that are recorded for us in the book of Psalms.

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Jesus set an example of prayer for the disciples (Mark 1:35). When Jesus prayed, He would often take the disciples with Him. Unfortunately, the flesh would sometimes get the better of these men, and they would fall asleep (Mark 14:37-41). We are encouraged to pray often. Paul tells the Thessalonians church to pray without ceasing. Stated another way, we need to be praying about all things at all times (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

We also need to pray when we speak as Christ's ambassadors (Ephesians 6:8-20). In witnessing, our greatest enemy is fear and worry but, through prayer, we can be overcomers (Philippians 4:4-7). Sometimes when one struggles with getting into a habit of prayer, it can be helpful to get "prayer partner" who will walk along with you, one whom you can trust and know that they are there to support and encourage you just as you do for them.

Prayer is simply asking the question, "What Would Jesus Do" (WWJD)? Most importantly, we need to see things through the eyes of Christ. Prayer focuses our eyes on Him, and takes our eyes off ourselves. Prayer helps us to view things through spiritual eyes rather than worldly eyes. Prayer gives us renewed hope, peace, and strength to face challenges that each day may bring.

PRAYER CHANGES THINGS.

Principle Five: A DISCIPLE NEEDS TO BE DIRECTED

*But the Helper, the **Holy Spirit**, whom the Father will send in My name, **He will teach** you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.*
John 14:26

When Jesus left this earth, He told the disciples to wait in Jerusalem and to be in prayer until the coming of the Holy Spirit (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:12-14; 2:1-4). Jesus said that unless He went back to heaven, the Holy Spirit could not come (John 14:16-29). The Holy Spirit is our Comforter, Teacher, and the One Who empowers us to overcome the strongholds of this world. He gives us hope – something which is lost to much of the world (Romans 15:13).

Key to the disciple's walk is asking Christ to fill us with His Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit connects us to the rest of the body and aids in our ministry one to another. Paul tells the Ephesian disciples to pray for the Holy Spirit to fill them daily (Ephesians 5:18). God's Spirit is like fuel in a vehicle – when used, it needs replacing, or it will soon "run out".

One purpose of the Holy Spirit is to empower us for service (Acts 1:8, Ephesians 4:12). As well, the Holy Spirit guides us on our journey. He is our direct lifeline to Christ and is the One Who keeps us connected to the family of God.

Principle Six: A DISCIPLE NEEDS TO BE CALLED

*Therefore, We Are **Ambassadors** for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.*
2 Corinthians 5:20

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It is important that we see ministry as one big picture, not as a bunch of little departments. The disciples of Christ have a common call, purpose and goal. We need to see that this Gospel of Jesus Christ is to be communicated to all people throughout the whole world. The key is to see the big picture of the Bible and its Author, God Almighty, Who has commissioned His church to go forth and minister to others for His glory.

Step One: CALLED TO BE A DISCIPLE / AMBASSADOR FOR CHRIST

It is very important that we understand who we are in Christ. Before we can go out and give Him to others, we must receive Him into our lives. Paul tells us that, as disciples, we are called to be ambassadors of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:20; Ephesians 6:19-20). Representing our King, Jesus Christ, we need to be going out into a strange land to a people who may not understand or know the importance of what Christ has done for them. We need to help people into a personal relationship with God through their reconciliation with Him.

Step Two: CALLED TO BE A SENT ONE FOR CHRIST

I Who is Involved in MISSIONS - *Going* Matthew 28:19-20

We are called to be witnesses for Christ. We are all to be involved, whether locally or abroad. The great commission commands us to be active partakers.

First: We are to **come** to Christ. He calls us to be His followers.

Second: We should seek God in prayer as to where we should be going. He desires to **send** us out into His harvest field.

Thirdly: We then need to be willing to **go**. Nothing will take place and we will not see any fruit from our lives if we do not take a step of faith and then **go**.

Fourthly: Then, as God gives us a harvest of people, we need to train and mentor them as disciples of Christ.

II Who is involved in EVANGELISM - *Outreach* Mark 16:15

We are to be witnesses to others, both in word and deed. We may not all be gifted as evangelists, but Paul tells Timothy to do the work of evangelist as he serves His Lord (2 Tim 4:5). We are to be proclaimers of the Good News of Jesus Christ. The Good News consists of 10 major points. When combined, these things set free the captives of bondage of sin and death, bringing life to all who will receive Christ Jesus as Savior and Lord. These points are all about Jesus.

1. Living Word

2. Birth

3. Live

4. Death
5. Resurrection
6. Ascension
7. Holy Spirit
8. Church
9. Second Coming
10. Heaven

III Who is involved in DISCIPLESHIP - *Making* 2 Timothy 2:2 & 15

As disciples of Christ, we need to realize each day that we have a great opportunity to influence many people around us. We are all learners, but we are all also teachers of some kind. We are called to train and equip others for Christ, whether those others are our spouses, our children, our neighbors, or others more distant from us.

There are four key areas concerning this type of ministry.

- First, is the need for **understanding**. Neh. 8:1-12
- Second, is to **practice**. Phil. 4:9
- Third, having a heart to **serve** others. Rom. 12:10-12
- Fourth, we need to **mentor** others. 2 Tim 2:2

Step Three: CALLED TO BE PART OF THE CHURCH / CHRIST BODY

Church Planting

The word “church” means, “called out ones” or “belonging to the Lord”. The church is the Body of Christ. We are His hands and feet here on earth. We commit ourselves to serve him, not in our strength, but through the power of the Holy Spirit. The coming together of the disciples is what makes a local church. The building in which we assemble is to be known as the House of Prayer, a place where the body can minister to itself and to others. It is to be a place for fellowship and communion. The church is the place for using our spiritual gifts as well as for equipping and training one another (Rom 12:4-8). The church is the gathering place where disciples prepare themselves to be sent out into a lost world where they, too, once lived and of which they were a part. We go as His shining Light.

Disciples (followers of Christ Jesus) come together, forming a church. Here are some purposes and goals for a local church:

The church is a Body of people called out by Christ.

The church is a place of safety and refuge.

The church is a place to learn, grow, and mature in Christ.

The church is a place of fellowship, worship, and communion.

The church is the incubator, giving birth to, and equipping disciples who will then go forth and plant new churches.

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The church is the channel used by God for the Holy Spirit to fill, flow through, and empower disciples of Christ.

The “first fruit” of **new churches** results from doing missions, evangelism, and discipleship for Christ Jesus in the local community. It is sponsored by a body of praying and committed believers who desire to fulfill the call of the great commission (Matt 28:19-20).

Key verses: Acts 11:19-22; Col. 1:18-20

Step Four: CALLED TO BE SERVANT/ LEADERS

One of the main purposes of the church is to train and equip people for service. The church always needs people who are willing to become leaders for Jesus Christ. Servant/leadership equipping and training results in laborers to bring in the harvest and leaders who can give instruction and mentor others.

Leaders are people who pray, study, and make sure they are full of the Holy Spirit prior to attempting to train and serve others. Leaders need to strive for quality, not quantity. Their goal is to raise up more disciples so that they, too, can go out and establish new disciples and churches.

Key verses: Romans 12:10-13; John 12:24-26

A disciple/ambassador of Christ should be one who is completely sold out for Christ in everything that he/she says and does. Others should see the fruit of our being connected to the bigger picture of mission, evangelism, and discipleship. Our goal is to see churches and servant leadership established all over our communities, countries, and the world. Amen.

Principle Seven: A DISCIPLE NEEDS TO HAVE FELLOWSHIP

*“What we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have **fellowship** with us; and indeed our **fellowship** is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.”*

1 John 1:3

Another important point to remember is that men and women were created for fellowship. We are not called to walk alone or be islands unto ourselves. As disciples of Christ, we become part of His worldwide Church. He is our Head, and we are the various members of His Body (1 Cor 12:12-27).

The church is where we worship, have communion (1 Cor 11:23-24) and give of our possessions. It is also a place where we can give of ourselves – our talents, gifts and service (1 Cor 12:1-31). In church, we are built up and encouraged. As well, we become connected through smaller house fellowships. The early church went from house to house having communion, teaching God’s Word, and working together to meet the needs of others (Acts 2:42-47).

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Fellowship is at the heart of God and is born of love (Rom 13:8-10; 1 John 4:7-8). We are His children and He desires to care for and fellowship with us. John tells us that the cleansing of our hearts is an important part of fellowship (1 John 1:3-7).

Finally, we should not forsake the assembling of ourselves together; failure to meet together often results in losing out on what God desires to do through our lives (Hebrews 10:24-25). Fellowship is what binds us together as a body of believers.

Principle Eight: A DISCIPLE NEEDS TO TESTIFY

*“They had **testified** and preached the word of the Lord.*
Acts 8:25

*“Ashamed of the **testimony** of our Lord”*
2 Tim 1:8

*“And the **testimony** is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.*
1 John 5:11

The most powerful weapon you have against this world's enemy is your testimony. A testimony is a witness to what Christ Jesus has done personally in your life. A testimony is twofold. First, it's something you share through words. Second (and most powerfully) your testimony is seen through your actions. Actions speak louder than words.

The power of a testimony is demonstrated when we study the account of the woman at the well. After speaking with Jesus, she went back and told the people in her village about what He had said and done. The villagers came to see this Man and soon after that, as Jesus shared truth with them, they became believers (John 4:7-38).

Let us look at another type of testimony – baptism. Baptism allows others to observe your belief changes and that you have made Christ Lord by turning your life completely over to Him (Rom 6:4-7, Colossians 2:12). Baptism should be one of the first things every disciple should do after giving his life to Christ.

Paul tells Timothy not to be ashamed of his testimony (2 Timothy 1:8). A testimony is unique to the individual and differs from those around him. A disciple must purpose to share his testimony as one doesn't know how one's testimony can touch others' lives. If we don't share it, how will people know about Jesus Christ and what He desires to do in their lives (Rom 10:14-15)?

There are many kinds of testimonies that one can give, and various methods of sharing them. Testimonies can be shared through song, poetry, or reading a Scripture passage that has special meaning for you. Paul testifies to the Ephesians believers of God's grace and power in his life (Acts 20:24).

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You do not have to fear sharing your testimony with others. Jesus said that, in time of need, God will give the words to speak (Matt 10:19-20). We should always be ready to give a testimony of the hope that is within us (1 Peter 3:15-16). The Scriptures tell us that, if we believe in the Son of God, we have a testimony; that testimony is one of eternal life (1 John 5:9-12).

Principle Nine: A DISCIPLE NEEDS TO BE DISCIPLINED

*“Thus you are to know in your heart that the LORD your God was **disciplining** you just as a man **disciplines** his son. Therefore, you shall keep the commandments of the LORD your God, to walk in His ways and to fear Him.”*

Deuteronomy 8:5-6

Discipline can be compared to planting a garden. Daily, there is much work and effort that must be put into a garden in order to obtain the fruit of one's labors at harvest. John tells us that we are like branches on a vine, needing to be pruned and nurtured. In due time, those branches will produce fruit (John 15:1-11). Becoming mature disciples takes time (Hebrews 6:1), much effort, and discipline. You are not alone as the Holy Spirit guides you through the valleys and hilltops coming your way. At first, we are like babies, then little children, then youth, and finally adults. This maturing comes by feeding on the Word of God daily (1 Peter 2:2). To reach the goal of becoming more like Christ, we need to grow and develop (Eph 4:16).

The Word of God gives us a standard by which to live. We need to be willing to take off the old self and become clothed with the newness of Christ (Col 3:1-17 and Eph 4:17-32). This requires discipline, but through prayer **you can overcome**, and **change will take place** (1 John 4:4).

There is a measuring stick that we can use to tell whether or not we are growing. First, do we see fruit from our lives? Second, what kind of fruit is it? Jesus says we will be known by our fruit (Matt 7:20). Paul also says that the way we can know whether we have the fruit of the Spirit is by watching how we relate to others. Are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control evident in the things we say and do (Gal 5:22-23)?

Discipline also helps us to recognize the difference between the things of the world and the things of God (John 15:8). Discipline helps us to differentiate between truth and falsehood, life and death (2 Pet 3:18-19).

Finally, discipline is part of the character of God. He tells us that He disciplines those whom He loves (Deut 8:5). Paul also knew the importance of discipline because it prepares one's body for the journey ahead. It also provides an understanding of the rules of the race so that one does not become disqualified (1 Cor 9:27).

Principle Ten: A DISCIPLE NEEDS TO BE AN EVANGELIST

*“He who goes to and fro weeping, carrying his bag of **seed**, shall indeed come again with a shout of joy, bringing his sheaves with him.*

Psalm 126:6

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We are to be like farmers who have been given precious seed (Psalms 126:6). Until it has been planted, seed does not produce a harvest. Having received, we now need to give. We must be willing to spread the seed of the Word. Paul warns us that we need to be wise seed planters; there is both good seed and bad seed and, whatever we sow, we will reap (Gal 6:7-9).

God is a giving God. From His heart of love, he bestows much to us and desires that we freely give to others (Matthew 10:8). God wants vessels that He can use to touch people with His love and mercy. Within us He has placed a treasure – a treasure that needs to be shared with others (1 Cor 4:7).

Paul tells Timothy to do the work of an evangelist (2 Tim 4:5), taking the Good News of Jesus Christ and broadcasting it to others. This does not mean that we are all evangelists, preachers or teachers. But it does indicate that we need to tell people about our faith in Christ. All of us have different abilities and gifts. Whatever we have been given, pouring it back out to others is the key (1 Cor 3:6).

As an example, we can be likened to water in a well. As the water is used, it remains fresh and alive. When it lies unused, it becomes stagnant and eventually dries up. Christ wants us to have the living water in our hearts flowing out to others (John 4:10, 14). Jesus states that if we give even a cup of cold water in His name, we will receive a blessing (Matt 10:43, Mark 9:41).

In His last few hours on earth, Jesus gave the disciples what we call the “great commission”. This is a command to go and make more disciples (Matt 28:19-20, Mark 16:15-18). The Good News must be proclaimed throughout all the earth. As disciples of Christ, we have been entrusted with this responsibility to be disciples/evangelists.

Principle Eleven: A DISCIPLE NEEDS TO PUT THE WHOLE ARMOUR OF GOD

*“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on **the whole armour of God**, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.”*

Ephesians 6:10-11

There is one other area in which we need to be committed when it comes to the teaching of discipleship. We often forget that we are in a spiritual battle – a battle, not only for our own lives, but for those lives round about us. We need to be always equipped and ready. Paul told the Ephesian church that they needed to put on the full armor of God, both for protection and for fighting against the enemies of God in the spiritual realm (Eph 6:11).

We have a very real enemy who desires to destroy us, both as individuals and as a church. He wants to bring division amongst us as disciples, as nations, and as people groups. Satan and his demons are there to afflict and injure wherever possible. Therefore Christ, through Paul and by the power of the Holy Spirit, tells us that, if we are going to stand against our enemy, we must put on the full armor of God (Eph 6:10-20).

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There are six key pieces to this armor of God. They are laid out below in chart form, describing the piece, the purpose, and how it protects us.

Belt	With truth	Protects your reproductive area
Breastplate	Of righteousness	Protects your heart and vital organs
Shoes	Preparation of the gospel of peace	Protects your feet
Helmet	Of salvation	Protects your thoughts
Shield	Of faith	Protects you from the fiery darts of the enemy
Sword	Word of God	Protects you and empowers you for battle.

Again, each day the disciple must keep in mind that he or she is in a real battle, a battle that affects our thinking and our attitude. It affects how we feel in our hearts and it can even affect our physical bodies. The full armor of God must be donned every day if we hope to overcome the enemy of our souls. The enemy is always looking for the weakest point in our individual lives and in the Body of Christ. When he finds that point, that is where he will attack, trying to divide and destroy wherever he can.

Principle Twelve: A DISCIPLE IS A COMMISSIONED SERVANT LEADER

*"Not that we are **adequate** in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our **adequacy** is from God, who also made us **adequate as servants** of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the **Spirit gives life**".*

2 Corinthians 3:5-6

One cannot be a servant leader for Christ Jesus without accepting the call to go out and make disciples. Leadership is a position of influence. A servant leader not only influences others to accept Christ as their personal Savior, but also influences them to be followers of Christ in all that they say and do. The great commission challenges us to be disciple makers (Matt 28:19-20), but doing so requires us to be servant leaders. We humble ourselves before Christ (James 4:10) and then allow His Holy Spirit to flow through us to touch and challenge others to make a choice – an eternal choice.

As the above verse states, our adequacy as servant leaders does not come from ourselves, but comes through God Who empowers us for service by His Holy Spirit. We need to lay down our lives at the cross (Matt 10:38-39) and die to self (John 12:24) and then let Christ, through the Holy Spirit, make us into a new creation (2 Cor 5:17). We need to be servant leaders who stand strong in faith, doing things through His ability, not ours (1 Pet 4:11). We need to believe that He is able to do all things through us (2 Tim 1:12).

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As believers in Christ, we need to rise up and take on the role of servant leadership under the Headship of Jesus Christ. We need to work together with His church and the gifting of others to help equip people in the church (2 Tim 3:17) and to bring in the ripened harvest (Matt 9:25-38) for God's glory. Sometimes we wait to hear a call from God, not realizing that God has already commanded us to go out to serve and lead others into a deeper fellowship and walk with Christ Jesus (John 12:26; 1 Pet 2:21). We do not have to keep asking – we just need to “get doing”.

Conclusion

It is important that we understand that God has commanded and commissioned us, not only to become disciples, but to go out and make disciples (Matt 28:19-20). He has given us His Word, His commitment and power, so that we are able to go out in His strength (not ours), in His ability (not ours). We are on a journey that needs to clearly tell others that we are Christians (Acts 11:26). Don't worry if you don't understand all there is to know! Making mistakes and falling are all “par for the course”. Get up, keep moving, and grow in Christ. As you do, you will begin to see the evidence of fruit. Above all else, the key to our discipleship walk is keeping **Christ LORD** of our lives in all that we say and do (Eph 6:17; 2 Thes 3:3).

Christ desires to shepherd you as one of His sheep. He knows how to care for and love you through every circumstance. He will guide you every step of the way. Call out to His name and He will answer you (John 10:11, 14). Remember that Christ has set a race before you. It is up to you whether or not to run. There will be many temptations and obstacles in your way. You must keep focused and stay close to the heart of God. As you do, you will complete the race and a great reward will be awaiting you (Heb 12:1-2, 1 Cor 9:24-26, 1 Tim 2:5).

Our prayer is that, as you follow these discipleship principles, you will have a very productive and fruitful life with Jesus Christ.

Discipleship Application

Being a disciple of Christ is not an easy pathway to walk. The purpose of discipleship is to prepare for, and be ready to go to heaven, and to be a member of the heavenly kingdom prepared for us by Jesus Christ. Even when Jesus walked here on earth, many of the disciples found it hard to understand His parables and teachings; the 12 disciples themselves often asked questions of Jesus concerning what He meant (Matt 13:10). It wasn't until later that the disciples began to understand and, then, only after Christ had briefed them and baptized them with the power of the Holy Spirit. It's sad to say that, in Christ's time on earth, there were people who called themselves disciples but, after they heard the strong teachings of Jesus, decided no longer to follow him (John 6:66). Even today, there are many people who, although starting off well and even beginning the race with good intentions for Jesus Christ, in their hearts losing their first love as time went by (Rev 2:4), becoming weary and no longer following. The disciple must pace himself and not get entangled with the things of this world. He or she must ensure that they stay close to the heart of God and to His will for their lives (Heb 12:1-2).

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Disciples

"Be Forward Focused"

Keep looking and walking forward with God.

Keep focusing on God and His Kingdom.

Keep to the call and giftings you been given from God.

Commitment and Prayer

Dear Lord Jesus,

Thank You for calling me to be Your disciple. I desire to follow You, wherever You lead me. I pray that You will open my heart up to hear Your still small voice. Lord, I need to see and hear both from Your Word and from the Holy Spirit. Jesus, I also ask that You help me to walk in Your power and strength and that my will would submit to Your will. I pray that I will be able to walk this journey You have for me, with much wisdom, power and understanding. I desire to serve You and Your body of believers in the years to come. Help me, Lord, to truly be Your disciple, so that when others look at me, they will see that I am a Christian and a follower of Jesus Christ, one who walks in Your ways and in Your truth.

Thank You for all your help and love.

Your servant in Christ,

Foundational Scriptures of this Doctrine

Matt 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24: 44-49; John 20:21; Acts 1:6-8

Related Scriptures:

Isa 8:16; Matt 10:1, 24; 8:23; (Luke 9:1); 11:2 (Luke 7:19); 14:19 (Mark 6:41; Luke 9:16; John 6:11); 28:7 (Mark 16:7); Mark 9:31; Luke 6:13; 11:1; 14:26; 14:33; John 1:37; 13:5, 35; 15:8; Acts 6:1; 9:25; 13:52; 20:7; 21:4

Chapter Nine

Teachings on the Church

*Those who believed what Peter said were **baptized** and added to the **church** that day—about 3,000 in all. All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' **teaching**, and to **fellowship**, and to sharing in meals (including the **Lord's Supper**), and to **prayer**. A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders. And all the believers met **together** in one place and **shared** everything they had. They sold their property and possessions and **shared** the money with those in need. They **worshiped** together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the **Lord's Supper**, and **shared** their meals with great joy and generosity all the while **praising** God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their **fellowship** those who were being saved.*

Acts 2:41-47 (NLT)

*So the **church** throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace, being built up; and going on in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the **Holy Spirit**, it continued to increase.*

Acts 9:31

Introduction:

The first day we became disciples of Christ was also the first day we became part of His body, the Church. The two go hand-in-hand. He is the Head and we are His Body (1 Cor 12:27). We become connected as brothers and sisters in the Lord. We are a family, having the one common goal of proclaiming and glorifying our Lord Jesus Christ in all that we say and do. We are His children (1 John 3:2) and, through the ministry of the church which was birthed by the Holy Spirit, He cares for us and meets the needs that we face each day. His church is our place of sanctuary and peace. It is a place where we can be built up and encouraged. It is the place which God has created for us, in which we grow and mature in order to produce fruit that will last (Rom 7:4). It is a place where we should be able to experience a little bit of God's heaven here on earth. This is what we have been called to be - a part of Christ's body, His church.

Definitions:

1. **church**: called out ones; belonging to the Lord; the Body of Christ. Synonyms: assembly, gathering.
2. **body**: the main part of something; the trunk or main mass of an organism. Synonyms: figure, form, shape, association, collection, company, corporation.
3. **head**: scull, top, start, leader, the thinking part of the physical body. Synonyms: chief, director, leader, president.

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Christ “breathed forth” the church as His Body so that it would minister to its members and also reach out, giving hope and encouragement to a lost world. Christ describes the church as a **body, bride, and building**. The reason for these word pictures is to help the disciple understand how we are all **connected together** as a unit. There are individual pieces, but all the pieces have a relationship to each other. Christ is the Head of the Body. The body picture demonstrates the difference and the uniqueness of how we all come together and minister one to another. As a group of believers we have a purpose to fulfill. By this step of discipleship, we get to clearly understand Who Christ is and how that, with our gifts, we can minister and build each other up. When Christ ascended on high, the church came alive; the Father sent the Holy Spirit to anoint and empower the disciples for service (Eph 6:7; Phil 2:17).

The Bible is full of illustrations showing the disciple what God wants us to understand about the importance of Scripture. Take time to look up these biographies in the Scripture, and reflect on how God called these people to be His vessels for service. Notice how God calls everyday people to Himself, and then anoints them for service, both for body ministry and for His Kingdom.

Peter: His heart’s desire was to **ground the church in truth and doctrine**. He knew that the church could be strong only when they knew what they believed in, and what they understood about Who Christ is. Peter knew that, as individuals and as a church, we are on a journey of growing and learning. There would be a maturing process that would have to take place. In his later life, Peter wanted people to know the truth about the grace of God (1 Pet 5:12). He used word pictures such as a “spiritual house” and a “chosen generation” of Christ. He also warned the church of the coming challenges and problems, both from within and from without.

James: His words to the church related to **humility and prayer**. James knew that individual disciples as well as the church would undergo hardships and trials; he wanted his readers to remain true to Christ, serving with all their hearts and having faith that God knew all their needs. He taught the disciples and the church about being both listeners and doers. He taught about not showing favoritism, about needing to control our tongues, and watching out for worldliness ... all important truths that, if heeded, will make the church strong, providing a powerful testimony for Christ Jesus.

John: His heart demonstrated love. He encouraged the church, not only to know Christ’s love, but also to **walk in the love of Christ** each day, letting it **flow** through them. He knew that the disciple was to be an extension of Christ’s love to a lost world; the only way people would see and understand Who Christ is would be through the disciples and the church. John wanted the disciples to be complete and whole in Christ’s love because there is much joy when we live in His love. Christ was/is total love – John wanted the light of Christ’s love to shine out through every disciple. The church was to be a lighthouse of faith, hope and love.

Paul: His burden for the church was to see it established in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. He wanted the disciples to understand the meaning of being clothed with Christ’s **grace and righteousness** in all they said and did. He knew that the church would be strong only if it would

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continue walking in the power and the anointing of the Holy Spirit. He also taught that the church must work together in unity and harmony, using the gifts that God would give to the disciples. His hope was that we would understand that Christ is the Head and we are His Body. We are to be **His ambassadors to a lost world, Christ's ministers of reconciliation** (2 Cor 5:20).

All of these individuals had a big heart for the church. They clearly understood how Christ, through the Holy Spirit, would spread the Gospel throughout the world. God has chosen to limit Himself to working through the church as His channel. This is His Way, this is His Truth, and this is how He extends Life to us and to others (John 14:6).

The Bible gives us other descriptive words when it comes to portraying church:

Body: The body provides the best picture of how the disciple of Christ works and grows in Christ. The body is made up of many members and each member, large or small, has a valuable part and function to play. Strength and stability to exist and work comes through unity and harmony between the parts. If we try to live outside of this body, we will find ourselves lifeless and without power. All the parts working together is what gives life to the body. It has been said that the Church (the Body of Christ) represents Christ's hands and feet here on earth. We are His vessels which He fills and empowers so that, not only can we come together as a church, but that we can be filled with the Spirit – the foundation for the gifts of the Spirit to the various parts of the body that God provides as He sees fit.

Related Scriptures:

Rom 12:1, 5; 1 Cor 6:15; 12:12, 27; Eph 4:4; 5:23; Col 1:18

Bride of Christ: The Body is also pictured in Scriptures as the "bride of Christ". We are called into a deep relationship with Him. Christ's believers have been betrothed to Christ, one day to become His bride. There is a wonderful day coming when all the battles, sickness, and struggles will be over. We will be presented as Christ's bride to the Heavenly Father. In the book of Revelation, we are given a beautiful picture of the marriage supper of the Lamb. We are told that His bride is one that has been washed in the blood of the Lamb, without spot or wrinkle; it is a glorious church that will bring much praise to God the Father.

Related Scriptures:

2 Cor 11:2; Rev 19:7; 19:9; 21:2

Temple of Christ: Another illustration used in the Bible is that we are the temple of Christ and, **as His temple, we are to be clean and holy before him**. Christ cannot dwell where sin dwells; that is why we need to be washed by the blood of the Lamb and to put on His righteousness, so that we may enter the Holy of Holies where we have a personal fellowship with Jesus Christ. Not only are we to be individual temples in which Christ (through his Holy Spirit) dwells but, as believers, we also can come together as a body making up a large church or temple of believers where His Presence dwells with us as a group.

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Related Scriptures:

1 Cor 3:16, 17; 6:19; 2 Cor 6:16; Eph 2:21

Building of Christ: We are also likened to a structured building in which we come together. The building is being fitted together in such a way that Christ is the Chief Corner Stone. Because He is the Cornerstone, the rest of the building has to line up with Him. We become fitted together with Him, for He is the Master Builder.

Related Scriptures:

Ps 118:22; Isa 28:16; Matt 21:42; Mark 12:10; Luke 20:17; Acts 4:11; Eph 2:20; 1 Pet 2:6

Principle One: FOCUSES ON THE TRIUNE GOD

“Hear oh Israel: The LORD our **God**, the LORD is **one!**”
Deuteronomy 6:4

“For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the **Father**, the **Word**, and the **Holy Spirit**; and these three are **one.**”
1 John 5:7

God is “One” (Deut 6:4, John 10:30). We often like to divide up God’s activities into three major compartments, forgetting or not making the connection, that in all things there is only One God (1 Tim 1:5). Yes, we have the Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit, each of Whom also carries many descriptive titles, but still functions as One Supreme Being, Creator of all heaven and earth. You cannot pray to one without the other hearing. You cannot be ministered to just by one, without the others being involved. When God walked with Adam and Eve in the coolness of the day (Gen 3:8), He was “One God”. We need to remember that we are made in the image of one God (Gen 1:26). Yes, each “part” of the Godhead has a different function, but each is interconnected in unity and harmony as One. Each has all knowledge, all power, and all presence.

The church must see, communicate, study and worship God as One. Often we do divide up the Godhead in three parts because it makes it easier for us to understand Whom we serve and worship. And, yes, they do function in clearly different types of ministry to us. This helps us in our meditation, and assists us to connect more personally with God as our Father, Redeemer, Deliverer, Empowerer, Teacher and Comforter.

The Father: He is pictured by Jesus for us as the Vinedresser in John 15; He cares for the vine. He prunes branches so that they can bear more fruit. He grafts branches into the vine, the Vine being Jesus Christ. He also removes branches that do not bear fruit, gathering them into a pile and burning them. Even in this picture, we have the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit all working together to produce fruit (John 15:1-15).

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He is also pictured as the elderly One, full of wisdom, grace and mercy; He has children and cares for and disciplines them because He loves them. He can also be thought of as the father in the parable about the prodigal son who leaves, but one day returns into the loving arms of his father. This Father keeps looking for the return of His children and, when they do come back, He restores them as a beloved sons (Luke 15:11-32).

Related Scriptures:

Prov 4:1; Isa 63:16; 64:8; Matt 5:16; 6:8, 9 (Luke 11:2); John 10:30; 4:23; 14:10; 15:16; 1 Cor 8:6; Eph 4:6; 2 John 1:9

(See Chapter 2 for more in depth information.)

The Christ is pictured as the Redeemer (Gal 3:13), the Lamb Who shed His blood for the remission of our sins (Mark 1:4, Acts 2:38). He is the Deliverer Who came to set the captives free. He is also the Head of the Church. Paul taught this to the Ephesians, where He states, “*And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be **head** over all things to the **church**, which is His **body**, the fullness of Him who fills all in all*” (Eph 1:22-23).

It is sometimes hard to understand how Christ can be the head of the church when there are so many groups and denominations around the world. Christ is not the head of a religion, and the Church is not a bunch of buildings. Rather it's a coming together of believers in Jesus Christ – people who have taken Christ into their hearts as their personal Lord and Savior (Rom 10:9-10; 1 Cor: 12-27). Such people have become part of Christ's universal church where He is the Head and we are His Body. The head is the leader, the top, the starting point, the chief, and the thinking part of both the physical and spiritual body. **The disciples represent Jesus Christ here on earth and, as His Body, He empowers them with His Holy Spirit so that they may be able to serve Him and glorify His name.** By the power of the Holy Spirit He, as the Head of the Body, is able to give direction every moment of every day to every part of the Body.

Related Scriptures:

1 Cor 8:6; 11:3; Eph 1:22; 4:15; 5:23; Col 1:18; 2:10; 1 John 4:14; 2 John 1:9

(See Chapter 3 for more in depth information.)

The Holy Spirit is pictured as our teacher, comforter, and empowerer (Luke 12:12; John 14:26; Acts 1:8). He has been sent by the Father to dwell within us. This is only possible because Christ was willing to die on the cross for our sins. Through His righteousness, Christ made it possible that the Holy God is able to come into our lives. We are not temples made by earthly hands where animal blood is shed; we are temples created by the anointing power of the Holy Spirit – through the once and for all sacrifice of Jesus Christ (1 Cor 6:19).

Jesus prophesied that, after He returned to heaven, and as the disciples waited in Jerusalem, the prophetic word of Joel was going to be fulfilled (Joel 2:28). The Holy Spirit would be sent directly from God on High to empower them. The power, authority, and presence of God was

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going to be placed inside them, and us. The fire and anointing would empower the disciples for service. The Holy Spirit fills us with fruit (Gal 5:22-23) and give us gifts for the purpose of serving both those within the church and outside of the church – to a lost world (1 Cor: 1-11, 14:1-25), a world that would need to hear the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Related Scriptures:

Acts 1:5; 2:4 (4:31); 2:33, 38; 11:16; Rom 15:13; 1 Cor 6:19; Eph 2:18; 5:18; 1 Thes 4:8;
2 Tim 1:14

(See Chapter 4 for more in depth information.)

Concerning the universal church, we struggle to see how it can possibly work and how it can be connected. But we need to see the bigger picture. God cannot be put in a box; He is all in all, fulfilling His divine will, purpose, and goal here on earth. He has chosen to do so through His children. His greatest desire for us, as His children, is to make us joint heirs to Him and His kingdom (Rom 8:17).

Principle Two: FOCUSES ON REPENTANCE LEADING TO SALVATION

The disciple of Christ is to be an ambassador of reconciliation to a lost world (2 Cor 5:19-21), bringing a message of hope and grace. It is key for the church to bring people to a place of a personal relationship with God (Acts 2:14-39). This relationship results from repentance and confessing our sins (Rom 10:9-10). Christ brought the gift of salvation to earth so that man, through faith, could be redeemed (Rom 3:24; 1 Cor 1:30; Gal 3:13; Heb 9:12).

The church's purpose is to be a channel of redemption for a lost world AND a place where the disciple can grow through sanctification (Acts 2:40-47), working together with one another as a body of believers and ministering to each other with the gifts God has given (1 Cor 12:1-31). We are on a growth journey leading to fruit production that will last for God's glory (John 15:8).

Man and woman fell from grace and the presence of God because of disobedience, which is sin (Gen 3:1-24). Therefore, we need to realize that, from the moment of birth, man enters the world of trespasses and sin (Eph 2:1). This is what Jesus explained to the Pharisee named Nicodemus (John 3:1-21). We are sinners who need forgiveness (Acts 3:38, 26:18; Eph 1:7; Col 2:13; 1 John 1:9). Isaiah 64:6 tells us that man's righteousness is as dirty rags. A life free of sin and a personal relationship with God was no longer possible (Rom 5:12-13). We needed to be washed by the blood of the Lamb (1 Cor 6:11). Christ died on the cross so that, once again, we could enter into the very presence of God (Luke 23:45).

The church needs to go out and call people to repentance (Matt 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-18). We need to testify, telling people that God is a God of mercy (Ps 103:8; Eph 2:4) and that, because of His love, He sent His Son to pay the price required for our sins (John 3:16). Jesus came to take away the sins of the world (John 1:20).

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The church should never forget its prime directive, that of bringing hope, mercy, grace, and the love of God to a lost, eternally dead world (Acts 16:17). God's goal for sending His Son to live and die here on earth was to make a way of escape for the sinner (1 Cor 10:13). With one united voice, churches need to trumpet the fact that the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ (Rom 6:23).

We also need to warn people that this same Jesus Christ, Who became our sacrificial Lamb, will come back again as King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev 19:16), bringing judgment to the earth. All will be judged. Those people (including family and neighbors) whose names are not found in the Book of Life (Rev 20:11-15) will be condemned to an eternal death (Matt 25:41-45; 2 Thes 1:7-9). Jesus has the keys of Hades and death (Rev 1:18). However, disciples and the church have been commissioned to go and tell **all**. **All** followers of Christ, individually and the corporate church, must go to **all** places, bringing all of God to **all** the people.

Principle Three: FOCUSES ON BAPTISM

*"Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be **baptized** in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."*

Acts 2:38

Introduction

The Bible tells us that if we are found trustworthy with little things, God will give us greater things to handle. More responsibility is given to us as we mature. One of the growing steps to maturity is baptism. Christians who have not been baptized really don't have a vibrant, growing, spiritual life. They have not been obedient to the small areas in their Christian walk. Again, it is important to remember that baptism is not an indication that people "have arrived" and are now mature in the things of God. Baptism is just a testimony of a commitment made to Jesus Christ to die to self and then live for Him.

After believing and repenting, the next step is to publicly identify with Christ, committing to follow Him. Baptism is the beginner's step in the Christian walk of obedience and maturity. If you are not faithful in little things, you cannot be trusted with greater things. Many times the little things (or steps) can be the hardest to take, but they must be taken.

Understanding the meaning of words is the heart to understanding Scripture. Words form the bridge helping us understand more about ourselves and about God and His Word, the Bible. Following are the keywords vital to this subject of baptism.

Definition

Baptism: Greek word – "Baptismos", to dip in water completely, idea of "bath" or "wash", to be totally covered over. Synonyms: initiation, introduction, inauguration, launch, beginning, rite of passage.

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Emersion: the process or state of emerging from or being out of water after being submerged, to plunge. Synonyms: bathe, douse, soak, marinate, drench, submerge, flood.

The word baptism in the above verse is a translation of the Greek word which means “immerse” or “put under”. The act of baptism symbolizes or indicates the acceptance of the Teacher and His message, as well as a decision to fellowship with other disciples. Baptism can also mean “disciple-identification” and “fellowship”. Baptism also gives testimony to others of our commitment to Christ, that we have died to self and now live for Him. Peter tells people to (first) repent and then be baptized because, through Christ, they have the remission of sins. Also, baptism opens the door to receiving the Holy Spirit - the One Who will teach, guide, and comfort us - into one’s life.

BIBLICAL EXAMPLE

The Bible has many examples, showing how God speaks to His people concerning the importance of water baptism. Take time to look up, and then reflect, on how God can speak to us through these people. Just as He used them, He desires to use us as His vessels for service.

The Ethiopian Eunuch: On a journey back from a pilgrimage to Jerusalem (while riding in his chariot), the eunuch was reading the scroll of Isaiah. God brought Philip to speak to him about Christ. The eunuch asked Philip to explain to him what he was reading. He then believed and repented and desired to be baptized. They stopped at some water and there he was baptized. Afterward, he continued on his journey rejoicing in the Lord (Acts 8:26-39).

Paul: Saul (Paul) was a Pharisee who went out from Jerusalem, persecuting the church, imprisoning all the believers he could find. But one day he encountered Christ Jesus on the road to Damascus. He fell to the ground. God blinded Him and spoke to him about what he was doing against Christ and His followers. At the same time, God was preparing another person, named Ananias, to speak to Saul. Saul repented, received the Holy Spirit, was healed of his blindness and immediately got baptized (Acts 9:1-19).

Cornelius the Centurion: He was an army commander, a Gentile devoted to God, but he did not know about Jesus Christ. He was committed to praying and giving to the needy. God sent Peter to go and speak to him and to tell him about Christ. While Peter was testifying, the Holy Spirit came upon all of those who were listening. That day those new believers went out and were all baptized (Acts 10:47-48).

Lydia, Seller of Purple: While on his travels, Paul stopped in at Philippi and met a group of ladies down by the river. One lady was Lydia (a seller of purple cloth) from Thyatira. They opened their hearts and responded to Paul’s message. Lydia and her household immediately wanted to be baptized. They persuaded Paul to stay longer to teach and be with them (Acts 16:15).

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Jailer: This man was put in charge of guarding Paul and Silas as a result of their setting a slave girl free from an evil spirit. While in jail, a violent earthquake took place. All the doors opened, and prisoner's chains fell off. The jailor was in a panic and called out to Paul and Silas, "What must I do to be saved?" The jailor then took them to his house. After hearing the Word of God, he and his family repented and were baptized (Acts 16:33).

These were people with normal lives. God revealed Himself in a variety of ways, calling ordinary people to do extraordinary things for His glory. The beginning step in allowing the power of God to flow through their lives was baptism. That step touched and encouraged others at that time, encourages us now, and will do so for generations to come.

Baptism demonstrates going down into the waters of death and coming up in the newness of life in Christ Jesus. Baptism portrays a picture of the change that has taken place. Our lives now reflect that we are Christ's disciples. We have died to self, are now broken, about to grow in the newness of Christ.

Concerning the teaching on baptism, we will look at six areas which can help the disciple to see the bigger picture. The individual disciple as well as the church are commanded to practice these areas.

1. MODEL AND TEACHER

In Matthew 3:13-17 we have the account of the baptism of our Lord Jesus. Matthew explains that, one day, Christ came to John the Baptist, seeking to be baptized by him. John felt he was not worthy of such an honor. However, after Jesus explains why He should be baptized, John does baptize Him. When Jesus was baptized, the Father spoke from heaven about Jesus being His beloved Son and, at the same time, the Holy Spirit came upon Christ in the form of a dove.

Baptism by immersion is a necessary step for all believers. Jesus modeled it for the disciples and taught its importance for all believers. It was part of the plan of God in the Old Testament. God purposed to use baptism to symbolize the work that Christ would do in our lives when we confess our sin and submit to His Lordship. No longer would it be our will, but His will for our lives.

God's plan was first to send John as a forerunner for Christ. John would be the last of the Old Testament prophets who would speak about Jesus' coming. He stated that, while he baptized people with water, Christ would baptize people with the Holy Spirit and fire (Matt 3:11). While John's ministry occurred in the wilderness and his dress and food were simple, his message was of the weighty matters of repentance and baptism (Matt 3:1-11; Luke 3:4-6). John stood for truth and righteousness and, because of that, it cost him his life. John struggled with Jesus' request to be baptized, but remained faithful to God's call (Matt 3:14).

Following Jesus' baptism, we are told that He was driven out into the wilderness where He was tempted by the enemy three times (Matt 4:1-11). Victory can sometimes be followed by great

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challenges; valleys can follow the mountaintops. The valleys we experience can demonstrate our faithfulness and commitment to Him.

All that Jesus did became a picture and model that we, as disciples, are to follow (John 12:26; 12:21). We learn from His life, so that we can call others to discipleship through the waters of baptism. All those who desire to give their lives to Christ should be taught about baptism (Acts 2:38).

RELEVANCE

Just as Christ became a personal example for us, we also need to be a testimony and example to others. Discipleship identification is at the root of baptism. Baptism demonstrates that we have surrendered all to Jesus. It indicates we have died to self and are alive in Christ through His resurrection power. John taught it. Jesus modeled it. Now we are to go out and proclaim it to a lost world (Matt 28:19-20). All of us need to be obedient in this step if we are to remain true and faithful to everything Christ calls us to do.

RELATED SCRIPTURES:

Mark 1: 9-13; Luke 3: 21-22

2. DEATH AND LIFE

Baptism is a picture of death and life. In a spiritual sense, it also demonstrates the need to be buried and raised from the dead. It is a witness to others that we have been freed from the chains of sin and death and are now free to serve and to be empowered witnesses for Christ. We are born into trespasses and sin. We can only be freed from the curse of sin by the blood of Jesus Christ and through the redemptive work that He did on the cross for us.

*Paul says in Romans 6:1-7, "What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace might increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it? 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". The disciple through Christ has been released from death into life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin.*

We are like seeds placed in the ground; in order to produce fruit we need to be broken open (John 12:24). Many times, the word death is used when referring to the planting of seeds in the ground, but a picture of seeds breaking open may be a more accurate illustration. Jesus stated that, either we fall upon Him and be broken, or He will fall upon us and we will be crushed (Matt 21:44). The "Potter" takes the broken pieces and makes them into a vessel that will glorify the

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Father in heaven. There is a war between our minds (attitudes) and our hearts (servitude to Christ). But we need to have faith and trust, believing that Christ knows what is best for us.

The “waters of baptism” symbolize death. As you go under the water, you “die”. At the moment of death, Christ’s resurrection power floods into our lives, raising us up into newness of life. Baptism may seem humiliating but it shows where our hearts are. It demonstrates whose “will” is in charge, and whether the grip of the world has truly died in us. We will move from being self-serving to desiring to serve Christ with all our hearts.

RELEVANCE

We are to change from an old life to a new life in Christ. Through Christ we now become new creations (2 Cor 5:17). The old has died and Christ now makes our hearts and minds new. We now become focused on Jesus and His kingdom. We also begin to love the lost and hurting. We become a people of prayer, desiring to read God’s Word and follow after its principles and teachings. Also, we become filled with the Holy Spirit Who gives us the power to die to self and to live for Christ as His servants.

RELATED SCRIPTURES:

Matt 10:38-39; Luke 20:18; John 3:15-16; 5:24; 14:6; Col 2:12, 20

3. IDENTIFICATION AND TESTIMONY

Baptism provides two kinds of testimony. It helps the disciple understand that while baptism is not conversion, but rather identification with Christ in His death and resurrection. It is a testimony to others, showing that we are committed to following Jesus Christ as our Lord. One testimony is the action itself; the other testimony is seen by how we speak, giving thanks and praise to the Lord for what He has done.

Philip was one of the seven appointed by the disciples to serve the widows, the poor, and the needy. Philip was in Samaria, testifying about the Gospel of Christ. Things were happening – we read that men and women were being baptized. Philip saw fruit from the ministry he was doing. In fact, the word got back to Jerusalem. Peter and John decided to go and investigate what was happening. They were excited to see and hear that many people had been baptized with water, and to hear how these new believers were also baptized in the power of the Holy Spirit. They laid hands on them and they were all filled (Acts 9:17).

Next, we have the amazing account of God guiding Philip to meet a man who was on his way home from Jerusalem. This event would most likely change history in the country of Ethiopia. The key factor was that the eunuch who was traveling needed to understand the Scripture, know its Author, repent, and then follow through in the waters of baptism. How wonderful that he did so! God will always reach towards hearts who are seeking after Him. He desires to speak at the right time and at the right place (Acts 8:26-40).

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Philip also had to know God's heart, and what God wanted him to do. Remember that Philip was an appointed deacon, a man the church had appointed to serve the poor and needy. In our service, we need to be in step with God's will and go wherever He leads (Acts 6:1-7).

RELEVANCE

A baptism testimony should relate something of where you have come from. Make sure it glorifies Christ, not the enemy. It should inform observers what is happening in your life and the reason for which you are being baptized. You should back it up with a favorite verse that has challenged you. Also, it is good to share your commitment and hope in Christ. It should lay down footprints for others to follow. Baptism provides a living example of what Christ has, and is, doing in your heart, showing that you are now empowered with the very presence of Christ. It is important to be led daily to do what the Holy Spirit is asking of you.

RELATED SCRIPTURES:

Acts 8:12-17, 25; 1 John 5:6-12

4. GROWTH AND FELLOWSHIP

In a young believer's walk with Christ, baptism is a step that should be considered as soon as possible. Baptism is a step that shows the intention of the heart. It symbolizes and identifies with Christ's earthly death and burial. Baptism is just a beginner's step in the Christian walk towards maturity and obedience. In all of Paul's letters, he points out the need for constant growth in Christ. Every letter that was written was to baptized believers who needed to grow and become more obedient to Jesus Christ.

We see throughout Scripture that baptism was a second step. First, the person confessed his sin and asked Jesus to come into his life as Lord and Savior, and then he was baptized. It is interesting how many commentators make the statement that, in Biblical times, there was no such thing as an unbaptized Christian. Paul takes it for granted that they are all baptized. Commentators go on to say how sad it is that, in our current times, people are unwilling to be baptized.

Baptism is only part of a growing process that begins at conversion, a growing process that does not stop until we are with Christ in glory. Fellowship with other disciples is another way God uses to help us grow and mature; the "body" is made up of people who have been gifted by God to minister to others in various ways. These gifts nurture and mature us so that we can produce fruit.

There many reasons that can keep us from taking the step of baptism – some are things like pride, fear, and religion. **Pride** – baptism looks like it could be humiliating. **Fear** – wondering what others may think. **Religion** – man makes all kinds of standards and rules by which to judge themselves, determining whether or not he or she should be baptized.

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Christ desires that we grow and produce fruit. The picture of fruit is used so that people will know the kind of “tree” you are. This is why Jesus tells the disciples that “by their fruit you will know them” (Matt 7:16). Baptism is one step in the growing process. Just like farming, we need nurturing (pruning, weeding, feeding). Also, we need to be looked after and cared for (fellowship).

RELEVANCE

Baptism is a step in one’s discipleship growth that begins with Christ. We are called to be baptized, thus uniting us with the Body of Christ. Baptism provides relationship with other baptized believers who can help us grow so that we can bear more fruit for Christ’s kingdom. The enemy will try to lie to you, telling you why you should not be baptized. Christ does not ask you to be perfect. He asks you to start your journey with Him – first, through repentance, and then going through the waters of baptism as a testimony for His glory.

RELATED SCRIPTURES:

Mark 4:26-29; Acts 2:40-47; 12:24; 1 Cor 1:9; Eph 4:15; Col 2: 6; Phil 3:10-11; 1 John 1:3-7

5. INSTRUCTED AND COMMANDED

Baptism by immersion is not an option, but is commanded by Christ and practiced by the apostles as a key part of the disciple’s walk with Christ. We see baptism as a command that Jesus left for us, as found in Matthew 28:19: “Go therefore, make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.”

The Bible is very clear about instructing the new believer in the importance of baptism. We are commanded to be baptized. It is not an option but is a real part of identification as a disciple. If we deny Christ before men, He will deny us before the Father. Leaders need to be teaching clearly that baptism is a command of God. This step should not be taken lightly but should be prayerfully committed and faithfully done in obedience to Christ’s command. We hinder the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives if we are not being obedient and submitting ourselves to God’s will.

What follows are two questions that may help us in our decision making.

Why should I be baptized?

1. Jesus was (Matt 3:13-17).
2. Jesus preached it (Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:16).
3. The apostles preached it (Acts 2:38).
4. The apostles practiced it (Acts 8:36-38; Acts 16:33; Acts 19:5).
5. Because I want to be an obedient follower of Jesus and His Word.

When should I be baptized?

1. Upon real conversion

Conversion consists of:

- a. Repentance – Acts 2:38
- b. Believing – Mark 16:16
- c. Confession – Rom 10:9 & 10

Once a person has become a Christian according to the above, there is no real benefit to be gained by waiting. We note that many people in Bible times were baptized immediately upon their confession (Acts 16:33; Acts 2: 41).

RELEVANCE

If we do not clearly understand what the Word is saying, we need to study and ask wise counsel to teach us about baptism until it makes sense to us. Teaching and instruction help to make things clear, bringing peace to our hearts and setting us free to go forward and to serve Christ with all our hearts. Do not be afraid of the Biblical command. It is beneficial in bringing us into a greater personal relationship with Christ. As well, it sets boundaries, which in turn gives us more freedom.

RELATED SCRIPTURES:

Acts 2:41-42; Rom 6:4; Eph 4:4-6; Col 2:10-12; 1 Pet 3:17-22

6. COMMISSIONED AND PROCLAIMED

In the Gospels and Acts, one of the last things Jesus did was to commission the disciples to go out and make more followers of Christ by teaching and baptizing them. Christ's vision was that His disciples would spread the good news of the Gospel throughout the whole world. Jesus wanted to give everyone the opportunity to repent and believe in Him as Lord and Savior.

Paul told the Church of Rome, "How shall they hear unless someone goes and tells them?" (Romans 10:14). We are all called to be witnesses for the Gospel and should not be ashamed in doing so. Yes, there will be challenges and heartaches, but Christ has promised to be with us to the end of the age.

In the fulfilling of the great commission, baptism is key as it causes people to humble themselves before God. By baptism, disciples bear testimony to what they've committed in their hearts. Baptism is not an option, but an important step in every disciple's life. If we are faithful in the little things, He will entrust us with much more.

Baptism is also a good measuring stick to see if fruit is being produced for the Kingdom of God. We have been handed the Gospel torch to share with those with whom we come in daily

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contact. As disciples, we must view the Gospel of Christ as exciting news that we can't keep within ourselves – it should burst out of us!

Baptism is a great way to lead others to Christ Jesus. A personal testimony is a very powerful tool in the hands of the Holy Spirit. Remember the woman at the well – she went back to her village and told everyone of her meeting with Christ. They came, listened to Christ, and received His message. Baptism is an evangelistic tool that God uses to proclaim Good News of Jesus Christ. It is one way to show the world that God desires a personal relationship with anyone who will accept and receive Him into their hearts.

RELEVANCE

Commission and proclamation are part of the disciple's pilgrimage, starting on the day of repentance and baptism. We are called to go out to a lost world and proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. We are told to go throughout all nations of the world, teaching, making disciples, and baptizing them. It must start with your conviction that Christ has commanded us to do so, and then have the faith to proclaim this news of life and freedom to all who would receive it.

RELATED SCRIPTURES:

Ex 33:19; 1 Chr 16:23-25; Psa 96:1-3; Matt 10:27; 28:19-20; Mark 16:16-18; Acts 1:7-8; 9:20; 1 Cor 11:26; Col 1:28; 1 Pet 2:9-10; 1 John 1:1-4

Will you take the next step of testifying to Christ's death, burial and resurrection? Remember, we are not saying you need to be perfect, but you do need to be committed. Humble yourself in the sight of the Lord and He promises to lift you up. Be baptized, then also teach and encourage others to be baptized.

APPLICATION

This act of baptism is one of the few times that your body, soul, and spirit unite in a testimony and action for Christ. If you have not been baptized, NOW is the time to overcome all fear, religious thinking, and pride. Take the next step in your walk of obedience – not in your own strength and righteousness – but in HIS strength and righteousness. Make the decision and do something about it today.

(See "Baptism" booklet by Dr Humphries)

Principle Four: FOCUS ON HOLY SPIRIT GUIDANCE

The God of the Bible is a God Who creates, and uses, principles of creation that, as His people, we can discover. From His creative heart, he formulates things in a way that show both logic and wisdom. He uses patterns to interconnect with things here on earth. He provides us with steps we must follow if we hope to unlock the truth of His words.

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Before the fall of man, all created things lived in harmony and unity. All things are unique and have their place. Man and woman are God's crowning glory, made after His image – body, soul, and spirit. Humans were made able to think, rationalize, and understand things. All creation was made for man to discover and explore, but the key to unlocking this reservoir of wisdom and knowledge comes through a personal walk with God Himself each day (Gen 2:1-25; 3:8).

In Scripture we see many patterns or steps of logic used by God so that man can understand and discern how God works through things here on earth. Some examples are the creation story, flood story, Lord's Prayer, fruit of the Spirit, etc. Each of these has a pattern, helping man to see and understand the heart of God as well as what and how He is working things out in people's lives here on earth.

During Old Testament times many things seemed to be a mystery for the people. They couldn't comprehend what God was doing and why He was doing it, or why He was allowing certain things to happen. We have a saying in English: "Hindsight is always 20/20". Sometimes it seems that we will not understand the full picture of God's intent until later. He does have a perfect plan that, in the end, will cause all to worship Him as God of all creation.

As we move into the New Testament, the Scriptures tell us things that were once a mystery, but are now becoming clear to those who seek God's face. In the New Testament, God's plan for the world becomes evident. His steps and His timing are perfect. With the coming of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-40), He became our teacher and counselor, revealing deeper truths from His Word about God and about Jesus. He takes that which was a mystery, bringing it to light, so that all who choose can see and hear. When an artist begins to paint a picture, he starts with broad brush strokes and, over time, moves to add in pieces to his picture. Then, later, as he stands back and reflects, he begins to add in the smaller details which, when finished, give understanding, boldness, and life to what he or she was endeavoring to communicate to the viewer.

Today's challenge is that people want things almost instantaneously. They want the "fast food" way of life and do not want to wait. The problem with this type of lifestyle and thinking is that it does not work very well in reference to God and His teaching. God wants people to meditate, to wait, to tarry before Him. Often, He gives to us pieces of the big picture, but we don't necessarily see or clearly understand what He is presenting or showing us until the last piece is carefully put into place. That's when the 'puzzle' moves from being a bunch of pieces to a full picture that can be clearly seen and understood.

God is a God of miracles, but He also does everything for a reason or purpose, involving order and logic. We may not see it at the time, but at the right time He shows his magnificence and glory. He is omnipresent, omnipotent, and truly omniscient (Rev 19:6).

Throughout history God has been unveiling His redemptive picture of grace, a process that has been given to us in steps and is now revealed to men and women by the Holy Spirit. Sometimes truths are revealed by God, but then people stray from His truth. Other times God

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reveals a foundational truth so that those who seek Him can build on that foundation. Historically, we have seen the great awakenings, movements of revival preaching, movements of evangelism, the Pentecostal movement, the Jesus people movement, the charismatic movement, the signs and wonders movement, the house church movement and the worship and praise movement that we are familiar with today.

I believe this is true in reference to the workings of the Holy Spirit in the church and in the personal lives of disciples today. Over the last 100 years there has been a great emphasis and teaching in the church concerning the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit. Many have claimed they've exhausted all truth concerning the Holy Spirit, but the truth is that God has not yet finished the picture. The Artist is still creating and filling in the final details of the picture so that His master plan can be revealed.

Different churches and various denominations have brought, to the overall picture, key building materials concerning the Holy Spirit. Over time these various pieces were sometimes walls of division between various groups of disciples of Christ. These pieces have now made the church more balanced and stronger. A true servant's discipleship heart is beginning to be formed within the Body of Christ.

The Bible tells us that we need to walk in the Spirit of truth (Gal 5:16, 25). Doing so leads to a place of coming together with the words of God. The Word is placed in our hearts so that, through the Spirit, we can be led by Him and live out the Word and His will for our lives. We are to be examples of the living Word to a lost world, being empowered by the Holy Spirit. Maybe it is time to start a new movement called "Bapticoctal", a joining together of the Baptist and Pentecostal, a bringing together of personal faith grounded in the Word of God and linked with the emotions and feelings of the heart of God. I'm reminded of what Jesus told the woman at the well. He said, "God is Spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:24).

When Jesus died, something happened that few people either know about or few churches talk about. The Bible tells us that at the moment of Christ's death, the temple veil was torn in two from the top to the bottom. Why? Because a change had come (27:51). God was opening a new way. No longer was the high priest going to enter the Holy of Holies just once a year but, because of Christ's blood sprinkled on the mercy seat on our behalf once and for all, we could now personally enter into the Holy of Holies – this through faith, covered in His blood of righteousness, being delivered from death. We could now have a deep and personal eternal relationship with Almighty God (Luke 23:45).

The disciple's journey is a step-by-step process of dying, growing, maturing, and producing eternal fruit in Christ Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit. We need to take that which we have learned (truth, Word of God) and experienced (emotions and feelings), but realize that there is still more to the picture. We need to help others to take the steps towards a deeper prayer life, a deeper heart relationship with God, seeing what the Lord desires us to see, hear, know, and understand. God wants to bring all into the next step of the filling and fullness of the Holy Spirit.

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God is calling many to a deeper walk in Him, so that in the last days we will be able to fulfill all of the great commission of Jesus Christ, experiencing and living out all that these Scripture verses are commanding and telling us that we should be doing.

*And **Jesus** came and **spoke to them**, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 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, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen." Matthew 28:18-20*

*And **He said to them**, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover." Mark 16:15-18*

*Then **He said to them**, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and the remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things. Behold, I send the Promise of my Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high." Luke 24:46-49*

*So **Jesus said to them** again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you. And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." John 20:21-23*

*And **He said to them**, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." Acts 1:7-8*

Question: Are these verses written for the church of today? Or, as some say, were they for the apostolic age, for the time when God was establishing the Church and, once that was completed, the age of grace began? It is, however, interesting to note that when you go to other countries and observe the church – a church that has developed primarily on its own without much human guidance from the west – these verses seem to be alive and well, functioning as part of the everyday ministry of the church. These disciples don't know or aren't even aware that this is not what should be taking place.

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This brings us back to the question. Are these great commission verses, in their entirety, for the church today? And, if not, why not? If they are to be, why are we not seeing this type of ministry happening in Western church today? Many people today will have a variety of answers, or to put it bluntly, excuses. Here are just a few – they go like this:

One: we are in a scientific age in terms of our thinking.

Two: we like to have control of things happening in our lives.

Three: we are better educated today; we understand the Bible more clearly.

These are but a few reasons given. Then, why is it, when you are in what we call a third-world country where people cannot control or manipulate their surroundings, we often see this kind of ministry and service amongst the people? The problem may be that we have turned to man-made ways of thinking and have walked away, or closed our hearts to what God is saying to His church. We have stopped living as Full Gospel Disciples of Christ Jesus.

To be able to carry out the substance of these Scriptures, we need to move into a greater depth and maturity in our walk with the Holy Spirit. The gifts are not the finishing step, but are tools with which we can be equipped as ambassadors of reconciliation. They are there to help us, through the love and power of Jesus Christ, to go out and truly see the captive set free from the bondage of Satan. It is time for the church of Christ to begin fulfilling all aspects of each part of the great commission commands, in spirit and in truth. We have to allow the Holy Spirit to teach, comfort, and guide in all things. That means dying to self-will and living out God's will for our lives – not in our power and strength – but in the power and strength of the Holy Spirit. Again, we must allow the church – Christ's Body – to be empowered by the daily presence and filling of the Holy Spirit.

(see Booklet, by Dr Humphries. "Full Gospel Discipleship")

Principle Five: FOCUSES ON TEACHING

*"Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for an entire year they met with the **church** and **taught** a great many people, and it was in Antioch that the disciples were first called "Christians."*

Acts 11:25-26

As the church assembles in a specific place, it does so for the purpose of training, nurturing, and equipping of the members. The book of Acts gives us numerous accounts of how the apostles would see a church born, and then they would stay there for six months to a year or more, grounding, equipping, and establishing it as a functioning body of believers.

DEFINITIONS

1. **Teaching:** a system or thing used as an example to follow or imitate; *Synonyms:* type, version, style, mould, template, framework, pattern, design, guide, blueprint, paradigm, sample, example.

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2. **Instruction:** a direction or order; detailed information telling how something should be done, operated, or assembled. *Synonyms:* teaching, coaching, tutoring, education, schooling, tutelage, lessons, classes, lectures, training, drill, drilling, discipline, preparation, grounding, priming, direction, guidance, information, enlightenment, edification, educator, tutor, instructor.
3. **Understanding:** the ability to understand or think; intelligence, the power of apprehension; the power of abstract thought. *Synonyms:* intelligence, comprehension, conclusion, perception, to apprehend, grasp, figure out, identify, follow, master, learn, discern, be instructed in, see the light.
4. **Training:** to coach in or accustom to some mode of behaviour or performance; to make proficient with specialized instruction or practice; to focus or direct. *Synonyms:* to teach, coach, tutor, school, educate, practice, prepare.
5. **Equipping:** to supply with resources, fit out, to provide for; to provide with what is necessary, useful or appropriate. *Synonyms:* provide, furnish, supply, issue, arm, endow.

We should also look at the definition of the word “church” – it means “called out ones”. This definition illustrates that we are to be people who have been called out of the world to live for Christ, to move away from focusing on the earth to becoming kingdom orientated as Christ’s disciples. The church was created as the means of helping disciples grow and mature in Christ. We need each other, and we need help from one another in order to become fully equipped for service.

The reason the early churches grew and became strong was because the apostles took time to train people in the Word of God. Also, they appointed leaders who would give direction and discipline to the local believers. The ministry of discipleship involves training people in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. There is much to learn and understand. It takes people raised up by God to equip us for the ministry that Christ has for us.

Instruction must be done in a way that people will understand. The Jewish people would “reason together” (the polite way of saying “argue it out”) until they had an answer or solution. Training people takes a lot of time and instruction. Not all people learn the same way, so one has to equip believers through a variety of methods. As a church, we need to be more aware of one of the purposes for the sending of the Holy Spirit; that is, to teach and guide both the individual disciple and the church.

It is important to observe that these early new believers recognized the need to devote themselves to instruction; they were hungry for more understanding of God and His Word. They received Peter’s message and then were obedient in following through with baptism. They committed, and devoted themselves, to be taught more about the ways of Christ. Christ Himself was a master teacher and a model for all the disciples to follow. Teaching is key to equipping people for service.

As in all trades and professions, there is a formal time of learning in the classroom; we also need an internship program reflecting real life situations. We cannot be, as James says, just a

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hearer of the Word, but we must be doers also (James 1:19). **Another important point to recognize is that, as you teach others, you also become a learner because of the time you spend helping others.** The Word of God becomes more established in your own life. All of us have something to give and to teach others. Seek God in prayer and He will show you someone, and lead you in how you should minister to them. Teaching does not have to be profound; it only has to be simple and clear, and shared from a heart of love. With that in mind, your words will find good soil in which to be planted, and you will begin to see fruit for Jesus Christ.

Related Scriptures:

Acts 8:30-32; 15:35; 18:25; Eph 4:12, 22-24; Col 2:6-7; 2 Thes 2:15; 1 Tim 3:15; 1 Cor 14:12

(see Booklet, by Dr Humphries: "Teacher Learner / Learner Teacher")

Principle Six: FOCUSES ON FELLOWSHIP

*"All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to **fellowship**, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer."*

Acts 2:42

The church also came into being for the purpose of fellowship. The disciple needs to be grounded, and needs to be walking in fellowship with other believers. We are not islands unto ourselves. There is no room for individualism in the Body of Christ. We are to work and minister as a team. We are part of a new family that will spend all eternity together. God has many reasons as to why we should come together in fellowship. Remember the saying, "iron sharpens iron". Another reason is to help and encourage each other in our walk with Christ. Fellowship is how we become mature and strong in Christ. When interacting with each other in fellowship, we grow in areas we might never face or understand by ourselves. Fellowship is the heart of what church should be. We have fellowship with Christ and with each other; this is what will make a true body through which Christ can flow. We are His vessels of grace and mercy.

Definitions

1. **Fellowship:** friendly association, especially with people who share one's interests; a group of people meeting to pursue a shared interest or aim. *Synonyms:* companionship, companionability, sociability, comradeship, friendship, mutual support, mutual respect, mutual liking, intimacy, association, closeness, togetherness, solidarity.
2. **Friendship:** the state of being friends; one that seeks the society or welfare of another whom he holds in affection; respect or esteem for one whose companionship and personality are pleasurable. *Synonyms:* close relationship, attachment, association, bond, tie, link, union, companionship, fellowship, rapport, understanding, harmony, unity, intimacy.

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There appeared to be a real hunger for fellowship in the early church. All of them were rejoicing over the blessing of God because they had experienced what it meant to be delivered from sin and entering into a personal relationship with Christ. They wanted to meet together as often as possible. This verse (above) tells us that they went to the temple for larger group fellowship, and they also met in homes (cell groups or small group fellowship or Bible study groups) for more personal and intimate fellowship with each other and with Christ. The home group is where they also celebrated the Lord's Supper.

It was as a corporate body that they met in fellowship with Christ for worship and praise. It was in such a place where evangelism took place because Scriptures tell us that more people were being added to the church daily. People feel more free in small groups where they can ask questions and learn more without fear of saying or doing something wrong. It is also a place where they will feel more open to share their hearts with others and pray. These home fellowships must also have been a place for building strong friendships with one another. Home fellowships are where needs can be shared and people can pray with and for each other.

A fellowship is also a place where disciples' gifts can be at work, ministering to the rest of the body. It's a place where leaders can be formed and instruction can be given. It is the place where correction and discipline can be shared in love – in order to help disciples, young or old, to become stronger in Christ. A fellowship is where fruit can be nurtured and matured for God's glory.

One of the root meanings of the word "fellowship" is "relationship". Relationship can be broken down into three specific words. The first is the word "**relate**"; this refers to times of communication, talking, and learning from one another. The second word is "**relation**". We are all part of a family and, because of the work of Christ, we all become brothers and sisters. We are told that we are joint heirs with Jesus Christ. The third word is "**ship**". We are all "in it together" and, hopefully, all pulling together to head for the same common goal – that of eternal life with Jesus Christ. Fellowship is to be the heart of every local church. When it is so, the church will experience what the early church experience – amazing growth in Christ!

RELATED SCRIPTURES:

1 Cor 1:9; 11:18; Gal 2:9; 1 John 1:1-4, 5-7

The "One Another Factor" that we are entreated to have for each other within the body of Christ Jesus and to our neighbours.

- 1. Be at peace with each other Mark 9:50**
- 2. Wash one another's feet John 13:14**
- 3. Love one another John 13:34**
- 4. Love one another John 13:35**
- 5. Love each other John 15:12**
- 6. Love each other John 15:17**
- 7. Everyone members one of another Rom 12:5**

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8. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love Rom 12:10
9. Honour one another above yourselves Rom 12:10
10. Live in harmony with one another Rom 12:16
11. Love one another Rom 13:8
12. Stop passing judgment on one another Rom 14:13
13. Accept one another, then just as Christ accepted you Rom 15:7
14. Instruct one another Rom 15:14
15. Greet one another with a holy kiss Rom 16:16
16. When you come together to eat, wait for one another 1 Cor 11:33
17. Have equal concern for each other 1 Cor 12:25
18. Greet one another with a holy kiss 1 Cor 16:20
19. Greet one another with a holy kiss 2 Cor 13:12
20. Serve one another in love Gal 5:13
21. If you go biting and devouring each other ... you will be destroyed by each other Gal 5:15
22. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other Gal 5:26
23. Carry each other's burdens Gal 6:2
24. Be patient, bearing with one another in love Eph 4:2
25. For we are members one of another Eph 4:25
26. Be kind and compassionate to one another Eph 4:32
27. Forgive each other Eph 4:32
28. Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs Eph 5:19
29. Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ Eph 5:21
30. In humility consider others better than yourself Phil 2:3
31. Do not lie to each other Col 3:9
32. Bear with each other Col 3:13
33. Forgive whatever grievance you may have against one another Col 3:13
34. Teach *one another* Col 3:16
35. Admonish one another Col 3:16
36. Make your love increase and overflow for each other 1 Thes 3:12
37. Love each other 1 Thes 4:9
38. Encourage each other 1 Thes 4:18
39. Encourage one another 1 Thes 5:11
40. Build each other up 1 Thes 5:11
41. Encourage one another daily Heb 3:13
42. Spur one another on toward love and good deeds Heb 10:24
43. Encourage one another Heb 10:25
44. Do not slander one another James 4:11
45. Don't grumble against each other James 5:9
46. Confess your sins to each other James 5:16
47. Pray for each other James 5:16
48. Love one another deeply, from the heart 1 Pet 1:22
49. Live in harmony with each other 1 Pet 3:8
50. Love each other deeply 1 Pet 4:8
51. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling 1 Pet 4:9

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- 52. Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others 1 Pet 4:10
- 53. Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another 1 Pet 5:5
- 54. Greet one another with a kiss of love 1 Pet 5:14
- 55. Have fellowship one with another 1 John 1:7
- 56. Love one another 1 John 3:11
- 57. Love one another 1 John 3:23
- 58. Love one another 1 John 4:7
- 59. Love one another 1 John 4:11
- 60. Love one another 1 John 4:12
- 61. Love one another 2 John 1:5

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Principle Seven: FOCUSES ON COMMUNION

*“They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the **Lord’s Supper**, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people.”*

Acts 2:46

Communion is what brings the disciple into a deeper fellowship with Jesus Christ. It personalizes for us what He did for us on the cross. It causes us to remember, and reflect, on the covenants and promises that Christ has made to every disciple. It also brings us together to examine ourselves and how we are doing with our faith and commitment to Christ.

Definitions

1. **Communion:** an act or situation involving sharing; possession in common; joint ownership; fellowship of members in a church. *Synonyms:* fellowship, kinship, friendship, togetherness, harmony, understanding, connection, communication.
2. **Remember:** have in, or be able to bring to one’s mind an awareness of (someone or something that one has seen, known, or experienced in the past). *Synonyms:* recall, call to mind, recollect, think of, put a name to, reminisce about, think back to, look back on, cast one’s mind back to, summon up, commemorate, pay tribute to, honour, salute, celebrate, pay homage to, memorialize, keep alive the memory of.

Communion is also known as a “love feast” or “love celebration”. Communion reminds us of Christ’s victory over death and, for His disciples, deliverance from the curse of the Law. We are not just to focus on Christ’s death, but we should rejoice over the victory that Christ had over sin and death. Christ gives to us this grace/righteousness, full of hope and power.

Communion can be broken down into at least twelve areas.

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Time of communication:

It is a time of talking with God and God talking with us. It is also a time where we can share our hearts with each other. As we talk and share, we will know how to pray and help each other. Communication is something that we have to work at. We cannot always wait for people to speak to us first but we should go to them and start a conversation. It is also a time where we get things right with one another. Sometime a person will not know that they have offended you unless you humble yourself and, in love, go and speak with them. James tells us that we are to be slow to speak and quick to hear, because he wants disciples to make sure they understand what they heard before they reply with an answer or a statement about something (James 1:19). The way we communicate will either tear people down or will build them up in the faith. Much of the church today is hurting so much because the disciples are not being very wise regarding how they speak. Much of our speech is of a gossip nature which the Bible calls sin. *2 Tim 2:16*

Time of companionship:

Friendship and companionship are being built during the time of communion. Fellowship builds stronger relations between people and with God. The coming together brings the family of Christ together. It is a time of testifying and sharing our hearts with each other. It is a time of getting to know each other as brothers and sisters in Christ. We all need relationships with others; it is those relationships that help us to grow stronger in Christ. Plus, we are told that if two or three work and pull together the burden becomes light. *John 15: 13-15*

Time of confession:

It is a time of communicating struggles and sins. It is a time to confess, where possible, one to another and specifically before God. It brings us to a place of getting our house in order. Paul tell us that the way we deal with sin will have a direct bearing on our health and our life with Christ. He also tells us that we need to go to one another and correct things before we have communion with God and with each other. It is time to clean the slate of sin, to be washed and start off fresh. *Ps 32:5*

Time of commitment:

It is a time to reflect on the commitment that we have made to Christ. We invited Christ into our hearts to be our Lord and Saviour. How are we living that commitment out for Christ as He has called us and shown us to do? When we committed to Christ, we were committing ourselves to His teaching and His will for our lives. It is no longer "I that live but Christ that lives in me". We are saying, "not my will be done but Thy will be done". We are committing to be good examples and stewards of the Gospel message. We are committing to Him to be our Lord and Saviour in all areas of our lives. *Ps 37:5, Pro 16:3*

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Time of remembering our covenant:

Communion is also a time of reflecting on the covenants we have committed ourselves to with Christ. We have made agreements with God and they are signed and sealed with His blood. They are binding from the point of both sides. The Bible is full of everlasting covenants that are made between God and His people. The rainbow reminds us of God's promise not to destroy the earth again with a flood. But the key covenant is the one Christ made with His blood for those who believe – to have everlasting life with Him and to reign with Him in His Kingdom. The covenant moves us from death back to life. We were dead in trespasses and sin and now, because of Christ's covenant, we can have, if we choose, everlasting life. Every time we take the cup and drink it we are remembering the covenant that is made between God and ourselves..

We are now under the Christ's law of Grace. We are now bound to the full Gospel of Jesus Christ. He reminds the disciples that it is "an agreement now made between us." The Holy Spirit is also sent as a guarantor of this covenant between man and God. *Heb 9:15*

Time for teaching and training:

The Passover was held each year, not only to celebrate what God had done for the people of Israel and Egypt, but it was also a time to remember how God kept his promise to set them free and bring them into the promised land. The Passover was a family celebration where the older members would share testimonies and teachings concerning God Almighty. Christ had come to fulfill the requirements of the law and was now showing His disciples that the Passover/Communion celebration would now illustrate that He was the Passover Lamb and that His shed blood would protect them and set them free from the bondage of sin and death.

Communion (sometimes known as a love feast) is a family event where children and young people can experience the occasion, observing and asking questions about the purpose of the event taking place. Local believers in the New Testament were able to come together in house church settings as often as they could (Acts 2:41-47). Christ desired that this event would cause people to remember what He had done for them. It was to be a time when the Gospel stories of Christ's life and teachings would be shared. They would break bread with one another and share the Communion cup (1 Cor 11:17-34).

Time of obedience:

We are told that, until Jesus returns to receive His church, we should have Communion regularly. No matter what their culture, race, or nationality, a Communion service makes all people equal. It is a time when the poor, the rich, and the needy are recognized as brothers and sisters of the same family. We should not forsake the gathering (coming together) as Christ's disciples. This is what helps us grow and mature as a body of believers. Christ has set the example of obedience and we are now to follow it (1 Pet 1:2).

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Time of ministry:

Communion is also a time when the local church body can minister, one to another, through the fruit, gifts and talents that God has given. Not only can we encourage and speak into each other's lives, but also we can plan ways of helping each other and those around us. It is a good time to take up a love offering for the poor and, with Christ's love, minister to the needy. It is also a time when we can corporately worship and pray to our God. We can take this time to serve each other and to put each other ahead of ourselves (2 Cor 5:18-21).

Time of worship:

During our time of meeting together, we also need to spend time worshipping our Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks through songs and hymns. We gather to lift up our hearts in praise and thanksgiving for what He has done for us. He did what we could never do. He brought back hope to the hopeless. He is to be our center of focus. We need to worship and praise Him for all His love and goodness to us, especially for coming to us and giving us a way of escape from bondage and death. When we understand all that He has done for us, our hearts will want to praise him (Psalm 95:6; Heb 10:1).

Time of prayer:

Communion is also a time to come together in prayer, for ourselves as individuals, as well as in corporate prayer for one another. We are told that if two or more come together and agree together on earth, God will hear them (Matt 18:19-20). We are to pray for God's direction, not only for our own lives, but also for the church of which we are a part. God wants to hear from us but he also wants to direct us, give us wisdom and hear about the struggles we are facing in our daily life. Prayer brings us into a deeper fellowship with Him and others. Jesus' heart and example was a life of prayer and fasting. The more we pray, the more wisdom and understanding we get. This will help us in living out the days of our earthly lives. Also, the more we humble ourselves in prayer, the more He will lift us up. Prayer also helps to open up our spiritual eyes. Christ prayed at least three times during the communion supper with the disciples. Once He prayed over the bread and the second time it was over the cup. Why? It was for at least two reasons: so that the emblems would be blessed by God and so that disciples would see, hear, and understand what Jesus was trying to show and teach them (1 Cor 7:5; Phil 4:6).

Time of equality:

We are all brothers and sisters in the Lord. Communion demonstrates to us that we are all equal in the eyes of God, healthy or sick, Jew or Gentile, rich or poor, man or woman. Communion demonstrates that disciples share things together. Those who have should give to those who have not. Those who are weak are to be helped by those who are

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strong. Those who are struggling or sick can be prayed for by the other members (2 Cor 8:13-15).

Time of warning:

In 1 Corinthians Paul warns the church about how they should act and behave during the Communion service. It was to be a “love feast”, a time of celebrating Who Jesus Christ is and what He has done for us. However, if Communion was not done for the proper purpose, the results could affect our health and lives. Disciples were told to first get things in order in their own lives before taking of Communion. In that sense, Communion is like the giving of an offering – if we don’t give it with the right heart attitude, we will not receive a blessing from God. Paul states that we will be judged on how we partake of Communion. What is your heart like? If we don’t examine ourselves carefully, we can be bringing judgment on ourselves (1 Cor 11:27-34). We are to eat at home first, and we are also to show respect and exercise good manners toward one another. We need to respect and serve each other because Christ is dwelling in each of our hearts; whatever we do to each other we are doing it to HIM (Acts 20:28-32).

All these points should enable us to understand that Christ is the Head of His Body, the Church. We are His friends, servants willing to do His will. We fellowship and live our lives in, and around, Christ. We live because of His resurrection power flowing through our hearts.

Communion is a time when many of the heart needs of disciples can be met. It is a time when we are called to a place of remembrance and reflection about the magnificent and freeing things Christ has done for us. Communion reminds us again about His broken body and shed blood. But it also tells us that the grave was not victorious and that Christ rose from the dead and is now seated at the right hand of the Father, interceding on our behalf (Heb 7:25). Communion should also cause us to remember that this “Emmanuel” (i.e. God with us) is dwelling right within our hearts. He has sent the Holy Spirit to us, not only that we can be taught and learn how to walk and stand in Christ, but also to have the power to overcome the things of this world. Communion demonstrates that Satan is a defeated enemy, having no power over those who have Christ in their lives as Lord and Savior.

Related Scriptures:

Matt 26:26-30; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:14-20; 1 Cor 11:17-34; 13:13; Eph 1:22

(see Booklet, by Dr Humphries. “Communion”)

Principle Eight: FOCUSES ON PRAYER

*“While Peter was kept in prison, the **church prayed** fervently to God for him.”*

Acts 12:5

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The early church and disciples knew the importance of prayer. They knew prayer was the way you communicated with God and would hear from Him as they sought for wisdom and faith. The disciples knew the power of prayer. They knew that prayer changed things for them and for the people around them, and even for the events they faced. Jesus Himself taught the disciples the importance of prayer, modeling it throughout His ministry and through His actions.

Definitions:

1. **Communication:** the act or action of imparting or transmitting and receiving; access between persons or place; interchange of thoughts or opinions. *Synonyms:* transmission, conveyance, disclosure, broadcast, connection, dialogue, talk, conversation.
2. **Prayer:** a supplication or expression addressed to God; an earnest request or wish. *Synonyms:* communication, devotion, invocation, litany, supplication, appeal, petition, plea, request.

The early church saw demonstrations of the power of prayer. It brought healing and deliverance. It even opened prison doors to deliver those who were captive. Prayer even raised people from the dead. Prayer was used to commit people for ministry, setting them apart through the laying on of hands for service. Prayer should be central to the life and walk of every disciple. We need to hear from God daily. Prayer was integral to the very heart of Jesus Himself as he communicated with His Father in heaven. Prayer is God's way of calling and directing us for daily service in Him. Sometimes prayer was seemingly formal and, at other times, informal. Sometimes it was very specific and thought out; other times it was very spontaneous.

We are told that the church itself was to be known as a "house of prayer" where people came together to communicate and meet with God (Matt 21:13). The church was to be a place where people prayed, fasted, experienced healing and deliverance, and where they got to know the will of God.

In response to a question from the disciples, the Lord Himself taught the disciples a prayer that is still used to this very day. I do not think that it was taught so that we would repeat it over and over again but, rather, it was to be a template that we could use for our prayer life.

The Lord's prayer has at least eight key points that we should know and use in our prayer life each day. They are commented on below.

Our Father:

Our prayer should always start out by focusing on the Father. By saying "our Father", we are turning prayer into a personal relationship with Him. We are to respect and honor His name. Jesus always had the Father on His mind. Throughout the Gospels there is a lot of teaching concerning the Father. When the disciples asked how they would know the Father, Jesus responded by saying, "If you know me, you will know the Father." In John 14

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we are told of the abiding relationship that we are to have with the Father. In John 15 Jesus tells us that the Father is the vinedresser. We learn that it is the Father Who sent the Son and that it was also the Father who would send the Holy Spirit to teach and empower us. We are told to be thinking about His kingdom and not about the kingdom of this world. In the book of Matthew, His focus was twofold. One was about the kingly Messiah and the second was about the Kingdom of God that was coming here to earth through Christ.

Our Father's Will:

We are to pray that His will be done. God has a plan for us; He has already mapped it out in heaven. It is important that we, as disciples, get in step with that plan here on earth. The biggest battleground that we face is the battleground of the wills. Will it be my will or will it be His will? Do I have faith that His will is the right way, the true way for my life? Salvation is dying to our wills and then living for Him. The reason we struggle so much in this area is because our wills still fight us on all fronts, causing us to not understand what it means to have Christ as Lord and Saviour. If we understood, we would see that our will is to be put to death. We are now new creations. We now have the heart of God in us. We are now His servants and stewards. Paul tells us that we are to die daily; if we do not die daily, then our wills try to take over, and we become world-centered instead of God-centered. We will try to live in our righteousness which, we are told is like filthy rags. Or, we can put on Christ's grace/righteousness and become joint heirs with Jesus.

Our Father's Bread:

One of our basic human needs is the need for bread. We need bread for our physical bodies, but we also need spiritual food that feeds our spiritual man. This section of the prayer most likely reflects back to when God gave the Israelites bread from heaven (manna). It also reminded them of the 'shewbread' in the tabernacle, which represented God's presence. Jesus stood up and proclaimed, "I Am the Bread of Life". Christ is bread and water for the needy soul (John 6:35, 48). For disciples, the bread causes us to think of Communion where Jesus broke the bread as a symbol of His broken body for us.

Our Father's Forgiveness:

Concerning forgiveness, there are two areas about which we need to think. One is the forgiveness of our sin by the Father and the other is forgiveness of each other. Within us we still carry a fallen nature that has the capacity to sin against God and other people. We need to keep our slates clean, our minds and hearts covered by the blood of Christ. We are to forgive one another as Christ forgives us. Jesus gave and forgave so that we could give and forgive others. An unforgiving spirit builds a wall between people, destroying unity and harmony in the church body.

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Our Father's Leading:

As a Shepherd, our Father leads and guides us through each day of our lives. We need constantly to seek His leading and direction – that is what will keep us from falling into temptation. Temptation is all around us. Satan's goal is to make us stumble and fall. Satan is the accuser of the brethren. He successfully tempted Adam and Eve, causing all mankind to be born with a sin nature. He used the same temptation with Christ, and you can be sure he will use it on you, Christ's disciple, as well. Christ gave us the tools we need to get through our personal struggles. We'll face many battles within our hearts and minds. He will lead us, but we must choose to follow.

Our Father Deliverer:

The enemy wants us to lose hope and give up. That is why we are to pray that we will be delivered from evil. The evil spoken of here refer to our ungodly actions and unrighteous thoughts. But we also need to be delivered from the direct attacks of the evil one. He seeks to destroy, divide, tear down and, if at all possible, even kill. We hear many voices every day; we need God's help to navigate through all of them. Christ delivers us from the strongholds of Satan and from the sin that binds. Even the gates of Hades cannot withstand the power of the Father who can deliver us (Matt 16:18). Before we became children of God, we were children of the ruler of this world, the one who keeps people in bondage and death. The Father came and, by the blood of Christ, delivered us from all the strongholds of the enemy.

Father's Kingdom:

As the Son of the Father, Jesus came from heaven to proclaim that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. We are to be thinking about His kingdom, and not about the kingdom of this world. Matthew focused on two things. One was about the Kingly Messiah. The other focus was about how the Kingdom of God on earth was coming through Christ. Jesus, through His shed blood as a sacrifice, made a way possible for those who gave themselves to Him, to have their names written in the Lamb's Book of Life. We, too, as Christ's disciples, are called to be ambassadors, representing Jesus Christ and His Kingdom on our earthly life's journey.

Our Father's Power & Glory:

The Father is not asking us to walk in our own strength and ability, but to walk in His strength and ability. Jesus said, "I will ask my Father to send the Holy Spirit Who will teach and guide you in all things. He will not glorify Himself, but He will bring glory to the Father." Daily, we need to be empowered by the Holy Spirit. We need to learn how to walk in the power of the Holy Spirit. Christ said that the same power that raised Him from the dead must also dwell in us. The purpose of this is so that we can glorify and praise God

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through the testimony that we have in Him. "It is no longer I that liveth, but it is Christ that liveth in me."

Christ ends this prayer by saying, "Forever, Amen". There is no time limit for God; He has no beginning or end. This is how we, and those who come after us, should come to the Lord in prayer. "Amen", meaning, "Let it be so, Lord" brings the prayer to a final climax.

Please use these eight points to help you in your prayer life. Ask the Lord for wisdom on what these things mean and how you can pray for yourself and others. Christ wants to be a prayer partner with every disciple. We just need to have the faith to let Him guide us in our life of prayer.

Prayer is a very powerful tool in the hands of the disciple. Christ tells us that if two or three come together, agreeing on something, it will be done in heaven (Matt 18:19). We are also encouraged to bind and loose things in heaven and on earth (Matt 16:19). Prayer breaks the cords that bind. Prayer is the key to setting the captive free. Learn about the prayer lives of others and take the time to experience different ways of praying. One should also keep a prayer journal to see the hand of God giving direction and answering prayer. A prayer journal builds faith and strength, empowering the disciple to go deeper in their relationship with Christ. We are to pray daily for the filling of the Holy Spirit in our lives (Eph 5:18). The Holy Spirit is our Counselor, Teacher, and Comforter. He helps us to walk through the times of trouble in our lives.

Related Scriptures:

1 Kin 8:27-30; 1 Chr 7:14-15; Matt 21:13; Rom 12:11-13; Eph 6:18-20; Phi 4:6-7; Col 4:2-4; James 5:14-18

(See booklet by Dr Humphries: "Lord's Prayer")

Principle Nine: FOCUSES ON WORSHIP

*"They **worshipped** together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity all the while **praising** God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people."*

Acts 2:46-47

When disciples are changed from the inside out, their hearts become Christ's home. Their minds become filled with new thoughts and actions and their mouths now speak praises to our God. When one gets to know Jesus Christ personally, one just wants to worship Him. We are told that the believers went down to the temple daily to worship God. They could not keep their faith bottled up inside. Something magnificent had happened inside of them. They were filled with God's glory and their actions were that of joy and generosity.

Definitions:

1. **Worship:** the feeling or expression of reverence and adoration for a deity. *Synonyms:* reverence, revering, worshipping, veneration, adoration, adoring, devotion, praise,

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thanksgiving, praising, praying to, glorification, glorifying, glory, exaltation, exalting, extolment, extolling, homage, respect, honour, honouring, esteem.

2. **Praise:** express warm approval or admiration of; the expression of approval or admiration for someone or something. *Synonyms:* worship, glorify, honour, exalt, adore, pay tribute to, pay homage to, give thanks to, venerate, reverence, hallow, bless.

When people's hearts are full of worship and praise, they become testimonies to attract others to desire Christ. Apparently it is also true that the deeper you enter into worship and praise, the more your heart desires to worship and praise. This relationship begins to develop a level of love that most people thought was not possible. When people see and understand what Christ freely did for them because of His love, they just want to worship and praise him with all that they have (cymbals, dance, harps, psalms, hymns, etc.). See Psalm 150; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16.

Worship is expressed in many ways, both individually as well as when we meet together as a church. The old way of death and destruction has lost its appeal, but upon confession of our faith in Christ and follow-through with baptism, things begin to change. Satan desires to fill us with guilt and condemnation, but Christ fills us with love and freedom. For some of us, we just want to shout about God's love and grace from the rooftops.

Praise and worship can be expressed through testimony, songs, and hymns. It can be accompanied by uplifted hands, clapping, being reverent and quiet, or shedding tears. Our lives are to be a sweet-smelling incense to the Lord (2 Cor 2:14-15). The joy of the Lord is to be our strength. We know that He Who lives in us is greater than he that lives in the world (1 John 4:4).

We are exhorted by Scripture to express our hearts to God by using our mouths. As a church, there is a great need to be led by the Holy Spirit. Different ways of expression meet specific needs, both in our lives and in the Body of Christ. Listen to what Paul had to say to the Ephesian church: *"And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in **psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody** in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another in the fear of God."* (Ephesians 5:18-21). It is easy for the church to get out of balance when we use just one type of format, moving away from another just because it may be deemed old fashioned or out-of-date. There is a place in the body of Christ for worshiping with psalms and hymns. Hymns were often the way people learned about systematic theology. Psalms were often used so that people could memorize and sing Scripture to God. As a church, we must continue to worship God in all avenues. This is how the body of Christ can experience unity and harmony under the headship of Jesus Christ. Where the Spirit of God is, there is His power for ministry (Rom 15:19; 2 Cor 3:17).

King David was a great man who knew worship and praise. He knew how to come before the throne of God and pour out praise and adoration to his Creator. The book of Psalms is rooted

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in the vision of how David saw his God. Everywhere he looked, he saw the majesty of God; he could not help but worship and praise God for just simply being with him, and giving him life.

The heart that truly seeks after God will also be a heart wanting to give worship and praise, in all its forms, to God. Jesus tells us that if we are committed to Him, out of our hearts will come living water (John 7:38). Jesus said it's not what goes into the mouth that we need to be worried about, but it's what comes out of the mouth that will show to whom we belong (Matt 15:11, 18). The book of Revelation, speaking of the end times, boils down to "Whom will we worship?" Satan will try to get us to worship him and glorify his ways, but we need to remember that his way leads to death and destruction. Other people will just be worshipers of themselves. Christ leads us to a heart that is full of grace, mercy and joy. The way I view God is the basis for how I worship and praise Him. The church is to be a worship center where we can express who we are in Christ. Like the disciples, we desire to come together and worship God.

RELATED SCRIPTURES FOR THE LESSON:

Deut 10:20-21; Ps 95:6; Rom 12:1; Eph 1:11-14; 3:21; Heb 9:14; 12:28-29; Rev 22:3

Principle Ten: FOCUSES ON GIVING

*"And all the believers met together in one place and **shared** everything they had. They sold their property and possessions and **shared** the money with those in need."*

Acts 2: 44-45

The church is designed to be a place for giving ... a place to receive God's tithes and offerings. The finances of the early church were used to build people, not buildings. Of utmost importance were the needs of the people, both locally as well as further afield. That is why, later in the book of Acts, the apostles selected deacons to go out and administer these finances for the needy. The deacons worked under the direction of the local elders. Giving was a very tangible way to show God's love and concern for others. It gave (and gives) testimony that the church of Jesus Christ cares. However, one must be aware that giving involves more than one's finances. It is also giving of one's time and life for the help and service of others.

Definitions

1. **Sharing:** have a portion of (something) with another or others; use, occupy, or enjoy (something) jointly with another or others; participate in, take part in, play a part in, have a role in, be involved in, contribute to, have a hand in, have something to do with, *Synonyms:* divide up, allocate, ration out, give out, distribute, dispense, hand out, dish out, deal out, dole out, parcel out, measure out.
2. **Giving:** bestow (love, affection, or other emotional support); freely devote, set aside, or sacrifice for a purpose; carry out or perform (a specified action). *Synonyms:* provide with, supply with, furnish with, hand, let someone have, offer, award, grant, bestow, confer; donate, contribute, put up, hand over, turn over, give up, relinquish, devote, dedicate, set aside.

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When the Spirit of God moves on the church, people desire to give and help where they can (Acts 2:45). Just as God gave His only Son for us so that we could have life and freedom we, too, need to give to others so they can have life and freedom. The tithe to the church came from the Old Testament practice of bringing finances to the temple. God, however, wants us to give all. We no longer own it, but are just stewards with what He has entrusted us.

The believers in the early church trusted God's leadership in wisely using that which had been entrusted to them, whether it was finances or people's lives. God's heart is one of giving, and He looks for a joyful heart which desires to give all to Him. The focus is not the gift, but the attitude and sacrifice of the giver (1 Sam 16:7). We need to trust that God knows our every need, even before we ask it.

Paul was so encouraged when various churches would give out of hearts that wanted to bless his ministry. Giving needed to be part of the everyday ministry of the disciple as well as the church. We can often miss out on so many blessings because we don't invest our lives and finances into God's Kingdom. We are told to lay up treasure in heaven, not here on earth (Matt 6:19). This, for disciples of Christ in North America, seems to be one of the hardest things to do, one of the most difficult to which to give their full hearts. We like to hold back and hope that others will do it, even when the Holy Spirit is speaking directly to us.

The church also gave of their leaders and teachers, to go out and help others. Apparently the church saw itself as part of a bigger picture; they were willing to send people as missionaries or teachers to other locations. As they saw the need and were led by the Holy Spirit, they moved people around, and they ministered to others in need, both in finances and personnel. When sending people, they sent their best. They shared their blessings with others.

Many have said that giving is directly attached to blessing. Paul called it sowing and reaping. If we sow sparingly, we will also reap sparingly (2 Cor 9:6). We must seek God's guidance as to where he wants us to sow, and then plant generously. The needy are all around us and, if we all would get involved, the church would see revival and begin to grow. The church needs to reach out into the community and show that they care about what is happening to the people around the church. We are His hands and feet, and we must use His time and money to build His kingdom.

Related Scriptures:

Acts 11:27; 13:1; 20:35; Rom 12:11-13, 20-21; 2 Cor 9:7-8; Gal 2:10

Principle Eleven: FOCUSES ON SERVICE

*"... and **shared** their meals with great joy and **generosity** all the while **praising** God and enjoying the **goodwill** of all the people."*

Acts 2:46-47

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*“Whatever your task, put yourselves into it, as done for the Lord and not for your masters, since you know that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward; you **serve the Lord Christ.**”*

Colossians 3:23-24

The day of Pentecost was so important because the disciples were obeying Christ's command to pray and wait until the Holy Spirit would come. The one main purpose of Christ in sending His Holy Spirit was to empower His disciples for the work of service. Our sinful nature is self-serving but, when the Holy Spirit comes into our lives, we become Christ's servants. We need the power and strength that comes from God in order to serve one another.

Definitions

1. **Service:** the action of helping or doing work for someone; be ready to assist someone whenever possible. *Synonyms:* act of assistance, good turn, favour, kindness, helping hand, help, aid, offices, ministrations, assist, benefit, be helpful, be of assistance, be beneficial, be advantageous, be of benefit, serve, advantage, be useful, be of use, be profitable, profit, be valuable, be of worth, do someone a good turn.
2. **Serve:** to be a servant; to offer habitual worship and obedience to; to work through or perform; to wait on, to be used to or answer the needs of. *Synonyms:* work, labour, give a helping hand, assist, be useful, be valuable.
3. **Servant:** a person bound to do the bidding of a master or superior; one that must work for another and obey him. *Synonyms:* helper, worker, steward, slave, supporter, follower.
4. **Caring:** displaying kindness and concern for others; the work or practice of looking after those unable to care for themselves, especially the sick and the elderly. *Synonyms:* kind, kind-hearted, warm-hearted, soft-hearted, tender, concerned, attentive, responsible, considerate; affectionate, loving, warm, benevolent, humane, good-natured, gentle, mild, indulgent, sympathetic, understanding, receptive, compassionate, charitable, gracious, long-suffering, patient.

At its root, service comes from humbleness and humility. The servant of Christ desires to see unity and harmony within the body of Christ. Within the early church, there was built a spirit of sharing and serving one another. To function as a unit, the church of Christ has to be willing to care and serve all other members. The heart of the church is to be one of service.

Serving one another demonstrates that we care for each other. Christ came to serve and to be an example of service (Matt 28:28). In Mark 4:38 Jesus demonstrated his care for his disciples by calming the sea. The disciples were fighting a storm on the sea of Galilee and Jesus was asleep at the back of the boat. Fearing disaster, one of the disciples woke Christ and asked, “Lord, don't you care?” Throughout history people have needed to know that someone else cares; without that knowledge, people lose hope and give up on life.

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Church leaders must realize they are put in place to serve the members of the church, giving it direction, wisdom, encouragement, and protection from enemies that would try to tear the church apart and destroy it. Jesus modeled servant leadership and that is what we need to model to a lost world today. All of us are to serve the Lord with gladness and joy; to do so will mean coming to the Father and asking Him to fill us with the Holy Spirit each day (Eph 3:7).

To serve those who are within and outside the church, the body of believers needs to have a plan how to serve in a variety of ways. The Gospel of Christ is to be shared with the needy, the poor, the widows, and those who are in jail (Matt 25:31-46). Also, we need to be aware of what our friends and neighbors may be going through. Mark tells us that, even if we give a cup of cold water in the name of Jesus, it is as if we have done it for Him personally (Mark 9:41).

I believe treasures are laid up in heaven for disciples who are true servants. To His followers (the church), Christ said that if we wanted to be first, we must be last (Mark 9:35). He also said that if we are asked to go one mile, we must be willing to go two – by serving in such a way, we gain a friend (Matt 5:41). We also need to have a heart of service for the needy. The good Samaritan presents a clear picture of how we need to have a heart of service (Luke 10:30-37). My life must be one of service for my King. It is no longer I, but Christ, Who lives in me.

Related Scriptures:

Matt 6:24; 20:26-28; Acts 14:22; 20:28; Rom 12:11-13; Eph 3:7; 1 Thes 3:11-12; 4:9-10; 5:11; 5:13; 5:15-18; 2 Tim 2:24; 1 Pet 4:10

Principle Twelve: FOCUSES ON LEADERSHIP BUILDING

*"Not that we are **adequate** in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our **adequacy** is from God, who also made us **adequate as servants** of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life".*

2 Corinthians 3:5-6

There is a great need for servant leaders today, people who are trained and equipped to serve with their lives, no matter the price or cost. The fields are ripe and the age of grace is coming to an end. We are told the laborers are few and that we need to be praying to the "Lord of the harvest" to send out more laborers (Matt 9:37-38). We need people who believe that God can use them ... to step out in faith. We should encourage all disciples to be equipped and trained to go out and serve the Lord.

Servant leadership is a learned skill. It can often evolve from on-the-job training. We learn from our mistakes and make changes as we go along. The Bible is one of the best leadership manuals we could possibly have because, in it, we can glean firsthand testimonies and teaching from Bible characters. Their accounts have been kept for us so that the wisdom they learned can be passed on to us.

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Definitions

1. **Leader:** the person who leads or commands a group, organization, or country; a person followed by others. *Synonyms:* chief, head, principal, pioneer, front runner, innovator, trailblazer, pathfinder, ground-breaker, leading light, guiding light, torch-bearer, originator, initiator, developer, discoverer, founder, architect, influencer.
2. **Servant:** a person bound to do the bidding of a master or superior; one who must work for another and obey him. *Synonyms:* helper, worker, steward, slave, supporter, follower.
3. **Servant leadership** is always a challenge and the more we advance in leadership the greater the responsibilities and challenges we will face. Leadership can be a very lonely place – there will always be struggles with people who are discontented with what we do.

Our goal as **servant leaders** is to produce lasting fruit. We need more laborers and leaders developed for the Kingdom of God and for the work Christ has entrusted to us. We are told that the harvest is ripe, but that the laborers are very, very few (Matt 9:37-38). As servant leaders, Paul tells us that we are to rest our foundation on Christ and His teaching.

Servant leaders are not born; they are made. We need to understand that most of the leaders in the Bible were trained and equipped, and then worked together with each other under the Headship of Christ.

Difference Between Natural and Spiritual Leadership

Natural

Self-confident
Knows men
Makes own decision
Ambitious
Originates own methods
Enjoys commanding others
Motivated by personal considerations
Independent

Spiritual

Confident in God
Also knows God
Seeks to find God's will
Self-effacing
Finds & follows God's methods
Delights to obey God
Motivated by love for God & man
God-dependent

BIBLICAL EXAMPLES

God uses different kinds of people to bring leadership to His people. Christ uses our strengths and weaknesses to lead others. When we work within a team, our efforts and effectiveness are enhanced. Christ desires to use us as we are; He moves us through equipping and training processes that will mature us into being good leaders. Some examples are in the people listed below;

Peter: John 21:15-21
Fisherman
Leader in the church in Jerusalem
Wrote the Books of 1 and 2 Peter

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- Matthew:** Matthew 9:9-13
Tax collector
Wrote the Book of Matthew
- Luke:** Luke 1:1-4 & Acts 1:1-2
Doctor (He also was a Gentile)
Wrote the Books of Luke and Acts
- Philip:** Acts 8:4-8
Deacon
Evangelist of the Gospel of Christ
Minister to an Ethiopian eunuch
- Barnabas:** Acts 4:36-37 and Acts 11:22-26
Levite
Missionary, teacher and mentored many other leaders
- Apollos:** Acts 18:24-28
Equipped and well-trained teacher of the Scriptures
Missionary and teacher
- Paul:** Acts 9:1-22
From Pharisee to an Apostle of Christ
From one who persecuted the church to missionary
One who planted churches
Wrote letters to the Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, Ephesians etc.
- John Mark:** Acts 15:37-41
Young man, somewhat a legalist, stubborn, rejected by Paul, who later accepted him as a fellow missionary. Acts 15:38, Philemon 24, 2 Timothy 4:11
- Lydia:** Acts 16:13-15
Business lady
Homemaker
- Philemon:** Philemon 1:1-2
Slave owner
- Epaphras:** Colossian 1:7-8 and Acts 19:10
Church planter

20 QUALITIES OF A BIBLICAL LEADER (2 TIMOTHY 3 AND TITUS 1)

1. Above Reproach (blameless)

2 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:7

- a. Above being blamed, not being condemned for wrong actions, no character 'defects', no grounds for anyone accusing him of improper behaviour (including improper behaviour of a sexual nature).
- b. A model of good living, having a good reputation.
- c. It can be tied in with 'being well thought of by outsiders.'

2. Husband of One Wife

2 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:7

- a. One-woman man, not a bigamist. Some would interpret this to say 'married only once.'
- b. In a culture where men frequently cohabited with more than one woman, Paul needed to make it very clear that an elder in the Church was to be a 'one-wife man' - loyal to her and her alone.
- c. No concubines, no bigamy, no mistresses, no lusting after.
- d. It is possible to be married to one woman, live with that woman and still break this qualification by committing emotional and mental adultery.

3. Temperate (vigilant)

2 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8

- a. Not self-indulging, having a clear perspective. One who does not lose his physical, psychological, and spiritual orientation.
- b. Stable, steadfast, and clear thinking.
- c. He must be a man who is not in bondage to himself and to the desires of the flesh.

4. Prudent (sober)

2 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8

- a. Sensible, of good behaviour. Carries the idea of self-control, cautious, alert, watchful, vigilant, and balanced in judgment.
- b. He must not be given to quick and superficial decisions based on immature thinking.

5. Respectable (good behaviour)

2 Timothy 3:2

- a. Orderly, regulated, well-assembled or constructed.
- b. He must have an orderly life, which is seen in proper behaviour.

6. Hospitable (given to hospitality)

2 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8

- a. Generous, warm-hearted, willing to have people into the home.
- b. Unselfish and willing to share his blessings with others.

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7. Apt to Teach

2 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:9

- a. One who can communicate the truth of God to others and can 'exhort sound doctrine' in a non-argumentative way (II Timothy 2:24-26).
- b. This does not necessarily refer to preaching to the masses, but can also include one on one ministry or ministry to small groups.
- c. It can also carry the idea of being loyal to the faith, able to instruct in the faith, or able to refute those who teach unsound doctrine.
- d. The distinction between the 'gift of teaching' and 'able to teach' should be acknowledged.

8. No Drunkard (not given to wine)

2 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7

- a. Not addicted to alcohol, not a slave to drink.
- b. This qualification does not rule out use of alcoholic beverage, but rules out its misuse.
- c. Addiction of any type demonstrates a lack of self-control.

9. Pugnacious (no striker)

2 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7

- a. Not violent, not given to blows, no bully.
- b. Not just the action is considered, but also the thinking is weighed.
- c. It suggests that one should be characterized by forbearance and tenderness.

10. Free from the Love of Money

2 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7; I Peter 5:2

- a. Not obsessed with money or the things it can do, not greedy for gains.
- b. In the New Testament church, the elders kept the money and distributed it to the needy.

11. Gentle (patient)

2 Timothy 3:3

- a. Considerate, gracious, forbearing.
- b. This concerns dealing with people in a loving manner, firmly but tenderly.

12. Uncontentious (not a brawler)

2 Timothy 3:3

- a. Not given to quarrelling and selfish argumentation.
- b. One who is not always looking for a mental fight to prove their debating ability.

13. Manages His own Family Well

2 Timothy 3:4; Titus 1:6

- a. He must have the respect of his family and be recognized as the leader of the household.
- b. This does not mean he is a dictator, but he leads his home as Christ leads the church.

14. Not a New Convert (not a novice)

2 Timothy 3:6

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- a. Not one who is a new Christian or babe in Christ.
 - b. It refers to maturity in the Christian life; thus one must be a Christian long enough to demonstrate this maturity.
 - c. There are some who have been Christians for a long time, but are still babes in Christ.
 - d. The danger with new believers is that they are not stable in the faith and may become puffed up by their new leadership, and thus make wrong decisions.
15. A Good Reputation to Outsiders
2 Timothy 3:7
- a. Unbelievers must respect the character and integrity.
 - b. This allows for examination of neighbours, business associates, fellow workers, etc., of those seeking leadership.
16. Not Quick-Tempered (Passionate)
Titus 1:7
- a. not one who gets angry quickly and 'flies off the handle.'
 - b. This suggest that the leader must be in control of his own spirit and emotions.
17. Lover of Good
Titus 1:8
- a. Basically it means a lover of goodness.
 - b. This encourages an examination of one's motives toward people and things. (See Psalm 15)
18. Just
Titus 1:8
- a. The word suggests one who is fair and impartial.
 - b. This demands the ability to make objective judgments based upon principle.
19. Holy
Titus 1:8
- a. It emphasizes 'sacred', 'lawful', or 'dutiful' from the standpoint of morality and religion, whether they are based on divine precept, natural law, ancient customs, or inner disposition.
 - b. This is the capstone to the other qualifications.
20. Holding Fast to the Faithful Word
Titus 1:9
- a. Clarity and understanding of the practical doctrines of apostolic teaching whether oral or written.
 - b. This demands both a clear grasp of and a clinging to biblical truth, even in the face of opposition.
 - c. The leader should not only be able to encourage (exhort) believers with sound doctrine, but also refute (convince) opposition.

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Related Scriptures:

Acts 2:42; 1 Cor 12:28; 2 Cor 11:13; Heb 3:1; 13:7, 17

Leadership fivefold ministry

*And He Himself gave some to be **apostles**, some **prophets**, some **evangelists**, and some **pastors** and **teachers**, for the **equipping of the saints for the work of ministry**, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; Eph 4:11-13*

What has been called the five-fold ministry can be found in the local church, amongst a community of churches locally, a group or band of churches forming a single denomination or interdenominational churches around the world. It is important that we see this fivefold ministry, not only as a gift within the body of Christ but a leadership gifting that God uses to teach, equip and strengthen the disciples of Christ.

1. Apostles:

Definition: One who is sent, missionary, messenger, apostle (sa = go); Jesus picked 12 apostles who would be "sent out ones" to take the Gospel of Christ to a lost world.

This is a person to whom God gives what we may call "the bigger vision"; they can see the bigger picture and, as elders, they can help in giving direction to a number of churches at one time. Paul and Barnabus, Apollos, etc., were all apostles of Christ because they were sent ones to the churches.

2. Prophets:

Definition: This is a person who speaks on behalf of God. This is known as forth-telling. Prophets often foretell the future.

There were many prophets in the Old Testament. The validity of their prophecies was judged on the basis of whether or not what they prophesied came true; if they did not come true, they were judged to be false prophets and were to be taken out by the people and stoned. Sometimes prophets (example: Samuel) were God's mediators or spokesmen, receiving direct revelation from God and revealing God's will and truth. They can be either male or female, speaking a word of wisdom or even sometimes helping in the giving of understanding to parts of the body of Christ.

Related Scriptures: 1 Sam 3:20; Matt 1:22; 24:11; 1 Cor 12:28; 14:32; Eph 3:5

3. Evangelists:

Definition: A speaker who is sent out on behalf of another to proclaim some type of news; a preacher or proclaimer of the gospel. A disciple who goes out and shares the Good News of Jesus Christ with others.

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An evangelist is a disciple of Christ who has been gifted (with evangelism) by the Holy Spirit, having the unique ability to proclaim the Gospel of Christ to others; because of this unique gifting, he/she sees many people coming into a personal relationship with Christ.

Related Scriptures: Acts 21:8; 2 Tim 4:5

4. Pastors:

Definition: A minister in charge of a Christian church or congregation. This was one of the gifts provided by the Holy Spirit to be used in the body of Christ, the Church. The Greek word *poimen* is translated either as shepherd or pastor.

A pastor ministers like a shepherd to a flock. He works under the Great Shepherd, Jesus Christ (see 1 Peter 5:1-5). He is one who leads, nurtures and cares for God's people. Pastors are to be people who have servant hearts, unselfishly loving the flock over which they've been given charge. The Scripture also warns shepherds to be careful how they minister to the sheep because there will be strict judgment from Christ for those who been given this key ministry position by God. (See the word shepherd, and study Psalm 23:1-6 to see the job description of a shepherd/pastor).

Related Scriptures: Ps 80:1; Jer 3:15; Eze 34:5

5. Teachers:

Definition: One who gives instruction, trainer, coach, tutors, or educates.

We are all called to teach; we must understand that, by our actions and words, we are teaching others at all times. Teachers have a greater accountability before God so should be careful how they instruct others. The church where we gather should be a teaching centre, a place to ground people in the Word of God. Teaching, as well as preaching, can be used as a method of evangelism. Teachers are often involved in mentoring other disciples into a deeper understanding of the Word of God.

Related Scriptures: 1 Cor 12:28; 1 Tim 2:7; 2 Tim 4:3; Heb 5:12; 2 Pet 2:1

Project L.A.M.B.S. Book called *Servant Leadership*

Leadership Office of the Church

*Paul and Timotheus, the **servants** of Jesus Christ, to all the **saints** in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the **bishops** and **deacons**.*

Philippians 1:1

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1. Shepherd / Pastors

*Therefore, take heed to yourselves and to all the **flock**, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to **shepherd** the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.*
Acts 20:28

The shepherd or pastor is called to serve others, giving his life for the sheep. Whether we are pastors, ministers, or shepherds, we come under the headship of Jesus Christ. Shepherds are called to go out and change people's lives, becoming history makers. As pastors, we can be the ones God uses to ignite a spark in someone's life, changing the direction of a home, a nation, or the world. We are called to be carriers of precious seed which is to be planted in the hearts God has readied for His purpose.

Definition: shepherd - a person who tends and rears sheep; responsible for protecting the sheep from wild beasts. a member of the clergy who provides spiritual care and guidance for a congregation; guide or direct in a particular direction. *Synonyms:* guide, conduct, usher, steer, herd, lead, escort, accompany, walk, show, see, attend, chaperone.

The picture of the shepherd also represents spiritual leadership that the leaders of Israel were to exercise with their people. The 23rd Psalm is like a job description of how the shepherds were to work with the people of God. Pastors of the church today are to be shepherds to their flocks. Jesus Christ was and is our Great Shepherd.

Pastor / Shepherd Job Description from Psalm 23:1-6:

1. **He makes** (v2).
 - I lie down in green pasture; a place of wonderful food. It is like a good loaf of bread to a person
 - *He brings people into rest. This is what we are to do for the people we shepherd and look after.*
2. **He leads** (v2).
 - I am drinking from clean water that is still and quiet.
 - *He brings people refreshment and peace.*
3. **He restores** (v3).
 - I have been set in the right direction.
 - *He puts my feet on solid ground.*
4. **He guides** (v3).
 - I follow a path of righteousness
 - *He brings me into Christ's righteousness and into the truth of the Gospel.*
5. **He walks with me** (v4a).
 - I am not left alone but He goes with me.
 - *He helps me to face and to walk through the physical, emotional and spiritual challenges of my life.*

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6. **He comforts and protects** (v4b).
 - I am comforted by His rod that fights for me and by the staff that guides me. He picks me up when I fall.
 - *He brings comfort from the rod (the Word of God) and from the staff (the presence of the Holy Spirit).*
7. **He prepares for me** (v5a).
 - I am in a place to eat a banquet. This place is in the view of my enemies and they will see how God cares for His sheep.
 - *He feeds and cares for me and shows to my enemies the power and blessing God pours out on those who love Him.*
8. **He anoints my head with oil** (v5b).
 - We are guests of His household (sheepfold) and He inspects us for bugs and ailments, and he uses his ointment (Holy Spirit) generously.
 - *He brings us into and under the anointing of God. We are His people and He will pour His Spirit upon us generously.*
9. **He blesses me always** (v6a).
 - I shall receive God's goodness and love all the days of my life.
 - *He brings me into a place of understanding and experiencing God's love and goodness for His people.*
10. **He is with me always** (v6b).
 - We will dwell together.
 - *He will bring us to a place of dwelling with the Lord Jesus Christ forever.*

A shepherding heart must be called to lead God's people with a vision and understanding of who God is. A shepherd has an influence that can change the direction of people's lives forever. We are called to build a place of worship, to walk with God, and to lead the people to a heart of understanding. The role of the shepherd is crucial to the welfare of the sheep and to their ability to be productive. Our words and actions can change and affect the course of history. Each person impacts the world by his belief in God. God commissions and empowers in order to complete the call for His glory.

RELATED SCRIPTURES:

1 Kin 22:17; Ps 80:1; Isa 56:11; 63:11, Jer 3:15-16; 12:10; 25:34; 50:6 Eze 34:8; Zech 13:7; Nahum 3:18; Matt 25:32; Luke 2:8-20; John 10:2.

Project L.A.M.B.S. Book called *Shepherds of God's Sheep*

2. **Bishops**

This person is similar in ministry to pastors and shepherds, but his office and function often has him ministering to a number of pastors and churches within a given area.

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Definition: Overseer, elder; church leader, often a pastor to pastors, or an overseer of many churches in a district; Paul gave them a list of standards by which they should live. (See the word elder). Bishop: Episkopos: “an overseer, superintendent, guardian, to watch over, to take care of” (epi, “over,” skepeo, “to look or watch”). The term “bishop,” or “overseer,” indicates the character of the work undertaken. According to the divine will and appointment, in the NT, there were to be “bishops” in every local church, (Acts 14:23; 20:17; Phil. 1:1; Titus 1:5; Jas. 5:14). Where the singular is used the passage is describing what a “bishop” should do (from Vine’s Dictionary of Biblical Words).

Qualification and explanation

See this information listed in the eldership section.

Some denominations still ordain bishops as part of their leadership structure. They (like elders) most often oversee a number of pastors and churches. They tend to be older in faith and have much experience in ministry. This helps them to guide and help both pastors and congregations. They are usually appointed to their position by other bishops who pray and feel assured by the Holy Spirit that the candidate meets the standards and qualification for functioning as an overseeing bishop /pastor.

RELATED SCRIPTURES:

Phil 1:1; 1 Tim 3:1-2; Tit 1:7; 1 Pet 2:25

3. Elders

Elders are a key component of a local church. They are either appointed by other elders or by the local church members. But in some denominations, they can be put in place by the local bishop. Paul gives clear instructions concerning elders, both to us, as well as to Timothy and Titus.

Definition: Leader, overseer, advisor, senior, to be mature, having experience and knowledge.

Elder: Prebuteros: This is where we derive the word “presbytery.” This word simply means “elder, older, or a senior person”. An “elder” is another term for the same person as bishop or overseer. See Acts 20:17 with verse 28. The term “elder” indicated the mature spiritual experience and understanding of those so described; This word is referring to the spiritual maturity of the individual, it is not referring to physical age, else how could Paul tell Timothy to “let no man despise his youth.” Experience is crucial, but experience alone does not make the person spiritually mature. Rather, it is the individual’s obedience, faithfulness, and yielding to God and His dealings in their life.

Pastor Bob Verkoeyen

Office of Elder

A. Definition of New Testament Greek words used to describe the office of elder.

1. Presbuteros - translated "elder"
2. Episkopos - translated "superintendent" or "bishop"
3. Poimen - translated "shepherd" or often "pastor"

B. These three words refer to the same office but describe different aspects or functions.

1. This fact eliminates any New Testament basis for a hierarchal system among the clergy.
2. Pastor, shepherds, elder, presbyter, overseer, bishop refer to the same New Testament office in apostolic usage as seen in the New Testament.

a) In New Testament Scripture the terms bishop, elder, and overseer are all used interchangeably.

(1) Overseer - this term speaks of the work of ministry of an elder. (Acts 20:28)

ii) Elder - refers to the man as a person (Titus 1:5)

iii) Bishop - speaks of the office of an elder (Titus 1:6)

iv) Presbytery - refers to an assembly of elders (1 Tim. 4:14)

v) It seems obvious from Scripture that James was a pastoral elder and Paul and Barnabas were apostolic elders.

b) Whenever these terms are used, the qualifications are identical for each, for they speak of the same person, office, and ministry.

3. The English word "elder" specifically translates from "presbuteros," but included in the umbrella term is the meaning of episkopos and poimen as well.

a) The nouns presbuteros and episkopos are clearly used interchangeably in the New Testament, while poimen (used only once in the noun form) refers to the same office.

b) The three words each describe different aspects of the office of an elder and, in so doing, the words shed light on the specific function of a New Testament elder.

The church is to have elders who can oversee, knowing what is happening to the flock of God. They are to provide wisdom, both in equipping and training, so that disciples may mature and produce fruit that will last. They are also to seek God in prayer. Like deacons they, too, must meet certain standards before they are set apart for the ministry of eldership in the church (1 Tim 3:1-7; Tit 1:5-9).

The choosing of Elders must include several vital components:

1. The call of God must be evident.
2. Qualifications must be met.

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3. Time must be allowed to assure God's leading in the matter.
4. The best interest of the people and their will, welfare, and consensus should be evident and the rule of elders must be sensitive to the needs and spiritual well-being of the people (1 Peter 5:1-5; Acts 20:28). The younger (in maturity and faith) submit to the elder (v-5) but the elders feed and take oversight as loving shepherds who are examples to the flock, not as "lords over God's heritage."

Qualifications for Elder (RSV-KJV)

	<u>1 Timothy 3</u>	<u>Titus 1</u>
1. Above reproach (blameless)	3:2	1:6
2. Temperate	3:2	
3. Sensible (master of himself)	3:2	1:8
4. Good behaviour (dignified)	3:2	1:8
5. Hospitable	3:2	1:8
6. No drunkard	3:3	1:7
7. Gentle (not violent)	3:3	1:7
8. Not quarrelsome	3:3	1:7
9. Patient	3:3	
10. Not self-willed		1:7
11. No lover of money	3:3	1:7
12. Lover of goodness	1:7	
13. Holy		1:8
Family		
14. Husband of one wife	3:2	1:6
15. Good manager of the household	3:4	1:6
Ministerial		
16. An apt teacher	3:2	1:9
17. Not a recent convert	3:6	
18. Thought well of by outsiders	3:7	

Explanation of Elder Qualifications

A. Personal

1. Above reproach (blameless) [1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:6] - The life of an Elder must be above reproach. An unassailable character will command respect for an Elder. Any accusation should be without foundation and proved to be false when investigation is necessary.
2. Temperate (vigilant) [1 Tim. 3:1; Titus 1:8] - The Elder is to be filled with spiritual and moral earnestness. He is not given to excess, but moderate, well-balanced, calm, careful, steady, and sane. This pertains to his physical, moral, mental, and social tastes

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and habits. He is to be ever watchful (vigilant) to maintain Christian character and testimony.

3. Sensible (sober) [1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8] - Serious thinking. The self-controlled or sensible man is the man of sound mind. He is consistently level-headed, capable of sound decisions. Not swayed by sudden impulses, fads, or public pressure - not double minded.
4. Good behaviour [1 Tim. 3:2] - inner moral excellence and outward orderly behaviour that is respected, adding dignity to the office.
5. Hospitable [1 Tim. 3:2, Titus 1:8] - An openness to share; giving of ourselves to others, being open to receive those in need, taking the leadership in setting an example of hospitality as the Body shares together. In Acts the church broke bread together and gave of their means in sharing with the Body and its needs.
6. No drunkard [1 Tim. 3:3, Titus 1:7] - a command like this may sound strange, but it must be remembered that in Bible lands wine was (and still is) a common beverage. In keeping with the concept of self-control and temperance, an Elder must not be a drunkard or "one who lingers beside his wine." He was to be moderate in all things.
7. Gentle (not violent) [1 Tim. 3:3, Titus 1:7] - An Elder must not be a violent man, one who is "ready with his fists." The weapons of our warfare are not carnal and "no striker" simply means "not to strike back."
8. Not quarrelsome but forbearing and peaceable [1 Tim. 3:3, Titus 1:7] - These terms refer to not being contentious or quarrelsome, not getting into arguments or stirring up strife. Elders should endeavour to not only keep the peace, but be peacemakers.
9. Patient [1 Tim. 3:3] - To offset the pressures of the office, an Elder cannot be short tempered, quick to demand, or insist on having his own way immediately. He must exhibit the fruit of the Spirit and patiently seek to accomplish the will of God.
10. Not self-willed [Titus 1:7] - An Elder shall not be stubborn or have his will dominated by the self-life. The attitude shall not be pre-determined by his own mind but be objective so as to be able to make decisions according to the will of God.
11. Not a lover of money [1 Tim. 3:3, Titus 1:7] - "Not a lover of money - insatiable for wealth and ready to attain it by questionable means." Money must not be the motivation behind his decision making.
12. Love of goodness [Titus 1:8] - Appreciate that which is good, and stand for full development of that which is good and right in the world, the church and in men. A man of noble principles.
13. Holy [Titus 1:8] - Pure, a reflection of the nature of God, without guile or deceit, being a participant in the process of sanctification.

B. Family

1. "The husband of one wife" [1 Tim. 3:2, Titus 1:6] - This is restrictive, not imperative. It does not mean that an overseer must be married but that, if he is married, he must be a "one-woman" man, not promiscuous in his attitude or behaviour; a secure family man who lives, appreciates and relates to his own wife and whose conduct with members of the opposite sex is above reproach.

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2. Good manager of the household [1 Tim. 3:4,5; Titus 1:6] - The head of his household who has established principles as to a godly home. His children, even if wayward and rebellious, know the principles for which his parents stand, and that this home is structured according to Biblical standards. The children should, therefore, respect the stand taken by the parents as this household has the reputation of being a godly Christian home. The Elder rules his household well, that is, he lays down scriptural principles, is sincere, "with gravity", and is consistent, which should earn the respect of his children.
 - The father's firmness makes it advisable for a child to obey; his wisdom makes it natural for a child to obey; and his love makes it a pleasure for a child to obey.

C. Ministerial

1. An apt teacher [1 Tim. 3:3, Titus 1:9] - An Elder must be firmly grounded in the Word of God and be able to explain or instruct those needing instruction, correction, or edification. The ruling Elders do not need to function as teaching Elders (that is, in front of a class), but they should be able to instruct in the Word, answer problems that arise, be grounded in scriptural principles so as to be able to make scriptural decisions, to answer any problem or need that arises, and thus, they are "apt" or able, to teach anyone Christian principles based on the Word. He must hold firm to the sure Word as taught.
2. Not a recent convert [1 Tim. 3:6] - This means "not one newly planted," either as a newcomer to the faith, young in Word or experience, or a newcomer to the Body. Elders should be established, respected, trusted men, spiritually knowledgeable in the Word with experience and insight. "He must not be a beginner in the faith, for fear of his becoming conceited and sharing the devil's downfall." (J.B. Phillips)
3. Thought of well by outsiders (respected) [1 Tim. 3:7] - An Elder must be known even to worldly people, outsiders with whom he has dealings, as a man of character, a man against whom it is not possible to level any just charges of wrongdoing. He is a respected person in the community as well as at home and church.

The responsibility of elders - the seven-fold work of the elder

1. **"Feed"** [Acts 20:28, 1 Peter 5:2]
 - a) The word translated "feed" is the verb form of the word translated "shepherd" and, beside feeding, includes "protection, regulation, and whole care of a shepherd for his flock."
 - b) The responsibility of the "overseer shepherd" is a great one. He must not only "shepherd" each sheep, but also tend the whole flock. Probably all that we are going to consider in the seven-fold work of the "overseer" is comprehended in this word "shepherd."
 - c) In the matter of "feeding the flock" great care must be taken in providing the proper food. "The sincere milk of the word" must be given to the "new-born babies" (1

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Peter 2:2) while “strong meat” must be served “to them that are of full age (full-grown men)” (Heb. 5:14). It is to be remembered that an Elder must be “apt to teach” (1 Tim. 3:2). “They are to labour in the Word and Doctrine.” (1 Tim. 5:17)

2. **“Lead”** [Heb. 13:7, 17, 24]

- a) Those who “speak to you the Word of God”
- b) “Live their faith”
- c) “Stand guard over your spiritual good”
- d) “Have great responsibility”
- e) “Are constantly keeping watch over your souls and guarding your spiritual welfare.”
- f) “Will have to render an account (of their trust)”
- g) The “flock” should:
 - “Obey your spiritual leaders”
 - “Submit to them”
 - “Recognize their authority over you”
 - “Try to make their work a pleasure and not a burden”

3. **“Rule”** [1 Tim. 5:17; 1 Thess. 5:12, 13; Rom. 12:8] - in all the above passages the word translated “rule” means “to stand before,” i.e. (In rank) to preside: maintain, be over, rule.

4. **“Be Examples”** [1 Peter 5:3] - It is instructive to note how the Word of God maintains the balance of truth. In our last point we saw the Elders “ruling.” Taken by itself, this might encourage “arrogant dictatorial and overbearing persons.” Our present scripture, however, forbids this sort of thing. There must be authority, but it must be exercised properly.

5. **“Care”** [1 Tim. 3:5] - The meaning of such “care” is inferred in the preceding verse. The Elder “must have proper authority in his own household and be able to control and command the respect of his children.” What he is required to do on the domestic level he must be able to do on the church level. A responsible father is concerned with the oversight, atmosphere, health, and general well-being of his family. So, the Elder is to have the same kind of concern for the church over which he shares the oversight.

6. **“Admonish”** [1 Thess. 5:12] - The word translated “admonish” means “to put in mind; call attention to, i.e., (by implication) to caution or reprove gently; to warn.” Paul is the only one to use the word in the New Testament. It is used for:

- a) Christians admonishing one another (Col. 3:16; Rom. 15:14)
- b) Elders generally admonishing the church (Acts 20:31; 1 Cor. 4:14; Col. 1:28)
- c) Elders specifically admonishing those who are sinning (1 Thess. 5:14; 2 Thess. 3:14, 15).

7. **“Pray for the sick”** [James 5:13, 14] - Here we are considering a body of people called “the church” with properly qualified “elders.” The one who is requesting prayer of the church is being referred to as “one among you.” This is physical healing ministered by God through Elders as they obey “the apostle’s doctrine” on the matter.

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The church has a great need today for the ministry of elders. Often these people can be pastors / shepherds, but they can also be lay people who have been faithful in service to a local body of believers. The believers have seen the gift of eldership and have seen them functioning in this position for some longer period of time. They then, through prayer, set them aside for this leadership ministry to be an overseer who can help give spiritual leadership to the disciples of Christ Jesus.

RELATED SCRIPTURES: Ex 3:16; Acts 11:30; 14:23; 15:4, 20:17; 1 Tim 5:17; Tit 1:5; James 5:14

Deacons

This group of men and woman are often selected by the local body of believers to help serve within the local church. They were appointed to look after the needs of people within the community of believers. They could minister to the poor, widows, orphans and the sick. This was a clear hands-on, personal and practical ministry that all churches need to have functioning.

Definition of Deacon: Servant, appointed by elders, male or female; the Greek word means servant. The primary meaning of the Greek word diakonos, which appears throughout the New Testament, is "servant." From a transliteration of the word diakonos, we arrive at a title of deacon, but the word is used elsewhere as servant or minister. (Mt. 20:26; 23:11; Mk. 10:43; Col. 1:23; Eph. 3:7, etc.)

The Function of Deacons

- A. It is obvious that the first leaders of the New Testament church were the apostles and then as the church grew there arose a need for additional workers.
- B. The one thing that becomes very transparent both in the qualifications for a deacon and the outlining of their ministry is that they were to have a people-related ministry.
 - 1. It is possible to have leadership that functions primarily in a board meeting setting that does not really touch or minister to people.
- C. The plurality of leadership of both elders and deacons is addressed in Phil 1:1 and also 1 Tim. 3:8. The tie of leadership between elders and deacons is evident.
 - 1. This certainly indicates that deacons were not just waiters with a towel over their arm.
 - 2. Acts 6:3 indicates that the 'whole congregation' had input as to who should serve as deacons. The "we" in this passage obviously refers to the apostles who in turn appointed the deacons to their tasks.
 - 3. This points out the fact that there is every evidence in the New Testament church that there were different rankings of gifts in the church, but without competition.

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D. Deacons are literally those who serve Christ and His Body on earth.

1. The particular function of deacons in the New Testament church is based on the description of the office given in Acts 6:1-7.

E. The office of Deacon (unlike the office of Elder) was instituted after the inception of the church at Pentecost.

1. The office was created by the Elders of the church at Jerusalem who needed assistance in carrying out their ever-increasing responsibilities (Acts 6:2-4).
2. The initial responsibilities of the Jerusalem deacons quite simply consisted of whatever assignments the Elders wished to delegate to them, including the daily distribution to the widows (Acts 6:1) and the serving of tables (Acts 6:2).
3. The Elders properly reserved for themselves the responsibility of preaching (Acts 6:2), unified prayer (Acts 6:4), and teaching (Acts 6:4), thus maintaining their role as the primary leaders of the church.
4. Yet, apparently, there was given a flexibility to the deacons to develop their ministry to the church according to their various abilities (e.g. Stephen did great wonders and signs among the people (Acts 6:8)).

F. It is important enough to reiterate that the office of deacon was instituted by Elders and the specific function of the deacons in Jerusalem was clearly determined by the Elders as well.

1. The deacons performed those tasks which were delegated to them by the Elders and as such, were responsible to the Elders who were the overseers of the church.

Explanation of the Qualifications of Deacons

A. Relationship to character and spiritual matters:

1. Good reputation "of honest report" (Acts 6:3)
2. "Men of good and attested character and repute" - Amp.

B. Spirituality "full of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 6:3)

1. Maintaining a Spirit-filled life for service, thus exhibiting the power and the fruit of the Spirit in their daily activity and service.

C. Sound spiritual judgment "full of wisdom" (Acts 6:3)

1. Capable of wise decisions and actions; not merely the practical skill of professional experience, but wisdom from above, teaching how to respond in all situations.

D. Full of Faith (Acts 6:5)

1. Spiritual men who believe God, trusting Him as their source and depending on Him for their success. Able to pray with people and believe God for miracles. Two of these men, Stephen and Philip, went on to affect whole cities for God, exercising great faith in ministry.

E. Relationship to the Church

1. Acceptable to the Church (Acts 6:5)
 - a. "The saying pleased the whole multitude". Deacons must be men who are known and established in "the way", men in whom the assembly can have confidence.
2. Acceptable to the elders "whom they set before the apostles" (Acts 6:6)
 - a. The apostles, who exercised ministry gifts and were serving elders in the local Jerusalem church at this time, must concur in the choice of the people, or the apostles (elders) were to appoint the deacons "over the business", v.3.
 - b. They must be able to have confidence in the appointees for unity in the church. Growth can be best served by agreement between the leaders and people on these important matters.
3. Set apart by the elders (Acts 6:6)
 - a. "They laid their hands on them," and they prayed. By this act of "laying on of hands" the apostles acknowledged the call to this ministry, identified in partnership with the men chosen and indicated an impartation of leadership authority. By this public service, the congregation shared in the dedication of this individual to the ministry.

F. Relationship to Personal Life

1. Serious, grave, dignified (1 Tim. 3:8); "sober-minded" (v.11)
 - a. Both in inner and outer life the deacon must be serious minded, sober, and worthy of respect in the office. As a Christian, they should exhibit the "joy of the Lord," but as a Christian and a deacon they must not exhibit a shallow superficiality. They should act and be worthy of the trust committed to them.
2. Not double-tongued (1 Tim. 3:8)
 - a. "Not shifty and double talkers, but sincere in what they say." "Not talebearers!" (Moffatt) He "does not talk out of both sides of his mouth."
 - b. A sincere and genuine life which will be exhibited by his conversation. Totally loyal, not critical or talebearing - consistent in his speech.
3. Not given to wine (1 Tim. 3:8)
 - a. He must not drink strong drink, and like Elders, set an example in moderation and temperance in all things; especially those things in our time and society that are connected with worldly lifestyle and involvement.
4. Not greedy for gain "desirous of filthy lucre (1 Tim. 3:8)
 - a. Being a deacon is not for the purpose of enhancing business opportunities. Money is not to be the motivation for service or the basis for decisions. The love of the Lord and His people is the main reason for his calling and the deacon serves, even, at times, at his own expense. He reflects the teaching of Jesus regarding personal gain.

G. Relationship to the Ministry

1. "Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience (1 Tim. 3:9)
 - a. While not required to be "apt to teach", deacons must be loyal to the Word of God. In handling their service to the Body, they must always do so in relation to the Word and with a pure conscience.
2. "Let these also first be proved (1 Tim. 3:10)
 - a. As an Elder is not to be a novice, so the deacon must be well-known by life and example, not a newcomer, newly converted or a beginner, but someone in whom the people have confidence and they are "known by their doing." They should be looked upon as having a respected ministry, and then they are appointed to such an office.
3. Blameless (1 Tim. 3:10)
 - a. Free from accusation of wrongdoing, above reproach so no fault can be found.
4. Faithful in all things (1 Tim. 3:11)
 - a. Together with their wives they should be faithful - consistent in life and action - dependable, able to be counted on, always the same, never varying in their commitment to God, the church, family and this ministry.

H. Relationship to their Family

1. "Even so must their wives be..." (1 Tim. 3:11)
 - a. "The wives must be worthy of respect and serious, not gossipers, but temperate and self-controlled, (thoroughly) trustworthy in all things." "Their wives must be serious, too; they must not be slanderers, they must be temperate, and absolutely trustworthy" (Moffatt).
 - b. A man's wife will enhance or hinder a man's ministry and therefore these qualifications include requirements for his wife's wholehearted agreement and cooperation with this ministry.
 - c. These wives should especially watch their tongues; "not slanderers, gossipers" since they have more access to information about church people because of the husband's involvement with the needs of people by virtue of his office. The wives must help to protect the privacy of people, be extremely loyal and not use this office to spread tales. Any such action is a violation of trust and not worthy of the confidence placed in this family where the husband is chosen to serve.
2. "Let the deacons be the husband of one wife" (1 Tim. 3:12)
 - a. This requirement is the same as that pertaining to elders. Chaste in their dealings with the opposite sex, above reproach in marriage matters, a "one-woman man."
3. Must manage children and household well (1 Tim. 3:12)
 - a. The home, its principles and practices should set an example of a godly Christian home, being well-established, above reproach, and orderly.
 - b. The children should reflect the parent's standards, since the position and practices of this home are well-defined according to scriptural principles. The family of a deacon should be respected and above reproach in the community as well as in the church.

Deaconess

A. The role of women in office of deaconess

1. In the New Testament church when seven individuals were chosen to minister to widows and serve tables, all named were men (Acts 6:1-6).
2. Nevertheless, the New Testament does record the presence of women workers in the church.
 - a) Paul wrote to Phillip, "Help these women, for they have laboured side by side with me in the gospel." (Phil. 4:3)
 - b) In the letter to the Romans, Paul wrote, "I command to you our sister Phoebe, a deaconess of the church at Cenchrea, that you may . . . help her in whatever she may require of you, for she has been a helper of many and of myself as well." (Rom. 16:1-2)

B. The mention of Phoebe in Romans 16:1 as a "deaconess" suggests that women were permitted to perform the duties of a diakonos in the early church. Such is also intimated in 1 Tim. 3:11 where "gunaikas" "wives" (KJV) is translated more accurately "women" (RSV).

C. Qualities of women serving as deaconess:

1. The qualifications for deaconesses are essentially the same as those for deacons.
 - a) Noted emphasis is placed on the fact that if they are married women, they are to complement their husband's ministry, especially singling out that they should be:
 - (1) Grave, serious, not frivolous
 - (2) Not slanderers, watch the tongue and be careful not to gossip, backbite, find fault or accuse.
 - (3) Join their husbands in being sober-minded, setting an example.
 - (4) Faithful in all things.
 - b) The same qualifications are true for deaconesses who are not married, if chosen to serve.
 - (1) It is conceivable that a non-married woman or a widow be appointed as deaconess. Paul mentioned that the unmarried with the gift of celibacy, such as those mentioned, can serve God "without distraction" that a family would bring. (1 Cor. 7:32-35)
2. Thus, all of these women can serve God acceptably in this role.
 - a) Wives, as deaconesses, will complement the husband's ministry as a deacon, making the family a solid unit which can serve God in the Body of Christ together - if this is the procedure for a local church.
 - b) The wife must not hinder, bring reproach, or cause division, but faithfully support and serve. The same should be true for the wives of elders. The same is true for unmarried women who may be appointed to the office of deaconess, if it is determined that is their ministry.

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D. The Scriptural basis for women serving as deaconess.

1. The ministry of women is found throughout the Bible. In the Old Testament, there are prophetesses such as Deborah and Miriam, even leading the army and speaking the word of the Lord. Others in the New Testament had no official titled roles, but served the people of God such as:
 - a) The church at Philippi began with women (Acts 16:14,15)
 - b) "Help those women which laboured with me in the gospel (Phil. 4:3)
 - c) Dorcas, "was full of good works and alms deeds" ... making "coats and garments," whom Peter "raised from the dead." (Acts 9:36-40).
 - d) The early church in Jerusalem seemingly met in Mary's home. John Mark's mother (Acts 12:12), served the church in this way.
 - e) Priscilla served along with her husband Aquilla, as mentioned several times in Acts.
 - f) 2 John is written to the elect lady "whom I love in the truth; and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth." She had evidently been showing hospitality, even to the wrong type of travelling ministries. She is now exhorted not to continue this, but to receive worthy ministries, as the Elder Gaius in 3 John is exhorted to do.
 - g) The deaconess was recognized in the councils of Nicea 325 and Chalcedon 451, but rejected in later councils, to be revived in more recent times.
2. Whether by title or function, women have always served the Lord and should be included in the work of the Kingdom. "For there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." (Gal. 3:28).

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As already mentioned above, the role of the deacon and deaconess is so important and foundational to the functioning of the local body of believers. It is an area that should not be overlooked and this ministry needs to work in conjunction with the elders so that the body of Christ can be strengthened and matured. The elders and deacons help mold the church, both in maturity and discipline. They are there as servants to help the body of Christ to see growth and to bear fruit. Much prayer and research should diligently take place before people are appointed or voted to hold these offices.

RELATED SCRIPTURES: Phil 1:1; 1 Tim 3:8, 13; Rom 16:1

Principle Thirteen: FOCUSES ON EQUIPPING AND TRAINING DISCIPLES

*"Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the **church** that day—about 3,000 in all. All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' **teaching**, and to **fellowship**, and to sharing in meals (including the **Lord's Supper**), and to **prayer**. A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders. And all the believers met **together** in one place and **shared** everything they*

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*had. They sold their property and possessions and **shared** the money with those in need. They **worshipped** together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the **Lord's Supper**, and **shared** their meals with great joy and generosity, all the while **praising** God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their **fellowship** those who were being saved".*

Acts 2:41-47 (NLT)

The first day we became disciples of Christ was also the first day we became part of His body, the Church. The two go hand-in-hand. He is the Head and we are His body. We become connected as brothers and sisters in the Lord. We are a family, having one common goal and that is to proclaim and glorify our Lord Jesus Christ in all that we say and do. We are His children and, through the ministry of the church, which was birthed by the Holy Spirit, He cares for us and meets the needs that we face each day. His church is our place of sanctuary and peace. It is a place where we can be built up and encouraged. It is the place that God has created for us to grow and mature in so that we can produce fruit that will last. It is a place where we should be able to experience a little bit of God's heaven here on earth. This is what we have been called to be part of ... Christ's body, His church.

The church, as it comes together in a specific place, does so for the purpose of training, nurturing and equipping of the various members. The book of Acts gives us numerous accounts of how the apostles would see a church born in a location and then would stay six months to a year or more, grounding it, equipping it and establishing it as a functioning body of believers.

*Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So, it was that for an **entire year** they met with the **church** and **taught** a great many people, and it was in Antioch that the **disciples** were first called "Christians."*
Acts 11:25-26

The reason that the churches grew and became strong was because the apostles took time to train them in the Word of God. Not only that, they appointed leadership that would give direction and discipline to the local believers. The ministry of discipleship is training people in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. There is much to learn and understand, but it takes people that God has raised up to equip us for the ministry that Christ has for us.

Instruction must come in a way that people will understand. The Jewish people would reason together (the polite way of saying they would argue it out until they had an answer or solution). Training people takes a lot of time and instruction. Not all people learn the same way so a variety of methods must be used to equip different believers. One of the purposes for the sending of the Holy Spirit was to teach and guide the individual disciple and the church; as a church, we need to be more closely connected to that reality.

It is important to see that these early new believers saw the need to devote themselves to instruction. They were hungry for more understanding about God and His Word. They received Peter's message and then were obedient unto baptism. They devotedly committed themselves

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to be taught more about the ways of Christ. Christ Himself was a master Teacher and a model for all the disciples to follow. Teaching is the key to equipping of others for service.

Definitions

1. **Teaching:** a system or thing used as an example to follow or imitate; *Synonyms:* type, version, style, mould, template, framework, pattern, design, guide, blueprint, paradigm, sample, example.
2. **Instruction:** a direction or order; detailed information telling how something should be done, operated, or assembled. *Synonyms:* teaching, coaching, tutoring, education, schooling, tutelage, lessons, classes, lectures, training, drill, drilling, discipline, preparation, grounding, priming, direction, guidance, information, enlightenment, edification, educator, tutor, instructor.
3. **Understanding:** the ability to understand or think; intelligence, the power of apprehension; the power of abstract thought. *Synonyms:* intelligence, comprehension, conclusion, perception, to apprehend, grasp, figure out, identify, follow, master, learn, discern, be instructed in, see the light.
4. **Training:** to coach in or accustom to some mode of behaviour or performance; to make proficient with specialized instruction or practice; to focus or direct. *Synonyms:* to teach, coach, tutor, school, educate, practice, prepare.
5. **Equipping:** to supply with resources, fit out, to provide for; to provide with what is necessary, useful or appropriate. *Synonyms:* provide, furnish, supply, issue, arm, endow.
6. **Disciple:** one who is a follower, believer, supporter, devotee, student, learner. A disciple is one who follows after the imparted knowledge of a teacher and emulates the lifestyle of the teacher. In the New Testament people were called by Christ to follow Him and in so doing they became His disciples. (Both men and women can be called disciples).
7. **Discipleship:** adherence to a teacher's faith, a process of training and equipping someone. The disciples of Christ are commanded to go out and make other disciples, and this can only come through the discipline of discipleship training.

There are three components that are foundational to missions, evangelism and discipleship. They are also the same foundation stones for the local church. Reproduction – growth – maturity: each of these play a critical part in the big picture that the local church and the disciple faces each day. Discipleship is a lifestyle and an everyday life event, moment by moment, part of our thinking and a burden upon our hearts. Because of this new life we have received from Jesus Christ, we must get equipped and trained so that we can be a vessel that will glorify Him.

1. Reproduction

- Cells carry the DNA code of the original cell. They are part of each other, but separate.
- the key is to work ourselves out of a job, to reproduce ourselves in someone else so that they will be able to reproduce in others what has been produced in themselves.
- Scripture: 2Timothy 2:2

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2. Growth

- This takes time, both in the preparing of one's soul and the actual growing process – from a seed to a mature plant to a plant that will bear fruit.
- Scripture: Acts 12:24, 1 Cor. 3:6; 2 Peter 3:18

3. Maturity

- When one looks at nature usually only the mature reproduce some type of offspring.
- John's Gospel challenges us to produce fruit that will last (John 15:16).
- We need to be producers of quality not quantity
 - Scripture 1 Cor. 2:6-9; Eph. 4:11-13; 1 Cor. 14:20

It is important that the seasoning of all aspects of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23) be used in equipping and maturing. Unless a spiritual gift has first been "covered" by the fruit of the Spirit, it should never be used. God is a God of order. His desire is to take us on a maturity journey in which we grow deeper in the Holy Spirit and become more like Christ in all we say and do. Christ lays out some very specific teaching for believers in regard to their attitudes and actions (Matt 5-7).

The tests of a Disciple and the fruit that will become evident as we grow and mature in the teachings of Christ Jesus. The disciple will become more:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| - Obedience | John 14:15 |
| - Faithful | John 15:8 |
| - Persevering | John 8:31 |
| - Loving | John 13:35 |
| - Humble | Matt. 10:24, 25 |
| - Surrendering | Luke 14: 26, 33 |
| - Willing to bear the cross | Matt. 16:25 |
| -Full of the Fruit of the Spirit | Gal. 5:22-23 |

In the process of equipping, mentoring, and maturing, it is key that the disciples engage in the proper use of spiritual gifts which they have received. Gifts are for the body of believers, so that they can minister one to another. Leaders need to help disciples understand how and when to properly minister with the gifts that they have been given. This was one of the challenges that the Corinthian church faced (1 Cor 12-14). They needed to see clearly that all giftings must function on the foundation of LOVE (1 Cor 1-13). It is just as important in the church today that believers understand, wisely and knowledgeably, how to function and operate with the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Like all trades and profession there is the formal time of learning in the classroom, but we also need a time of doing an internship program (as it were) in real life situations. We cannot be, as James says, just hearers of the Word, but we must be doers also (James 1:19). Another important point is that, as you teach others, you also become a learner as a result of the time you spend helping others. The Word of God becomes more established in your own life. We all have something to give and to teach others. Seek God in prayer and He will show you someone and He will lead you to how you should minister to them. Teaching does not have to be profound;

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it only has to be simple and clear and shared from a heart of love. With that in mind, it will find good soil in which to be planted and you will begin to see fruit for Jesus Christ.

RELATED SCRIPTURES:

Acts 8:30-32; 15:35; 18:25; Eph 4:12, 22-24; Col 2:6-7; 2 Thes 2:15; 1 Tim 3:15

Project L.A.M.B.S. Book called *The Disciple's Church*

Principle Fourteen: FOCUSES ON MISSIONS

*"Then He said to His disciples, the **harvest truly is plentiful**, but the **labourers are few**. Therefore, pray the **Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into His harvest**".*

Matt 9:37-38

*"Therefore do not be ashamed of the **testimony** of our Lord, nor me his prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God, who has saved us and **called** us with a holy **calling**, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began,"*

2 Timothy 1:8-9

Definitions Assignment, task, work, charge, undertaking, operation; one who goes as a representative of another. any one or group of people who are sent abroad for a specific purpose. Latin "missio" means "**to send**", messenger, more strictly speaking, to send across cultural lines from one group to another.

Let's look at the words *Mission and Missionary*. The word **mission** means an assignment, task, work, charge, undertaking, operation. God has commissioned all disciples to be missionaries in His harvest field. The harvest is ripe; God commissions His labourers to serve each day, whether in the home, job, neighbourhood or around the world. **Missionaries** are sent out ones that God calls to deliver, on His behalf, the Good News of Jesus Christ. The missionary is an ambassador who represents the Kingdom of God. Jesus gave the Great Commission to all disciples in Matthew 28:16-20.

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Seeing the harvest and the need:

Christ desired to show His disciples that, while the harvest was truly ripe, there were very few laborers to bring in that harvest (Matt 9:35-38). He encouraged them to be part of the solution by becoming laborers themselves. The need was great. Jesus wanted them to go from village to village, proclaiming the good news about the kingdom of heaven. The disciples had been watching Christ teaching in the synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing people of their sicknesses and diseases. He wanted the disciples/missionaries to recognize that the “sheep” were weary and scattered, and had no shepherd to help them.

Christ emphasized to His disciples that, because of the abundant harvest and the shortage of laborers, they needed not only to get involved themselves, but also needed to pray that the Lord would provide more laborers who were willing to go out into the harvest fields (Matt 9:35-38). Before they went out, the disciples/missionaries needed, through the eyes of Jesus, to see where the harvest was, so that they could go and reap in the fields to which God had called them. Paul told the church that some would plant, others would water, but it would be God Who would give the increase, causing the harvest to be ready (1 Cor 3:6).

It is important that the eyes of disciples/missionaries be focused on the needs of people whom they are going to serve. We are called to serve others, not to be served ourselves. All over the world, people have great needs; the needs may be physical, mental, and spiritual. These are the challenges that disciples/missionaries will face each day. That's why they need to spend as much time as possible in prayer, seeking the Lord as to where to go and how to minister so that His harvest can be brought in according to His purpose and will.

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Being sent out ones:

After His resurrection, Jesus told His disciples He was going to send them out, first to Jerusalem, then to Samaria, and finally to the uttermost parts of the earth. They were sent out as missionaries on His behalf. In Matthew 10:1-44 Jesus provided insight to them on what their ministry would be like. Following is a short list of some of the things that he instructed the disciples to do; he prophesied to them about what would take place as they went out as His ambassadors to a lost world.

Here is what Jesus shared with them just before He sent them out on their first short term mission trip: (Matt. 10:1-44)

- that He was commanding them and sending them out
- that they were to go first to the lost sheep of Israel v6
- that they were to tell the people that the Kingdom of God is at hand v7
- that they were to heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons v8a
- that freely you have received now go out and freely give
- that whatever the Holy Spirit gives to them they were to freely speak out, doing all this in the name of Christ Jesus v8b
- that they were not to worry about provisions, money, clothes or even sandals and that they didn't even need a walking stick or food.
- that God would provide for them and use them to bless others v9
- that as they travelled and as the Spirit led them to go to various towns and cities, they were to:
 - Stay in people's homes until finished
 - bless them and pray, leaving peace upon that home
- that for those who do not receive your words v14
 - there would be many who would not want to hear or change
 - they were to shake off the dust
- that the judgment on those would be worse than that which fell upon Sodom and Gomorrah v15
- see clearly now (behold) v16
 - that they were sheep in the midst of wolves
 - that they were to be wise as serpents and harmless as to doves
- that men would torture them v17
- that their lives would be a testimony to the Gentiles v18
- that when they came before their persecutors not to worry about what to say v19
- that they were to remember that the Holy Spirit was sent by the Father and would speak in them and through them in those hours v20
- that they would have problems with their parents and family v21
- that they would be hated because of the name of Christ v22
- that there would be persecution, but to keep going because they would not get through all the places before the Son of Man came v23
- it was important for the disciples to listen and obey Christ v24

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- that they were not to fear as all things would be revealed v26
- that whatever the Holy Spirit told them in the darkness, or in their quiet time, they were to speak in the light and preach from the rooftops v27
- they were not to fear what enemies could do to their bodies v28
- that God watches the two sparrows and He will also intently watch them as they do His will v29
- that God even knows the number of hairs on their heads; He knows all the details about them both now and in the future v30
- that they are very valuable to God v31
- that they needed to confess Him before men and to be careful that they do not deny Him v32
- that there will not be peace; He brings the sword (Word of God) against them v34
- that they must put God first in all areas of their life v35-37
- that they must take up the cross and follow Jesus v38
- that if they should lose their lives for Christ's sake they would find real life in Him v39
- that they can bless others by just giving them a cup of cold water v40
- that they should remember that when they go, He will also go with them v40
- that God will reward His children v41
- that even doing the small things as giving a cup of cold water to a child is a great blessing to God the Father v42

The Gospels have much teaching that helps the disciple/missionary to understand how to serve when they go out to the mission field. In some ways the above is just an overview, but it's like a window through which the disciple/missionary is able to look and gain understanding of both the positive and negative things they encounter as they obey the great commission.

Making Disciples / Missionaries

This is a command that all disciples/missionaries of Christ are called to obey. It is self-evident that these great commission commands are not going to be easy for the followers of Christ to fulfill. But He is not asking us to do these things in our own strength and power. He wants us to have the faith and belief that we can do these things in His strength and in His power. That is why He sent the Holy spirit Who comes into our lives and makes all things possible, not because of who we are, but because of Who He is (Acts 1:8).

Again, it is important for the disciple/missionary to understand that these great commission statements are the last words of Jesus Christ before He returned to heaven. The commands in the great commission are not optional; they are truths that all disciples/missionaries are called upon, and commanded to do. We will take a look at two that Christ gave to His followers.

The first one is found in Matthew 28:18-20.

Jesus told the disciples,

- that He was giving them all authority in heaven and earth

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- that they were to **go** make disciples
- they were to **baptize** them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- that they were to **teach** these new disciples to **observe** all things that He had commanded them
- that He would be with them always even and to the end of the age

The second one we will look at is found in Mark 16:15-18.

Jesus told the disciples,

- that they were to **go** into all the world
- that they are to **preach** the gospel
- that those that believed would be saved and that they should bear testimony of their salvation through baptism
- that **signs would follow** because of the Holy Spirit working through them
 - they will cast out demons
 - they would speak in new tongues
 - things that are deadly will not kill them
 - they will lay hands on the sick and they would recover

From these verses we can get a clear picture of what a disciple/missionary should be involved in, and what the call should look like. It is the frame holding together the picture of the missionaries' service to others.

God has commissioned all disciples to be missionaries in His harvest field. The harvest is ripe; God commissions his labourers to serve each day, whether in the home, job, neighbourhood, or around the world. Missionaries are sent out ones that God calls to deliver, on His behalf, the Good News of Jesus Christ. The missionary is an ambassador who represents the Kingdom of God. In Matthew 28:16-20 Jesus gave the Great Commission to all disciples.

The moment a disciple/missionary steps out across a cultural boundary, there are a whole host of new things one needs to learn and clearly understand. There are hundreds of different people groups around the world; they speak different languages, use different scripts, and hold to a variety of unique cultures and traditions. It is interesting to note how many times the book of Revelation states that in heaven every tribe and tongue and nation and people group will be represented (Rev 4:9; 7:2; 10:11; 11:9; 13:5; 14:6; 17:15). Disciples/Missionaries need to spend time pondering this reality, and asking the Lord to enable us to take the gospel of Christ Jesus to the world's people, all of whom are part of His creation.

As disciples/missionaries, we need to remember we are representing a body of believers where Jesus Christ Himself is our Head. We are commissioned and sent out through the Church. We should endeavor to work closely with the sending churches; we are told there is strength in numbers. On the mission field there are too many missionaries who feel left alone and deserted. We should never get to the point where it becomes "them and us". We are called to accomplish

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this ministry together. Churches today are busy doing many things, but often there is little communication with their missionaries out on the field. Mind you, it is also true that missionaries do not always communicate very well with the churches.

Because the harvest field is ripe and the laborers are few, we need to accept the calling God has placed on our hearts. We need to go to that specific harvest field to which he has directed us, and bring in His harvest. We are told that we are His hands and feet; we are also told He will never leave us nor forsake us (Deut 31:6; Josh 1:5). He has called us to be His ambassadors to a lost world. The Scriptures tell us, "How beautiful are the feet of them who bring good news" (Rom 10:15). For hundreds of years, many people groups around the world have lived in bondage to Satan and his demons; Christ, however, has come to set the captive free (Gal 5:1). Christ does this through commissioning and empowering us to go out in His strength and ability, not ours.

Being a disciple/missionary is not an easy ministry. The enemy of our souls will try to attack us in a variety of ways. But our goal and purpose is to bring together as one: mission, evangelism and discipleship. When we read the book of Acts, it becomes quite clear that the missionaries went out, proclaimed (evangelized) the gospel of Jesus Christ, and then took time to build up disciples in Christ Jesus through teaching. Because of these three actions being done simultaneously, churches were established; "lighthouses" began to appear in many places throughout various lands. On behalf of our Lord Jesus Christ, as His ambassadors, we are here to bring reconciliation to a lost world. This world is not our final destination. (See Appendix 1)

We have also been given the fruit of the Spirit which, in turn, flows out through the giftings that God has given to us to use on the mission field. Our lives should be overflowing with love, grace and mercy to a lost world. Our homes should be places of refuge where people can come and be strengthened and encouraged, places where they can meet Jesus Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords.

Time becomes one of the biggest enemies we will face. In our minds, there never seems to be enough time to do what we've been called to do. The Scriptures tell us that there is enough time, as long as we're in step with the will of God Himself. Christ wants to make us more like Him; as we allow that to happen, our lives will begin to bear fruit. Other people will be changed when they see the changes in our lives. On earth we will never be perfect, but there is coming a time when Jesus Christ Himself will make of us a new creation.

The main purpose of the ministry to which God has called us is that of reflecting to others the glorious light of Jesus Christ. We are the rough diamonds that He takes, chiseling off all the rough edges so that we can shimmer and shine. Of course, God concerns himself with the bigger body of believers, but He is also very concerned about lost souls, desiring them to see Him as their Lord and Savior. He also greatly desires to take our lives and graft them into Himself so that we can bear fruit which will last for His glory (John 15:1-11).

Igniting a Mission Fire

Following are some ideas that can be used to **ignite a Mission Fire** in one's local Church. The biggest challenge is to communicate the imperative of mission outreach, both locally and abroad. People need to understand that mission outreach is at the heart of Christ's call and commission for every believer. In order for people to have a heart to equip others with the Gospel of Christ, the importance of doing missions as a local church must be communicated and taught. All generations are to carry out this ministry – from children to seniors. We are all called to get involved; there are no bystanders.

Mission cell groups, that focus on prayer, training and getting people involved with some type of mission outreach. Taking the time to pray and brainstorm together, to hear and do the kinds of projects that can be done as a group of believers under the headship of Jesus Christ.

Mission Sunday Services, where the church could set aside, maybe once every six months, a complete service that would focus on a specific mission. The music, Scriptures and testimonies all deal with a specific country or mission outreach. Or, once a month, a short five-minute video updating the congregation as to what one of the missionaries they support, is doing and hearing what their needs may be.

Mission Conference, the local church may want, each year on a weekend, to put on a conference where various mission organizations would be invited to the church to share and give testimony of what God is doing. A conference can also be used as a time of training people within the church on how to become more mission/discipleship orientated. One could do this in conjunction with other churches in the community; this approach could be used to break down any walls between churches and plant seeds of unity, resulting in churches working together to reach out to a lost world.

Mission Retreats, can be put on by several churches where a camp is rented for a weekend, and focus is given to a variety of teachings concerning missions. Topics could include how one could get involved, raising support, getting information, and even praying with others about what God may be saying to their hearts concerning missions. The day could be broken up into a variety of activities which revolve around giving people a greater understanding about missions and the purpose of missions in the local church.

Mission Board, each church should have a Mission Board where the focus is to communicate concerning the work and needs of missionaries that the church supports. Missions is not a "them and us" type of ministry, but an "us and us" working together as a team – as a body of believers. It is the board's role to communicate the needs of missions and to come up with ways that the local church can get more involved as well as raising funds for the spreading of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Mission Communication, with today's technology there are so many ways that the local

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church can reach out, both to people around the world and to the missionaries they support. With phone, Skype, YouTube and many other ways, churches are able to touch the lives of their missionaries and of the lost around the world. We need to overcome our fears of communication and to let the Lord speak to us, and through us, to others.

Mission Field outreach, it is important that the local church gets involved in reaching their own community as well as reaching out to the world. Not everyone can be full-time missionaries, but all of us are called to some type of mission outreach. If two or more connect and encourage each other through prayer and planning, this group can reach out to the lost. The local church could even plan to raise funds whereby, once a year, they could send somebody to visit one of their supported missionaries; then that person would come back and give a report to their local church.

Mission to local community, every community has some type of service group; such a group may be directly representing the Church of Jesus Christ or simply be a group trying to help their fellow citizens. Even if it's not a church-centered organization, there are all kinds of needs in the local community in which one can be involved. There are ventures like food banks, helping at shelters, giving a helping hand at a clothing depot, giving out hampers or participating in projects such as Samaritan's Purse. Our communities need people whose lives have been changed by Jesus Christ, people who are willing to let their light shine through their actions.

Mission Publications, a church can also get involved in preparing, writing, and distributing materials such as booklets, community newsletters, gospel tracts, and news articles for local papers. Signs highlighting things related to the gospel of Christ can be erected.

Mission Testimonies, are important in the local church – as many as possible get an opportunity to share their faith. The impact of a testimony can touch an entire community. Remember the testimony of the woman at the well. Short video testimonials can be posted on YouTube. The Internet can be used by people willing to blog about their Christian faith and what God is doing in their lives.

Mission Fellowship Meals, churches can host potluck meals focusing on different countries where all the food that's prepared can represent a specific country. The decorations, the music, and even how the meals are eaten can demonstrate what it would be like to be a cross-cultural missionary living in another country.

Missions to Immigrants, because of the hundreds of people migrating into some countries, can be effective. These people have many needs, ranging from clothing and medical attention to learning the English language. They may need someone to give them rides and someone to teach them the ways of our society. As Christians, we should be first in extending love to them. We need to find out where they're living, as well as learning of the struggles they are facing each day. Then, we need to begin putting together teams of people to help them. There is so much we can do for people like this. God is bringing the world to our doorsteps.

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Mission Societies, there are hundreds of these groups around the world. They are set up to help in a variety of ways, ranging from projects that are humanitarian in nature to those preparing people for the spiritual realm that lies ahead. Humanitarian projects like starting schools, drilling wells, improving farming methods, running small businesses, doing hospital work, translation work, learning a second language – all of these need our support.

Mission and Children, we should never underestimate the power of children in missions; God takes their simple faith, and often uses it to break down some of the hardest hearts. From a young age, we need to be training children to understand that God can use them in a variety of ways, not only in their communities, but around the world. We need to show them that there is a lot more involved in missions than just having someone go into another part of the world. We need to have them understand that mission is getting people involved in all avenues of life, using their lives as lights for the Gospel of Jesus Christ, whether they will be “tentmakers” or full-time missionaries.

Mission and Youth, this group needs to experience hands-on opportunities to be witnesses for Christ within their own local communities, across the country, or in other parts of the world. The local church should plan ways that their young people can experience what it means to do missions. This may mean short-term mission trips, but it also may mean youth giving a month of their time to either serve their church or their community. Many times experience is the best teacher. And we, as a body of believers, need to equip them for service, both for the present time and for the days and years ahead of them. There are many programs and materials that can be searched out on the Internet if one just takes the time to do so.

Mission and Seniors, nowhere in the Bible is there reference to believers retiring from the work of serving Jesus Christ after the age of 65. In fact, these people now have time and, often, the finances to serve in a variety of ways, both locally and around the world. They have the time to pray, to write letters, to use their skills to build things, and to use their wisdom to help direct committees and boards. There is a largely untapped storehouse of people who need to be motivated to get involved in service, using their later years to finish the race well for Jesus Christ. There are so many mission organizations across Canada and around the world that can use their help in both short and long-term ministries. Do we believe God can still use this group of people for His Kingdom? That is a key question.

Mission to Missionaries, the church also needs to have a clear understanding of their responsibility to the ones they have sent out. The church must continue to minister to their missionaries on the field. The church should set up a team of at least two or three people who dedicate themselves, maybe for one year, to communicate, pray for, and share with the church the things which their sent-out missionaries are experiencing.

Mission Teams, if at all possible, it is good for a local church to send out short term mission teams. The more that people go out on mission teams and experience the will and call of God on their lives, the more intense will be their heart for missions. Such teams move people outside their comfort zones, causing them to face and deal with things that they would never

experience living at home. Teams can be made up of varying age groups, including children, reaching out to some place in the community. Young people can go and do some type of short-term mission. Teams of parents can go out and experiencing cross-cultural life. Even teams of seniors can take their giftings and talents, helping others for short periods of time.

These are just a few ideas of how to **Ignite a Mission Fire** within one's church and community. We need not worry about the size or numbers of people getting involved in missions. It takes just a spark to get a fire going and, once a fire has started, it will ignite more "fuel" which, in due time, will create a glowing fire for Jesus Christ

Project L.A.M.B.S. Book called *Missions and Missionaries*

Principle Fifteen: FOCUS ON LAST DAY EXHORTATIONS OF JESUS CHRIST CONCERNING THE CHURCH

End times: The book of Revelation pictures for us the different kinds of churches in the last days – churches that have both good and negative characteristics. We see from these seven examples mentioned that a number of them got away from the Headship of Jesus Christ, and got sidetracked into things that defiled and weakened the church here on earth. I believe that this prophecy concerning the seven churches can be a measuring stick used to evaluate the church we serve at or attend.

Let us take a few moments to reflect on some of the characteristics of these seven churches that Jesus described:

Revelation 2:1- 3:22

- 1. Ephesus** - The strong church
Rev 2:1-7
 - Had patiently borne adversity and could not stand evil.
 - They had left their first love. God appealed to them to remember from where they had fallen.
- 2. Smyrna** - The poor, rich church.
Rev 2:8-11
 - This church would face persecution.
 - God had nothing against them.
- 3. Pergamum** - The faltering church
Rev 2:12-17
 - Had not denied God.
 - Had allowed false prophets into the church.
- 4. Thyatira** - The apostate church
Rev 2:18-29
 - Had many good works.
 - Had allowed the false prophetess Jezebel to come in.

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5. **Sardis** - The dying church
Rev 3:1-6
 - Asked to repent and watch.

6. **Philadelphia** - The weak church
Rev 3:7-13
 - God promised to keep them from the hour of temptation.
 - The synagogue of Satan, who claimed to be Jews, would know that God was with them.

7. **Laodicea** - The lukewarm church
Rev 3:14-22
 - This church thought they were fine.
 - God asked them to buy gold from Him, so they would be rich.

What are the true purpose and goal of the local church, and what is the local church focusing on as its priority during these last days?

Conclusion

By definition, the church is the Body of Christ. Because of that Body, we are all connected together as a unit. All of us, young and old alike, have been given talents and gifts for the purpose of a fruit-bearing ministry within the Body. The church is growing and, as leaders, we need to be aware of where in the world the fields are ripe for harvesting. Harvesting occurs the moment a church is being planted. We are to remember that a church consists of “called out people” who have become disciples of Jesus Christ. The church is a living organism designed to teach and to be taught, to be a place of fellowship and communion. The church is to be a “house of prayer”, a place of worship and giving. We need to do all we can to serve one another. Regardless of age and influence, as disciples we are interconnected under the Headship of Jesus Christ.

Discipleship Application

We need to realize that disciples and the church are one and the same. We are the church wherever we go. The Bible tells us that, if two or three of us come together, we are meeting as part of Christ’s Body (Matt 18:20). He is our Head and the Holy Spirit is the power and anointing behind the body’s service and ministry. We are called out of the world so that, in turn we can go back into it as Christ’s ambassadors (2 Cor 5:20), bringing a message of Good News to all who will hear (Rom 19:15). We need to take seriously the role of the church in the world today. Christ tells us that no matter what kind of trials we face, we will continue to stand (Rom 14:4; 2 Cor 1:24; Eph 6:13-14; 1 Pet 5:12). Christ tells us that even the gates of hell will not be able to prevail against the church (Matt 16:18). We need to remember that the Church is the Bride of Christ; very soon the church will be taken up by Christ and we will all partake in the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Rev 19:6-10). We have a clear and true hope in Christ Jesus, and He is readying His church to have the final victory over sin and hell.

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Commitment and Prayer

Dear Lord Jesus,

Help me to see the church for what it truly means to You. I know what man has built may not resemble Your body and what it should look like, but I pray that You will continue to work through Your people. I also pray that You will help connect me with the other members of the body and that I will try to do my best to work with them as they work with me. I also pray that I may be active and part of every aspect of what the church is to this lost world. I pray for revival and an awakening in Your church and ask that You will start first with me. I praise You for birthing the church and filling her with your Holy Spirit. I also pray that You will help me to understand my spiritual gifts so that I can use them for You in equipping the body for service. thank you for making Your Church Your bride and that soon you will be coming back for us. We love You, worship You and praise You for now and all eternity.

Sincerely your servant,

Foundational Scriptures of this Doctrine

Matt 16:18; 18:17; Acts 8:1-3; 13:1; 14:22-27; 15:3-4, 22; 20:28; 2 Cor 4:17; 12:28; 14:12; Eph 1:22; 5:23-32; Col 1:18, 24; Rev 2 & 3

Chapter Ten

Teachings on Angels, Satan and Demons

“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.”

Ephesians 6:12

Introduction

Many believe that man is made up of body, soul, and spirit. There are also many out there today that would deny that there is such a thing as a spirit realm; two thirds of the world, however, believe that there are spirits in almost everything, living and dead. It is mostly the highly educated people in Europe and North America who deny the spirit realm. For most of the world's history, there has always been a belief, in some form or other, of the spirit realm; many superstitions are based on some of these beliefs and traditions.

Throughout this book, our foundation for the teachings are based on the Bible as the Word of God. The Bible provides information concerning angels, fallen angels and demons. The Bible takes us right back to the Garden of Eden where we see how Satan himself, as is speaking serpent, deceived Eve (Gen 3:1-17). The moment Adam and Eve ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the downward spiral began, leading to the destruction of mankind. Because of man's disobedience, the “evil one” gained power over men and women; they became corrupt and violent in their hearts – even to the point that they were willing to kill each other (Gen 4:1-15).

Sin is the result of our fallen nature. That fallen nature has brought about weakness, allowing Satan to draw others into his plans for disobedience. The “evil host” desires to bring about division and destruction to our world. One has only to look at history to see how the evil one has caused many people to rise up against each other and to destroy each other. The evil one has even caused people to desire suicide, allowing no chance for them to have an eternal destination with Christ Jesus.

Definition

1. **Spirit:** Essence, life force, power, Holy Ghost. Often the word "Spirit" is ascribed to the name of the third person of the trinity. He is the teacher and empowering one, the comforter and encourager sent by the Father. He provides disciples with gifts so that there will be fruit, and so that the church will be empowered for service. Also, the non-physical part of a person, the seat of emotions; sometimes equated with the soul. Can represent the third part of man (body, soul and spirit), that is, the heart of man where Christ through the Holy Spirit comes and dwells. But there is also the dark side to the

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word spirit, that which produces evil, dissolution and destruction, things that come forth from the darkness both of the world and of men.

2. **Evil:** spite, meanness, cruelty, unkindness. Evil comes forth from the realm of darkness, the spirit realm which we are told is ruled by Satan and his legions (Eph 6:12); a destructive spirit that Satan has released here on earth; it is sinfulness in all forms.

Now that we have defined these two key words, let us move on to a further study of Angels, Satan and Demons. May we understand how we can come to a point of breaking their strongholds on our personal lives, and understand how they have brought forth wickedness into the lives of people here on earth.

Principle One: ANGELS

*“For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor **angels** nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

Rom 8:38-39

The first thing we need to understand is that there are both good angels serving on behalf of our Creator and Lord Jesus Christ. Next, we need to understand that there is a host of demonic angels who have been cast out of heaven to earth because of their rebellion and disobedience (Rev 12:7-9).

The word **angel** can be defined as a seraph, cherub, a supernatural being with supernatural powers. Believers are forbidden to worship angels. A heavenly host of angels appeared to the shepherds to announce Jesus' birth (Luke 2:9-15). We are given the names of two angels: one is Gabriel (Dan 8:16; 9:21; Luke 1:19, 26) and the other is Michael the Archangel (Jude 1:9). There are different kinds of angels, both good and evil.

We will first look at the good and godly servants of the Creator; these live in Heaven and make up the heavenly host army of God Almighty (Rev 19:19). Psalm 68:17 tells us that there is an army of angels who serve God.

First, we need to understand that angels are created beings. Most often they live within the spirit realm and are not visible to man (Ps 148:2,5; Col 1:16). They were created by God to serve God. They do not reproduce (Matt 22:30) like man, and they do not experience death (Luke 20:36). We are told in Scripture that there are countless angels and that we, as human beings, are not to worship them or to bow down before them (Col 2:18-19). We are also told that there are times when they do appear to man in order to give clear direction to the person or persons to whom they are speaking (Dan 8:15; 10:13; Zacharias - 1:10; Mary - Luke 1:26, 34-35). The Word of God also tells us that angels can appear in visions and dreams, as they did to Joseph (Matt 1:20; 2:13).

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These created angels do have intelligence and a free will (2 Sam 14:20; Rev 22:9) to be either obedient or disobedient. Angels of God are moral creatures, having a lot of knowledge and wisdom. They are used by God to convey truth and teaching (Dan 8:15-26; 9:22). They are greater, more powerful and mightier than any humans; they are very active, both in the heavenly and earthly realms, doing that which is according to God's will (Dan 6:22).

Many of the angels of God are constantly involved in bringing praise and glory to our Creator, God Almighty (Job 38:7; Ps 103:20). Throughout the history of mankind, angels have also served as God's messengers, bringing a divine truth of God's will to various people here on earth. For example, we have Gabriel coming to Zacharias (Luke 1:11 and following verses). Then we see Gabriel coming to Mary (Luke 1:26, 34-35) and to Joseph (Matt 1:20; 2:13). We read of angels appearing to the shepherds at the time of Christ's birth, announcing His coming to earth (Luke 2:9, 13). Various disciples of Christ also experienced the presence of angels; Philip met an angel along the Gaza Road (Acts 8:26). When Peter was in prison, he was visited and released by an angel (Acts 12:7). Cornelius was told that his alms and prayers had been recognized by God (Acts 10:3-7). In Acts 27:23 an angel appears to Paul, assuring him that he will arrive safely in Rome.

The purpose and goal of God's angels/messengers is often ministry to believers. Throughout Scripture, we see that they protect people from harm (Acts 5:19), and that they deliver people, sometimes even from prison (Acts 11:13). It seems that one of the tasks of angels is to minister God's grace and mercy to His people. Angels also seem to have emotions; the Bible tells us that there is great rejoicing in heaven when one sinner is converted to our Lord Jesus Christ (Luke 15:10). It also seems that mankind may even have guardian angels here on earth, both guarding and helping them (Matt 18:10; Acts 12:15). It also seems that angels are involved in taking people up to heaven when they die (Luke 16:22). We also know that God puts angels in charge of or over His churches (Rev 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14).

But there is also another ministry accomplished by angels which we do not often think about. Angels are involved in executing and bringing forth God's judgment on mankind (2 Kings 19:35). Angels are servants of the Lord. They are there to do God's will, both in heaven and on earth. We are also told that they're going to be accompanying our Lord Jesus at His return (Matt 25:31). When we examine the Gospel accounts of Jesus Christ, we see that that an angel was there at the announcement of His birth (Luke 1:34), immediately following His time of temptation (Matt 4:11), and at the tomb following His resurrection (Luke 24:4). They were also present at the time of Christ's ascension (Acts 1:10). The angels are called candlestick carriers of the Lord (Rev 1:20) and also trumpet blowers (Rev 8:6,7), announcing the next events taking place on the earth (Matt 24:31; 1 Thes 4:16-17).

Just as in an army, there are various levels of angels with different designations and activities. We read of cherubim (Gen 3:24; Heb 9:5) and seraphim (Isa 6:2, 6). We also know of Gabriel the Archangel (Dan 8:16). Gabriel met with Daniel, telling Daniel that he had tried to come earlier, but was hindered by a battle taking place in the heavenly realm. We also read that an angel was with Daniel while he was in the lion's den (Dan 6:22). Daniel also had another encounter with an angel named Michael (Dan 12:1).

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The opposite to good angels is bad or evil angels. There is a demonic host that, having been stripped of their rights, have been sent to earth and have lived here since before the creation of time. We will not go into a lot of detail concerning these because they carry the same nature and character as Satan himself. They are evil and full of lies, with the goal of dividing and destroying people as much as possible. They are knowledgeable, both of this world and of the Word of God (Matt 4:1-11). The Bible tells us that the evil will come as wolves in sheep's clothing (Matt 7:5; Acts 20:29); if possible, these will even try to deceive the very elect of God (Matt 24:24; Mark 13:22), just like they tried to deceive and tempt Jesus Christ with the very Scriptures themselves (Matt 4:1-11).

Disciples need to be aware of this evil realm; that is why walking in the Spirit is so important (Gal 5:25). We need to ask God to give us wisdom and understanding (James 1:5) so that we can discern what is of the Lord and what is deceptive and evil. That's why we have been given the Holy Spirit Who will fill (Eph 5:18) us and teach us (1 Cor 2:13). Prayer and communication with God will help us to walk in the light (Eph 5:8; 1 John 1:7) and not get ensnared by darkness (Heb 12:1).

Related Scriptures:

Gen 22:11; 24:7; Ex 23:20; Judg 13:13; Ps 68:17; 91:11; Matt 4:6; Acts 27:23; Gal 1:8; Heb 13:2; Rev 2:1; 10:1

Principle Two: SATAN

*"And no wonder! For **Satan** himself is transformed into an angel of light."
2 Cor 11:14*

We know that Satan rebelled and was disobedient to God and that he was the chief of demons who opposed God Almighty. He is also known as the devil, a high angelic creature who was cast out of heaven (Rev 12:9). His goal is to divide, maim and destroy God's beautiful creation, both the world itself as well as created humanity. Throughout the Bible we are given little snapshots concerning this demonic leader. Isaiah 14:12 says that Satan was also known as Lucifer: *"how you are fallen from heaven, son of the morning! How you were cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations!"* Some Bible translations record "Day Star" as the literal name for Lucifer. Some believe that Lucifer was the most beautiful angel created by God and that he was completely trusted by God until he rebelled.

As we look at some of the characteristics and activities of Satan we quickly see that the other demonic soldiers of his army use the same kind of tactics as he does. We are told from Scripture that Satan is an accuser and that he is also a tempter (Matt 12:24; Mark 3:22; Luke 11:15) who tries to lead people astray. He is our enemy and an adversary who desires to deceive. He is an evil one who roars like a lion (1 Pet 5:8) and tries to fill people's hearts with lies (John 8:44) and deceit. He sometimes comes as an angel of light but in reality, he is a murderer at heart. He is the father of all sin and he himself is the greatest sinner. As an angel of light, he counterfeits that which is real, namely Jesus Christ (2 Cor 11:14). He tries to blind, ensnare and bind people

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(Luke 13:16) so that they cannot serve or even come to God the Father Himself. It seems that he has the power to bring about deafness and dumbness, blindness, convulsions and even paralysis or lameness (Mark 9:17, 25; 9:26; 9:20; 12:22; Acts 8:7).

Because he is the great deceiver, he also counterfeits so many of the blessings of God and tries to mimic everything from various kinds of gifts of the Spirit to even the fruit of the Spirit. We are told that he comes as an Antichrist to oppose all that Christ is doing here on earth (1 John 2:18; 4:3; 2 John 1:7). Even in our present age there is a significant movement to establish Satanic churches. There is even a Satanic Bible that turns the truth of God into a method that, if followed, will destroy people not only here on earth, but it will damn them to hell with Satan and his demons (Matt 23:33).

It is important each day that we, through prayer and through studying the Word of God, ask God to help us in discerning what is right and wrong. Satan often speaks in a still small voice, trying to deceive us into thinking that what he is saying is actually right and something that we need to consider. He will even twist Scripture to try to get people to be disobedient and worship him (Matt 4:1-11). He has a pattern that he loves to use on mankind, a pattern based on the word "lust". He wants to appeal to our bodily desires, then to our minds, filling them with half-truths. Then he appeals to the spiritual man, encouraging people to become their own gods seeking only to do their own will.

Satan's Destiny

Even though Satan is the prince of this world he is still a defeated foe. There is a time coming when he will lose and be defeated, and Christ will have the final victory (Luke 10:18; John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; Rom 16:20; Heb. 2:14-15; 1 John 2:13; 3:8; 5:18). Satan has been defeated because of the work of Christ by means of the crucifixion and resurrection. Christ brings the gift of salvation to a lost world so that it is also possible for us to defeat Satan and his demons (1 Cor 10:13; 1 John 4:4). Scripture (Rev 12:11) tells us that the disciples were able to overcome because of their testimony and by the blood of the Lamb. Christ overcame Satan. Satan's final destination will be the eternal lake of fire. Matt 25:41; Rev 20:10). Satan and his fallen angels will be sent to their proper domain and will find themselves in everlasting chains in a place of complete darkness (Jude 6).

Related Scriptures:

1 Chr 21:1; Job 1:6; Ps 109:6; Zech 3:2; Matt 4:10 (Luke 4:8); 16:23 (Mark 8:33); Mark 1:13; 4:15; Luke 10:18; 22:3; 22:31; Acts 5:3; Rom 16:20; 1 Cor 5:5; 7:5; 2 Cor 12:7; 1 Thes 2:18; 1 Tim 5:15; Rev 12:9; 20:2

Principle Three: DEMONS

*"Then he called his 12 disciples together and gave them power and Authority over all **demons**, to cure diseases."*

Luke 9:1 NKJB

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A demon is known as a spirit, devil, **demon**; spirits that are servants of Satan. “And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their proper dwelling—these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day” (Jude 6). “The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him” (Revelation 12:9). “Then another sign appeared in heaven: an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on its heads. Its tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth. The dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that it might devour her child the moment he was born” (Revelation 12:3, 4). This shows the cunning and destructive power of this demonic host. Their goal is to confuse, deceive and destroy all if possible.

As already stated above, demons have the same job description, purpose and goals as their leader, Satan. Demons are limited in what they can do because they are also created beings and have limited powers; but their greatest power is exercised when men and women accept Satan’s lies and believe in things that are not true. Again, their goal is to divide, conquer and destroy.

Demons are determined to overthrow the plans of God Almighty. Satan, as a serpent, plunged mankind into eternal death, but Christ came to redeem those who would confess their sin to Him. The demonic realm is powerful in nature, able to destroy and kill; demons have the ability to oppress and possess people, and sometimes objects. Evil angels (demons) are just the opposite of God’s angels. They inflict physical difficulties on humans and participate in violent activity in order to harm. Just as God’s angels are His messengers, evil angels participate in the work of Satan. Their end will be that of eternal isolation and separation from God in a place called Hell (Rev 20:14).

Related Scriptures:

Matt 17:18 NKJB; Luke 10:17 NKJB; John 8:48 NKJB; James 2:19 NKJB

Principle Four: SPIRITS

*“Beloved, do not believe every **spirit**, but test the **spirits**, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the **Spirit** of God: Every **spirit** that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every **spirit** that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the **spirit** of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world”.*

1 John 4:1-3

There is much testimony in the Bible concerning the Spirit of God, but there are also references to evil spirits that have, as their goal, the bringing about of destruction and death. Throughout Israel’s history, we see that there were many false prophets and false religions. Some of these not only offered up sacrifices, but cut and mutilated their bodies to try to appease these spirits. These evil spirits would often give individuals power for a period of time, but at great cost to themselves and others.

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The apostle John knew that believers in Christ would face various kinds of false teaching on a constant basis. John knew the power of the enemy, the one who desires only death and destruction. John knew evil forces would be at work through false teachers. In reference to teachers, John made it plain that false teachers were those who did not confess that Christ came in the flesh. Within this short statement is the bigger picture of the Gospel (shed His BLOOD) on the cross, resurrected from the dead, and is now in heaven as Lord and King.

Evil spirits have the ability to possess people. Note the demoniac who Jesus faced (Matt 17:18; Mark 1:23, 26; 5:2, 9, 13). Another example is the woman who followed Paul and Silas (Acts 16:16). There are other similar accounts throughout the Gospels and the book of Acts. In the end times these evil spirits will be imposters, trying to bring down the elect of God (Matt 24:4-14). Even when someone is delivered from these foul spirits, the empty void they leave must be filled with the Holy Spirit. If not, Jesus warns that they can come back and bring with them even more spirits (Matt 12:43-45).

Even today there are false Christs and false antichrists, black magic and satanic churches. As disciples, we need to be keenly aware of this realm because it is all around us each day (1 Cor 2:12). Satan has many weapons and can work through things and through people, trying to pull us down and depress us in your faith. Therefore, we need to put on the full armor of God (Eph 6:10-20) and be filled daily by the Holy Spirit, walking in His power. We are in a spiritual battle (2 Cor 10:4-6; 1 Tim 1:18-20). We need not fear but need to know that the Holy Spirit helps us be "overcomers" against our enemies (Zech 4:6; John 4:24; Rom 8:1, 26; 1 John 3:24).

Principle Five: Idols

*"Do not turn to **idols**, nor make for yourselves molded gods: I am the LORD your God".*
Lev 19:4

*"Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord God, Repent, turn away from your **idols**, and turn your face away from all abominations, For anyone of the house of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell in Israel, who separates himself for Me and sets up his **idols in his heart** and puts before him what causes him to stumble into iniquity, then goes a prophet to inquire of him concerning Me, I the LORD will answer him Myself".*
Ezek 14:6-7

*"But that we write to them to abstain from things polluted by **idols** ..."*
Acts 15:20 (15:29; 21:25)

*"Little children, keep yourself from **idols**".*
1 John 5:21

To the present day, and throughout history, the world has been full of all kinds of created images made by man to represent some type of god or deity. For example, just to name a few,

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religions like Buddhism, Hinduism, and Animism can have thousands of gods. Even in Christian circles, there are denominations that have statues of all kinds of saints.

An idol is an image or some material object to which religious worship or adoration is addressed. Idolatry is the worship given to such images or objects. Pagodas, shrines, and temples are often built in honor of such false deities. People can take, or make, objects representing a god and then worship such things as if they were gods. Scripture expressly forbids the worship of idols. One of the 10 Commandments forbids doing so (Ex 20:4-5). Even though King Solomon was the wisest man in the world, he struggled with the worship of idols (1 Kings 11:1-8). The Israelites always seem to be getting mixed up with idol worship, especially including the various gods that other countries around them worshiped (Baal worship is mentioned in 1 Kings 18:21).

Then, in the New Testament (Acts 15), Paul takes a letter to the churches, telling them to abstain from the worship of idols (Acts 15:20, 29). In Romans 1:21-25, Paul teaches about what happens to people who fall into the snares and traps of idol worship. Many times, on his mission trips, Paul was confronted by people who either worshiped or made various idols as a livelihood. Then, as we move into the Book of Revelation, the Antichrist himself will set up an idol and command people to worship it (Rev 13:14; 16:2).

Disciples of Christ in North America may think they are not like the East, where there are many idols. However, North Americans do have a lot of man-made things that are worshiped and treated like idols. Such things can be just as destructive to our walk with Christ because they have some form of power over us. What we hold dear in our hearts becomes the foundation on how we live and worship (Ezek 14:4). We are to flee all kinds of idolatry (1 Cor 10:14; Eph 5:5).

Related Scriptures:

Lev 19:4; 26:1; 1 Sam 15:23; 2 Kin 21:11; 1 Chr 16:26 (Ps 96:5); 2 Chr 34:7; Isa 2:8; 31:7; 57:5; Ezek 14:4, 6; Hab 2:18; Acts 15:20 (15:29; 21:25); 17:16; 1 Cor 5:11; 10:14; 12:2; Gal 5:20; Eph 5:5; Col 3:5; 1 Thes 1:9; 1 John 5:21

Principle Six: Spiritual warfare

*“Finally, my brother, be strong in the Lord and the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the **devil**. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this age, against **spiritual hosts** of wickedness in the heavenly places.”*

Eph 6:10-12

To put it simply, “**spiritual warfare**” means that we are in a battle, not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers (Eph 6:12). Because of our sin nature, and without Christ in our hearts, it’s a battle we have already lost and we will spend an eternity in hell (Ps 55:11; Matt 23:33; Luke 12:5). The aim of spiritual warfare waged against us is to keep us bound – in things or attitudes or to a certain way of life. Satan desires to ensnare us, and he often does so one little step at a time. For example, he gets us to use drugs and alcohol, weakening us to the

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point where he can either oppress or possess us; his end goal is always the same – to eventually bring us to the place of eternal death.

To understand demon **oppression**, we should first define it. It means to afflict, to bring persecution, tribulation, to dominate, to treat cruelly, harassment, repression, subjugation. These demons try, by afflicting us through a variety of cruel and oppressive ways, to distract us from our walk with Christ. We can be set free from such oppression by remaining close to Christ and by looking constantly to Him. The easiest way to understand oppression is to see it as things that entangle and ensnare us. It can be pictured as a little creature who sits on our shoulders, speaking quietly, constantly whispering into our minds things that will keep us from having victory in Christ Jesus. Again, we need to remember that Satan is a liar; he will try to fill our minds with deceptive things, hoping we will walk down his pathway, not realizing that it leads to eternal destruction. (See Hos 12:7; Ps 103:6; Eccl 4:1; Acts 10:38).

To understand **possession**, it's also important to define what it means: the state of owning, or to have power over something or someone; having; to inherit or to take upon oneself, allowing a "witch spirit" (evil spirit) or demon of the underworld to control. Giving over ownership or power over oneself to another being. Sometimes evil spirits can enter and possess people, controlling their thinking and actions. Part of the ministry of Jesus and His disciples was to cast out these evil spirits from those being afflicted, the purpose being to set the captives free from this type of bondage.

When one allows a demonic spirit to come into one's life, it opens the door to many other spirits; their goal is to control your life from within so as to get you to do things that you'd never thought were possible (Matt 12:43-45). Such a spirit can fill people with all kinds of demonic activities and sicknesses, even causing them to throw themselves into fires (Matt 17:15; Mark 9:22) with the hope that people will kill themselves. Demonic spirits usually come through a door that we voluntarily open to them. People get possessed as a result of something dramatic that has happened to them, or through the use of drugs and alcohol. Evil spirits desire to attack us at our weakest moments, when we're vulnerable. They're like wolves attacking a flock of sheep in order to get one of the lambs to run off in a separate direction by itself; at that moment they are ready to pounce upon it and kill it.

If there is a positive side to all of this, it is that Jesus Christ Himself has come to be our deliverer by shedding His blood on the cross (Isa 19:20; Ps 144:2; Rom 11:26). When we take Jesus Christ into our hearts as our Lord and Savior, He first sets us free from the snares of Satan and the bondage of sin, and then He seals us with His Holy Spirit (Eph 4:30) and fills us with His Holy Spirit (Eph 5:18) – then we will be able to help set others free through the claiming of Christ's blood. As His disciples, Christ has commissioned and commanded us to go out (Matt 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-18) to set the captive free (Matt 10:8). This cannot be done through our own ability or strength, but by His ability and strength. We have been called to a deliverance ministry – a ministry that should not be taken lightly, but needs to be seasoned with much prayer and fasting.

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We also need to be aware that the occult is all around us. There are many Satanic churches with false teaching and their own demonic scriptures which are full of witchcraft. Further, there are many nominally Christian churches where the Good News of the Gospel is not preached. We are in a real war with a real enemy that seeks to destroy and, if possible, kill us (Eph 6:10-22).

Prayer and fasting (Matt 17:21) are the keys by which we unlock the door to the throne room of Christ. That is how we find out the will of the Father concerning the varying circumstances we may face. It is the way we communicate with God and hear His Heart regarding what we should do. We do not walk alone. Prayer and fasting (1 Cor 7:5) take us into a deeper connection with God, empowering us to break the strongholds of Satan, through Christ Jesus.

Principle Seven: POWERS AND ABILITIES

*“And these signs will follow those who believe: in my name they will cast out **demons**; they will speak with new tongues; they will take of deadly serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.”*

Mark 16:17-18

It is important, as disciples of Christ, that we understand demons and Satan are not like God. They are not omnipotent, omnipresent, or omniscient. They are created beings but are limited in what they can do. Being in the spirit realm, they are most often not visible to the human eye; there are times that they will appear in fleshly form or in some type of evil deception for the purpose of causing fear amongst people. When they are invited to come into a person's life, they have the ability to bind them with all kinds of demonic activities. The Bible documents that they can speak through the host they have taken over (Matt 8:29, 31; Mark 1:24, 26; 5:7; Luke 4:41). They even have the power to control people's minds, leading them to do destructive and horrendous things (Mark 5:9; Luke 8:30).

As disciples, we need to remember that, once we've given our lives to Christ, He's the one Who empowers us and gives us the ability to serve Him and others (Acts 1:8). Satan wants us to believe that he has all power to do things, but he can do nothing without God's permission – we see this in the book of Job (Job 1:6-12). Because of Christ's shed blood, the work He did on the cross, His resurrection from the dead and His taking back the keys of life and death from Satan (Rev 1:18), that Christ now gives us power and authority. Through His Name we have the ability to defeat Satan and his demons (Matt 10:1). Even when repeating the Lord's prayer, we are asking God to deliver us from the evil one (Matt 6:13).

God gives us the power and authority to push back the gates of hell (Matt 16:18). We can bind and loose (Matt 16:19), take back and restore what the enemy has done (Joel 2:25). The enemy may try to deceive us or bring us to a place of hopelessness, but we need to remember that all things are possible through Christ Who strengthens us (Matt 19:26). We are in a battle, but if we have faith like a mustard seed, we will overcome (Matt 17:20; Luke 17:6). Finally, we are on the winning team. Christ is about to conquer all and bring about a new heaven and earth (Rom

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8:37). We need to keep focused on Who Christ is, remembering that He has called us and will empower us against all our enemies.

Conclusion

It is important to remember that all of this demonic activity with mankind and with God's creation here on earth has been the result of disobedience and rebellion beginning way back in the Garden of Eden (Gen 3:1-24). A curse fell on all mankind and on all of God's creation. Satan has been using that opening to bring death and destruction, building a highway upon which millions of people walk, thinking they're going in the right direction (Matt 7:13); they don't realize that their final destination will be hell itself (Pro 27:20; Matt 18:9). People do not realize that, not only is there an eternal heaven for those who believe in Christ, but there is also an eternal damnation for those who choose to obey their own will and make Satan their master (Rev 20:13-15).

The book of Revelation is a prophetic book given by God almost 2000 years ago, so that it would be a witness to people here on earth about what is yet to come. If one takes time to read this book one will begin to notice that one of the central themes of the book is whom are you going to **serve** and who will you **worship** as your Lord? God has given us a free will to make the choice we desire, but if we do not make this choice before we die, the choice has already been made. It also gives us a picture about some of the last battles that will take place involving Angels and Demons:

*"Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the keys to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the **dragon**, that **serpent** of old, who is the **devil** and **Satan**, and bound him for 1000 years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while. ... Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea. They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night for ever and ever." Revelation 20:1-3, 7-10*

Discipleship Application

Jesus taught the disciples that they had the **authority** to bind and to loose things both on earth and heaven (Matt 16:19). As His servants, will we serve the purposes of our heavenly Father as He **empowers us** to do His will? We must find out where the 'strong man' is hiding and discover the deceptive work he's doing in our homes and in our churches; he will always attack the weakest link (Matt 12:29). Christ has **commissioned** His disciples to go out and preach the gospel

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to all nations (Matt 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-18), but we must be careful what we preach and teach, making certain that it lines up with the Word of God (Gal 1:8). The Word is the sword in the disciple's hand and, when properly used, will destroy all the enemies of God Almighty (Pro 5:5; Eph 6:17; Heb 4:12).

Christ came to set the captive free (John 8:32, 36; Gal 5:1). Mankind was already living in sin and bondage (Isa 61:1; Rom 8:2). It is true that through the name of Jesus Christ we are able to overcome, not because of who we are but because of Who He is and because of what He has done for us. All the demons in hell tremble at the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 3:16, 4:12; Col 3:17; Rev 2:13). The key is that, if we are going to do battle in the spirit realm, we must take up the whole armour of God (Eph 6:10-20); if we don't do so we will not be able to stand. Finally, Paul tells the Galatian Church that they should walk in the Spirit (Gal 5:16), be led by the Spirit (Gal 5:18), and have the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23) flowing out through their lives so that they may be able to live in the Spirit, right here on earth (Gal 5:25). Jesus has given us the authority and power; now we just need to go out and serve Christ with all our body, soul and spirit. Matt 10:1 states, *"And when He called His twelve disciples to Him, He gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease"*.

Commitment and Prayer

Dear Lord Jesus,

I pray today that You would help me to be able to stand against the attacks of Satan and his demons, that You will remind me by Your Spirit to put on the full armour of God and not to be full of fear but to be full of faith. I pray that You would fill me with Your Holy Spirit each day and empower me through Your precious blood, not only able to defeat the enemy's attacks upon my own life but also to be a vessel of Yours who will go out and set free those who are being held captive by Satan. Thank You Lord that I am part of a church, a part of Your Body. Thank You that I do not have to face this spiritual warfare by myself but, through prayer and through the study of Your Word, I can join together with a fellowship of believers and be able to overcome all the fiery darts of Satan. I thank You that even the gates of hell cannot resist or hold back the power of Your blood and the power of Your Name, Jesus. I thank You that one day soon every knee shall bow, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. I pray that You would help me to keep my eyes focused on You and my ears open to the leading of your Holy Spirit as I continue to walk with You on this earthly journey.

Your servant in Christ,

Related Scriptures:

Evil spirits:

1 Sam 16:23; Acts 19:12; Acts 19:15; Rev 16:14

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Evil:

Gen 2:9; 3:5; 6:5; Ex 5:23; Num 14:27; 2 Kin 17:13; Ezra 9:13; Ps 23:4; 34:13 (1 Pet 3:10); 34:14 (1 Pet 3:11); 34:16 (1 Pet 3:12); 52:3; 97:10; Prov 3:7; 8:13; 13:21; Eccl 9:3; Isa 5:20; 57:1; Jer 18:11; 44:23; Ezek 7:5; Amos 5:14; Matt 5:11, 45; 6:13 (Luke 11:4); 6:23 (Luke 11:34); 7:18; 12:35 (Luke 6:45); John 3:20; Rom 1:30; 12:9, 21, 17; 1 Cor 15:33; Gal 1:4; Eph 5:16; 6:13; 1 Thes 5:22; 1 Tim 6:10; Tit 3:2; James 1:13; 3:8; 4:11; 1 Pet 3:9; 3 John 1:11

Chapter Eleven

Teachings on Last Things

*"Little children, it is the **last time**: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the **last time**."*

1 John 2:18

*"And saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book **of life**; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds ... And if anyone's name was not found written in the **book of life** he was thrown into the lake of fire".*

Rev 20:12, 15

Introduction

The prophecy of the Bible has set people on a journey that, one day, will climax – a New Heaven and Earth with Jesus Christ sitting on His throne as Savior, LORD and King. The timeline was set on the day that man and woman were created, as recorded for us in Genesis. The clock started to count down to a **Day** when "time will be no more" (Rev 10:6).

The Bible is not two separate books with one belonging to the Hebrews and another to the Christians; they are one, deeply interconnected with each other. The foundations of the New Testament were established in the Old Testament. These principles are like threads that weave their way through all the books of the Bible, concluding with the book of Revelation. There is a climax coming that will separate the sheep from the goats (Matt 25:32). The five virgins who were ready will go into the wedding feast and five others left standing outside will miss the coming of the Lord (Matt 25:1-13). Things will happen in a moment and people will be separated into at least two different groups.

The book of Revelation tells us of a God Who is teaching us to make a decision for change. The disciple of Christ must draw closer to God in prayer and to the study of His Word, if he/she hopes to be able to pass through these coming days.

Definition

End Times or **Last Days** can be defined as a time when the existence of mankind, as we know it, comes to an end. Some feel it will be a time of great suffering and darkness. Whether it'll be as a result of man's own destructiveness (nuclear war) or because of natural causes (earthquakes, changes in the heavens, climate change, etc.), normal life for man and woman comes to an end.

For the Christian, the earth was created with the time factor built into it (Gen 1:1-26). We have seasons, night and day. We measure time in seconds, minutes, hours, days, years, and

centuries. But one day time will be no more (Rev 10:6-7). The times of the earth will soon come to an end. These can also be known as the end of the world as we presently know it, a season of time before Christ sets up His new kingdom. The disciple of Christ believes that, in the last days, Christ will come to set up a new heaven and earth where time will no longer be measured. We are in the last days; Christ will soon come for His Bride, the Church. The battles and corruption of this old world will come to an end.

There are two major threads weaving their way through the Bible, coming together as one in the last days. The first is the thread of people who have come to Christ during the age of grace. They are often known as Gentile Christians, through whom the covenant given to Abraham was revealed. The second thread, running parallel and greatly affecting the first, are the people of Israel. Since the time God spoke to Moses to call the twelve tribes of Jacob out of Egypt, Israel has, as a people, been under great stress. Following 70 AD Israel saw the destruction of the temple and they were then scattered throughout the whole earth. For thousands of years the Israelites have undergone persecution and hardship, often being hunted down like animals and killed. In spite of this God kept a remnant (Isa 10:20-23; Rom 11:5) that will rise up once again for His glory in the **End Times**.

This chapter deals with the subject of **Eschatology**: This is the doctrine concerning "last things" or end time events; events like the Second Coming, events concerning "end times" and divine judgment. One can get further understanding by studying the books of Daniel, Ezekiel and Revelation.

Since the beginning of creation, the issue of life and death has been a central concern of man's existence. One tree in the Garden of Eden represented the knowledge of good and evil, and the other significant tree represented eternal life (Gen 3:22-24). After Adam and Eve had eaten from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, God barred them from the Garden of Eden so that they would not eat of the tree of life. The day they disobeyed was the day that death began to reign over their mortal bodies, and they began to die. Satan then controlled the keys of life and death, and it wasn't until Christ died on the cross, and then resurrected, that He took back the keys of life and death (Rev 1:18). We do not again hear of the tree of life until it is talked about near the end of the book of Revelation (Rev 22:2).

A major theme running through the Bible, having a big impact concerning end times, is that of God sending His Son Who would come as the Messiah. Isaiah prophesied about Emmanuel "God with us" (Matt 1:23). Isaiah also proclaimed that this sent One, the Holy One of God, His beloved Son, would come as a servant. Jesus Himself stated that He did not come to be served, but to serve others (Matt 20:28). His ultimate service was to give His life, shedding His blood as a sacrificial Lamb so that man would have the opportunity of redemption from sin and death (John 1:29, 36; Rev 5:12). When Jesus ascended into heaven He told his disciples that He would come back again; throughout Scripture we learn that when He comes back the second time, He will come back as King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev 19:16).

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It is important to understand that, as we look at the “last days” teaching, all Scripture is interconnected – from the book of Genesis all the way through to the book of Revelation. Our first stop, therefore, will be to look into the past where we can glean some teaching concerning about what will take place in the last days here on earth.

Principle One: OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECY

The people who lived in Israel had various prophets round about them. There were prophets sent by God, as well as false prophets representing all kinds of other deities. An example is the 450 prophets of Baal as well as the 400 prophets of Asherah. Elijah stood against them, demonstrating that there was only one true God that people were to worship (1 Kin 18:22).

God gave rules by which prophets were to be governed. The main rule was that if a prophet prophesied something that did not come to pass, he was to be taken out and stoned (Deut 13:5; 18:22). True prophets spoke only on behalf of God and not about what they felt or how they would be honored by what they said.

Many prophets spoke of future things, not knowing the times or seasons when their words would be fulfilled. Such prophets had relationships with God that were sure and steadfast, and they knew God was showing them things that were to take place at a future time. Because of this assurance, they spoke with confidence and boldness, even though they knew they might be persecuted or even put to death. Jeremiah was one of these.

Throughout Scripture there are at least four major kinds of prophecy given as instruction of God's expectations. These prophecies revealed what He was about to do in the future, things that would affect their lives and the lives of others.

PROPHECY ABOUT ISRAEL

The prophecies concerning Israel are like a thread weaving its way throughout the whole of the Bible. They speak about the chosen people of God in the land that He gave them. They show His plan of redemption for them. They also indicate that, because they have forsaken their first love (Rev 2:4), He will let other nation persecute them. It is important to note that the more faithfully people walked with God and the more they did what He told them to do, the greater the blessing. But when the people's hearts became hard and far from God, they would undergo bondage and death. God is longsuffering and merciful, but when people chose to sin and forsake God they move out from under His protection.

Other related Scriptural prophecies from Ezekiel: 8:3-4 shows that God will again dwell in Jerusalem, 9:9, the King is coming, 14:4, there will be a battle for Jerusalem, 14:9, God will be King over all.

PROPHECY ABOUT THE MESSIAH

Then there are the prophecies that focus on a coming Messiah Who would bring peace and establish a Kingdom of righteousness amongst His people. Much was foretold about where He would be born, what His Name would be, how He would die and be raised from the dead. It was also foretold that He would come first as a suffering servant, a Lamb that would be sacrificed for the people. The Scriptures also speak about how He would come back a second time as King of Kings and Lord of Lords (see appendix 1).

PROPHECY ABOUT SHEPHERDS / LEADERS OF GOD'S PEOPLE

There were also prophecies, both positive and negative, concerning the shepherds of God's people (sheep). The leaders who walked in faith often had prophecy given to them about blessing. But they also had prophecies of doom and punishment for many generations for those who turned their backs on God and His people. Shepherd leaders and teachers will be subject to a greater judgment as God holds them responsible for what they say and do (James 3:1).

PROPHECY ABOUT GENTILES, NATIONS OF THE WORLD

We also have prophecies that were given to the people known as the Gentiles (anyone not of Israel). See Isa 42:6; 49:6; 66:19. Even though God had a chosen people, he wanted to show that He also cared for all of His creation. Right from Abraham to the first Jewish missionaries who shared the Good News of Jesus Christ, the Gentiles have also been on God's heart. Even now the Gentiles live in what is often called the "age of grace". Soon, though, this age will come to a close and, once again, all mankind will be judged for what they have done while living here on earth.

Next, we can move on and look at some of the Hebrew Old Testament Books of the Bible.

ISAIAH

The name Isaiah means, "The Lord Saves". Isaiah's ministry started in 740 BC, the year that King Uzziah died. He was married and had two children. It was during his time that the Northern Tribes of Israel were captured (722-721 BC). Legend says that he was martyred by being sawn in half in 681 BC.

The theme of the book of Isaiah is about God's judgment and salvation. The phrase "the Day of the Lord" is used very often throughout the book. It also ascribes the title of God as the "Holy One of Israel" (12 times in chapters 1-39 and 14 times in chapters 40-66).

Chapters 1-39 deal mostly with events during Isaiah's life-time. Chapters 40-66 deal with the Messiah and future events.

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Other details of the book are:

1. The Nations will bring Israel home (5:26)
2. Birth of the Messiah (7:14)
3. Kings will descend from the line of David (9:6-7, 32:1)
4. Highway for the exiles to return on (11:16, 40:3)
5. Messiah Chief Corner Stone (28:16)
6. Messiah as Redeemer (41:14)
7. Light that will come to the Gentiles (42:6)
8. Gentiles become servants of the Lord (54:17)
9. Messiah's suffering and death (53)
10. Rebirth of Israel (66:8)

In summary, the book of Isaiah prophesies about the Lord's Kingdom on earth – with its righteous Ruler and His righteous subjects following in faith after Him. The beauty of the **End Time** teaching is that there will be a restored earth as well as a restored people (Rev 21:1).

Again, remember that this book reveals to us that the Messiah would come first as the suffering servant Who would become the Sacrificial Lamb and then, in the final days, He would come back as the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. What a day of excitement that will be!

JEREMIAH

Jeremiah's prophetic ministry started around 626 BC and extended until about 586. He was also a priest and was commanded by God not to marry or have children. He was known as the weeping prophet, yet was fearless in his service to God.

One of the main themes of Jeremiah was the judgment that God would pour out on His people and to all nations. The people had left serving God in order to serve themselves and false gods. They refused to repent – resulting in Jerusalem's and the Temple's destruction. They had become hard in their hearts and God allowed much hardship to come upon His people. For a man of God, there is nothing more challenging than when he speaks and pleads with people to change, but they do not heed him.

It is interesting that, in much of his prophetic ministry, Jeremiah used different kinds of object lessons and personal examples. Through Jeremiah, God wanted to show people a life of truth faithfulness to Him. Later, however, a band of Jews were exiled, forcing Jeremiah to live in Egypt where he died.

The book of Jeremiah shows that there would be a day when mercy and covenant faithfulness would triumph over the bondage and wrath of Satan. The time would come for judgment to end and restoration to take place. Also, the nations that tried to crush Israel would be defeated and the Old Covenant would be honored. The house of David would once again rule over Israel. God was bringing them toward a time where the law would be written upon their hearts and there would be a New Covenant (31:31-34).

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EZEKIEL

Ezekiel's early years were spent as part of a group of people who were taken captive to Babylon in 587 BC. It was there where he spent the rest of his life, prophesying about things to come. He was in Babylon when the city of Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed in 586 BC. The time had come for God to punish His people because of His hatred of idolatry and sin, yet He never ceased to love them.

Ezekiel was of a priestly family and was married. He also used much divine symbolism to proclaim God's truth to the people. Chapters 1-24 prophesy that the city would fall, and that the temple of God would be destroyed. Also included was a pronouncement of a series of judgments on seven nations.

Most material from the book of Ezekiel is either quoted or alluded to in the book of Revelation, with the exception of one chapter. He prophesied that a day was coming when God would build a new city (chapter 40-48) and that He would restore the land and the temple.

He preached often on God's sovereignty over all creation, people, nations and history. There are at least 65 occurrences of the phrase **"then they will know, I am the Lord"**. This book gives to us deep insights into the Last Days of the World and its people.

DANIEL

Daniel went to Babylon during the first deportation in 606 BC. He gained a reputation as one who could interpret dreams and riddles. The book of Daniel is mainly known for two stories. One is Daniel in the lion's den (6:16-24) and the second is about the three Hebrew boys in the fiery furnace (Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego 3:19-30).

The theme of the book is "The Most High God". Daniel, through his prayer life and supreme dedication to God, is given a vision into the things to come. He even meets with the archangel Michael who tells Daniel that he took over 21 days to get to Daniel, because of great battles he fought (10:10-14). There are great wars going on in the spirit realm all around us.

If we take an overview of this book, we can see that it breaks down into the following outline.

The destiny of the nations of the world (Ch. 2-7)

The destiny of the nation of Israel (Ch. 8-12)

1. Vision of Ram and a Goat (Ch. 8)
2. Vision of the 70 weeks (Ch 9)
3. Vision of Israel's future (Ch 10-12)
 - a. Revelation of things to come (10:1-3)
 - b. Revelation from the angelic messenger (10:4-11:1)
 - c. Prophecies concerning Persia and Greece (11:1-4)
 - d. Prophecies concerning Egypt and Syria (11:5-35)

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- e. Prophecies concerning antichrist (11:36-45)
- f. Distress and deliverance (12:1)
- g. Two resurrections (12:2)

Daniel's heart was pure, focusing on God Most High. He had a burden for the people of Israel and God opened the windows of the spirit realm so that he could see both the present and the future. Many of Daniel's prophecies have been already fulfilled so we can trust that those which are connected to the End Times will soon also be fulfilled.

Principle Two: COVENANTS

Another key component which has to do with **End Times** is this whole area of the covenants and promises of God. For thousands of years God has been making covenants and promises to mankind. The word 'covenant' is used over 350 times throughout the Bible. Most of these covenants that have been made, both to the Jews and to the Gentiles, have attached to them the words "everlasting or eternal". This means they have an effect on our present daily lives.

But before we go any further, let's take a moment to define the meaning of 'covenant making'. The word **covenant** is defined as: *agreement, contract, treaty, promise or pledge*. It can be entered into between two or more parties or between groups of people or nations. Historically we see where covenants began in Genesis. We find in Gen 15:12-21 a covenant being made with Abram. Because of Abram's faith and obedience to God, God entered into an everlasting covenant with him. There needed to be preparation before the agreement could be ratified or confirmed. Animals would have to be slaughtered and arranged in such a way that both parties could walk between the parts. The purpose was twofold – first, an animal had to be killed and its blood shed as a witness to the agreement. Second, the parties said to each other that if they did not keep the covenant they, too, would be cut into pieces.

Spiros Zodhiates in his Bible study notes say the following, *"It was a treaty, alliance of friendship, a pledge, or obligation between a monarch and his subject, a constitution. It was a contract which was accompanied by signs, sacrifices and a solemn oath which would seal the relationship with a promise of blessing for obedience and curse for the disobedient."* Later we will look at the subject of communion and see these same elements being portrayed there.

The covenant: with Noah (*not to destroy the world again by a flood: Gen 9:16*), Abraham (*out of him would come many nations and God would give them a land of their own, Genesis 15:1-21*), Isaac (*the covenant of Abraham flowing through Isaac, Genesis 26:2-5*), Jacob (*having a vision of heaven and his name being changed by God to Israel, Genesis 35:9-15*), Moses (*the people being called to God and a land, Deut. 5:1-4*), Joshua (*fulfilling the promise of God concerning a promised land*) and David (*from him an everlasting dynasty of kings in Israel, Psalm 89:3-4*). These are just some of many that are still in effect today and will have a great influence on the **End Time** events. The idea of covenants is not popular today as we do not often like to enter into something so binding.

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One place that we observe a covenant is in the marriage service. We do not often use the word "covenant" but, rather, the term "vow". The couple speak vows to each other in front of the pastor and audience and then move to the giving of rings to remind them of their commitment to each other. This covenant is to be binding until death.

Communion was a time where Jesus called the disciples to remember the covenant that had been made between Himself, as God, and them, as His disciples. Communion was to be known as a love feast. Jesus, when He blesses and passes the cup to His disciples, tells them that this cup now represents the "New Covenant" that He was about to enact for them, via His body and blood, on the cross (Matt. 26:26-30; 1 Cor. 11:23-34). Jesus told the disciples that He would not partake of this service again until He met with His redeemed in paradise.

Right from the beginning of creation, God has been a God of love, desiring a personal relationship with all mankind. We see this clearly in Deuteronomy 7:7-9 as a "Covenant of love". This idea of giving flows throughout all of Scripture. God calls us to join Him in a covenant of love (Communion service: Matt 26:28). Those who choose not to join Him will experience the fear and destruction to come to the world in the **End Times**.

Principle Three: PARABLES BY JESUS CHRIST

Jesus (Who came as God/man) also prophesied what would happen in the last days. Disciples of Christ need not be afraid but stand strong in faith in order to overcome. Christ did not give the exact date when the End Times would occur (Acts 1:7), but did give us many clues, telling us to be faithfully watching the times and the seasons.

In the book of Matthew "The Kingdom of Heaven" is the theme. Jesus wants people to know they need to prepare for things which are about to happen. Our battles are not with flesh and blood but against principalities and powers in the spirit realm (Eph 6:12). The trumpet will soon sound and, at any time, we must be ready for His soon-coming return (1 Cor 15:52).

Much of Jesus' teaching about the End Times came through parables. A parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning. For us to understand we must ask the Holy Spirit to teach us, so that we may have understanding about how these teachings affect us today.

1. Tares **Matt 13:24-30, 36-43**

In this parable, the field is the world, the grain represents the people of God and the tares are the unrepentant people. They are all allowed to grow side by side until harvest time, when the reapers gather the tares and burn them. The wheat is collected and gathered into the storehouse. The question for us is – which kind are we, the one that is harvested or the one that is burned?

2. Wedding feast **Matt 22:2-14**

This parable is about a wedding where all the people are asked to come. Again, there are two kinds of people. Over and over again the King sent out his people to invite others to come to his son's wedding, but they did not come. Therefore, he sent forth his armies and destroyed their

cities and the people who lived in them. And so, an invitation goes out again, calling upon people to come from the highways and byways. This time some people come, but one did not have on a wedding garment. That individual was taken out from the wedding and thrown into outer darkness. The parable asks the question, "Are you one who has on a wedding garment and will be blessed to remain at the wedding, or are you the one who will be cast into outer darkness forever?"

3. **Fig tree** **Matt 24:32-35**

This parable foreshadowed the second coming of Christ. We will not know the day when He will come, but we can know the seasons, understanding that the time is close. We need to look for signs that are taking place around us, being always ready for His appearance. We need to keep an eye on world events (especially Israel) and compare them to the teaching of the Bible.

4. **Ten Virgins** **Matt 25:1-13**

This parable is about five foolish and five prepared virgins. The bridegroom came for those who had prepared (the wise virgins) and they entered into the wedding celebration. The key in this parable is to be ready. Although we do not know the exact time, if we have prepared, we will spend eternity with Him. Those who are foolish will be cast away from His presence for all eternity. We are challenged to make a choice in these **End Times**. It is up to us as to whether we'll be wise or foolish.

5. **The Talents** **Matt. 25:14-30**

Here Jesus teaches about three men who were entrusted with a certain amount of money. The master went away, and they did not know the time of His return. When He did come back, He took an account of all that they had done. Two were wise; they had invested the master's money. The third was foolish and hid his money. The master rewarded the two for how they had invested; but He condemned the third, took away what he had, and cast him into outer darkness. The key here is that God gives us gifts, talents and possessions to use. All that we have, He has given to us and it is important that we be wise stewards. The truth that is being taught here is that during the **End Times** Christ will judge us on the basis of that for which He has entrusted us. If we show no fruit, we too will be cast out for all eternity from the presence of the Lord. We have a choice, invest our lives for Christ or hide our beliefs.

6. **Sheep and the Goats** **Matt 25:31-46**

In the last days there will be a time of judgment for all people, both for disciples of Christ as well as for the people of the world. The parable says that there are two kinds of people – one being sheep and the other goats. On the "Day of Judgment" we will be brought before the Lord and will be separated into two groups. The sheep will enter the Kingdom of God and the goats will be cast out into the place of eternal fire.

Both groups knew about Christ, but one had received Him into their lives as Lord and Savior, while the other had more of a religion than a faith. They believed they did all kinds of things for Christ but as they are judged Jesus will say, "I know you not." Again, we have a choice to

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confess our sin, die to self and become a true follower of Christ or choose to live on this earth fulfilling our own earthly desires.

These parables show that there are two kinds of people but only one that will spend an eternity with Christ in heaven. We must be ready because in the **End Times** we will not have the opportunity to make a commitment of faith to Jesus Christ. We should not wait for another hour or day because when least expected, the trumpet will sound and time will be no more (1 Corinthians 15:50-57). We must be like Daniel and King David, coming to God and confessing our sins. As Romans 10:9-10 says, we must confess, believe and invite Christ into our hearts as our Lord and Saviour. The **End Times** are near, do not wait (See Appendix 2, salvation prayer).

Christ gave many more teachings concerning the End Times.

Take time to study these passages and ask the Holy Spirit to help you understand the truths that they teach concerning the **End Times**.

Signs of Christ's Return	Matthew 24:1-14
Perilous Times	Matthew 24:15-28
Be ready for His Coming	Matthew 24:42-51
Heaven	John 14:1-6

Principle Four: NEW TESTAMENT EPISTLES (PETER, JOHN, JUDE AND PAUL)

These books shed light about what will take place in the End Times. The disciple of Christ should take some time to look up these references and see what they say to us. We must take time to understand the Word of God, so we can be ready for His return. The choice is up to us.

Romans	14:10	Judgment Seat
1 Corinthians	3:10-15	Judgment Seat
1 Corinthians	12:1-4	Paradise
1 Corinthians	15:51-53	Twinkling of an eye
2 Corinthians	5:10	Judgment Seat
Ephesians	4:8-10	Paradise
Colossians	3:4	Revealed with Him
1 Thessalonians	4:16-17	Rapture
2 Thessalonians	2:3-8	The man of sin, son of Perdition, the wicked one
1 Timothy	4:1-3	Seducing spirits
2 Timothy	2:8-13	Living in Christ
Hebrews	1:2	Last Days
Hebrews	11:14-16	Priesthood of the King
2 Peter	1:20-21	Prophecy and Scripture
2 Peter	2:1-2	False teachers
2 Peter	3:7-13	New heaven & earth
1 John	2:18	Anti-Christ
Jude	1:5-16	False teachers and shepherds

Principle Five: BOOK OF REVELATION

The book of Revelation was written around 95 AD. It was penned by John who was an apostle and the son of Zebedee (Matt. 10:2). During the time of writing, John had been exiled to the island of Patmos for his activities as a Christian missionary (Rev 1:9).

The purpose of John's writing was to encourage the faithful to keep trusting and moving forward through hope in the Lord Jesus Christ. He wanted to show the believers that the final battle between God and Satan was soon to come and they must stand fast, even unto death. Soon Christ would return for His church and would establish His Kingdom on earth and in heaven.

One of the distinctive features of the book is the use of the number seven. It is used 52 times. In Hebrew, the number seven stands for completeness. Here is a brief overview of how the number is used.

- seven beatitudes
- seven churches
- seven spirits
- seven golden lampstands
- seven stars
- seven seals
- seven horns and eyes
- seven trumpets
- seven thunders
- seven signs
- seven crowns
- seven plagues
- seven golden bowls
- seven hills
- seven kings

These are just some examples. There are many more throughout the book of Revelation.

Another distinction is the title '**LAMB**' that is used to represent Jesus (mentioned 24 times). It is a reminder to the reader that Jesus was sacrificed for the atonement of many. He did this for each of us on the cross of Calvary, outside the city of Jerusalem.

Related Scriptures:

Rev 5:6, 12; 7:10, 14; 13:8; 14:1; 17:14; 19:7; 21:27; 22:3

One other key thought that weaves its way through the book is the question, "Who you will worship?" From the beginning of time Satan has been trying to get mankind to bow down and worship him. Paul tells the disciples that we are in a battle, not of flesh and blood, but spiritual (Ephesians 6:12-13). We can either worship the Creator in whose image we were made or worship

Satan (another created being), who is full of lies, destruction and death. We all face eternity – we need to choose with whom we will spend it.

We can also find in the book of Revelation other very important teachings that have a direct impact both on the disciple of Christ and the nonbeliever.

1. Lamb's Book of Life

This is the title of a book that contains the record of names of those who will be able to enter heaven. When we confess and repent of our sins, our names are written in this Book of Life. It is interesting that God has chosen to use a book to record our names after we have committed our lives to Jesus Christ. We are not sure whether, when we get to heaven, we'll be able to walk over with someone and look into the book and see if our name is written there or not. I know that anyone who wouldn't find his name written there would already have known why in their heart, and would know they've been condemned to eternal death. Maybe that's why there is so much crying and gnashing of teeth by the people who are in hell (Matt 8:12,13:42, 50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30 Luke 13:28).

Related Scriptures:

Rev 3:5; Rev 21:27; Rev 22:19

2. Rapture

This is the transport of believers to heaven. This will be a time of great celebration for the church when it is taken up to be with Christ forevermore. On that day, all disciples of Christ will experience great pleasure and joy (See 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 and 1 Corinthians 15:50-54). The rapture will be an amazing time for those who are going to be taken up to be with the Lord. But for those who are left behind, it will be time of devastation and heartache. It is so important that we stick close to the heart of God and that our ears are tuned into the trumpet sound of the Lord. We must realize that at any day and at any time the rapture could take place and we must, at all times, be ready to go. The Bible tells us that it will take place in the twinkling of an eye (1 Cor 15:52) and for those of us who go, time will be no more. The word "Rapture" is not used in the Bible, but is the word that the church fathers gave to the event they knew could take place at any time.

3. Tribulation

This is the teaching concerning both the time of the tribulation and the events occurring during this seven-year period. There has been much debate on when the church will be raptured. There are three specific beliefs concerning when the church will be removed; these positions are held by a variety of different denominations, churches and individuals. The word "tribulation" is used over 40 times in the Bible, often in connection with the seven-year period. Throughout history many books have been written about the subject and there has been much speculation on what position one should hold. The key to this teaching is not to focus on when we will go, but rather to keep our heart in tune with what God is doing – both with His disciples and with His Church. It shouldn't matter when we go because our faith is not built on a time sequence but is built on a personal relationship with Jesus Christ; when He calls us we will surely go! But, until that

time, He will help us to become a Church without spot or wrinkle, washed in the blood of the Lamb (Eph 5:27). We must have the faith to believe that we truly are in God's hands and that, no matter whatever situation we find ourselves in, He is there with us and will take care of us through all we face here on earth – right up until we meet face to face with Him in heaven.

Pre Tribulation

This group believes that just before the antichrist appears and the events of the seven years begin to unfold, the church will be raptured into heaven.

Mid Tribulation

This group believe that the church will remain as a witness to the world during the 3 ½ years of peace, but then the church will be raptured into heaven.

Post Tribulation

This group believes that the church will go through the entire seven years of tribulation, as a witness to the world. Also, during this time, the churches will become washed and purified before the Lord.

4. Judgment seat

A place in heaven where Christ will bring a ruling, decision, verdict, sentence; a place where Christ Jesus will be seated to pass judgment on the living and the dead (Rev 20:11-15). The disciple must make an effort to warn people to be ready, for without Christ in their heart, they will face God's just sentence to eternal damnation (Mark 3:29). There is no avoiding the judgment of God because He is a holy God and has given us the choice of making a decision. Our decision will cause us to reap what we have sown here on earth (Gal 6:8).

The Bible tells us that judgment starts first with the people of the Lord. Everything we have done and will do is recorded as evidence the righteous Judge will use to either bless us or condemn us. We must keep our slates clean before the Lord and keep ourselves covered in His righteousness (Eph 6:14; Phil 3:9). Every day we need to make the challenging decision to choose those things which are right, the things which will bring honour and glory to our Lord Jesus Christ. One day we all will stand before the Lord and will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (Rom 14:11).

Related Scriptures:

Rom 14:10; 2 Cor 5:10

5. Punishment

This is an act of discipline towards a person, usually coming in response to a transgression of a legal or moral code. Punishment can come in many forms: a lecture, some type of work, spanking or strapping or whipping, imprisonment and, under severe circumstances, the death penalty. Around the world, there are all kinds of ways whereby people and governments punish their supposed wrongdoers. In many countries, not all punishment is legal or just. We need to remember that while Christ hung on the cross, He took upon himself our punishment; that which we were guilty of, He paid through shedding His precious blood. He was whipped and tortured

and forced to wear a crown of thorns and then nailed to a cross (Matt 27:29, 35; Col 2:14). His punishment and death is what sets us free and, because of His great love, He is coming back for us again (Acts 1:11). But we also need to be reminded that in the last days many people will undergo persecution for the name of Christ (2 Tim 3:12) and many others will be martyred because they took a stand for their Lord Jesus (Rev 6:9-11). We need to remember that when we walk these dark valleys He is with us, His rod and His staff they comfort us (Ps 23:4).

Related Scriptures:

Ex 21:20, 22; Lev 26:18; Isa 13:11; Jer 21:14; Hos 4:9; Amos 3:2; Matt 25:46; 2 Thes 1:9; 2 Pet 2:9

6. Millennialism

Millennial kingdom

This refers to the future thousand-year reign of Christ Jesus, full of peace and righteousness, when Jesus will rule over all on earth (See Revelation 20). Again, the Church of Jesus Christ has had divided opinions about this teaching over the years. One can see (below) that there are three different ideas concerning when this time will take place. Most evangelical theologians believe that it is a literal time period that will take place after the rapture of the church. Regardless of the opinions, for the disciple of Christ, it is not critical to hold to a specific time period because, whenever it may be, all we need to remember is that, because of our faith and obedience to Him, we are with Christ for all eternity.

A Millennial

A view that the 1000-year period of time mentioned in Revelation chapter 20 is not an actual time period, and that it will not specially take place before the return of Christ.

Post Millennial

This view holds to the teaching that the world will get progressively better with the Gospel of Christ and that there will be a time of total victory here on earth. Then Christ will come for His church after the millennium.

Pre Millennial

This doctrine teaches that the church will be raptured (taken up) before the tribulation, and that God will focus once again on redeeming the children of Israel. Christ will then return and rescue Israel, setting up the millennium kingdom. This teaching provides for a clear distinction between the Church and Israel.

7. The Battle of Armageddon

In the Jezreel Valley of northern Israel, a great end time battle will be fought in the valley of Armageddon; also referred to as the valley of Megiddo. This valley narrows extensively and on both sides are mountain ranges or higher plateaus looking down into it. It is at this point where two major armies will come down from the north to try to destroy Israel and capture the city of Jerusalem. There will be much bloodshed and destruction in this valley - this will be the place

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where Jesus and all His armies will come and destroy the enemies who aligned themselves to the beast and the antichrist.

In the Hebrew tongue **Armageddon** *Rev 16:16*

Principle Six: MODERN DAY ISRAEL

In May 1948 many Hebrew prophecies were fulfilled when the Jewish people were granted the ability to once again become a nation. As a result many scattered people came back home to the land God had promised them in a covenant many thousands of years before (Lev 26:33; Isa 43:5-6). Every day, led by the Holy Spirit to give up all they have, people are returning to a little barren piece of land called Israel. Israel is only 65 miles wide and about 150 miles long, and is mostly desert and rock. Millions of people have taken this first step. These people are seeing life come back to the land that has for so long been barren. A nation able to defy the greatest powers of the world, is being brought forth. Each day they face neighbors who want to destroy them, desiring to wipe their presence off the map. These nations do not understand that there is One greater Who holds these Jewish people in the palm of His hand.

There is an Old Testament account regarding Elijah and his servant being surrounded by many enemies. Elijah's servant feels the situation is hopeless, but Elijah tells him to go out and look again. This time he sees the mighty armies of the Lord totally encircling them and protecting them (2 Kings 6:15-18). I believe this is the same today – the army of the Lord is encamped around the nation of Israel.

Principle Seven: PRESENT DAY: RE-BIRTH OF ISRAEL

- Jewish people persecuted around the world since AD 70 when the temple was destroyed, and the people were scattered.
- Population 1919, 100,000 people
- 1939—1945 6 million Jews killed in Germany, Poland and other countries
- Israel becomes a nation, May 14, 1948
- Population 1948, 780,000 people
- 6 Day War 1976
- Jerusalem becomes one united city
 - Rabin assassinated 1995
 - Valley of dry bones, people begin to return (Ez. 37:1-14)
 - European Union created
 - Population in 2008, 2,018,000 people
 - ISIS movement
 - Jerusalem recognize as the unified capital of Israel (2019)
 - Great Tribulation
 - New Temple to be Built (4) on the Temple Mount
 - Anti-Christ comes
 - 144 thousand Jews preach Christ (Rev. 7:1-8)

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Armageddon

- Bear, Russia
- China, 200 million soldiers

Second coming of Christ

Judgment of Jews

Judgment of the Christians

Millennium, 1000-year reign

- throne of David restored
- 12 tribes, head of the nations

New Heaven and Earth

Present Day Events:

When one looks at this topic of the **End Times**, it is important to study, pray and be aware of what is going on in the world around us. There are more prophecies to be fulfilled in these Last Days concerning the Jews and the Gentiles.

- There will be more wars.
- There will be more natural destruction like floods, storms and earthquakes.
- There will be call for peace at all cost.
- There will be a desire to have a one world government with one kind of currency.
- There will be a push to mark all people in order to buy or sell (the mark of the beast, 666).
- There will arise all kinds of false teachers and religions.
- There will be all kinds of people claiming that they are the Christ (Antichrists).
- There will be people who will want to divide the Land of Israel.
- There will be preparation and building of the new temple in Jerusalem.
- Many people will start dying worldwide from starvation, plagues and diseases.
- Most of the world will desire peace over anything else.

These are just a few things that Bible calls “signs” that we must be aware of. As we begin to see these things happen, we need to be prepared because the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ is very soon (Rev 22:20). We are now standing at the door of the “**End Times**”.

Other Observations:

There are many other things that are going on around about us each day that are like little pieces in a puzzle that will eventually make up the whole picture. They may not mean a lot as an individual piece, but as you put them all together they seem to begin to point in a direction indicating it will not be long before Christ Himself will appear again to take up His church and to establish His new kingdom.

- All banking cards are now coming with an imbedded chip paving the way for an embedded personal chip for humans.
- The rise of Germany again as a leader and influence over the European union.
- The world population rising to over seven billion.
- Technology, where most electronics are embedded with the ability to be tracked by law enforcement and governments.
- Cloning and stem cell technology

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- Reporting of events at the moment that they are occurring.
- The storing of information is what is known as the cloud.
- Countries going into greater debt and internal chaos.
- The greater cooperation of various world religions.
- The destruction and the watering down of the Bible.
- The new power of computers and social media worldwide.
- Wristwatch technology
- Bank insecurity: hacking into accounts
- World wide web: the ability to track all communications
- Oil prices: the severe changes in the market place: oil prices, gold etc.
- Global warming: the pollution, shrinking of the ice caps and the flooding of low lands, plus the severe storms that raged throughout the earth
- Television programs on demonic and satanic topics
- Arm bracelet: will contain your banking, medical, driver's ID and citizenship
- Outbreak of world wide viruses

Principle Eight: FUTURE EVENTS

What follows next are keywords that help the disciple to understand what will take place yet in the future. With many of these words we only have parts of the picture and will only be able to surmise what may or may not happen, and how they fit into a specific timeline as a whole. What follows is just a summary that will help the disciple to understand a little bit more concerning the last day's events and, hopefully, will trigger some further interest into digging deeper into these various teachings concerning the times in which we find ourselves living.

1. ISRAEL

The nation comprised of the physical descendants of Abraham's grandson, Jacob, whose father was Isaac. The name "Israel" also represented the twelve tribes of Israel; in English the word means "God preserves". Israel is key to all last day events. We must continue to pray for Israel but, at the same time, keep our eyes and ears open to what's going on in that small country. Many last day events will take place in the land of Israel.

Related Scriptures:

Isa 48:17; 49:7; 54:5; Jer 25:27; Matt 2:6; 10:6; Luke 22:30; Acts 13:23; 13:24; Rom 10:1; 11:26; Heb 8:8; Rev 21:12

2. CHURCH

"Ecclesia", Greek name for church; means "called out ones", to assemble, gathering; the gathering of believers in Christ who assemble for worship, teaching, communion, etc. (Eph 5:21-32). The church is also referred to as the body of Christ, to be His hands and feet to a lost world. The church is the means by which the Spirit of God extends the fruit of the Spirit to the world through the gifts He provides. The church also plays a large part in the last day's events. We are coming near the end of the age of grace and we need to be doing all that we can to take the Gospel of Jesus Christ out to a lost world (Mark 16:15-18). The disciple needs to be connected to

the church of Christ in order to understand how God is speaking to His church about the next things on His calendar. The church itself is in trouble and is in need of an awakening just as Jesus said in Revelation chapter 3 verse 22, *"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."*

Related Scriptures:

Rev 1:4; Rev 2:7 (2:11, 17, 29, 3:6, 22) (See section 9 in this chapter)

3. Antichrist

This word means false Christ, Christ's greatest enemy, a demonic leader who opposes Christ's teaching and authority; one who deceives others into believing in non-biblical truth (2 John 1:7); anti means "in place of". The disciple needs to be aware that there will be many antichrists out to deceive and to destroy the children of God (Matt 24:11; 2 John 1:7). We must judge people's teaching and preaching by the Word of God and by the Holy Spirit. We must be diligent to seek after that which is the truth and not that which seems pleasurable to the flesh or mind. Remember how Jesus reminded the woman at the well that she needed to follow after the Spirit and the Truth (John 4:24).

Related Scriptures:

1 John 2:18; 4:3; 2 John 1:7

4. Second Coming

This most often refers to Jesus' words "Just as you have seen me go, I will once again come back", referring to His coming back in the clouds (Acts 1:9-11). We are given hints about what to watch for, but we are also told that although no man can know the day or the hour (of the rapture), we can know the times or the seasons as to when He will return (1 Thes 5:1-11). It is very important to keep an eye on the signs of the times. No disciple of Christ will know the exact time, but I believe a disciple can know the seasons of time when the fruit is beginning to ripen and the things throughout the world are beginning to spiral down to destruction. It is most important that we walk in the Spirit (Gal 5:16, 25) and keep closely connected to the heart of Jesus Christ because as a Shepherd He watches over His sheep, continuing to feed them and to protect them against their enemies (Ps 23:1-6). Jesus' first coming to earth was as a servant, but when He comes to earth the second time He will come as Lord and King to destroy His enemies and to set up His Eternal Kingdom (Rev 19:16).

5. Resurrection

To raise up, to lift up, to restore back from the dead, a restoration, a renewal, a reappearance. Christ died on the cross and was put in a borrowed grave and after three days He arose (Matt 27:57; 28:6). The resurrection power filled His earthly body. Jesus proclaimed during His earthly ministry, "I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25). During Christ's time on earth there were two religious groups, one known as the Pharisees and the other one known as the Sadducees; the Pharisees believed in a resurrection of the dead but the Sadducees did not (Matt 22:23; Acts 23:8). Also, one of the themes of the book of Matthew deals with the "kingdom of heaven". Jesus was always pointing out to people that His Father had sent Him from heaven and

that now He was going back to prepare a place for His bride, the Church. Paul desired that he may know, in a deeper way, Christ's resurrection power and that it would fill his heart for service (Phil 3:10). When one is filled with the resurrection power of Jesus Christ, one also becomes full of faith and hope, not in the things which we now see but in the things which are about to come to fruition. Soon and very soon we are about to be resurrected from this earth into God's heavenly kingdom.

Related Scripture:

Matt 22:23 (Mark 12:18; Luke 20:27; Acts 23:8), 30; 27:53; Mark 12:18; Luke 20:36; John 5:29; 11:25; Acts 4:2, 33; 17:18; 24:15; Rom 1:4; 1 Cor 15:12, 21; Phil 3:10; Heb 6:2; 11:35; 1 Pet 1:3; 3:21; Rev 20:5

6. Lamb of God

The Old Testament teaches that there would be One Who would come and lay down His life for all mankind (see Isa 53:7). In the New Testament Christ was that perfect Lamb of God. He shed His blood so that people could have the forgiveness of sins. It was a one-time sacrifice of innocent blood for all those who, by faith, would receive Christ as Saviour and Lord. In the book of Revelation one of the main descriptive titles that is used for Jesus Christ is the word "**Lamb**". John the Baptist told the people when he saw Jesus coming, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world" (John 1:29). (See the book of Revelation).

Related Scriptures: John 1:29, 36

Principle Nine: The END TIME CHURCHES

The Holy Spirit gave to John a vision of the end times, the book of Revelation. In the very first chapter we are told that Christ is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end (Rev 1:8,11). Shortly thereafter we see a large section devoted to the Last Day Churches. We are told what they are like. We are given a snapshot of their strengths and weaknesses. At the end of the address to the church in Laodicea, we have the very well-known "*Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me*" (Rev 3:20).

What follows is a brief overview concerning these seven churches. In many ways these description picture for us the condition of many churches worldwide.

Revelation 2:1- 3:22

1. Ephesus - The strong church

- a. Rev 2:1-7
- b. Had patiently borne adversity and could not stand evil.
- c. They had left their first love. God appealed to them to remember from where they had fallen.

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2. **Smyrna - The poor, rich church.**
 - a. Rev 2:8-11
 - b. This church would face persecution.
 - c. God had nothing against them.

3. **Pergamum - The faltering church**
 - a. Rev 2:12-17
 - b. Had not denied God.
 - c. Had allowed false prophets into the church.

4. **Thyatira - The apostate church**
 - a. Rev 2:18-29
 - b. Had many good works.
 - c. Had allowed the false prophetess Jezebel to come in.

5. **Sardis - The dying church**
 - a. Rev 3:1-6
 - b. Asked to repent and watch.

6. **Philadelphia - The weak church**
 - a. Rev 3:7-13
 - b. God promised to keep them from the hour of temptation.
 - c. The synagogue of Satan, who claimed to be Jews, would know that God was with them.

7. **Laodicea - The lukewarm church**
 - a. Rev 3:14-22
 - b. This church thought they were fine.
 - c. God asked them to buy gold from him, so they would be rich.

Conclusion

In studying the subject of the **End Times** there are at least two vital things that one should keep in mind. The first one is the events that are taking place in the land of Israel. We need to be aware of things like land negotiations, what other countries are proposing to do to Israel, and what other countries are preparing to do in terms of economics.

The second thing is begin to get a better understanding of the Bible and what it teaches concerning the **End Times**. Do not rely on what others say but search the Scriptures and pray that God will reveal the truths that will help us to be prepared. The Holy Spirit is our great Teacher and Revealer of Truth (1 Cor 2:6-16). We, as disciples, will need to be focused on the Word of God. We need to ask the Holy Spirit to enable us to discern all that we see and hear. Again, it is key that we walk a life of faith in Jesus Christ. We need to prepare our hearts and daily ask Christ to fill us with

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His Holy Spirit (Eph 5:18) Who will comfort and teach us all things. A believer does not need to fear, because our hope is not in the things of this world but on the Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

My prayer is that we will make John 14:6 your motto for each day of your life. To truly make Jesus the **way** we walk, the **truth** we follow and that we live a **life** that brings honor to Christ Jesus.

Jesus said unto him, "I am the way, the truth and the life: no man comes to the Father, but by me." John 14:6

Discipleship Application

It is very important that the disciple of Christ study the Word of God because what one believes about the end times can dramatically affect the way one walks and lives here on earth (2 Tim 2:15). We need to live as though Christ will appear at any moment, but also need to live a missionary type of life that will take advantage of the last days and hours to win more people for the kingdom of God. These truths need to become deeply embedded in our hearts so that we will be able to see the signs that God is giving, and be able to properly react to them. Like the five virgins who had their lamps trimmed with oil, we need to be ready to hear the bridegroom's call (Matt 25:1-13). This needs to be a personal commitment to readiness – we should not rely on others or expect others to tell us when to get ready and what to watch out for. We need to be walking in the spirit (Gal 5:16, 25). We need to ask God to shine light on our pathway (Ps 119:105) so that we know we are walking according to His will; then, when the trumpet sounds (1 Cor 15:52), we will be ready to go.

Commitment and Prayer

Dear Lord Jesus,

First, I want to come to You and confess to You my sin in my areas of disobedience. I ask again afresh today, that You come into my heart and be my Lord and Saviour and that, because of confession with my mouth and my heart I can know that my name is written in the Lamb's book of life. I pray that You will make my heart to be in tune to Your Holy Spirit. I pray that Psalm 23 will become my Banner that I live by, trusting each day that You are my Shepherd and Lord and I am one of Your lambs and that You will keep me at all times. I pray that You will empower me with Your strength and with Your wisdom so that I can be an ambassador of Your kingdom, encouraging the refugees of this world to come and be part of Your heavenly kingdom. Thank You for what You have done in my life and for so many others in Your church. I pray that You will bring a new awakening to Your Word so that a remnant will rise up and push back the gates of hell.

Your servant in Christ,

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Related Scriptures:

Last days

Gen 49:1; Neh 8:18; Isa 2:2; Mic 4:1; John 6:39 (6:40, 44, 54); 11:24; 12:48; Acts 2:17; 2 Tim 3:1; Heb 1:2; James 5:3; 1 Pet 1:5; 2 Pet 3:13

Chapter Twelve

Teachings on Heaven

Scripture

*"Indeed **heaven** and the highest **heavens** belong to the LORD your God, also the earth with all that is in it."*

Deut 10:14

*"Then it happened, as he continued on and talked, that suddenly a chariot of fire appeared with horses of fire, and separated the two of them; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into **heaven.**"*

2 Kin 2:11

*"In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, repent, for the **kingdom of heaven** is at hand!"* Matt 3:1-2

*"No one has ascended to **heaven** but He who came down from **heaven**, that is, the Son of Man who is in **heaven.**"*

John 3:13

Introduction

Heaven is a wonderful place and it is a place to which all believers in Christ Jesus look forward to going. The subject of heaven has also been a topic of debate almost since from the beginning of time. Even in Jesus' time we had two groups of people who argued with Jesus concerning His teaching about heaven or the kingdom of heaven. The Sadducees believed that there was no heaven, no eternity, whereas the Pharisees believed that there was heaven, eternity and judgment (Luke 12:18; Acts 23:8). But for the disciple of Christ, heaven is a real place; it is the kingdom where God Almighty, the Creator of all heaven and earth dwells (Matt 6:9, 13b). It is a place of beauty and peace, a place of wholeness, a place of worship. We are told that it has gates, streets of gold and mansions throughout the kingdom; it is the place where the throne room of God is located (John 14:2; Rev 20:11; 21:21).

Heaven is referred to in the very first verse of the book of Genesis where God states that He created the heavens and the earth (Gen 1:1). It is also the place from where God sent a chariot of fire down to earth to pick up Elijah and take him back into heaven (2 Kings 2:11). When John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus Christ, began to preach out in the wilderness he warned people to repent for the "kingdom of heaven" was now at hand (Matt 3:2). Also, when one reads the book of Matthew, one will soon discover that one of the main themes that he records throughout the book is concerning the kingdom of heaven.

Definitions

1. **Heaven**, meaning paradise, bliss, above the sky, firmament, the idea of the whole universe; the eternally wonderful dwelling of God (third heaven, 2 Cor 12:2); where

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- judgment will take place; the place where the marriage supper of the Lamb occurs; the battleground of spiritual warfare.
2. **Kingdom** a realm, empire, monarchy. This is an area of land, a city, a country or a commonwealth of countries where a king or a queen rules over the people. Whose kingdom are you representing and serving? Are you a soldier of this world's kingdom or God's heavenly kingdom? We are called by Jesus Christ to be ambassadors of reconciliation for His Kingdom (2 Cor 5:20).
 3. **"Kingdom of Heaven"** which can also be termed as the Heavenly Kingdom. This is a realm or place over which God has absolute rule. It is God's dwelling place. This term is used most often in the book of Matthew. The book of Revelation also gives to us a glimpse or a window into the appearance of heaven and of those who dwell there.

In recent history we've had people share stories concerning visions that they've had about heaven. We have also had people who have died and come back to life and then shared what they saw and what they heard while they were in heaven. The Holy Spirit's "Revelation" to John is like a window allowing us to see what heaven is like.

Principle One: GOD CREATED

*"In the beginning God created the **heavens** and the earth."*
Gen 1:1

It is important to understand that God created the heavens (plural) and the earth. But, because of the fall of man, not only man was infected by sin, but all creation is affected by corruption and death. But there's a time coming when the old heaven and earth will pass away (Rev 21:1). In God's eternal plan, when all the battles are over, He is going to create a new heaven and a new earth, pure and clean and not tarnished by sin. It will be healthy and beautiful, just like it was in the time of the Garden of Eden (Isa 65:17; 66:22; 2 Pet 3:13; Rev 21:11).

We must remember that everything that has been created belongs to the Lord. He watches over His whole creation (Ps 15:2), He is One Who does not sleep or rest (Ps 121:4). God is truly our Father, one who cares, comforts and loves us. We all have a Father in heaven (Matt 5:16), because He was the one who created us and breathed life into us from the very beginning (Gen 2:7). Another beautiful truth is that not only did He create us, but He made us in His own image, both male and female (Gen 1:27). We are a very unique part of both God's creation and of His heavenly kingdom.

Another unique fact about this place called heaven is that in the midst of it we have the throne room of God (Isa 66:1; Eccl 5:2; Rev 4:1-11). This is a place where the 24 elders will cast their crowns before the throne of God and as they do, they will be saying, *"You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power; for You created all things, and by your will they exist and were created"* (Rev 4:11). There is one other thing that is part of the throne room of God – in this throne room we are told that there is an altar. The Scripture states, *I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the Word of God and for the testimony which they held, and*

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they cried out with a loud voice, saying, how long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth? Then a white robe was given to each of them, and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed” (Rev 6:9-11).

Principle Two: KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

*“And said, assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the **kingdom of heaven**. Therefore, whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the **kingdom of heaven**.”*

Matt 18:3-4

Heaven is a real place where there will be no more pain and suffering; those with disabilities and mental challenges will be made whole before the Lord. They will be new creations, for all the old things will have passed away and they will have become new (2 Cor 5:17; Rev 21:1). Anxiety and pressures will be gone because heaven is a place of peace; a place where we can rest, worship and serve. There will be no more need for sun, moon (Rev 21:23) and stars because the glory of the Lord will light everything in heaven.

We are told that the streets are made of gold and that there are many mansions (Rev 21:21). We are told that Jesus has gone to prepare a place for us and soon all the preparations will be ready, and He will come back for His church (John 14:3). We are also told that the river of life flows through heaven (Rev 22:17) and that the tree of life is planted alongside the river (Rev 22:2; 22:9). It is interesting to note that Adam and Eve were banned from the Garden of Eden, unable to eat from the tree of life after they had eaten the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen 3:22-24). Now, at the end of the Book of Revelation we are again introduced to the tree of life (Rev 22:2), but this time we are not banned from it; this time we can walk up to it and partake of it. What a special day that will be when we can, for the very first time, taste of this beautiful fruit of God’s tree of life.

One can hardly imagine what it is going to be like to walk the beautiful streets of gold (Rev 21:21) and to see the magnificent beauty of God’s creation all around us. We’ll know that we have been set free and that all we will see and hear has been created by God our Father; for all eternity we will be experiencing everlasting joy with God and with other believers (John 6:47; Rom 6:23).

Principle Three: LAMB OF GOD

*The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold! The **Lamb of God** who takes away the sin of the world!”*

John 1:29

This title “**Lamb of God**” or just the name “**Lamb**” is most often used in the book of Revelation. It describes for us what God did by sending His Son to become the **Sacrificial Lamb**, taking upon Himself the punishment for the sins of the world. John the Baptist was the only one

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who had previously used this title. When he saw Jesus coming toward him, prior to His baptism, John proclaimed, "Behold the **Lamb of God**" (John 1:29, 36). This title should remind us of the Passover that took place in Exodus. A perfect lamb was selected, then sacrificed, and its blood spread over the doorposts of the house (Ex 12:1-7). Following that, and even in the New Testament, most Jewish people knew that, for one to have forgiveness of sin, there needed to be the shedding of blood. That is why, yearly, they celebrated the Passover. It was during this time of Passover that Jesus was put to death (Luke 22:1-2). Christ commanded us to gather together in the fellowship of communion, to remind us of what Christ did for us as our sacrificial Lamb (Matt 26:26-30). Even the prophet Isaiah told that there would be One who would come as a Lamb and take away the sins of the world (Isa 53:7).

Jesus Christ came to this earth to be our once-and-for-all **Sacrificial Lamb**, a **Lamb** without blemish (1 Pet 1:19). Because of His shed blood which He gave for us on Calvary, by confessing our sin and believing on Him as our Lord and Savior, we can enter into heaven and live with Him for all eternity (Heb 9:22, 13:12, 20).

Again, look how the book of revelation uses the title **Lamb**:

- stood a **Lamb**, as it had been slain *Rev 5:6*
- worthy is the **Lamb** that was slain to receive *Rev 5:12*
- saying, Salvation to our God ... and unto the **Lamb** *Rev 7:10*
- them white in the blood of the **Lamb** *Rev 7:14*
- not written in the book of life of the **Lamb** *Rev 13:8*
- looked and, lo, a **Lamb** stood on mount Sion *Rev 14:1*
- war with the **Lamb** and the **Lamb** shall overcome *Rev 17:14*
- the marriage of the **Lamb** is come, and his wife *Rev 19:7*
- are written in the **Lamb's** book of life *Rev 21:27*
- of God and of the **Lamb** shall be in it *Rev 22:3*

It is clear from these Scriptures that the reader is to understand that Christ was sent to earth by the Father for a purpose. The Old Covenant law didn't work, but it was a schoolmaster (Gal 3:13), demonstrating our sinfulness and pointing us to the true way of having forgiveness of sins (Eph 1:7) and to have life eternal (John 3:15; Rom 6:23; 1 Tim 6:12). Truth and life come only through Jesus Christ (John 14:6), the Lamb of God. This is how we get to the Father in Heaven.

Principle Four: TREASURE AND REWARDS

*"Do not lay up for yourselves **treasures** on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves **treasures in heaven**, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal hello; for where your **treasure** is, there your heart will be also."*

Matt 6:19-21

"But seek the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you. Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom sell what you have and

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*give alms; provide yourself money bags which do not grow old, a **treasure in the heavens** that does not fail, where no thief approaches nor moth destroys. For where your **treasure** is, there your heart will be also.*

Luke 12:31-34

Unfortunately, many disciples are more concerned about their treasures here on earth than they are about their treasures in heaven. Treasures are built up in heaven (Matt 19:21; Luke 18:22) by investing in people and getting involved in His local church, doing the things which God's Holy Spirit calls us to do. The book of Malachi (Mal 3:10) encourages us to give our tithe to His storehouse, and to others around the world. The Lord desires us to give and, when we do, we are told God will open up the windows of heaven and He will bless us. I believe what God is looking for are people who are willing to be channels and churches through which He can minister and where His will is being done.

As disciples, we sometimes focus so much on the earthly and forget that we are just pilgrims passing through, and that what God really wants us to do is to lay up treasures in heaven that have an eternal reward attached to them. One of the Beatitudes talks about our heavenly rewards. It states, "*Blessed are you when men hate you, and when they exclude you, and revile you, and reject your name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! For indeed your reward is great in heaven, for in like manner their fathers did to the prophets*" (Luke 6:22-23). Building up treasure in heaven can be difficult here on earth because it may mean persecution and trial and sacrifice. One may have to give more than he thought it was possible to give, whether of finances or time. However, when we "do it unto the Lord", He strengthens us and blesses us for our faithfulness. There is no greater sacrifice than to pour one's life into others and, by doing that, we lay up beautiful treasures in heaven that are lasting and eternal (Matt 6:19-21).

Revelation 3:18 tells of another thing the disciple needs to realize: "*I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.*" Through the power of the Holy Spirit, John exhorts us to make changes here on earth that will affect how we live in Heaven. We need to be as refined gold that has gone through fire (Mal 3:2-3; 1 Pet 1:7). Jesus is coming for a church that is washed and pure before Him (Ps 51:7; Rev 1:5). We also need to ask the Holy Spirit to anoint our eyes so that we may see the real truth. Often, we are blind, but Christ wants us to see Him day by day in our lives.

Principle Five: REJOICING AND CELEBRATION

*"I say to you that likewise there will be more **joy in heaven** over one sinner who repents than over the ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance."*

Luke 15:7

The purpose of Christ's coming was to shed His blood, and rise again on the third day. By doing so, people would have a choice whether or not to give their lives to Christ. In the kingdom of heaven, salvation is extremely important. In fact, the Scripture tells us that there is great rejoicing

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over one sinner who repents (Luke 15:7). Why would this be so important? Because every person who repents demonstrates that the death of Christ on Calvary was worth it all. He gave Himself because He loved us and wants all of us to be with Him for all eternity (John 3:16). No one can experience a greater joy than that of receiving love (1 Cor 13:13; 1 Pet 4:8), not because it's been requested or because they have to somehow pay for it, but because it's freely given – with no strings attached. That's why there's so much rejoicing in heaven. It's an exciting moment when the name of that "lost lamb" of Jesus gets written into the **Lamb's Book of Life** (Rev 13:8).

Another event where there is much rejoicing and celebration will be at the marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev 19:7-10). This will be one of the last final things that will take place during the **End Times**. It brings together His Church as His bride to be presented to the Father as the one who was betrothed. The engagement period is over, and the wedding will soon take place. What a banquet that will be when we all will gather round banqueting tables and Jesus introduces us for the very first time as His Bride to the Father. What a joyous day of celebration that will be! That day will represent the end of time as we know it, but the beginning of eternal time that will never end - for all eternity.

Principle Six: CHRIST'S RETURN

*"But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are sleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from **heaven** with a shout, with the voice of the arch-angel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore, comfort one another with these words."*

1 Thes 4:13-18

A "crossover event" will take place for those of us who are still alive here on earth. We need to be aware of two things. The first is the rapture of the church when we meet with Jesus in the clouds; at that moment we will become part of His physical eternal Kingdom (1Thes 4:13-18). The second thing is that Jesus will come back again to set up his Kingdom here on earth (Acts 1:11). He will bind Satan and all his demons and to bring judgment upon all peoples (Rev 20:10). The world is going to be in great suffering and pain. The antichrist (1 John 2:22) will attempt to rule the world; in the end, he will bring a devastating destruction upon the earth.

When Jesus was ascending into heaven after His resurrection, the disciples were looking heavenward when some angels came to them and told them that, as they have seen Jesus go, He will come back again (Acts 1:11). The first time that Jesus came, He came as a suffering servant so that He would be able to shed His blood as a sacrificial Lamb, providing remission of sin for us (Acts 2:38; Rom 6:22-23). But now He will come as Lord of lords and King of kings (Rev 19:16). He will bring with Him an army and not only that, but the Bible says He will also bring with Him the

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rewards that He has for us (Luke 6:23). When the battle begins, we are told that Jesus will come on a white horse (Rev 19:11), leading His Soldiers, His devoted disciples into a victorious battle that will bind and enslave Satan and all his demonic host for 1000 years (Rev 20:2).

An important point to understand concerning heaven is that Jesus Christ is known either as the "Lamb" or "Lamb of God" (John 1:29; Rev 12:11). Throughout history, from the time of Cain and Abel and throughout the Old Testament there always had to be a sacrifice for sin. One of the most significant time of sacrifice occurred during the last plague in Egypt when the firstborn was killed. If the Israelites hoped for redemption from death of their firstborn child, they needed to sacrifice a lamb and shed its blood and then place it over the doorpost of their home. Then, when the death angel saw the blood he would pass by (Ex 12:1-25). The fulfillment of this event was initiated as Christ celebrated the final Passover with His disciples. Jesus gave the Passover a different meaning, telling them that the bread represented His broken body and that He would shed His blood as a new covenant for the remission of their (and our) sins (Matt 26:26-30). Before we can stand before a holy and righteous heavenly Father we must be covered by the righteous blood of Jesus Christ. Then, when we move into chapter after chapter of Revelation, we are reminded of the Lamb of God (See section on the Lamb of God) so that we remember, even during the most horrible times which are going to take place on earth, that we still have a Lamb of God (John 1:29) Who has sacrificed Himself for us. It's because of that sacrifice that we will have the victory over our enemies.

Principle Seven: JUDGEMENT POURED FORTH

*"But why do you **judge** your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the **judgment seat** of Christ. For it is written: as I live, says the LORD, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then each of us shall give an account of himself to God."*

Rom 14:10

*"And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were **judged** according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were **judged**, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire."*

Rev 20:12-15

All people, both dead and alive, will be brought before the judgment seat of the Lord (2 Cor 5:10). We will be brought to account for the things that we've done here on earth. The judgment will be final and everlasting (Matt 27:19; John 5:30; Heb 6:12). Our lives will be laid bare before the Lord and, if we have not confessed our sin and asked God for forgiveness through the blood of Jesus Christ, we will be standing before the father as a lost child, guilty of our unrepented sins (Rom 14:10). I know this is not the way we like to think about heaven, but the judgment does

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indeed take place there, and we need to be aware that the things we do here on earth will, at some time in the future, be judged (John 12:47-48; Rom 11:33; 2 Cor 5:10; 2 Tim 4:1).

We are told that if our names are not written in the “Book of Life” we will be cast into the lake of fire (Rev 21:27). What a horrible day that would be! We will know that we were guilty because we had denied Christ in our hearts and lives during that short time we spent on earth. We will know our decision had cost us a beautiful eternity with Jesus Christ. I think that we would spend eternity thinking about what we have thrown away for the sake of a little bit of pleasure here on earth and will, as the Bible states (Matt 8:12), cause us to grind our teeth and cry out with terrible suffering. We must ensure, as disciples, that we warn people that a day of judgment is coming and that they will not be able to run or hide. Not even physical death will hide them, but all will be brought forward before the judgment seat of Christ (2 Cor 5:10).

Principle Eight: ETERNAL LIFE

*“that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have **eternal life**”.*

John 3:15

*“and this is **eternal life**, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent”.*

John 17:3

Our life here on earth is but a small dot or speck on the timeline of eternity. The word eternity means infinity, time without end, perpetuity, and endlessness, permanency. Eternity will be realized in two distinct forms: one is eternal death and destruction (Rom 6:23; Phil 3:19; 2 Thes 1:9) and the second is eternal life (1 John 5: 11-13). It is up to us to determine which one to choose – eternal life or eternal death (Deut 30:19). We must really take the time to think this through, and to choose wisely. This is not something fictional, it is reality. We will be judged and people will be separated into two groups (Matt 25:31-46).

Eternal life is a gift that God extends to all who believe, to all who make Jesus Christ Lord and Saviour of their life. When we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us (1 John 1:9). We must take this action. It is a step of faith (2 Cor 5:7; Eph 2:8; Heb 11:6). The hymn writer expressed it this way, “Trust and obey, for there is no other way”. The journey begins when we confess our sins, making children of God. But we also need to move deeper into the fullness of Christ by asking the Holy Spirit to baptize us (1 Cor 12:13) and fill us (Eph 5:18), so that we can have the power to overcome the trials and tribulations of this world. In Christ we become connected to a new kingdom. The old has passed away (2 Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15). Our focus should always be on Christ and the need to keep moving forward to that day when we will be called before his presence in heaven. What a wonderful and amazing day that will be.

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Principle Nine: NEW MAN AND NEW WOMAN

*“After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, **clothed with white robes**, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice saying, Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb!”*

Rev 7:9-10

*“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a **new name** written which no one knows except him who receives it.”*

Rev 2:17

*“They shall see **His face**, and his **name** shall be on their foreheads.”*

Rev 22:4

When we get to heaven, probably the most joyous thing for us will be the receiving of a new body. The “old temple of God” will pass away and we will be given a new heavenly body. We will be clothed in new clothing representing the holiness and cleansing of Christ’s precious blood (Rev 3:5, 18; 19:4). Another beautiful thing is that the Lord is going to give us a new name. We will be presented with a stone and, within that stone, we will have a name that is unique and special to us (Rev 2:17).

In heaven man and woman will not be linked in marriage, but our completeness will be found by being one with Jesus Christ (Gal 3:28). There will be no need for wives, husbands, or the bearing of children. Our joy will be fulfilled by having perfect fellowship with God in all his Glory and with our brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus. The evil that once bound us on earth from the inside out, will be no more (Rev 21:4). As men and women, we will stand cool before god (Rev 22:3-4).

Principle Ten: MEETING GOD FACE TO FACE

*They shall **see his face**, and his name shall be on their foreheads.*

Rev 22:4

What joy it will be when we have the opportunity to meet God face to face! All the pain and suffering will be over. Our struggles here on earth will be over (Rev 21:4). I’m sure there will be joyful tears before our Heavenly Father. In our churches, we often sing, “What a day that will be when our Jesus we shall see”. I know we will lift up our hands, fall to our knees and worship Him for what He has done for us, for how much He has loved us and shown us His mercy and grace. It may be hard for us to grasp that we are now in our eternal home – forever.

The last time that mankind (man and woman) saw God was in the Garden of Eden. No one throughout all history has been able to look upon the face of our God. But, when time has come

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to an end and we are in heaven to be with God for all eternity, we shall finally behold His face (Rev 22:4). What a beautiful day it will be when we are able to look at our Triune God, the Creator of all heaven and earth.

Principle Eleven: PEOPLES

*“And they sang a new song, saying: you are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seal; for you were slain, and you have redeemed us to your God by your blood out of every **tribe and tongue and people and nations,***
Rev 5:9

There will be people from many backgrounds represented in heaven – people from all around the world who have given their lives to Jesus Christ, and become his disciples. We read in scripture that every nation, tongue, people, and tribe will be represented (Rev 5:9; 7:9). Can you imagine what it will be like to see millions and millions of people streaming into the gates of heaven, approaching the very throne room of God Himself!

We need to remember that these many people will also include the church – those who were “raptured” by Christ. All the individual disciples of Christ from around the world will have finally come together, both those from the past and those who were still alive at Christ’s coming. Yes, we are told in Scripture that, although churches have struggled over the years, the best part is that Jesus never forsook His Church but continued to pour out his grace and love (Rev 1:4; 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 22). There will be much jubilation and excitement with people greeting those they know and getting to know others who are part of the Body of Christ. We will see, for the first time, how massive the Church of Christ really is. I’m sure that, all over heaven, there will be much praise; some will be lifting hands, others will have fallen to their knees, and others will be lying prostrate on the ground, weeping with tears of joy and worship.

And here will be our brothers and sisters and the people of Israel. Hebrews tells us that there will be a new covenant with the house of Israel, the Jewish people. The Scripture says, *“they shall be my people,”* (Heb 8:7-13). In heaven, there will be 12 gates, and 12 angels at the gates. The names written on the gates will be the names of the 12 tribes of Israel (Rev 21:12). There will also be a remnant of 144,000 (Rev 7:1).

It is important to note that seven times the phrase is used in the book of Revelation stating, *“out of every tribe and tongue and peoples and nation”* (Rev 5:9; 7:9; 10:11; 11:9; 13:7; 14:6; 17:15). Heaven is going to be unique, being made up of people from every corner of the world. I believe we will see the difference between peoples; the difference will be seen mainly by how they will worship and praise God. There may be differences, but overall there will be harmony and unity through all the heavenly realm of God.

DISCIPLES' PRINCIPLES OF FAITH

Principle Twelve: MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB

“Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has been made ready... write: Blessed are those who are called to the **marriage supper of the Lamb.**”

Rev 19:7, 9

The climax to everything is revealed at the marriage supper of the Lamb. The battle has been won, pain and suffering are over. The time of the martyrs has come to an end (Rev 6:9-11), all the wedding people have arrived, and the triumphant entry of the bride will occur. All will be clothed in wedding garments. There will be worship and praise coming from all corners of the earth. As the gate is opened and the bride begins to enter into the home of her King, it will be a time of great celebration. Then a hush will come upon all the people and, at that moment, the bride will be introduced to all who have gone before. There will be great shouts of joy because the Lamb has overcome all things and He sits on His throne as our Groom and King.

We will have been wedded to God – we will see Him face to face. The eternal relationship in the glory and presence of God will have been established. Following the wedding, we will live in mansions and walk the streets of gold. The Groom will show us around, and we will walk with God and forever be One with Him. What a day that will be!

Conclusion

Jesus Himself tells us that He came to testify to the churches about these things (Rev 22:16). John the Baptist tells us that we need to be ready, for the “*kingdom of heaven is at hand*” (Matt 3:2). The time is short. The disciple of Christ needs to make sure he is always prepared for when Christ comes to take up His Church (2 Pet 3:10). We need to be looking up to the heavens, for the time of redemption draws nigh (Luke 21: 28).

We need to realize that everything concerning who we are and what we do on earth is linked and tied to the “Kingdom of Heaven”. In order to have victory here on earth, we must have a greater understanding of heaven. We need to grasp the power of God and that His authority for us here on earth comes from heaven. It is the Word of God that sets the captive free (Gal 5:1). We are given a free choice to decide whether or not to believe the Truth, and what kind of life we will live (Deut 30:19-20). When we journey with Christ as His disciples, that pathway takes us to heaven where we will spend all eternity with our Creator God.

Discipleship Application

The Bible tells disciples that we must first seek the kingdom of heaven or the kingdom of God (Matt 6:33; Luke 12:31) because, unless we have a genuine walk with Him, the Scriptures tell us that we cannot see the kingdom of God (John 3:3). Nothing unholy can enter into the kingdom of heaven. The only possible way for us to go in is to be covered by the blood of Jesus Christ and His righteousness (Phil 3:9). The time is coming when the goats and the sheep will be separated;

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those who find themselves on the right hand of the Lord will be asked to enter the Father's house and to inherit the kingdom that has been prepared for them from the foundation of the world (Matt 25:34). We also need to remember that, while we are still here on earth, the Scriptures tell us that God gives us the keys of the kingdom of heaven. We are constantly involved in warfare; there is a great battle in the spirit realm but, with these keys, we're told that whatever we bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever we loose on earth will be loosed in heaven (Matt 16:19).

Commitment and Prayer

Dear Lord Jesus,

I come to You today, asking that You help me to keep my eyes fixed on the goal, that, as I run this race here on earth I'll be looking to You, Jesus as the author and finisher of my personal race that I've been running with You. Lord, if I ask that You help me to keep my eyes open, not only on those things around me here on earth, but also that my eyes would continue to look heavenward as I anticipate Your coming. I pray that I may focus my thinking more clearly on the end result - that one day I will be with You in heaven for all eternity. Knowing that makes everything that we go through here on earth, worth it all. I pray that not only will people see You in my life, Jesus, but they would also see that I am an ambassador of the kingdom of heaven and that my life shines forth the power and blessing of Your Eternal Kingdom.

Your servant in Christ,

Related Scriptures:

Heaven

Gen 1:1; 7:11; Deut 1:10; 10:14; 30:12 (Rom 10:6); 1 Kin 8:27; 2 Kin 2:11; Ezra 1:2; Ps 11:4; 19:1; 50:6; 102:25 (Heb 1:10); Isa 65:17 (2 Pet 3:13; Rev 21:1); 66:1 (Acts 7:49), 22; Dan 7:13; Mal 3:10; Matt 3:2; 5:16; Luke 6:23; 15:7; John 6:5; Acts 7:49; Eph 3:10, 15; 1 Thes 4:16; 1 Pet 1:12; Rev 21:3

Kingdom

Gen 10:10; Ex 19:6; 1 Chr 28:7; Esth 1:2; Ps 22:28; 145:13; Isa 19:2; Dan 2:37; 4:3; Matt 3:2 (4:17); 4:8, 23 (9:35); 6:10 (Luke 11:2); 6:13; 13:38; 16:19; 19:14 (Mark 10:14; Luke 18:16); 26:29 (Mark 14:25; Luke 22:18); Luke 9:62; 12:32; 13:29; 17:21; John 18:36; Rom 14:17; 1 Cor 4:20; 6:9; Gal 5:21; Eph 5:5; 2 Thes 1:5; Heb 11:33; 2:28; James 2:5; 2 Peter 1:11; Rev 12:10

Kingdom of God

Mark 10:24; Matt 19:24; John 3:5; Acts 14:22; Rom 14:17; 1 Cor 6:10; Col 4:11; 2 Thes 1:5

DISCIPLES' PRINCIPLES OF FAITH

Kingdom of Heaven

Matt 5:10; 16:19; 18:3

Summary of Disciples' Principles of Faith:

Theological disciplines should always be based clearly upon the Bible. Then, out of that, can come the different sciences and knowledge of man. It is dangerous to build theology around emotion and feeling, but we are to build our walk with Christ upon His Word and testimony, the Bible. Too many people build their theology on emotion and experience, and when one does that, he/she is then building their home on shifting sands. We are called to build upon the rock of Christ Jesus, **NOT** on human tradition or religions (Matt 7:24-27).

In the pages of this book, you've seen a variety of teachings that disciples of Christ should learn and allow to deeply root in their hearts. These teachings are essential foundation stones on which we are to build our lives, and by which we must live. We are entering these last days when people will experience great deception; this deception will be the result of ignorance of knowing the Word of God. The Word of God has been given to the world, but it is vital for the disciples of Christ (Christ's Body, the Church) to help guide and correct thinking and interactions as we live here on earth. With this thought in mind, I want to conclude the book with Revelation 1:1-20, and I pray that the Holy Spirit will use these words to awaken within us the importance of prayer and studying the Word. I pray that our hearts will be stirred to challenge and call others to a deeper faith in Jesus Christ.

*"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants - things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John, who bore witness to the Word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw. Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near. John, to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. **To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, says the Lord, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.**"*

"I, John, both your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was on the island that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet, saying, I am the Alpha and the Omega the First and the Last, and, what you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamum, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea. Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with the garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. His head and hair were all white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; His feet were like brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the

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sound of many waters; He had in his right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength."

*"And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me saying to me, do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. **I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forever more.** Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death. Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this. The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches.*

Finally, in Revelation chapter 22 versus 20 and 21, *"He who testifies to these things says, **Surely I am coming quickly.** Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus! The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."*

Appendix:

I Disciples Gospel Creed

1. I do believe and confess in the **Living Word** of God who, in the beginning was and is God, who created all things and without Him nothing was created, and as the Word He became flesh and dwelt amongst us, the only begotten of the Father who is full of grace and truth.
2. I do believe and confess in the **virgin birth** of the second person of the Triune God Head, God's Son, Jesus Christ through the woman Mary and that she was imbued from on high by the power of the Holy Spirit and conceived and gave birth to a Son whose name is "Emanuel, God with us".
3. I do believe and confess in the **life of Christ** who lived and taught here on earth proclaiming the Father and the Kingdom of God, exemplifying to all that He was the only way, truth and life, and that one should take up the cross and follow Him.
4. I do believe and confess in the **physical death** of our Lord Jesus Christ on the cross, where he bore my sins and opened to people a way into the Holy of Holies where we could stand before the Father, clothed in Christ's grace and righteousness, proclaiming that we have died to ourselves and now live our all, as disciples, for Jesus.
5. I do believe and confess in the **bodily resurrection** of Jesus Christ that after being dead for three days He rose victorious from the grave, becoming the first born among many, putting to death the old man and making way for a new man, clothed and filled with His power and truth.
6. I do believe and confess in the **ascension** of Jesus Christ, that from the time of the resurrection, to the day He was taken up into the clouds, being seen by many, is now in paradise, preparing a place for the disciples, interceding before the Father on our behalf.
7. I do believe and confess in the **Holy Spirit** who, as one of three Persons of the triune God, is sent by the Father to regenerate, baptize into Christ's Body (the Church) and fill believers (His disciples) with power, anointing them with the fruit of the Spirit, gifting them with gifts so that they can serve the body of Christ Jesus throughout the world.
8. I do believe and confess in the one **church** of Jesus Christ, which He birthed on the Day of Pentecost through the Holy Spirit, Jesus being the head, making her a living organism, with the purpose of proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ on earth and giving to her His presence of love, making her a place of refuge, encouragement and nurturing, a place from which the teaching of Christ would go out, a place for all who would receive Him as their Lord and Saviour to have fellowship.
9. I do believe and confess in the **second coming** of Jesus Christ, that He will soon come again with His army as Lord and King, defeating all enemies and binding Satan and putting to death the curse of sin and disobedience once and for all, resulting in a new kingdom and new earth and heaven.

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10. I do believe and confess in the literal place called **heaven**, where all will be judged, a place where the Lamb's Book of Life is kept, a place where one day as a disciple I will go, a place of no more sickness or death, a place where I will become a new creation with a new name, a place where we will come face to face with our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ the Lamb of God, Redeemer for all who have believe in Him, and that we will gather together with Him at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, worshipping and adoring our King Jesus for all eternity.

I now and forever confess my total allegiance to My LORD and King Jesus Christ both now and for all eternity. Amen

Name: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

II Road map for Eternal Life

1. God is calling you!

Romans 1:6-7

Among whom you also are the **called** of Jesus Christ; ⁷ to all who are beloved of God in Rome, called *as* saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. God has made a way for us.

Romans 1:16

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for **salvation** to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

3. No man is sinless.

Romans 3:10

As it is written, "THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE."

4. All Men and Women are sinners.

Romans 3:23-24

For **all have sinned** and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;

5. Root problem to everything is sinfulness.

Romans 5:12

Therefore, just as through **one-man sin** entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death **spread to all men**, because all sinned

6. God desires to give to us eternal life.

Romans 6:23

For the wages of sin is death, but the **free gift of God is eternal life** in Christ Jesus our Lord.

7. Eternal life comes only through Jesus Christ.

Romans 5:8

But God demonstrates His own **love** toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, **Christ** died for us.

8. Confess our sin, believe in our hearts and commit to Christ. *Romans 10:9-10, 13*

That if you **confess with your mouth** Jesus *as* Lord, and **believe in your heart** that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; ¹⁰for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, **resulting in salvation**. ... ¹³ for "**Whoever will call on the name of the LORD will be saved.**"

9. Living a transformed life.

Romans 12:1-2

Therefore, I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to **present** your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, *which is* your spiritual service of worship. ²And do not be conformed to this world, but be **transformed** by the renewing of your mind, so that you may **prove what the will of God** is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

10. New life can start today.

Romans 13:11-12

Do this, knowing the **time**, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for **now, salvation is nearer to us** than when we believed. ¹²The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore, let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.

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11. Living for God with all our hearts.

Romans 14:8, 12

For if we live, we **live for the Lord**, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore, whether we live or die, **we are the Lord's**. ... so then each one of us give an **account** of himself to God.

12. God fills us through the Holy Spirit.

Romans 15:13

Now may the God of **hope fill you** with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the **Holy Spirit**.

Time to take the first step: Eternity Prayer

Dear Jesus,

I confess that I am a sinner, having gone my own way and that I need You as my Lord and Saviour. I believe that You paid the price for my sins when You died on the cross and shed Your blood for me, so that I might have eternal life. I am ready and willing to turn from my sin and return to You. I now invite You into my heart and surrender the control and direction of my entire life to You. Help me to be a true disciple in You and to serve others. Thank You for taking my punishment and providing for me a way of escape from eternal death to an everlasting life, and for coming into my heart so that I can now have a close personal relationship with You. *Amen*

Welcome home to eternity with Christ Jesus.

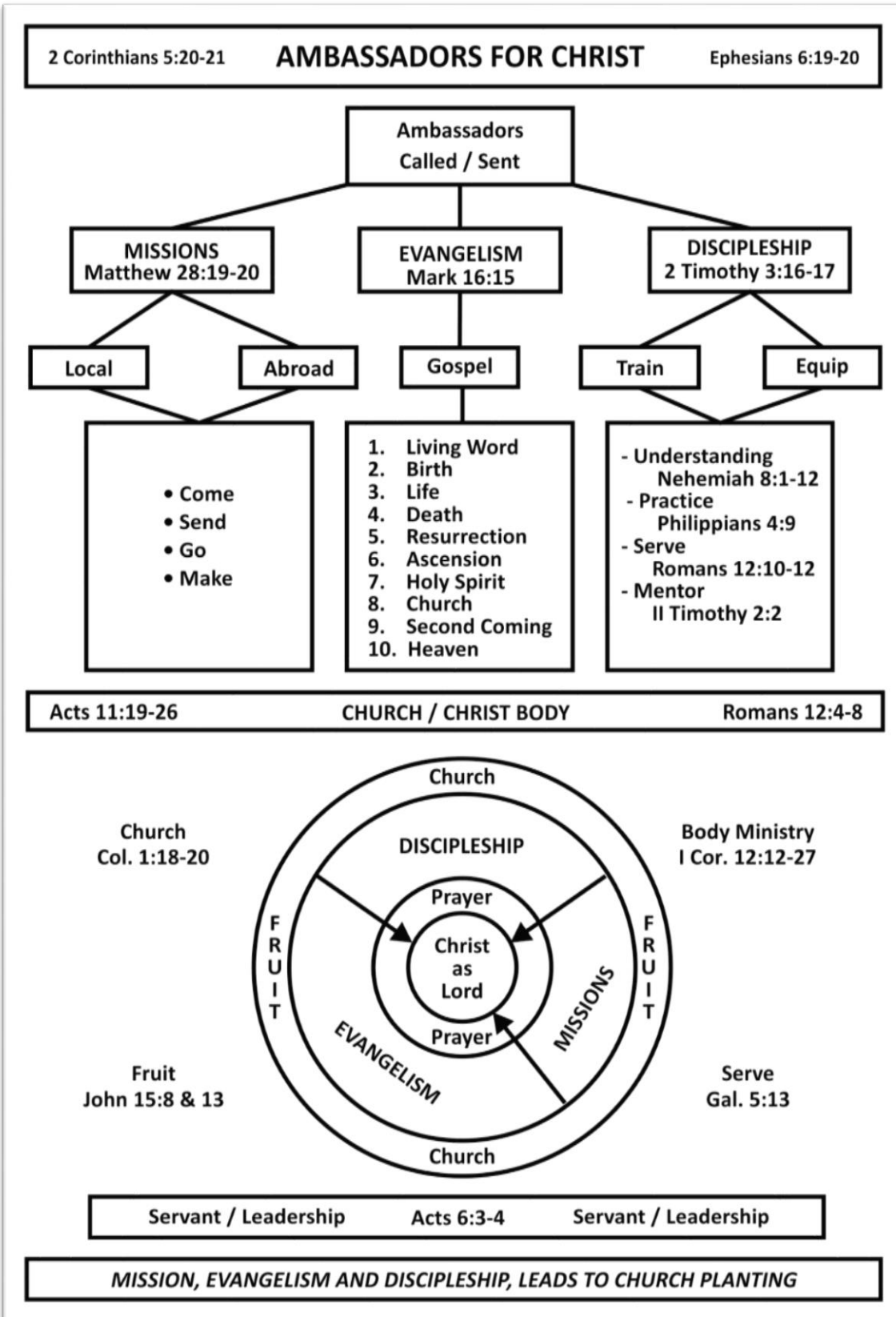
III Disciple's Statement of Faith

We believe:

1. In the Holy Bible as the inspired Word of God and as the final authority in all matters of Christian life and doctrine. (2 Tim 3:16, 17)
2. In the One True God, in the Trinity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (Deut 6:4; Matt 3:16; John 1:1; Acts 5:3, 4; 1 John 5:8)
3. In the virgin birth of Jesus the Messiah, being conceived by the Holy Spirit. (Matt 1:23-25; Luke 1:34, 35)
4. In the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ, His ascension and seat at the right hand of the Father. (Acts 1:8-11, 2:24; Eph 1:19-23)
5. In salvation through repentance of sin and faith in Jesus Christ and His blood shed for our redemption. (Acts 4:12; Rom 5:9; Eph 2:8-10)
6. In the believer's water baptism by immersion in which a believer identifies with Christ in His death, in His burial, and in His resurrection to newness of Life. (Mark 16:16; Rom 6:1)
7. In the filling of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38; 19:1-6), with the gifts (1 Cor 12-14), fruit (Gal 5:22, 23), and ministries. (Eph 4:11)
8. In exercising the privileges and authority of believers, and in praying in Jesus' name to appropriate the provisions in the redemptive work of Christ for healing and deliverance unto wholeness of spirit, soul, and body. (Is 53:4-6; Luke 4:18; John 14:12; James 5:14)
9. In the life and walk in the Spirit which helps believers to overcome and enables them to live the victorious Christian life. (Rom 8:11; Gal 5:16-18)
10. In the resurrection of all the dead; believers to eternal life (1 Cor 15), and unbelievers to eternal damnation. (Rev 20:4- 15)
11. In the imminent Second Coming of Jesus Christ. (John 14:1; Acts 1:11; Rev 22:12)
12. In the great commission to the church to go into all the world and preach the Gospel, making disciples of all nations, baptizing converts in the name of the Godhead, and teaching them to observe all of Christ's commands. (Matt 28:19,20; Mark 16:15,16)

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IV Ambassador Chart: Mission, Evangelism and Discipleship



V Ten Commandments

And God spake all these words, saying,

I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

1. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

2. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

3. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain.

4. Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

5. Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

6. Thou shalt not kill.

7. Thou shalt not commit adultery.

8. Thou shalt not steal.

9. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

10. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

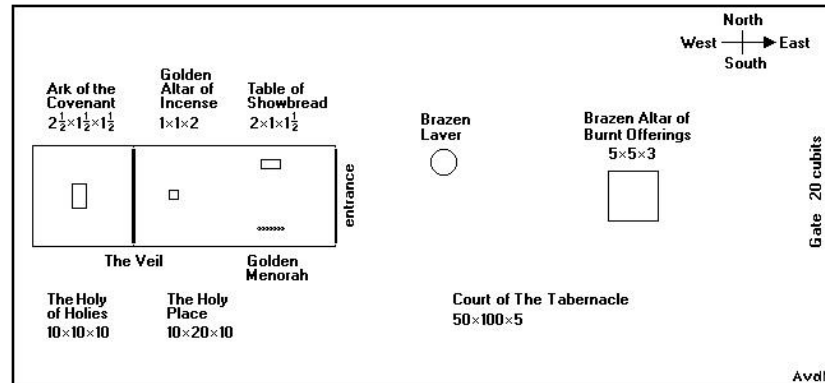
Exodus 20:1-17

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VI Tabernacle

Exodus 25-27; 35:10 - 38:31

THE TABERNACLE



All dimensions are in cubits. 1 cubit = 1 royal cubit = 20.67 inches.

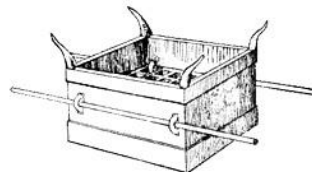
Drawing of the Tabernacle © 2005 A. vander Nat



The Ark of the Covenant with the Mercy Seat



The Golden Menora or Lampstand



The Brazen Altar of Burnt Offerings



ALTAR OF INCENSE



TABLE OF SHOWBREAD



BRONZE LAYER

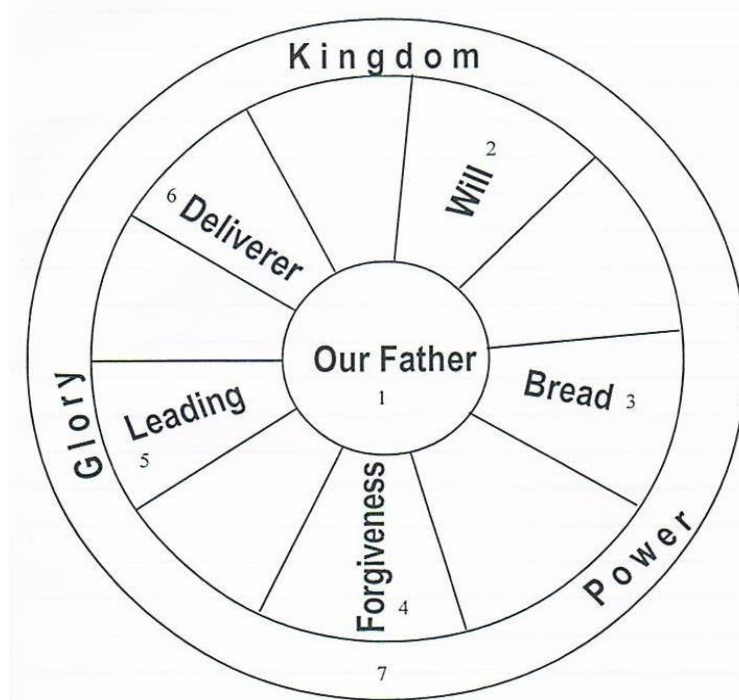
VII Disciple's Prayer Wheel

Our Father, which art in heaven,
 Hallowed be thy Name.
 Thy Kingdom come.
 Thy will be done on earth,
 As it is in heaven.
 Give us this day our daily bread.
 And forgive us our trespasses,
 As we forgive them that trespass against us.
 And lead us not into temptation,
 But deliver us from evil.
 For Thine is the kingdom,
 The power, and the glory,
 Forever and ever.

Amen.

Matt 6:9-13; Luke 11:2-4

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------|
| 1) Our Father | verse 9 |
| 2) Our Father's Kingdom | verse 10,13 |
| 3) Our Father's Will | verse 10 |
| 4) Our Father's Bread | verse 11 |
| 5) Our Father's Forgiveness | verse 12 |
| 6) Our Father's Leading | verse 13 |
| 7) Our Father Delivers | verse 13 |
| 8) Our Father in Power & Glory | verse 13 |



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VIII Full Armour of God

"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armour of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil".

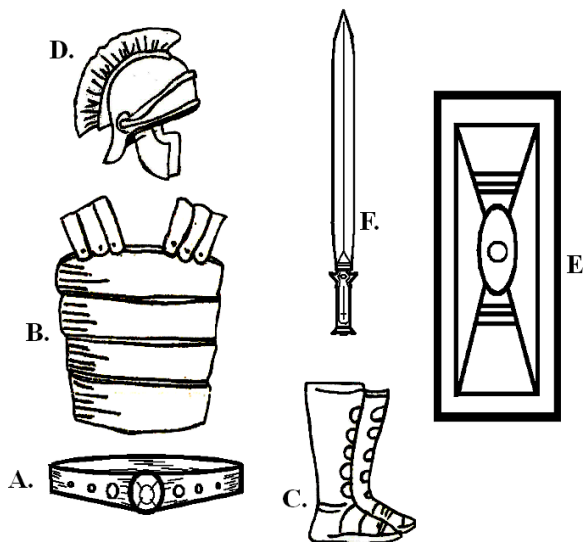
Ephesians 6:10-11

- | | | |
|------|-------------------------|-------------|
| I. | The Soldier's Strength | Eph 6:10 |
| II. | The Soldier's Battle | Eph 6:11-12 |
| III. | The Soldier's Equipment | Eph 6:13-17 |
| IV. | The Soldier's Attitude | Eph 6:18 |
| V. | The Soldier's Power | Eph 6:19 |
| VI. | The Soldier's Message | Eph 6:20 |

Armour

Ephesians 6:10-17

- | | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| A. Belt | with truth | <i>protect your reproductive area.</i> |
| B. Breastplate | of righteousness | <i>protect your heart.</i> |
| C. Shoes | preparation of the gospel of peace. | <i>protect your feet.</i> |
| D. Helmet | of salvation | <i>protect your thoughts.</i> |
| E. Shield | of faith | <i>protect you from the fiery darts of the enemy.</i> |
| F. Sword | Word of God | <i>protect you and empower you for battle.</i> |



IX Disciple's Prayer of Commitment / Discipleship Lifestyle

Dear Jesus,

I confess that I am a sinner having gone my own way and that I need You as my Lord and Savior. I believe that You paid the price for my sins when You died on the cross and shed Your blood for me, so that I might have eternal life. I am ready, willing to turn from my sin and return to You. I now invite You into my heart and surrender the control and direction of my life entirely to You. Help me to be a true disciple to you and to others. Thank you for taking my punishment and providing for me a way of escape from eternal death to everlasting life. Thank you for coming into my heart so that I can now have a close, personal relationship with You. Amen

(A) Disciple's Relationship Commitment Certificate

My Confession:

I have confessed my sinfulness to God, turned from my sin and believe that Christ has forgiven me.

My Acceptance:

I now receive the living Christ into my life as Lord and Savior.

My Commitment:

I surrender the right of my life to Jesus Christ. Jesus is my Lord.

Date of surrender to Christ: _____

Signature: _____

Witnessed by: _____

(B) Discipleship Lifestyle Commitment

What follows are some helpful hints to strengthen the new relationship that you now have with Christ Jesus as His Disciples.

Scripture: Reading and studying the Word of God daily.
2 Timothy 3:14 – 17

Prayer: For Christ's will and wisdom for others.
Philippians 4:6 – 7

Testify: Share your faith in Christ and tell others of God's love. Water baptism is one of the first ways to do this.
1 Peter 3:15 – 16

Fellowship: Go out and get involved with other believers
– in worship, communion and giving – which will strengthen your personal relationship with God.
Hebrews 10:24 – 25

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Walk: Let the Holy Spirit direct and guide your life each day. Allow the Holy Spirit to fill you and empower you for service.

John 14:26, Acts 2:38

Fruit: Grow each day while walking on a journey of maturity so that you may bear fruit that will last.

John 15:11

Seed Planting: Fulfill the call of the great commission by going, planting and reaping for God's glory. The seed is the Good News of the Gospel of Christ. Go tell and give to others what you have freely received.

Matthew 28:19–20, Mark 16:15 – 18

X Glossary

Abide	p.69, 101, 126	Convert	p.225
Administration	p.110	Convicting	p.93
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Project L.A.M.B.S. International

Making disciples is the call and mandate of our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus urged the disciples to follow Him. He laid down before us the teaching and the walk that we need to follow with Jesus as our supreme example. It is imperative for every believer and the church to know that disciples are not born but they are made. For the church to be strong in the last days, we must be about the business of equipping the saints (disciples) for the work of service.

Dr. James Humphries has been ministering for over 40 years and has experience in a variety of ministries including church planting, children's ministry, street ministry, youth ministry, camp ministry, pastoral work and directing and teaching in schools all over the world. In addition, he has taken part in traveling and ministering in the USA, Mexico, Ukraine, Myanmar, Israel, Jamaica, Japan, Thailand and across most of Canada. He completed his B.R.E. and his M.A. from Briercrest, and his Doctor of Ministry from Providence Theological Seminary in the spring of 1999.

In January 1996, Dr. James Humphries resigned as pastor of a local church with a vision to reach further abroad with the Word of God and to use it to train labourers for Christ (Matthew 9:36-38). He shared this with Dr. David Smith and Dr. Chuck Nichols of Providence Theological Seminary and they greatly encouraged Dr. James Humphries and his wife Irene to develop what God was laying on their hearts.

In March 1997, they traveled to Jamaica where they met several pastors who were very concerned about the need for training and disciplining their young people as leaders in their churches. Dr. James Humphries and Irene did not know this would be the starting point to an international ministry of discipleship training around the world known as Project L.A.M.B.S. International.

To date, Project L.A.M.B.S. has ministered in Canada, Myanmar, Ukraine, Africa, Jamaica, Mexico, Israel, Thailand, Japan, Dominican Republic, Naga Land and China. We offer over 30 different courses. Our graduates' number over 1000, and are serving worldwide. Out of this group of graduates, we have equipped and trained directors, teachers and pastors who in turn are carrying out 2 Timothy 2:1-2 to an even larger group of people.

In 2002 it was discovered that Irene had cancer again. God gave Irene another three years and because of that she was still able to travel and teach in many different countries. Shortly after what was to be her last trip, Irene was hospitalized in February 2005. A few weeks later she went home to be with her Lord and Saviour on March 9.

My second wife Hkaw Win was raised and trained mostly in the land of Myanmar. She has earned B.th, University Degree and a Master of Divinity Degree in Myanmar. In April 2007 she finished a second Master's Degree at Providence Theological Seminary in Christian Education. After July 1st, 2007 she headed back to Myanmar to head up the Christian Education Department for the Myitkyina Kachin Baptist Association and oversaw various ministries to 62 churches. After her four-year term was completed, she has been traveling and working as an interpreter and doing translations concerning various kinds of discipleship books and materials.

Over the last ten years we have lived in the countries of Myanmar and Thailand preparing a variety of resources in the Burmese (Myanmar) and Kachin Languages. To date we have published over 20 different kinds of books. Our goal is to equip and establish people as Disciples of Christ. Please pray for God's leading and wisdom. Our walk with Christ has taken us down many challenging pathways but we have seen the faithfulness of our Lord and Savior in every area. His grace has been sufficient.

Founder and Director,

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