

**Basic
Christian
Discipleship**

**A Twelve-Week Discipleship Manual for
the First Baptist Church of Durham**

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WEEK 1: SALVATION

I. THE BIBLE IS FULL OF SALVATION LANGUAGE

A. Salvation = Rescue/Deliverance from Danger

1. Implies danger, distress
2. Implies also helplessness in the face of the danger
3. Implies also a Savior... one who saves the individual from the danger

B. This is the Central Issue of the Bible

(NIV) Psalm 69:13 *But I pray to you, O LORD, in the time of your favor; in your great love, O God, answer me with your sure salvation.*

Isaiah 12:1-3 ¹*You will say in that day: "I will give thanks to you, O LORD, for though you were angry with me, your anger turned away, that you might comfort me. "*²*"Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid; for the LORD GOD is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation. "*³*With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.*

Romans 10:13 *For "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."*

Over 500 references in the Bible to "salvation", "Savior" or "save"

C. Salvation from What?

1. Modern people fuzzy on this

Bumper sticker: "Jesus is the answer"... some critic responded, "What is the question?"

The Philippian jailer asked it best: Acts 16:30 *"What must I do to be saved?"*

And Paul and Silas answered the question best: Acts 16:31 *And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."*

2. Still... salvation from what?

- a. Poverty?
- b. Poor self-esteem?

- c. Aimlessness?
- d. Depression?
- e. Addiction to drugs or alcohol?

3. The Bible is very clear on this question as well...

Matthew 1:21 *She [Mary] will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.*

Romans 11:27 *and this will be my covenant with them when I take away their sins.*

1 Timothy 1:15 *The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost.*

Hebrews 9:28 *so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time...*

II. THE GOSPEL: THE POWER OF GOD FOR SALVATION

Romans 1:16 *For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes*

A. God

1. God the Creator (Genesis 1:1)
2. God the King (Psalm 47:7)
3. God the Lawgiver (Exodus 20:1-17)
4. God the Judge (Psalm 96:13)
5. God the Savior (Titus 2:13)

B. Man

1. Created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27)
2. Body-soul/spirit (2 Corinthians 5:6-8, Hebrews 12:23)
3. Sinful (Romans 5:12, Ephesians 2:1-3)
 - a. Sin is breaking God's law

b. Sins of omission (Deuteronomy 6:5)

c. Sins of commission (Deuteronomy 5:17-21)

d. Sinful to our core (Romans 7:14-16)

4. Judgment Day is coming! (Matthew 12:36, Romans 2:16, John 5:27-29)

C. Christ

1. Fully God (John 1:1-3, Philippians 2:10-11, Hebrews 1:1-3))

2. Became fully human (Galatias 4:4)

3. Led a sinless, miracle-working life (1 Peter 2:22, Acts 2:22)

4. Died an atoning death (1 Peter 2:24, Isaiah 53:5)

5. Raised from the dead on the third day (1 Corinthians 15:3-4, Matthew 28:1-7)

6. Sits at the right hand of God the Father (Hebrews 1:3)

D. Response

1. Through faith in Christ all sins can be forgiven (John 3:16, Acts 16:30-31, Acts 2:37-39)

2. Our good works are not accepted as payment for sin (Romans 3:20, Romans 3:28)

3. Repent and believe... Today! (Acts 16:30-31, Acts 2:37-39)

III. A COMPREHENSIVE SALVATION FROM SIN

A. Salvation from sin's **personal position**

According to Romans 5 and 1 Corinthians 15, the entire human race sinned when Adam sinned in the Garden of Eden. The entire human race was represented by our father Adam at the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil; Adam was our “Federal Head,” and his actions there represented all of us. Thus every single human being born is born as a sinner under Adam’s curse of death. Christ came to rescue us from that position, from being seen “in Adam” on Judgment Day. At the moment of personal faith in Christ, our position immediately changes from being “in Adam” to being “in Christ”: *“For as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive”* (1

Corinthians 15:22). The Puritan Thomas Goodwin wrote, “There are but two men that are seen standing before God, Adam and Jesus Christ; and these two men have all other men hanging at their girdles.” We become “in Adam” by being born, we become “in Christ” by being born again (cf. John 3:3).

B. Salvation from sin’s **penalty**

The penalty for sin is clear: *“the wages of sin is death”* (Romans 6:23). This death was greatly clarified by Christ in His warnings about hell: *“Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell”* (Matthew 10:28). The death of the soul in hell is called the “second death” (Revelation 21:8). Christ came to pay the death penalty for our sins, the righteous penalty our sins deserved. He came to drink the cup of God’s righteous wrath in our place (Matthew 26:39), to extinguish (propitiate) the flaming hot wrath of God against us by the shedding of His blood (Romans 3:25). By His substitutionary death, Jesus Christ fully paid the penalty for our sins, and the result is total freedom from condemnation before the judgment seat of God: *“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus”* (Romans 8:1).

C. Salvation from sin’s **power**

Sin reigned over us like a vicious tyrant, dominating us and leading us to misery on earth and in hell. Romans 5:21 pictures sin as an evil emperor, with kingly authority over its hapless subjects: *“...sin reigned in death.”* Jesus said, *“Everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin”* (John 8:34). The word “slave” implies an authority, a right of ownership. This means that a non-Christian has no choice but to keep on sinning. Because of Adam’s voluntary defection to Satan’s evil kingdom, we were born into that dark empire under his wicked dominion. This makes our sinning very personal—there is a specific “King of Sin,” Satan, who orchestrates our lives of sin by the evil world he’s set up and by specific, intelligent temptations. And he had a perverse authority over us to compel us to sin more and more—he is called the *“prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience”* (Ephesians 2:2-3). Jesus came to deliver us from that evil dominion, to rescue us and bring us to freedom from sin: *“He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son”* (Colossians 1:13). That is a transfer of authority similar to the changing of a man’s citizenship from one country to another. For the rest of our lives here on earth, we never need to sin again. Sin has no right to dominate us, nor does Satan. *“We died to sin”* (Romans 6:1), as a ruling principle, as a native land, as a dominating force. We are free!

D. Salvation from sin’s **practice**

If what we’ve just said is true, then why do we ever sin as Christians? A simple answer is, “Insanity!” Sin does not come to us saying, “Hello, I’m sin. I’d like to destroy your life, your marriage, your employment, your children, your possessions

and everything you hold dear.” Rather, Satan “*disguises himself as an angel of light*” (2 Corinthians 11:14), and we can become “*hardened by deceitfulness of sin*” (Hebrews 3:13). “Deceitfulness” implies that sin lies to us about its true effects on our lives. The biblical answer to the question, “Why do Christians sin if they’ve been freed forever from sin’s authority?” is that we still inhabit something called the “*body of sin*” (Romans 6:6), also called the “*body of death*” (Romans 7:24). Our physical bodies (including our brains) have marinated in sin for years and have developed habits of sin. Those habits of sin can only be effaced by new habits of holiness by the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 6:19). Christ is in the process of freeing us from the practice of sin by teaching us new habits, new practices. He does this by renewing our minds and habits gradually, with great pain and suffering, through many experiences, through failures and successes, and Christ ultimately completes this work in us when we are separated from the physical body. This ongoing transformation of our lifestyle by the power of the Spirit is the essence of sanctification.

E. Salvation from sin’s **pollution**

Sin is a great polluter: it polluted our standing with God, our hearts, our “righteous” acts, our consciences, memories, and thinking patterns, our habits, practices, and lifestyles, our relationships with others, our bodies, and all of Creation itself. The remedy for pollution is purification, and that is abundantly provided for by the salvation which Christ brings: “*If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son, cleanses us from all sin*” (1 John 1:7). John goes on to tell us that our ongoing relationship with Christ is purified by God as we confess our sins on a continual basis: “*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*” (1 John 1:9). Christ’s work on the cross is a cleansing fountain which is infinitely able to purify us constantly from all the pollution of sin.

F. Salvation from sin’s **presence**

When Christ’s saving work is completely finished, all believers will be completely saved from the very presence of sin itself forever. While we live on this earth, sin attacks us internally, like some kind of malignant tumor, causing us immense pain: “*For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate... So it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me*” (Romans 7:15-17). What a vile thought: sin dwelling in me causing us to do what we hate and not do what we love. Like the malaria parasite, a microscopic worm that attacks blood cells and destroys them; like the HIV virus that destroys the body’s immune system; like a tapeworm that thrives in the digestive tract and robs nutrients from the body; like a tick that burrows down into the skin and gorges itself on blood—so is sin living in us. Disgusting!

But what a blessed thought: someday there will be no sin living in me or in anyone in the New Heavens and New Earth! Sin’s very presence will be removed forever. That

internal bent toward evil, that taste for illicit pleasures, that idolatrous cherishing of created things more than the Creator, that rebellious “me first” disposition, all of it will be gone forever. And not just in one of God’s children, but in all of them. At last, we will be “made perfect” spiritually (Hebrews 12:23) and physically (1 Corinthians 15:49), and thus totally conformed to the Son. Not only that, but the world itself will be liberated from all the ravages of sin and will be gloriously perfect.

Summary: This is the great salvation Christ came to give us. It is a comprehensive salvation from sin: sin’s position, penalty, power, practice, pollution, and presence. Christ will not stop His work on behalf of His elect until this full salvation is accomplished.

IV. SALVATION COMES IN STAGES

Illustration from Jesus’ miracles: A Blind man healed in stages: Read Mark 8:22-25.

Just as Christ healed the blind man in stages, so also salvation comes to us in stages, and not all at once.

A. Salvation: A Simple Three-Part Outline

1. Justification

Because of our faith in Christ, God justifies us: 1) He credits Christ’s perfect righteousness to us; 2) He covers our sins completely and does not count them against us; 3) He declares us permanently righteous in His sight, not guilty of sin, and fit for eternity in heaven.

Justification happens in an instant... simply by faith. It can never be taken away.

2. Sanctification

On the basis of our faith in Christ and by the power of the indwelling Spirit, God works in us a practical, daily righteousness—causing us to put sin to death and to do good works, both in fulfillment of His Law. We become gradually more and more like Christ in our hearts and in our lives. This is a process that will take the rest of our lives, it involves some advances and some setbacks, and it will not be completed in this world. It both proceeds by faith in Christ and requires all the effort we can muster.

3. Glorification

On the basis of our faith in Christ, God at death (or at the Second Coming of Christ), by His sovereign power, causes us to become perfectly conformed to Christ in our spirits. At the glorious appearing of Christ, He will also give us resurrection bodies,

so that we will be conformed to the image of Christ both in spirit and in body forever. This is the final stage of our salvation.

B. A More Detailed Outline of Salvation

1. The Process of Calling and Drawing

- a. This phase begins the moment we are born (Romans 8:28, Galatians 1:15)
- b. It continues until we are justified
- c. It involves anything God may use to show you Himself and your need for salvation (Romans 8:28, John 6:44)
- d. The ultimate “call” of God comes when we hear the gospel clearly explained by a human being (Romans 10:17)
- e. In that moment, the Holy Spirit also calls to our dead hearts with resurrecting power (John 5:25)

2. The Moment of Regeneration, Faith, and Justification

- a. Regeneration / born again / new creation / light in our souls (John 3:3, 1 Peter 1:3, 1 Peter 1:23, 2 Corinthians 5:17, 2 Corinthians 4:6)
- b. Faith and repentance (See Mark 1:15 emphasizing repentance and belief, see Ephesians 2:8 emphasizing that faith and salvation is a gift from God)
- c. Justification

Romans 3:23-30 ²³for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. ²⁶It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.²⁷ Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By a law of works? No, but by the law of faith. ²⁸For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law. ²⁹Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, ³⁰since God is one—who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith.

Justification = gift of perfect righteousness, full forgiveness of sins

Romans 4:3-8 ³ For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness.” ⁴ Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. ⁵ And to the one who does not work but believes in^[a] him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness, ⁶ just as David also speaks of the blessing of the one to whom God counts righteousness apart from works: ⁷ “Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; ⁸ blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin.”

3. Additional Gifts at that Moment

- a. Adoption (Galatians 4:6-7, Romans 8:15-17) AND
- b. Indwelling Spirit (Galatians 4:6-7, Romans 8:15-17)

Summary: at the moment of repentance and saving faith, the believer receives a permanent status in the sight of God... a POSITION in His sight: completely righteous in Christ; forgiven of all sins, past, present, and future; a new creation; adopted as a son/daughter; with the indwelling Spirit. These things will never change, no matter what happens from there.

4. The Process of Sanctification

- a. Based on justification, but different from it
 - i) Justification never changes... it is set in the mind of God; also our works have NO PLACE WHATSOEVER. (Romans 3:28)
 - ii) Sanctification changes daily, and our works are essential to our progress (Ephesians 2:10,)
- b. Key passage: Romans 6-8
- c. Key concepts
 - i) Understand your union with Christ (John 17:21-23, Romans 6:5)
 - ii) Understand your status in Him: dead to sin, alive to God
 - iii) Consider yourself dead to every temptation that comes your way (Romans 6:11)
 - iv) Know that, because of indwelling sin in the body, you will have a hard fight every step of the way (Galatians 5:16-17)
 - v) Put sin to death by the power of the Holy Spirit

Romans 8:13-14 ¹³ For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴ For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

5. The Two Moments of Glorification

Romans 8:30 *And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.*

a. At death, the glorification of the spirit

Hebrews 12:23 *the spirits of righteous made perfect*

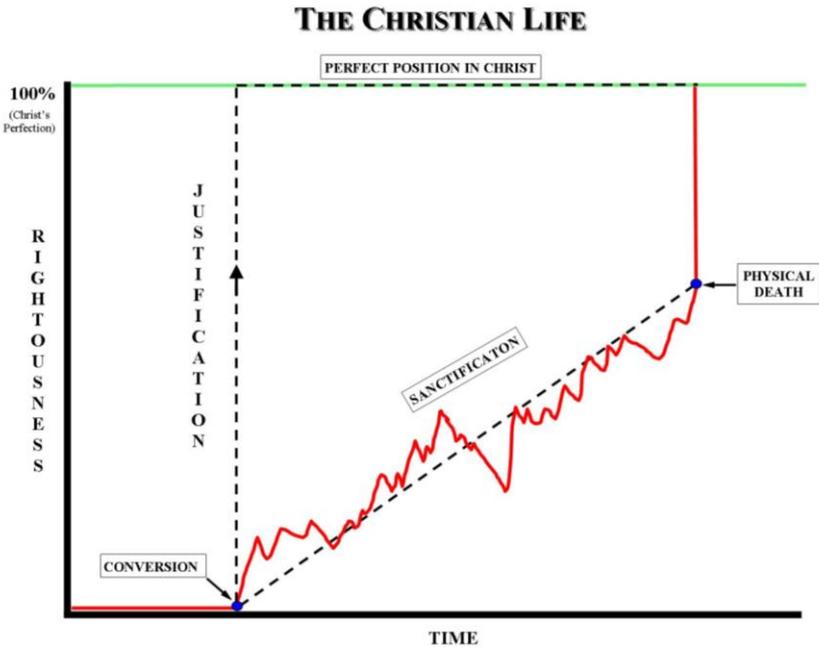
b. At resurrection, the glorification of the body (Philippians 3:21)

C. Our Final Salvation

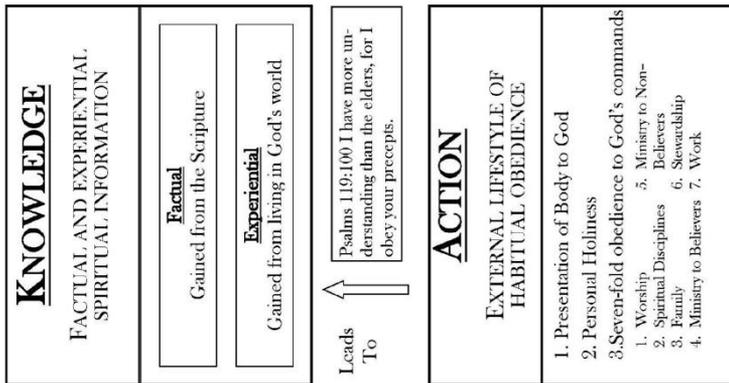
1. No condemnation on Judgment Day (Romans 8:1)

2. Eternity in the New Heaven and New Earth (2 Peter 3:13, Revelation 21:1-4)

V. SALVATION IN A CHART

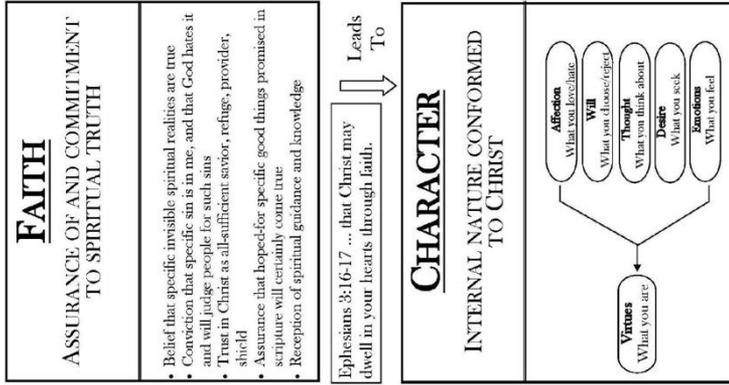


A Pathway to Christian Maturity



Leads To

Romans 10:17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.



Leads To

Matthew 12:33 "Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad, for the tree is known by its fruit."

WEEK 2: HOW CAN I BE SURE I'M A CHRISTIAN?

After someone has repented and trusted Christ, has perhaps “prayed the sinner’s prayer” and asked Jesus to be his/her personal Savior, how can that person know for certain that anything has happened? That person frequently doesn’t feel very different at all. Or perhaps they feel wonderful for a little while, and then the feelings start to wear off and they wonder if anything ever happened at all. Or perhaps they begin to struggle again with sins they thought were gone, and they yearn to know how it really stands between them and God.

Can we really know now, here on earth, that we are definitely going to heaven when we die? If so, how can we be sure? What does the Bible say about this?

This question is an issue of “assurance of salvation.” Assurance is an internal sense of personal security in the presence of God. It is a gift of God’s grace, but unlike the grace of justification, it is variable, based on our personal circumstances, our faith, our obedience.

The purpose of the week 2 study then, is to give the Bible’s answer to the question, “How can I be sure I’m a Christian and will go to heaven when I die?”

I. ASSURANCE OF SALVATION IS PROMISED

Some people claim that assurance of salvation is not possible, or even desired, for the Christian. Roman Catholics state that it is not possible to know for certain, in this life, that we are going to heaven when we die. But the Bible denies this:

1 John 5:11-13 ¹¹ *And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.* ¹² *Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.* ¹³ *I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life.*

It seems a central purpose of many Scriptures is to give us a healthy assurance of our final salvation: Read Romans 8:32-39.

One whole book of the Bible is given for this exact purpose, that we may know that we have eternal life... to know the difference between true and false assurance—1 John. We’ll come back to that later!

So, assurance of salvation is more than just possible, it is promised.

II. ASSURANCE OF SALVATION IS DISPLAYED

Many Christians in the Bible clearly attain to a secure sense of their personal salvation. See 2 Timothy 4:7-8, Acts 7:55-60, Job 19:25-27.

2 Timothy 4:7-8 *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.*

Job 19:25-27 *For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth. ²⁶And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God, ²⁷whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. My heart faints within me!*

III. ASSURANCE OF SALVATION IS COMMANDED

Read 2 Corinthians 13:5, 2 Peter 1:10-11, and Hebrews 10:22

IV. ASSURANCE OF SALVATION IS VITAL

- A. It Is Possible to Be Self-Deceived (Matthew 7:21-23)
- B. Not Every “Faith” Is Truly Saving Faith (James 2:19, Luke 8:13, John 2:23-25)
- C. The Stakes Are Very High

Matthew 25:46 *“...And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”*

V. THREE LEVELS OF CHRISTIAN ASSURANCE

- A. Assurance Reasoned Out in the Mind
 1. Basic idea: Scripture tells me such and such... I believe that, and that settles it
 2. “Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so...”
 3. Promises of God simply believed become our assurance

Example 1: Read 1 Timothy 1:15. Based on this word, we say “I am a sinner; Christ came to save even the worst of sinners; I trust in Him, He will save me.”

Example 2: Read John 5:24. Again, we simply say “I hear Jesus’ word, and believe God who sent him; therefore, I have eternal life... I have crossed over from death to life.”

Example 3: Read Romans 10:9-10. By this passage, we say “I have confessed with my mouth that ‘Jesus is Lord.’ I do believe in my heart that God raised him from the dead. Therefore I am justified (forgiven) for all my sin, and I will be saved.

4. BUT stronger assurance comes by reasoning process

Romans 5:6-10 *For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— ⁸ but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. ¹⁰ For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.*

“Much more...” language is a reasoning process. Reasoning by faith: when I was at my worst—a hate-filled enemy of God—Christ died for me. I at my worst, the Savior dead on the cross justified me by his blood. Now I am a reconciled believer (yes, struggling with sin, but a believer nonetheless) and Christ is alive at the right hand of God interceding for me. It is easier to finish the saving work than it was to begin it!

B. Assurance Worked Out in the Life (Marks of Regeneration)

These are changes that actually happen in the heart and daily life of a true Christian. When we see those changes, we grow in a sense of certainty that we are truly saved.

As a Christian, you should see the following things happening in your life. Growth in these areas is steady and consistent over a long period of time, though some days may see momentary setbacks. A total lack of these following attributes probably indicates that the person has not actually been redeemed, and is still in sin and not yet saved.

Marks of Regeneration

1. LOVE FOR GOD, AND FOR CHRIST	6. PERSEVERANCE OVER TIME... ESPECIALLY IN THE FACE OF TROUBLE
2. OBEDIENCE TO GOD’S COMMANDS	7. DESIRE FOR THE WORD OF GOD
3. LOVE FOR OTHER CHRISTIANS	8. GROWING PERSONAL PRAYER LIFE
4. HUNGERING AND THIRSTING AFTER RIGHTEOUSNESS	9. TESTIMONY OF INDWELLING SPIRIT
5. PERSONAL HOLINESS: ACTUAL TEMPTATIONS RESISTED SUCCESSFULLY	

1. Love for God, and for Christ (1 John 4:15-17)
 - a. Heart affections after God and the things of God
 - b. A yearning to follow Christ, to be with Him, to see Him
 - c. A growing sense of these things

2. Obedience to God's Commands (1 John 2:3-6, 1 John 3:18-20, John 15, John 14:15)

Simply put... God will not bless disobedient Christians with healthy assurance. The more we obey, the stronger our assurance becomes. The more we disobey (i.e. SIN!), the weaker will our assurance become.

Example: *Pilgrim's Progress*, Interpreter's House, the "Man in the Iron Cage"

So [Interpreter] took [Christian] by the hand again, and led him into a very dark room, where there sat a man in an iron cage.

Now the man, to look on, seemed very sad; he sat with his eyes looking down to the ground, his hands folded together, and he sighed as if he would break his heart. Then said *Christian*, What means this? At which the *Interpreter* bid him talk with the man.

Then said *Christian* to the man, What art thou? The man answered, I am what I was not once.

Chr. What wast thou once?

Man. The man said, I was once a fair and flourishing professor, both in mine own eyes, and also in the eyes of others; I once was, as I thought, fair for the *Celestial City*, and had then even joy at the thoughts that I should get thither.

Chr. Well, but what art thou now?

Man. I am now a man of despair, and am shut up in it, as in this iron cage. I cannot get out. Oh, now I cannot!

Chr. But how camest thou in this condition?

Man. I left off to watch and be sober; I laid the reins upon the neck of my lusts; I sinned against the light of the Word and the goodness of God; I have grieved the Spirit, and he is gone; I tempted the devil, and he is come to me; I have provoked God to anger, and he has left me: I have so hardened my heart, that I cannot repent.

Then said *Christian* to the *Interpreter*, But is there no hope for such a man as this? Ask him, said the *Interpreter*. Nay, said *Christian*, pray, Sir, do you.

Inter. Then said the *Interpreter*, Is there no hope, but you must be kept in the iron cage of despair?

Man. No, none at all.

Inter. Why, the Son of the Blessed is very pitiful.

Man. I have crucified him to myself afresh; I have despised his person; I have despised his righteousness; I have *counted his blood an unbody thing*; I have *done despite to the Spirit of grace*. Therefore I have shut myself out of all the promises, and there now remains to me nothing but threatenings, dreadful threatenings, fearful threatenings, of certain judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour me as an adversary.

Inter. For what did you bring yourself into this condition?

Man. For the lusts, pleasures, and profits of this world; in the enjoyment of which I did then promise myself much delight; but now every one of those things also bite me, and gnaw me like a burning worm.

Inter. But canst thou not now repent and turn?

Man. God hath denied me repentance. His Word gives me no encouragement to believe; yea, himself hath shut me up in this iron cage; nor can all the men in the world let me out. O eternity, eternity! how shall I grapple with the misery that I must meet with in eternity!

Inter. Then said the *Interpreter* to *Christian*, Let this man's misery be remembered by thee, and be an everlasting caution to thee.

Chr. Well, said *Christian*, this is fearful! God help me to watch and be sober, and to pray that I may shun the cause of this man's misery!

3. Love for Other Christians (1 John 3:14)

4. Hungering and Thirsting After Righteousness (Matthew 5:6)

- a. A yearning to be holy
- b. A yearning for the things of God
- c. A yearning for heaven

5. Personal Holiness: Actual Temptations Resisted Successfully (1 John 3:2-3, 1 John 1:5-7)

6. Perseverance over Time... Especially in the Face of Trouble (1 John 2:19, Mark 4: 16-17)

7. Desire for the Word of God (1 John 2:14, John 8:31)

8. Growing Personal Prayer Life (1 John 3:21-22, 1 John 5:14-15)

9. Testimony of Indwelling Spirit (1 John 4:13, Romans 5:5, Romans 8:16)

VI. THE ETERNAL SECURITY OF THE BELIEVER, AND OUR ASSURANCE OF IT

A. "Once Saved, Always Saved..."

John 6:37-40 All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. ³⁸ For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. ³⁹ And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. ⁴⁰ For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day."

John 10:27-29 *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. ²⁸I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. ²⁹My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.*

Romans 8:30 *And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.*

B. BUT... Assurance is Different

1. It is possible to be saved and not be certain
2. Our sin patterns can severely damage our assurance and make it dwindle, if not disappear for a time

VII. WHAT ABOUT MY FEELINGS?

A maturing Christian learns that feelings, while important, are not more important than the Word of God and our faith in that word. Feelings depend on perceived truth... and our perception of truth sometimes can be quite weak.

VIII. THE BENEFITS OF A HEALTHY ASSURANCE

- A. It Glorifies God
- B. It Makes Us Consistently Joyful
- C. It Helps Us Resist Temptation
- D. It Empowers Us for Courageous Witnessing
- E. It Sweetens Our Worship
- F. It Strengthens Our Prayer Life
- G. It Makes us Others-Centered Rather Than Me-Centered
- H. It Enables Us to Minister Comfort to Others

IX. MAINTAINING A HEALTHY ASSURANCE

- A. Be Constantly in the Word of God
- B. Ask God for a Healthy Assurance
- C. Obey God's Commands by the Spirit
- D. Confess Quickly Any Known Sins
- E. Put Sin to Death by the Spirit
- F. Think Often of Christ's Death and Resurrection
- G. Think Often of Heaven; Study it from Revelation
- H. Meditate on the Wickedness and Danger of Sin

WEEK 3: THE SPIRIT FILLED LIFE

I. THE IDENTITY OF THE SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is God, the Third Person of the Trinity

Matthew 3:16-17 And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; ¹⁷ and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son" with whom I am well pleased."

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

1 Peter 1:2 according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood

2 Corinthians 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God [the father] and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

The Holy Spirit possesses all the attributes of deity that the Father and the Son possess: self-existence, omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence, sovereignty, etc.

The Holy Spirit has eternally existed as God, with the Father and the Son (See Genesis 1:1-2)

The Holy Spirit is a person: He has feelings, makes plans and executes them, can be lied to and is grieved over sin.

II. THE PROMISE OF THE SPIRIT

A. Old Testament Promises of the Holy Spirit

1. God would give his people a new heart and would put His Spirit in us (Ezekiel 36:26-27)
2. God promised to pour out his spirit on all [his] people (Joel 2:28-29)

B. New Testament Promises

1. John the Baptist promised baptism (immersion) with the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11)
2. Jesus Christ promised to send the "Counselor" (the Spirit) to live with/in us (John 14:16-17)
3. Jesus breathed on the disciples and told them to "Receive the Holy Spirit" (John 20:22)

4. Jesus promised before he ascended to heaven that the baptism of the Spirit would come soon (Acts 1:4-5)
5. The Apostle Peter proclaimed that whoever repented and believed in Jesus Christ and was baptized in the name of Jesus Christ would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:37-39)

C. Promises Fulfilled

1. The initial outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4)
2. Peter proclaimed that God the Father has fulfilled his promises and poured out the spirit (Acts 2:32-33)

III. THE ACTIVITIES OF THE SPIRIT

[This is by no means an exhaustive list! The Spirit does more than these things!]

A. Preparation for Conversion (John 16:8-11, John 15:26)

In preparation for our conversion, the Holy Spirit works in our hearts the deep conviction of sin necessary for salvation. This conviction is focused ultimately on the sacrifice of Christ for sin (John 15:26).

The Spirit brings the lost person to realize their need for Jesus Christ. This happened in the heart of every single person who ever trusts in Christ.

B. Regeneration (John 3:5-6, John 3:7-8)

By the power of the Holy Spirit, each individual sinner is “born again” to a new life. The new nature inside their heart is the direct work of the Holy Spirit.

C. Adoption and Its Testimony (John 14:16-17, Romans 8:15-16, 2 Corinthians 1:21-22)

At the moment of conversion, we are given the indwelling Spirit to live with us forever (John 14:16-17).

The Holy Spirit testifies to us that we are children of God (Romans 8:15-16).

The indwelling Spirit is spoken of as a “deposit guaranteeing our full inheritance: (2 Corinthians 1:21-22)

What this means is that the Holy Spirit gives the believer consistent internal assurance that he/she is a child of God, and consistent fellowship with God and with Christ day by day.

D. Progress in Sanctification

It is by the Spirit that we began the Christian life, and it is also by the Spirit that we will make progress in sanctification (Galatians 3:2-3).

The Holy Spirit is given to us to enable us to make progress in the Christian life—growing step by step more to be like Christ.

Romans 8:4 *in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.*

Galatians 5:25 *If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.*

1. Mortification of Sin (Galatians 5:16-18, Romans 8:13-14)

Romans 8:13-14 *For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴ For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.*

Mortification = putting sin to death... saying “NO!” to actual temptations (more on this next week). It is done both by us and by the power of the Spirit.

2. Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23)

In sanctification, the Holy Spirit works these virtues in every Christian more and more, conforming him/her to the pattern of Christ.

E. Illumination of Scripture

John 16:13 *When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth...*

John 17:17 *Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.*

Much of the discussion of the Holy Spirit’s work of illuminating Scripture focuses on what occurs at the time of regeneration. There is indeed a great and momentous change that occurs then. A soul that was blind is now enabled to see. The veil is lifted. A person passes from darkness to light. Such a great and categorical change is indeed worthy of attention. But the attention given to this aspect of illumination should not make us forget that the Spirit’s illuminating work is necessary throughout the life of a believer.

“*Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law*” (Ps. 119:18) is the prayer of a redeemed man. Despite the blessings the Psalmist had already known, despite the fact that he had an evident relish and delight in the Word of God, he knew that this Word had treasures and depths yet to impart to him. Similarly it was for Christian believers in Ephesus that Paul prayed that

“having the eyes of your heart enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe” (Eph. 1:18-19). [see “The Holy Spirit's Illumination of Scripture” by Alwyn York]

F. Spiritual Gifts

The Holy Spirit gives us each special gifts that enable us to serve other Christians and build up the whole church to full maturity in Christ. These “spiritual gifts” are essential to our service in the Body of Christ:

1 Corinthians 12:7-11 *To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. ⁸ For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, ⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, ¹⁰ to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹ All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.*

G. Prayer Life (Romans 8:26, Ephesians 6:18, Jude 1:20)

The Holy Spirit empowers our prayer lives, giving us a heart for prayer, what to pray for, and spiritual power in prayer.

H. Guidance (Luke 4:12, Acts 16:6-10)

The Holy Spirit is given to each one of us also to guide us to make wise choices in our lives. The Spirit gives us wisdom and insight so that we can know which direction to turn: (Luke 4:12, Acts 16:6-10)

The apostle Paul speaks of being “led” by the spirit (Galatians 5:18)

I. Power for Witnessing

God has left us here on earth to be His witnesses to lost people. The Holy Spirit has come to give us power for evangelism and missions: (Acts 1:8)

IV. THE SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE

A. “Be Filled with the Spirit”

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

1. Basic command in the Christian life... the key to all happiness and fruitfulness: the ongoing filling by the Holy Spirit

2. It is a passive imperative: in effect you are commanded to let something happen to you
3. it is an ongoing, constant command
4. It means to allow the Holy Spirit to guide you, direct you, empower you, speak Scripture to you
5. The Holy Spirit uses the Scripture constantly to lead the Christian in the right way
6. Simple action point: pray throughout the day that God will fill you with His Spirit
7. This is especially essential after sin
 - a. Confess your sins
 - b. Pray to be filled (controlled) again by the Spirit
8. The Father will give the Spirit to those who ask! (Luke 11:11-13)

B. “Keep in Step with the Spirit”

Galatians 5:25 *If we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.*

Isaiah 30:21 *And your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, “This is the way, walk in it,” when you turn to the right or when you turn to the left.*

1. Another way of saying “Be filled with the Spirit”...
2. However, it gets to more details of how the Spirit may lead
3. It is a constant sense of guidance, especially in the area of temptation and ministry

C. “Do Not Grieve the Spirit”

Ephesians 4:30-32 *And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.*

D. “Do Not Quench the Spirit”

1 Thessalonians 5:19 *Do not quench the Spirit.*

WEEK 4: WHY DO I STILL SIN? WHAT SHOULD I DO ABOUT IT?

I. RECAP ON THE DOCTRINE OF SIN

- A. Sin came into the world through the sin of Adam (Genesis 3)
- B. Sin spread to the entire human race (Romans 5:12)

Romans 5:12 *Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned*

- C. Penalty for Sin is Death (Genesis 2:17, 3:19b, 3:22-23, Romans 6:23)
- D. Sin results in depravity of body and mind (Genesis 6:5, Romans 3:10-18)

II. RECAP ON SALVATION FROM SIN (SEE WEEK 1, III. A-F)

- A. Salvation from Sin's personal position (1 Corinthians 15:22)
- B. Salvation from sin's penalty (1 John 5:12, Romans 8:1)
- C. Salvation from sin's power (Ephesians 2:1-10, Romans 6:1)
- D. Salvation from sin's practice (Romans 13:13)
- E. Salvation from sin's pollution (1 John 1:7 & 1:9)
- F. Salvation from sin's presence [In Heaven] (Revelation 21:27, 22:3-4)

III. INDWELLING SIN

- A. Even the most sanctified Christians have real struggles with sin (Romans 7:15-25).
 1. As a Christian with a transformed heart, the apostle Paul found himself wrestling with indwelling sin. His discourse in Romans 7 gives us insight into the war that was being waged in him: his new nature in Christ vs his old sinful nature.
 2. Read Romans 7:15-25 to see the battle with sin going on in the apostle Paul

3. 1 John 1:8, written by the apostle John to a Christian readership, clearly explains that everyone still has sin

B. Sin dwells in us because we still have a fallen nature

1. While not enslaved to sin, Christians still have a sinful nature
2. In Romans 7:23, Paul says sin “dwells” in his members

C. Sin dwells in us because sinful habits are hard to break

1. The “practices” of the old man must be put away

Colossians 3:5-10 *Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. ⁶ On account of these the wrath of God is coming. ⁷ In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. ⁸ *But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. ⁹ Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices ¹⁰ and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.**

2. Paul is regularly exhorting his readers to leave the old man and the old ways behind. He would not have to do this if believers did not struggle with old sins (Ephesians 2:22-24)

D. Sin dwells in us because we are not finished being saved

1. John tells his readers in 1 John 3:2 that when we see Jesus face to face, we will become like him. It is then that our salvation will be finished
2. Paul encouraged the already-saved Philippians in Philippians 2:12 to “*work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.*”

E. Indwelling sin still resides in our mortal bodies, affecting both our minds and our actions. It affects the “members” of our body

1. Jesus taught that sinful actions come from a perverted heart

Mark 7:21-23 *For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, ²² coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. ²³ All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.”*

2. Paul talks about sin “dwelling” in our “members”

Romans 7:23 *but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members.*

3. Our flesh is referred to as a “body of sin” showing that our current state is still sinful (Romans 6:6)
4. We sin with the members of our body, therefore Paul warns us to not sin with the members of our body (Romans 6:12)
5. Paul speaks of sin as part of us that is “earthly” (Colossians 5:5)
6. Jesus warns us in Matthew 5:29-30 that if a member/part of our body causes us to sin, we should cut it off (take drastic measures to eliminate the source of the sin)

F. Our physical body is still effected by the fall (Romans 8:18-23)

In Romans 8:18-23, Paul speaks of both believers and the entire creation growing together waiting for final redemption.

Summary: Even though redeemed, Christians still have indwelling sin that comes from a heart that is still corrupted, habits of sin from years of sinful behavior, and a corrupted body that still suffers the effects of the fall. This manifests in a conflicted Christian, he/she wants to live righteously before God, but finds sin lurking around every corner, as the apostle Paul says, *For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out.* ¹⁹*For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing.* ²⁰*Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.*

IV. REDEEMED FROM SIN: A NEW CREATION

- A. The apostle Paul says those who are in Christ are a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17)
- B. Peter (in 1 Peter 1:3) and Jesus in (John 3:3) describe salvation as being “born again”
- C. Paul says this “new self” is “created after the likeness of God” (Ephesians 4:22-24)

V. REDEEMED FROM SIN: A CRUCIFIED LIFE

- A. The death of the old man and the transformation into the new man comes by being “crucified” with Christ (Galatians 2:20)

B. We died with Christ. We identified with his death and crucifixion in Baptism

Romans 6:3 *Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death...*

Romans 6:8 *Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him*

C. Our Old Nature has been put to death (Galatians 5:24, Romans 6:6-7)

D. Our old, sinful nature no longer wields the power

1. Sin's dominion has been broken (Romans 6:14)

2. Christians have been set free from sin (Romans 6:6-7, Romans 6:22)

3. The body is dead, the Spirit is life (Romans 8:9-10)

VI. WHAT SHOULD I DO ABOUT MY INDWELLING SIN?

A. Repent! And again...Repent!

Repentance and faith is at the heart of our response to the gospel. It is not something we only do when we first become Christians, but is rather a regular part of the Christian life. In 1 John 1:9, the apostle John encourages us Christians to confess our sins to God, because God is faithful to forgive us!

1 John 1:9 *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

B. Consider yourself dead to sin: Apply the death and resurrection of Christ to your life

In the mental/heart battle against sin, the Christian must actively remind himself/herself that they are dead to sin.

Romans 6:2 *...How can we who died to sin still live in it?*

Romans 6:11 *So you must also consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.*

1 Peter 2:24 *He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness.*

C. Put sin to death (kill sin!) by the power of the Holy Spirit

This is a death by starvation and strangulation. Enabled by the power of the Holy Spirit, we are called to put our sin to death.

Romans 8:13 *If you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.*

1. Do not present your body to sin for unrighteousness (Romans 6:13)
2. Do Present your body as a slave of righteousness (Romans 6:13, Romans 6:17-18, Romans 12:1)

D. Methods of putting away sin

1. Positively: Looking to, feasting on, and Abiding in Christ (Hebrews 12:1-3, John 15:7-11)

When Christ is your joy and you are abiding in him, sin loses its allure. By faith you are able to see through the deceitfulness of sin, and continue pursuing Christ who is your joy.

2. Negatively: Flee temptation / Resist temptation

1 Corinthians 10:13-14 *No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.¹⁴ Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.*

Luke 22:40 *Pray that you may not enter into temptation*

James 4:7 *Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*

E. Cultivate habits that help you grow

New Habits:

- Spend time every day doing Bible reading/study and prayer
- Read books by helpful Christian authors
- Memorize Scripture
- Make Church attendance and small groups a priority
- Worship God by paying close attention to the Preached sermon
- Add Christ exalting music to your collection
- Listen to good preaching for others outside your church
- Make yourself available to serve the church in ministry
- Limit TV if this causes you to stumble

- Get security on your computer to block pop-ups and web sites
- Develop strong relationships with members of your church, sharing your life, success and struggles (for individuals, men with men and women with women)
- Examine the time you spend on leisure (television, reading, computer, tablets, sports, games, etc) to cut back and add a new habit that will strengthen your relationship with Christ
- Share the gospel regularly with your neighbors, colleagues, family and strangers
- Gather the family together for Bible study, prayer and worship.

Summary:

By the power of the Holy Spirit, a Christian can and must actively put sin to death. This is done by living a life that is “crucified with Christ” (Galatians 2:20). The Christian looks to Jesus as the source of all joy and hope, while applying the death grip to his/her sinful desires.

WEEK 5: WHAT IS A “QUIET TIME” AND A HEALTHY PRAYER LIFE?

The daily discipline of Bible intake and prayer are essential to the Christian life; without them we will starve. Our faith is like a living plant that needs constant food—the food of faith is the Word of God. So also we must pray, and express our heart to God. A prayerless life is the life of a non-Christian. In this session, we will discuss the practical aspects of a daily quiet time and a healthy prayer life.

I. WHAT IS A “QUIET TIME”?

A. Definition

A “quiet time” is a time for an individual Christian to focus alone on God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is composed of three basic elements: Bible intake, prayer, worship. Let’s look at each of these elements

B. Key Features of a Healthy Quiet Time

1. Undistracted time alone

This is where the “quiet” in “quiet time” comes from. The basic concept is that God is worth our undivided attention, and that His voice is sometimes hard to hear. See 1 Kings 19:11-13.

Dedicated, focused time to seek the Lord is necessary, for God commands in Isaiah 55:6 “*Seek the Lord while he may be found*” yet Isaiah also declares in Isaiah 45:15 “*Truly, you are a God who hides himself.*” Therefore we must spend time seeking him, because he actually somewhat hides himself, to cause us to seek after him.

The world crashes in with its many problems, and it demands our attention; it becomes very difficult to attend to the health of our souls. See Luke 10:38-42 for an example of how the necessary worldly duties can sometimes hinder us from seeking what is most important.

2. Focus on God—Father, Son, Holy Spirit

a. The central point of our quiet time is our relationship with God

Matthew 22:37-38 *And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.”³⁸ This is the great and first commandment.*

b. As we come to study the Bible and pray, our focus should be getting to know God better

3. Bible intake

- a. It is by the word of God that we develop and grow in our faith (Psalm 19:7-11)
- b. Every day, we need to take in the word and feed on it
- c. This can only happen with the discipline of regular study

Matthew 4:4 *“It is written: ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”*

4. Prayer (Luke 5:16, 1 Chronicles 16:11, Psalm 5:1, ect...)

5. Worship (Psalm 7:17, Psalm 29:2)

C. Goals of a Healthy Quiet Time

1. Learning the word of God better
2. Growing in love for God
3. Gaining specific wisdom/guidance from God
4. Addressing specific sin patterns (Hebrews 4:12-13)
5. Growing in love for others
6. Interceding for other people (Ephesians 6: 18-19)
7. Preparing ourselves for the challenges and opportunities we will face that day

D. Challenges to a Healthy Pattern of Quiet Times

1. The busyness of life
2. Lack of discipline
3. Bad habits and the difficulty of learning good ones
4. The fleshly desire for rest and ease
5. Sin

John Bunyan: “Prayer drives out sin, or sin drives out prayer.”

6. Frustration at past failures

- a. Failure in bible study
- b. Failure in prayer
- c. Failure in discipline

This is what we must overcome to have a healthy quiet time

II. BIBLICAL BASIS FOR QUIET TIMES

A. Psalms

Psalm 27:8-9 *You have said, “Seek my face.” My heart says to you, “Your face, LORD, do I seek.”⁹ Hide not your face from me. Turn not your servant away in anger, O you who have been my help, Cast me not off; forsake me not, O God of my salvation!*

Psalm 63:1-6 *O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water. ² So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory. ³ Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you. ⁴ So I will bless you as long as I live; in your name I will lift up my hands, ⁵ My soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food, and my mouth will praise you with joyful lips, ⁶ when I remember you upon my bed, and meditate on you in the watches of the night.*

B. Christ's Example and Commands

Mark 1:35 *And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed.*

Luke 5:15-16 *But now even more the report about him went abroad, and great crowds gathered to hear him and to be healed of their infirmities. ¹⁶ But he would withdraw to desolate places and pray.*

Luke 6:12 *In these days he went out to the mountain to pray, and all night he continued in prayer to God.*

Mark 6:31-32 *And he said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while." For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. ³² And they went away in the boat to a desolate place by themselves.*

C. Paul's Commands for Spiritual Growth

Romans 12:1-2 *I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ² Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.*

III. THE A-C-T-S PATTERN FOR PRAYER

A. Adoration

1. give yourself fully to worshipping the Lord
2. stimulate your mind with the greatness of God
3. three great sources of God-centered worship (The attributes of God, The actions of God in history, The promises of God for the future)
 - a. the attributes of God
 - i) use the "Attributes of God" sheet attached at the end of this chapter
 - ii) Go over each one in worshipful prayer
 - iii) Or choose one and go deeper
 - b. the actions of God in the past

i) review God's actions in Redemptive History

Creation... the Flood... the Call of Abraham... the Abrahamic covenant... the miraculous birth of Isaac... God's protection and use of Joseph in Egypt... Moses and the burning bush... the Exodus... the manna and the water from the rock... God reveals himself to Moses on Mt. Sinai... the Ten Commandments... the wandering in the desert... the conquest of the Promised Land under Joshua... the raising up of the Judges... David and Goliath... the Davidic Covenant... the raising up of the Prophets (Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah, etc.)... amazing military deliverance under Hezekiah. the exile to Babylon... Daniel's life and ministry in Babylon... the restoration under Ezra and Nehemiah... the ministry of John the Baptist... The birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ... The Acts of the Apostles... Church history until now

ii) give thanks for each one, mindful of the fact that God is every bit as powerful and loving now as He was then

c. the promises of God for the future

i) the protection of the church, and each individual member of it, against all of Satan's attacks

ii) the successful advance of the gospel to the ends of the earth

iii) the Second Coming of Christ

iv) the establishment of His eternal Kingdom

v) the resurrection of all the saints... in perfect bodies

4. Speak to God your love and admiration for each of these

5. Support it with Scripture

6. Seek to stimulate your heart to higher levels of affection for God; this will make obeying Him and serving Him much sweeter and more powerful

B. Confession (1 John 1:9, Proverbs 28:13, Psalms 139:23-24)

1. allow God to search your heart thoroughly by His Spirit to uncover sins you need to confess

2. tell God everything... He knows it all already

3. the desire is to allow the cleansing of Christ's blood to establish you in a stronger relationship with God than ever before... and to enable you to hate sin and fight it better than before

C. Thanksgiving

1. fill your mind and your mouth with thanks to God

2. thankfulness is a great grace, thanklessness is a great sin

3. use the thanksgiving sheet at the end of this document

D. Supplication (Intercession for Others)

1. care enough for others to join with their struggles

2. pray for physical things, of course... they are always the most pressing

3. but ultimately seek Christ's Kingdom (Matthew 6:33)

4. pray for what Christ told you to pray for (Matthew 6:9-13)

- Begin with the realization that God is OUR heavenly Father (not ours individually, but we belong to a huge worldwide family of God; notice all the requests are in the plural: "our" "us" "we")... and the fact that He's in heaven emphasizes His sovereign power
- First request: that God's name be hallowed... held in honor by men
- Second request: that God's Kingdom will come
 - As a subset of that: that God's will will be done on earth as it is in heaven
 - In other words, when God's Kingdom does come, it will result in His servants in joyful submission to His rule forever
- Third request: that God will meet our temporal needs... our daily bread
- Fourth request: that God will forgive us our sins... that we be constantly mindful of our need for forgiveness... and that our experience of God's forgiveness is linked to our forgiveness of others
- Fifth request: that God will protect us from temptation and deliver us from Satan's attacks

I do not believe this is the only prayer we should pray... but it is a model prayer focused on what Christ thinks is important. So also that Jesus told his disciples to ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers (Matthews 9:37-38).

5. Paul's pattern of prayer (Ephesians 1:17-19, Ephesians 3:14-19, Philippians 1:9-11)

IV. PRACTICAL MATTERS

E. Early Morning is the Best Time

1. David's Example (Psalm 5:3, Psalm 108:1-2)
2. Jesus' Example (Mark 1:35)
3. The Theology of "Today"
 - a. The creation pattern (Genesis 1:5)
 - b. Hebrews 3-4 (Specifically, Hebrews 4:7)
4. God's Mercies are New Every Morning (Lamentations 3:22-23)

The implication of this verse is that God yearns to show us His mercy especially in the morning before the day has begun in earnest.

5. Common Sense

Benjamin Franklin: "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."
 In other words, it's better to labor to avoid problems than to be skillful in fixing them afterwards. How does this apply to a morning quiet time? Well, the basic idea is that a time in the word, prayer, and worship can help us avoid temptations and sins that might destroy our whole day. It's better to meet with the Lord at the beginning of a day and seek the filling of His Spirit, be filled with His word, and to cover the day in prayer... than at the end of an avoidably bad day to ask His mercy and forgiveness.

George Mueller once said, "How different, when the soul is refreshed and made happy early in the morning, from what it is when, without spiritual preparation, the service, the trials, and the temptations of the day come upon one!"

F. BUT Multiple Times Per Day is Good Too... If You Get to That Level!

1. Charles Spurgeon's Devotional Classic: "Morning and Evening"
 - a. Patterned after the Old Testament's requirement for sacrifices to be offered both in the morning and evening

Exodus 29:38-39 *ow this is what you shall offer on the altar: two lambs a year old day by day regularly. ³⁹ One lamb you shall offer in the morning, and the other lamb you shall offer at twilight.*

b. So also we can BOTH begin and end the day with the Lord

2. Daniel's example

Daniel 6:10 *He got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously.*

G. How Long Should You Spend?

1. no set time... rather you need to spend enough time to accomplish your spiritual goals
2. consistency is most important... duration will grow as love and maturity grows

H. Bible Intake

1. Psalm 119

- a. The perfect coupling of prayer and bible intake
- b. The perfect prayer... for insight

Psalm 119:18 *Open my eyes that I may behold wonderful things out of your law.*

- c. The perfect prayer... for obedience

Psalm 119:36 *Incline my heart to your testimonies, and not to selfish gain!*

- d. The goal... a life of freedom in God's path

Psalm 119:32 *I will run in the way of your commandments, when you enlarge my heart.*

2. Breadth: Through the Bible in a Year

- a. An excellent discipline... to tour the unfolding story of Scripture year after year
- b. Many good resources ESV, NIV Year Bibles, John MacArthur Yearly Bible

3. Depth: Three ways to go deeper

- a. Meditation
- b. Memorization
- c. Study

I. A Quiet Time Notebook

V. GEORGE MUELLER'S INSIGHTS ON DEVOTIONAL DISCIPLINE

The following quote is from George Mueller's Autobiography:

It has recently pleased the Lord to teach me a truth, irrespective of human instrumentality, as far as I know, the benefit of which I have not lost, though now, while preparing the fifth edition for the press, more than fourteen years have since passed away. **The point is this: I saw more clearly than ever that the first great and primary business to which I ought to attend every day was, to have my soul happy in the Lord.**

The first thing to be concerned about was not how much I might serve the Lord, how I might glorify the Lord; but how I might get my soul into a happy state, and how my inner man might be nourished.

For I might seek to set the truth before the unconverted, I might seek to benefit believers, I might seek to relieve the distressed, I might in other ways seek to behave myself as it becomes a child of God in this world; and yet, not being happy in the Lord, and not being nourished and strengthened in my inner man day by day, all this might not be attended to in a right spirit.

Before this time my practice had been, at least for ten years previously, as an habitual thing to give myself to prayer, after having dressed myself in the morning. Now, I saw that the most important thing I had to do was to give myself to the reading of the word of God, and to meditation on it, that thus my heart might be comforted,

encouraged, warned, reproved, instructed; and that thus, by means of the word of God, whilst meditating on it, my heart might be brought into experimental communion with the Lord.

I began therefore to meditate on the New Testament from the beginning, early in the morning.

The first thing I did, after having asked in a few words the Lord blessing upon his precious word, was, to begin to meditate on the word of God, searching as it were into every verse, to get blessing out of it; not for the sake of the public ministry of the word, not for the sake of preaching on what I had meditated upon, but for the sake of obtaining food for my own soul.

The result I have found to be almost invariably this, that after a very few minutes my soul has been led to confession, or to thanksgiving, or to intercession, or to supplication; so that, though I did not, as it were, give myself to prayer, but to meditation it turned almost immediately more or less into prayer. When thus I have been for a while making confession, or intercession, or supplication, or have given thanks, I go on to the next words or verse, **turning all, as I go on, into prayer for myself or others, as the word may lead to it, but still continually keeping before me that food for my own soul is the object of my meditation.**

The result of this is, that there is always a good deal of confession, thanksgiving, supplication, or intercession mingled with my meditation, and that my inner man almost invariably is even sensibly nourished and strengthened, and that by breakfast time, with rare exceptions, I am in a peaceful if not happy state of heart.

The difference, then, between my former practice and my present one is this:

Formerly, when I rose, I began to pray as soon as possible, and generally spent all my time till breakfast in prayer, or almost all the time.

At all events I almost invariably began with prayer, except when I felt my soul to be more than usually barren, in which case I read the word of God for food, or for refreshment, or for a revival and renewal of my inner man, before I gave myself to prayer. But what was the result? I often spent a quarter of an hour; or half an hour, or even an hour, on my knees, before being conscious to myself of having derived comfort, encouragement, humbling of soul, etc.; and often, after having suffered much from wandering of mind for the first ten minutes, or a quarter of an hour, or even half an hour; **I only then began really to pray.**

I scarcely ever suffer now in this way. For my heart being nourished by the truth, being brought into experimental fellowship with God, I speak to my Father and to my Friend (vile though I am, and unworthy of it) about the things that he has brought before me in his precious word.

As the outward man is not fit for work for any length of time except we take food, and as this is one of the first things we do in the morning, so it should be with the inner man. We should take food for that, as every one must allow. Now what is the food for the inner man? Not prayer, but the word of God; and here again, not the simple reading of the word of God, so that it only passes through our minds, just as water runs through a pipe, but considering what we read, pondering over it, and applying it to our hearts. When we pray, we speak to God.

ADORATION: WHAT GOD IS LIKE

THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

- 1) Self-existence: *"I AM WHO I AM"* Exodus 3:14
- 2) Immutability: *"I the Lord do not change."* Malachi 3:6
- 3) Absolute Perfection: *"This God- his way is perfect,..."* Psalm 18:30
- 4) Eternity: *"Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God."* Psalm 90:2
- 5) Immensity: *"But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you."* 1 Kings 8:27
- 6) Perfect Unity: *"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one."* Deuteronomy 6:4;
- 7) Omnipresence: *"Am I a God at hand, declares the Lord, and not a God far away? 24 Can a man hide himself in secret places so that I cannot see him? declares the Lord. Do I not fill heaven and earth? declares the Lord?"* Jeremiah 23:23-24
- 8) Omniscience: *"Great is the Lord and abundant in power; his understanding is beyond measure."* Psalm 147:5
- 9) Omnipotence: *"I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted."* Job 42:2
- 10) Spirituality: *"God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth."* John 4:24
- 11) Invisibility: *"No one has ever seen God."* John 1:18
- 12) Holiness: *"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts. The whole earth is full of His glory."* Isaiah 6:3
- 13) Wisdom: *"...to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ!"* Romans 16:27
- 14) Truthfulness: *"And also the Glory of Israel will not lie or have regret, for he is not a man, that he should have regret..."* 1 Samuel 15:29
- 15) Love: *"God is love."* 1John 4:16; *"his [God's] steadfast love endures forever."* 1 Chron. 16:34
- 16) Compassion: *"When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd."* Matthew 9:36; *"Jesus wept."* John 11:35
- 17) Patience: *"The Lord is merciful and gracious... slow to anger."* Exodus 34:6
- 18) Goodness: *"The earth is full of the steadfast love of the Lord."* Psalm 33:5
- 19) Grace: *"But you are a God ready to forgive, gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love."* Nehemiah 9:17

- 20) Mercy: *“For the Lord your God is a merciful God.”* Deuteronomy 4:31
- 21) Righteousness: *“Your righteousness reaches to, O God, reaches the high heavens”*
Psalm 71:19
- 22) Justice: *“For I, the Lord, love justice.”* Isaiah 61:8
- 23) Wrath: *“God is a righteous judge, and a God who feels indignation every day.”*
Psalm 7:11
- 24) Sovereignty: *“[God] works all things according to the counsel of his will.”*
Ephesians 1:11
- 25) Glory: *“And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb..”* Revelation 21:23
- 26) Happiness: *“Our God is in the heavens; He does all that he pleases.”* Psalm 115:3

GIVING THANKS TO GOD

Psalm 103:2 *Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits*

I. GOD HIMSELF

A. God’s Nature

- Thank you, God, that you have eternally existed as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- Thank you for your holiness: you are perfectly separated from all evil, and high above all your creation.
- Thank you, God, that you never change.
- Thank you that you love righteousness and hate wickedness.
- Thank you that you have the power to accomplish all your holy will, and that no power can stop you.
- Thank you that you know all things and that nothing in all creation can be hidden from your sight.
- Thank you for your goodness, sustaining all living creatures by opening your hand.

B. God’s Eternal Plan

- Thank you, Father, that before the foundation of the world, you had planned our salvation in Christ.
- Thank you, Lord, that nothing surprises you, and that you work all things after the counsel of your will.

C. God’s Great Acts

- Thank you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, that by the word of your power all things were created, and have been sustained moment by moment.
- Thank you for calling Abraham, and for promising that through him all nations on earth would be blessed.

- Thank you for delivering Israel from the power of Pharaoh at the Red Sea.
- Thank you for the Laws you gave Moses to reveal sin, and to prepare us for a savior, Christ.
- Thank you for feeding Israel with manna from heaven day after day for forty years.
- Thank you for speaking perfectly through the prophets at many times and in various ways.

D. Jesus Christ

- Thank you for bringing Jesus Christ into the world, born of a virgin when the time had fully come.
- Thank you that Christ took on a human body and was fully tempted just as we are, yet was without sin.
- Thank you for the amazing display of your mercy through Christ's miracles of healing.
- Thank you for the perfect teachings of Christ, who spoke like no man had ever spoke.
- Thank you that Jesus Christ bore our sins in His body on the tree, shedding His blood that we might stand fully righteous in Him on Judgment Day.
- Thank you that Christ rose from the dead on the third day and is sitting at the right hand of God the Father.

E. The Holy Spirit

- Thank you for the regenerating work of the Spirit, who creates life where there was none.
- Thank you that the Holy Spirit lives within us forever.
- Thank you that the Spirit testifies with our spirits that we are God's children.
- Thank you that the Spirit enables us to say "No!!" to ungodliness and to live holy lives in this world.
- Thank you that the Spirit convicts the world of sin, thus bringing new brothers and sisters into the church.
- Thank you that the indwelling Holy Spirit is merely a deposit guaranteeing the full inheritance for later.

II. GOD'S SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS

A. Already

- Thank you for your perfect word, the Bible, which teaches us everything we need for life and godliness.
- Thank you for the perfect salvation Jesus Christ has accomplished in His death on the cross.

- Thank you for the saving graces: the Word, the call of the Spirit, regeneration, faith, and repentance.
- Thank you for complete forgiveness of every sin, past, present, or future.
- Thank you for the joy of the indwelling Spirit and all his work of holiness in us.
- Thank you for the church, and for sweet fellowship with the saints on earth.
- Thank you for the spiritual gifts and the way each member builds the body to full maturity.
- Thank you for the task of the Great Commission, and how it gives meaning and purpose to our days.
- Thank you for brothers and sisters in Christ who love us too much to let us drift away from Christ.
- Thank you for hearing and answering our prayers, weak, faithless and impure though they may be.
- Thank you for our trials and sufferings which produce godliness and spiritual maturity in us.
- Thank you that no power in all creation can snatch us away from you.

B. Not Yet

- Thank you for heaven, the perfection of fellowship with you, Lord, forever and ever!!
- Thank you for the resurrection, that though worms destroy this body, yet in our flesh we will see God.
- Thank you for perfect souls, no longer divided and tempted by sin.
- Thank you for the New Heaven and the New Earth.
- Thank you for fellowship with perfected saints from all ages, and from every tribe, language, and people.
- Thank you that heaven is eternal.
- Thank you for judging wickedness eternally, that your justice may be seen, as well as your mercy to us.
- Thank you that you will be our eternal portion, face to face with you!!

III. GOD'S TEMPORAL BLESSINGS

- A. Provision
- Thank you for our bodies, that are so fearfully and wonderfully made.
- Thank you that you keep us in such good health, and heal us from so many diseases.
- Thank you for daily food, and of such delicious variety: breads, meats, vegetables, fruits, sweets, drinks.
- Thank you for the physical beauty of the earth, and how it satisfies our five senses.

- Thank you for the variety of weather, and how you measure out rain and sunshine to meet our needs.
- Thank you for warm homes that protect us from the elements.
- Thank you for jobs and salaries that meet our needs and so many of our wants.
- Thank you for the constant comfort of our lives: air conditioning, automobiles, hospitals.
- Thank you for work, for meaningful tasks and a sense of accomplishment when each is done.
- B. Families
- Thank you for creating as your first institution the family.
- Thank you for marriage, the highest earthly love which people can experience with each other.
- Thank you for sustaining Christian marriages through love, mercy, and constant forgiveness.
- Thank you for children, marvelous, fascinating, challenging, and rewarding gifts from God.
- Thank you for the privilege of training children in the fear and nurture of the Lord.
- Thank you for countless gifts of love that families share together, lightening the burdens of life.
- Thank you for the wisdom of aged family members.
- C. Society
- Thank you for America, our home and native land.
- Thank you for the freedoms we enjoy here: freedom to worship, work, speak, think, prosper, live.
- Thank you for the sacrifices others have made for these freedoms.
- Thank you for our government leaders, and for their wisdom and service.
- Thank you for the vast array of skillful people who use their training and work to bless our lives.
- Thank you for friends and neighbors.
- D. Desires of our Hearts
- Thank you for a myriad of pleasures which are not essential to our lives but which bring us joy: hobbies, possessions, books, sports, aromas, flavors, sounds.

WEEK 6: HOW SHOULD I STUDY THE BIBLE?

[Much of the material used herein was taken from author David E. Pratte. His complete work can be found at: http://www.gospelway.com/bible/how_to_study.php]

The Bible is an astonishing book: straight from the mind of God through fallible human authors, yet miraculously protected from any error—it is nothing less than a miracle itself, the word of God directly to the human race. Since it was written to the entire human race and since it is essential to our salvation, it must be intelligible to people of all different backgrounds and intellectual abilities... it must speak simply and clearly. Yet since it comes from the infinite mind of God, it stands to reason that it must soar infinitely above our minds as well. The Bible is both simple and deep, meant to save a child and to challenge a genius.

How then should we study the Bible? It requires interpretation and understanding... how should we approach it?

I. PRESUPPOSITIONS

- A. There is a God, and he rewards those who seek him
- B. This God has revealed himself in the Holy Bible, the Old and New Testaments

II. PROPER ATTITUDES IN STUDY

- A. Appreciate the Importance of Study
 1. Study so you can obey God and grow in His Service (Joshua 1:8, 1 Peter 2:2)
 2. Study so you can avoid error and false teaching (Hosea 4:6, John 10:5, 1 John 2:20-22)
 3. Study so you can teach others (2 Timothy 2:15, Colossians 3:16)
 4. Study to express love for God and His word (Psalm 119:97, John 14:15)
- B. Study in Total Dependence on the Holy Spirit (John 16:13, Psalm 119:18)
- C. Study with an Open Mind and a Love for the Truth (Acts 17:11)
- D. Respect the Bible as Being Verbally & Infallibly Inspired (2 Timothy 3:16, 2 Peter 1:20-21, Psalm 12:6)
 1. The Bible is from God
 2. The Bible is verbally inspired
 3. The Bible is infallible

E. Believe that the Bible Can Be Understood

1. God gave it to us so that we WOULD understand Him
2. His has given us of His indwelling Spirit so that we can understand the Scripture
3. Jesus explained things very carefully to His disciples who humbled themselves and asked what His teachings meant (Mark 4:10-11, Mark 4:33-34)

III. PRINCIPLES OF BIBLE AUTHORITY

A very important principle: we must be very careful how we hear the Word of God. Do we listen carefully as though our lives depended on these words, or do we throw them off?

Deuteronomy 32:47 *For it is no empty word for you, but your very life, and by this word you shall live long in the land that you are going over the Jordan to possess.*

The New Testament Filters and Interprets the Commands of the Old Testament

1. The Old Testament involved many commands and practices no longer binding on (or even acceptable for) New Testament people (Hebrews 8:13)
2. The Ceremonial Laws of the Jewish nation, for example, have been fulfilled in Christ (Matthew 5:17, Ephesians 2:15)
 - a. Circumcision, commanded for all Jewish men, is no longer required (Acts 15:1-29)
 - b. Animal sacrifices are no longer acceptable today (Hebrews 8:13)
 - c. The national laws requiring Jews to assemble three times a year (Passover, Pentecost, Feast of Ingathering) are no longer binding on us
 - d. The dietary laws have been fulfilled, and Jesus declared all foods clean (Mark 7:19)
3. So also many Old Testament practices and commands are fulfilled and not appropriate for us today
4. Two warnings, however
 - a. Old Covenant laws are still informative for us concerning God's character and are worth reading
 - b. Many Old Covenant laws ARE still binding on us, however:

Deuteronomy 6:5 *You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.*

Leviticus 19:18 ... *you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.*

It is through the filter of the New Testament and what God accomplished in Christ that we can understand what to do with Old Testament commands and examples.

B. Much Good Comes from Studying the Old Testament

1. History... giving an essential context to the work of Christ
2. Prophecies... giving a sense of certainty about God's work in history
3. Lessons about the unchanging nature of God
4. Unchanging principles of human behavior and God's expectations

C. In the Bible, God Uses Three Basic Methods to Reveal His Will

1. Commands and direct statements (1 Corinthians 14:37)
2. Examples and illustrations (1 Corinthians 10:11, 1 Peter 2:21)
3. Logical necessary conclusions, "necessary inferences" or "Scriptural reasoning." Jesus and Paul reasoned from Scripture all the time! (Acts 17:2 Matthew 12:1-4, Romans 4:9-10)

D. God's Word Completely Reveals His Will for Us

We don't need anything more than Scripture to know what God wills for us...
Scripture is sufficient

2 Peter 1:3 His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence

2 Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

E. Only Divine Authority, not Human Authority, Is Acceptable in Religion
God's wisdom is infinitely higher than ours... we need Him to speak to us, or we will be in darkness still:

Isaiah 55:8-9 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. ⁹ For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Human tradition is dangerous and an untrustworthy guide:

Matthew 15:7-9 You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, when he said: ⁸ "This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; ⁹ in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men."

1. The Bible teaching about wisdom

Proverbs 14:12 There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death.

2. The Bible teaching about worship

John 4:24 *God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth.*

3. The Bible teaching about love

1 John 4:10 *In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*

4. The Bible teaching about faith

Faith is born by hearing the word of God... but faith is also put on display by the Biblical accounts of faith-filled men and women:

Romans 10:17 *So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.*

Hebrews 11 is filled with one example after another of faith in action. Read also Hebrews 12:1.

5. The Bible teaching about authority

2 John 1:9 *Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God. Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son.*

Galatians 1:8-9 *But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. 9 As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed.*

F. God May Teach in General or Specific Terms

1. A statement of the principle

a. Specific authority

God has told us not to practice things that do not fit the meaning of His instructions. So when He wants us to do a thing in a particular way, He instructs us by choosing words that are specific or narrow (limited, restricted, exclusive) in their meaning. If we then do things differently, outside the limits of the meaning of the terms He uses, we displease Him

b. General authority

When God wants to leave men free to choose from several alternative ways of doing a thing, He instructs us with words that are more general or broad (inclusive, comprehensive, all-encompassing) in their meaning. We still must do only what fits the instruction, but we are free to choose any of the various alternatives that fit. Any such choice would be acceptable because we would still be doing what God said

2. Applications of the Principle

a. Noah and the ark (Genesis 6:14)

God told Noah to make an ark of gopher wood. Metal, pine, walnut, etc., do not fit the definition of gopher wood. They constitute different kinds of materials. God did not expressly say not to use them, but He excluded them by saying “gopher wood” and remaining silent about metal, pine, etc.

Had God wanted to leave Noah free to use any kind of material, He could simply have said to make an ark, and specified no material at all. Then Noah could have chosen any kind of material and He would still have been obeying God. But when God specified the material, the use of any other material would have been disobedience.

On the other hand, there are many things a person can do that would fit the definition of “making” an ark. He might use a hammer and saw, or pegs and glue. None of these things are specifically mentioned, but they would have been acceptable because, while using them, Noah would still be doing what God said to do.

b. Making Disciples and Preaching (Matthew 28:18-20)

Jesus commanded us to go and make disciples of all the nations. The apostle Paul is also very clear that we must only preach the true gospel (Galatians 1:6-12). Nevertheless, there could be different ways in which one goes about preaching and making disciples. He might speak to a group of people, write them a letter, divide them up into classes, speak over radio or TV or write on a blackboard or overhead projector. All such would fit the meaning of what God said to do.

Likewise, many other things are wrong in religion, though nowhere specifically forbidden, because they do not fit what God specifically said to do. Other things are acceptable, though nowhere specifically mentioned, because they do fit general instructions in God's word. Study the chart below for other examples.

IV. OTHER RULES FOR BIBLE STUDY

A. Consider Other Passages on the Same Subject

1. Truth on a subject is determined by “adding up” all pertinent passages

Acts 3:22-23 *Moses said, ‘The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers. You shall listen to him in whatever he tells you. 23 And it shall be that every soul who does not listen to that prophet shall be destroyed from the people.’*

We can't take a "supermarket" view of the Bible, wandering through the aisles and picking and choosing what we want and what we don't want.

Matthew 4:4, But he answered, "It is written, " 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.' "

John 17:17 Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.

1 Corinthians 14:33 For God is not a God of confusion but of peace.

Some applications:

An example is the issue of proper worship. There isn't just one passage in which worship is comprehensively covered... a Biblical doctrine of worship must be assembled by looking at many passages of Scripture.

So also the doctrine of the Trinity cannot be found in just one passage, but its component parts must be assembled from various passages

B. Consider Context and Background

"Context" means the verses surrounding the one being studied, especially verses on the same subject. By "background" we mean who is speaking, to whom they speak, etc. These are just a particular form of considering all the Bible says (see the last point).

Consider some specific benefits of considering context and background:

Word meanings: Words may have different meanings in different contexts. We learn the correct meaning by how the word is used.

Acts 20:17, 28 shows that the "elders" (v17) are "bishops" or "overseers" (v28). Hence, both terms refer to the same work or office.

Further explanation: When a verse confuses us, other statements nearby may clarify the meaning.

Acts 16:31-34 - Some people claim v31 means we are saved by "faith only," so baptism is not needed. But v32-34 shows that only part of the gospel had been taught. When all was taught, baptism was so urgent that the sinner had to do it even in the middle of the night (cf. Acts 2:38; 22:16; Mark 16:16; etc.).

Proper application: Often a statement can best be understood by considering how it is applied in context.

Romans 7:1-7 - We have been discharged from the law, but what law does this mean? It included, "Thou shalt not covet" (v7) - one of the Ten Commands. Hence, the law we are freed from includes the Ten Commands.

The speaker: Every Bible word is infallible, but sometimes it infallibly records the sins or lies of fallible people.

Psalms 14:1 quotes "There is no God." But who says this? The fool says it. The Bible accurately records, not that the statement is true, but that foolish people truly do say it.

Job 2:9 says "Curse God and die." But who says this? Job's wife said it, and was immediately rebuked by Job.

To understand the Bible properly we must realize that sometimes it accurately records the fact that fallible people do or say sinful things.

The people addressed, when and where: Not all instructions in the Bible - not even all that God spoke - are intended for us to obey.

Genesis 6:13,14 - God told Noah to build an ark. Must we build one?

Genesis 22:1,2 - God told Abraham to sacrifice his son. Must we slay ours?

Luke 23:39-43 - Jesus said the thief on the cross would be in Paradise, so some conclude we today can be saved without baptism. But the man Jesus addressed lived under the Old Testament before Jesus died to remove it (Heb. 9:16,17; Col. 2:14). This no more applies today than the command to Noah to build the ark or the command to Abraham to slay his son.

C. Define the Meaning of the Words

The Bible is verbally inspired - each word is from God (see previous notes). The message is revealed in words, and we understand it only when we understand the words.

Words are sometimes used today in ways that completely differ from the meaning in the Bible. Consider such words as the following: saint, church, bishop, Christian, etc.

The word "baptism" is defined today as sprinkling, pouring, or immersion, but in the Bible it means immersion (Rom. 6:4; Acts 8:38,39).

Dictionaries may help, but the best way to learn Bible words is to study them by the means already discussed: context and parallel passages

V. TOOLS & SUGGESTED PROCEDURES FOR BIBLE STUDY

A. Helpful Tools for Study

1. Translations

The Bible was written in Hebrew and Greek, so we need translations into our language. Since the Bible is verbally inspired, translations ought to give the exact meaning of the original words.

We are wealthy in English to have many reputable translations to work with: King James Version, Revised Standard Version, New American Standard Bible, New King James, New International Version, and the English Standard Version

2. Cross references

Some Bibles have footnotes on each verse that refer to other similar verses. From those verses you might find still others, etc. This is useful for “studying other verses on the subject.”

3. Concordance

A concordance lists words in the Bible alphabetically and gives passages where each word is used. Some concordances are brief; others are more complete.

Uses of a concordance include: (1) finding many passages about a subject; (2) finding a particular verse if you know one or two words in it; (3) determining the meaning of a word by studying verses where it is used

4. Other helps

The following helps may be useful, but remember they are written by fallible humans who can be wrong.

(1) Bible dictionaries and encyclopedias are descriptions, listed alphabetically, of Bible people, places, things, and events. Emphasis is on history and geography. Do *not* expect detailed definitions or discussions of doctrinal matters.

(2) Word study helps include “expository dictionaries” and lexicons. These actually define Bible words. You look up the English word in an expository dictionary, but

you must know the Greek or Hebrew alphabet to use a lexicon. Be careful with these books if you have no training in the original languages.

(3) Commentaries are verse-by-verse explanations of the Bible text. Be especially careful because the authors' beliefs may contradict Scripture. If you use commentaries, study several to get alternative views, consider the *reasons* the author gives for his view, and always let the Bible be your final authority

B. Suggested Procedures for Bible Study

Too many people do not study the Bible in an organized way, and too many depend on others to study for them. It may not be wrong to use someone else's material to guide us in a study, yet some members cannot study for themselves.

The following suggestions are designed to help you start with just a few basic Bible study tools and study a Bible passage or subject for yourself. They are general guidelines that may be abbreviated or modified in some cases. But they should be helpful in learning God's word.

Suggested procedure for studying a Bible passage

Suppose you have a particular section of Scripture you want to study: a verse, chapter, section, or even a whole book. The following procedure will help you use the principles we have learned.

1. Study the general background of the book of the Bible. Who wrote it? What do you know about the author? To whom was it written, and what do you know about these people? When was it written and under what circumstances? You may learn this information from reading the book itself (see next step) or by using cross-references, concordances, etc.

2. Read the passage in context. You may need to read the whole book. Understand the theme of the book, and list the main subjects discussed.

3. Study the particular passage section by section. Examine each paragraph, each verse, each phrase, and even each word. Define key words using context, parallel passages, other translations, and dictionaries. Study other passages on the subject (use cross references and concordance).

Ask yourself questions about what the passage does and does not mean, and consider alternative views. Search for evidence till you can answer your questions, prove what view is correct, and explain the meaning in your own words. Think of examples or

illustrations to help explain the passage. Make specific applications to your own life and the lives of others.

Write careful notes throughout your study, and save your notes for future reference.

Suggested procedure for studying a Bible subject

- 1. Select and define the topic.* Write it as precisely as you can in a few statements or questions. Revise if necessary as you proceed.
- 2. Jot down everything you think you know about the topic:* passages, main points, illustrations, applications, etc.
- 3. List the important words related to the topic.* You will use these to find pertinent passages in the concordance. Be sure to define them as you proceed.
- 4. List the important passages.* Use memory, concordance, cross references, etc.
- 5. Study each passage using the methods previously described for passages.* Ask questions, draw conclusions, make applications, think of illustrations.
- 6. Organize the material.* Divide your topic logically into its major divisions and sub-divisions. Classify each item of information under the appropriate sub-division. (If you cannot do this, you probably need to study more to understand the material better.)

Again, take careful notes at each step. You may want to write a final outline or summary of the material, especially if it is to be taught to others. Save your notes for future study.

WEEK 7: WHAT ARE THE BASIC DOCTRINES OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH?

REDEMPTIVE HISTORY: THE ALPHA AND OMEGA

PERIOD 1: FROM THE FALL TO CHRIST'S INCARNATION

- I. From the Fall to the Flood
- II. From the Flood to the Calling of Abraham
- III. From Abraham to Moses
- IV. From Moses to David
- V. From David to the Babylonian Captivity
- VI. From the Captivity to Christ

PERIOD 2: FROM CHRIST'S INCARNATION TO HIS RESURRECTION

- I. Christ's Incarnation
- II. Christ's Life
- III. Christ's Death & Resurrection: The Purchase of Redemption

PERIOD 3: FROM CHRIST'S RESURRECTION TO THE END OF THE WORLD

- I. Resurrection to the Destruction of Jerusalem
- II. To the Time of Constantine
- III. The Rise of the Roman Catholic Church
- IV. The Reformation
- V. The Spread of Missions and Defense of the Faith
- VI. Future Events

PERIOD 1: FROM THE FALL TO CHRIST'S INCARNATION

- Creation Genesis 1
 - Garden of Eden Genesis 2
 - The Fall Genesis 3
- I. From the Fall to the Flood**
- The Spread of Sin and of the Seed Genesis 4-5
- II. From the Flood to the Calling of Abraham**
- Noah and the Flood Genesis 6-9
 - The Spread of the Nations & The Tower of Babel Genesis 10-11

III. From Abraham to Moses

- The Call of Abraham Genesis 12
- The Covenant with Abraham: “So shall your offspring be...” Genesis 15
- Abraham Circumcised Genesis 17
- The Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah Genesis 18-19
- The Birth of Isaac Genesis 21
- The Offering of Isaac Genesis 22
- Isaac and Rebekah Genesis 24
- The Birth of Jacob and Esau Genesis 25
- Esau Sells His Birthright to Jacob Genesis 25
- Jacob Steals Esau’s Blessing Genesis 27
- Jacob Flees to Mesopotamia: Leah, and Rachel Genesis 28-29
- The Birth of the Twelve Patriarchs Genesis 29-30
- Joseph Sold into Slavery in Egypt; Rises to Power Genesis 37-41
- Jacob and the Patriarchs Settle in Egypt Genesis 42-50

IV. From Moses to David

- Israel in Bondage in Egypt Exodus 1
- The Birth of Moses (and his rescue) Exodus 2
- Moses Raised as Egyptian Exodus 2
- Moses Flees from Egypt Exodus 2
- Moses Called by God as Deliverer (Burning Bush) Exodus 3
- The Ten Plagues on Egypt Exodus 7-11
- The Passover Exodus 12
- The Exodus Exodus 13-14
- Journey to Sinai (Manna from heaven, water from the Rock) Exodus 15-18
- The Law Given at Sinai Exodus 19
 - The Ten Commandments* Exodus 20
 - The Covenant Accepted* Exodus 24
 - The Institution of the Tabernacle* Exodus 25-40
 - The Sacrificial System* Exodus 25-40
 - The Covenant Broken (Golden Calf)* Exodus 32
 - Various Laws: “Be holy as I am holy”* Leviticus
- Israel Rejects the Promised Land Numbers 13-14
- Israel Wanders in the Desert Forty Years Numbers 33
- Moses and the “Second Law-giving” (Deuteronomy) Deuteronomy
- “Blessings or curses”; Covenant renewed Deuteronomy 27-28, 29
- Joshua and the Conquest of the Promised Land Joshua 1-12
- Promised Land Allotted to Twelve Tribes Joshua 13-21
- Promised Land Conquest Incomplete Joshua 23-24; Judges 1-2

- Judges: Cycle of Rebellion, Repentance, and Deliverance Judges 3-21; Ruth; 1 Sam. 1-7
- Saul Anointed as King 1 Samuel 8-10
- Saul Rejected 1 Samuel 15

V. From David to the Babylonian Captivity

- David Anointed as Future King 1 Samuel 16
- David and Goliath 1 Samuel 17
- Saul Persecutes David 1 Samuel 18-31
- Saul Dies at Mt. Gilboa 1 Samuel 31
- David Becomes King 2 Samuel 2
- David Consolidates the Twelve Tribes 2 Samuel 3-5
- David Plans the Temple 2 Samuel 7
- The Covenant with David 2 Samuel 7
- David's Victories 2 Samuel 8-10
- David's Sin with Bathsheba 2 Samuel 11
- David's Struggles with Rebels: Absalom and Sheba 2 Samuel 14-21
- David's Death 1 Kings 2
- Solomon Becomes King of the United Kingdom 1 Kings 2-4
- Solomon Builds the Temple 1 Kings 5-6, 8-9
- Solomon's Sins (accumulation & idolatry) 1 Kings 7, 11
- Solomon's Death; Rehoboam Ascends 1 Kings 12
- The Divided Kingdom 1 Kings 12-22; 2 Kings 1-25
Judah's Kings: Some good, many bad
Israel's Kings: Few good, most bad
- The Prophets: Covenant Prosecutors, Kingdom Previewers 1 Kg. 17-19, Isaiah, Jeremiah, etc.
- Israel Exiled to Assyria, Judah Spared 2 Kings 17-19

VI. From the Captivity to Christ

- Judah Exiled to Babylon 2 Kings 24-25, Jeremiah, Habakkuk
- Life in Exile Esther
- Exile Prophets: Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel
- The Return of the Jews to the Promised Land Ezra, Nehemiah
The Decree of Cyrus
The Return under Ezra & Nehemiah
- Life in Post-Exilic Israel Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi
The Wall & Temple Rebuilt
The Prophets Foretell Future Glory
- Intertestamental Waiting

PERIOD 2: FROM CHRIST'S INCARNATION TO HIS RESURRECTION

I. Christ's Incarnation

- The Birth of Jesus Christ
- The Ministry of John the Baptist

II. Christ's Life

- The Mighty Deeds and Words of Jesus Christ: Miracles, Teachings, Perfect Holiness

III. Christ's Death & Resurrection: The Purchase of Redemption

- The Death of Christ
 - The Resurrection of Christ
-

PERIOD 3: FROM CHRIST'S RESURRECTION TO THE END OF THE WORLD

I. Resurrection to the Destruction of Jerusalem

- Pentecost and the Gift of the Holy Spirit
- The Ministry of the Apostles
- The Advance of the Gospel: Churches Planted
- The Persecution of the Church by the Jews and Rome
- The Destruction of the Temple

II. To the Time of Constantine

- The Early Church: Spiritual Conquest of the Roman Empire (30-325)

III. The Rise of the Roman Catholic Church

- Church Fathers, Christological Controversies and Augustine (325-590)
- The Split between Roman and Eastern Christianity (867)
- Medieval Christianity: Popes, Monks, Crusaders, and Scholastics (590-1517)

IV. The Reformation

- The Reformation: Luther, Zwingli, Anabaptists, Calvin, Puritans (1517-1689)

V. The Spread of Missions and Defense of the Faith

- Modern Europe: Reason, Revival & the Rise of Missions (1650-1914)
- American Christianity: Puritans, Two Awakenings, Slavery (1620-1900)
- The 20th Century: Modernism, Militarism, Missions, and Post-Modernism

VI. Future Events

- Increasing Missionary Success
- Increasing Persecution
- Antichrist & Tribulation
- Second Coming of Christ
- Millennial Kingdom and Eternal State

OVERVIEW OF SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY: WAYNE GRUDEM

PART 1: THE DOCTRINE OF THE WORD OF GOD

1. **The Word of God** - What are the different forms of the Word of God?
2. **The Canon of Scripture** - What belongs to the Bible and what does not?
3. **The Four Characteristics of Scripture: (1) Authority** - How do we know that the Bible is the Word of God?
4. **The Inerrancy of Scripture** - Are there any errors in the Bible?
5. **The Four Characteristics of Scripture: (2) Clarity** - Can only Bible Scholars understand the Bible rightly?
6. **The Four Characteristics of Scripture: (3) Necessity** - For what purposes is the Bible necessary? How much can people know about God without the Bible?
7. **The Four Characteristics of Scripture: (4) Sufficiency** - Is the Bible enough for knowing what God wants us to think or do?

PART 2: THE DOCTRINE OF GOD

1. **The Existence of God** - How do we know that God exists?
2. **The Knowability of God** - Can we really know God? How much of God can we know?
3. **The Character of God: “Incommunicable” Attributes** - How is God different from us?
4. **The Character of God: “Communicable” Attributes** - (1) How is God like us in his being and in mental and moral attributes? (2) How is God like us in attributes of will and in attributes that summarize His excellence?
5. **God in Three Persons: The Trinity** - How can God be three persons, yet one God?
6. **Creation** - Why, how, and when did God create the universe?
7. **God’s Providence** - If God controls all things, how can our actions have real meaning? What are the decrees of God?
8. **Miracles** - What are miracles? Can they happen today?
9. **Prayer** - Why does God want us to pray? How can we pray effectively?
10. **Angels** - What are angels? Why did God create them?
11. **Satan and Demons** - How should Christians think of Satan and demons today? What is Spiritual warfare?

PART 3: THE DOCTRINE OF MAN

1. **The Creation of Man** - Why did God create us? How did God make us like Himself? How can we please Him in everyday living?
2. **Man as Male and Female** - Why did God create two sexes? Can men and women be equal and yet have different roles?
3. **The Essential Nature of Man** - What does Scripture mean by “soul” and “spirit”? Are they the same thing?
4. **Sin** - What is sin? Where did it come from? Do we inherit a sinful nature and/or guilt from Adam?
5. **The Covenants Between God and Man** - What principles determine the way God relates to us?

PART 4: THE DOCTRINES OF CHRIST AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. **The Person of Christ** - How is Jesus fully God and fully man in one person?
2. **The Atonement** - Was it necessary for Christ to die? Did Christ’s entire earthly life earn any saving benefits for us? What is the cause and nature of the atonement. Did Christ descend to hell?
3. **Resurrection and Ascension** - What was Christ’s resurrection body like? What is its significance for us? What happened to Christ when He ascended into heaven? What is meant by the states of Jesus Christ?
4. **The Offices of Christ** - How is Christ prophet, priest, and king?
5. **The Work of the Holy Spirit** - What are the distinctive activities of the Holy Spirit throughout the history of the Bible?

PART 5: THE DOCTRINE OF THE APPLICATION OF REDEMPTION

1. **Common Grace** - What are the undeserved blessings that God gives to all people, both believers and unbelievers?
2. **Election and Reprobation** - When and why did God choose us? Are some not chosen?
3. **The Gospel Call and Effective Calling** - What is the gospel message? How does it become effective?
4. **Regeneration** - What does it mean to be born again?
5. **Conversion (Faith and Repentance)** - What is true repentance? What is saving faith? Can people accept Jesus as Savior and not as Lord?
6. **Justification (Right Legal Standing Before God)** - How and when do we gain right legal standing before God?
7. **Adoption (Membership in God’s Family)** - What are the benefits of being a member of God’s family?

8. **Sanctification (Growth in Likeness to Christ)** - How do we grow in Christian maturity? What are the blessings of Christian growth?
9. **Baptism and Filling with the Holy Spirit** - Should we seek a “baptism in the Holy Spirit” after conversion? What does it mean to be filled with the Holy Spirit?
10. **The Perseverance of the Saints (Remaining a Christian)** - Can true Christians lose their salvation? How can we know if we are truly born again?
11. **Death and the Intermediate State** - What is the purpose of death in the Christian life? What happens to bodies and souls when we die?
12. **Glorification (Receiving a Resurrection Body)** - When will we receive resurrection bodies? What will they be like?
13. **Union with Christ** - What does it mean to be “in Christ” or “united with Christ”?

PART 6: THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

1. **The Church: Its Nature, Its Marks, and Its Purposes** - What is necessary to make a church? How can we recognize a true church? What are the purposes of the church?
2. **The Purity and Unity of the Church** - What makes a church more or less pleasing to God? What kinds of churches should we cooperate with or join?
3. **The Power of the Church** - What kind of authority does the church have? How should church discipline function?
4. **Church Government** - How should a church be governed? How should church officers be chosen? Should women serve as pastors of churches?
5. **Means of Grace Within the Church** - What are the different activities within the life of the church that God uses to bring blessing to us? What do we miss if we neglect involvement in a local church?
6. **Baptism** - Who should be baptized? How should it be done? What does it mean?
7. **The Lord’s Supper** - What is the meaning of the Lord’s Supper? How should it be observed?
8. **Worship** - How can our worship fulfill its great purpose in the New Testament age? What does it mean to worship “in spirit and in truth”?
9. **Gifts of the Holy Spirit (1): General Questions** - What are the spiritual gifts? How many are there? Have some gifts ceased? How should we seek and use specific gifts?
10. **Gifts of the Holy Spirit (2): Specific Gifts** - How should we understand and use specific spiritual gifts?

PART 7: THE DOCTRINE OF THE FUTURE

1. **The Return of Christ: When and How?** - When and how will Christ return?
Could he come back at any hour?
2. **The Millennium** - What is the Millennium? When does it occur? Will Christians go through the Great Tribulation?
3. **The Final Judgment and Eternal Punishment** - Who will be judged? What is hell?
4. **The New Heavens and New Earth** - What is heaven? Is it a place? How will the earth be renewed? What will it be like to live in the new heavens and new earth?

Table of Contents from: Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, Zondervan (Grand Rapids, 2000)

THE BAPTIST FAITH AND MESSAGE

I. The Scriptures

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.

Exodus 24:4; Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 17:19; Joshua 8:34; Psalms 19:7-10; 119:11,89,105,140; Isaiah 34:16; 40:8; Jeremiah 15:16; 36:1-32; Matthew 5:17-18; 22:29; Luke 21:33; 24:44-46; John 5:39; 16:13-15; 17:17; Acts 2:16ff.; 17:11; Romans 15:4; 16:25-26; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2; 4:12; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:19-21.

II. God

There is one and only one living and true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe. God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. God is all powerful and all knowing; and His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future, including the future decisions of His free creatures. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. The eternal triune God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

A. God the Father

God as Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace. He is all powerful, all knowing, all loving, and all wise. God is Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. He is fatherly in His attitude toward all men.

Genesis 1:1; 2:7; Exodus 3:14; 6:2-3; 15:11ff.; 20:1ff.; Leviticus 22:2; Deuteronomy 6:4; 32:6; 1 Chronicles 29:10; Psalm 19:1-3; Isaiah 43:3,15; 64:8; Jeremiah 10:10; 17:13; Matthew 6:9ff.; 7:11; 23:9; 28:19; Mark 1:9-11; John 4:24; 5:26; 14:6-13; 17:1-8; Acts 1:7; Romans 8:14-15; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 4:6; Colossians 1:15; 1 Timothy 1:17; Hebrews 11:6; 12:9; 1 Peter 1:17; 1 John 5:7.

B. God the Son

Christ is the eternal Son of God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself human nature with its demands and necessities and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His substitutionary death on the cross He made provision for the redemption of men from sin. He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples as the person who was with them before His crucifixion. He ascended into

heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the One Mediator, fully God, fully man, in whose Person is effected the reconciliation between God and man. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to consummate His redemptive mission. He now dwells in all believers as the living and ever present Lord.

Genesis 18:1ff.; Psalms 2:7ff.; 110:1ff.; Isaiah 7:14; 53; Matthew 1:18-23; 3:17; 8:29; 11:27; 14:33; 16:16,27; 17:5; 27; 28:1-6,19; Mark 1:1; 3:11; Luke 1:35; 4:41; 22:70; 24:46; John 1:1-18,29; 10:30,38; 11:25-27; 12:44-50; 14:7-11; 16:15-16,28; 17:1-5, 21-22; 20:1-20,28; Acts 1:9; 2:22-24; 7:55-56; 9:4-5,20; Romans 1:3-4; 3:23-26; 5:6-21; 8:1-3,34; 10:4; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2:2; 8:6; 15:1-8,24-28; 2 Corinthians 5:19-21; 8:9; Galatians 4:4-5; Ephesians 1:20; 3:11; 4:7-10; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:13-22; 2:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; 3:16; Titus 2:13-14; Hebrews 1:1-3; 4:14-15; 7:14-28; 9:12-15,24-28; 12:2; 13:8; 1 Peter 2:21-25; 3:22; 1 John 1:7-9; 3:2; 4:14-15; 5:9; 2 John 7-9; Revelation 1:13-16; 5:9-14; 12:10-11; 13:8; 19:16.

C. God the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, fully divine. He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Through illumination He enables men to understand truth. He exalts Christ. He convicts men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He calls men to the Saviour, and effects regeneration. At the moment of regeneration He baptizes every believer into the Body of Christ. He cultivates Christian character, comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through His church. He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption. His presence in the Christian is the guarantee that God will bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service.

Genesis 1:2; Judges 14:6; Job 26:13; Psalms 51:11; 139:7ff.; Isaiah 61:1-3; Joel 2:28-32; Matthew 1:18; 3:16; 4:1; 12:28-32; 28:19; Mark 1:10,12; Luke 1:35; 4:1,18-19; 11:13; 12:12; 24:49; John 4:24; 14:16-17,26; 15:26; 16:7-14; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4,38; 4:31; 5:3; 6:3; 7:55; 8:17,39; 10:44; 13:2; 15:28; 16:6; 19:1-6; Romans 8:9-11,14-16,26-27; 1 Corinthians 2:10-14; 3:16; 12:3-11,13; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; 5:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:19; 1 Timothy 3:16; 4:1; 2 Timothy 1:14; 3:16; Hebrews 9:8,14; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 John 4:13; 5:6-7; Revelation 1:10; 22:17.

III. Man

Man is the special creation of God, made in His own image. He created them male and female as the crowning work of His creation. The gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God's creation. In the beginning man was innocent of sin and was endowed by his Creator with freedom of choice. By his free choice man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. Through the temptation of Satan man transgressed the command of God, and fell from his original innocence whereby his posterity inherit a nature and an environment inclined toward sin. Therefore, as soon as they are capable of moral action, they become transgressors and are under condemnation. Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man in His own image, and in that Christ died for man; therefore, every person of every race possesses full dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

Genesis 1:26-30; 2:5,7,18-22; 3; 9:6; Psalms 1; 8:3-6; 32:1-5; 51:5; Isaiah 6:5; Jeremiah 17:5; Matthew 16:26; Acts 17:26-31; Romans 1:19-32; 3:10-18,23; 5:6,12,19; 6:6; 7:14-25; 8:14-18,29; 1 Corinthians 1:21-31; 15:19,21-22; Ephesians 2:1-22; Colossians 1:21-22; 3:9-11.

IV. Salvation

Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man, and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. In its broadest sense salvation includes regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification. There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.

A. Regeneration, or the new birth, is a work of God's grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace.

Repentance is a genuine turning from sin toward God. Faith is the acceptance of Jesus Christ and commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Saviour.

B. Justification is God's gracious and full acquittal upon principles of His righteousness of all sinners who repent and believe in Christ. Justification brings the believer unto a relationship of peace and favor with God.

C. Sanctification is the experience, beginning in regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to God's purposes, and is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual maturity through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. Growth in grace should continue throughout the regenerate person's life.

D. Glorification is the culmination of salvation and is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed.

Genesis 3:15; Exodus 3:14-17; 6:2-8; Matthew 1:21; 4:17; 16:21-26; 27:22-28:6; Luke 1:68-69; 2:28-32; John 1:11-14,29; 3:3-21,36; 5:24; 10:9,28-29; 15:1-16; 17:17; Acts 2:21; 4:12; 15:11; 16:30-31; 17:30-31; 20:32; Romans 1:16-18; 2:4; 3:23-25; 4:3ff.; 5:8-10; 6:1-23; 8:1-18,29-39; 10:9-10,13; 13:11-14; 1 Corinthians 1:18,30; 6:19-20; 15:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17-20; Galatians 2:20; 3:13; 5:22-25; 6:15; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-22; 4:11-16; Philippians 2:12-13; Colossians 1:9-22; 3:1ff.; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; 2 Timothy 1:12; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 2:1-3; 5:8-9; 9:24-28; 11:1-12,8,14; James 2:14-26; 1 Peter 1:2-23; 1 John 1:6-2:11; Revelation 3:20; 21:1-22:5.

V. God's Purpose of Grace

Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners. It is consistent with the free agency of man, and comprehends all the means in connection with the end. It is the glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, and is infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable. It excludes boasting and promotes humility.

All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end.

Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, and bring reproach on the cause of Christ and temporal

judgments on themselves; yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-8; 1 Samuel 8:4-7,19-22; Isaiah 5:1-7; Jeremiah 31:31ff.; Matthew 16:18-19; 21:28-45; 24:22,31; 25:34; Luke 1:68-79; 2:29-32; 19:41-44; 24:44-48; John 1:12-14; 3:16; 5:24; 6:44-45,65; 10:27-29; 15:16; 17:6,12,17-18; Acts 20:32; Romans 5:9-10; 8:28-39; 10:12-15; 11:5-7,26-36; 1 Corinthians 1:1-2; 15:24-28; Ephesians 1:4-23; 2:1-10; 3:1-11; Colossians 1:12-14; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 2 Timothy 1:12; 2:10,19; Hebrews 11:39-12:2; James 1:12; 1 Peter 1:2-5,13; 2:4-10; 1 John 1:7-9; 2:19; 3:2.

VI. The Church

A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the two ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ through democratic processes. In such a congregation each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord. Its scriptural officers are pastors and deacons. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture.

The New Testament speaks also of the church as the Body of Christ which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages, believers from every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation.

Matthew 16:15-19; 18:15-20; Acts 2:41-42,47; 5:11-14; 6:3-6; 13:1-3; 14:23,27; 15:1-30; 16:5; 20:28; Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 3:16; 5:4-5; 7:17; 9:13-14; 12; Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:19-22; 3:8-11,21; 5:22-32; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:18; 1 Timothy 2:9-14; 3:1-15; 4:14; Hebrews 11:39-40; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Revelation 2-3; 21:2-3.

VII. Baptism and the Lord's Supper

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Saviour, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's Supper.

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming.

Matthew 3:13-17; 26:26-30; 28:19-20; Mark 1:9-11; 14:22-26; Luke 3:21-22; 22:19-20; John 3:23; Acts 2:41-42; 8:35-39; 16:30-33; 20:7; Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 10:16,21; 11:23-29; Colossians 2:12.

VIII. The Lord's Day

The first day of the week is the Lord's Day. It is a Christian institution for regular observance. It commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead and should include exercises of

worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private. Activities on the Lord's Day should be commensurate with the Christian's conscience under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Exodus 20:8-11; Matthew 12:1-12; 28:1ff.; Mark 2:27-28; 16:1-7; Luke 24:1-3,33-36; John 4:21-24; 20:1,19-28; Acts 20:7; Romans 14:5-10; I Corinthians 16:1-2; Colossians 2:16; 3:16; Revelation 1:10.

IX. The Kingdom

The Kingdom of God includes both His general sovereignty over the universe and His particular kingship over men who willfully acknowledge Him as King. Particularly the Kingdom is the realm of salvation into which men enter by trustful, childlike commitment to Jesus Christ. Christians ought to pray and to labor that the Kingdom may come and God's will be done on earth. The full consummation of the Kingdom awaits the return of Jesus Christ and the end of this age.

Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 9:6-7; Jeremiah 23:5-6; Matthew 3:2; 4:8-10,23; 12:25-28; 13:1-52; 25:31-46; 26:29; Mark 1:14-15; 9:1; Luke 4:43; 8:1; 9:2; 12:31-32; 17:20-21; 23:42; John 3:3; 18:36; Acts 1:6-7; 17:22-31; Romans 5:17; 8:19; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28; Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 11:10,16; 12:28; 1 Peter 2:4-10; 4:13; Revelation 1:6,9; 5:10; 11:15; 21-22.

X. Last Things

God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth; the dead will be raised; and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment. The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord.

Isaiah 2:4; 11:9; Matthew 16:27; 18:8-9; 19:28; 24:27,30,36,44; 25:31-46; 26:64; Mark 8:38; 9:43-48; Luke 12:40,48; 16:19-26; 17:22-37; 21:27-28; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; 17:31; Romans 14:10; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 15:24-28,35-58; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Philippians 3:20-21; Colossians 1:5; 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 5:1ff.; 2 Thessalonians 1:7ff.; 2; 1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 4:1,8; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:27-28; James 5:8; 2 Peter 3:7ff.; 1 John 2:28; 3:2; Jude 14; Revelation 1:18; 3:11; 20:1-22:13.

XI. Evangelism and Missions

It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations. The new birth of man's spirit by God's Holy Spirit means the birth of love for others. Missionary effort on the part of all rests thus upon a spiritual necessity of the regenerate life, and is expressly and repeatedly commanded in the teachings of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the preaching of the gospel to all nations. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by verbal witness undergirded by a Christian lifestyle, and by other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ.

Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-6; Isaiah 6:1-8; Matthew 9:37-38; 10:5-15; 13:18-30, 37-43; 16:19; 22:9-10; 24:14; 28:18-20; Luke 10:1-18; 24:46-53; John 14:11-12; 15:7-8,16; 17:15; 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2; 8:26-40; 10:42-48; 13:2-3; Romans 10:13-15; Ephesians 3:1-11; 1 Thessalonians 1:8; 2 Timothy 4:5; Hebrews 2:1-3; 11:39-12:2; 1 Peter 2:4-10; Revelation 22:17.

XII. Education

Christianity is the faith of enlightenment and intelligence. In Jesus Christ abide all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. All sound learning is, therefore, a part of our Christian heritage. The new birth opens all human faculties and creates a thirst for knowledge. Moreover, the cause of education in the Kingdom of Christ is co-ordinate with the causes of missions and general benevolence, and should receive along with these the liberal support of the churches. An adequate system of Christian education is necessary to a complete spiritual program for Christ's people.

In Christian education there should be a proper balance between academic freedom and academic responsibility. Freedom in any orderly relationship of human life is always limited and never absolute. The freedom of a teacher in a Christian school, college, or seminary is limited by the pre-eminence of Jesus Christ, by the authoritative nature of the Scriptures, and by the distinct purpose for which the school exists.

Deuteronomy 4:1,5,9,14; 6:1-10; 31:12-13; Nehemiah 8:1-8; Job 28:28; Psalms 19:7ff.; 119:11; Proverbs 3:13ff.; 4:1-10; 8:1-7,11; 15:14; Ecclesiastes 7:19; Matthew 5:2; 7:24ff.; 28:19-20; Luke 2:40; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31; Ephesians 4:11-16; Philippians 4:8; Colossians 2:3,8-9; 1 Timothy 1:3-7; 2 Timothy 2:15; 3:14-17; Hebrews 5:12-6:3; James 1:5; 3:17.

XIII. Stewardship

God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual; all that we have and are we owe to Him. Christians have a spiritual debtorship to the whole world, a holy trusteeship in the gospel, and a binding stewardship in their possessions. They are therefore under obligation to serve Him with their time, talents, and material possessions; and should recognize all these as entrusted to them to use for the glory of God and for helping others. According to the Scriptures, Christians should contribute of their means cheerfully, regularly, systematically, proportionately, and liberally for the advancement of the Redeemer's cause on earth.

Genesis 14:20; Leviticus 27:30-32; Deuteronomy 8:18; Malachi 3:8-12; Matthew 6:1-4,19-21; 19:21; 23:23; 25:14-29; Luke 12:16-21,42; 16:1-13; Acts 2:44-47; 5:1-11; 17:24-25; 20:35; Romans 6:6-22; 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2; 6:19-20; 12; 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8-9; 12:15; Philippians 4:10-19; 1 Peter 1:18-19.

XIV. Cooperation

Christ's people should, as occasion requires, organize such associations and conventions as may best secure cooperation for the great objects of the Kingdom of God. Such organizations have no authority over one another or over the churches. They are voluntary and advisory bodies designed to elicit, combine, and direct the energies of our people in the most effective manner. Members of New Testament churches should cooperate with one another in carrying forward the missionary, educational, and benevolent ministries for the extension of Christ's Kingdom. Christian unity in the New Testament sense is spiritual harmony and voluntary cooperation for common ends by various groups of Christ's people. Cooperation is desirable between the various Christian denominations, when the end to be attained is itself justified, and when such cooperation involves no violation of conscience or compromise of loyalty to Christ and His Word as revealed in the New Testament.

Exodus 17:12; 18:17ff.; Judges 7:21; Ezra 1:3-4; 2:68-69; 5:14-15; Nehemiah 4; 8:1-5; Matthew 10:5-15; 20:1-16; 22:1-10; 28:19-20; Mark 2:3; Luke 10:1ff.; Acts 1:13-14; 2:1ff.; 4:31-37; 13:2-3; 15:1-35; 1 Corinthians 1:10-17; 3:5-15; 12; 2 Corinthians 8-9; Galatians 1:6-10; Ephesians 4:1-16; Philippians 1:15-18.

XV. The Christian and the Social Order

All Christians are under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in our own lives and in human society. Means and methods used for the improvement of society and the establishment of righteousness among men can be truly and permanently helpful only when they are rooted in the regeneration of the individual by the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ. In the spirit of Christ, Christians should oppose racism, every form of greed, selfishness, and vice, and all forms of sexual immorality, including adultery, homosexuality, and pornography. We should work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the abused, the aged, the helpless, and the sick. We should speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death. Every Christian should seek to bring industry, government, and society as a whole under the sway of the principles of righteousness, truth, and brotherly love. In order to promote these ends Christians should be ready to work with all men of good will in any good cause, always being careful to act in the spirit of love without compromising their loyalty to Christ and His truth.

Exodus 20:3-17; Leviticus 6:2-5; Deuteronomy 10:12; 27:17; Psalm 101:5; Micah 6:8; Zechariah 8:16; Matthew 5:13-16, 43-48; 22:36-40; 25:35; Mark 1:29-34; 2:3ff.; 10:21; Luke 4:18-21; 10:27-37; 20:25; John 15:12; 17:15; Romans 12-14; 1 Corinthians 5:9-10; 6:1-7; 7:20-24; 10:23-11:1; Galatians 3:26-28; Ephesians 6:5-9; Colossians 3:12-17; 1 Thessalonians 3:12; Philemon; James 1:27; 2:8.

XVI. Peace and War

It is the duty of Christians to seek peace with all men on principles of righteousness. In accordance with the spirit and teachings of Christ they should do all in their power to put an end to war.

The true remedy for the war spirit is the gospel of our Lord. The supreme need of the world is the acceptance of His teachings in all the affairs of men and nations, and the practical application of His law of love. Christian people throughout the world should pray for the reign of the Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 2:4; Matthew 5:9, 38-48; 6:33; 26:52; Luke 22:36, 38; Romans 12:18-19; 13:1-7; 14:19; Hebrews 12:14; James 4:1-2.

XVII. Religious Liberty

God alone is Lord of the conscience, and He has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are contrary to His Word or not contained in it. Church and state should be separate. The state owes to every church protection and full freedom in the pursuit of its spiritual ends. In providing for such freedom no ecclesiastical group or denomination should be favored by the state more than others. Civil government being ordained of God, it is the duty of Christians to render loyal obedience thereto in all things not contrary to the revealed will of God. The church should not resort to the civil power to carry on its work. The gospel of Christ contemplates spiritual means alone for the pursuit of its

ends. The state has no right to impose penalties for religious opinions of any kind. The state has no right to impose taxes for the support of any form of religion. A free church in a free state is the Christian ideal, and this implies the right of free and unhindered access to God on the part of all men, and the right to form and propagate opinions in the sphere of religion without interference by the civil power.

Genesis 1:27; 2:7; Matthew 6:6-7,24; 16:26; 22:21; John 8:36; Acts 4:19-20; Romans 6:1-2; 13:1-7; Galatians 5:1,13; Philippians 3:20; 1 Timothy 2:1-2; James 4:12; 1 Peter 2:12-17; 3:11-17; 4:12-19.

XVIII. The Family

God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption.

Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race.

The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation.

Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth. Children are to honor and obey their parents.

Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-25; 3:1-20; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Joshua 24:15; 1 Samuel 1:26-28; Psalms 51:5; 78:1-8; 127; 128; 139:13-16; Proverbs 1:8; 5:15-20; 6:20-22; 12:4; 13:24; 14:1; 17:6; 18:22; 22:6,15; 23:13-14; 24:3; 29:15,17; 31:10-31; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; 9:9; Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 5:31-32; 18:2-5; 19:3-9; Mark 10:6-12; Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16; Ephesians 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21; 1 Timothy 5:8,14; 2 Timothy 1:3-5; Titus 2:3-5; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7.

WEEK 8: HOW SHOULD I RELATE TO THE CHURCH?

I. CHURCH LIFE

A. What is the Church?

As a new Christian, it is vital for you to understand the relationship you should have with the local church the rest of your life on earth. Jesus Christ arranged his disciples on earth in local churches for their protection and care until they should be drawn into the heavenly assembly of perfected believers. He did this because he wanted us to be in the family of God, relating in a wonderful and healthy way with other Christians. If we are Christians, then God is our Father; we are adopted sons and daughters of the living God. But God has adopted children like us from nations all over the world. These Christians are united by their faith in Christ and by the indwelling Holy Spirit:

Ephesians 4:4-6 There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

The biblical word for this vast invisible “body of Christ” is the “church”. Jesus says this is what he is building all over the world. He said to the Apostle Peter:

Matthew 16:18 And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

The Greek word for “church” is *ekklesia*, which means “called out ones.” We are those who have been “called out” of Satan’s dark kingdom, and assembled into the family of God:

Colossians 1:13-14 He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

This word in the Old Testament was “assembly,” as if the believers of Israel were called out of their tents or their homes to worship the living God. (Psalm 68:26, Psalm 149:1-2)

In the New Testament, the word “church” is used in two related but different ways. Sometimes, the word is used to refer to the sum total of all the true believers in Christ, alive or dead, in every nation on earth. This is sometimes called the “invisible church.” The moment you became a Christian, you were mystically joined to that church, called “the Body of Christ.” (1 Corinthians 12:13)

Paul likens marriage to the relationship of Christ to the church and the head to the body. (Ephesians 5:23, 29-30)

In other cases, the word “church” refers to an actual assembly of Christian people in a specific locality. We call this a “local church.” A local church has members (by a mutual covenant... more on this in a moment) that live in that community, people who know and are known by the other members of the church. Jesus was speaking of the local church when he taught about church discipline. (Matthew 18:15-17)

So also Paul usually used the word “church” (and especially the plural, “churches”) to refer to the local church.

In the New Testament, the word “church” does not refer to a building, although it is likely that some churches did have dedicated buildings where they met. But many churches simply met in people’s homes. We should learn to think of the church as people, other believers. And we are now part of that by our faith in Christ.

B. What Are the Basic Functions of a Local Church?

Theologians in the past said, “Where you have the true preaching of the Word, the right observance of the ordinances (baptism and Lord’s Supper), and the proper practice of church discipline, there you have a church.”

Well, these basic functions are vital, but there are more than just those three. Let me give you an overview of all the proper functions of a local church.

The local church is primarily established to advance the Kingdom of God by evangelism/missions, and to help individual Christians grow to spiritual maturity in Christ. In our church, we call these twin commitments, “the two infinite journeys.” Christians will be busy doing both until Jesus returns! Beyond these two basic functions (evangelism and discipleship), the church should:

- 1) assemble regularly for corporate worship and the preaching of the Word of God;
- 2) perform the ordinances of baptism and the Lord’s Supper,
- 3) watch over the spiritual welfare of its members, performing discipline for sin where needed;
- 4) care for the material welfare of its needy members when necessary;
- 5) collect money for the ongoing needs of the church, the spread of the gospel, and the alleviation of the misery of the poor;
- 6) show compassion to the suffering by various works of mercy;
- 7) pray for these various needs.

We can also get a good idea of what a church should do by looking at the “one another” passages in the New Testament:

- Be at peace with each other (Mark 9:50)
- Love one another (John 13:34)
- Be joined to one another (Romans 12:5)
- Be devoted to one another (Romans 12:10)
- Honor one another (Romans 12:10)
- Rejoice with one another (Romans 12:15)
- Weep with one another (Romans 12:15)
- Live in harmony with one another (Romans 12:16)
- Accept one another (Romans 15:7)
- Counsel one another (Romans 15:14)
- Greet one another (Romans 16:16)
- Agree with each other (1 Corinthians 1:10)
- Wait for one another (1 Corinthians 11:33)
- Care for one another (1 Corinthians 12:25)
- Serve one another (Galatians 5:13)
- Carry one another’s burdens (Galatians 6:2)
- Be kind to one another (Ephesians 4:32)
- Forgive one another (Ephesians 4:32)
- Submit to one another (Ephesians 5:21)
- Bear with one another (Colossians 3:13)
- Teach, admonish each other (Colossians 3:16)
- Encourage one another (1 Thessalonians 5:11)
- Build up one another (1 Thessalonians 5:11)
- Spur one another on (Hebrews 10:24)
- Offer hospitality to one another (1 Peter 4:9)
- Minister gifts to one another (1 Peter 4:10)
- Be humble toward one another (1 Peter 5:5)
- Confess your sins to one another (James 5:16)
- Pray for one another (James 5:16)
- Fellowship with one another (1 John 1:7)

A committed group of Christians that does these things for one another is called a “church.”

C. What is Covenant Membership of a Local Church?

We often speak of “covenant membership” of a local church. A covenant is a binding agreement between two or more persons. The most common covenant we see acted out before us is marriage: a man and a woman agree before God and witnesses to be husband and wife, with all the privileges and duties connected with that union. Covenant membership in a local church is very similar to a marriage, but with some significant differences. Covenant membership in a local church involves individual Christians agreeing to certain clearly-stated commitments between the individual and the group: as the Three Musketeers put it, “All for one, and one for all.” The clearly-stated commitments are written out in a church covenant, and the individual Christian agrees to these commitments.

Though this idea of “covenant membership” in a local church is not clearly spelled out in the New Testament, it is assumed. The word “member” is related to the “Body of Christ” image in Romans 12:4-5.

The possibility of church discipline in which a person who was “inside” the church (i.e. a member of it) could be expelled assumes that there are clear boundaries in which the people of the local church know who is “in” and who is “out” as clearly seen in 1 Corinthians 5:12-13.

The Membership Covenant of First Baptist

Having been led as we believe by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we do now in the presence of God and this assembly most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge, holiness, and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, doctrines, and discipline; to give it sacred preeminence over all institutions of human origin; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations.

We also engage to maintain family and personal devotions; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger; to use our influence to combat the abuse of drugs and alcohol and the spread of pornography and other practices which lead to moral and spiritual decay; and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember one another in prayer; to aid one another in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and Christian courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the rules of our Savior to secure it without delay.

We moreover engage that when we remove from this place we will as soon as possible unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

These commitments we make to each other are of the essence of our local church life. Covenant membership is a voluntary agreement that Christians make to one another for the glory of God and for our mutual protection and benefit. It is vital for you as a new Christian to accept that you must be a covenant member of some healthy local church the rest of your life.

D. What Kind of Church Should I Join?

Not all churches are truly Christian—made up of genuine Christians who are truly filled with the Holy Spirit and are preaching the true Word of God. There are a lot of imposters, just as Judas Iscariot only seemed to be a true Apostle. So we need to be very discerning about what church to join.

To evaluate a local church, you should begin by attending its main worship service. You should observe everything, noting how people are to one another, and what kinds of things happen. But by far the most important part of evaluating a local church is the sermon—the main doctrinal instruction of the church. Paul gave a strong statement about the role of the church in the world:

1 Timothy 3:14-15 I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these things to you so that, ¹⁵ if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth.

Listen to the sermon. Is it preaching the Bible, or is it primarily just the opinion of the pastor? Does he preach Christ crucified and resurrected? Does he plainly explain how sinners can be saved through repentance and faith in Christ? Does he also teach the text of the Bible so that people already saved can grow in their faith in Christ? Is it clear? Is it interesting? Is the preacher passionate? The sermon sets the tone for a lot of the life of the church.

Beyond that, you can evaluate the health of a church by other marks. Mark Dever wrote a helpful summary called *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church*. In that summary, beyond the preaching of the text, he added eight other marks of a healthy church:

1. Expository Preaching

This is preaching which expounds what Scripture says in a particular passage, carefully explaining its meaning and applying it to the congregation. It is a commitment to hearing God's Word and to recovering the centrality of it in our worship.

2. Biblical Theology

Paul charges Titus to "teach what is in accord with sound doctrine" (Titus 2:1). Our concern should be not only with how we are taught, but with what we are taught. Biblical theology is a commitment to know the God of the Bible as He has revealed Himself in Scripture.

3. Biblical Understanding of the Good News

The gospel is the heart of Christianity. But the good news is not that God wants to meet people's felt needs or help them develop a healthier self-image. We have sinfully rebelled against our Creator and Judge. Yet He has graciously sent His Son to die the death we deserved for our sin, and He has credited Christ's acquittal to those who repent of their sins and believe in Jesus' death and resurrection. *That* is the good news.

4. Biblical Understanding of Conversion

The spiritual change each person needs is so radical, so near the root of us, that only God can do it. We need God to convert us. Conversion need not be an emotionally heated experience, but it must evidence itself in godly fruit if it is to be what the Bible regards as a true conversion.

5. Biblical Understanding of Evangelism

How someone shares the gospel is closely related to how he understands the gospel. To present it as an additive that gives non-Christians something they naturally want (i.e. joy or peace) is to present a half-truth, which elicits false conversions. The whole truth is that our deepest need is spiritual life, and that new life only comes by repenting of our sins and believing in Jesus. We present the gospel openly, and leave the converting to God.

6. Biblical Understanding of Membership

Membership should reflect a living commitment to a local church in attendance, giving, prayer and service; otherwise it is meaningless, worthless, and even dangerous. We should not allow people to keep their membership in our churches for sentimental reasons or lack of attention. To be a member is knowingly to be traveling together as aliens and strangers in this world as we head to our heavenly home.

7. Biblical Church Discipline

Church discipline gives parameters to church membership. The idea seems negative to people today – "didn't our Lord forbid judging?" But if we

cannot say how a Christian should *not* live, how can we say how he or she *should* live? Each local church actually has a biblical responsibility to judge the life and teaching of its leaders, and even of its members, particularly insofar as either could compromise the church's witness to the gospel.

8. Promotion of Christian Discipleship and Growth

A pervasive concern with church growth exists today – not simply with growing numbers, but with growing members. Though many Christians measure other things, the only certain observable sign of growth is a life of increasing holiness, rooted in Christian self-denial. These concepts are nearly extinct in the modern church. Recovering true discipleship for today would build the church and promote a clearer witness to the world.

9. Biblical Understanding of Leadership

What eighteenth-century Baptists and Presbyterians often agreed upon was that there should be a plurality of elders in each local church. This plurality of elders is not only biblical, but practical — it has the immense benefit of rounding out the pastor's gifts to ensure the proper shepherding of God's church.

These marks of a healthy church are a good set of criteria to find out what kind of church to join. Beyond these, there may be some other factors (proximity, size of the church, style of worship music, patterns of small group Bible study, etc.) These are not as important, but could factor into your decision.

E. Why It Is Vital for Every Believer to Be a Covenant Member of a Church?

Some people think they can be healthy spiritually on their own, apart from the local church. They may watch a famous preacher on TV or online and think that's "good enough." Others invest themselves vigorously in what's known as "parachurch ministries," Christian works that care for the poor and needy in a city, or that reach college students, or that care for unwed mothers, or that lead Bible studies for prisoners, or some other worthy cause, and think "What do I need the church for? I'm busy every day doing this ministry?"

Well, we've already seen that the church is the "Body of Christ," and we are all "members." (Romans 12:4-5) Every member of the human body must stay vitally connected with the rest of the body in order to stay alive: each finger and toe and leg and arm and ear and eye must receive a constant supply of oxygen and nutrients just to keep living. So it is with the local church: we cannot be healthy and cut off from local church.

I want to give two compelling reasons why every believer in Christ should be a covenant member of a healthy local church for the rest of their lives.

Reason #1: For protection from indwelling sin.

Each of us carries around in our bodies the seeds of our own spiritual destruction. Romans 7 calls it “indwelling sin.” Read Romans 7:15, 7:17, and 7:20.

Every Christian is in a bitter spiritual war for the health of his soul. The enemies are well-known: the world, the flesh and the devil. The Christian’s soul is like a walled city being assaulted by two external enemies. The devil has designed a very clever world system of lusts and idols and temptations that constantly besiege the soul, seeking to draw it away from Christ. The flesh (our indwelling sin) creeps to the main gate and seek to lower it, compromising the defenses of our souls. This warfare, though invisible, is constant. Of the three enemies, the worst is indwelling sin... our own habits of wickedness that allure us to evil and bring us shame. We need constant help... and God has set up the church to do precisely that. A powerful passage that addresses this is Hebrews 3:12-13.

This passage (Hebrews 3:12-13) speaks of a dire threat—a “sinful unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God.” The force acting to bring that terrible thing about is “sin’s deceitfulness.” Sin is deceitful in that it promises happiness and only brings death and destruction. Sin has a hardening effect on the heart, so that little by little the heart is drawn away after sin and away from the living God. We become hardened to the sweet calling of God by His Spirit and the shocking wickedness of sin. The remedy in this passage is the Body of Christ—the “brothers” who are commanded here to “see to it” that none of their number is gradually drifting away from Christ. The Body of Christ is to us this constant vigilance and daily encouragement to offset the incessant assault of sin on the Christian’s heart. Encouragement is especially in the form of the Word of God, the gospel of Jesus Christ:

Hebrews 2:1 Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it.

The church is set up to help its members with their constant battle with sin. It does this by vigilantly “watching over one another in brotherly love” (as our church covenant says), encouraging each other to fight sin by the gospel. If we are not covenant members of a good church, we will be very vulnerable to the deceitfulness of sin, and our hearts will become hard, turning away from the living God. You need to be active in a good church with fellow Christians who will pray for you and ask you good questions about the state of your soul and intervene when you need it to keep you healthy in Jesus.

Reason #2: For maximum rewards on Judgment Day.

One of the most significant reasons God has left us on earth is so that we may do many good works that he has prepared for us to do:

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

These good works help build up the Body of Christ, advancing the Kingdom and helping you and others grow into Christlike maturity. Jesus says we will be storing up treasure for which we will be rewarded on the Day of Judgment (Matthew 6:19-21), and in the context of that statement, he is referring to good works like giving money to the poor and needy, praying, and fasting. Paul says that all our works will be tested by fire on the Day of Judgment, and only those things that were done for his glory will last:

1 Corinthians 3:12-15 *Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw—¹³ each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. ¹⁴ If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. ¹⁵ If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.*

Being a member of a healthy local church will help you not to **waste your life** on worthless things that will only be consumed on Judgment Day. A clear passage teaching this is in Hebrews 10:

Hebrews 10:24-25 *And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, ²⁵ not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.*

In this passage, we (as members of a local church) are to consider each other, to the end that we may spur one another on to love and good deeds. We do this by encouraging one another to be zealous for good works, using our spiritual gifts and strengthening each other, and all the more as we see Judgment Day approaching. So, you need to be in a good church so you can be trained, encouraged, and held accountable to do a maximum number of good works for the glory of God, and be highly rewarded on Judgment Day.

F. What Are Some Benefits of Membership?

As a member of a healthy church, you will receive the benefits of other people's spiritual gifts. They will teach you the Word of God, pray for you, encourage you when you are feeling down, warn you about harmful habit patterns they are seeing in your life, keep you from feeling lonely, give you a rich and wide circle of close friends, support you with advice, finances, and all other kinds of help in times of need, rejoice with your good news, grieve with your sad news. In a good local church, you will have opportunities both to give and receive many blessings. You will partake in the Lord's Supper, which is a constant reminder of the death, resurrection, and Second Coming of Christ. You will grow in Christ and help others to do the same. All these

benefits (and countless others) will come from covenant membership in a healthy local church.

G. What Are Some Responsibilities of Membership?

You will be responsible to attend worship services regularly, contribute financially, pray, and use your spiritual gifts to serve others. Spiritual gifts are special abilities given with variety to each Christian. Each Christian has a spiritual gift package that enables each one to find a fruitful pattern of ministry in the local church (Ephesians 4:7, Ephesians 4:12, Romans 12:4-8, 1 Corinthians 12:4-7).

These passages (Ephesians 4:7, Ephesians 4:12, Romans 12:4-8, 1 Corinthians 12:4-7) teach the every Christian has some spiritual gift(s) by which he/she can minister to other Christians to help strengthen them. These gifts bring joy to local church life. It gives us a powerful sense of meaning to our lives. And God uses our gifts to build up the whole Body of Christ until it reaches maturity.

We will also be called on to give money sacrificially. Though money isn't the most important thing you can give to a local church, it is a vital indicator of your spiritual health. Whatever you give should be generous and done cheerfully, by faith:

2 Corinthians 9:7 Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

These are some of the varied responsibilities of membership.

H. A Special Word on Commitment to the Local Church

It is vital that you be faithful to attend church, and not to make a habit of skipping church. Hebrews 10:25 (quoted above) teaches this plainly:

Hebrews 10:24-25 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, ²⁵ not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

Every week, Christians face temptations to skip church. Satan whispers into our ears that "It's just for a week" or "It's legalism to think you have to go every week." Little by little, it's easy to get into bad habits of missing church. Beyond that, it's easy to begin criticizing the local church you're committed to—just as spouses are tempted to find faults in their spouses after a few years of marriage. But God wants us to be committed to our local church, and to be patient with its flaws, and to overcome the temptation to skip church. This is vital for our long-term spiritual health!

WEEK 9: WHAT IS BAPTISM? WHAT IS THE LORD'S SUPPER?

Last week, we discussed the need a new Christian has for a proper relationship with the church of Jesus Christ. We defined the marks of a church: 1) the right teaching/preaching of the Word of God; 2) the proper use of the ordinances (baptism and Lord's Supper); 3) the proper administration of church discipline. Today, we'll look at the second of this list of three: the ordinances of the local church.

Today, we'll assert that a new Christian should, as soon as possible after repentance and saving faith be baptized in water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

We'll also assert that a regular participation in the Lord's Supper is essential to ongoing spiritual health and a right relationship to the local church.

I. TWO ORDINANCES

A. Ordinances are Things Ordained by Christ for the Church

1. Established by Christ during His time on earth
2. To be done in the context of the local church

B. "Means of Grace"

1. These are ordained by Christ for the benefit of His people
2. Their purpose is to help us in our spiritual lives with Him
3. They are called "Means of Grace" because by these God ministers grace to us

C. We Recognize Two

1. Baptism
2. Lord's Supper

D. Symbolic in Nature

1. They are done in the physical world
2. But they have spiritual significance
3. Thus they are symbolic in nature
4. This does not mean they are unimportant
5. "Outward visible sign of an internal spiritual reality"

II. BAPTISM

A. What Is It?

1. Word Means "To Immerse"
 - a. Though some Christian churches baptize by sprinkling, this is not the proper use of the Greek word
 - b. The word literally means "to immerse"

- c. If I told someone I wanted a garment to be dyed purple in a vat of indigo, and that person responded by sprinkling some indigo dye on the garment, I would think they have not heard me... “No, I said ‘immerse!’” Immersion and sprinkling are two different things
2. Immersion in water done once in the life of a true believer in Christ
 - a. We need not repeat baptism in the Christian life; indeed we OUGHT NOT to
 - b. Baptism is an ordinance marking for all time the beginning of the Christian life
 3. Baptism a beginning ordinance... done as soon as possible after initial saving faith
 - a. On the day of Pentecost, 3000 believed and were added to the church; they were baptized right away
 - b. So also the Ethiopian Eunuch was baptized immediately after he came to faith (Read Acts 8:35-38)
 4. A matter of obedience
 - a. In a moment, I will argue that water baptism is not necessary to go to heaven
 - b. However, it is commanded by Christ
 - c. Therefore, to refuse baptism is a sign that the person is not really a Christian, since a Christian is someone who submits to the Kingly rule of Christ
 5. Opportunity to proclaim faith in Christ
 - a. Jesus says we should be willing to confess His name publicly

Matthew 10:32-33 So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, ³³ but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.

b. Paul says

Romans 10:9 if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

c. Some evangelical churches make much of “walking the aisle” or “coming forward” or “altar calls” as public professions of faith in Christ; but water baptism is the New Testament way of making our faith in Christ public

6. Connection to the Local Church

- a. Throughout the Book of Acts, it is by water baptism that someone makes public their connection to the church of Christ
- b. So, it is necessary in order to be a member of a local church
- c. Of course, it never needs to be repeated in life, so all that is necessary is a testimony of earlier baptism once it's happened

B. Baptism First Seen in the Ministry of John the Baptist (Matthew 3:1-2)

C. Christ's Baptism a Higher Baptism (Matthew 3:11-12)

D. Water Baptism in the Gospels:

1. Submitted to by Christ (Matthew 3:13-17)
2. Performed by Christ's Disciples (John 3:22, John 4:1-2)
3. Commanded by Christ for His Church (Matthew 28:19-20)

E. What Baptism Symbolizes

1. Symbolic of Baptism of the Spirit (Acts 1:5, 1 Corinthians 12:13)
2. Symbolic of Union with Christ in Death and Resurrection... and a commitment to walk in a new life of personal holiness (Romans 6:1-5)
3. Symbolic of Spiritual Cleansing (1 Peter 3:21)

F. Done Only to Believers

1. Again and again in the Book of Acts, it is only believers that are baptized (Acts 2:37-38, Acts 8:12, Acts 16:14-15, Acts 16:29-34, Acts 18:8)
2. So we reject the concept of infant baptism

G. Faulty Views of Baptism Rejected

1. Infant baptism: no scriptural warrant
2. Baptismal regeneration (baptism required for heaven) is false
 - a. Thief on the cross was not baptized
 - b. Paul's statement:

1 Corinthians 1:17 *For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.*

III. LORD'S SUPPER

- A. What Is It?
- B. Established by Christ the Night He Was Betrayed (Matthew 26:26-29, 1 Corinthians 11:23-32)
- C. Commanded as a Repeated Ordinance (1 Corinthians 11:25-26)
- D. Symbolism of the Lord's Supper
 - 1. Lord's Supper a Memorial of Christ's Death (Matthew 26: 27-27, 1 Corinthians 11:25-26)
 - 2. Lord's Supper a Symbol of Christian Unity (1 Corinthians 10:16-17)
 - 3. Lord's Supper a Picture of Our Heavenly Feast with Christ (Matthew 26:29)
- E. The Seriousness of the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:27-30)
- F. Faulty Views of the Lord's Supper Rejected
- G. Spiritual Presence
- H. "Looking" Properly at the Lord's Supper
 - 1. Looking back... at Christ's death, and our own conversion
 - 2. Looking inward... at our own sinfulness, and our union with Christ
 - 3. Looking around... at the Body of Christ
 - 4. Looking up... to God for ongoing Life
 - 5. Looking ahead... to Christ's Return and a Heavenly Feast

WEEK 10: FAITHFUL STEWARDSHIP OF MONEY

Amazingly, one of the topics our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ addressed the most frequently and poignantly was the issue of money. The way we handle our money says a lot about the state of our hearts. Therefore, it is essential for a new Christian to begin early in bringing this area of his/her life under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Our purpose today is to look at some basic teachings on money and derive from them some general guidelines that will be helpful in a growing Christian's life.

I. CHRIST TEACHES US ABOUT MONEY

A. A Fundamental Issue of Conversion

1. Our natural sin: idolatry (Romans 1:25)
2. Serving two masters is impossible (Matthew 6:24)

According to this statement in Matthew 6, God and money are rival powers, rival masters; if a man is still serving money, he cannot be Christ's disciple. Therefore, one of the works of the Holy Spirit in conversion is transforming someone's view of earthly possessions and money.

3. When Salvation Comes, It Reaches Our Money

- a. Matthew 19:21-23: The "Rich Young Ruler" tried to serve both masters; he wanted to go to heaven, but he was unwilling to part with his possessions in order to do so; when Jesus forced him to choose, he tragically chose money. (Matthew 19:21-23)
- b. Luke 19:1-10: Zacchaeus made the opposite decision from the Rich Young Ruler; voluntarily he offers to give half his money to the poor and to make restitution for his past financial sins. On the basis of that decision and statement, Jesus declares that "salvation has come to this house"! That's how important money is.
- c. Luke 12:13-21: In this parable, the Rich Fool is wealthy in possessions but poor in spiritual things; his wealth is a gift of God, but all he wants to do is use his possessions for his own pleasure. But that very night he dies and goes to face Judgment Day. So also many Americans live this kind of life after their so-called conversion.

B. Two Key Parables on Stewardship

1. Matthew 25:14-30
2. Luke 16:1-15

II. SOME GENERAL PRINCIPLES

1. Everything We Have is God's (Psalm 24:1, 1 Corinthians 4:7, Romans 11:36)
2. We Are Stewards of His Possessions (Luke 16:11-12, Matthew 25:14)
3. We Will Give Him an Account of What We Have Done with His Things (Luke 16:2, Matthew 18:23, 2 Corinthians 5:10)
4. God Means for Us to Invest Our Possessions for His Kingdom (Luke 16:9)
5. If We Do So, We Will Store Up Treasure (Rewards) in Heaven (Luke 12:33-34)
6. God Commands Us to Care for the Poor and Needy (Luke 14:13-14)
7. God Also Means for Us to Provide for Our Basic Needs (1 Thess. 4:11-12)
8. God Desires for Us to Live Simple Lives, Not Glutted with Earthly Pleasures (Luke 12:15, 1 Timothy 6:8)
9. Materialism Is Idolatry... and a Great Danger to Our Souls (1 Timothy 6:9-10, Ephesians 5:5, Colossians 3:5)
10. Christian giving is a grace from God (2 Corinthians 8:1-3)
11. God Desires Us to Give Money Generously By Faith (1 Timothy 6:17-19, 2 Corinthians 9:11)
12. God Defines Generosity by Sacrifice, Not by Amount (Mark 12:41-44, 2 Corinthians 8:12)
13. The Unequal Distribution of Wealth is a Test from God; We Should Not Assume that, Just Because We Have the Money, It's Ours to Spend on Ourselves (2 Corinthians 8:13-15)
14. God Desires Us to Give Money Cheerfully (2 Corinthians 9:6-7)
15. Giving Should be Done Cheerfully and Liberally, According to the Heart (2 Corinthians 9:6-7)

WEEK 11: HOW DO I TELL OTHERS ABOUT JESUS?

Immediately after people trust in Christ, they often have some of the best evangelistic opportunities they will ever have in their Christian life. At that point in time, they have many non-Christian family/friends, and they have a high comfort level in those relationships. They also have a high level of excitement about their new faith in Christ, and a high level of hope that the same gospel message that saved them can also save their family/friends.

What they need is good training on how to share their faith. This outline will give a sense of 1) the need for evangelism; 2) the responsibility for evangelism; 3) a memorable gospel outline; 4) carrying on a gospel conversation

I. THE NEED FOR EVANGELISM

- A. Apart from Christ, All Human Beings Are Lost (John 3:36)
- B. The Gospel is the Power of God for Salvation (Romans 1:16)
- C. The Gospel Must Be Proclaimed by Witnesses (Romans 10:13-15)

II. THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR EVANGELISM

- A. The Great Commission is for the Whole Church (Acts 1:8)
- B. Every Christian Bears This Responsibility (Acts 8:1, Acts 8:4)

III. A MEMORABLE GOSPEL OUTLINE

Simple Four-Part Outline: God-Man-Christ-Response

GOSPEL OUTLINE

God:

- God is Creator (Genesis 1:1)
 - Therefore, God is loving (Acts 14:17)
- God is King (Psalm 47:7)
 - Therefore, God is sovereign (Psalm 103:19)
 - Therefore, God also makes laws (10 Commandments + 2 Commandments)

Ten Commandments:

- 1) You shall have no other gods
- 2) You shall not make or worship idols
- 3) You shall not take the Name of the Lord in vain
- 4) Keep the Sabbath day holy
- 5) Honor your father and mother
- 6) You shall not murder [**and anger is the root of all murder**]
- 7) You shall not commit adultery [**and lust is adultery in your heart**]
- 8) You shall not steal
- 9) You shall not bear false witness
- 10) You shall not covet anything

Two Commandments:

- 1) You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength
- 2) You shall love your neighbor as yourself

- God is Judge (Psalm 96:13)
 - Therefore, God is **holy** (Habakkuk 1:13)

Man:

- Man is Created by God the Creator (Genesis 1:27)
 - Created to **be like** God, to **know/love** God, to **serve** God
- Man is Rebellious Against God the King
 - Universally Rebellious (Romans 3:10-12)
 - Rebellious Against God's Laws (10 + 2 Commandments_
- Man is Under Judgment by God the Judge
 - Judgment Day (Matthew 12:36)
 - Judgment Penalty (Romans 6:23)

First Key Question: How can a sinful person enter heaven where God allows no sin?

Christ:

- God's Fourth Title—Savior (Isaiah 33:22)
 - Saved from what? (Matthew 1:21, From our sins!)
- Jesus' Supernatural Life

- God-man (John 1:1, John 1:14)
- Miraculous (Matthew 11:5)
- Sinless (1 Peter 2:22)
- Jesus' Substitutionary Death (1 Peter 2:24, 2 Corinthians 5:21)
- Jesus' Saving Resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:3-5)
- Jesus' Salvation Gifts
 - Total Forgiveness of Sins (Ephesians 1:7)
 - Eternal Life (Romans 6:23)

Response:

Second Key Question: "What must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30)

- What You Must DO: (Mark 1:15)
 - Repent: U-Turn: Away from sin; Toward God
 - Believe the gospel: Believe THAT it's true; Believe IN Christ
- What You Must NOT DO:
 - Do Not Work For It (Ephesians 2:8-9)
 - Do Not Wait For Tomorrow (2 Corinthians 6:2)

Those who repent of their sins and believe in Christ will have eternal life, both now, and forever!

- Eternal life (now)
 - New Creation by the Creator (2 Corinthians 5:17)
 - Joyful Servant to the King (1 John 3:24)
 - Completely Pardoned by the Judge (John 5:24)
 - Adoption into God's Family (John 1:12)

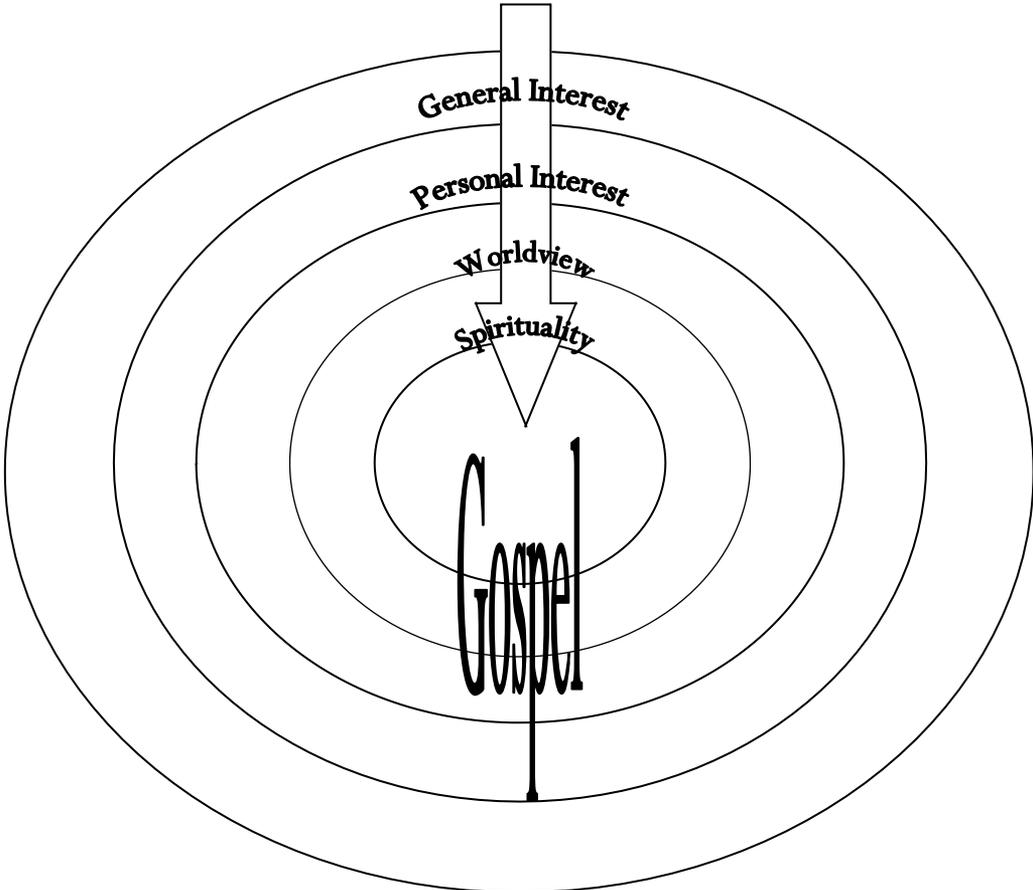
- Eternal Life Forever (in heaven)

John 11:25-26 *Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, ²⁶ and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?"*

IV. CARRYING ON A GOSPEL CONVERSATION

- A. How do I turn a common conversation to spiritual things?
 1. Taking initiative in conversation
 - a. need to be interested, friendly, others-centered
 - b. look constantly for opportunities to begin conversations... who knows where it will lead??
 2. Hardest transition: from secular to sacred topics
 - a. challenging to begin conversation with stranger
 - b. easy once begun to talk about "general interest" issues
 - c. hardest transition: to the gospel itself
 3. Best approach: concentric circles, getting ever closer to the topic

A Gospel Conversation



4. Be like Jesus... a fascinating conversationalist

John 4:10 Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water."

HIGH INTEREST LEVEL: 1) What is the "Gift of God"? 2) Who are you? 3) Why should I ask you for anything? 4) What is "living water"?

Be like Jesus... an excellent question-asker (See Matthew 9:5, Matthew 16:26)

Carrying on a gospel conversation: Concentric circles

- The management of a "gospel conversation" should progress through concentric circles from more general and superficial topics through to the core issues of the gospel.
- The goal is to draw the person to whom we're witnessing into a conversation over these core issues so that we have an opportunity to share the saving message of the gospel.
- One of the key tools we can glean from Jesus' evangelistic technique is that of asking searching, open-ended questions that cause a person to reflect on life or death issues.

Real-Life Example: We can and should use this approach in witnessing. For example, suppose you're getting your hair cut at a "Great Clips" store. The woman seats you and asks how you want your hair cut today. You answer the question and she settles in to do her work. You can lead her through ever more serious levels of discussion by your questions:

- 1) **General Interest (Level 1):** "How long have you worked here?" "Do you like working at a place like Great Clips, or would you rather work in a smaller salon?" "Has today been busy?" "What's the busiest day?" "What kind of hair is easiest to cut? What kind is hardest?"
- 2) **Personal Interest (Level 2):** "Why did you decide to become a hairdresser?" "Do you enjoy cutting people's hair? Why?" "You seem to enjoy talking to people... are most customers easy to talk with?" "Do you frequently have to cut the hair of your friends or relatives? How does it make you feel when they ask you to do it?"
- 3) **Worldview (Level 3):** "What would you say is the number one problem facing society today, and how do you think we can solve it?" "If you inherited a million dollars tomorrow, how would your life change? Do you think it would change you?" "What are your goals in life?" "What makes life worth living?" "Do you ever fear death?" "What do you think happens when we die?"
- 4) **Spirituality (Level 4):** "Where are you on your spiritual journey?" "What is your spiritual background? Do you have a church you attend regularly?" "Have you ever read the gospel accounts of the life of Jesus Christ?" "What's the most remarkable thing you ever heard about Jesus Christ?" "If you could ask Christ one question—about anything at all—what would it be?"

- 5) **Gospel (Level 5):** “If you were to die tonight, how certain would you be that you would go to heaven?” “Has anyone ever explained to you how the death of Jesus Christ benefits people today?”

The following are some various questions you could use in conversations:

EVANGELISTIC QUESTIONS

OPENING:

1. “What three things are you most thankful for in your life?”
2. “What is your happiest memory from childhood?”
3. “If you could meet any person from history, who would it be and why?”
4. “What qualities are most important in a mate and why?”
5. “Who was the person who most influenced your values? If you could sum up your values in a few thoughts, what would they be?”
6. “Why do you think there's so much violence in the world these days?”
7. “Let's say you were 80 years old and looking back on what you consider to be a good life. What would you want to be in that life?”
8. “If you could have anything at all, what would it be?”
9. “If you could only have one of the following, which would you choose: money, power, good relationships, accomplishments, character, long life?”
10. “What is the most important aspect to a successful life?”
11. “What would you say are the most important differences between your values and those of your parents? Grandparents?”
12. “Would you say most people are afraid to die? If so, why?”
13. “Do you ever think about death? Are you ever afraid to die?”

TRANSITIONAL:

14. “What is your spiritual background?”
15. “Did you enjoy going to church when you were a kid?”
16. “What's the most beautiful natural sight you've ever seen? When you saw it, what did it make you think of God?”
17. “Have you ever prayed for something and got what you asked for?”
18. “Why do you think most people don't attend church regularly?”
19. “If you could ask God any question, what would it be and why?”
20. “What would it take for you to believe there's a God?”
21. “What is the significance of Easter to you?”

EVANGELISTIC:

22. “Who do you think Jesus Christ was?”
23. “Why do you think Jesus died?”
24. “If I could prove to you that Jesus Christ rose from the dead, would you ask Him to be your personal Lord and Savior?”
25. “If you were to die tonight and have to stand before God to give an account for your life, and He were to ask you why He should let you into heaven, what would you say?”
26. “Has there ever been a time in your life that you've asked Jesus Christ to be your Lord and Savior, or are you still thinking about it?”

27. “The most important thing in my life is having a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ. Would you like to know how you can know God personally?”
28. [If you notice the person is wearing a cross] “Why do you wear that cross?”
“Do you understand the significance of the cross in Christ’s life?”

B. How do I bring someone to a point of repentance and faith commitment to Christ?

1. Use only when full gospel (“God-Man-Christ-Response”) has been shared
 - a. there’s no point in bringing someone to a quick “decision” who hasn’t heard of Christ
 - b. make sure there’s been enough time to cover the key gospel facts
2. The need for human response essential to the gospel
 - a. Jesus made the blind beggars ask for what they wanted, even though it was obvious (Matthew 20:30-34)
 - b. Spurgeon: Robinson Crusoe’s Text & “Taking shares”

Psalm 50:15 and call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me.”

Charles Spurgeon: God And The Praying Man Taking Shares.

That is an odd word to close with, but I want you to notice it. Here are the shares. First, here is your share: “Call upon me in the day of trouble.” Secondly, here is God’s share: “I will deliver thee.” Again, you take a share—for you shall be delivered. And then again it is the Lord’s turn—”Thou shalt glorify me.” Here is a compact, a covenant that God enters into with you who pray to him, and whom he helps. He says, “You shall have the deliverance, but I must have the glory. You shall pray; I will bless; and then you shall honor my holy name.” Here is a delightful partnership: we obtain that which we so greatly need, and all that God gets is the glory due unto his name. Poor troubled heart! I am sure you do not demur to these terms. “Sinners,” says the Lord, “I will give you pardon, but you must give me the honor of it,” Our only answer is, “Ay, Lord, that we will, for ever and ever.” [Preached at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, December 27, 1885]

Central concept: we have a “share” to take in this matter... calling on the name of the Lord

- c. central verse on this in NT

Romans 10:13 “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

To “Call on the name of the Lord” means to take Him at His word, trusting in His character as revealed by His history in Scripture, and trusting in His promises as recorded in Scripture. But it also means to CALL on Him... “Save, Lord!”

3. Faith internal, deeds inevitable come as a result

Romans 10:13-15 *For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”¹⁴ How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard?^[a] And how are they to hear without someone preaching?¹⁵ And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!”*

NOTE: in verse 14, no one can call on the name of the Lord without first believing in Him... and it is that faith that justifies us. We are justified by faith apart from the “calling”, but the faith that justifies WILL call out, calling on the name of the Lord

4. The “Sinner’s prayer”: used and abused
 - a. most gospel tracts end in some kind of “sinner’s prayer”
 - b. usually the prayer contains good theology... but it can be abused
 - c. some can be made to feel that the prayer guarantees salvation
 - d. others use manipulative tactics like a salesman
 - e. BIGGEST DANGER: adding the “sinner’s prayer” as a “work” required for salvation AND/OR giving false assurance if the prayer is mimicked by the person
5. Two key verses for me that says it’s okay to encourage a person to call out to God (2 Corinthians 6:2

2 Corinthians 6:2 *“In a favorable time I listened to you, and in a day of salvation I have helped you. Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation.*

NOTE: God “hears” us in the time of His favor... we call on Him with our mouths and our hearts

Romans 10:9-10 *because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.*

Again, the heart believes, THEN the mouth confesses

6. Transition statements to lead to commitment:

“Do you understand the things we’ve been talking about?”

“Do you want to trust in Christ and ask Him to be your Savior and Lord?”

Make it clear that the prayer does not guarantee salvation, nor is it required for salvation

Let them say what is truly on their heart... don’t line-feed them the prayer

WEEK 12: THE GREAT COMMISSION

It is essential that new Christians come immediately face to face with their responsibility to be active in the spread of the gospel of Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth. If a new Christian learns early on in his/her Christian life about missions, he/she will be far more likely to spend a lifetime active in missions. The call extends to all of us to care about people in regions that have no access to the gospel. The purpose of this session is to give biblical evidence for the “Great Commission” (the command of Christ to take the gospel to the ends of the earth), and to give inducements and encouragements for fruitful action in this vital area.

I. OLD TESTAMENT: GOD’S TIMELESS CONCERN FOR THE NATIONS

- A. The Call of Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3)

- B. The Exodus: God Makes a Great Name for Himself
 - 1. God spoke to Pharaoh between the sixth and seventh plagues before the Exodus (Exodus 9:15-16).
 - 2. God’s mighty acts made a great name for Himself, resulting in salvation for Rahab, a Gentile (Joshua 2:10-12)

- C. God Establishes a Temple in Jerusalem for the Salvation of the Nations
 - 1. Solomon’s prayer of dedication (1 Kings 8:41-43)
 - 2. Isaiah’s similar vision for the Temple (Isaiah 56:6-7)

- D. The Psalms: May the Peoples Praise You O God! (Psalm 67:1-7)

- E. The Prophets: A Light for the Gentiles (Isaiah 49:6)

II. CHRIST’S MISSION IS OUR COMMISSION

- A. Christ Came to Seek and to Save the Lost (Luke 19:10, John 6:38-39)

- B. Christ Sent Only to the Lost Sheep of Israel (Matthew 15:24)

- C. However, He Has Other Sheep (Gentiles) (John 10:16)

- D. Christ’s Second Coming: Linked to the Gospel Work (Matthew 24:14)

- E. The Great Commission(s): The Same Command Given many times!
 - 1. Matthew 28:18-20
 - 2. Luke 24:46-49
 - 3. John 20:21-23

III. THE BOOK OF ACTS: THE GREAT COMMISSION MOVES OUT

A. Acts 1:8: The Theme of the Book of Acts

Acts 1:8 *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*

B. From Jerusalem to the Ends of the Earth

1. It starts in the upper room in Jerusalem, the Apostles and 120 believers (Acts 1:12-15)
2. The Holy Spirit falls like fire (Acts 2:1-4)
3. People from all over the Mediterranean there for Pentecost (Acts 2:9-11)
4. Moving out to Judea (Acts 8:1)
5. Moving out to Samaria (Acts 8:5)
6. Moving out to the Gentiles (Acts 10:44-45, Acts 11:20)
7. Moving on to Cyprus, and Asia Minor (Acts 13:2-4, Acts 13:13)
8. Moving on to Greece (Acts 16:9-10)
9. Moving on to Rome (Acts 28:14)

C. God's Promise to His Son is OUR Command for Action

Example 1: God's Old Testament promise to the Messiah, His Son (Isaiah 42:6)

Paul and Barnabas take it as a command to them to preach the gospel (Acts 13:47)

So also Psalm 2:8 and Psalm 110:1-3.

Christ's "troops" must be willing in the day of His battle... to rescue captives from Satan's kingdom

IV. PAUL'S PASSION AND HIS COMMAND FOR US

A. Romans 15: Paul's Passion for the Advance of the Gospel (Romans 15:15-24)

B. Romans 10: The Logic of Missions (Romans 10:13-15)

V. REVELATION: A FINAL VISION OF SUCCESS

A. Representatives From Every Tribe, Language, People, and Nation, All Worshiping Jesus Christ! (Revelation 5:9-10)

B. A Vast Multitude From All the Peoples of the Earth, Worshiping Jesus Christ (Revelation 7:9-10)

VI. CHURCH HISTORY: TWENTY CENTURIES OF ADVANCE

A. From Jerusalem to Rome: The Spiritual Conquest of the Roman Empire

Astonishing fact: a scant three centuries after a Jewish carpenter was crucified in Jerusalem, the Roman Emperor declared his conviction that that Jewish carpenter was his Savior and his God! How did that happen?

1. People who were willing to die for Christ

John 12:24 *Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.*

Romans 8:36 *As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered."*

Tertullian: "The blood of martyrs is seed for the church."

Perpetua, Roman widow, believer in Christ: threatened with death by the Roman prefect if she didn't renounce her faith in Christ, said, "You are wasting your time! While I live, I shall defeat you. And if you kill me, I shall defeat you even more!"

B. From Rome throughout Europe

C. The Reformation: The Gospel Reclaimed as Luther came to understand Romans 1:16-17 and Romans 3:21-24.

D. Four Key Missionary Men, Four Key Insights

1. William Carey: We Have an Obligation to the Heathen

- courageously opened discussion among Protestants of the need for cross-cultural missions
- impoverished English shoemaker with hunger to preach the word... pastor of a small Baptist church
- read *Captain Cook's Voyages*, record of the daring exploits of British explorer
- formed convictions about missions, directly in the face of prevailing 18th c. conviction that Great Commission was given only to apostles... famous rebuke by an older pastor: "Young man, sit down. When God pleases to convert the heathen he will do it without your aid or mine."

- Undaunted, turned to Scripture and wrote powerfully influential 87-page book: 1792, *“An Enquiry into the Obligation of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens.”*
- Organized Baptist Missionary Society; soon many other such agencies came into being
- Landed in India in 1793 and poured out his life in service to Christ, through some terrible trials... his greatest successes came in Serampore where over 600 nationals were converted and disciplined; the trail had been blazed
- Within 25 years of Carey’s writing, twelve other Protestant mission agencies were formed, and the work was born

2. Hudson Taylor: We Must Press On to the Inland Regions

- Served as a missionary in the Shanghai area in 1854, but soon grew depressed around other missionaries, who lived luxurious lifestyles
 - decided to move further inland, and totally immersed himself in Chinese ways
 - In 1857, resigned from his mission agency because they rejected his immersion lifestyle and because their financial support was erratic
 - Returned to England. In 1865, Hudson Taylor began a new era in Protestant missions when he stared at the “accusing map” of China on the wall of his study. He became increasingly burdened for the inland regions of China, and committed his life to bringing the gospel to those inland provinces. He was in Brighton in England when he wrote these words:

“On Sunday, June 25, 1865, unable to bear the sight of a congregation of a thousand or more Christian people rejoicing in their own security while millions were perishing for lack of knowledge, I wandered out on the sands alone, in great spiritual agony, and there the Lord conquered my unbelief, and I surrendered myself to God for this service. I told Him that all the responsibility as to issues and consequences must rest with Him; that as His servant, it was mine to obey and follow Him—His to direct, to care for, and to guide those who might labor with me. Need I say that peace at once flowed into my burdened heart.”

- Trusted God for missionaries:

At that moment, Taylor wrote in the margin the results of his new insight; he trusted God for 24 new workers, two for each of the eleven inland provinces of China, and two for Mongolia. Taylor summed up his God-honoring insight this way: “God’s work done in God’s way will never lack God’s supply.” Hudson Taylor’s zeal for inland regions was copied by many other mission agencies, many of them American... China Inland Mission was followed by Sudan Interior Mission and many others.

BUT Taylor still thinking in terms of political regions... the eleven inland provinces of China; more clarification was on the way

3. Cameron Townsend: We Must Speak in their Heart Language

- In 1917, became missionary to Guatemala; mastered Spanish, the national language of Guatemala, began to go house to house distributing Spanish literature... realized that few of the people spoke Spanish as their first language
- Indian asked him, "If your God is so smart, why he can't speak our language?"
- Convinced, Townsend saw the need for someone to concentrate on unreached tribes by translating the Scriptures into their language; founded Wycliffe Bible Translators
- At first, estimated 500 different languages; then, revised estimate to 1000, then to 2000; in April of 1982, at the time of his death, they estimated the number at 3000; now Wycliffe Bible Translators believes there are over 5000 distinct languages in the world
- The preaching was to be in the heart language of the people, and the overlooked tribal groups would be overlooked no more

4. Donald McGavran: We Must Identify and Reach the Unreached People Groups

- At the same time as Townsend was doing his work, McGavran was serving as a missionary in India, and was observing cultural differences in social groups
- He identified "homogenous units" which we now call "people groups," which each must be penetrated with the gospel before the Great Commission is finished
- Language and culture, plus various geographic and social factors go into the identification of a "people group."

Summation:

William Carey: We Have an Obligation to the Heathen

Hudson Taylor: We Must Press On to the Inland Regions

Cameron Townsend: We Must Speak in their Heart Language

Donald McGavran: We Must Identify and Reach the Unreached People Groups

E. The Present Situation

1. No geographical nation on earth without a New Testament Church
 - couldn't have said that even fifteen years ago
 - God has broken through in Mongolia, Albania, and various closed Muslim nations
 - The fall of the Soviet bloc has opened access to countless hidden people groups

2. Tremendous force for final thrust: Two-Thirds World Missions Agencies

Up until recently, missions dominated by Western nations estimates indicate that, since 2000, more missionaries on the field have been from non-Western nations than from Western nations... in 1988, there were more than twice as many Western missionaries as non-Western missionaries

3. Unreached people groups

1950 estimated 24,000 unreached peoples

1980 estimated 17,000 unreached peoples

1992 estimated 11,000

1996 estimates put it around 9,000... almost half what it was in 1980 when I started praying for them

MANY local churches have adopted unreached peoples and have prayed for them until there were local churches planted in their midst!!

4. Various amazing statistics: TO GOD'S GLORY

i. 3500 new churches opening worldwide every week

ii. 28,000 additional Christians in People's Republic of China every day.

In 1950 when China was closed to foreign missionaries, cons.

estimates at 1 million Chinese Christians; now conservative estimates at 40-50 million

iii. 20,000 new Christians in Africa every day; in 1990, 3% of continent was Christian; now over 40%

iv. In Muslim Indonesia, the number of Christians is so high the government has stopped printing the statistic... estimates place it at around 25%!!

v. In Iran, more Muslims have come to faith in Christ since 1980 than in the previous 1000 years combined!!

vi. In Russia, after 70 years of oppression, Christians number at least 100 million- five times the number in the Communist parts and 36% of the total population

vii. In A.D. 100, 360 non-Christians for every believer; now the estimate is 7 non-Christians for every evangelical believer

viii. In A.D. 100, estimated 12 unreached people groups per church congregation; in 1991, with 5 million congregations worldwide, there are at least 500 congregations for every unreached people group!

VII. HOW TO ACT FOR MISSIONS

A. Care

1. Have a deep concern for what God is doing around the world

2. Show it by investing effort in learning more about missions

B. Learn

1. www.joshuaproject.net is a great website describing specific unreached people groups

2. Take the “Perspectives on the World Christian Movement” missions course

C. Pray (Matthew 9:37-38)

D. Give

1. sacrificially give to mission efforts around the world

2. Lottie Moon

3. Global Priority Mission Fund

E. Go

1. Short term missions

2. Career!

