

FOLLOWING JESUS

Becoming a Disciple



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Who we are

We are a group of like-minded Christians dedicated to enlarging the Kingdom of God globally through empowering leaders and strengthening local churches.

What we do

We provide ways for the Kingdom of God to impact unreached nations by mobilizing believers and churches. This is accomplished through relational mentoring, cultural engagement, and Christ-centered, Spirit-filled, and Bible-based training and resources.

What makes us unique?

We believe the only way growth in the Kingdom is sustainable is through strengthening healthy churches. Our goal is to equip indigenous churches in unreached nations to become self-supporting and self-propagating.

Once churches are equipped, we continue our support through seminars, training programs, prayer partnerships, and resources that help churches achieve greater ministry effectiveness.

Kingdom Building International (KBI) also offers specialized retreats and conferences that reignite passion and purpose in the lives of Christian Leaders so that when they return to their perspective fields of service, they are refreshed and refocused on their mission.

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Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	2
WHAT IS A DISCIPLE?	6
OUR BIBLE	14
WHAT WE BELIEVE	22
HOW GOD MADE US	31
HOW GOD SEES YOU	37
GOD KIND OF LOVE.....	45
CHANGE THE WAY YOU THINK.....	56
GOD’S COVENANT PROMISE	67
SETTING YOURSELF APART.....	77
FAITH.....	89
PRAYER.....	97
BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT	113
SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY.....	122
HOW GOD GUIDES US	131
GOD’S SUPERNATURAL GIFTS.....	142
SHARING THE GOSPEL	159
Appendix 1 – Salvation Prayer.....	170
Appendix 2 - Ephesians Prayer Challenge	171
Appendix 3 – Commitment Statement	172
Appendix 4 – God is Faithful.....	173
Appendix 5 – Your Identity.....	174
Appendix 6 – How to Study the Bible	175
Appendix 7 – The Love Chapter	182

<i>Appendix 8 – Key Definitions</i>	183
<i>ENDNOTES</i>	185



INTRODUCTION

It was over a hundred degrees. We were soaked with sweat, and we looked like we had just jumped into a swimming pool. We were in Honduras for ten days on a mission trip, and my husband was the plumber at the mission hospital for the week. Although I am a nurse, this week they had a whole group of nurse practitioners that had come to help. They asked if I could help my husband in construction. I was willing to serve wherever needed, so I happily nodded my head. For most of the week, I was “plumber’s helper.” They had asked Denis to fix a surgical sink that had been leaking for months. Nobody had been able to fix it. Denis quickly discovered the problem. Apparently, there was a “chunk missing out of the seat”—whatever that means. I didn’t know before that day that faucets had seats. But discovering the problem was the easy part. The hard part was trying to figure out how to fix it. No easy task with limited supplies and resources. We quickly discovered that the faucet was impossible to get. We would have to figure something else out. The people who had installed the sink had cemented it in so that you couldn’t get behind the sink. We would both be lying on our backs most of the day in the cabinet, looking up at the faucet. Our tools consisted of a flashlight, some PVC pipe, a few washers, and a pair of channel locks. Our mission felt almost impossible. We finally “made it work” after eight hours with an outside faucet and some washers. It wasn’t perfect and it certainly wasn’t easy. But we were both reminded that day how important it is to have the right tools for the job.

Do you want your life to have significance here on earth? I think most of us would answer yes to that question. You were created with a purpose.

***Ephesians 2:10** - For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*

We are God’s handiwork. God created us for a purpose. We all have a general purpose and a specific purpose to accomplish on this earth. We were created in Christ Jesus for good works. As soon as you accept Christ as your Lord and Savior, you have stepped into your pathway of purpose. You have been commissioned to share the good news of Jesus Christ with others (your general purpose). How we carry out our general purpose is different for every one of us. God has prepared in advance specific good works for each of us to accomplish. Good works, as described in the Bible, are works of eternal significance. God has prepared in advance works of eternal significance that He needs every one of us to carry out. We all have a specific place in the commission that uses our unique gifts, callings, and talents. Nobody else can fulfill our specific place like we can.

But just like fixing plumbing, we need to ensure that we are equipped with the proper knowledge and tools. To do this, I must first introduce you to someone. This person doesn't care what you look like, how you dress, if you are angry, if you are depressed, if you have been really mean, if you are scared, if you need to talk a lot, if you are insecure, or even if you are smart or good-looking. This person doesn't care about your past or anything you've done. This person wants to be with you all the time, no matter how you are feeling or what kind of mood you are in. This person I would like to introduce you to loves you more than anyone you know and loves you just as you are right now at this moment. You may be saying . . . "Yeah right, there is nobody like that." But there is. This person is a man named Jesus. He loves you so much that He knew you would be sitting here right now at this minute reading these very words in this book and He asked me to write them just for you.

To understand how much He cares about you, you have to know what He did for you. Let me first ask you this question. What is the most loving thing you could do for or give someone? What is the most precious thing you have to give anybody? It's not money and it's not time, although those things can be important. The most precious thing that you could ever do for somebody would be to lay your life down for them. Imagine there is a murderer. He has been sentenced to die for the crime he committed. However, at the last minute, as he is about to die, someone taps him on the shoulder and says, "I love you and want to take your place today." That is what Jesus did for every person that ever lived or ever will live. He did it for everybody you know, and most importantly, HE DID IT FOR YOU. Why did He do it? Because He knew that you needed it and could not live without it.

"I don't need it," you might say. But God is a perfect and holy God. The only way that we can have fellowship with Him and be with Him forever is if we are perfect and holy just like him. Have you ever told a lie (even a little lie)? Have you ever stolen anything (even a pen or paper clip from the office)? If you've done either of these things, then you are admittedly a liar and a thief. Nobody is perfect. Nobody can have right-standing with God. But God knew this and planned for it. God is a just God. If somebody committed murder, would it be fair to let them off the hook because they are otherwise a nice person? God can't just let us off the hook either. He had to come up with a substitution for us so that we could stand before him without sin or a sense of inferiority and be completely perfect in his sight.

John 3:16 - For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

He accomplished this by sending His only son, Jesus Christ, in the form of a man to stand in judgement for us. He took the death penalty for us to pay for our sins.

In the Old Testament, they had to offer sacrifices for their sins. Annually, the High Priest would enter the Holy of Holies, where the presence of God dwelt. He would offer a sacrifice for the sins of the people by applying animal blood to the mercy seat. But when Jesus died on the cross, He carried his own blood into the heavenly holy of holies and paid the price for every sin of every person that has lived or will ever live. This is the New Covenant. By doing this, He purchased back our right standing with God. We can boldly stand before our Father God without shame. But He doesn't stop there! When we accept Christ into our heart, we aren't just saved from going

to hell (although that is true). We have available to us the ability, power, and identity of Jesus as well. One of the most critical tools that we have as Christians is understanding who we are, what we are, and what we have in Christ. When I say, “in Christ,” I am referring to everything that He accomplished through His death on the cross, burial, resurrection, and ongoing ministry. Yes, Jesus has an ongoing ministry to this day. His ministry didn’t stop after He died. He is constantly sitting at God’s right hand, pleading our case. Adam broke fellowship with God in the Garden when He sinned. Jesus is constantly reminding God of how He restored our fellowship with Him. If you have never accepted Jesus as your Lord and Savior, you can do it right now. I have included a prayer in the back of this book (see **Appendix 1**). When you pray this prayer, if you believe it, you will be recreated on the inside and God’s Spirit will come to live on the inside of you. If you have already accepted Jesus, that is wonderful! You have already taken the first step into your pathway of purpose. This is the starting point of performing the works of eternal significance that God has prepared before for you to accomplish! This is the starting point of becoming a disciple or follower of Jesus.

Consider the following passage that was written by Paul to the believers at Ephesus:

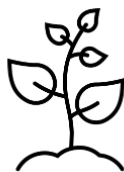
***Ephesians 1:17-23** - That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. 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.*

Did you get that? If not, read it again! Paul says that he is praying for the Ephesian believers that they would have spiritual revelation and knowledge of what Jesus did for them and the inheritance that they have because of Him. Imagine again the person about to die for their crimes. What if someone told them, “Not only do I want to take your place, but I want to give you everything I have and own so that you can lead a happy, prosperous, long life.” Well, that is exactly what Jesus has done! It says that we have great power available to us as believers according to the working of His mighty power that raised Christ from the dead. How much power does it take to raise somebody from the dead? That power is available to you as a believer! It also says that we have the same authority that Jesus had. The Jesus who cast out demons, healed the sick, and lived a sinless life has delegated the authority to His church. The church isn’t a building, the church is people or believers. He has delegated all authority to us. When Jesus was living on earth, He was the only body of Christ. But, when He died, He gave us His inheritance and made us His body on earth to carry out His plans and purposes. He didn’t just save us from hell, but He also blessed us with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ (Ephesians 1:3). Becoming a disciple is a journey to understanding what Jesus did for us as well as the inheritance He left us. It is also a journey of taking this understanding and applying it to our lives.

Understanding how to become a disciple is a key or foundation to stepping fully into all that God has for you. It is a key to unlocking the fullness of God in your life. It is a key to tapping into your purpose and making a significant impact in advancing the kingdom of God. Do you want to live a life of significance? The impact that you have in this life will be influenced by your understanding of truth. But this Bible study isn't a study of natural knowledge. Paul wrote to the Corinthian believers:

1 Corinthians 2:14 - But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

Becoming a disciple requires spiritual knowledge. This knowledge is spiritually understood. I want to issue a challenge. Pray the Ephesians prayer over yourself every morning and personalize it to yourself. Start TODAY. As you continue to pray this prayer, God will open the eyes of your understanding regarding His spiritual truths. The Holy Spirit is our teacher. He teaches us all things (John 14:26). He will enlighten you to the spiritual realities of the truth for your life. I have included a personalized copy of the Scripture prayer in the back of this book to help you with this challenge (see **Appendix 2**).



WHAT IS A DISCIPLE?

“Touch your finger to the tip of your nose.” What does that have to do with becoming a disciple? When I was younger, we used to play a game called “Simon Says.” The game works like this: there are a few children playing. One person is the leader and everyone else playing is a follower. The leader says “Simon Says, touch your finger to the tip of your nose” or some other command. While he is saying the command, he also does the command. If he doesn’t say, “Simon says” at the beginning of his command, then you don’t do it. If he does say, “Simon says,” then you are supposed to act and do exactly as he says. If you don’t follow the leader correctly, you lose and are out of the game.

It reminds me a bit of what a disciple is supposed to look like. Jesus tells us to do something. Jesus models a way to act. A disciple is someone that simply does what He says to do and acts like He acts—a follower of His Words and actions. The great part of being a disciple is that if you mess up, you don’t lose the game! You get another chance to do and say the right thing. In order to be a disciple, we need to know what a disciple looks like. Knowing this truth is at the very core of our purpose. How do we act and speak like a disciple of Jesus?

The simplest definition of a disciple is a follower of Jesus. But a follower is not just a student or a learner. A true follower is one who applies what he has learned . . . he or she is a DOER. That means in order to truly be a disciple or follower of Jesus, we need to know His commands and know how He would act in a situation. We also need to understand what the Bible says a disciple looks like. What does a disciple believe? What does a disciple do? What does a disciple say? The simple answer is that a disciple would believe what Jesus believed, do what Jesus would do, and say what Jesus would say. Let’s start our journey to find out what a disciple looks like.

What is a Disciple?

Jesus’ purpose on this earth came to a climax on that first Easter. As soon as you accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, you stepped into your pathway of purpose. Everything that Christ did for you led to this pivotal point in your life—not just through His death, but through His resurrection. You are connected with your purpose—the purpose you were created for.

Your entire purpose is wrapped up in this “becoming a disciple.” If a child draws a picture, we may not know what it is, but the child knows exactly. She knows every line and scribble. She knows exactly what she created. So, if we want to know what the child drew, we will ask her. She will tell us since she is the creator.

If we want to know our purpose, we need to ask our Creator. We are purpose-created beings. We are created with a purpose. Let's look at the two levels of purpose.

General Purpose

Read the following Scriptures and answer the questions:

Genesis 1:27 - In whose image did God create us?

1 John 4:8 - Who is God? _____

Matthew 22:37-39 - What are we supposed to do?

John 13:34 - What main commandment has he given to us?

Simply, we are to love God and love others. God is love. We are to be image bearers of our Heavenly Father on this earth.

If God is love and our purpose is to be image bearers of HIM, then it makes sense that He commands us to love one another. He is telling us to act on the purpose we were created for. How do we know our specific purpose? How do we know how to carry out this general purpose in our daily lives? Our specific purpose will always line up with our general purpose here on earth.

Specific Purpose

Look up the following Scriptures and answer the questions:

Jeremiah 1:5 - Did God know Jeremiah before he was even born?

Did God already have a specific purpose for Jeremiah? What was it?

God knew Jeremiah before he was born and gave him the specific purpose to be a prophet. God knew you before you were born as well. God knows how many hairs you have on your head. He knew when and where you would be born and who your parents would be. HE CREATED YOU FOR A PURPOSE. You were created for a specific purpose. To find out your specific purpose, you need to ask your Creator.

Read the following Scripture and answer the question:

Ephesians 2:10 - What were you created to do?

You are God's handiwork. You have a general purpose and a specific purpose to accomplish on this earth. You were created in Christ Jesus for good works. As soon as you accepted Christ as your Savior, you stepped into your pathway of purpose. You have been commissioned to do good works. Good works are works of eternal significance.

HOW we carry out our general purpose is different for each and every one of us. God has prepared in advance specific good works (works of eternal significance) for each of us to accomplish. We all have a specific place in the commission that uses our unique gifts, callings, and talents. Nobody else can fulfill our specific place in the body of Christ like we can.

When most people think about purpose, they think of it in terms of future events. Our purpose lives in every moment and every interaction that we face during the day. We continually have opportunities to find our purpose for the moment we are currently in. Your purpose is NOW, not some point in the future. He wants to use our talents and unique gifts and interactions to display our purpose and bear His image.

Becoming a disciple is constantly growing spiritually—to discover our purpose in Him and carry it out as if He Himself was doing it. This work of becoming a disciple is never completed while we are here on Earth. The goal of this study is to prepare you to become a lifelong disciple or follower of Jesus—to start on your journey of purpose.

We want to give you both the knowledge and the tools to grow spiritually and answer some of the following questions:

1. *How can I stay close to God?*
2. *How can I know when God is speaking to me?*
3. *How can I live a life that is pleasing to God?*
4. *How can I become a strong or mature Christian?*

In order to answer these questions, we must have a better understanding of basic Biblical teachings which include:

1. *Understanding how God created me*
2. *What happened when I became a Christian*
3. *What does the Holy Spirit want to do in my life once I become a Christian?*
4. *What is the importance of God's Word in my life?*
5. *How do I read and study the Bible?*
6. *What does it mean to live a life of faith?*
7. *How is the local church part of God's plan? What part must I play in the local church?*
8. *How do I live in fellowship with God and other people?*
9. *How do I discover God's plan for my life?*

Are you ready to answer these questions and start this journey of discipleship together? For it truly is a lifelong love journey.

What does a disciple believe?

Read the following verses and write in your own words what the Bible says a disciple believes:

Matthew 28:20 - _____

John 8:31 - _____

A disciple believes the Bible. A disciple obeys or acts on the Bible. A disciple lives out God's Words. The foundational truth that every disciple must put as first place in his/her life is God's Word.

You can't believe something you don't know. You can't act on something you have never heard or seen. In order to believe the Bible, you must know what it says.

A disciple must have continuous truth encounters. Below are some basic ways to ensure that you are getting continuous truth encounters in your life:

- *Read the Bible daily (Joshua 1:6-8)*
- *Christian Community (going to church and interacting with other believers)*

As you continually get the truth on the inside of you through these truth encounters, you will change from the inside out. Your actions will follow. Right believing leads to right living.

You will have the tools and knowledge you need to act on situations in your life as a follower of Jesus (James 2:20).

What does a disciple do in their personal life?

As disciples, we believe God's Word and give it first place in our life. We understand that we need continuous truth encounters in order to do this. But God asks more of us as disciples.

Read the following Scriptures and answer the questions:

Isaiah 54:13 - *Who will teach us?*

2 Corinthians 13:14 - *What did Paul want for the believers at Corinth?*

From these Scriptures, we can see that there is more to being a disciple than following rules. A disciple communes or has fellowship with the Lord. The true meaning of commune is "to share." When you are in fellowship with God, you are sharing with Him and He is sharing with you. A disciple has fellowship with the Lord on a regular basis. During these times of fellowship, we are able to share with the Lord and He is able to share with us. It assumes a personal relationship with Jesus acted out by having personal fellowship with Him.

Relationship requires both a time commitment as well as an exchange. In order to have a relationship with God, you have to be intentional about setting aside time to focus on this relationship.

We already shared the following ways to ensure you are getting continuous truth encounters in your life:

- *Read the Bible daily (Joshua 1:6-8)*
- *Be a part of the Christian community (going to church and interacting with other believers)*

In order to commune with the Lord, we must spend time with Him. The other things a disciple should do in their personal life are:

- *Pray (1 Thessalonians 5:18, Ephesian 3:18)*
- *Praise and worship (Hebrews 13:15)*
- *Meditate or think on God's Word (Joshua 1:6-8)*

I would encourage you to set a time each day to spend time with God through reading the Word, prayer, and praise and worship. Create space in your schedule and life to protect this time. Don't see it as an obligation, but as a privilege. The more time you spend with Him, the more you will come to know Him. Relationships grow through fellowship. Start with a time of day and amount of time that can work for you—something achievable. For instance, if you currently don't have a regular routine each day to read the Word and pray/praise/worship, committing to two hours a day would be overwhelming. Consider starting with fifteen or thirty minutes a day, for instance. Most of us can find 15–30 minutes in our day. But start with something. As you dig deeper in your relationship with God through reading the Bible and prayer, you will be amazed and encouraged in your trust of Him and His Words. Don't put it off, start today! I have included a commitment statement in **Appendix 3** to help you set up a plan to spend time daily in the Word and prayer. Don't beat yourself up if you miss a day, just get right back on track the next day!

As you read the Word, pray, and praise and worship Him daily, spend some time being quiet and listening to Him as well. Relationship is not one-sided. Praying is speaking to Him and listening for His response. We will spend more time specifically learning about prayer in a future lesson, but for now, start having daily conversations with Him.

Read John 10:3 - Who hears the shepherd's voice?

This is Jesus talking. He is the shepherd, and we are the sheep. We are His. We hear His voice. We just need to listen sometimes. You can start by getting quiet and just tell Him you love Him and listen for Him to reassure His love for you. His voice will bring peace, comfort, and life.

Praise and worship is using our words and voices to give Him praise and tell Him how amazing He is. Thank Him for everything He has done for you. Praise and thank Him specifically for things He has done for YOU. What has he saved you from? What has he delivered you from? What has He delivered you to? Praise and worship Him for it!

Read Joshua 1:8 - When does it say to meditate on the Book of the Law (or the Word):

A disciple doesn't compartmentalize their fellowship to 15–30 minutes a day. We can have times of specific focus, but we can continue to fellowship with Him throughout the day by praying as things come to mind and meditating on His Word throughout the day. Meditate means to focus one's thoughts on or murmur. You can go throughout your day and murmur Scriptures.

In preparation for the mission field, we decided to go to language school to learn Spanish. During our first week of school, my head felt like it was going to explode with Spanish. After our five-hour class, I didn't even want to think about Spanish anymore. I was just tired. The second week got a bit better. By the third week, I was able to form sentences in Spanish and have small conversations with people. By the fourth week, I found myself playing out scenarios and sentences in my head and thinking about the correct tenses and conjugations. I would think a thought in English, then replace it with Spanish. When I was walking in the streets, I would meditate on Spanish words and sentences and mumble or murmur them under my breath. Finally, by the end of the eight weeks, Spanish phrases were just rolling out of my mouth with little effort. I had practiced and mumbled Spanish continually throughout the day for weeks. It finally paid off. I remember one day when I was talking to my teacher about Jesus and was able to share with her about God and His goodness. This would have been very difficult if not impossible if I didn't know the language.

We do the same with God's Word. As we meditate and murmur on God's Words, they become a part of us. Start meditating on God's Words. Pick a few Scriptures to start with. Say them over and over again.

I would encourage you to start today by meditating on God's faithfulness. Spend some time meditating on His Word regarding His faithfulness, worshiping Him, and praising Him for His faithfulness. We can have confident expectation in His faithfulness to do exactly what He said He will do. God is faithful even when we mess up or are faithless in a situation. He never changes. Refer to **Appendix 4** for a list of Scriptures to get you started.

What does a disciple do in the world?

We have already established that disciples have a divine purpose. There is a divine purpose to our relationships. We are put in peoples' lives for a divine purpose. We are to leave an eternal legacy in the world.

God tells us that we are to love because GOD IS LOVE and we are to be image bearers of Him, His character, His purposes, and His will. We are to be disciples of Him. We do His commandments not to prove that we love Him, but to express our love to Him and to express His image of love to the world around us! Jesus desired to do the will/works of His father—He faithfully bore the image of His father on the earth.

Consider the following Scriptures:

John 14:10 - Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works.

1 John 4:17 - Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world.

Psalms 32:8 - He will direct us on the best pathway for our life . . . and as we do this, it will also have the best impact on those around us.

If we love Him, we should desire what God desires and do His works. If we are followers of Jesus, then we want to do the work of the Father on this earth and faithfully bear His image in the world.

Read John 15:8 - What does it say that disciples should do?

Read Ephesians 5:1 - What does Paul tell the Ephesians to do?

Paul tells the Ephesian Christians to be imitators of Him. He knows that if they imitate Him, they will bear this fruit, which is not natural, but eternal. They will perform good works to the proportion that they depend on Him and look to Him.

Read John 15:5 - What does Jesus tell His disciples?

The branches will wither and die if separated from the parent stock; Christians can do nothing if separated from Christ.

What kind of seeds are you planting with your life that God has given you? What will you be remembered for when you die? The theme of legacy is interwoven throughout the Bible. The patriarchs were very conscious of the legacy that they would leave behind and sought to pass on the gift of God's promises to their succeeding generations. Both Isaac and Jacob gathered their offspring to their side and prayed God's blessing upon them, gave prophetic predictions and granted them their respective inheritances.

Jesus' entire life and ministry was focused on leaving the greatest legacy ever granted, the gift of eternal life. As followers of Jesus, the fruit that we bear should be eternal fruit. The legacy we leave is meant to be something of enduring value—a spiritual legacy. This legacy has the potential to be a blessing for all eternity. It is the most valuable legacy anyone can leave behind. For followers of Jesus Christ, our spiritual legacy is salvation and resurrection life, which we receive from Him. This legacy is secured through His sinless life and death for all humankind.

Such a spiritual legacy is a very unique gift because it promises the continuation of our relationship with those we love beyond this life into eternity. It guarantees the reunion in heaven

with Christ one day of all who share that same life of faith in Him. What greater gift can anyone give than the assurance that they will be in heaven waiting for those they love? That their goodbye is not “goodbye forever” but simply a “goodbye until we meet again.”

Read Acts 17:6 - What does it say that Jesus' followers did?

This is Jesus' legacy. He created doers that turned the world upside down with their teachings because they were LIFE-CHANGING!!! We do this by:

1. *Sharing the Gospel (Romans 1:16)*
2. *Living in Christian community (Hebrews 10:25)*
3. *Loving others (John 13:35, 1 John 4:9, 1 Corinthians 13)*
4. *Be the example—walk in the truth that you know (3 John 1:4; Philippians 3:16)*

We will share more about each of these topics in future lessons so that you will be confident in your discipleship journey. You will act like a disciple and impact the world—your world for Jesus.

A Godly legacy demands a commitment to follow Christ and walking that out by living an exemplary Christian life. If you were to die right now, today, what aspects of your legacy would you want others to value and inherit? What would they say about your legacy and what would they do with it? If it's not what you want, then make a choice now to change that.

The Taj Mahal is one of the most beautiful and costly tombs ever built, but there is something fascinating about its beginnings. In 1629, when the favorite wife of Indian ruler Shah Jahan died, he ordered that a magnificent tomb be built as a memorial to her. The Shah placed his wife's casket in the middle of a parcel of land, and construction of the tomb literally began around it. But several years into the venture, the Shah's grief for his wife gave way to a passion for the project. One day while he was surveying the sight, he reportedly stumbled over a wooden box, and he had some workers throw it out. It was months before he realized that his wife's casket had been destroyed. The original purpose for the memorial became lost in the details of construction. Don't ever lose focus of your purpose so that you bear much fruit for His glory.



OUR BIBLE

Helen Keller. She became deaf and blind after an illness that nearly took her life at eighteen months of age. After this, she lived in a dark world void of meaning until she was seven years old. At that time, a young teacher showed up at her doorstep. This woman named Anne Sullivan was hired by her parents to attempt to control the young angry child, who had lost her ability to communicate with the world around her. Time after time, her teacher showed her objects. Then, she signed the name in her hand. Time after time, young Helen failed to grasp the meaning of the strange signs. For weeks this continued. Day after day, Anne Sullivan made hand signals in young Helen's hand. Day after day, the young girl failed to grasp the meaning. One day as they were crouched by the water well, something clicked. Nothing in the teacher's methods had changed. She had continued to show her the same thing for weeks. But today, as her teacher slowly poured the cool, crisp water over her hand and made the letters for "WATER," she finally understood! Things had names. On this day, water became more real to her than it ever had before. And the darkness that had once enveloped her life became light. Water hadn't changed, the word for water hadn't changed, but suddenly, the word had meaning in her life.

The same is true for the Word of God. Just as water doesn't change, God's Word never changes. And just as the application of water to the young girl's hand made the word become real to her, as we apply God's Word to our lives, it takes on meaning and substance in our lives. It becomes real in our lives. The part of our life that was once dark takes on light. One of the most important things you will ever do is find out what the Word says about a situation or area of your life and apply God's Word to that portion of your life. We will talk more about this later, but remember that the Word of God is one of your most effective and important tools.

Other religions may have documents or books that they follow. But no other religion has a book or document that is alive and has life-changing impact.

Read John 1:1

The Spanish Bible uses the word "*el verbo*" for "word" instead of "*la palabra*." It is saying that in the beginning was the verb. The verb was with God and the verb was God. Verbs make things happen. Verbs change things. It sounds ridiculous to say, "I my house green." But when we add the verb, things change. Things happen. "I ainted my house green." Verbs manifest things. Without the verb, nothing changes, and nothing happens in our life. God's Word is the "*el verbo*" in our lives. His Word changes our lives.

The Bible is one of our most important tools as disciples. For this reason, we need to understand what makes up the Bible, how it was written, and how we got our current version. The Bible is one of the most influential books in history and inspired many people to do amazing things. It is still the best-selling book in the world. The Holy Bible has been translated into at least 2,018 languages, with countless more partial translations, and audio translations (for unwritten languages). This is an enormous number of translations. In comparison, Shakespeare, considered by many to be the master writer of the English language, has only been translated into fifty languages.

How many books are in the Bible?

The Bible contains sixty-six books, divided among the Old and New Testaments. There are thirty-nine books in the Old Testament. There are twenty-seven books in the New Testament. Below are some facts about each testament or section of the Bible.

Old Testament	New Testament
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 39 books • First 5 books (Genesis to Deuteronomy) written by Moses called The Law, Book of Moses, Pentateuch, Torah. • Oldest book is Job • 17 History Books (Genesis to Esther) • 5 Poetry Books (Job to Song of Songs) • 17 Prophecy Books (Isaiah to Malachi) • 3 Major Prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel) • 14 Minor Prophets • Some consider Daniel and Lamentations also Major Prophets. • Most Psalms are attributed to David. • King Solomon wrote Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Songs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 27 books • First 4 Books are called Gospels, which means “Good News”. • The first 3 Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke) are called Synoptic Gospels because they include many of the same stories, often in a similar sequence or in similar wording. • The Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles are attributed to Luke. • Apostle Paul has written 13 letters (almost half the New Testament). • 1, 2 Timothy and Titus are called Pastoral Letters. • Apostle John has written the 3 letters of John and the Book of Revelation. • Author of Hebrews is unknown (some attribute it to the Apostle Paul). • Two letters are written by the half-brothers of Jesus: James and Jude.

The Testaments

The Bible is divided into two sections (or two parts): Old Testament and New Testament. Testament means “covenant” or “contract.”

The story of the Bible is that God has entered into a BLOOD COVENANT with man through the Lord Jesus Christ. His Old Covenant was the guide sign to the “destination” that He was planning for His people and all mankind. It wasn’t the destination, but it foreshadowed or pointed to the destination. The Old Covenant was His way of establishing relationship with a spiritually dead people that could not intimately fellowship with Him. He was showing through

the Old Testament a shadow or picture or sign to guide the way so that everybody would recognize Him when he showed up on the scene.

From the time that Adam disobeyed God in the Garden and throughout the entire Old Testament, the Bible was pointing towards Jesus and the redemptive plan that God was unfolding. We can see that from the very beginning, there are two ways that Satan tries to stand in the way of the purpose of God:

- *Destroy the knowledge of God upon the earth*
- *Destroy the righteous bloodline*

The Old Testament is God sharing His plan of redemption with his covenant people. He entered into covenant to show His loyalty, intense love, unfailing kindness, compassion, mercy and steadfast persistence for His people. The covenants of the Old Testament are like stepping stones towards the new and better covenant. He was progressively revealing His plan to redeem His people as soon as Adam “initiated” the requirement for a New Covenant (or Testament).

Without God’s influence in their lives and worlds, people had no sense of right and wrong. God provided a measuring stick to point them to their need for righteousness. He also made them a nation and relocated them to the Promised Land. It is important to note here that the Old Testament shows God stepping in to preserve His righteous bloodline as well as to preserve the knowledge of Him in this group of people.

After the Israelites finally entered the Promised Land, a monarchy was eventually established. One of the greatest Kings of this nation was King David. God was so pleased with David, He called him a man after his own heart (“I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will.” - Acts 13:22). God found a man that He could preserve the righteous bloodline and preserve the knowledge of Him. God promised Him:

Psalm 89:3-4 - I have made a covenant with My chosen, I have sworn to My servant David: ‘Your seed I will establish forever And build up your throne to all generations.’

This Scripture is referring to the bloodline of the Messiah or Redeemer that would finally re-establish the broken relationship. Matthew 1 documents that Joseph is a descendent of David. Luke 3 documents that Mary is a descendent of David. This same Joseph and Mary would be Earthly parents to God among us—God in the flesh. Through the entire Old Testament runs a theme in which God is continually working to restore relationship and fellowship that had been tragically lost in the fall. He established and continually reinforced His covenant faithfully through chosen men so that He could eventually make it available to ALL MEN.

Jews during the time of Jesus had been taught the Old Testament prophecy about Jesus since they were young children. They had built up expectations in their mind about what the returning Messiah would look like and how he would show up on the scene. Many thought that the Messiah would return as a political figure to establish a physical kingdom on this earth and save them from the tyranny of the Roman Empire.

The story of the New Testament is that God has entered into a BLOOD COVENANT with man through the Lord Jesus Christ. All who choose to can enter into the covenant with Him.

When my children were younger, we would sometimes take them to the movies. I was excited to take my kids to a particular movie as it was going to be 3D. As the movie started, I could hear my youngest son shuffling around in his seat agitated. I quietly leaned over and whispered, “What’s wrong?” He said, “Mommy, something is wrong with this movie, it’s blurry.” As I looked closer, I noticed that he didn’t put his 3-D glasses on. Without these special glasses or lenses, all the images on the screen appeared unclear and blurry. After we positioned his glasses on his face, he excitedly watched the rest of the movie—finally seeing things clearly as he should.

Just like he had to look through these lenses to clearly see the movie, God wants us to look at His Word and our relationship with Him through the “filter” or “lenses” of the covenant. When we do this, everything becomes clearer. He was showing through the Old Testament a shadow or picture so that everybody would recognize Him when he showed up on the scene:

***John 5:39-40** - You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.*

***Luke 24:44-46** - Then He said to them, “These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.” Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day*

***Matthew 5:17** - Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.*

***Luke 24:25-27** - Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.*

Jesus came to earth to fulfill the Old Covenant and establish a New Covenant based on better promises. This New Covenant or New Testament is a better covenant based on better promises. These better promises include a relationship with Him and access to a rich inheritance. As we spend time with Him in His Word and prayer, He reveals who we are and what we have:

***Psalms 25:14 (AMP)** - The LORD confides in those who fear him; he makes his covenant known to them. The secret [of the wise counsel] of the Lord is for those who fear Him, And He will let them know His covenant and reveal to them [through His word] its [deep, inner] meaning.*

The New Testament reveals that we have not just had our sins forgiven but that we have become the **RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD IN CHRIST**. Sin no longer has power over us. If we only believe that we have forgiveness of sins, then sin will continue to dominate us because we don't understand that we have entered into the covenant relationship with God and all that He has is ours!!! It is not just about a father forgiving us, but about Him providing at our disposal **ALL THAT HE HAS!**

Romans 8:16-17 - The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now, if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ . . .

He has not just restored our legal rights to relationship through the forgiveness of sins, but He has restored fellowship, position, authority, and sonship. He has provided us an inheritance of all that He has. Forgiveness allows us to stand before Him but entering into the covenant makes all that He has at our disposal. When we accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior, we immediately have access to this inheritance as co-heirs with Jesus Christ. The Old Testament and New Testament make up a continual and progressive story of God's redemptive plan for mankind.

Who wrote the Bible?

The Bible was written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit by over forty different authors from all walks of life: shepherds, farmers, tentmakers, physicians, fishermen, priests, philosophers, and kings. Despite these differences in occupation and the span of years it took to write it, the Bible is an extremely cohesive and unified book.

Moses contributed the most books to the Old Testament. He wrote the first five books of the Bible, referred to as the Pentateuch: the foundation of the Bible. The Apostle Paul wrote fourteen books (over half) of the New Testament. The Bible was written in three languages (Hebrew, Greek, Aramaic) over three continents (Africa, Europe, Asia).

When was the Bible written?

The Bible was written over a period of about one thousand five hundred years, from around 1450 B.C. (the time of Moses) to about 100 A.D. (following the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ). The last author of the Bible has been dead over nineteen hundred years.

Many scholars agree that Job is the oldest book in the Bible, written by an unknown Israelite about 1500 B.C. Others hold that the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible) are the oldest books in the Bible, written between 1446 and 1406 B.C. Malachi is the youngest book in the Old Testament written about 400 B.C. The oldest book of the New Testament is probably the book of James, written as early as A.D. 45. The Book of Revelation is the youngest book of the New Testament, written about 95 A.D.

The oldest almost-complete manuscript of the Bible now in existence is The Codex Vaticanus. This manuscript dates from the first half of the fourth century. It is in the library of the Vatican in Rome. There are older fragments of the Bible that are still preserved—the oldest being a tiny scrap of the Gospel of John. It was found in Egypt and dates to the beginning of the second century. (It is currently in the Rayland's Library in Manchester, England).

The Bible we know today

The entire New Testament, as we know it today, was canonized before the year 375 A.D. The Old Testament had previously been canonized long before the advent of Christ. “Canon” is derived from the Greek word “Kanon,” signifying a measuring rod. Thus, to have the Bible “canonized” meant that it had been measured by the standard or test of divine inspiration and authority. It became the collection of books or writings accepted by the apostles and leadership of the early Christian church as a basis for Christian belief. It is the standard by which all Christians throughout the ages live and worship.

The first translation of the Bible made into English was completed in 1382 A.D. by John Wycliffe. The Bible was printed in 1454 A.D. by Johannes Gutenberg, who invented the “type mold” for the printing press. It was the first book ever printed.

God’s Word is truth

Jesus and God’s truth are completely inseparable. This is because Jesus is “the Word became flesh [who] dwelt among us . . . full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).

Read John 14:6 - What does Jesus call Himself?

Read John 1:1- What does this verse say about Jesus and the Word?

Read John 8:31-32 - What does it say about Jesus and the Word?

In other words, Jesus was the walking, talking, living, breathing, Word of God incarnate. He was the human embodiment of God’s entire body of truth packaged up in one physical human body.

If we abide or live in His Word, we are not only His disciples, but we KNOW the truth. God’s Word is absolute truth or reality. To reject His Word is to reject Jesus Himself.

Read Hebrews 4:12-13 - What does it say about the Bible?

The Bible is simply the living, **written**, absolute truth and Word of God

Principles of Bible Interpretationⁱ

There is a need to clearly interpret certain passages of the Bible because there is a gap between the way we think and the words we use today and the way of thinking and the words that these Bible writers used thousands of years ago. Bible scholars have pointed out that there are language gaps—differences in words that we use; there are cultural gaps—different customs were in vogue then. There are geographical gaps—certain rivers that are spoken of in the Bible have long since dried up. Some places that are spoken of frequently in the Bible are not on our

modern maps. And then there are historical gaps—the Bible speaks of kings and empires that existed years ago.

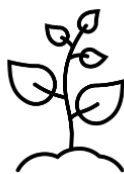
Therefore, there is a need for Bible interpretation. Here are just a few principles of interpretation of the Bible that will keep you from error and help you understand the Word of God.

1. *Always remember that the Bible is God’s infallible, inerrantly inspired Word. There are no mistakes in the Bible. God has included everything in the Bible that He wants you to know and is necessary for you to know concerning salvation and your Christian life.*
2. *The second principle of interpretation is to interpret the Bible in the light of its historical background. There are three aspects to this:*
 - *Study the personal circumstances of the writer. In studying the Book of the Revelation, it is important to understand where John was and what he was doing when God gave him this marvelous revelation. See **Revelation 1:1–10**.*
 - *The second aspect of this principle is to study the culture and customs of the country at the time that the writing or story was taking place. For example, to understand the Book of Ruth, it is important to study the customs concerning widows, redemption of property, and so on, as they are explained in **Leviticus 25** and **Deuteronomy 25**.*
 - *A third aspect of this principle is to study and interpret the Bible in the light of the actual historical situation and events that were taking place at the time of the story. For example, in studying the Gospels it is important to realize that the entire land of Palestine and all of the Jews were being governed and oppressed by the Roman Empire at that time.*
3. *Interpret the Bible according to the purpose and plan of each book. Every Bible book has its specific purpose intended by the Holy Spirit to bring some special message to man. For example, it is important to remember that **First John** (see **1 John 5:13**) was written to Christians. Therefore, the promise in **1 John 1:9** is specifically applied to Christians.*
4. *One of the most important principles of interpretation is always to interpret according to the context of a verse.*
 - *The “context” includes the verses immediately preceding and immediately following the verse you are studying. If you do not take care to interpret the verse according to the context, you could make the Bible teach atheism. For the Bible itself says, “There is no God” (**Psalms 14:1**). But the context makes very clear what this verse means: The entire sentence says, “The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God.”*
 - *Always study the passage immediately preceding and immediately following any verse, word, or topic to make sure that you see this truth in the setting which God intended.*
5. *Always interpret according to the correct meaning of words. You can find the correct meaning of a word in several ways. First of all, look up the usage of the word in other parts of the Bible to find how it was used in that generation. Another way is to look up its background or its root. You could do this with the use of a dictionary. Still another way is to look up the synonyms—words that are similar in meaning but slightly different: for example, prayer, intercession, supplication.*

6. *Also interpret the Bible according to all the parallel passages that deal with the subject and according to the message of the entire Bible.*

The more you read and study the Bible, the more you will understand that God is revealing His way of salvation to men from beginning to end (see **Appendix 6** for more information on Bible study). And when you come to a difficult passage, think of it in the light of the overall purpose of the Bible. For example, the animal sacrifices of the Old Testament are meant to be a picture of the perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross.

If you will follow these simple rules, you will be kept from error and extremes, and you will be helped to correctly understand the teachings of even the more difficult passages in God's Word.



WHAT WE BELIEVE

“I think we should go left.” My mom is notorious for having a bad sense of direction. One specific time, we were taking dinner to someone who just got home from the hospital. My mom thought she knew where she was going. I knew she usually didn’t. So, when she said, “I think we should go left,” I went right. After a few turns, we ended up right in front of the house. We both laughed for a few minutes before delivering the food. But just because we are told something or told to think something doesn’t mean it is the truth. In my mom’s case, the exact opposite was true. We got very lucky in finding the house. Consider if we would have had a map or turned the GPS on our phone? If we had used an accurate map as our guide, we would have made the correct turns without fail.

Did you ever think about what takes place when you use a map? Maps represent a belief about what a piece of the world is like. There is a simple way to test to see if that belief is correct. We find our current location on the map, plot a course, then move out. If our beliefs are true (if the map is accurate), we arrive where we intended to go.

If our beliefs are not accurate, we’ll learn that soon enough. Sometimes we get it wrong, but even then, we know we’re wrong because of new, accurate information that shows us our error. We also have a “map” to guide our understanding of the reality in which we live. This “map” is the Bible. When we understand basic, fundamental doctrines in the Bible, we can be sure that our beliefs are based on truth.

Doctrine simply means “teaching.” The purpose of this lesson is to help you understand the basic and foundational doctrines of the Bible. When we talk about doctrine, we are talking about what the Bible teaches us concerning major foundational teachings.

If you fail to learn the ABCs and the basics of elementary education, it will become impossible for you to advance to a level of higher education. In the same way, if we don’t learn the basic doctrines of the Bible, it will be impossible for us to advance in our Christian walk.

Hebrews 6:1-3 - List out the foundational doctrines mentioned in this verse:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

The writer of Hebrews also recognized that there are foundational truths or doctrines that every Christian should know.

Foundational Truths

There are certain doctrines that are foundational to the Christian life. There are certain things that every Christian should know concerning the Christian faith—why we believe what we believe. As Christians, we should know what we believe and why we believe it.

Read Luke 1:4

This verse summarizes why this lesson is necessary. It is our desire to teach you what the Bible says concerning the major theological issues. That you will know with certainty what you believe and more importantly, why you believe it. Read the following Scriptures:

John 7:16-17 - What did Jesus tell people when they questioned His teaching?

Matthew 16:12 - What were the people supposed to beware of?

1 Timothy 1:10 - Did Paul think there could be things taught contrary to sound doctrine?

1 Timothy 4:6 - What did Paul tell Timothy he should do to be a good minister of Jesus Christ?

Why do we need to study and understand these major doctrines of the Bible? If there is good, sound, Godly doctrine, there is the possibility of just the opposite. With any Bible subject, there is a road of divine truth that presents a balanced perspective of God. Every road has two sides (sometimes we call them ditches). To stay in the middle of the road requires skill and effort.

On one side of the road, there is the ditch of legalism. Legalism represents a narrow, rigid description of God and His nature. There is no freedom, joy, or happiness in legalism. It usually creates fear and bondage.

On the other side of the road, there is the ditch of fanaticism. Fanaticism is just the opposite of legalism—no rules, no boundaries, complete freedom with no restrictions. With every Bible doctrine, the truth is somewhere between the ditches of legalism and fanaticism in the middle of the road. To do this, we must approach these doctrines from the standpoint of God's Word. What does the Bible say?

Read Matthew 15:8-9 - What were these men doing?

What is Jesus saying? That these men were trying to place divine authority on their own human ideas. They insinuated that their manmade doctrines were divinely inspired. We must be careful of not doing the same thing.

Read Ephesians 4:14-15 - What does Paul say spiritual children do in relation to doctrine?

What does Paul expect mature Christians to do?

The Bible often uses physical growth and development to illustrate spiritual growth and development. In these verses, Paul is encouraging Christians to grow beyond childhood. One of the characteristics of spiritual children is that they are easily influenced. It is the nature of a child to believe anything. Children also put everything they find in their mouths “. . . every wind of doctrine . . .” But Paul desires that we will no longer be little children, tossed and carried about by all kinds of teachings that change like the wind. We will no longer be influenced by people who use cunning and clever strategies to lead us astray. The only way to do this is to grow spiritually in understanding of good, sound, Godly doctrine.

Below are the foundational doctrines that every Christian should know. Read each summary and then look up the Scriptures for yourselves. Write key words or phrases from each Scripture that helps you understand each doctrine.

The Scriptures

The Bible is the inspired Word of God, the product of holy men of old who spoke and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. The New Covenant, as recorded in the New Testament, we accept as our infallible guide in matters pertaining to conduct and doctrine.

2 Timothy 3:16 - _____

1 Thessalonians 2:13 - _____

2 Peter 1:21 - _____

The Godhead

Our God is One, but manifested in three persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, being coequal.

Deuteronomy 6:4 - _____

Philippians 2:6 - _____

God the Father is greater than all; the Sender of the Word (Logos) and the Begetter.

John 14:28 - _____

John 16:28 - _____

John 1:14 - _____

The Son is the Word flesh-covered, the One Begotten, and has existed with the Father from the beginning.

John 1:1 - _____

John 1:18 - _____

John 1:14 - _____

The Holy Spirit proceeds forth from both the Father and the Son, and is eternal.

John 14:16 - _____

John 15:26 - _____

Man, His Fall and Redemption

Man is a created being, made in the likeness and image of God, but through Adam's transgression and fall, sin came into the world. The Bible says ". . . all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God," and ". . . There is none righteous, no, not one."

Romans 3:10 - _____

Romans 3:23 - _____

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was manifested to undo the works of the devil and gave His life and shed His blood to redeem and restore man back to God.

Romans 5:12-15 - _____

1 John 3:8 - _____

Eternal Life and the New Birth

Salvation is the gift of God to man through faith in Jesus Christ. This is separate from works and the Law, and is made operative by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, producing works acceptable to God.

Ephesians 2:8-10 - _____

The New Birth is necessary to all men, and when experienced, produces eternal life. Man's first step toward salvation is godly sorrow that leads to repentance.

2 Corinthians 7:10 - _____

John 3:3-5 - _____

1 John 5:12 - _____

Water Baptism

Baptism in water is by immersion, is a direct commandment of our Lord, and is for believers only. The ordinance is a symbol of the Christian's identification with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection.

Matthew 28:19 - _____

Romans 6:4 - _____

Colossians 2:12 - _____

Acts 8:36-39 - _____

The following recommendation regarding the water baptismal formula is adopted: "On the confession of your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and by His authority, I baptize you in the Name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Amen."

Baptism in the Holy Spirit

The Baptism in the Holy Spirit is a gift and is accompanied by the initial evidence of speaking in other tongues. The Baptism in the Holy Spirit and fire is a gift from God as promised by the Lord Jesus Christ to all believers in this dispensation and is received after the new birth. This experience is accompanied by the initial evidence of speaking in other tongues as the Holy Spirit Himself gives utterance.

Matthew 3:11 - _____

John 14:16,17 - _____

Acts 1:8 - _____

Acts 2:38, 39 - _____

Acts 19:1-7 - _____

Acts 2:1-4 - _____

Sanctification

Sanctification is living a life of holiness. The Bible teaches that without holiness no man can see the Lord. We believe in the Doctrine of Sanctification as a definite, yet progressive work of grace, commencing at the time of regeneration and continuing until the consummation of salvation at Christ's return.

Hebrews 12:14 - _____

1 Thessalonians 5:23 - _____

2 Peter 3:18 - _____

2 Corinthians 3:18 - _____

Philippians 3:12-14 - _____

1 Corinthians 1:30 - _____

Tithing

To tithe is to give ten percent of our income to God for His work. God provides for His people through His people. All that we have is a gift from God; therefore, a tithe is a mere portion of what He has already given to us. When we give our tithe to God, we provide for His work, prove His faithfulness, and show Him honor in acknowledging Him as the Source of all we possess and as One worthy of our worship. We bring Him the sacrifices of our praise and our possessions.

Malachi 3:10 - _____

Philippians 4:19 - _____

2 Corinthians 9:6 - _____

Luke 6:38 - _____

Divine Healing

Healing is the privilege of every member of the Church today provided through Jesus' death on the Cross. Healing is for the physical ills of the human body and is wrought by the power of God through the prayer of faith, and by the laying on of hands. It is provided for in the atonement of Christ and is the privilege of every member of the Church today.

James 5:14-15 - _____

Mark 16:18 - _____

Isaiah 53:4-5 - _____

Mathew 8:17 - _____

1 Peter 2:24 - _____

Hell and Eternal Retribution

The one who physically dies in his sins without accepting Christ is hopelessly and eternally lost in the lake of fire and, therefore, has no further opportunity of hearing the Gospel or repenting. The lake of fire is literal. The terms “eternal” and “everlasting,” used in describing the duration of the punishment of the damned in the lake of fire, carry the same thought and meaning of endless existence as used in denoting the duration of joy and ecstasy of saints in the Presence of God.

Hebrews 9:27 - _____

Revelations 19-20 - _____

Resurrection of the Just and the Return of our Lord

Jesus will return and “. . . The dead in Christ shall rise first – Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air . . .”

1 Thessalonians 4:16–17 - _____

The angels said to Jesus’ disciples, “. . . This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.” His coming is imminent. When He comes, “. . . The dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air . . .”

Acts 1:11 - _____

Following the Tribulation, He shall return to earth as King of kings, and Lord of lords, and together with His saints, who shall be kings and priests, He shall reign a thousand years.

Revelation 5:10 - _____

Revelation 20:6 - _____

Three Guidelines for Determining Proper Doctrine

We have shared the foundational doctrines. However, the doctrines shared in this lesson are not exhaustive. You are told to continually examine doctrine that is shared with you. As Paul said, so that you would not believe every wind of doctrine, but ensure that it is sound, good, and Godly. Below are three guidelines that you can use to determine proper doctrine.

1. Does it agree with the Scriptures?

The Bible is our standard on which we base our faith. However, do not establish doctrine on one isolated Scripture. Establish doctrine on a consensus of God's Word. Find at least 2–3 Scriptures that are in consensus to ensure that the doctrine is established on the Word.

Read 2 Timothy 3:16

Read John 8:31-32

Jesus said in Mark 12:24, “Do ye not therefore err because you know not the Scriptures, neither the power of God.” Most people err or get in error because they don't know what the Scripture says. Don't make this error. When Paul and Silas ministered in the synagogue at Berea, it says that the Jews “. . . made a daily study of the Scriptures to see if what was said was true.” (Acts 17:11). This is also what we should do.

Read Matthew 4:3-7

Notice that even the Devil has doctrine. He will even attempt to use the Bible to prove his doctrine. Jesus interpreted Scripture with Scripture. We should also interpret Scripture with Scripture. There is safety in that form of Bible interpretation.

2. *Does it agree with the Holy Spirit?*

The Spirit and the Word will always agree.

Read John 16:13

The Holy Spirit came to guide the Christian into the truth of God's Word. This guidance applies to doctrine. In John 2:27 it says “. . . you need not any man teach you . . .” John is not saying that we should not have teachers in the body of Christ. He is also not saying that we should not listen to anyone instruct us in the Word. He is saying that the Holy Spirit will bear witness with your spirit to let you know if what you are being taught is doctrinally and scripturally accurate. The opposite is also true. Since the Holy Spirit will guide you in all truth, He will also guide you out of something that isn't true. Listen to that nudge in your Spirit when you hear a doctrine. The Holy Spirit will always and forever lead you into complete truth.

3. *Does it agree with your spirit?*

This is the compass that we need to use most carefully. When a person becomes a Christian, they are born again as spiritual babies. We have already established that spiritual children need to grow and develop. This growth happens as we feed upon God's Word and yield to the Holy Spirit. The more you develop your spirit—train and educate your spirit—the safer a guide it will become.

Timothy 3:16 - Why is Scripture given?

1 Corinthians 2:10-11 - Who reveals truth to us?

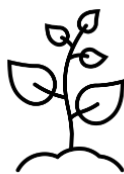
As we develop and train our spirit by feeding on God's Word and yielding or becoming more sensitive to the Holy Spirit, our spirit will help guide us as well.

Read 2 Corinthians 11:4

In this verse, Paul is warning the Corinthians about false ministers who are trying to deceive them. Paul lists three areas of deception:

- Preach another Jesus (not every religion in the world preaches the same Jesus as we preach)
- Another Gospel
- Another Spirit (this is talking about an attitude of the heart—a spiritual attitude that reflects what is on the inside of a person).

I have been in meetings before where from all outward appearance everything seems fine. But for some reason down on the inside, I didn't feel right. I'm not advocating to become extreme in this area to the point where you are constantly critiquing everyone's attitude. But in connection with false doctrine, does it agree or bear witness with your spirit? However, it is important to remember that God's Word is always our main source of reference for sound doctrine.



HOW GOD MADE US

Crack, roll, peel. I was preparing to eat a hard-boiled egg for breakfast. When I was small, my dad taught me to peel a hard-boiled egg. Crack it first, roll it, then peel off the outer shell. My goal was to get to the yummy middle of the egg and take a big bite. As I was about to take a bite, it occurred to me that there are three parts to an egg. All the parts are still an egg, but they are three separate and distinct parts—the shell, the white, and the yolk.

In the same way, we are created with three parts to our nature. We must understand how we are created to correctly understand the Bible. We must understand how we are created so that we can be true disciples—taking accurate information about ourselves into consideration when we determine our role as followers of Jesus.

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:23 - What does Paul say is to be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord? _____

From this Scripture, we can see that we were created with three parts to our nature—Spirit, Soul, and Body.

Spirit – We are a spirit

Man is a spirit, he has a soul, and he lives in a physical body. The spirit part of you is created in the image of God. This is the part of man that is aware or conscious of God.

Read Genesis 2:7

God breathed life or spirit into man at creation. Man was created to have the same nature as God. If we have accepted Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, we have the same nature as God.

Read Genesis 1:27

God had to create us as spirit beings. God made us in His image and likeness. So, what is God's likeness?

Read John 4:24 - What does God say that He is? _____

Yes, He says that He is spirit. Those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth. With your spirit, you:

1. Contact God

2. *Hear the voice of God*
3. *Fellowship and worship God*
4. *Produce the fruit of the spirit*
5. *Are convicted of sin*
6. *Receive understanding of the Scriptures*

Conscience is the voice of your spirit.

Soul – We have a soul (mind, will, and emotions)

With your soul, you think, reason, and experience emotions. This part of you makes you aware of yourself.

Read Hebrews 4:12 - What does God's Word judge?

God's Word judges a person's thoughts and intentions. With your soul, you:

1. *Use reason*
2. *Use imagination*
3. *Have memory*
4. *Have emotions*
5. *Have will*

Reason and emotion are the voices of your soul.

Body – We live in a body (physical body)

The body is the house your spirit lives in. This part of your make-up is temporary. It will not live forever.

Read 2 Corinthians 4:16

Our physical being is gradually decaying, yet our spiritual being is renewed day after day. Our physical body is on a time limit, but our spirit lives forever. With your body you:

1. *Receive information through your five physical senses (see, taste, touch, feel, and smell)*
2. *Contact the physical world around you*

Feeling is the voice of the body.

What happened when you became a Christian?

Jesus was speaking to a religious leader of the Jews when He described what happens when you become a Christian.

Read John 3:3-7

When Jesus replied, “I tell you for certain that you must be born from above before you can see God’s kingdom!” Nicodemus asked, “How can a grown man ever be born a second time?” Jesus answered: “I tell you for certain that before you can get into God’s kingdom, you must be born not only by water, but by the Spirit. Humans give life to their children. Yet only God’s Spirit can change you into a child of God. Don’t be surprised when I say that you must be born from above.”

You must be born again or from above? How is that possible? Jesus was not referring to a physical birth but a spiritual birth. Nicodemus was responding with his mind based on his understanding of the physical. But Jesus was speaking of the spirit man. He was sharing a spiritual truth about man’s spirit.

Read 2 Corinthians 5:17 - Recognizing that we are spirit beings, what part of man becomes a new creation? _____

When we are born again, our physical body doesn’t change. If we were bald, we are still bald. Our soul isn’t recreated. We still have some of the same thinking we did before we were born again. So, what has been recreated? Our Spirit.

Read Ezekiel 36:26

This Scripture is a promise of God’s redemptive plan. Spirit and heart are often used interchangeably in the Bible. God promised that He would give us a new heart or a new spirit. He is talking about the new birth. When a person becomes a Christian, they experience a nature change. The sin nature is taken away and recreated with God’s nature. Without a nature change, a person still has their old nature (sin nature) dominating them. In Christianity, God changes us from the inside to the outside.

When you become a Christian, God comes to live in your Spirit. Consider the following Scriptures:

1 Corinthians 3:16 - Don’t you know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit lives in you?

1 Corinthians 6:19, 20 - Don’t you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and who was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourselves but to God; he bought you for a price. So, use your bodies for God’s glory.

1 John 4:15 - Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

When God comes to live in your spirit, you receive God’s nature. God’s nature is love.

Romans 5:5 - And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

What do we need to do?

As Christians, we must understand that we have two natures to consider. We have a spiritual nature which is our spirit. This spiritual nature has been recreated. We now have the life and the nature of God in our spirit. We still have our human nature to address. Our human nature is made up of our soul and body. Our human nature was not recreated when we were born again. We must bring our souls (mind/will/emotions) and physical bodies into alignment with what has already happened in our spirit.

When we are born again, sin no longer has power over us, but we still have the ability to sin if we allow our souls and bodies to function apart from our spirit. Our minds (souls) can be influenced by our physical body. We can allow circumstances to affect our thoughts based on what we see, hear, and touch in the world around us. We don't have to let our bodies influence our souls.

As Christians, our soul (our mind) can also be influenced by God. How? When we become Christians, the Holy Spirit lives in us.

Read John 16:13 - What does the Holy Spirit do when He hears?

Read 1 Corinthians 2:10-12 - What part of our nature does the Holy Spirit communicate with?

God speaks to your spirit by the Holy Spirit. Then, your spirit has direct influence on your understanding. Unfortunately, too many times, we have not developed or trained our spirit to be sensitive to God's voice. As Christians, we must allow our spirits (inward man) to control how we live—how we speak, think, and act.

Christianity is living life from the inside out. As we read the Bible, pray in the spirit (or other tongues), meditate on His Word, and practice God's Word in our lives, our spirits are strengthened, and our minds are renewed. Our thinking is changed. We will spend more time on some of these topics such as changing the way you think, praying in tongues, and being led by the Holy Spirit in later lessons. Yet, God desires that we allow our spirits through our renewed minds to change the way we live. If we fail to strengthen our spirits and renew our minds, our human nature and our old thinking will control us.

Read Romans 5:5

This Scripture says that we have received the love of God in our hearts (spirits). As Christians, we can allow problems or people to cause us to become angry. We can allow our emotions and their actions to influence us to the point that we say -or do wrong things. We can also hold on to

un-forgiveness. But our heart (spirit) has God's love in it. If we listen to our heart, we will be controlled by God's love. We will not say or do things that are wrong.

If we do not listen to our heart, we listen to our un-renewed minds or to what our physical senses tell us. Then, we will not do the right things. We must allow our hearts to control us. We must allow the life of God to control us.

Read Ephesians 4:22-29

In Verses 22-24, Paul is writing to Christians. We must change our clothes, take something off. We take off the old self and put on the new self. The understood subject is you. You do not let your old life control you. You allow your new life to control you. God wants our spiritual nature to control our human nature.

Romans 8:9 - But you do not live as your human nature tells you to; instead, you live as the Spirit tells you to—if, in fact, God's Spirit lives in you. Whoever does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.

In Verses 25-29, Paul tells the believers at Ephesus not to lie or become angry. Again, the understood subject is you. You do not lie, and you do not use harmful words. That means it is possible for Christians to do that. If we have God's love in our hearts, why do we (Christians) do that? Why is Paul even having to write to the believers at Ephesus about this? Because they have not renewed their minds. They have not made their spirits strong with God's Word. So, their natural desires (human nature) are controlling them. God wants our spiritual nature to control us.

How do we do that?

1. *Change the way we think – Feed your spirit on God's Word. Renew your mind to God's Words. Replace your thoughts with God's thoughts. We will learn more about this in the lesson "Change the way you think."*
2. *Act on what you know – We are not only to feed our spirit on God's Word, we also need to act on God's Word. We will learn more about this in the lesson "Setting yourself apart."*
3. *Pray in the spirit – We will speak more on this in the lesson on "Baptism of the Holy Spirit." One of the benefits of praying in tongues is to strengthen or build up our spirit and make it more sensitive to the Holy Spirit.*

As followers of Jesus, we must learn to listen to our hearts and to understand the voice of our heart or spirit.

Developing the fruit of the spirit

What is the fruit of the spirit? What is fruit on a tree? Fruit is the by-product of the nature of the tree. We wouldn't expect an orange tree to grow apples. We would expect an orange tree to grow oranges. The fruit lets you know what kind of tree it is. The life of the fruit is in the tree. Fruit is a by-product of the life that is in the tree.

As Christians, the fruit of the spirit is the by-product of the life and nature of God that is in us. Whose life do we have in our spirits? God's life. We produce the fruit of the spirit in our lives because we have the life of God in our spirits. So, what does this fruit look like?

Read Galatians 5:22-25

Our new spiritual, recreated nature produces love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There are no laws against things like that. This Scripture says that those who belong to Christ Jesus have put to death their corrupt nature along with its passions and desires. If we live by our spiritual nature, then our lives need to conform to our spiritual nature.

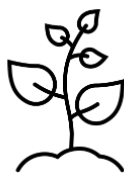
John 15:5 "I am the vine, and you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will bear much fruit; for you can do nothing without me."

John 14:16-17 "I will ask the Father, and he will give you another helper who will be with you forever. That helper is the Spirit of Truth. The world cannot accept him because it doesn't see or know him. You know him because he lives with you and will be in you."

The fruit of that spiritual nature will be evident in how we speak and act. You can't see the inside of a tree, but you can always see its fruit. If we are living a life dominated by our new recreated spirit, then it will be evident to everyone around us—just like we can see oranges on an orange tree.

The fruit or characteristics that people should be able to see and experience in our lives are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. These are the qualities that are to control our lives. When other people see this kind of fruit or lifestyle, they will know that we are different.

This might seem like an overwhelming task, but we are not alone. In John 14, we are assured that the Holy Spirit is our Helper. He will nudge us and guide us if we listen to Him. He is always speaking these actions to our spirit. We just need to listen and follow.



HOW GOD SEES YOU

The line snaked around the corner hallway as I patiently waited to pick up the kids from children's church. It was Mother's Day and we had lunch plans. Although I enjoy cooking and love to cook homemade meals for my family, there would be no cooking for mama today. As I approached the pickup door, I noticed the kids in front of me handing decorated potholders to their moms. How cute! The kids had made a Mother's Day craft. I would be adding to my potholder collection today. As each of my kiddos handed me their decorated potholder, my eyes teared up as I read the "I Love Mom" and "Best Mom" potholders decorated with hearts and handprints. Then, I came to my son's potholder, which was covered in small brown discs with wiggly lines of steam coming up from the top of each one. In bold print letters, he wrote, "I love my mom's chicken patties." Wait, what? Of all the things my son could have put on the potholder, he chose how much he liked it when I made frozen chicken patties from a box? He saw me as the best frozen chicken patty warmer upper . . . Ouch. He couldn't have picked my homemade pancakes or tasty homemade chili? Chicken patties? I smile every time I use my chicken patty potholder. But it also reminds me that people may say one thing about us or our circumstances; we may say something else about ourselves or our circumstances, but what really matters is what God says about us and our circumstances.

It is believing and acting on what God says about who we are and how that impacts our circumstances. Do we believe Him or just believe in Him? Do we establish our identity and expectations on what other people say about us or even what we say about ourselves? Or do we establish our identity and expectations on what the Bible says? Applying this truth practically to our lives is:

- ***Saying what God says about us:*** Identifying ourselves with Christ and everything that He accomplished through His death, burial, and resurrection.
- ***Expecting what God says about our circumstances:*** Believing or having faith means that we expect that we have and can do what God says we can have and do.

Just like I am more than a good (or maybe even the best according to my son) chicken patty warmer upper, what he thinks doesn't define me. God has a bigger and better plan for our lives. If this is true, then how does God define us?

New Creation Truths

When you become a Christian, God comes to live in your spirit.

Read 1 Corinthians 3:16

When God comes to live in your spirit, you receive God's nature. One word to describe God's nature is Love. We have God' love nature in us and we are His love children.

Read Romans 5:5

His love is not only towards us, but it is in us. His love is residing in our hearts (our spirit). He sees us as His beloved. He sees you with all the potential He has created you for. He doesn't see your limitations, but He sees you as you were created to be with His ability fully functioning in and through you.

God also sees you as righteous. Righteousness is the purpose of the cross. Righteousness is the ability to stand before the Father without a **SENSE (OR AWARENESS)** of guilt, condemnation, or inferiority—as if sin never existed.ⁱⁱ It is a good position with God.

Read 2 Corinthians 5:21

You are legally made the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. You are positionally righteous the instant that you accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior. He sees you according to your oneness with Christ. He **SEES YOU** as righteous from the very moment that you accept Christ into your life. **YOU ARE** the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. Jesus didn't go to the cross for you but **AS YOU**.

I remember speaking with a missionary from Honduras who had recently returned to the States to see her new granddaughter. She told me about her trip to the supermarket. Let me start by explaining the condition of the supermarkets in Honduras. The produce is unpredictable and there are lots of bruised, rotting, and blemished fruits and vegetables to choose from. You must dig through the fruits and vegetables to find some decent ones to buy. She was telling me about going to a supermarket. When she went to the produce section, she picked up a green pepper and thought how lucky she was to have picked up a perfect green pepper on her first try. Then, she picked up another and another . . . they **ALL** looked perfect. Not one had a cut in it, not one was starting to get soft, not one was starting to crack . . . she said she was so surprised that she stood there for a few moments.

It reminded me of how God sees us when we ask Jesus to come into our life. Before we accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior, we are like the Honduran green peppers with all our cuts, bruises, and cracks. But when we accept Jesus into our life and all that He did for us, God sees us just like the perfect green peppers, not one spot, blemish, or crack. He sees us perfect without spot or blemish. It's nothing that we can do on our own. There is nothing we could do to deserve this, but He provided it freely by sending his Son to die for us. The Bible says that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23) but that He sent His son to be sin who knew no sin that we may have right-standing with God through what Christ did for us (2 Corinthians 5:21). He said "I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for my own sake and remember your sins no more . . . (Isiah 43:25). And all we have to do is to believe and call . . ." For whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved . . . (Romans 10:13)."

You are forgiven. How did God forgive you? Read the following verses:

Micah 7:19 - You will again have compassion on us. You will overcome our wrongdoing. You will throw all our sins into the deep sea.

Psalms 103:12 - As far as the East is from the West, so far does he remove our sins from us.

Hebrews 10:17 - And then he says, "I will not remember their sins and evil deeds any longer."

God totally removes or wipes away our sin. There is no remembrance of it.

If we expect to have a strong spiritual life, a powerful prayer life, and a bold testimony for Christ, we must learn to accept the forgiveness God has given us and forgive ourselves. We are positionally righteous, but we also need to have a SENSE or AWARENESS of this righteousness.

Righteousness Mentality

As Christians we must develop and maintain a righteousness mentality. You cannot improve God's standard of righteousness. You received it as a gift. You did not earn it. You did not work for it. You could not pay for it. God paid the price through Jesus' sacrifice. All you can do is believe. When you accept Jesus into your heart, you are immediately made righteous. You will be just as righteous tomorrow as you are today, next week, next month, or next year. It is God's standard of righteousness. You cannot improve God's standard. Only your understanding (sense or awareness) of what God has done for you can grow.

Read Romans 5:17

Why does God want us to understand righteousness? Because we cannot fully step into our full potential until we have a sense or awareness of our righteousness. I want you to notice that reigning in life (to rule in life) is connected to our understanding of righteousness. One of the greatest things a Christian can discover is the fact that they have been made righteous by Jesus Christ.

The opposite of righteousness is guilt and condemnation. Righteousness is defined as the ability to stand in the presence of God without a sense of guilt or condemnation. The opposite of this is not being able to stand in the presence of God because of a sense of condemnation or guilt. Many times, we remember the bad things we did even after we have asked God to forgive us. As a result, we struggle with guilt, shame, and condemnation.

The devil tries to take advantage of our self-guilt. He brings pictures to our mind or thoughts to our mind of things we have done in the past. But these are just thoughts or pictures—they are not reality. After we ask God to forgive us for our sins, we need to forgive ourselves.

Guilt and condemnation will keep you from growing spiritually and from experiencing your spiritual inheritance. It will hinder your fellowship with God. A guilty person does not feel close

to God. It will hinder your prayer life. It will hinder your faith, confidence, and boldness. It will hinder your relationship with others. You can't love yourself and love others as Jesus does (as a true disciple). How you see yourself will affect your relationship with others.

Since righteousness is the opposite of condemnation and guilt, our sense of righteousness destroys the sense of guilt and condemnation that our un-renewed minds may try to hold on to. This understanding of righteousness will have a tremendous impact on how we live the Christian life. It is the main difference between a full rich life and a life with no joy, no happiness, and no peace. When we finally understand that we are righteous, guilt and condemnation will no longer control our lives.

How do I get a Righteousness Mentality?

How do we develop a Righteousness Conscience so that we can live free from guilt and condemnation? You must understand that righteousness is a gift. You have been made righteous when you became a child of God. Read the following Scriptures again:

***Romans 5:17-18** - For if by one man's offense death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. Therefore as by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.*

***2 Corinthians 5:21** - He has made Him who knew nothing of sin to be sin for us, in order that in Him we may become the righteousness of God.*

The moment you became a Christian, God made you righteous and accepted you into His family. He looks at you as though you have never sinned. He made you worthy to be called a child of God.

You are also forgiven. Forgiveness is for the Christian. You must forgive yourself. If God can forgive you, then you must accept that forgiveness and see yourself as forgiven.

Read Romans 14:17

A Righteousness Mentality brings us to a life of peace and joy. When you maintain a Righteousness Mentality, your prayer life will become more powerful. Your relationship with God and others will improve. You will begin to grow spiritually. You will discover what it means to rule in life.

See what the Bible says

Our greatest tool in getting a Righteousness Mentality is our Bible. We have God's Words available to us. But we must know what the Bible says to take advantage of it.

One day, I was speaking to my mother on the phone. She suddenly became very agitated and I could hear her shuffling things around. She started to become out of breath as I heard her frantically looking for something. I heard her say, "Where is it?" and "I can't find it." I finally

said, “Mom, Mom, what are you looking for?” She said, “I have to leave to go to an appointment and I can’t find my phone.” I said, “Mom, you are talking to me on your phone.” We both started laughing, but just because you have something available to you doesn’t mean that you are aware of it.

Righteousness is ours. It is who we are. However, we can’t act on a truth that we aren’t aware of. As you read the Bible and meditate on the verses that talk about righteousness, the following will happen:

1. *Your understanding will grow*
2. *Your faith will grow*
3. *Your thinking will change*
4. *Your life will change*

We must spend time reading and meditating on God’s Word and what He says about us. We need to become convinced of what He says about us. We need to see ourselves as He sees us. The only way to do this is to change the way we think about ourselves and align our thinking with God’s thinking. The importance of changing the way we think will be discussed in more detail at a future lesson. For now, we will share that changing the way you think starts with putting God’s Word in you. Below are examples of verses in the Bible that you should say daily. Speak them daily over your life. Say them out loud so you can hear them. I would encourage writing them in the front of your Bible (also refer to **Appendix 5** for more references):

***2 Timothy 1:7** - For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.*

***Psalms 27:1** - The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?*

***Philippians 4:19** - But my God shall supply all your needs according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*

***1 John 4:4** - Children, you belong to God, and you have defeated these enemies. God’s Spirit is in you and is more powerful than the one that is in the world.*

***Romans 8:31** - What can we say about all of this? If God is for us, who can be against us?*

***Romans 8:35** - Can anything separate us from the love of Christ? Can trouble, suffering, and hard times, or hunger and nakedness, or danger and death?*

***Romans 8:37** - The one who loves us gives us an overwhelming victory in all these difficulties.*

***Psalms 34:19** - The righteous person has many troubles, but the LORD rescues him from all of them.*

Psalm 34:17 - The righteous call to the LORD, and he listens; he rescues them from all their troubles.

Psalm 103:1-5 - By David. Praise the LORD, my soul! Praise his holy name, all that is within me. Praise the LORD, my soul, and never forget all the good he has done: He is the one who forgives all your sins, the one who heals all your diseases, the one who rescues your life from the pit, the one who crowns you with mercy and compassion, the one who fills your life with blessings so that you become young again like an eagle.

Below are additional Scriptures that God says about YOU. Review each one and write what it means to you. If one is especially meaningful to you, add it to the front of your Bible to say daily:

Scripture	Truth	What does this mean for me?
Deuteronomy 28:13	I am the head, not the tail	
Matthew 5:13	I am the salt and light of the earth	
John 1:12	I am God's child	
John 15:15	I am Christ's friend	
Romans 5:1	I have been justified (declared or made righteous or right-standing in the site of God)	
Romans 8:1-2	I am free from condemnation (feelings of guilt, shame, or inferiority; deserving of punishment or disapproval)	
Romans 8:28	I am assured that ALL things work together for my good	
Romans 8:35-39	I cannot be separated from the love of God	
1 Corinthians 6:17	I am united with the Lord and one with him in spirit	
1 Corinthians 6:20	I have been bought with a price—I belong to God	

2 Corinthians 1:21-22	I have been established, anointed, and sealed by God	
2 Corinthians 5:17	I am a new creation in Christ	
Ephesians 1:1	I am a saint	
Ephesians 1:5	I have been adopted as God's child	
Ephesians 2:6	I am seated with Christ in the heavenly realm	
Ephesians 2:10	I am God's workmanship	
Ephesians 2:18	I have direct access to God through the Holy Spirit	
Ephesians 3:12	I may approach God with freedom and confidence	
Colossians 1:14	I have been redeemed and forgiven of all my sins	
Colossians 2:10	I am complete in Christ	
Colossians 3:3	I am hidden with Christ in God	
Philippians 3:20	I am a citizen of heaven	
Philippians 4:13	I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength	
Hebrews 4:16	I can find grace and mercy in my time of need	
1 John 5:18	I am born of God and the evil one cannot touch me	
1 John 5:4-5	I have overcome the physical world because Jesus conquered it for me.	

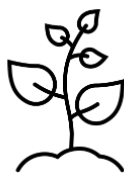
John 10:27	I hear His voice	
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Maintain Unbroken Fellowship

To maintain your sense of righteousness, you also need to maintain unbroken fellowship. You can't break relationship, but you can break your fellowship. What if you mess up? What if you make a mistake? Once you sin, you have broken not only your fellowship, but you have compromised your SENSE of righteousness. When this happens, you must immediately ask God to forgive you.

Read 1 John 1:9

Once we confess our sin, God totally removes or wipes away that sin and cleanses us from all unrighteousness. God has forgiven you. There is no remembrance of it. God expects us to do the same once we have confessed our sin—to put it behind us and forget it. You must forgive yourself and remove from your mind any negative thought that is contrary to these verses that we just read.



GOD KIND OF LOVE

The store was filled with beautiful sparkly diamonds. The couple was excitedly looking at the rings to pick out the perfect diamond ring to signify their commitment to each other and plans to marry. In Western culture, men usually present a ring to the woman they intend to marry. In this case, the salesman behind the counter was the most knowledgeable in the store. He knew all the details and facts about each diamond in the store. He methodically shared the facts of each diamond ring that they looked at. But, as the couple turned to leave the store without purchasing a ring, the owner of the store came over to them. He asked if he could spend some time with them again as they looked at rings. The couple reluctantly turned around and went back into the store. Thirty minutes later, the happy couple left as the proud owners of a new diamond ring. One of the other employees came over and asked the owner what he had done to get the couple to buy a diamond. The owner simply answered, “The salesman is very knowledgeable about diamonds and knows all the facts. But, I love diamonds. Love is what made the difference.”

We are not trying to compare the love of diamonds with God’s love. But this story does show us that love makes a difference. Love is also the thing that makes the difference in our discipleship journey.

Read John 13:35 - How will people know that we are Jesus’ disciples?

If this Scripture is true (and we know that it is), then this thing called love is an extremely important piece to becoming a disciple. This thing called love defines us and helps others recognize that we are disciples. We will learn in this lesson that God’s love (or the God kind of love) is not only the thing that defines us as a disciple of Jesus, but it is also the very foundation of our Christian life. Why? Because God is love. He doesn’t just do love, but it is who He is. As a result, everything He does and says springs from this very essence of who He is. If we are to be followers of Jesus, then it should also be the thing that motivates everything that we say and do.

God is Love

In the Old Testament, God revealed Himself to Moses with the decisive statement, “I AM” (Exodus 3:14). Throughout the Old Testament, He added to His name “I AM”—translated Yahweh or Jehovah or LORD—by giving names that clarified His character based upon His provision and His miracles. God has revealed himself as Elohim, El Shaddai, and Jehovah in the Old Covenant. Scripture declares God’s names as Jehovah-Jireh (the Lord, My Provider), Jehovah Rapha (the Lord Heals), Jehovah Nissi (the Lord, My Banner), Jehovah Shalom, (the

Lord, Our Peace), Jehovah Raah (the Lord, My Shepherd), and more. They created a physical picture of how He interacts with His people.

In the New Covenant, He continues to reveal who He is in relationship to us. How does He reveal Himself?

Read 2 Corinthians 6:18

Read Galatians 4:6

He reveals Himself as our Heavenly Father. Through these Scriptures, He establishes His relationship to us. His motivation for His interactions is revealed. He is our Heavenly Father and sees us as His children.

But, what kind of Father is he? Is He an absent, angry, distant Father? What is His motivation? One of the most powerful descriptions of who God is can be found in the books of John and 1 John. Jesus introduced us to a Father God of LOVE. He loves us with a Father's love. He is approachable and seeks our best.

Read the following Scriptures:

1 John 4:8 – Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.

1 John 4:16 - So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

John 3:16 - For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

God IS love. Love is God unveiled. Love isn't just what He does, but it is who He is. As a result, everything He says and does is an expression of this love. Love gives. From creation to the cross, our Heavenly Father gives because He loves. But the ultimate expression of love occurred when He loved the world so much that He was willing to give His only Son so that we could be restored in fellowship with Him to our original purpose of image-bearers of this very same love nature.

My prayer for you in these lessons is that God reveals his redemptive plan to you so that you can experience His love that surpasses knowledge.

Read Ephesians 3:14-21

What a beautiful prayer that Paul prayed for the believers at Ephesus. He prayed that they would be rooted and grounded in His love. What surpasses knowledge? Experience. He wanted them to apply and experience the love of God as the incredible ability working in them.

For God so loved the world, He gave Christ to reconcile the world to Himself. He was in Christ reconciling the world, YOU, to Himself. He has clothed you in righteousness or right standing with Him. As a result, you can come boldly to Him without a sense of guilt or inferiority. He calls you His friend or covenant partner in Christ. God sees you just as He sees Christ. He sees you in light of everything Christ accomplished through His death, burial, and resurrection. He is no longer holding your sins against you, but He sees you as righteous (or as standing perfectly before Him without spot or blemish). He sees you as a joint heir of Christ and has provided a full inheritance that you have access to through and in Christ. All that Christ has and accomplished is YOURS as well. This is not only exciting but empowering news.

He sees us as His beloved sons and daughters. He sees YOU as His beloved son and/or daughter. There is nothing that separates you from His love except for your refusal to accept all that He has provided for you. This is not only good news, but it is the THE good news throughout the Bible woven into each chapter and book. I would encourage you to speak the words of how God sees you over your life every day until they are so a part of you that you can't see yourself differently than He sees you. You were in Christ when He died on the cross. You were with Christ when He rose again. You are joint heirs with Christ in His inheritance. You have Christ's ability on the inside of you. You are one with Christ in all things. If you can wrap your head around these truths, it will revolutionize your relationship with God and your impact in the world.

His oneness with us means that our spirits have been recreated with His very love nature.

Read Romans 5:5 - What is our spirit recreated with? What has filled our hearts when we accept Christ as our Lord and Savior?

The unveiling of who we are IN CHRIST in our hearts and minds will have tremendous impact not only on us, but on everyone that we contact. The unveiling of who we are IN CHRIST is the foundation for understanding His love for us as well as our ability to share His love with others.

Goodness of God

We will spend some time focusing on how God expresses His love. To do this, we must go all the way back to the first book of the Bible—Genesis. God created the heavens and the earth by speaking them into existence.

Read Genesis 1 - What does God say at the end of each day of creation?

Everything God created He declared as GOOD. Then, He created his “masterpiece” of creation—Adam or man. God gave him all authority over the earth, His creation. He gave Adam authority to name all the animals. This person, Adam, was made in His very image so that he could have a relationship with and fellowship (or spend time) with him. In order that man would also have somebody to help him on the earth, God created Eve or woman. Adam and Eve lived a blessed life in a beautiful Garden in a world without sin or death. The only rule or law God

established was that they could not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil or that they would surely die.

Read Genesis 2 and 3

Satan, disguised as a serpent, came to Eve, and told her:

You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil. (Genesis 3:4-5)

Eve fell for the deception and ate the fruit. Then, she gave fruit from the tree to Adam and he also ate. What a sad day for mankind. In that instant, through disobedience, man died spiritually and was separated from God. God wasn't speaking about natural or physical death in Genesis 2:17 when he told Adam that he would die, but spiritual death. Since God is Spirit (John 4:24), that meant that Adam and Eve could no longer have fellowship with God. We can see that Adam and Eve were still physically alive after they ate the fruit, because God comes to the garden looking for them (Genesis 3:8).

Now, I want you to see some important things about this passage. God reveals himself through His names. Throughout the Old Testament, we can see God reveal different facets of his character through His names. In Genesis 1:1 to 2:3, God is referred to as Elohim, which reveals Him as creator, ruler, sovereign, or judge. Elohim refers to His power and His might, but does not imply relationship. This makes sense as He completes the story of creation of the heavens and the earth in Genesis 2:3. However, from Genesis 2:4, He is known as YHWH Elohim (or Lord God), which means He Who Causes "That Which Is" To Be or "I am who I am." Later in Scripture, this name is confirmed as a personal covenant God.ⁱⁱⁱ Consider what the writer of Hebrews says about God in Hebrews 11:6 –

But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

The word "is" in the second half of this verse means "to cause to be." So, you could read this verse to say:

But without faith, it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He causes to be rewarded those who diligently seek Him.

This implies not just a supreme deity God that makes creation and then steps back to let things take their course, but a God who seeks relationship with His people and wants "to cause to be" rewards (or GOOD things) in the lives of those who diligently seek a relationship with Him. It implies relationship—ongoing relationship! He is the God who causes GOOD things to be in the lives of His children.

Now let us go back to our story in the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve were deceived. God revealed Himself as "Lord God" or YHWH Elohim in Genesis 2:4. He revealed himself as a relationship God. Then, in the very next verse, He details more the creation of man. In the

following verses, the Scriptures reveal how God gave LIFE to man . . . that he breathed His very life into man and made him a living being. He breathed spirit into man! So, He reveals Himself as a relationship God, then proceeds to introduce the very being that He endeavors to have relationship with—man. When Satan spoke to Eve in Genesis 3, He drops the relationship part of God’s name and refers to him simply as Elohim. Eve then responded back to him also using Elohim instead of YHWH Elohim. Do you see the significance here? Part of Satan’s deception was that God was a distant supreme being that didn’t really care about His creation. Eve fell right into the deception when she answered back using the same term for God. When God is seeking Adam and Eve in the garden after their disobedience and addressing them, He continues to refer to Himself as YHWH Elohim. He is still the same relationship seeking God that He revealed Himself to be in Genesis 2:4. But, unfortunately, Adam and Even had broken fellowship and relationship through their disobedience. God never changed. He proves this almost immediately after the act of disobedience by telling the serpent:

And I will put enmity between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel. (Genesis 3:15)

He immediately started making provision for restoring the lost fellowship. The Seed He is referring to here is Jesus. This is the first prophecy of Jesus in the Bible, which we see later fulfilled in the New Testament!

So, if God is so concerned about our relationship, we must ask ourselves—what is relationship? Relationship is a sharing or exchange. It’s spending time together and getting to know each other and continuing to stay an important part of each other’s lives. Consider the following verse:

*And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will dwell in them And walk among them. **I will be their God, And they shall be My people.**” (2 Corinthians 6:16)*

Notice that this verse doesn’t say “the” God, but “their” God. He wants to be our God. He wants a relationship with us. But our relationship must also be developed through fellowship (or spending time with that person).

God from the very beginning of the Scriptures defines Himself as a relationship-seeking God that desires to have relationship with us. He called His creation good. When Adam and Eve broke man’s fellowship with God through their act of disobedience, God put a plan into place to restore His fellowship and relationship with man. Through Jesus, God restored our relationship and fellowship with Him. What Jesus did in establishing a New Covenant based on better promises accomplished the means for us to have position, relationship, and fellowship with God our Father at long last. In this New Covenant he reveals himself as our Heavenly Father. We are His children.

I would like to spend some time on a relationship word translated in the Old Testament as loving kindness, mercy, or steadfastness. The word is *chesed*. I want to delve a little deeper into its meaning because the true meaning of this word exemplifies God’s love towards us. God’s demand for righteousness is insistent. It is always at the maximum intensity. The loving-kindness

of God means that His mercy is greater. The word stands for the wonder of his unfailing love for the people of His choice, and the solving of the problem of the relation between His righteousness and His loving-kindness. It encompasses ideas of love and loyalty. It also conveys the idea of the steadfastness and persistence of God's sure love for His covenant-people. Probably one of the most well-known Scriptures using this word is Psalms 23 –

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the LORD Forever.

We are living this Psalm out right now in this age! What a beautiful message of God's relationship with us! His love and relationship towards us are steadfast, loyal, intensely loving, unfailingly kind, compassionate, and merciful. Considering this, you could read this Psalm as follows:

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over. Surely goodness and His loyalty, intense love, unfailing kindness, compassion, mercy, and steadfast persistence for me shall follow me all the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the LORD Forever.

This is powerful! It is a picture of his exceedingly great love for us that will loyally seek relationship with us in steadfast persistence. His goodness is chasing after us. This is the reason He pursued covenant and made provision for it by sending His own son to earth to live as a man, was made sin before He died on the cross, and rose again to restore the relationship that Adam gave away to the enemy—to legally make a way for a just and holy God to have relationship and fellowship with us by making us righteous. For God so loved the world that He gave His son because He knew that this was the only way to express His love fully to and through us.

What is the God kind of love?

What would you share with your family if you knew you only had a day to live? Would you talk about trivial things? Or would you share the most important things that you wanted them to know? I believe that I would share the most important things that I thought they needed to know. I believe Jesus did the same. Jesus knew His time on earth was ending. As He shared the last Passover meal with His disciples, He focused on two main topics—Love and the Holy Spirit. His words are recorded in John 13-17. I would encourage you to read these chapters from beginning to end without stopping. They are powerful and encouraging. Why did He focus on these topics? Because Jesus knew that these two topics were critical for His disciples to know to carry out His

work on earth after His departure. We will focus on the first topic—love—in this lesson. We will focus on the second topic in a future lesson.

Love is found twenty-nine times alone in John 13-17. The word used for ‘love’ in these chapters is ‘agape.’ The word ‘agape’ is found in different forms over three hundred times in the Bible.

A man tries to control his wife and says he loves her. A wife leaves her husband because she says she doesn’t love him anymore. What kind of love is this? If this is the kind of love God has for us, it means we could lose it at any time. But this is not the love or agape that is shared in the Bible when referring to the God kind of love. This type of love is phileo. To better understand this, let’s look at two different words for love used in the Greek New Testament.

Agape vs. Phileo

Review the definitions below of agape and phileo.

Agape – not motivated by appearance, emotion, sentiment, or duty (family bond). It is decisive. It is a choice. It is giving and seeks the benefit of the one who is loved. It is impossible to carry this out in our own ability, but it is made possible IN HIM because His love has been imparted into our recreated spirits. It must always involve action. It is unrestricted, unconditional, and fearless. God is spirit (John 4:24). If God is love, then the God kind of love is not natural, but spiritual. It is a supernatural love.

Phileo – It is conditional, emotional, impulsive, and based on sense of duty or physical bond. It seeks benefit of self. When there is no more perceived benefit, love is no longer returned or given. It is taking/getting rather than giving. This is a natural love known as brotherly love.

Below is a comparison of the two words:

Agape	Phileo
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Used very little in secular Greek, but predominant in New Testament</i> • <i>Unconditional</i> • <i>Sacrificial</i> • <i>Giving</i> • <i>Serving</i> • <i>Unselfish</i> • <i>Intentional</i> • <i>Spiritual</i> • <i>Choice</i> • <i>One-way flow that is not dependent on the one receiving it</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Used frequently in secular Greek</i> • <i>Taking</i> • <i>Emotional response to something that appeals</i> • <i>Two-way flow that instinctively flows toward someone who also returns the same emotion.</i>

Read Romans 8:38-39

Nothing means nothing. Agape is a one-way flow—even toward someone who doesn't deserve or return it. Therefore, nothing can separate us from the Love (agape) of God because it has no dependence on us.

The best illustration of the contrast of these two types of love in the Bible is found in the book of John.

Read John 21:15-17

Jesus asks Peter if he loves Him. Peter responds that, yes, he loves Him. But in many translations, the distinction of the two different words for love is lost. Jesus asks Peter, do you AGAPE me? Peter responds, yes, he PHILEOS Him. Jesus asks again if Peter AGAPES Him. Peter responds again that He PHILEOS Him. Finally, Jesus comes down to Peter's level and asks him if he PHILEOS Him. Peter responds yes. Peter had denied Jesus three times. As Jesus was restoring Peter, He wanted to demonstrate AGAPE. But Peter responded with a natural response based on his feeling. Peter was deeply humbled by his failure, fearing that he had forfeited any chance of further ministry. But Jesus came down to his level and started there. The faltering disciple who could only claim a friendly affection for Jesus would later be transformed by the Holy Spirit into a committed lover of the Lord.

As we yield to the enabling power of the Holy Spirit IN US, we can AGAPE. But, AGAPE must always involve action.

Walking in Love

My teeth were gritted and I was kneeling at the couch in my living room. I had determined to do what the Bible said. But surely it would be okay if I didn't do just this one thing.

Read Matthew 5:44 - Whom does it tell us to bless and pray for?

God knew how much I'd been hurt. Surely, He really didn't mean for me to pray blessing for the person who had broken trust and hurt me so deeply. But that's what it said. I read it a few times just to make sure that I hadn't read it wrong. I even read the verses before and after to make sure that I wasn't taking the verse out of context. I was desperately trying to find a way to avoid having to apply this Scripture to my life. After I had exhausted every way out, I was on my knees ready to pray a blessing for somebody who had deeply hurt me. With gritted teeth, I thought the words in my head before I could make my lips form the words. Finally, with clenched fists, I managed to stutter it out . . . "God, bless him and bless his life." There, I'd said it. The first time was the hardest. But after it was out, it came out much easier the next time. I first said this prayer in December, but I knew that I didn't really mean it the first time I prayed it. However, the Bible told me to do it, so I was determined to be obedient in this area regardless of how I felt.

I remember the day clearly. It was a cloudy, gray, typical February day in western Pennsylvania. I was praying. I started praying like I had done every day for the last two-and-a-half months, I said the same words I prayed many times, "God, bless him and bless his life." But I was surprised as I realized something was different this time . . . I MEANT IT. I really did want God

to bless him and bless his life. Through months of prayer and praying for him, God had changed my heart. I wanted the best for him.

The new commandment of the New Covenant is LOVE. All the laws of the Old Testament have been replaced by this one new law. LOVE is the fulfilling of the law.

Read Hebrews 10:9-17

He took away the old so that He may establish the new. Jesus introduces this greatest commandment in the following Scripture.

Read Matthew 22:36-38

Jesus not only introduces us to the command, but also to the purpose. This new kind of love is spiritual. It is supernatural. It is impossible to carry this out in our own ability. But it is made possible IN HIM because He is in us. The God kind of love is AGAPE. It is unconditional, one-way, sacrificial, serving, giving love.

God is LOVE. We have God living on the inside. We have the very nature of God and are made in His image. Love is who we are—our essence—so love is also what we should do and say. Since love is spiritual, that means that it can dominate our human nature because we are a spirit. When we are saved, the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts so that our true nature is love.

1 John 4:19 - We love because he first loved us.

Romans 5:5 - The love of God has been shed abroad in our hearts.

Hebrews 8:10 - He puts his laws in our minds and hearts.

Because God first loved us, He made a way for His very nature to be imparted into us. He gives us the ability to love with His kind of love. Not natural love, but supernatural love. He doesn't just command us to love but furnishes us with the love that he commands us to act on. He has put the law of love in our minds and hearts. He has shed His love abroad in our hearts. AGAPE is made possible because we have been recreated with His love nature in our spirits. We already have it on the inside of us, but we must act on it. Love was the ultimate purpose each of us was created from and for. We are each created to express God's love in a unique and specific way.

Read John 15:12 - What are we do to "even as" He did?

Read John 16:13 - What will the Holy Spirit guide us into?

Read Ephesians 5:2 - What are we to walk in?

Walking means our daily conduct. We are to take His place here on Earth even as He would do in our daily conduct. I am to speak the words that He would speak and do the kind of deeds He would do. Love words and love deeds. Not only does He furnish us with the love, but He sent the Holy Spirit to empower us to act on this love.

To act on it, we need to know what it looks like. What does AGAPE look like?

Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8

Read Ephesians 4:32

Read Galatians 5:22-25

This is what love looks like outwardly. When we let our love nature express itself, we see love fruit. But these Scriptures also reveal our motivation. Love should be the great motivator. Love inside us motivating our actions. Not acts of love to prove or earn our position, but acts of love as a demonstration of our nature. We are motivated by love because that is now who we are. When we are motivated by love, our acts of love have eternal significance. When we step out of love, we step out of God's perfect will.

Read John 15:8 - How do we prove we are His disciples?

What is the purpose? Read the following Scriptures:

John 13:34-35

Matt 22:37-40

What are we supposed to do? LOVE GOD and LOVE PEOPLE!

When we do this, we will bear fruit—love fruit. Fruit with eternal significance. To the degree that we live out this law of love is a direct reflection of our Christ-likeness. Our love fruit is the result of our indwelling love nature expressing itself in action in the world around us—in situations, circumstances, and relationships.

How do we walk in this love? Below are the key steps to successfully walk in AGAPE (or the God kind of love).

1. *Getting God's words of love on the inside of us. We think love, then we do love. (Refer to the lesson "Change the way you think")*
2. *Spending time with Him in prayer and worship*
3. *Acting on the truth that we know despite how we feel just as I chose to act on the Word regarding forgiveness even though I didn't feel it. Why? Because AGAPE is spiritual. It is not based on emotion. It is based on choice to act on the truth. (Refer to the lesson "How God Made Us")*

4. *Yielding to the Holy Spirit. We have the Holy Spirit that will guide us into all truth. The Holy Spirit will always guide us into the way of love. He provided both the help and ability to accomplish His command of love.*

God's words are love. His commands are saturated in love. When we act on His word, we walk in this love. When we yield to the Holy Spirit, He will always guide us in alignment with this love and we will not only faithfully bear His image in this world, but we will bear eternal love fruit. And the most amazing thing is that He promises us that His love never fails!

Read 1 Corinthian 13:8

Never means never. When we let our spirit dominate our natural thoughts, feelings, emotions, and actions, we will let our love nature shine. We will be lights in the darkness to every situation we encounter. Love never fails. Whenever God's love is applied through us in any circumstance, it will accomplish the purpose for which He sent it. But, since this love isn't based on feelings or emotions, we need to act on it even when we don't feel it. AGAPE is a choice. It is not dependent upon the other person's actions or even our feelings. It is simply choosing to act on the Word.

As disciples, we need to become love experts. We are recognized as His disciples because we act on and demonstrate this AGAPE in our lives. Without Agape, our actions have no eternal significance. But, Agape will never, never, never fail.

I have included a personalized love confession in **Appendix 7**. I would encourage you to speak this confession over yourself.



CHANGE THE WAY YOU THINK

My husband and I were in Honduras on a mission trip. We were making plans to move there for a year. While we were there, one of the missionary's daughters showed us her dead "bug" collection. It was very impressive . . . tarantulas, beetles, moths the size of butterflies. She had a fine collection of bugs...very LARGE bugs. My first instinct was to shudder when I saw them. The thought came into my mind... "Are you sure you want to move to the mission field for a year? You don't even like to run into a daddy long leg. What if you run into the King Kong of daddy long legs like this girl has in her bug collection?" For a moment, I was focused on the dead bugs. I was afraid of running into one of their living relatives. I was questioning the plans that God had put on my heart.

Many times, we do the same thing in our lives. Each of us has our own dead bugs that we deal with whether it be a fear of failing, a poor decision, or a failed relationship. We focus on these experiences, fears, and past failures. It keeps us from taking a step into our future. God has so many amazing things for us, but we need to focus on the beautiful future he has for each of us instead of our fears and past failures. Those dead bugs pinned to Styrofoam couldn't hurt me. Our past failures in our lives can't hurt us unless we focus on them and allow them to hold us back. By the way, I never did run into any of those bugs during my stay in Honduras (although I can't say the same about the mosquitoes). Sometimes, we insistently hold on to or focus on these things—depression, insecurity, bad habits, bitterness. But God has amazing plans for us. He has a specific purpose for us.

Read Jeremiah 29:11

The Bible says, "He knows the thoughts and plans he has for you, thoughts for good and not for evil to bring you good in your final outcome." This verse is a sample of how God thinks or His thoughts. He doesn't want you to feel useless, insecure, unhappy, depressed, helpless, angry, out of control, or taken advantage of. His plans for you are good. He has a purpose for your life. If you give him a chance, He will show it to you. As we continue the discipleship journey, we must change the way we think to align with the way God thinks.

Where do we find God's thoughts?

The primary place that you can discover God's thoughts is in God's Word or The Bible. His Words (the Bible) contain His thoughts. He promises His followers peace, prosperity, joy, and a fulfilling life. He wants you to forget about the dead bugs and focus on your wonderful future with him. But there may be some things you have to give up. You can't "hold onto" or focus on

your old thoughts or lifestyles and still receive ALL that God has for you. His thoughts for us are better than the thoughts that we have for ourselves.

Read the following verses:

John 1:1-5 - In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He 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 14:6 - Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

God and His Word are one. God's Word is His thoughts and will. God's Word is His thoughts for the world and His thoughts for us as believers. Jesus is the Word made flesh. Believing in His Word is the same as believing in Jesus himself. What does it mean? When we have a circumstance, what do we have to do? We need to find out what Jesus or the Word, says about it!

There is right believing and wrong believing. Right believing leads to right living. Controlling your thoughts and actions is one of the most important aspects of your discipleship journey. Learning this process and putting it into action will help you deal with both your circumstances and your emotions. In the lesson "How God Made Us," we learned that we are spirit beings. We also learned that we should let our recreated spirit dominate our human nature (thoughts and physical activities). If you can learn how to take your thoughts captive, you will be able to change your life. It will forever impact any circumstance you encounter in life. I am not saying that you are never going to have negative or destructive thoughts again, but the key is to recognize them for what they are and not allow those thoughts to define and your actions.

What we allow in our ears and eyes will impact our thinking. If we put water into a cup, we wouldn't expect to get milk out of that cup. We would expect to get water. What you put in you is what will come out of you. Your ears and eyes are the main gateways that affect your thinking. What you watch or listen to will impact the way you think. Also, what we allow to continue in us or our lives become our defining moments. Consider the diagram below.



What we put into us will affect the way we think. What we think affects what we believe and say. Our beliefs will affect what we do or act upon. We will ultimately act on what we believe to be true. Keep this diagram before you for the rest of the lesson. What we say or do is a good indicator of what we are thinking or believe. If our words or actions are not lining up with God's

Word, then we have a thinking problem that needs corrected. We will talk more about this diagram when we discuss how to change your thinking. But it is important to remember that God's Word is the most important tool for defining each moment of our lives as a disciple.

Defining Moments

What are your defining moments? What are you allowing to continue in you or in your life that affects how you act in situations? What has happened in your past that you allow to dictate your present and your future? What are you watching or listening to that is not aligned with God's truth? Are you listening to podcasts or watching videos that don't line up with God's truth? Are you allowing those ideas and thoughts to continue in your life? How does it affect what you say and how you act?

I was talking to another missionary about the scrawny, starving dogs in Honduras. She lived on a farm growing up as a child and told me how the starving dogs in Honduras never attacked the chickens. On her farm growing up, they had to protect the chickens from hungry foxes and dogs. It did seem quite strange. Dogs are carnivores, after all. I questioned why things would be different. She told me that one of her Honduran neighbors had the answer for her. When the puppies are young, the mother chicken henpecks and scares the puppies into submission. When they are full-grown, they don't even think of trying to attack the chickens. Even though they have the strength and ability to conquer the chickens and are hungry and starving, they remain hungry because they've been "taught" or tricked into thinking that they can't. They allowed these thoughts to continue in them even though they had gained the ability to overtake the chickens as they got older. How many times do we do the same thing in our Christian walk?

Just like the starving dogs, the way we think (or our thought-life) dictates what we allow to become our defining moments or how we act in a situation. How we act in a situation impacts the outcome of the situation. A wrong thought can make us miss the purpose of God in a situation. Wrong thoughts can keep us from acting out God's plans. What defining moments do you want to dictate your actions?

Read Jeremiah 29:11 - What kind of thoughts does the Lord say He has for us?

Read John 10:10 - Why did Jesus say he came?

God's defining moments for us are amazing. They are good and not evil. They are full of hope and peace. His thoughts are for us to have an abundant life. If we change our way of thinking to His way of thinking, then He defines our moments minute by minute, day by day. He has good plans and amazing thoughts for every one of us. When we accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, we have access to the thoughts and plans of God for us.

We have a Choice. In our defining moments (or circumstances) we have:

- *Potential for setback*
- *Potential for greater fruit*

What choice did God provide us? He is a gentleman and will not force us to think and act on His thoughts for us. We have a choice to make. We can either react or respond.

- ***React** to our current and future circumstances based on what we've allowed to define us in the past. When we react, we allow past circumstances or experiences to define us. This keeps us a victim to our past ungodly thoughts, experiences, and circumstances.*
- ***Respond** to our current and future circumstances based on how God has defined us or our circumstances. We can choose to respond to a circumstance based on God's way of thinking instead of our own thoughts or emotions. This is our choice!*

You may not realize that you can control your thoughts. You may think that if you are depressed you must stay depressed until the depression goes away on its own. I know this is how some people think because this is how I used to think. I remember waking up in a "bad mood" and thinking . . . here we go again, another bad day. UNTRUE! This is where responsibility and choice come into the picture. You can choose to have a good day even if you wake up in a bad mood. I don't mean that if you have bad thoughts that you are a bad person, but I do mean that thoughts usually translate into actions. If you let yourself think angry or sad thoughts all the time, you will be angry or depressed. Before you can control your thoughts, you must understand how thoughts control your life. When you dwell or let your mind settle on certain thoughts, you tend to eventually speak what is on your mind. As a result, your thoughts turn into words. The more you speak something, the more you cement this thought into your head. If you let yourself constantly have negative thoughts, you will speak negatively and will eventually act negatively. The way you think controls how you see and interact in your world.

So, how do we take this step towards right thinking? If we are to respond instead of react, we need to understand what our response should be. What should our response look and sound like?

Do God's Word

What are you looking at and acting upon? What we believe is what we act upon. What we act upon becomes reality for us. You can just say you believe, but you must act on your belief (applying His Word). When we have a circumstance, what do we have to do? We need to change our focus or what we are looking at. We need to look at the circumstance through a filter of God's Word or His thoughts.

Read Matthew 14:22-31

Note: You will also find an account of this story in Mark 6:45-52 and John 6:15-21 if you would like to read those verses as well.

After Jesus had preached to the people, He told His disciples to get in a boat and go to the other side of the sea. When the boat was now in the middle of the sea, a great storm came upon them. Jesus went to them, walking on the sea. When the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they thought He was a ghost and cried out in fear. But Jesus spoke to them saying, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid." Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come

to You on the water.” Jesus told him, “Come.” Peter obeyed and stepped out of the boat! But when he started looking around at the storm surrounding him, he was afraid and began to sink. Jesus immediately stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?”

You will notice a few things in this passage:

1. *When Peter stepped out of the boat, his focus was on Jesus*
2. *Peter didn't just listen to (or hear) Jesus, but He DID what Jesus said. Jesus told Him to get out of the boat, so he did it. He didn't pay attention to the stormy circumstances around him. He was convinced that if Jesus told him to do something, it would work out well for him. So, he acted on what Jesus told him.*
3. *When Peter was focused on Jesus:*
 - *He was not afraid*
 - *He stepped out or acted*
 - *He was able to do what Jesus did—overcome his circumstances and walk on water*
4. *When Peter lost his focus or looked to the storm (circumstances around him):*
 - *He became fearful*
 - *He began to sink*

We must find out what Jesus (or the Word) says about our circumstances. We need to keep our focus. If our focus is on the wrong thing (like Peter's focus changed from Jesus to the storm), we need to change what we are looking at—change our focus. Nothing changed in Peter's circumstances except his focus and what he was looking at (his ability didn't change, his surroundings didn't change, and Jesus didn't change). When he was looking to Jesus/the Word for his answers and ACTING ON THEM, he was overcoming his circumstances. When he started looking to the wind and storm around him, he began to sink!!! We'll do the same.

Our lives become what we allow ourselves to think about. What you think on will become what you believe, and what you believe will become action (what you say and do). If this is true, then HOW do we change our thinking?

How do I change my thinking?

God's thoughts and plans are so much bigger and better than anything we could figure out on our own. He has amazing plans for our lives. We only see ourselves as we are or as we THINK we want to be, but God sees us with all the potential and talents that He has placed in us when He created us. We see ourselves with the limits of what we think we can accomplish. God sees us in the light of what He can accomplish through us. We see ourselves in the light of our past and present. God sees us in the light of our future as well. He sees us as who He created us to become. We define ourselves by what WE think we can do and not what our abilities are with God working in, through and for us.

So, how do we change our thinking so that we can think like God thinks?

Read Ephesians 6:16 - What does the shield of faith quench or extinguish?

What are the fiery darts of the devil? They are thoughts that he tries to give us that are the opposite of God's thoughts. If we don't control our thoughts, our thoughts will control us. For this reason, one of the main ways that the devil attacks us is through our thoughts. He will always give us thoughts opposite to God's purpose and truth. If he can get us to agree with these thoughts, he can hinder our ability to live out the plans that God has for us. But we don't have to accept these thoughts that he tries to give us. We can choose only to accept God's thoughts.

Read Romans 12:2

The Amplified Bible personalizes it a bit more. Read this same verse below in the Amplified version of the Bible.

Romans 12:2 (AMP)

Do not be conformed to this world (this age), [fashioned after and adapted to its external, superficial customs], but be transformed (changed) by the [entire] renewal of your mind [by its new ideals and its new attitude], so that you may prove [for yourselves] what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God, even the thing which is good and acceptable and perfect [in His sight for you].

Before we go any further, we need to define some of the key words used in this verse:

- **Conformed** = **to act in accordance with prevailing standards or customs.** The Bible says "Don't be fashioned after this world and its systems." It is saying don't think how the world thinks or tells you to think.
- **Transformed** = **completely changed, shaped, or formed.** The Bible says to be transformed or completely shaped or reformed by changing the way you think.
- **Renew** = **to make like new: restore to freshness, vigor, or perfection. A change for the better.** The verse implies an exchange of your old thoughts for new and perfect thoughts.
- **Prove** = **to test, prove or allow.** The verse says that we are to let our minds be changed by transforming the way we think to the way God thinks so that we can allow God's best in our lives.

Read Isaiah 55:8 - How are God's thoughts different than our thoughts?

God's thoughts are higher or better than our thoughts. If I want to allow what is good/acceptable in God's sight for me, I must see what God says and say what God says.

Read Philippians 2:12 - What does it tell us to do in this verse?

This isn't talking about obtaining salvation for yourself through works, but applying the blessings and benefits of salvation to your life. Our spirit is made alive when we are born again,

but we need to renew our mind to line up with our spirit. We do this by exchanging God's thoughts for our thoughts.

Read Philippians 4:8 - Paul writes a list of things for the believers at Philippi. What does he tell them to do on these things?

Read Joshua 1:8

What are we supposed to do with the law (or Word) day and night?

What will be the result if they do this day and night?

In both Scriptures, we are told to meditate on God's Word. We briefly spent some time in a previous lesson discussing what it means to meditate, but we will dig a little deeper into the meaning of meditate in this lesson. Meditating on God's Word plays a very important role in changing the way we think. Let's start by reviewing the definition of meditate:

- ***Meditate*** = to focus one's thoughts on; to imagine, to mutter, to speak, to ponder, to reflect.

What happens when we meditate on God's Word? Read the following portion of Scripture in the Amplified version:

Joshua 1:8 (AMPLIFIED) “. . . and then you shall deal wisely and have good success.”

Another translation says so that you may “deal wisely in the affairs of life.” It stands to reason that we will make our way prosperous if we learn to deal wisely in the affairs of life. One of the keys in dealing wisely in the affairs of life is found in the opening statement of this verse. Notice the first thing he mentions to do is to not let it (God's Word) depart out of your mouth. Why? Have you ever been so engrossed or so overcome by a problem or a situation that you found yourself talking about it? This is really a form of mediation. Meditation can be negative or positive. Worry or anxiety is a negative form of meditation. You must keep God's Word in your mouth to keep your meditation positive. I'm not talking about repeating just any words, but specifically speaking God's Words.

Read Isaiah 55:11

Why is it important to keep God's Word in your mouth? Notice that God's Word didn't accomplish anything until it came out of His mouth. God's Word will not accomplish anything in your life until it comes out of your mouth.

The Word in your mouth will strengthen your faith. When we confess God's Word, we are simply affirming to ourselves what we believe. We are testifying about something we know. We are witnessing a truth that we have embraced. Speaking God's Word strengthens our faith. We will speak more on using our words in faith in a later lesson. For now, it is important to note that

the Word in your mouth determines or shapes your destiny because it affects your faith. It either allows God to work or permits the devil to interfere.

Read John 6:63

Jesus said the words He speaks are spirit and life. If you are not satisfied with what you've got, check up on what you are saying. Because all that you have and all that you are today is the result of what you believed and said yesterday.^{iv} Choose to speak life into your thoughts and situations.

Let's refer again to the diagram we shared earlier. Our thinking and our saying are very closely connected.



Read Luke 6:45 - What does the mouth speak from?

What we say will reflect what we think. In other words, what we say will reflect what we think on and have put into us (or in our hearts).

Read Romans 10:17 - How does faith come?

Faith doesn't come by asking or hoping for more faith. Faith comes by hearing the word of God (Faith = Belief). Notice that speaking things can affect our thinking.

It is not just a one-way connection. Our mouth will speak from the abundance of what is in our heart. But since faith comes by hearing, what we think and believe can be impacted by speaking God's Words out loud. We can choose to willfully put God's Words in our heart by speaking them. Then, the words that our mouth speaks from the abundance of our heart will be aligned with God's thinking.

Now, I want you to try the following exercise. Read the instructions fully before you do it.

1. You are going to count to **ten** IN YOUR HEAD—do not say the numbers, only think them in your head as you count
2. When you get to the number **six**, SAY your name out loud

What happened when you said your name? You had to pause or stop counting in your head. You can't do both at the same time. So, if you have a thought in your head and you say something, what you speak overrides what you are thinking.

We can replace our thoughts with God's thoughts because we can't think and say at the same time. Saying will always override thinking. God's Word in your mouth will affect your soul and spirit. What you say with your mouth in connection with what you believe in your heart impacts your spirit at the new birth. Then, believing and speaking God's Word will continue to impact your spirit after the new birth as well.

Read James 1:21 - What does God's Word have the power to do?

When you meditate on God's Word, the true nature of God can be expressed from your spirit through your soul and body. In other words, meditating on God's Words will make your spirit stronger and influence your soul (mind) and body (actions).

Replace vs. Resist

The cheerful little girl was almost five. She was waiting with her mother at the checkout stand at the market. She saw a box of fake pearls in a pink box. "Oh mommy, please, mommy. Can I have them? Please, mommy, please?" The mother checked the back of the little box for the price. "If you really want them, I'll think of some extra chores for you to do." Finally, the girl had saved enough money to buy the fake pearl necklace. The little girl loved her pearls. She wore them everywhere.

This little girl had a loving daddy. Every night when she was ready for bed, he would stop whatever he was doing and come upstairs to put her to bed.

One night he asked the little girl, "Do you love me?"

"Oh yes, daddy. You know that I love you."

"Then give me the pearls."

"Oh, daddy, not the pearls. You can have my favorite doll."

"That's okay, honey, daddy loves you. Good night."

About a week later, the girl's daddy asked again, "Do you love me?"

"Daddy, you know that I love you."

"Then give me the pearls."

"Oh daddy, not my pearls. You can have any of my other toys."

"That's okay. Sleep well. God bless you, little one, daddy loves you."

A few nights later when her daddy came in, the little girl was sitting by the bed. As he came close, he noticed she had tears rolling down her cheeks. "What is it? What's the matter?" The little girl didn't say anything but lifted her little hand up to her daddy. When she opened it, her pearl necklace was sitting in the palm of her hand. She finally said, "Here, daddy, this is for you." With tears in his own eyes, the girl's father reached out with one hand to take the fake pearl necklace. With his other hand he reached into his pocket and pulled out a blue velvet case with a real pearl necklace to give to her. He had them all the time. He was just waiting for her to give up her fake necklace so he could give her the genuine treasure.

God wants us to do the same. He wants us to give up our thoughts for His thoughts — the genuine treasure. We need to exchange or replace our thoughts for God’s thoughts just as the little girl exchanged her necklace for her daddy’s real necklace. How do we practically do this exchange?

Read 2 Corinthians 10:3-6 – What are we to do with every thought?

Notice that it says WE need to bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. It is our responsibility. How do we bring a thought into captivity? By renewing our mind (or changing the way we think). Taking your thoughts captive is replacing what you think about something with the truth or what God says about something . . . with the Word.

I didn’t say RESIST, but REPLACE!!! You cannot just try to stop thinking your thoughts. You need to take your thoughts and completely replace them with God’s thoughts. Renewing our mind is an exchange. It is **not resisting** negative or unhealthy thoughts about us or our circumstances but **replacing them with God’s thoughts . . . REPEATEDLY!** Below are some examples of Our thoughts we may have vs. God’s thoughts.

Our Thoughts	God’s Thoughts
I can’t do it	Philippians 4:13 — I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.
I’m afraid . . .	2 Timothy 1:7 — For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.
I’m worried about . . .	Philippians 4:6 — Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with Thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;
I don’t know what to do.	James 1:5 — If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.
I feel so alone.	Hebrews 13:5 — Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”
I don’t deserve to be loved; I’ve done too many things wrong.	Romans 3:23 — For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God Romans 5:8 — But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
I’m no good.	Ephesians 2:10 — For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.
Nobody cares about me.	1 Peter 5:7 — Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.
I’m so unlucky. Nothing every goes right for me.	1 John 4:4 — You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

	1 John 5:4 — For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.
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Do you have an area of your life that needs a thinking problem corrected? Find two or three Scriptures to stand on that speak to that area of your life. Every time a negative thought tries to come into your head, SAY God's thought about the situation. Faith comes by hearing and hearing and hearing AND HEARING the Word of God.

There was a time in my life that I was consumed with anxiety and worry. But, when I learned that I could change my thoughts to God's thoughts, it literally changed my life. My thoughts were so consumed that I felt out of control. So, I found three Scriptures that said what God said. I wrote these Scriptures on small cards that I could carry with me. When my thoughts tried to focus on worry, I would pull my cards out and start SPEAKING the Scriptures out loud so that I could stop the negative thought and replace it with God's thought. When I started, I had to pull out those cards continually. If I was in public, I would go into a bathroom so that I could murmur them out loud to myself. Every time a thought of worry would come to me, I would speak God's Word to replace that thought. Was it hard work? Yes. Was it worth the work? Absolutely Yes! Eventually my thoughts of worry were automatically replaced with God's thoughts in that area of my life.

Practice makes perfect

I had an interview for a new job in a city. I did not drive to the city very often. I was a little nervous. I really wanted this job. I made sure that I got directions from my dad the night before my interview. I called the hospital to double-check the directions just in case he had made a small mistake. I also had a map just for emergencies. Early the next morning, I dressed nicely and headed for the city. I started off well. I took the correct exits until I entered the city limits. There was a tricky exit to get to the street that the hospital was located on. Now what? My palms started sweating and my breath sped up. Showing up late to an interview is not usually the best way to get a job. Well, to make a long story short, I arrived at the hospital an hour late. I'm thankful to say that they understood. I got the job and worked there for seven years. Years later, when I was driving the same route to work, my mind was on other things. What did I have scheduled today? Should I stop and get something to eat on my way to the office? Then, I looked at my surroundings and realized that I had driven halfway to work and hadn't even given a conscious thought to how to get there. A far cry from the interview day when my palms had a tight grip on the steering wheel the entire way there. I knew my way to the office so well because I had driven it so many times. It wasn't difficult to get there anymore. It had become easy because I had repeatedly driven this way day after day, year after year.

Just like it was difficult for me to get to my interview in the city the first time, the same is true with our thoughts. When we first try to change a thought or a mindset, it can be difficult. We constantly need to refer to the "roadmap" for help. We may lose our way a few times, but that's okay . . . it's to be expected. The important thing is that we recognize it and get redirected. Eventually, it will become just like when I drove to work after working at the same place for years . . . natural and easy. ***The key is repetition.***



GOD'S COVENANT PROMISE

“Dr. Livingstone, I presume.” This famous phrase represented the end of a long and dangerous journey across Africa to find a man named David Livingstone. Livingstone was a beloved and well-known missionary from England. He was challenged to travel to Africa for a two-year expedition to find the source of the Nile River. Six years after he left for the Dark Continent in August of 1865, little had been heard from Livingstone. A New York newspaper magnate, James Gordon Bennett Jr., commissioned Morton Stanley to search for the famed Livingstone. To do this, Stanley set out from Zanzibar in March 1871 leading a caravan of nearly two thousand men into the interiors of Africa.^v It was a dangerous trek fraught with the threat of attacking tribes, lack of food, and disease. During his travels, Stanley encountered a feared and respected chieftain named Mirambo. Mirambo’s rule was far-reaching to almost ninety thousand square miles of country at the height of his reign. Stanley himself describes entering in blood covenant with Mirambo to secure peace, provision, and friendship across his area of rule and influence:

“Manwa Sera {Stanley’s chief captain} was requested to seal our friendship by performing the ceremony of blood-brotherhood between Mirambo and myself. Having caused us to sit fronting each other on a straw carpet, he made an incision in each of our right legs, from which he extracted blood, and inter-changing it, he exclaimed aloud: ‘If either of you break this brotherhood now established between you, may a lion devour him, the serpent poison him, bitterness be in his food, his friends desert him, his gun burst in his hands and wound him, and everything that is bad do wrong to him. Through the intermingling of blood, it was considered that the same blood now flowed in their veins and they were forever tied in a bond of friendship, peace, protection, and provision. Stanley had just entered into blood covenant or “strong-friendship,” which was considered the most sacred of compacts between two individuals among many African tribes. It was so sacred that it was unthinkable to break the covenant after it was entered.”^{vi}

During his travels in Africa, Stanley entered into blood covenant with numerous native chiefs. In some cases, years after entering into a covenant with a chief, he would again encounter his blood covenant brother in his travels and rest in his blood covenant relationship to establish the safety and provision of his band of travelers.^{vii} Stanley experienced the binding strength and power of covenant relationship during his travels in Africa. But he merely experienced a covenant made between men. If a blood covenant made with man could provide peace, friendship, provision, and protection, what would it be like to enter into a blood covenant with God?

What is covenant?

What truly is covenant? To answer the first question, we must ask how much covenant is spoken about in the Bible. The word “covenant” is found over three hundred times in the Bible. The Greek word *diathékē* is translated as both ‘testament’ and ‘covenant.’ Covenant is such an important theme throughout the Bible that the entire Bible is divided into the Old Covenant (Testament) and New Covenant (Testament). Webster’s dictionary defines covenant as “a usually formal, solemn, and binding agreement.”^{viii} A covenant is a set-agreement having complete terms determined by the initiating party, which also are fully affirmed by the one entering the agreement.^{ix} In his book, *The Covenant*, James Garlow provides a definition of covenant based on the Hebrew root (*berith*):

“It comes from the root word meaning “to cut.” So, what is a covenant anyway? In its simplest form, it is an all-encompassing agreement between two parties with clearly outlined perimeters and promises. It is a mutual understanding between two persons who bind themselves together with specific obligations to fulfill.”^x

Covenant is a promise and agreement between two parties. But, not just a promise given lightly. It is solemn promise between two parties that also implies obligations or requirements that each party is responsible to meet, show allegiance, and loyalty. In many Eastern cultures, it is understood that a covenant is a binding promise that cannot be broken. It is where we get the terms “blood brothers” and “closer than a brother.” Individuals who enter into covenant do so by choice. The only way out of a covenant made by men is physical death. And even then, the descendants of the covenant are considered.

Why do we need covenant?

There is this unwritten rule that some people have, “If God is God, then . . . (you fill in the blank) . . . my husband wouldn’t have left me . . . my father wouldn’t have died when I was three years old . . . my child wouldn’t have been killed by that drunk driver.” We have certain expectations of God. We hold God responsible for our expectations. When they go unmet, we may be disappointed and even angry.

However, when we fully understand both our relationship with God as well as our position enacted by the covenant, it puts our expectations into clearer perspective. It also allows us to know with assurance that God is honor bound by his covenant to respond to us in certain ways. Finally, it provides a basis of fellowship with our Father. God is faithful, by whom you were **called** into the **fellowship** of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord (1 Corinthians 1:9). God has called us into fellowship with Him. This word “called” means bid or command. Relationship and fellowship are so important to God that he **commanded** us to have companionship and close communication with God/Jesus. However, without the covenant, we are spiritually separated from God with no means to restore fellowship on our own. Through the covenant, God has taken the needed steps to provide restoration of fellowship and relationship with Him. The two great objectives of the redemptive work accomplished or restored through the covenant are:

Relationship - LEGAL status restored.

- *We are now adopted into His family as sons and daughters. Before, we were servants, but now, we are friends or covenant partners with Him.*

- *He is legally obligated to tell us what He is doing when we ask.*
- *We are joint heirs legally with Christ to his eternal inheritance.*
- *We have access to the promises of His Word.*
- *The authority that Jesus won back with his death, burial, and resurrection has been delegated to the church (believers).*
- *We are given legal access to use His name.*

Fellowship - RELATIONAL status restored.

- *Based on our righteousness or right-standing with God provided through the covenant, we can come boldly to the throne room of grace to find mercy and grace to help in time of need. We can approach God without a sense of inferiority or guilt.*
- *He sent us a helper. The Holy Spirit comes to live on the inside of us when our spirits are recreated at the new birth. The Holy Spirit can fill and keep filling us (gift to the church). Through our relationship with the Holy Spirit (our spirit communicating with His Spirit), we experience ongoing fellowship with God through Jesus Christ.*

When I was in Bible school, I met a lot of people that I was friends with in class, but I only had a few that I actually had a relationship with because I spent a lot of time with them. There were a few people that I knew not just OF them, but ABOUT THEM. How they thought, felt, and what was going on in their daily lives. Unfortunately, since that time, I no longer have a close relationship with some of these people. We may only talk once a month or even once a year. I don't KNOW them like I used to. To maintain a relationship, it requires a time commitment. It also requires an exchange. Relationships are never one-sided but require input from both parties. Christianity is not a religion, but a relationship. You made Jesus a part of your life when you got saved, but you must also choose to include him in your life daily.

With relationship comes trust/faith and with faith comes expectation. Relationships are defined by expectations. When we enter a restaurant, we expect good service and to receive the food that we ordered. When we get married, we expect that our spouse will be faithful. When we make a marriage vow, we have certain expectations based on the relationship we have entered. If my dad told me he would send me \$100 for my birthday, I would already be spending it in my head. If a stranger on the street asked for my address and made the same promise to send me \$100, my response would be quite different. My expectation of receiving the gift would be very low if not non-existent. Why? Because I have spent time with my father and know him. I know that he keeps his promises, so I am expecting the \$100 to arrive and may already be acting on what I will purchase with the money.

So, why do we need covenant? God, from the very beginning of the Scriptures, defines Himself as a relationship-seeking God that desires to have relationship with us. When Adam and Eve broke man's fellowship with God through their act of disobedience (go back and read Genesis 3 if you are not familiar with this story), God put a plan into place to restore His fellowship and relationship with man. Through Jesus, God restored our relationship and fellowship with Him. What Jesus did in establishing a New Covenant based on better promises accomplished the means for us to have position, relationship, and fellowship with God our Father at long last. Covenant also defines our relationship (including both benefits and obligations) and position

(both in heaven and on earth) with God our Father through Christ. The Covenant provides a means or basis for fellowship with God. There can be no real relationship without fellowship.

The covenant restored both our legal and relational access to God.

Ephesians 2:14 - For He Himself is our peace, who had made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation . . . For through Him, we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.

We need the covenant to have a relationship with God as Father, which also results in a clear understanding of our expectations within the relationship as provided through His promises. God is always faithful to honor His promises to us. Establish yourself in His faithfulness (see **Appendix 4** for scriptures to meditate on regarding His faithfulness).

Covenant ritual

Hebrews had a blood covenant ritual that was similar to the other nations around them. All nations practiced blood covenant because man instinctively sought this relationship (this practice was not unique to the Hebrews). Covenant rituals and relationships have been recorded in such places as ancient African and Chinese cultures as well.^{xi} In fact, the first covenant ritual took place in the Garden of Eden after Adam sinned. God made tunics of animal skin to cover them (Genesis 3:21).

For the purposes of this study, we will look at the Hebrew ritual and its bearing in Scriptures. The covenant making ceremony was a significant part of publicly declaring the covenant relationship between two parties. Let's get started:

Parties - All covenant ceremonies had two covenant parties that would enter into the covenant ceremony. In the case where one or both of the parties was a group of people, they would select a representative for their group that embodied the heart of the group. In this case, it was as if the group was "in" or fully part of or connected with the representative during the ceremony. This representative would be considered the guarantee or surety of the covenant.

Covenant Terms - The parties would declare before witnesses that "everything I have belongs to you and yours to me, both assets and liabilities." These terms would clearly define how the covenant would be expressed between the parties in terms of promises, obligations, and responsibilities of each party. Usually, blessings associated with the covenant and cursing (if the covenant was broken) were spoken during this part of the ceremony. For instance, we see this exchange of covenant terms between Jonathan and David in 1 Samuel 20 when David required of Jonathan protection from his father. Jonathan promised to send him word of his father's plans so that David could be safe. David in return promised kindness to not only Jonathan but to all his descendants.

Significant Exchanges - Covenants of this time period also included up to five exchanges: robes, belts, weapons, names, and sons.^{xii} We have seen an example of exchanges during the covenant ceremony when Jonathan expresses his love for David by giving him all the clothes he was

wearing and all of the weapons he was carrying (1 Samuel 18:4). In essence, he was giving his whole heart and self to David.

Take off coat or robe - By giving their coat or robe, they were stating, “I’m giving you all of myself. My total being and my life, I pledge to you.” It is giving everything of yourself to the other person.

Take off belt or weapons - By giving of their belt and weapons, they were saying “here is my strength and ability to fight. If anyone attacks you, they are attacking me too.” It was in a sense confirming that the battles of the other person were considered their own and that they would protect them with all their strength and ability.

Exchange names - Each party takes the other’s name as part of their name. We are familiar with a similar covenant exchange in our Western culture during a wedding ceremony as the wife takes the husband’s last name. When God cut covenant with Abram, he gave him a new name— Abraham or the father of many nations. God took on a new name as well. In Exodus 3:15, God revealed Himself to Moses as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (His covenant partners).

Cut the Covenant (blood sacrifice) - Every ancient covenant ceremony required the shedding of blood. An animal was split in half down the middle. After the animal was split, the two sides were laid down. Then, the two parties would walk through the two bloody halves in a figure eight that symbolized infinity. As they walked through the dead animal halves, they were signifying that they were dying to themselves. We see an example of this blood sacrifice in the Old Testament when God made covenant with Abraham (Genesis 15:9-17). Jesus shed his own blood as a sacrifice when he cut the New Covenant.

Oath or Vow - There would be oaths and vows spoken before witnesses and before God, saying, “God, do so to me or more if I ever try to break the covenant (referring to the dead animal.)” They would also ask or invoke God to help them keep the covenant.

Make a scar -They would cut their palms or wrists and press them together to mix the blood. As the blood intermingled, they believed that their lives were becoming one. The cut would make a scar as a permanent testimony to the covenant. When Jesus appeared before Thomas, he had already ascended to heaven and applied His blood to the heavenly Holy of Holies. But his scars remained as a testimony to his redemptive work. In fact, upon seeing Jesus’ scars, Thomas cried out “My Lord and my God!” acknowledging Jesus as the Messiah that had been promised to the Jewish people (John 20:28).

Eat a memorial meal - The parties would eat a memorial meal to commemorate the covenant. They wouldn’t feed themselves, but would rather feed each other food and drink. As they did this, it would symbolize that as they ingested the food and drink, they were taking their covenant partner into their life. Does this remind you of the communion meal that we celebrate today in our churches?

Plant or build a memorial - The parties would then plant (i.e., tree) or build a memorial to the covenant to remind the parties. The memorial may be sprinkled with the blood of the animal as a remembrance.

After the covenant ceremony is complete, the two parties are considered friends. All your children were included in the covenant as well until they were old enough to decide to accept or reject.

In Bible times, one didn't use the word "friend" loosely as we do today. You only became friends after you cut covenant. Covenants also had specific language associated with them. The word "friend" in the Oriental/Hebrew culture means a blood covenant partner. As we consider the following Scriptures considering what we know about the significance of the word "friend" in the Hebrew cultures, these Scriptures take on new meaning:^{xiii}

Proverbs 18:24 - A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.

John 15:15 - Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.

"Friend" is covenant language in the Bible. It means the most intimate, loyal, and strongest inter-union between two beings. When Jesus called Judas "friend" in the Garden of Gethsemane, He was indicting him of breaking the blood covenant by betraying Him.

As we walked through the covenant ceremony, you may have recognized examples of covenants in the Old Testament. You may have also glimpsed a picture of the New Covenant that was established by Jesus. He carried out this covenant ceremony as our representative! We were "In Him" as one of the parties when He cut covenant through the shedding of His own blood. Can you see it? God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them (2 Corinthians 5:19). He climbed the hill with the Cross and offered himself as an offering to the world. The cross was planted as a memorial tree in remembrance of Him. He came to shed his blood as a fulfillment of an everlasting covenant. We even change our name to Christians. Jesus becomes our friend and covenant partner. The righteousness of Christ is imputed or counted to us (2 Corinthians 5:21 - We are the righteousness of God in Christ) in an exchange. He has clothed us in righteousness. Everything that He has is ours. The Holy Spirit is the SEAL or scar (Romans 8:16 - The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God and Ephesians 1: 13 ". . . you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.").

Old Covenant vs. New Covenant

When my kids were little, I would ask them to clean their rooms and they would shove stuff in the closet and under the bed. They weren't really cleaning it; they were just hiding the mess so I couldn't see it temporarily. The Old Covenant was similar. Under the Old Covenant, people's sins were not taken away, they were only covered or temporarily hidden through the temple sacrifices and rituals. This covering is also called Atonement. Now, under God's New Covenant

(New Testament), our sins are not just covered, they are completely taken away. This is called Remission. Remission means “a total removal—no more remembrance.”

Read Hebrews 10:16-18 - What does God promise to give us in the New Covenant?

Read Hebrews 8:12 - What does God do when our sins are forgiven?

God promised that with the New Covenant, He would put His laws in our hearts and completely remit or remove our sins. He doesn't even remember them after they are forgiven. If we would come back to Him two seconds after they were forgiven and ask Him to forgive that sin, He would say “What are you talking about?” Because there is remission of sin instead of just covering (or atonement for sin), there is no further need for the offering and sacrifice system used by the Israelites in the Old Testament.

Under the Old Covenant, there were blessings and curses. The Curse of the Law referred to in Galatians 3:1-14a refers to the first five books of the Bible—(Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy). In these books of the Bible, we discover all the spiritual laws God gave to man. In these laws, God communicates His will or what things man must do and what things man must avoid. If man obeys God's laws or instructions under this Old Covenant, God will be able to bless them. If man disobeys God's laws or instructions, God cannot bless them and Satan gains access. The law was given to let people know what sin really is and what the consequences of sin are. As long as the nation of Israel followed the laws of God and took advantage of animal sacrifices, their sins would be forgiven and God could bless them. Read the following Scriptures which talk about this:

Exodus 15:26

Leviticus 26:3-4

Deuteronomy 28:1-4, 15-19

If Israel was disobedient to God's laws, God could no longer bless them or protect them. Disobedience to God's laws allowed Satan to bring sickness, disease, and destruction into their lives. In these five books, we discover that the curses associated with violating God's laws can be grouped into three categories:

1. *Spiritual Death—(Genesis 2:17)—(the literal Hebrew speaks of two deaths (Spiritual Death and Physical Death)*
2. *Sickness and Disease—(Deuteronomy 28:3)*
3. *Poverty—(Deuteronomy 28:2)*

If they followed the laws of God, they would experience the blessings of Abraham (which was the blessings of the covenant God made with Abraham four hundred and thirty years before the law of Moses).

What is the blessing of Abraham? In the book of Deuteronomy, God begins to fully reveal what those blessings include. They include deliverance from spiritual death, healing and health for the physical body, and financial and material blessings (or prosperity).

Read Galatians 3:13-14, 29

All the blessings of Abraham and what is listed in Deuteronomy are now available to everyone who is in Christ. If you are in Christ, you are Abraham's spiritual descendants and have access to the blessings of the covenant that Abraham made with God.

Read Hebrews 8:6

That covenant is now called a better covenant with better promises. This new covenant provides not only natural and material blessings, but now we have access to spiritual blessings. We have been redeemed from the Curse of the Law or the curses associated with not keeping the laws of God. Who redeemed us? Jesus Christ. Jesus paid the penalty for breaking the law. Jesus became a curse for us, so that we might receive the blessings.

Spiritual life instead of spiritual death

Review the following Scriptures, which assure us of this promise. Write a small summary of what it says about our promise of spiritual life:

Romans 5:15-16 - _____

John 10:10 - _____

1 John 3:14 - _____

Romans 10:9-10 - _____

2 Corinthians 5:17 - _____

Health and healing instead of sickness and disease

Review the following Scriptures, which assure us of this promise. Write a small summary of what it says about our promise of health and healing:

Isaiah 53:4, 52 - _____

Matthew 8:16-17 - _____

1 Peter 2:24 - _____

Material and financial blessing instead of poverty

Review the following Scriptures, which assure us of this promise. Write a small summary of what it says about our promise of prosperity (material and financial blessing):

Joshua 1:8 - _____

Psalm 1:1-3 - _____

2 Corinthians 8:9 - _____

2 Corinthians 9:8 - _____

Romans 8:32 - _____

How do we receive the blessings of God and avoid the curses that come because of sin? We must have knowledge of the truth. We must know that we are redeemed and exercise faith in the promises of God.

Read Galatians 4:1 and 4:7 - What is the promise shared here?

Read 1 Corinthians 11:31 - Do we have the authority to judge ourselves and our actions in the New Testament?

Read Romans 13:8 - What Law or Commandment do we need to follow in the New Testament?

In the New Covenant, every Christian is given the authority to judge themselves. We can judge ourselves because our spirits have been recreated. We have the life of God in us. We have the Word of God and the Holy Spirit. We can know what is right and what is wrong. We must obey the commandment of the New Covenant.

Applying the covenant

The story of the Bible is that God has entered into a BLOOD COVENANT with man through the Lord Jesus Christ. All who choose can enter into the covenant with Him. God wants us to look at His Word and our relationship with Him through the “filter” of the Covenant. He was showing through the Old Testament a shadow or picture so that everybody would recognize Him when he showed up on the scene:

John 5:39-40 - You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.

Luke 24:44-46 - Then He said to them, “These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses

and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.” Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:

Matthew 5:17 – *Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.*

Luke 24:25-27 - *Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself*

Jesus came to earth to fulfill the Old Covenant and establish a New Covenant based on better promises. These better promises include a relationship with Him and access to a rich inheritance. As we spend time with Him in His Word and prayer, He reveals who we are and what we have:

Psalm 25:14 (AMP) - *The LORD confides in those who fear him; he makes his covenant known to them. The secret [of the wise counsel] of the Lord is for those who fear Him, And He will let them know His covenant and reveal to them [through His word] its [deep, inner] meaning.*

When we understand that we have not just had our sins forgiven but that we have become the **RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD IN CHRIST**, then sin no longer has power over us. If we only believe that we have forgiveness of sins, then sin will continue to dominate us because we don't understand that we have entered into the covenant relationship with God and all that He has is ours!!! It is not just about a father forgiving us, but of Him providing at our disposal **ALL THAT HE HAS!**

Romans 8:16-17 - *The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now, if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ . . .*

He has not just restored our legal rights to relationship through the forgiveness of sins, but he has restored fellowship, position, authority, and sonship. He has provided us an inheritance of all that He has. Forgiveness allows us to stand before Him, but entering into the covenant makes all that He has at our disposal. When we accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior, we immediately have access to this inheritance as co-heirs with Jesus Christ. We represent HIM on the earth!



SETTING YOURSELF APART

My son is a picky eater. I make a dish called stuffed peppers. If you have never had this dish, it is a pepper stuffed with a mixture of meat and rice inside. Then, you cover it with tomato sauce and bake it. But my son doesn't like his foods to mix. So, as we sat at dinner, I looked over at my son and noticed that he was carefully separating every piece of rice from the meat. He had a separate pile for his meat and a separate pile for his rice. After many of us had already finished eating, he finally had his food prepared and was able to eat. He spent a lot of time separating out the meat and rice, but he was finally rewarded.

This experience reminded me of a word used in the Bible—sanctification. The basic meaning of sanctification is “separation” or to be set apart (usually for a specific purpose). Just as my son carefully separated the meat from the rice, God has separated us from sin and set us apart to Himself for His purpose. The meat was no longer part of the rice. In the same way, sin is no longer a part of our nature as soon as we accept Christ as our Lord and Savior. As a result, we have a responsibility to set ourselves apart for God’s holy use and His purpose. We separate ourselves from worldly things and set ourselves apart to allow God to work in and through us.

What is sanctification?

Sanctification means to be separated from sin. But, to have a fuller understanding of sanctification, we need to understand the three stages of sanctification referenced in the Bible. We also need to look at a few other common words found in our Bible. Review the table below and find the Scriptures referenced. This information will set the foundation for our lesson on sanctification.

Bible term	What does it mean	Scriptures
Redemption	<p>The action of saving or being saved from sin, error, or evil. The action of regaining or gaining possession of something in exchange for payment or clearing a debt.</p> <p>Jesus redeemed us or paid the price for our debt of sin through His death, burial, and resurrection. As a result, our sins are completely forgiven and our relationship with God is restored.</p>	<p>Romans 5:8-11 Romans 4:25 2 Corinthians 5:18-19</p>
Justification	<p><u>Positional sanctification</u> Justification is an act of God whereby He</p>	<p>Colossians 1:13 Titus 3:7</p>

	<p>declares a sinner to be righteous because of that sinner’s faith in Christ. It is a legal term that declares the final say in the matter. Man is made just as if he has never sinned. God declares man to be not guilty and therefore treated as holy. God has imparted His righteousness to us legally based on what Jesus Christ did for us. This is the starting point of sanctification.</p> <p>Positional sanctification is a one-time act of the Holy Spirit on the hearts of unbelievers for salvation from sin. At the moment of salvation, believers understand and acknowledge their sinful state, their inability to save themselves through any works of their own, their need of a savior, their acceptance of the sacrifice of Christ on the cross as sin’s payment, and their faith in Jesus’ resurrection. At that moment, believers are brought out of darkness into the light. Our position before God has been changed forever. No longer dead in trespasses, we are made alive together with Christ. Our position changes in that we are made citizens of a whole new kingdom.</p>	<p>Romans 3:28 Romans 5:9 Romans 6:11 Romans 6:14 1 Corinthians 1:30</p>
Sanctification	<p><u>Progressive or experiential sanctification</u></p> <p>Although believers have been sanctified, made holy or set apart from sin unto God instantly at the new birth, we are still being sanctified, changed, or transformed progressively into Christ-likeness in our thinking, lifestyle, character and conduct by the Holy Spirit as we renew our minds with the truths of God’s Word.</p> <p>Set apart from sin in the flesh for a holy use or living a life of holiness. The Bible teaches that without holiness no man can see the Lord. We are positionally holy, but we have a responsibility after we have accepted Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior to pursue a holy life.</p> <p>Progressive sanctification is an ongoing work of grace that requires a lifetime to complete. It is the gradual work of separating disciples</p>	<p>Ephesians 2:5 Colossians 3:10 Philippians 3:12-14 2 Corinthians 3:18 Hebrews 12:14 1 Thessalonians 5:23 2 Peter 3:18</p>

	from the world and making them more like Jesus Christ.	
Glorification	<p><u>Ultimate sanctification</u></p> <p>Glorification is God’s final removal of sin from the life of the everyone who is saved in the eternal state. At Christ’s coming, the glory of God will be realized in us. Glorification is the culmination of sanctification.</p> <p>When a believer dies, their spirits go to be with Christ in heaven. The sanctification of the whole person—spirit, soul, and body—will finally be complete when the Lord Jesus returns and we receive our glorified bodies.</p>	<p>2 Corinthians 5:6-8</p> <p>Philippians 3:21</p> <p>1 Corinthians 15:35-49</p>

In this lesson, we will spend most of our time on positional and progressive/experiential sanctification. These stages of sanctification are the ones that we live out on this Earth as disciples. They are for now. As a disciple, you must understand these stages of sanctification so that you may act appropriately upon God’s truth.

Positional Sanctification

When we accept Christ into our life, all that He has is ours. Sin no longer has power over us. We have both the ability and the power backing us NOT to sin.

Read Hebrews 10:14 - Who did God perfect forever?

Through the New Covenant, Jesus provided us both forgiveness of sins and destroyed the power of the devil over our lives. When He sacrificed himself, He separated man from Satan’s power.

Read 2 Corinthians 5:21 - Who was made sin?

Why was He made sin?

Jesus was made sin so that God could impart His righteousness to us. He justified us and made us just as if we never sinned. He gave us positional righteousness. You are legally no more or less righteous in God’s eyes because of the completed work of Jesus. You are the righteousness of God in Jesus Christ. It happens the instant that you accept Christ as your Lord and Savior. You are set apart for a purpose. You have taken on the characteristics of the very one who set you apart.

We have already covered this idea of righteousness in a previous lesson. Below are key aspects of our **positional or legal sanctification**:

1. POSITION - You are seated together with Christ Jesus. You are one with Christ. God sees you as righteous from the very moment that you accept Christ into your life. You are the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. Jesus didn't go to the cross for you but as you. You can't be any more or less righteous than you are the moment that you accept Christ.
2. FAITH - You obtain this position by believing in what Christ did for you through His death, burial, and resurrection. It is by grace you have been saved through faith.
3. RELATIONSHIP - Our relationship with God is restored, which provides access to our Heavenly Father
4. PAST TENSE - It is already accomplished

We are legally and positionally righteous, but there is another stage to sanctification. We need to come to His throne boldly with a SENSE of righteousness.

Hebrews 4:16 - Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

If He tells you to come to the throne room BOLDLY, then it must mean that you could come to throne room NOT BOLDLY. You can still approach the throne room, but HOW are you approaching the throne room? This will depend greatly on your understanding of the second stage of sanctification.

Experiential sanctification

How we approach both our heavenly Father as well as our discipleship journey is dependent upon the experiential or LIVING side of righteousness. It is also closely connected with our SENSE of righteousness.

E.W. Kenyon defined righteousness as the ability to stand before the Father without a SENSE (OR AWARENESS) of guilt, shame or inferiority.^{xiv} We can approach God as if sin never existed. It is a good position with God. It also gives us access to the ability and promises of God through Jesus Christ.

This definition points out the negative side of righteousness. We are not to have a sense of inferiority or guilt. The opposite of this negative is the positive. We are supposed to approach Him boldly with a sense of our right standing with Him. A SENSE of sin/unrighteousness hinders our relationship with God. It keeps us from BOLDLY approaching Him.

Read the following Scriptures:

1 Peter 1:16

1 Thessalonians 4:2-3

2 Thessalonians 5:22-23

These Scriptures put emphasis upon the New Testament truth of sanctification in relation to the life, character, and conduct of believers. When we are established in our righteousness, then we

recognize our standing with God and act upon it. We understand that He has declared us holy. He has broken Satan's power over our lives and given us the ability to act holy. We need to align our thoughts and our actions (i.e., body) with whom we already are declared to be. We are freed from sin and its power. We should not serve sin because it is not who we are. We are not dead to the presence and force of sin in our world, but we are dead to the controlling power of sin. We are to come into agreement with God in faith that the work Jesus did through His death, burial and resurrection is real and effective in our lives.

Below are key aspects of our **experiential sanctification**:

1. **OBEDIENCE** – *We follow His commands and act on God's Word due to complete agreement and not duty. Obedience is a natural consequence of agreement.*
2. **FELLOWSHIP** – *Relationship is position, but fellowship is based upon spending time with someone. You can have a relationship without fellowship, but you cannot have fellowship without relationship. Our relationship to God has been restored which allows us to pursue fellowship with Him.*
3. **HOLY SPIRIT** – *When Jesus ascended to heaven, He promised that He would send us another helper. This helper is the Holy Spirit. After God delivered us from the domination and power of sin, He did not stop there. He gave us the Holy Spirit to help us to fulfill the New Testament commandment of love experientially in our lives.*
4. **PRESENT TENSE** – *It is acting NOW. It is acting on God's Word minute by minute. It is our ongoing acts of obedience to God's Word as we live our daily lives as followers of Jesus.*

Every act we do according to God's Word is an act that separates us from sin so that we can live for God. We can do this because we have been separated from sin and sin no longer has power over us. We can do this because the nature of God has been put inside us. Each godly act that we do in agreement with His Truth strengthens our SENSE of righteousness. Pursuing sanctification in our discipleship journey is how we ensure that our sense of righteousness is maintained.

Why do we need to pursue sanctification?

Knowing the "Why" simply means understanding why you are doing something before you do it. Some will refer to the "why" as the "guiding principle" or the "primary objective." They all mean the same thing—to understand the purpose of the activity. Motivation determines what you do. Attitude determines how well you do it. The why provides the motivation and attitude to determine what you do and how well you do it. We will now focus on why pursuing sanctification in your discipleship journey is so important.

When we maintain our righteousness, we can operate at our full potential and impact. You break fellowship with Jesus to the degree that you are not aligned with the truth of God's Word. To this degree, you live at a poorer quality of life and decrease His ability to work in and through you. God's Word has a lot to say about this topic of separating ourselves from sin and practicing God's truth. Review the key phrases in the Scriptures below. I would also encourage you to read the whole Scriptures for yourself in your own Bible.

Ephesians 4:1 - "walk worthy of the calling with which you were called"

Colossians 1:9-10 - “that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work . . . ”

1 Thessalonians 2:11-12 - “That you would walk worthy . . . ”

Romans 12:1-2 - “that you present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not conform to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind that you may provide what is the good and acceptable and perforce will of God.”

1 Corinthians 15:34 - “Awake to Righteousness, and do not sin”

Isaiah 54:14 – “Established in righteousness”

1 John 1 - “Practice righteousness”

In many cases, these Scriptures are worded as commands. We are to awake to righteousness so that we don't sin. It is also clear that knowledge of His will plays an important part in this act of sanctification. Why are we told to practice righteousness and walk worthy if we are already righteous? We are to walk worthy of our calling. It is not earning our salvation but honoring our position.

Honoring the position that we have already been given is the responsibility of every disciple. One of the great needs of the church today is to understand our positional sanctification as well as our responsibility to progressively do the work of sanctification.

In the lesson “How God Made Us,” we learned that our spirit is recreated at the new birth. Our position is secured when righteousness is imparted. Then, we must get our Soul and Body in alignment with the truth (or righteousness) that has already been imparted to us. If we don't, then even though we are made righteous, we can continue to practice unrighteousness. If you look up unrighteousness in the Bible, you will find that it is used interchangeably with the words, “ungodliness,” and “sin.”

Read the following Scriptures:

2 Timothy 2:16

Titus 2:12

1 John 5:17

Romans 2:8

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

Paul also tells us in the letter of Romans that the Gospel (or His Word) reveals the righteousness of God. It also tells us that the Truth is suppressed by unrighteousness (or sin). If you are not pursuing righteousness, you are suppressing righteousness.

Read Romans 1:16-20

You will notice as you read this Scripture that suppressing the truth results in actions or activities that are not pleasing to God. There are negative impacts when we don't pursue righteousness. There are positive impacts when we choose to pursue righteousness. The impact (positive or negative) is not only in our lives but affects the world we live in and the people that we encounter. I have listed some negative and positive impacts below for you to consider (not exhaustive):

Negative impact of not pursuing sanctification

- *If you are in a condition of sin/broken fellowship, acting on righteousness will become short circuited*
- *You will live a life of poorer quality and impact*
- *You will have diluted authority*
- *You can block blessing and provision that God wants you to have and has already provided for you*
- *You will have a lost SENSE of righteousness*
- *You will experience shame and guilt (see ***Genesis 3:9-12***)*
- *You will become more self-conscious and less God-conscious*
- *Your prayers can be hindered through the following (see ***Isaiah 59:11***):*
 - *Selfish motives or asking for the wrong thing (see ***James 4:3***)*
 - *Decreased ability to act in faith or agreement with God's truth (see ***James 1:6-8***)*
 - *Un-forgiveness (See ***Matthew 5:23-24***)*

Positive impact of pursuing sanctification

- *You will reveal our Heavenly Father and honor your position*
- *You will open yourself to living an abundant life including peace, fellowship, wisdom, reigning in life, authority, and His provision (see ***Psalms 84:11***)*
- *You can fulfill the purpose for which you were created. You will live a life in agreement with Him (i.e., abiding in Him) and bear much fruit (see ***John 15:7-8***)*
- *Your prayers will make tremendous power available to circumstances and situations (see ***1 John 5:14*** and ***James 5:16***)*
- *Others will recognize that you are a disciple that has spent time or fellowship with Jesus (***Acts 4:13***)*

When we maintain or pursue righteousness, we can operate at our full potential and impact as disciples. When we don't know or do these things, our ability to fulfill our purpose is hindered. If progressive sanctification or practicing righteousness is so important, how do we do it? How do we practice righteousness in our daily lives so that we are continually becoming more Christ-like?

Putting off and putting on

Ability is what you're capable of doing. Your position provides the ability. Just because you have the ability, doesn't mean that you are fully acting on your ability. Sanctification is a big word in the Bible, but many disciples of Jesus don't grasp the true importance of application in their daily life.

Read Ephesians 4:22

This verse tells us to put off the old man. What does that mean? Our old man's actions included things like anger, jealousy, filthy speech, etc. However, these things are not part of our new identity. We are to put off these things because they no longer belong to us. We don't ask God to deliver us from those things but thank God that He already delivered us from them. We are delivered from anger, so I am putting it off.

I was crucified with Christ and this thing was buried with the old me. For me to live is Christ. That thing doesn't belong to me anymore. You don't do it to get better, but you already ARE there. That thing that does not agree with God's Words no longer belongs to you. But nobody can do it for you. You have a responsibility to put off the things that no longer belong to you.

Read the following Scriptures:

Romans 12:1-2 - *We change our beliefs to get in alignment with truth, then the natural consequence is obedience. Obedience to God's Word is the same as living in righteousness.*

Romans 6:5-14 - *We are told to present our bodies as a instruments of righteousness*

Paul wrote the letter of Romans to the Christians in the church at Rome. These Scriptures were written to believers. If the Bible tells us to change our thinking so that we can present our bodies as instruments of righteousness, then the opposite must also be possible. We can also not change our thinking which will result in us not presenting our bodies (or our actions) as instruments of righteousness.

Read Colossians 3:1-17

These verses tell us to cleanse, purge, mortify (let die), put on and put off. How? By setting your mind on things above (or God's Words) and not on earthly things. We are to put on the new man. We are to take off the old man. God has provided a new suit for you. It is eternal in nature and woven in love. Put on who you really are by looking at the truth instead of relying on how you feel. Put on Christ. This starts with changing the way you think (as we discussed in a previous lesson).

If you attack your habits and behaviors as if they are a part of you, your body fights back. But as soon as you realize that they are no longer who you are, you are not fighting yourself anymore. This is how humans were created to be. The real you. The spirit man that has God's nature.

Read Ephesians 4:13

This Scripture describes the goal of sanctification. As disciples, we are to come to unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God. We are to grow spiritually and become more Christ-like.

Read Philippians 2:12

As shared in a previous lesson, this isn't talking about obtaining your salvation for yourself, but applying the blessings and benefits of salvation to your life. You are righteous, now act like it!

Below are some things that we can do as disciples of Christ to pursue Christ-likeness. As we change the way that we think and act on these things, we will continually grow to be more like Jesus. We will be pursuing this work of sanctification. We are choosing to honor the position that has already been provided to us.

Truth Encounters

You cannot act on a truth that you don't know. For this reason, it is important to have regular truth encounters. Below are some ways to ensure that you are having regular truth encounters:

- *Read the Bible and put God's Word first in your life*
- *Pray regularly both in your understanding and in the Spirit (or your prayer language)*
- *Go to Church where the teaching is based on the Bible*

However, keep in mind that the main way that we have truth encounters is by reading the Bible. In Scripture, knowledge of the Truth is regularly paired with walking worthy.

Read John 17:17

This verse says that we are sanctified by His Word because His Word is truth.

Press towards the Goal

I had just finished a meeting for work. It had been a busy few days. I had met a lot of new people and learned a lot. It was time to fly home and I had packed my bags and was headed to the lobby to get a taxi. As I was leaving, I noticed a group of people that I had connected with during the meeting sitting in the lobby. Of course, I didn't want to be rude so I turned back to wave as I continued my trek to the taxi. As I continued to walk forward yet look back . . . BAM! I walked right into a column. Not my best moment and quite embarrassing. I was so busy looking back that I didn't see what was right in front of me. I literally had to hit the column before I even realized it was there! Many times, we do the same thing. We keep looking back and hit a wall because we can't see what is right in front of us. Read the following verses:

Read Philippians 3:12-14

We have not already obtained. It is a life-long process. But these verses tell us to walk in (or do) the truth that you know. Look forward. Don't keep looking to the past and reliving your mistakes. Press forward toward the goal. If you keep looking back, you will keep hitting a wall in your discipleship journey. Shame and guilt will strip you of your sense of righteousness. It is a minute-by-minute decision to act on what the truth says despite how you feel.

- *Change the way you think (refer to the lesson on this topic)*
- *Forgive yourself - Don't look back but look at the now and the future. You will never have a sense of righteousness until you can forgive yourself for the things that Jesus already forgave for you.*
- *Know and act on your identity - Act on who you are. Come boldly before His throne without a sense of guilt or shame.*
- *Stand in the authority Christ has provided - When you know that Christ lives in you and you are in a good position with God, you allow Him to work through you. You can stand and act on the authority that He has given to you.*

Part of putting off our old man and putting on the new is making decisions throughout our day to act on the truth revealed to us during our truth encounters. It is our decision to act on this truth.

Yield to the Holy Spirit

One of the works of the Holy Spirit is sanctification.

Read 1 Peter 1:2

We see here that the Holy Spirit sanctifies in two ways. First, he sets us apart *in Christ* that we might be cleansed by His blood. We learned that the Holy Spirit recreates our spirit in the new birth and sets us apart from sin and places God's nature in us. Second, He works *in us* so we can be obedient to Jesus Christ. Through the sanctification of the Spirit, we are given a new position and infused with a new power. The Holy Spirit helps us to live for God. Our participation in this sanctifying work is described as obedience. Sanctification is the moment-by-moment process by which we submit ourselves to following Jesus with the help of the Holy Spirit.

Read John 16:13

The Holy Spirit will always lead us into all Truth. We will learn more about how to be led by the Spirit of God (or "*How God Guides Us*") in a future lesson. However, if one of the jobs of the Holy Spirit is sanctification, then we need to immediately obey the voice of the Spirit. Do and pray what He tells you to.

Christian Community

Another important activity to support pursuing sanctification is living in Christian Community. This includes:

- *Actively serve in your local church*

- *Spend time with other Christians. Find Christian friends or mentors that will keep you accountable.*

Read the following Scriptures:

1 Corinthians 15:33

Hebrews 10:22-24

The Bible says that when we live in Christian community, we provoke (or encourage) each other to good works. We also admonish (advise or urge) others to walk worthy and receive the same urging from others. Basically, when you are part of Christian community, you surround yourself with others that will encourage you in your discipleship journey—and you will do the same for others.

Restore broken fellowship IMMEDIATELY

When you practice righteousness, it enables you to have unbroken fellowship. You can't break relationship, but you have the choice to break or maintain your fellowship. When you maintain unbroken fellowship, you establish an atmosphere that allows God to speak to you and work through you.

But what if you mess up? What if you make a mistake? Once you sin, you have broken not only your fellowship, but you have compromised your SENSE of righteousness. When this happens, you must immediately ask God to forgive you.

Read 1 John 1:9

Once we confess our sin, God totally removes or wipes away that sin and cleanses us from all unrighteousness. God has forgiven you. There is no remembrance of it. God expects you to do the same once you have confessed your sin—to put it behind you and forget it. You must forgive yourself and remove from your mind any negative thought that is contrary to these verses that we just read.

Avoiding the trap of performance-based Christianity

We have spent a lot of time talking about acting on God's Word. But we also need to talk about guarding against a work mentality or a performance-based mentality.

Read Ephesians 2:9

It is obvious from reading this verse that we cannot be saved by our own effort or own works. Once we become Christians, there is a temptation for us to think that our performance, good works, or service somehow keeps us in right standing with God.

Read Luke 10:38-42

This story is about two women named Mary and Martha. Jesus did not rebuke Martha's service. He rebuked her over-concern and preoccupation with things or doing more than with God. Our Christian service should spring forth from a relationship with God. We reduce our Christian experience to works only if we attempt to have a relationship with God through service only.

When we develop a works-based relationship, we lose our joy and strength. We become self-centered instead of God-centered. Our relationship with God should not be works-centered. It should be established upon God's grace. Grace is something we can do with God that we could never do on our own. Our relationship is a result of what God did for us through Christ. It is nothing that we could ever earn. It is a free gift.

However, our fellowship with God is a result of what we do once we become Christians. True fellowship is the result of understanding who your Heavenly Father really is. As discussed in a previous lesson, it is from spending time with him in reading the Word, prayer, and praise/worship. When you know who your Father is, you will desire to fellowship with Him. My son's relationship and fellowship are not based on works. He doesn't have to work his way into my favor. He was born a son. His fellowship springs out of his relationship. He may do some things that don't always please me, but he will always be my son and I will always love him. There is nothing we could ever do that would make our heavenly Father stop loving us. There is also nothing we can do to earn His love. He loves us the same now as He did before we accepted Jesus into our hearts. No act or service can influence how much He loves us. We express our love to Him by following His commands. We don't do the works to earn His favor, but because we already have His favor. We follow His commands not to earn our position with Him, but rather to honor and glorify Him.



FAITH

The kids were excited. We had been telling them about it for weeks. We had purchased tickets to go to the circus. There were clowns, camels, acrobats, trapeze artists, overpriced popcorn, and, of course, elephants. Large elephants that were as tame as they could be. You could even pay to take a ride on one if you wanted. Then, I remembered reading a story about how they trained elephants for the circus. When the elephants are just babies, the owners tie large chains around their ankles and connect them to a stake in the ground. The chain is so strong and heavy for the baby elephants that they can't break free. At first, they tug and pull at the chains. But the chain is just too strong. Eventually, they finally give up. The strength of the chain and hopeless attempts to escape are so strongly imprinted in the elephant's memory that, in time, it is only necessary for the owners to use a small rope to tether the elephants. Even when they are large and they could easily break the chains, let alone the slender rope, the memories of their experiences are strong and they don't even attempt to break free. The memories are defining moments for these elephants. Their memories of weakness and failure define their actions.

We can be the same way. Our defining moments are most definitely different than those of the elephants in this story, but they have the same effect. Many of us allow memories, words, or other's actions define how we act or how we see ourselves and our circumstances. Our defining moment may be a divorce, the death of a child, being abused as a child, harsh words from somebody, or even a past failure. But whatever it is, we allow our experiences to dictate our life. Just like the circus elephants, we act on what we believe about ourselves and our circumstances based on experience.

If this is true, we must honestly ask ourselves—what do we believe? What are we going to allow to dictate our actions? Because just like the circus elephants, we act on what we believe. If we act on what we believe, do we believe what God says or do we believe what others say? Do we believe what God says or do we look to our circumstances or past experiences?

What is Faith?

The Greek word for faith means a firm persuasion, a conviction based upon hearing, trust, or assurance. Bible faith is a firm persuasion, to be fully persuaded, to be convinced, to trust, to be totally confident, and to be certain that God's Word is true.

There are two kinds of faith:

1. *Natural faith* - Natural faith is controlled by the physical senses
2. *Spiritual faith* - Spiritual faith is controlled by what God says—either written or spoken. We will also refer to this as Bible Faith or the God kind of Faith.

There is a place for natural faith. Natural faith works for us in this natural world. For instance, we believe that when we jump up, we will come back down. We are certain that if we touch fire we will get burned. When we walk across the street, we must believe what we see so that we don't get hit by a car. When our landlord calls us and tells us we must pay our monthly rent, we must believe what we hear and pay the rent so we have a place to live. Natural faith is built through our knowledge and experiences of the physical world we live in and helps us to function in this physical world.

We will also learn that spiritual faith can impact our physical world. However, natural faith will not produce spiritual results. Natural faith will not receive spiritual blessings from God. Spiritual faith happens when we place our trust in God. In God's kingdom, only God's kind of faith will work. God's kind of faith is spiritual. It is something that must come from our hearts or spirits.

The Bible defines spiritual faith in the book of Hebrews.

Read Hebrews 11:1

Faith in God means that we believe what He says about us and our circumstances. It is a confident trust in Him despite what we see, taste, touch, feel or smell with our physical senses. It is confident trust in Him despite what others may tell us. Without faith, it is impossible to please God. Because He says it, He will do it and I come into agreement with Him to that fact. I no longer have hope, but my hope is replaced with expectation. Hope is always future, but faith is NOW. Faith is expectation—with the knowing and agreement that if God said it, He will do it, and it shall come to pass.

That trust or persuasion comes from what you know. What you know comes from what you hear. Bible Faith or the God kind of Faith comes from hearing and believing God's Word. It does not come from our physical senses or circumstances. It does not come from books or from what people may say about God's Word. Bible faith is developed from hearing and meditating in God's Word. Faith is complete agreement with God regardless of our circumstances, our past experiences, or even what we see with our eyes. It is recognizing His Word as the absolute reality despite what we experience with our physical senses. Whatever He says about the situation or circumstance I face, I agree with Him—despite what my eyes may see.

One of the best illustrations of Bible Faith is found in the book of Romans.

Read Romans 4:17-21

Let us look at some of these verses that we just read.

- *In Verse 17 – it says that Abraham believed what God said.*

- *In Verse 18 – Abraham did not allow the natural circumstances to control him. Abraham was influenced more by God’s word than by physical circumstances.*
- *Verse 20 – Abraham did not doubt God’s Word. He was not double-minded.*
- *Verse 21 – Abraham was fully persuaded that God would do what He said he would do.*

Bible Faith has the following characteristics:

1. *It believes God’s Word—written or spoken.*
2. *It does not allow problems or circumstances to change what it believes.*
3. *It does not change its mind. It is convinced that what God says will happen.*
4. *Faith uses your imagination. The Holy Spirit inspires our imagination to see the absolute reality despite your physical circumstances. See your present circumstance as God sees it in the theatre of your mind.*

Why do we need Faith?

The birds were singing and the cool breeze was gently blowing as I sat outside my vacation rental early in the morning reading my Bible. My good friend was sitting next to me and quietly reading her Bible until . . . she pointed out a large animal moving in the woods. We both stood up and walked to the edge of the patio to get a better view of the animal. Suddenly, a large black bear walked out of the woods and stood about fifteen feet away. I don’t think I ever moved so fast in my life. I hurdled the chair to get to the door and inside to safety. My friend just stood there and stared the bear down! The bear turned and walked away. Later, I was told that if you encounter a bear, the worst thing you can do is run scared. Apparently, you are supposed to make a lot of noise and make yourself look as big as possible. Because I didn’t know any better, I responded based on what I could see and I ran scared. Many times, we do the same in our Christian walk. When we face difficult circumstances, we run scared because we don’t know any better. But God has a better plan for us and it is closely tied and dependent on our understanding of the God kind of faith.

Why is faith so important as a disciple? We are going to look at just a few reasons that this thing called faith is so important to understand as we continue our discipleship journey.

Read Hebrews 11:6 - What is required to please God?

Read Mark 11:22 - Who did Jesus command us to have faith in?

Read Romans 1:17 - What are the just or believers supposed to live by?

Do you want to please God? If the answer is yes, then you will need to understand this thing called faith. Jesus commanded us to have faith in God. Paul (the writer of Romans) tells us that the just (or believers) shall live by faith. This is a direct command statement. Jesus and Paul command it and we can't please God without it. We must ask ourselves why faith is given such importance in the life of the believer by God, Jesus, and Paul.

Read 1 John 5:4-5

Basically, this verse is saying that we overcome the world or stand in the victory that Jesus achieved for us by faith. But, our faith in what? And what is the world? What exactly is the world and what is our relation to the world? Our faith in Jesus overcomes the world, but what does that look like? To understand this, we must understand the following important facts:

1. ***This world we live in is not Jesus' world.***

John 17:5 And now, Father, glorify Me along with Yourself and restore Me to such majesty and honor in Your presence as I had with You before the world existed. AMP

2. ***This world that we live in with all of its problems and circumstances is not really "our" world.***

John 17:16 They are not of the world (worldly, belonging to the world), [just] as I am not of the world.

3. ***Jesus said that Satan is the ruler of this world that we live in.***

John 14:30 I will not talk with you much more, for the prince (evil genius, ruler) of the world is coming. And he has no claim on Me. [He has nothing in common with Me; there is nothing in Me that belongs to him, and he has no power over Me.] AMP

4. ***Jesus also said that He came to overcome the evil and expel the ruler of this world.***

John 16:33 - I have told you these things, so that in Me, you may have [perfect] peace and confidence. In the world you have tribulation and trials and distress and frustration; but be of good cheer [take courage; be confident, certain, undaunted]! For I have overcome the world. [I have deprived it of power to harm you and have conquered it for you.] AMP

He didn't remove us from the world, but He removed its POWER to harm us. Jesus accomplished His purpose when he died on the cross and rose again. So, this is not Jesus' real world, but He came to this world. This is not our real world, but we live in this world. Satan is the ruler of this world, but Jesus overcame his power by what He did on the cross two thousand years ago. HE DEPRIVED IT OF IT'S POWER TO HARM US. What is our world? Where is our citizenship if we are not citizens of this world?

Read Philippians 3:20

In this verse, Paul was talking to Christians. He was telling them that their citizenship **IS** in heaven (present tense). So, we aren't waiting for our citizenship, we already have the citizenship. The waiting he is referring to is the second coming of Christ but our citizenship is **now**. That means that we function using the rules and laws pertaining to our citizenship.

Read Acts 22:22-29

Notice the following important points in this Scripture:

- Verse 25 – Paul asserted his Roman citizenship to the centurion
- Verse 26 – The centurion immediately stopped the flogging
- Verse 28 – Paul says that he was BORN a citizen. In other words, he was born a free citizen (not a slave or foreigner)
- Verse 29 - Instantly those who were about to examine and flog him withdrew from him; and the commandant also was frightened, for he realized that [Paul] was a Roman citizen and he had put him in chains

They could not touch Him as soon as He told them He was a Roman citizen because His citizenship afforded him certain rights. Before he asserted his citizenship, they were planning to flog him. After he asserted his citizenship, they were afraid to touch him because the Caesar who reigned over the Roman world was very powerful. The centurion mentions that he obtained the citizenship at a price, but Paul says that he was BORN FREE. So, what does this all mean? Just like Paul had certain rights due to his citizenship, we are born citizens into the Kingdom of Heaven when we became born again with all the rights and privileges accordingly. As soon as we became citizens of the heavenly world, we gained access to all the promises of God's word AND the power and authority behind the words.

Accepting Jesus as our Lord and Savior was the starting point of our victory. When we accept Jesus, it gives us the ACCESS to stand or believe the promises of God, and that they are applicable to us.

So, obviously, Paul's citizenship took higher rank over whatever citizenship he held anywhere else. He was in their world, but he was not of their world. But, just as Paul did, we must assert our citizenship and claim those promises just as Paul had to speak up to let the people in authority in that region know his citizenship.

Why did he do that? Because he knew that his citizenship afforded him certain rights and privileges. If he didn't think it would do him any good in that circumstance, he wouldn't have said anything, right? Likewise, our citizenship in heaven takes higher rank than our "citizenship" in this world.

Read Hebrews 11:3

The created can never be more real than the creator. That means that the spiritual world is the more real world. WHATEVER is born of GOD has overcome the world. If you have accepted Jesus, you are a whatever and have overcome the world. You can stand on God's promises and

assert your citizenship. We live according to God's promises as a citizen of heaven and not according to the natural world. He who promised is faithful. We access those promises through faith. To fully live in the promises and privileges of our citizenship, we must access them through the God Kind of faith since they are spiritual.

How does Faith come?

We read in Hebrews 11:6 that "without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." If God demands that we have faith to please Him, then it is God's responsibility to give us a way that we can receive faith. The exciting news is we do not have to pray for faith, fast for faith, or even try to get faith from God. God makes faith available to every person who believes in Him. Every person receives a measure or a portion of the God-kind of faith when they become a Christian.

Read the following Scriptures:

***Ephesians 2:8-9** - For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.*

***Romans 10:8-10** - But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*

***Romans 12:3** - For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.*

***2 Corinthians 4:13** - We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak*

We become Christians through faith. For a person to become a Christian, they must believe or to say it another way—they must have faith. If you are a Christian, you already have the measure or a portion of the God kind of Faith. Where is that faith located? It is located in your heart or spirit.

The Bible teaches us that we can take the measure of faith that God has given to us and we can make it grow. The Bible talks about weak faith, strong faith, no faith, and great faith. The Bible teaches us that there are different levels of faith. Every Christian begins their Christian life at the same level of faith. Faith is like a muscle. Everyone receives the same amount. It is what you do with your muscles that determine if you are strong or weak.

Some Christians get jealous because they see other Christians living better and experiencing more of the blessings of God in their lives than they are experiencing. This does not happen because God loves those people more than you. They are simply using the faith God gave them.

Faith begins where the will of God is known. If you aren't sure of God's will in a situation, it is hard to have faith. If faith begins where the will of God is known, how do we go about figuring out what the will of God is?

Read Romans 10:17

Faith comes by hearing and hearing and hearing the Word of God. Our relationship with God is built by knowing HIM. How do we know him? We know Him through prayer and reading His words. He says that He has magnified His Word above His own name or who He is (Psalm 138:2). His words define Him and tell us of His nature as well as our relationship with Him.

When we say faith comes by hearing the Word of God, we are not saying that every time you hear the Word you receive new faith from God.

Jesus said in Mark 4 that the Word of God is like seed. So, it is with your faith. You receive a measure or a seed of the God-Kind of faith when you become a Christian. Every time you hear the Word, that seed is watered and it will grow and begin to produce.

Faith grows or develops in two ways. The measure of faith that every Christian receives can grow or be increased as follows:

1. *By feeding it on the Word of God*
2. *By exercising it or putting it into practice*

Both must work together. Knowledge without action becomes mental assent. Action without knowledge is presumption. What are you looking at and acting upon? What we believe is what we act upon. What we act upon becomes reality for us. You can't just say you believe, but you must act on your belief (applying His word).

How is Faith released?

I had two props: a chair and a piece of cloth. When I was teaching children's church, I would use these two props to give the kids an object lesson about faith. I would tie the cloth over their eyes so they couldn't see. Then, I would walk them all around the room and spin them around. Finally, I would place them right in front of the chair (but not touching the chair). I would tell them that there was a chair behind them and that they could sit down. Did they sit? Some kids did sit when I told them to sit. But some kids decided not to try to sit. Obviously, the kids who didn't sit weren't convinced that there was a chair behind them waiting for them to sit on.

Whether the kids decided to sit or not was directly related to whether they believed me when I told them there was a chair waiting for them. If they had confident trust in my words, they sat. If they did not fully trust my assurance that there was a chair, they hesitated to sit. But, either way, the kids acted on what they believed. We do the same. We will act on what we believe.

Read James 2:14-26 - What is dead without works (or actions)?

James says that faith without corresponding actions is dead. Do we trust Him? Then, we DO what he says. Being a disciple means to DO the word. Faith is acting on the Word or doing the Word. Faith must be released through corresponding actions for it to produce results. Just as the kids that believed my words acted on them, we act on God's Word if we confidently trust Him. In Verse 26, it said that just as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead. "Dead faith" does not mean "no faith" or "non-existent faith." Faith is present, but it is not active or producing anything. Faith is perfected, or brought to completion, through corresponding actions.

Perfect or complete faith acts on what it believes. Believe is a Verb. Faith is an Act. Verbs are action words and result in an act. If I said "He the house green" it is confusing and meaningless. But when I add the verb "painted," it changes the whole thing. He painted the house green. Now we have action in motion. He is doing something and producing results. Faith is belief activated or belief in motion. Many people have faith. They may be firmly persuaded of something in the Word of God in their minds. Yet, their faith is not producing anything because their faith is not accompanied by action.

The number one way to release faith is with words. Speak what God says about your situations.

Read Proverbs 18:21

When it comes to receiving from God, the number one way that we act upon our faith is by speaking what we believe in our heart. What are you allowing to continue in you that does not line up with God's Words? What has happened in your past that you allow to dictate your present and your future? God's Word is LIVING. When we think, say, and do God's Word, we are infusing LIFE into our situations and the situations of others. Use your imagination and ask yourself "What would it look like if God's Word is true in my life?" Imagine yourself in that place.

God is ready to perform His Word in our lives!

2 Chronicles 16:9 - For the eyes of the Lord run to and for throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of *those* whose heart *is* loyal to Him.

Isaiah 55:11 - so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

Mark 13:31 - Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

Jeremiah 1:12 - Then the LORD said to me, "You have seen well, for I am watching over My word to perform it."

What you believe will determine who you are and what you will become. You can either choose to say what God says, or to believe what the world says.



PRAYER

We were sitting around the table all staring at each other. My husband and I lived in Central America for almost a year serving at a missionary hospital shortly after we were married. We had invited a local family over to eat dinner with us. I had specifically made spaghetti and meatballs so that they could experience some of the food that we consider customary in America. I had also brought an ice cream machine with me and had made chocolate chip ice cream for dessert. This was a real treat in the small village an hour and a half outside of the largest city. Any ice cream bought in the city would surely be soup by the time it arrived at the mission hospital because of the heat. I worked hard to create the meal and was excited to share it with our new friends. The steaming spaghetti and meatballs was prominently displayed in a large bowl in the middle of the table. The ice cream was chilling in the freezer. But nobody would take any food! It would seem we couldn't get past saying grace. We kept telling them to take some food, but they just stared at us with their hands securely in their laps. We changed the way we said it in Spanish as perhaps they weren't understanding us? They still just stared at us without making even the smallest move to serve themselves. Were they afraid of trying the "strange" food? Finally, the wife was gracious enough to tell us our mistake. Apparently, it is their custom or ritual that the host serves each guest and determines the amount that each guest will receive. The guest never serves themselves. This custom or ritual had meaning to them. But, since we didn't understand, we sat for long, uncomfortable minutes around the table staring at each other. We learned a good lesson about Honduran social etiquette that day and we were finally able to eat the feast I had prepared! This lesson served me well later when we were throwing a baby shower for one of the nurses working in the hospital. We had to serve each of the shower guests as well. No buffets in Honduras! After we understood their customs and rituals, we could better understand the meaning behind them.

Just like not understanding the different customs and rituals made it difficult for us to get the expected results, not understanding the different types of prayer and when they should be used will limit our ability to pray biblically and get the expected results.

Why Pray?

Prayer is basically talking with God. Spending time having conversations or praying with God is important in our daily life. Through prayer, God gives us comfort, guidance, reassurance, direction, purpose, and love. It is the place where we thank Him for all the wonderful things that He's done for us and make requests of Him for our needs and the needs of others. It is in prayer that we spend time with our maker and become more like Him. It is in prayer that God shares Himself with us. Take some time each day to have a conversation with God. God is waiting to

talk to you. It doesn't matter the time of day. He is listening attentively to every word that comes from your lips. The main reason we should pray is because we are told to pray.

Read Luke 11:2-8

In this passage, Jesus is instructing His disciples how to pray. Notice he doesn't say "if you pray" but He says "when you pray." The assumption is that we will pray and He is telling them how to do it when they do.

We can and should set aside specific times to pray. But we are to have a continual communication throughout our day as well. God wants to hear from us. We can ask for wisdom, praise and worship Him, or even thank Him during these times of prayer. We don't have to limit our prayers just to specific times of day. We are to pray because this is how we communicate with Him and receive from Him. But it is also how we show Him our gratitude for His goodness working in our life. Our Heavenly Father wants relationship with us. And prayer plays a vital part in getting to know Him and continuous fellowship with Him. You will also find multiple Scriptures in the Bible regarding prayer. Below are just a few Scriptures that tell us things that we are expected to pray for (not exhaustive). After each Scripture reference write what it is telling us to pray for:

Ephesians 6:18 _____

Galatians 4:19 _____

Philippians 4:6 _____

Philippians 4:19 _____

Matthew 9:36-37 _____

Acts 4:29 _____

Ephesians 1:17 _____

Ephesians 6:19 _____

Colossians 4:3 _____

Colossians 1:9 _____

1 Timothy 2:1-2 _____

James 1:5 _____

James 5:15 _____

He tells us to pray for our needs or things that we need to live like food, a place to live, clothing, necessities of life. It must be God's will to meet your needs or He would not tell you to ask for all your needs. Even though God knows what you need, He still requires that you ask Him. We can pray for workers to share the Gospel with others, boldness, other Christians, and Ministers. The Bible says that we can also pray for spiritual and natural wisdom as well as insight and clear understanding of God's will for our lives. The Bible tells us to pray for anyone who is in a position of leadership. We can see from these few Scriptures that God is not interested in just a piece of our life, but every part of our life. We are to pray and share it all with Him. And then we are step out in pray for others that may not be able to pray for themselves to impact the world around us.

The final reason that we need to pray may shock you. God is not in complete control. This statement may surprise you but it is true. People ask why bad things happen to good people? God is not in control. How can this be? Not only has He given us free will, but other spiritual beings are at play in this world. We will spend more time on this topic in the lesson entitled "Spiritual Authority." For now, we will just provide a basic teaching for the purpose of understanding why it is important to pray.

As we learned in the previous lesson, the spiritual world is more real than the natural world (refer to Hebrews 11:3). The things which occur in this physical world are influenced by the spiritual. When God created the heavens and the Earth, He gave authority over the Earth to Adam.

Read Genesis 3

When Adam and Eve were disobedient and ate the forbidden fruit, they handed over that authority to Satan. For this reason, Satan and his demons have a legal right to function in this physical realm of Earth.

Read 1 John 5:19

Read Luke 4:6

There is a "god" of this world that influences the things we can see, hear, taste, feel and smell. That "god" is Satan. Satan and his demons have been handed authority of this physical realm by Adam through his disobedience. As a result, he can influence circumstances. He can also influence people. He is the father of non-believers. But Christians can also allow themselves to be influenced by Satan's suggestions if they are not grounded in the Word of God. For this reason, the Bible tells us that we don't wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the spiritual beings influencing this world that we live in.

Read Ephesians 6:12 - What do we wrestle against?

Read 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 - What are the weapons of our warfare?

We are fighting a spiritual battle, not a physical battle. But the good news is that Jesus defeated Satan through His death, burial and resurrection. He then turned around and gave us that authority to function in this earth in Jesus' place.

Read Ephesians 1:19-23

Jesus gave us the authority. It doesn't say that Jesus or God will do this. We have a responsibility to assert our authority in situations. One way that we do this is through prayer.

Read Ephesians 6:10-20

Our salvation and resulting righteousness give us access to the use of the battle gear. Believers are the only ones that can wage this spiritual warfare. God needs us. He has delegated authority to us—and what we bind on earth will be bound in heaven, what we loose on earth will be loosed in heaven . . . DON'T PRAY FOR A FEELING, PRAY FOR A RESULT.

So, we understand that we need to pray to commune (or spend time with) God, to commit ourselves to His plans, to worship Him, and to manifest His plans on this earth. But there are different types of prayer based on our purpose. Just like the dinner with our friends in Honduras, if we don't know the rules, we will have a difficult time or not understand why something isn't working. So, it is also important to understand the different kinds of prayer so that we can apply the appropriate rules to that type of prayer. If we do this, we will be effective in our prayer life as disciples of Christ.

Different Kinds of Prayer

It may be surprising to find out that there are different kinds of prayer that are used for different reasons. If we try to use the wrong kind of prayer for a situation, we won't be as effective or our prayers may not work at all.

We will examine the different kinds of prayer that are mentioned in the Bible and the rules that control or influence these prayers. There are at least nine different kinds of prayer described in our Bible. Each kind of prayer has its own set of rules or conditions that make that kind of prayer work. This is not a formula, but prayer becomes effective when we understand our position in Christ and the scriptural rules or conditions that are associated with each kind of prayer. It is important to note that many of these prayers work together and do not function separately from each other.

1. Prayer of Faith/Petition

The prayer of faith/petition is probably the prayer that most of us think of when we think about prayer. It is asking God for things that are promised to you in the Bible or that belong to you because of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. This is the most common prayer that Christians pray. When we pray this kind of prayer, we must understand the guidelines or rules that are associated with this kind of prayer. If we are to ask for things, what kind of things? We are to ask for things according to God's will.

Read John 15:7

First, God's will is revealed in God's Word. When we are using the prayer of faith, we ask for things that are promised in the Bible. If you are praying about something or asking for something and you have no scriptural precedence, you can't pray the prayer of faith.

Faith begins where the will of God is known. You could say that Faith begins when you have God's Word on the subject. Faith must rest upon the Word, not upon our desires and wishes. The Word of God is the revealed will of God. When we pray the Word, we KNOW that we pray God's will. If we know that we are praying God's will, we know that we have the petitions that we ask. God's Word is from the Creator and based on the more real world than the physical world. Our world is based on the Creator's rules and promises. He holds the instruction manual and has given it to us through the Bible. The Prayer of Faith will only be effective when we have a solid scriptural foundation. If you aren't sure if your prayer is scriptural, find 2–3 Scriptures that you can stand on when you pray.

Second, before we can pray the prayer of faith, we must be sure that we are in faith before we pray. You don't ask or pray and then try to get in faith. You should be in faith before you pray.

Read James 1:5

He is saying that there is the chance that you could ask or pray apart from faith. Do we have any scriptural basis for what we are talking about?

Read Mark 11:24

This Scripture says to "Believe that you receive them and you shall have them." Notice that it also says that the "YOU SHALL HAVE THEM" is contingent upon "BELIEVE YOU RECEIVE THEM." You are only going to have what you believed you received when you prayed. In other words, you should already know that what you are praying for belongs to you and that you are going to receive it. Being in faith is knowing all of that BEFORE you pray.

Read Matthew 21:22

When you read it, you can't leave out the word "BELIEVING"! It isn't just asking in prayer that is going to get the job done. If you try to believe after you ask, it never will work.

You may ask HOW DO I GET IN FAITH? or HOW DO I KNOW WHEN I'M IN FAITH? We have already determined that God's will is revealed in God's Word. When you know God's Word, you know God's Will. We get into faith by getting into God's Word, by finding Scriptures and meditating and building them into our inner consciousness . . . then pray. We can sometimes make the mistake of rushing into prayer without building the proper foundation. Then, we try to build the foundation after we pray.

How Does the Prayer of Faith Work?

1. *Decide what you want from God and find Scriptures that promise you those things. The reason so many Christians' prayers are not answered is because they do not know what they want. They are not specific with their prayers. You must first decide what you want. Then, you must find Scriptures that promise you the things you are asking. If you do not have any Scriptures that promise you what you are asking, then your prayer will not work. We can only ask for things that are according to God's will. God's Word reveals God's will. Once you find those Scriptures, you must meditate or think on them. Build them into your heart until you are convinced that what those Scriptures say belong to you. Then and only then are you ready to pray or ask.*
2. *You must believe that you receive the answer the moment you pray. You must believe God has heard you and answered your prayer before you have (or can see) an answer to your prayer. That is faith.*
3. *Control your thoughts. You will never have a successful prayer life if you do not control your thoughts. You must remain positive and disciplined in your thought life. Never permit a suggestion or a picture of failure to remain in your mind. Imagine yourself with what you have prayed for. A person who has doubts shouldn't expect to receive anything from the Lord. A person who has doubts is thinking about two different things at the same time and can't make up his mind about anything. The devil will put thoughts of doubt or fear into your mind but you must resist them and replace those thoughts with God's Word. Many times, when the answer does not come immediately, we are tempted to doubt.*
4. *Maintain a lifestyle of thanksgiving and praise. We will talk about this kind of prayer later in this lesson. Too often we only come to God when we want something. We never spend time worshipping Him or praising him for Who He is and for what He has done in our lives.*

Read Philippians 4:6

This is what you do from the time you pray until the answer comes. Refuse to worry and refuse to doubt. Even if things seem to get worse, even if everything around you tells you the answer is not coming, continue to thank Him for the answer, worship Him, and praise Him.

We also need to make it clear that the prayer of faith will always work for you, but not necessarily for others.

Read Mark 11:24

Notice that the word "You" is mentioned five times. Who can you pray the prayer of faith for?

1. *You can always pray the prayer of faith for yourself. The Prayer of Faith works in the following areas: your salvation (pray one time), Baptism with the Holy Spirit, divine healing, and financial needs met. Basically, the prayer of faith will work for anything that the Bible already promises you.*
2. *Baby Christians—in some cases you can carry baby Christians on your faith in certain situations.*
3. *Unsaved people—as a sign.*

But you must remember that when you begin praying for others, their will and their wants and desires must be taken into consideration. Your prayers will not override their will, wants, or desires.

Things you CANNOT pray the prayer of faith for:

1. *Spouse: You can't claim so-and-so for a wife or husband. You must find the will of God on this.*
2. *The will of God in various areas. In the affairs of life, the will of God must be examined. There are many things in the affairs of life in which there is not a specific Scripture that we can reference. In these cases, it will require us to seek God's will. You don't always find the will of God easily. But you will need to ask "what is the will of God for me?" It may take several times of prayer. But, in every avenue of life (marriage, money, children, entertainment), we need to talk to God about it to determine His will.*

This brings us to the next kind of prayer that is often confused with the prayer of faith.

2. Prayer of Submission/Consecration

The prayer of submission or consecration is prayer for submitting your life and ministry to the will of God.

Read Luke 22:39-42

Because of this one statement made by Jesus concerning the subject of prayer, many Christians have mistakenly made the assumption that all prayer needs to be concluded with the statement "IF IT BE THY WILL." They assume that Jesus was making a blanket statement concerning prayer. However, I want you to notice two things:

1. *Jesus was praying about the will of God*
2. *Jesus was dedicating Himself or surrendering His will to the will of His Father*

Read Matthew 26:36-45

We can quickly determine what Jesus was praying about by what He was not praying for. Jesus was not praying or believing to receive anything. So, we know that this is not in reference to the Prayer of Faith. Remember what Jesus said in Mark 11:24. The Prayer of Faith deals with things God's Word promises you or the things that you know belong to you because they are redemptive realities. In Verse 39, Jesus says, "If it be possible." Jesus doesn't know if it is possible. Jesus is praying about becoming the sin sacrifice for the world. He is praying to the Father to see if there is any alternative. He doesn't know and that's why He is praying "if" it be possible. Then, He says, "Nevertheless not my will, but as you will" (Jesus is praying about the will of God for His life). When we talk about the prayer of consecration we mean, "Praying about the will of God for your life."

The prayer of Consecration is:

1. *Praying about the will of God for your life.*

2. *Submitting yourself to God's will*

Many Christians tend to confuse the prayer of consecration with the Prayer of Faith. People have tried to apply the rules that govern the Prayer of Faith to the Prayer of Consecration and vice versa. You can see that won't work. For example, some Christians try to apply the Prayer of Faith for choosing a mate in marriage. But there is no clear Scripture in the Bible that says, "You are going to marry Bob." In this case, the prayer of consecration is the appropriate prayer where you seek God's will for who you will marry. The only way to know the will of God is to live a consecrated life. The Christian life is a series of consecrations. It is not one and done.

3. *Prayer of Agreement*

The prayer of agreement is similar to the prayer of faith except for the fact that it includes more than one person.

Read Matthew 18:18-20

In Verse 19, Jesus makes one of the most significant comments about the subject of prayer. He says that if two people would first AGREE and then ASK that it shall be done by their Father. It will come to pass. Jesus didn't say there is a good chance or a high percentage it will come to pass. He said IT SHALL BE DONE or IT IS FOR CERTAIN or IT CAN'T BE ANY OTHER WAY. If Jesus said what He meant and meant what He said, we need to take advantage of this kind of prayer. This kind of prayer could increase our effectiveness.

The conditions of the prayer of agreement include the following:

1. *Minimum number of people must be two. For you to pray the prayer of agreement, there must be two people or more.*
2. *You must AGREE. This is more difficult than you think! You can't be in agreement for one thing and have the other person agreeing for something totally different. For example, if you are agreeing for healing and total restoration and the other person is agreeing for a successful operation, you are not in agreement. You must first establish something you can both agree on.*

This second condition of agreement is where a lot of Christians make a mistake when it comes to the prayer of agreement. Many Christians read this verse and ask for agreement on something very general. But that is not agreement. That is only verbal assent.

In Verse 19, Jesus said "anything." We must ask ourselves the question, does anything mean anything? We need to be careful not to take the word "anything" out of its setting. The word "anything" must be confined to "anything according to His will/Word." God is not going to violate his own Word. Find Scriptures that promise you what you are praying for. If you can't find Scriptures, then you are going to have problems praying in agreement. If it's not according to His Word, then you can't agree on it. You need to be specific in your prayers. And the agreement must be on the known will of God (i.e., based on actual Scriptures).

What can we agree on? The same rules apply here as the ones that apply to the prayer of faith. We can agree together on anything the Bible says belongs to us (healing, finances and needs being met, spiritual blessings, etc.). We cannot agree on things that are out of line with the Word of God or the Will of God. You can't impose your will on someone else and try to make something happen. You can't agree that the same anointing that is on me will come on you. In the prayer of agreement as with the prayer of faith, you need to assess motive. If motives are wrong, prayer and agreement will not work. For instance, God wants to prosper us but not for greedy motive. To agree with someone to be blessed financially without them following the Biblical rules of prosperity will not work. If you want to prosper, you will have to abide by God's rules of prosperity and have the right motive. Then you can get someone to agree with you.

4. Prayer of Intercession / 5. Prayer of Supplication

We will cover the prayers of intercession and supplication together as they are similar although they have a different focus. The prayers of intercession and supplication are prayers that we pray for others (not ourselves). Intercession is a prayer to withhold judgment or pray on the behalf of another person. When you pray the prayer of intercession, you act as a bridge between parties with a view to reconcile differences. Supplication is a prayer on behalf of another person (primarily Christians) to make a humble entreaty or to ask for something earnestly and humbly.

Read Genesis 18:17-33

This is an example of intercession. Abraham intercedes for Sodom. He is talking with God with the view of withholding judgment on the people of Sodom.

Read Galatians 4:19

This is an example of supplication. Paul is praying (making supplication for Christians) for what purpose? Until Christ is formed in them. He is making an entreaty on behalf of the saints for their spiritual growth.

Both prayers are earnest prayers. Because both kinds of prayers are for others, these prayers are more effective when we have the help of the Holy Spirit.

Read Romans 8:26

The Holy Spirit is our helper in prayer. This is not something the Holy Spirit does apart from you. This word "help" means to take hold, against, together with. That means that He will help us in our limitations when we pray for others because we don't always know how to pray for others as we need to. We will speak more about this in the lesson entitled "Baptism of the Holy Spirit."

Read Isaiah 62:6-7

This verse suggests that there are men and women whose business it is to hold these promises and statements of fact clearly before the Lord's mind. If there had been someone who had interceded for them, judgment would not have come.

When we talked about why we need to pray, we also spoke about Hebrews 11:3, which basically says that the spiritual world is more real than the natural world we can see. The spiritual world influences the natural world that we live in.

Read Daniel 9:3-4 and 10

Daniel confessed the sins of the people of Israel and prayed. However, it isn't until Daniel 10:12 that we see the answer to his prayer. The angel says that he has come because of Daniel's words (or prayers). If it had not been for Daniel's words, the angel would not have been dispatched. What took so long for the angel to come? If we compare Daniel 10:1 with 10:13 we can see that he refers to the physical king of Persia in Verse 1. But, in Verse 13, the angel says he had to fight the prince of the Kingdom of Persia. The angel is not talking about the physical king of Persia. He is talking about a spiritual being that he had to fight in the heavenlies to get to Daniel with the answer. When we look at this Scripture in light of Hebrews 11:3, we understand that there are wicked spirits in the heavenlies. The devil and demons have a right to be here until Christ returns to this earth. That is why we must pray and exercise our authority in prayer. We have authority on this earth, and we are expected to exercise that authority on this Earth to accomplish God's will. We will learn more about our authority in the lesson "Spiritual Authority."

6. United Prayer

United Prayer involves a group of individuals who come together for the specific purpose of prayer. It is usually a time of planned prayer with a purpose. The participants know what they are coming together to do.

Read Acts 4:23-31

The key to effective united prayer is not how many people you can gather to pray, but how unified you can get everyone in prayer. If you read through the book of Acts you cannot find one place where believers prayed in a group that only one person lead in prayer. Nor did they have any sentence prayers.

Four areas that United Prayer will produce results:

1. ***During a time of crisis*** (see ***Acts 12:1-5,12***) In Verse 5, it says that there was a continual stream of prayer going up to God from the church on His behalf. The group of believers persistently stayed with it. The reason our united prayer doesn't work many times is that we are not persistent enough. We need to pray until we get results. Many times, when a group of people speak to God, He will answer the whole group.
2. ***To Bring about Revival*** (see ***Acts 4:23-31***) It says that they lifted their voices in "one accord." Did they have results? Yes!
3. ***Worship*** (see ***Acts 2:42***) When the believers came together in united prayer, there was a supernatural manifestation of the power and the presence of the Holy Spirit. The Lord

wants us to experience times of corporate in-fillings. These times come through times of united worship and happen in response to what we do. We can experience them anytime we corporately unite in worship.

4. **To seek divine guidance** (see *Acts 13:1-3*) In this example, the believers used a combination of different kinds of prayers. United prayer can use different kinds of prayer based on the purpose. In this case, they created an atmosphere conducive for the Holy Spirit to speak. They united in their preparation, purpose, and participation.

United prayer is a group of believers coming together in unity with a specific prayer purpose.

7. **Praying in the Spirit**

Praying in the Spirit is being under the influence of the Holy Spirit when you pray.

Read Ephesians 6:18

This verse shows the two applications of praying in the Spirit.

- **Praying in your understanding** - Being under the control or influence of the Holy Spirit as you pray in your own understanding. You are in a place where you are more conscious of God and the things of God and less conscious of yourself and natural things.
- **Praying in Tongues** – This is allowing the Holy Spirit to speak mysteries (to you, not to God) through your mouth as you yield to Him. (1 Corinthians 14:2, 14-15)

What if you already know what God's Word says concerning what you are praying about? Then you can pray with your understanding. You can pray in the Spirit and still pray with your understanding. The Holy Spirit will use the Word that you have in you. He will pray through you. On your part, it will almost seem like an unconscious effort similar to praying in other tongues. It is your spirit praying influenced by the Holy Spirit in words that you understand.

But what if you have reached the end of your understanding? Then, God has made provision for this situation as well. He has provided the Baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in other tongues. We will spend more time going into more detail about this type of prayer in a future lesson entitled "Baptism in the Holy Spirit."

However, for this lesson, we want to point out that there are different types of tongues mentioned in the Bible. If you don't understand the difference, it will be very confusing about how God intended the demonstration of tongues in our daily Christian lives. All tongues are the same in essence but different in purpose and use.

The Scope of Tongues:

1. **The devotional aspect** (See *Acts 2, 10, 19; 1 Corinthians 14:2, 14-18*) – The devotional aspect is the private side of tongues. It includes the initial evidence of the infilling of the Holy Spirit. It is the private application in our devotional and prayer life.

2. ***The public aspect*** (See *1 Corinthians 12:10; 14:22, 26-28*) – What we sometimes call the Gift of Tongues. There is a public side to the operation of tongues that works together with the interpretation of tongues.
3. ***The Ministry Gift*** (see *1 Corinthians 12:28*) – There are also those who have a specialized ministry in tongues and interpretation as a public demonstration. This is a ministry gift that is used for the edification of the church.

Many people confuse the public demonstration of tongues with the private demonstration of tongues in our personal devotional/prayer life. We will cover this topic of the public aspect of tongues in the lessons “Baptism of the Holy Spirit” and “Gifts of the Spirit.” For the purposes of this lesson, we are focused on the devotional aspect of tongues in our personal devotional/prayer life.

Read 1 Corinthians 14:14-15

Paul said that he prayed in his understanding, and he also prayed in the Spirit. What did he mean? He prayed for situations according to God’s will according to God’s Word as far as he knew how. But, when he reached the end of his understanding, he would pray in the spirit. We can do the same. When we are praying in our personal prayer time or even in united prayer and we reach the end of our understanding, God has given us the gift of tongues so that we can pray out His will for situations. When we pray in tongues, we are praying out mysteries (to us, but not to God!). When we pray in tongues, we allow the Holy Spirit to help us in our limitations to pray out God’s perfect will in situations after we reach the end of our own understanding.

8. Prayer of Praise/Worship

The Prayer of Praise/Worship is exactly what it says. It is a prayer that is focused on worshipping and praising God. This kind of prayer is incorporated into almost every other kind of prayer. As you read through the Bible, you will find a consistent connection between prayer, praise, and the giving of thanks. You will notice that the Bible sometimes also calls this “ministering to the Lord.” Read the following Scriptures:

Acts 2:42, 46-47

Acts 16:25

Ephesians 1:16

Ephesians 5:18-20

Colossians 1:3

Colossians 4:2

Philippians 4:6

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

1 Timothy 2:1-2

Hebrews 13:15

Do you see a common theme in all these Scriptures? We can see time and time again how PRAYER, PRAISE, and THANKSGIVING are all connected. The reason they are connected is because they work together for effective results. We need to incorporate praise and thanksgiving into our prayer life. If you have never started your personal prayer time by ministering to (or praising and worshipping the Lord), I would encourage you to start doing this. You will find that it takes you to a new level in your personal prayer time.

I heard someone say that praise and worship is the only thing we can give God that He won't give us back. It is our gift to Him. It reminds me of my own kids. Some days, it feels like my days are filled with non-stop requests from my kids for their needs. I love making sure that my kid's needs are met. But, when one of them comes up and gives me a hug and tells me thanks for something, it is such a blessing! I suspect that God is similarly blessed.

When we worship and praise the Lord, we are simply lifting our voices and expressing out of our hearts our love and appreciation for God. There will be a lot of things that you won't even have to go through in life as a result of waiting on the Lord. He will reveal the traps and pitfalls of life and show you how to avoid them or supernaturally overcome them as you minister to Him!

9. Prayer of Commitment

The prayer of commitment is casting your cares on the Lord. There is a combination of the prayer of commitment and the prayer of faith involved in casting our cares on the Lord. It takes faith to roll them over on Him.

Notice how worry attaches itself to us. The more you talk about a problem the bigger it becomes.

Read Matthew 6:25-34

What did Jesus say about worry? Worrying is not going to change the situation. Don't be like the world. They are concerned with the necessities of life to the point of worry. Why did Jesus make these statements? Because worry makes you become unfruitful—especially in your prayer life. The devil knows how to disarm the believer—by giving you something to worry about. If you're not careful, you can go hear all kinds of marvelous teaching. But if you are overtaken with worry, the cares of this life will choke out the Word and it won't bear any fruit in your life. Not only will worry choke out the Word to the point where it becomes unfruitful, it will also nullify the effects of your prayers. When you are consumed with worry, you are not in faith. You are not on believing ground. Worry is a sin. You cannot be in sin and believe God at the same time. We already discussed how one of the signs of a disciple is that they bear fruit. So, an important part of your discipleship journey is to cast your cares on the Lord.

Read Philippians 4:6-7

I memorized this verse when I was going through a difficult situation with one of my kids. I was tempted to worry hundreds of times a day during this time. However, I made a decision to refuse to worry about my kids. Every time I was tempted to worry, I would speak this Scripture and pray. How do we maintain a worry-free or a carefree lifestyle?

1. *Make a decision to refuse to worry.*
2. *Find Scriptures that deal with your anxieties. Once you find them, meditate on them, build them into your inner consciousness. Meditate on the goodness and the faithfulness of God.*
3. *When you are tempted to worry (a worrying thought comes to mind), replace the thoughts of anxiety with thoughts from the Word of God. Thank Him that He is working on your behalf. When you do that, the peace of God will be with you.*

Fasting and Prayer

The reason we are talking about fasting and prayer together is that fasting will only benefit the Christian when it is incorporated with prayer. People have tried to separate fasting from prayer and establish it as the ultimate key to spiritual success. If you study the New Testament, not one single time is the Church instructed to fast. There are no rules or guidelines given. Nor is the Church encouraged to fast. Why?

Read 2 Corinthians 3:8

In these verses, there is a contrast between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. Verse 8 says “. . . the ministry (or dispensation) of the Spirit.” As you read through the New Testament, you will notice great emphasis is placed upon the ministry and influence of the Holy Spirit. We are living in the dispensation/age/ministry of the Holy Spirit. The reason there are no rules or guidelines instructing the Church to fast is that fasting is to be done as the occasion arises or as the Holy Spirit directs. Fasting affects you—not God. God doesn’t change. He’s the same before/during/after fasting. It is you that is changed.

The New Testament describes four reasons to fast:

- ***To lay hands on ministers to ordain them and commission them*** – (see ***Acts 14:23; Acts 13:1-3***) *Fasting didn’t bring the revelation or cause the Holy Spirit to speak. Fasting helped them become more sensitive to the Holy Spirit.*
- ***To draw close to God during a time of danger*** – (see ***Acts 27:21-33***) *The crew and passengers were fasting. They ate very little for an obvious reason. They were in the middle of a storm and their lives were in danger. Paul was fasting to draw near to God (Verses 21-25). He received direction and was able to comfort and encourage the hearts of everyone on the ship.*
- ***To minister to the Lord*** – (see ***Acts 13:1-3***) *Fasting can be used to spend extra time ministering to or waiting on God. The best kind of fast is when you become so consumed with God and the things of God you find yourself fasting (unconscious fasting). They were preparing the atmosphere and preparing themselves.*
- ***To become more spiritually perceptive*** – *Fasting doesn’t change God—fasting changes you. Fasting makes you more keen and receptive to God’s Spirit. You can use fasting with*

the purpose of separating yourself from every distraction and subjecting every desire of your flesh to the dictates of your spirit. You are making your flesh submit to your spirit.

However, there is no reason to fast unless you have a purpose. Unless you are going to spend time praying and waiting on God, you're wasting your time.

Read 1 Corinthians 7:4-5

This is the only reference to fasting in the epistles and still Paul does not mention a specific commandment to fast. But notice there is mutual consent and there is a purpose. However, just because there are no specific guidelines given to the Church concerning fasting doesn't mean we shouldn't fast. God's Word does give us some principles to follow:

1. *Have the right motive*
2. *Have a purpose*
3. *Avoid extended fasts – There is only one person in the New Testament that went on an extended fast—Jesus. Most of the time you should never have to fast longer than three days.*

Nowhere in Scripture did they fast for a revival. Nowhere did they fast for a mighty move of God. Just as Charles G. Finney said,

“A revival is no more miraculous than a farmer reaping a crop. The farmer has to till the ground, plant the seed, cultivate, and trust God to send the rain. You can fast until doomsday that God will save souls, but if you don't get out there and witness to people, preach salvation, and “go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature,” nobody will get saved and I don't care how long you fast.”^{xv}

Does fasting increase the anointing? Again, fasting prepares you to be more receptive to God and makes you a more susceptible channel for the power of God to flow through. Usually, when you fast you are also waiting on God, meditating, studying the Word and preparing yourself. Actually, that whole process helps increase the anointing. You are more conscious of the Holy Spirit and spiritual things which helps you yield to the anointing.

Should we fast? There is a time and place for fasting as a disciple of Jesus. However, we should follow the New Testament guidelines for fasting and ensure that we have a purpose, the right motives, and avoid extended fasts.

Things that hinder your prayer

I went hours without receiving a text on my phone. I started to get concerned. Finally, I noticed that my phone was in airplane mode. I was not connected to a signal to send or receive anything! Here I was waiting to receive something, and I wasn't connected to the very service that would allow me to receive. When I corrected this and turned off airplane mode, my phone went crazy. I think we do the same thing sometimes in our relationship with God. We ask to receive something from Him in prayer, but we have situations or things in our life that keep us in airplane mode (or

hinder our prayers). If you aren't getting answers, God is not the problem. Check your connection. Below are some common things that can hinder our prayers.

1. **Un-forgiveness** (see *Mark 5:23-24*) – This is the most common problem that can hinder our prayers. This is the first area you should check.
2. **Relationship Problems** (*1 Peter 3:1-7*) – Not honoring your spouse.
3. **Not walking in love** (*1 John 2:10-11; Matthew 25:4; Isaiah 59:11*) – Anything not of love is sin. When we are not walking in love, we hinder God's ability to work in our life. When we are not walking in love, it results in a lost SENSE of righteousness which makes us feel guilt/shame, inferiority, and self-conscious greater than God-Conscious. This makes it difficult to come to God boldly in prayer. Refer to the lesson on "How God Sees Us"
4. **Doubt** (*James 1:6-8*) – When we believe something but do not act in faith or agreement with God's Word/will. This includes worry.
5. **Unbelief** (*Mark 6:1-6*) – When we do not believe or cannot be persuaded to God's wWord/will (disobedience).
6. **Wrong intent** (*James 4:2-3*) – When we pray with selfish motives or amiss. Amiss means to pray for things that are harmful, worthless, or evil. We must pray with pure intent.
7. **Pride** (*James 5:6*) – God resists the proud, but gives more grace to the humble. Humility is saying what God says about a situation (obedience).

Don't let your prayers be hindered. If there is an area of your life that needs adjustments, decide to do that today.

Our prayers are too important to God's Kingdom to not properly understand how to pray or let our prayer be hindered. We understand that we are one with the Holy Trinity through our covenant relationship. We no longer pray from a beggar mentality. Asking takes on a whole new meaning. We are asking in the sense that we are NOT begging and whining to God about situation and needs, but rather we are asking from our "in-ness" mentality.

We ask with expectation because we are asking from the position of oneness with the Son, the Father and the Holy Spirit . . . from a position of righteousness or good standing with God. We are not asking from a place of anxiety, but from assuredness of His faithfulness.

Our prayers have authority because we understand He has provided it to us. Our prayers are backed by faith because we are assured in His faithfulness. Our prayers are spoken with expectation because we spend time with Him and know His heart. Our prayers are spoken in confidence because we yield to the Spirit who will always lead us into all truth. Our prayers are powerful and effective.



BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

I still remember the day that I received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. I was a new Christian sitting in church service. There was a guest speaker that evening. I don't even remember his message. But, at the end of the service, he asked if anyone wanted more of God. I wanted all of God that I could get, so I practically ran down the aisle to receive whatever "more" there was to get. As I stood at the altar with my hands lifted high, I praised God and told him how much I loved Him. As the minister went down the line and prayed for people, he finally stood in front of me. He didn't say a word. But, as he laid his hand on my shoulder, I started praying words that I didn't understand. I didn't feel any different. Well, maybe I was a little confused. I had never heard a teaching in my short Christian walk about the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. I had no idea what happened to me! To be honest, I was a little weirded out by the whole experience. Since I had never heard anyone talk about this kind of experience before, I was embarrassed to even ask anyone about it. I thought they would think I was strange. But I was living with my sister at the time. When she came home, I shared my experience with her. She explained to me that I had received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. The next day, she got me a book to read so that I could better understand what happened to me. Each of us will have a different journey and experience to receiving the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. No matter our journey or experience, we will each receive the same benefits from this amazing gift. This lesson will cover the basics of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit so that you can understand the function and importance of this wonderful free gift.

What is Baptism of the Holy Spirit?

Salvation and receiving the Baptism of the Holy Spirit are two different things. Some Christians believe that if you receive salvation that you have received all of the Holy Spirit that you will ever get. Not true. This isn't based on my opinion. We are going to look at what the Bible says about the topic. If you are saved, you are born again by the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit takes up residence in your heart. The Bible states that we are to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus after we have been born again as an outward show of our belief in our salvation (the remission of sins). This referring to Water Baptism. But there is a second separate and distinct experience of the Holy Spirit after salvation. The second work of the Holy Spirit is called the 'Baptism with the Holy Spirit.'

Acts 8:15-16

In these verses, John's disciples receive the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. We can clearly see in Acts 8 that receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit is a separate "experience." After they had already been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, THEN they prayed for them that they might

“receive the Holy Spirit” or that the Holy Spirit could fall upon them (the baptism of the Holy Spirit).

Why do we need the Baptism of the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit wants to empower you to do His work on this earth.

Read Acts 1:4-8

In Verse 8, the word “power” means force, ability, miraculous power. We also discover the reason for this second work of the Holy Spirit. What are we empowered for? To be witnesses for Him!

It is impossible to be the kind of Christian you want to be without this experience. It is impossible to be effective in ministry without this experience.

Read Luke 24:46-49

Jesus is telling his disciples, “Don’t even think about leaving the city limits until you receive this promise of the Father. Don’t even think about entering any phase of ministry or Christian service until you have received this experience.” What is Jesus talking about? He is referring to the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit is a work of the same Holy Spirit that is already living in you because of the New Birth. You have the Holy Spirit living in you when you accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior. But the Baptism of the Holy Spirit that Jesus is talking about here is a different operation of the Holy Spirit. What happened when the disciples received this promise of the Father?

Read Acts 2:4

They began to speak with other tongues as the Holy Spirit gave them utterance. This was the first outpouring of the Holy Spirit. But we see other examples of this second work of the Holy Spirit in the later chapters of the book of Acts:

- *Acts 8*—The Samaritans spoke with other tongues
- *Acts 9*—Paul spoke with other tongues
- *Acts 10:44-46*—They spoke in tongues and magnified God.
- *Acts 19*—They spoke with tongues and prophesied

We can see from multiple witnesses in the Bible that there is a second work of the Holy Spirit evidenced by speaking in other tongues.

Different kinds of tongues?

There is great confusion because we have not rightly divided the word concerning this subject of tongues. There are at least three different ways tongues can be manifested. All tongues are the same in essence but different in purpose and use.

1. *Devotional/Private (Acts 2:4) - The initial evidence that is also a devotional gift to be used primarily for personal edification and prayer.*
2. *Public Demonstration (1 Corinthians 12:10) - Diverse kinds of tongues. This is sometimes called the Gift of Tongues. This manifests as the spirit wills for the benefit of an assembly.*
3. *Ministry Gift (1 Corinthians 12:28) - Diversities of tongues. This demonstration of tongues is listed as a Ministry Gift. It is also a public gift as the Spirit wills for the edification of the church.*

People have confused the gift with the evidence. God desires for every believer to be baptized with the Holy Spirit and to speak with other tongues for the purpose of personal spiritual edification. The tongue you received at the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is to assist with the worship and praise of God—the prayer and praise tongue. The public gift is for the edification of the church or the body of Christ in a public setting. Paul notes that in the public gift, tongues should be interpreted so that the church may be edified. In our private/devotional prayer time, it is not always necessary to interpret what we are praying in other tongues. At times we may sense in our spirit that there is something that God wants us to know in relation to what we are praying in other tongues. At these times we can pray that we may interpret in our private devotions.

Read Acts 19:5

After these believers were filled with the Holy Spirit, what was the first manifestation they experienced? Speaking with tongues. If we expect to have greater manifestations of the Holy Spirit in our lives, we must begin with speaking with other tongues. The more we speak with tongues the more the Gifts of the Spirit begin to operate, the less we speak the less they operate. Speaking with Tongues in your personal/devotional time is the doorway into the rest of God's supernatural power (i.e., Spiritual Gifts or God's Supernatural Gifts).

Read through the book of Acts. There are constant manifestations of the Holy Spirit. Why? The New Testament believers were filled with the Holy Spirit and encouraged to be constantly filled. Speaking with other tongues is not only the initial evidence of the Holy Spirit, it is a continual experience for the rest of one's life.

Are tongues for today?

Even though circumstances change, God never changes. He works in the same way now as He did in the early church.

Read Malachi 3:6

Read Hebrews 13:8

God initiated the New Covenant and He carries out the New Covenant. Part of this New Covenant according to Acts not only includes being born again with the Holy Spirit, but being filled or Baptized in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in other tongues.

Who speaks in tongues?

Are tongues for everybody? Some Christians do not believe that speaking in tongues is for everybody. Can you be baptized with the Holy Spirit without speaking in tongues? You can't have the fullness of the Baptism with the Holy Spirit without speaking in tongues. You can have experiences in the Holy Spirit but not the fullness. What does the Bible say?

Read Acts 2:4

At the initial outpouring of the Holy Spirit, everybody in the upper room received the Baptism. All one hundred and twenty disciples received with the evidence of speaking in other tongues—not just the Apostles. You may think perhaps this was only for that specific group of the original disciples and Apostles. But, let's look at another example.

Read 1 Corinthians 14

Paul is talking to the Corinthian church! The Corinthians were gentiles and not the disciples or Apostles. This Scripture is not referring to just a small group of Corinthians. Apparently, the entire church was speaking in tongues. It was so common in the Corinthian church services that everyone was speaking in tongues that Verse 26 says, "How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification."

Everyone had a tongue. Because the early Corinthian church did not understand the difference between personal/devotional tongues and the purpose for tongues in the public setting, Paul had to provide some teaching and correction to restore order to the services. There are also examples in Acts 10:45-46 and Acts 19:6.

Each of these Scriptures reports that the "evidence" of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is speaking in other tongues. Who does the speaking? WE DO!

Purpose of speaking in tongues

Many Christians who receive the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in other tongues may not understand the many purposes it serves in the believer's life. Some may think there is no significant purpose other than the initial evidence. Others may focus more on the ability to pray out mysteries.

But there are a number of purposes for tongues in our personal Christian walk. We will discuss the different purposes to have a full understanding of the importance of tongues in our personal prayer and devotional life.

1. Pray out “mysteries” for our life and for other’s lives

You can't talk about the subject of prayer without eventually getting around to the subject of tongues.

Read Hebrews 11:3

The spiritual world is more real than the natural world. God is SPIRIT (John 4:24). He works in the spiritual realm. When we pray in the Holy Spirit, we pray out “mysteries” or things that God knows that we need to pray out . . . EVEN WHEN WE DON'T KNOW WHAT TO PRAY.

Read Genesis 1:26

We were made in the image of God. God spoke, THEN things happened in the natural (Gen 1). Therefore, WE MUST SPEAK FOR THINGS TO HAPPEN IN THE NATURAL!!! We have a responsibility to carry out God’s plan and purpose, we have been handed the authority back from Jesus, and we have also been given the tools and help through the Holy Spirit. We carry out His will by acting on our faith and speaking the spiritual manifestation into the natural so that it becomes a natural manifestation.

Thankfully, God has provided a way to pray for things that we don’t know how to pray as we ought. We have the affirmation that if believers ask anything according to the will of God, that those prayers will be answered in Christ. However, what if we know to pray, but we don’t know how to pray as we should?

Read Romans 8:26

It says we know not what we should pray for as we ought. It did not say we don't know what to pray for. But we don’t know what to pray because of our limitations. Who will help us? This verse says that the Holy Spirit helps Christians when they do not know how or what to pray. Paul said that he prayed both in the spirit and in his understanding. Praying in our understanding is important but limited. God has provided the ability to speak in tongues so that Christians can speak to God mysteries that they could not otherwise pray out.

But, not only does the Holy Spirit help Christians pray, He also shows up on the scene in answer to prayer and to help the Christian perform God’s works on the earth. In Acts 2, the Holy Spirit showed up after the hundred and twenty had been praying in the upper room. In James 5, we read the account of how the Holy Spirit (symbolized by rain) showed up after Elijah prayed. He follows this example by telling believers that their prayers can be powerful as well. Why? They are backed by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit can also put a burden of prayer for His specific purpose. After you have some experience with prayer, you can determine what kind of a burden you have. For instance, many report that when they have a burden to pray for the lost, they feel lost themselves as they pray. Many times, when you start praying and you get in the spirit, God will begin to speak to you about other needs. Yield to Him and pray as He directs.

2. Edify or Strengthen Ourselves

Teen Challenge is a Christian-based drug and alcohol program in the USA that supports the power of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. The success rate of this program is reportedly 70 percent compared to 1–15 percent in comparable secular program according to the ‘National Institute for Drug Abuse.’^{xvi} Dave Wilkerson, the program’s founder, attributes this success to the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. He stated that after the teens received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, their return to drugs dropped drastically.^{xvii} Why?

Read Jude 20

Speaking with tongues is an excellent way to maintain spiritual strength. Through the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, the individuals in this program strengthened their spirit which helped their spirit to dictate their actions (and not their bodies). The problems that many Christians encounter in their lives are due to spiritual weakness and not just a lack of knowledge. We need to be strong in the Word. But we also need to be strong in the spirit.

Read 1 Corinthians 14:4

God has provided a means whereby we may edify ourselves through praying in tongues. You are not going to be able to edify others if you are not edified.

Read Acts 4:31

Notice in this Scripture, the connection of staying full of the Holy Spirit with boldness. As we build up and refresh our spirit, we will have boldness to go out to do the works that God has called us to do.

When we speak in tongues, it makes it easier to do what God wants us to do. It stimulates our faith and refreshes our spirit. But we also make ourselves more sensitive to the leading and teaching of the Holy Spirit.

Read John 14:26

The Holy Spirit teaches us through God’s Word. The Holy Spirit will remind you of Scripture. The Holy Spirit will help you understand the Bible. You understand that you can receive this revelation knowledge from the Holy Spirit without the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. But, the Baptism of the Holy spirit will make it easier as you sensitize yourself to Him through praying in tongues.

As you read the Bible, ask the Holy Spirit to help you understand. He will begin to reveal the meaning of what you are reading. It will seem like your heart will be warm on the inside or like someone turns on a light. You see everything clearly. The Holy Spirit will help you know what is right and what is wrong.

3. To speak to God and magnify and glorify God supernaturally

Another purpose of tongues is to speak supernaturally to God and assist in the worship of God.

Read 1 Corinthians 14:2

God under the New Covenant has provided a means of supernatural communication with Himself through speaking in tongues. The devil does not understand this language. You are speaking mysteries to God (mysteries to you, but not to God!).

Read Acts 10:46

It can also be the perfect worship—magnifying and glorifying God without tainting it with our thoughts, expectations, and intent. He heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. From the natural standpoint, God became bigger and more real to them.

4. *Other purposes for the Baptism of the Holy Spirit*

Some other purposes for the Baptism of the Holy Spirit include:

- *Bring the tongue under subjection—when you are praying in tongues, you can't speak against the truth of God's Word*
- *Protects us from contamination from the world—when you pray in tongues throughout your day, you will be strengthened by the Holy Spirit's power in your spirit to protect you from worldly contamination (such as vulgar talk or ungodly images that you may come in contact with throughout your day)*
- *Doorway to the supernatural/Spiritual Gifts—as we pray in tongues, it makes it easier for the Holy Spirit to use us as He wills to function in Spiritual Gifts*
- *We receive power to walk out our Christian life. Receiving the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is not necessary to go to heaven. When you are born again and accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior, you are heaven bound. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit is a gift that God has given us to give us the power to walk out our Christian life and be witnesses to him*
- *The ability to pray perfect, God-directed prayers for ourselves and others*
- *The ability to edify ourselves and make ourselves more sensitive to the Holy Spirit. We are more able to do what He wants us to do on this earth and carry out the plan He has purposed for our lives*
- *Through our ability to offer God pure and perfect praise—praise that isn't sifted through our own limited knowledge*

As a result, because we become more sensitive to what the Holy Spirit is saying to us, we are more effective in our ministry to the world. We are praying the “right” things and saying the “right” things to the right people at the right time and thanking God and praising Him for His wondrous works—even those works that we may not know about or understand completely.

How to receive the Baptism of the Holy Spirit

There are many Christians that desire to receive the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and speak in tongues but have difficulty receiving. One of the main causes for this has to do with

misunderstanding who is doing the praying. The Holy Spirit doesn't speak in tongues through you.

Read 1 Corinthians 14:14

Notice the phrase “my spirit prays.” The Holy Spirit is not praying through you. Your spirit is doing the praying. It is the Holy Spirit helping our spirits to pray. The Holy Spirit gives us the utterance, but we are the ones moving our mouths and our spirits are doing the praying (with the help of the Holy Spirit).

Read Act 2:4

Notice the phrase “the Spirit gave them utterance.” Another translation says “the Spirit prompted their utterances.” We can see that the believers had an urge or prompting to speak in other tongues. You may feel an urge to say something—or like your tongue wants to start saying something. The Holy Spirit won't force you to say it. But when you feel this urge or prompting you must yield to it and let the words come out of your mouth. You can stifle this urge by not yielding to it.

The other main reason that people have difficulty receiving the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is due to lack of faith. Do you believe that all believers are promised the Baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in other tongues? Do you believe it is available to you? If not, you should go back and read the book of Acts paying close attention to the verses where people were filled with the Holy Spirit. Faith comes by hearing the word of God. Meditate on these verses until you are convinced in your spirit.

Then, receiving the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is similar to receiving salvation. How did you receive salvation? By believing in your heart and receiving and saying with your mouth. How do you know you are saved? Because the Holy Spirit gave you evidence by witnessing to your spirit. You receive Baptism of Holy Spirit in the same way—by believing and acting or speaking in faith. The Holy Spirit will give you evidence that you have received by speaking in tongues. Praying comes from the spirit, not from the head. You can't make it happen on your own, but you must open your mouth in faith and start speaking so that the Holy Spirit can give utterance. Many people try to go from their spirit to their head, then out of their mouth. But you can't understand it. It goes from your spirit to your mouth. You must take your head out of it.

It's not something that you have to “wait” or tarry for. The only instance of tarrying is with the disciples after Jesus' resurrection because they were waiting for the Holy Spirit to manifest Himself on the earth. This was the manifestation of the promise made to them in John 14-16. However, we don't have to tarry. The Holy Spirit has already manifested Himself on the Earth. Every other instance of people receiving the Baptism of the Holy Spirit in the Bible received it immediately. It's received not by waiting, but through faith.

Calm your mind, take a deep breath, and exhale. As you exhale let your mouth make the words that the Holy Spirit is prompting you to speak.

You must do the praying. The Holy Spirit will not force you. You may feel stupid at first but keep going. The devil tries to make you feel that way to get you to stop. Just keep reminding yourself of scripture.



SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY

A few years ago, we took our kids to a theme park in the USA. They had many rides that used virtual reality. If you aren't familiar with this technology, it makes 3-D images appear that seem real. As we traveled through tunnels and cityscapes of a specific ride, a person jumped on our cart! But, as you tried to reach out to the person, your hand met nothing but air. The person wasn't real. They were a created fake image to look real. They may look real, but they weren't reality.

This reminds me of what Christian's face as we navigate this world. There are a lot of things that we come into contact with and circumstances that we face that aren't our true reality. There are suggestions that the devil will try to put in our thoughts to make us think something is real in our life when the opposite is true. I think this is especially true with this topic of the Believer's Authority. One of the most destructive truths to the devil's plans is wrapped up in this truth about authority. If we allow ourselves to be distracted and deceived by the "fake images" that the devil tries to use to thwart us, he can keep us from fully functioning in the position and authority that will cause severe damage to his kingdom. He has a lot to lose. But, if we can fully understand and step fully into this authority, we have a lot to gain—not just for ourselves but for God's Kingdom!

What is our measuring stick of truth? The truth, or reality, is found in God's Word. I pray that as we dig in the Word to discover what the Bible says about this topic, the Holy Spirit will enlighten your eyes to the truth. That you are empowered through revelation knowledge to act upon this truth for God's Kingdom and glory.

What is Authority?

Authority is delegated power. We see a common example of authority in our everyday lives if we have ever seen a policeman directing traffic. Policemen who direct traffic during the rush hour just raise their hands and the cars stop. These men don't have the physical power to stop the vehicles if the drivers choose not to stop. But they don't use their own strength to stop traffic. Their strength to stop the cars is based on the authority that has been given to them by the government they serve. People recognize that authority and stop their cars when the policeman lifts his hand. But what if the policeman didn't know he had the authority to hold up his hand to stop cars? What if he was not aware of that fact? There would likely be a mess of cars and a big traffic jam. If the policeman doesn't know his authority and act on it, it will have a significant impact on the traffic.

Authority isn't something we earn. It is something that is delegated to us by someone with power. The same is true in Christianity. We will see in this lesson that Jesus has delegated authority to us. However, just like the policeman, if we don't know our authority and act on it there will be significant impact.

We must ask what authority do we have as Christians? And how are we expected to act on that authority?

Our Authority in Jesus

If Christians have some type of authority delegated to them. Who is delegating the authority? What power is backing the authority?

To fully understand this authority, we have to go back to the book of beginnings—Genesis. God created the heavens and the earth by speaking them into existence. Then, He created his “masterpiece” of creation—Adam or man. God gave him all authority over the earth, His creation. He gave Adam authority to name all the animals. This person, Adam, was made in His very image so that he could have a relationship with and fellowship (or spend time) with him. In order that man would also have somebody to help him on the earth, God created Eve or woman. Adam and Eve lived a blessed life in a beautiful Garden. The only rule God established was that they could not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil or that they would surely die. Satan, disguised as a serpent, came to Eve and told her, “You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” (Genesis 3:4-5). Eve fell for the deception and ate the fruit. Then, she gave fruit from the tree to Adam and he also ate. What a sad day for mankind. In that instant, through disobedience, man died spiritually and was separated from God. Man also leased his authority to the devil. At that moment, Satan became the “god of this world.” He had taken over the authority originally delegated to Adam. But God never changed. He proves this almost immediately after the act of disobedience by telling the serpent, “And I will put enmity between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.” He immediately started making provision for restoring the lost fellowship and authority. This is the first prophecy of Jesus in the Bible which we see later fulfilled in the New Testament!

Fast forward thousands of years. The first prophecy about Jesus is finally about to come to pass. Jesus was born to a virgin. He met all the requirements of law and lived a sinless life. Around thirty years of age, He started His ministry and gathered a group of disciples. It is in this setting that He starts to give a glimpse of the authority that will be available to all Christians.

Read Luke 10:19

Although the word “power” is used twice in this verse, they are not the same Greek word. What Jesus actually said was, “I have given you AUTHORITY to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the POWER of the enemy . . .” In speaking about “serpents and scorpions,” Jesus is talking about the power of the devil, demons, and evil spirits. As He sent out the seventy disciples, He shared the idea of authority. Not natural authority like a policeman has to stop cars.

But He is introducing them to spiritual authority. How did Jesus ultimately make this spiritual authority available to every Christian?

Read John 14:12-14

Jesus said that whatever we demand in His name, He will do it. He also said that we would do greater things. How can He promise this? He had a purpose. He came to Earth for a specific purpose. His ministry on Earth is summarized in the following scripture:

Read 1 Timothy 3:16

What did Jesus accomplish through His ministry on Earth and His death, burial, and resurrection? Through Jesus, God restored our good standing and fellowship with Him. However, Jesus also did something about the lost authority through His redemptive work.

Read Colossians 2:15

Read Philippians 2:9-10

Through His death, burial, and resurrection, He triumphed over Satan and all his evil spirits. When we make Him Lord of our lives, it gives us access to the inheritance. His rule and reign establish His Kingdom on earth. He does that by establishing His rule and reign in the lives of the believers! He released the power of God in the lives of His people and effectively within the Earth. When we allow Him to be Lord of our lives, we reign with Him and WE ARE FREE.

The key to our inheritance and to our victory over the devil and demons is found in what Jesus accomplished when He established the New Covenant with His own blood. What Jesus did in establishing a New Covenant based on better promises accomplished the means for us to have position, relationship, and fellowship with God our Father at long last. At this point, God has highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name. That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth. Every spiritual being in all three kingdoms is now under Jesus' feet. But, what does this mean for us?

To understand our spiritual authority, we must first understand our spiritual position in Christ.

Read Ephesians 1:19-23

This is talking about the resurrection of Jesus. Jesus is seated in heaven far above all principality, power, might and dominion and every name that is named. Jesus is in the highest position in the universe. Notice especially Verses 22 and 23—ALL things are under His feet. What does that mean? Jesus is the head of the Church. The church is the body of Christ. The head and the body are connected.

Read Ephesians 2:6-7

When Christ was raised, His body was raised. When Christ was seated, His body was seated. We are seated together with Jesus in heavenly places. That is our spiritual position! The Church—every believer—has the same authority over Satan as Christ the head does. What is the Christian’s position in Christ? Far above all the power of the Devil. Christians do not have to try to be seated above the Devil. Christians do not have to pray to be seated above the Devil. Jesus Christ has given to us spiritual authority. Our authority is connected to the redemptive work of Christ. The value of our authority rests on the power that is behind that authority. God Himself is the power behind our authority!

What is the significance of the name of Jesus in relation to this authority? In Philippians 2:9-10, it says that the name of Jesus has authority in all three worlds—heaven, earth, and under the earth. In the Old Testament, a name represented all that a person was and owned. If you acted in someone’s name, you acted on their behalf or in their authority. Our modern-day equivalent would be a legal power of attorney. If my husband gives me power of attorney, I can make decisions and act on his behalf as if I am him.

Through His death, burial, and resurrection, He legally made a way for us to fellowship with Him. But He also provided us with His name or power of attorney to act on His behalf on this earth (just as if we are Him). We can not only have relationship with Him, but we have access to ALL of what Jesus had when He died. This is our inheritance.

Jesus provided His Name as our inheritance. He gave us full use of His name so that we could act in His authority in all things that He has restored to us—not only on our behalf, but on the behalf of others. The following Scripture now becomes clearer.

Read John 14:13-14

Jesus can make us this promise because He knew the power and authority behind His name. He also knew His position with the Father (He is my beloved Son in whom God is well pleased). Jesus can make this promise because HE is at the right hand of the Father forever making intercession for US (Hebrews 7:25). Now we can understand why our authority is tied to His name. Now we understand the authority or power backing our prayer IN HIS NAME. We should remember and be aware of the power and authority backing our prayer. God sees us just as He sees Jesus . . . It is as if Jesus Himself is making the request!

How do we exercise our Authority?

He has deposited His very self into us. This is the truth of the covenant reality. We live and act on the word of God that is given to us, not on feeling. We agree with God in every situation. Our one-ness with Christ establishes our position with Christ. Christians do not have to fast to be seated above the devil. We don’t have to be afraid of the devil. Our position and seating with Christ are facts. They are realities. All we must do is understand our position and learn to use the authority Christ has given us.

How many things did God put under Jesus’ feet? All things. That includes Satan, evil spirits, sin, sickness, disease, and poverty. Satan cannot control you unless you allow him to. But you have

to know your position in Christ and then use your authority against the devil for it to become a reality in your life.

Read John 8:32

A famous preacher told a story about an older woman who worked for a wealthy family. As she grew old and was no longer able to work, she held fond memories of her employers. Yet, she lived in poverty. One day the preacher was visiting her house when he noticed a paper hanging on the wall. The paper had been given to her by her last employer. She couldn't read so she didn't know what it said. However, because she held such fond memories of them, she hung it on her wall to remember them. But, as the preacher looked at the paper, he suspected that it wasn't just a note of well wishes as the old woman thought. He asked her if he could show it to a lawyer. The old woman quickly agreed. She was surprised to find out that it was not just a note, but rather an inheritance worth quite a bit of money. She had this paper in her possession through all her years of poverty. But, because she didn't know what it said, she couldn't act on it. She could have been living her last years comfortably. But because of her ignorance, she did not take full advantage of the inheritance.

Many Christians are the same way. We have an amazing inheritance available to us. But, if we don't know it, understand it, and act on it, we will not benefit from it. You must know or understand the truth before the truth can make you free. Then, you must act on the truth you know. Then, the truth that you use or act on will make you free. Christians must exercise or use the authority Christ has given to them.

There are no verses in the New Testament that tell the Christian to pray to God or to ask God to help the Christian to overcome the devil.

Read Mark 16:17

In this Scripture, the first sign that is to follow the believer is that they are to exercise their authority over the devil.

Read James 4:7

James didn't ask to get Jesus to resist the devil. He also didn't ask to get a minister or another Christian to resist the devil. 'You' is the understood subject of the sentence. Submitting to God means submitting to His Word. You must be a doer of the Word.

Read 1 Peter 5:8-9

Who is to resist? YOU are to resist. Peter wouldn't tell Christians to resist if it was not possible to resist.

Read Ephesians 4:27

If Paul tells us NOT to give place to the devil, that means you CAN give place to the devil. Yes, Christians can give the devil opportunities to work against them. On the other hand, if you can keep him from having place or working in your life, then you must have authority over him. The devil can't take any place in your life unless you give it to him by permission, ignorance, or failing to exercise your authority.

Read the following Scripture:

Matthew 16:19 - Who has the keys to the Kingdom of heaven?

Who has the responsibility to loose or bind things on Earth?

The reason many things happen in our lives is because we allow them. God allows them because we allow them. Why does God allow them? Because He is not in control of your life—YOU ARE. God has given you authority over your life. If you do not use your authority, many times nothing will change in your life and there is nothing God can do.

How do we use our Authority?

We exercise our authority through our knowledge and practice of God's Word.

Read Ephesians 1:3

The knowledge that we need includes our victory in Christ over Satan. This includes our spiritual position in Christ. This includes deliverance and freedom from everything associated with Satan.

Read John 8:32

Knowing and acting on God's Word makes you free. You must not only know the Word, but you must also act on the Word. Say who you are in Christ, what you have in Christ, what you can do through Christ. Refer to the Lesson "How God Sees You." Use the Word of God as the sword of the Spirit. In Ephesians 6:17, the only offensive part of the armor is the RHEMA (Spoken Word).

Read Luke 4:1-13

Jesus was tempted in the wilderness by Satan. How did Jesus respond to Satan's offers of temptation? Jesus spoke or quoted three verses from the book of Deuteronomy. He used the Word to resist the devil. This is the only example we have in the Bible of Jesus showing us how to resist the devil. He didn't just think it. He SPOKE it. We have seen the importance of speaking God's Word in both the lessons on "Faith" and "Change the Way you Think."

Read Isaiah 55:11

The Word will not benefit you unless you get it in your mouth.

We also exercise our authority by using the name of Jesus. When I was on a mission trip to India, we were ministering in people's homes throughout the region where we were staying. We were traveling in groups of 2–3 and sharing the Gospel through worship and messages. One specific evening, I opened the service. Then, I handed it over to another person to share a message. It was a small house, so I moved to the back of the room. As the message was shared, a young lady in the middle of the floor fell to her side, curled in a fetal position, and started spinning so fast that her hair was flying behind her. The movements were not physically possible. As this scene unfolded, people were jumping out windows and pushing to get out the doors. I was pushed further back against the wall in the mad dash of people to exit the house as quickly as possible. It was at that moment that the speaker spoke to the evil spirit in this woman and told it to leave in the name of Jesus. I will never forget what happened next. The young woman's body went limp. We rushed to her side to ensure she was okay. Then, we shared Jesus with her. She accepted Jesus in her heart that night! Jesus' name is powerful! Every evil spirit must bow at the name of Jesus.

Read Mark 15:17

It is important to understand that your authority is in the name of Jesus. All the power of God is placed in that name. It has the power to overcome circumstances and destroy the works of the devil. He is already defeated. We must use the inheritance that we have been given. The most common way to use the name of Jesus is in prayer.

Read John 14:12-14

In this verse, 'demand' simply means using His name with prayer against the enemy and against circumstances in our daily lives. The simplest way to pray is to demand our rights in our own life.

But, as we saw from my experience in India, we can also declare His truth over some situations in the name of Jesus to get results. But experiences are meaningless without Scripture.

Read Acts 3:2-6

As Peter was walking past the Beautiful Gate, he passed a lame man begging for money. He didn't pray for the man. What did he do? He told him to walk in the name of Jesus. Peter understood the authority and power backing the name. All power or authority has been invested in the name of Jesus. The name of Jesus works in both our prayers and declares.

What do we have Authority over?

Adoption day. My husband and I built our family through adoption. We decided to offer to foster children to adopt. That means that we would foster the children first. While we were fostering our children, the state was their legal guardian. We had limited rights as foster parents. We couldn't travel without permission. We had to get permission to participate in certain activities.

We did not have the legal right to make most decisions for the kids while we were foster parents. As foster parents, we had to understand the limitations of our authority. Finally, we were able to adopt. It was a happy day for our family. But it also brought many changes to our authority. When we adopted our kids, we now had the legal right to exercise our authority as parents. On adoption day, we received the full rights in the eyes of the law to exercise our authority as a parent for our child.

When we discuss authority of the believer, we also must understand any limitations of our authority. We must ask ourselves the question—are there limits or boundaries to our spiritual authority? The answer is yes. The authority that Christ gave to every believer is spiritual authority. Christ's purpose through His redemptive work was to give back to the Christian the spiritual authority that was lost because of Adam's sin. What spiritual authority did Adam have?

Read Genesis 2:15

Adam was responsible to guard and keep his garden. Adam's spiritual authority was confined to protecting his garden. In other words, his authority was his life and what was under his control. The spiritual authority we have been given is for the individual believer to guard or protect his own life, the life of his family, and those things that under his personal control.

Read James 4:7 - Who does the resisting?

Read Ephesians 4:27 - Who doesn't give place to the devil?

Read 1 Peter 5:8-10 - Who must be sober and vigilant?

In each of these biblical examples, the Scripture is clear that the subject is YOU. You have the authority to address the devil in your own life or your own realm of control.

For example, I cannot exercise authority over my neighbor's property. My neighbor has control of that property. I can exercise authority over my own property that is in my control. We do not have authority outside of our natural and spiritual boundaries. We do not have authority over other people's will. We only have authority over demon spirits that come against us personally. We can only exercise authority over demonic influence in the lives of others when we have permission.

Jesus never forced Himself or His will on anyone. He asked the person permission or what they wanted Him to do. The only exception is when He was ministering to demon possessed people.

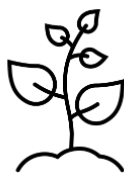
There are some areas that Scripture tells us that we have authority. In these cases, the spiritual authority that we have been given is for the purpose of expanding the Kingdom of God. Read the following Scriptures:

Ephesians 6:18

Mark 16:15-20

Luke 10:19 (but read the entire chapter)

This spiritual authority is for every believer to be able to carry out the command of Jesus in Mark 16. Also, this spiritual authority is to enable every believer to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in intercessory prayer. This kind of prayer moves the believer into a partnership with God that allows God to move and change things in the world around us. When it comes to using spiritual authority in other areas that the Scripture does not specifically address, we must have a leading from the Holy Spirit.



HOW GOD GUIDES US

Our family recently took a trip to the Holy Land. It was the trip of a lifetime that we planned for over ten years. In order to get the most out of our trip, we joined a tour led by a tour guide. The tour guide was an expert in the Holy Land. As a result, he was able to skillfully guide us safely through the Holy Land and point out the sites of most interest. Our trip to the Holy Land would have been very different if we would have tried to figure it out on our own instead of relying on our tour guide. After all, he knew what we should see, where we should go, and what we should do.

The same is true with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the third person in the Godhead. He is one with God. When we accept Jesus in our hearts, we become one with Jesus. The Holy Spirit recreates our spirit at the new birth and comes to live on the inside of us—in our hearts. We have the ultimate tour guide that can know and reveal God’s thoughts to us on the inside. If we listen, He will tell us what we should see in a situation, where we should go, and what we should do. Through this intimate relationship, God calls each Christian to a specific ministry and equips him with the ability to discern that plan with the help of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is available to lead and guide the believer in both aspects of daily life as well as in ministry activities.

God in Us

God lives in the life of the Christian through the person of the Holy Spirit. Once we become Christians, we must change our thinking to be “God-inside” minded.

When the kids were little, there was a restaurant that had a buffet where kids eat free. With six kids, we would go there often. The buffets were filled with meats, breads, cheeses, and even desserts. There was food all around us at the restaurant. But, with six hungry kids, just seeing the food around us wasn’t good enough. We would take turns filling plates of food to share with the kids. We would put it on the table. They could smell it, but it still wasn’t good enough. Finally, we were able to distribute the food to the kids’ individual plates and they were able to eat and fill their hungry bellies. There is a difference between being with the food and even near the food. The only thing that satisfied them was to have the food in them. God is not only with us, God is not only near us, God is in us.

Read 1 Corinthians 3:16 - Who dwells in us?

Read 1 Corinthians 6:19 - Who does our body belong to?

Read 2 Corinthians 6:16 - Where does God dwell?

After you accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior, these Scriptures apply to you. The Holy Spirit, whom you received from God, lives in you. You don't belong to yourselves. You are the temple of the living God. As God said, "I will live and walk among them. I will be their God, and they will be my people."

Read Romans 8:9 - How are we to live?

Read 1 John 4:4 - Where is God's spirit?

What is more powerful than the world?

If Christians would fully understand this spiritual truth, it would change their lives. God created us with emotions. I am thankful that I can sense God. I am thankful that there are times that I can feel God and it affects my emotions. However, we must accept the fact that God is living in us whether we feel or sense Him every moment of our lives. If we develop an awareness of God's presence, it will affect the way we talk, the way we live and the way we treat other people. Also, if we are constantly conscious of God living in us, then we will acknowledge God in every situation of life. The Holy Spirit is God's presence living in us.

If the Holy Spirit lives in us, we must ask ourselves a question. What has the Holy Spirit come to do in us?

In this lesson, we will unpack some of these roles of the Holy Spirit to better understand how we can maximize His influence in our discipleship journey and allow Him to be our tour guide or lead us in life.

Who is the Holy Spirit? What has He come to do in your life?

Who is the Holy Spirit? What has the Holy Spirit come to do in us? Unfortunately, very few Christians understand why the Holy Spirit is living in them. To move forward in our discipleship journey, we must fully understand who He is, why He is living in us, and what He wants to do for us.

To fully understand what the Holy Spirit has come to do in your life, you must learn to see him as a person. He is not just an influence or a force or just power. He is a Person who lives in us and is with us every moment of our lives. He has come to renew our spiritual life, to give us strength, comfort, peace, joy, to guide us in life, to help us understand the Bible, to help us discover God's will for our lives.

Unfortunately, many Christians never take advantage of what the Holy Spirit wants to do for them because they never take the time to become familiar with the Holy Spirit. When most people talk about the Holy Spirit, they refer to Him as the third member of the Godhead (Trinity). Most Christians understand God the Father. Every Christian understands Jesus. Very few Christians understand the Holy Spirit—who He is and what He has come to do in and through our lives as Christians.

In an earlier lesson (“God Kind of Love”), we asked ourselves the question—if you knew you only had one day left on Earth, what would you share with people? I would share things I thought would be most important for them to know. I believe that Jesus did the same. John Chapters 13–17 contain what Jesus taught His disciples just before He was crucified, died, and rose from the dead. In the previous lesson, I encouraged you to read these chapters through without stopping. If you don’t remember them, I would encourage to go back and read them again.

In these chapters, Jesus spent much of His time talking about two topics—Love and the Holy Spirit. We focused on love in a previous lesson. In this lesson, we will focus on the Holy Spirit. If Jesus thought this subject was important enough that He spent the majority of His last Words on earth talking about it, then we need to take notice. In these chapters, Jesus shared who the Holy Spirit is and what He came to do. Much of what Jesus taught was preparation for His disciples. He was preparing them for His departure and for the coming of the Holy Spirit.

Read John 16:1-3

Jesus is preparing His disciples for His departure. At this time, His disciples did not fully understand what He was saying. They thought Jesus came to establish a natural physical kingdom. Yet, Jesus came to establish a spiritual kingdom.

Read John 14:16

Read John 16:16-18

In these passages, Jesus introduces the person of the Holy Spirit. Notice the word that Jesus used to describe the Holy Spirit. In some Bible translations, the word “Comforter” is used. The word literally means someone who comes and stands by your side to help you. Really “Helper” is the best word to describe the Holy Spirit. The amplified version of the Bible uses seven words to describe what the Holy Spirit has come to do in the life of the Christian—Comforter, Counselor, Helper, Intercessor, Advocate, Strengtheners, and Standby.

Jesus also calls Him the Spirit of Truth. That simply means the Holy Spirit will reveal truth.

Read John 17:17

He won’t reveal just any truth, but truth as God knows it. The Holy Spirit has come to help you understand God’s truth.

In John 16:17, Jesus says that the world cannot accept the Holy Spirit. That means that the Holy Spirit only comes to live in the life of the Christian. Those who are not Christians find it difficult to understand who the Holy Spirit is and what He has come to do. We will look at the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of an unbeliever in a future lesson (“Sharing the Gospel”).

But, notice Jesus said the disciples knew the Holy Spirit because He was living with them. How? The Holy Spirit was with the disciples in the form of Jesus. Jesus was the disciples’ present comforter. Jesus told His disciples that He was going away. However, He told them that He would send someone in His place.

Read John 14:16-17

The Holy Spirit our Helper. What does this mean? First, we need to understand that a helper is a supportive role. A helper is a person that willingly helps someone else do something. They aren’t in control of the situation. A helper supports the person doing the task. This is an important fact to understand. The Holy Spirit won’t do things for you or force you to do things. But He will help you if you let Him.

What will He help us with? Let’s look at two key Scripture passages to understand how the Holy Spirit helps us.

Read John 14:26

Read John 16:13

Based on these Scriptures, there are four distinct ways that the Holy Spirit will help us:

- 1. Teach you all things as God knows them*
- 2. Bring to your remembrance the things of God*
- 3. Guide you into all truth—truth as God knows it*
- 4. He will show you things to come. What does that mean? He will show you things concerning your own personal life. He will show you things that will affect you. You must believe that He will show you. You must ask Him to show you things to come.*

He will help you understand the Bible. He will help you discover God’s will for your life. He will speak to you. God speaks to you through the Holy Spirit. Since the Holy Spirit lives in your spirit, He will speak to you in your spirit (we will talk about this more later).

The Holy Spirit is our teacher. Another work of the Holy Spirit in our lives is the work of teaching us. The Holy Spirit has come to teach us and to reveal things to us, to help us make decisions in life. In John 14:26, Jesus was speaking to His disciples. Jesus was their current teacher. However, Jesus was about to leave. Jesus said, “I will send you another comforter—another teacher.” The Holy Spirit has come to teach us or help us understand the Bible or what God may say to our hearts/spirits so that we are able to act on it and apply His truth to our life.

How does the Holy Spirit teach us? How does He guide or lead us? How does He help us make the right decisions in life? The main way the Holy Spirit teaches us is through God's Word. He will also bring the Word that we know to our remembrance.

Read Acts 11:15-16

Peter was speaking to a group of Gentiles (or non-Jews). While he was speaking, the Gentiles received the Holy Spirit into their lives. Then, Peter remembered what the Lord said to them in Acts 1. We should take note that Acts 1 took place about ten years earlier! This is a work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit reminded Peter of what Jesus said. The same thing happens in the life of the Christian. The Holy Spirit will remind you of scripture.

The Holy Spirit will help you understand the Bible. He will guide you in truth so that you can apply it to your life.

Read Luke 24:13-16, 27

Jesus' followers were going to a village named Emmaus (about seven miles from Jerusalem) and they were talking to each other about all the things that had happened. As they talked and discussed, Jesus himself drew near and walked along with them. They saw him, but somehow did not recognize him. Jesus heard what they were discussing and explained to them what was said about Himself in all the Scriptures beginning with the books of Moses and the writings of all the prophets. What happened when He did this?

Read Luke 24:32

While Jesus began to explain the Scriptures, their hearts began to feel warm on the inside. Something happened in their hearts. They began to understand what the Bible was saying. As you read the Bible, ask the Holy Spirit to help you understand. He will begin to reveal the meaning of what you are reading. It will seem like your heart will be warm on the inside or like someone turns on a light. You see everything clearly. This is revelation knowledge. The Holy Spirit will reveal the spiritual truth to you. He will guide you in truth.

The Inward Witness

The Holy Spirit will help you know what is right and what is wrong. The Holy Spirit will help you make the right decisions in life. Remember, the first (and main) way the Holy Spirit will lead us and help us make decisions is through the Bible.

Read Psalm 119:105

Read Psalm 119:130

Read 2 Timothy 3:15

Our decisions should agree with principles found in the Bible. The Holy Spirit will never lead us outside of the truth found in the Bible. Whatever leading we may think we receive from the Holy Spirit, we should always check to make sure that it is in agreement with Scripture. God and the Holy Spirit never miss it, but we can miss it sometimes. The Bible talks about how to live with one another, husbands and wives, children, work, honesty, working hard, etc. For instance, if you felt the Holy Spirit told you to leave your husband or wife for another person, this is not in alignment with Scripture. The Holy Spirit would never tell you to do something that is not in agreement with the Bible. He will always lead you in truth—and God’s Word is truth. The Bible gives us direction concerning the majority of what we need to know in life.

Read 2 Timothy 3:16

Everything in the Scriptures is God’s Word. All of it is useful for teaching, helping people, and correcting them and showing them how to live. The Bible is God speaking to me and you. The Bible is a book filled with godly principles. There may not be a specific verse that answers every question you have. However, once you learn its principles, you will be able to determine what God’s thoughts are concerning every important area of life. The will of God is found in the Word of God. The more a person grows, the more he begins to think from God’s perspective.

The Second Way the Holy Spirit helps us make decisions is to speak to our hearts (we sometimes call this an inward witness). It is a witness or knowing in our spirit. How does He do this?

Read John 4:24

Read 1 Corinthians 2:9-14

God is Spirit. At the new birth, the Holy Spirit recreates our spirit and lives in us. Since God is Spirit, He will communicate with us in His realm. He will communicate with us through our spirit. The Holy Spirit will reveal the things of God to our spirit. We have received this Spirit so that He can communicate to us the things that have freely been given to us by God. They are spiritually discerned—the Holy Spirit communicating with our spirit.

Read Romans 8:14,16

It says the Holy Spirit will testify to your spirit. In other words, there is something in our heart or spirit that says yes or no. There is something in our spirit that agrees or disagrees with what we are about to do or are currently doing. Another translation of the Bible says, “The Spirit himself endorses our inward conviction . . .” When we say we have a witness to something, we mean that deep down in our hearts, there is an inward agreement to it. Sometimes it is an inward approval, sometimes it may be an inward disapproval. A genuine inward witness from God will persist whereas emotion or feeling will soon pass away.

Read Colossians 3:15

The inward witness can act as a source of confirmation after a decision has been made or is about to be made. It is a peace that cannot be shaken or changed regardless of circumstances,

regardless of what your emotions are saying, regardless of the thoughts coming into you mind from without.

Read 1 John 2:26,27

Sometimes the inward witness will be negative or not peaceful. This is just as telling as the unshaken peace. In this passage, John was instructing these Christians to not listen to false teaching. John said that we have the Holy Spirit living in us. What will He do in us? The Holy Spirit will tell us what is right and what is wrong concerning teaching, concerning what we hear, concerning how we should live our lives. We won't have this unshaken peace when something is wrong, incorrect, or we are moving in a wrong direction. In fact, we will have the opposite—discomfort and lack of peace. Sometimes people have described it as a “scratching” in their spirit. John is saying that it is not necessary to ask anyone what is right and what is wrong because the Holy Spirit who lives in you will tell you.

Sometimes you may get words or phrases that come up in your spirit. How can you say that it is from God and not you? First, it will always be in alignment with God's Word. Second, it will come from inside your heart and not your head or outside. Third, it will never condemn (see Romans 8:1). If it does not meet these criteria, it is likely not from God. However, keep in mind that this is not the main way that God will lead us and we should never seek after voices to get leading from God.

As my husband and I decided to start our family, I started looking for a job that would be a better fit with a growing family. I sent out my resume, interviewed, and was finally offered a job. Everything seemed good naturally with accepting this job—the hours were what I was looking for, the pay was better than my current job, and it provided some flexibility for a growing family. It seemed to make sense to take this job, so I started moving in that direction. I completed my paperwork and drove to the company to hand it in for processing. I walked in the door and right up to the reception desk. As I approached the desk, I suddenly had an inward witness that this was NOT the job that I was supposed to accept. It was almost like someone poured ice water in my spirit. The inward witness isn't always so dramatic or even an audible voice. Sometimes it is just a gentle nudge on the inside. In any case, it was a very uncomfortable witness—and NOT a sense of peace. I politely told the receptionist that I changed my mind and that I would not be able to accept the job. I walked out of the building and called my husband. He was a little shocked when I told him that I had turned down the job and why. Yet, he was very supportive in my decision. Within weeks, I received an interview and offer for a large international research company that would allow me to work from my home office! I have worked at that company for over fifteen years, and it has been a blessing to our family. The Holy Spirit guided me in the affairs of life.

There are three important points I want to make here. First, sometimes when we don't know God's will in a situation, we need to start moving forward with what seems right. It is easier for God to redirect someone that is moving in a direction than it is for Him to try to get someone to move in a direction. I started moving in a direction that seemed right to me and the Holy Spirit was able to direct me in the way that He wanted me to take.

Second, the Holy Spirit would not have forced me to decline the job. He provided an inward witness, but I still had to yield and act on this inward witness. The Holy Spirit is a gentleman and a helper. He will not force us to accept His help. The Holy Spirit is very polite. He will not intrude into our lives. He will not force Himself into our lives. We must ask Him or invite Him into our lives. We must ask Him to comfort us, counsel us, help us, and strengthen us. We should thank Him every day for being in us and acknowledge His presence.

Finally, I would caution you against looking for a physical sign to determine God's will or direction in a situation. Just because I was offered the job didn't mean that this was the direction I was supposed to take. If I would have based my understanding of God's leading on the "open door" of the job offer, I would have missed God. We have already learned about how Satan is the "god of this world." That means that he can influence the physical world that we live in as well as the people in it that allow themselves to be influenced by him. For this reason, basing God's leading on physical circumstances is very unreliable. God can open doors for us. But, so can the devil. Sometimes we are tempted to judge God's leading by what our physical senses tell us. But God doesn't say that He will guide us through our physical senses.

Read Proverbs 20:27

The Bible does not say that the body or mind of man is the candle of the Lord. No, the Word says that the spirit of man is the candle of the Lord. God will guide us and enlighten us through our spirit. The two main ways that God will lead you is through His Word (Bible) and through the inward witness (your spirit).

Practicing the Word

Another important aspect of allowing the Holy Spirit to lead us is practicing the Word. One way that we allow the Holy Spirit to work in us is through the words we speak. Faith is released through the words that we speak.

Read Hebrews 11:6

We cannot please God without Faith. We must approach God in faith. Everything that we receive from God is received by faith. The same is true concerning the work of the Holy Spirit. If we constantly speak negative words—words filled with doubt, unbelief, fear, worry—words that are contrary to what God says, we will limit what the Holy Spirit wants to do in our lives.

Read Numbers 13 & 14

Because Israel said, "We cannot go into the Promised Land," God was unable to bring them into the land He promised to them. In other words, God was unable to do everything He wanted to do in their lives because He could not get Israel to believe Him and to act on His word.

Read Mark 6:5-6

Jesus was not able to perform any miracles except that He placed his hands on a few sick people and healed them. He was greatly surprised because the people did not have faith. Then Jesus

went to the villages around there, teaching the people. Jesus was unable to perform any miracle or mighty work in His own hometown of Nazareth. Why? Because of their unbelief or because the people did not have faith. Likewise, we must believe that the Holy Spirit lives in us. We must believe that He will do everything that He says He will do. We must act on God's Word. We must say what God's Word says about us. Then, the Holy Spirit can operate in and through our lives.

Read Luke 6:47-49

Jesus is telling the story of building two houses. He is talking about hearing His sayings and doing them. The man who built his house with a strong foundation—meaning he heard the Word and acted on—could not be shaken when the storms came. In Verse 49, it is clear that the man heard and knew what he was supposed to do. But since he didn't act on what he heard and knew, he was not able to stand the storms. Knowing and hearing the Word is only the first part. We must also practice the Word by doing it. We must apply it to our circumstances and situations. We must do what God tells us to do and we will stay unshaken in the storms of life.

Recharging our spirit

The problems and challenges of life can affect us and cause us to become weary and discouraged. We must keep our spirits strengthened and refreshed every day.

Read Galatians 6:9

Read 2 Corinthians 4:16

We will see the results in due time if we don't grow weary or discouraged. How do we avoid this weariness and discouragement as we face the challenges in life? The Bible says our inner man (our spirit) is to be renewed every day. What does that mean? Paul is not talking about the work of salvation. When we became Christians, the Holy Spirit recreated our spirit. That experience happened one time. Salvation is a one-time experience. So, what is Paul talking about when he said that our spirits are renewed every day? Paul is talking about something we must do. He is talking about the Christian keeping their own spirits strengthened and refreshed every day.

Many of us have probably experienced a time when our cell phones got low on battery. Maybe they got so low to the point that they even died. We had to find a place to plug it in in to recharge it so that it could be used again. The power became less and less through use until it needed to be recharged.

This is the same for Christians. Because of the challenges, tests and trials of life, our spiritual life can become less powerful. We can allow problems, pressures, and trials to drain our spiritual battery. We must understand that the Holy Spirit does not leave us. He is still living in us. But our own spirits can become weak because we neglect to do those things that keep us strong spiritually.

Read Isaiah 40:31

To wait upon the Lord means to spend time with God and wait in his presence. This includes reading His Word, praying (taking time to talk and listen to Him) and taking time to worship and praise Him. We are grateful for times when we come together as a church to worship and praise God. But we also need private times of worship and praise. When we praise and worship God, we are waiting on Him. When we spend time mediating in the Word, we are waiting on Him. When we fellowship with God (talk to Him like a close personal friend), we are waiting on Him. What happens when we do that? Our spiritual strength is renewed. The word renewed means “to change or renew.” It also means to “exchange.” When we spend time with God, fellowship with Him, and worship and praise Him, our spiritual strength is renewed. We are changed and our spirit is recharged. We exchange our weakness for His strength. We exchange our fear for His confidence. We exchange our lack of understanding for His wisdom. This verse is saying that when we spend time with God, we will be changed and our lives will be different.

As we also learned in the lesson “Baptism of the Holy Spirit,” another way to recharge or edify our spirit is to pray in tongues.

Read Jude 20

Praying in tongues also strengthens and fortifies our spirit as well as sensitizing our spirit to hear from the Holy Spirit.

How can we be led by the Spirit of God?

Paul wrote to the Romans that “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God (Romans 8:14).” James stated that God would give wisdom to those that ask (James 1:5). Psalm 25:14 says that “the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him.” God reveals His mysteries by His Spirit to all believers (1 Corinthians 2:10). God is intimately involved in the lives of His people through the working of the Holy Spirit. However, we must yield to Him and allow Him to work in our lives. He is a gentleman and will not force Himself on us.

As a summary, below are the keys to being led by the Spirit of God:

1. ***Give the Word of God first place in your life*** – This is the main way that God will lead you. So, know what the Bible says about your situation.
2. ***Meditate in the Word of God*** – Spend time thinking about Scriptures, say them throughout the day, ask the Holy Spirit to reveal God’s truth to you.
3. ***Practice the Word of God*** – We can’t just hear and know the Word, but we also must act on it or apply to our life. We need to be doers of the Word and not hearers only. The Word only changes things in our life when we apply it.
4. ***Pray in the Spirit*** – One of the benefits of praying in tongues is that our spirit is edified or recharged. It will also help us to be more sensitive to the voice of the Holy Spirit and what He is trying to tell us.
5. ***Instantly obey the voice of our spirit*** - Your spirit has the life and nature of God in it because the Holy Spirit dwells in you. The devil can’t be giving you the information because he is not in you. The Holy Spirit is on the inside of you. God communicates with you through your spirit because that is where He is. He isn’t in your head. He isn’t in your

reasoning faculties. He is in your spirit. Your spirit gets its information through Him. Learn to immediately obey the voice of your spirit.

In the lesson “How God Made Us” we learned that we are a spirit, we have a soul, and we live in a body.

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:23

Notice that Paul began with the inside and moved to the outside of man. He started with the innermost part of man—which is also referred to as the heart or spirit. Why? This order is intentional. We are to be more spirit conscious and less body conscious. Some people get it backwards. They are more body conscious than spirit conscious. Natural things are more real to them than spiritual things, so they put physical things first. And some are more soul conscious because they live more in the mental realm.

But if we are going to be led by the Spirit of God, we must become more spirit conscious or we will miss His leading. The Bible shows us that we are to put our spirit first. We have a soul and live in a body. But we are a spirit being. That spirit became a new creation created by God in Christ Jesus. That spirit is how He communicates with us—His Spirit to our spirit. As we become more spirit conscious, we will find it much easier to be led by the Spirit of God.



GOD'S SUPERNATURAL GIFTS

When my husband and I were going to language school in Guatemala, we lived with a host family. This family, as well as the teachers at the school, only spoke to us in Spanish and knew very little English. During our first days of classes, communication was a struggle consisting of broken Spanish phrases and charades. One of our lessons covered the phrases, “Not yet” vs. “Not anymore.” One day as I was having a conversation with my teacher; she asked me if we had any children, and I proudly used my Spanish to tell her “not yet.” She looked at me with a horrified expression and started telling me how sorry she was. I was honestly a bit confused about her reaction until I realized that instead of saying “not yet,” I had told her “not anymore.” Yikes! One small word difference, but the difference in the meaning was significant. Words and their meaning have significance. I demonstrated my ignorance of the Spanish language that day that resulted in confused interactions and misunderstanding.

Just like my ignorance of the Spanish language during that conversation caused misunderstanding in my interactions with my teacher, ignorance of Gifts of the Spirit (or Spiritual Gifts) can cause a misunderstanding in our interactions with the Holy Spirit and demonstration of Spiritual Gifts. As disciples, it is important that we understand Spiritual Gifts to allow the full demonstration of the Holy Spirit to work in and through us without confusion or misunderstanding.

What are Spiritual Gifts?

Paul said by the Holy Spirit to the Church at Corinth, “Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I WOULD NOT HAVE YOU IGNORANT” (1 Corinthians 12:1). If it was important for the early church not to be ignorant of Spiritual Gifts, then it is probably important for the church of today not to be ignorant of Spiritual Gifts.

In a previous lesson, we discussed different ways that the Holy Spirit works. The Holy Spirit comes to live in the believer in the New Birth. This is primarily for our own personal benefit. The result is the fruit of the spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). The fruit of the spirit has to do with holiness—our lifestyle, our character. The Holy Spirit coming upon the believer (or the Baptism with the Holy Spirit) is primarily for giving us power for service and to be a witness (Acts 1:8; Luke 24:49). Another way that the Holy Spirit works in the public setting is Gifts of the Spirit.

In a general sense, we call them Gifts of the Spirit (or Spiritual Gifts) because they are manifestations that are given by the Spirit. Spiritual Gifts are gifts of the Holy Spirit manifested through individual believers as the Spirit of God wills. The Gifts of the Spirit aren’t just given for the individual, but they are given to profit the whole local assembly or local body of believers.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:1-14

There are different gifts, but they are from the same Spirit. There are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. There are differences of operations, but it is the same God that works in them all. The manifestations of the Spirit are given to the body of Christ or Church (body of believers). This means that any believer can function in Spiritual Gifts.

Notice in these verses that the Bible describes different ways that the Holy Spirit manifests Himself. Verses 8–10 describe for us the nine different ways the Holy Spirit will manifest Himself through the Church (or believers). The manifestation of the Spirit is given according to what is useful for the body of believers at the time. The New American Standard Bible translates Verse 7, “But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.” The manifestation of the Spirit will contribute to the common good of the Body of Christ. The manifestation of the Spirit is not given to exalt or glorify the individual. The manifestation of the Spirit is not given to destroy the Body of Christ.

In Verse 11, we can see that all these manifestations are operated by the same Spirit. All these manifestations come from the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit distributes the manifestation to each one as He wills. Every spirit-filled believer has the potential to be used in any of these manifestations because every believer has a measure of the Holy Spirit in them. We must learn to obey and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit when He desires to manifest Himself through us. However, we do not possess these things and cannot operate them whenever we want to. We do not will the Spiritual Gifts into existence whenever we choose.

The nine Gifts or Manifestations of the Spirit can be grouped into three categories:

Revelation Gifts	Power Gifts	Utterance/Inspirational Gifts
<i>Gifts that reveal something.</i>	<i>Gifts that do something.</i>	<i>Gifts that say something.</i>
1. <i>Word of Wisdom</i> 2. <i>Word of Knowledge</i> 3. <i>Discerning of spirits</i>	1. <i>Gift of faith (Special Faith)</i> 2. <i>Working of miracles</i> 3. <i>Gifts of healings</i>	1. <i>Prophecy</i> 2. <i>Divers (different) kinds of tongues</i> 3. <i>Interpretation of tongues</i>

God supernaturally reveals Himself to the Body of Christ through these manifestations of the Spirit. All nine of these manifestations of the Spirit are supernatural—none of them are natural. God is Spirit (John 4:4). So, it makes sense that the manifestations of the Spirit are also spiritual or supernatural. However, before we can be used by the Holy Spirit in these manifestations, we

need to understand that the Baptism with the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking with other tongues is the door into these nine manifestations of the Spirit. We will talk about this more a little later in the lesson.

What is the Purpose of Spiritual Gifts?

When my kids were little, I would put food in front of them and they would grab it with their little hands and try to get it in their mouth. They would get more food on their face or the floor than they did in their mouth. When they were old enough, I put a spoon in their hand and started teaching them how to use the spoon to put food in their mouth. At first, they would bang the spoon on the table or smear the food on the table with the spoon. They didn't understand the intended purpose of the spoon at first. As a result, very little food would get in their mouth. Finally, they learned how to use the spoon for its intended purpose and actually got food in their mouth! It was only when they started using the spoon for its intended purpose of eating that the expected benefit was received—food in their mouths and bellies!

The dictionary defines “purpose” as the reason for which something exists or is done, made or used. But, if we are not clear on the purpose for something or are trying to use it inappropriately, the benefit is limited. In the same way that my kids had to understand and apply the use of a spoon for its intended purpose, we need to learn and understand the purpose of Spiritual Gifts to get the expected benefit from these amazing gifts.

Read 1 Corinthians 12-14

The word “gifts” in 1 Corinthians 12:1 is not in the original text. It was added by the translators. Verse 1 literally says, “Now concerning spirituals, brothers . . .” Paul is saying, “Now concerning the things pertaining to and of the Spirit.” He is saying “Let me talk to you about how the Holy Spirit wants to work or how the Holy Spirit desires to manifest Himself in the Church.”

Not all of 1 Corinthians 12-14 discusses what we call Spiritual Gifts. For instance:

1 Corinthians 12:12-30 - Paul talks about how the body of Christ works together (in unity through the Holy Spirit).

1 Corinthians 12:28-30 - Paul talks about ministry gifts, which are also a type of manifestation of the Holy Spirit through specific individuals that are called to a specific ministry (and equipped with the corresponding Ministry Gifts to function in that ministry).

1 Corinthians 13 - Paul talks about love. A love that is shed abroad in our heart by the Holy Spirit when He recreates our spirit at the new birth.

Although we are focusing on Spiritual Gifts in this lesson, we understand that Paul is also addressing topics that include other aspects regarding manifestation of the Holy Spirit in these Scripture passages.

God was preparing His people for manifestations of the Holy Spirit even before Jesus came to this earth in human form.

Read Joel 2:28-32

This prophecy was spoken by the prophet Joel who lived about eight hundred years before the birth of Jesus Christ. He prophesied of a time when God's Spirit would be poured out on all flesh. Fast forward over eight hundred years later after Jesus died on the cross. Before ascending to heaven, Jesus told His disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4-8). We see Joel's prophecy fulfilled in Acts 2.

After the Holy Spirit fell on the disciples waiting in the upper room, Peter got up and quoted the prophecy from Joel. He confirmed that this prophecy had been fulfilled. This is what had been spoken by the prophet Joel, shared by Jesus, and finally came to pass.

You will notice in Verse 17 that several manifestations of the Spirit are mentioned including dreams, visions, and prophesying. He was saying that we have now entered this age of the Holy Spirit. We will now see manifestations of the Holy Spirit. For what goal? We find the answer in Verse 21—that whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. The ultimate goal is to share the Gospel, expand the Kingdom of God, and glorify God.

As we read through 1 Corinthians 12-14, we see a theme of teaching and guidance regarding how the Holy Spirit wants to manifest within the church—one way of which is Spiritual Gifts. Manifestation means “to shine forth.” Spiritual Gifts are one important way that He wants to reveal Himself or “shine forth” through the believer.

It is important that we have clear knowledge about Spiritual Gifts according to Paul. Although these words were initially spoken by Paul to the Corinthian church, it also applies to the church for today. Paul wanted them to have a clearer understanding of how these gifts work together for the benefit of the church. We also need to have a clearer understanding of how these gifts work together for the benefit of the church today.

Read Romans 12:2

We looked at this Scripture when we talked about changing the way we think. However, when we read this Scripture again, we will notice that it implies that God has a perfect will. His perfect will is the written Word of God. But our understanding of God's will is not perfect. For this reason, God has provided the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will minister to us individually as we already discussed in previous lessons. In his mercy and grace, He also provides gifts for the benefit of the church to understand God's will through manifestations.

What is the purpose of Spiritual Gifts as described in 1 Corinthians 12-14?

1. *To help the church realize the Holy Spirit is always present and working*
2. *To help the church understand that all life and power comes from God*
3. *To demonstrate the love and compassion of God to the world*
4. *To bring men and women face to face with the reality of God.*

Is this the same purpose that we find in the New Testament apply today? Has the direction of the church changed so dramatically that we no longer need these manifestations or an emphasis on the Holy Spirit and the supernatural? The answer is NO. He still wants to manifest Himself through Spiritual Gifts in our churches today for the same purposes that He describes for the early church.

We understand that Spiritual Gifts still have a purpose today in our churches. They are still a way that God wants to use in churches today to reveal Himself and His will, resulting in edification of the church (body of believers). When believers are edified, they are equipped to carry out His purposes and plans on this earth. If the Body of Christ is going to reap the harvest that must come into the Kingdom of God before Jesus comes again, we need to see the fullness of these gifts and manifestations of the Spirit in operation.

How do Spiritual Gifts work?

The storm was raging outside and suddenly our lights went out. We had lost our electricity. I slowly walked to the kitchen so that I could get a flashlight. As I grabbed the flashlight, I tried to find the switch. I had never used this flashlight before and didn't know how to turn it on. Finally, I found the switch and turned it on. When I did, light shined forth. I had to know how to make the flashlight work to make light shine.

We also need to understand how Spiritual Gifts work so that God can shine through us using manifestations of the Holy Spirit. God wants to shine forth through us, but we have a part to play in how and when they are manifested. The Holy Spirit will not force us to accept manifestations of Spiritual Gifts. When we understand how they work, we will be better equipped to shine forth in these manifestations as He wills.

In the lesson entitled "Baptism of the Holy Spirit," we said that the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is the doorway into the rest of God's supernatural power. One prominent minister said, "The more I pray in tongues the more manifestations of the Holy Spirit I have, the less I pray in tongues the less manifestations of the Holy Spirit I have."^{xviii} If we want the supernatural to work in our lives, then we must go through the door. We must receive the Baptism with the Holy Spirit and speak with other tongues. Speaking with tongues daily will help us to know when the Holy Spirit desires to manifest Himself through us in different ways including Spiritual Gifts.

The fuller we are of the Holy Spirit (or the more we are influenced by the Holy Spirit), the more He can manifest Himself through us. There is a connection between the Baptism with the Holy Spirit and Gifts of the Spirit. The more we speak in tongues in our personal devotional life, the more we will see the manifestations of Spiritual Gifts in our public life.

Some members of the Body of Christ are equipped with measures of the Spirit to minister more consistently in one or more of the Spiritual Gifts.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:4-6

Paul talks about three things:

1. *Gifts*
2. *Administrations*
3. *Operations*

Paul is saying that these gifts are administered or given to different people, they operate differently through different people, but it is the same Holy Spirit, who gives or divides these gifts to each person. In Verse 4, the word translated gift is *charisma*. This word means a gift of grace; a gift involving grace; a spiritual endowment; a miraculous faculty. These gifts are measures of the Spirit, or measures of anointing that are given to members of the Body of Christ according to the will of God—for what purpose? To supernaturally enable them to fulfill their functions or their work in the Body of Christ.

Read Hebrews 2:4

The Greek word translated “gifts” in Hebrews 2:4 means distributions. The Holy Spirit distributes or gives different gifts or abilities to different people in the body of Christ. He gives as He wills—not as we will. Different members of the Body of Christ have different ministries or functions. They have been given different gifts to equip them to fulfill their functions (Romans 12:4-6). These gifts will operate in a variety of ways and will produce a variety of effects.

When speaking about Spiritual Gifts, we tend to focus on 1 Corinthians Chapters 12 and 14. However, notice the chapter that comes right in the middle of these two chapters. The books of the Bible were not written in chapter and verse, but as a letter. We put divisions, but in Paul’s letter to the Corinthian Church, there would have been no division between Chapters 12, 13, and 14. Is this important? Absolutely. Why? He emphasized that even though the gifts worked differently, they also worked in unity (for a specific purpose). They were to operate through and with love. When motivated by love, they were profitable and accurate.

Read 1 Corinthians 14:1

We can see clearly that love cannot be separated from the use of Spiritual Gifts. Love (Agape) always looks to benefit others. These principles are still applicable today in the demonstration of Spiritual Gifts:

1. *Pursuing love remains the highest priority—the basic reason that we are expressing Spiritual Gifts is for the benefit of OTHER PEOPLE*
2. *Edification must be the primary goal in church services*

Many times, different Spiritual Gifts operate together (like the fingers on our hand), and sometimes it is difficult to distinguish between some of them. We are dividing them so that it

is easy to define them. There are no definitions of the manifestations of the Spirit in the Word of God. We only find examples of them in operation. These definitions are intended to give a basic understanding of each of the manifestations of the Spirit so that we will be able to recognize them when the Holy Spirit wants to manifest Himself. So that you can understand how they work—what they look like.

The Word of Knowledge

The Word of Knowledge is a supernatural revelation by the Holy Spirit of certain facts in the mind of God. It is supernatural knowledge of a person or a thing, or the knowledge of some event given to us by the Holy Spirit for a specific purpose to benefit people/church. The manifestation of the Word of Knowledge always brings revelation of present or past facts or information. It does not bring revelation of the future.

The Word of Knowledge is not:

1. ***The “gift of knowledge”***: *There is no manifestation of the Spirit called “the gift of knowledge.” God knows everything. However, the Word of Knowledge is not a revelation of everything that God knows. Notice that this manifestation of the Spirit is called “the Word of Knowledge.” A word is part of a sentence or thought. This manifestation of the Spirit brings revelation of a word of God’s knowledge, a specific part of the knowledge that God has which He wants to reveal at that moment. It is a revelation of certain facts (not all) in the mind of God.*
2. ***Natural knowledge***: *This does not refer to natural knowledge or intellectual knowledge. All these manifestations are supernatural. None of them are natural. It is a supernatural revelation by the Holy Spirit.*
3. ***General knowledge of the Word of God***: *General knowledge of the Word of God comes through studying the Word. The manifestation of the Word of Knowledge does not come by studying. General knowledge of God comes by walking with God over time. Through walking with God every day over time and having fellowship with Him in prayer and reading the Word, every believer can know God intimately.*

The manifestation of the Word of Knowledge can come in various ways. A Word of Knowledge can come through an inward revelation by the Spirit of God. This is not the inward witness nor the voice of our spirit (our conscience). This is when the Holy Spirit speaks to our spirit and gives us revelation of present or past facts. We see an example of a Word of Knowledge in the following Scripture:

Read Acts 10:1-8

The Holy Spirit spoke to Peter and told Him that three men were seeking him and that He had sent them. The Holy Spirit revealed to Peter a present fact and a past fact. This was supernatural revelation. Peter was up on the housetop and could not have known these things through natural means.

A Word of Knowledge can come through kinds of tongues and interpretation of tongues. The manifestation of the Word of Knowledge can operate in different ways through different people. For instance, some (by the Spirit) may see the part of the body of someone that needs healing.

Others (by the Spirit) may sense (spiritually) in their own self the discomfort or pain of the part of the body of someone that needs healing.

The manifestation of the Word of Knowledge brings revelation of present or past facts concerning people, places, and things. Through the Word of Knowledge, God can reveal sickness or the fact that an evil spirit is present. Through the Word of Knowledge, God can reveal to us information that will help us to effectively minister to others. The manifestation of the Word of Knowledge does not change anything but reveals present or past facts.

The Word of Wisdom

The Word of Wisdom is a supernatural revelation of the mind and the purpose of God communicated by the Holy Spirit. The Word of Wisdom reveals something that will happen in the future. The manifestation of the Word of Wisdom brings revelation of the plan, purpose, and will of God. As natural human beings, we do not have knowledge of the future. We only have knowledge of the present or past. God in His wisdom knows the future. Through the manifestation of the Word of Wisdom, God can reveal to man a part of the future that He knows.

The Word of Wisdom is not:

1. ***The “gift of wisdom”***: *There is no manifestation of the Spirit called “the gift of wisdom.”*
2. ***Revelation of all the wisdom of God***: *The Word of Wisdom is not a revelation of all the wisdom that God has. The manifestation of the Word of Wisdom brings revelation of a word of God’s wisdom, a specific part of the wisdom that God has which He wants to reveal at the moment.*
3. ***Natural wisdom***: *There is a natural wisdom that can come just by living life. However, the Word of Wisdom is a supernatural revelation.*
4. ***The wisdom of God that comes through prayer and meditation in the Word of God***: *This wisdom is available to every believer who asks in faith (James 1:5-6). As we meditate in the Word and put it into practice, we “. . . shall deal wisely and have good success” (Joshua 1:8).*

The manifestation of the Word of Wisdom is given to the believer by the Spirit as He wills. The Word of Wisdom and the Word of Knowledge often work together. We see an example of the Word of Wisdom in the following Scripture:

Read Revelation chapters 1-3

John saw Jesus in a vision (Revelation 2:1-7). Through the manifestation of the Word of Knowledge, Jesus revealed to him the present spiritual condition of each of the seven churches in Asia Minor. Through the manifestation of the Word of Wisdom, Jesus revealed what each of these churches should do—His plan, purpose, and will for them.

The Word of Wisdom can come through various ways (just as the Word of Knowledge):

1. ***Prophecy***: *A Word of Wisdom can come through prophecy. Many times, prophecy and the Word of Wisdom operate together. The simple gift of prophecy alone does not reveal the future. It is the Word of Wisdom that brings revelation of the future.*

However, the revelation brought by the Word of Wisdom can be spoken forth through prophecy. For instance, the prophets of the Old Testament prophesied of things concerning the future including the coming of Jesus as the Messiah. They spoke forth these things through prophecy, but it was the Word of Wisdom that revealed these things.

- 2. **Tongues and Interpretation of Tongues:** A Word of Wisdom can come through tongues and interpretation of tongues.*
- 3. **Visions:** A Word of Wisdom can come through a vision.*
- 4. **Inward Revelation:** A Word of Wisdom can come through an inward revelation by the Spirit of God.*

Sometimes the fulfillment of a Word of Wisdom is unconditional, but other times it can be conditional (depends on what a person does or does not do). We find an example of a conditional Word of Wisdom in the following Scripture:

Read 2 Kings 20:1-7

Through a Word of Wisdom given to him through the prophet Isaiah, God told Hezekiah that he was going to die and not live. The Lord was telling him what was going to happen under the present circumstances. In Verses 2-3, Hezekiah prayed to change the situation. After Hezekiah prayed, God sent Isaiah back with another Word of Wisdom that He would heal him and give him fifteen more years. Through prayer, Hezekiah was able to change what was going to happen in his future. The Word of Wisdom will not always automatically come to pass. Sometimes it can be changed.

Discerning of Spirits

Discerning of Spirits is supernatural insight (vision) into the spiritual world. It brings supernatural revelation of spirits and the spiritual world. This manifestation of the Spirit is limited in its revelation to a single area—spirits and the spiritual world. When Discerning of Spirits is in manifestation, a person (by the Spirit of God) can see or hear in the spiritual world. When the Holy Spirit speaks to us, revealing the fact of the presence of a spirit, this is the Word of Knowledge and not Discerning of Spirits. When through the manifestation of the Holy Spirit someone discerns a spirit, he can see or hear the spirit.

Discerning of Spirits is not:

- 1. **Discerning of “evil” spirits:** It is the discerning of spirits—all kinds of spirits, both good and evil. It includes the discerning of evil spirits, but this is only a part. Discerning of Spirits also includes the discerning of angels, the likeness of the Father, the Holy Spirit, the resurrected Christ, and the human spirit.*
- 2. **Spiritual discernment:** There is no manifestation of the Spirit called “discernment.” It is the Discerning of Spirits. Every believer can develop their spirit to be sensitive to the Spirit of God. Every believer should have spiritual discernment. Every believer can know things by the inward witness. Many times, what some call “discernment” is either the inward witness or the Word of Knowledge in operation.*
- 3. **Mind reading:** Discerning of Spirits has nothing to do with the mind—it is a supernatural revelation by the Holy Spirit.*

4. *Discerning of faults in people: It is not the “gift” of criticism or the “gift” of suspicion. A person does not even have to be saved to have these “gifts!”*

We see an example of Discerning of Spirits in the following Scripture:

2 Kings 6:13-17

Through the manifestation of Discerning of Spirits, the Lord opened the eyes of the servant of Elisha. He saw an army of angels around Elisha. This army of angels was already present before the Lord opened his eyes. He just could not see them because angels are spirits. When the Lord opened His eyes, he began to see into the spiritual world.

The Discerning of Spirits can be given to us for the purpose of protecting us, our ministry, or other people. Through the Discerning of Spirits, we can know what spirit is behind a supernatural manifestation. Not all supernatural manifestations are manifestations of the Holy Spirit. Evil spirits can also produce supernatural manifestations. However, we don't have to see into the spiritual world to know this in all cases. It is also possible to know through the Word of Knowledge or through the inward witness what spirit is behind a supernatural manifestation.

The Discerning of Spirits can be given to help us supernaturally minister to others. Through the manifestation of Discerning of Spirits, the Holy Spirit can reveal the presence of an evil spirit possessing a person so that it can be cast out. The Discerning of Spirits does not cast out evil spirits but reveals their presence. Once the evil spirit has been revealed, then it can be cast out through the manifestation of Special Faith.

Anything that God knows can be revealed to man as the Spirit wills. Through the three Manifestations that reveal something, God can reveal His knowledge of things past, present, or future. God can reveal facts, events, motives, origin, purpose, and destiny. God can reveal whether it is divine, human, satanic, natural, or supernatural.

Faith (Special Faith)

Special Faith is faith given by the Spirit of God beyond what a believer personally possesses from his own walk with God. Special Faith enables a person to believe God in such a way that God honors their word as His own and miraculously brings to pass the desired result now or later. Special Faith is a supernatural manifestation of the Holy Spirit. The manifestation of Special Faith gives us supernatural confidence and assurance that is beyond our general faith.

We see an example of Special Faith in the following Scripture:

Daniel 3:8-25

This story tells of three men who went against King Nebuchadnezzar's order and refused to worship a golden statue. They were Hebrews and worshipped the God of Israel. Because they disobeyed his order, the king threw them into a fiery furnace. In Verse 17, notice the men's response when the king asked who would deliver them from his hands. They confidently stated, "Our God who we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver

us from your hand, O king.” Through the Gift of Faith, they were able to miraculously survive the fire and serve as witnesses to all of Babylon.

What Special Faith is not:

1. **Saving faith:** *Special Faith is not the faith we were saved with. Saving faith is a gift of God given to us through the Word of God before we were saved. We had to exercise faith to receive the New Birth. If Special Faith was the faith by which we were saved, then not all who hear the Gospel could believe and be saved.*
2. **General faith:** *Special Faith is not the faith that every believer can exercise to receive the things promised to us in the Word of God. Every believer has the measure of faith. The same faith by which we were saved can be developed in other areas of the Word of God. Our faith can be increased by feeding it on the Word of God (Romans 10:17) and exercising it in our daily walk with God. Every believer can be strong in faith. Through our own faith, any believer can receive anything that is specifically promised to us in the Word of God. If the manifestation of Special Faith was this general faith, then not every believer could act on Mark 11:24 to receive the things promised to us in the Word of God.*

Special Faith is necessary to receive things beyond salvation or that are not specifically promised to us in the Word of God. For example, Special Faith would be necessary to cast a literal mountain into the sea (see Mark 11:23). Special Faith is faith given to us by the Holy Spirit that is beyond the faith that we have from our own walk with God. Special Faith is given to us as the Holy Spirit wills and not as we will and will always work to edify and declare His Glory.

Working of Miracles

The Working of Miracles is a supernatural manifestation of the Holy Spirit through which a person works a miracle. A miracle can be defined as a supernatural intervention in the ordinary course of nature by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Working of Miracles involves the mighty power of God flowing through a person to do something that is beyond the natural ability of man or the ordinary course of nature. The Working of Miracles employs faith that actively does a miracle.

Working of Miracles is not:

1. **Healing for the body:** *The manifestation of the Working of Miracles does not include healing for the body. Healing involves the removal of sicknesses or diseases in parts of the body. It is the renewal of a diseased condition. In a general sense, healing by the power of God is a miracle. However, healing by the power of God is not the Working of Miracles in manifestation. The Working of Miracles can operate in the physical body to produce creative miracles. For instance, to replace parts of the body that are missing, creative miracles are necessary. A person that is missing a part of the body does not need healing. He needs a creative miracle. Healing removes disease or restores to health a diseased condition in parts of the body that exist.*
2. **Special faith:** *Special Faith employs faith that passively expects a miracle. Through the manifestation of Special Faith, a person simply believes and God does the miracle for him.*

Through the manifestation of the Working of Miracles, the power of God flows through a person to do a miracle through him.

We see an example of working of miracles in the following Scripture:

Read John 2:1-11

The working of miracles was in manifestation when Jesus turned the water into wine. The anointing worked through Jesus to work a physical miracle. This was the first miracle of Jesus' ministry. We find the purpose of this miracle in Verse 11—God's glory was manifested resulting in His disciples believing in Him.

The Working of Miracles is a specific act of performing a miracle by the anointing of the Holy Spirit. It is active, not passive.

Gifts of Healings

The Gifts of Healings are a supernatural manifestation of the Holy Spirit for the healing of sickness and disease (without any natural means). Gifts of Healings are used to supernaturally deliver the sick and destroy the works of the devil in the physical body. They are used for the supernatural healing of diseases. Gifts of Healings are only one-way through which a person can be healed or minister healing.

Gifts of Healings are not:

1. ***Natural healing:*** *Gifts of Healings have nothing to do with medical science or any type of natural healing.*
2. ***Healing anointing:*** *The Gifts of Healings are a supernatural manifestation of healing through one person to another. Gifts of Healings are not the healing anointing.*
3. ***Promise of Healing:*** *Every believer has been redeemed from the curse of the law, which includes poverty, spiritual death, and sickness. For every believer, healing is already accomplished through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. Believers do not need to rely on Gifts of Healing to be healed. It has already been accomplished.*

We see an example of Gifts of Healings in the following Scripture:

John 5:1-17

The paralytic at the pool of Bethesda was healed. This man did nothing to initiate his healing. Gifts of Healings do not depend on the faith of the person that needs healing.

The term 'Gifts of Healings' is plural. There are many different types of sicknesses and diseases. When Gifts of Healings are in manifestation, the healing comes from God through another person to the one needing healing. Gifts of Healings operate as the Holy Spirit wills. When a person is healed through the manifestation of Gifts of Healings, no faith is required on the part of the person receiving healing.

Although at times believers can be healed through Gifts of Healings, God did not place Gifts of Healings in the Church to heal itself. If believers walk in the light of redemption, they will not need to be healed. He gave Gifts of Healings to minister healing to the world. As believers lay hands on the sick in obedience to the Great Commission (Mark 16:15-18), at times an anointing will come, and a gift of healing will be manifested through them (as the Holy Spirit wills).

Prophecy

Prophecy is a supernatural utterance in a known tongue. Prophecy includes every inspired utterance in a known tongue from the public gift to inspired preaching and teaching. The Gift of Prophecy is considered simple prophecy and can operate through any believer as the Spirit wants.

The purpose of the Gift of Prophecy can be found in the following Scripture:

1 Corinthians 14:3

The primary purpose of the Gift of Prophecy is to speak edification, exhortation, and comfort to men. It is not to foretell the future or to tell of things to come. It is to build up, encourage, and provide comfort. If prophecy does not edify, exhort, and comfort, it is not the genuine Gift of Prophecy in manifestation. The simple Gift of Prophecy contains no revelation. The simple Gift of Prophecy will always glorify God.

What the Gift of Prophecy is not:

1. ***Revelation (does not give people specific direction)***: *Simple prophecy does not give a personal word to every person (personal prophecies are not scriptural). It does not predict future events, pronounce judgment, condemn, criticize, or embarrass. It does not attract attention to itself. The simple Gift of Prophecy encourages, comforts, edifies, strengthens, and lifts up the hearts of people.*
2. ***Preaching and teaching***: *Prophecy does not mean preaching or teaching. To preach or teach, we must study to show ourselves approved unto God (2 Timothy 2:15). A person does not study to prophesy. However, when a person is preaching or teaching, he/she can be inspired by the Holy Spirit to say things spontaneously that come from his spirit rather than his mind. This is a part of the operation of the Gift of Prophecy. But preaching and teaching itself is not the Gift of Prophecy.*
3. ***Ministry Gift of Prophecy***: *There is a difference between the simple Gift of Prophecy and the ministry of a prophet. Every believer can prophesy, but not every believer is a prophet (see 1 Corinthians 12:28-29). A prophet is a preacher or a teacher of the Word of God (just as the apostle, evangelist, pastor, and teacher). A prophet also has manifestations that reveal something operating in his ministry, along with prophecy, on a consistent basis.*

We can see an example of the contrast between the Gift of Prophecy and the ministry of a prophet in the following Scripture:

Acts 21:8-11

The four daughters of Philip prophesied. However, the fact that they prophesied did not make them prophets. This was the simple Gift of Prophecy that exhorts, edifies, and comforts. This is the Gift of Prophecy in which every believer can operate. In Verses 10 and 11, we can see the ministry of a prophet. The Word of Wisdom was manifested through the prophet Agabus in prophecy to describe what would happen to Paul when he went to Jerusalem.

Every believer filled with the Spirit can be used in the simple Gift of Prophecy. However, not every believer is a prophet. A prophet is a specific ministry gift. A prophet is one called of God who speaks from the impulse of a sudden inspiration, or from the light of a sudden revelation. He is one who sees and knows things supernaturally. He is God's spokesman. Because of the measure of anointing that is upon him, prophecy as well as the Word of Knowledge, the Word of Wisdom and/or Discerning of Spirits will be manifested more consistently through the prophet. Even then, these things operate as the Holy Spirit wants and not as the prophet wants.

Before we expect to be used publicly in this gift, we should first experience the private side of prophecy.

Read Ephesians 5:18-19

When a person is initially filled with the Holy Spirit, there is an overflow resulting in speaking with tongues. As a person continues to maintain the spirit-filled life, they will experience other overflows including psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. These are prophetic in the sense that they are inspired utterances for one's personal use. Once you learn how to yield in this area, God can move you into a public arena.

Read Colossians 3:13

Let the Word dwell in you richly in all wisdom. Richly means in abundance. Simple prophecy allows the Holy Spirit to take the Word that you have in you and pull it out of your spirit and speak to one another—to comfort, to edify, to exhort. Only God's Word can accomplish that. True prophecy will not take from nor add to the Scriptures. It will intensify and quicken that which already has been given to us of God. True prophecy will bring forth things new and old out of the Scriptures of truth and will make them living and powerful to us.

Kinds of Tongues and Interpretation of Tongues

In the lesson "Baptism of the Holy Spirit," we discussed the purposes of tongues and focused on the private/devotional aspect. In this lesson, we will focus on the public aspect of tongues. Kinds of tongues and interpretation of tongues are two distinct manifestations of the Holy Spirit; however, they are often manifested together when believers come together to worship. For this reason, we will study them together.

Kinds of tongues is a supernatural utterance given by the Holy Spirit in languages never learned by the speaker nor understood by the mind of the speaker. These languages are not necessarily understood by the hearers although at times they could be understood by the hearers. Kinds of tongues is a supernatural manifestation of the Spirit. It has nothing to do with the ability to learn and speak other languages well. It has nothing to do with the mind of man.

There are different kinds of tongues. All kinds of tongues are the same in essence but are different in purpose and use. There are different levels of speaking with tongues and differences in the levels of anointing on some kinds of tongues. There are different languages given by the Spirit. Not only are there different tongues known by men on the earth, but there are also tongues of angels (heavenly tongues). Every believer can be filled with the Holy Spirit and can speak with other tongues. Speaking with tongues is one of the supernatural signs that should follow every believer.

Every believer can also pray that he may operate in interpretation of tongues.

Read 1 Corinthians 14:12-13

If every believer can speak with other tongues, then every believer can pray that he may interpret. However, this should be done with the leading and anointing of the Holy Spirit. Interpretation of tongues is supernatural utterance given by the Holy Spirit to show the meaning of what was said in other tongues. Just as with speaking in other tongues, there is both a public side and a private side of interpretation of tongues. In this lesson, we will focus on the public aspect of Interpretation of Tongues.

Interpretation of Tongues is not:

1. ***Translation of tongues:*** *It is called the Interpretation of Tongues. This manifestation of the Spirit does not give a word-for-word translation of tongues. The Interpretation of Tongues may require more or less words than what were spoken in tongues to show the meaning of what was said in tongues. For this reason, the interpretation may be either longer or shorter than the utterance in tongues.*

To be in operation, the Interpretation of Tongues always depends on Kinds of Tongues. The Interpretation of Tongues never operates unless Kinds of Tongues have been in manifestation. The purpose of this manifestation is to make utterance in tongues understandable so that the hearers will be edified.

Read 1 Corinthians 14:5

Kinds of Tongues and Interpretation of Tongues in operation together are equivalent to prophecy. They are for the same purpose as prophecy. When utterance in tongues is given publicly to address the church, it should be interpreted so that the church may be edified. Speaking with tongues and the interpretation of tongues together should edify the church. All the guidelines that apply to the operation of the simple Gift of Prophecy in the church also apply to the operation of Kinds of Tongues and Interpretation of Tongues in the church.

We speak the interpretation from our spirit in the same manner that we speak with tongues. The interpretation comes from the same place that the tongues come from. It is given to us by the Spirit at that moment.

In the church, if utterance in tongues is not interpreted, then the church will not be edified. Speaking with tongues is a sign for those that do not believe. It is a sign of God's presence. This

sign serves as testimony against them because they did not believe what was said. Every believer could publicly speak forth an utterance in other tongues, but not all should do it. It should be done according to the leading of the Holy Spirit, and with the anointing of the Holy Spirit. There is a difference between praying in tongues to magnify God and giving a public utterance in tongues to address the church. Any believer can speak to God (pray) in tongues to give thanks and worship God whenever he desires. However, speaking in tongues publicly to address the church is manifested as the Holy Spirit wills. In this case, only two or three people should give utterances in tongues in the same service.

Only one person should interpret each utterance in tongues. This is to prevent competitive interpretations of the same utterance in tongues. Every believer could interpret utterances in tongues if they knew that the interpretation of tongues was available to them and would ask God for it. However, in a service believers should listen to the Holy Spirit concerning who should interpret each utterance in tongues (only one should interpret each utterance in tongues). Each utterance in tongues and interpretation of tongues should be given one at a time. All things should be done decently and in order.

When everyone is praying or praising God together at the same time in a service, it is fine to speak to God in other tongues. Why? In this case, the whole church is being edified through ministering to the Lord and this does not need to be interpreted.

There is a ministry of Kinds of Tongues and Interpretation of Tongues, which is a ministry gift and is similar to the ministry of the prophet. Every believer can speak with tongues and interpret, but not all operate in these ministries (just as every believer can prophesy, but not all are prophets).

We can see all the manifestations of the Spirit in operation under the Old Covenant except for speaking with tongues and the Interpretation of Tongues. These two manifestations are distinctive of this age of the Holy Spirit—this age of the New Covenant.

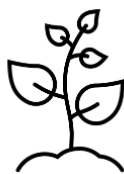
What is our responsibility?

The purpose of these manifestations is to glorify God and gather in the harvest to enlarge the Kingdom of God. We must learn to cooperate with the Holy Spirit so that He can work through us with Spiritual Gifts to accomplish His purposes. Similar to speaking in tongues, we need to let the Holy Spirit work through us. He doesn't do it. We must let Him as He wills—through us. He works through believers. So, what is our responsibility?

1. ***Pray in tongues in our personal prayer time*** – *It is the doorway to the supernatural and Spiritual Gifts. If we want the supernatural to work in our lives, then we must go through the door. We must receive the Baptism with the Holy Spirit and speak with other tongues. Speaking with tongues daily will help us to know when the Holy Spirit desires to manifest Himself through us in different ways including Spiritual Gifts. As a person continues to maintain the spirit-filled life, they will experience other overflows, including psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. These are prophetic in the sense that they are inspired utterances for one's personal use. Once you learn how to yield in this area, God can move you into a public arena.*

2. ***Do not be ignorant*** – *He does not want that we are ignorant in this area. This includes ignorance of what the gifts are, proper use, and how to yield to the Holy Spirit in this area. Study what the Word says about Spiritual Gifts. We need to understand Spiritual Gifts so that we can allow them to manifest in our public assemblies.*
3. ***Desire spiritual gifts*** – *If the church doesn't desire these things, then they won't have them. The Holy Spirit is a perfect gentleman. When the entire body desires them, the Holy Spirit will divide the manifestation as He wills. If you desire something, you will pray for it!*
4. ***Yield to the Holy Spirit*** – *The Holy Spirit works these gifts through believers. We must yield to the Holy Spirit with boldness and humility and allow Him to work through us.*

All these manifestations are given to the Church. If we stay filled with the Spirit and maintain an attitude of humility and expectation, the Holy Spirit will work through any member of the Body of Christ to manifest these gifts. Any church that is enjoying a genuine operation of Spiritual Gifts will be a church charged with the power of God and will create an atmosphere for revival. An energized church is an effective church whether it comes to evangelism or ministering to the needs of people.



SHARING THE GOSPEL

A little boy came to his father and asked him to play catch. The father was very busy working, so he said, “Son, just give me a few minutes. I need to finish this work.” The son came back a few minutes later and asked his father again to play catch. The father still hadn’t finished his work and he looked around his desk to find something to keep the boy occupied until he could get his work done.

His eyes skimmed over the scattered papers and books until they stopped on a magazine. He quickly opened the magazine and saw a picture of the world on one of the pages. He ripped out the page and proceeded to tear the picture into smaller pieces. He gently placed them into his son’s small, cupped hands. “Put this picture back together, then come find me and we’ll play catch.” A few minutes later, the son peeked his frowning face through the door and said, “Daddy, this picture is too hard. All the colors are the same.” The father, writing furiously on the page in front of him, looked up quickly to say, “Go try again. It may take you a little while, but you’ll get it.” The boy disappeared again. To the father’s surprise, the boy reappeared a few minutes later with a big grin on his face. “Daddy, I’m all done,” he said.

“You’re all done?” “Yes,” the boy proudly answered. “I thought you said it was hard. How did you finish it so quickly?” the father asked. The boy answered, “Well, I was having trouble putting the world back together, but then I realized that there was a picture of a man on the back. All I had to do was put that man back together and the whole world started falling into place.”

Sometimes it’s overwhelming to think about trying to make a difference in the world. Because it seems overwhelming, we can sit back and do nothing. But each of us has somebody that God wants us to reach out to with His love. It may be a family member, friend, or even the cashier at the local store. Each of us has people around us that we see and talk to each day. We don’t have to go to a different country or even a different state (although sometimes God does ask us to change our sphere of influence). It’s not about trying to change the whole world, but about touching the world one person at a time. It’s about making a difference in our world—sharing God’s love with those around us—wherever we are. As disciples, we are to bear fruit and reproduce ourselves.

The Great Commission

After Jesus died on the cross, Jesus appeared to His disciples and continued to share with them for forty days. He was preparing them for the great work that He was asking them to do.

Read Mark 16:15-18

Note: also read Matthew 28:16-20

We call this Scripture the “Great Commission” because it was His marching orders to His disciples of the job that he was assigning them on earth after His departure. If you are His disciple, this Scripture is also your marching orders (or assignment). He gave us our purpose. Everything that Christ did for you through His death, burial, and resurrection leads to this pivotal point in your life. When you accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior, you are connected with your purpose in Christ.

Read John 5:17

When the Jews began to persecute Jesus for healing a man, Jesus gave His defense. He said that His Father is always at work and that He had joined Him in the work. God has ongoing work. Jesus joined in this work.

Read 1 John 4:17 - How are we supposed to be in this world?

Read 1 Corinthians 3:9 - Who are we fellow workers with?

Read 2 Corinthians 3:5-6 - Who has He made ministers of the New Covenant?

Read 2 Corinthians 5:19-20 - What does He call us?

As He is so are we in this world! When we accepted Christ, we joined into this work that God is doing as well. We are Christ’s ambassadors. He has made us ministers of the New Covenant. We represent Christ on this earth and He can make an appeal through us. We became co-laborers in this work. So, we must ask ourselves these questions:

- *What is and has God been working on?*
- *What did Jesus come to Earth to do?*

Read the following Scriptures to find the answer to these questions:

Luke 19:10

Luke 4:18

John 10:10

God has been setting His people apart and restoring them to himself. God is working on the redemption project. Jesus came to earth in human form to join in this redemptive work. He came

to seek and save the lost, to restore fellowship, and to give us abundant life. If this is true, what is our assignment as a fellow worker with him?

Read 2 Corinthians 5:16-20

God has reconciled us to Himself and has given us the ministry of reconciliation. What is God's work? It is the work of redemption. So, we join into this work of reconciliation and redemption. One of the last commandments Jesus gave was the Great Commission. One of the last words He spoke before being received in heaven is to share our purpose!

Read Mark 16:15-18

There are a few important things that we need to notice about this commandment:

1. *It was written FOR all men* - God desires that all come to the knowledge of Christ, but He can't do it without us. Why? Because we are his representatives on this earth. The only way for men to truly step into and connect with the purpose that they were created for is to accept the Gospel for themselves.
2. *It was written TO all believers* – We were created for this purpose—to be image bearers of our Father. The Great Commission doesn't say that **HE** would Go, but that **WE** need to go. If you have accepted Jesus as your Lord and Savior, this commandment is written to you.

Read Luke 10:2-3

In Luke, He goes a little farther. Right after He says to pray for the laborers, He says GO . . . I SEND YOU. We should not only pray for the laborers, but we must also BE the laborers. We are to be the laborers that go into ALL THE WORLD. You don't have to go to another country (although God may call you to do this). Go into YOUR world. Jesus said "Go YOUR way . . ." YOUR WAY is right where you are at. Where you live. Your neighbors. The people you come in contact with in your daily life.

After we accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior, many of us dream of doing great things for God. You may ask, how do I fit into this purpose? How do I know my assignment? How do we do great things for God?

I am reminded of the story of the feeding of the five thousand in Matthew 14. The disciples couldn't figure out what to do with all the people that needed to be fed. All the disciples saw was that they only had a small amount of food—not enough to feed the mass of hungry people. They wanted to send the people away because the task was beyond their comprehension. But the Lord only asked them to bring to Him what they had. He didn't ask them to do something great or big or dramatic. He asked them to bring their measly five loaves and two fish—and the disciples' obedience in this seemingly small matter **resulted** in a great thing. Five thousand people were fed through that small act of obedience with what they had and what was immediately in front of them. We want to do great things and sometimes we try to figure it out. How do we get the people fed on our meager offerings? What great thing do you have for us, God? But God only calls us to be obedient and give Him what we've got where we are at. We don't have to plan

great things for God, we just have to live our life in obedience and give him ourselves and our abilities . . . and He will take it from there and turn them into great things.

You are the landing point of the Holy Trinity in every situation that you walk in. You are the presence of Jesus. He works in you and through you. He refuses to work without you. You walk into the darkness and you are the light and joy. You walk into corruption and you are the salt of the earth that stops it. You are taking Jesus to the world with every step that you take and every word that you speak.

How do I share?

You may be asking, “How do I share?” There are a number of ways to share God’s truth and love with others. But, in this lesson, we will share two simple ways:

1. *Share the Gospel with your actions*
2. *Share the Gospel with your words*

Be the example you want others to see—people notice. There is a divine purpose to our relationships. We are put in peoples’ lives for a divine purpose.

We learned in the first lesson that disciples are to perform good works. What does the Bible have to say about good works? Read the following Scriptures:

Ephesians 2:10

2 Timothy 3:17

Matthew 5:16

Our good works (living in the truth that we know and acting on the Word of God) will have eternal significance.

- *We were created to perform them.*
- *God equips us to perform them.*
- *Our good works will glorify God before men.*

We are created for a purpose. We all have a general purpose and a specific purpose to accomplish on this earth. As soon as you accept Christ as your savior, you have stepped into your pathway of purpose. You have been commissioned to share the good news of Christ with others (your general purpose). HOW we carry out our general purpose is different for each and every one of us. God has prepared in advance specific good works (works of eternal significance) for each of us to accomplish. We all have a specific place in the commission that uses our unique gifts, callings, and talents. Nobody else can fulfill our specific place in the body of Christ like we can.

Read Philippians 3:16

How do you live a life of example? Walk in (or conduct yourself/act on) the truth that you know. Start where you are at. When you live your life as a disciple, other people will see and notice something different about you. Act on the Word in your own life. Follow God's lead in your own life.

My grandmother was lying in a hospital bed as my husband and I were planning to move to Honduras to serve at a mission hospital. My grandmother didn't understand why we were going. One day, as my father was visiting her bedside, my grandmother asked him questions about why we were going. What was driving us to move to another country? She could see that we were doing it because we believed in something bigger than ourselves. She saw something about the way that we were living our lives and wanted to hear about it. As she looked at our lives, she noticed something different. This opened the door for a discussion about Jesus and His plan of salvation for her life. She got saved in her hospital bed not long before she died. When we live our lives as a disciple, people notice and many times it will open their hearts to the truth.

However, we can't just share the truth through our actions. We must also share the Gospel with our words.

Read Roman 10:14-15

They must be sent to preach. They must preach for people to hear. They must hear to believe. How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? How will they preach unless they are sent?

They must believe to call on Him! It all starts with somebody speaking. So, good works aren't just our actions (or how we live our life), but also sharing the Word. Every time you share the Gospel, you bear the image of the love of Christ.

What do I share?

I was twenty-six years old. For years, my sister had been sharing God's love with me. She had been sharing God's Word with me. At one point, I even told her, "I love you, but you really have to stop talking about Jesus around me." Wow! Hard to believe I said that, but it's true. She didn't give up. She kept sharing the truth of the Bible with me. The Bible says that God's Word is seed, yet it not just any type of seed.

Read 1 Peter 1:23

God's Word is incorruptible seed. This means that it never withers, dies, decays, or goes away. It means that it is everlasting and eternal. The Word of God lives and abides forever. Every time my sister shared God's Words with me, she was planting and watering this seed. Even though I didn't act on it right away, it was still planted.

One night as I was facing a crisis in my life, I remember looking in the mirror with tears streaming down my face. I was crying out to God. "God, if you are real—show me." The

moment I cried out to God, He reminded me of all the seed or words that my sister had shared with me. God loves me. He has a plan for my life. His Son died on the cross for me. That night, I drove to my sister's house at 2 a.m. and started banging on her door. I couldn't wait a moment longer. I wanted to ask Jesus into my heart. That night, she prayed with me and I accepted Jesus as my Lord and Savior. All the seed that she had planted in my life did not wither or die. The moment that I opened my heart to Him, the seed took root.

Cancelled. Cancelled. Cancelled. My husband and I were trying to get home in the middle of a snowstorm. All the flights to our city were cancelled. We were able to find a flight to a city about three hours away and rent a car to drive the rest of the way home. A young lady was driving the shuttle to take us to get our rental car. We started talking to her and asking her questions about her kids. When we arrived at the rental car lot, we got off the shuttle and started walking away. As I was walking, I sensed an urging on the inside to share Jesus with her. I will be honest. I started arguing with God. I was distracted. We were in a hurry to get our car and start driving home. Finally, I knew I couldn't ignore His "nudge" to share the Gospel. I left my luggage with my husband and rushed back to her. I told her how God had an amazing plan for her life and how much He loved her. I asked her if she ever heard what He did for her because of how much He loved her. That day, I was able to share Jesus with her and she accepted Him as her Lord and Savior. How amazing that God chose me to be part of His plan for her life—and I almost passed up the opportunity because I was distracted and in a hurry.

Sometimes it can seem intimidating, inconvenient, or overwhelming to share the Gospel. But, with a few simple tools, you can feel confident to share the Gospel.

First, start a conversation.

- *Take an interest in others and ask them questions*
- *Be ready to share your testimony. YOUR TESTIMONY is one of your greatest witnesses. What amazing thing did God do in your life?*
- *Tell them God has an amazing plan for their life*
- *Ask them if they want to hear about what God did for them because of how much He loves them*

Second, share the Gospel of what Jesus did through the following Scriptures.

John 3:16 - For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

God is constantly pursuing us with His love. Yet, no matter how hard we try to be good or ethical in our own strength, we will never be perfect. God is a perfect and holy God. The only way that we can have fellowship with Him and be with Him forever is if we are perfect and holy just like him.

Romans 3:23 - Everyone has sinned. No one measures up to God's glory.

But God knew this and planned for it. He had to come up with a substitution for us so that we could stand before him without sin or a sense of inferiority and be completely perfect in his sight. His plan was a man name Jesus.

Romans 5:8 - But here is how God has shown his love for us. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

He accomplished this by sending his only son, Jesus Christ, in the form of a man to stand in judgment for us and take the death penalty for us and pay for our sins. We will never have a relationship with God without accepting what Jesus did for us. It's not something you can do or earn on your own.

Romans 6:23 - When you sin, the pay you get is death. But God gives you the gift of eternal life because of what Christ Jesus our Lord has done.

In the Old Testament, they had to offer sacrifices for their sins. Yearly, the High Priest would enter into the Holy of Holies, where the presence of God dwelt, and offer an atoning sacrifice for the sins of the people by applying animal blood to the mercy seat. But when Jesus died on the cross, He carried His own blood into the heavenly Holy of Holies and paid for every sin of every person that has lived or will ever live.

He restored our fellowship with God that was lost by Adam in the Garden when He sinned. By doing this, He purchased back our right standing with God so that we can boldly stand before our Father God without shame. But He doesn't stop there! When we accept Christ into our heart, we aren't just saved from going to hell (although that is true). We have available to us the ability, power, and identity of Jesus as well.

What do we do with Jesus' death and resurrection (or rising from the dead)? If you have never accepted Jesus as your Lord and Savior, you can do it right now. "God, I confess with my mouth that Jesus Christ is my Savior and Lord. I believe in my heart that God raised Him from the dead and He is seated at your right hand right now. I accept Him into my life and will purpose to live a life pleasing to you. For you said it is by believing in my heart and speaking with my mouth in faith that I am saved."

Romans 10:9-10 - Say with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord." Believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead. Then you will be saved. With your heart you believe and are made right with God. With your mouth you say that Jesus is Lord. And so you are saved.

When you pray this prayer, you have fully stepped into your purpose. If you believe it, you have been recreated on the inside and God's Spirit has come to live on the inside of you. As soon as we accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, we have stepped into the pathway of our purpose. Everything that Christ did for us leads to this point in our life. Not just his death, but through His resurrection. We are connected with our purpose—the purpose we were created for.

Jesus died for our sins and rose again so that sin has no power over us:

Ephesians 2:8 - For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,

1 Corinthians 15:3 - Christ died for our sins, rose again the third day

Ephesians 2:4-6 - But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus

1 Corinthians 5:19 - That God was in Christ Reconciling the world to Himself

Third, **memorize** the following Scripture. This Scripture provides the instructions in the Bible regarding how to accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior. Have them ready in your mind for whenever you need to lead someone in the salvation prayer.

Romans 10:9-10 - 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. 10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation

Fourth, the Bible is clear that after someone accepts Jesus as their Lord and Savior, they can be baptized in water. Baptism in water is by full immersion. It is symbol (or outward expression) of the new believer's identification with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. We see examples of water baptism in the following Scriptures:

Romans 6:4

Colossians 2:12

Acts 8:36-39

You do not need to be a Pastor or full-time minister to baptize someone although this is the most common way it is usually done in a church service. The following confession is an example of the words to speak when performing Water Baptism:

“On Confession of your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and by His authority, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

Fifth, be ready to pray and/or lay hands on them, when needed. God draws unbelievers to Himself with healings. Read the following Scripture again:

Mark 16:18

What is one of the signs that will follow believers? They will lay hands on the sick and they will recover! God can use manifestations of His Spirit to draw people to Himself. Be ready to pray. You have a desire for God to heal through you. You have hands to lay on sick people. Your faith is released to activate the power of God to heal.

We also read that after believers accepted Jesus in the New Testament Church, they would pray for them to receive the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. Usually this is done by laying on hands, but people can receive the Baptism of the Holy Spirit even without laying on hands. We can find examples of both manifestations in the book of Acts. As we learned in previous lessons, God has given us this gift to empower us to be witnesses for Him. While it is not necessary to receive this gift to go to heaven, it is important for living an empowered Christian life. Don't just stop at salvation. There is a second Holy Spirit encounter that new believers need to receive! Pray with them to receive the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Finally, remember that we are not alone. Read the following Scripture:

Acts 1:8 - Who has He sent to empower us to be witnesses?

The last words of Jesus before He ascended to Heaven are not found in the Gospels. His last words are recorded in the first chapter of Acts. The "Great Commission" declares our assignment. But, Acts 1:8 gives us the ability to carry out this assignment. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to empower us to be witnesses for Him. He provided us the Holy Spirit to help us carry out this assignment on the earth. As we read the Gospel, it is like He is saying "I said all of that to say this . . . I now have an assignment for you as my disciples. It is to continue to share the Gospel with the world. But, I won't leave you alone, I will provide a helper so that you are not alone. This helper will empower you (or provide the power/ability) to carry out this assignment." Read the following Scriptures:

Romans 15:19 - How did Paul say He preached the Gospel?

What support did he provide for this statement?

1 Corinthians 4:20 - the Kingdom of God is not just in Word, but also in what?

1 Corinthians 2:4 - Paul's speaking wasn't just with words, but also what?

1 Thessalonians 1:5 - How did the Gospel come to the church at Thessaloniki?

Paul assures the Roman church that he has fully preached the Gospel. So, what does it mean to fully preach the Gospel? Fully preaching the Gospel requires not just actions, words, or knowledge of the truth, but POWER. Paul also shares with the Corinthian church that he came to them not with his own words or power, but in the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit helps us with what to say and when to say it. Paul said the words, but the Holy Spirit provided the power for the words to have impact. That means that you can't do this work apart from God. We are co-laborers. That is the difference between Christianity and other "religions." We are not alone. God has sent the Holy Spirit to help us. He shows up with the power to confirm our words, prepare people's hearts, reveal truth, and reveal the power of God. The Holy Spirit will help and empower us.

However, the Holy Spirit also has a ministry to the world. We find this ministry in the following Scripture:

John 16:8-11

The Holy Spirit will convict the world (or unbelievers) of sin, righteousness, and judgment. Why? To help them understand their need for a Savior. To show them that they need Jesus. Be quick to follow the "nudge" of the Holy Spirit when He tells you to say something. God gives us the words and God gives us the power. All we must do is SHARE. We are not responsible for the results of our sharing, God is.

Read 1 Corinthians 3:6-7

God gives increase to the seed that we plant. We are not responsible for the increase, God is. The seed (God's Word) will NEVER wither, die, or go away. Our responsibility is to ACT and God makes the power available to accomplish His purpose. But it takes both our actions/words AND God's power to fully preach the Gospel. We can expect the power to show up to confirm His Words when we share His truth. Why? Because He said so.

Finally, when possible, don't let a person leave without either praying for them or making sure that they know how to pray when the time comes, and they are ready to open their hearts.

Follow-up

After you have prayed the prayer of salvation with someone, follow-up with them.

- *Get them connected to a church or home group*
- *Get them a Bible to read for themselves*
- *Check in on them regularly, if possible*

We have a general and specific purpose. We are to be image bearers on earth of His great love. We are to display His love image and to connect others with their purpose for which they were created. There is a divine purpose to our relationships. Every one of us can touch those around us with seeds of eternal significance. As disciples, we must play our part in sharing the love of

Christ as image bearers of Him through both our actions and words . . . and leave the results up to God.

Appendix 1 – Salvation Prayer

God, I'm sorry for everything that I've done wrong in my life. I know that I've sinned. But I also know that you provided Jesus. And you said that when He died on the cross, He took all my sins to the cross with Him. He suffered for my sins. Three days after He died on the cross, you raised Him from the dead to sit at your right hand. I confess with my mouth right now that Jesus is now Lord or boss of my life. I accept what He did for me through His death, burial and resurrection and I believe in my heart that you raised Him from the dead and that He is, right now, sitting at your right hand ever ready to stand up for me. Thank you for this precious gift. In Jesus name I pray, AMEN

Appendix 2 - Ephesians Prayer Challenge

Ephesians 1:17-23

That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to ME the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of MY understanding being enlightened; that I may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe (ME), according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. 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.

Appendix 3 – Commitment Statement

COMMITMENT STATEMENT: I commit to spend time each day in reading the word and prayer.

When: _____ (i.e. each morning when you wake up? At night before you go to bed? At your lunch break?)

How Long: _____ (i.e. again, I encourage you to be realistic and choose an amount of time that is achievable)

The goal of this exercise is to be intentional about your time with God. It is important to set some time aside each day to spend time with Him or it is easy to miss it or become distracted.

Appendix 4 – God is Faithful

2 Timothy 2:13 - If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.

Psalms 33:4 - For the word of the Lord is right and true; he is faithful in all he does.

Psalms 119:90 - Your faithfulness continues through all generations; you established the earth, and it endures.

Lamentations 3:23-24 - Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

1 Corinthians 1:9 - God is faithful, who has called you into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

2 Corinthians 1:20 - For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us.

1 Thessalonians 5:24 - The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it. **2 Thessalonians 3:3** - But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen you and protect you from the evil one.

Hebrews 10:23 - Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful

Appendix 5 – Your Identity

I would encourage you to write these confessions in in your notebook or even in the front of your Bible. Read them over yourself every morning and evening (and even throughout the day if you can).

- *Christ lives in me. I am Christ-inside minded. It is no longer I who live, but Christ living in me (Galatians 2:10)*
- *I have His ability. Greater is He who is in me, than he who is in the world (1 John 4:4); I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength (Philippians 4:19)*
- *I have His wisdom, I am set apart for a purpose, and I am redeemed. But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption (1 Corinthians 1:30)*
- *I have His love - Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us. (Romans 5:5)*
- *I am righteous (have right standing with God) and can come before my father God without a sense of inferiority or guilt. For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. (2 Corinthians 5:21)*
- *I am seated in heavenly places with Christ at the right hand of the Father. And raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:6)*

Appendix 6 – How to Study the Bible^{xix}

The Bible is the greatest book ever written. In it God Himself speaks to men. It is a book of divine instruction. It offers comfort in sorrow, guidance in perplexity, advice for our problems, rebuke for our sins, and daily inspiration for our every need.

The Bible is not simply one book. It is an entire library of books covering the whole range of literature. It includes history, poetry, drama, biography, prophecy, philosophy, science, and inspirational reading. Little wonder, then, that all or part of the Bible has been translated into more than 1,200 languages, and every year more copies of the Bible are sold than any other single book.

The Bible alone truly answers the greatest questions that men of all ages have asked: “Where have I come from?” “Where am I going?” “Why am I here?” “How can I know the truth?” For the Bible reveals the truth about God, explains the origin of man, points out the only way to salvation and eternal life, and explains the age-old problem of sin and suffering.

The great theme of the Bible is the Lord Jesus Christ and His work of redemption for mankind. The person and work of Jesus Christ are promised, prophesied, and pictured in the types and symbols of the Old Testament. In all His truth and beauty, the Lord Jesus Christ is revealed in the Gospels; and the full meanings of His life, His death, and His resurrection are explained in the Epistles. His glorious coming again to earth in the future is unmistakably foretold in the Book of Revelation. The great purpose of the written Word of God, the Bible, is to reveal the living Word of God, the Lord Jesus Christ (read John 1:1–18).

Dr. Wilbur M. Smith relates seven great things that the study of the Bible will do for us:

1. *The Bible discovers sin and convicts us.*
2. *The Bible helps cleanse us from the pollutions of sin.*
3. *The Bible imparts strength.*
3. *The Bible instructs us in what we are to do.*
4. *The Bible provides us with a sword for victory over sin.*
5. *The Bible makes our lives fruitful.*
6. *The Bible gives us power to pray.*

You do not need a whole library of books to study the Bible. The Bible is its own best commentator and interpreter. With all the instructive helps that you have in this new Bible, you have a whole lifetime of Bible study.

I. PERSONAL BIBLE STUDY

A. *Devotional Bible Study*

The Bible is not an end in itself but is a means to the end of knowing God and doing His will. The apostle Paul said, “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15). God has given us the Bible in order that we might know Him and that we might do His will here on earth.

Therefore, devotional Bible study is the most important kind of Bible study. Devotional Bible study means reading and studying the Word of God in order that we may hear God’s voice and that we may know how to do His will and to live a better Christian life.

A great scientist and medical doctor, Dr. Howard A. Kelly (Professor of Gynecology at Johns Hopkins University from 1889 through 1940), was also an avid student of the Bible. He once said: “The very best way to study the Bible is simply to read it daily with close attention and with prayer to see the light that shines from its pages, to meditate upon it, and to continue to read it until somehow it works itself, its words, its expressions, its teachings, its habits of thought, and its presentation of God and His Christ into the very warp and woof of one’s being.”

For your devotional reading and study of the Bible, here are several important, practical suggestions:

1. *Begin your Bible reading with prayer (Ps. 119:18; John 16:13–15).*
2. *Take brief notes on what you read. Keep a small notebook for your Bible study*
3. *(see number 4 below).*
4. *Read slowly through one chapter, or perhaps two or three chapters, or perhaps just one paragraph at a time. After reading, ask yourself what this passage means. Then reread it.*
5. *It is often very helpful in finding out the true meaning of a chapter or passage to ask yourself the following questions, then write the answers in your notebook:*
 - a. *What is the main subject of this passage?*
 - b. *Who are the persons revealed in this passage: Who is speaking? About whom is he speaking? Who is acting?*
 - c. *What is the key verse of this passage?*
 - d. *What does this passage teach me about the Lord Jesus Christ?*
 - e. *Does this passage portray any sin for me to confess and forsake?*
 - f. *Does this passage contain any command for me to obey?*
 - g. *Is there any promise for me to claim?*
 - h. *Is there any instruction for me to follow?*
 - i. *Not all these questions may be answered in every passage.*
6. *Keep a spiritual diary. Either in your Bible study notebook mentioned above (number 2), or in a separate notebook entitled, “My Spiritual Diary,” write down daily what God says to you through the Bible. Write down the sins that you confess or the commands you should obey.*
7. *Memorize passages of the Word of God. No one is ever too old to memorize the Word of God. Write verses on cards with the reference on one side and the verse on the other. Carry these cards with you and review them while you’re waiting for a train, standing in lunch line, and so on.*
8. *Other persons prefer to memorize whole passages or chapters of the Bible. A small pocket Bible will help you to review these passages when you have spare moments. One of the best ways is to spend a few minutes every night before going to sleep, in order that your subconscious mind may help you fix these passages of God’s Word in your mind while you’re asleep (Ps. 119:11). To meditate means “to reflect, to ponder, to consider, to dwell in thought.” Through meditation the Word of God will become meaningful and real to you, and the Holy Spirit will use this time to apply the Word of God to your own life and its problems.*
9. *Obey the Word of God. As Paul said to Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:16: “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” The Bible has been given to us that we may live a holy life,*

well-pleasing to God. Therefore, God says, "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only" (James 1:22).

The Navigators, a group of men banded together just before World War II to encourage Bible study among Christian servicemen, developed a splendid plan for a personal, devotional study.

- *After prayer, first read the Bible passage slowly and silently; then read it again aloud.*
- *In a large notebook divide the paper into columns and head each column as follows: Chapter title, Key verse, Significant truth, Cross-references, Difficulties in this passage (personal or possible), Application to me, and Summary or outline of the passage. In each of these columns, write the information desired.*

Do not try to adopt all these methods at once, but start out slowly, selecting those methods and suggestions which appeal to you. You will find, as millions of others have before you, that the more you read and study the Word of God, the more you'll want to read it. Therefore, the following suggestions of Bible study are made for those who wish to make a more intensive study of the Bible truths.

B. Study for Bible Knowledge

There are many valuable methods of Bible study. One may study the Bible, as if with a telescope, to see the great truths that stand out in every book. Or one may study the Bible as if with a microscope to find all the marvelous details that are in this mine of spiritual riches. In this section there are several proven methods with which a person may conduct more intensive Bible study. The most important thing is to follow faithfully some systematic method of Bible study.

Bible Study by Chapters. In the Bible there are 1,189 chapters in the Old and New Testaments. In a little over three years, a person could make an intensive study of the whole Bible, taking a chapter a day. It is usually a good practice to start your Bible study in the New Testament.

1. *Read through the chapter carefully, seeking to find its main subject or subjects.*
2. *As you read each chapter, give it a title which suggests its main content. If you are reading the Gospel of John, for example, you might title the chapters like this:*
 - a. *ch. 1 "Jesus Christ, the Word of God"*
 - b. *ch. 2 "The Wedding at Cana"*
 - c. *ch. 3 "The New Birth"*
 - d. *ch. 4 "The Woman at the Well"*
 - e. *ch. 5 "The Healing of the Man at the Pool of Bethesda"*
3. *Reread the chapter again and make a simple outline, which will include its main thoughts. For example, in John 1, you might make an outline like this: "Jesus Christ, the Word of God":*
 - a. *Jesus Christ was the eternal Word of God, 1–9.*
 - b. *Jesus Christ came into the world, 10–18.*
 - c. *John witnesses that Christ is to come, 19–28.*
 - d. *John says that Jesus is the Lamb of God, 29–37.*
 - e. *Jesus Christ calls His first disciples, 38–51.*

4. *Concerning each chapter, ask and answer the questions suggested in item number 4 of devotional Bible study hints above. Especially take note of any practical or theological problems in this chapter. Then, using your concordance, look up the key words in those verses and find out what other portions of the Bible say about this question or problem. Compare Scripture with Scripture to find its true meaning. Usually, to understand an important Bible chapter, you must study it together with the preceding or following chapters.*

Bible Study by Paragraphs. A paragraph is several sentences of thought in writing. When an author changes the subject of emphasis in writing, he usually begins a new paragraph. (In this Bible, use the outline headings in the text as paragraph breaks, subdividing when appropriate). Studying the Bible by paragraphs like this is often called analytical Bible study.

1. *Read the paragraph carefully for its main thought or subject.*
2. *In order to find the relation of the important words and sentences in this paragraph, it is often helpful to rewrite the text. For example, if you were going to study the paragraph on prayer in the Sermon on the Mount found in Matthew 6:5–8, you could rewrite this text:*
 - a. *“And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.*
 - b. *“But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.*
 - c. *“But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.*
 - d. *“Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.”*
3. *From the text which you’ve now rewritten so that you can see the relationship of the various parts of the paragraph, it is easy to make a simple outline. For example, using Matthew 6:5–15, your outline of this passage would be something like this:*

“Jesus Teaches Us How to Pray”—Matthew 6:5–15.

 - a. *How not to pray: Matthew 6:5–8*
 - b. *Hypocritically in public, 6:5*
 - c. *With useless repetition, 6:7, 8 • How to pray: Matthew 6:6, 9–13*
 - d. *In private to your heavenly Father, 6:6*
 - e. *Following the pattern of Jesus’ model prayer, 6:9–13*

It is helpful also to look up in the concordance important words that occur in this paragraph. For example, the words “hypocrites,” “heathen,” and so on. By comparing other passages of the Bible that teach about prayer, you’ll be kept from making any mistakes concerning the true nature, conditions, and results of prayer according to the will of God.

Bible Study by Verses. In studying the historical passages of the Bible, such as most of the Old Testament or parts of the Gospels, each verse may have only one simple meaning.

But many verses in both the Old and New Testaments are rich with many great Bible truths that will demand more detailed study. There are many ways that you can study a single Bible verse.

1. *Study it by the verbs in the verse. For example, if you were studying John 3:16 you would find the following verbs: “loved . . . gave . . . should not perish . . . have . . .”*
2. *You could make a comparative list like this:*
 - a. *God loved*
 - b. *God gave*
 - c. *Man believes*
 - d. *Man shall not perish*
 - e. *Man has everlasting life*
3. *Or simply take the nouns in this wonderful verse: “God . . . world . . . only begotten Son . . . whosoever . . . everlasting life.”*
4. *Study a verse through the personalities revealed. For example, once again taking John 3:16, these very simple but significant points are brought to light: “God . . . only begotten Son . . . whosoever . . . him.”*
5. *Study a verse by looking for the great ideas revealed in it. Let us look again at John 3:16 as our example. We might title this verse, “The greatest verse in the Bible.” The following ideas are found in it:*
 - a. *“God”—the greatest person*
 - b. *“so loved”—the greatest devotion*
 - c. *“the world”—the greatest number*
 - d. *“he gave”—the greatest act*
 - e. *“his only begotten Son”—the greatest gift*
 - f. *“that whosoever believeth”—the greatest condition*
 - g. *“should not perish”—the greatest mercy*
 - h. *“have everlasting life”—the greatest result*
6. *Sometimes a combination of these various ideas applied to a verse will bring the richest results. For example, take Romans 5:1:*
 - a. *“Therefore”—This verse depends on 4:25. Our justification is based on and is guaranteed by Jesus’ resurrection.*
 - b. *“justified”—made righteous*
 - c. *“by faith”—method of our justification (see also 3:24; 4:9)*
 - d. *“have”—not future, but present tense—We have this now.*
 - e. *“peace with God”—We were enemies, but now there is peace between us and God*
 - f. *because of what Christ has done.*
 - g. *“through our Lord Jesus Christ”—The way to peace with God is only through Jesus Christ.*

Bible Study by Books. After you have begun to study the Bible by chapters or paragraphs or verses, you will be ready to study the Bible by books. There are several methods of Bible book study.

1. ***Inductive Method:*** *One is called the inductive method. This is a method of studying in detail the contents of a Bible book and then drawing from these details general conclusions or principles concerning the contents and purpose of the book.*

2. **Synthetic Method:** Another method of book study is called the synthetic method. By this method, one reads the Bible book over several times to receive the general impressions of the main ideas and purpose of the book without attention to the details. (It is sometimes hard to distinguish these two methods.)
3. **Historical Method:** In some cases the study of a Bible book becomes a historical study, if that book relates the history of a nation or a man in a particular period of time. For example, the Book of Exodus tells the history of the children of Israel from the death of Joseph in Egypt until the erection of the tabernacle in the wilderness in the time of Moses. This covers approximately 400 years.

Here are some methods for Bible study by books:

1. Read the book through to get the perspective and the general emphasis of the book.
2. Reread the book many times, each time asking yourself a relevant question and jotting down the answers you find as you read. Here are the most important questions to ask:
 - a. First reading: What is the central theme or emphasis of this book? What is the key verse?
 - b. Second reading: Remembering the theme of the book, see how it is emphasized and developed. Look for any special problems or applications.
 - c. Third reading: What does it tell me about the author and his circumstances when he wrote this book?
 - d. Fourth reading: What does the book tell me about the people to whom the book was written and their circumstances, needs, or problems?
 - e. Fifth reading: What are the main divisions of the book? Is there any outline apparent in the logical organization and development of the book? During this reading, divide the text into the paragraphs as you see them and then give a title to each paragraph. Draw a line down the right side of the outline and on the other side write any problems, questions, words, or ideas that require further study by comparison with other passages in the Bible.
 - f. Sixth and successive readings: Look for other facts and/or information that your earlier readings have suggested. By now certain words will stand out in the book. See how often they recur. (For example, as you read the Book of Philippians, you will soon find that the word joy occurs many times. This is one of the key words of the book, so note its occurrences and the circumstances surrounding it.)

As you read and reread a book, you'll find that you begin to see its structure and its outline very clearly. It is true, however, that there are other outlines for any given book. It depends on the principle of division that you select.

Bible Study by Topics. Closely related to the method of study by words is the study according to great topics or subjects: Bible prayers, Bible promises, Bible sermons, Bible songs, Bible poems, and so on.

Or one might study Bible geography by reading rapidly through and looking for rivers, seas, and mountains highlighted in Scripture. For example, the mountaintop experiences in the life of Abraham are a thrilling study.

Another challenging study is to read rapidly through the Gospels and Epistles looking for the commands of the Lord to us. The list of Bible topics is unlimited.

First, for a topical study on prayer, look up the word prayer or pray in your concordance. Look up every form of these words and such related words as ask and intercession. After you have looked up these verses, study them and bring together all the teaching on prayer that you find. You will find conditions of prayer, words to be used in prayer, results to expect from prayer, when to pray, and where to pray.

Bible Study Through Biography. The Bible is a record of God's revealing Himself to men and through men. The Old Testament as well as the New is rich in such biographical studies. Here are a few:

- *The life of Noah: Genesis 5:32—10:32*
- *The life of Abraham: Genesis 12—25*
- *The life of Joseph: Genesis 37—50*
- *The life of Deborah: Judges 4, 5*

Let us summarize various methods for studying the great Bible biographies:

1. *Read the Bible book or passages in which this person's life is prominent, e.g., Abraham in Genesis 12—25, plus references to Abraham in Hebrews 11 and Romans 4.*
2. *Trace a character with a concordance.*
3. *Be careful to note indirect references to the person in other portions of Scripture.*

Conclusion. There are many other methods of studying the Bible: the psychological method, the sociological method, the cultural method, the philosophical method, and so on. Use all the Bible study methods suggested above. From time to time, change your method so that you'll not become too accustomed to any one method or tired from delving too deeply into one type of study.

Appendix 7 – The Love Chapter

1 Corinthians 13:4-8

I am patient and kind. I do not envy, I do not boast, I am not proud. I do not dishonor others, I am not self-seeking, I am not easily angered, I keep no record of wrongs. I do not delight in evil but rejoice with the truth. I always protect, always trust, always hope, always persevere. Love never fails in my life. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away.

Today, I am walking in love. I have God's love nature in me and His ability. I have this love life and I will act in love.

Appendix 8 – Key Definitions

Atonement: Under the Old Covenant, people’s sins were not taken away, they were only covered or temporarily hidden through the temple sacrifices and rituals. This covering is also called Atonement.

Covenant: The Greek word *diathékē* is translated as both testament and covenant. It is a formal, solemn, and binding agreement or contract. Covenant is a promise and agreement between two parties. It is not a promise given lightly. It is solemn promise between two parties that also implies obligations or requirements that each party is responsible to meet, allegiance, and loyalty.

Condemnation: Feelings of shame, guilt, shame or inferiority; deserving of punishment or disapproval.

Gospel: The word literally means “good news.” In the New Testament, it refers to the announcement that Jesus has brought the reign of God to our world through His life, death, and resurrection from the dead.

Justification: Justification is an act of God whereby He declares a sinner to be righteous because of that sinner’s faith in Christ. It is a legal term that declares the final say in the matter. Man is made just as if he has never sinned.

Meditate: To focus one's thoughts on; to imagine, to mutter, to speak, to ponder, to reflect.

Salvation: Salvation is not only forgiveness of sin, but also of healing and health. The word "salvation" means healing, health, safety, deliverance, soundness, and wholeness. Salvation refers to Jesus providing us with the new birth and the remission of sin. Because of Jesus' sacrifice on the Cross for us, we can receive eternal life and become new creatures in Christ Jesus.

Sanctification: Set apart from sin in the flesh for a holy use or living a life of holiness. The Bible teaches that without holiness no man can see the Lord. We are positionally holy, but we have a responsibility after we have accepted Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. Progressive sanctification is an ongoing work of grace that requires a lifetime to complete.

Redemption: The action of saving or being saved from sin, error, or evil. The action of regaining or gaining possession of something in exchange for payment, or clearing a debt. It refers to the work of Christ on our behalf, whereby He purchases us, He ransoms us, at the price of His own life, securing our deliverance from the bondage and condemnation of sin.

Resurrection: Although resurrection literally means to rise up or stand up. To a believer, resurrection means return to life after death. In the Bible, it refers to the fact that Jesus Christ returned to life after His death and burial. It also refers to the event told about in the Bible in which dead people will be brought back to life before the day of final judgment.

Righteousness: The ability to stand before the Father God without a SENSE (OR AWARENESS) of guilt, condemnation or inferiority - as if sin never existed. It is a good position with God.

ENDNOTES

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