



Firm Foundations

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INTRODUCTION

In the eighth grade my class mates and I were picking on a fellow who had rather large feet. Our teacher walked in and overhearing us sternly said, “It requires a firm foundation to support a big man.” This was a truth that would prove itself time and time again. Every tall, strong, and beautiful structure is only as stable as the foundation on which it is built.

In high school and college I took drafting and architectural design and learned more about the importance of a firm foundation. With every floor plan and picture of a home that we drew, we were required to provide a complete detailed drawing of the foundation. This foundation drawing was always a little boring as we looked forward to the house design, but we quickly realized its importance. Without a strong foundation our project would be a failure. I once saw a building in Texas confirmed this architectural truth to me. The building had been hit by a hurricane. The walls were intact but the foundation had collapsed, causing the building to fall straight down into its own basement.

The requirement for a firm foundation doesn't only apply to buildings, but is also true with regard to people. You will find that stable and mature people didn't get that way over night. They started with a firm foundation and slowly and surely grew on that foundation.

Nowhere is this need for a firm foundation truer than in our spiritual development. In Matthew 7:24-27, Jesus tells of two men who both built houses. One built his house on a foundation of sand and the other built his house on a foundation of rock. When the storms came only the house built on the rock foundation was able to stand. Jesus compared this to our hearing the Word of God and not only hearing the Word of God but doing what it says. In Jesus' story both men heard the same words of Jesus. The difference was that the man who heard Jesus' words and did not do them was like a man who built his house on a sandy foundation. The man who heard the words of Jesus and obeyed them was like a man who built his house on a rock solid foundation.

As you study the Word of God and the truths presented in this course, you will be given the building blocks to build a strong and firm foundation. Upon this foundation the Holy Spirit will continue to build as you grow and develop in the Lord. BUT, hearing and reading these words is not enough to give you a firm foundation. Hearing alone will give you a foundation of sand. It's only when you hear and obey, apply it to your life, do what the word of God instructs you to do that you will have a firm foundation. Then you will be a person who is like the man who built his house on a rock. You will have a firm foundation and when the storms of life come and go you will still be standing strong in the Lord.

So read, hear, and enjoy, but obey to assure your Firm Foundation in Christ Jesus.

SALVATION

FIRM FOUNDATIONS WEEK ONE

WHAT IS SALVATION?

More than likely you've heard many people gleefully express, "I've been saved!" "Saved?" you ask, "Saved from who or what?" In fact, the numerous expressions used by believers including terms such as: saved, born again, redeemed, becoming a Christian, etc. can be somewhat confusing. However, regardless of the term selected, all are words we use to describe a change that has occurred in our lives

- that is divine and far beyond our own ability,
- is a result of being saved or rescued from a certain death and damnation that we deserved due to our transgressions against a holy and just God, and
- that implies the preserving of ourselves for future use. Yes, God does have a special plan and purpose for our lives (Jeremiah 29:11).

Webster's primary definition of salvation is "1. a saving or being saved from danger, evil, difficulty, destruction, etc.; rescue." His theological definition of salvation is a bit clearer to those of us seeking a relationship with Jesus: "[salvation is] spiritual rescue from the consequences of sin; redemption."

To better understand this great and amazing salvation that takes place, let's look into the Holy Scriptures for some background information.

A HOPELESS SITUATION

Scripture tells us that we are hopeless if we are standing before God in our own goodness. In fact, it begins by reminding us that we are all born with a sin nature.

- *"Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me."* (Psalm 51:5)
No matter how cute we are as new born babes, we are all born into iniquity (a lack of righteousness).

Nor can our personal goodness help us. Many people feel they are good enough and don't need to be saved from anything. Perhaps someone hopelessly addicted to drugs, or trapped in a life of crime may readily see their need for a savior, but not a 'good ole boy'. I have often heard it said that, "**The hardest man to lead to Jesus is a good man**". The fact is everyone is unrighteous in God's eyes and all stand in need of a savior.

- *"As it is written: There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."*
(Romans 3:10-12)

- *“All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.”* (Isaiah 64:6)

People will say things like, **“He’s not a Christian, but he has a good heart.”** The Bible holds a different view of the unredeemed man.

- *“The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it? I the Lord search the heart and examine the mind, to reward a man according to his conduct, according to what his deeds deserve.”* (Jeremiah 17:9-10)

So we all once stood before God, unrighteous and with a desperately wicked heart. It appeared that we were in a hopeless situation.

SIN ENTERS THE WORLD

How did mankind get into this mess? What is sin?

- Romans 5:12 *“Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man [Adam], and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned-“*
- Sin is disobeying God’s laws, going against His desires for us and turning to our own way. These sins don’t go unnoticed by a Holy God that can have no fellowship with sin. Sin must be punished and *“...the wages of sin is death...”* (Romans 6:23).
- Romans 8:2 refers to two spiritual laws. *“...because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.”* Without Jesus Christ, the law of sin and death is fully activated.

So, where is the hope? We are born into sin, we are displeasing to God, no matter how good we try to be it is only worthless, and the end result is a certain death.

JESUS CHRIST IS OUR ONLY HOPE

In our hopelessness, in our unrighteous condition, even though we displeased a holy and just God, that same God is a God of love and mercy and still loved us and desired to bring us into right standing with Him.

- *“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through him! For if, when we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.”* (Romans 5:8-11)

Reconciliation

To reconcile means to make friendly again, to settle a quarrel, and to make consistent or compatible. That's what the blood of Jesus has done for us. Jesus has settled our differences with God and made us consistent and compatible with Him.

John 3:16 tells us, God sent his Son Jesus to pay the price for our sins. He died a brutal death not to pay for his own wrong doing, but to pay for our wrong doings. Fortunately for us, Romans 6:23 ends with this promise: "...but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

WHY THE BLOOD?

Why did Jesus have to shed his blood for you?

In the Old Testament we read that the only acceptable sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins was the blood sacrifice of an animal.

- The Lord told Moses that, "*For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life.*" (Leviticus 17:11)
- In the New Testament we are told that without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness for sins (Hebrews 9:22).
- Hebrews chapter 9 further explains how Jesus shed his blood to be the final atonement for the sins of man.
- Also see Matthew 26:28; John 6:53; Romans 5:9; Ephesians 1:7; Ephesians 2:13; and 1 Peter 1:18-19.

REDEEMED FROM THE CURSE

Without the blood of Jesus man also falls under the curse of not being able to keep the law. The curse of the law is described in Deuteronomy 28.

The good news is that Christ has redeemed us!

- "*Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree." He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.*" (Galatians 3:13-14)

So He not only saved us from the curse of death, but through Jesus we receive the blessings promised to Abraham's descendants and the promise of the Holy Spirit.

Now that you are redeemed you are living under the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. Jesus paid the price for you to have eternal life. Not just eternal life when you pass from this world, but also abundant life while you are here on this earth.

Abundant Life!

John 10:10 (NKJ) "The thief [Satan] does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they [you] may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly."

To the new Christian it's very important to understand that your sins are forgiven but, it is also important to understand that Jesus provided a way for you to be free from the desire to keep on living in sin.

- *"But He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all."* (Isaiah 53:5-6)
- Jesus Christ was pierced or wounded for our transgressions. A transgression is the act of committing the sin itself. It means to overstep or break a law or commandment.
- Jesus was also crushed or bruised for our iniquities. An iniquity is not just the act of committing the sin but it is the desire to sin and transgress. It deals with the wickedness and rebellion in man's heart.

If you find yourself continually committing a certain sin, asking for and receiving forgiveness, only to sin again; then you need to realize that Jesus can and has set you free from those desires, that iniquity, as well as, the law of sin and death. When you have been saved, you have been made dead to your sin nature and alive in Christ Jesus.

HOW CAN YOU APPROPRIATE OR ACCEPT THIS FREE GIFT FROM OUR LOVING FATHER?

- Romans 10:9-10 tells us that we must believe and confess. *"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." For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is you're your mouth that you confess and are saved."*

Jesus taught that out of the abundance of the heart the mouth will speak forth. When we believe that Jesus is the atonement for our sins, that he died for us on the cross, and that God raised him from the dead; then we will begin to verbally speak it and will confess with our mouths that He is our Lord. The result is salvation, and what a great and wonderful salvation it is!

- *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."* (1 John 1:9)

You may hear people refer to what we call "The Sinner's Prayer" or perhaps you have prayed one yourself. The sinner's prayer is just putting in a nut shell all that we have studied here. There are not any hard set rules or special formulas to say, but the prayer usually includes:

- One's acknowledgment of God's plan of allowing Jesus to die for all sins.
- Asking Jesus to forgive one of their sins.
- Asking Jesus to take one's life and live through them with His righteousness.
- Thanking God for this redemption.
- A confession that Jesus is now the Lord of one's life.

Christ Jesus is ready and willing to forgive you of your sins. Forgiveness is only a prayer away!

WATER BAPTISM

Now that you are child of God it is important to follow Jesus' example and be baptized in water. In water baptism a Christian is bodily submerged in water as a public identification with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

- *“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.”* (Romans 6:3-4)

Water baptism is not optional. Every Christian is commanded to be baptized in water.

- *“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.”* (Acts 2:38)
- *“Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.”* (Mark 16:16)

Next Water Baptism at Believers Church_____.

WHO I AM IN CHRIST JESUS

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”

- Matt. 5:13,14 I am the salt of the earth and the light of the world.
- Matt. 9:36-38 I am a Spiritual reaper.
- John 1:12 I am God’s child.
- John 15:1,5 I am a branch of the true vine, a channel of His life.
- John 15:16 I am a fruit bearer.
- John 15:1 5 I am Christ’s friend.
- Acts 1:8 I am empowered to be a witness.
- Romans 5:1 I am justified.
- Romans 8:1,2 I am forever free from condemnation.
- Romans 8:28 I am called according to God’s purposes.
- Romans 8:31-34 I am defended by God.
- 1 Cor. 2:16 I am using the mind of Christ.
- 1 Cor. 3:16 I am God’s temple.
- 1 Cor. 6:17 I am united with the Lord, and in one spirit with Him.
- 1 Cor. 6:19,20 I am bought with a price and belong to God.
- 1Cor.12-14 I am spiritually gifted.
- 1 Cor. 12:27 I am an individual member of Christ’s body.
- 2 Cor. 1:21,22 I am established, anointed, and sealed.
- 2 Cor. 5:17 I am a New Creation, old things passed away, all things are new.
- 2 Cor. 5:17-20 I am a minister of reconciliation.
- 2 Cor. 5:21 I am an ambassador of God in Christ.
- 2 Cor.6:1 I am a coworker with God (1 Cor.3:9).
- Eph. 1:5 I am adopted as God’s Child.
- Eph. 1:15 I am a saint
- Eph.2:6 I am seated with Christ in heavenly places.
- Eph. 2:8-9 I am saved by grace, through faith, not by our works.
- Eph. 2:10 I am the workmanship of God.
- Eph. 2:18 I am privileged to have direct access to God through the Holy Spirit.
- Eph. 2:19 I am a fellow citizen with the saints and am of God’s household.
- Eph. 3:12 I am able to approach God with freedom and confidence.
- Eph. 4:12 I am a saint.
- Philp. 1:6 I am being perfected by God.
- Philp. 3:20 I am a citizen of heaven.
- Philp. 4:13 I am strengthened by Christ and can do all things.
- Col. 1:14 I am redeemed and forgiven of all my sins.
- Col. 2:10 I am complete in Christ.
- 1 Thes. 4:3-4 I am a vessel of sanctification and honor.
- 2 Tim.1:17 I am filled with the spirit of love, power, and a sound mind.
- 2 Tim. 2:15-26 I am an instrument of noble purposes, useful to the Master
- 1 John 5:18 I am born of God, and the evil one cannot touch me.
- 1 Peter 2:5 I am a living stone, used to build a spiritual house.
- 1 Peter 2:9-10 I am a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation
- Rev.1:16:5: 8-10 I am a kingdom of priest’s to our God and shall reign on Earth.

SALVATION UNDERSTANDING CHECK-UP

Check all answers that are correct or true.

INTRODUCTION

1. What is a foundation?
 The base on which something rests.
 The supporting material or part of a building.
 The basis or fundamental principle on which an idea is founded.
 A covering to keep the rain out.
2. In Jesus' illustration of the wise man and the foolish man, the meaning of the parable He was trying to convey was that a wise man knows
 He should build his house on the sand.
 That in life storms would come and he should be prepared.
 That a rock-solid foundation is an excellent footing for life.
 That Jesus' words and obedience to his words are a firm foundation.
3. What does Jesus say a believer's foundation is?
 His words are the believer's firm foundation.
 Doing what Jesus says is the basis for a firm foundation in Christ.
 Reading and obeying what God says in the Bible will build a strong foundation.
 Thinking about how Jesus' words apply to your life will help you build a rock solid foundation.

LESSON ONE: SALVATION

1. When a person gets saved, we say they
 Have been born again.
 Have become a believer in Christ Jesus.
 Have been redeemed from sin and spiritual death.
 Have been born into the family of God.\
2. Salvation is necessary for everyone (all) because
 Everyone is born with a sin nature.
 Other major religions have their own acceptable pathway to God.
 All our good deeds and good works are worthless to prove our right standing in God.
 Disobedience to God's commands and will for us brings death.
3. Jesus had to shed his blood because
 Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness for sins.
 Jesus knew that modern man would not tolerate animal sacrifice.
 Jesus' blood paid for our sins completely, once for all, regardless of the kind of sin, time or place of sin.
 Since life is in the blood and sin brings death someone had to pay for us to have eternal life with a holy God.

SALVATION REFLECTION QUESTIONS

LESSON ONE: SALVATION

1. How do you know that you are born again, a child of God?

(Ref. Romans 10:9-10)

Romans 8:16 states that “The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.” (NIV) Is the Holy Spirit testifying, bearing witness, and agreeing with, your spirit that you are a child of God?

What is God doing in and around you right now? How are you responding?
(Romans 3-4 reference)

2. You are saved from your sins past, present, and future. Therefore as I child of God what do you do when sin again?

(Ref. 1 John 1:9)

3. “Now that you have received Christ Jesus as savior and Lord, have you baptized in water?

Why or Why not?

(See Appendix)

“And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.”

PRAYER

FIRM FOUNDATIONS WEEK TWO

“Why worry, when you can pray?” was on a card my Mother gave me when I was in High School. I stuck the card in my Bible and tried my best to apply it to my life. Even though it sounded easy to do, I was surprised at how often I found myself worrying first and only praying as a last resort. The worrying came more natural because it was based on my own ‘self reliance mentality’. Praying, on the other hand, caused me to shift to a reliance on the Lord. As a new Christian one must learn to make that shift and start looking to the Lord first.

In his writings to the Philippians, Paul teaches how citizens of heaven are to live here on this earth. He speaks of

- helping others,
- rejoicing in the Lord,
- being gentle, and
- communicating with God.

Paul knew that it is very important that Christians not worry and try to figure everything out for themselves. In fact, in Philippians 4:6 he states,

- *“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.”* (Philippians 4:6).

In everything, no matter how big or small, the Christian should bring the situation to the Lord in prayer. These prayers should not be presented in a spirit of worry and anxiety, but should be uttered with a spirit of thanksgiving that we can make our requests known to God with assurance that He will answer.

Simply put, prayer is

- talking and communicating with God
- enjoying a relationship with Him, and
- asking Him to provide our daily needs.

The NKJV version of Philippians 4:6 indicates that “...*in everything, by **prayer** and **supplication**, with thanksgiving...*”

The use of the word supplication implies that our prayers should be more than just a simple petition or request. Supplication suggests persevering, intense prayer. Such prayer involves a total transfer of one's burdens and cares into the hands of Jesus.

Peter put it this way, “*Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.*” (1 Pet 5:6-7)

The result of this kind of prayer and supplication, with an attitude of thankfulness, is the peace of God that surpasses all human understanding. Philippians 4:7 says, “*And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*”

I think what Paul was trying to teach people, and what my mother was trying to teach me with the ‘Why Worry Card’, is that through prayer and supplication one can entrust all the cares and worries of this life into the hands of a loving Savior who cares for us. We don't have to make things work; we just give them over to Someone who can work all things together for our good.

Instead of fretting over these nagging anxieties, we now can experience peace that others only dream about: The peace of God that goes beyond our understanding and cannot be described with words.

I'm reminded of the old hymn, "What a Friend We Have in Jesus." It says,

"What a friend we have in Jesus, All our sins and grief's to bear!
What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer!
Oh, what peace we often forfeit, oh what needless pain we bear,
All because we do not carry everything to God in prayer!"¹

JESUS OUR EXAMPLE AND TEACHER

The Word of God teaches us how to pray effectively, and along with the Word we have the excellent example of Christ Jesus Himself to follow. Jesus was a man of prayer and was often observed by others as He took time to pray. In the Gospel of Luke, we find that one of His disciples approaches Jesus after watching him pray and asked, "*Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.*" (Luke 11:1b)

Jesus responded by providing a prayer that was never intended to be a ritualistic prayer that must be strictly adhered to, but rather He outlined the basic contents of what a prayer should contain. In Luke 11, this prayer is somewhat abbreviated. The full text of this prayer, which is commonly called The Lord's Prayer, can be found in Matthew 6:9-13 when Jesus tells the disciples how to pray:

- *"This, then, is how you should pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."*

It is important for believers to look at each section of this prayer, as each has purpose in developing our own prayer life:

1) "Hallowed be Your name".

Our prayers should be directed to our Heavenly Father and should include

- worship,
- praise, and
- adoration

Prayers should not to be limited to one sentence, but should be an expression of true worship and love, coming from one's heart. Opening your heart and expressing your feeling of gratitude to God may be awkward at first, as you struggle to say how you feel, but later as your relationship grows more intimate you will find yourself worshipping your Father all the time. It will become a daily part of your life. You will find the name of Jesus always upon your lips.

¹ "What a Friend We Have in Jesus", Words, Joseph Scriven, 1855. Tune CONVERSE, Charles C. Converse, 1868

- 2) “Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

This is not just a prayer for a future millennial day to quickly come. This is a prayer asking God to bring about His kingdom in our lives today. A prayer that God’s kingdom here on this earth will grow and that God’s people will develop into kingdom people, who live by the words, rule, and reign of ‘The King of all Kings’. Moreover, asking for God’s will to be done here on earth is an acknowledgment that you are laying down your life and will. You are saying that you are ready to accept his perfect will here on earth, just like His perfect will is carried out in heaven. These words express an attitude of dying to yourself and being totally surrendered to God’s will.

- 3) “Give us today our daily bread.”

Here again this doesn’t mean that we are limited to only praying for bread, rather this is an acknowledgment that God is the provider of all of our needs. It suggests an attitude of looking to God as the sole provider of all our substance. It’s a statement that we are not self reliant, thinking, “I can take care of myself.” Jesus can provide all of our needs and He is capable of great and miraculous things as well as the daily needs of life.

- 4) “Forgive us our debts [sins],”

We have been saved by the blood of Jesus and He has forgiven us and paid the price of our redemption. I wish that we could say since that great day of salvation we have never sinned again, but we are people of flesh who are learning to walk in the Spirit. Daily, from glory to glory, He is changing us. We are being transformed into the image of Christ Jesus, and when we sin there is a provision for that sin. We are taught to be quick to seek God’s forgiveness, and then to carry on without guilt or condemnation.

- *“But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin. If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”* (1 John 1:7-9).

- 5) “As we also have forgiven our debtors.”

This is a blunt reminder that we should be forgiving people. We should love people like Jesus loves them and be merciful to them. In Matthew 18, Jesus speaks of reconciliation among brothers, and teaches that forgiveness is a requirement rather than an option. In the conclusion of that chapter Jesus tells of the punishment of an unmerciful servant and then makes this statement,

- *“This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart.”* (Matt 18:35).
- *“For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.”* (Matt.6:14-15).

We must forgive one another from our hearts, and Jesus encourages us to pray for the grace to do so. When we have forgiven one another and ‘made things right’ with one another in the Lord, then our worship and prayers will not be hindered (1 Peter 3:7; Matt. 5:23-24).

6) “And lead us not into temptation,”

Don’t ever think that you are so mature in the Lord that you needn’t be concerned with temptation. Ask the Lord to keep you from every snare of the devil and sins that so easily deceive you. You need the Lord’s help to overcome the temptations of this world. Ask the Lord to lead you away from the traps, to keep you from finding yourself in situations that may cause temptation. Jesus understands the temptations of this world, and has provided a way out for us.

- *“For we do not have a high priest [Jesus] who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin.”* (Hebrews 4:15)
- *“No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.”* (1 Corinthians 10:13)

7) “But deliver us from the evil one.”

The Word of God helps us understand our foe, the evil one. Satan is the

- prince of the power of the air,
- the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience (Eph 2:2),
- he is the prince or ruler of this world (Jn.12:31), and
- he is the god of this age who has blinded the minds of unbelievers, lest the gospel of Christ shine on them (2 Cor.4:4).

It's important to realize that Satan has a certain degree of power, but he is not all powerful. He is mighty, but he is not almighty! 1 John 4:4 tells us that “greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world.” As a matter of fact, every one born of God overcomes the world that is the worldly system that Satan has established (1 John 5:4). Satan may not be with you personally tempting you to sin, but due to the fall of man, Satan has devised a scheme that incorporates everything from people living under his control or influence, to demons, all to help pull you down. And of course he also works with your own sinful nature and desires of the flesh.

Ephesians 6:10-12 exhorts us to be strong in the Lord, and to put on the whole armor of God, that we may be able to stand against the wiles or the schemes of the devil. To make up for his lack of power and authority Satan has resorted to scheming with trickery and deceit. He is a liar and would like nothing more than to confuse you and cause you to believe his lies. More often than not this spiritual warfare takes place on the battle field of your mind.

- *“For though we walk in the flesh , we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.”*(2 Cor.10:3-6)

Satan desires to control your mind and cause you to walk in confusion. Remember he already has blinded the minds of unbelievers. You, on the other hand, as a born-again believer, have the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16), and are able to keep your mind set on the higher things of God.

Let there be no doubt about it, Satan your adversary, like a roaring lion, is seeking to devour you. As you humble yourself before God, cast your cares upon him, realizing that he cares for you, you will be sober and alert to the devil's attacks, resisting him and standing firm in your faith (1 Peter 5:6-9). There is no time for sleep or slumber in our spiritual warfare. Satan doesn't give up easily. Even after he tempted Christ Jesus in the wilderness and was unsuccessful "...he left him until an opportune time." (Luke 4:13) The devil always looks for times when people are weak or vulnerable and then he will try again.

James 4:7 tells us,

- *"Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."*

Jesus is encouraging His disciples, and His future disciples to make that a part of our daily prayer life and look to the Lord to be our ultimate deliverer from the evil one, remembering that

- *"You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them [the devil and his minions], because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world."* (1 John 4:4)

The Matthew 6 in the KJV, NKJV, and the NASV of this model prayer includes a close that's not included in the Luke account. This closing statement acknowledges the supreme sovereignty of God.

- *"...For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen."* (Matt 6:13)

Jesus continued to teach about prayer in Luke 11 and said that when we pray we should be persistent, having a sense of urgency and boldness, shameless, if you will (verses 5-8). He then shows us that we should have an attitude of expectancy when we pray.

- *"So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks, the door will be opened."* (Luke 11:9-10; Ps.5:3)

Many times in the gospels you will see that Jesus lifted up His eyes and spoke to the Father. Sometimes he would have extended times of prayer (Luke 6:12, Mark 6:46), other times His words were short and to the point. Jesus seemed to understand how to have constant communication with the Father.

Read "The High Priestly Prayer" of Christ Jesus recorded in **John 17**. Notice how Jesus addressed the Father as someone whom he knew intimately and loved, but at the same time Jesus maintained great respect for the Heavenly Father. He spoke words of adoration to the Father, He spoke the true facts concerning His mission on earth. He spoke of what had already been accomplished. Jesus also reminded the Father of His own words and plans and asked the Father to bring them about. In this prayer we can also see that even at the coming of Jesus' greatest hour

of tribulation he was still thinking of others. He prayed for His disciples and those who would later believe (that includes you and me). He expressed His own desires to His father and at the same time maintained the attitude of ‘not my will, but yours.’

We would do well to look to Jesus as our teacher and our example as we pray.

- *“The one concern of the Devil is to keep Christians from praying. He fears nothing from prayerless studies, prayerless work, prayerless religion. He laughs at our toil, mocks at our wisdom, but trembles when we pray.”* Samuel Chadwick

OTHER SCRIPTURES THAT TEACH US ABOUT PRAYER

2 Chronicles 7:14	Prayers of repentance will bring personal forgiveness as well as a healed nation
Psalms 5:2	Pray to God in times of need
	• Psalm 118:25
Psalms 55:17	Prayer should be a normal part of our daily life
Psalms 118:25	We can pray for our financial needs
	• 3 John 1:2
Matthew 5:44	We should pray for our enemies
Matthew 6:5-6	Our prayers should be unto God and not for the praise of man
Matthew 6:7	Our prayers should be more than vain repetitions
Matthew 21:22	Pray God’s will, and without doubting
	• James 1:6-8
	• Mark 11:24
	• John 15:7
	• Matthew 18:19-20
	• 1 John 5:14-15
Matthew 26:41	Prayer will keep you from temptation
Acts 1:14	God honors corporate prayer in unity
	• Acts 6:4
	• Acts 4:23-31
	• Acts 12:5
Romans 8:26-27	The Holy Spirit will help us pray
Romans 12:12	We should be steadfast and faithful in our prayers
	• Luke 18:1
	• Colossians 4:2
	• 1 Corinthians 14:15
	• Ephesians 6:18
	• 1 Thessalonians 5:17
Philippians 1:4	Like Paul we should be praying for the fellow believers
	• Philippians 1:19
	• Colossians 1:9
	• Colossians 4:3
1 Timothy 2:8	God desires for men to be praying men
1 Timothy 4:5	Even our food should be sanctified by the word of God and Prayer
James 5:14-15	God heals the sick when we pray in faith
James 5:16	The fervent prayer of a righteous person will accomplish much

In conclusion, prayer is our communication with God. We share with Him as Father, friend, and loving creator, who deserves our respect, praise, and adoration.

The act of praying to God acknowledges our need for someone much greater, stronger, and wiser than us. Prayer takes our dependence off ourselves and causes us to depend on the Lord.

As we cast our cares on the Lord, we do it in faith, believing that he will hear and respond to our needs. We are to ask, even though God knows our need before we ask. Praying to our Father, without doubting, is the ultimate act of faith, and without that kind of faith it is impossible to please God.

- *“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.”* (Hebrews 11:6)

As you pray, never forget, that God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

“What a man is, he is alone on his knees before God, and no more.”

Robert Murray McCheyne

PRAYER UNDERSTANDING CHECK-UP

LESSON TWO: PRAYER

Fill in the blanks.

1. Prayer is _____.
2. Philippians 4:6 says “Be anxious for nothing, but with _____ let your requests be made known to God.”
- 3.
4. According to 1 Peter 5:7, a believer can give all his cares (anxiety) to Jesus because _____.
5. In Matthew 6, Jesus taught us to pray to _____, in heaven.
6. Again in the Lord’s prayer, we think we can take care and provide for ourselves, but Jesus said to ask (pray) for _____.
7. 1 John 1:9 begins “_____, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins...”
8. For the believer in Jesus, forgiveness is a _____, not an option.
9. Your adversary (foe, enemy) is _____, not people.
10. John 15:7 says, “If you _____ in me and my words remain in you, _____ whatever you wish and it will be given you.”
11. Pray and never forget that according to Hebrews 11:6, God is a _____ of those who earnestly seek him.

PRAYER REFLECTION QUESTIONS

LESSON TWO: PRAYER

1. "Don't bargain with God. Be direct. Ask for what you need." (Luke 11:10 reference) Have you bargained with God in prayer?

How do you feel about being direct with God? Why?

2. How do you usually spend sleepless hours during the night?

Can you see yourself spending those hours in grateful meditation/reflection as David did? (Psalm 63 reference)

BIBLE STUDY

FIRM FOUNDATIONS WEEK THREE

To the believer the importance of consistently reading and studying the Bible cannot be overstated. The Word of God will bring revelation, strength, and maturity to a Christian. It is a source of life to our soul (Matt.4:4; 1Peter2:2), and without a steady diet of the Word of God we will find ourselves spiritually malnourished, weak, and dying.

THE WORD OF GOD

- “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
- 2 Tim 3:16-17
16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,
17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.
(NKJ)

In 2 Timothy 3, Paul reveals some truths about God’s word and the application that it has for the believer's life. Paul starts by giving us the source and origin of the Bible. He then shares with the reader that:

All scripture is given by the inspiration of God. The expression ‘given by inspiration of God’ is translated from the Greek word theopneustos, which means ‘God Breathed,’

Saying the Word of God is just our instruction manual, even though it does serve that purpose, is really selling it short.

It is the living word that will give life to all who hear and receive it, it is proper to refer to the scriptures as “the Word of God,” because it is not just a book containing Gods words, but rather it is literally Gods breath, His own utterance. that this God breathed scripture is profitable for several things:

- a. *Doctrine.* Simply defined doctrine is the principals of our religious beliefs that we will embrace and teach to others. Paul was saying that the word of God is to be the standard for all of our beliefs and teachings. No matter how good a concept or idea may sound, if it’s not a biblical concept, it should be rejected. The Lord has provided us with a wonderful plumb line and as long as we apply His word we will always maintain a straight line of truth.
- b. *Reproof.* Basically reproof is being told that you are doing something wrong. A lot of people would rather not be told that they are wrong, but for the believer who desires to please his Father and walk in righteousness, it is a very comforting thought. There is a sense of security to know that God, through His Word, will tell you when you are doing something wrong. One of the worst things that a parent can do to their children is to not set any boundaries or limitations. On the other hand, children that know what is expected out of them have the freedom to explore and grow without the fear of stepping out of line or going too far. God’s Word sets the boundaries for His children and allows them the freedom to grow.

- c. *Correction.* The reproof is good, but God's word goes further. It just doesn't tell us that we are doing something wrong and then leave us wondering what we should be doing. The Word also provides us with correction. Correction not only points out a wrong but corrects the wrong and points us in the right direction. Life would be hard, if not unbearable, if we were always told that our actions were wrong, but we were never told how to correct our actions. God's Word applied will bring correction and positive change in our lives.
- d. *Instructions in righteousness.* The essence of righteousness is, the being and doing right in the sight of God. I like to think of righteousness as being in a right standing with a Holy God. The Word will teach us how to have a pure heart, how to walk in obedience to God, and how to receive the righteousness that is beyond our own capability that is the righteousness of Christ Jesus.

Why did God give us His Word that can teach us, reproof us, correct us and instruct us in righteousness? Paul explains that God desires that we be complete. People who are whole, people who are prepared, and people who are thoroughly equipped for every good work. This is exciting news, since we all are His workmanship, knowing that He has created us for good works, and wants us to walk in them. God not only breathed His Word, but He has preserved it for almost 2000 years so that so that we can be fully furnished.

God has given you his God breathed Word not so you can be partially complete, not so that you can be just a little equipped for a few good works. No, God's Word has been preserved for you so that you can be fully complete. He gave His Word so that you would be thoroughly equipped so you would be able to do every good work that He calls you to do. With a daily intake of God's Word you can be a mature and nourished Christian, fully furnished for every good work.

THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL GUIDE US INTO TRUTH

Not only do we have the word of truth but, God has given us the Holy Spirit to teach us and bring the scripture to life.

- *"I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. 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. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you."* (John 16:12-14)

The Holy Spirit is ready to illuminate the word of God to us, teach us, and bring all things to our remembrance, but we have a responsibility to read and study His word.

- *"Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly."* (2 Tim 2:15-16)

The New King James Version says to *"Be Diligent to present yourself approved to God."* In other words it may take some effort on your part. You must apply yourself so that the Holy Spirit can teach you. Study the Word of God so that you can be the very best for the Lord that you can possibly be. Remember that champions major on the basics!

SEVEN BENEFITS FROM SPENDING TIME IN THE WORD OF GOD

1) **You will receive renewed strength, caused by a divine exchange with God.**

- *Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might He increases strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall, But those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.*
(Isaiah 40:28-31 NKJ)

The word of God will not only teach you and will provide you with a source for renewing your strength. As you grow in the Lord and began to reach out with the Gospel of Christ Jesus you will find that it isn't always an easy task; one that takes you out of your comfort zone. It's not uncommon to find yourself in situations where your own strength and wisdom are inadequate. Many people begin their walk with high hopes and big dreams, only to find that later they feel tired and weary. Before you throw in the towel and give up, let me share with you the blessing of 'The Divine Exchange.'

It is wonderful to know that we have a heavenly Father who has ultimate strength and is full of wisdom and understanding. Isaiah refers to the Lord as a God of unsearchable understanding. When we need wisdom, he is the one we turn to.

This is where **"The Divine Exchange"** comes in:

- We go to the Lord with our lack of understanding, spend time with Him and bond together with Him.
- As we spend time in prayer and studying the word of God we exchange our confusion and lack of understanding for the mind of Christ, which provides us with His wisdom and unsearchable understanding. (see 1 Corinthians 2:16)
- We renew our strength when we spend time with the Lord by exchanging our weaknesses for His strength.
- This divine exchange is simply stated in Philippians 4:13: "I can do everything through him who gives me strength."

I guarantee you that you will get more done and work more effectively in the kingdom of God with the mind of Christ and the strength of Christ, than you will using your own wisdom and strength. You see, reading the Word of God daily isn't a religious work, or a duty to make you a better Christian. We don't do it so we can check off items on our spiritual checklist each day to show how holy we are. It is so much more than that. It is truly a time of divine exchange with our God.

2) **Grace and peace will be multiplied to you.**

- *Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.* (2 Peter 1:2-4 NKJ)

How do you receive multiplied grace and peace? Through knowledge of God and Christ Jesus which comes from the reading of the Word.

Where do we find the great and precious promises He has given us? They are all found in the Word of God. His Word leads to the divine nature and escape from corruption.

Grace is defined as God's unmerited favor, and not only favor but God's ability and enabling power. Not saving grace alone, but also growing grace. This growing grace will be multiplied to you.

3) **The Lord will make your ways prosperous and successful.**

The secret of Joshua's success as found in the Old Testament was that he meditated on the Word of God day and night.

- *“Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their forefathers to give them. Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. 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. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”*
(Joshua 1:6-9)

Joshua reminds us to be careful to obey all the law. Remember when Jesus taught about the man likened to one who built his house on a rock compared to a man likened to one who built his house on the sand? Both men heard the Word of God, but the difference in the two men was that only one obeyed the Word of God.

Obedience to the Word of God is the key for Godly decision making that will lead to success.

Mark Twain once said, *“It's not the things I don't understand in the Bible that bother me, it's the things I do understand!”* Too often we hear and understand but yet we still don't obey.

It is also important that we *“Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth;”* Jesus said out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. Read and study the Word of God so that you may begin to speak the Word of God out of the abundance of your heart! Meditate on the Word day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. *‘You can't obey it if you don't know what it says.’* True obedience will only come when the Word gets in your heart. We need to heed this advice so that the Lord will make our ways prosperous and successful.

4) **The Word of God is able to make you wise.**

- *“...while evil men and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.” (2 Timothy 3:13-15)*
- *“The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple. The precepts of the Lord are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the Lord are radiant, giving light to the eyes.” (Psalm 19:7-8)*

Psalm 1:2 tells us to delight in the law of the Lord and to *meditate* on it day and night. In other words, love God’s truths and think about them all the time! Webster defines meditate as: “1. to reflect upon; study; ponder. 2. to plan or intend – to think deeply and continuously; reflect; muse.” One of the best ways to meditate on the Word of God is to memorize it and let it sink down into your heart.

There are a variety of techniques for memorizing scriptures:

- Straightforward memorization in which the scriptures are repeated until they are remembered
- Using word associations for key points
- Drawing a picture of a verse
- Putting the particular scripture to song
- Working with flash cards in a variety of ways

No matter what your technique, the important thing is to start getting the word of God firmly planted in your heart. You need to spend some time understanding the Word of God, with the Holy Spirit’s illumination and letting it settle into your heart. This will require some effort on your part.

Why do you think King David would say that he delighted in the law, which are rules and regulations? The answer is that he had realized that God’s standards bring life.

Psalms 112:1 tells us how blessed man is when he does two things:

- Fears the Lord, and
- Greatly delights in his commands

Ps 112:1 Praise the LORD. Blessed is the man who fears the LORD, who finds great delight in his commands. (NIV)

Continuing on in Psalms 112 King David tells us the results of doing these two things:

- our children will be mighty in the land
- the generation of the upright will be blessed
- wealth and riches [will be] in our house

- our righteousness [right standing with God] will endure forever
- we will have light in darkness
- good will come to us if we're generous and a lender
- we will never be shaken
- we will be remembered forever
- we will have no fear of bad news
- our hearts will be secure
- we will be honored
- we will be the envy of the wicked

5) Divine guidance.

- *"I have not departed from your laws, for you yourself have taught me. How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! I gain understanding you're your precepts; therefore I hate every wrong path. Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path." (Psalm 119:102-105)*
- Proverbs 6:23 also refers to the word as a lamp and a light.
- Proverbs 3:5-6 tells us to "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight."
- Psalm 119:165 lets believers know that the Word gives us great peace. We have no need to worry, we won't stumble.

6) The Word will bring purity to your life.

- Psalm 119:9-16. *"I hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you."* (v.11)
- Ephesians 5:25-27. Jesus washes you with the Word, making you holy and blameless.
- Romans 12:1-2. You can be transformed by the renewing of your mind.
- John 17:17. We are sanctified by the word of truth.
- John 8:32. "Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."
- 2 Peter 1:2-4. We are partakers of a divine nature.
- Hebrews 4:12. The Word is a double edged sword, a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.
- Ephesians 6:17. The Word of God is the sword of the spirit
- 2 Tim 3:16. *"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."*

7) The Word will increase your faith.

- *“But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, ‘Lord, who has believed our message.’ Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message and the message is heard through the word of Christ.” (Romans 10:16-17)*

Rom 10:16-17 (NKJ)

16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our report?"

17 So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Taken in its context this passage is teaching about salvation. We are saved by faith, and faith comes by hearing the Word of God preached. I have also learned that this is a principal that applies to our Christian walk. As we hear the Word of God, our faith is increased.

Someone once said, “Faith comes by hearing and hearing, and hearing....”

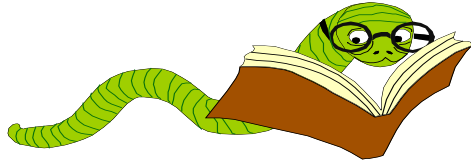
Sometimes it takes a while for the Word to sink in and produce real faith in our lives.

CONCLUSION: LET THE WORD DWELL IN YOU RICHLY

- *“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. Let the word of Christ dwell in you 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. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.” (Colossians 3:12-17)*

In light of what the Word of God can do in our lives, we would be foolish to neglect it. Instead we should be reading the Word, studying the Word, memorizing the Word, meditating on the Word, hearing and obeying the Word, and, like Paul says, letting the Word of Christ dwell in us richly.

AMAZING BIBLE FACTS



Taken from "The Holy Bible - Wholly True"
by Winkie Pratney

The Word of God will endure forever

- *"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away."* Matthew. 24:35.

God's spoken word

- In Genesis chapter one "God said" appears 9 times.
- Malachi, the last book of the Old Testament uses "Thus says the Lord" 23 times.
- "The Lord spoke" appears 560 times in the first 5 books and at least 3800 times in the whole Old Testament.
- Isaiah claims that his message came directly from the Lord 40 times; Ezekiel, 60 times; and Jeremiah, 100 times.
- Jesus Christ quoted from at least 24 different Old Testament books.

The Books

- The bible is a collection of 66 books; 39 in the Old Testament and 27 in New Testament.
- It was written by 40 different authors, all inspired by God, some educated, some simple men; doctors, farmers, tax collectors, fishermen, and kings. Even with the diversity, the scriptures flow in unity, with perfect detail. In truth the bible only has one author that used 40 different men.

Prophecy

- 3,856 verses in the bible are directly related to prophecy. 1 in 6 tell of future events.
- Over 300 prophecies were fulfilled by Christ Jesus' life.
- The odds of even 48 of those prophecies being fulfilled by one man are one in 10E157. That's 10 with 157 zeros behind it!

**The greatest proof of the Bible being the divine Word of God
is the difference its message makes in your life!**

BIBLE STUDY UNDERSTANDING CHECK-UP

LESSON THREE: BIBLE STUDY

Check all answers that are correct/true OR fill in the blanks.

1. The Word of God
___ is alive.
___ will instruct believers in how to live.
___ is only the New Testament.
___ will cause believers who read it to mature.
2. According to 2 Timothy 3:16-17, scripture is profitable for
___ maintaining good health.
___ giving a personal word of prophesy.
___ doctrine.
___ reproof (know when you're sinning.)
___ correction.
___ instruction in righteousness.
3. Our _____ is the principles of our religious beliefs.
4. Do your best to present yourself to God as one _____, a workman who does not need to be _____, and who correctly handles the word of truth.
2 Timothy 2:15
5. According to our lesson, spending time with the Lord will bring us _____ and _____.
6. According to Joshua 1:8, the Lord will make your way prosperous and successful if you
___ obey God's word.
___ meditate on the word of God.
___ offer sacrifices.
___ speak the word of God.
7. The word is a _____ and a _____ to guide me.
Proverbs 6:23
8. The lesson gives seven benefits from spending time in the word of God. List at least three.

BIBLE STUDY REFLECTION QUESTIONS

LESSON THREE: BIBLE STUDY

1. Can you think of a time when “putting on the full armor of God” would have helped you overcome a situation or maybe an example of when knowing the Word helped you to “stand” against the devil’s schemes? (Ephesians 6 reference)

2. Can you share a time when you experienced one of the seven benefits of spending time in the Word of God?

3. What would you say if a friend asked you, “What was the most important thing you read in the Bible today?” (Romans 5-6 reference)
Why?
Would you feel comfortable explaining to your friend what it means?

THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

FIRM FOUNDATIONS WEEK FOUR

“...It is quite possible to have something, yes much, of the Spirit’s presence and work in the heart and yet come short of that special fullness and work known in the Bible as the baptism or filling with the Holy Spirit.” R.A. Torrey

John the Baptist declared that Christ Jesus was the Lamb of God who would justify us and take away our sins, but he also said that Jesus was the one who would baptize us in the Holy Spirit.

- *“I would not have known him, except that the one who sent me to baptize with water told me ‘The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.’” (John 1:33)*

The word *baptize* is taken from the Greek word *baptizo* that means to immerse, submerge, to make overwhelmed or completely wet. Jesus desires that we be people who are totally overwhelmed, totally submerged, and totally soaked in the power of the Holy Spirit.

In John 7: 37-39 Jesus spoke of believers receiving the Holy Spirit. He said that the Holy Spirit would flow out of the believer’s life, like rivers of living water.

- *“On the last day and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, ‘If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.’ By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.”*

Later as Jesus was preparing to leave His disciples, He gave them a challenge that seemed humanly impossible.

- *“I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.” (John 14:12)*

Jesus knew that, in their flesh, the disciples were inadequate, but He had a solution. Christ promised that a Comforter and Helper would come. With the Holy Spirit working through them, they would be able to accomplish all that Jesus called them to do. He referred to the Holy Spirit as the ‘Spirit of Truth’ who would help the believers do all that Jesus has commissioned them to do.

- *“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.” (John 14:16-17)*

This Counselor, often called the Comforter or Helper, is the Holy Spirit.

- *“All this I have spoken while still with you. 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.” (John 14:25-26)*

Jesus continued to teach his disciples about the work of the Holy Spirit.

- The Holy Spirit will testify of Christ (John 15:26)
- He will reprove the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:7-11)
- The Holy Spirit, Spirit of truth, will guide believers into all truth, speak what he hears, show us things to come, glorify Jesus, and receive from Jesus and show those things to us (John 16:12-15)

One of the greatest things that the Holy Spirit does in the believer's life, when he is baptized in the Holy Spirit, is that the believer is filled with power to be a witness.

- *“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”* (Acts 1:8)

Even after Jesus commissioned His disciples, He instructed them to wait, not to attempt anything in their own power and strength, but to first be filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will empower you to advance the kingdom of God, as well as live a victorious Christian life. The Greek word used here for power is ‘*dunamis*’, which means strength, ability, and power for performing miracles. It also implies moral power and excellence of soul. Our translation of *dunamis* is **dynamite power**. It's exciting to know that the Holy Spirit fills our lives with explosive power!

ISN'T SALVATION ENOUGH?

At the point of salvation we receive the Holy Spirit into our hearts. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is by no means taking anything away from the miracle and wonder of our salvation experience. It is a separate experience or, as it is sometimes referred to, a second blessing.

- Ephesians 4:30 tells us that we are sealed by the Holy Spirit at the day of our redemption.
- Romans 10:9-10 tells us that in order to be saved, all one has to do is, “...*confess with your mouth, Jesus is Lord,*” and *believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.*”
- The baptism of the Holy Spirit is when God pours out His Holy Spirit upon us and fills us to overflowing with His power spoken of in Acts 1:8. This is the empowering for service.
- It's been said that, ‘Salvation is God's gift to the world, to sinners. The baptism in the Holy Spirit is God's gift to His children, believers in Christ.’

A man can take a drink of water and has the water inside of him, but that doesn't mean that he has been baptized in that water. Jesus desires that we be baptized, totally wet, overwhelmed by, and full of the Holy Spirit. To do all that we are called to do in Christ, we need the fullness of God's Holy Spirit overflowing in our lives.

Christ Jesus himself was a man without sin in his life, yet He never did a miracle, nor did he start His public ministry without the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. In Matthew chapter 3 we see Jesus coming to John the Baptist to be baptized in water. At that point God baptizes Jesus in the Holy Spirit.

- *“As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, ‘This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.’”* (Matthew 3:16-17)
- Immediately after His baptism we see Jesus being led by the Holy Spirit. *“Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert,”* (Luke 4:1)
- After Jesus’ baptism in the Holy Spirit experience He performs His first miracle, turning water into wine. (John 2:11) Luke 4:14 says, *“Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit...”*
- Matthew Chapter 4 tells us what Jesus did in Galilee, *‘in the power of the Holy Spirit.’* *“Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. News about Him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed, and he healed them.”* (Matthew 4:23-24) Jesus is truly an example to us as to what walking in the power of the Spirit is all about.
- After Jesus’ death on the cross and resurrection from the dead, He spoke with his disciples concerning their relationship with Him. *“Again Jesus said, ‘Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.’ And with that he breathed on them and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit’”* (John 20:21-22)
- Later when Thomas joined them, he made a positive confession as to whom he believed Jesus to be. *“Then he said to Thomas, ‘Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.’ Thomas said to him, ‘My Lord and my God!’ Then Jesus told him, ‘Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.’”* (John 20:27-29)

It is my belief and conviction that Thomas, as well as the other disciples whom Jesus had breathed the Holy Spirit into were saved at this point in their lives, but Jesus still insisted that they wait and be baptized in the Holy Spirit. In fact, this was one of Jesus’ last requests of them, prior to His going to the Father.

- *“On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: ‘Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’”* (Acts 1:4-5)

Later the disciples received this baptism in the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost.

- *“When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.”* (Acts 2:1-4)

I believe that salvation and receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit are two distinct acts of God’s love towards us. That’s not to say that they have to happen at two different times in our lives. A person could ask God to save them, receive their salvation, and at the same time also ask Jesus to baptize them in the Holy Spirit.

If you are already a believer and have never been baptized in the Holy Spirit, there is no need to wait any longer. Ask Jesus to baptize you now.

WHAT ARE THE QUALIFICATIONS TO RECEIVE THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT?

- 1) You must be saved. (Acts 2: 37-38)
- 2) Ask the Father for Jesus to baptize you in the Holy Spirit and believe that you will receive. (Luke 11:9-13)

WHO IS THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT FOR?

- *“For the promise (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4,5; Acts 2:33) is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.”* (Acts 2:39)

The baptism in the Holy Spirit is for all believers. Some have said that it is only for special men with special calls upon their lives, but what call can be more important than the call to all believers to spread the gospel throughout the world. According to 2 Corinthians 5:18, we have all been given the ministry of reconciliation.

Joel 2:28-29 proclaims that the Spirit will be poured out upon all flesh! Also Acts 5:32 adds that God gives the Holy Spirit to those who obey Him. We can conclude that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is available to all who have obeyed the Lord unto salvation.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT?

- 1) Jesus' purpose for baptizing in the Holy Spirit is to fill believers with power (Acts 1:8) so that they can fulfill the great commission (Matthew 28:19-20). The baptism with the Holy Spirit imparts power for service! You would think that after Christ's death and resurrection, the disciples would be ready to fulfill the task that the Lord had given them. They had spent three and a half years with Jesus as their personal teacher, they had seen the resurrected Lord, and confessed their belief in Him as Lord and God. But no sooner than Jesus commissioned them He immediately told them to wait before attempting anything on their own. Rather they were told to go to Jerusalem and wait for the power to come upon them and then they would become His witnesses. Serving in the power of the Holy Spirit is the only way to serve effectively.
- 2) The Holy Spirit will give you the supernatural ability to do the works that Jesus did and the works that He also expects you to be doing. (John 14:12; Luke 4:18; Mark 16:17-20). We can take comfort in knowing that it is not by our own strength and ability, nor by our own power and might, but it is by the power of the Spirit of the Lord that we are able to work on His behalf.
 - *"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power."* (Ephesians 6:10)
 - *"Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit," says the LORD Almighty.*" Zechariah 4:6
- 3) Not only will you have power to build the kingdom but you will also experience power in your every day Christian walk. Power to live an overcoming life.
 - *"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."* (Romans 8:11) This is the Abundant Life that Jesus speaks of in John 10:10.

HOW DO YOU RECEIVE THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT?

- 1) Repent and acknowledge Jesus Christ as the Lord and Savior of your life (Acts 2:38).
- 2) Ask and receive. Just like salvation, all you have to do is ask and you will receive. *"If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"* (Luke 11:13)
- 3) Receive in Faith. Christ has redeemed us that we might receive the Promise of the Holy Spirit through faith. (Galatians 3:13-14)

Once the Baptism in the Holy Spirit has been received, Christian's are to:

- submit to God,
- walk in the Spirit, and
- be continually filled with the Holy Spirit. (Ephesians 5:18; Acts 4:29-31)

When Paul exhorted us to be filled with the Spirit in Ephesians he used a tense in the Greek that suggests continually being filled. We should maintain the fullness of the Holy Spirit by a continual in-filling of Him. While there is only one baptism in the Holy Spirit experience, we need to constantly allow the rivers of living water to flow from our innermost being (John 7:38), and continually stay filled with the Spirit of God.

Speaking in Unknown Tongues

As it happened in the New Testament Church, so it is today, one of the first things that often happens to believers upon being baptized in the Holy Spirit is that they receive a spiritual prayer language. This prayer language is often referred to as speaking in tongues.

The book of Acts records several events concerning Speaking in Tongues.

- 1) The disciples spoke in tongues upon receiving the Baptism in the Holy Spirit.
 - Acts 1:4-5 - Wait for the promise.
 - Acts 2:1-4 - On the day of Pentecost they all were filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.
- 2) Believers filled at Samaria, eight years after the day of Pentecost.
 - Acts 8:5-8, 12 - The people were saved and baptized, in water, under the ministry of Philip.
 - Acts 8:14-17 - Peter and John prayed for them to receive the Holy Spirit. Did they speak in tongues?
 - Acts 8:18-19 - *“When Simon saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles’ hands, he offered them money...”* What did Simon see that convinced him they had received the Holy Spirit? So convinced that he was willing to pay money for the ability? The Spirit of God cannot be seen with the physical eye, unless He takes on a physical form. More than likely, what Simon saw and heard was the people speaking in tongues.
- 3) Believers filled in Cornelius’ household, ten years after Pentecost.
 - Acts 10:44-46 - While Peter was preaching the Holy Spirit fell upon the Gentiles, and the Jews were amazed because, *“...the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God.”*
- 4) Believers filled in Ephesus, twenty years after Pentecost.
 - Acts 19:1-3, 6 - When Paul laid his hands upon them they received the Holy Spirit and began to speak in tongues and were prophesying.
- 5) Paul’s baptism in the Holy Spirit.
 - In Acts 9:10-12, 17 - Paul receives the Holy Spirit (he had received salvation and his apostolic commissioning three days earlier on the road to Damascus). Did Paul speak in tongues? At some point he did, and it’s reasonable to believe that he received his tongues with his Holy Spirit filling.
 - In Paul’s own words, *“I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you.”* (1 Corinthians 14:18)

Why Should We Speak In Tongues?

- Reason 1) Tongues seem to be one of the first signs that a believer has been baptized with the Holy Spirit (reference previous verses).
- Reason 2) Tongues are given for spiritual edification. *“He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church.”* (1 Corinthians 14:4)
- Reason 3) Tongues is the Spirit of God inside you, praying to God. *“For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God. Indeed, no one understands him; he utters mysteries with his spirit.”* (1 Corinthians 14:2) *“For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful.”* (1 Corinthians 14:14)
- Reason 4) Tongues is a reminder of the Spirit’s indwelling presence in our lives. John 14:16-17 tells us that God will send a comforter and helper who will always be with us. Galatians 5:16 & 25 remind us that we are to walk in the Spirit, not in the flesh.
- Reason 5) Praying in tongues helps us pray in line with God’s will. In tongues we can effectively pray for ourselves and others. *“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 8:27) Also see 1 Corinthians 14:2, 14.
- Reason 6) Praying in Tongues stimulates faith. *“But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit.”* (Jude 1:20)
- Reason 7) Tongues enhance our worship unto the Father, as we worship in Spirit and in truth. *“Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.”* (Ephesians 5:18-19) Also see John 4:24, Acts 10:46, and 1 Corinthians 14:15-17.
- Reason 8) Speaking in tongues brings our tongue under subjection as we learn to yield it to the Holy Spirit (James 3:5-12). Praying in tongues under the influence of the Holy Spirit is a giant step toward fully yielding all of our members to God. If we can learn to yield our most unruly member, with God’s help we can yield all.

The Holy Spirit is going to make you a stronger Christian. Remember, you shall receive power! It is the difference between being a good Christian and being the kind of world-changing Christian that God has called you to be. The promise of the Holy Spirit is for you and is one of the many good things God has in store for your life. If you are a Christian and have never asked to be baptized in the Holy Spirit, why wait? Why live another day in your own strength and power when you could be living and walking in the power of the Holy Spirit. Ask and by faith receive.

“If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!” (Luke 11:13)

HOLY SPIRIT UNDERSTANDING CHECK-UP

LESSON 4: THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

Check all answers that are correct/true OR fill in the blanks.

1. According to John 1:33, 34 God the Father said to John the Baptist, "The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will _____." I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God.
2. To baptize means to
 immerse
 strengthen
 submerge
 swallow
 totally soak
3. The Holy Spirit is
 the Comforter
 the Spirit of truth
 the Helper
 the Baptizer
 the Counselor
4. Jesus says in John 16:26 says, "When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will _____ about me."
5. The book of Acts 1:8 tells believers what will happen to them after the Holy Spirit comes upon them. "But you will receive _____ when the Holy Spirit comes on you; any you will be my _____ in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."
6. According to Acts 2:1-4, on the day of Pentecost the 120 believers
 were all together in one place (unified in purpose)
 heard and felt the sound like a violent wind from heaven
 saw tongues as of fire resting on them
 were all filled with the Holy Spirit
 spoke in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.
7. In order to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit you must
 be saved (born again)
 ask Jesus to baptize you in the Holy Spirit
 be an active member of a local church
 desire to be a missionary or pastor
 receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit by faith
8. "If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will you Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to _____." Luke 11:13
9. According to 1 Corinthians 14:2 "For anyone who speaks in a tongue, does not speak to men but to _____. Indeed, no one understands him; he utters _____ with his spirit.
10. "He who speaks in a tongue _____ himself, but he who _____ edifies the church." I Corinthians 14:4
11. Jude says in verse 20 to "build yourselves up in your most holy faith and _____ in the Holy Spirit."

HOLY SPIRIT REFLECTION QUESTIONS

LESSON FOUR: THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. How does the second qualification (p. 33 of the curriculum) make you feel?
 - 2) Ask the Father for Jesus to baptize you in the Holy Spirit and believe that you will receive. (Luke 11:9-13)

Why?

2. Do you feel like you are ready to operate in the Holy Spirit?

If not, what reservations do you have?

Can you think of ways to overcome the reservations you have?

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

FIRM FOUNDATIONS WEEK FIVE

- *“The acts of the sinful nature are obvious; sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.*

“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.” (Galatians 5:19-23)

A young man once told me that he desired to start moving in the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Knowing that he had recent problems with relationships, I asked him, “What about the fruit of the Spirit, are they manifesting in your life”? He quickly answered, “Oh yea, I know about the fruit. I mastered that in a few weeks”. I must admit that his answer caught me by surprise, and left me wondering how to gracefully reply. Fortunately a dear sister standing nearby remarked, “I’m glad you were able to master it in a few weeks. It takes most of us years to fully develop the fruit”.

The fruit of the Spirit is not something that you decide you want and through sheer determination and discipline “master them.” Fruit is something that is produced in a believer’s life as he yields to the work of the Holy Spirit. When I think of a tree that bears much fruit, I picture in my mind a strong healthy tree, one whose roots are firmly planted in the ground. A tree that is able to draw from a water source and receive nutrients from the sun.

In Galatians 5:16, Paul encourages believers to ‘live by the Spirit’ and in verse 18 he says that if we are led by the Spirit we are not under the law. Believers are not in bondage to the flesh and its works, but rather are able to bring forth the fruit of the Spirit. Walking in the Spirit means to walk in line with and to be led by the Spirit in the direction that God has for our lives. It’s not just saying that we are filled with the Spirit and then walk in any direction we would like to go. As we begin to walk in the Spirit we will be strengthened, we will grow healthy, and we will produce much fruit.

JESUS SAID YOU WILL KNOW A TREE BY ITS FRUIT

In Matthew 7:15-20 Jesus explains to his disciples that one will know a tree by its fruit. A good tree will produce good fruit and a bad tree will produce bad fruit. We cannot tell what is in the heart of a man by looking at him. It is by the fruit produced in his life that we can begin to see a picture of his heart.

Walking in the flesh will naturally bring forth the works of the flesh. On the other hand, as we stay full of the Spirit, walk in the Spirit, and are led by the Spirit, the characteristics of the Holy Spirit will be evident in our lives. Notice that there are many works of the flesh and one fruit of the Spirit. This fruit is manifested in different ways. Paul shares with us nine attributes of the fruit.

HOW DO I OBTAIN ABUNDANT FRUIT IN MY LIFE?

Before we look at the nine characteristics of the fruit of the Spirit, let's see how it is produced in our lives. Paul's prayer for the Philippians is that they would be filled with the fruit of righteousness. (Philippians 1:9-11) God desires that we all be filled with this fruit of righteousness which comes from Jesus and that we abound in the fruit of the Spirit.

So, do we decide that today we will have love and go around loving people with all our might? Or do we decide that today we will have joy and force ourselves to have happy thoughts all day? No, the fruit is not something that we can make happen. Rather fruit is the natural byproduct of the Holy Spirit living within us. The fruit will be brought forth in our lives in direct proportion to our surrender and yielding to the Spirit.

Jesus says producing fruit is like a branch growing on a vine (John 15:1-8). If that branch wants to bear fruit it must stay connected to the vine. It is here that it will receive the water and food it needs to survive and be productive. Jesus makes it clear that he is the vine and we are the branches. Apart from Him we can do nothing.

- *“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.”* (John 15:4-5) It is abiding in Jesus, spending time in His presence, and being led by the Holy Spirit that will cause you to bear much fruit.

Jesus also referred to the Father as the vinedresser. The vinedresser prunes back the branches for the purpose of increasing the potential for bearing much fruit. Even though this pruning process may be a bit painful at times, it is for our own good. So if we are to bear much fruit we must abide in Jesus, as well as accept the loving pruning of the Father. You see, God wants you to be a fruitful branch. In John 15:8, Jesus even says that as we bear much fruit the Father will be glorified!

BUT THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IS...

Love

This is *Agape* love, God's love that is explained in 1 Corinthians 13. Love should reign supreme in the believer's life. The Bible says that God himself is the essence of Love (1 John 4). It was love that caused God to send Christ Jesus (John 3:16). Love is the greatest (1 Cor. 13:13). You see, everything we do must be motivated by love. We, like Jesus, must be moved with compassion for people. Without love, all of our Spiritual gifts would be worthless. Why do you think that in the middle of teaching on the gifts of the Holy Spirit and their operation in the Church, Paul stops and teaches on love? I think the Holy Spirit knows the hearts and minds of men, and inspired Paul to teach that love should be our motive for using any of the gifts.

- *“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. 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. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.”* (1 Corinthians 13:1-3)

Also see Luke 6:27; Colossians 3:14; 1 Peter 4:8; 1 John 3:18.

Joy

True joy does not come from worldly pleasure. It comes from being reconciled with and made compatible with a Holy God.

- *“Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.”* (Romans 5:11)

The joy that comes from God isn't only experienced in good times, but it is a joy that is so deeply rooted that it abounds even in hard times.

- *“Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds,”*(James 1:2)

Also see Luke 6:23; 15:7-10; 24:52-53; John 15:11; 16:22; Acts 8:8; 13:52; 15:3; Romans 14:7; 15:13; 1Peter 1:8.

Peace

If there is one thing that the world is lacking more than anything else, it is peace. Jesus is the giver of a peace that surpasses our understanding.

- *“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”* (John 14:27)

Also see Romans 5:1; 8:6; 14:7; 15:13; 16:20; Ephesians. 2:4; Philippians 4:7.

Patience or long-suffering

As Christians we are to convince, rebuke, and encourage, carefully and with great patience. (2 Timothy 4:2). Also it's with patience that we are able to inherit the promises of God.

- *“We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to make your hope sure. We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.”* (Hebrews 6:11-12)

Also see Ephesians 4:1-4; Colossians 3:12-13; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-15.

Kindness

The world would be changed if Christians would just start being kind to people. We needn't look down on the unsaved and treat them harshly. We need to demonstrate the Love of Jesus in practical acts of kindness.

- *“But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked.”* (Luke 6:35)

Not only are we expected to be kind to our enemies, but yes, we are to be kind to one another also!

- *“Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.”* (Ephesians 4:31-32)

Goodness

Goodness in our lives can only be produced by the Holy Spirit, because in the flesh no one is good at all.

- *“‘Why do you ask me about what is good?’ Jesus replied. ‘There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, obey the commandments.’”* (Matthew 19:17)

We need the fruit of the Spirit producing goodness in our lives because we were created to walk in good works.

- *“For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”* (Ephesians 2:10)

It is through letting these good works shine, that the Father will be glorified.

- *“In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”* (Matthew 5:16)

Faithfulness

Thank God that He is a faithful God!

- *“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”* (1 John 1:9) This is the kind of faithfulness that the Holy Spirit will produce in your life.
- According to 2 Timothy 2:2, the Gospel and its teachings are to be passed down by faithful, reliable men.
- Revelation 2:10 tells us that we are called to be people who are faithful until death, and then we will be given the crown of life.

In Matthew 24, Jesus teaches that we are to be wise and faithful servants so that when He returns, He will find us doing what He has called us to do.

- *“Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time? It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns.”* (Matthew 24:45-46)

Paul said that we are required to prove our faithfulness.

- *“Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.”* (1 Corinthians 4:2)

Also see, Luke 12:42, Luke 16; 1Cor. 10:13; 2 Cor. 1:18.

Gentleness

Our whole approach to reaching the world for Jesus and winning over those who oppose us is to be with gentleness.

- *“And the Lord’s servant must not quarrel; instead he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.” (2 Timothy 2:24-26)*
- *“Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and to show true humility toward all men.” (Titus 3:1-2)*

It’s important that we understand that gentleness and humility are not signs of cowardice or weakness. A person who can truly walk in humility and gentleness is a person who is strong in their convictions, secure in their position, and confident in their ability. As we abide in Jesus and remain full of the Holy Spirit, we can rest in the truth of His word, our position as sons, and our confidence that we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us.

Self-control

Without Jesus our lives were out of control. We had no direction or purpose. Once we have become born-again, the Holy Spirit brings control in our lives by leading us, giving us direction, turning us from fleshly desires, and teaching us to walk worthy of our calling. Even though we call this self-control, we understand that it is God-control in our lives.

A lack of self-control will cause us to lose the race set before us. Even if we manage to finish, we may be disqualified because we didn't play by the rules.

- *“Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.” (1 Corinthians 9:24-27)*

Self control is simply controlling one’s self by yielding to God's control in our lives.

FRUIT OF SPIRIT UNDERSTANDING CHECK-UP

LESSON FIVE: THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Check all answers that are correct/true OR fill in the blanks.

1. According to the lesson, the fruit of the Holy Spirit is _____ in a believer's life as he yields to the work of the Holy Spirit.
2. There is/are
____one fruit of the Holy Spirit
____three fruits of the Holy Spirit
____nine fruits of the Holy Spirit
3. According to John 15:4-5, "Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can _____ by itself; it must _____ in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me."
4. Match: Jesus compares healthy, fruit-producing Christians to healthy, fruit-bearing trees. The tree must have
____a) good soil 1) Father
____b) sun 2) Son
____c) deep roots 3) Holy Spirit
____d) water 4) Word
____e) pruning 5) our character/desire for the things of God
5. I Corinthians 13:13 says, "And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is _____."
6. List the nine different ways the fruit of the Holy Spirit is manifested. Gal 5:22-23
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
 - 5) _____
 - 6) _____
 - 7) _____
 - 8) _____
 - 9) _____

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT REFLECTION QUESTIONS

LESSON FIVE: THE FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. Has the Holy Spirit begun to produce fruit in your life?

Which one(s)

Can you give an example?

2. Is there fruit of the Spirit that you can identify that in order to be produced you need to get “connected to the vine” so that it can be used in your life?

What will be your first step towards cultivating that fruit of the Spirit in your life?

THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

FIRM FOUNDATIONS WEEK SIX

There was once a man who built houses. He was a hard worker and used good tools to complete his tasks. He had a hammer, a hand saw, a screw driver, a ruler, and some sandpaper. These were proven tools that worked well, but it would take the man a year or more to complete a house. One day his friend told him that there were power tools available at the hardware store that would enhance his work and make him more efficient. His friend told him that with the power tools, he would probably be able to build three or more houses a year. The man had no interest in changing his ways, but his friend brought some of the power tools over to the job site and left them there.

The man decided to give them a try. He picked up a skill saw, plugged it in, held it up to his board and pulled the trigger. The saw squealed with power and jerked his hand as it began to rip through the board, slinging saw dust everywhere. The man quickly let go of the saw, thinking that it could hurt someone. The saw was also very noisy and made a mess. He made an attempt at the power screw driver, the nail gun, the table saw, and electric sander, but due to a lack of training and understanding, they all scared him. He drew the conclusion that the old way was better and put down the power tools, never to use them again.

The gifts of the Spirit are the power tools that the Holy Spirit has given to the church to efficiently build the Kingdom of God. 1 Corinthians 12 lists these nine gifts that equip the church with supernatural power to fulfill the great commission. We may be able to build the kingdom of God without them, but the task will be hard and slow.

The same is true of spiritual gifts. Paul said, *“Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant.”* (1 Corinthians 12:1) Ignorance of these gifts can cause a believer to fear them saying, “These gifts are different, sometimes sounding strange, and if not used properly could hurt someone.” What a waste of God's provision, all due to a lack of understanding. Paul realized that the gifts can be used improperly and goes to great lengths to explain how they are to operate in a church, during public ministry, for the edification of all (1 Corinthians 14).

The nine gifts of the Spirit are: 1) The Word of Wisdom, 2) The Word of Knowledge, 3) Faith, 4) Gifts of Healing, 5) The Working of Miracles, 6) Prophecy, 7) Discerning of Spirits, 8) Different Kinds of Tongues, and, 9) The Interpretation of Tongues. Paul makes it clear that they are all given by the Holy Spirit. The gifts are manifestations of the Spirit given to an individual, but for the profit of all.

Some have divided the nine gifts into three categories.

Revelation Gifts:	Words of Wisdom; Words of Knowledge; and Discerning of Spirits
Power & Demonstration Gifts:	Special Faith; Gifts of Healing; and Working of Miracles
Vocal/ Inspiration Gifts:	Prophecy; Kinds of Tongues, Interpretation of Tongues.

For the sake of our study, however, we will take them in the order that they appear in the scriptures.

THE WORD OF WISDOM

This wisdom is different from natural wisdom and even the general wisdom that is available to all Christians who ask for it (James 1:5-8). This wisdom is a gift from the Holy Spirit as a spiritual manifestation, for a specific need or special circumstances where man's wisdom falls short. It is supernatural directions or decisions, given to the believer for a certain situation. One in which the outcome would usually not be known by any other way but by God-given revelation.

We can see this gift working in the life of Christ Jesus. In Matthew 22:15-22 when Jesus was questioned concerning paying taxes to Caesar he perceived the heart of the Pharisees.

- *“But Jesus knowing their evil intent, said, ‘You hypocrites, why are you trying to trap me?’”* (vs. 18)
- *“Then He said to them, ‘Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s.’”*, (vs. 21) This type of wisdom produced results.
- *“When they heard this, they were amazed. So they left him and went away.”* (vs. 22)

Also in Luke 12:13-21 we see that the word of wisdom will reveal the root cause of a problem so it can be dealt with. Jesus was able to know the heart of a man who requested that Jesus make the man's brother divide a family inheritance with him.

- *“Then He said to them, ‘Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.’”* (vs. 15) In this case the root cause of the issue was covetousness and the desire for possessions.
- The word of wisdom can also be seen in Joseph interpreting Pharaoh's dream. See Genesis 41:14-40.
- Jesus knowing that Peter would deny Him three times clearly demonstrates a Word of Wisdom. (Matthew 26:34)

THE WORD OF KNOWLEDGE

This kind of knowledge can't be obtained by natural means. It is a supernatural revelation of the Holy Spirit, given for a specific purpose, usually pertaining to an event or a need in a person's life.

- Nathan received a word of knowledge concerning David's sin. (2 Samuel 12:1-15)
- Jesus, through a word of knowledge, knew about the coin in a fish's mouth. (Matthew 17:27)

- Jesus knew the truth concerning the life of a Samaritan woman, whom He had just met, (John 4:7-19). The use of this gift resulted in many believing in Jesus. See John 4:28-30; 39-42.
- Jesus has a word of knowledge concerning who Nathanael was (John 1:47-49), which resulted in Nathanael's instant belief in Jesus being the Son of God.
- Jesus knew who would betray Him. (John 6:64)
- One of the most dramatic examples of the word of knowledge was when Peter knew that Ananias and Sapphira spoke lies concerning their giving. (Acts 5:1-11)

THE GIFT OF FAITH

This is more than human faith, saving faith (Ephesians 2:8-9), or general faith (Romans 12:3). This is a supernatural manifestation of unlimited faith for specific situations that produces supernatural results. Some examples of this supernatural faith include:

- The gift of faith was in operation when Abraham offered his son Isaac on an altar, (Hebrews 11:17-19)
- Daniel used the gift of faith in the lion's den. (Daniel 6:23)
- Jesus used this gift of faith when he cursed the fig tree and even though it showed no signs of being cursed, it died from the roots up. (Mark 11:12-24)
- Jesus and Peter walking on water. (Matthew 14:25-26)
- Jesus calling Lazarus out of the grave. (John 11:3-44)
- This gift of faith prompted Peter to command a man to rise up and walk. (Acts 3:4-6)
- Paul not dying after being bitten by a poisonous snake. (Acts 28:3-5)

GIFTS OF HEALING

- *“Now 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.”* (1Thessalonians 5:23)
- God is concerned about our wholeness in spirit, soul, and body. Paul's prayer for the saints was this: *“Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well.”* (3 John 1:2)

God is the ultimate physician and He is the one who does the healing. He often uses His people as vessels for His healing power to flow through. Notice that this "gift" is plural, "gifts" of healing. There are numerous physical problems as well as emotional, mental, and spiritual sicknesses. The Holy Spirit flows through His people with various gifts of healing to meet all the needs of the sick.

- Jesus used gifts of healing to heal a leper (Matthew 8:1-3), and to heal multitudes of others (Matthew 14:14).
- Jesus opening blind eyes. (Mark 10:46-52)
- Paul spoke and a crippled man walked. (Acts 14:10)
- Gifts of healing flowed through Peter. (Acts 3: 4-7)
- Gifts of healing flowed through Paul. (Acts 19: 11-13)

THE WORKING OF MIRACLES

- *“And He said to them, “I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God come with power.” (Mark 9:1)*

Our God is a God of miracles. From the forming of the heavens and earth, to the birth of Christ and His ministry, to Jesus’ return and our living eternally with Him, God is working miracle after miracle. The manifestation of the working of miracles is God performing what could not be done in the natural. This is when God steps out of the bounds of natural laws and intervenes on the behalf of man. The working of miracles goes beyond gifts of healing and deals with creative miracles as well. Numerous miracles are described throughout the scriptures. Among them are:

- Moses parting the Red Sea. (Exodus 14:13-31)
- The axe head that floated. (2 Kings 6:1-7)
- Jesus walking on the water. (Matthew 14:25-26)
- Jesus feeding Five thousand. (Mark 6:39-44)
- Jesus feeding Four thousand. (Matthew 15: 32-38)
- Jesus turning water into wine. (John 2:1-11)
- Jarius' daughter being raised from the dead. (Mark 5:38-42)
- Paul raising Eutychus from the dead. (Acts 20: 9-12)

THE GIFT OF PROPHECY

- *“But everyone who prophesies speaks to men for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort.” (1 Corinthians 14:3)*

The Gift of Prophecy is a spontaneous, Spirit-inspired, oral message given to encourage and edify. It is not a previously planned sermon or teaching. We are encouraged by Paul to desire spiritual gifts, but especially that we may prophesy (1 Corinthians 14:1). Prophecy is very useful for ministry in public assemblies. Paul goes to great lengths in 1 Corinthians 14 to explain how prophecy is a particularly useful tool for public ministry.

It needs to be understood that the gift of prophecy is different than the ministry or office of a prophet. Just because someone uses the gift of prophecy, doesn’t mean that they are established in the church as a prophet. Compare 1 Corinthians 14:31 with Ephesians 4:11.

It is also important to understand that we prophesy in part (1 Corinthians 13:9). This is God using both the human and the divine to encourage His people.

We as believers are called to test prophecies (using the Word of God as our standard) and to hold fast to that which is good. (1 Thessalonians 5:19-21)

Prophecy should also be judged and tested (1 Corinthians 14:29).

- *“Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.” (1 John 4:1)*

A simple test might include these questions:

- 1) Does this prophecy agree with the word of God?
- 2) Does it lift up and glorify the name of Jesus?
- 3) Does it bring edification, encouragement, and comfort to the hearer?
- 4) Does your Spirit bear witness with the prophecy?

Prophecy used correctly can be a great ministry gift to the church. Don't fear it, respect the gift and the giver of the gift, and desire to prophesy.

- *“Do not put out the Spirit’s fire, do not treat prophecies with contempt. Test everything. Hold on to the good.”* (1Thessalonians 5:19-21)

THE GIFT OF DISCERNING OF SPIRITS

As you know there are other spirits operating in the world besides the Holy Spirit. Satan is a liar and a master of deception, his source of evil is often hard to discern. Therefore God has given the manifestation of discerning of spirits. This gift allows the believer to see behind the scenes of the spirit realm, and to know if the source is human, demonic, or divine.

- The spirit world, and the ability to see angels was given to Elisha and Gehazi. (2 Kings 6)
- Jesus used this gift to discern a satanic spirit speaking through Peter. (Matthew 16: 22-23)
- Jesus discerned a deaf and dumb spirit and cast it out. (Mark 9:24-27)
- Jesus discerned a spirit of infirmity that had troubled a woman for 18 years. (Luke 13:11-16)
- Peter discerned that Satan was working in the hearts of Ananias and Sapphira. (Acts 5:1-10)
- Peter discerned the evil in the heart of Simon. (Acts 8:18-23)
- Paul discerned the evil in the heart of Elymas the sorcerer. (Acts 13:9-12)
- *“The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.”* (1 Timothy 4:1)

THE GIFT OF DIFFERENT KINDS OF TONGUES AND THE INTERPRETATION OF TONGUES

We have already looked at the value of speaking in tongues in the believer’s personal life. Now we see two gifts that are companion gifts that allow us to use the gift of tongues, along with an interpretation, to edify and encourage others also.

The different kinds of tongues are Holy Spirit inspired messages to His people. These different kinds of tongues may be both human language, unknown to the speaker, as in Acts 2:4-13, or tongues unknown to humankind, such as tongues of angels, mentioned in 1 Corinthians 13:1. Both are supernatural manifestations. The point is that whatever is spoken is unknown to the speaker and the hearer and needs to be interpreted if it is to be used as a ministry gift for the entire church body (1 Corinthians 14).

The interpretation of tongues is also a supernatural manifestation that allows a believer to understand what the speaker is saying. The interpreter should share or explain the message to any others who are present, so that they might receive edification also. If you use the gift of tongues for public ministry purposes, be sure that the tongue is able to be interpreted by someone else present or by yourself.

The Holy Spirit has blessed the church with these nine gifts and when used properly they will greatly help in building and strengthening the Body of Christ.

THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT UNDERSTANDING CHECK-UP

LESSON 6: THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Check all answers that are correct/true OR fill in the blanks.

1. I Corinthians 12 through 14 identifies nine (9) gifts of the Holy Spirit. List the three revelation gifts.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
2. Name the three power and demonstration gifts
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
3. What are the three vocal or inspiration gifts?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
4. The Gift of the Word of Wisdom
_____ is our natural, general, born-with common sense wisdom.
_____ is given by the Holy Spirit for a specific need or special circumstance when man's natural wisdom isn't enough.
_____ did not need to operate in Jesus' life on earth because He is God in the flesh.
5. Examples of the Gift of the Word of Knowledge are found in
_____ Matthew 17:27
_____ John 3:16
_____ John 6:64
_____ 2 Samuel 12:1-15
6. The Gifts of Healing
_____ operate only through doctors in today's world.
_____ operate only through specific healing ministries.
_____ could operate through me if I were a willing vessel for God to use.
7. 1 Corinthians 14:1 says, "Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the _____."
8. According to 1 Corinthians 14:39, "Therefore, my brothers, be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid _____."
9. According to 1 Thessalonians 5:19 we
_____ test everything
_____ must not treat prophecies with contempt
_____ must not put out the Spirit's fire

THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT REFLECTION QUESTIONS

LESSON SIX: THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. Have you been baptized in the Holy Spirit and operated in any of the spiritual gifts?
2. Have you ever seen any of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in operation?
3. When you think of spiritual gifts, do you see yourself wanting to ask God for all of them or none of them?

Why or why not?

BODY MINISTRY

FIRM FOUNDATIONS WEEK SEVEN

I was talking to a friend one day about his renewed commitment to Christ. After living a defeated Christian life he visited a renewal service at our church. That night God moved on his heart and he walked the aisle and reaffirmed his faith in Jesus. As we spoke he revealed some interesting insights concerning his perception of the Christian walk. He said, "I guess I've been sort of a closet Christian, now I realize that I need to be serious with the Lord and get my life in order." Just when he had finished saying this he quickly added, "But don't expect to see me out there ministering to other people or anything like that." It was then that I realized that my friend had a basic misunderstanding of his relationship with the Lord. He understood salvation, but he was missing the principal that all Christians are called to minister to 'the other people' that he referred to. God has sent His son Jesus to redeem man. He has a place prepared in heaven where man will live eternally, but he doesn't put man on hold just to wait out the rest of his days here on earth. No, God has a plan and a purpose for redeemed man.

Even new Christians can begin to share their experience and new found faith in the Lord. As they grow in the Lord, so will their testimonies and ministry capabilities. Jesus said that if you are faithful in a little, you will be given much. A new believer may not have all the theological answers to all questions, but he has a story to tell. People find it hard to deny a man's story as he shares what he has experienced in a real and personal way.

A testimony or our story is something that isn't easily refuted. People may reject ideas, opinions, and doctrines, but it's hard to deny a new believer's personal experience. When he says, "I'm not sure exactly what happened to me, and I may not be able to show it to you in the Bible, but I know that I have been changed. I was in bondage, now I am free. I was unhappy and confused, now I have joy and peace. I was sick, now I am healed."

CALLED TO BE A MINISTER OF RECONCILIATION

God has called all Christians to be His ministers. He has given our life purpose. We are called to advance the kingdom of God, reach out to others with God's love, and to bring unregenerate man back into a relationship with a living God.

- *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; 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 Corinthians 5:17-19)*

What is the purpose for which God created this new creature? God has reconciled you and given you a ministry, the ministry of reconciliation! God desires to reconcile the world unto Himself. He sent Jesus Christ, His son, who died on the cross to redeem man by His blood. All as been accomplished per His plan, and now it's your turn to do your part. You are entrusted with the word of reconciliation! What an awesome task! What trust God has in you that you are chosen for the finishing touch to his plan!

In order to understand your ministry, you need to understand the meaning of reconciliation.

- Webster defines reconciliation: to make friendly again, to settle a difference, to make consistent or compatible.

Sin separated you from God, but through Jesus your relationship with Father God is restored. You are friends again. Jesus settled the difference and made you consistent and compatible with God. Your ways are consistent with His ways. Your thoughts and desires are no longer contrary to God's, but rather they are compatible with His thoughts and desires. The best news that you can take to a lost and dying world is that Jesus also desires to reconcile them to God. You have been given this ministry of reconciliation. You are to speak this word of reconciliation, to let the world know that there is hope. They too can be made consistent and compatible with a holy God.

CALLED TO BE AN AMBASSADOR FOR CHRIST JESUS

- *“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. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”*
(2 Corinthians 5:20-21)

In this scripture, Paul refer to you as an ambassador for Christ. An ambassador is appointed by a government and is the highest ranking diplomatic representative of that government to another country. When the United States sends an ambassador to another country, that ambassador represents the United States in everything that he does. How he conducts his business, the decisions he makes, and his views, good or bad, will be a direct reflection on the United States. The people of the foreign country will get a perception of America, be it good or bad, based on the actions of the ambassador. As citizens of heaven (Philippians 3:20) we are appointed by Christ to be an ambassador to this world. When you begin to understand this spiritual truth it will change the way you conduct your life. You are one of the ambassadors of Christ Jesus! You represent Him. When you walk into a room all eyes are upon you because Christ’s ambassador has just entered the room. Everything you do or say will be a direct reflection on how others perceive Jesus Christ. How do we represent Jesus to the world? We represent Him by our actions and how we conduct ourselves in everyday life. Let me ask you, based on your actions, how do the people around you perceive Christ?

Not only are you Christ’s ambassador, but Paul goes on to say that it’s as if God were pleading through you, pleading for unredeemed man. Can you picture that? Jesus pleading for lost souls through you. Not just through your pastor or great men and women of the faith, but Jesus desires to plead through you. Your mission is to implore the world on Christ’s behalf to be reconciled to God. Lead them to salvation and righteousness (right standing with God).

- *“Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.”* (Daniel 12:3)

Do you understand what my friend did not? He never saw himself as an ambassador for Christ. He embraced Jesus enough to obtain salvation, but he was always struggling with sin and a consistent walk. Why? Even though he desired salvation for his soul, he wanted to live life for himself. He didn't understand that true salvation is accompanied with purpose and meaning. It also comes with responsibilities.

We use the word saved to describe our redemptive experience. The word saved also implies setting something aside for a special purpose as in, 'Saving it for a rainy day.' God has saved you and sets you aside for His purpose. This is the day and time to live your life unto Him. As Paul said, "*For me to live is Christ.*" That's why my friend struggled, committing his life to Christ only to fall again. He didn't see his purpose, his usefulness. He never saw that he had a big role to play in God's redemptive plan for mankind.

THE SALT OF THE EARTH

- "*You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men.*" (Matthew 5:13)

Jesus said, "*You are the salt of the earth.*" Through your ministry of reconciliation you have become salty, a seasoning agent to this world. You add flavor and taste to everything around you. You will find as you continually allow Jesus to guide, your life will be 'spicy,' full of zeal and zest! You will truly taste and see that the Lord is good and through you others will taste and see His goodness also.

Not only will you season the lives of others, but like salt, you will have a preserving effect on the world, keeping it from rot and decay. I'm reminded of the story of Abraham pleading for the city of Sodom, knowing that Lot lived there. The Lord told Abraham that he would spare the city from destruction for the sake of ten righteous people (Genesis 18:16-33). Who knows the mercy that God may have extended to this world, just for the sake of the righteous ones. You will also preserve many from a certain doom. Man loves darkness more than light and due to his sin and disobedience he is separated from God. You as a preservative will have the opportunity to share the cross of Jesus with them.

Salt also will make people thirsty. If I learned one thing working in movie theaters as a youth, I learned that salty popcorn sells a lot of cokes. Your life should be one that makes people thirsty to be like you. They should like what they see and as they are around you more they will discover that it is Jesus that makes a difference. They will thirst and yearn to know more about Him.

Matthew 5:13 also talks of salt losing its flavor, and becoming good for nothing. Even the most favorable salt can lose its usefulness if it's left in the shaker and never sprinkled onto a plate. Salt can be pure, have a wonderful flavor, and be much desired. It can even look very pretty sitting in its shaker as a table center piece, nevertheless it's only useful when it's poured out.

The church has been introverted for too long. It's time to make a savory difference in this world. Remember Jesus said to not be of this world, but to be in it. Be in it building the Kingdom of

God and making a difference. I hope to encourage you to pour yourself out of the shaker and make a difference. If you don't, I'm praying and asking God to pour you out of the shaker, out of your place of comfort, to spread you out onto the plate. There are many plates of food all around you that desperately need to be flavored. You are much desired by a bland and lost world. They need what you have the capability to give them. My prayer is that the Lord will prepare the plates and shake the church, His Salt, out all over the earth.

YOU ARE AN INDIVIDUAL, FUNCTIONING IN A BODY

- *“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 Corinthians 12:12)*

In 1 Corinthians 12 Paul gives us the wonderful analogy of the church being the body of Christ, with all the members placed in the body for a purpose. Every member is significant and has a special purpose or function. We see this to be true in our earthly bodies. Every part or member works together for the common good. All members are important.

Is there any part of your body that you feel is insignificant? Would you be willing to give up any part of your body? So it is in the body of Christ. Everyone performs a needed function. The body will not be complete and work as it should if just one small member decides not to do its part. No part of the body should consider itself better than any other part.

- *“As it is, there are many parts, but one body. 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!’ On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable,” (1 Corinthians 12:20-22)*

We all need to find our place of ministry and begin working together for the common good. Think about changing the oil in your car. You probably will get a certain amount of grease on your hands, but it is preferable to have grease on your hands instead of on your face or in your eye. The eye was needed to see the task at hand and the hands were needed to turn the bolts. What if the hands suddenly rebelled and decided that they were tired of getting dirty! “I get all the dirty jobs while the face does nothing but look pretty!” The face does more than just look pretty. The hands must realize that for the good of the whole body the face needs to stay clean, especially the eye areas. It was better for the body as a whole if the hands took the grease.

When the body works together as a whole and receives honor, each member receives that honor also. If just one member suffers, the whole body will suffer.

- *“If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.” (1 Corinthians 12:26-27)*

Herein lies the beauty of the body of Christ. God lets us keep our redeemed personalities and all of our individualism. He takes us as individuals and uses us together to form one strong and healthy body.

Let me give you an example that everyone can relate to: stubbing your big toe! The big toe seems fairly insignificant yet it works hard, performs its intended function, and is rarely seen or thought about. It is often hidden, considered ugly, and embarrassing by many. Then, when you least expect it, you smash your toe into the end of a chair or drop something heavy on it. Now this quiet, hard working member becomes one of the most outspoken members of your body! Pain radiates from the toe and darts up your leg and spreads throughout your body. For the next few hours your big toe receives all of your undivided attention. Every step you take is taken with care as not to apply any unnecessary pressure to the toe. It is pampered until it is well, only to be forgotten again. But it still faithfully carries on with its God-given purpose.

Never feel insignificant or unimportant in the body of Christ. If you don't do your part in ministry, the whole body will suffer. When you faithfully serve God and do your part in the ministry, the whole body will receive honor.

YOU ARE A NECESSARY MEMBER NEEDED FOR A HEALTHY CHURCH!

UNSUNG HEROES IN THE BIBLE

- *“Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms.” (1 Peter 4:10)*

You have received a special gift from God and it is your responsibility to be a good steward of that gift. Okay, so you may not have the most exciting, glamorous, or praised job. You might not receive any recognition at all; nevertheless, use your gift to serve others. You are not the first to be over-looked; the bible has many examples of heroes of the faith whose praises are virtually unsung.

- *“Many women were there, watching from a distance. They had followed Jesus from Galilee to care for his needs. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee’s sons.” (Matthew 27:55-56)*

Have you ever heard of these “many women” who ministered to the needs of Jesus? We owe them a great amount of thanks. They helped Jesus so that He could in turn help others and change the course of history! I wonder if they fully understood the magnitude of what they were doing.

They are unsung heroes who laid down their lives to serve someone else. They may not have gotten the praise, but think of the joy that they experienced serving Jesus and having a very close relationship with him.

Exodus 17:11-12 tells of how Aaron and Hur held up the arms of Moses when he was too weary to hold them up for himself. Joshua was at battle with Amalek and as long as Moses held up his hands Israel prevailed, but when he let his hands down Amalek prevailed. Moses may have gotten the glory but he couldn't hold up his arms alone. Aaron and Hur played a big part that day in Israel's victory. I wonder if there are any battles being lost today because people are not willing to support someone else. They say, “Who wants to do all the work if someone else is going to get all the credit when the battle is won.”

Never think of your ministry in the body as being unimportant. We never have a full picture of just how we are being used in the kingdom. One day we may be surprised when the Lord shows us just how many lives we have touched, or had the opportunity to touch for the better.

- Always remember the exhortation of Christ Jesus, *“Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much.”* (Luke 16:10)

I love to read of the great men and women of faith who accomplished much for God. But at the same time I believe that the days of a one-man show are over. I believe that in this day and time God desires to accomplish His mission through a unified effort of the body of Christ. He wants to use a salty church that understands their purpose, a massive force, an extension of Jesus’ hands and His feet, with hearts beating with the heartbeat of heaven.

To my friend mentioned at the beginning of this lesson, I must say, “Yes, I do expect to see you out there ministering to other people.” My friend and all of us as well, are very important factors for successful body ministry.

**You all have received a gift, minister it to one another,
as good stewards of the manifold grace of God!**

BODY MINISTRY UNDERSTANDING CHECK-UP

LESSON 7: BODY MINISTRY

Check all answers that are correct/true OR fill in the blanks.

- Christians are called to
 - be ministers of reconciliation
 - be His ministers
 - be ambassadors for Christ
 - convict the world of sin
 - love even the unlovely with God's love
 - advance God' kingdom
- Sharing your testimony with others is
 - telling how you came to have faith in Jesus
 - requires knowing Bible verses
 - sharing about your life bc and ac, before Christ and after Christ
 - saying how Jesus is changing you
- According to 2 Corinthians 5:17, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new _____; the old has gone, the new has come!
- Reconciliation is defined as
 - to settle a difference
 - to make compatible
 - to choose to be perfect
 - to make friendly again
- As the salt of the earth (Matthew 5:13-16) you
 - make people thirsty for God
 - have a preserving effect on the world
 - cause others to "taste and see that the Lord is good."
 - are better than unbelievers
- What is 1 Corinthians 12:12-31 about? Verse 14 says, "Now the body is not made up of one part but of _____." And verse 27 says, "Now you are the _____ of Christ, and each one of you is a _____ of it.
- 1 Peter 4:10 says, "Each one should use whatever gift he has received to _____ others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.
- Since you have received a gift from God you
 - must protect it at all costs
 - use it to serve others
 - be a good steward of your gift

BODY MINISTRY REFLECTION QUESTIONS

LESSON SEVEN: BODY MINISTRY

1. Can you think of an “unsung hero” in your life?

How might your life be different if that person had an attitude of “Who wants to do all the work if someone else is going to get all the credit”?

2. What is a simple way that you can begin “ministering to other people”?

What might be stopping you from getting started? (or how have you started ministering to other people?)

Appendix

Just Add Water

“What do these things have in common: a cup of coffee, a jet ski, a catfish, a lily pad, a rose, and a Christian?”

The answer is, for each of them to realize their full potential you have to “*Add Water.*”

The Bible records that:

John proclaimed Jesus as the Messiah

Jesus was baptized by

John the Baptist,

At Pentecost 3000 new believers were added.

3000 were baptized at

Pentecost.

Phillip encountered the Ethiopian eunuch.

The Ethiopian eunuch was

baptized.

Peter and Cornelius spread the Gospel to the Gentiles.

The Gentile believers were baptized.

Let’s consider the significance and symbolism of adding water via Baptism in the life of every Christ follower.

Jesus’ Ministry Was Launched By Just Adding Water

As a child of God, it is important to follow Jesus’ example and be baptized in water. It is a very important first step in the Christian life. Jesus was baptized in order to “fulfill righteousness.”

- *“Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. But John tried to deter him, saying, ‘I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?’ Jesus replied, ‘Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.’ Then John consented. As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, ‘This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.’” (Matthew 3:13-17)*

Jesus Tells Us To Just Add Water To All Nations

As Jesus commissioned His followers, He established Baptism as an eternal ordinance of His church.

- *“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” (Matthew 28:19)*

We, at Believers Church, are not fulfilling our commission if we are not being baptized ourselves and baptizing others.

Belief and Adding Water Go Together

Jesus Commands Us to Just Add Water

Baptism is not an option for us; rather it is a commandment that God requires out of every believer. Some of Jesus' last recorded words instructed believers to be baptized. Believing and baptism seem to naturally flow together.

- *“Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.”* (Mark 16:16)

Jesus' call for us to believe in Him also included a call to be baptized, showing us the importance and high value that the Lord places on Baptism.

Notice that even though we are expected to be baptized, Baptism is not what saves us, the believing does. *“whoever does not believe will be condemned.”* Baptism is an outward display of an inward change.

Believers in the Bible Added Water by Being Baptized

- *“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.’* (Acts 2:38)
- *“Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.”* (Acts 2:41)

Some have taken Peter's words *“let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ”* to mean that these are the only words that can be properly spoken in a baptismal service. Some even believe that if *“baptized in the name of Jesus”* is not spoken, that the person being baptized is not even saved. However, some of the most common words spoken in baptisms are, *“I baptize you in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit”*. I ask you who is this son? As we all know, the son is Jesus; therefore, baptizing in the name of the Son is baptizing in the name of Jesus. In other words, *“I baptize you in the name of the Father, God, and in the name of the Son, who is Christ Jesus, and in the name of the Holy Spirit.”*

Acts 8:26-40 tells of an experience Phillip had when he shared the gospel with an Ethiopian eunuch. Upon hearing the gospel, the Ethiopian immediately asked if he might be baptized immediately. Philip responded as follows:

- *“Then Philip said, ‘If you believe with all your heart, you may.’ And he answered and said, ‘I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.’ So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing.”* (Acts 8:37-39 NKJV)

In Acts when salvation and the Baptism of the Holy Spirit came to the Gentiles, they were also instructed to be baptized in water.

- *“While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God. Then Peter said, ‘Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have the Holy Spirit just as we have.’ So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.”* (Acts 10:44-48)
- *One of those listening was a woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message. When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. ‘If you consider me a believer in the Lord,’ she said, ‘come and stay at my house.’ And she persuaded us.”* (Acts 16:14-15)
- *“At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family were baptized.”* (Acts 16:33)
- *“Crispus, the synagogue ruler, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard him believed and were baptized.”* (Acts 18:8)
- *While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples and asked them, ‘Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?’ They answered, ‘No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.’ So Paul asked, ‘Then what baptism did you receive?’ ‘John's baptism,’ they replied. Paul said, ‘John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus.’ On hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.* (Acts 19:1-6)

After his conversion, Ananias told Paul that the first thing that he needed to do was be baptized.

- *You will be his witness to all men of what you have seen and heard. And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.”* (Acts 22:15-16)

In our modernized, "comfort zone Christianity," we do, sad to say, tend to take God's commandments far too lightly. As Chuck Colson points out, ***“Most Westerners take baptism for granted, but for many in the world the act requires immense courage. In countries like Nepal, it once meant imprisonment. For Soviet or Chinese or Eastern bloc believers, it was like signing their own death warrant.”***²

² ¹ "The Body: Being Light In Darkness" by Charles Colson and Ellen Santilli Vaughn, 1992, Word Publishing, page 137

Add Water as a Public Declaration

Adding Water is a public identification with the Death, Burial, and Resurrection of Christ Jesus

In water baptism, a Christian is bodily submerged in water as a public identification with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Our old sinful nature symbolically dies when we go under the water.

- *“What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? 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. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin--because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.” (Romans 6:1-11)*

When we come up out of the water, we come up as a new person in Christ Jesus. We are no longer controlled by sin, but we are alive in Christ Jesus! Dead to sin, alive in Christ!

When you accepted Jesus as your Lord and Savior, you became a new person. Your old life and your old sinful ways are gone.

- *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!” (2 Corinthians 5:17)*

Were you selfish?	That's dead.
Were you manipulative?	That's dead.
Were you bitter?	That's dead.
Were you an alcoholic?	That's dead.
Were you addicted to drugs or even nicotine?	That's dead.
Were you sexually immoral?	That's dead.
Did any other sin control your life before?	That's dead.

Baptism is an outward expression of something that has already occurred in you at salvation.

- It is your public confession to your friends, family, and all who know you that you are now a new creation in Christ Jesus.
- It is your public commitment to forsake the ways of the world.
- It is your public declaration that you are dead to the sins of the past.

- *“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.”* (Galatians 2:20)

Adding Water declares that you are forgiven of all your sins

- *“In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead. 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, 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.”* (Colossians 2:11-14)

The New King James Version of the Bible interprets Colossians 2:14 in this way:

- *“having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.”*

Handwriting: A word commonly used when a monetary obligation was acknowledged by a debtor. It means a signed confession of indebtedness, bond, or self-confessed indictment. In Ephesians, it is used of the Mosaic Law.³

- *“And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.”* (Ephesians 2:15)
- *“None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.”* (1 Corinthians 2:8)

Adding Water Is a Public Declaration of Your Belonging

- A wedding ring is an outward sign that a person belongs to another through the act of marriage.
- A military uniform is an outward sign that a person belongs to a particular branch of service.
- Similarly, baptism is an outward sign that identifies us as belonging to the family of God.
- *“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. 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. Now the body is not made up of one part but of many.”* (1 Corinthians 12:12-14)

Here again, Baptism is an outward picture of something that has occurred within. No matter what your background or ethnic origin, by one Spirit, we are baptized into one body. Baptism

³ Jack W. Hayford, Litt.D., Spirit Filled Life Bible NKJ (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1991), p. 1816

represents your adoption into the family of God. You now belong to Christ's family and are members of His body. When new believers are baptized, we are welcoming them into our family. We are saying, "This person is now one of us!" As a family, we can love, support, care, and pray for one another.

The Living Bible describes it this way in Ephesians 2:19 *"You are members of God's very own family ... and you belong in God's household with every other Christian."* That's right; this is where you belong, in the household of God.

So as you make the decision to be baptized, we rejoice with you as you publicly declare, ***"I am now a new creation in Christ Jesus, the old has passed away and all things are new! I am now baptized into the Body of Christ Jesus. I am part of His family!"***

So Why Add Water?

1. Adding Water is a public identification with the Death, Burial, and Resurrection of Christ Jesus.
2. Adding Water declares that you are forgiven of all your sins.
3. Adding Water Is a Public Declaration of Your Belonging.
4. Believers in the Bible Added Water by Being Baptized.
5. Jesus Commands Us to Just Add Water

So, if for no other reason, you should add water to your Christian experience and be baptized just because Jesus told you to. *"If you love me, you will obey what I command."* (John 14:15)

Back to Acts 8:26-40: When Phillip shared the gospel with the Ethiopian eunuch, the Ethiopian immediately asked, "Here is water, what is hindering me from being baptized?"

Let me ask you. What is hindering YOU from being baptized?

After Jesus appeared to Saul on the road to Damascus, Ananias asked Saul / Paul a question that we need to all ask ourselves today

"And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name."

(Acts 22:15-16)