

# Beginning With Christ

Discipleship Course  
Revised Edition

# Teaching Guide

Revision 1c 9/2023



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# Mission, Objectives, and Vision

## **Mission:**

***To assist New Christians in becoming mature reproducing members of a local fellowship***

## **Objectives:**

1. To develop an environment of love and care
2. To build relationships with others
3. To develop in our relationship with Christ
4. To embrace the purpose of the Church, i.e., to win, grow and reproduce (The Great Commission)
5. To encourage each other in our prayer life
6. To assist in personal Bible Study
7. To grasp the basics of the Christian life (basic theology)
8. To become comfortably familiar with the Old and New Testaments
9. To form Care Groups from the Beginning With Christ Discipleship Course sessions.
10. To develop future Care Group leaders

## **Vision:**

**To enroll and nurture 6-12 New Christians in the Beginning With Christ – Discipleship Course – Revised Edition track each quarter who are growing in Christ, learning to serve Him and win others to personal faith in Christ.**

# A Note To Course Teachers

We know that everyone has a different energy and style of teaching. This course framework has been developed with a latitude to allow Teachers to introduce their own speed, personality, and creativity into the progression of the course framework. This teaching guide should be just that, a guide and not perceived as a strict legalistic teaching method. We tried to include all the scriptures you will need to teach right from this guide, but there will be occasions you will need a Bible to reference from. The scripture references in this course are from the Christian Standard Bible (CSB).

There are references within the course units to other materials that have been written as part of the online version (*the online version might not be available in this revision*) please feel free to reference from them to supplement your in-person presentation of the course units. Please remember this course is designed for new Christians. We strongly suggest you not overload them with too much too fast. The additional materials are meant to be additional and optional reading for those who choose to dig deeper in individual understanding.

It is expected that this course will grow and mature just as we as Christians are meant to grow and mature. As such we would love to hear about creative approaches to this course and ideas to improve upon it. As a reminder, this material is provided free of charge and is to be presented free of charge. and is able to be adapted as needed and can be released publicly in accordance to the license conditions found on the Table of Contents page. Any questions you may have on licensing and use permissions can be directed to [steve@preachersteve.com](mailto:steve@preachersteve.com).

On behalf of the entire team who has helped develop this course, We hope that you will share with us by emailing Pastor Steve at [steve@preachersteve.com](mailto:steve@preachersteve.com).

God Bless,

The Beginning With Christ – Discipleship Course – Revised Edition Development Team

# Lesson 1 - WHAT'S SO IMPORTANT ABOUT SPIRITUAL GROWTH?

## Course Introduction:

**This class is for the benefit of Young Christians - if you recently invited Christ into your life... congratulations! Welcome to the family of God!**

## Illustration Example:

Compare nurturing and growth of spiritual babes with a newborn baby

## Outline:

### WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH

- A. “let us grow in every way into him who is the head — Christ”

**But speaking the truth in love, let us grow in every way into him who is the head — Christ.**

**Ephesians 4:15 (CSB)**

- B. “your faith is flourishing and the love each one of you has for one another is increasing.”

**We ought to thank God always for you, brothers and sisters, and rightly so, since your faith is flourishing and the love each one of you has for one another is increasing.**

**2 Thessalonians 1:3 (CSB)**

- C. “Therefore, let us leave the elementary teaching about Christ and go on to maturity”

**Therefore, let us leave the elementary teaching about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works, faith in God,**

**Hebrews 6:1 (CSB)**

- D. “desire the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow up into your salvation”

- E. **Like newborn infants, desire the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow up into your salvation,  
1 Peter 2:2 (CSB)**
- F. “But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. ”

**But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.  
To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity.  
2 Peter 3:18 (CSB)**

## II. SPIRITUAL GROWTH IS GOD’S WILL FOR YOUR LIFE

- A. Sounds exciting, doesn’t it?
- B. Sadly, many Christians never mature
1. Satisfied in being saved but never grow beyond that experience

Illustration: How sad parents would be if their child never grew up physically and never matured. (The point) how sad our heavenly Father might feel if we never grew up spiritually.

## III. WITH GOD’S HELP YOU CAN GROW SPIRITUALLY!

### The Parable of the Sower (Mark 4:1-20)

1 Again he began to teach by the sea, and a very large crowd gathered around him. So he got into a boat on the sea and sat down, while the whole crowd was by the sea on the shore. 2 He taught them many things in parables, and in his teaching he said to them, 3 “Listen! Consider the sower who went out to sow. 4 As he sowed, some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured it. 5 Other seed fell on rocky ground where it didn’t have much soil, and it grew up quickly, since the soil wasn’t deep. 6 When the sun came up, it was scorched, and since it had no root, it withered away. 7 Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns came up and choked it, and it didn’t produce fruit. 8 Still other seed fell on good ground and it grew up, producing fruit that increased thirty, sixty, and a hundred times.” 9 Then he said, “Let anyone who has ears to hear listen.”

### Why Jesus Used Parables

10 When he was alone, those around him with the Twelve asked him about the parables. 11 **He answered them, “The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you, but to those outside, everything comes in parables 12 so that they may indeed look, and yet not perceive; they may indeed listen, and yet not understand; otherwise, they might turn back and be forgiven.”**



## The Parable of the Sower Explained

**13** Then he said to them, “**Don’t you understand this parable? How then will you understand all of the parables? 14** The sower sows the word. **15** Some are like the word sown on the path. When they hear, immediately Satan comes and takes away the word sown in them. **16** And others are like seed sown on rocky ground. When they hear the word, immediately they receive it with joy. **17** But they have no root; they are short-lived. When distress or persecution comes because of the word, they immediately fall away. **18** Others are like seed sown among thorns; these are the ones who hear the word, **19** but the worries of this age, the deceitfulness of wealth, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. **20** And those like seed sown on good ground hear the word, welcome it, and produce fruit thirty, sixty, and a hundred times what was sown.”

1. Jesus desires to teach us through the Word/Bible
  - a. this is God’s message (love letter) to mankind
2. A closer look at the 4 types of “ground” (Discuss)
  - a. “the path” = hard; no penetration; non-receptive
  - b. “the rocky ground” = receive joyfully with zeal but short lived
    - 1) Perhaps they rely too much on feelings; the need for an emotional “experience”
  - c. “among thorns” = too concerned with “worldly” things to grow spiritually
    - e.g. - Prestige (pursuit of wealth)
    - Power (getting to the “top”)
    - Pleasure (do your own thing without respect to God’s will for your life)
  - d. “good ground” = grows and produces good “fruit”, beneficial to God’s kingdom
3. God desires that every heart be “good ground”

- Will you let Him make the ground of your heart good?

## IV. How will it happen? What can I do?

### ***Application:***

- 1) An open/receptive attitude towards God’s instructions from His Word as you hear or read it
- 2) A willing attitude to apply it to your life

# Lesson 2 - "I CAN WORSHIP GOD AT THE BEACH...CAN'T I?"

Opening Question:  
(10 min.)

What is your favorite outside recreation activity?

Consideration Question: What Is Worship?

Worship is the act of "Proclaiming God." When we "Proclaim God" we are raising his name in honor. In fact when you research into the roots of the word worship in the original texts and language its meaning is "To Proclaim God". Worship is much more than singing, listening to a sermon, or gathering together. Worship is a time to open our hearts and minds. It is a time to free ourselves from well, **ourselves** and the weight of daily life and distraction; and direct all our energy to God and in remembrance to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ that gave us the ability to lay or sins and burdens on him for forgiveness and rest.

## Why Do I Have To Go To Church?

Many have said, "**But I don't have to go to church to be a Christian**". Yes, that's true. But going to church should be like going to the bus station. It doesn't take you to your destination (*heaven*), but it's a good place to meet the bus (*Jesus Christ*) who will take you there! Whereas attending church isn't a ticket to heaven, it should be a "training ground" in preparation for heaven! Think of the student who doesn't show up for classes; the athlete who doesn't come to practice; the soldier who is absent without leave... If our faith is strong enough to get to heaven, it should be strong enough to get us to church.

I. WHAT IS THE CHURCH ? [Make this a discussion question: What would you say...  
What do you think?]

A. What it is not:

1. It's not a "building" but a group of born again believers meeting for worship, fellowship, etc.  
(Look up and read Acts 2:42-47)

**42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer. 43 Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and signs were being performed through the apostles. 44 Now all the believers were together and held all things in common. 45 They sold their possessions and property and distributed the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46 Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple, and broke bread from house to house. They ate their food with joyful and sincere hearts, 47 praising God and enjoying the**

favor of all the people. Every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

### Act 2:42-47 (CSB)

- a. There are local churches (fellowships) like **“YOUR CHURCH or other churches if you are teaching this independently.”**
- b. Then there is God’s “universal” church comprised of **all** in this world who have trusted in Jesus (see Acts 4:12)

### B. What it is:

1. "Church" means "the Lord's "; the cherished possession of Jesus Christ

- a. Jesus calls it, "my church" - **“And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. ”**

**Matthew 16:18 (CSB)**

2. Metaphors that describe the church:

- a. The body of Christ - **“He is also the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything.” Colossians 1:18 (CSB)**

1) Jesus is the head, we are the body parts

**[Illustration]** just like a body the parts are important and not to remain in isolation... a finger needs the rest of the body to survive! Toe, eye, ear, etc..

- b. The bride of Christ - **“7 Let us be glad, rejoice, and give him glory, because the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his bride has prepared herself. 8 She was given fine linen to wear, bright and pure. For the fine linen represents the righteous acts of the saints.**

**Revelation 19:7-8 (CSB)**

(Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.)  
(also 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:22-23)

**2 For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy, because I have promised you in marriage to one husband -- to present a pure virgin to Christ.  
2 Corinthians 11:2 (CSB)**

**22 Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord, 23 because the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church. He is the Savior of the body.  
Ephesians 5:22-23 (CSB)**

1) He loves her (the church); so should be

c. The branches of Christ - Look up John 15:1-8

**1 "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. 2 "Every branch in me that does not produce fruit he removes, and he prunes every branch that produces fruit so that it will produce more fruit. 3 "You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. 4 "Remain in me, and I in you. Just as a branch is unable to produce fruit by itself unless it remains on the vine, neither can you unless you remain in me. 5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without me. 6 "If anyone does not remain in me, he is thrown aside like a branch and he withers. They gather them, throw them into the fire, and they are burned. 7 "If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you want and it will be done for you. 8 "My Father is glorified by this: that you produce much fruit and prove to be my disciples.**

**John 15:1-8 (CSB)**

1) where the fruit is produced

d. As the building of Christ -

**"19 So, then, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with the saints, and members of God's household, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. 21 In him the whole building, being put together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. 22 In him you are also being built together for God's dwelling in the Spirit."**

**Ephesians 2:19-22 (CSB)**

1) a place where someone lives and works

e. Sheep who need to stay together in one flock -

**"4 What man among you, who has a hundred sheep and loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open field and go after the lost one until he finds it? 5 "When he has found it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders, 6 "and coming home, he calls his friends and neighbors together, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, because I have found my lost**

**sheep!”**

**Luke 15:4-6 (CSB)**

f. Soldiers who are active in God's army -

**“3 Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.”**

**2 Timothy 2:3 (CSB)**

g. Citizens of God's kingdom, where our citizenship is in Heaven. -

**“20 Our citizenship is in heaven, and we eagerly wait for a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ.”**

**Philippians 3:20 (CSB)**

h. Priests who serve in the same temple entered into the “Holy of Holies” (the presence of god) in behalf of others. God didn't create us to live and serve Him in isolation, He desires us to care and serve one another.

**“5 you yourselves, as living stones, a spiritual house, are being built to be a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ”**

**1 Peter 2:5 (CSB)**

A person can individually worship God, but individual worship should never serve as an alternative to group (corporate) worship. Individual worship pairs along with praying in private.

## II. WHAT KIND OF CHURCH SHOULD WE BE (ATTEND)?

A. A Christ centered church

1. Worship focused on the Lord Jesus Christ
2. Where Christ is not merely looked upon as a good Teacher or moral example but as the crucified Savior and living Lord

B. A church that emphasizes the new birth in Christ

1. Where it is clear that people are made aware of the necessity of a conversion experience

C. A church that teaches and preaches the Word of God

1. To build your faith, give you wisdom, train in godliness, and help

you grow

D. A loving church

1. **"35 "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."**

**John 13:35 (CSB)**

a) where "outsiders" easily become "insiders"

E. A church with a sense of mission

1. "A Great Commission Church" -

**19 "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 "teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."**

**Matthew 28:19-20 (CSB)**

a) outreaching

b) growing

c) not satisfied to nurture itself without seeking to win lost people to Christ

III. DON'T LOOK FOR THE PERFECT CHURCH

A. There's no such thing; the church is made up of fallen, sinful, imperfect people

IV. WHAT ABOUT CHURCH MEMBERSHIP ?

A. It's biblical; churches were formed in New Testament times  
(See Revelation 1:4 for some examples)

**4 John: To the seven churches in Asia. Grace and peace to you from the one who is, who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne,**

**Revelation 1:4 (CSB)**

B. It is a tangible expression of the spiritual bond that unites every Christian with Christ and with other Christians

C. It serves to join God's people together for His purposes and service

D. For more on this attend a "Membership Class" at a church you feel comfortable at.

So to answer the question posed by the lesson title "***I CAN WORSHIP GOD AT THE BEACH...CAN'T I?***", theoretically yes, we CAN worship God at the beach, and worship individually, but it needs to be focused on God without distraction. Ideally though we are meant to worship with other believers, and joining others in worship not only pleases God, but it promotes a healthy Christian life and means for continued growth.

**[Teacher: A membership class (if available) is where we want to encourage and direct this group to attend at the conclusion of the *Beginning With Christ* Discipleship Course Track.]**

Caring Time: From our study today, it is easy to see that God desires for us to come together not only for worship, but also to care for one another. It is a privilege we have and it's by God's design.

One way we care for one another is to pray for others.  
Today, how can we care and be of help to one another through prayer?

# Lesson 3 - "LORD, TEACH ME TO PRAY"

## Instructor Note:

**Not all scripture references are printed in entirety in the lesson guide. You should have a Bible handy and reference them in full as needed.**

Introduction: [Generally speaking, when you are involved in a conversation, do you tend to do more of the talking or more of the listening? Are you realizing some struggles with praying? What are they?]

In this lesson we will be talking about what prayer is, why it is necessary, and some of the conditions and suggestions for praying.

## I. THE NATURE OF PRAYER - COMMUNICATION

A. First, God speaks to man through His Word

B. Second, man responds to God in prayer

## II. HOW DID JESUS PRAY? SOME CLASSIC EXAMPLES.

A. Before daybreak the next morning

**“Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he got up, went out, and made his way to a deserted place; and there he was praying.”**

**Mark 1:35 (CSB)**

B. For extended periods of time -

**“During those days he went out to the mountain to pray and spent all night in prayer to God.”**

**Luke 6:12 (CSB)**

C. At a time of great decision -

**“When daylight came, he summoned his disciples, and he chose twelve of them, whom he also named apostles:”** Luke 6:13 (CSB)

D. Luke 11:1-4 - His model prayer

1. **"A-C-T-S"**

- a. **A** - adoration
- b. **C** - confession
- c. **T** - thanksgiving
- d. **S** - supplication

**He was praying in a certain place, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John also taught his disciples."**



He said to them, **"Whenever you pray, say,**

**Father, your name be honored as holy.**

**Your kingdom come.**

**Give us each day our daily bread.**

**And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves also forgive everyone in debt to us.**

**And do not bring us into temptation."**

**Luke 11:1-4 (CSB)**

E. Hebrews 7:25 - and He's still praying!

**Therefore, he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, since he always lives to intercede for them.**

**Hebrews 7:25 (CSB)**

### III. WHAT KINDS OF THINGS SHOULD I PRAY ABOUT?

A. Hebrews 4:16 - the need for prayer

**"Therefore, let us approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in time of need."**

**Hebrews 4:16 (CSB)**

1. Philippians 4:6,7 - to combat anxiety
2. James 1:5 - to obtain wisdom
3. Romans 10:1 - to see people we love saved
4. James 5:14 - to see Christians who are sick healed
5. Colossians 4:12 - to discover God's will for our lives
6. Matthew 9:37,38 - to raise up workers for God
7. Matthew 17:20 - to meet many other situations "Our Mountains"

### IV. WHY DOES IT SEEM THAT MY PRAYERS ARE "BOUNCING OFF THE CEILING"? ARE THERE SOME CONDITIONS REGARDING PRAYER?

A. A right relationship with God - Psalm 66:18

B. A right relationship with others - Matthew 5:23,24

C. Pray as specifically as you can about a situation - Philippians 4:6

D. Claim the promises of God for you personally

**Illustration:** Like cashing a check at the bank that is written to you and also endorsed by you (you claim it... it's for you; it's yours)  
e.g. - James 1:5-8 "wisdom"

E. Praying unselfishly - for others (intercession)

- those who do not know Christ
- pastors, spiritual leaders
- missionaries
- government leaders
- sick, elderly, shut-ins
- those with special needs; jobs, school, death, divorce, etc.
- even our enemies (Luke 23:24)

F. Live in an attitude of prayer

1. "practicing the presence of Christ" ; living in the spirit of prayer
2. 1 Thessalonians 5:17 - "Never stop praying."
3. God wants us to support everything with a spirit of prayer that allows Him to influence and control our thoughts, words, and actions

G. Praying in faith that God will answer - James 1:6,7

[Illustration] A woman prayed for \$337.00 to pay her utility bill... soon the mailman delivered a check from the IRS for exactly that amount... the lady lifted her eyes toward heaven and prayed, "Lord, remember that prayer request I made for \$337.00? Well, never mind. Someone else provided it!"

She didn't expect God to answer and when the answer came she was blind to it!

H. Asking according to God's will - James 4:3

I. Sometimes the answer is "no"

1. Luke 22:42 (Jesus asking the Father to forego his suffering)
2. 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 (Paul requesting that the painful "thorn in the flesh" be removed)
3. We need to pray in submission to God's will; acceptance without bitterness

V. ANY PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS ON PRAYER?

- A. You learn to pray by praying
- B. Pray about little things as well as big
- C. Develop a prayer and answers list
- D. Make it a regular part of your life if it already isn't

## Lesson 4 - "CAN I BE SURE OF MY SALVATION?" FACTS OR FEELINGS?

**Introduction:** [Opening Question: What is a promise that either you have made or someone made to you that "fell threw"? Discuss: What is a promise?]

**Illustration:** A woman was sick in the hospital with cancer. A pastor went to visit her and realized that she was a Christian but lacked the assurance that she would go to heaven when she died. The lady had chosen to trust in Christ for her salvation and had invited Him into her life but she had no peace in her heart.

Christians who aren't certain of their relationship with Christ aren't going to have fullness of joy nor are they prepared to freely and fully serve the Lord. We should not be satisfied until we know, without a doubt, we're children of God on the way to heaven.

*[Get responses to the 2 diagnostic questions*

1) *Do you know for sure you will go to be with God in heaven?*

2) *If God asked you, "Why should I let you into my heaven, what would you say?"*

*(use 3X5 cards and collect them).*

*Then share the Gospel and give opportunity for people to silently pray to accept Christ as you lead in prayer.*

***Do follow-up visits in the near future with those who had answers on their cards that indicate they don't have assurance of their salvation.]***

### I. WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

A. (a promise of God) **"See! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me."**

**Revelation 3:20 (CSB)**

1. He promised to come in

B. (a gift of God) **And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.**

**1 John 5:11 (CSB)**

**The one who has the Son has life. The one who does not have the Son of God does not have life.**

## 1 John 5:12 (CSB)

1. He gave us eternal life through Jesus Christ. Without Jesus Christ we can't possess this gift
2. People who have Jesus living in them possess eternal life.

### C. (Conclusion)

**"I have written this to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know you have eternal life."**

### 1 John 5: 13 (CSB)

1. Note the present tense; ***our heavenly father wants you to know that you HAVE eternal life!***
2. It doesn't say, "hope, think, wish, suppose, or dream"

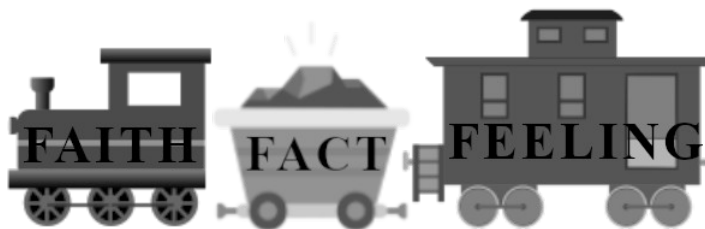
### D. **"Truly I tell you, anyone who believes has eternal life."** John 6:47 (CSB)

1. There's no "wishing" or "hoping" here. We have it! Our Lord's word's couldn't be any clearer!

## II. WHAT ABOUT THOSE TIMES WHEN I DON'T FEEL LIKE A CHRISTIAN?

- A. It doesn't change a thing regarding our destiny. It's not our feelings that settle the issue but rather the facts of God's Word.

**Illustration:** of a train to show the proper place of feelings [have students draw a picture of a train comprised of an engine, coal car, and a caboose]



"engine" = faith which is inspired or fuel by

"coal car" = facts (or promises) of God's Word

"caboose" = feelings

\* faith should not be based on feelings but on the Word of God

\* move ahead in faith based on the promises of God and the feelings will follow

**"So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the message about Christ."**

**Romans 10:17 (CSB)**

## III. SO WHAT IS THE TRUE NATURE OF "SAVING FAITH"?

A. It's not just a "head knowledge" that Jesus existed

**Illustration:** Suppose I ask a man, "Do you believe in communism?" If he answers "yes", that could imply one of two things.

1) He might mean that he believes communism exists, or

2) He might mean that he is a communist

What an enormous difference! You know communism exists but that doesn't mean you are one!

3) Faith or believing the truth that God exists or that Jesus lived and died doesn't make a person a Christian.

a) even the demons believe!

**You believe that God is one. Good! Even the demons believe -- and they shudder.**

**James 2:19 (CSB)**

b) they certainly aren't going to heaven because they neither love Him or are dedicated to Him

B. To believe or trust in Christ is to love Him and place our whole life into His care; it's an act of the will

**Illustration:**

Source: Evangelical Explosion (EE) <https://evangelismexplosion.org/chair-illustration-2/>

Take two chairs and sit them side by side.

Sit in the first chair and explain.

- This chair represents the trust and rest in ourselves alone

Move to the second chair and explain.

- This chair is the Christ Chair. Moving to and sitting in the Christ chair symbolizes place our rest and trust in Jesus instead of depending on ourselves alone.

"chair illustration" = resting in Christ

1. And, our response to God should be one of love and *gratitude* for what Christ has done for us

**Illustration:** a President of Princeton who said,

*“When I realized what Christ had done for me, the rest of my life was like a ‘PS’ saying ‘thank you’ for what You did for me!”*

**Conclusion/Application:** If you are trusting in Christ as your personal Savior, and if this faith results in a sincere love for Him and commitment to Him, then our heavenly Father wants you to know that you are His child. And if you should die today, you would go to be with Him in heaven.

If this is the case for you, go in the joy of the assurance of your eternal destiny!

If not, it can be by simply praying from the sincerity of your heart, asking Jesus to come into your life to forgive you for your sins and trusting or yielding your life into His care.

**Assurance verses:**

John 3:16

John 10:27-30

Galatians 5:1-5

I Corinthians 3:10-15

Acts 4:12

Romans 1:16

# Lesson 5 - "WHEN DOES GOD GET EVEN?" (HOW DO WE FORGIVE OURSELVES?)

**Introduction:** [Thinking back to your childhood, think of a time when you were "let off the hook" for something you did ... when you really deserved to be punished... Who let you off... How did you feel towards that person?]

Many times new Christians are troubled by their pasts and carry a burdensome baggage of guilt in their hearts.

## [Illustration]

A woman was grateful for God's pardon but still felt troubled by her past. She confessed to living with several men in her past outside of marriage. She was pregnant twice and aborted both babies. She said to the pastor, "I know I'm forgiven, but I'm also afraid that one of these days God is going to get even!"

That fear will surely stunt one's growth. The purpose of this lesson is to help lift the burden of guilt off one's heart; to help a person have a clear conscience.

## I. GOD GETS EVEN AT THE CROSS

A. Because our heavenly Father is just, He must punish sin

1. He does not say, "I'll just forget all about your sin. Or, I'll ignore the whole thing and pretend it didn't happen."

a. That would be mercy, but not justice.

b. So sin must be punished

B. But God's law was satisfied when Jesus died on the Cross

1. If Christ died for us, for the penalty of our sins, would it be just (or unjust) for God to punish the same crime or sin twice?

2. No, it would be unfair for the Judge of the universe to punish us a second time.

**"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus."  
Romans 8:1 (CSB)**

- a. If you're in Christ, God won't condemn you, because He already punished Jesus in your place.

**[Illustration]** Think of an old-fashioned shower with a bucket of water above it. A man gets into the shower and pulls the rope. The bucket turns over, spilling all its water on him. Now a second man steps into that same shower and pulls the rope. But he remains perfectly dry, because the water has already been poured out! Jesus is the first man, God poured out His wrath on Him for our sin. Since by faith we stand in Jesus, there's no wrath left over for us. There is no need to fear that God will get even for He did that 2000 years ago at Calvary!

## II. WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS

A. "As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. "

**Psalm 103:12 (CSB)**

B. "I am the one, I sweep away your transgressions for my own sake and remember your sins no more."

**Isaiah 43:25 (CSB)**

C. "He will again have compassion on us; he will vanquish our iniquities. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea."

**Micah 7:19 (CSB)**

D. "The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

**John 1:29 (CSB)**

### **[Illustration/joke]**

You heard about the husband who asked his wife why she kept reminding him of a certain sin he had committed years ago. "You promised to forgive and forget that," he complained. She said, "I have forgiven and forgotten, but I don't want you to forget that I've forgiven and forgotten!"

[the devil is like this wife reminding you... ]

God got even all right - at the Cross. Then He forgives and forgets!

## III. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CONDEMNATION AND DISCIPLINE

A. Think of discipline as correction not condemnation

1. Discipline is given in love

**"for the Lord disciplines the one he loves and punishes every son he receives." Hebrews 12:6 (CSB)**



2. Condemnation is the outbreak of wrath and is reserved for unrepentant rebels

B. Discipline proves we're forgiven children of God

1. **"Endure suffering as discipline: God is dealing with you as sons. For what son is there that a father does not discipline? But if you are without discipline -- which all receive -- then you are illegitimate children and not sons."**

**Hebrews 12:7-8 (CSB)**

C. God disciplines us for our good that we may share His holiness

"Furthermore, we had human fathers discipline us, and we respected them. Shouldn't we submit even more to the Father of spirits and live? For they disciplined us for a short time based on what seemed good to them, but he does it for our benefit, so that we can share his holiness."

**Hebrews 12:9-10 (CSB)**

D. Condemnation has no redeeming value

[**Illustration:** it would be like sending a child who had told a lie to the electric chair. Rather we choose to discipline them by "sending them to their room, etc.]

**Application:** Forgiving yourself

A. How? By looking to the Cross

1. Understand that your unwillingness to let yourself off the hook is another sin for which Christ died.
2. Take it to the Cross and leave it there.
3. Accept God's pardoning love.

B. Memorize Romans 8:1

**"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus,"  
Romans 8:1 (CSB)**

**Conclusion:** To grow spiritually you must know that God got even with you two thousand years ago, when His Son Jesus was punished in your place. He unleashed all His wrath on Him. Since your faith is in Christ, there is no condemnation - no punishment - waiting for you (Romans 8:1). Your conscience can and should be free from guilt.

# Lesson 6 - "WHY DO I FEEL LIKE A WALKING CIVIL WAR? (THE BATTLE OF THE TWO SUPERPOWERS!)"

Introduction:

*Tell us about a "fight" you had as a child - who won?  
Or  
What was something you struggled with as a child?*

Jim, a new Christian, came to discover as he was reading his Bible that he was involved in a battle - a spiritual warfare! He confessed to thinking that being a Christian should be more like a walk in the park than a battle.

Many new Christians make this discovery soon after becoming a Christian as they struggle with decisions and conflicts of lifestyle.

The purpose of this lesson is to help you understand that you now have two natures. Yes, God has given you new life in Christ, yet the old nature does not want to surrender. It will constantly try to divert you from fellowship with Christ.

## I. GOD'S GIFT TO YOU - A NEW NATURE

### A. The source of the new nature - Holy Spirit

1. **"Don't you know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God? You are not your own,"  
1 Corinthians 6:19 (CSB)**

2. **"And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever. He is the Spirit of truth. The world is unable to receive him because it doesn't see him or know him. But you do know him, because he remains with you and will be in you."  
John 14:16-17 (CSB)**

### B. The role of the Holy Spirit (new nature)

1. John 14:26 [Look Up] "... will teach you..."

## II. THE CONFLICT

A. **"For the flesh desires what is against the Spirit, and the Spirit desires what is against the flesh; these are opposed to each other, so that you don't do what you want."  
Galatians 5:17 (CSB)**

(pair up with another person and answer)

*Galatians 5:16-26*

*What do you think:*

- *what 2 things would you say are "in conflict"? (v.17)*
- *if we were "made alive" by the Spirit, why do you think we still struggle with sin?*
- *how would you say a person can be "led" by the Holy Spirit?*
- *does Paul seem to be declaring wrong:*
  - a) everyone who sins*
  - b) those whose sin is part of their lifestyle*
  - c) both*

## B. The Christian is pulled in two directions

1. by the old nature towards sinfulness
2. by the divine nature God has implanted in you towards holiness

**[Illustration]** Suppose someone hurts your feelings. Something inside you says, "You should never forgive him for what he did!" That's the old nature talking. At this point your Christian nature interrupts, "I'm not going to let you feel comfortable with that attitude! God could have taken revenge against you for all your sins against Him, but He pardoned you instead, Now it's your turn to forgive."

And thus the Christian is pulled in two directions - sinfulness and holiness.

(It would be good to use a personal illustration at this point)

1. A missionary explained the conflict as, "two dogs fighting inside your heart, a good dog and a bad dog." When he was asked by a new believer, "Which dog wins?" The missionary thought for a moment and said "The one you feed the most"

## III. WHICH NATURE ARE YOU FEEDING THE MOST?

### A. The old nature that hungers after sin

*(turn to another person and answer) What are some ways that feed the old nature?*

1. watching unwholesome movies, television programs
2. reading lustful books and magazines
3. seeking to be "in" with the wrong crowd, etc.

B. The new nature that Christ gives you that desires for holiness

(turn to another person and answer) *What are some ways to feed the new nature?*

1. investing time in the Word of God
2. prayer
3. worship
4. Christian fellowship
5. Christian literature, etc.

C. Which of the two alternatives sounds more attractive to you?

What might your response reveal?

IV. THE SINFUL NATURE IS NO LONGER OUR MASTER, BUT IT IS STILL OUR ENEMY !

A. The old nature is dead to sin's domination

1. **“For we know (reckon or acknowledge) that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be rendered powerless so that we may no longer be enslaved to sin,”**  
**Romans 6:6 (CSB)**

2. **“So, you too consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.”**  
**Romans 6:11 (CSB)**

B. Don't be discouraged when the battle rages inside you

1. Quote of Charles Spurgeon (great 19th-century London preacher) *"I have a daily fighting of my better self against the old self, the newborn nature against the old nature, which will, if it can, still keep its hold upon me."*

C. Don't give up!

**[Illustration]** a Christian is like a water faucet that continues to drip cold water. No matter how hard you turn that "cold" nozzle to the off position, you can't stop the flow of the cold water. But by turning the "hot" nozzle to the on position, you can send out a stream of hot water that dominates the cold. That hot water is like the power of our Christian nature. If we give it full play, it can win the victory over the unending trickle of sin and self.

**Application:**

- feed the new nature and starve the old
- soak your mind and heart in God's Word
- cultivate fellowship and friendships with other Christians
- avoid places, people, and things that will interfere with your spiritual walk

*What steps might God have you take this week to “feed the new nature”, i.e., to be “led by the Spirit” more?*

# Lesson 7 - "WHAT DO YOU MEAN... FIFTEEN MINUTES A DAY WILL CHANGE MY LIFE?"

Opening Question:

**What surgery have you experienced personally?  
(or someone near to you)  
or  
Who was the best teacher you ever had?  
What did you most like about him/her?**

We've talked about how the Holy Spirit has come to guide and teach us, i.e., give us instruction on how to live life!

I have found many people who come to me for counseling from a Biblical perspective...that's OK but many their questions could have easily been answered if they had only spent some of their own time in God's Word! I promise them that if they just committed some time each day for the study of Scripture, God will change their lives! (And eliminate a lot of personal pastoral counseling.) Yes, the Holy Spirit has been given to us to give us guidance, but the Bible is the instruction manual He draws from to give us direction.

## I. WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS

**A) All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.**

**II Timothy 3:16-17 (CSB)**

| <b>In groups of 3</b>                                                                 | <b>II Timothy 3:16-17</b> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>In 3 minutes list how many things you learn about the Bible from these verses:</b> |                           |
| -                                                                                     | -                         |
| -                                                                                     | -                         |
| -                                                                                     | -                         |

1) The Holy Spirit is the author

2) Man is the instrument used by the Holy Spirit to write...

a) **“because no prophecy ever came by the will of man; instead, men” (35 over 1500 years) “spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”**

## II Peter 1:21 (CSB)

3) Therefore the Bible is the Word of God

B) **“For the word of God is living and effective and sharper than any double-edged sword, penetrating as far as the separation of soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”**  
Hebrews 4:12 (CSB)

(It's alive! It's active!")

C) **"... their knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness,"**  
Titus 1:1 – In Part (CSB)

D) **"Be diligent to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who doesn't need to be ashamed, correctly teaching the word of truth."**  
2 Timothy 2:15 (CSB)

1) Believers are instructed by God to study the Scriptures

II. WILL "A CHAPTER A DAY KEEP THE DEVIL AWAY?" (Make this a brief discussion question. Ask "What do you think?")

A) Not a "lucky charm"; it doesn't exempt us from difficulties; temptation will not cease

1) **Illustration:** Testimony of a new Christian who was going through some very trying times which even caused Him to ask God, "Why me, Lord?" He picked up his "Daily Bread" which directed him to Isaiah 53 and after reading about the suffering Christ went through, he didn't feel so bad!

a) God was speaking to this new Christian to comfort him

b) As we regularly listen to the voice of our Lord through the Scriptures, we will gain wisdom and strength to deal with life's problems and even be joyful in the midst of them!

III. WHEN WILL I FIND THE TIME TO READ THE BIBLE?

A) You'll never find the time; you'll have to make time.

1) sign on a secretaries desk: "You always have time for what you put first." Is getting into the Bible on a daily basis your number-one priority?

B) [Take a calculator to class (Most Smart Phone have a Calculator APP) or have students round off and divide to calculate how much you would have to read each day to get through the New Testament in a year. The whole Bible?]

- divide the # of pages by 365
- approx. how long would it take to read those portions?
- just think how much you could cover in 5/10 yrs.!

Consider your schedule, what would be a reasonable maximum goal for you to read each week? \_\_\_\_\_

A minimum goal? \_\_\_\_\_

**(Teacher: You will want to help students be as realistic as possible at this point so they don't get set up for defeat)**

#### IV. BUT I HAVE SUCH TROUBLE REMEMBERING WHAT I'VE READ?

A) **Illustration:** A man wanted to fill a tank with water. He turned on a faucet, filled up his bucket, and carried it over to the tank. He made many trips back and forth. But there was one problem - his bucket had holes in it. By the time he walked over to the tank, all the water had leaked out. That's how some of us feel when we read the Bible - it all leaks out!

BUT the work wasn't a total waste. At least he had a *clean bucket!*

So even if some facts leak out of your memory while reading Scripture, at least you're going to have your mind, heart, and life continually cleansed! And no doubt, over the course of time, the "bucket" will have fewer holes in it.

1) Look up and highlight (underline, circle) Ephesians 5:26 speaks of the cleansing work of the Scriptures to those who consult it.

**“to make her holy, cleansing her with the washing of water by the word.”**

**Ephesians 5:26 (CSB)**

#### V. SOME TIPS ON READING THE BIBLE

- A) Get the big picture; don't struggle with the details at this point
- B) Be systematic; try to read daily and through the New Testament
- C) Pray first Psalm 119:18 [Look Up]

**“Open my eyes so that I may contemplate wondrous things from your instruction.”  
Psalm 119:18 (CSB)**

D) As you read, answer 3 simple questions:

- 1) What does the passage say? (main facts, key verses)
- 2) What does it mean to me personally? (how does it apply to you or how is God speaking to you)
- 3) What am I specifically going to do as a result of this truth? (applying it in your life)

E) Close in prayer

F) The goal is to hear God speak to you personally (It might help to pretend that Jesus is reading to you) -"You go through the Bible so that the Bible goes through you"

- What do you learn, or what are you reminded of about God?
- What do you learn about yourself?

G) Mastering the Scripture (memorization) isn't nearly as important as allowing the Scripture to master you

Conclusion: God desires to speak to you personally through His Word. A daily discipline of Bible reading will put you in touch with the living Christ and change your life. This can make the difference in spiritual victory or defeat, fulfillment or frustration, joy or weariness. While reading the Scriptures claim God's promises, seek to obey His revealed will, and take seriously His warnings against sin and you will find wisdom for living in 'God's love letter' to you!

Caring Time:

- What would be a reasonable way to pray for you this week:**
- A) That God would give me a desire to read the Bible**
  - B) That God would help me make Bible reading a higher priority**
  - C) That God would help me find the time to read the Bible**
  - D) That God would become more personal as I read the Bible this week**

How else might we help each other through prayer today?



## Lesson 8 - "I'VE TRIED TO LIVE FOR CHRIST - BUT IT DIDN'T WORK!"

Introduction:

**As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?  
or  
What plant best describes you now: Towering Oak?  
Weeping Willow? Tumbleweed? Crab Apple Tree?  
Explain.**

All too often, in talking with new Christians, we hear confessions that go like this, "Yes, I've received Christ as my Savior but nothing ever came of it. I tried to live *for* Christ, but it didn't work."

Whenever one utters these words, you know that they are living in spiritual defeat. This causes great frustration for there is *only one person who can live as a Christian should - that is, Jesus*. In this lesson we will see that honoring God with our lives is to let Christ - who has come to live in you - live *through* you.

### I. WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS

A. The apostle Paul wrote, "**I am able to do all things through him who strengthens me.**"  
**Philippians 4:13 (CSB)**

B. it is "**the God of peace**" who is "**working in us what is pleasing in his sight.**"

**"Now may the God of peace, who brought up from the dead our Lord Jesus -- the great Shepherd of the sheep -- through the blood of the everlasting covenant, equip you with everything good to do his will, working in us what is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen."**  
**Hebrews 13:20-21 (CSB)**

C. Ephesians 3:20 teaches that God "**is able to do above and beyond all that we ask or think according to the power that works in us**"

**Now to him who is able to do above and beyond all that we ask or think according to the power that works in us —  
Ephesians 3:20 (CSB)**

II. THE FULFILLING CHRISTIAN LIFE ISN'T A MATTER OF BRUTE DETERMINATION! IT'S A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST LIVING IN AND THROUGH YOU.

- A. If you've been trying your best to live for Christ - **forget it** - only Christ can please the heavenly Father.
- B. [Look Up & Read John 15:1-17] John 15:4-5,11 speaks of a relationship that will bring about "fruit" and joy as we allow Christ to live through us

(Pair up with another person)

**What do you think?"**

- **Who represents the "Vine"?**
- **Who are the "Branches"?**
- **What does Jesus command?** (v. 12)
- **How much has Jesus loved you?** (v. 13)
- **How's your "fruit" (love for others): Grade A-1? Juicy? Green? Wormy? Why?**
- **Do you feel more like Jesus' servant or his beloved friend?**

- C. [Hudson Taylor - missionary] *"I used to ask God to help me. Then I asked if I might help Him. I ended up by asking Him to do His work through me."*
- D. [Donald Barnhouse - Bible teacher] *"It is not what you do for Christ that counts; it's what you let Him do through you!"* (**use a personal illustration**)

III. SO WHAT'S OUR "JOB"?

- A. To quit trying to live for Jesus and simply become a channel through which He can live His own life
- B. Paul said, **"I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ who lives in me"**

**"I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."  
Galatians 2:20 (CSB)**

1. Stop trying to "imitate" Christ (or simply following a book of "do's and don'ts)
2. Yield to your "friend", the indwelling Christ that He might live His life and love through us
3. Look up Revelation 3:20

**"See! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me."  
Revelation 3:20 (CSB)**

(Pair up with another person) Rev. 3:20

**"What do you think?"**

- **Who was the last person(s) you invited over for dinner?**
- **What does God mean by "I will come in and eat with him, and he with me"?**
- **How far off or close is God in your life: Outer Space? Next door? Knocking at my door? Had lunch with Him today!!**

#### IV. WHAT ABOUT THE COMMANDS OF THE BIBLE AND CHRISTIAN DISCIPLINE?

A. "strive, wrestle, train, make every effort, be disciplined" (e.g. reading Bible, prayer, etc.)

1. These speak of our attitude of yield to the spirit of God which allows us to respond to His leading (the Bible helps us to understand who is the Christ that lives within - a primary means in developing our relationship with Christ)

2. Labor for the Lord - but in His strength

3. **[Illustration]** Suppose you have a serious illness. Your doctor prescribes some pills for you and says, "Be sure to take these every four hours. If you do, you'll get well." You don't want to remain ill, so you discipline yourself to follow his orders. You live on schedule of taking the pills every four hours around the clock. You even get up at midnight and four in the morning. And sure enough, you get well. Now then, what was the power that brought about your healing? Was it your personal discipline? No, it was the medicine! And so it is in our Christian lives. God commands us to be disciplined. But it's not our practice of discipline that brings spiritual growth. It's the power of the indwelling Christ.

#### V. UNLEASHING GOD'S POWER IN YOUR LIFE - SURRENDER

A. Make this commitment in prayer:

*"Lord Jesus, I surrender the control of my body over to You. I want You to look through my eyes. From now on You will think through my mind. My ears will now be Your ears. Use my tongue as Your mouthpiece. Here are my hands. Reach out to*

*other people by means of them. And I ask You to love through my heart. May it be Your feelings and emotions that motivate me."*

B. Remember the "old nature" doesn't like to give in that easily that's why Jesus said that His followers must "take up their crosses daily" Luke 9:23 (Make a conscious commitment each day to be a channel through which Jesus can bear His own fruit of holiness and love)

C. Ask, "Lord, what would You desire to do through me in this situation?" Then let Him live out through you.

Conclusion:

- **What situations in your life could you use Gods' insight and wisdom this week?**
- **In what way could you use Christ to live through you this week?**

- in unison pray through the above commitment

## Lesson 9 - "WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TEMPTATION AND SIN?"

Opening Question:

**Has anyone mistaken you for someone else or said you look like some "famous" person? Who?**

**or**

**If you were on a diet, what food would be your greatest temptation?**

Introduction: We all have known twins in our lives. Many of them look and even act very much alike. Temptation and sin are a lot alike, often masquerading as twins, but there is quite a lot of difference between them. A lack of understanding between the two has caused a lack of spiritual growth in many Christians.

In this chapter we will look at four distinctions between temptation and sin.

### I. TEMPTATION IS A SUGGESTION; SIN IS A YIELDING TO THE SUGGESTION

A. True or False? What do you think? Temptation takes place in our minds while sin takes place in our actions? [False]

1) not always; we can sin in our thought lives without lifting a finger

2) both the suggestion and the yielding to the suggestion can take place in our minds

**[Illustration]** You're sitting at a red light. A man who recently humiliated you in public walks across the street. The thought to step on the gas and run over him flashes through your mind. That's temptation! It's a suggestion.

Now you don't want to be a murderer so you resist the urge to kill him. You may even smile and nod at him as he walks by but in your heart and mind you're mowing him down with your car! And enjoying every bit of your fantasy! Now that's sin! You haven't done a thing outwardly but you've done plenty inwardly. All in your thought life. And that's enough to make you guilty in God's eyes. We must be aware that Satan seeks to take advantage of our weaknesses.

**Teacher:** Be prepared for a little resistance here, or students wanting to argue the concept of this illustration. Inform them to hang on because it's an incomplete part of the overall discussion.

3) Jesus said, **“But I tell you, everyone who is angry with his brother or sister”** (without JUST cause) **“will be subject to judgment.”**

**“But I tell you, everyone who is angry with his brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Whoever insults his brother or sister will be subject to the court. Whoever says, 'You fool! ' will be subject to hellfire.”**

**Matthew 5:22 (CSB)**

4) **“But I tell you, everyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”**

**Matthew 5:28 (CSB)**

a. it's not just the outward act that God looks at, He judges the heart

B) To avoid sinning in this situation you have to say " no " to the suggestion.  
**(Apply to the previous illustration)**

1) **"No!** I won't indulge in vengeful thoughts."

2) Christ forgave me my sins; now I need to be willing to forgive.

3) Seek to get your mind on another "track", perhaps praying or reciting Scripture.

4) It's not easy! But sin can be avoided--God's Promise to you!

a. **"No temptation has come upon you except what is common to humanity. But God is faithful; he will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to bear it. "**

**I Corinthians 10:13 (CSB)**

## II. TEMPTATION DOESN'T INVOLVE GUILT; SIN DOES

A) Hebrews 4:15b **"but one who has been tempted in every way as we are, yet without sin."**

**“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in every way as we are, yet without sin.”**

**Hebrews 4:15 (CSB)**

1) Whatever temptation you might experience, our Lord has experienced it, too, yet without sin

2) We don't need to feel guilty just because we're tempted

a. becoming discouraged and losing your joy

e.g. - "I must be way out of fellowship with God because of all the filthy thoughts that enter my mind"

3) Only when we yield to temptation and sin do we incur guilt

4) God's solution to guilt is forgiveness; we need to confess it (Agree with God and yield to Him) and He will forgive you.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

I John 1:10 (CSB)

### III. HOW CAN I DEAL WITH TEMPTATION?

A) A look at Christ's example (Luke 4:1-12) [Look Up and read]

Teacher: Inform the students that:

- \* In v. 3 Jesus is tempted in "Material Self-interest Possessions"
- \* In vs. 5-7 The temptation is one of "Power"
- \* In vs. 9-11 The temptation is one of "Pride & Invincibility"

*Now although Jesus was God in the flesh, let's consider how He dealt with temptation as a man walking this earth.*

**In groups of 3**

**Luke 4:1-12  
(multiple choice)**

**What do you think:**

**How would you describe the power struggle going on here?**

- a. this is the classic struggle between good and evil
- b. Satan is trying to conquer Jesus when He seems weak and powerless
- c. this power struggle is no different than those we face daily
- d. Satan is trying to conquer Jesus by tempting Him on the physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual levels

**When do you find yourself most vulnerable to the tempter?**

- a. when I'm tired or under stress
- b. when I'm alone or away from home
- c. when I'm not expecting it
- d. when I let my mind dwell on certain things

**What tactics does Jesus use to conquer Satan?**

- a. quote Scripture to refute claims
- b. appeal to higher authority
- c. tell Satan to "beat it"

1) Christ withstood Satan's temptations because He was filled with the Scriptures

- a. Satan backed off and tried another approach  
(We must always be on guard)
- b. the Bible is a great weapon against temptation
- c. the more familiar we become with the Bible the greater victory we can enjoy over sin

1. **“I have treasured your word in my heart so that I may not sin against you.”**

**Psalm 119:11 (CSB)**

2. We may not be able to quote specific scriptures in resisting temptation as Jesus did but it will be most helpful to become more and more aware of what is pleasing and displeasing to God as we read the Bible

2) Christ won the victory over temptation because He was filled with the Spirit

**Then Jesus left the Jordan, full of the Holy Spirit, and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness.**

**Luke 4:1 (CSB)**

Satan tempted Jesus for 40 Day and 40 Nights without success of making Jesus cave to the temptation (suggestion)

**Then Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread throughout the entire vicinity.**

**Luke 4:14 (CSB)**

- a. We need to submit or yield to the Holy Spirit's leading
- b. The real problem with many of us is not that we're too weak, but that we're **too strong!**

3) These same two weapons that Jesus used against temptation are available to us today

- a. James 4:7 [Have students look up & highlight]

**Therefore, submit to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.**

**James 4:7 (CSB)**



#### IV. ARE TEMPTATIONS NECESSARY?

A) Another look at Christ's example

1) **“For since he himself has suffered (endured) when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are tempted.”**  
**Hebrews 2:18 (CSB)**

**Although he was the Son, he learned obedience from what he suffered.**  
**Hebrews 5:8 (CSB)**

a. Temptations benefited our Lord; He learned (obedience) from His temptations

B) They help us, too, by:

- 1) stretching our spiritual muscles
- 2) driving us to prayer
- 3) build compassion for others who are struggling, etc.

C) But don't go looking for temptations, for you will encounter enough suggestions without inviting them

*Conclusion:* No one NEEDS to experience sin. It only tears down, hinders fellowship with Christ, and ruins one's testimony. Jesus Himself was tempted in every way as you are, yet He never sinned. You can experience victory over temptation, because God always provides a way of escape. Utilize the two weapons the Lord provides - the instruction of the Scriptures and the yielding to the Holy Spirit.

Caring Time:

**What 1 or 2 “shots of temptation” can you expect the Devil to fire your way this week?**

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How else can we help one another through prayer this week?

(closing prayer)

# Lesson 10 - "DESTINATION HEAVEN - AN ENJOYABLE TRIP OR A ROUGH RIDE?"

**Introduction:** What was the most interesting airplane (or other mode of transportation) flight that you have ever taken?

## ***[Story of a college freshman on first commercial airlines flight]***

When asked if he cared for lunch he politely declined the meal thinking he would have to pay for it. He didn't realize that it was already included in the price of the ticket. While everyone arrived at the same destination the others had a more enjoyable trip than himself. Their stomachs were satisfied while he was hungry.

This is like two types of Christians. All believers are going to heaven but some enjoy the trip while others make it a tough ride! Does it need to be? Ours is to be an abundant life (John 10:10).

**"A thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come so that they may have life and have it in abundance."**

**John 10:10 (CSB)**

## I. THE CARNAL CHRISTIAN

A) A person who belongs to Christ but doesn't live like it

1) 1 Corinthians 3:1 [Look Up] "

**"For my part, brothers and sisters, I was not able to speak to you as spiritual people but as people of the flesh, as babies in Christ."**

**1 Corinthians 3:1 (CSB)**

a) "brothers", "in Christ" yet worldly (carnal)

B) They are not growing spiritually

1) 1 Corinthians 3:2-3 [Look Up]

**I gave you milk to drink, not solid food, since you were not yet ready for it. In fact, you are still not ready,**

**because you are still worldly. For since there is envy and strife among you, are you not worldly and behaving like mere humans?**

**1 Corinthians 3:2-3 (CSB)**

a) It's natural to be milk fed at birth

b) but unnatural to remain an infant

C) A carnal Christian is a disappointment to Christ

1) v.3 "**are you not worldly and behaving like mere humans?**"

a) Paul was saying that they were still, after many years, living like non-believers!

b) They reduce the church's strength

D) A carnal Christian is not a victorious believer

1) v.3 "**For since there is envy and strife among you,**"

a) we should be known for our love and unity;

**By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.**

**John 13:35 (CSB)**

E) Some symptoms:

1) little or no prayer life

2) not reading the Bible

3) perhaps worrying about problems rather than trusting the Lord to solve them, etc.

## II. THE SPIRITUAL CHRISTIAN

A) Seeks to see things from God's point of view

1) **The spiritual person, however, can evaluate everything, and yet he himself cannot be evaluated by anyone.**

***For who has known the Lord's mind, that he may instruct him?***

**But we have the mind of Christ.**

**1 Corinthians 2:15-16 (CSB)**

2) Instead of getting bitter towards God when trials come, they take comfort in the fact that "**We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.**"

**Romans 8:28 (CSB)**

a) They understand that the Lord is shaping them into the image of Christ

B) Servants of Christ (1 Corinthians 4:1) [Look Up]

**“A person should think of us in this way: as servants of Christ and managers of the mysteries of God.”**

**1 Corinthians 4:1 (CSB)**

1) "entrusted" with the things (truth) of God

2) [Read 2 Corinthians 5:15-21]

C) Their character is evidenced by the increasing "fruit of the Spirit" (Galatians 5:22-23) [Look Up]

**But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,**

**gentleness, and self-control. The law is not against such things.**

**Galatians 5:22-23 (CSB)**

1) [compare the sinful nature to the fruit of the Spirit - Gal. 5:16,19-21 & 22-23]

D) The spiritual Christian is led by and "filled" with the Holy Spirit

1) **"And don't get drunk with wine, which leads to reckless living, but be filled by the Spirit:"**

**Ephesians 5:18 (CSB)**

a) "filled" = when someone is under the Holy Spirit's control

b) like being "under the influence" of alcohol

2) It's not as if we need more of the HS because we received all there is of Him when we trusted Christ as Savior. But often He doesn't possess all there is of us. (You have all of Him, but does He have all of you?)

**[Illustration]** - Think of a glove and a hand. The glove is lifeless by itself. But when the hand fills it, the glove can do great things! Now what if the glove is filled with paper? There's no room for the hand. And, as a result, the glove can't fulfill its purpose.

You are the glove and the Holy Spirit is the hand. God created you to be filled with His Spirit that you might bear the "fruit" of His Spirit, living life more abundantly (John 10:10).

**"A thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come so that they may have life and have it in abundance."  
John 10:10 (CSB)**

A Christian who makes a difference that will last throughout eternity.

**Conclusion:** All Christians are not the same. There are two kinds - the carnal and the spiritual. Both belong to Christ. But there is an enormous difference in their life-styles. The carnal Christian is under the control of his old, sinful nature, while the spiritual Christian lives under the control of the Holy Spirit.

Memorize: Galatians 5:22-23 (CSB)

# Lesson 11 - "LORD, DO I REALLY NEED TO BE BAPTIZED?"

## Introduction:

Tell us about one of the most difficult things that you were asked to do in a public setting?

or

How do you react when you are asked to do something you don't want to do?

The concept of "baptism" is quite foreign to our culture. To many new Christians it comes as surprise and a challenge. In this session we will look at the Bible to see what God has said about baptism and how that might apply to you.

## I. I'VE HEARD IT SAID THAT BAPTISM IS COMMANDED BY CHRIST, IS THAT TRUE?

A. **Then he (Jesus) said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.**

**"Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.**

Mark 16:15-16 (CSB)

1. also Matthew 28:19 **"Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing ..."**

**"Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,"  
Matthew 28:19 (CSB)**

## II. DID JESUS EVEN MODEL BAPTISM FOR US?

A. Matthew 3:13-17 Jesus sets the example

(Pair up with another person and answer) Read Matthew 3:13-17

### **"What do you think"**

Picture yourself watching this scene from a rowboat:

- What do you see and hear?
- How does this make you feel?
- In what ways do you "see" God in this situation?
- What might this tell you about Christ's internal spiritual experience?

B. Baptism was a common practice in those days. It was like taking an oath or pledge of allegiance.

### III. BAPTISM DEFINED AND CLARIFIED

- A. In our church we consider baptism as an ordinance or divine instruction to be administered by His church as an outward, visible sign (testimony) of a believer's inner experience of God's saving grace.

**38 Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, each of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.**

**39 "For the promise is for you and for your children, and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call."**

**40 "With many other words he testified and strongly urged them, saying, "Be saved from this corrupt generation! "**

**41 "So those who accepted his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand people were added to them."  
Acts 2:38-41 (CSB)**

(Turn to another person)

Read Acts 2:38-41

Who should be baptized? (v.41)

- B. It does not mean that we are saved by baptism

1. John 1:12 [Look Up]
2. Luke 23:42,43 [Look Up]

a) The thief on the cross was saved without it

- C. It is the outer, public confession of Christ as Savior and Lord

1. "Peter replied, 'Repent and be baptized, each of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'" Acts 2:38 (CSB)

a) It is the final act of the "repentance- belief-baptism" response to the Gospel

- D. It signifies our identification with Christ in His saving act, i.e., death and resurrection unto new life

1. 3 “Or are you unaware that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?”

**4 Therefore we were buried with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too may walk in newness of life.**

**Romans 6:3-4 (CSB)**

E. It symbolizes our identification with the Church

1. “12 For just as the body is one and has many parts, and all the parts of that body, though many, are one body -- so also is Christ.”

“13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body -- whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free -- and we were all given one Spirit to drink.”  
1 Corinthians 12:12,13 (CSB)

F. It symbolizes the baptism of the Holy Spirit who comes reside in the new believer

1. “I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”  
Mark 1:8 (CSB)

#### IV. HOW IS BAPTISM ADMINISTERED?

A. The Greek word for baptism used in the New Testament is "baptizo" meaning to dip or immerse

1. As when a garment was dipped into liquid for dyeing

2. Or the drawing of wine by dipping the cup into the bowl

**[Illustration]** When a red garment is dipped into bleach it comes out white. Likewise, baptism is symbolic to the sin in our lives being washed away when we trust in Christ.

B. We see baptism by immersion depicting or “picturing” the believers identity with Christs’ death on the cross, His burial, and His resurrection or victory over the power of sin. **See Romans 6:3,4**

C. Baptism was in the Jordan River, **See Mark 1:5**, where there was sufficient water to immerse individuals

#### V. WHAT'S THE PROCEDURE FOR BEING BAPTIZED IN OUR CHURCH?



A. By checking “Desire Information About Baptism” on the decision card, or notifying one of the pastors.

B. The Senior pastor will meet with those who are interested for a brief interview and to give instructions.

C. It is offered several times during the year.

D. You are encouraged to invite your friends and relatives to attend the service to witness your baptism

- Have you followed the Lord in Baptism?

If not:

- What steps might God have you take this week to further determine if He would have you take this public profession?
- What answers do you need; questions you have?

# Lesson 12 - "LORD, WHY AM I HERE?"

## Introduction:

[What is one of the most unbelievable events that you have witnessed?

On a scale of 1-10 (1 = not too well, 10 = very well), how well do you feel you understand what your purpose in life is supposed to be?]

The Christian's purpose in life is quite specific. Some believers who call themselves The Navigators put it: "*Our purpose in life is to know Christ and to make Him known.*"

## I. WHAT GOAL SHOULD WE SET FOR OURSELVES IN LIFE?

### A. To Know Christ

1. Philippians 3:10 The apostle Paul said, "My goal is to know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings, being conformed to his death,"

a. Paul had been a believer nearly 30 years when he said this!

b. You might be thinking that since you're a Christian you already know Christ...true, but... because Jesus is the infinite God, we human beings can never know Him fully

**[Illustration]** Do you know America? Maybe you have lived here for awhile... know all 50 states and capitals... even visited them. But you could spend the rest of your life exploring America's lakes, canyons, forests, caves, farmlands, rivers and mountains, etc..

The U.S. has over 250 million people, most of whom you've never met... in a very real sense, we don't know America.

c. There is always more to discover about Christ

### B. What is the "eternal life" that Jesus gives?

1. John 17:3 "that they may know You (God/Christ)"

**"This is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and the one you have sent -- Jesus Christ."**

**John 17:3 (CSB)**

2. God has revealed Himself in the Bible; that means He wants to be known!
3. While we can't know the Lord completely, we can know Him well

## II. WHAT WILL BRING ME THE GREATEST JOY IN MY CHRISTIAN LIFE?

### A. To Make Him Known

1. The privilege of introducing someone to the Lord Jesus
2. Many are not sharing their faith; they may be consistent in Church attendance, prayer, Bible reading, but not making Him known.

**[Illustration]** ... like a person who eats a lot but doesn't exercise... out of shape... need to do both. Christians need to take in but also give out... reading Bible etc. balanced with proper spiritual exercise which occurs when we share our faith, knowledge, and love of Christ with other. "The Gospel is not just something to go to church to hear, but to go from church to tell!"

### B. What was Jesus' first command to His disciples?

1. **"Follow me," Jesus told them, "and I will make you fish for people."**  
**Mark 1:17 (CSB)**

### C. Well, what about His last command, what was it?

1. **"Then he (Jesus) said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation."**  
**Mark 16:15 (CSB)**

### D. How about His last words before ascending into heaven?

1. **"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."**  
**Acts 1:8 (CSB)**
2. When you trusted Christ and received the gift of eternal life, why didn't He immediately take you home to heaven?

E. Is it natural to want to tell others about their faith in Christ?

1. John 1:40-42 [Look Up]

F. Ok, what's it really mean to "witness"?

1. The word "witness" means to bear testimony, to give a first-hand account of an event, to declare publicly your belief. (His love, forgiveness, peace, life changing power, etc.)

a. Telling what Jesus has done for us and what He can do for them

2. A distinction: we are not called to be a lawyer, but a witness.

3. Also a living testimony, i.e., how we live

### III. HOW ABOUT SOME EXAMPLES FROM SCRIPTURE?

A. Even when told not to - Acts 4:18-20

B. In the face of persecution - Acts 1:1-4

C. As modeled for us by a layman, Philip - Acts 8:26-40

D. (**Read the Book of Acts!**)

### IV. ANY OTHER REASONS I SHOULD BE A WILLING WITNESS?

A. There are born approximately 138,000 more lost people into the world yesterday!

1. (1 million per week, 52 million per year)

2. A line consisting of the lost people would circle the earth 30 times!

B. Why try? That seems to be a hopeless task!

**[Illustration]** A man was walking the beach ... where there were thousands of starfish washed up... he began tossing starfish back into the ocean. Someone came along and said, "That's a hopeless task. What good could you possibly be doing?" The first man having just thrown a starfish into the water, replied, "To that one starfish, I just did a lot of good!" ("**Indeed, the hairs of your head are all counted. Don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.**" **Luke 12:7 (CSB)** )

### V. LIKE MANY CHRISTIANS, I KNOW I SHOULD SHARE MY FAITH, BUT I DON'T KNOW HOW!

- A. Seek out training courses on witnessing. Your church may offer courses on this topic. Young or Old it is never too late to start.
- B. Develop a "testimony"
  - 1. "Before - how you received eternal life - After"
- C. Begin praying for unsaved friends, relatives, associates, and neighbors for opportunities to witness to them
- D. Develop a life-style of witnessing and discover one of the greatest joys in the Christian life

# Lesson 13 - "WHY DO WE HAVE COMMUNION?" (IF IT'S SUPPER, WHY IS THERE ONLY BREAD AND JUICE?)

Added to the Course Track in Revision #1a – Written by: Rev. Steven D. Hofmeister

## Introduction:

Ask the class what is “Communion” ?

### I. WHAT IS “COMMUNION” AND WHY DO WE HAVE IT?

In Matthew Chapter 26, before Jesus would be arrested, tried, and executed at the cross he joined his disciples in a Passover meal.

What is the Passover

The Passover Celebration commemorates Israel’s escape from slavery in Egypt when the blood of a lamb painted on their door frames saved their firstborn sons from death brought by Gods wrath on Egypt (*Exodus 12*). As Christians, we recognized this as a foreshadowing of what Jesus would sacrifice (*the origins of why Jesus is referenced to as a Lamb or Lamb of God*). This detail about the Passover is significant when we look at the event We refer to as “The Last Supper” as it would be the last time Jesus Christ himself would sit at such a Passover Meal before he would have his blood shed like the sacrificial lamb.

But, this was not just any Passover meal. Jesus would address his disciples after the meal and employ a great deal of symbolism and prophesy that would lay out the events to come.

#### A. Read Luke 22:14-20

**1. 14 When the hour came, he reclined at the table, and the apostles with him.**

**Luke 22:14 (CSB)**

This is where we source the term “Communion” from. In the sacrament of communion we celebrate as Christians in our time is not a reenactment of the meal itself, but the communal moment that Jesus had with his disciples following the meal.

**2. 15 Then he said to them, “I have fervently desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.”**

**Luke 22:15 (CSB)**

Jesus knew what was to come, he had “divine knowledge” of the greater plan. The historical and symbiotic relationship between what was to come, and what took place at the Passover made it the ideal time to share this new covenant with his disciples.

**3. 16 “For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.”**

**Luke 22:16 (CSB)**

Jesus Christ knew his death was coming. Jesus would predict his death 3 times prior to the “Lord’s Supper”.

| <b>Predictions Jesus made of his death and the disciples accounts</b> |                  |            |               |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|------------|---------------|
| <b>First Prediction</b>                                               | Matthew 16:21    | Mark 6:31  | Luke 9:21     |
| <b>Second Prediction</b>                                              | Matthew 17:22-23 | Mark 9:31  | Luke 9:44     |
| <b>Third Prediction</b>                                               | Matthew 20:18    | Mark 10:32 | Luke 18:31-34 |

\* This is not a complete reference, but enough to show the pattern and witness to Jesus’s predictions.

**17 Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks, he said, “Take this and share it among yourselves.”**

**Luke 22:17 (CSB)**

The act of sharing as we do when we are gathered together with grape juice (*Fruit of the Vine*) and (usually unleavened) bread is the communal act just as the disciples shared. Some gatherings partake of the juice and bread together as a group, while others leave that timing to the individual, the symbolism and commitment made in the practice does not change.

**18 “For I tell you, from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.”**

**Luke 22:18 (CSB)**

Verses 16-18 Jesus emphasizes these details to stress the fact that he is going to face torture, suffering, and death until he rises again. In his previous predictions, his disciples would not accept that Jesus would have to face death. He reinforces this fact here. At this Lord’s Supper event is when Judas Iscariot would leave and betray Jesus to the Pharisees.

**F. 19 And he took bread, gave thanks, broke it, gave it to them, and said, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”**

**Luke 22:19 (CSB)**

**20 In the same way he also took the cup after supper and said, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.”**

**Luke 22:20 (CSB)**

Verses 19-20 Jesus explains the symbolism of this new covenant and commandment. His body will be broken, his blood will be spilled, and to perform this sacrament of “communion” in remembrance of his (Jesus Christ’s) sacrifice and covenant to save us.

We practice this sacrament of Communion as he commanded in honored remembrance of Jesus Christ’s sacrifice, and as a symbol of our committed belief in him (Jesus Christ).

**“For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.”**  
**1 Corinthians 11:26 (CSB)**

## II. THE IMPORTANCE OF SELF-EXAMINATION

1.) Communion is a solemn and holy sacrament.

Similar to how a person would take an oath of office for government or military service, Communion is a sacrament of commitment and remembrance of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Just as a person needs to be prepared in mind and spirit to take an oath, so must a person be prepared to participate in communion.

2.) Who should not participate in Communion?

a. Don’t take the juice “cup” or eat the bread “body” because you are hungry. *yes, this might be a bit humorous because of the size of typical prepackaged communion portions, but it is warned about in scripture.*

**“If anyone is hungry, he should eat at home, so that when you gather together you will not come under judgment...”**  
**1 Corinthians 11:34 (CSB)**

To clarify, this scripture does not say you can’t participate because you are hungry. It warns not to participate as a means of quenching that hunger. It has to do with keeping the sacramental meaning of the eating and drinking.

b. Anyone who has not made an open public commitment of belief in Jesus Christ. (“the saved”) This open public commitment is usually validated by baptism. If you have not been baptized, seek advice from your Pastor before participating in Communion.

**“So, then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sin against the body and blood of the Lord.”**  
**1 Corinthians 11:27 (CSB)**

c. Anyone dealing with unrepentant sin.



We all wrestle with sin daily. None of us are immune to sin and temptation. If a person is dealing with “unconfessed” sin (*meaning you have not taken it to Jesus in prayer of confession*) and have not repented (*Given Up, Quit, Distanced Yourself*) of that sin. Then you should not participate in communion until you have confessed and repented. This is why quiet prayer and personal examination is offered before one participates in communion.

**“For whoever eats and drinks without recognizing the body, eats and drinks judgment on himself.”**  
**1 Corinthians 11:29 (CSB)**

### 3.) Personal Self-Examination.

A person should do a self-examination on their mind and heart. It is very important to participate in communion with a mind clear of unconfessed sin and after repentance.

Though this is a personal examination, there may be times where you might feel you need guidance when it comes to confession and repentance. In those times it is encouraged you seek private counsel with your Pastor for help and encouragement.

**“Let a person examine himself; in this way let him eat the bread and drink from the cup.”**  
**1 Corinthians 11:28 (CSB)**

### Conclusion:

Communion is a sacrament of remembrance and commitment to Jesus Christ, and as we have identified is meant to be taken seriously. It provides us a regular opportunity to self-examine our hearts and minds, and most importantly our relationship with Jesus Christ. It is a practice necessary to maintain a healthy Christian life.

# Lesson 14 - "I'D LIKE TO GET INVOLVED, BUT WHERE DO I START?"

**Introduction:** [If there were a job or position that you could have (other than what you presently do) what would it be? Why?]

**Rhetorical question:** Do you want your life to count for Christ?

Jesus said that anyone who desires to follow Him must "take up his cross daily" (Luke 9:23 (CSB) ). In the first century, the cross was used for one thing - killing people. It was an instrument of death. Jesus Himself was executed on one. Therefore, to take up your cross as a follower of Christ means you're willing to die for Him. That's commitment! Our Lord wants us to be willing to go to the limit for Him.

But what are you committing to the Lord? What do you have to offer to Him? What should I consider in becoming involved in serving the Lord?

In the New Testament, besides being called believers, brethren, saints, servants, sheep, soldiers, etc., Christians are also called "stewards". Today we will look at how we can (and are responsible to) become involved in serving the Lord.

I. A STEWARD IS A MANAGER OF A HOUSEHOLD OR ESTATE TO WHOM IS ENTRUSTED VARIOUS GOODS TO BE USED OR INVESTED FOR THEIR OWNER'S PURPOSES AND PROFIT.

**[Illustration]** A hired hand who is put in charge of taking care of the farm while the owner is away on vacation.

A. The Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30)

1. We have been entrusted with certain "goods" to invest for His purposes: spiritual gifts, time, and financial/material resources.

II. SPIRITUAL GIFTS . WOW! WHERE DO I GET THEM?

A. I Peter 4:10,11

B. Romans 12:4-6a (7-8; ministry gifts)

C. Ephesians 4:11,12 positions to prepare God's people for works of service

D. I Corinthians 12:1-6,11 (7-10; manifestations of gifts)

E. Definition - A God-given spiritual capacity arising out of the grace of God and given for service.

F. They are given universally, "to each one" I Cor.12:7

G. Why are they given by God? "for the common good" I Cor. 12:7

H. They are given " selectively " I Cor. 12:11

### III. WHAT DOES GOD SAY ABOUT OUT "TIME" ?

A. The importance to God (Ephesians 5:15-17)

B. The Lord's Day (Exodus 20:8-11)  
- a time set apart for God in keeping with His character

C. In general, because of God's mercy towards you (Romans 12:1,2)

### IV. WHAT ARE THE BIBLICAL INSTRUCTIONS REGARDING OUR GIVING?

A. I Corinthians 16:1,2 It should be regular, by all, and as God has prospers us.

B. What is to be our attitude in giving?  
1. II Corinthians 9:6-8 (cheerfully)

C. God's promise and the church's benefit  
1. Malachi 3:8-10 (God's blessing)

D. Various funds in a church (these vary)  
Examples:

1. "General fund"
2. "Building Fund"
3. "Missions"
4. "Benevolence"

### V. WHAT OPPORTUNITIES FOR SERVICE ARE THERE?

A. List the various areas of service within your church and community outreach.

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## Student Handout Worksheets

Student Worksheets are not currently included in Revision 1c as they are being completely redeveloped. It is highly encouraged that teachers of this discipleship course provide a handout/worksheet of their own design that students can study and review at home.

If you would like to share your worksheet ideas with us for consideration in future revisions, please email them in Word or PDF format to [steve@preachersteve.com](mailto:steve@preachersteve.com).