

# Firm Foundation 13-Week Daily Devotion Teacher's Manual

Written by Ronnie and Penny Haynes  
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Foundational Truths about  
Christianity  
For the New Believer

**Outline of**  
**Firm Foundation Class – Teacher's Outline**  
**Written by Ronnie and Penny Haynes**

**1. Understanding Salvation**

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Day 2 – Understanding Salvation

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Firm Foundation Teacher's Outline

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Day 5 – Christianese: Justification and Sanctification

Class Lesson – Putting It All Together (Chart)

Key code for the Teacher's Outline:

**Yellow Highlight:** This is the actual teacher's discussion guide. You can read this word for word, or you can paraphrase it in your own words.

**Yellow Bold Underline:** These are questions or comments for class discussion. Encourage the students to participate and share.

**Christianity is about RELATIONSHIP.**

**What God wants from me is a DAILY, DEPENDENT RELATIONSHIP with Him, where I look to Him for all of my needs.**

**God initiated this relationship by sacrificing His only Son, Jesus, to pay for my sins, so I could have the *right* to enter into this holy relationship.**

**He then revealed Himself and His Word to me so I could have the *opportunity* to enter into this relationship with Him.**

**When I accepted His sacrifice and His Word to be true, and moved beyond merely believing to actual dependence upon Him, I entered into the relationship by faith.**

**I remain in this relationship by continued reliance upon God's Word, Spirit, power and presence.**

Firm Foundation Glossary  
Key Words to Know and Memorize

**Faith:** Confidence in God expressed by complete reliance upon God; dependence upon God.

a) **Saving Faith:** Confidence in Jesus' death on the cross as satisfactory payment for your sins expressed by complete trust and reliance upon Jesus' death (not trying to earn your salvation through other means).

b) **Daily Faith:** Confidence in God's faithfulness to daily provide for and keep you expressed by daily trust and reliance upon God and His Word.

**Sin:** Lack of confidence in God expressed by reliance upon anything other than God (including others or yourself); acting independently of God

a) **Transgression:** Crossing over the line of the law; breaking a law

b) **Iniquity:** Man's natural bent toward sin, or independence from God

**Repentance:** Genuinely feeling sorry for your actions ALONG WITH a change of heart and mind that desires to turn away from sin (independence from God) and turn to God (dependence on Him)

a) **Remorse:** Regret for your actions because you dread the consequences

**Holiness:** The state of being "set apart" for God; separated from the world for God's purposes.

**Grace:** God's unmerited influence on the heart, and man's response to that influence; God divinely and sovereignly revealing Himself to a person, giving them an opportunity to respond to Him in faith (dependence upon Him). God may reveal Himself through His Word, His Spirit, His power, but the purpose of grace is to enable us to respond to God in faith (or dependence on Him).

a) **Saving Grace:** God divinely revealing the truth of His Word (and His salvation) to your heart, giving you the opportunity to respond to that truth in faith (dependence upon Christ's work on the cross as payment for your sins).

- b) **Daily Grace:** God divinely revealing Himself daily to you, enabling you to trust Him for all of your needs, and empowering you to complete His purpose for you.

**Righteousness:** Being in right (dependent) relationship with God; the example of this would be Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden – their relationship with God was a righteous relationship, where they depended upon God for all of their needs, communicating daily with their Father.

- a) **Righteous Standing:** When we have trusted in Christ's finished work on the cross as payment for our sins, and have entered into a dependent relationship with God the Father through Christ, we have "right standing" with God. God considers us to be "in Christ", and we are "right" with Him.
- b) **Righteous Actions:** Actions that reflect our dependence upon and obedience to God. Although we have right standing through our faith in Christ's finished work, we do not always "act right", or act according to our faith in and dependence upon Christ. Sometimes, we act "unrighteously", or as if we did not trust Christ and depend upon Him.

**Saved/Salvation:** Rescued and made whole or complete.

**Old Man / Old Nature:** The natural (unsaved) man's nature that seeks independence from God and pursues gratification of self. It is, by nature, set against God and God's will, plan and purposes. It has no desire to please God. The old nature is crucified and no longer exists when you are "born again".

**New Man / New Nature:** The spiritual nature that is born within you upon salvation. This nature desires to please God, and is deeply grieved and bothered when you sin. It takes the place of the old nature. Proof of this occurs when you sin: before you were saved, you could sin, and it didn't really bother you enough to keep you up at night. Now, if you sin, it will eat at you until you confess your sin and God forgives you and cleanses you of all your unrighteousness. If you can continue to sin and it not greatly bother you, you probably are not born again.

**Carnal Man / Sinful Nature / Flesh:** These are the terms we use to describe the left-over habits, mindsets and desires you lived by while you were unsaved. Old thought-patterns, physical/emotional/mental habits that you utilized for daily survival, and basic fleshly desires that have driven and motivated you carry over into your new spiritual life. These are the things you must "mortify" or "put to death" by the Spirit. These are the issues with which you struggle as you seek to obey God's Spirit.



**Sanctified:** The process of being made holy, or set apart for God.

**Justified:** A judicial term meaning that you have been pronounced legally innocent of all charges. It is more than the simple phrase “just-as-if-I’d” never sinned – it goes beyond that. Justification is the act whereby your sinful actions are fully acknowledged, but the legal pronouncement overrides your actions. Therefore, the One who pronounces you “innocent” is proven to be the most gracious Being of all, choosing to remember your sins no more, casting them away from you as far as the east is from the west.

**Love:** Giving of yourself for the benefit of another. Consider the word “charity” – when we give to charity, we are giving something of ourselves for the benefit of others. Agape is charity – love of which only God is capable, and the word for which only exists in connection with the God of the Bible.

### **Parable of the seed and the soil:**

**Mark 4:20: Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop—thirty, sixty or even a hundred times what was sown.”**

The Word of God, in Mark 4:20, is heard and accepted, and therefore produces a crop. Alternately, the Word of God in the previous verses is not really heard (because hearing implies obedience to what is heard) and no crop is produced. The person who does not fully hear the Word of God does not wholeheartedly accept or respond to it.

In Mark 4:28, the Word of God is planted in the soil, and the soil produces the crop while the farmer goes about his daily business. The farmer doesn't make it grow, but by its very nature, the combination of good, fertile soil and seed causes growth of fruit.

What is the seed? The Word of God. (Mark 4:14)

What is the soil? The heart, the attitude and receptiveness of which will vary from person to person.

What is the crop or fruit? It is the faith that is produced when a person readily hears, accepts and wholeheartedly responds to the Word of God. (Romans 10:17, Hebrews 4:2)

Galatians 5:22,23 says that faith is a **fruit** of the Spirit, it is something that is produced.

The commentaries say that the ground is representative of a heart that is ready or not ready to receive the Word of God. The heart (or attitude of the person) may be hardened against God, shallow and not willing to really pay attention to the Word, filled with other distracting things, or plowed and ready to receive the Word of God. The heart, or kardia, is often used interchangeably with the soul, the center of the emotions, thoughts and will.

Hearing and receiving the Word of God produces faith. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. (Rom. 10:17) But the person who hears the Word of God must have a “receptive heart”, or have an attitude of heart that is willing to respond in reliance upon the Word it receives.

If the attitude of the hearer's heart is unreceptive and unresponsive, then there is no fruit of faith produced. If I hear a Word from God and say, “That's impossible”, my attitude of unbelief will stop that Word from producing faith, or reliance upon God.

If the hearer's receptivity is short-lived, willing only to be a hearer and not a doer of the Word, true faith never develops. James 1:23,25 and Hebrews 2:1 says that we have to continue to apply what we have heard. If my attitude causes me to say, “I'm too busy to pay attention to what that Word says,” I will not continue to receive and obey that Word, and no faith will be produced.

If the hearer's receptivity is sincere at first, but diminishes due to distractions caused by worries and concerns, or if his heart is hardened by the deceptive power of sin (he begins to disbelieve God and turns away from Him – Hebrews 13:3), his faith dissipates and becomes unfruitful.

**However, if the hearer's attitude causes Him to say, "I am willing to believe that this Word is true," and he accepts and is ready to respond wholeheartedly to the Word, to be a continual doer of the Word who holds fast to what He believed in the beginning (Heb. 3:1-4:7), a crop of faith is produced.**

*Hebrews 3:1-47*

*And we are his house, if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast.*

*<sup>7</sup>So, as the Holy Spirit says:*

*<sup>8</sup>"Today, if you hear his voice,  
do not harden your hearts  
as you did in the rebellion,  
during the time of testing in the desert,  
<sup>9</sup>where your fathers tested and tried me  
and for forty years saw what I did.  
<sup>10</sup>That is why I was angry with that generation,  
and I said, 'Their hearts are always going astray,  
and they have not known my ways.'*

*<sup>11</sup>So I declared on oath in my anger,  
'They shall never enter my rest.' "◦*

*<sup>12</sup>See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. <sup>13</sup>But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. <sup>14</sup>We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first. <sup>15</sup>As has just been said:*

*"Today, if you hear his voice,  
do not harden your hearts  
as you did in the rebellion."◦*

*<sup>16</sup>Who were they who heard and rebelled? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt? <sup>17</sup>And with whom was he angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the desert? <sup>18</sup>And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed◦? <sup>19</sup>So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief.*

*Heb 4:1 Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. <sup>2</sup>For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith.◦ <sup>3</sup>Now we who have believed enter that rest, just as God has said,*

*“So I declared on oath in my anger,  
‘They shall never enter my rest.’”*<sup>4</sup>

*And yet his work has been finished since the creation of the world. <sup>4</sup>For somewhere he has spoken about the seventh day in these words: “And on the seventh day God rested from all his work.”*<sup>5</sup>*And again in the passage above he says, “They shall never enter my rest.”*

*<sup>6</sup>It still remains that some will enter that rest, and those who formerly had the gospel preached to them did not go in, because of their disobedience.*<sup>7</sup>*Therefore God again set a certain day, calling it Today, when a long time later he spoke through David, as was said before:*

*“Today, if you hear his voice,  
do not harden your hearts.”*<sup>8</sup>

How is a heart hardened? Hebrews 3 & 4 speaks of the deceptfulness of sin causing a heart to harden. What then is the deceptive power of sin?

According to that same passage in Hebrews, a sinful, unbelieving heart will turn away from the living God. Sin is refusal to believe and rely upon God's Word, God's Truth. When we refuse to believe the Truth of God's Word, we have no choice but to embrace and believe the falsehoods that Satan and the world tells us – that God is not real, or is not trustworthy. Once we believe God is not good and His Word is untrue, our hearts are hardened against Him.

But if we don't harden our hearts when we hear His voice, but choose to believe His Word is true, and choose to hear and obey what He has revealed to us, faith is produced.

And what is “faith” therefore? Faith is not “believing that God's Word is true” – it is the DEPENDENCE UPON GOD that RESULTS from believing that God's Word is true. Faith is a response of trust and reliance upon God once His Word is heard and accepted as true. And our faith will ultimately be expressed in our daily thoughts and actions.

The Word of God revealed to a receptive heart can produce faith.

Ephesians 2:8,9 says: <sup>8</sup>For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—<sup>9</sup>not by works, so that no one can boast.

We are saved by grace. Without God's grace, we could not be saved, nor have faith. Grace is two-fold: 1) God divinely influences our heart, which 2) causes a response in us.

How does He divinely influence our heart? By sovereignly choosing to reveal Himself and His truth to our heart through the Word of God and the Holy Spirit's conviction.

And what is the 2<sup>nd</sup> part of grace? Our response to that divine revelation of who God is.

That response may be negative, due to unbelief and a lack of receptivity (a hardened heart). But if the response is positive, believing that the Word is true, the heart will trust and rely upon God.

What do we call the response of reliance upon God due to believing His Word? Faith.

That is what it means to be saved by grace, through faith. The grace part is God divinely revealing Himself and His truth to our heart, provoking a response from us. The faith part that obtains the salvation is our heart's positive response to God's self-revelation.

The next part of that verse says that this grace is not from ourselves, but is the gift of God. He sovereignly chooses to reveal Himself to our hearts and give us the opportunity to believe His Word and respond with utter reliance upon Him.

The verse next says that it is not by works, lest any man should boast. That means that God initiates this self-revelation, and He alone creates the opportunity to respond to Him. We can't earn this revelation nor the opportunity to respond to Him. This is all the gift of God.

*The sowing of the Word of God is an example of God's grace. The farmer initiates the entire process by sowing the seed, giving the soil an opportunity to respond to that seed. God reveals Himself to us through His Word, giving us the opportunity to respond to that revealed Word.*

Eph 3:2 Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, <sup>3</sup>that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. <sup>4</sup>In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, <sup>5</sup>which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets.

The administration of God's grace is the mystery made known to Paul by revelation from God, the insight into the mystery of Christ as revealed by the Spirit.

Eph 3: <sup>7</sup>I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power. <sup>8</sup>Although I am less than the least of all God's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, <sup>9</sup>and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things. <sup>10</sup>His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, <sup>11</sup>according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**Paul was only able to become a servant of the gospel by receiving the gift of God's revelation of Himself, which came by God's power alone. The grace that was given to Paul was the revelation of the mystery of God and the opportunity to respond by preaching this revelation.**

## FIRST WEEK'S LESSON

This week, we are talking "understanding salvation" and "baptism". First, let's turn to John 3:16 and discuss eternal life through God's plan and purpose.

Monday

### UNDERSTANDING SALVATION

John 3:16 says "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

#### 1. ETERNAL LIFE THROUGH GOD'S PLAN & PURPOSE.

- God loves you and wants you to understand how much he loves you. The bible says... "*For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that who so ever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.*" John 3:16 (KJV)

What is God's plan and purpose for you? To receive eternal life.

#### 2. OUR PROBLEM IS THAT SIN SEPARATES US FROM GOD AND HIS PLAN FOR OUR LIFE.

- We all sin, by nature and by choice, and are separated from God and eternal life. The Bible says *Romans 3:23...* "*For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*" (NIV)  
*We can't do it all by ourselves or by any self-works.*  
*"Not of works, lest any man should boast."* Ephesians 2:9 (KJV)

**How does our sin separate us from God?** God is holy, and Hebrews 12:14 says that "without holiness no one will see the Lord."

But God has provided a way to bridge the gulf that exists between the Lord and us. He made a way to remove our sin and make us "holy". That provision is His Son, Jesus Christ.

#### 3. GOD'S PROVISION ----- JESUS CHRIST.

- The good news is God provided a way of forgiveness, His Son Jesus. *1 Peter 3:18 says "Christ also hath once suffered for sin, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God."*  
*1 Peter 2:24 says "He himself bore our sin in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sin and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed".*  
*In John 14:6 Jesus said... "I am the way the truth and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me."*

**How did Jesus' death bring us to God?** When He died on the cross, He took upon Himself all of the sins of the world, including your sins and mine. We should have had to suffer the death penalty for our sins. However, He offered to pay the penalty Himself.

**Now, if someone buys something for you, what do you have to do to make it "yours"?** You *receive* it, take hold of it, claim it as your own. Jesus has paid the penalty for your sin, but unless you receive this gift of eternal life that Jesus has purchased for you, it does you no good.

#### 4. OUR RESPONSE IS TO RECEIVE JESUS AS LORD.

- To cross over from death to life, we have to receive Jesus as our Lord and Savior.

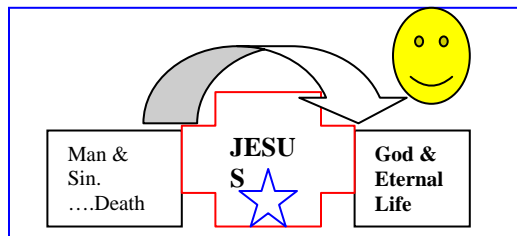
*John 1:12 says "As many as receive Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name."*

*And in Romans 10:9-10, it reads "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God has raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. .... For with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."*

Once you place your faith in Jesus Christ, believing that His death on the cross has paid off the debt you owed to God, you can ask for the gift of eternal life. This has always been God's desire: to adopt you and make you His child.

As you begin to understand what it really means to be saved, you will want to develop a closer relationship with God. This intimate relationship grows through prayer and Bible studies.

Begin by making a commitment to get to know the Lord better through daily prayer and Scripture reading. Remember, prayer to the Lord is no different than talking to anyone else. Ask Him to lead you and guide you. Ask God to show you every area of your life that needs improvement. Begin to trust Him to complete the work He has begun in you.





Tuesday

## UNDERSTANDING SALVATION

Vs. for the day: Romans 10:13

Passage for the day: Romans 10:9-13

Rom 10:13 says "for, Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

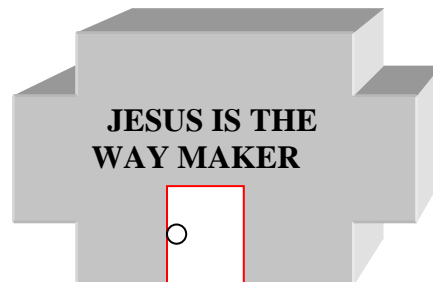
Receiving Jesus as your Lord means placing your faith in him. Faith does not just believe facts about Jesus; it places confidence in him. We have to surrender our lives totally to Him. This means turning our lives over to Him, believing that He is the answer for all our problems. We have to begin to trust in the Lord.

**Now, TO RECEIVE JESUS AS LORD AND TO BE SAVED, there are certain steps you must take...**

1. Most importantly of all, Admit that you're a sinner, and repent and turn from your sins.  
*Acts 3:19 says "Repent ye therefore, and be converted that your sins will be blotted out."*
2. Then you need to place your faith in Jesus, believing that he died for your sins.  
*Ephesians 2:8 says "By grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it's the gift of God. You are saved by **God's grace** (which means that it is **His power** that saves you, not anything you can do in your own strength). But you receive that grace and salvation **through faith, which means trusting that Jesus' death really did pay off the sin debt that you owed.***
3. Lastly, you must surrender to Jesus as Lord and give him control of your life. Receive Jesus Christ into your heart through prayer.  
*In Revelation 3:20 "Jesus said... "Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in...."*  
*Romans 10:13 says "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."*  
*And Luke 9:23 says that surrendering to Jesus as Lord means that we have to deny ourselves.*

Surrendering to Jesus is not just saying that He is Lord; it is like riding in a car and letting someone else take over the steering wheel. Surrender means allowing Jesus to lead you where He sees fit, trusting that He knows what is best for your life.

Today, as you talk with God, ask Him to show you areas of your life that you need to surrender to His control. This will be a life-long process, where God continually shows you different things that He wants to change. But ask Him where He wants you to begin. And commit yourself to be obedient to whatever He reveals to you.



Wednesday

## FIRST STEPS AS A BELIEVER

Vs. for the day: John 3:3

Passage for the day: John 3:1-7

In John 3:3, Jesus says "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."

When you follow these steps and give your life to Jesus Christ,

**God records your commitment in heaven, according to Luke 19:20.**

*"Rejoice, because your names are written in Heaven." Luke 19:20 (KJV)*

**So, now you need to grow as a Christian.**

In 1 Corinthians 3:1, the Bible calls new Christians "babes in Christ."

A baby needs special care and attention, and can't really do much for himself. That's why God created the family to attend to the baby's needs.

**Jesus said..** "I tell you the truth, no man can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again." John 3:3 (NIV)

**The Church** is to a new Christian what the *home and families* are to a baby.

**You identify** with your new family by confessing Jesus publicly (telling others that you have given your life to Christ) and by believer's baptism. The term "Believer's" baptism is a way of distinguishing between the routine ritual baptism some people underwent before they had a personal relationship with Christ, and the baptism people choose to participate in because they have made a decision to "believe" on Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

"Then they that gladly received his word were baptized, and the same day there were added about three thousand souls." Acts 2:41 (KJV) Read Romans 6:1-13

What is essential to the growth of a new baby? First of all, air, or breathing.

**Praying** is as important to a Christian's spiritual life as *breathing* is to a person's physical life. We need to develop a daily conversation with God. This doesn't just mean talking to Him at the beginning or end of the day (although that is important), but we need to talk to Him throughout the day as well. You can discuss everything that happens to you during the day, and you will be surprised at how much He has to say to you in response.

We should learn to be specific in our prayers to God. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9 (KJV)

Another requirement for a baby's health is nourishment.

**God's word** is to a new Christian what *good food* is to a baby.

Good food is a daily requirement for proper growth. 1 Peter 2:2 says "Like newborn babies, crave spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good."

Remember how we discussed publicly confessing Christ as a means of identifying with Christ and the Church? Well, **Learning to witness** is to a new Christian what **learning to talk** is to a baby. Jesus commanded us to share the good news with others. According to Acts 1:8, one of the reasons the Holy Spirit was given to the Church was to be a witness about what Jesus Christ has done in our lives.

**WARNING:**

***Being a Christian is far more than trusting Christ for Salvation!***

You probably found out within the first 24 hours after you gave your life to Christ that it takes more than trusting in Christ. And you probably discovered that the harder you try, the more difficult it becomes to grow spiritually and live out your faith.

**NOTE: *Whether your Christian life began one week ago or 2 years ago, Satan is still hard at work trying to defeat you. This study will help you get a better grip on being an overcomer and living a victorious Christian life.***

Now let's talk about one of the most important first steps to take after receiving salvation. That is water baptism. Some people feel really uncomfortable about this subject. Maybe they don't like getting up in front of people, maybe they're afraid of being submerged under water. Whatever the hindrance, though, Baptism is extremely important in a believer's life. Let's see why...

Thursday

## WATER BAPTISM

Vs. for the day: Romans 6:3,4

Passage for the day: Romans 6:3-7

Let's read Romans 6:3,4 Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

Baptism is a way of publicly expressing your decision to accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior. Being immersed (or completely covered) in water is symbolic of the truth that the "old" you is dead. Coming up out of the water represents the truth that the "new" you has been born.

This is stating the open rejection of the old lifestyle. Now that you've received Jesus into your life, you're no longer living the old life, but now raised to a new life as a Christian.

Baptism is also a way of identifying with Jesus. Jesus died on the cross for our sins and was buried, but on the third day, He rose to live again. When we are baptized, we show that our sins have been buried with Christ, we are dead to our old way of life, and have been raised to live again as a "new creature in Christ". This is a way of telling everyone else that you are determined not to live the way you used to live, but instead are committing yourself to obey the leading of God's Spirit in your life.

Being baptized is the next step after salvation. If this is something you haven't done yet, you need to go ahead and do it. Remember even Jesus was baptized (Mark 1: 8,9). So now it's time for you to bury that old man or woman. Make a commitment to do this with the Elders of the church as soon as possible.

Friday

## WATER BAPTISM

Vrs. for the Day: Matt. 10:32,33

Passage for the Day: Matt.10: 28-33

Matt. 10:32,33 (NIV) "Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven.

If we've really surrendered to Jesus as Lord it means that we give him control of our lives. As evidence of giving Jesus control of our lives, we want to identify with him. Water Baptism is the next step of showing your faith in Jesus; you are confessing publicly that you are a believer. This is also a way of identifying with the entire body of Christ. Today we're going to look at the importance of acknowledging Jesus Christ through water Baptism.

- Is it important that we acknowledge Jesus Christ as our Lord through water baptism now that we've confessed our sins and received him into our lives? \_\_\_\_\_

The Bible says in Acts 2:41-44 that those who really received Jesus as Lord were glad to be baptized. Then they joined the Church so the Apostles could feed them the word of God, and so they could share fellowship with other believers.

Baptism is just the first step toward becoming a part of the body of Christ. We leave behind the old "sinner" man, and move forward in the newness of life given to us by the shed blood of Jesus Christ. This is what it means to be **Born Again**.

1 Peter 3:18-21 speaks that it is an answer of a good conscience toward God. The scripture says that Christ died and suffered for our sins, so that we might find God. It also says that He was put to death in the body but was made alive in the spirit. So being baptized is putting to death the Old Nature and being born of the spirit. This is why we are submerged under the water. The water is like the covering of the blood of Jesus. Then we're raised to a new life in Christ Jesus. Remember that it's not being baptized that saves you. Salvation only comes through the acceptance of Jesus into our lives through repentance, placing our faith in Him and receiving Him as Lord of our lives.

If you have never been baptized, today you can make that commitment to the Lord. Have the assurance of a good conscience toward God and bury that "old" person in the water.

We have regularly scheduled baptisms on Sunday nights, and anyone who would like to be baptized can do so. All you need to do is check at the information table for the next baptism, sign up, and attend a short meeting with the Elders right before the baptism. It doesn't matter if you have been baptized before. Baptism is a way of putting your past behind you and saying you are starting over. **Is there anyone who would like to participate in believer's baptism?** Then make sure you sign up at the information table.

## Understanding Salvation

### I. What Did I Do?

- A. **I realized that I was a sinner.** That means that I realized that I have not been trusting in God, but relying on myself to meet my needs. I have chosen to act independently of God instead of submitting to God and recognizing His right of ownership over my life. (Luke 18:13,14)

<sup>13</sup>“But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’”

<sup>14</sup>“I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

- B. **I repented of my sin.** That means that I not only felt sorry for my past actions, but I also wanted to change my future actions. I am sorry for living my life independently of God, and want to rely upon Him for direction and guidance, and for meeting my needs from now on.

The Greek word for “repent” is *metanoeo*, which means “after knowledge.” It is looking back at what you have done and not only

- a) regretting the consequences that you will have to endure, but also
- b) *having a change of mind* where you no longer want to do those things.

There is another Greek word, *metamelomai*, which means regret, or selfish dread of the consequences of what one has done, but *with no change of mind*. There is no forgiveness of sins promised in the Bible for regret, only for repentance.

<sup>2</sup>*I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.*” (Luke 5:32)

<sup>38</sup>*Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. <sup>39</sup>The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”* (Acts 2:38,39)

<sup>8</sup>*Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. <sup>9</sup>The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.”*(Luke 3:8,9)

- C. **I placed my faith and trust in Jesus Christ.** That means that
1. I acknowledged that Jesus Christ is God in the flesh, and trusted that He died on the cross to pay the penalty for my sins, so I would not have to endure everlasting punishment and separation from God.
  2. I made a conscious decision to entrust my whole life, my past, present and future, everything that is valuable and precious to me, including my plans, hopes, dreams and desires, to the care and will of God.
  3. I decided that I would no longer live independently of God, but would rely upon Him for every decision I would make, and would rely upon Him to meet my

needs in whatever way He deemed suitable.

<sup>9</sup>*That 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. <sup>10</sup>For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. (Romans 10:9,10)*

D. **I surrendered my life to Him.** That means that I pledged to do my best to submit to His Lordship over my life, allowing Him to be the Master and Controller and Decision Maker in my life. I would follow and obey God's instructions to the best of my ability through the power of the Holy Spirit who is now living within me.

<sup>15</sup>*But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. (1 Peter 3:15)*

## II. What Did God Do?

A. **God accepted you placing your faith in Him, and applied Jesus' payment for your sins to your account.** In other words, you no longer have a "sin debt"; the penalty that you owed for your sins are "paid in full" by Jesus Christ.

<sup>25</sup>*God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—<sup>26</sup>he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus. (Romans 3:25,26)*

*He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world. (1 Jn. 2:2)*

B. **God says that you are now as "righteous" in His sight as Jesus Christ is.** Righteousness is "right standing with God". What God originally intended was for you to be in a dependent relationship with Him; now that you have entrusted and submitted your life to Him, you are where you should have been all along, in "right relationship" with Him. God *credited* righteousness to you when you placed your faith in Him, not because you did good works or did something right, but solely because you entered into a trusting relationship with Him. So even if you mess up and do something wrong, you remain "righteous" in God's sight because you are in a dependent relationship with Him.

<sup>5</sup>*However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness. <sup>6</sup>David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:*

<sup>7</sup> *"Blessed are they  
whose transgressions are forgiven,  
whose sins are covered.*

<sup>8</sup> *Blessed is the man  
whose sin the Lord will never count against him."* (Romans 4:5-8)

C. **God took your spirit, which was dead, and "quickened" it or "made it alive".** All of mankind, since Adam, has been born with a "dead" spirit. The spirit is the part of man that communicates with God and can enter into relationship with God

(because God is Spirit). But since your spirit was dead, you could not hear from God or truly have fellowship with God. But God made your spirit alive, so you can now communicate and have communion with God.

*But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. (Romans 8:10)*

<sup>13</sup>*When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, <sup>14</sup>having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. (Col. 2:13)*

<sup>18</sup>*For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit, (1 Peter 3:18)*

**D. God gave you a “new nature” which resides in your newly quickened spirit, and has crucified the “old nature”.** The “old nature” is the essence of who you were, the part of you that wanted to keep sinning, or living independently from God. Though your conscience may have been slightly bothered by your wrongdoing, it was never enough to make you stop doing it, nor was it enough to keep you up at night. But your “old nature” was crucified when you entrusted your life to Christ. It died; it no longer exists.

<sup>24</sup>*Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. (Galatians 5:24)*

However, the “new nature” that God gave you desires to please God, to obey the Holy Spirit, to depend upon and be in right relationship with God. It is greatly bothered when you don't do what you know is right, and won't leave you alone until you've confessed the sin and have returned to right relationship with God.

<sup>24</sup>*and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. (Eph 4:24)*

<sup>9</sup>*Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices <sup>10</sup>and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. (Col 3:9,10)*

As a side note, you still have “flesh”, or old habit patterns that you have spent a lifetime developing as a means of getting what you need for yourself. Habits still exist after the new nature takes over, and they must slowly be “mortified” or put to death by the power of the Holy Spirit. In addition, your mind is filled with fallacies (lies) you have always believed to be true, so your mind needs to be renewed and filled with the truth of the scriptures as the Holy Spirit reveals it to you.

<sup>3</sup>*For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, (Romans 8:13)*

<sup>5</sup>*Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. <sup>6</sup>Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. <sup>7</sup>You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. <sup>8</sup>But now you must rid*



*yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. (Col. 3:5-8)*

*Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Romans 12:2)*

**E. God gave you eternal life by placing His own life, His Holy Spirit, to dwell within you.**

“Eternal life” is life without beginning and without end. There is only one entity that is without beginning and without end, and that is God Himself. Therefore, He gave you **His life**, eternal life, by placing His own Holy Spirit to live within you.

<sup>14</sup>*Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us. (2 Tim. 1:14)*

<sup>19</sup>*Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? (1 Cor. 6:19)*

You are now the temple of the Holy Spirit, and God Himself lives inside of you. Everything that God is and has now resides within you by the presence of His Spirit. Latent within you are the “fruits” of His Spirit, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness and self-control, and if you will just remain in a dependant relationship with Him, with your spirit united with His Spirit, those characteristics will begin to “bloom” in your life naturally.

<sup>22</sup>*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,*  
<sup>23</sup>*gentleness and self-control. (Gal 5:22)*

<sup>4</sup>*Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. (John 15:4)*

The Holy Spirit will lead you into all truth and teach you about God the Son and God the Father. He will convict you of sin (even before you do it), and remind you that you are righteous because of your faith in God.

<sup>13</sup>*But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. <sup>14</sup>He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. <sup>15</sup>All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you. (John 16:13-15)*

<sup>8</sup>*When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: <sup>9</sup>in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; <sup>10</sup>in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; <sup>11</sup>and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned. (John 16:8-11)*

**You now have the same authority that His Spirit has to take dominion over the forces of evil. In addition, His Holy Spirit also tells you what God wants to reveal to you personally, and when you want to pray, but just don't know exactly what to say, the Holy Spirit searches your spirit and speaks to God on your behalf.**

<sup>1</sup>*He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness. (Matthew 10:1)*

<sup>18</sup>*Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. (Matthew 28:18)*

<sup>19</sup>*I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. (Luke 10:19)*

<sup>26</sup>*In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. <sup>27</sup>And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will. (Romans 8:26,27)*



SECOND WEEK'S LESSON

This week, we learned that our identity, who we essentially are, has changed. Let's start out by reading 2 Corinthians 5:17.

Monday

**LEARNING YOUR NEW IDENTITY  
WHO WE ARE NOW**

Verse for the day: 2 Corinthians 5:17

Passage for the day: 2 Corinthians 5:14-17

2 Cor. 5:17 (NIV) "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come"!

Read 2 Corinthians 5:17

**After we are born again, what does this scripture say we become?** A new creation.

Now, let's turn to Ephesians 2:10. Someone read that for us.

**Who is it that has re-created us?** God has re-created us.

**And why were we re-created?** To do good works.

God is now ready to begin a new work in your life. This is why it's so important to understand that we should start acting according to our new identity. Once we become a new creation, we also inherit a new identity.

We learn that after we're born again, we're really just beginning our life. The Bible says we're like newborn babes, so it's like learning how to walk all over again. However, this time we have our Father God to pick us up when we fall.

Begin to focus on your new identity. Ask God to show you areas in your life that belong to the "old man". Ask Him to show you how to overcome these weaknesses. Remember that you are no longer that same person any more.

Tuesday

## LEARNING YOUR NEW IDENTITY

Vs. for the day: Colossians 3:9-11

Passage for the day: Colossians 3:5-17

Let's look at Colossians 3:9-11.

Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices  
And have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.  
Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

We have a "new self" which is continually being changed into the image of Jesus Christ, our Creator. And this scripture tells us that it doesn't matter where we come from, what race or nationality we are, or what we have done. Once Christ is in us, He changes everything. Slowly but surely, we become everything that Jesus is.

How we formerly identified ourselves no longer applies. Paul states here that our race, religion, cultural background or social distinctions no longer apply. And our physical heritage, race or social standing no longer determines our identity.

Fred Astaire was without dispute one of the top singers, dancers, and actors of all time. He played in numerous movies and Broadway shows, winning many awards. But in 1932, when Astaire was starting out, a Hollywood talent judge wrote on his screen test; "Can't act. Can't sing. Can dance a little."

Sometimes, as Christians, we may fail badly. We think, "What kind of Christian would do that?" "How can I ever serve Christ again?" But we develop and grow in our Christian life when we leave those failures behind us, and daily use our God-given gifts for Him. In time, those failures will be forgotten footnotes. We should not look at our past but focus on right now and the future.

Our identity lies in the fact that *we are no longer that old person.*  
**WE ARE BRAND NEW; WE ARE IN CHRIST, AND  
WHO CHRIST IS DETERMINES WHO WE ARE.**

As you seek the Lord in prayer today, begin to praise him for your new identity. As you start to realize that you're a child of the Almighty God and you're going to find your true destiny in life. Just begin to thank Him and praise Him. Ask Him what you can do for Him today so that He might be glorified.

Wednesday

## LEARNING OUR NEW IDENTITY

Vs. for the day: Romans 12:2

Passage for the day: Romans 12:1-2

Now, Romans 12:2 says, "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will."

What is it that God says we are not to do? Be conformed to this world. This means that we are no longer to be like the world. It also means that our identity is not to come from the world, or from what has happened to us while we have lived in the world.

Remember: we are new creations with a new identity.

**But how do we learn our new identity?** By Renewing our mind.

Renewing our minds doesn't "just happen". We don't wake up with a completely new mindset. We must study the Word of God so that we can discover and understand who we really are from God's perspective. As we believe what God says about us, and we disregard all that we previously thought about ourselves, our minds will slowly but surely be *transformed*. Daily, we become more and more like Jesus in thought and action.

Today as a commitment to the Lord. Ask God to begin that new work in your mind so a renewing will take place. Ask Him to transform (change) anything that is not acceptable to Him. Remember that if we stay focused on Jesus, we live a victorious life.

**Now, has anyone in here encountered problems in some of your existing relationships since you became saved?** That's not surprising, since your most of your friends and family expect you to act like you used to. What they don't understand is that you are not the same person you used to be!

Thursday

## LEARNING OUR NEW IDENTITY

Vs. for the day: 1 John 3:1-3

Passage for the day: 1 John 2:28-3:3

Turn to 1 John 3:1-3. Someone read it for us. How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.

As a side note, don't be surprised when your old friends don't understand the changes in you. Why won't they "know" or understand you anymore?

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You are now "children of God". Unless your friends know God, they will not "know" you. You are being changed into the image of Jesus Christ, someone with whom they are most likely unfamiliar. Remember that *you're* still trying to figure out your new identity. **Do you really think that your old friends are going to understand this new you?** It's going to take time for you to make adjustments in your new life style. So be patient - God is good.

There's an old saying, "No one can make us feel inferior without our consent." You need to make a conscious decision to not worry about your self-image or what others think about you now. You may find it takes time for others to accept that you no longer are that old person. So stay focused on the important things, like finding out your new identity. You'll even begin to find that things about yourself you didn't even know.

Make a list and begin to pray for those old friends that just don't understand you any more.

As you make your list, remember that at one time you were as blind as they were. So ask God to show each of them the real truth, that they might come to an understanding of salvation.

Friday

## WHO WE ARE DETERMINES WHAT WE DO

Vs. for the day: Luke 6:43

Passage for the day: Luke 6:43-49

Luke 6:43 (NIV) "No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit.

**So, the most important belief we possess is the true knowledge of who God really is. The second most important belief is who we are as a child of God.**

Remember, when we received Jesus as our Lord and Savior, He gave us power to become sons of God. God adopted us as His own children. We're brothers of Jesus Christ, and the Bible even says we are "co-heirs" with Christ, which means that we get everything that Jesus gets. **We need to see ourselves as royal children of God and start acting as royal children of God.** Some of us still see ourselves as dirty paupers that don't deserve anything, and sometimes we actually act like dirty paupers.

We will behave in accordance with the way we perceive ourselves. If we don't see ourselves as God does, we will not only suffer from a wrong identity and a poor image of which we really are, but we will not act as we should. This also confuses our thoughts of who God really is. You'll find that Jesus used analogies all through the Bible. Here is one example where he uses trees and fruits.

Someone read Luke 6:43-49.

**A good tree cannot produce \_\_\_\_\_ and a bad tree cannot produce \_\_\_\_\_ . A good tree can only produce \_\_\_\_\_ , and a bad tree can only produce \_\_\_\_\_ .**

**It is *not what we do* that determines *who we are*.  
It is **WHO WE ARE** that **DETERMINES WHAT WE DO!****

When we realize that we are "sons of God", forgiven and empowered by God's Holy Spirit, we no longer have to act like the persons we used to be. Even when we make mistakes and mess up, we are no longer "Sinners" asking for forgiveness; we are "Saints" of God who confess their sin, ask for forgiveness, and are cleansed from all unrighteousness.

I hope this week you have begun to realize that you have a new identity because you are **in Christ**. Don't be discouraged if there are still areas you are struggling with. Be patient; through God's grace and in His time He is going to help you overcome and live a victorious life.

1 John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."



Today is a new day in the Lord. We can be thankful for a forgiving God who knows that we sometimes mess up. Remember the Bible says “ all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”(Rom.3: 23). So don't give up, even if you've messed up and sinned. Confess it to the Lord, thank Him for His forgiveness, and go on. He is faithful to forgive you.

## **Learning Your New Identity**

### **WHO WE ARE DETERMINES WHAT WE DO**

Let me tell you a story. Once upon a time, there was a homeless young woman who lived on the streets. She had no parents, no clothes except those upon her back, no belongings to speak of. She ate whatever she could find, even someone else's left-overs in a garbage can.

One day, the prince of the city came through the streets with his royal carriage and saw the young woman rummaging through the garbage bins. His heart was filled with compassion, and he had his servants invite the young woman to enter the carriage to come to the royal palace. The woman was confused; why would the Prince want her to come to the palace?

But she accepted the invitation, though she remained somewhat in a daze. When she came to the palace, she was shown to a huge bedroom with a large canopied bed, closets full of women's clothing, and which was adjacent to a large bathroom, with a huge jacuzzi tub. She was instructed to remove her clothing, take a long bath, and put on any of the clothing she found in the closet.

She was suspicious, and very uncomfortable, to say the least, but her curiosity, mixed with her fatigue and her hunger drove her to try it. She enjoyed the luxurious bath and the delicious feeling of being clean; she felt almost decadent when she put on the long flowing gown that she had picked out of all of the splendid garments. She went down the long staircase and was escorted into the main banqueting hall, where she sat down to a huge feast with every food imaginable. The Prince had requested that a special feast be held in honor of the young woman, who probably had not sampled such fare before.

The evening was wonderful. She enjoyed the food, the drink, the fine clothing and the wonderfully important way she was treated by the Prince and the servants. It was like living in a dream. And she expected the dream to soon come to an end.

But the Prince requested that the young woman become his Ward, his permanent guest, whose welfare would now be his concern. All of her needs would be taken care of by the Prince. She was welcome to stay with the Prince as a Princess of the kingdom for as long as she desired.

Amazed at such a prospect, she followed the servant back to the huge bedroom, where she was given a silken dressing gown for sleeping. The bed was soft, the sheets cool, the covers warm. It was perfect.

Yet in the morning, she found herself hungry again. And out of habit, she reached for her old rags instead of the fine clothing hanging in her closet. She went downstairs, through the huge banqueting room and kitchen, and went outside, behind the palace to the garbage dump, where she began rummaging for scraps from last night's feast, as she had learned to do throughout her life in order to keep from starving.

One of the servants noticed a beggar eating out of the trash cans and informed the Prince. His Highness looked out the window and recognized the beggar as his new Ward. He rushed down the stairway and out behind the house and turned the young woman toward himself.

“Why are you wearing these rags? You have new royal clothing in your new bedroom. And why are you eating out of the dumpster? There is an abundance of food in the royal refrigerator, all at your disposal. You are dressed like a pauper, and acting like one who has no food or clothing, when in actuality, you are now a princess, with all the goods, rights and privileges of royalty.

**Don't you know who you are?”**

“I am an orphaned pauper,” said the young woman, “living in your palace. I don't deserve to be in such a fancy place; I am nothing, and I have nothing. I have never done anything to even merit my visiting here, much less my living here.”

“That's not the point,” said the Prince. “I invited you here, and adopted you as one of the royal family solely out of my compassion for you. You didn't earn it; I freely gave it to you. And you no longer are an orphaned pauper; you are a royal Ward, with all of the benefits and privileges that come with being my Ward.

“Whether or not you wear the fine clothing or eat the sumptuous food is up to you, but it is yours nonetheless. However until you accept the fact that you are no longer a pauper, and embrace the truth that you are now a Princess, you will never be able to enjoy all that now belongs to you.”

The young woman stood there baffled. How could this be? Who was she? A pauper or a Princess? She didn't know who she was anymore. She had been a pauper so long, she continually felt like a pauper. But the Prince has decreed that she is a Princess, and whatever the Prince decrees is the truth.

“Dear Prince, I have been a Pauper so long, I do not know how to be a Princess. I don't feel like a Princess inside. And yet I know that what you decree becomes law. So I need you to help me remember who I now am, so that I will act like a Princess instead of a Pauper. I do so want to be a Princess.”

The Prince called one of the royal servants, a handmaiden named Paraklete. “You”, the Prince said, “are to remain at the side of the Princess at all times, reminding her that she is now a royal Princess. You are to remind her of the benefits and privileges that come with her rank, and remind her of the behavior befitting someone in her position. You are not to force her to do anything, but to always speak the truth in love to her.”

And the newly found Princess slowly learned to eat from the royal refrigerator rather than the royal dump, and reach for her new fine clothing rather than her rags. And she made good use of the royal bathroom and routinely tried to keep herself clean from the filth she used to walk and wallow in.

But this slow transformation of her outward actions only followed on the heels of the renewal of her mindset. With Paraklete by her side, reminding her that she was not a pauper, but a royal Princess, she slowly learned what her new identity truly was, and learned to act according to who she now was.

Questions:

1. What was the woman before she met the Prince? What did she have?  
*A pauper. Nothing.*

2. Did she deserve to be invited to the palace? Had she done anything to merit the favor of the Prince? *No.*
3. Once the Prince decreed that she was a Ward of the royal family, and a now a Princess, was the woman still a pauper? What was she? *No. She was a princess.*
4. Did she feel like a Princess? Did that make her any less a Princess? *No. No.*
5. What made her a Princess? *The Prince's decree; he said she was a Princess. And whatever the Prince says is law in the kingdom.*
6. What did she act like the morning after her first night in the palace? Why? *A pauper. Because her mindset and habits were still those of a pauper. She continued to think of herself as a pauper.*
7. Did her actions change the fact that she was a Princess? Why? *No. Because she didn't become a Princess by her actions, but by entering into a dependent relationship with the Prince, so her actions couldn't cause her to lose her royal standing.*
8. Who did the Prince give to her as a "helper"? What was the helper to do? *A handmaiden named Paraklete. She was to remind her that she was now a royal Princess, and reminded her that she should act like a royal Princess.*
9. And what were the resulting changes in the young woman's life? *She started reminding herself of the truth, that she was a Princess, and therefore started acting like a Princess.*  
\*\*\*\*\*
10. What were you before you met Jesus: a sinner or a saint? What did you have to offer him? *A sinner. Nothing.*

*Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us...*

11. Did you deserve to be invited into the kingdom? Did you do anything to merit the favor of the Son of God? *No. No.*

*Titus 3:3-7 At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. <sup>4</sup>But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, <sup>5</sup>he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, <sup>6</sup>whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, <sup>7</sup>so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.*

12. Once you received Jesus by repenting of your sins, placing your faith in Him, and surrendering your life to Him, Jesus decreed that you were a royal son of God. Even more so, God the Father now said you are "righteous" in His sight, a saint of God. So what are you now: a sinner, or a saint (sanctified in Christ)? Why? *A saint. Because God has decreed it.*

*1 Cor. 6:9-11 Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders <sup>10</sup>nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers*

*will inherit the kingdom of God. <sup>11</sup>And that is what some of you were. **But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.***

13. Do you always feel like a saint? Does that make you any less a saint? *No. No.*

*1 John 3:18,19 Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. <sup>19</sup>This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence <sup>20</sup>whenever our hearts condemn us. For God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.*

14. What made you a saint? *God the Father's decree. He said you are a saint, and whatever the Father says is law in His Kingdom.*

*1 Cor 6:11 **But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.***

15. Do you sometimes act like the sinner you used to be, instead of the saint God says you now are? Why? *Yes, I sometimes sin. Because, over the period of a lifetime, I have developed habits and mindsets that are used to doing things my way, independently of God. Breaking habits, and replacing lies I have always believed to be true, doesn't happen overnight.*

*Romans 7:15-23 I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. <sup>16</sup>And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. <sup>17</sup>As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. <sup>18</sup>I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature [flesh]. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. <sup>19</sup>For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. <sup>20</sup>Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.*

*<sup>21</sup>So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. <sup>22</sup>For in my inner being I delight in God's law; <sup>23</sup>but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members.*

16. Do your actions change the fact that you are a saint? Why? *No. Because I didn't become a saint because of my actions, but because I entered into a dependent relationship with God, so my actions can't cause me to lose my standing as a saint.*

*Titus 3:4,5 But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, <sup>5</sup>he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit,*

17. Who has the Lord given to you as a "helper"? What is the helper to do? *The Paraklete, or the Comforter, the Holy Spirit. He is to remind me of who I am now, and remind me of how I am to act. He lets me know when I am acting like a saint, and when I am not.*

*John 14:16,17,26 <sup>16</sup>And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—<sup>17</sup>the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be <sup>18</sup>in you...<sup>26</sup>But the Counselor, the*

*Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.*

18. What do you think the result would be if you told yourself daily that you are no longer a “sinner saved by grace”, but a “saint that occasionally sins”? *I would start acting like a saint that occasionally sins instead of a sinner saved by grace.*

**Romans 12:2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.**

### THIRD WEEK'S LESSON

This week, we are going to continue our discussion about our new identity since we have given our lives to Christ. We now know that understanding who we are (which is royal sons of God) determines how we act. And since we are no longer the same person we used to be, we should not continue to act in the same ways we used to act.

Today we are going to discuss the security and significance that becomes our when we give our life to Christ.

Monday

## WHO I AM IN CHRIST JESUS – I AM SECURE

Vs. for the day: Romans 15:7

Passage for the day: Romans 15:5-7

Romans 5:7 says, "Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God."

*Learning who we are, and who God wants us to be, allows us to say  
" I AM ACCEPTED".*

Rejection is one of the hardest things to deal with. Unconditional love and acceptance is one of the most basic needs of humanity. Many times, peer pressures and man's approval makes people compromise their moral standards to be accepted by others. A person begins to scheme and manipulate other people, or present a false image, to gain approval. Then, when this fails, they envy those who seem to have what they want.

### **How does it make you feel to be rejected?**

When you know who you are in Christ Jesus, you no longer need to be threatened by people or compete with them, because you are secure and loved. No matter what you've done in your life, no matter what your background, you have a Father that loved you enough to suffer for you. He allowed a part of Himself too die for you; this shows how much he really loves you.

### **How does it make you feel to know that someone died for you?**

### **Would it be hard for you to die for someone you love?**

He accepts us just as we are. We don't have to change to come to Him. He takes us while we are still sinners and gives us the assurance that we are accepted.

As you begin to pray and seek God today. Thank God that you are accepted just as you are. That you don't have to change before he will accept you. Thank him for all that he's done in your life so far, and all that he's going to do in the future. Remember he loves you. So its time to show him that you love him. After all Jesus gave his life for you so that we might be forgiven. With that I believe he proved his love. So try to show him some back.

Tuesday

## I AM SECURE IN JESUS CHRIST

Vs. for the day: Hebrews 4:16

Passage for the day: Hebrews 4:14-16

Let's read Heb. 4: 16. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Just as Jesus was powerful enough to save us, He is also powerful enough to keep us secure in Him. He provides for us everything we need for life and godliness. We have to be confident that He will provide all our needs according to his riches in glory. Our Father owns it all.

All we have to do is stay as close to Him as we possibly can, and He will complete in us what He needs to accomplish. He'll shelter us in times of need and He'll bless us with **ABUNDANT LIFE RIGHT NOW.**

- Let's turn to Romans 8:1,2.  
**We are free forever from** \_\_\_\_\_.
- Someone read Philippians 1:6.  
**I am to be confident that the good work God has begun in me will be** \_\_\_\_\_.
- Turn to 2 Timothy 1:7.  
**I have not been given a spirit of** \_\_\_\_\_.
- Turn to Hebrew 4:16.  
**I can always find \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ in time of need.**
- Someone else read 1 John 5:18.  
**If I am born again, Satan can't \_\_\_\_\_ me.**

The Bible says if we abide in Him, He will abide in us. Jesus will never abandon us or forsake us. He won't leave us the way He found us, either. He will finish the work He has begun in us until we are complete and mature, not lacking anything.

God also cannot love us any more or any less than He already does. No matter what you do, you cannot get away from God's love for you, according to Romans 8:38,39. That should be enough security for us all.



Wednesday

## WHO I AM IN CHRIST JESUS – I AM SIGNIFICANT

Vs. for the day: John 15:4,5

Passage for the day: John 15:1-5

**What do you think that a man or woman's greatest need is?** Some people have said that they would like their tombstone to say that they made a difference. **We all need to feel significant and that we have purpose and meaning in our lives.**

Let's read John 15:4,5. **Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.**

### **Where do most people try and find their significance?**

Our problem occurs when we look in the wrong places to find our significance. Some people try to find it in their jobs and in money. Others try to find it in "stuff" or worldly things. Some try to find it in power.

Significance all rests on the questions "Who am I?" and "Why do I exist?" Our answer to these questions divides us into two groups: those who pursue significance in the right way and those who pursue it in the wrong way. Our desire to fulfill this need can either drive us closer to God and all the right answers, or away from God and seeking the ways of the world. Lasting significance is found only in Christ Jesus.

### *I Am Significant in Christ*

- Let's turn to Matthew 5:13,14.  
**I am the salt of the earth and the light of the earth.**
- Someone read John 15:1-5.  
**I am a true vine, and a channel of his life.**
- Now, someone else read Acts 1:8.  
**God has empowered me to be a witness.**

Thursday

## WHO I AM IN CHRIST JESUS – I AM SIGNIFICANT

Vs. for the day: Matthew 6:26

Passage for the day: Matthew 6:25-34

- **Turn to 1 Corinthians 3:16**  
**I am God's \_\_\_\_\_.**
- **Someone read Ephesians 3:12**  
**I can approach God with \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.**
- **Now turn to Philippians 4:13**  
**I can do \_\_\_\_\_ through Christ Jesus who strengthens me.**

The only place we will find any purpose or significance is in our relationship with the Lord. He made us for a purpose, and if we will stay in His will, we will automatically arrive at our destiny.

So few people feel significant in today's automated society, but you are extremely important to God. Even the hairs on your head are numbered. The God of who created the universe actually takes the time to daily watch over every aspect of your life and take care of you.

When we were dead in our sins, we believed we were insignificant, and many of us acted as though we were worth very little. But now we have the sure knowledge that we are invaluable to God, even worth the death of His only begotten, and we need to learn how to live as the precious children we are.

Today, as you pray to the Lord begin to see that God loves you and remember you're special to him. With the thought in mind that you are significant in the eyes of the creator of all things.

Friday

## WHO I AM IN CHRIST JESUS – I AM SIGNIFICANT

Vs. for the day: Romans 8:37

Passage for the day: Romans 8:28-40

Let's read Romans 8:37.

**Now, we are no longer defeated, but we are more than**

Someone else read Romans 8:29

**God predestined us to be conformed to the image of**

Now that we've learned that we have a new identity, we begin to see that we no longer have to worry about the things in our past. Now we have to focus on the things of the future. We need to realize that we are significant to God through Christ Jesus. We should no longer live in a defeated state of mind, because we are more than conquerors through Jesus.

God has a plan and a purpose for our lives. He has predestined us to be *called* (chosen and set apart for a destiny), *justified* (made innocent, as if we had never sinned), and *glorified* (made more like Jesus). Christ did all of this for us when He died on the cross.

### **REMEMBER:**

**We are no longer products of our past. Instead,**

***We are products of Christ's work on the cross!***

Jesus' death made you holy and righteous in the Father's sight. You are important, accepted and loved. No matter what anyone else has ever said about you, and no matter what you have believed about yourself, the truth is that you are priceless to God, and invaluable to the Body of Christ.

Just as you've learned in the last two days that you are special and that God has predestined you with a special purpose. Today as you pray, ask God to show you that purpose. With the thought that you're significant no matter what's going on around you right now. Trust in God so that he will direct you to your destiny.

## **OLD NATURE LESSON**

**FOURTH WEEK:**

The question for this week is, if I'm born again, then why do I still struggle with doing things the right way? Well, we are going to discuss the difference between our New Nature and our Flesh, and the constant war between the two. The good news is, we have been given the victory over our Flesh, and therefore, we can be "more than conquerors through Him who loved us."

Monday

**BELONGING TO YOUR CHOICE: SPIRIT OR FLESH**

Vs. for the day: Galatians 5:15

Passage for the day: Galatians 5:13-23

Galatians 5:15 If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.

**OUT WITH THE OLD, IN WITH THE NEW**

**Did you know that you have a new nature?** From birth, you had the Old Nature. But since you have been born again, you have a New Nature.

Read Galatians 5:13-18

**What is the main word in these Scriptures?** Love

The one thing that propels us to serve the Lord is our love for Him (because of what He has done for us), and our love for one another (which He implants in our hearts when He comes to live in us). By loving as the Lord commands, we actually fulfill the law's righteous requirements.

Let's read Galatians 5:19-21.

**What are some signs that your flesh is in control?** (Galatians 5:19-21)

Sexual immorality, impurity, debauchery, idolatry and witchcraft, hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, orgies.

The things named in this passage are very self-serving actions, motivated to please ourselves at anyone else's expense.

**Love means giving of yourself for the benefit of others, and the Old Nature cannot truly do that. It seeks to serve only itself.**

**What are some signs that your New Nature is in control?** Read Galatians 5:22,23

Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

The things named in this passage are God- and other-centered. They are expressions of love, or ways that we can give of ourselves for the benefit of others.

Once you are "born again", you begin a process of "re-learning" how to think and how to act, **just like a baby**. During this process, you will find that the choices you make become extremely important. Do you obey the Flesh and continue to do what you have

always done? Or do you obey the New Nature's voice, which suggests that you do something that is somewhat unfamiliar.

You will discover the reality that your future really does depend upon today's choices. ***You belong to your choice***, so choose wisely.

Tuesday

## **YOU BELONG TO YOUR CHOICE**

Vs. for the day: Galatians 5:16, 24

Passage for the day: Galatians 5:24,25

Let's read Galatians 5:16,24

Galatians 5:16, 24 So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature...Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires.

Your own choice will decide whether the Spirit or Flesh will be in control of your life. Read Galatians 5:16,24.

**How does the Scripture say we can make the right choices?**

By living by the Spirit and crucifying the sinful nature.

**Living by the Spirit** is another way of saying you must listen to the prompting of the Holy Spirit and obey His leading.

**Crucifying the sinful nature** occurs when you obey the Spirit, because you will not continue to feed the flesh. Think of it this way: in order to live, something must be fed. If you starve it, it will die. When you do not follow, obey, or "feed" your sinful nature, you are starving it so it will die. But the only way to crucify the sinful nature is to follow the Spirit.

Before you were born-again, the Old Nature was directing your life. All of your thoughts, desires, actions and emotions were expressing that nature.

**What does "walking in the Spirit" mean?**

It's another way of saying "live by the Spirit", or follow the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Now that you have the New Nature, you have the supernatural ability to express the thoughts, desires, actions and emotions of God's Spirit, which lives in you. He is slowly transforming you into the image of His Son, Jesus Christ, and the more you yield to the Spirit's leading, the more Christ-like you will become.

**Christians are to live in the Spirit, by the Spirit.** How does one live by the Spirit?

1. We must believe that the Spirit is within us and know that God has sent the Spirit into our heart. (Galatians 4:6)
2. We must, in every situation, be yielding to the Spirit, and be able to submit our desires to those of the Holy Spirit.
3. We must be dependent on the Holy Spirit for help, enabling us to live a God-pleasing life.
4. We must anticipate the effects of the Spirit to help us in our daily lives.

Too many people try to "live like a Christian" without truly yielding themselves to the Spirit's control. They try to do it through sheer willpower. But willpower will not conquer your Flesh. It is only by the Spirit that we put to death the Flesh, with all of its characteristics (Romans 8:13), and it is only by submitting to God's Spirit that we can live victoriously.

Ask God to reveal to you areas of your life where you are trying to “kill off” the Flesh by sheer willpower, and ask Him to replace those efforts with the supernatural ability to obey the Spirit's voice.

***LIVE BY THE SPIRIT!***



Wednesday

## YOU BELONG TO YOUR CHOICE

Vs. for the day: Galatians 2:20

Passage for the day: Romans 8:1-14

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

Let's read Romans 8:10-11

**Now that Christ lives in you, what is your condition?**

My body is dead because of sin, but alive because of righteousness.

You have been taken out of darkness and placed into His marvelous light; you have been rescued from death and have now been made alive. You also have righteousness, which means you are "right with" or "not guilty" before God.

Now, someone read Galatians 2:20.

**How do you live now? What is it that allows you to continue in Him?**

Christ now lives within you, and you live by the faith of the Son of God. This actually means that God gives you the faith you need to live. The scriptures say that every man receives a "measure of faith", a certain amount that is sufficient for that person for that day.

Jesus totally believed every word His heavenly Father spoke; He had faith in God. That same faith that He had has been imparted to us, so that we have the ability to trust God and trust His choices for our lives. We can yield to the Holy Spirit because we know that He will lead us into eternal life and righteous living. We can obey His still small voice because we trust that He knows best for us.

But you must choose to follow the prompting of your New Nature before Christ can take control of your life. He has to be your Lord and Master. When you make that decision, ***you belong to your choice.***

Has God been speaking to you regarding any area particular area of your life? Have you been resisting doing what the Spirit has suggested, or have you obeyed Him, choosing to believe He really does know best in all situations? Make a commitment to obey the Spirit's leading in this area, regardless of how strange or uncomfortable it may feel. You will be amazed at what wonderful things God can do through an obedient and yielded vessel.

Thursday

## **RISEN WITH CHRIST**

Vs. for the day: Colossians 3:1

Passage for the day: Colossians 3:1-7

Colossians 3:1 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.

Let's read Colossians 2:12-13 and 3:1-7.

**What does it mean to be "risen with Christ"?**

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When Paul speaks to the Colossians about seeking things from above, he is saying that you have "died" with Christ and are now "risen" with Christ. Therefore, not only have the Colossian believers been freed from sin, they have also turned to a new life, leaving behind their old ways, habits, values, interests and sins. **Seek those things from above.** Seek knowledge, closer fellowship with Him, the experience of His resurrection power and victory over our sin.

**What 3 choices in Colossians 3:1,2,5 should we make to live victoriously?**

1) Set your heart on things above  
2) Set your mind on things above  
3) Put to death whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, idolatry.

Remember that it is by obeying the Spirit's leading that we "mortify" or put to death the cravings of the Flesh (Romans 8:13). You can't force yourself to *not* do all those old things you used to do. Your victory will be short-lived if you do it that way.

But when you replace your old thoughts, emotions and habits with those of the Spirit, you will find yourself automatically doing things that please the Lord. And without even trying, your old ways and habits will just die off as you **make your choice** to walk in the Spirit and follow His leading.

What old habits do you want God to remove from your life? Can you hear the Spirit speaking to you about other ways you should be acting or reacting? One good decision will lead to another if you will just begin with one act of obedience. Don't forget that you are Risen with Christ, and able to live victoriously in every situation by the Spirit's power.

Friday

## **RISEN WITH CHRIST**

Vs. for the day: 2 Corinthians 5:17

Passage for the day: 2 Corinthians 5:14-18

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

**Let's read 2 Corinthians 5:14-18**

**Christ died for all so that we would not live for ourselves, but instead live for him.**

**We all "died" with Jesus Christ, meaning that our Old Nature was crucified on the cross with Jesus, and it therefore no longer exists. We have also all been made alive through Jesus Christ's resurrection, which means that Jesus Christ has come to live within us, and we are free to obey our New Nature.**

**2 Corinthians 5:16 says that we no longer regard anyone from a "worldly point of view". What does that mean?**

**In the book of James, we are told that we are not to judge people according to how they look. In the Old Testament, God told the Prophet Samuel that He does not look on man's outside, but instead looks upon his heart. This verse discourages us from looking at people according to who they were, or what they have done. Why?**

**2 Corinthians 5:17 says that we are new creations.**

**Old things have passed away, and behold ALL things have become new. It has been said that the only person who will remind you of your past is the devil, because God has chosen to remember your sins no more. He has created you to be something brand new. The old person no longer exists.**

**Today, make the choice to no longer look at yourself as you used to be. Instead, choose God's view and opinion of you over your own or the opinion of others. You are a new creation, risen with Christ, with the Spirit of the living God within you. Now you can **live for Christ!****

**We are saints that sometimes sin. Read Eph. 4:22-24. By faith, we are to function in the light of our true identity – who we really are in Christ Jesus.**

## BELONGING TO YOUR CHOICE

What do the following five things all have in common?

A nun, Someone who rides horses, Someone who bites their fingernails,  
Someone who curses, Someone who attends church regularly.

**They all have a habit.**

Since we are a new creation in Christ, and the old man is dead, why do we still have a problem with doing things the "old" way?

**We still have our old habits, mindsets, and leftovers from our prior life.**

How do we make choices that please God?

Read Romans 13:8-14. What does God tell us to "put on"? **The Lord Jesus Christ.**

(Rom 13:8 NIV) Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law.

(Rom 13:9 NIV) The commandments, "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not covet," and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

(Rom 13:10 NIV) Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

(Rom 13:11 NIV) And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.

(Rom 13:12 NIV) The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.

(Rom 13:13 NIV) Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy.

(Rom 13:14 NIV) Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.

What are we to make no provision for? **The flesh and lust (desires of the sinful nature)**

Read Ephesians 4:22-24. What does God tell us to "put on"? **The new self.**

(Eph 4:22 NIV) You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires;

(Eph 4:23 NIV) to be made new in the attitude of your minds;

(Eph 4:24 NIV) and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

Why is this so important?

**Only the new self, which is created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness, can allow us to make choices that will reflect Jesus in us.**

Read Ephesians 6:10-17. What does God tell us to “put on”? **The armor of God.**

Belt **Truth** Breastplate **Righteousness** Shoes **Peace of the Gospel**  
Shield **Faith** Helmet **Salvation** Sword **Spirit**

Christ is **The Armor of God**

Read John 3:30. What does John the Baptist say here?  
**Jesus must increase and I must decrease.**

**Putting off the old self and putting on the new self is not a matter of making ourselves stop doing something bad. No, it is more a matter of yielding to the good that the Spirit is leading us to do. It's more a matter of resting than doing good works. A good tree produces good fruit; a bad tree produces bad fruit.**

**This is sanctification.**

**Oswald Chambers said, “The end and aim and meaning of all sanctification is personal, passionate devotion to Jesus Christ.**

The only way to be sanctified is to be passionately devoted to Jesus Christ. We always become more like the people we hang around, and we need to spend more time just being with Jesus, praying, reading, listening to the Spirit.

**Sanctification leads to holiness, and HOLINESS MAGNIFIES JESUS CHRIST, NOT OURSELVES AND OUR OWN CLEANNES.**

Every choice we make is either for the flesh or for the spirit. Every choice brings us either one step closer or one step further away from becoming more and more like Jesus Christ.

FIFTH WEEK:

Today, we are going to continue learning about how our choices affect our relationship with Christ and therefore our walk with Christ, or our actions. We belong to our choice, which means that we must make a decision every time we act: do we follow our Flesh, or the way we used to do things, or do we follow our New Nature, the Spirit living inside of us now.

Monday

**Did you know that we are “CONTAINERS” FOR CHRIST?**

Vs. for the day: 2 Corinthians 4:11

Passage for the day: 2 Corinthians 4:6-11

2 Corinthians 4:11 For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body.

Let's read 2 Corinthians 4:6-11.

Start out with verse 6: God's light shined into our hearts and gave us the light of the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

What did God put into our hearts so that we could know Jesus Christ personally?

**His Holy Spirit.**

That light is the Holy Spirit, who leads us into truth and witnesses to us about who Jesus Christ really is. We can know Him personally, because He lives within us.

In verse 7, Paul refers to the Holy Spirit as a “treasure” in jars of clay, or earthen vessels. Our bodies are those clay jars (because Genesis says that our bodies were formed from the dust and will return to dust), but these earthen vessels are of extreme value now that the treasure of the Holy Spirit lives within us. His presence makes all the difference in our life.

Verses 8 and 9 tell us of our victory when Jesus is in control and we submit to his will. Even though we go through hard times, we win the battles because the Holy Spirit empowers us. We may look a little tattered and torn at times, but inside, we are becoming more and more like the Lord Jesus, because the Spirit is slowly but surely transforming us into His image.

There is no doubt that you receive a New Nature when you choose to allow Christ to control your life. **We are the container for the indwelling Christ.** That is how we can know Him, hear Him, and choose to obey Him.

Many people try to live a Christian life and try to understand God without ever really experiencing the indwelling presence of Christ. But they can't do it because they don't allow themselves to be the containers for Christ. Only those who receive the new Nature have the ability to know God as well as follow and obey Him.

Praise God today for the indwelling presence of Jesus Christ through His Holy Spirit. Thank Him for changing you to be more and more like Jesus. Rejoice because, no matter what happens, you will not be crushed, despairing, abandoned or destroyed. This is His promise through the treasure that lives within us. Praise Him that you are the container for the indwelling Christ.

Tuesday

**Now, it's one thing to have the treasure of the Holy Spirit in us, but it's another thing to be CONTROLLED BY THE NEW NATURE**

Vs. for the day: Galatians 5:22,23

Passage for the day: Galatians 5:19-26

Galatians 5:22,23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

**We should recognize that Jesus Christ lives in us now.**

As new Christians, we often ask Christ to give us qualities like love, power, gentleness, and righteousness. But Jesus doesn't just give us those qualities: **He gives us Himself.** He is the source of those qualities, and more. If we receive Him into our hearts, He will bring these things with Him.

But we have to **surrender our lives to His direction**, letting the Flesh die so He will allow His life to flow through you. He is the New Nature. He is the source of all good things. And his desire is that you have it all.

**Now, let's re-read Galatians 5:22-23.**

These are the characteristics that fill us when Christ inhabits us. They are called the **"Fruit of the Spirit"**.

**Name the nine Fruit of the Spirit:**

- 1)love
- 2)joy
- 3)peace
- 4)patience
- 5)kindness
- 6)goodness
- 7)faithfulness
- 8)gentleness
- 9) self-control

These are the characteristics that will flow out of us when we yield to His Spirit and let Jesus be Himself in us.

**Which one of the fruit of the spirit is weakest in your life?** In your quiet time, acknowledge this weakness to Jesus and ask Him to strengthen you in this area.

Wednesday

Now that we know that we are “containers for Christ”, and that the Holy Spirit lives within us and creates the fruit of the spirit in us, how do we release the New Nature within us?

## **RELEASING THE NEW NATURE**

Vs. for the day: Romans 8:26

Passage for the day: Romans 6:12-18

Romans 8:26 In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.

An apple tree produces apples. It can't produce peaches. Why? Because by nature, it is an apple tree.

Your New Nature also produces fruit: Fruit of the New Nature. Re-read the nine (9) Fruit of the Spirit from yesterday's lesson. Jesus can make all of these qualities real in our lives if we are willing vessels, allowing Him to flow through us. Jesus must be the one to release the fruit **into our lives**; however, we are the ones who choose to let these fruit flow **out of our lives**.

**Someone read Romans 8:26-28.**

There is no excuse for not producing fruit. **Even our weakest qualities can be changed through prayer.** Verse 26 says that the Spirit makes intercession for us (prays for us) even when **we** don't know how to pray.

There is a simple decision that you make as a Christian. You must allow Jesus Christ to be the Lord of your life. When you do this, His Nature is in control of you and will produce the Fruit of the Spirit.

**You don't have to struggle to be like Jesus. You simply let Him be Himself within you!**

**Now, someone else read Romans 6:12-18**

**What does this scripture say about sin? It wants to reign over you and make you obey it's lusts.**

According to verse 12, sin tries to rule your life, but you have a choice who will rule.

**But you don't have to let sin reign over you. Sin is no longer your master. It can only be your master when you choose to give yourself to the power of sin.**

**You always belong to your choice. If you choose to let Christ reign, He will reign as King of your life, allowing the fruit to flow through your life. But you have to**



**choose whether you want to live by the Spirit and the Fruit of the Spirit. Choose the Flesh or the New Nature.**

Thursday

It's really simply a matter of making Jesus Christ King over our life. A King reigns over his domain. If we belong to Jesus, He has every right to make the decisions for our lives, and for us to submit to His will for us. However, many of us have lived as King over our own lives for so long that we find it hard to hand over the "crown" to someone else. But we will never be all that Jesus has destined us to become if we refuse to make Jesus King.

## **MAKING JESUS CHRIST KING**

Vs. for the day: Romans 8:7,8

Passage for the day: Romans 7:21-25

Romans 8:7,8 the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.

**You can't allow the Flesh back in.** You can't trust the Flesh. Many times Christians get defeated after they are born-again. They expect their lives to automatically change, or expect everything that might lead them astray to be removed. This is a bad mistake. **You can't trust yourself until Christ is totally in control of your life.**

Sometimes we have to take ourselves out of situations that can bring up the Flesh. The Flesh will never change or be any different, but will always produce the same ugly, bad fruit. If you don't allow the Flesh to die, your body becomes a battleground. A struggle begins between your New Nature and your Flesh.

**Let's read Romans 7:22-25 If you have not made a clear cut decision to let Jesus Christ reign over your life, you will experience a lot of these same feelings.**

This is a struggle of a Christian who has not made a clear-cut decision to let Jesus Christ reign over His life. **If Jesus Christ is truly your Lord, He must control your life. The Flesh has to die.**

**Someone read Romans 8:6-8 for us.** This tells of 4 negative statements about a Christian who has not yielded their life to Christ. Write them below.

**What are the 4 statements this scripture makes about people who have not yielded their life to Christ?**

1. Their mind is death
2. Their mind is hostile to God
3. Their mind does not submit to God's law because it cannot do so
4. They cannot please God

**What allows us to make Christ King and obey Him? Someone read Romans 8:9.**

This tells us that we have the Spirit of God dwelling in us. The word “dwelling” means “reside permanently”. When the Holy Spirit dwells in us, we are not controlled by the sinful nature but by the Spirit of God. But we must still make the choice to obey what the Spirit says. Making Christ King happens on a moment by moment, decision by decision basis.

Friday

## MAKING JESUS CHRIST KING

Vs. for the day: Ephesians 4:22-24

Passage for the day: Ephesians 4:22-32

Ephesians 4:22-24 You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

**So how do you win victoriously over the Flesh? Let's read Ephesians 4:22-32.**

**What are the steps described in the following verses?**

Vs. 22 **Put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires. If you do not put off the old self, it will continually try to corrupt you.**

Vs. 23 **Be made new in the attitude of your minds. Every action you take actually begins with an attitude in your mind. Your attitude affects your thoughts, and your thoughts affect your actions. When the Spirit of God changes makes your attitudes new, your thoughts will change and so will your actions.**

Vs. 24 **Put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. God created the new self, or the New Nature, to be just like Him. It is righteous and holy. Its attitudes, thoughts and actions are righteous and holy. So when you yield to the Spirit within you, your attitudes, thoughts and actions will automatically reflect the Lord's.**

These verses talk about replacing the Flesh with the New Nature. We replace the old thoughts and behaviors with new attitudes that reflect the new creation that we truly are in Christ.

Verses 25 –32 state examples of behaviors we must “trade-in” to become new. What are they?

Vs. 25 **Put off falsehood and speak truthfully**

Vs. 26 **In your anger do not sin**

Vs. 28 **He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work**

Vs. 29 **Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building other up according to their needs**

Vs. 31 **Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brailing and slander, along with every form of malice.**

**Verse 32 is a summary of how the New Nature will act: kind, compassionate, forgiving...Christ-like.**

**You must forsake your Flesh for the New Nature.** But the secret is in allowing God to live out His life from within you. He is naturally kind, compassionate and forgiving, and you will be too if you yield to his leading. If there is any area over which Christ does not reign as Lord, ask God to take control over it, and He will do it for you.

## **Containers for Christ:** **What Difference Does It Make to Have Christ Living In Us?**

Body - This is the part of you with which you interact with the external world.

1. The Body receives information and external stimuli from the world, and sends that information and stimuli to the soul.
2. Additionally, the Body has its own set of desires and needs which it transmits to the soul.
3. The Body is also our means of influencing and affecting our physical surroundings.

Soul – This is the seat of your thoughts, will and emotions: you make decisions with your soul. The soul is affected by input from both the Body and the Spirit.

1. When your spirit is dead, the only source of input which the Soul receives is from what the Body, or the flesh, receives. All of your decisions are influenced solely by what your five (5) senses tell you, your physical and/or emotional state, and what your carnal mind has come to believe is the truth from past experience.
2. When your spirit is alive, you now have another influence on the Soul – the desires and leading of the Holy Spirit. Now you have a choice whether to follow the cravings of your flesh or to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit speaking to your spirit.

Spirit – This contains the essence of who God created you to be. You cannot become all God intends for you to become while your spirit is dead, and we are all spiritually “still-born.” The spirit is also the part of you that can interact with the spiritual realm. It can hear from God, understand what the Holy Spirit is saying, and desires to please God.

The unsaved, natural man receives stimuli and information from his surrounding world and sends that information to the soul (mind, will and emotions). The soul reacts accordingly, and instructs the body to do something in response.

Take, for example, a man driving down the highway and someone not only cuts him off but curses him as he goes by. The natural man sees this through his sense, sends this information to his mind, emotions and will, and the soul processes the data. His mind says, “I will not be treated that way! I didn't deserve that treatment! That person needs to be taught a lesson...” The emotions get hot and say, “That makes me so mad! I'm gonna kill that guy!” And his will decides to step on the gas, get closer to him and curse him back, with added hand movements.

The spiritual, born-again man receives stimuli and information from his surrounding world AND information and guidance from the indwelling Spirit of God. The spiritual man then must make a choice whether or not to let his body react to the stimuli from the world or to the leading of the Spirit of God.

This man is cut off and cursed by the same man on the highway. He processes the same thoughts and emotions as the natural man. However, simultaneously, he hears in his spirit the Holy Spirit saying, “Forgive him, for he knows not what he does. He doesn't

know any better. He doesn't know the Lord. He needs someone to show him the love of the Lord. Bless those that persecute you and pray for those that revile you. Do not return evil for evil, but return blessing for evil..." Now, the man has to MAKE A CHOICE whether he will obey his natural inclination to kill the guy or his spiritual inclination, which would be to pray for the salvation of that person. That decision will determine how his Body responds.

Read Romans 7:14 – 8:10.

<sup>14</sup>We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. <sup>15</sup>I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. <sup>16</sup>And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. <sup>17</sup>As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. <sup>18</sup>I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. <sup>19</sup>For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. <sup>20</sup>For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. <sup>21</sup>Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.

<sup>22</sup>So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. <sup>23</sup>For in my inner being I delight in God's law; <sup>24</sup>but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. <sup>25</sup>What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? <sup>26</sup>Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!

So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.

<sup>1</sup>Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, <sup>2</sup>because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. <sup>3</sup>For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, <sup>4</sup>God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. <sup>5</sup>And so he condemned sin in sinful man, <sup>6</sup>in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.

<sup>7</sup>Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. <sup>8</sup>The mind of sinful man <sup>9</sup>is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; <sup>10</sup>the sinful mind <sup>11</sup>is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. <sup>12</sup>Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.

**<sup>13</sup>You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. <sup>14</sup>But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness.**

In Romans 7:14 – 8:1, what is Paul describing? *I want to do good things, but there is something inside of me that wants to do bad things. In my mind I want to serve God, but in my flesh I want to serve myself.*

Can you relate? Give an example.

In Romans 8:5 – 8:10, describe the difference between the mind that is controlled by the flesh and the mind that is controlled by the Spirit. *The mind controlled by the flesh is an enemy against God and His Spirit. It cannot please God and doesn't want to. It brings death. The mind controlled by the Spirit brings life and peace.*

<sup>5</sup>Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. <sup>6</sup>The mind of sinful man<sup>o</sup> is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; <sup>7</sup>the sinful mind<sup>o</sup> is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. <sup>8</sup>Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.

<sup>9</sup>You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. <sup>10</sup>But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. <sup>11</sup>And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.

Read 2 Cor 4:6-11.

<sup>6</sup>For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness,"<sup>o</sup> made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

<sup>7</sup>But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. <sup>8</sup>We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; <sup>9</sup>persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. <sup>10</sup>We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. <sup>11</sup>For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body.

What does "earthen vessels" or "jars of clay" represent? Why?

*Our bodies, which are basically made up of the same minerals you find in the dust of the ground.*

What is supposed to be revealed in our body? *The life of Jesus, which is His Spirit.*

Read Col. 1:27.

<sup>27</sup>To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is **Christ in you, the hope of glory.**

What is the hope of glory? *Christ in you.*

In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit would settle **upon** people, but never reside **within** people.

Read John 14:16,17.

And I will ask the Father, and **he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth.** The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and **will be in you.**

What does Jesus say will happen after he goes away? *He will send the Holy Spirit to live inside of you. He used to be with you, but now will be in you.*

So what is the main difference between you today and you the day before you were saved?

- 1) *The Holy Spirit indwells me*
- 2) *My spirit is alive, not dead*
- 3) *I have a new nature*
- 4) *The old nature is crucified*

And how do we allow the Holy Spirit to make a difference in our everyday lives (our external actions)?

Read Colossians 3:16.

Let the word of Christ dwell in your richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God..

What will the Word of God do for you? Read Romans 12:2.

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.

*It will renew your mind so you can know which voice in your head is God's voice, so you can know and obey His will for your life.*

SIXTH WEEK

Monday

How many of you would say that you now are, or have ever felt that you were “broken”? Maybe you have experienced losses in your life: loss of relationships, loss of material things, loss of physical ability. John 10:10 says that the devil comes to kill, steal and destroy, but that Jesus came that we might have life, and have it more abundantly. God is about the business of making us whole; and if we have been “pulled apart”, then it is God's desire to put us back together again.

**BECOMING WHOLE**

**GOD WANTS YOU TO BE WHOLE**

Vs. For the day: Matt. 1:21

Passage for the Day: Matt. 1:18–25

Matt. 1:21 She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

**God wants you to be a whole, unbroken person.** Today we are going to focus on becoming whole. We are going to use the greatest example God could have ever given us, and that example is Jesus Christ. He is the only one who lived blameless before God and man, and He is the only person that can truly say that He was without sin.

As Christians, we sometimes mistakenly tend to focus our lives on the people around us. However, we need to turn from this worldly focus on each other and begin to focus on the only person who deserves to be imitated. That was the Son of God, Jesus Christ our Savior.

**Let's read Matthew 1:21**

**What does the word “saved” mean?**

The word “saved” actually means “to be made whole”.

Even though you're now a Christian, do you ever feel like you're still missing something in your life?

**You may not feel whole.** But God wants you to realize that there is hope for becoming whole. God loved us so much that He sent His Son, Jesus, to make us complete.

**Someone read Luke 4:18,19 in the King James Version.**

**What are the 6 things Jesus came to do?**

- 1) To preach good news to the poor
- 2) To heal the broken hearted
- 3) To proclaim freedom for the prisoners
- 4) To proclaim recovery of sight for the blind
- 5) To release the oppressed
- 6) To proclaim the year of the Lord's favor



Jesus came to do these things in **your life**. No matter what you have gone through, Jesus wants to heal you and fill the emptiness within you. **Which of these six (6) things do feel most appropriately describes what you need Jesus to do for you today?** *(allow discussion for those who want to talk about it)*

The Scripture plainly tells us that He comes to set us at liberty so that we might be free from any bondage and so that we can be made whole. Remember to keep your eyes on Jesus. We should let him be the example that we try to become more like.

Today end your lesson with a prayer of thanks to the Lord Jesus, and ask Him to help you to overcome any kind of bondage that might be holding you back from being whole.

## GOD'S SPIRIT MAKES US WHOLE

### Tuesday

Vs. for the day: 2 Timothy 1:7

Passage for the day: John 14: 15 - 31

Now, let's take a look at 2 Tim. 1: 7 - For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.

We did not receive a spirit of **fear**. Instead, we received a spirit that had the power to make us whole from "the inside out".

What are the characteristics of this spirit that lives within us?

1. Full of power
2. Full of love
3. Full of self-discipline

These three things within us will enable us to fulfill every good work which God has planned for us.

We need to recognize the power, love and discipline that God has implanted within us which will enable us to fulfill every good work He has planned for us.

**Someone read John 14:15-31. What does the Scripture say that the Father will send? The Holy Spirit (also known as the Counselor and the Spirit of truth)**

Verse 17 calls him the "Spirit of truth." **How did Jesus say the disciples would know the Spirit in this verse? He will be IN you.**

God's plan always included sending the Holy Spirit down to make us new, to make us whole and complete. Part of the reason why Jesus left the earth was so that the Holy Spirit would come to live in us.

Thank Jesus today for the Holy Spirit within you. When you feel the “tug-of-war” going on inside yourself, listen for the voice of the Spirit. He will always lead you in the right way – the way that will make you more like Jesus.

Now, becoming whole is a process, and a big part of the process is forgiveness. Think about when you are unable to forgive someone – either someone else, or yourself. How does it feel? (allow for discussion) Normally, you will feel “twisted up” inside, like something is continually eating at you. Sometimes that is guilt, sometimes that is anger and bitterness. But it truly will eat you alive. That's why forgiveness is such an essential part of becoming whole.

## Let's talk first about FORGIVING YOURSELF

### Wednesday

Vs. for the day: Revelation 12:10

Passage for the day: Revelation 12:10-12

- **Although you can't change your past, you *can* recover.**

You can be completely forgiven and healed by God, but your memory won't be quite as forgiving.

**Turn to Revelation 12:10** - Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: "Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down.

The accuser of the brethren will make sure you're reminded of every failure. That is why it is of the utmost importance that you remember who you are *right now* because of what **Christ has done for you and in you.**

Something important to remember is that God will not remind you of your past once you have confessed it and you have been forgiven. He separates your sin from you as far as the east is from the west. The only person who will remind you of your failures is Satan, so you don't have to listen to his accusations.

**Someone else read Romans 8:33.** This scripture says that no one has any right to bring a charge against you except God the Father. And if God the Father has forgiven you, then He can't possibly condemn you. Your past is in the **past**, and you have every right to forget it, just as the Father has.

Read 2 Corinthians 5:17

Remember: you are a new creation. Living in the past is evidence that you have not forgiven yourself.

**Finally, Let's read Romans 8:1 together.**

If you are in Christ Jesus, you are free from the past; there is no longer any **condemnation**. Although all of us continue to fall from time to time, as "righteous" people, we always get back up again.

**Someone read Proverbs 24:16**

- It doesn't matter what you used to be.

It doesn't matter what you are the day you give your life to Christ.

**What really matters is what Christ is doing in and through you.**

Remember, God is not finished with you yet. Today, remind yourself that you are a new creation, with a forgiven past and a clear future. Reach for all that God has for you, forgetting what is behind.

Most of us have people who have hurt us in some way. I want you to think of someone who has harmed you. Could you go to that person and have a regular conversation with them? Could you look them straight in the eyes? Do you ever have a desire to tell others what they have done to you? If you can't talk with them or look in their eyes, or if you still feel the need to talk about how you have been harmed, chances are, you haven't forgiven them.

**The next step is FORGIVING THOSE WHO HAVE HARMED YOU**

## Thursday

Vs. for the day: Luke 23:34

Passage for the day: Matthew 6:14,15

Luke 23:34 Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."

Romans 8:29 says that we are predestined to be conformed to the image of Jesus. Our goal is to continually be more and more like JESUS.

Read Luke 23:34

What did Jesus say in response to those who tortured, betrayed and crucified Him?

**Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.**

Jesus knows what it's like to be hurt and betrayed; yet he was able to forgive those who caused him so much pain. Jesus calls us to have this same forgiveness for *those who have harmed us*.

Someone read Matthew 6:14,15

If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will **forgive you**. But if you **do not forgive** men their trespasses, neither will your Father **forgive your sins**.

**Forgiving others is not an option; it is a necessity.** This scripture, along with others in the Bible, makes it clear that **unless you forgive others, God will not forgive you** for the sins you commit.

Remembering that forgiveness is a **necessity**, you need to realize the importance of asking God to help you forgive them. **You may not “feel” like forgiving them, and you may not even like them, but forgiveness is a command of God, and is an action you must take regardless of how you “feel.”** Forgiveness is, in reality, not just a one time action. Just as Satan will remind you of things you have done in the past to keep you under guilt and condemnation, Satan will remind you of things that others have done to you so that there will always be division in the body of believers, and hatred in your heart. Therefore, you will normally need to forgive the person (or people) every time Satan reminds you of what they did. Then, little by little, you will find that you truly have forgiven them, and Satan cannot torment you with the past.

When one of the disciples asked Jesus how many times he should forgive someone, Jesus said, “Seventy times seven”, which represents an infinite amount of times. This could refer to the truth that we sometimes need to repeatedly forgive someone for a single hurtful act *because it repeatedly comes to mind*.

Two things to remember may be helpful when dealing with people who have hurt you:

1. **Most people do not intentionally set out to harm you** – you just “got in their way” while they were getting something for themselves. It is mainly out of selfishness or self-seeking that we hurt other people – trying to obtain something we think we need.
2. **We ourselves have hurt others unintentionally**, and desire to be forgiven for the harm we have done to them. We must forgive others the same way **we desire to be forgiven**.

Ways you can forgive others:

1. Pray for them and forgive them.
  2. Possibly you can write to them.
  3. Go to them and express your forgiveness personally.
  4. Give them a call.
  5. What are other ways you can forgive those who have hurt you?
- Forgiveness is not just what you do for others; it's a vital thing you do for yourself. Abraham Lincoln was known to hold short accounts. He once was asked, “Why do you try to make friends out of your enemies?” Lincoln replied, “Am I not destroying my enemies when I make them my friends?”
  - **Let's read together Ephesians 4:31,32.** Let all **bitterness** and **rage** and **anger** and **brawling** and **slander** be put away from you, with all **malice**, and be **kind** to one another, **compassionate**, **forgiving** one another, as God in Christ **forgave** you.

Forgiving others is a part of becoming whole. Ask God to help you forgive those who have hurt you. You will find forgiving others to be an incredible release for you.

**Just as forgiveness is something we must do, despite our “feelings”, we must choose to always ACT UPON GOD’S WORD, INSTEAD OF OUR FEELINGS**

**Friday**

Vs. for the day: James 1:22,23

Passage for the day: Matthew 7:24-27

James 1:22,23 Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror

Someone read Matthew 7:24-27

Everyone who hears Jesus' words and does them will be like a **wise man** who built his house upon the **rock**. When the storms came, the house stood firm. But everyone who hears Jesus' words and does not do them will be like a **foolish man** who built his house upon the **sand**. When the storms came, the house **fell**.

Many people make all their decisions based upon how they've always done things, or possibly upon how they are feeling at the moment. But that ground is like shifting sand, always changing and very unreliable. However, God's Word is here described as a rock, solid and suitable as a foundation upon which to make decisions and build a life. However, reading God's Word isn't enough. Let's read James 1:22,23 and see what it says.

Many people build their lives on foundations of their own choosing. But only the foundation of God's Word will allow us to build a life that can stand the storms of life.

Reading God's Word isn't enough, though. Read James 1:22,23

Be a **doer** of the word, and not a **hearer** only.

God demands that we **act** upon His Word. There is a parable about two sons. Their father asks them to go out into the field and work. One son says he will go and work, but never does. The other son says he won't work, but actually goes into the field as his father had asked. Jesus asked which son acted righteously. The righteous son was the one who actually obeyed the father's request, not the one who *said* he would do it. The important thing is to obey the Father's requests of us through His Word.

**In summary for this week, let's read Phil. 3:13,14**

**What is the one thing that Paul says he has done?**

Forgetting what lies **behind** and straining toward what lies **ahead**, he presses on toward the goal for the **prize** of the upward call of God in **Jesus Christ**.

We **must not live in the past**, but must press on toward the future, which Jesus has in store for us. Jeremiah 29:11 says, "For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope."

**Leave the past behind, INCLUDING EVERYTHING *WE* HAVE DONE WRONG, AND EVERYTHING *OTHERS* HAVE DONE WRONG TO US, and press on toward the future and the hope which Christ Jesus has for us.**

**BECOMING WHOLE (PERFECT, MATURE & COMPLETE)**

James 1:2-4: Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

**PERFECT**

5046. teleios, tel'-i-os; complete (in various applications of labor, growth, mental and moral character, etc.); completeness: --of full age, man, perfect.

The image of fully completed growth as contrary with infancy and childhood, being set over against the babes in Christ. God's perfection is absolute; man's is relative reaching the goal set for him by God with each individual different according to one's God-given ability. The "teleios" is one who has attained his moral end, the goal for which he was intended, namely, to be a man obedient in Christ. It may be true, though, that having reached this attainment, other and higher ends will open up before him to have Christ formed in him more and more.

Perfection is not a static state. It in part indicates the ultimate goal in heaven as contrary with something that can have only partial fulfillment on earth. In 1 Jn 4:18, perfect love means the love that is not wanting, the love which accomplishes its goal. In James 1:17, a perfect gift means that which meets the need of a person. That you may be perfect means that you may not be morally lacking. Perfect is not to be confused with sinless (anamartetos).

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In Matthew 5:48, who is perfect? Who does Jesus say should be perfect?  
<sup>48</sup>Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

In Matthew 19:21, what does Jesus tell someone to do to be perfect? Why do you think he says this?  
<sup>21</sup>Jesus answered, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

In 2 Corinthians 12:9, God says that His \_\_\_\_\_ is made perfect in Paul's weakness. What does this mean?  
<sup>9</sup>But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.

Read Philippians 3:12. Paul says he has not yet been made perfect; so what does he do?  
<sup>12</sup>Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.

In Colossians 1:28, who is supposed to become perfect? What does "perfect in Christ" mean?

<sup>28</sup>We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ.

In Hebrews 2:10, who was made perfect? How was he made perfect?

<sup>10</sup>In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering.

In Hebrews 10:14, what did Jesus do to those who are being made holy? How did He do it?

<sup>14</sup>because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.

MATURE

In Ephesians 4:13, mature means attaining what?

<sup>13</sup>until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

In Hebrews 5:14, what is one of the characteristics of a mature Christian?

<sup>14</sup>But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.

.....  
Luke 8:14 – The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life's worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature.

*5052. telesphoreo, to be a bearer to completion (maturity); i.e. to ripen fruit (fig.):--bring fruit to perfection, as the seed does the fruit.*

.....  
COMPLETE

**3648. holokleros, hol-ok'-lay-ros; complete in every part, i.e. perfectly sound (in body): --entire, whole**

You can have complete \_\_\_\_\_ (Jn. 15:11), \_\_\_\_\_ (Acts 3:16),

\_\_\_\_\_ (James 2:22) and \_\_\_\_\_ (1 Jn. 2:5, 4:12, 4:17).

John 15:11 - I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.



Acts 3:16 - By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has given this complete healing to him, as you can all see.

James 2:22 - You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did.

1 Jn. 2:5 - <sup>5</sup>But if anyone obeys his word, God's love<sup>o</sup> is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him:

1 Jn 4:12 - <sup>12</sup>No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

1 Jn. 4:17 - <sup>17</sup>In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him.

Read James 1:2-4. Exactly what is it that brings perfection and maturity to the Believer? *Undergoing trials that test my faith and cause me to develop perseverance.*

James 1:2-4: Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

*The word for perseverance is also translated "endurance", and means "the ability to not surrender to circumstances or succumb under trial."*

## SEVENTH WEEK

You know, we often hear about people “having integrity”, but very few people could put a definition with the word “integrity”. This week, we will look at the real meaning of integrity, and especially how it is important in the life of a Christian.

# INTEGRITY

## Monday

Vs. for the day: Colossians 2:10

Passage for the day: Colossians 2:9-10

Colossians 2:10 And you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority.

**Read Colossians 1:10. Who gives us our completeness? Jesus.** In Him, we are made whole and complete.

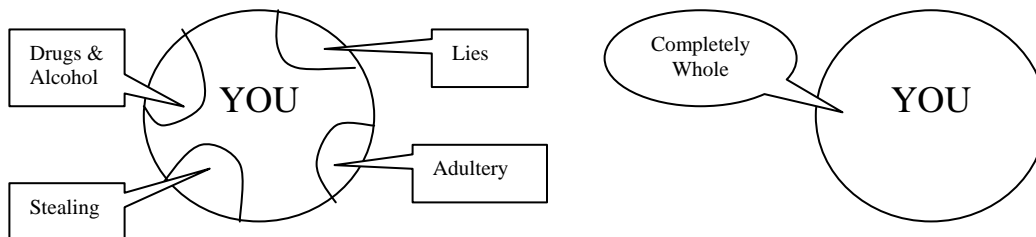
God desires us to be whole and complete, and our “completeness” comes from being “in Christ.” Today’s lesson is going to show us how God purposes for us to have **integrity**, and why integrity is so important to the Body of Christ. Many people speak about integrity, but very few people know its true meaning.

### What is the definition of integrity?

The state or quality of **being complete**, undivided, or unbroken; entirety, unimpaired state; soundness, purity.

Take, for example, an *integral number*. An integral number is a **WHOLE** number, as opposed to a fraction. The same root that is used in the word “integral” is used in the word “integrity”. So integrity is the state of being “whole”.

**(Go over the illustration below, drawing it on a board, if possible.)**



**Making bad choices or decisions causes cracks or chips that split apart your wholeness as a person. When you deliberately do what you know is wrong, you spoil your integrity, and your wholeness.**

Another way of putting it is this: your words and your actions are in one accord. If you say it, you mean it, and you do it. You do not *say* one thing and *do* another. You are not

one kind of person in one situation, and another type of person when the situation changes. You are completely and wholly like Jesus to all people.

Proverbs 10:9 says “The man of integrity walks securely, but he who takes crooked paths will be found out.” The Hebrew word used for “integrity” comes from the word meaning “completeness”, and can be translated “uprightness”. When you belong **completely** to God, you are upright, and will act with integrity.

Ask God to reveal to you what parts of your life are not in line with His Word and His ways, causing you to lack integrity, or wholeness. Ask Him to help you give your life completely to Him, so that you may be the reflection of Jesus in everything that you say and do.

Remember, He desires your wholeness and integrity even more than you do, and by His grace, He will enable you to be complete.

## INTEGRITY

### Tuesday

Vs. for the day: Genesis 37:28

Passage for the day: Genesis 37:1-36

Genesis 37:28 So when the Midianite merchants came by, his brothers pulled Joseph up out of the cistern and sold him for twenty shekels of silver to the Ishmaelites, who took him to Egypt.

In Genesis 37, we find the story of Joseph, son of Jacob. He had dreams where the Lord had revealed to him that his brothers, and many others, would bow down to him. His brothers already knew Joseph was his father's favorite child, because Jacob had given Joseph a beautiful, multi-colored coat. So when one of them suggested getting rid of Joseph, most of the other brothers agreed, and Joseph was sold into slavery.

Now Joseph did not necessarily do anything to deserve being punished in this way by his brothers, but it happened anyway.

**What kind of attitude would you expect Joseph to have?**

*(Let the class discuss their thoughts on this)*

**What kind of attitude do you think you would have if you were done severely wrong without a cause?** *(Let the class discuss their thoughts on this)*

Is integrity basically an attitude, a commitment, or an action?

Integrity actually begins with a complete commitment to the Lord, which is reflected in a person's attitude and actions.

**Let's read Psalm 37:5 together.**

Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him and he will do this:

He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun.

**What does this scripture command you to do?**

**Commit your way to the Lord and trust in Him.**

**When you do it, what will God do for you?**

**He will make your actions righteous, and plead the justice of your cause.**

True integrity cannot be found apart from the Lord. He makes us whole and upright if we will commit ourselves to Him, to follow Him at all costs.

When you commit yourself completely to the Lord, He will make you upright and whole. Pray today that God will help you commit yourself completely to Him, and that you will walk in integrity.

## INTEGRITY

### Wednesday

Vs. for the day: Genesis 39:10

Passage for the day: Genesis 39:1-23

Genesis 39:10 And though she spoke to Joseph day after day, he refused to go to bed with her or even be with her.

**1. Now we'll talk about Genesis 39.** Here we see the story of Joseph where he had been sold by his brothers who hated him. Now Joseph finds himself a slave in Potiphar's house.

**What does Potiphar observe about Joseph (vv.3-6)?**

**That the Lord was with Joseph, and with everything he did.**

**2. Why does Joseph refuse the request of Potiphar's wife (vv.8-9)?** Because it was sin against God and his master.

**What does he call her suggestion (vv. 9)?** "wicked

**3. Instead of calling our "indiscretions" evil, wicked, and against God, what are some of the excuses we sometimes use for our actions?**  
*(let the class discuss this)*

**4. How does the woman's persistence make matters more difficult (vv.10-12)?**  
*(let the class discuss this)*

**5. How much do you think Potiphar's wife understood about Joseph's reasons for refusing her (vv.13-19)?**  
*(let the class discuss this)*

**6. How would you compare her loyalties with Joseph's?**  
*(let the class discuss this)*

Proverbs 20:6 says "Many a man claims to have unfailing love, but a faithful man who can find?" Joseph proved his love for the Lord by remaining faithful to God. His loyalty and commitment to be true to the Lord kept his integrity intact.

Today, pray that the Lord will increase your faithfulness to Him, and will make you aware of things that vie for your loyalty. Make a commitment to honor the Lord in everything you do and say.

## INTEGRITY

### Thursday

Vs. for the day: Genesis 39:19,20

Passage for the day: Genesis 39:19-23

Let's read Genesis 39:19,20 – When his master heard the story his wife told him, saying, “This is how your slave treated me,” he burned with anger. Joseph's master took him and put him in prison, the place where the king's prisoners were confined.

Even though Joseph had not done anything wrong, Joseph was punished for a crime he did not commit. Normally, people who have been “done wrong” will “do unto others as others have done unto them.” However, Joseph refused to compromise his integrity (complete commitment to the Lord), and the Lord protected him and blessed him for his loyalty to God.

Let's continue to review Genesis 39:19-23.

- 1. In verses 19 and 20, why does Potiphar believe his wife instead of Joseph?**  
(let the class discuss this: possibilities are 1) He didn't want to admit that his wife was an adulteress; 2) He could not side with a slave over his wife)
- 2. What would have happened if Joseph had not had any integrity and favor in Potiphar's eyes?**  
(let the class discuss this: possibilities are 1) He could have been killed instead of being put in prison; 2) He could have been put in a beggar's prison, instead of the higher class King's prison)
- 3. Who really came out the winner in this scripture? Why?**  
(let the class discuss this: Joseph, because the Lord blessed his faithfulness, even when he was in the prison. He was put in a position of authority even in the jail. And of course, eventually he became the right hand man of Pharaoh.)
- 4. It has been said that moral failure in leaders comes with power - which sometimes causes them to think “the rules don't apply to me”. What would have happened if Joseph had been conscious of his power rather than his master's trust in him and God's trust in him?**  
(let the class discuss this: possibility – Joseph could have sinned, thinking he could get away with it)
- 5. Have you ever been tempted to think, “the rules don't apply to me”? What was the circumstance?**  
(let the class discuss this)

We need to be faithful stewards when God entrusts us with anything. Even when circumstances seem to turn against us, we must remain loyal to the One we know is still

in charge. Our commitment to Christ must remain unmovable and unshakable, even when people wrong us.

Pray that God will help you to remain faithful with whatever He entrusts you, and that you always act in accordance with His will.

## INTEGRITY

### Friday

Vs. for the day: Ephesians 6:13

Passage for the day: Ephesians 6:10-18

Ephesians 6:13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.

Your completeness, or integrity, must be guarded at all costs. When Paul says that we must put on the full armor of God, he is reminding us that we must protect ourselves from the schemes of the devil, in whatever form they may come. Joseph protected himself with the word of God, hiding it in his heart that he might not sin against God. His inner commitment to be faithful to the Lord kept his integrity intact, and allowed him to overcome and be victorious.

**If Joseph had been led by his feelings and emotions, and by Potiphar's wife what would have happened?**

*(let the class discuss this: possibilities are 1) could have slept with her out of lust; 2) could have slept with her out of bitterness from having been made a slave)*

Joseph had a great deal of self-respect. How is self-respect related to integrity? People with low self-esteem or lack of self-respect do not have a sense of wholeness, and therefore do not think their actions are affecting their ability to become whole. In other words, they do not think they are, or will ever be whole, so they say to themselves, "What difference does it make what I do?"

**1. What do you lose when you give into temptation or you are careless about your integrity?**

*(let the class discuss this: a portion of your self-respect)*

**2. What is currently trying to grab you and tempt you to compromise your integrity?**

*(let the class discuss this)*

**3. In what ways can we follow Joseph's example and maintain our integrity?**

*(let the class discuss this)*

Proverbs 4:23 says 'above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life. Integrity is a main ingredient for becoming whole. Our lives depend on our integrity.

What we have or what we do is nothing with out the integrity of which we are. Our lives should be centered on Integrity. We should always keep our eyes on Jesus. Remember even if no one else sees what we do. God always does.



INTEGRITY – DJ BIBLE STUDY???

Now that you have begun your walk as a Christian, you realize that things are already changing in your life. Once you were apart from God, but now you are a part of the Church, the Body of Christ. And you are not the same person that you used to be. First, we are going to discuss

EIGHTH WEEK

Monday

## UNDERSTANDING WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO YOU

Verse For The Day: Colossians 1:21,22

Passage For The Day: Colossians 1:13-23

Colossians 1:21,22 Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation

**Let's read 2 Corinthians 5:17 - Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!**

**What does this Scripture say has happened?**

***You are no longer the old person you used to be, you are a new creation.***

**Why has all of this happened?**

***The old is gone and the new has come.***

**What makes the difference?**

***Being IN CHRIST since you gave your life to Jesus.***

Yes, Christ makes the difference.

**Now, someone read Colossians 1:21-22. Before you received Jesus into your life, what does the Scripture say your attitude was to God? Alienated (KJV says "Hostile")**

**How did God view our deeds and thoughts before our conversion? Evil**

Even though your thoughts and life in your eyes may not have been that bad, **sin is sin to God.** And the Scripture says that your relationship was hostile to God. This should be all the more reason to be thankful that he still loved you, just as you were. He never gave up on you.

**Now some of those old ways that you once enjoyed and considered "fun" don't feel quite as good anymore. Why? Because the Holy Ghost lives inside of you, and you are a new and different person.**

**What words or phrases describe how God is changing you?**

***"God is making me holy, without blemish and free from accusation".***

**God has begun to separate you from your evil and old ways. He is creating a new person who will desire holy living. Even though we mess up regularly, he is always faithful to forgive us if we confess our sins (1 John 1:9).**

**Know that Christ now lives in you.** You can't change yourself, but God does it for you – if you are a willing vessel. Psalm 51:12 says "Grant me a willing spirit to sustain me." Today, ask God to help you to be more submissive to His Spirit and to His will for you.

Tuesday

**This new person that you have become has a new attitude, and lives by new rules. Let's discuss**

### **GOD'S PRINCIPLE TO LIVE BY**

Verse For The Day: 1 Corinthians 10:31

Passage For The Day: Romans 14:7-8

1 Corinthians 10:31 So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

**As Christians, living by faith is not a long list of do's and don'ts you should live by. But the Bible does give us a simple principle to go by in making all of our choices.**

**Read 1 Corinthians 10:31**

**Now, read Romans 14:7-8 *For none of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone. If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.***

**What is the principle to live by in both of these Scriptures?**

**Do everything for the glory of God.**

**Read 1 Corinthians 6:19,20. *Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.***

**What does it say about who you are? *You are not your own***

**To whom you are responsible? *To God***

**What you are to do? *Honor God with your body.***

**If at all times we can keep in mind God's plan for us and for our lives, it will help us make decisions that will honor God and glorify Him. Our problems begin when we focus on what we *think* we want or what we *think* is best for us, instead of trusting that God the Father loves us and actually *knows* what is best for us.**

**If we will remember that every choice we make has the ability to glorify God, then we will strive to make the most out of every decision.**

Life is about choices. Your first spiritual choice was whether or not to receive Jesus. But since that decision was made, your life has been (and will be) filled with choices that have the ability to bring glory and honor to God.

Today, resolve to make every decision count, remembering that our goal in every choice we make is to honor God and glorify Jesus.

Wednesday

**The good news is that we do not have to make our decisions alone. Most importantly, we have the Holy Spirit living inside of us which leads us in making our choices. Secondly, we are actually part of a Body of believers, with Jesus Christ as the Head, and being a part of the Body has its advantages.**

### **BEING IN THE BODY**

Verse For The Day: 1 Corinthians 12:27

Passage For The Day: 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

1 Corinthians 12:27 Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

As a new Christian, Satan tries to rob us of our victory. He tries to keep us from growing spiritually, serving God, ministering and being an effective witness. He also wants to rob us of our fellowship with God the Father. The foundation to overcome this attack of Satan is the presence and power of Jesus Christ, who now dwells in us personally, and in the Body of Christ as a whole.

**Someone read 1 Corinthians 12:12 *The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ.***  
**What is the Body? A unit made up of many parts**

**Now, let's read Colossians 1:18 *And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.***

**Who is the Head of the Body? Christ**

**Read Ephesians 1:22 *And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church,***

When we are all born-again, the Bible says we are called "babes in Christ." (1 Corinthians 3:1).

**What does a baby need to have (other than food) in order to survive?**

**Home & Family. The Body is your family now, and the church is your home.**

**Read Romans 12:4-5 *Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.***

**What does the Word say here?**

**Every member of the Body of Christ belongs to the other; we must be in relationship with one another.**

The Church should have a working relationship with one another.

1. The Bible says we should assemble together. (Hebrews 10:25)
2. We should have compassion for one another. (Colossians 3:12-17)
3. We should bear one another's burdens. (Galatians 6:1-3)

When we try to make it on our own, or try to be "Lone Rangers", we can be defeated by the enemy. If you are going to live victoriously in Christ, the church must be a vital part of your spiritual growth. You'll find that God uses each person to make up the Body (Church) for everyone's benefit.

So after your conversion, God says you are to be baptized, confess him publicly and become a part of the Body (Acts 2:41-47). Make a commitment to attend as many weekly services as possible, so you can be encouraged by others, and even be an encouragement to someone else.

Thursday

**BEING IN THE BODY**

Verse For The Day: 1 Corinthians 12:18

Passage For The Day: 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

1 Corinthians 12:18 But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:14-27

In our study of the Body, review how each member of the body needs one another to function. Also, the Church (Body) must have every member to function.

Your growth as a Christian directly affects and is affected by others in the Body of Christ. When one suffers, all hurt. When one rejoices, all are happy. The Bible says we are to be in one mind and one accord.

**Read 1 Corinthians 12:18. But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. What does God decide? Where each part of the body goes and what it does.**

Sometimes people feel like they are not important, and that their service is not needed, but **what does 1 Corinthians 12:21-25 say about everyone's service?** (vs. 22,23 - *On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor.*) **Everyone's service is important to the Body.**

**Read Acts 4:32-35.** *All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had. **What is another thing that members of the Body do? They shared everything they had.***

Christians are even closer-knit than a family – we are a Body, and we need each other. Christ is our head, and we are his arms and feet and hands to reach out to others, and to take care of each other.

Thank God today that He has placed you in the Body of Christ, with a specific purpose in mind, and that you play an important role in His plan for the Kingdom of God.

Friday

**Now, let's take a look at our relationship to our Head, Jesus.**

### **BEING IN THE BODY**

Verse For The Day: Ephesians 2:22

Passage For The Day: 1 Peter 2:4-10

Ephesians 2:22 And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

**Someone look up 1 Peter 2:4-10**

**What word does this scripture use repeatedly to describe Jesus? *Stone***

**Next, let's read Ephesians 2:19-22** *Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.*

*In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord.*

*And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.*

**Who are we joined together with? *Jesus***

**What are we becoming? *A house that God dwells in by His Spirit.***

In these Scriptures, the Word speaks of stones, and how Jesus is our Cornerstone. We're described as "living stones", being constructed into a "spiritual house", a "holy temple." A building is made up of many parts, none any less important than the others. And that is how we must consider every person in the Church – none any less important than the others.

Stones have to be carved in order to fit into a building. Sometimes God has to "chisel" off some rough edges, or "knock off" some things in our lives that will hinder us or hinder the Body as a whole. He uses our circumstances and situations, and especially the

people around us, to make us “fit” closely together in the church. We must realize that God uses everything that happens to us to make us more like Jesus Christ, the Chief Cornerstone.

Pray today that God will reveal how you fit into the body, and pray for an opportunity to encourage someone else to fulfill their place in the body as well.

## THE BODY

What does a body do? What is its function?

*Sustains itself first, taking care of its members. Then, when it is healthy/secure, it interacts with the physical world; it is the vessel by which we affect our external surroundings. It communicates what is felt and thought on the inside.*

Then what would the Body of Christ (or the church) do? What is its function?

*Takes care of its members, interacts with the physical world, affecting its surroundings, communicating what Christ is feeling and thinking.*

Let's look at the Body of Christ. Let's read 1 Cor. 12:4-7

(1 Cor 12:4 NIV) There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit.

(1 Cor 12:5 NIV) There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord.

(1 Cor 12:6 NIV) There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men.

(1 Cor 12:7 NIV) Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.

*First of all, notice the mention of the Trinity here – Spirit (Holy Spirit), Lord (Jesus), and God (the Father).*

*-The Holy Spirit gives us the gifts. He has them within Him, and when He takes up residence in us, He brings those gifts with Him.*

*-We serve the Lord Jesus Christ. Lord, or kurios in the Greek, means master, and we serve Jesus Christ, our Master.*

*-God the Father is the one who ordains the plan into which we all fit and work. He takes everything we do and makes it fit into the Master plan of restoring His fallen creation to Himself.*

What is the purpose of these different gifts, service and working?

*Achieving the common good, God's plan for the world.*

Someone read verses 8-11

(1 Cor 12:8 NIV) To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit,

(1 Cor 12:9 NIV) to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit,

(1 Cor 12:10 NIV) to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues.

(1 Cor 12:11 NIV) All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.



Note that the important thing pointed out is that there are manifold gifts available, but everyone is not empowered to use every gift all the time. Gifts are given to be used for specific purposes at specific times. As it says in vs. 11, the Spirit gives them as God determines they need to be given.

Read vs. 12 and 13.

(1 Cor 12:12 NIV) The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ.

(1 Cor 12:13 NIV) For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free--and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

*These verses were very important in Paul's time because there was a caste system, a society of slaves and masters, slaves and free people, and there were strong distinctions and prejudice between people of differing nationalities, especially Jews and non-Jews. Paul emphasizes that we are all one body now, regardless of our background.*

What do these verses say to us in today's society?

*Regardless of our past, what we were or what we have done, we are all part of the Body of Christ, and there is no difference between us.*

Read the remainder of the chapter.

(1 Cor 12:14 NIV) Now the body is not made up of one part but of many.

(1 Cor 12:15 NIV) If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body.

(1 Cor 12:16 NIV) And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body.

(1 Cor 12:17 NIV) If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be?

(1 Cor 12:18 NIV) But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be.

(1 Cor 12:19 NIV) If they were all one part, where would the body be?

(1 Cor 12:20 NIV) As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

(1 Cor 12:21 NIV) The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!"

(1 Cor 12:22 NIV) On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable,

(1 Cor 12:23 NIV) and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty,

(1 Cor 12:24 NIV) while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it,

(1 Cor 12:25 NIV) so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other.

(1 Cor 12:26 NIV) If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

(1 Cor 12:27 NIV) Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

(1 Cor 12:28 NIV) And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues.

(1 Cor 12:29 NIV) Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles?

(1 Cor 12:30 NIV) Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret?

**(1 Cor 12:31 NIV) But eagerly desire the greater gifts. And now I will show you the most excellent way.**

**Read 1 Cor. 3:4-9**

(1 Cor 3:4 NIV) For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not mere men?

(1 Cor 3:5 NIV) What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe--as the Lord has assigned to each his task.

(1 Cor 3:6 NIV) I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow.

(1 Cor 3:7 NIV) So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.

(1 Cor 3:8 NIV) The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor.

(1 Cor 3:9 NIV) For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building.

*All of us have different jobs to do, and none is more important than the other. Paul's point is that God is the one who really brings all the important things to pass, not us. We just need to be faithful doing what He has asked us to do.*

*The story of the northeast tent-peg: When the Israelites moved throughout the desert, carrying the tabernacle with them, each of the tribes of Israel was responsible for carrying a part of the tabernacle. Every part was important. But let's say there is a man whose sole responsibility is to carry the northeast tent-peg. However, he feels insignificant, because he is not carrying the ark, or the furniture from the holiest of holies, or something of great importance. So, he decides what he is carrying is unimportant, and so he leaves it behind.*

*Then, when the Israelites stop at their next location, and everyone brings their part of the tabernacle, the overseer asks where the northeast tent-peg is. The man who was responsible for it says he knew it wasn't very important, so he didn't bring it with him. However, the overseer tells him that the tabernacle must have each tent-peg to hold down all the necessary roping. Without the northeast tent-peg, the tabernacle could not be erected. Therefore, the man would have to spend all of his time, including the nighttime while everyone was sleeping, holding down the rope that the northeast tent-peg normally holds down.*

*The moral of the story is that every person and every responsibility is an important one, and the body of Christ, the Church, is incomplete unless everyone does their part.*

(1 Pet 2:4 NIV) As you come to him, the living Stone--rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him--

(1 Pet 2:5 NIV) you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

(1 Pet 2:6 NIV) For in Scripture it says: "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame."

Monday

## **GIFTS AND TALENTS IN THE BODY**

Verse For The Day: Romans 12:6

Passage For The Day: Romans 12:6-8

Romans 12:6 We have different gifts, according to the grace given us.

God has given everyone **gifts and talents**. What is the difference?

A **Spiritual Gift** is a gift given to you by God. The Holy Spirit enables you to use this gift to edify the Body and to help the Body function.

A **Talent** is something God gave you upon your natural birth which you later discover and develop.

Gifts and talents are totally different. Only Christians have received spiritual gifts, and those gifts can only be used to the glory of God. You can use your talent to express a variety of spiritual gifts, or you have the choice to use it for your own purposes or glory. (For example, a musical talent)

Read Romans 12:6-8

<sup>6</sup>We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his<sup>o</sup> faith. <sup>7</sup>If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; <sup>8</sup>if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

What are we do to with the gifts we are given? *Use them.*

Read Ephesians 4:11-13

<sup>11</sup>It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, <sup>12</sup>to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up <sup>13</sup>until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

God gifted us to do different things in the body, but all gifts have the same purpose.

What is that purpose? *So that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the measure of the fullness of Christ.*

God has given us these gifts so that His Body may be built up and completed. In other words, your gifts are not to be kept to yourself, but used in the body of believers **for their benefit**.

Read Romans 11:29. *For God's gifts and his call are irrevocable.*

The good news here is that you are never too old or too late to use the gifts that God has given you, or to fulfill the call that God has for your life. The gifts and the call are **irrevocable**.

Today, ask God to begin showing you the gifts He has given to you that will enable you to fulfill your call in His kingdom. Ask Him to give you wisdom to use the gifts wisely, and to be led by the Holy Spirit in everything you do.

Tuesday

**GIFTS AND TALENTS IN THE BODY**

Verse For The Day: 1 Corinthians 12:1

Passage For The Day: 1 Corinthians 12:

1 Corinthians 12:1 Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:4-12

<sup>4</sup>There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. <sup>5</sup>There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. <sup>6</sup>There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men.

<sup>7</sup>Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. <sup>8</sup>To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, <sup>9</sup>to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, <sup>10</sup>to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, <sup>11</sup>and to still another the interpretation of tongues. <sup>11</sup>All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.

<sup>12</sup>The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ.

All gifts come from the same source, God's Holy Spirit. That is why they are called "spiritual" gifts. God uses them all for His purposes, but the manifestation of the Spirit (*meaning the appearance of the spiritual gift*) is given for the **common good**. (v. 7)

Once again, see how the gifts are given to be used IN THE BODY, for everyone's good.

Let's create a quick overview of the spiritual gifts listed in this passage:

Vs. 8: - \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_

Vs. 9: - \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_

Vs. 10: - \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_

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- \_\_\_\_\_

You will learn more about the meaning of these different gifts at another time. The important thing, however, is that you use the gifts that God gives you for the benefit of the body. And 1 Corinthians 12:31 says that, although we should **eagerly desire the greater gifts**, there is something of greater excellence than the gifts. That is **love**.

Wednesday

**GOD'S DEFINITION OF LOVE**

Verse For The Day: John 3:16

Passage For The Day: Luke 6:31-35

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

The world has created some of its own definitions of love. What are some that you can think of that are portrayed in the media?

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God has His own definition of love, and it is found in John 3:16. Let's take a close look at it:

1) What did God do? \_\_\_\_\_

2) How did He do it? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3) Who did He do it for? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4) Why did He do it? So they \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

God's definition of love means **giving of yourself for the benefit of someone else**. How did God express His love? By giving of Himself, giving us His Son. Who did He do it for? For us, for someone other than Himself. Why did He do it? So we would not die, but have eternal life – He did it for our benefit. And this is the example we are to follow.

The opposite of love is actually not hatred, but selfishness – taking something from others for the benefit of ourselves.

Read Philippians 2: 2:1-5

What should you look to? \_\_\_\_\_

In a world where looking out for "Number One" is the motto, looking to the interests of others seems foreign to us. But that is the kind of love God calls us to. Ask God to show you how you can express **His** selfless love to someone around you today.



Thursday

**THE BODY'S LAW OF LOVE**

Verse For The Day: Matthew 22:40

Passage For The Day: Matthew 22:36-40

Matthew 22:40 All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.

There are laws of physics, laws of nature, and there is the law of the Body of Christ. And that law is love. Everyone seeking "righteousness", or right standing with God, will be interested to know that every one of the commandments is fulfilled when we love others as Christ has loved us.

Read Matthew 22:36-40

What are the two (2) greatest commandments?

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

What two (2) things hang on these commandments?

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

Everything God has ever written and commanded is fulfilled when we truly love Him and love others – ***according to His definition of love.*** Look at the Ten Commandments.

Read Deuteronomy 5:7, 8, 11, 12, 16-21

The first four (4) commandments are examples of how we are to express our love for God. The second six (6) commandments are examples of how we are to express our love for our neighbor.

Therefore, whenever we question whether or not our actions are righteous, we need to ask ourselves if we are acting in love. Are we "giving of ourselves for the benefit of another", or are we getting something from someone else for our own benefit?

Today, ask the Holy Spirit to show you how to love God the Father and love the people around you. Ask Him also to show you any areas where you have been acting selfishly, but have told yourself that you have been doing something for someone else's benefit. Be prepared to change your actions according to what the Spirit reveals.

Friday

**FUNCTIONING IN LOVE (CHARITY)**

Verse For The Day: 1 Corinthians 13:13

Passage For The Day: 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

1 Corinthians 13:13 And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

Now, let's get back to how love and gifts are connected.

Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

One of the most beautiful and most famous chapters of the Bible is found in 1 Corinthians 13:1-13. In this chapter, you will read about the greatest of all realities, even greater than God's spiritual gifts.

What is this reality? \_\_\_\_\_

What is "charity"? \_\_\_\_\_

The Body of Christ's existence depends upon **love**. God called you out of your sin through love. (John 3:16)

What never fails? \_\_\_\_\_

List the many qualities of love:


Which one of these listed do you desire to have most in your life?

\_\_\_\_\_

The Bible says that God is love, and he desires you to have love in your life. Paul lists 5 things beside love. Put an X beside the ones that **will not last**.

- Inspired Prophecy
- Tongues
- Knowledge
- Faith
- Hope

***Love is the greatest thing in the world.  
That's why God wants His love to flow through us to others.***

Pray that God will flow through you today as you have the opportunity to love on others around you.

## THE LAW OF LOVE

When people think about Christianity, they think about laws, about do's and don'ts. But in the Body of Christ, there is only one law, and that is the Law of Love.

Let's read the following scriptures:

Romans 13:8

**(Rom 13:8 NIV) Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law.**

Romans 13:10

**(Rom 13:10 NIV) Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.**

Galatians 5:14

**(Gal 5:14 NIV) The entire law is summed up in a single command: "Love your neighbor as yourself."**

James 2:8

**(James 2:8 NIV) If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing right.**

What do these scriptures say about the relationship between law and love?

*Love fulfills the law.*

So, what is love? *Giving of yourself for the benefit of another.*

Read John 3:16. How is this the example of biblical love?

*For God so loved the world that He **GAVE** – that is giving His only begotten Son – God gave of Himself what was most precious to Him That whosoever believes on Him – He is giving for another person's sake, not His own Should not perish but have everlasting life – for the purpose that they may live and not be destroyed.*

Biblical love is not common love as accepted by the masses. The word

*AGAPE: is a greek word only found in the scriptures, and is only used in reference to God's love. This is evidence that agape love can only be found in God and obtained by having God living in us.*

Read Matthew 22:36-40.

*(Mat 22:36 NIV) "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"*

*(Mat 22:37 NIV) Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."*

*(Mat 22:38 NIV) This is the first and greatest commandment.*

*(Mat 22:39 NIV) And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'*

*(Mat 22:40 NIV) All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."*

What are the two (2) greatest commandments?

1. *Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength.*
2. *Love your neighbor as yourself.*

When Jesus said that all the law and the prophets hung on these two commandments, what did He mean?

*That the basis of every law ordained by God and every command uttered by the prophets is love for God and love for His people.*

**When we look at the 10 commandments, we see that the first four commandments really boil down to loving God with all of your heart, soul, mind and strength, and the last six commandments boil down to loving your neighbor as yourself.**

**Deuteronomy 5:7,8,11,12,16-21 (The 10 Commandments):**

1. *Commandments regarding love for God: Have no other gods before me, do not make a graven image or idol, do not misuse the name of the Lord, and observe the sabbath day.*
2. *Commandments regarding love for others: Honor your father and mother, don't murder, commit adultery, steal, give false testimony, or covet.*

Let's look at 1 Corinthians 13:1-13.

*(1 Cor 13:1 NIV) If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.*

*(1 Cor 13:2 NIV) If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.*

*(1 Cor 13:3 NIV) If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.*

*(1 Cor 13:4 NIV) Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.*

*(1 Cor 13:5 NIV) It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.*

*(1 Cor 13:6 NIV) Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.*

*(1 Cor 13:7 NIV) It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.*

*(1 Cor 13:8 NIV) Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away.*

*(1 Cor 13:9 NIV) For we know in part and we prophesy in part,*

*(1 Cor 13:10 NIV) but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears.*

*(1 Cor 13:11 NIV) When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me.*

*(1 Cor 13:12 NIV) Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.*

**(1 Cor 13:13 NIV) And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.**

What is Paul saying to the Corinthian church?

**All of these great works sound wonderful, but God says that without love, the underlying reason for the existence of everything He created, these works are empty. They may be self-motivated and self-seeking. The opposite of love is actually selfishness.**

***Look at the characteristics of love. Ask yourself, do you have those characteristics in your life? Which ones do you have? Which ones are lacking in your life?***

Let's quickly read Galatians 5:22,23.

*(Gal 5:22 NIV) But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,*

**(Gal 5:23 NIV) gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.**

Compare this listing of the fruit of the Spirit with the characteristics of love? What do we find?

1 Corinthians 13	Galatians 5
Love is patient	Patience
Love is kind	Kindness
Love does not delight in evil	Goodness
But rejoices in the truth	Joy
Does not envy, does not boast	Self-control
Always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres	Faithfulness
Is not rude	Gentleness
Is not easily angered	Peace

The point of this is that love is a fruit of the Spirit that grows in you and manifests itself out of you as you grow in Christ, as you maintain and nurture your relationship with Him. You can't *make* yourself love like God loves – it will surface in your life the way a flower buds and grows out of the branch. All it has to do is stay *attached* to the branch, and it will grow and bloom, because flowing through that branch is the sap that gives it all it needs to become just like the other branches.

## NINTH WEEK

Monday

**Being a Christian means more than just going to an altar and making a one-time decision to make Jesus Christ your Savior and Lord. It means developing an intimate relationship with Him, where you know His thoughts and come to understand Him better.**

**Compare it to any relationship you have here on earth: in order to really get to know someone, you have to spend time learning about their likes and dislikes, their attitudes and desires, their plans and their goals. And you have to spend time listening to them.**

**This week, we are going to look at the importance of developing a quiet time as a means of getting to know Jesus more intimately. Let's look at Joshua 1:8.**

### QUIET TIME

Vs. for the day: Joshua 1:8

Passage for the day: Psalm 119:97-105

**Joshua 1:8 Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.**

What is a "Quiet Time"?

A "quiet time" is a time where you establish a regular time to nourish yourself spiritually, a time to be alone with Christ. This will enable you to begin your personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

**Take a look at the evaluation on your first page. How did you rate yourself?**

Begin an honest evaluation of yourself:

- My quiet time is a daily practice in my life and I feel good about it just as it is.
- My quiet time is a daily practice, but it really doesn't seem to make a difference.
- My quiet time is irregular and not meaningful.
- I don't have a quiet time, but feel I need practice one.

If you checked any of the last three, here's how to establish or strengthen your quiet time.

- 1. Find a specific time and place for your quiet time.** Think of it as having an appointment with Jesus. He will be there waiting for you. **Where would be a good place and time for you personally?** (*let them discuss*)
- 2. Be consistent.** Be serious about this. Consistency is the key to a meaningful quiet time. This is true about everything you do. It has been said that it takes 21 days of doing something repeatedly for it to become a habit. Having a quiet time needs to become a habit that comes naturally for you.

3. **Have your Bible, notepad and pencil.** Always be ready for God to talk to you as you begin. Let him lead you in his Word and be prepared to write down what's on your mind as he speaks. Believe it or not, God actually wants to talk to you and reveal things to you. It may not always be the exact thing YOU wanted Him to reveal, but try to allow Him to direct the conversation.
4. **Always begin your time with prayer.** This is just like calling a loved one on the phone. Open up your heart to Jesus. Tell him how much you love him. Offer yourself to him daily so he can direct your day and your life in order to teach you. Share every thought with him.
5. **Take time to let him speak to you.** Will God speak to you verbally? No, not always. Bible reading is one of the main ways God communicates with you. Read his words slowly and meditate on them.  
**Have any of you already experienced God speaking to you through your daily devotional time? (let them discuss)**
6. **Try to end your quiet time with a definite commitment for the day.** Turn what you have learned into something practical and helpful. This can help you extend your faith. For example, you can tell God how much you love him, and trust him to lead you each day. Or you can commit to share the Gospel with someone today. Respond with a commitment to do whatever God puts on your heart that day.

Never underestimate the importance of your quiet time. Imagine going to work without having any communication with your boss. You aren't really sure what he wants you to do today, or how he may want you to do it if you don't talk with him.

The same is true for your relationship with the Lord. Starting the day without communicating with Him cuts you off from important information He may want to share with you, and even more importantly, can cut you off from the source of power you need to be an overcomer that day.

God gives us "daily bread." That means that He only gives us what we need for today. So if you had your quiet time yesterday, but didn't have one today, don't expect yesterday's "bread" to carry you today. You need "fresh" nourishment from the Lord.



Tuesday

**Now, let's discuss LEARNING HOW TO PRAY. Someone read 1 John 1:9**

Vs. for the day: 1 John 1:9

Passage for the day: Matthew 6:9-13

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

First of all, **you have to believe that God hears your prayers. (1 John 1:9).**

The book of Hebrews tells us that we must believe that God is, or exists, and that He is a rewarder of those that diligently seek Him. One way to seek Him is through prayer.

The Bible also says that when we pray, we know that He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, we know that we have the petitions that we ask of Him (when we pray according to His will).

Don't be afraid to speak to God and tell him what's on your mind. Why? Because he already knows what's on your mind. Prayer is like talking to your best friend, because God is your Father, Best Friend, and Brother. God desires you to talk to him.

**God gave us a model prayer (Matthew 6:9-13).**

How should we address God when we pray? \_\_\_\_\_

We should talk to God like he is the most perfect father in the world, because He is.

**Does God expect you to use fancy words or sound really "spiritual"? (Let them discuss...NO)**

God wants you to talk ("pray") to him in the way you talk to a father or best friend, or someone you love – **talk to him from the heart.**

Jesus gave us this prayer as an example of how to pray. He wants us to pray our own prayers in the same manner that we normally talk to other people. Using The Lord's Prayer (and the below explanations) as an example, let's discuss ways we can pray or things we can say to God:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,	Acknowledge and address God as your Father ( <b>What could you say to God here?</b> )
Hallowed be thy name	Praise Him for what He has done for you, and for His wonderful characteristics ( <b>What could you say to God here?</b> )
your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.	Tell Him that you are willing to submit yourself to His will for your life ( <b>What could you say to God here?</b> )
Give us today our daily bread.	Ask Him to provide for your needs, according to His wisdom and riches

	<b>(What could you say to God here?)</b>
Forgive us our debts	Ask Him to forgive you for your sins and shortcomings <b>(What could you say to God here?)</b>
As we also have forgiven our debtors.	Ask Him to help you forgive those who have harmed you or those you love. <b>(What could you say to God here?)</b>
And lead us not into temptation,	Ask Him to show you the correct path to take today, so you will not fall into temptation <b>(What could you say to God here?)</b>
But deliver us from the evil one.	Ask for His protection against the evil powers of Satan, and for the wisdom to know how to fight against him. <b>(What could you say to God here?)</b>

The important thing is not really your exact words, but the intention of your heart. Did you know that God searches your heart with His Spirit and knows your thoughts? So even when you don't have the "perfect words" to say, He knows what you are meaning. The Scripture even says that the Spirit will intercede for us with "groanings" when words just aren't appropriate.

The one thing He desires is that you take the time to talk to Him, share with Him, and listen to Him, just like in any other relationship.

Wednesday

**We've discussed the importance of taking time with God, and the importance of communication with Him. Now let's discuss our main source for getting to know Him...**

## **USING GOD'S WORD AS A SOURCE OF GROWTH**

Vs. for the day: 2 Timothy 3:16

Passage for the day: 2 Timothy 3:14-17

2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,

Before you begin your Scripture reading, talk to God about what you are about to read. Ask Him not only for understanding, but also to show you how to apply the truths you learn to your life.

After reading a Scripture passage, meditate on His Word. What is meditation? It is to think about what you have read so you can better understand it.

**These are helpful questions to ask yourself every time you read the Bible. Today, read 2 Timothy 3:14-17 and answer the following questions.**

**A. Is there a truth in this passage that should influence:**

1. What I believe?

*(that all Scripture is from God, or God-inspired)*

2. How I feel?

*(I should feel confident in my knowledge of God when I study His Word, and confident that I am thoroughly equipped for every good work)*

3. The way I behave?

*(I should apply what I learn to my everyday life [continue in what I have learned])*

**B. Can I find an example here to follow or avoid?**

*(Timothy's example of using the Bible to make me wise and equip me to do works for God)*

**C. Is there a command from God to obey?**

*(CONTINUE in what I have learned. Don't just read it and forget it.)*

**D. Is there a promise from God to claim? What is it?**

*(Yes – God's Word will equip me for every good work and have the ability to make me wise.)*

**What kind of commitment could you end today's scripture study with?** *(Let them discuss the possibilities – 1) Read the Bible more consistently; 2) Make a concerted effort to apply what I have learned; 3) memorize a verse that speaks to me)*

Write at least 1 way to take your commitment and put it to practical use in your life.

*You can use this sheet as a guideline for Bible study every time you read a passage of Scripture.*

Thursday

**Now, what did we say was the reason for having a quiet time, learning to pray and reading the Bible? (To get to know God more intimately) Did you know that another name for Jesus is "The Word of God"? When you read His Word, you are getting to know the very thoughts and actions of Jesus.**

## KNOWING GOD'S WORD

Verse For The Day: John 1:1

Passage For The Day: John 1:1-14

**Let's read John 1:1-14**

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Here the Scripture is speaking of the Word of God, and that Jesus is the Word of God. John writes that Jesus, the powerful Son of God, came in human flesh, gave his life on the cross and then returned to the Father. John wanted his readers to know that if we believe on Jesus, we can receive eternal life.

The Scripture speaks that through the Word (Jesus) all things were made, and without Him nothing could be made. It also says that He is life and light, and that life and understanding comes only through Him.

It also says that the world could not recognize him. Why? Because if we're lost in sin, we can't see the truth. He is the only truth and understanding. He can shine light on our lives in times of darkness. But we have to be willing vessels, ready to receive His word and let it sink down deep into our spirits.

Understand that Jesus Christ is the "express image of God", exactly what God would be like if He was standing next to you in human form. The Bible is also the "express image" or exact representation of God's thoughts, personality, characteristics and actions – only in written form. In order to really know God in a personal way, you need to learn about Him through His written Word (the Bible), and through your daily experience with His Holy Spirit.

As you spend time reading the Bible today and praying, ask God to reveal Himself to you in a new and personal way. Be prepared for God to answer that prayer, and throughout the day, look for Him to do something special in your life.

Friday

**Another handy tool is MEMORIZING GOD'S WORD**

Verse For The Day: Psa 119: 11

Passage For The Day: Psa. 119: 11-16

Psalm 119:11 I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.

As new Christians, you should find yourself a Study Bible that you can understand. It doesn't matter if it is the NIV (New International Version), the NKJV (New King James Version), the Spirit-Filled Bible, etc. **The important thing is that you need to be able to understand what you read.**

Read Psalms 119:11-16

I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.

Praise be to you, O LORD; teach me your decrees.

With my lips I recount all the laws that come from your mouth.

I rejoice in following your statutes as one rejoices in great riches.

I meditate on your precepts and consider your ways.

I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word.

**Where did the writer of the Psalm say he kept the Word of God?**

*(In his heart)*

Jesus said in Matthew 4:4 – It is written that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

**Is it important to memorize Scripture?** *(yes)*

**What are ways you can memorize Scripture?** *(let them discuss)*

It is no harder than memorizing a phone number, a song on the radio, a zip code or address, names of people, spelling or street names. You have to make it a habit.

Try beginning with small scriptures and advance yourself to larger scriptures with discipline and practice. Use memory cards (index cards).

**Learn your verses as if your spiritual growth depends on it – because it does!** Even Jesus needed and used memorized Scripture during his tempting by Satan in the wilderness. Start by choosing one weekly “Verse of the Day” to memorize, using the memory card method. Be prepared to share your verse during class each Sunday.

## QUIET TIME

What is the purpose of a quiet time? *To communicate with the Lord; tell Him what is on your mind and in your heart, and to listen to what He is thinking and feeling. To get to know the Lord more intimately.*

What can a quiet time be composed of? *Prayer, studying the Bible, reading devotional material (any literature that helps you focus on God), praise (music); anything that involves spending time with God.*

What is prayer? *Talking to God*

Is there a set way to pray? *No. Communication is the main thing.*

Why do we use the Bible during quiet time? *Because it contains God's thoughts toward us, including His will and His teachings.*

What are we to do with the scriptures we read? *Meditate on them, memorize them, study their meanings, apply them, share them.*

Read the following verses.

(Josh 1:8 NIV) Do not let this **Book of the Law** depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then *you will be prosperous and successful.*

(Psa 48:9 NIV) Within your temple, O God, we meditate on **your unfailing love.**

(Psa 77:12 NIV) I will meditate on **all your works** and consider **all your mighty deeds.**

(Psa 119:15 NIV) I meditate on **your precepts** and consider **your ways.**

(Psa 119:16 NIV) I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word.

(Psa 119:18 NIV) Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law.

(Psa 119:23 NIV) Though rulers sit together and slander me, your servant will meditate on **your decrees.**

(Psa 119:24 NIV) Your statutes are my delight; they are my counselors.

(Psa 119:27 NIV) Let me understand the teaching of your precepts; then I will meditate on **your wonders.**

(Psa 119:28 NIV) My soul is weary with sorrow; strengthen me according to your word.

(Psa 119:98 NIV) Your **commands** make me wiser than my enemies, for they are ever with me.

(Psa 119:99 NIV) I have more insight than all my teachers, for I meditate on **your statutes.**

(Psa 119:148 NIV) My eyes stay open through the watches of the night, that I may meditate on **your promises.**

(Psa 143:5 NIV) I remember the days of long ago; I meditate on **all your works** and consider **what your hands have done**.

Meditate = siyach. *To ponder, to converse (aloud, or even with oneself). This verb conveys the idea of going over a matter in one's mind, i.e. rehearsing it, whether inwardly or outwardly.*

Write down what we are to MEDITATE on:

1. The Book of the Law  
*-towrah, means instruction, teaching, doctrine, etc. Towrah is based on covenant, i.e. after the basic agreement is made, stipulations are spelled out. However breaking specific law is equivalent to sinning against God, i.e. breaking with one's covenant relationship. Towrah was much more than a law or set of rules. It was not meant to be perceived as restrictions, but the very means by which one could reach a spiritual ideal. However, the people came to understand it as something which was imposed for its own sake rather than what God intended for them to become. The means became an end, and instead of being seen as a guideline, it became a heavy, external set of rules which were stifling.*
2. God's unfailing love  
*-cheded, one of the most important words in the Hebrew O.T. It can be related to a covenant, but not always. It means to show oneself both kind and merciful. This term is closely related to the forgiveness of sins, and is an eternal attitude of love which contains mercy.*
3. All God's works and all God's mighty deeds  
*-aliylah, the sense of effecting, an exploit or performance. All God has done that has affected us. Many of the psalms and O.T. narratives include repeating what God has done for us. Before the law was read to the congregations, they were reminded of all God had done for them.*
4. God's precepts and God's ways  
*-piquwd, appointment, allocation, what is mandated (by God), based on the word paqad, which means an action on the part of God which produces a beneficial result for His people. It is first used in Gen 21:1, where the Lord intervenes on behalf of Sarah in a miraculous way, so that she could conceive at an advanced age. The strong undercurrent meaning is a positive action by a superior in relation to his subordinates.  
*-Orach means a well-trodden road. Normally figuratively used to describe the way to life or to death.**
5. God's decrees  
*-choq, precepts and rules which must be strictly obeyed. The ancient people often engraved their laws upon slabs of stone or metal and then displayed them in public places.*
6. God's wonders  
*-pala, its basic meaning is "to be wonderful" and "to cause a wonderful thing to happen." It's first occurrence is found in Gen. 18:14: "Is anything too difficult for the Lord?" Pala is used primarily with God as the subject. He does things which are beyond the bounds of human powers or expectations.*

7. God's command
  - *mitzvah, the terms of the contract in a deed of purchase for a plot of land.*
  - Described the particular conditions of God's covenant with Israel. They were clear-cut directives which were revealed by inspiration and in effect until the cross of Christ.*
8. God's statutes
  - *eduwth, means testimony, witness, prescription, a reminder or a warning sign.*
  - Associated with the tabernacle and the ark.*
9. God's (word) promises
  - *imrah, refers to the Word of God.*
10. God's works and what God's hands have done.
  - *ma'aseh, While bara conveys the thought of the creation of something out of nothing, aseh talks about refining the thing created. In other words, the emphasis was on fashioning the created objects.*

Read Psalm 145. Find at least one (1) verse that describes an aspect or action of God that you have seen in action in your own life. Write down corresponding praises that you could write to God, being specific about what He has done and why you are praising Him.

(Psa 145:1 NIV) A psalm of praise. Of David. I will exalt you, my God the King; I will praise your name for ever and ever.

(Psa 145:2 NIV) Every day I will praise you and extol your name for ever and ever.

(Psa 145:3 NIV) Great is the LORD and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom.

(Psa 145:4 NIV) One generation will commend your works to another; they will tell of your mighty acts.

(Psa 145:5 NIV) They will speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty, and I will meditate on your wonderful works.

(Psa 145:6 NIV) They will tell of the power of your awesome works, and I will proclaim your great deeds.

(Psa 145:7 NIV) They will celebrate your abundant goodness and joyfully sing of your righteousness.

(Psa 145:8 NIV) The LORD is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love.

(Psa 145:9 NIV) The LORD is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made.

(Psa 145:10 NIV) All you have made will praise you, O LORD; your saints will extol you.

(Psa 145:11 NIV) They will tell of the glory of your kingdom and speak of your might,

(Psa 145:12 NIV) so that all men may know of your mighty acts and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.

(Psa 145:13 NIV) Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures through all generations. The LORD is faithful to all his promises and loving toward all he has made.

(Psa 145:14 NIV) The LORD upholds all those who fall and lifts up all who are bowed down.

(Psa 145:15 NIV) The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food at the proper time.

(Psa 145:16 NIV) You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing.



(Psa 145:17 NIV) The LORD is righteous in all his ways and loving toward all he has made.

(Psa 145:18 NIV) The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.

(Psa 145:19 NIV) He fulfills the desires of those who fear him; he hears their cry and saves them.

(Psa 145:20 NIV) The LORD watches over all who love him, but all the wicked he will destroy.

(Psa 145:21 NIV) My mouth will speak in praise of the LORD. Let every creature praise his holy name forever and ever.

Many Christians are afraid of reading the Old Testament. It is very intimidating, and people are afraid they won't understand what it is saying. But to truly understand their Christianity, they need to understand God's original plan, and how the New Testament is just an *extension* of the Old Testament.

Most of what Jesus said was just a confirmation of what the Old Testament already taught. Jesus did not disagree with or do away with the teachings of the Old Testament. He said He came to fulfill the Law, or the Old Testament. In other words, He was going to show them how to LIVE the Law.

Do you remember from past lessons what one thing fulfills the law? What is the one thing that there is no law against? (*Let them discuss*) The answer is LOVE. Jews in Jesus' time were following the "letter of the law", following the rules and regulations, but were completely missing the important thing, the "spirit of the law", which is LOVE.

What did Jesus say are the two most important commandments in the entire Bible? They sum up all the Law and the Prophets... (*Let them discuss*) 1) Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength, and 2) love your neighbor as yourself. The goal of all of God's commandments were that we would learn to love God and love each other. The Old Testament, as well as the New Testament, are books about learning how much God loves us, how we are to love God, and how we are to love others.

This week's lesson will give you a very quick and simple overview of the Old Testament so you will not be so overwhelmed by this very important book.

## TENTH WEEK

Monday

### **GOD'S WORD: INTRODUCTION TO THE OLD TESTAMENT**

Verse For The Day: Exodus 10:1,2

Passage For The Day: Leviticus 26:12-17

Leviticus 26:12 And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people.

The Old Testament contains the history of God's chosen people, God's interaction with them, and God's purpose and plan for His creation. These 39 books were written by approximately 30 writers from different backgrounds and generations during the period prior to Christ's birth. God spoke to lawyers, farmers, priests, kings, poor people, rich people, everyone. He didn't discriminate against anyone.

Genesis
Exodus
Leviticus
Numbers
Deuteronomy
Joshua
Judges
Ruth
1 Samuel
2 Samuel
1 Kings
2 Kings
1 Chronicles
2 Chronicles
Ezra
Nehemiah
Esther

**5 Books of Moses**

**12 other Historical Books**

**Read these boxes**

The first **17** books are **Historical Books**, beginning with the **5 Books of Moses** (called the **Torah** in Hebrew; called the **Pentateuch** in Greek), and followed by **12** other historical works.

Job
Psalms
Proverbs
Ecclesiastes
Song of Solomon

**5 Poetical Books**

The next division of books are the **5 Poetical Books**.

Isaiah
Jeremiah
Lamentations
Ezekial
Daniel
Hosea
Joel
Amos
Obadiah
Jonah
Micah
Nahum
Habakkuk
Zephaniah
Haggai
Zechariah
Malachi

**5 Major Prophets**

**12 Minor Prophets**

The last **17** books are **Prophetic Books**, beginning with the **5 Major Prophets** and ending with the **12 Minor Prophets**.

Though most of these **39** writers did not know one another, it is amazing to note that all of them carry the same theme throughout their stories: **God's love and faithfulness to man, even when man turns away from God.** Thank God for His faithfulness to you, and that He has left you His Word, like love letters from a beloved, to remind you of His unending love for you.

## TUESDAY

### IMPORTANT PEOPLE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Verse For The Day: Genesis 12:3

Passage For The Day: Genesis 12:1-3

Genesis 12:3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

Have you ever listened to a sermon and heard a preacher talking about certain people in the Bible, but you didn't know who they were? There are several key people in the Old Testament, whose stories affect everyone else. This is not everyone that is important, but knowing who they are will help you out.

**[IN THE FOLLOWING SECTIONS, LET THE CLASS ADD ANYTHING THEY MAY KNOW ABOUT THESE PEOPLE AND THESE BOOKS, AND ADD WHATEVER YOU FIND INTERESTING OR IMPORTANT AS WELL.]**

There are six (6) key people in the book of Genesis about whom you need to learn.

- 1) Adam – Father of the human race. God formed him from the dust of the earth and then breathed the breath of life into his nostrils to make him a living “soul”.
- 2) Noah – Through whom the world was spared from total annihilation by the flood and through whom the world was re-populated. He is famous for building an ark.
- 3) Abraham – The Patriarch (or “Father”) of the Israelites who believed and received the two-fold promise written in Genesis 12:1-3. What are the 2 promises written here?
  - A) I will make you a great nation
  - B) And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”  
This is the plot for the entire Bible – how God creates Israel, makes it a great nation, and blesses the entire earth by bringing the Savior out of Israel.
- 4) Isaac – Abraham’s long awaited and promised son.
- 5) Jacob / Israel – Isaac’s son, Abraham’s grandson, whose name (and personality) was changed from “Jacob” (or “Deceiver”) to “Israel” (or “Prince with God”). He had 12 sons, who became the 12 Tribes (or families) of Israel.
- 6) Joseph – Jacob’s beloved son, the wearer of the “coat of many colors”, who was sold into slavery by his brothers, but consequently became ruler over Egypt. He was therefore able to save his entire family (the nation of Israel) from famine by inviting them to live in Egypt. Eventually the Israelites were enslaved by the Egyptians.

Then there are Eleven (11) “Leaders” (or groups of Leaders) of Israel. They are:

- 1) Moses – The deliverer of Israel from Egyptian slavery.
- 2) Joshua – Moses’ successor during the 40 years of wandering in the wilderness.
- 3) The 12 Judges – They ruled over a 400 year period where Israel’s spiritual state and faithfulness to God slowly but continually declined.
- 4) Samuel – Actually was a “Judge” and a prophet who, per Israel’s request, changed Israel from Tribal Government to a nation led by a king.
- 5) Saul – Israel’s first King who couldn’t handle the job. He later persecuted his future successor and tried to kill him.
- 6) David – Saul’s successor. He is known for his triumph over Goliath, the giant, with a sling and a stone, and is famous for writing many Psalms, for being a “man after God’s own heart”, and for his affair with Bathsheba.
- 7) Solomon – Israel’s third and final king over a “united” Israel. He had wisdom and riches beyond anyone else, but he married foreign wives and began worshipping their gods, and so the kingdom was divided after his reign.
- 8) 39 Kings of the Divided Kingdom – Solomon’s son caused Israel to divide into 2 nations, Israel in the North (with 10 tribes) and Judah in the South (with 2 tribes).
- 9) Zerubbabel – The first of 3 leaders who led the people of Judah home after their 70 years of Babylonian captivity.
- 10) Ezra – The second leader to return with the exiled people in order to rebuild the city of Jerusalem.

11) **Nehemiah** – The third leader to return with the exiled people. His concern was rebuilding the wall around Jerusalem.

People from every walk of life were important to God, and He did great things through those who were willing to learn and do His will. You, too, are important to Him. Tell Him today that you desire to know His will and play a part in accomplishing His will for the world.

Now we will do a quick overview of each of the Old Testament books. You will see what was important to God because these are the things He chose to capture on paper and share with all peoples.

Wednesday

## **SIMPLE SUMMARY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT BOOKS**

Verse For The Day: Genesis 1:1

Passage For The Day: Genesis 1:1-31

Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

The next three days will be spent looking at the content of the books of the Old Testament. This is a very short summary, but hopefully it will prove to be helpful.

**Genesis** – Reveals God's sovereignty, unlimited power, and unfailing love for man as it chronicles the relationship between God and the people He created. Stories include Adam and Eve; Cain and Abel; Noah and the Flood; the Tower of Babel; and Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph's lives. Most of the history of the world occurs in the first 11 chapters of Genesis. It ends with the Israelites being invited by the Egyptians to live in Egypt.

**Exodus** – Means "exit" and describes the Israelites' departure from Egypt (and deliverance from slavery) by the hand of God through His servant, Moses. It is the source for the Ten Commandments.

**Leviticus** – The Priests' handbook for the Tabernacle set up during the exodus.

**Numbers** – Begins with a census that counts the people, describes the 40 years of wandering, and ends with another census.

**Deuteronomy** – The 2<sup>nd</sup> in a series – summarizes the wilderness wanderings and reteaches the Law to the new generation.

**Joshua** – Details the entrance and conquest of Canaan until the death of Joshua.

**Judges** – The 400 year period where Judges ruled over Israel. During this time, Israel slowly fell into a horrible cycle of sinning against the Lord, being enslaved, crying to God, Him saving them and granting them peace in their land, and then their falling into sin again.

**Ruth** – Biography of a widowed Moabitess who chose to become an Israelite, and eventually became an ancestor of King David as well as Jesus.

**1 Samuel – The birth of Samuel and the reign of Israel's first king, Saul. Also David's anointing for kingship, his battle with Goliath, and his persecution by Saul. It ends with Saul's death.**

**2 Samuel – The reign of David. Stories include his affair with Bathsheba, and also his son, Absalom's, revolt against him.**

**1 Kings – The reign of Solomon, division of the Kingdom between the 10 tribes in the North (Israel) and the 2 tribes in the South (Judah), and the beginning of the 39 kings who reigned. Elijah was prophet at that time.**

**2 Kings – The reign of the remaining kings of the Divided Kingdom until Israel is scattered and Judah is carried captive to Babylon. Elisha becomes Elijah's successor in this book. The chariot of fire that takes Elijah off to heaven is found in this book.**

**1 Chronicles – Summarizes the Kingdom Period of David.**

**2 Chronicles – Summarizes the Kingdom Period of Solomon, and then only Judah's history.**

Thursday

## **SIMPLE SUMMARY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT BOOKS**

Verse For The Day: Psalm 119:103

Passage For The Day: Psalm 119:97-104

Psalm 119:103 How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!

**Ezra – Details the return from Babylonian Exile until the Temple is rebuilt. The king of Babylon actually sent the Jews home with money and supplies to rebuild the Temple.**

**Nehemiah – The final phase of the return from the Exile and the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem.**

**Esther – Biography of a Jewish orphan who became queen of Persia and who saved the Jews from complete annihilation.**

**Job – This book deals with the problem of human suffering.**

**Psalms – These are actually called the "Books of Hallel" or "Books of Praise". They are written by David and others, and reflect every possible movement of man's spirit and soul.**

**Proverbs – Written by King Solomon, they deal with understanding and practicing wisdom.**

**Ecclesiastes – Details Solomon's quest to discover "meaning in life" apart from God. It was an unsuccessful quest, as he finds that there is no meaning to life without God.**

**Song of Solomon – Describes a love relationship on 2 levels: first, between King Solomon and one of his soon-to-be wives; and secondly, between Christ and His bride, the Church.**

**Isaiah – One of the most important prophets in the Old Testament. This book foretells the exile as punishment for Israel's disobedience, as well as Christ's future coming. It also has an uncanny resemblance to the entire Bible as a whole. Its' 66 chapters are even broken up like the 66 books in the Bible, with 39 chapters in the first section and 27 chapters in the second.**

**Jeremiah – He was known as the "weeping prophet" who had to foretell the doom of the exile to the Israelites. It also foretells of the coming "New Covenant" that would involve Christ.**

**Lamentations – A book containing the heart's cry of a sorrowing nation in exile.**

**Ezekiel – Another major prophet whose visions of God include the four creatures and the "wheel within a wheel". God also requested Ezekiel to perform some very strange acts as prophetic demonstrations of Israel's sad spiritual state, and what God would do to Israel.**

**Daniel – One of the most well-known prophets. Stories include Daniel's interpretation of the dream; Daniel and the Lion's Den; Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the Fiery Furnace; and the "writing on the wall".**

Friday

## **SIMPLE SUMMARY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT BOOKS**

Verse For The Day: Joel 2:28

Passage For The Day: Joel 2:23-32

Joel 2:28 'And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions.

**Hosea – This prophet was called to marry a prostitute who continued to be unfaithful to him in order to show the Israelites an example of how they were being unfaithful to their "Husband", the Lord.**

**Joel – This prophet preached about the "Day of the Lord" and the coming judgment. However, it is within this small book that we find the prophecy about God's spirit eventually being poured out upon all flesh.**

**Amos – Prophecies judgement against the surrounding nations, as well as upon**

**Israel and Judah's wickedness. He has several visions which include a plumbline and a basket of fruit.**

**Obadiah – Another prophetic book of judgement, except on Edom.**

**Jonah – One of the most well-known prophets due to his experience in a whale belly. He was called to prophesy to Ninevah, but instead ran away. This book shows how God gives us second chances, even when we have been rebellious and turned away from Him.**

**Micah – Prophecies more judgment against Israel and Judah. One of its famous verses is found in 6:8 – “He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”**

**Nahum – Another prophecy against Ninevah. This book characterizes God as all-knowing, righteous, longsuffering, all-powerful, good, and holy.**

**Habakkuk – Perplexed because wickedness is so rampant, Habakkuk wants to know why God doesn't do something about it. Famous verse is 3:19 - The Sovereign LORD is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to go on the heights.**

**Zephaniah – Prophecies judgement against Judah.**

**Haggai – Prophetic book detailing prophecies regarding Zerubbabel and Joshua, the son of the High Priest.**

**Zechariah – The prophecy begins with a strong call to repentance, a prerequisite to experiencing the blessings in the book. Its most famous verse is 4:6 – “So he said to me, 'This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the LORD Almighty.” It also contains the prophecy about Jesus riding into Jerusalem on a donkey.**

**Malachi – God is a refiner and purifier of silver and gold in this book. Malachi prophesies about Judah's unacceptable sacrifices to the Lord. Here God tells His people to test Him by tithing to Him and allowing Him to pour out unlimited blessings on the people in return.**

**The Old Testament is the story of Israel and it's stormy relationship with God. Yet God protected Israel, because out of its womb would come the Messiah, the Anointed One, the Christ, who would save His people from their sins and restore right relationship between God and His people. Praise God that the same miraculous delivering and healing power that was evident in the Old Testament is available to you and I today.**



## INTRODUCTION TO THE OLD TESTAMENT

What did you find most interesting about this week's lesson on the Old Testament?

What kind of people wrote the books of the Old Testament? *Statesmen, farmers, educated people, cup bearers, etc. All types of people.*

Read Hosea 1:2,3 and Chapter 2

(Hosea 1:2 NIV) When the LORD began to speak through Hosea, the LORD said to him, "Go, take to yourself an adulterous wife and children of unfaithfulness, because the land is guilty of the vilest adultery in departing from the LORD."

(Hosea 1:3 NIV) So he married Gomer daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son.

What does God ask Hosea to do? *To take a prostitute as his wife, knowing she would continue to be unfaithful, even after they were married.*

Why does God ask him to do that? *To symbolize God's relationship with His people, Israel.*

(Hosea 2:1 NIV) "Say of your brothers, 'My people,' and of your sisters, 'My loved one.'

(Hosea 2:2 NIV) "Rebuke your mother, rebuke her, for she is not my wife, and I am not her husband. Let her remove the adulterous look from her face and the unfaithfulness from between her breasts.

(Hosea 2:3 NIV) Otherwise I will strip her naked and make her as bare as on the day she was born; I will make her like a desert, turn her into a parched land, and slay her with thirst.

(Hosea 2:4 NIV) I will not show my love to her children, because they are the children of adultery.

(Hosea 2:5 NIV) Their mother has been unfaithful and has conceived them in disgrace. She said, 'I will go after my lovers, who give me my food and my water, my wool and my linen, my oil and my drink.'

(Hosea 2:6 NIV) Therefore I will block her path with thornbushes; I will wall her in so that she cannot find her way.

(Hosea 2:7 NIV) She will chase after her lovers but not catch them; she will look for them but not find them. Then she will say, 'I will go back to my husband as at first, for then I was better off than now.'

(Hosea 2:8 NIV) She has not acknowledged that I was the one who gave her the grain, the new wine and oil, who lavished on her the silver and gold-- which they used for Baal.

(Hosea 2:9 NIV) "Therefore I will take away my grain when it ripens, and my new wine when it is ready. I will take back my wool and my linen, intended to cover her nakedness.

(Hosea 2:10 NIV) So now I will expose her lewdness before the eyes of her lovers; no one will take her out of my hands.

(Hosea 2:11 NIV) I will stop all her celebrations: her yearly festivals, her New Moons, her Sabbath days--all her appointed feasts.

(Hosea 2:12 NIV) I will ruin her vines and her fig trees, which she said were her pay from her lovers; I will make them a thicket, and wild animals will devour them.

(Hosea 2:13 NIV) I will punish her for the days she burned incense to the Baals; she decked herself with rings and jewelry, and went after her lovers, but me she forgot, declares the LORD.

(Hosea 2:14 NIV) "Therefore I am now going to allure her; I will lead her into the desert and speak tenderly to her.

(Hosea 2:15 NIV) There I will give her back her vineyards, and will make the Valley of Achor a door of hope. There she will sing as in the days of her youth, as in the day she came up out of Egypt.

(Hosea 2:16 NIV) "In that day," declares the LORD, "you will call me 'my husband'; you will no longer call me 'my master.'

(Hosea 2:17 NIV) I will remove the names of the Baals from her lips; no longer will their names be invoked.

(Hosea 2:18 NIV) In that day I will make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field and the birds of the air and the creatures that move along the ground. Bow and sword and battle I will abolish from the land, so that all may lie down in safety.

(Hosea 2:19 NIV) I will betroth you to me forever; I will betroth you in righteousness and justice, in love and compassion.

(Hosea 2:20 NIV) I will betroth you in faithfulness, and you will acknowledge the LORD.

(Hosea 2:21 NIV) "In that day I will respond," declares the LORD-- "I will respond to the skies, and they will respond to the earth;

(Hosea 2:22 NIV) and the earth will respond to the grain, the new wine and oil, and they will respond to Jezreel.

(Hosea 2:23 NIV) I will plant her for myself in the land; I will show my love to the one I called 'Not my loved one.' I will say to those called 'Not my people,' 'You are my people'; and they will say, 'You are my God.'"

What does the Lord claim that His "wife" has done? *She has claimed that it is her lovers that have provided for her, not her Husband, and so she has chased after them. Israel burned incense to Baal and worshipped Baal. She has forgotten the Lord.*

What does the Lord say He will do in the first 13 verses? *He will chastise His unfaithful wife. He will wall her in.. He will stop all of her celebrations. He will take away what He has given to her.*

What is His purpose in doing this? *So she will return to Him.*

What does He do, though, in verses 14 through 23? *He leads her into the desert to speak tenderly to her and to restore what He has taken away from her. He restores their marriage, and takes her as His wife again forever.*

How does his story mirror our lives today? *We were prostitutes of sorts before we knew the Lord, selling ourselves to whomever we thought would provide us with what we thought we needed (self-worth, money, love, etc.) Then we came to the Lord, but we still at times have turned away. Yet, the Lord, though He chastised us, continually brought us back into an intimate relationship with Him. He loves us enough to not let us go.*

How do you think the unfaithful wife felt during the time of chastisement and punishment? *Frustrated, angry, etc.*

How do you think the Lord felt during the time of chastisement and punishment? *Frustrated, but sad, because the one He loves has turned away from Him, rejected.*

How do you think God feels when He has to discipline us? *Same as above.*

What kind of people do you think God wants for Himself? (think about not only the above story, but many of the other Old Testament stories) *Those who are broken and hurting, dysfunctional, who don't belong.*

God also had a habit of choosing the underdog, people who were not the favorites, but people who were nobodies. In the book of Judges, He chose Gideon, the least of the tribe of Benjamin, which was the least tribe of all. He chose Rahab in the book of Joshua, a harlot who later became an Israelite by marriage, and gave birth to Boaz, another man whose choice of women was questionable by the world's standards. He ended up marrying a Moabitess, not an Israelite. And yet, God chose Ruth, the Moabitess to be in the lineage of King David and Jesus Christ.

Now David was just a shepherd boy, but God chose Him to be King. Think of the disciples in the New Testament, and where they came from. They were uneducated, for the most part, but God used them mightily. There are also many stories of God switching the birth order of brothers, so that the younger got the double portion of blessing, instead of the first born.

God roots for the underdog, and likes to surprise people by using the "foolish" things to confound the wise.

So what do you think would be the main theme of the Old Testament? *That God loves His people, even when they are unfaithful, and although He may punish or chastise, the goal is to bring His people back to Him. Everything He does is motivated by love for us.*

Have you ever had a long distance relationship which was kept by correspondence? You wrote to them what you considered to be important to you and necessary for them to know about you. You received the same type of information from them in return. In this week's lesson, we are going to see what God considered to be important to Him and necessary for us to know about Him.

Whereas the Old Testament spans a huge amount of time, the New Testament zooms in like a microscope on a period of less than one hundred years. People have made the comment that the God of the Old Testament was an angry God, prone to temper tantrums where He destroyed entire civilizations. Then they say the New Testament shows a very different God who is loving, forgiving and kind.

What they do not realize is that these same "New Testament" characteristics (merciful, loving, kind, generous, forgiving) are found in the Old Testament as well. Otherwise God would have totally destroyed the disobedient and rebellious Israelites. And the righteously angry God, who is serious about sin and its consequences, is very well and alive in the New Testament. Just look at Jesus cleaning out the Temple courts with a whip!

The New Testament is a continuation of the Old Testament, revealing God's love and faithfulness to His people, as well as to all the nations of the world. In the book of Jeremiah, God speaks of creating a new covenant with His people because the old covenant could not make His people righteous. But as Paul says in the book of Romans, this new covenant, the gospel of Jesus Christ, reveals a righteousness that comes by faith, not by works or by law. Only through this new covenant can we attain the righteousness that we so desperately need.

And the New Testament is a close-up look on the Way, the Truth and the Life that is found in Jesus Christ, our Savior and our Lord, the long-awaited and prophesied Messiah. Let's look at 1 John 5:11-13.

Monday

## **GOD'S WORD: INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW TESTAMENT**

Verse For The Day: 1 John 5:13

Passage For The Day: 1 John 5:11-13

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

Read 1 John 5:11-13. This is a basic summary of the purpose of the New Testament.

In verse 11, what two things did God give us? 1) **His Son**

2) **Eternal life**

In verse 12, He who has the **Son** has **life**, and He who does not have the **Son** does not have **eternal life**.

In verse 13, to whom were these things written, and why were these things written to us?

1) **To those who believe in the name of Jesus**

2) **So that they may know that they have eternal life.**

The 27 books of the New Testament can be divided into three (3) sections:

1. **Historical Books** (The Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John; and Acts)
2. **Epistles or letters** (Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1 & 2 Peter, 1 & 2 & 3 John, Jude)
3. **Prophecy** (Revelation)

There are eight major time periods in the New Testament. They describe the expansion of the gospel throughout the known world in Jesus' time. The periods are as follows:

**The Life and Ministry of Jesus (covered in Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and the beginning of Acts):**

1. **Jesus' Birth and First Thirty (30) Years. – not much is known about these early years other than the details of His birth and his trip to the Temple at the age of 12.**
2. **Jesus' Public Ministry – This began with His baptism in the Jordan by John the Baptist, and the 40 day fast in the Wilderness where He was tempted by Satan. This is when He called His disciples together, taught and gave them authority to cast out demons.**
3. **The Last Week – This includes His entrance into Jerusalem before the Passover (Palm Sunday) where He rides into town on the colt of a donkey. It includes the Last Supper, where He and His disciples shared His last Passover meal before His Crucifixion, burial, and resurrection.**
4. **The Next Forty Days – This is when He showed Himself to the disciples and many other people, and ends when He is taken up to heaven.**

**The Early Church (covered in Acts):**

5. **The Church at Jerusalem – This is where the beginning of the "church" as we know it began. It started with 120 waiting in the Upper Room for the fulfillment of the promise which Jesus had made. When the Holy Spirit comes upon them in Acts, they are transformed from a bunch of frightened, hiding disciples into powerful, bold witnesses for the Lord Jesus Christ.**
6. **The Church "Scattered Everywhere" – When persecution comes to the church, the disciples are scattered throughout the known world. God used the persecution to allow the gospel to be spread all around.**
7. **Paul's Missionary Trips – God then used particular people which He had trained and mentored for years as missionaries. Paul, Barnabus, Silas and John Mark (Mark) were some of those people.**
8. **Paul's Arrest and Trip to Rome – This is how God chose to spread the gospel even further. Paul's arrest allowed Him to witness even to the highest leaders in the land.**

The purpose of the Scriptures, Old and New, is to reveal God's character and plan to the people He has created. The New Testament mission is to spread the good news about

Jesus, the Savior, and how He can save you from hell and change your life forever. Today, make the decision to spread the truth about Jesus to someone with whom you come in contact.

Tuesday

## THE AUTHORS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Verse For The Day: John 20:31

Passage For The Day: John 20:29-31

John writes first about his reasons for writing about Jesus in his gospel. Someone read John 20:31. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. John believed that people could come to believe in Jesus by reading about the acts that He performed, as did the other writers of the gospels. But all of the gospel authors wrote from different perspectives.

The 27 books in the New Testament were written by eight (8) men. About  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the New Testament was written by three (3) men: Paul, Luke and John.

1. Luke wrote the Gospel of Luke and Acts.
2. Paul wrote all 13 books from Romans through Philemon (and possibly Hebrews)
3. John wrote the Gospel of John, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John and Revelation.

The other five (5) men who wrote books that bear their own names are:

4. Matthew
5. Mark
6. James
7. Peter (1 & 2 Peter)
8. Jude

Let's take a look at the Gospels. Here we find the life and ministry of Jesus told by four different people, from four different viewpoints. Each has a different point to get across and sees Jesus from a separate angle.

1. **Matthew** – This gospel was written by one of Jesus' disciples, also known as "Levi". He was a Jew and a tax collector. This book was written to convince Jews that Jesus is the long-awaited Jewish Messiah and King who fulfills the Old Testament prophecies. And in Jewish style, his gospel includes genealogies and references to Jewish customs and traditions. It stresses His *kingship*, His *kingdom*, and the principles of that *kingdom*. In Matthew, **Jesus is the King**.
2. **Mark** – This gospel was written by John Mark, nephew of Barnabus. He accompanied His uncle along with Paul on the first missionary journey, but defected before it's completion, causing a rift between Mark and Paul. But Mark must have spent time with Peter, because his gospel has a lot of the Apostle Peter's memories and stories of Jesus. Mark writes in part to the Romans of the day, and presents the Lord Jesus as the Servant of the Lord, and for this reason stresses action and deeds rather than words or family pedigree. In Mark, **Jesus is the Servant**.
3. **Luke** – This gospel was written by a physician named Luke, who was extremely detailed in his descriptions of Jesus, down to the "sweat that was like great drops of blood." He is acclaimed to be the greatest historian of all time. He accompanied Paul

on important missionary journeys, but never mentioned himself by name. Luke focuses in on Jesus' humanity, and how He was fully man, and therefore includes more information on Jesus' birth and boyhood. His writing is aimed at the Greeks, who were seeking the perfect man. In Luke, **Jesus is the Son of Man.**

4. **John** – This was written by the “disciple whom Jesus loved”, John the son of Zebedee. This gospel focuses on Jesus' deity, the fact that He was God incarnate (or in the flesh), and that believing on Him is the key to light and life. In John, **Jesus is the Son of God.**

Wednesday

## BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS

Vs. for the day: Romans 1:17

Passage for the day: Romans 1:16,17

Romans 1:17 For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

**Acts** – This book, written by Luke, tells of the Acts of the Holy Spirit as well as the beginning and growth of the Church. The Old Testament reveals **God the Father**; the Gospels reveal **God the Son**; Acts reveals **God the Holy Spirit**. In chapters 1-7, the gospel is presented in Jerusalem, and from 8-12 moves to Judea and Samaria. Chapters 13-28 cover the gospel spreading to the end of the earth through missionary journeys. It begins with the central figure being Peter at Jerusalem, but changes to Paul and the Church at Antioch.

**Romans** – Written by Paul, this Epistle (or letter) to the Church at Rome gives detailed doctrinal teaching and gives explicit directives for the practical application of spiritual truth. You learn about the meaning of important terms such as *justification*, *righteousness* and *faith*.

**Read it's key verses:** Romans 1:16,17. I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

What is revealed in the gospel? **Righteousness from God**  
How does it come? **By faith**

**1 & 2 Corinthians** – Paul wrote these letters to the Corinthian church he had established. They were blessed with great spiritual gifts, but were plagued by immaturity, carnality (following their fleshly desires), internal confusion, strife and division. Paul had to spend a lot of time correcting them and clarifying specific issues, especially where spiritual gifts and spiritual authority were involved. It is interesting to note that in the midst of addressing some very serious problems is the “Love Chapter”, 1 Corinthians 13. Paul emphasizes the fact that although spiritual gifts are wonderful things, if they do not love God and love one another, their spiritual gifts have no value, and their lives are not pleasing to God.

The next 4 epistles generally go together and provide a practical handbook for living.

**Galatians** – Paul wrote this letter to defend several truths that his critics were attacking. They claimed he was not an apostle and that he did not preach the gospel. They were “Judaizers” who believed that when Gentiles (non-Jews) accepted Jesus Christ as their savior, the new converts needed to follow Mosaic law, including circumcision. Paul emphasized two things.

**Read Galatians 5:6.** For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.

What are those two (2) things?

1) **Faith** 2) **Love**

**Ephesians** – Paul wrote this letter to the church at Ephesus, but it was intended to be circulated to all the churches in Asia. Subjects include God's grace, predestination, what it means to *become* a Christian and to

be a Christian, spiritual gifts and the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer. It also includes practical instruction on how Christian unity should function, how a family should live, and how spiritual warfare is waged. It concludes with a very famous portion of scripture.

**Read Ephesians 6:10-18.** Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.

Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.

Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place,

and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.

In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.

Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

What is described here? **The armor of God.**

**Philippians** – Paul wrote this epistle while he was under house arrest in Rome, awaiting his trial. That is why it is so amazing that the key words in this letter are **joy** and **rejoice**. Subjects include how Christians can and must rejoice 1) in spite of suffering, 2) in service for the Lord, 3) in the excellence of Christ and 4) through anxiety (so they can find peace). It is a letter of great encouragement.

**Colossians** – Paul writes to the church at Colosse to clear up some false teaching that had crept in. It also contains great practical suggestions. Real believers are to practice love, meditate in the Word until filled and transformed, be thankful, be prayerful, and praise God, until their Christian walk and talk bear adequate witness to a genuine experience of faith.

**Read Colossians 3:12-15.** Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.

**How should we act as God's chosen people and what should our qualities be?**

**Compassionate, kind, humble, gentle, patient, forgiving. We should love and forgive, and let peace rule in our hearts. We also need to be thankful.**

Thursday

## BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS

Vs. for the day: James 2:18

Passage for the day: James 2:17-20

James 2:18 But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do.

**1 & 2 Thessalonians** – Paul points out several areas of weakness to the Thessalonian church: laziness and sexual sins in particular. Paul also encourages the believer to live in faith, love and hope as he anticipates the imminent return of our Lord Jesus Christ. No other book tells us more about the rapture of the church. **Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.**



2 Thessalonians centers on clearing up a misunderstanding concerning the Day of the Lord.

**1 & 2 Timothy** – This is a “Pastoral Epistle” from Paul to his “son in the ministry”, Timothy. This book contains important instruction for the order of the church and the appointment of leadership. It is instructions to a young pastor which include the exhortation to keep the faith by keeping sound doctrine. In 2 Timothy, Paul deals with the great apostasy and social corruption which will exist in the latter days of the church.

**Titus** – This particular epistle from Paul deals with correcting false doctrine, motivating the recipients toward good works, and establishing order in the churches by teaching sound doctrine.

**Philemon** – This letter is written to a slaveholder in Colosse who was a Christian brother and dear friend to Paul. It deals with a runaway slave named Onesimus who had been led to faith in Christ and was demonstrating his repentance by returning to Colosse and making things right. He was placing himself at the mercy of his owner, who could punish him severely or kill him. Paul pleads with Philemon to treat his slave kindly, and as a brother in the Lord.

**Hebrews** – The author of this letter is unknown, but it may have been Paul. It was written to mid-first-century Christian Jews who were giving serious thought to renouncing their commitment to Jesus Christ by returning to the practice of Judaism. This book shows how the blessings found in Jesus Christ are superior to those offered through the rituals of Judaism. Unbelief was the cancer that began to destroy them, which is why you find the famous “Faith Chapter” in Hebrews. This letter explains the meaning of real faith, which depends upon keeping your eyes and thoughts fixed on Jesus. It describes Jesus as our compassionate High Priest who is far superior to any human High Priest.

**James** – The author of this letter is believed to be James, the half-brother of Jesus. This book is the most practical book in the New Testament. It is not so much what a person says as what he does that is important.

**Read James 2:17-20.**

In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do.

You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that--and shudder. You foolish man, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless ?

**Faith without deeds or works is dead.** It gives specific examples of how to live and what to watch out for. Ask the Lord for the ability to live what you believe and therefore be a witness through your everyday life.

Friday

## BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS

Vs. for the day: Jude 1:24,25

Passage for the day: Jude 1:20-25

Jude 1:24,25 To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy-- to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.

**1 & 2 Peter** – The Apostle Peter is the author of this book. This letter helps Christians deal with trial and persecution. It deals with the suffering of the people of God and is addressed to the Christians who have been scattered due to persecution. He emphasizes that fiery trials purify and mature us, helping us become more like Jesus. 2 Peter stresses the danger of false teachers that will come.

**1, 2 and 3 John** – The “disciple whom Jesus loved” is the author of this letter that was circulated to all the churches. The key words are *know, believe, love* and *fellowship*. To really appreciate the change in John from before Jesus’ resurrection and after the coming of the Holy Spirit, you need to understand that his nickname had formerly been “Son of Thunder”, because he wanted to rain down fire upon Jesus’ opponents. However, as you see in his gospel and in his letters, this “Son of Thunder” now speaks only of the importance of **love**. 2 John deals with a cult of the day called “Gnosticism”, and explains the falsehood of that doctrine. The key word in both 2 & 3 John is **truth**.

**Jude** – This letter, written by another half-brother of Jesus, encourages believers to fight valiantly for their faith. Jude also deals with Gnosticism, and condemns all evil men and their practices.

**Read Jude 1:14,15.** Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men: "See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him."

With whom does the Lord come in this verse, and for what reason does He come?

**He comes with thousands of angels to convince all the ungodly of their ungodly ways.**

**Then read Jude 1:20,21.** But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit. Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.

What are we to be doing until Jesus returns?

**Built ourselves up in the most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit.**

What good news does Jude 1:24 state? To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy--

**God is able to keep you from falling and present you without fault and with great joy before Himself.**

Maintaining our life with God is the key, because our only hope to be righteous and holy is to have Him live His life in and through us.

**Revelation** – This prophetic book was written by John, the author of the Gospel and the letters that bear his name. John wrote this while he was exiled on an island of Patmos, and this book is derived from a vision that God gave to John. Revelation reveals God's triumphs, the eternal glories of Christ, the new heaven and the new earth. In times of darkness and persecution, this book has given courage to its readers, enabling them to endure hardship and death for the sake of

Christ. This is the only book that promises that its reader will be blessed for reading it; and it ends with a curse on anyone who adds or takes away from this prophetic book.

I hope that these sections on the Old and New Testament have helped you to understand what God is trying to say to us today. It was a quick overview, but now you hopefully know where to look when you are searching for certain subjects in God's Word.

Thank God today for the Word He has left us. Think of them as love letters to us from a Father who wants us to always remember Him and keep Him foremost in our lives.

## INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW TESTAMENT

Let's Read the Book of Philemon (*fil-ay'-mone*).

(Phile 1:1 NIV) Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, To Philemon our dear friend and fellow worker,

(Phile 1:2 NIV) to Apphia our sister, to Archippus our fellow soldier and to the church that meets in your home:

(Phile 1:3 NIV) Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

(Phile 1:4 NIV) I always thank my God as I remember you in my prayers,

(Phile 1:5 NIV) because I hear about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints.

(Phile 1:6 NIV) I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ.

(Phile 1:7 NIV) Your love has given me great joy and encouragement, because you, brother, have refreshed the hearts of the saints.

(Phile 1:8 NIV) Therefore, **although** in Christ **I could be bold and order you to do what you ought to do,**

**(Phile 1:9 NIV) yet I appeal to you on the basis of love.** I then, as Paul--an old man and now also a prisoner of Christ Jesus--

(Phile 1:10 NIV) **I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, who became my son while I was in chains.**

(Phile 1:11 NIV) **Formerly he was useless to you, but now he has become useful both to you and to me.**

(Phile 1:12 NIV) **I am sending him--who is my very heart--back to you.**

(Phile 1:13 NIV) I would have liked to keep him with me so that he could take your place in helping me while I am in chains for the gospel.

(Phile 1:14 NIV) But I did not want to do anything without your consent, so that any favor you do will be spontaneous and not forced.

(Phile 1:15 NIV) **Perhaps the reason he was separated from you for a little while was that you might have him back for good--**

**(Phile 1:16 NIV) no longer as a slave, but better than a slave, as a dear brother. He is very dear to me but even dearer to you, both as a man and as a brother in the Lord.**

(Phile 1:17 NIV) So if you consider me a partner, welcome him as you would welcome me.

(Phile 1:18 NIV) **If he has done you any wrong or owes you anything, charge it to me.**

(Phile 1:19 NIV) I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand. **I will pay it back--not to mention that you owe me your very self.**

(Phile 1:20 NIV) I do wish, brother, that I may have some benefit from you in the Lord; refresh my heart in Christ.

(Phile 1:21 NIV) Confident of your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I ask.

(Phile 1:22 NIV) And one thing more: Prepare a guest room for me, because I hope to be restored to you in answer to your prayers.

(Phile 1:23 NIV) Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends you greetings.

(Phile 1:24 NIV) And so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas and Luke, my fellow workers.

(Phile 1:25 NIV) The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

What has happened in this story? *A slave named Onesimus ran away from Philemon, a Christian friend of Paul. Paul is attempting to pave the way for Onesimus, who has now been converted to Christianity, to return to His master.*

Now, let's read through verses 10-12, and 15-19, but change the characters around. Substitute your name for Onesimus, God the Father's name for Philemon, and Jesus' name for Paul. What parallels do you discover?

(Phile 1:10 NIV) **I (Jesus) appeal to you for my son (/daughter), \_\_\_\_\_, who became my son/daughter while I (Jesus) was in chains.**

(Phile 1:11 NIV) **Formerly \_\_\_\_\_ was useless to you, but now he/she has become useful both to you and to me.**

(Phile 1:12 NIV) **I am sending \_\_\_\_\_ --who is my very heart--back to you.**

(Phile 1:15 NIV) **Perhaps the reason \_\_\_\_\_ was separated from you for a little while was that you might have him/her back for good--**

(Phile 1:16 NIV) **no longer as a slave, but better than a slave, as a dear brother/sister. \_\_\_\_\_ is very dear to me but even dearer to you, both as a (wo)man and as a brother/sister in the Lord.**

(Phile 1:17 NIV) **So if you consider me a partner, welcome \_\_\_\_\_ as you would welcome me.**

(Phile 1:18 NIV) **If \_\_\_\_\_ has done you any wrong or owes you anything, charge it to me (Jesus).**

(Phile 1:19 NIV) **I, Jesus, am writing this with my own hand. I will pay it back.**

**I was apart from God, useless to Him, and I ran away from Him. But Jesus is sending me back to the Father, not as a slave to sin, but as Jesus' brother and God's child. I am very dear to Jesus and even dearer to God the Father. God is to welcome me as He welcomes Jesus, and as far as the debt I owe for my sins and transgressions, Jesus says to charge it to His account, and He will pay it back.**

**Onesimus transgressed, confessed, and was reconciled to his master through Paul's entreaties. We have transgressed, and when we confess and believe, we are reconciled to our Master because Jesus intercedes for us, pleading our case, and paying our sin debt for us.**

For those of you who studied Hosea last week, what kind of parallel do you see between these two stories? *In each case, someone walked away from and sinned against their rightful Master, and yet they were both reconciled to their Master.*

Read 2 Corinthians 5:14-21.

(2 Cor 5:14 NIV) *For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died.*

(2 Cor 5:15 NIV) *And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.*

*(2 Cor 5:16 NIV) So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer.*  
*(2 Cor 5:17 NIV) Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!*  
*(2 Cor 5:18 NIV) All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation:*  
*(2 Cor 5:19 NIV) that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.*  
*(2 Cor 5:20 NIV) We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.*  
*(2 Cor 5:21 NIV) God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

What did Christ do for us? (vs. 14) *Died for us out of love for us.*  
Why did He do that? (vs. 15) *So we shouldn't live for ourselves any longer, but for Jesus who died for us.*  
What is the result of Christ's death in our place? (vs. 16,17) *We are not like we used to be. We are new creations, the old has gone and the new has come.*  
What was God's purpose in sending His Son to die and making us new? (vs. 18) *To reconcile us to (or bring us back into fellowship with) Him.*

2644. katallasso, kat-al-las'-so; from G2596 and G236; to change mutually  
**It takes 2 parties for reconciliation to take place, and both persons somehow make a change in order to be put back together again.**  
**God is the subject, the one who initiates the change, and man is the object of that initiative and change. Compared to "propitiation" and "to make reconciliation", which both aim at man turning away God's wrath, katallasso means that God actually lays aside or withdraws His wrath of His own choosing.**

How was He able to do that? (vs. 19) *He did not count our sins against us.*  
What has He committed to us now? (vs. 19) *The message of reconciliation.*  
What does that mean? (vs. 20) *We are to tell the world about God's desire to bring fallen man back into fellowship with Him and urge them to be reconciled to God.*  
How did we become righteous enough to enter back into relationship with God? (vs. 21) *By God making Jesus, who had no sin, to be sin for us.*

What would you say that the theme for the New Testament would be? *God wants to reconcile (or bring back into intimate relationship) all those who have walked away from Him, and He has paid the price to buy us back and pay our sin debt. He did this out of great love for us.*

Monday

**CHRISTIANESE**  
**(BASIC CHRISTIAN TERMINOLOGY)**

Vs. for the day: 1 John 4:10

Passage for the day: 1 John. 4:7-12

1 John 4:10 This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

Many Christians attend church, listen to the sermons and speak about God's Word, but they really don't know the meaning of many of the words they use. They have a concept of what the terms mean, but can't actually give you a definition.

This week, we are going to learn the actual meaning of some very important terms: Love, Faith, Sin, Righteousness, Mercy, Grace, Justification and Sanctification.

LOVE:

Read 1 John 4:7-12. How did God show His love to us? **He sent His only Son into the world that we might live through him.**

*1 John 4:7-12*

*Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.*

*Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.*

*This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.*

*This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.*

*Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.*

*No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.*

What does John say love is? **Not that we loved God, but that He loved us enough to send his Son as an atoning sacrifice.**

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The important thing to see in John's definition of love is that God is the author, source and definer of love. Since God **is** love, His actions will be **examples of how true love acts.**

And the main characteristic of His love is **SELFLESSNESS**, giving of Himself and what is important to Him so that someone else (namely us – a sinful people) could gain something of great worth (eternal life).

Also notice, in verse 10, that God's love is unconditional, and **never depends on being loved in return!** How many of us love only when we are loved back? Real love sacrifices for others, even when it is not appreciated, and more specifically, even when the object of that love hates the Lover.

Read Luke 23:33,34.

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*Luke 23:33,34*

*When they came to the place called the Skull, there they crucified him, along with the criminals--one on his right, the other on his left.*

*Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.*

What was Jesus' response to those who had beaten, ridiculed, slandered, mocked, betrayed and crucified Him? **Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they're doing.**

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Jesus' love never depended on our loving Him. The same is true for God the Father. In the book of Hosea, God commanded a prophet to take a prostitute for his wife, knowing she would be unfaithful. When the wife ran away, God commanded Hosea to take his wife back. All of this was to give a living example of God's relationship with, and long-suffering love for, the nation of Israel.

The definition of **love** is "giving of yourself for the benefit of another." Take a good hard look at your surrounding relationships and the people you say you "love." Are you loving them with God's love, or with the world's selfish "what can you do for me?" version of love? Ask God to make you aware of this, and ask Him to help you love others without asking for anything in return.



Tuesday

**CHRISTIANESE**  
**(BASIC CHRISTIAN TERMINOLOGY)**

Vs. for the day: Romans 4:5

Passage for the day: Romans 4:3-9

Romans 4:5 However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness.

**FAITH:**

Read Romans 4:3-9.

*Romans 4:3-9*

*What does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."*

*Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation.*

*However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness.*

*David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:*

*"Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.*

*Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him."*

*Is this blessedness only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? We have been saying that Abraham's faith was credited to him as righteousness.*

Here, the Apostle Paul defines faith by using the "Father of Faith", Abraham, as an example.

Focus on verse 5.

The man who has faith does not do what? **Work**

This means he does not attempt to "earn" his righteousness.

Instead, what does he do? **Trusts God**

How important is faith? Read Hebrews 11:6.

*Hebrews 11:6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.*

What does it say? **We must have faith in order to please God.**

The Greek word for faith is "pistis". It means to rely upon, to throw all your weight upon. It means entrusting your entire self, including all that you have and all that is important to you, to something or someone other than yourself. Biblically, the definition of faith is **confidence in God that expresses itself through complete reliance upon God.** You believe not only in your head that God exists and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him; you express this confidence in God through your actions.

Read James 2:18. But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do.

How does James say that He will express His faith in the Lord? **Through his deeds.**

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**SIN:**

Now, if we understand this definition of faith, we can define its opposite: **sin**. The word for "sin" actually means "missing the mark." According to our section on faith, what is the mark for all believers? (Reread Hebrews 11:6) The mark is having faith in God. Therefore, to sin is to have a **lack of confidence in God that expresses itself through complete reliance on self or others.**

Read Hebrews 3:12-19.

*See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. <sup>13</sup>But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. <sup>14</sup>We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first. <sup>15</sup>As has just been said:*

*"Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion."*

*<sup>16</sup>Who were they who heard and rebelled? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt? <sup>17</sup>And with whom was he angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the desert? <sup>18</sup>And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed? <sup>19</sup>So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief.*

In v. 12, what must we be careful **not** to develop? **A sinful, unbelieving heart**

In v. 14, what must we be careful to hold on to? **The confidence we had at first**

In v. 19, what was the source of their sin? **Their unbelief**

Sin does not originate in our actions; instead, it begins with our refusal to trust in God. Then this lack of reliance upon God and His provision for our lives will manifest itself in self-serving, "get what I can for myself" actions. And if you remember the definition of love, you cannot give of yourself for the benefit of another if you are striving to get all you can to meet your own needs.

Unbelief that God will meet all of your needs and take care of you will block your ability to love others. On the other hand, when you are confident that God will give you everything you need, when you need it, and are not concerned with "looking out for #1" (yourself), you have the freedom to give selflessly of your own time and resources. That is why Galatians 5:6 says that **the only thing that matters is faith expressing itself through love**. Ask God to help you identify areas of your life where you are relying upon something or someone other than God.

Wednesday

**CHRISTIANESE**  
**(BASIC CHRISTIAN TERMINOLOGY)**

Vs. for the day: Romans 10:3

Passage for the day: Romans 10:3,4

Romans 10:3 Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness.

**RIGHTEOUSNESS:**

We know from the previous day's scriptures that righteousness comes by faith, but what exactly is "righteousness?"

Read Romans 10:3,4.

*Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. <sup>4</sup>Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.*

There are two sources of "righteousness" mentioned; what are they?

1) **The kind man establishes for himself** 2) **the kind that God establishes**

The only righteousness that matters is the righteousness that God defines and offers. The problem with mankind throughout the ages has been its attempt to be "righteous" apart from God. They sought to "establish their own" righteousness, create their own definition and rules for becoming righteous. But that is unacceptable in God's sight. So let's see what God's version of righteousness is.

Righteousness is innocence or holiness in God's sight. It is a state of being in "right standing" with God. It cannot be earned, but it can be given to you. Think of a person who receives an honorary Doctor's degree at a university – they did not attend the school and earn it, but it is given to them at the discretion of the head of the university.

Righteousness is somewhat like that; it is impossible for us to ever pay the penalties for our own sin, but God can "credit" righteousness to our account, and we can stand before Him as if we had never sinned. Read Romans 4:6-8.

*David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:*

<sup>7</sup>*"Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.*

<sup>8</sup>*Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him."*

What does God do for those He has credited righteousness?

- 1) **Transgressions are forgiven**
- 2) **Sins are forgiven**
- 3) **His sins are never counted against him.**

Jesus paid the cost for our sins when He died on the cross. When we have faith in (or completely rely upon) God's payment for our sin through Jesus' death, God "credits" or gives to us righteousness.

Now, there is a difference between **being righteous** and **acting righteously**. When you place your faith in Jesus' work on the cross, God credits righteousness to your account. You can come into heaven and stand before Him. You have received the "honorary degree" of being righteous.

However, when you follow the leading of your emotions, your old habits or your old mindset, you will not act righteously. But when you follow the leading of the Holy Spirit, who **is righteous**, you will **act righteously**.

**YOUR ACTIONS DO NOT DETERMINE YOUR STANDING WITH GOD. You received your righteousness through faith in God, and cannot lose it by your actions. However, JUST BECAUSE YOU HAVE RIGHT STANDING WITH GOD DOESN'T MEAN YOU WILL ACT RIGHTEOUSLY. Righteous living comes through a day-by-day commitment to follow the leading of the Spirit.** Thank God for paying for your sins and allowing you to be His child, and commit yourself to strive toward righteous attitudes, thoughts and actions.

Thursday

**CHRISTIANESE**  
**(BASIC CHRISTIAN TERMINOLOGY)**

Vs. for the day: Ephesians 2:4

Passage for the day: Ephesians 2:4,5

Ephesians 2:4,5 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions--it is by grace you have been saved.

**MERCY:**

Mercy is a quality that God highly esteems. Read Matthew 5:7.

*Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.*

What does God desire us to give more than sacrifices? **Mercy**

That is probably because our Heavenly Father is merciful. Read Luke 6:36.

*Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.*

What does God command here?

**Be merciful as God is merciful.**

In Luke 10:29-37, Jesus tells the parable of the Good Samaritan. When Jesus asked who was a "neighbor" to the man who had been robbed and attacked, the correct response was, "The one who had mercy on him."

Read Ephesians 2:4,5.

*But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, <sup>5</sup>made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions--it is by grace you have been saved.*

God who is rich in mercy made us alive with Christ when?

**When we were dead in our transgressions.**

Did we deserve to be made alive with Christ? No. In other words, we actually deserved death, hell and the grave. Romans 6:23 says that the wages of sin is death. But God refrained from sending us to hell, and instead was merciful.

An example of mercy is **not giving someone the negative response they deserve**. When one servant had his huge debt cancelled by his Master, the Master showed Himself to be merciful. When this same servant turned around and had another servant thrown into jail for not paying a small debt, the first servant showed himself to be unmerciful. In the parable of the wicked servant, Jesus said that the unmerciful servant and his family were to be sold into slavery – not for neglecting payment of his debt, but for being unmerciful. He who is merciful will receive mercy.

**GRACE:**

The Apostle Paul starts many of his letters by praying for grace to be given to his readers. We know that we are saved by grace, through faith, but what exactly is grace? Unlike what most people think, grace is NOT forgiveness. Grace is NOT mercy. Grace is **God's divine empowerment in our lives which allows us to accomplish His purpose in the world.**

Read John 1:16.

*From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another.*

What did we receive out of the fullness of God's grace?

**One blessing after another.**

Remember how righteousness could not be attained through obeying the law? It could only be obtained through faith. Well, when we have faith in God, trusting in His Son's payment for our sins, God gives us the power to become sons of God. (John 1:12).

Read 2 Peter 1:3.

*His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.*

What has God given us?

**Everything we need for life and godliness.**

This divine enablement to live for God is His power dwelling within us by the Holy Spirit. But for God's grace (supernatural empowerment) in our lives, we would still be like we used to be. Thank God for coming to live within you, and allowing you to share in His power.

Friday

**CHRISTIANESE**  
**(BASIC CHRISTIAN TERMINOLOGY)**

Vs. for the day: Romans 3:26

Passage for the day: Romans 3:22-26

Romans 3:26 he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.

**JUSTIFICATION:**

“Justify” = “**Just as if I’ had never sinned.** God justifies us and declares us to be innocent. It is a judicial term, one used in a court of law, where someone on trial is cleared of all charges.

When we, by faith, believe in God’s payment for our sins, and we entrust ourselves wholly to Him, God justifies us (makes us legally innocent) and credits to our account righteousness.

Read Romans 3:22-26

*This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, <sup>23</sup>for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup>and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. <sup>25</sup>God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished-- <sup>26</sup>he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.*

According to verse 23, what have we all done?

**All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.**

What are we justified by? **His grace.**

What are we justified through? **Through the redemption that came by Christ.**

In verse 24, what did God do to demonstrate his justice?

**God presented His son as a sacrifice of atonement.**

In verse 26, who are the ones who are justified? **All who have faith in Jesus.**

Whereas we deserved death and hell because of our rebellion and unbelief, due to God’s great mercy, He has sent His Son to pay our penalty and declared us “not guilty”. That is **justification.**

**SANCTIFICATION:**

To sanctify means to “make holy” (which means to set apart for God’s use); “to purify or consecrate”. Sanctification is a life-long process which begins at salvation and ends when we die (or are taken away to be with the Lord). It is the slow transformation we undergo to become less like our old selves and more like our Lord.

Read 1 Corinthians 6:9-11.

*Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders <sup>10</sup>nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. <sup>11</sup>And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.*

In verses 9 and 10, what are some of the things we used to be? **Sexually immoral, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, homosexual offenders, thieves, greedy, drunkards, slanderers, swindlers.**

In verse 11, what happened to us? **We were sanctified, we were justified.**

Read Philippians 2:12,13.

*Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed--not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence--continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, <sup>13</sup>for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.*

In verse 12, what is Paul's command to the believers?

**Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling.**

When we place our faith in Christ, He puts His salvation INTO us by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. But that salvation must begin to show on the OUTSIDE through our actions. Remember the difference between **being righteous** and **acting righteously**. Our sanctification is expressed by our righteous actions; people will know we belong to the Lord by the "fruit we bear".

Through sanctification, we move from glory to glory; we decrease and Jesus increases. We are conformed into the image of Jesus Christ. That is sanctification.



## CHRISTIANESE

*Many Christians attend church, listen to the sermons and speak about God's Word, but they really don't know the meaning of many of the words they use. They have a concept of what the terms mean, but can't actually give you a definition.*

This week, we are going to learn the actual meaning of some very important terms: Love, Faith, Sin, Righteousness, Mercy, Grace, Justification and Sanctification.

### **LOVE:**

There are four types of love according to the Greek.

Storge – Affection: *love as that between parents and children.*

Philia – Friendship: *love between people who have mutual interests; it arises out of companionship. Friends stand side by side, enjoying something outside of themselves which they hold in common.*

Eros – Romantic Love: *where the lover desires the Beloved, not just the pleasure he/she can give. Lovers stand face to face, enjoying each other.*

**These three (3) loves all have an amount of “Need Love” mixed in with them – the desire and need for love from another partially fuels these loves, and therefore makes them somewhat self-centered at their core.**

Agape – Charity: *to give of yourself for the benefit of another. It is a “gift-love” that desires the good of another, and will make itself vulnerable in the process of meeting the other's needs. This love is the only love that has no “need love” in it. God does not need our love; He merely desires to give us love, and so His love is not contaminated with the desires of self. He is able to love what is not naturally lovable.*

Agape can only come from God. (Remember that the word only occurs in Biblical Greek, in reference to God.)

Read Romans 5:8 and 1 John 4:10. What is the example of love here? *God loved us when we were sinners and sent His only Son to pay for our sins.*

(1 John 4:10 NIV) This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

(Rom 5:8 NIV) But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Read 1 John 5:3 and 2 John 1:6. What is the example of love we should follow? *We are to obey His commands, which are not burdensome, because that command is that we walk in love, both for God and for other humans.*

(1 John 5:3 NIV) This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome,

(2 John 1:6 NIV) And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love.

### **FAITH:**

Pistis - *Faith is an act of trust more than just a mental assent or belief in the mind. Faith means entrusting all that you are and all that you have (and all that you will be and will have) to God. It is confidence in God that is displayed through your actions.*

Read James 2:15-26 and then Ephesians 2:8,9. What are these scriptures (that appear to contradict each other) saying?

(James 2:15 NIV) Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food.

(James 2:16 NIV) If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it?

(James 2:17 NIV) In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

(James 2:18 NIV) But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do.

(James 2:19 NIV) You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that--and shudder.

(James 2:20 NIV) You foolish man, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless ?

(James 2:21 NIV) Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar?

(James 2:22 NIV) You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did.

(James 2:23 NIV) And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called God's friend.

(James 2:24 NIV) You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone.

(James 2:25 NIV) In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction?

(James 2:26 NIV) As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.

(Eph 2:8 NIV) For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--

(Eph 2:9 NIV) not by works, so that no one can boast.

*We cannot earn our salvation by our works. We are saved by God's power that He displayed through Christ's sacrificial death on the cross. We receive that salvation that Christ won for us by believing God at His word and relying upon Christ's death to save us. We are not saved by what we have done (or have not done).*

*However, James is saying that real faith will be lived out in every day life, and there will be a change in your actions that match up with the faith you are professing with your mouth. Actions speak louder than words, and that is especially true when it comes to faith. If you believe that Jesus is God, and you have committed your entire life to Him, believing His promises are true and that He will never leave you nor forsake you, then you will live in the confidence that God is in control, and has a great plan and future for you. However, if you worry about what will happen to you next, you are saying by your*

*actions that Jesus is not trustworthy – He may fail or not come through this time. Your actions are expressing something contrary to what your words have proclaimed.*

*In other words, your actions prove that your faith in the God who has saved you is real.*

**FAITH is confidence in God expressed in a complete reliance upon Him.**

**SIN:**

1 John 3:4-10

<sup>4</sup> Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness. <sup>5</sup> But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin. <sup>6</sup> No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him.

<sup>7</sup> Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. He who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous. <sup>8</sup> He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. <sup>9</sup> No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God. <sup>10</sup> This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; nor is anyone who does not love his brother. <sup>1</sup>

In Hebrew, it is the underlying idea of missing the mark, or deviating from the goal, not conforming to the norm. <sup>2</sup>

**What is the mark? Intimate relationship with God.**

sin is rebellion against God, the defiance of his holy lordship and rule (Is. 1:28; 1 Ki. 8:50; *etc.*)<sup>3</sup>

Isaiah 1:28 And the destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners *shall be* together, and **they that forsake the LORD shall be consumed.** <sup>4</sup>

In classical Gk. it is used for missing a target or taking a wrong road. <sup>5</sup>

The real thrust of the demonic temptation in the account of the Fall in Gn. 3 lies in its subtle suggestion of man's aspiring to equality with his maker ('you will be like God . . .', 3:5). Satan's attack was directed against the integrity, veracity and loving provision of God, and consisted in an enticement to wicked and blasphemous rebellion against man's proper Lord. In this act man snatched at equality with God (*cf.* Phil. 2:6), **attempted to assert his independence of God**, and hence to call in question the very nature and ordering of existence whereby he lived as creature in utter dependence upon the grace and provision of his creator. 'Man's sin lies in his pretension to be God' (Niebuhr). **Thus the origin of sin according to Gn. 3 ought not to be sought so much in an overt action (2:17 with 3:6) but in an inward, God-denying aspiration of which the act of disobedience was the immediate expression.** <sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>*The New International Version*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House) 1984.

<sup>2</sup>*The New Bible Dictionary*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.) 1962.

<sup>3</sup>*The New Bible Dictionary*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.) 1962.

<sup>4</sup>*The King James Version*, (Cambridge: Cambridge) 1769.

<sup>5</sup>*The New Bible Dictionary*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.) 1962.

<sup>6</sup>*The New Bible Dictionary*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.) 1962.

Propitiation refers to God's wrath being satisfied by the death of Christ (Rom. 3:25; 1 John 2:2). Expiation emphasizes the removal of sin by the sacrifice that satisfied God. **Sin interrupts normal relations with God; expiation removes sin and restores the relationship.**

**SIN is the opposite of faith: a lack of confidence in God that is expressed in reliance upon others or self.**

### **A LITTLE SIN RUINS EVERYTHING: Birds Die From Spills**

The Audubon Society on several occasions has called attention to the senseless slaughter of thousands of Atlantic sea birds due to the careless spillage of oil from ocean-going ships. The smallest amount of this substance will mat the feathers, destroying their insulating properties and interfering with the normal function of the wings in flight.

Tests have proven that a drop of oil no larger than a quarter will work its way through the plumage of a bird to cause slow but certain death from exposure and starvation.

—*Our Daily Bread*

### **MERCY:**

It denotes devotion to a covenant, and so, of God, his covenant-love (Ps. 89:28). But God's faithfulness to a graciously established relationship with Israel or an individual, despite human unworthiness and defection, readily passes over into his mercy. 'This steady, persistent refusal of God to wash his hands of wayward Israel is the essential meaning of the Heb. word which is translated loving-kindness'<sup>7</sup>

Exodus 13:19

<sup>19</sup> And the LORD said, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the LORD, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. 8

Nehemiah 9:31

<sup>31</sup> But in your great mercy you did not put an end to them or abandon them, for you are a gracious and merciful God. 9

Nehemiah 13:22 Remember me for this also, O my God, and show mercy to me according to your great love.10

**C. S. Lewis describes his experience: "You must picture me alone in that room in Magdalen, night after night, feeling, whenever my mind lifted even for a second from my work, the steady unrelenting approach of Him whom I so earnestly desired not to meet. That which I greatly feared had at last come upon me. In the trinity term of 1929 I gave in, and admitted that God was God, and**

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<sup>7</sup>*The New Bible Dictionary*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.) 1962.

<sup>8</sup>*The New International Version*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House) 1984.

<sup>9</sup>*The New International Version*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House) 1984.

<sup>10</sup>*The New International Version*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House) 1984.

**knelt and prayed: perhaps, that night, the most dejected and reluctant convert in all England. I did not then see what is now the most shining and obvious thing; the Divine humility which will accept a convert even on such terms. The prodigal Son at least walked home on his own feet. But who can duly adore the Love which will open the high gates to a prodigal who is brought in kicking, struggling, resentful, and darting his eyes in every direction for a chance of escape? - God's mercy continues calling us into relationship with Him even when we don't want to have anything to do with Him.**

**"Did you ever hear of the mother who visited Napoleon on behalf of her condemned son? The emperor told her the young man had committed the same offense twice, and justice demanded the death penalty. 'But Sire,' she pleaded, 'I don't ask for justice -- only for mercy.' 'He doesn't deserve it,' said Napoleon. 'No, he doesn't,' she admitted, 'but it would not be MERCY if he deserved it.' 'You're right!' said the ruler quickly, 'I'll grant your request and show him mercy!'"**

**GRACE: God's unmerited, beneficial influence on a person, which enables him to do what he could not do by themselves.**

God's grace can come in the form of an intellectual revelation of who He is, or what He can do, or in the form of divine empowerment - strength or endurance or love. In either case, the gift is not earned, but is given freely by a superior for the benefit of an inferior.

*favor, grace, gracious care or help, goodwill*— that which one grants to another, the action of one who volunteers to do something. to which he is not bound <sup>11</sup>

It is often found in association with the word 'covenant', and denotes the attitude of faithfulness which both parties to a covenant should observe. <sup>12</sup>

Grace is concerned for man, as guilty; mercy, as he is miserable <sup>13</sup>

it signifies the unmerited operation of God in the heart of man, effected through the agency of the Holy Spirit. <sup>14</sup>

it is in reality the communication of Divine goodness by the inworking of the Spirit, and through the medium of Him who is 'full of grace and truth.' <sup>15</sup>

Romans 5:1-5

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>2</sup> through whom we have gained access by faith into

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<sup>11</sup>Bauer, Walter, Gingrich, F. Wilbur, and Danker, Frederick W., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press) 1979.

<sup>12</sup>*The New Bible Dictionary*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.) 1962.

<sup>13</sup>*The New Bible Dictionary*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.) 1962.

<sup>14</sup>Girdlestone, Robert B., *Synonyms of the Old Testament*, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company) 1997.

<sup>15</sup>Girdlestone, Robert B., *Synonyms of the Old Testament*, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company) 1997.

this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.<sup>3</sup> Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance;<sup>4</sup> perseverance, character; and character, hope.<sup>5</sup> And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us. *16*

Title: Clean in a Dirty Place

One day a young minister was being escorted through a coal mine. At the entrance of one of the dim passageways, he spied a beautiful white flower growing out of the black earth. "How can it blossom in such purity and radiance in this dirty mine?" the preacher asked. "Throw some coal dust on it and see for yourself," his guide replied. When he did, he was surprised that the fine, sooty particles slid right off the snowy petals, leaving the plant just as lovely and unstained as before. Its surface was so smooth that the grit and grime could not adhere to it.

Our hearts should have the same characteristic. Just as that flower could not control its habitat, so we cannot help it that we have to live in a world filled with evil. **But God's grace can keep us so clean and unspotted that though we touch every side, it will not cling to us.**

If we want the Lord's full blessing and approval, we must heed the admonition, "...keep thyself pure" (1 Tim 5:22). **By the cleansing power of His Word and the sanctifying influence of His Holy Spirit, it is possible for the Christian to remain "clean in a dirty place."**

#### **JUSTIFICATION:**

As regards its nature, it is the judicial act of God, by which he pardons all the sins of those who believe in Christ, and accounts, accepts, and treats them as righteous in the eye of the law, i.e., as conformed to all its demands. In addition to the pardon (q.v.) of sin, justification declares that all the claims of the law are satisfied in respect of the justified. It is the act of a judge and not of a sovereign. The law is not relaxed or set aside, but is declared to be fulfilled in the strictest sense; and so the person justified is declared to be entitled to all the advantages and rewards arising from perfect obedience to the law (Rom. 5:1–10).

Justification proceeds on the imputing or crediting to the believer by God himself of the perfect righteousness, active and passive, of his Representative and Surety, Jesus Christ (Rom. 10:3–9). Justification is not the forgiveness of a man without righteousness, but a declaration that he possesses a righteousness which perfectly and for ever satisfies the law, namely, Christ's righteousness (2 Cor. 5:21; Rom. 4:6–8).

The sole condition on which this righteousness is imputed or credited to the believer is faith in or on the Lord Jesus Christ. Faith is called a "condition," not because it possesses any merit, but only because it is the instrument, the only instrument by

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<sup>16</sup>*The New International Version*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House) 1984.

which the soul appropriates or apprehends Christ and his righteousness (Rom. 1:17; 3:25, 26; 4:20, 22; Phil. 3:8–11; Gal. 2:16).<sup>17</sup>

Romans 4:4-8<sup>4</sup> Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation.<sup>5</sup> However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness.<sup>6</sup> David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:

<sup>7</sup>“Blessed are they  
whose transgressions are forgiven,  
whose sins are covered.

<sup>8</sup> Blessed is the man  
whose sin the Lord will never count against him.”<sup>18</sup>

### **RIGHTEOUSNESS:**

in a broad sense: state of him who is as he ought to be, righteousness, the condition acceptable to God<sup>19</sup>

The Heb.  $\text{צדק}$  probably derives from an Arab. root meaning ‘straightness’, leading to the notion of an action which conforms to a norm.<sup>20</sup>

One basic ingredient in the OT idea of righteousness is relationship, both between God and man (Ps. 50:6; Je. 9:24) and between man and man (Dt. 24:13; Je. 22:3).<sup>21</sup> Righteousness implies a correct relationship to the will of God which was particularly expressed and interpreted by Israel’s covenant with God.<sup>22</sup>

This righteousness is proclaimed by Jesus as a gift to those who are granted the kingdom of God (Mt. 5:6). By faith in Jesus Christ and his work of atonement man, unrighteous sinner though he is, receives God’s righteousness, *i.e.* he is given a true relationship with God which involves the forgiveness of all sin and a new moral standing with God in union with Christ ‘the Righteous One’ (Rom. 3:21-31; 4:1-25; 10:3; 1 Cor. 1:30; 2 Cor. 5:21; Phil. 3:9). By dealing with all the consequences of man’s sin and unrighteousness (both Godward and manward) in the cross, God at once maintains the moral order in which alone he can have fellowship with man *and* in grace delivers the needy (Rom. 3:26).<sup>23</sup>

Romans 3:20-24

**propitiation = satisfaction. Christ is the only offering that satisfied God concerning sin**

<sup>20</sup>Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.<sup>21</sup> But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify.<sup>22</sup> This

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<sup>17</sup>Easton, M. G., M. A. D. D., *Easton's Bible Dictionary*, (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.) 1996.

<sup>18</sup>*The New International Version*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House) 1984.

<sup>19</sup>*Enhanced Strong's Lexicon*, (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.) 1995.

<sup>20</sup>*The New Bible Dictionary*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.) 1962.

<sup>21</sup>*The New Bible Dictionary*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.) 1962.

<sup>22</sup>*The New Bible Dictionary*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.) 1962.

<sup>23</sup>*The New Bible Dictionary*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.) 1962.

righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, <sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup> and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. <sup>24</sup>

**SANCTIFICATION:**

derived from Lat. *sanctus*, 'holy', and *facere*, 'to make'<sup>25</sup>

The basic sense of the Heb. root  $\square\Omega\blacklozenge$  is variously given as (1) 'set apart', (2) 'brightness'. The former could underlie references to holiness or sanctification in terms of position, status, relationship, where the words are translated 'cut off', 'separated', 'set apart for exclusive use', 'dedicated' or 'consecrated', 'regarded as sacred or holy in contrast to common, profane or secular'<sup>26</sup>

Any thing or person sanctified is recognized as set apart by God as well as by man<sup>27</sup> Our Lord speaks of the Temple that sanctifies the gold and the altar that sanctifies the gift (Mt. 23:17, 19). Here the primary meaning is consecration; the gold and gift are dedicated, set apart, and reckoned as especially sacred and valuable by their relation to the already holy Temple and altar. <sup>28</sup>

A further extension of the thought comes in Christ's sanctifying of the people with his own blood (Heb. 13:12) and possibly in Jn. 17:17 the Father's sanctifying of the believers through the word of truth.<sup>29</sup>

Christ by his sacrifice sanctifies his brethren not only in the sense of setting them apart but also in that of equipping them for the worship and service of God.<sup>30</sup>

The derived word 'saint' refers primarily to their status in Christ (sanctified in Christ Jesus)<sup>31</sup>

The will of God is our sanctification (1 Thes. 4:3), and to be sanctified wholly is to be conformed to the image of Christ and so to realize in experience what it is to be in the image of God.<sup>32</sup>

As justification implies deliverance from the penalty of sin, so sanctification implies deliverance from the pollutions, privations and potency of sin. The prayer that God will sanctify the believers wholly so that their whole spirit, soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of Christ is followed by the assertion that 'He who calls you is faithful, and he will do it' (1 Thes. 5:23-24). <sup>33</sup>

God the Spirit works through the faithful recognition of the law of truth and the believer's response of love, and the net result is spiritual maturity expressed in the fulfilling of the law of love to one's neighbour. The consummation of sanctification to the believer who, by gracious faith in the work of Christ, by the Spirit 'purifies

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<sup>24</sup>*The New International Version*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House) 1984.

<sup>25</sup>*The New Bible Dictionary*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.) 1962.

<sup>26</sup>*The New Bible Dictionary*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.) 1962.

<sup>27</sup>*The New Bible Dictionary*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.) 1962.

<sup>28</sup>*The New Bible Dictionary*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.) 1962.

<sup>29</sup>*The New Bible Dictionary*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.) 1962.

<sup>30</sup>*The New Bible Dictionary*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.) 1962.

<sup>31</sup>*The New Bible Dictionary*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.) 1962.

<sup>32</sup>*The New Bible Dictionary*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.) 1962.

<sup>33</sup>*The New Bible Dictionary*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.) 1962.



himself" (1 Jn. 3:3), is indicated by the assurance: 'we know that, when he appears, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. 34

1 Thess 5:23,24 <sup>23</sup> May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>24</sup> The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it. 35

In a 3rd-century debate on Christianity, Celsus said to Origen, "When most teachers go forth to teach, they cry, 'Come to me, you who are clean and worthy,' and they are followed by the highest caliber of people available. But your silly master cries, 'Come to me, you who are down and beaten by life,' and so he accumulates around him the rag, tag and bobtail of humanity."

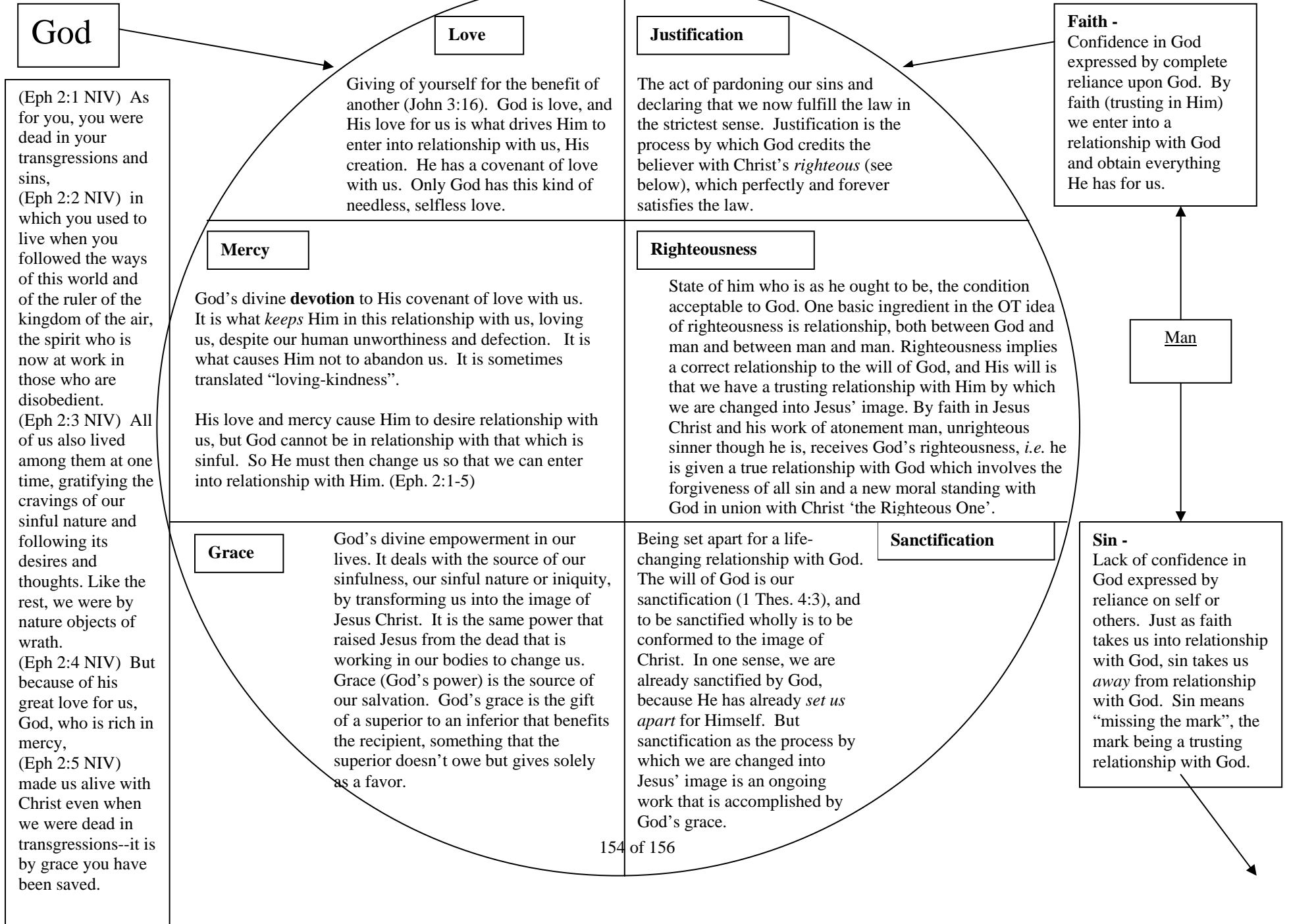
And Origen replied: "Yes, they are the rag, tag and bobtail of humanity. But Jesus does not leave them that way. Out of material you would have thrown away as useless, he fashions men, giving them back their self-respect, enabling them to stand on their feet and look God in the eyes. They were cowed, cringing, broken things. But the Son has set them free."

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<sup>34</sup>*The New Bible Dictionary*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.) 1962.

<sup>35</sup>*The New International Version*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House) 1984.

Firm Foundation Teacher's Outline



## Firm Foundation Teacher's Outline

James 2:18 But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do.

Hebrews 3:12-19

See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God.

But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.

We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first.

As has just been said: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion."

Who were they who heard and rebelled? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt?

And with whom was he angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the desert?

And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed ?

So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief.

Romans 10:3,4

Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness.

Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.

Romans 9:30,31

What then shall we say? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith; but Israel, who pursued a law of righteousness, has not attained it.

Romans 4:6-8

David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:

"Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.

Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him."

Luke 6:36

Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

John 1:16, 17

From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another.

For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

2 Peter 1:3

His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.

Romans 3:22-26

This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished-- he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Philippians 2:12,13

Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed--not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence--continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.