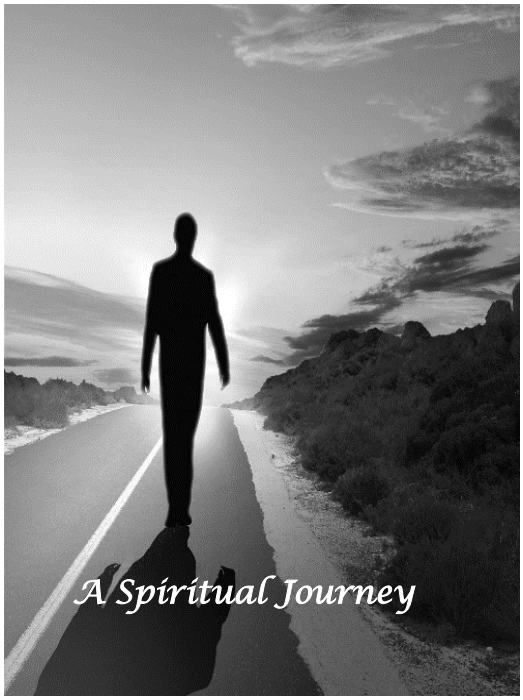
For God So Loved The World

LOVE CHRISTIAN CENTER

3500 HWY 5, STE 101
DOUGLASVILLE, GEORGIA 30135
www.lovechristianctr.org

Where the love of Christ is at the center of all we do

Assimilating New Members



Senior Pastor
Rev. Dr. LaSonja Richardson

Co-Pastor
Rev. Ed Richardson

Love Christian Center
3500 Hwy 5, Ste 101
Douglasville, Georgia 30135

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

It is with humility, excitement, and expectation that we embark on this ministry journey.

Jesus directed us to go into all the world, make disciples, baptize, and teach them to observe all the things He commanded, He then promised to be with us even unto the end of the world.

The number of Christians in the world has declined almost 20% in the last 20 years, in light of this; there is much work to do.

Love Christian Center desires to be a church for all people, training them to bring others to Christ, to be responsible citizens in their personal and business endeavors and active in community matters.

We love that you have joined us in reaching out to the unchurched and unsaved as we move forward in building the Kingdom of God.

We love you with the love of the Lord.

Rev. Dr. LaSonja Richardson, DMin/PC, Sr. Pastor
Rev. Ed Richardson, Co-Pastor

Table of Contents

Mission Statement 6
Vision 6
Goals 6
Core Values 6
About Your Church 8
Salvation, Baptism & the Lord's Supper 10
    Salvation 10
    Baptism 12
    What It Means to be Baptized 12
    What It Means to Take the Lord's Supper 15
Doctrines 18
What It Means to Be a Good Church Member 33
Stewardship 41
Appendix A 47
Appendix B 49
Appendix C 55
Appendix D 60
Appendix E 68
Appendix F 70
Appendix G 71
Appendix H 72
Appendix I 73
Appendix J 74
Appendix K 75
Bibliography 76

LOVE CHRISTIAN CENTER

3500 Hwy 5, Ste 101
Douglasville, Georgia 30135
470-308-3951
Senior Pastor – Rev. Dr. LaSonja Richardson

www.lovechristianctr.org

admin@lovechristianctr.org

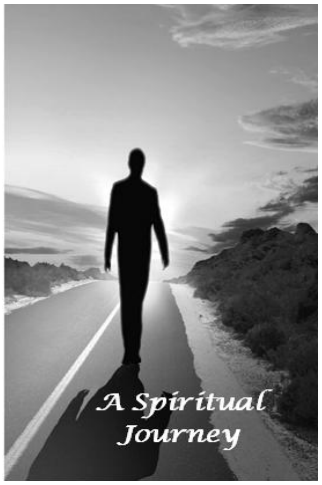
Schedule of Services

Sunday Services
Sunday School …… 8:45 a.m.
Worship ……10:00 a.m.
Holy Communion …… First Sunday
Baptism …… Quarterly

Thursday Service
Intercessory Prayer ……8:00 a.m.

Thursday Service
Bible Study …… 7:00 p.m.

Session 1



Mission Statement

Lifting up Jesus, winning souls for the Kingdom of God.

Vision

Be a place where people come for enlightenment, encouragement, and empowerment to advance and enhance the Kingdom of God.

Goals

- To win lost souls for Christ through evangelism.
- To biblically educate Christians through sound Scriptural teaching and preaching.
- To equip Christians spiritually, physically, and financially through comprehensive coaching.

Core Values

- **Bible Knowledge**—Become familiar with the truth of Scripture through regular attendance at Worship Service, Sunday School, and Bible Study. 2 Timothy 2:15

- **Prayer**—Communicate with God daily. 1 Thessalonians 5:17

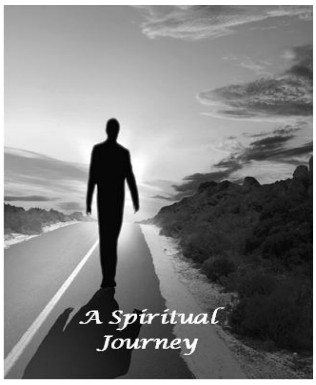
- **Excellence**—Maintain the highest ministry standards that bring glory to God. 1 Corinthians 10:31

- **Worship**—Reverence God for who He is. Psalm 29:2

- **Encouragement**—Give hope to people who need hope. Ephesians 1:18

Notes

Session 2



About Your Church

Love Christian Center began with the prayers and vision of the late Pastor Ivan T. Harris of First Baptist Church Denbigh, Newport News, Virginia. Pastor Harris prayed about this vision for 12 – 14 years before announcing and appointing pastors for the new locations. The first locations were in the Fredericksburg, VA and Douglasville, GA areas. Ministers LaSonja and Edward Richardson were assigned as co-pastors of the Douglasville site May 2012.

After much prayer and research, the strategic plan including the mission statement, vision, goals, and core values were drafted. The organizational meeting was held on November 1, 2012. Seven families were invited to the meeting and six attended. The meeting began with prayer by Minister Edward and Minister LaSonja read what would become the theme Scripture for Love Christian Center, John 3:16.

Ministers LaSonja and Edward explained Pastor Harris's vision for the church plant and provided each family with a Strategic Plan. Ministers LaSonja and Edward gave their salvation and call to ministry testimonies and ministry experience. The attendees then gave their salvation, church affiliation, backgrounds, and ministry experience.

The meeting continued with a discussion of a possible start date and location for the church to meet. The attendees were asked to be prayerful and consider joining the ministry. The meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.

After approaching several churches about sharing space with no success, the Riverwalk Club House was chosen as a temporary site for services. Bible Study began April 17, 2013, and the first worship service was held at the Riverwalk clubhouse on July 29, 2013. Due to circumstances beyond our control this was the only Sunday worship service was held in this location; this also ended the period for Bible study at this location. Sunday worship and Wednesday Bible study continued in the home of Ministers LaSonja and Ed.

While searching for a location, church membership grew. In September 2013 a location was found in the Douglasville area, but extensive renovations were needed. While the building was under renovation, the church continued to grow, and May 2014 children's church began. Ministers LaSonja and Ed were good stewards over all the Lord provided in tithes and offerings and found, purchased, and received donations of pulpit furniture, lighting, congregational chairs and an additional communion table. On May 10, 2014, the membership met and completed extensive renovations on the building, painting, and laying down flooring. Carpet was installed on May 14, 2014, and the congregation met and set up chairs and pulpit furniture in the sanctuary.

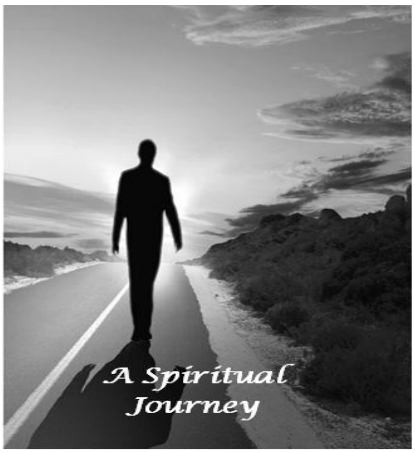
On May 18, 2014, the first Sunday worship service was held at 3755 Kings Hwy, Douglasville, GA. Services continued at this location with celebrations to include church anniversaries held the first Sunday of November, pastors' anniversary the first Sunday in June, choir musicals, revivals, and other celebrations, as the church began to grow.

On July 27, 2014, Ministers LaSonja and Ed were ordained as ministers of the Gospel on the recommendation of Pastor Ivan Harris of First Baptist Church Denbigh and the ordaining council, in Newport News, VA.

In October 2019 a virus, COVID-19 was first discovered in China. By February 2020 it had become a pandemic and by March 2020 many businesses, including churches had to close their doors. By order of the Douglasville mayor, gatherings of 10 or more people were not allowed to meet. Due to this mandate, Love Christian Center transitioned to a completely online format. September 2020, we surrendered the lease to our worship space on Kings Hwy. June 2021, we secured another space at 3500 Hwy 5, Ste 101/102 continuing with the online format while extensive renovations were done.

Upon completion of the renovations in January 2022, we celebrated with an open house and outreach targeting the surrounding community on January 29, 2022. The first Sunday of in person worship was held January 30, 2022. Online services continued to be conducted as the video ministry becomes stronger.

Sessions 3 & 4



Salvation, Baptism & the Lord's Supper

Salvation

Salvation is for the lost, while rewards are for the saved. The salvation offered to all who believe is the same for everyone, while rewards will differ. Salvation is a free gift, but rewards are earned. Salvation is received in the present; rewards are received in the future.

What It Means to Be Saved

Without Christ as my Savior, I am a condemned sinner (John 3:18). I am utterly lost (John 3:36). As a condemned sinner, I am spiritually dead (Ephesians 2:1). I have no hope, and I am without God in the world (Ephesians 2:12).

But, when Christ comes into my heart, He forgives my sin (Acts 10:43), He writes my name in the Book of Life (Revelation 21:27), He saves my soul (Luke 19:10). Believing in Christ as my Savior, I am a new creation (II Corinthians 5:17). I am a child of God (John 1:12).

For Christ to be a Savior to me, I must realize that I am a lost sinner, and He came into the world to save me (Isaiah 53:6; I Timothy 1:15; Matthew 1:21). I am saved forever by repenting of my sins (Luke 13:3) and believing in Jesus as my Savior (John 3:14-16; John 5:24; Acts 20:21; II Timothy 1:12).

When I repent of my sins and ask Jesus to save me, I am to immediately and publicly confess Him as my Lord and Savior (Matthew 10:32, 33; Romans 10:9-10).

Questions and Answers

Question: From what does Jesus save us?
Answer: From our sins. (Mark 2:1-11; Matthew 26:28; I John 1:7)

Question: What is sin?
Answer: Sin is disobedience to God or breaking of the law of God. (I John 3:4)

Question: Who has sinned?
Answer: All of us have sinned. (Romans 3:10, 23)

Question: What is the penalty for my sin?
Answer: Death. (Ezekiel 18:4; Romans 6)

(1) Physical Death – the soul is separated from the body.
(2) Spiritual Death – the second death. The soul is separated from God forever.

Question: How can I be saved from this death?
Answer: I can be saved from eternal death by trusting Jesus as my Savior. Be sorry for my sin and turn from it (this is repentance) and look to Jesus to forgive me (this is saving faith). (Acts 16:30-31)

Question: Do I work for this great salvation?
Answer: I do not work for my salvation. It is a free gift of God. It is wholly of grace. I just receive it; I just take it; I just accept it. My salvation is something God gives me through faith in Jesus Christ. (Romans 4:2-5; Ephesians 2:8-9)

Question: Why should I seek to do good works?
Answer: Because Jesus has saved me, and I seek to honor Him in my life (Ephesians 2:10; James 2:26; John 15:14). If I am truly saved, I will obey my Lord. Good works are the result of my salvation, not the means by which I obtain it. Only after the tree is made good, can it bring forth good fruit (Matthew 12:33).

Question: What are the steps of salvation as we turn in saving faith to Jesus?
Answer: The steps of salvation are:
(1) Repentance: Being sorry for my sin and turning from my sin to Jesus.
(2) Faith: Accepting Jesus as my Savior.
(3) Confession: Publicly declaring my faith in Jesus.

1. Who is God?
God is the Supreme Being of the Whole Universe.

   a. He is Omnipotent – All powerful
   b. He is Omniscient –All knowing
   c. He is Omnipresent – Everywhere

2. Who is Jesus Christ?
Jesus Christ is the second person of the Trinity and manifested in the flesh as God's Only Begotten Son.

3. Who is the Holy Spirit?
The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity and is manifested as the Comforter.

4. What is the Trinity?
   a. God the Father
   b. God the Son
   c. God the Holy Spirit

Baptism

Baptism is taught in the Bible as the next step following conversion in the Christian life. "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). Baptism by immersion, in which a person, after confessing faith in Christ, is lowered fully under water, then immediately brought forth. A baptismal service, whether in the church baptistery or in a stream or lake is a beautiful and impressive service. There are four reasons why a new Christian should be baptized:

1. A Christian should follow Christ's example.

2. A Christian should obey Christ's commands.

3. Baptism is a public confession of Christ.

4. Baptism shows a believer's death to sin and determination to live a Christian life.

What It Means to be Baptized

The doctrines of a church are its beliefs and teachings. The ordinances of a church are its observances, called ordinances because Christ commanded or ordered them. In a New Testament church, there are two ordinances, Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Baptism is a burial and a resurrection. We are buried with Christ in the likeness of His death, and we are raised with Christ in the likeness of His resurrection (Romans 6:2, 3; Colossians 2:12; Galatians 3:27). It shows forth three things:

1. It portrays or pictures the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus.

2. It portrays or pictures our death to sin and our resurrection to a new life in Christ.

3. It proclaims our faith. Our faith is that, if we die and are buried, we shall be raised from the dead by the power of the Lord.

Baptism is the first of the two church ordinances. It is the doorway into the church. We are all baptized by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ. The body of Christ is His church. Water baptism portrays the work of the Spirit that adds to the body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:13).

Questions and Answers

Question: Who baptized Jesus?
Answer: John the Baptist (Matthew 3:1).

Question: Where was Jesus baptized?
Answer: In the Jordan River (Matthew 3:13), He had to have "much water" (John 3:23).

Question: Does Jesus command us to be baptized?
Answer: Yes. According to His Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20, all who accept Jesus as their Savior are to be baptized.

Question: What is the meaning of baptism?
Answer: It pictures three things: (Romans 6:23; Galatians 3:27).
(1) It pictures the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus.
(2) It pictures the death to sin and our resurrection to a new life in Christ.
(3) It pictures our faith that, if we die and are buried, we shall also be raised from the dead.

Question: What is baptism?
Answer: It is burial and a resurrection (Colossians 2:12).

Question: In what name are we commanded to be baptized?
Answer: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19).

Question: In Acts 8:26-39, what was the first thing the eunuch wanted to do after he heard the Gospel of Jesus?
Answer: He wanted to be baptized (Acts 8:36).

Question: What was the one requirement he had to meet before he could be baptized?
Answer: To believe in Jesus with all his heart (Acts 8:37).

Question: How was the eunuch baptized?
Answer: He was lowered beneath the baptismal waters (buried with Christ) and raised out of the baptismal waters (resurrected with Christ) (Acts 8:38, 39).

Question: According to Acts 2:41; 10:44-48, who should be baptized?
Answer: Those who have repented of their sins and have accepted Jesus as their Savior.

Question: Are we lost if we are not baptized?
Answer: The Bible says we are lost if we do not repent (Luke 13:3). The Bible says we are lost if we fail to believe on Jesus (John 3:18). Nowhere does the Bible say we are lost if we are not baptized.

Question: Why then, should we be baptized?
Answer: Because of our love for the Savior. Jesus, Himself set the example and Jesus, Himself, commanded us to be baptized. Baptism is an act of obedience on the part of one who believes in Jesus.

Question: How is baptism rightly administered?
Answer: The believer is immersed in water, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. This is according to the institution of Christ and the practice of the Lord's Apostles.

Additional Scriptural References on Baptism:

Romans 6:4 – "*Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Also, Colossians 2:12; I Peter 3:20, 21; Acts 22:16.*

Acts 2:41, 42 – "*Then they that gladly received his word were baptized, and there were added to them, the same day, about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the Apostles ' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." Also, Matthew 28:19-20.*

What It Means to Take the Lord's Supper

For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come (I Corinthians 11:26).

The second (and recurring) church ordinance is the Lord's Supper. Our Savior instituted it the night in which he was betrayed and delivered to die for our sins on the cross (Matthew 26:26-30). We are not saved by partaking of the supper. It is a memorial of the death of Christ, that we may ever remember his sacrifice for us (I Corinthians 10:16).

Who may take the Lord's Supper? Those who have trusted Jesus as their Savior and who have been baptized in obedience to his command. In the great commission recorded in Matthew 28:19-20, three things are very plain: first, we are to make disciples (the literal translation) of all nations; second, we are to baptize these converts to observe the things God has commanded being the observance of the Lord's Supper. The order Jesus gave is very plain. It is one, two, three. One, we must trust in Jesus, become a disciple of Jesus. Two, we are to be baptized, buried with the Lord, raised with the Lord. Three, we are to observe the things Christ has given to us to keep, one of which is the Lord's Supper.

This order of one, two, and three is as much inspired as the content of the great commission. Before I have the privilege of taking the Lord's Supper, I must (first) be converted, I must (second) be baptized, then I am ready (third) to sit at the Lord's table.

Questions and Answers

Question: What are the two elements of the Lord's Supper?
Answer: Bread and "the fruit of the vine" (Matthew 26:29).

Question: What do these two elements symbolize?
Answer: The bread represents the body of Christ, and the cup represents the blood of Christ.

Question: Why are these elements and not the actual body and blood of Jesus?
Answer: Because when Christ instituted the Lord's Supper and said these words, his body was standing before the disciples and his blood was still coursing through his veins. The bread and the cup "show forth the Lord's death." The very words, "in remembrance of me" suggest their symbolic nature. Jesus said he was "the door"(John 10:9), "the vine" (John 10:11), and we understand perfectly what he meant. We also understand the symbolic meaning of His words regarding the bread and the cup.

Question: How often should we observe the memorial of the Lord's Supper?
Answer: Jesus left that to us. He said, as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup…" We could observe the Lord's Supper every day, every week, every month, every quarter.

Question: How should we take the Lord's Supper?
Answer: We should take the Lord's Supper in deepest humility and reverence. The adverb, "unworthily" {notice it is not an adjective) in 1 Corinthians 11:27-29 refers to our manner of observing the ordinance, not our own worth. Because we are sinners and the sacrifice of Christ has made atonement for our sins, we observe the Lord's Supper in overflowing love and gratitude.

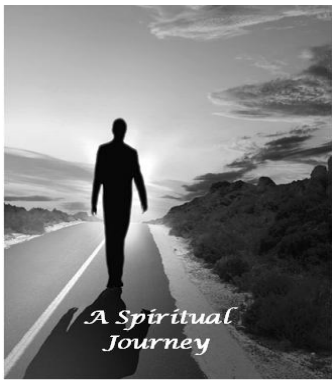
Question: What is meant by the words in I Corinthians 11:26, "till he come"?
Answer: The words "till he come" plainly teach us that our Lord Jesus will come a second time, which is the joy and hope of all those who truly believe in Jesus (Acts 1:11, I Thessalonians 4:16).

Additional Scriptural References on The Lord's Supper

I Corinthians 11:28 - *"But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup." Also, I Corinthians 5:1, 8; 10:3-32; 11:17-32; John 6:26-71; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:14-20; and Matthew 26:26-30.*

Notes

Session 5



Doctrines

Love Christian Center embraces the following statements concerning the truth. The Bible is our all-sufficient rule for faith and practice. This Statement of Fundamental Truths is intended simply as a basis of fellowship among us (i.e., that we all speak the same thing; I Corinthians 1:10; Acts 2:42). No claim is made that it contains all biblical truth, only that it covers our need as to these fundamental doctrines. We do not presume to say the phraseology employed in this Statement of Fundamental Truths is inspired or that it is the final work on Bible truth. However, we are persuaded it is proper and consistent with the Holy Scriptures to "set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us" (Luke 1:1).

Abortion (Induced)
We believe that human life begins at conception and that the unborn child in a mother's womb is a living human being. Induced abortion constitutes the unjustified, unexcused taking of unborn human life. Induced abortion is murder. We reject teachings that the abortions of pregnancies is an acceptable and godly practice. (Deuteronomy 18:9; Psalms 139:13; Jeremiah 1:5; Exodus 21:22; Hebrews 13:8)

Alcohol
The Scriptures speak often of the destructive power of alcohol. Noah's drunkenness brought shame to his family (Genesis 9:20-27). Lot's drunkenness resulted in an incestuous relationship with his two daughters (Genesis 19:30-38). An inebriated Xerxes sought to humiliate Queen Vashti publicly (Esther 1:9-22). The consumption of alcohol impairs judgment, inflames passions, and invites violence (Leviticus 10:8-11; Proverbs 20:1, 23:29-35, 31:4, 5).

Angels and Demons
God created the angels to be His servants and messengers (Nehemiah 9:6; Psalm 148:2; Hebrews 1:14). Satan is a fallen angel who led a group of angels in rebellion against God (Isaiah 14:12-17; Ezekiel 28:12-15). He is the great enemy of God and man, and the demons are his servants in evil. He and his demons will be eternally punished in the lake of fire (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10).

Anointing Oil is Administered for Healing
The anointing oil is administered for both physical and spiritual restoration with the laying on of hands when required (Mark 16:18; James 5:14). If sins have been committed against Christ or His Body they are to be confessed.

Assurance of Salvation
Assurance means that you, a believer in Jesus Christ, have confidence that you are in the family of God and therefore have eternal life. Assurance looks at our eternal salvation from man's viewpoint. The central passage is 1 John 5:13. Each clear verse about eternal salvation, such as John 3:16, stresses the basis for assurance because God keeps His Word.

Baptism
We believe the New Testament teaches at least three baptisms. First, there is the baptism whereby the repentant sinner, upon trusting Jesus Christ as his Savior, is baptized by the Holy Spirit into the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13). Secondly, there is water baptism by immersion for believers only. This we believe to be an ordinance of the church, whereby the believer experiences the reality of co-crucifixion and co-resurrection with the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:19-20; Romans 6:3-6). Thirdly, there is the filling or baptism in the Holy Spirit by the Lord Jesus Christ, which may occur at or subsequent to conversion. We believe that speaking in tongues as the Spirit gives the utterance is the normative evidence of this baptism. Further, we believe that by the believer's continued submission to the Holy Spirit, his very weakness is transformed into strength to witness for Jesus Christ in power, and to live according to the will of God (Acts 1:5-6; 10:46; 11:28; 19:6).

Baptism - Ordinance
Baptism by immersion shall be observed as commanded in the Scriptures by all who have repented of their sins and have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ to the saving of their souls and who give clear evidence of their salvation (Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:12). Those who have become partakers of Christ by faith in His shed blood are commanded to be water baptized (by immersion) into Christ. In this act of faith, we participate in Christ's burial and resurrection and receive a circumcision of the heart (Genesis 17:1-4; John 3:1-6; Romans 2:28-29; I Peter 3:18-22; I John 5:8).

Baptism in the Holy Spirit
The baptism in the Holy Spirit is a necessary and vital experience for every believer and is evidenced by the initial physical sign of speaking with other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance. Those who seek the fullness of the Spirit shall receive prayer for the baptism in the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:15-17; 19:2-6).

Blessed Hope
The resurrection of those who have fallen asleep in Christ and their translation together with those who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord is the imminent and the blessed hope of the church (I Thessalonians 4:16-17; Romans 8:23; Titus 2:13; I Corinthians 15:51).

Carnality
Carnality comes from the word for flesh, sarkikos, and by extension often refers to man living apart from God's power and Word, whether a believer or unbeliever. When one lives by his own power, he is living by his human fallen nature, which works through the flesh or body. The believer who lives by his human nature instead of by the Holy Spirit is said to be carnal. The central passage is I Corinthians 3:1-3 where believers are living like unbelievers and are called carnal. Galatians 5:16-21 states the conflict between the flesh and the Holy Spirit and gives some works of the flesh that are sins. Carnality is opposite to spirituality. Confession of sin to God restores the believer to walking in the light, to fellowship (I John 1), and to walking by the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5).

Christian Service
Christian service is serving God and believers through the power of the Holy Spirit, mainly in the area of one's spiritual gift, through godly love, when abiding in Christ, and to God's glory. This is the application and expression of the Christian life (John 15:1-5; 1 Peter 4:10-11; I Corinthians 12:4-7; I Corinthians 10:31).

Confirmation
Confirmation is administered by the laying on of hands of the presbytery to confirm the believer in the faith and service of Christ. This is done after the believer has been instructed and established in the doctrines of Christ (John 7:17; II John 9; Acts 8:17; 14:21-23; 15:32, 41; 19:6, Galatians 2:9, I Timothy 5:24).

Creation

1. **Of the World:** God spoke into existence the world and all things that it contains, for His own pleasure, and the enjoyment of His creatures (Revelation 4:11; I Timothy 6:17).

2. **Of Man:** God created man in His image according to Genesis 1:26 as a triune being consisting of spirit, soul (which is made of the mind, will, and emotions), and a body.

Death
As a result of original sin, all mankind is subject to the death of the body. The soul does not die with the body, but immediately after death enters into a conscious state of happiness or misery according to the character here possessed either by rejection or acceptance of the Savior (Romans 5:12; Ecclesiastes 12:7; Philippians 1:23).

Dedication of Children
The dedication of children is the presentation of a child to God, and therefore establishes a covenant between God and parents. God promises blessing and protection to the child whose parents are faithful to rear him/her in the services of the Lord. Such a child is made holy and is part of the covenant family of God by the faith of his parents until he/she reaches the age of accountability, whereupon he/she becomes responsible as an individual before God and is commanded to repent (Psalms 34:11; Isaiah 54:13; Matthew 19:14; Mark 10:13-16; Luke 18:15-16; I Corinthians 7:14).

Deliverance
The need for deliverance is manifested by an inability to be free from bondage: e.g., mental (emotional), physical, or spiritual normally associated with demon activity. It is God's desire to bring deliverance to His people (Job 5:19; Psalms 91:3; II Timothy 4:18; Hebrews 2:15; II Peter 2:9). We have been granted the authority in the name of Jesus to bring deliverance to others (Mark 16:17; John 14:12; I Corinthians 12:8-11). We must understand that our warfare is with the forces of evil (Ephesians 6:12), our weapon is the Word of God, our authority and power are from Jesus Himself (Mark 16:17; Acts 1:8) and that the battlefield is in the spiritual realms (Ephesians 6: 10-18; II Corinthians 10:3-5; Romans 8:9; Galatians 5:22-23).

Divine Healing
Deliverance from sickness is provided for in the atonement and is the privilege of all believers. The ministration of the laying on of hands accompanied with the anointing of oil for the healing of the sick shall be granted as request is made and the need may require (Isaiah 53:4-5; Matthew 8:16-17; Mark 16:17-18; James 5:14-15).

Dress Code
The obedience of a child of God is not measured by what clothing we wear but by our walk in the Spirit. A believer is to dress modestly with the Christian simplicity that becomes holiness, not to

indulge of pride in dress or behavior (Proverbs 29:23; I Timothy 2:8-10; James 4:6; I Peter 3:3-4; I John 2:15-17; Galatians 5:16).

Economics
Biblical economics is a free enterprise system with the ownership of private property, the right to accumulate wealth, and proper taxation (Leviticus 27:30-33; Proverbs 3:9; Proverbs 6:6-11; Proverbs 10:5; Proverbs 10:11, 26; Proverbs 13:22; Proverbs 22:22; Proverbs 24:30-34; Ecclesiastes 5:18-20; Matthew 22:17-22.)

Education
As Christians, one of our responsibilities is to make sure that our children and we are educated in the godliest manner possible. God has entrusted us with children, and He will require an accounting of what we did with them (II Chronicles 17:9; Psalm 78:1; II Timothy 3:16-17; Romans 1:20; Ephesians 6:4; John 1:17).

Eternal Covenant
The Eternal Covenant leads to the Covenant of Grace. Whereas the Eternal Covenant was made between the Father and the Son, the Covenant of Grace is made between God and man. This latter covenant is where God promises eternal salvation to man based upon Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. The manifestation of that covenant occurs in our world in a sequence of additional covenants that God made with individuals: Adam (Genesis 2:15-17), Noah (Genesis 9:12-16), Abraham (Genesis 17), the Israelites at Mount Sinai (Exodus 34:28), and believers in the New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-37).

Eternal Security
Eternal security means that when a person believes in Jesus Christ as Savior, he can never lose his eternal life. The Bible clearly teaches that once we believe in Jesus Christ as Savior, our eternal destiny is fixed and secure. Security looks at our eternal salvation from God's viewpoint (Ephesians 1:13-14; John 10:27-30).

Evangelism
Evangelism, the communication of the gospel message, includes a warning, an explanation, and a call. Evangelism includes warning people about sin and the consequences of sin (John 16:8; Acts 24:25; Revelation 20:11-15). It includes an explanation of God's remedy for sin—the gospel (Acts 8:29-35; Romans 3:21-26; II Corinthians 5:21), and it includes the clear call to repent (to turn from sin and to turn toward God) and believe the gospel, by faith (Mark 1:15; Luke 13:1-5; Acts 17:29-31; Romans 1:17; Romans 10:9-13).

Fasting
Believers may fast as long as our motive and attitude are right before God: humility, recognition and expression of our dependence and need for God in our lives, intercessory prayer for others and ourselves, and focusing ourselves on God's will and our ministry for Him.

a. To show genuine humility, repentance, confession of sin, and need of the Lord (1 Samuel 7:6; Jeremiah 36:9; Ezra 10:6; Nehemiah 9:1-2; Joel 2:12; Daniel 9:2-20; 10:2-3).

b. To pray for others, especially those ill (Psalm 35:13; 2 Samuel 12:15-23).

c. To pray for guidance and safety (Esther 4:3, 16; Ezra 8:21-31).

d. At the hour of one's death (Judges 20:26; 1 Samuel 31:13; 2 Samuel 1:12; 3:35).

e. To concentrate on service for the Lord (Acts 13:1-4; 14:23).

Family
The family is the first and most important classroom and training ground for society. The family provides the security, the heritage, and the perpetuation of morality without which no society can survive (Genesis 4:1-2; Ephesians 6:1-4).

Fellowship with God
Fellowship with God emphasizes the friendship relationship with God the Father and the Son. Sin breaks the fellowship; confession of sin restores the fellowship. When in fellowship with God, believers partner with God in service and enjoy a close friendship. The central passages are 1 John 1 and John 13. Since one is no longer walking in darkness (sin), the Holy Spirit also leads and controls the believer as Galatians 5 teaches. John 15:1-9 uses the term "abide" which also refers to fellowship with Jesus Christ.

Final Judgment and Eternal State
We believe that at death the spirits and souls of those who have trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ pass immediately into His presence and there remain in conscious bliss until the resurrection of the glorified body, when Jesus Christ comes for His own. Whereupon soul and body reunited shall be with Him forever in glory; but the spirits and souls of the unbelieving remain after death conscious of condemnation and in misery until the final judgment of the Great White Throne when soul and body reunited shall be cast into the lake of fire, not to be annihilated but to be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power (Luke 16:19-26; 23:42; II Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23; II Thessalonians 1:7-8; Jude 6, 7; Revelation 20:11-15).

There will be a final judgment in which the wicked dead will be raised and judged according to their works. Whosoever is not found written in the Book of Life, together with the devil and his angels, the beast, and the false prophet, will be consigned to everlasting punishment in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death (Matthew 25:46; Mark 9:43-48; Revelation 19:20; 20:11-15; 21:8).

Five-Fold Ministry
The church is to be taught and led by the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers for the purpose of every believer seeing and exercising his/her priestly and kingly ministry as outlined in I Peter 2:5, 9 and Revelation 16. The five-fold ministry is to teach and train its people to do the work of the ministry with maturity and unity in mind. Working with these ministries will be elders, deacons, and the gifted men and women of the church (Romans 12:3-8; I Corinthians 12:12; Ephesians 4:11-13; I Timothy 3:2-12; Titus 2:1-15).

Gifts of the Spirit
The nine gifts of the Spirit set forth in I Corinthians 12 should be and must be operative in the church to enjoy the fullness of God. These gifts are imparted by the sovereignty of the Holy Spirit and only work or are operated by this one and the self-same Spirit (I Corinthians 12:11).

Giving
Biblical giving is the giving of self and wealth to God and His work and doing so voluntarily and out of love for God and His work. Central passages of Scripture for giving: Matthew 6:3-4; I Corinthians 16:1-3; II Corinthians 8-9; Galatians 6:6-8; Philippians 4:10-19, 1 Timothy 5:8, 17-18; III John 5-8.

Godly Love or Christian Love
This is God's kind of love in us for others, especially for believers. John 3:16 and Romans 5:8 demonstrate that God's love is sacrificial. Since this is true, godly love—Christian love—is also sacrificial. The Holy Spirit produces it in a believer who is controlled by the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23; Romans 5:5). Christian love is not dependent on the person who is loved. It depends on the source. Godly love pleases God (II John 5-6). The basic idea in godly love is sacrifice for others—thinking of others first and doing for them that which is in accordance with God's will and God's good, and that which is needed. Furthermore, it includes responsibility, which is being accountable to God, to doctrinal principles, and to one's level of spiritual growth; protection of others by way of verbal protection (what we say), mental protection (our thoughts), and physical protection; self-control which relates to sacrifice, responsibility, and protection; and thankfulness. First Corinthians 13:4-7 personifies love by saying what it is and does, and what it is not and does not do. Godly love contrasts with friendship love which is for certain people.

Help of the Poor
We believe that it is the intent of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to feed the hungry (Matthew 25:34-40; Isaiah 58:7-8); to care for the poor (Matthew 19:21; Psalm 112:9; II Corinthians 9:6-9); and to care for the widows and orphans (James 1:27). We further believe that such ministry should be toward His name to both saints and unbelievers (Hebrews 6:10).

Infallible Word of God
We believe that the Holy Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, were written by holy men inspired by the Holy Spirit and are God's revealed word to man. They are the sufficient, infallible rule and guide to salvation and all Christian worship and service (II Peter 1:20-21; II Timothy 3:15-17; I Thessalonians 2:13). The Bible is the inspired Word of God, equally in all parts and in the whole; it is totally inerrant in the original manuscripts. It is the supreme revelation from God and of God, superior to conscience and reason, though not contrary to them; and it is therefore our infallible rule in all manners. All the Scriptures center about the Lord Jesus Christ and hence, no portion is properly read nor understood until it leads to Him.

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and the Son of Man
Jesus was born miraculously of the Virgin Mary (Matthew 1: 23; Luke 1:31, 35).

He lived a sinless life (Hebrews 7:26; I Peter 2:22).

He came into the world to save men from the guilt and condemnation of sin (John 3:16), offering His blood as atonement (I Corinthians 15:3; II Corinthians 5:21) and making it available to all who exercise faith in Him.

He resurrected from the dead (Matthew 28:6; Luke 24:39; I Corinthians 15:4).

He is exalted to the right hand of God (Acts 1:9, 11; 2:33; Philippians 2:9-11; Hebrews 1-3).

His divinity is proved from His titles, His attributes, and His works (John 1:14; Luke 1:26-35; Acts 4:12; Acts 16:31).

He is presently seated at the right hand of God the Father, interceding for His redeemed.

We also acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord over all things in Heaven, and in Earth, and under the Earth (John 1:12-14; I Timothy 3:16; Acts 7:37-38; Philippians 2:9-10; Hebrews 7:25).

Justification

Justification is the legal act whereby God declares the sinner to be innocent of his or her sins. It is not that the sinner is now sinless, but that he/she is "declared" sinless. This declaration of righteousness means the person is justified before God. This justification is based on the shed blood of Jesus, "...having now been justified by His blood..." (Romans 5:9) where Jesus was crucified, died, buried, and rose again (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). God imputed (reckoned to our account) the righteousness of Christ at the same time our sins were imputed to Christ when He was on the cross. That is why it says in 1 Pet. 2:24, "And He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed." Also, 2 Cor. 5:21 says, "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." Additionally, we are justified by faith (Romans 5:1) apart from works of the Law (Romans 3:28).

Kingdom Citizenship

Sovereign God rules all creation, but He favors those that are in faith relationship with Him. He puts them in His kingdom by grace through faith (I Chronicles 29:11; Psalm 2: Jeremiah 50:17-20; Daniel 4:17, 25, 32: Haggai 2:21-22; Luke 8:22-36).

All believers are citizens of God's kingdom and commanded to be patriotic toward His Kingdom (Philippians 1:27; 3:20).

Laying on of Hands

We adhere to a simple belief that power or anointing of any other necessary quality can be transmitted from one person touching another. The Levitical priesthood first practiced this (Numbers 8:10-11, 27:22-23). Jesus practiced it as a blessing, (Mark 10:13-16) and He, as well as others, used it for healing (Mark 5:22-23; 16:18; Acts 14:3; 19:11-12; 28:8; Luke 4:40), conferring office (Acts 8:16-18), receiving anointing (I Timothy 4:14) and for ordination (I Timothy 4:14).

We believe in the doctrine of the laying on of hands for:

1. The confirming of believers to commitment and ministry in the local church.
2. The confirming of one's call by God to special ministry in the local church (Acts 13:1-3).
3. The imparting of spiritual gifts (I Timothy 4:14; II Timothy 1:6).
4. The experiencing of the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:17-18).
5. The ministry of healing of the sick through the Lord Jesus Christ (Mark 16:16).
6. The blessing and dedicating of children to the Lord (Mark 10:16).

We further believe that, in obedience to the Holy Scriptures, we should lay hands on no man suddenly, but that the laying on of hands confirms a ministry, which is already observable and has been proven (I Timothy 5:22).

Law and the Gospel
The Law is the do's and don'ts of moral behavior. God gave the Law so that people would have a guide to live by and a standard by which they might recognize God's purity and their sinfulness. There are 613 commandments in the Old Testament. They oversee moral, judicial, and religious behavior.

The Law is a reflection of the character of God, because the Law comes forth from the very heart of God. Since it is not possible for us to keep the Law and therefore earn our position with God, we then need the holiness of God given to us – because there simply isn't any way for us to attain to the standard of God. Therefore, "...The law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith," (Galatians 3:24).

Liberty or Freedom
Liberty or freedom includes privacy and personal responsibility and is the direct application of God's sovereignty and human volition. The Bible teaches both spiritual freedom and human freedom (John 8:31-36). God created man in His image and man therefore received moral freedom and volition, with the result that he was created to live in freedom—to live with free choice or freedom (Genesis 1:26-31). The exercise of freedom requires free people to grant freedom and privacy to others. Personal responsibility, therefore, goes hand in hand with freedom. Tyranny and slavery often occurred due to the sin nature of man, but God willed for human freedom to predominate. For example, when an Israelite was enslaved, "Every Israelite (man or woman) who had become a slave might not only be redeemed at any time by his relatives but, if this did not take place, was bound to receive his freedom without payment in the seventh year, with a present of cattle and fruits (Exodus 21:2; Deuteronomy 15:12–15). Indeed, all slaves of Hebrew descent, with their children, obtained freedom without ransom in the Jubilee year (Leviticus 25:39–41)." (The New Unger's Bible Dictionary, 1988. 444) The very fact of volition and authority argue for human freedom. The Law of Moses outlines human freedom for Israel, God's priest nation (Exodus 20:1-17; Psalm 146:7; 119:45; Isaiah 61:1; I Peter 2:16).

Lord's Supper
The Lord's Supper is a memorial of the covenant made with God through the blood of Christ. It is a continuation of the Passover Feast, which God commanded His covenant people to observe. Those who have made covenant with God through the blood of Christ and have been water baptized are instructed to participate. The church participates in the Lord's Supper as a body or family, with each covenant partner in fellowship adding to the blessedness of the experience (Exodus 11, 12; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:19-20; I Corinthians 10:16; 11:23-26).

Marriage
God created marriage (Genesis 2:22). It is a covenant made between a man and a woman that makes them one (Genesis 2:24). The marriage covenant requires the married parties to be faithful, loving, and helpful to each other as long as they both shall live (Mark 10:3-10). Christians are not to marry unbelievers (II Corinthians. 6:14-18). Those whom God has directed to be joined together shall, after counseling with the pastor concerning what God requires of them, be joined in Christian marriage (Malachi 2:13-16; Matthew 5:32; 19:5-6,9; Romans 7:2-3; I Corinthians 7:10-11, 15; II

Corinthians 6:14; Ephesians 5:22-23).

This church observes the wedding ceremony as holy and unto God. It is a religious ceremony and cannot be conducted in this church without pastoral consideration. Any couple wishing to conduct their wedding ceremony in this church must first submit to pastoral counseling that is approved by this church. The couple must also live a lifestyle that is consistent with this church's doctrinal views.

Millennial Reign of Christ
The second coming of Christ includes the rapture of the saints, which is our blessed hope, and is followed by the visible return of Christ with His saints to reign on the earth for one thousand years (Zechariah 14:5; Matthew 24:27, 30; Revelation 1:7; 19:11-14; 20:1-6). This millennial reign will bring the salvation of the national Israel (Ezekiel 37:21-22; Zephaniah 3:19-20; Romans 11:26-27) and the establishment of universal peace (Isaiah 11:6-7; Psalm 72:3-8; Micah 4:3-4).

Ministry and Distribution
The Bible relates that covenant partners of the Levitical order were to be paid from the tithes and offerings presented (Numbers 18:21-24; Deuteronomy 12:19; 18:1-2) by the people to the men/women of God at the church. The church believes that the Word of God sets forth that the sacerdotal functions to be performed by the Levites are:(a) The care of the sanctuary (Numbers 1:49-53; 18:2-4; I Chronicles 6:48; 23:27-32); (b) The ushers in the temple (I Chronicles 9:17-27, 26:12-19); (c) Treasurers (I Chronicles 26:26-28); (d) Singers (I Chronicles 9:33-34); (e) Instructors in the law (Leviticus 10:10; Ezekiel 44:24); (f) Assistants to the priests (Numbers 3:9; I Chronicles 23:28-32); (g) Secretaries (I Chronicles 2:55; II Chronicles 34:13); (h) Overseers of building and repairing the temple (I Chronicles 23:2-4; Ezra 3:8-9); (i) Inquirers of God (Exodus 28:30, Numbers 27:21, Ezra 2:63, Nehemiah 7:65); (j) Ministers before the ark (I Chronicles 16:4); (k) Musicians (I Chronicles 15:16, 16:42); (l) Protectors of the tabernacle (Numbers 1:53); (m) Ministers of God (Numbers 3:12, 39-49); (n) Prayers (II Chronicles 30:27; I Chronicles 23:30); (o) Teachers (II Chronicles 35:3, Nehemiah 8:9); (p) Praisers (II Chronicles 8:14); and (q) Providers of music for worship (II Chronicles 5:12; 7:6; 29:30; 30:15-27).

Therefore, all persons participating in the above functions of the Levites in the church shall be candidates for commissioning into the ministry and shall be eligible for receipt of the Levitical distribution from the church. The senior pastor with the counsel of the board of directors shall determine the amount of such distribution.

Missions
Missions are the whole task, endeavor, and program of the Church of Jesus Christ to reach out across geographical and/or cultural boundaries by sending missionaries to evangelize people who have never heard or who have little opportunity to hear the saving gospel.

Music
Music and song are a product of, reflection of, and appreciation of God's word, works, and person inside a believer. Biblical music honors God, teaches and recalls Bible doctrine, and encourages people. Biblical music expresses the thinking, free will, emotion, conscience, and self-consciousness, though it especially joins the learned doctrine in the soul and human spirit with the emotion of the soul and human spirit. In church assembly, the ministry of music prepares the

congregation for the ministry of God's Word (Psalm 30:4, Psalm 57:9, Colossians 3:16, I Chronicles 15:16; 25:1, Exodus 15:1-18, I Samuel 16:23, Acts 16:25, James 5:13).

Nationalism
God planned that people would live in groups called nations. These nations would have similar culture including language, geography, and heritage. Each of these national distinctions provides for a balance of power among nations and protects against a monolithic power over many groups. We can look at Genesis 10 and 11 for the beginnings of human government in the post-flood civilization (Genesis 10:32-11:9; Acts 17:26-27).

New Covenant
This is the new covenant of the Messianic age where the law of God is written upon the hearts of men (Jeremiah 31:31,33); it was promised in Eden (Genesis 3:15); it was proclaimed to Abraham (Genesis 12:3), and it was fulfilled in Christ (Luke 1:68-79).

New Heavens and New Earth
We, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness" (II Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:22).

Of the World to Come
We believe that the end of this age is rapidly approaching (I Peter 4:7). We believe in "That Blessed Hope" the personal, imminent return of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (Acts 1:11; I Thessalonians 4:13-18). We believe in the bodily resurrection of the just and of the unjust, the everlasting blessedness of the saved, and the everlasting punishment of the lost without Christ (Acts 24:15; Matthew 24:31-46; Revelation 22:11).

One God
We believe that Scripture teaches there is one and only one true and living God, who is self-existent, and the eternal "I AM," the creator of heaven and earth, and the redeemer of mankind. We believe that He has chosen to reveal Himself as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the same in essence, though distinct in personality (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 43:10-11; Matthew 28:18-19; Luke 3:22). These three are one God, having the same nature, attributes, and perfection and are worthy of the same homage and obedience (Mark 12:29; John 1:14; Acts 5:3, 4; II Corinthians 13:14; Revelation 1:4-6). The mode of His existence, however, is a subject far above the understanding of man. He is the fountain of all perfection and happiness. He is glorified by the whole of creation and is worthy to be loved and served by all intelligence. He, therefore, is the only proper object of worship (Jeremiah 10:10; Exodus 3:14; Psalms 90:2; Matthew 28:19, 20; Job 11:7; Psalms 19:1, 2; 145:10; 150:6; Exodus 34:14).

Ordinances of the Gospel

1. **Baptism in Water:** We believe water baptism is commanded of every believer, and a necessary requisite for going on to spiritual maturity. When done in faith, it is the means whereby those who have been justified by faith in the blood of Jesus Christ receive a circumcision of the heart, are made participants in the death and resurrection of Christ, and thus are delivered from the dominion and rule of sin. The ordinance of baptism is a burial with Christ, to be observed, whenever physically possible as commanded in the Scriptures by all who have repented and truly believed in their heart on Christ as Savior and Lord. The method of baptism will be by immersion. They declare to the world that they have died

with Jesus and that they have also been raised with Him to walk in newness of life. It is the circumcision of the heart by faith and through the working of the Spirit of God. Water baptism is the taking on of a great responsibility, because in it a person makes an everlasting commitment to God (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 10:47-48; Colossians 2:11-12).

2. **The Lord's Supper:** The Lord's Supper, consisting of the elements, bread and the fruit of the vine, is the symbol expressing our sharing the divine nature of our Lord Jesus Christ, a memorial of His suffering and death, and a prophecy of His second coming. It is enjoined on all believers 'until He comes' (John 6:48, 51, 53-57; Luke 22:19-20; I Corinthians 2:11-12).

Ordination
The Bible relates that those who are chosen by God to a specific work should be recognized by appointment and ordination to the work (Mark 3:13-15; I Chronicles 9:22; II Chronicles 11:15; 23:18; I Corinthians 7:17; Titus 1:5; I Timothy 2:7). Thus are those to be set in order in their function as Levites for the ministry of the work and so those in the church might know and receive those who have a position in the work of the ministry.

Primitive Man and His Fall
Our first parents, in their original state, were upright. They naturally preferred and desired to obey their creator and had no preference or desire to transgress His will until they were influenced and inclined by Satan to disobey God's commands. Previous to this, the only tendency of their nature was to do righteousness. In consequence of their first transgression, the state under which the posterity of Adam came into the world is so different from that of Adam that they have not that righteousness and purity which Adam had before the fall; they are not willing to obey God but are inclined to do evil. Hence, none, by virtue of any natural goodness and mere work of their own, can become the children of God (Genesis 1:26-31; 3:1-7; Ecclesiastes 7:29; Psalms 51:5; John 6: 44; Romans 5:12-21; I Corinthians 2:14).

Promise of the Father
All believers are entitled to and should ardently expect and earnestly seek the Promise of the Father, the baptism in the Holy Ghost and fire, according to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ. This was the normal experience in the early Christian church. With it come the endowment of power for life and service, and the bestowment of the gifts and their uses in the work of the ministry (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-5; I Corinthians 12:1-31). This wonderful experience is distinct from and subsequent to the experience of the new birth (Acts 2:38; 10:44-46; 11:14-16; 15:7-8).

Repentance
Repentance means to decide to turn from one's sin; it is not a condition of salvation; faith in Christ as Savior is the only condition for salvation (John 3:16; Acts 16:31; Ephesians 2:8-9).

Responsibility of the Believer
We believe that it is essential that each believer lay a foundation of Biblical truth and experience upon which he/she builds his/her life. These foundation stones are: repentance from dead works, faith toward God, doctrine of baptisms, laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment, all of which are prerequisites to going on to perfection (spiritual maturity) (Hebrews 6:1-2).

We believe each Christian is called and chosen in God to be a priest unto God to offer up the sacrifice of praise (the fruit of the lips), to give of their time, strength, and material possessions to the service of the Lord. All believers have been purchased with the blood of Jesus Christ and are no longer their own, but belong to the Father to be used for His glory; and as possessions of the Lord, must give themselves to serving Him, finding their place in the church, His body, and making themselves available by being present when the church comes together, that they might be able to minister their gifts and talents for the building up of the Body of Christ (John 15:16; Ephesians 1:4-5; I Corinthians 6:20; 12:18; Hebrews 13:15; I Peter 2:5,9). We believe that the whole purpose of man is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever. Therefore, we believe in the act of praising and worshipping God with one's total being as set forth in the Holy Scriptures. We also believe that praising God is a form of spiritual warfare (Psalm 149; 150; Mark 12:29-31; Ephesians 5:18-21).

Salvation of Man

Man's only hope of redemption is through the shed blood of Jesus Christ, the only Son of God. Salvation is received through repentance toward God and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ. By the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, being justified by grace through faith, man becomes an heir of God according to the hope of eternal life. The inward evidence of salvation is direct witness of the Spirit and the outward evidence to all men of a life of righteousness and true holiness (Luke 24:47; John 3:3; Romans 10:13-15; Ephesians 2:8; Titus 2:11; 3:5-7; Romans 8:16; Ephesians 4:24; Titus 2:12).

Salvation is an inclusive word, which gathers into itself all the redemptive acts and processes, i.e., justification, redemption, deliverance, imputation, sanctification, glorification, etc. The Hebrew and Greek words for salvation imply the ideas of deliverance, safety, preservation, healing, and soundness. Salvation is by grace through faith, is a free gift, and wholly without human works (Romans 3:27-28, 4:1-8, 6:23, Ephesians 2:8). Salvation is in these three tenses:

1. Condition of Salvation - The grace of God, which brings salvation, hath appeared to all men, through the preaching of repentance toward God and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ; man is saved by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, and, being justified by grace through faith, he becomes an heir of God according to the hope of eternal life (Romans 10:13-15; Luke 24:47; Titus 2:11; 3:5-7; Ephesians 2:8-9).

2. Evidence of Salvation - The inward evidence to the believer, of his salvation, is the direct witness of the Spirit (Romans 8:16). The outward evidence to all men is a life of unconditional love, righteousness, and true holiness, demonstrated by the fruit of the Spirit (John 13:35; Galatians 5:22-23; Ephesians 4:24).

3. Final Result of Salvation - The spirit of the believer who dies in Christ immediately goes to be with the Lord (Ecclesiastes 12:7; Luke 23:42-43; II Corinthians 5:8).

Sanctification

Sanctification is the process by which, according to the will of God, we become partakers of His holiness; that it is begun at regeneration; and that it is carried on in the hearts of believers by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in the continual use of the appointed means, especially the Word of God, self-examination, self-denial, watchfulness, and prayer (I Thessalonians 4:3; I John 2:29; Romans 8:5; Philippians 2:12-13). Sanctification is an act of separation from that which is evil, and a dedication unto God (Romans 12:1-2; I Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrews 13:12). The

Scriptures teach a life of “holiness without which no man shall see the Lord” (Hebrews 12:14). By the power of the Holy Ghost, we are able to obey the command: “Be ye Holy, for I am Holy” (I Peter 1:15, 16). Sanctification is realized in the believer by recognizing his identification with Christ in His death and resurrection and by faith reckoning daily upon the fact of that union, and by offering every faculty continually to the dominion of the Holy Spirit (Romans 6: 1-11, 13; 8: 1-2, 13; Galatians 2:20; Philippians 12:12-13; I Peter 15).

Scientific Accuracies in the Bible

Science is merely that branch of discovery that categorizes, discovers, and utilizes the knowledge woven into the fabric of the universe by a Sovereign, All Powerful, and Omniscient, Creator. Science is not the end of all things, but merely one of the means by which man may glorify God. This is because God is the creator of all that is. He has hidden the treasures of his ominous glory in the very universe in which we exist. The power in the atom, momentum, energy, mass, time, etc. are all creations of God and, therefore, under his authority. The more the Christian learns of these things, the more he can glorify God. Science must be subservient to Him, not the other way around. Science is not God's replacement. This is not to say that the Bible is vindicated by science; rather, it is science that is vindicated by the Bible (Genesis 7:11, 15:5, 8:22, 28; Isaiah 40:22; Job 26:7-8; 2 Samuel 22:16; Psalm 8:1,3,6,8, 102:25--26; Ecclesiastes 1:6--7).

Smoking

The Bible commands us not to allow our bodies to become "mastered" by anything. Smoking is undeniably strongly addictive. Scripture teaches us to care for our bodies, "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your body". Smoking is undoubtedly very bad for your health. Smoking has been proven to damage the lungs and the heart (1 Corinthians 6:12, 6:19-20).

Spirituality

The ministry of the Holy Spirit emphasizes function in our lives. One needs the Holy Spirit to live correctly. A believer is either spiritual or carnal. Personal sin takes one out of spirituality and into carnality. Confession of sin changes one from living by the flesh and puts one into living by the Holy Spirit. We continue on living by the Holy Spirit by faith. Spirituality is attained through a believer’s walk with the Spirit, by not grieving the Spirit, and by quenching not the Spirit (I Thessalonians 5:19; Ephesians 4:30; Galatians 5:16-6:1, I John 1).

Spiritual Growth

Spiritual growth refers to the progressive advancement in the biblical faith. This depends on the ministry of the Holy Spirit, fellowship, learning God's Word, faith, testing, and application (Ephesians 4:12, 14, 15; 2 Peter 3:14-18, I Peter 2:2, Hebrews 5:11-6:6).

The Church & The Body of Christ

The Church is the Body of Christ, the habitation of God through the Spirit, with divine appointments for the fulfillment of her great commission. Each believer, born of the Spirit, is an integral part of the general church, which is written in heaven (Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:22, Hebrews 12:23).

The Church and the Ministry
We believe that all who are united by the new birth to Jesus Christ are covenant partners of the Universal Church, the Body of Christ. We also believe that the local congregation of Christian believers is divinely instituted and is the chosen instrument of God for the furtherance of God's work here on Earth. While appreciating the work of para church groups, we believe that the local church is God's chosen vehicle for world evangelization and the nurture of Christians. We further believe in the spiritual unity of all believers and in working together with others who believe in salvation through the shed blood of Jesus Christ for the causes of evangelism, missions, and benevolence (Matthew 16:16-18; John 17:21; Ephesians 1:20-23; 4:3-10; Colossians 3:14-15). The church is the Body of Christ, the habitation of God through the Spirit, with divine appointments for the fulfillment of her great commission and purpose. Each believer, born of the Spirit, is an integral part of the Church of the Firstborn, whose name is written in heaven in the Lamb's Book of Life. As such, the Bible reveals that we are covenant partners one of another and the basis of our fellowship is in Christ in the power of the Spirit (Ephesians 1:22; 2:19-22; Hebrews 12:23). A divinely called and scripturally ordained ministry has been provided by our Lord for the three-fold purpose of leading the church in: (1) Evangelization of the world, (2) Worship of God, and (3) Building a body of saints being perfected in the image of His Son (I Chronicles 16:29; Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-20; Luke 14:23; John 4:23-24; Ephesians 4:11-16; Colossians 1:28).

The Holy Spirit
The Scriptures ascribe to the Holy Spirit the acts and attributes of an intelligent being. He guides, knows, moves, gives information, commands, forbids, sends forth, reproves, as the instrumental segment of the God Head in the liberal dispersion of spiritual gifts, and can be sinned against (John 16:13; I Corinthians 2:11; Genesis 1:2; Acts 10:19; 13:2; 16:6; 13:4; John 16:8; Mark 3:29; Acts 7:51; Ephesians 4:30; I Corinthians 12).

The works of God are ascribed to the Holy Spirit; creation; inspiration, giving of life, and sanctification (Job 33:4; II Peter 1:21; I Peter 3:18; I Corinthians 6:11).

Tithing, Offerings, and Alms
Both the Old and New Testament Scriptures teach tithing as God's financial plan for the support of His work. These are to be practiced continually by all believers and are outward expressions of the unity of the church, the Body of Christ, as it joins together in support of the work of the Lord (Malachi 3:8-10; I Corinthians 16:2; Genesis 28:22; Matthew 23:23; Deuteronomy 26; 14:28-29; 15:7-11; Numbers 18:8-11; Ezekiel 44; Proverbs 14:21; 29:7; Luke 11:41; 12:33).

Total Prosperity of God
We believe that the gospel of the kingdom is God's absolute answer to man's total need and total prosperity NOW:

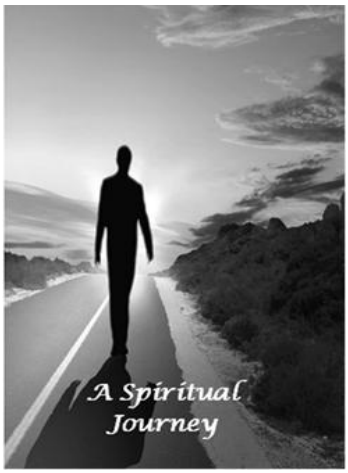
1. **Spiritually:** John 3:3,11; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21; Romans 10:9-10
2. **Mentally: 2** Timothy 1:7; Romans 12:2; Isaiah 26:3
3. **Physically:** Isaiah 53:4-5; Matthew 8:17; 1 Peter 2:24
4. **Financially:** 3 John 2; Malachi 3:10-11; Luke 6:38; 2 Corinthians 9:6-10; Deuteronomy 28:1-14

5. **Socially:** Proverbs 3:4; 1 Samuel 2:26; Romans 14:18; 2 Corinthians 8:21

Volition

God gave mankind volition, the right and ability to make choices, good and bad (Genesis 2:16-17; Isaiah 1:16-20; Luke 6:27; John 17:17; Acts 17:27, 30).

Session 6



What It Means to Be a Good Church Member

The Bible explains church membership this way, "Now you are the body of Christ, and individual members of it. And God has placed these in the church." 1 Corinthians 12:27–28. Members of a church comprise the whole and are essential parts of it, every member has a role or a function and the whole body suffers if one member fails to do their part.

A Church is not the building in which the people meet. A church is a congregation of baptized believers voluntarily associated together for the purpose of proclaiming the gospel, observing the ordinances, and fellowshipping in the love and grace of the Lord Jesus. Jesus found the church (Matthew 16:18) and purchased it, in that he gave himself for it (Acts 20:28, Ephesians 5:25).

On becoming a Christian, we receive the Spirit of Christ, the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit makes Christ real and personal to us. We know the Holy Spirit is leading us and working in us when we experience his guidance. A Christ-guided Christian will possess and manifest the Christian virtues. One of these virtues is unselfishness. The basis of most quarreling and unhappiness and strife can be traced to selfishness. The lives of selfish people have always been filled with unhappiness. Unselfishness, on the other hand, makes life meaningful, abundant, happy, and truly great. Christ is our supreme example of unselfishness.

When Christ lives in us, by the inner working of His Spirit, we will find another virtue in our lives, purity. Impurity crowds out the good and the beautiful in our lives. Our Lord desires that we have clean minds, clean thoughts, and clean actions. The Bible tells us to think on whatsoever is true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, and gracious (Philippians 4:8). Jesus said, "blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Matthew 5:8).

Christians should also demonstrate Christ's virtue of love and forgiveness. "A new commandment I give to you," said Jesus, "That you love one another as I have loved you," (John 13:34). We are also to forgive as Jesus forgives - He forgives and then forgets.

Radiant joy should characterize the life of every Christian. Of all the people on earth, Christians should be the happiest. Some young people have been hesitant to become Christians because they thought it would hinder their enjoyment of life. The truth is quite the contrary. Being a Christian does not take away from life, it adds to it. When Christ comes into one's life, he does not destroy happiness. He said, I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (John 10:10).

Jesus also expects us to trust him fully and completely for the strength we need for every

test. All too frequently we take things into our own hands and forget that faith in Christ is invaluable in every experience in life. He helps us to overcome temptation, He gives us courage and strength when times are difficult. A trusting Christian will not fret and worry. He will live one day at a time. A Christian can say with the Apostle Paul, "I can do all things in him who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13).

A Good Church Member is Guided by the Bible

A Christian's life should be pleasing to God. To do God's will requires a knowledge of His teachings. Men, "inspired by God" wrote the Bible, (2 Timothy 3:16). Its purpose is that "You may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and believing you may have life in his name" (John 20:31). The Bible gives us instruction (2 Timothy 3:16) and hope (Romans 5:14), helps us to grow in the Christian life (1 Peter 2:2), and keeps us from sinning (Psalm 119:11).

When we pray, we speak to God. When we study and meditate upon his word, He speaks to us. Spend time each day in earnest, prayerful Bible Study. If the Bible is new to you or if you have not read the Bible systematically, begin with the Gospel of John, follow this with the Book of Acts. Next, read the other Gospels and the letters of the Apostle Paul. The entire New Testament can be read in three months by reading three chapters a day. By this time, you will desire to read Genesis, the Psalms, Proverbs, and other books of the Old Testament. Gradually, you will become acquainted with the entire 66 books of the Bible.

The Christian religion is based upon the revelation from God which is found in the Bible. It is therefore imperative that we have a proper understanding of the Scriptures. Every verse of Scripture must be interpreted in its context or setting and then compared with other Scripture passages that will shed light upon it. A Bible dictionary and a commentary are valuable aids to the study of the Bible. The most helpful Scripture passages are underlined in some Bibles with helpful comments written in the margins of the Bible.

The essential truths of the Scriptures are open to all. Always pray for understanding and guidance when you read the Bible. Seek the message God has for you personally. Let him speak to you through His Word.

Our study of the Bible must be accompanied by the adjustment of our lives so that we conform to the will of God. "Be doers of the word and not hearers only" (James 1:22). Dwight L. Moody once said, "I have never seen a successful Christian who did not study his Bible."

Christians can sometimes act like demanding children who want things their way. Temper tantrums in churches may not include church members lying on the floor kicking and screaming, but some come close.

With church membership you give up your preferences to meet the needs of others, to serve others, to give and to sacrifice. We will never find joy in church membership when we are constantly seeking things our way. Church members are to make their attitude that of Jesus Christ.

A Good Church Member Is Guided by Prayer

Christians are instructed to "pray constantly" (1 Thessalonians 5:17). We should live with a constant awareness of God's presence in our lives. We should pray because we need to have fellowship with God. Sincere prayer draws us near to God and keeps us near to him. A prayerless Christian is a powerless Christian. If we fail to turn our thoughts to God in the morning, he will be little in our thoughts throughout the day.

We should form the habit of praying daily for specific people and things. A prayer list may prove helpful in making our prayers meaningful and vital. Christians need to have a place where they can be alone and talk with God. If possible, one should have a definite time and place for prayer. The more we pray, the less difficult and more satisfying prayer becomes.

A part of every prayer should be given to thanksgiving to God for his countless blessings. We should pray for those who are in need, for those who are not Christians, for the church, its ministry in Christ's name throughout the world. Christians should also pray to God to keep them from evil, to provide strength, guidance, and blessings.

Our prayers are always answered, if we meet the conditions, although they may not be answered in the way we expect. The Christian should always pray that the Lord's will may be done in his life. Prayer brings us into alignment with God's will, so that we will be ready to receive the answer to our prayers that God desires to give us. Our prayers are answered more abundantly than all that we ask or think" (Ephesians 3:20).

Pray for the Pastor

Church members must be intercessors for the pastor and their families. Pray for their protection, physical and mental health, and wisdom to know what to preach and teach and how to present God′s Word. Many church members do not realize what pastors are faced with and the things they have to deal with. Pastors experience loss, grief, pain, sorrow, financial problems, emotional issues, and sometimes even mental problems. Their family members need their leadership, love, and support also.

Pastors are expected to be on call 24/7, sometimes to people who are not members of the church. Some believe pastors know and should respond when someone is in need, even when no one tells them about the need. They are expected to be present whenever anyone in the church feels they need them and to deliver deep, thought-provoking messages every Sunday, without fail.

A pastor needs wisdom dealing with church members each week so he/she can best discern how to respond to the plethora of demands upon him/her. Pastors will feel stress and pressure every day. Members can pray that they will experience the peace that only God can give. It doesn′t take a lot of time, but it does take discipline.

Pray as a Family

The family must come together in prayer, led by the spiritual head of the household. Pray together as a family for the church. Praying for the church helps families to love the church, its leaders, and members, despite their flaws

A man who visited Niagara Falls was amazed at the grandeur, majesty, and power. Upon investigation he discovered that a very small portion of the water from Niagara Falls is used to generate electricity. The man exclaimed, "It is ashamed there is so much power available and so little used." Similarly, in our prayer life, there is so much power available, but unfortunately so little used.

A Good Church Member Attends Church

There is joy in attending church worship services with our family and friends. In our worship of God in His church, we shut out the noise and confusion of the world and listen for God's guidance by means of music, prayer, scripture reading, and the pastor's message. Through these, one should feel the nearness of God. The faithful meeting for worship each Lord's Day is of far greater importance than any other engagement. Unfavorable weather or a headache seldom keep us from our work or pleasure, neither should such excuses keep us from meeting with God in his church. Hebrews 10:25 tells us “Not forsaking the assembly of ourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”

A live coal, if separated from the fire, soon cools and dies. However, if it remains in the fire with the other live coals, it will continue to throw out heat and light. If a Christian tries to live the Christian life alone, failure results. The fellowship of other Christians will help and encourage us to greater Christian devotion and service.

God desires for Christians to get along. In John 13:35 He said: “By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another”.

You are to be a source of unity and never a divisive force. You are to love your fellow church members unconditionally. And while that doesn’t mean you agree with everyone all the time, it does mean you are willing to sacrifice your own preferences to keep unity in your church. Unity will not happen in the church if members have unforgiving hearts.

Each local church is made up of imperfect members and imperfect pastors. All will make mistakes. All will all sin. Yes, all can be hypocrites. This is why forgiveness is so important.

A Good Church Member Serves Christ in His Name

True faith always manifests itself by good works, “for faith apart from works is barren” (James 2:20). Every Christian has talents and abilities that can be used in God’s Service. The

diversified ministry of most local churches offers a wide variety of service opportunities, such as teaching, providing transportation, helping in the nursery, directing recreation, using one's musical talents, ushering, visiting the sick or someone lonely, performing manual labor or office work, dramatics, and leading handicrafts or other group activities.

Service in Christ's name must extend beyond Bible Study, group activities, and worship service in the local church. In fact, meetings within the walls of the church should not be an end in themselves but should be a vital source of training and inspiration that will send Christians forth to witness and serve in every facet and relationship of life.

As Christians, we must carry the gospel to those outside the fellowship of the church and serve mankind in every area of need. The entire membership of the church should be trained for Christian service, just as members of the clergy receive training for their ministry. Therefore, the importance of the church is enhanced rather than diminished.

God placed us in churches to serve, to care for others, to pray for leaders, to learn, to teach, to give, and, in some cases, to die for the sake of the gospel. Many churches are weak because we have members who have turned the meaning of membership upside down. It′s time to get it right. It′s time to become a church member as God intended. It′s time to give instead of being entitled.

Some members get into a pattern, they get excited about church. Get more involved. Discover the imperfections of the church. Get discouraged about the church. Leave the church. It′s important to know, no church is perfect, no pastor is perfect, no member is perfect.

We are called to be biblical church members. This means biblical church members:

- give without qualification.
- view the tithes and offerings as joyous giving. There are no strings attached.
- serve and minister as a natural way of doing things.
- are functioning members.

Good Church Member Pledges

Pledge One

I will be a functioning church member.

I like the metaphor of membership.
It's not membership as in a civic
organization or a country club.
It's the kind of membership given
to us in 1 Corinthians 12: "Now you
are the body of Christ, and individual
members of it" (1 Cor. 12:27). Because
I am a member of the body of Christ,
I must be a functioning member, whether
I am an "eye," an "ear," or a "hand." As a
functioning member, I will give. I will serve.
I will minister. I will evangelize. I will study.
I will seek to be a blessing to others. I will
remember that "if one member suffers, all the
members suffer with it; if one member is honored,
all the members rejoice with it" (1 Cor. 12:26).

_____

Signature

Pledge Two

I will be a unifying church member.

I will seek to be a source of unity in my church.
I know there are no perfect pastors, staff, or
other church members. But neither am I.
I will not be a source of gossip or dissension.
One of the greatest contributions I can make
is to do all I can in God's power to help keep
the church in unity for the sake of the gospel.

_____

Signature

Pledge Three

I will not let my church be about my preferences and desires.

I will not let my church be about
my preferences and desires.
That is self-serving. I am a
member in this church to serve
others and to serve Christ. My Savior
went to a cross for me. I can deal with
any inconveniences and matters
that just aren't my preference or style.

_____

Signature

Pledge Four

I will pray for my church leaders.

I will pray for my pastor every day. I
understand that the pastor's work is
never ending. His/her days are filled with
numerous demands that bring emotional
highs and lows. He/ She must deal with critics.
He/ She must be a good spouse and parent.
Because my pastor cannot do all things in
their own power, I will pray for their
strength and wisdom daily.

_____

Signature

Pledge Five

I will lead my family to be healthy church members

I will lead my family to be good members of this church as well.
We will pray together for our church. We will worship
together in our church. We will serve together in our church.
And we will ask Christ to help us fall deeper in love
with this church because He gave His life for her.

_____

Signature

Pledge Six

I Will Treasure Church Membership as a Gift.

This membership is a gift. When I received the free gift
of salvation through Jesus Christ, I became a part of the
body of Christ. I soon thereafter identified with a local
body and was baptized. And now I am humbled and
honored to serve and to love others in our church. I pray
that I will never take my membership for granted,
but see it as a gift and an opportunity to serve others
and to be a part of something so much greater
than any one person or member.

_____

Signature

Stewardship

Session 7

It is very easy to forget that the world and everything in it belongs not to people but to God, who created all things. "The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it" (Psalm 24:1). God is the owner of all you possess. Even the money you earn does not belong to you. It is a trust from God. You earn money by the abilities God has given you, by making use of the natural resources of the earth; land, minerals, water, vegetation, and electricity are all products of God's creation.

GOD OWNS EVERYTHING! (Psalm 24:1, 89:11; Haggai 2:8)
Deuteronomy 10:14; Psalm 50: 10-12; Leviticus 25:23; Revelation 4:11) *Yours, O LORD, is the greatness, the power, the glory, the victory, and the majesty. Everything in the heavens and on earth is Yours, O LORD, and this is Your kingdom. We adore You as the One who is over all things. Riches and honor come from You alone, for You rule over everything. Power and might are in Your hand, and it is at Your discretion that people are made great and given strength.*
(1 Chronicles 29: 11-12 NLB)

Stewardship means that a Christian is accountable to God for the way in which his or her life, health, body, talents, time, and money are used. The first step to be taken is to give oneself to God.

A steward is defined as an administrator, manager, caretaker, agent, or custodian. It is important to realize that a steward is one who takes care of someone else's property. A Christian steward is one who takes care of or manages the affairs of God.

We are stewards of all that God entrust us with. His trust includes money, our gifts and abilities, our mind and intellect, our bodies and how we use our time.

A Christian steward realizes it is God who gives him his abilities (Deuteronomy 8:18) and it is in God that we live, move, and have our being (Acts 17:28). The Christian steward recognizes God as his preeminent Master and lives for and honors Him. The whole of the Christian's life; personality, time, talent, influence, material substance, everything is Christ. Our responsibility is to recognize our life is not our own and that we live according to the principles of God's Kingdom. Remember, "each one of us shall give account of himself to God11 (Romans 14:12). A Christian steward is one who is responsible and dependable to walk in obedience to the commands and will of God (1Corinthians 4:1-2).

Christians who do not support the Lord's work financially as they should, must face this

truth: They have not yet given themselves to God. When we have surrendered our lives to God, then we shall give our money joyously to God's work. That is the test. Do you really enjoy giving generously to God's work?

God knows our needs. God also knows that multitudes of people worry too much about what they have and what they do not have. Some people never give to God's work because of selfish or unsatisfied desires. Jesus urged His followers not to be too concerned about food and clothing but rather to be concerned about doing God's will (Matthew 6:31-33).

BIBLICAL BASIS FOR

1. Stewardship of time (read Ecclesiastes 3:1-14 and Ephesians 5:15, 16)

2. Stewardship of the body (read 1 Corinthians 6: 15-20)

3. Stewardship of our gifts (read 1 Peter 4:10-11)

4. Stewardship of possessions (read Matthew 25:14-30)

God's financial plan for the church is tithing. Every committed disciple desires to give to the Lord's work. But the amount to give is the difficult question. The Bible suggests an amount – a tenth. In the Old Testament the giving of a tithe (a tenth) of one's income to God's work was a part of the law (Malachi 3:10). In the New Testament, believers are urged to give regularly and proportionately (1 Corinthians 16:2). If the Old Testament believers gave a tenth, surely we, who live not under law but under the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, cannot do less. Persons who give at least a tenth of their income to God's work are being faithful to God's Word.

Tithe Your Income

"Bring ye *all* the tithe into the store-house, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this," says the LORD of host." (Malachi 3:10).

A tithe is 10 percent of all our income (i.e., if your gross salary is $200.00 per pay period, your tithe would be $20.00 per pay period). We believe in "tithing from the top," which is the "gross income - not net." As God's divine representative (Acts 20:28), I am presenting God's will to you. It is on this basis:

- That in obedience to the head of the church, Jesus Christ, our method of obtaining funds to operate the ministries of Jesus, will be according to the Bible, which is the giving of tithes and offerings (Malachi 3:8-11; 1 Corinthians 16:2, Matthew 23:23).

- That each member would give in obedience to the command of Jesus to support the ministries of His church. According to 1 Corinthians 16:2, it says "upon the first day of the week let everyone of you lay by him as God hath prospered him..." The emphasis is on the individual. God made you individually. Your gifts were granted individually. Your soul was saved individually.

- In obedience and recognition and in appreciation of what God has done through Jesus Christ, we are to give individually. He tells us when, upon the first day of the week, that's each Sunday.

- If we turn aside from God's will to human devices, we will fail in spiritual blessings and in church finances. God's will is simple. It is plain. It is certain. We can plan to succeed with God, or we can plan to fail.

- It is my conviction and experience that spiritual growth would be evident in your life by personally giving your tithes and offerings. Nine-tenths of our income with God's blessings is much better than all of our income without His blessings.

Why do we tithe? We bring the tithe to God to show Him we honor Him, trust Him, and most of all, to maintain our covenant with Him by obediently giving a tenth of our income. It is a pure act of faith and love. Scripture states that the tithe goes to the tribe of Levi, i.e., the priests, as their inheritance for their work of the tabernacle of Meeting. The priests are to then tithe a tenth of the tithe to the Lord and offer it as a heave offering to Him.

What is the purpose of the tithe? Today, the tithe is to be brought to the local place of worship to maintain the expenses of the ministry. It is to provide the pastor and church leaders with sufficient resources to promote the gospel of Jesus Christ, and to maintain an appropriate facility.

What are the blessings and protection for tithing? Malachi says that God will rebuke the devourer for your sake, and He will not let the fruit of your ground be destroyed; nor will your vine fail to bear fruit in your field. There is divine protection and destiny covered by the tithe. If you have not been consistently tithing or you have used the tithe inappropriately, REPENT! Ask God′s forgiveness and wisdom as you go forward. His desire is that you honor Him. He is pleased when you trust Him.

Let's try it God's way (Malachi 3:10). An anonymous writer wrote:

Let me build my little life
strong on Christ the
cornerstone.
Thy praises shall be my daily
song, my will be thy very own.

Scripture References for Tithing and Stewardship

1. Malachi 3:10 -"Prove me now herewith...if I will not pour you out a blessing."

2. Proverbs 19:17 - "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord."

3. Deuteronomy 8:18- "But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth."

4. Luke 16:10-11 -"He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much."

5. Deuteronomy 15:14 – "Thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock, and out of thy floor, and out of thy winepress: of that wherewith the Lord thy God hath blessed thee thou shalt give unto him."

6. Luke 16:14 - "And when they heard these things (about giving) the Pharisees also, who were covetous...derided him."

7. Deuteronomy 8:7-10 – "For the Lord thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; a land of wheat, and barley, and vines and fig trees and pomegranates; a land of olive oil, and honey; A land wherein thou shalt not lack anything; a land whose stones are iron and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass. When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the Lord thy God for the good land he hath given thee."

8. Second Corinthians 8:14 - "But by an equity that...your abundance maybe a supply for their want and their abundance...for your want."

9. Ezekiel 16:49 - "Neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor."

10. Luke 16:8 - "And the Lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light."

11. Second Chronicles 31:5 - "And the tithe of all things brought they in abundantly."

12. Second Timothy 6:10 - "For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil."

13. Romans 14:12 - "So then everyone of us shall give account of himself to God."

14. Isaiah 55:2 - "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread?"

15. Matthew 6:11 - "Give us this day our daily bread."

16. Psalm 50:12 - "If I were hungry I would not tell thee."

17. Luke 6:38 - "Give and it shall be given unto you."

18. Leviticus 27:30 -"And all the tithe...is holy unto the Lord."

Offerings

Offering is any amount above the tithe that you give. We give three kinds of offerings: regular, love, and sacrificial.

The regular offerings are to be used to take care of the needs of the church. The love offering is an offering we give to the man or woman of God that is above our tithe and regular offering. This offering is also a seed that is planted in the life of the man or woman of God. It is one aspect of giving honor where honor is due (Romans 13:7).

Because Jesus gave his life, animal sacrifices are no longer necessary. Today, we know that we are to present our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God. (Romans 12:1)

God wants us to be cheerful and happy givers. When we give out of our relationship with God, there is a special joy that we feel. The Father has a special joy when we trust Him to supply our need.

Happiness Is Yours For the Giving

Knowing that my financial support is necessary for the ongoing of God's work through our church, here is my commitment of faith.

Check one:

_____ Barring unforeseen circumstances, I will give a tithe (10%) or more, which is $_____ each week or $_____ each month

_____ Though not 10% or more, I will give a definite percentage, which amounts to $_____ each week or $_____ each month.

_____ I prefer not to commit to a specific weekly or monthly gift, but I will give as regularly as I can.

____ Mr.
____ Ms.
____ Mr & Mrs.

Name _____

Signed _____

(This is for your own personal use, and you sign it as a commitment between you and God.)

See the Commitment Card below to determine your percentage of giving.

Percentage of Giving Scale

Yearly Income		$8K	$10K	$12K	$15K	$18K	$25K	$35K	$50K
Weekly Income		$153	$192	$230	$288	$346	$480	$673	$961
Weekly offering:	%								
	1	1.53	1.92	2.30	2.88	3.46	4.80	6.73	9.61
	2	3.06	3.84	4.60	5.76	6.92	9.60	13.46	19.22
	3	4.59	5.76	13.8	8.64	10.38	14.40	20.19	28.83
	4	6.12	7.68	9.20	11.52	13.84	19.20	26.92	38.44
	5	7.65	9.60	11.50	14.40	17.30	24.00	33.65	48.05
	6	9.18	11.52	13.80	17.28	20.76	28.80	40.38	57.66
	7	10.71	13.44	16.10	20.16	24.22	33.60	47.11	67.27
	8	12.24	15.36	18.40	23.04	27.68	38.40	53.84	76.88
	9	13.77	17.28	20.7	25.92	31.14	43.20	60.57	86.49
	10	15.30	19.20	23.00	28.80	34.60	48.00	67.30	96.10
	15	22.95	28.80	34.50	43.20	51.90	72.00	100.95	144.15

Appendix A
Sixteen Times to Send for Your Pastor

1. When a loved one is facing death.

2. When a relative continues to be despondent following the death of a loved one.

3. When you are facing a surgical operation.

4. When you are facing adjustment to a physical handicap.

5. When you are going through a long convalescence.

6. Following the birth of a baby.

7. When you desire to unite with the Church.

8. When you have begun to worry about excessive drinking.

9. When a loved one is drinking excessively.

10. When you are having difficulty in your marriage.

11. When you are choosing a life mate and have doubts about your choice.

12. When you are choosing a lifework and feel uncertain about your choice.

13. When, as a parent, you are concerned about either of the above decisions for your son or daughter.

14. When you are discouraged and life has lost its meaning.

15. When a loved one has become despondent for an obvious reason.

16. When behavior of a loved one shows marked and rapid change, whether it is toward excessive misbehavior or excessive interest in religion.

Notes

Appendix B
Exploring the Spiritual Gifts

Purpose

Before the new disciple leaves the discipling process to be integrated into the total ministry of the church, it is imperative that he/she is enabled and equipped to understand and use his/her spiritual gift(s).

Ralph Neighbour states, "It is the privilege of God to bestow His gifts upon His Children. He decides, without any advice from the children, what gift(s) shall be given to each of them." In 1 Corinthians 12:7-11 and Romans 12:6, Paul states that the Holy Spirit gives each person a gift(s) just as the Holy Spirit pleases.

Although each of us has different gifts coming from the same Spirit, they cannot be used in their fullness until we possess the qualities of the Fruit of the Spirit. It is the Fruit of the Spirit that makes Christ live in each of us. When the Fruit of the Spirit is made resident in our lives, we walk. talk, work, and play daily in the Fruit of God's love. Love is the Fruit from which the other aspects (Galatians 5:23) are manifested in our daily lives. As the Holy Spirit fills our lives, the personal and character qualities grow and mature into ripe fruit. Thus, forming the basis for the effective discovery and development of the spiritual gift(s) in our lives.

Spiritual gifts are given for the edification of the Body of Christ. They are the tools by which the church is empowered to rediscover the dynamic force which turned the world upside down and inside out. This empowerment allows the church to experience the fullness of who God is.

To help us understand how the spiritual gifts operate in the Body of Christ, Paul, in 1 Corinthians 12, uses the human body. Though the human body is one, it has many members, each with a very unique function. It is the unity of the physical body that enables it to perform as a whole. The spiritual gifts serve the same purpose in the church - independent, yet uniquely dependent upon the diversity of each member to come together to form an effective, functioning body.

A proper understanding of the purpose and interrelatedness of the spiritual gifts provides for an effective, holistic function of the church body as it seeks to glorify God. As a part of the discipling process, discovering the spiritual gifts of members identifies human resources, and guides persons into appropriate areas of service which will result in the whole body working together in harmony.

Spiritual Gift

A special attribute given by the Holy Spirit to every member of the Body of Christ according to God's grace for use within the context of the body.

Natural Talent

An innate ability that both Christians and non-Christians can have. Persons are born with abilities that may or may not be used to build up the Body of Christ.

Fruit of the Spirit

Personal and character qualities that all Christians should possess. Fruit grows as a result of confessing and denying sin and self-centeredness, thus allowing the Holy Spirit to fill and control every aspect of our daily lives.

Christian Roles

All Christians must be prepared to exercise their role and responsibility as Christians whether or not they possess a special gift. All Christians must do or act a certain way.

Fruit of the Spirit	Spiritual Gifts
• *Being (What A Christian is)*	• *Doing (What a Christian does)*
• *Normal expected outcome of Christian growth, maturity, Christlikeness and fullness of Holy Spirit.*	
• *Requires growth and development through the believer's walk with God and by yielding to the Holy Spirit.*	
• *Prerequisite to effective exercise of spiritual gifts.*	• *Worthless without Fruit*
• *Eternal*	• *Temporal*
• *God-oriented (internal)*	• *Task-oriented (God + Self = Task)*

Discovering and Developing Your Spiritual Gifts

Step 1 Explore the possibilities.

Step 2 Experiment with as many as you can.

Step 3 Examine your feelings.

Step 4 Evaluate your effectiveness.

Step 5 Expect confirmation from the body.

The Gifts

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

The gift of **pastoring** is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to assume a long-term personal responsibility for the spiritual welfare of a group of believers.

The gift of **teaching** is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to communicate information relevant to the health and ministry of the body and its members in such a way that others will learn.

The gift of **wisdom** is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to know the mind of the Holy Spirit in such a way as to receive insight into how given knowledge may best be applied to specific needs arising in the Body of Christ.

The gift of **knowledge** is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to discover, accumulate, analyze, and clarify information and ideas that are pertinent to the growth and well-being of the body.

The gift of **exhortation** is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to minister words of comfort, consolation, encouragement, and counsel to other members of the body in such a way that they feel helped and healed.

The gift of **discerning of spirits** is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to know with assurance whether certain behavior purposed to be of God is in reality divine, human, or Satanic.

The gift of **giving** is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to contribute their material resources to the work of the Lord with liberality and cheerfulness.

The gift of **helping** is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to invest the talents they have in the life and ministry of other members of the body, thus enabling the person helped to increase the effectiveness of his or her spiritual gifts.

The gift of **mercy** is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to feel genuine empathy and compassion for individuals, both Christians and non-Christians, who suffer distressing physical, mental, or emotional problems and to translate that compassion into cheerfully done deeds that reflect Christ's love and alleviate the suffering.

The gift of **missionary** is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to minister whatever other spiritual gifts they have in a second culture.

The gift of an **evangelist** is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to share the gospel with unbelievers in such a way that men and women become Jesus' disciples and responsible members of the Body of Christ.

The gift of **hospitality** is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to provide an open house and a warm welcome to those in need of food and lodging.

The gift of **faith** is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to discern with extraordinary confidence the will and purpose of God for His work.

The gift of **leadership** is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to set goals in accordance with God's purpose for the future and to communicate these goals to others in such a way that they voluntarily and harmoniously work together to accomplish those goals for the glory of God.

The gift of **administration** is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to understand clearly the immediate and long-range goals of a particular unit of the Body of Christ and to devise and execute effective plans for the accomplishment of those goals.

The gift of **miracles** is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to serve as intermediaries through whom it pleases God to perform powerful acts that are perceived by observers to have altered the ordinary course of nature.

The gift of **healing** is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to serve as human intermediaries through whom it pleases God to cure illness and restore health apart from the use of natural means.

The gift of **tongues** is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ (a) to speak to God in a language they have never learned and/or (b) to receive and communicate an immediate message of God to His people through divinely anointed utterance in a language they have never learned.

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

The gift of **voluntary poverty** is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to renounce material comfort and luxury and adopt a personal lifestyle equivalent to those living at the poverty level in a given society in order to serve God more effectively.

The gift of **intercession** is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to pray for extended periods of time on a regular basis and seek frequent and specific answers to their prayers, to a degree much greater than that which is expected of the average Christian.

The gift of **service** is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ

to identify the unmet involves in a task related to God's work, and to make use of available resources to meet those needs and help accomplish the desired results.

The gift of **celibacy** is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to remain single and enjoy it; to be unmarried and not suffer undue sexual temptations.

Appendix C
Points of Emphasis

In the beginning God created man and man was perfect and had a divine relationship with God. But man disobeyed (sinned) God. The relationship was broken, thus man's fall from perfection, the primary reason for an individual's need to be converted from a broken relationship to a full relationship with God - the plan of salvation.

We believe that the Scriptures teach that the blessings of salvation are made free to all by the Gospel. Mankind is a direct creation of God.

Requirements for becoming a Christian:

1. Repent of your sinful ways (Acts 17:30).
2. Believe in Jesus Christ (Acts 16:31; John 1:12).
3. Obey the commands of Christ (John 14:15).

Accepting a Christian Way of Life - Baptism.

1. Follow Christ's example (Matthew 3:13-17).
2. Obey Christ's command (Matthew 28:19).
3. Confess Christ publicly and be baptized (Acts 2:41).
4. Baptism shows one's death to sin and commitment to live a Christ-like life (Romans 6:4)

The church is a body of baptized believers in Jesus Christ. It means that you are identified with a particular local church (a custodian of the Christian Faith), its practices and traditions.

1. You belong to a group of regenerated people, who believe and accept "one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of All, who is overall and through all, and in all" (Ephesians 4:4-6).
2. The Church associates herself with other Christians in preaching and teaching or winning and guiding soul sin Christian growth.

3. Church membership also means you are participating in a spiritual covenant with Christ.

    a. As a disciple, you must live the Christ-like life you have accepted. A daily routine of prayer and Bible reading, church attendance and witnessing should become a part of your Christian lifestyle.

    b. Prayer is the Christian's way of communicating with God. We should always pray (Luke 18:1).

Types of Prayer

Confession

Praise

Thanksgiving

- Daily Bible reading is necessary. As a suggestion to the new convert and young disciple, you should read about Jesus' life first. The Bible contains 66 books and two sections - Old Testament (39 books) and the New Testament (27books), and it is arranged in 9 groupings.

- Christian Lifestyle - The Christian life is simply Christ living in you. There are at least five disciplines in a disciple's life.

1. Live in the word.

    - Read the Bible daily.
    - Ongoing and consistent.
    - Study the Bible.
    - Memorize a verse of Scripture each week
    - Take notes while hearing, reading, or studying the Bible.
    - Apply it to your life.

2. Pray in faith.

    - Keep a prayer list and journal and, pray for the persons and concerns recorded.
    - Record experiences of a specific answer to prayer.
    - Each day include in your prayer- praise, thanksgiving, confession, petition, intercession.

3. Fellowship with believers.

    - Seek to live in peace with fellow Christians.
    - Seek reconciliation with those who have a problem with you and those with whom you have a problem.
    - Show others that you area Christian by the way you treat people.
    - Live in harmony with other members in your family as well as church family.

4. Witness to the world.

    - Pray regularly for lost persons by name.
    - Share your testimony with others when there is an appropriate opportunity.
    - Share the plan of salvation with those who are open to hear it.
    - Follow up and encourage persons who have been won to Christ.

5. Minister to others.

    - Serve Christ through a responsibility.
    - Give at least a tithe through your church.
    - Do kind deeds for persons less fortunate.
    - Establish goals in your life and keep them clearly defined before God and self
    - Self-examination.

There will be a constant battle in your life to do good, yet because of your old nature you may experience desires to do wrong. Along this faith journey, you should examine yourself daily. As a Christian you should always ask:

1. Do I put anything before God in my life?
2. Am I disobedient to God and my parents?
3. Am I living the way God would want me to live?
4. Do I follow God's Commandments and expectations?
5. Do I live my life the way the Bible teaches?
6. Do I get uncontrollably angry?
7. Do I have the love for God and the proper love for all mankind?
8. Do I disrespect myself and others in word and deed?

- **Stewardship**

1. Stewardship is daily habit the disciple must cultivate. Giving generously to God's work is acknowledging that God created all things. Christians must first give of themselves, then of their time, talents, and treasures. Supporting your church enables local and worldwide missions. The Bible suggests that a tenth (Old Testament) is the beginning amount a Christian should give.

2. The New Testament believers are urged to give regularly and proportionately. Giving, just as prayer, Bible reading and study, regular church attendance are ways the disciple grows in the new life and accepts responsibilities as a church member.

- **Sharing the Good News**

Since you have repented of your sins(turned from doing wrong to doing right), accepted Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord, been baptized, and joined a church, you are a disciple - a Christian. You now need to tell others of your conversion. You should be a witness of God's love for you. There are many ways to witness.

1. Telling others of your changed life.

2. Performing acts of service at home, at work, in the church, and in the community.

3. Cultivating Christian attitudes and behavior.

4. Showing love toward all people.

5. Being honest and faithful in completing tasks.

6. Showing concern for the less fortunate and making sincere efforts to alleviate misery and suffering

7. Doing all that you do to the glory of God not to man.

- **Life in Christ**

1. Being a disciple is a faith journey. Once a Christian starts this journey, many obstacles and hindrances will cause disappointment, fright, doubt, and a search for truth. Remain connected to God through study (individual and corporate), fellowship, service, and worship.

2. Satan and others will do everything in his power to prevent you from becoming an effective disciple; therefore, it is necessary to develop a closer walk with God.

3. A disciple of Christ is one who makes Christ the Lord of his life (Luke 9:23).

4. Deny self

5. Take up your crosses daily.

6. And follow Christ.

7. Abiding in Christ.

8. A daily quiet time.

9. Make Christ Lord of your life.

10. Feeling close to the Lord throughout the day.

11. Awareness that the Lord disciplines you.

Appendix D
Steps to Spiritual Maturity:

How We Grow up in Christ

What does it take to grow up and become spiritually mature? Why do some Christians not grow as they should? God's word presents steps we can take toward growth and spiritual maturity by Bible study, patience, and diligent practice of good works.

Introduction:

People understand the concept of growth in the physical development of humans, and we know why it is important

Babies are immature physically and mentally, but we expect them to develop. If they don't, there is a problem.

My best buddy in high school did not grow and might have been nearly a midget. But in his senior year, doctors gave him shots to make him grow.

Spiritual growth is a similar concept but is far more important

Growth is development or improvement toward a goal called "maturity" (or, in the Bible, perfection"). When one is "born again" as a child of God, he is spiritually immature. As time passes, he should develop the qualities or abilities which the Bible says characterize the mature. A congregation matures as individual members mature.

Many Scriptures describe the need to grow and mature spiritually:
Ephesians 4:14,15 - Be no longer children, but grow up in Christ.
2 Peter 3:18 - but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
2 Thessalonians 1:3 - The Thessalonians grew exceedingly in faith.
Philippians 1:9 - Paul prayed for their love to abound more and more.

Many problems result when members fail to grow: some go back to the world, others cause strife because of ignorance or become stumbling blocks because of irregular attendance, worldliness, or indifference.

The purpose of this lesson is to study the steps each Christian should take to grow spiritually.

Just as a baby needs to do certain things to grow physically, so Christians need certain kinds of activities to grow spiritually. When members don't grow, it is because they lack one or more of these.

A Desire to Grow

We Will Never Grow Unless We Want to Grow

In the physical realm, children WANT to grow.

I want to grow up to be just like Mommy/Daddy/Michael Jordan...” “I can't wait till I'm 6 so I can drive.”

Parents and kids become so excited when kids learn something new - the first step, first word, draw picture, etc. Everyone wants them to develop new abilities.

Parents sometimes use this to encourage children. When Tim was small, he wanted to drink milk because Bill Buckner (Cubs' first baseman) advertised it.

Likewise, in spiritual matters, Christians must WANT to grow.

1 Peter 2:2 - Desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby.

Some seem to like being spiritual babies. They don't want to grow. It's easy to be a baby - no responsibility. Others feed you, clothe you, change your diaper. In the church, you don't have to teach, rebuke sin, or do work. It's a free ride!

But being a baby is not the goal of life. We are born babies so we can grow up and be productive and useful. Likewise, we are born again, so we can become mature Christians, actively serving the Lord.

One of the conditions for becoming a child of God is REPENTANCE. One must determine to tum from sin and GOTO WORK in God's vineyard. Then one must bring forth the FRUITS of repentance. This will lead us to grow and improve in God's work. Otherwise, we have not accomplished our purpose for becoming children of God.

1 Peter 2:21 - Jesus set an example for us, and we should follow in His steps. We should ask ourselves, "Don't I want to grow up to be spiritually strong like Jesus?"

We Must Maintain This Desire to Grow.

Some members who once wanted to grow may lose that desire.

They may start off on fire for the Lord but lose their zeal. They develop a spirit of indifference or negligence.

Others develop a level of maturity and stagnate. They are satisfied, thinking no more growth is needed.

The Scriptures teach that growth is always needed.

Philippians 3:12-14 - Even Paul, as mature as he was, did not consider himself to have achieved perfection (maturity) such that he could cease striving to improve. He forgot past achievements (and failures) and pressed on to greater accomplishments.

Matthew 26:31-35 - Peter thought he had reached a level where he would never deny Jesus. But that very night he denied Him three times.

1 Corinthians 10:12 - Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. Christians never reach the point we are so mature that we cannot fall.

One of the main reasons Christians do not grow is that they do not see the NEED for growing. They have no desire to work and serve to the full extent of their ability. When people develop a burning hunger and thirst to work for the Lord, then they will develop the other steps they need to grow.

Do you have that burning desire to accomplish more for the Lord? Have you set specific goals of work you want to accomplish for God, improvements to make, new levels to reach?

Nourishment

We Need Spiritual Food from God's Word.

A child cannot grow physically without proper food.

Good parents are concerned about proper nutrition. They want children to eat what is good, not bad for them. We are touched by pictures of children starving due to poverty.

Most children WANT nourishment. Babies *cry* for food. Once as a child I got so hungry I cried, and my mother felt really bad.

Even adults know we need food, and don't like to go long without it. We want it every day, regularly, several times a day.

Likewise spiritually we cannot grow without feeding on God's Word.

I Peter 2:2 -As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby. 2

Peter 3:18 - Grow in the grace and KNOWLEDGE of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Matthew 4:4 - Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

[Eph.4:15; Matt.5:6]

To Get This Nourishment, We Must Study the Bible and Attend Church Meetings.

Scriptures show the need for regular nourishment

Hebrews 5:11-14-Christians were rebuked for not growing as they should have, because they had not studied. Time and again members fall away or are spiritual midgets because they do not eat properly.

Acts 17:11- Bereans were able to determine whether truth was taught because they searched the Scriptures DAILY. We need REGULAR nourishment.

Psalm 1:1,2-Meditate on God's word day and night. Children and adults need physical food regularly and get very upset without it. But are we content to go for days at a time without feeding on God's word? [119:47,48,95-99; Josh 1:8]

Do we make use of the opportunities the church provides for nourishment? I never ceased to be amazed when the church provides a spiritual feast, and members choose to do other things. How often do we miss the regular meals provided for our bellies?

Take this test to check your spiritual nourishment.

How much time did you spend this week watching TV?

How much time did you spend watching sports or entertainment, or reading the paper, magazines, etc.?

How much time did you spend on some hobby or outside interest, that may not be immoral but is not necessary?

How many hours did you spend studying your Bible?

How many services of the church did you attend? How many did you miss that you could have attended?

Which do you nourish the best: your spirit or your body? Are you feeding your mind on God's word or pleasures?

Christians need regular nourishment from God's word to grow.

Exercise and Practice

Exercise and Practice Are Essential to Physical Development.

Athletes & musicians know they must exercise and practice to improve.

Developing skills requires continual repetition: playing a song, throwing pitches, shooting baskets. Athletes run, lift weights, and practice hour after hour in order to grow strong and develop endurance.

Illustration: Aman once had an apartment next to a professional cello player. He thought it must be exciting to play in an orchestra. Then he listened as the man practiced the scales, exercises, and songs endlessly.

Children practice skills over and over to learn them.

Children learning to walk try again and again. They are proud to learn anew word, then they use it till they drive you crazy! They want to play the same thing over and over: play the same tape recording, put the clothes on a doll.

Parents encourage children to repeat what they must learn: drill math facts, spelling, reading, piano.

They get tired, but we encourage them because that's how they learn. "Practice makes perfect" – or at least it promotes improvement.

Exercise and Practice Are Essential to Spiritual Growth.

Scriptures:

Hebrews 5:14-Those who are of full age, by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. Growth requires exercise as well as nourishment.

1Timothy 4:7 - Exercise yourself toward godliness.

Like children, athletes, and musicians, we must work again and again at applying Bible principles to become effective in the Lord's work.

Applications:

To learn to TEACH, we must do it repeatedly: teach your children, home studies, Bible classes, preach sermons, again and again.

To learn to LEAD SINGING, practice songs at home, sing with your family, lead during church meetings over and over.

To understand the BIBLE, study it again and again, talk to others, drill yourself, memorize. Get in and dig.

To learn to PRAY, do it over and over.

Kids may not be good at activities at first, but parents encourage them to do it over and over. Likewise, older members must encourage the newer ones to use their talents. They may not be skilled at first, but they learn by doing.

We need to encourage teachers, preachers, and song leaders. Don't complain. Surely don't stay home. They need the practice!

Time and Patience

By definition, growth requires TIME. It is progress and development as time passes. Several important lessons follow:

Don't Expect to Reach Your Goal Overnight

Children do not become adult-grown instantaneously.

At birth they are so small you can hold them in a little basket. Soon they are outgrowing new clothes every month. Eventually they can wear their parents' clothes or even larger. But it takes time.

Sometimes children become impatient. "I can't wait till I'm 18 (or 21)."We say, "Take your time. It will come soon enough. "Time passes and, sure enough, what they were waiting for has come and gone, and they're looking back wondering how the time passed so fast!

Likewise, spiritually, do not expect maturity overnight

James 1:4 - To become perfect and mature (entire), lacking nothing, we must have patience.

Some new-born Christians want to know everything and do everything right away. They may not be willing to take the TIME to STUDY and DEVELOP ability. Yet they want to be just like the mature members - and want other members to treat them with the same respect that they do mature members -before they have taken time to grow.

Sometimes older members are impatient with new members. We don't understand why new converts have trouble with some basic concepts. Then sometimes these new members explain, "I never was really taught what the BIBLE said before. "They have no background in the Scriptures, and it takes TIME to grow.

Remember that people who may be mature today did not get that way overnight. It took years of study and practice. And new converts will not become mature overnight. It will take time.

New members should not get discouraged and give up. Older members should not be impatient or overly demanding. Remember how our children took time to grow, and how we had to show patience with their immature ways as they grew. But growth will come as long as people are trying and we give them time.

Don't Become Discouraged by Mistakes and Rebukes

Children make many mistakes and must often be told they are wrong.

How often does a child fall while learning to walk? They fall again and again, gathering bumps and bruises. They spill their milk, don't hold their spoon properly, fall off their bikes, and come to bat in the bottom of the ninth with the winning run in scoring position and strikeout.

Parents are continually correcting, instructing, and punishing, till we almost feel sorry for the kids. Growing up is tough!

If kids are going to become mature, they have to keep going in spite of mistakes and rebukes. And someday they will lookback on their own childish mistakes and just smile.

Likewise, new converts will make many mistakes and must often be told they are wrong.

Some of the greatest Bible figures committed terrible errors and had to be rebuked.

- Moses made excuses when God called him to lead Israel out of bondage.
- David committed adultery with Bathsheba and was rebuked by Nathan.
- Peter denied Jesus three times.
- Paul persecuted Christians before his conversion.
- Thomas doubted Jesus' resurrection.
- All the apostles forsook Jesus when He was arrested and crucified.

Matthew 16:21-23 - Shortly after he had confessed Jesus and been highly praised (v15-18), Peter contradicted Jesus and was severely rebuked.

Yet all of these are remembered as some of God's greatest servants.

Great servants are not people who live without ever sinning, but people who learn from their mistakes and go on to serve God faithfully.

Judas betrayed Jesus and is remembered as a traitor. Peter denied Jesus three times and is remembered as a great apostle. What is the difference? Judas, after betraying Jesus, hung himself Peter, after denying Jesus, repented and went to work preaching the gospel.

Proverbs 29:1 - A person is destroyed, not simply because he errs, but because he becomes stubborn when he is rebuked and will not repent. What is needed is repentance and patience to learn to do right.

Conclusion

The story is told of a little boy who fell out of bed. Asked what happened, he said, "I guess I just stayed too close to the getting in place." That is exactly why many people fall away from God after their conversion -they stay too close to the "getting-in" place and do not grow to maturity.

It is no shame to be a baby, if you were born a few months ago. But if a person has been a child of God for several years and has not grown, he has a problem.

Everyone needs to grow as a Christian, and everyone can grow, if he/she simply applies the Bible principles of growth.

Appendix E
The Bible

The Books of the Old Testament (39)

Pentateuch (Torah)	Historical Books	Poetical / Wisdom	Major Prophets	Minor Prophets
Genesis	Joshua	Job	Isaiah	Hosea
Exodus	Judges	Psalms	Jeremiah	Joel
Leviticus	Ruth	Proverbs	Lamentations	Amos
Numbers	1 Samuel	Ecclesiastes	Ezekiel	Obadiah
Deuteronomy	2 Samuel	Song of Solomon	Daniel	Jonah
	1 Kings			Micah
	2 Kings			Nahum
	1 Chronicles			Habakkuk
	2 Chronicles			Zephaniah
	Ezra			Haggai
	Nehemiah			Zechariah
	Esther			Malachi

The Books of the New Testament (27)

Gospels	Historical	Letters to Churches	Letters to Individuals	General Epistles	Apocalyptic
Matthew	Acts	1 Corinthians	1 Timothy	Hebrews	Revelation
Mark		2 Corinthians	2 Timothy	James	
Luke		Romans	Titus	1 Peter	
John		Galatians	Philemon	2 Peter	
		Ephesians		1 John	
		Philippians		2 John	
		Colossians		3 John	
		1 Thessalonians		Jude	
		2 Thessalonians			

Appendix F
DO Prescription for Christian Conduct

DO to others what you would have them do to you. Matthew 7:12

DO turn away from godless chatter. 1 Timothy 6:20

DO put off falsehood and speak truthfully. Ephesians 4:25

DO rejoice in the Lord always. Philippians 4:4 (Even when you don't feel like it.)

DO everything without complaining or arguing. Philippians 2:14 (Bet you thought mothers invented this one!)

DO keep away from every brother who is idle. 2 Thessalonians 3:6 (Laziness can be contagious.)

DO your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed. 2 Timothy 2:15

DO offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. 1 Peter 4:9

DO love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. (Matthew 5:44) (That's a hard one - but not impossible!)

DO be patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Romans 12:12

DO be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy, the Devil, prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. 1Peter 5:8 (Surely you don t want to be his next meal!)

DO get rid of all bitterness, rage, and anger. Ephesians 4:31 (Hit a pillow, if it helps - then pray!)

DO be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other. Ephesians 4:32

DO be rich in good deeds; be generous and willing to share. 1 Timothy 6:18 (Even with your little sister.)

DO give everyone what you owe him. *Romans 13:7 (That includes notebook paper!)*

DO get wisdom, get understanding. *Proverbs 4:5 (You need all you can get if you 're going to live with grownups!)*

DO trust in the Lord with all your heart. *Proverbs 3:5*

"Quoted verbatim from the New International Version,
except those portions in italics which are the author's paraphrase."

Appendix G
Emergency Phone Numbers

When…	Call
you are in danger	Psalm 91
you are lonely and fearful	Psalm 23
you want Christian assurance	Romans 8:1-30
you want courage for a task	Joshua 1.
you want peace and rest	Matthew11:25-30
you have sinned	Psalm 51
you worry	Matthew 6:19-34
you grow bitter and critical	1 Corinthians 13
you feel down and out	Romans 8:31-37
you leave home for labor or travel	Psalm 121
you think of investments/returns	Mark10
your faith needs stirring	Hebrews 11
your prayers grow narrow and selfish	Psalm 67
in sorrow	John 14
man fails you	Psalm 27
God seems far away	Psalm 139
the world seems bigger than God	Psalm 90
If…	
you want to be fruitful	John 15
you are depressed	Psalm 27
you find the world growing small and yourself great	Psalm 19
you are losing confidence in people	1 Corinthians 13
your pocketbook is empty	Psalm 37
people seem unkind	John 15
you're discouraged about your work	Psalm 126
For Paul's secret to happiness	Colossians 3:12-17
For an idea of Christianity	1 Corinthians 5:15-19
For a great intervention/opportunity	Isaiah 55
To get along with fellow men	Romans 12

Appendix H
My Commitment to Christian Discipleship

I understand that becoming a member of Love Christian Center is the external sign of my inner commitment of life to Jesus Christ. I further understand that there are specific actions which a growing committed Christian will undertake. These will include:

1. Worship – Regular attendance upon public worship of God in my church.

2. Prayer – The daily practice of seeking God's guidance and power through prayer.

3. Bible – The reading of the Bible on my own individual plan, or in fellowship with others in a Bible Study or Prayer group.

4. Giving – The pledging of my financial support to the work of God's church.

5. Service – Offering myself to be used within the life of church and community to live out Jesus' command "Love your neighbor."

6. Witness – Seeking opportunities to share my faith with others in my daily life and associations.

I accept this challenge to Christian Discipleship, and pledge my earnest intent to do these things, by the grace of God, and in fellowship with other Christian Disciples.

_____

Signature

Appendix I

The Ten Commandments
Exodus 20: 1-17

Our Relationship with God

I. Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.

II. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image. Thou Shall not bow down thyself to them or serve them.

III. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.

IV. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy ... thou shalt not do any work.

Our Relationship with Each Other

V. Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land.

VI. Thou shalt not kill.

VII. Thou shalt not commit adultery.

VIII. Thou shalt not steal.

IX. Thou shall not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

X. Thou shalt not covet ...anything that is thy neighbor's.

Appendix J
The Beatitudes

And seeing the multitudes, He went up into a mountain: and when He was set, His disciples came unto Him: And He opened His mouth, and taught them, saying ...

Blessed are the poor in spirit:
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they that mourn:
for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek:
for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst
after righteousness:
for they shall be filled.

Blessed are the merciful:
for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart:
for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers:
for they shall be called the children of God.

Blessed are they which are persecuted
For righteousness' sake:
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad:
for great is your reward in heaven.

For so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.
Matthew· 5:1-12 KJV

Appendix K
Glossary

Atonement -The act by which God restores us into a harmonious relationship and 1Ulitybetween God and mankind.

Christian - A follower of Jesus Christ; one who practices Christ's likeness. Church -A body of baptized believers; the assembly of the called-out ones.

Conversion – The initial change of attitude and lifestyles that involves turning away from evil and turning toward an in-sync relationship with God.

Disciple -A student, follower, leaner of Jesus Christ.

Holy Spirit/Ghost - The Third Person of the Godhead (Trinity). As God the Father (First Person) revealed God's self in human form, Jesus the Christ {Second Person), God is also revealed in Spiritual form as the Holy Spirit, the comforter, the Paraclete (Third Person). There are three natures but only one God.

Ordinances - A symbolic act commanded by Jesus which signifies the remembrance of the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are the two ordinances in the Baptist tradition.

Redemption - Deliverance from the power of sin, death, and the wrath of God by Christ's sacrifice.

Regeneration - An act of God, through the Holy Spirit, whereby a spiritual change occurs in a person's life. Literal means “born again” into a new life in Jesus Christ.

Salvation -The free gift of God given to all, which delivers us from the power of sin.

Sanctification - Separation from sin and set apart or dedicated to God's service.

Sin -Anything that is opposite to the will of God.

Sinners -All who have failed to do God's will at some point in time.

Stewardship- The management of God's household affairs (includes times, talents, and treasures).

Testimony - Sharing of God's activity in and through one's life.

Unbeliever - A person who has not accepted Christ as Lord of his/her life.

Bibliography

Brown, J. Newton, A Baptist Church Manual, Judson Press, 1975.

Jefferson, Lee Roy, The Spiritual Journey: Assimilation of New Members, Concord Baptist Church, 1982.

Knight, Allan, and Gordon Schroeder, The New Life, Judson Press, 1971. Ministry Resource Manual, Baptist General Convention of Virginia, 1995-96.

Odle, Joe T., Church Member's Handbook, Broadman Press.

Roberts & Price, Studies for New Converts, Standard Publishing, 1981.

The Holy Bible