

KNOW *WHAT* YOU BELIEVE

LEADERS EDITION

(Part 1 of *Know Series*)



Calvary Chapel Teens 2023 - 2024

WHY THE “KNOW SERIES”

Christians, particularly young Christians know little, if anything of the scriptures in an age of information where the resources of the libraries of history are a click away. Surveys show us while Americans tend to revere the Bible, many, if not most are unfamiliar with what it teaches.

In a guest article to The Christian Post Richard Ross Professor of Student Ministry and J.M. Price Chair of Religious Education at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary wrote the following:

Youth ministry researcher Chap Clark says, “I’m convinced that the single most important area where we’ve lost ground with kids is in our commitment and ability to ground them in God’s Word.”

As a result, Barry Shafer says, “The church today, including both the adult and teenage generations, is in an era of rampant biblical illiteracy.”

Duffy Robbins takes this one step further when he says: “Our young people have become incapable of theological thinking because they don’t have any theology to think about. ... And, as Paul warns us, this ... leaves us as ‘infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching’ (Ephesians 4:14).”

At the conclusion of the National Study of Youth and Religion, lead researcher Christian Smith reported:

“Even though most teens are very positive about religion and say it’s a good thing, the vast majority are incredibly inarticulate about religion. ... It doesn’t seem to us that many teens are being very well-educated in their faith traditions.”

Duffy Robbins considers possible causes when he says: “The church in general, and youth ministry in particular, has demonstrated more of an appetite for goose bumps than for God’s truth, more interest in how our young people feel than how they think. ... But where are Christian teenagers learning basic tenets of the Christian faith? And if they don’t understand those basic truths or doctrines ... then how does that impact their long-term faith? I’m concerned that too much of our teaching is reduced to what can ... be communicated by a worship band illuminated by stage lighting and well-placed candles.”

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The basic tenants of the Christian faith have been lost among the activities of Children's Bible Clubs, videos, youth group car washes and fundraisers, all night lock-ins, ski trips, youth band practice and contemporary topical teachings, most of which tell us to stay away from bad things:

Morality has replaced theology,

Activity has replaced accountability,

Relevance has replaced relationships.

Don't hear any of that the wrong way!

These are not bad things. The church I am from practices all of these. And more! Yet there remains amazing Biblical illiteracy and a disconnect from real living faith.

Emphasizing morality, practice and behavior over belief, in our opinion, is part of what has contributed to the crisis of faith facing many young people in the church today.

Although we are involved in all of these things you might expect from an active church, including teaching line by through the entire Bible, in our church services, Sunday School and Youth Gatherings, we discovered there was a huge gap in understanding what Christians actually believe historically, and even how one actually becomes a Christian.

Surveys are showing that Christian students entering their first year of college know less about the Christian faith than in previous decades.

Throughout the history of the church many movements have informed their children, youth and converts through classes, requirements and catechisms. Increasingly over the last one hundred years in the church, the responsibility of teaching doctrine and basics of the faith has been relinquished by families and given to the church. The church in turn has been relinquishing her responsibility and in many cases having little or no system to teach the fundamentals of the faith to new believers or families. The result has been disastrous!

Charles Spurgeon had a catechism he wrote to assist families in learning the basics of the Christian faith.

I am persuaded that the use of a good Catechism in all our families will be a great safeguard against the increasing errors of the times, and therefore I have



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compiled this little manual from the Westminster Assembly's and Baptist Catechisms, for the use of my own church and congregation. Those who use it in their families or classes must labor to explain the sense; but the words should be carefully learned by heart, for they will be understood better as years pass. May the Lord bless my dear friends and their families evermore, is the prayer of their loving Pastor. C. H. Spurgeon

The “Know Series” similar to Spurgeon’s observations grew out of this recognized need in a multi-year curriculum following the school calendar. It is perfect for Sunday School classes for 6,7,8 or 9th grade, high school students and even college and young adult classes. Although the curriculum could be used in an adult class, it is designed with teen and high school students in mind. The format is simple to understand and use, modern in its references and applications, and vital to the future of vibrant Christianity in emerging generations.

Many Christian traditions, but few in the Evangelical / Pentecostal traditions, have what is known as ‘Confirmation.’ Confirmation was / is a rite of passage where a child turns into an adult, or young adult, and affirms, or confirms for first time the faith of their upbringing. Often the student goes through a year-long, or longer study of the scriptures and of their particular church tradition. Having learned the scriptures, doctrines, traditions and practices of the church, they are asked if they are affirming their faith to be their own. Unfortunately even this process is no guarantee that one actually embraces the faith, as much of this can become a tradition in and of itself. It does however provide a basis of understanding for future generations.



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THE TWO YEAR “KNOW SERIES”

The “Know Series” is not intended to take the place of regular worship, or to usurp activities integral to a church’s calendar or practice, yet is designed to be a “once in a lifetime” exploration of what Christians believe, whether it is reasonable to believe these things, and how to live them out in a post-modern and post-Christian society.

It is not necessary to do all three years as each stands by alone. In our opinion the most important is “Year One: Know What You Believe” followed by “Year Two: is “Know Why You Believe” which repeats many of the topics in Part One, “Know What You Believe,” but explores the reasons Christians believe these things and the reasonableness of all of the topics taught. Year Three “Know Your Bible” is designed to help the students see the Bible is one continuous story from Genesis to Revelation. The original design for a three year program was to use it for grades 7-9, one section for each year. Having done the first two, the third section can be invaluable, but will not be available unless sections 1 or 2 have been completed.

YEAR ONE: “Know What You Believe” covers all area of core Christian belief, including several sessions on the Bible as the Word of God, the structure of the Bible, Jesus, God the Father, the Holy Spirit, Prayer, Conversion, The Attributes of God, The Resurrection, Discipleship, The Church, and special seasonal lessons on origin of Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter, Mothers Day, including teaching topics on Serving, Giving, and Attitudes.

YEAR TWO: “Know Why You Believe” includes sessions on “Does God Exist?” “What is God Like?” “What the Bible Says About Itself” “The Impact of the Bible on World Cultures” “Does the Bible Contradict Itself?” “Jesus in History” “Prophecies: History in Advance” “Science and the Bible?” “Jesus the Only Way?” “The Problem of Evil” “World Religions and Cults” “Comparative Salvation” “Stewardship” as well as exploring national and religious holidays during the school year calendar.

Every session in each Series contains a resource page with books, articles, videos, links and outside resources for further study and application.



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RESOURCES AND LESSONS PLANS

EACH LEADER SESSION INCLUDES:

- 1) OBJECTIVE for the week
- 2) Classroom Teaching Outline
- 3) Red Sections indicate blank fill-in spaces for Student Handbook

GOALS

A) Knowledge

“Apply your heart to instruction and your ears to words of knowledge.” Proverbs 23:12

Seeking knowledge, particularly knowledge about God, His Word, His Commands, His Ways is simply good for us. “The Know Series” is designed to give us knowledge of what Christians believe, have always believed, why we believe and how to apply it to our lives. By the end of our time together students should have a robust knowledge of the scriptures. Any knowledge acquired about the Lord and His Word will pay huge dividends in our lives and future.

B) Experience

“After that whole generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation grew up, who knew neither the LORD nor what he had done for Israel.” Judges 2:10

Knowledge is important, and so is an experience with the Lord. We are working with students, many of whom were brought up with faith. They are now entering a time in their lives where their faith needs to be their own, not that of their parents, that of their teachers or their peers. They need their own experience with God! If they are not saved, they need to encounter God for themselves. Often parents believe their children are right with God when they have never in their hearts or minds ever committed to Christ.

C) Discipleship

“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, and teaching them to obey everything I have



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commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Matthew 28:18-20

A disciple is one that has accepted the Person of Jesus Christ, believes the Word of God, conforms their life to the pattern of scripture and actively spreads the Word of God. A disciple is not just a passive learner, but an active participant.

D) Baptism

"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, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Matthew 28:18-20

Baptism is one the first things we can do to show God, Ourselves and Others that we have made the decision to trust God for our life and salvation. "The Know Series" offers all students the opportunity to be baptized at the completion of the year. Students choosing baptism will therefore demonstrate a clear understanding of what they are doing having spend time learning the Christian faith.



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THE MOST IMPORTANT RESOURCE: YOU!

In the context of leading “The Know Series” you are so much more than a teacher.

You are a Teacher. In that you are imparting information, making difficult things easy to understand and helping bring application of the material to real living.

You are an Example. It is important for you to own the material yourself, and to live out what you know in front of your students.

You are a Leader. That means you have followers, you need to be out in front, doing these things before others. You go first.

You are a Mentor. That means you’ll need to take some time with some of your students one on one to explain things deeper and to attend to their particular needs or questions.

You are a Follower. That means you need to demonstrate teamwork with your co-workers and submission to God.

You are a Steward. God has given you your life, your experience, some students, a curriculum and time. Recognize that it is God that has you in this position at this time.

Right now you’ve got an amazing opportunity and serious call.

You’ll do great. Do it as on to the Lord!

“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.... Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men.” Colossians 3:17, 23



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SOURCES, DISCLAIMERS AND ATTRIBUTIONS

In a Series like the Know Series the basic assumption is that there is no new information and very little that is original. This is especially true in the first series, “Know What You Believe” and becomes decreasingly so as we move through “Know Why You Believe” and “Live What You Know.” If there are any original thoughts still out there on the topics of doctrine and apologetics (defense of the faith) they certainly are few and far in between. Most of what needs to be said in these areas has been said, yet needs to be communicated in updated language to every generation.

It would be nearly impossible to say anything new about the historic Christian faith. It can be said in new ways, and hopefully we have reworked what has been said and believed for centuries, into an accurate, understandable and meaningful way for students in the 21st century. No footnotes or attributions appear anywhere in the “Know What you Believe” material, although there are extensive resources included at the end of each session and at the end of “Know Series.” It is not believed that there are any direct quotes from any outside source material, although admitting that there is nothing ‘new’ conveyed in the studying of these basic Christian doctrines and truths. If there is any similarity to the writings and quotes of others it is because the truths contained have come by way of years of study and assimilation of these truths. Any resemblance to anybody else’s work is strictly unintentional and the result of things stuck somewhere in the recesses of memory from study.

I’m relatively certain that some of this material owes a great debt to Randy Emelo. Randy served as volunteer training new believers in our newly planted church. Some of his material has been incorporated into this manual. Some is probably modified, some might have slipped through unchanged. In either case, Randy has the gift of making difficult to understand things simple. Kudos!

Similarly in the second section “Know Why You Believe” there are few if any footnotes or attributions, that is because as far as we can tell nobody has been directly quoted, except for a few long dead that have no copyrights on them. Since the second section being a discipline known as apologetics is a constant work of research and writing, the assimilated material in this section is most definitely from sources outside of ourselves. Again, most of that material is also a progression of passing down information from one researcher to the next making the ideas and concepts presented almost indistinguishable from those who have originated the ideas. Every effort in these cases has been made to give proper attribution. This section does have extensive resources given at the end of each session and at the end of the course. Every effort has been made to attribute ideas to their proper sources and it is hoped that students and instructors alike will become familiar with these sources, purchase their materials, assimilate the ideas and concepts



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themselves and pass them on to others as they have become part of your thinking and reasoning.

It should be noted that much of this material has been taught for years at Calvary Chapel in Eastern Connecticut and has been corrected, reformed, added to by many teachers and leaders through the years. This material has been worked and reworked over the years, therefore any similarity to the original contributors found in the material is acknowledged.

Because it seemed impossible to footnote every reference, similarity, re-worked idea in the material a complete bibliography rather than footnotes is found at the end of the material and throughout the recommended readings and resources for each section.



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FIRST DAY OF CLASS LEADERS **PREPARATION AND INTRODUCTION**

(Sections not in Student Manual are Printed in Red)

(I) BREAK THE ICE

Introduce yourself and have various students introduce themselves. Simple, but informative introductions are best. You might want to tell a bit about yourself and give briefly your Christian testimony. Hopefully you will see many of the students week after the week for the next year. Much of what happens in that time will be relational as well as instructional

Have the students tell where they come from, what school they are in and something about themselves others might not know. (Interests, hobbies, something about their family, etc.)

(II) INTRODUCING YOUR STUDENTS TO THE CLASS OVERVIEW

These lessons are designed so that Jr. High, Middle School students 7-8th graders attending these Sunday School sessions over the next two years will: “Know What They Believe” and Know Why They Believe.”



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YEAR ONE:

"Know What You Believe"

We don't think we can make students believe anything, but we do want them to know what Christianity is and what Christians believe. The choice is up to them. After having learned these truths they will at the end of the year be asked whether they want to be baptized and follow after Jesus Christ.

In our Children's Sunday School Program Grades 1 – 6 the kids went through the entire Bible from Genesis to Revelation. The first year of the "Know Series" sums up Christian teaching and doctrine. Again while they may not *believe* these things when they leave your class they will at least *know* what Christianity is and what it teaches.

YEAR TWO:

"Know Why You Believe"

In these sessions we will answer questions for the students like, "Is Jesus the Only Way? Why?" "Is the Bible Really God's Word?" "What about Other Religions." In the first year we will teach them what Christianity is and what Christians believe, in the second Jr High year we will help them understand why Christians believe these things.

(III) ENCOURAGE YOUR STUDENTS TO PARTICIPATE IN OTHER FELLOWSHIP AND GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO THEM

There are other groups, classes, fellowships and evangelistic events designed for students their age going on regularly. Stay informed and encourage them to participate as much as they can in other fellowship, growth and evangelistic meetings.

(IV) PASS OUT THE ENCLOSED DIRECTORY GETTING THE NAMES, ADDRESSES AND E-MAIL ADDRESSES OF ALL YOUR STUDENTS. USE THIS TO PRAY REGULARLY FOR THEM THROUGHOUT THE WEEK.

(VI) USE THE TABLE OF CONTENTS TO REVIEW THE MATERIAL YOU WILL BE COVERING THOURHGOUT THE YEAR

Each student should have a copy of the "Table of Contents." Review with them what they will be learning, covering whatever you think is important as you explain it.

Notice the weeks that they will not be in class and point that out as well.



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BE SURE TO GIVE PLENTY OF TIME AND OPPORTUNITY FOR ANY QUESTIONS THEY MIGHT HAVE.

Make a photo-copy of the directory and turn it in to the church office. This will be used to communicate events and relevant information to the students. Whenever you get a new student, gather the same information passing it on to the church office, so we can continue to serve the Christian and non-Christian students the Lord brings our way.

(V) PRAY FOR ALL THE STUDENTS, THEIR FAMILIES, THEIR SCHOOLS, THEIR WITNESS AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.

Pray for each by name the first day out loud before dismissing them, using the directory if you need to. Get to know their names. Pray for them and send them out into the world as witnesses for Jesus Christ.

Be creative in your prayer times. Try having each student pray for the person to his or her right and have them pray for their school as well. This will get easier (hopefully) as the year goes on. Don't expect too much from them the first couple of weeks, but as you grow together, your prayer times should be able to grow as well.

ALWAYS HAVE PENS AND PENCILS ON HAND SO THE STUDENTS CAN FILL IN THE BLANKS, LEARNING WHILE WRITING WILL AID THE PROCESS. EVERYTHING THAT IS IN RED IN YOUR MANUAL SHOWS UP SIMPLY AS AN BLANK UNDERLINE _____ IN THEIR MANUALS.



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CLASS DIRECTORY (Be sure these are added to church database)

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE / TEXT _____

EMAIL / MESSENGER _____

SOCIAL MEDIA CONTACTS

SCHOOL / GRADE _____



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Lesson 2	Sept 24	Christians Believe in the Bible Part 1	4-13
Lesson 3	Oct 1	Christians Believe in the Bible Part 2	14-17
Lesson 4	Oct 8	Christians Believe in the Bible Part 3	18-22
Lesson 5	Oct 15	Christians Believe in God the Father	23-27
Lesson 6	Oct 22	Christians Believe in Jesus the Son	28-31
Lesson 7	Oct 29	Christians Believe in God the Holy Spirit	32-35
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Lesson 13	Dec 10	Christians Believe in Sin & Forgiveness	57-60
Lesson 14	Dec 17	Christians Believe You can Know You are Saved	61-63
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Lesson 26	Mar 24	Christians Believe in Having a Devoted Life	116-120
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Lesson 34	June 2	Christians Believe in Water Baptism	167-170
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Lesson 36	June 16	Year in Review	
Lesson 37	June 23	Party / Baptism	



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CLASS # 1

**“Know What You Believe”
INTRODUCTION WEEK
FORMAT OF CLASS AND LESSON PLAN**



OBJECTIVE: This week we will spend some time getting to know each other, a little about our own personal stories and history, as well as looking at the overview for the year it will take us to complete all our lessons. We'll get a general overview of classes, material and format.

The **KNOW SERIES** is a two year study In two parts: Part 1: *“Know What You Believe”* teaches what essential Christianity is and what Christians Believe Part 2: *“Know Why You Believe”* reviews the why behind the belief. We'll look at the reasons Christians believe the essential teachings of the Scriptures.

A) The first week let's spend time getting to know each other, what schools we go to, where we live.

B) Talking at this point is good! Let's find out who we are!

- 1) Your favorite / worst school subject. Why?**
- 2) Your absolute most favorite spot on earth.**
- 3) Your favorite color.**
- 4) Something we wouldn't know about you unless you told us (where you were born, your father is an Elvis impersonator, whatever...)**

C) Last year many of the students completed the section of material called “Know What You Believe.” In that class they covered the basics of what Christianity is and what Christians believe.



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D) YOUTH GROUP. Let's look at our Youth Group opportunities throughout the year.

E) Any Christian stories in the room? After us leaders tell you our God story is there anybody else that would like to share theirs?

G) Let's review the schedule for the school year together. We are going to explore why Christianity is true and help us be able to answer any questions that people ask us. We will be answering the following questions:

- 1) Why Believe in God anyway and what is God like?**
- 2) How do I know the Bible is God's Word?**
- 3) How do I know Jesus is God's Son?**
- 4) Did the prophecies of the Bible come true? What about future prophecies?**
- 5) Why is Christianity the Only Way?**
- 6) What about Science and the Bible?**
- 7) What about Miracles?**
- 8) What about other religions?**
- 9) What about evil? Did God create it?**
- 10) Did Jesus rise from the dead? (We'll spend a few weeks on this and Easter related topics in the spring.)**
- 11) We'll have a session on where Thanksgiving came from**
- 12) We'll also have a session on the meaning of Christmas.**
- 13) The last two teaching sessions we will talk about salvation, how to be saved and how to lead somebody to the Lord.**
- 14) We'll have an opportunity to be baptized at the completion of the course.**

H) Bring Bibles! Bring journals to keep notes! If you need a Bible we'll get you one!



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I) End every session with prayer. Last year we asked everybody to pray for the person to their left and their school. After awhile they figure this out and sit appropriately. At that point you might want them to pray for the person to their right.

J) This will be the guiding scripture for our time together this year:

1 Peter 3:15 (New Living Translation)

Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if you are asked about your Christian hope, always be ready to explain it. But you must do this in a gentle and respectful way. Keep your conscience clear. Then if people speak evil against you, they will be ashamed when they see what a good life you live because you belong to Christ.

If you still have time after you've done all of this in your first session you can discuss the following questions based on the above verse from first Peter:

1. What did Peter instruct his readers to be prepared for? (3:15)
2. How were these readers to give the reason for their hope in Christ? (3:15)
3. Why are believers to keep a clear conscience? (3:16)
4. How prepared are you to explain your hope in Christ?
5. What can you do to be better prepared for discussions about Christ with non-Christian friends?



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LESSON # 2

CHRISTIANS BELIEVE THE BIBLE



OBJECTIVE: The presented class covers various aspects related to the Bible, its definition, inspiration, historical accuracy, scientific evidence, and more. The class begins by defining the Bible as God's self-revelation to humanity, portraying the story of humanity's relationship with God and focusing on the Person and work of Jesus Christ. It delves into the Greek origin of the term "Bible," highlighting it as a unique and divine book, a revelation of God's words and voice.

The class explores key passages from the Bible, such as Hebrews 1:1-3 and 2 Timothy 3:16-17, to emphasize the progressive revelation of God's Word and its inspiration for teaching, correction, and righteousness. It delves into characteristics of the Word of God, its power, and reliability. The class also addresses the question of the Bible's accuracy, utilizing passages such as 2 Peter 1:20-21 and Titus 1:2 to argue for the divine origin and reliability of the Scriptures.

The class underscores the unity and historical accuracy of the Bible, with references to archaeological discoveries that support its claims. It discusses scientific evidence mentioned in the Bible, including astronomy, oceanography, and biology, arguing that these accurate descriptions provide evidence of divine authorship. The class contrasts evolutionary theories with biblical creation, touching upon historical and biological perspectives. It concludes by asserting that the Bible has withstood tests in areas like science, history, unity, and prophecy, demonstrating its authenticity and divine inspiration.



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PART ONE

(I) DEFINITION

(A) The Bible is God's **REVELATION** of Himself to man, His creation. The Bible forms one **CONTINUOUS STORY**; the story of humanity in relation to God. From the beginning to the end, the Bible has one great theme; the Person and work of Jesus Christ.

(B) The word Bible is taken from the Greek word 'biblos' simply meaning **BOOK**. It is 'the' book; there is no other book like it as we shall see. It is the revelation of God and the words and voice of God Himself!

(II) READ HEBREWS 1:1-3

(A) In these verses we see that God's Word is a progressive revelation.

(B) Various (or Sundry) Times

(C) Diverse manners (many ways)

(D) Times past

(E) Unto the fathers by the prophets

(F) In these last days

(G) Unto us by/in/His Son (The express image of His person).

(III) READ 2 TIMOTHY 3:16,17

(A) What portion of scripture is inspired by God? **ALL OF IT!**

(B) The work "inspired" in this verse means "God Breathed." It's as if God spoke it himself. (See Genesis 2:7)

(C) What is God's Word profitable for?

(IX) CHARACTERISTICS OF THE WORD OF GOD

(A) The Word of God is **LIVING AND ENDURING**.
"1 Peter 1:23, 25"



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(B) The Word is **LIVING AND ACTIVE**
"Hebrews 4:12"

(C) The Word is **WILL NEVER PASS AWAY**
"Luke 21:33"

(D) The Word is **THE POWER OF GOD UNTO SALVATION**
"Romans 1:16"

(X) HOW CAN I KNOW THE BIBLE IS WITHOUT ERROR?

(A) 2 Peter 1:20-21 assures us that God's Word is **FROM GOD** and
THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT.

(B) There are over 300 prophecies in the Old Testament fulfilled during the life and ministry of Jesus. If we analyze the probability of one person fulfilling just eight, the probability would be 1 in 10 with 17 zeros after it! We can understand why Peter declares that the written word of prophecy is more sure.

(C) 2 Timothy 3:16 tells us that all Scripture finds its origin in God.

(D) Titus 1:2 tells us that God cannot lie.

(E) What does this say about the reliability of God's Word?

The following article entitled, "*The Bible: the Word and the Voice of God*" is there to help you grow in greater confidence concerning the Word of God, it's value, accuracy and inspiration.

Article taken from www.bible.ca (used with permission)

"THE BIBLE: THE WORD AND VOICE OF GOD"

The Bible is the world's all-time best selling book. About 2.5 billion copies have been printed which are available in over 700 languages. Although the Bible has enjoyed such vast distribution and attention, it is read relatively little. Perhaps part of the reason the Bible is so neglected is the many doubts people have about this unique book. If the Bible came from the mouth of God, then the scriptures are believable when they speak of Jesus Christ and accurate when they touch the realm of science.

(I) IS THE BIBLE INSPIRED?:



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(A) *“All scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work .”(2 Timothy 3:16,17)*

(B) **The word inspired; (theopneustos) in the original Greek language literally means ‘God breathed’.** When the Bible claims to be inspired, we understand therefore, that it came from the mouth of God. It is God-breathed, inspired.

(C) **But a skeptic will say, Everyone knows the Bible was written by men!** The book of I Corinthians, for example, was written by a man named Paul. After all, the very first verse bears his name as the author. In reply to this we answer: Yes, I Corinthians was written by Paul. Notice however, what Paul said in chapter 14 verse 37: *“the things I write to you are the Lord's commandment.”*

(D) **Paul knew the source of his writings** and understood that he was like a pen in the hand of Almighty God. We must not view the Bible as the word of Paul, Peter, or Jeremiah but rather as the message God revealed through these men just as it is written in Jeremiah 1:9, *‘Then the Lord stretched out his hand and touched my mouth, and the Lord said to me, behold. I have put my words in your mouth’.*

(E) **The Bible writers were not like news reporters giving their personal interpretation of events they eye-witnessed, but were divinely guided** as 2 Peter 1:20-21 says, *‘Above all, you must understand that no prophesy of scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophesy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.’*

(F) **God and man worked together in writing the scriptures.** However, in this work, God is the author who dictated the message, and man is the writing instrument. Men were guided or inspired to write the exact message God wanted recorded in the Bible. Now that we have a fundamental understanding of inspiration and the origin of the Bible, let us look at some evidence of inspiration.

(II) UNITY OF THE BIBLE

(A) **Have you ever discussed some controversial subject with a small group of your friends.** Chances are, not everyone agreed with your personal point of view! Do the guests of a typical television talk show ever agree? Very rarely! In contrast, 40 different men wrote the 66 books of the Bible and discuss hundreds of controversial subjects, yet they all agree. What makes this even more remarkable is that the 40 Bible writers lived as much as 1600 years apart.



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(B) Imagine their cultural differences! Despite this great potential for contradiction between Bible writers, there is harmony and unity in the Bible's message. That is because the Holy Spirit was directly guiding each of the 40 men to write the Bible.

One scholar has noted that the unity found in the Bible is vastly superior to the sacred writings of all other world religions, including Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Bahai, and Islam. Anyone who has ever studied these writings must admit they are jumbles of disjointed material, without order, continuity or unity of any kind. The 66 books of the Bible on the other hand, weave a unified message from Genesis to Revelation.

Consider the high degree of unity found within the Bible. There is nothing like this, not even approaching this, in any other collection of sacred books of any world religion . The direct inspiration of God is what sets the Bible apart from all other books. The unity of the Bible is a powerful argument for divine inspiration because even a small group of men can rarely come to any degree of unity on even one topic.

(III) THE INSPIRATION PROCESS

- (A) The Holy Spirit
- (B) 40 Different Writers
- (C) Unified Message of the Bible

(IV) DIVINE PROPHECY

(A) Prophecy is foretelling an event in such detail before it happens so as to necessarily require divine guidance. The Bible is a book containing hundreds of detailed prophecies. There are, for example, well over 60 distinct prophecies in regard to our divine Savior Jesus Christ. Here is a sample of just 10 prophecies that foretold the crucifixion of Christ. **Not only were the predictions made 1000 years before Christ came from heaven to earth, but they were made over 500 years before crucifixion was first used anywhere in the world as a form of capitol punishment!** Crucifixion didn't exist when the prophecies were made.

PROPHECY	EVENT	FULFILLMENT
Psalms 41:9	Betrayed by friend (Judas)	John 13:18-27
Zech. 11:12-13	Betrayed for 30 pieces of silver	Matthew 26:15
Psalms 22:18	Clothes gambled for	Matthew 27:35
Psalms 22:16	Hands and feet nailed to cross	Luke 23:33
Psalms 34:20	No bones broken when killed	John 19:36
Zechariah 12:10	Side pierced	John 19:37
Isaiah 53:12	Prayed for his murderers	Luke 23:34
Psalms 22:1	His forsaken cry	Matthew 27:46
Isaiah 53:9	Buried in rich man's tomb	Matt 27:57-60
Psalms 16:10	Raised before body decayed	Acts 2:31



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(D) Today, so many Bible cities, names and events have been unearthed through archaeology that the Bible is considered the single most important historical document in existence. Many lost cities have been located using the Bible as a road map. So startling and impressive are some of the finds that one archaeologist was compelled to say, They are digging up Bible stories! The shovel and spade have confirmed that the historical information of the Bible is both accurate and reliable. If only more would realize that the Bible is not only a guide to the fallen ruins of ancient cities, but also a road map to the glorious city of Heaven!

(VI) SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE

(A) Although the Bible is not primarily a book of science, it does contain numerous scientific facts. We laugh at the scientific knowledge of just a hundred years ago. If man alone were the author of the Bible, we would expect to find many such humorous errors contained in it. However, if we examine the scientific data of the Bible and find it to be accurate to present day knowledge, then we have powerful evidence for divine authorship.

The scientific facts we are about to examine are not only accurate, but were revealed thousands of years before man discovered them for himself. We will look into the fields of astronomy, oceanography and biology. Unlike the sacred writings of other world religions, the Bible does not contain any errors typical of the time in which it was written. The Bible is the only book on earth inspired by God. All others are of human origin regardless of any claims they might make.

(VII) EVOLUTION VERSES BIBLICAL CREATION

(A) If a fair maiden kisses a frog which instantly changes into a handsome prince, we would call it a fairy tale. But if the change takes 40 million years, we call it evolution. We often hear that science has proved evolution. Nothing could be further from the truth. You see, people often confuse scientific fact with scientific theory. Current scientific theory does conflict with creation. But the facts of science do not! Surprised?

(B) The theory of evolution says that over millions of years simple life forms (one celled creatures) slowly evolved into complex life forms (fish), and that one kind of animal evolved into another kind (ape to man). Genesis, on the other hand, says that all life forms were created in six, 24 hour days. Genesis chapter one states 10 times that life forms can only reproduce after their own kind (ape to ape, man to man). All the observable facts of science strongly support the Bible's claim that it is impossible for one kind to reproduce a different kind. The truth is, there is absolutely no tangible evidence to support evolution from any area of science, just theory and a wild imagination!



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(C) Why then do evolutionists reject creation? Quite simply, they are faithless, godless men who find it impossible to believe in a Creator as powerful as Genesis describes! Sure, they might admit to some vague higher life form, but not one so powerful as to create all things in only six days! It has never occurred to them that when God created the universe in six short days, He may have been taking His time? There are many scientists who fully accept Biblical creation.

(D) But if the Bible is wrong and man actually did evolve in small graduations over a long period of time, we should find ample fossil evidence of links in intermediate stages of transition. For decades, evolutionists have searched for fossils of these links to prove biblical creation wrong. Although millions of fossils have been unearthed, not even one missing link has ever been found. Has it ever occurred to you that this is the reason why scientists refer to them as missing links?

(VIII) CHARLES DARWIN VERSES EVOLUTION

(A) Even Charles Darwin realized the difficulty missing links gave his theory. Darwin wrote in his book, *Origin Of The Species*, "Why, if species have descended from other species by fine graduation, do we not everywhere see innumerable transitional forms? Why is not all nature in confusion, instead of the species being, as we see them, well defined?" The reason we have never found any missing links is quite simple. Darwin's theory of evolution is wrong!

(IX) "EXPERTS TRICKED" FOR 40 YEARS!!

(A) In 1912, Arthur Woodward announced to the world that he had found the missing link between ape and man. Piltdown Man, as he called it, consisted of a jaw bone and a piece of skull which he estimated to be over 500,000 years old! However, in 1953, when the new fluoride dating process was applied to the bones, scientists were shocked to learn that the jaw bone was less than 50 years old. Only then did they notice that the bones and teeth had been treated with salts and filed to make them appear old and primitive. In other words, Piltdown Man was a complete fraud. Take note Bible student! The world's foremost scientific experts had been fooled for over 40 years! (Read I Corinthians 3:18-20.) For almost a half century, evolutionists pushed Piltdown Man in the faces of Bible believers as scientific proof we evolved from apes! Some proof!

(X) LEADING EVOLUTIONIST REJECTS LUCY

(A) Through the years several other missing links have been found, but today, every one has been discarded. Even the famous Lucy skeleton, discovered in 1974 by Donald Johanson, has now been discarded as a missing link by several of the world's leading evolutionists including Richard Leakey! He and others view Lucy as nothing more than an extinct ape. In spite of over 100 years of intensive searching, the only place you will find a missing link today is in the colorful imagination of an evolutionist. Museums



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certainly don't have any! In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. (Gen. 1:1)

(XI) BIOLOGY AND THE BIBLE

(A) Darwin's theory of evolution quickly influenced every area of scientific thinking.

Around 1905, biologists began to teach many new theories that are today rejected as false. For example, they taught (contrary to the Bible) that the different races of men did not have a common ancestor (i.e., Adam and Eve) but evolved from several isolated sources. You can imagine how these theories greatly fueled racial tensions. Everyone has heard how Adolf Hitler ruthlessly exterminated some 12 million people during the second World War. But few realize that Hitler's personal views of racial superiority and fascism had their foundation firmly rooted in Darwin's theory of evolution. Hitler methodically identified what he believed to be the inferior races of man. He then set out to exterminate these evolutionary misfits in the same way a pure bred dog breeder will cull unwanted puppies from a litter. After all, if man randomly evolved by chance from animals, then man is nothing more than an animal! Hitler merely took the theory of evolution to its logical end. today we face a greater genocide. 30 million babies have been aborted because women are told by evolutionist doctors that the 10 week old fetus in their womb is not yet human!

(B) Today, biologists have proved through bio-genetics that all races of men have a common ancestor.

Even though many biologists still reject the Biblical creation story in Genesis, they must now admit that the Bible was right all along when it said, God made from one man, every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth (Acts 17:26). The theory of evolution and Bible creation are two opposing views of man's origin. Only one is right. You cannot accept both !

(XII) ASTRONOMY AND THE BIBLE

(A) The earth is round! You may be surprised to learn that the Bible revealed that the earth is round Job 26:10, Prov. 8:27, Isaiah 40:22, Amos 9:6. Today, we chuckle at the people of the fifteenth century who learned sailing because they thought they would fall over the edge of the flat earth. Yet the Bible revealed the truth in 1000 B.C.!

(B) The earth is free floating in space! Another remarkable truth found in the Bible is that the earth is free floating in space. Job 26:7 says, God hangs the earth on nothing.

(C) Compare this to how other ancient cultures contemporary with Job believed the earth was suspended:

- (1) Held up by a man named Atlas
- (2) Held up by four elephants



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(3) On a turtle swimming in a sea of milk

(XIII) OCEANOGRAPHY AND THE BIBLE

(A) Matthew Maury (1806-1873) is considered the father of oceanography. He was bed ridden during a serious illness and asked his son to read a portion of the Bible to him. While listening, he noticed the expression paths of the sea in Psalms 8:8. Upon his recovery, Maury took God at his word and went looking for these paths. We are indebted to his discovery of the warm and cold continental currents. His book on oceanography is still considered a basic text on the subject and is still used in universities. Maury used the Bible as a guide to scientific discovery. If only more would use the Bible as a guide in their personal lives!

(XIV) THE HYDROLOGIC CYCLE AND THE BIBLE (Job 36:27-28)

(A) The water cycle was not fully understood until about 30 B.C. by a Roman engineer named Marcus Vitruvius. Yet every aspect of the water cycle was fully revealed to mankind in 1600B.C.! The Bible's description is in perfect harmony with modern science. Vitruvius was 1600 years too late!

(XV) WE HAVE PUT THE BIBLE TO THE TEST IN FOUR AREAS:

- (A) Scientifically accurate facts .
- (B) Historically confirmed by archaeology.
- (C) Unity of overall theme.
- (D) Genuine divine prophecy .



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LESSON # 3

CHRISTIANS BELIEVE IN THE BIBLE PART 2



OBJECTIVE:. The class provides a comprehensive overview of the Bible, starting with its structure and composition. It highlights that the Bible consists of 66 books, divided into the Old Testament with 39 books and the New Testament with 27 books. The languages of origin are mentioned as Hebrew for the Old Testament and Greek for the New Testament, emphasizing that the English version is a translation. The need for a New Testament is explained through Hebrews 8:9-10, comparing the foundations of the Old and New covenants.

The importance of the Holy Spirit in understanding the Bible is discussed. It's noted that those without the Spirit may struggle to comprehend God's message, while the Holy Spirit serves as a teacher and a reminder of truths. The class introduces a method of studying the Bible using a passage from Mark 4:35-41, breaking down questions based on who, what, where, when, why, and the impact of the passage's truths on one's life.

The fundamental divisions in Scripture are outlined, separating the Old Testament into sections like historical preparation and prophecy, and the New Testament into categories including the Gospels, Acts, Epistles, and Revelation. Basic themes of the Bible are also explored, ranging from God's role and the concept of sin to the focus on Jesus, redemption, salvation, and the spiritual realm. The class concludes with a call to prayer, encouragement for fellowship, and inviting non-believers to church.



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Discussion of last week's meeting, readings and events.

(I) AN OVERVIEW OF THE BIBLE

(A) The Bible contains **66** books: **39** in the Old Testament and **27** in the New Testament.

(B) The books are divided into **chapters** and **verses** for reference.

(C) The Old Testament was written in the **Hebrew** language.

(D) The New Testament was written in the Greek language. (Remember that our English Bible is a translation from these original languages.)

(E) Did God make a mistake? Why the need for a New Testament? What's wrong with the Old one? Read Hebrews 8:9-10.

(1) The foundation of the Old covenant with Israel was man's obedience to it (v 9).

(2) The foundation of the New covenant is God's action on behalf of man. (Note the "I wills" in verse 10). It was enacted by the shed blood of Jesus Christ. (Luke 22:20)

(II) BECAUSE THE BIBLE IS INSPIRED WE NEED THE HOLY SPIRIT TO HELP US UNDERSTAND IT

(A) The man without the Spirit does not understand the things that come from God (1 Corinthians 2:14)

(B) The Holy Spirit (Greek - Parakletos - One called along side to help) will teach us and help us to remember (John 14:26)

(III) ONE METHOD OF STUDYING GOD'S WORD

(A) There are many others.

(B) Turn to Mark 4:35-41 and read the passage. Now, answer the following questions from these verses:

(1) Who?



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- (2) What is said about the person or people involved?
- (3) What does the person (people) say?
- (4) What? What is happening? What are the events; in what order?
- (5) Where? Where is the event taking place? Where are people going to or coming from?
- (6) When? When did the events take place?
- (7) Why? Why is this story included? Why here in the text? Why does one person say what he does? etc.
- (8) Wherefore? So what?
- (9) What difference would it make in my life if I were to apply this truth?

(IV) BASIC DIVISIONS IN SCRIPTURE

(A) Old Testament: Historical preparation for the Messiah.

- (1) 5 books by Moses - Beginning history/law
- (2) Joshua/Esther - Messiah preparation history
- (3) Job - Poetic & Wisdom
- (4) Isaiah to Daniel - Major prophets
- (5) Hosea to Malachi - Minor Prophets

(B) New Testament: Manifestation - Consummation of Christ.

- (1) The Gospels: The life & works of Christ
- (2) Acts: The further works of Christ through the Apostles.
- (3) The Epistles: Church doctrine
- (4) Revelation: Jesus' rule established

(V) BASIC THEMES OF SCRIPTURE

(A) God - Genesis 1:1; Hebrews 1:1; Psalms 103

(B) Man/Creation - Genesis 2:7



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- (C) Sin - 1 John 2:15-17; Romans 3:23
- (D) Jesus - John 5:39, Luke 24:7, 44, 45
- (E) Redemption - Romans 3:24; 10:8-13
- (F) Salvation - Romans 1:16; 10:8-13
- (G) Satan/spirit world - Genesis 3:1, 2 Corinthians 4:4
- (H) Prophecy - 2nd coming of Jesus - Revelation 4:20
- (I) Man - Beginning and final end - John 3:17-19

Pray for one another. Invite some unsaved people to church and see what God does.



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LESSON # 4

CHRISTIANS BELIEVE THE BIBLE PART 3



OBJECTIVE: This lesson titled "Christians Believe the Bible Part 3" delves into the Bible's self-referential statements and explores its significance as a divine document. It starts by highlighting key verses like II Timothy 3:16, which asserts that all Scripture is divinely inspired and valuable for guidance, and I Peter 1:24, emphasizing the eternal nature of God's Word. The class emphasizes that the Bible's prophecies are not mere human interpretations but are communicated through the Holy Spirit.

The course also addresses life's fundamental questions through biblical perspectives on origins, identity, purpose, and destiny. It then presents reasons for believing in the Bible, including the testimony of the Holy Spirit, Jesus' endorsement of Scripture, fulfilled prophecies, and the steadfast witness of the apostles even unto death. Additionally, the Bible's historical and archaeological accuracy is examined as a testament to its reliability.

The class outlines intriguing facts about the Bible, such as its diverse authorship over 1600 years in multiple languages, encompassing various literary genres while maintaining consistency. It explores the Bible's widespread impact, surviving persecution and inspiring countless artistic creations. The course concludes by providing a foundational overview of the Bible, highlighting its divine origin, unifying theme of Jesus Christ, and its division into the Old and New Testaments, each contributing to the story of the nation of Israel and the person of Jesus, respectively.



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Discussion of last week's meeting, readings and events.

(I) WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT ITSELF

- A. "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." (II Tim. 3:16)
- B. "All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the Word of the Lord stands forever." (I Pet. 1:24)
- C. "Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophets own interpretation, for prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." (II Pet. 1: 20-21)
- D. Read Psalm 19. Some things we can learn about God by looking at nature. However, other things (salvation, the fall, etc.) we can learn only as God "reveals" them through His Word.

(II) THE BIBLE ANSWERS LIFE'S BASIC QUESTIONS

- A. Where did I come from? (Origins)
- B. Who am I? (Identity)
- C. Why am I here? (Purpose)
- D. What happens when I die? (Destiny)

(III) WHY WE BELIEVE THE BIBLE

- A. **Witness of the Holy Spirit**
 - 1. Read John 14:26.
 - 2. Internal Witness
- B. Witness/Testimony of Jesus
 - 1. "Think not that I have come to destroy the law or the prophets, I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill." (Matt. 5:17)
- C. Witness of the **fulfilled prophecy**.
- D. Witness of the Apostles



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1. Would you die for a lie? Here is a listing of how the original Apostles died still claiming that they had witnessed the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the fulfillment of Biblical prophecy.
 - a. Peter - Crucified upside down
 - b. Andrew - Crucified
 - c. Matthew - The Sword
 - d. John - Natural, but put in burning oil for his faith and banished to the island of Patmos.
 - e. James, son of Alphaeus - Crucified
 - f. Philip - Crucified
 - g. Simon - Crucified
 - h. Thaddaeus - Killed by arrows
 - i. James, brother of Jesus - Stoned to death
 - j. Thomas - Spear thrust
 - k. Bartholomew - Crucified
 - l. James, son of Zebedee - The sword
2. The Apostles were witnesses of the resurrection:
 - a. Luke 24:48; John 15:27; Acts 1:8; Acts 10:41; Acts 13:31; I Cor. 13:15; Acts 3:15; Acts 4:33, I John 1:2
- E. The witness and history of archaeology.

(IV) SOME FACTS ABOUT THE BIBLE

- A. Written over a period of **1600** years.
- B. Over **40** authors (written by kings, prisoners, shepherds, doctors, Rabbi, tax collector, military, generals, fisherman, politician.)
- C. Written in different places.
- D. Written in three languages: **Greek, Hebrew, Aramaic.**
- E. The Bible deals with every major issue in life and speaks of many controversial issues; yet always without contradiction!
- F. The Bible contains history, law, medical information, poetry, songs, biographies, correspondence.



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G. No book has been published more than the Bible. The Bible is translated into well over 3,000 languages.

H. No book has ever survived through more persecution and criticism than the Bible.

I. The Bible has been the inspiration for more music, art, stories, plays, than any book in history.

J. The Bible is the accurate historical document of its time.

K. The Bible is the accurate archeological book of its time.

L. The Bible is a book of prophecy. Three hundred concerning Christ's first coming, and 300 concerning His second coming, and hundreds concerning history.

1. The Bible says that it may be discarded if the prophecies it contains fail: Deut. 18:20-22; 13:1-4; Matt. 7:15-20.

M. The Bible has changed the lives of millions even though criticized by hundreds.

(V) **BASIC REVIEW OF THE BIBLE**

(A) What is the Bible?

(1) The Bible is **God's Word** revealed to us.

(a) Heb.1:1-2

(2) The Bible has many writers but only one author.

(b) II Tim. 3:16

(B) Why has God given us His Word?

(1) II Tim. 3:17

(C) The Bible is broken into two major sections.



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(1) Old Testament

(a) 39 Books

(2) New Testament

(b) 27 Books

(3) 66 Total Books

(D) The Bible has one single unifying theme.

(1) **Jesus Christ**

(E) The Old Testament is an account of a nation. (Israel)

(F) The New Testament is an account of a Man. (Jesus Christ)

(G) The Nation was founded and nurtured of God to bring the Man into the world.



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LESSON # 5

CHRISTIANS BELIEVE IN GOD THE FATHER



OBJECTIVE: While the Bible takes a presuppositional stance, the class also highlights various evidences for God's existence outside of scripture. It touches upon humanity's historical belief in a higher being, the necessity of a creator for creation, and the intricate design of the universe that points to an intelligent designer.

Moving on to the nature of God, the class describes Him as an invisible spirit, yet personal, with biblical references such as John 1:18 and John 4:24. The subsequent section delves into the attributes of God, showcasing His omnipresence, omnipotence, omniscience, eternality, holiness, righteousness, mercy, immutability, truthfulness, and awe-inspiring nature. The course also explores God's personal characteristics, including His knowledge, emotions, and will.

The class details the recipients of God's love, including His Son and the world, with references like Matthew 3:17 and John 3:16. The demonstration of God's love is discussed through passages like Romans 5:8, and the ways individuals experience His love on a daily basis are explored, referencing Romans 5:5.

Lastly, the course addresses the Father's role within the Godhead, highlighting His authority without diminishing the significance of the Son or the Holy Spirit. Verses like John 6:38 and 14:16 are used to illustrate this concept. Through a combination of scriptural references and thoughtful analysis, the class aims to deepen students' understanding of the existence, nature, and characteristics of God, fostering a comprehensive exploration of these theological concepts.



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(I) THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

The Bible does not seek to prove the existence of God. The fact that there is a God is assumed throughout the Scriptures. The first verse of the Bible, Genesis 1:1, is an example. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." God's existence is presented as a statement of fact that needs no proof. The man who says there is no god is called a fool in Psalms 14:1.

(A) However, even apart from the Bible, there are certain evidences for the existence of God.

(B) Mankind has always believed in a universal being.

(C) Creation must have a creator. The universe could not originate without a first cause.

(D) The wonderful design which we see in creation demands an infinite designer.

(E) Since man is an intelligent being, the creator must have been of a much higher order in order to create him.

(II) THE NATURE OF GOD

(A) God is Spirit - He is invisible

(B) John 1:18

(C) John 4:24



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(D) God is a person. Personal names are used in reference to Him.

(E) Exodus 3:14

(F) Exodus 6:3

(III) THE ATTRIBUTES (CHARACTERISTICS) OF GOD

(A) Omnipresent (present everywhere) - Jeremiah 23:23, 24

(B) Omnipotent (all powerful) - Jeremiah 32:17, 27

(C) Omniscient (all knowing) - Job 34:21

(D) Eternal (everlasting) - Deuteronomy 33:27

(E) Holy (free from all defilement, absolutely pure) - Isaiah 6:3

(F) Righteous or just (always does what is right) - Psalms 145:17

(G) Merciful (doesn't give us what we deserve) - Deuteronomy 4:31

(H) Immutable (He doesn't change) - Malachi 3:6

(I) Truthful (cannot lie) - Titus 1:1, 2



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(J) Awesome (inspiring awe which is reverent wonder tinged with fear) - Deuteronomy 7:21

(IV) PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS ASCRIBED TO HIM

(A) Knowledge - Isaiah 55:8-10

(B) Emotions - Genesis 6:6

(C) Will - Joshua 3:9, 10

(V) THE LOVE OF GOD

(A) What is the very essence of His nature?

1 John 4:7, 8, 16

(B) Whom does God love?

(1) God loves His Son - Matthew 3:17

(2) God loves the world - John 3:16

(C) How did God demonstrate his love for us? - Romans 5:8

(D) How do I experience God's love each day?

(1) Romans 5:5



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(VI) THE FATHER IS GOD

The Father holds the place of authority within the Godhead. He is not more important than the Son or the Holy Spirit, but authorizes their ministries (John 6:38, 14:16)



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LESSON # 6

CHRISTIANS BELIEVE IN JESUS THE SON



OBJECTIVE: This class delves into the assertion that Jesus embodies all the attributes of God. It begins by exploring various attributes of divinity exhibited by Jesus, including omnipresence (Matthew 28:18-20), omnipotence (Matthew 28:18), omniscience (John 16:30), eternity (John 1:1, 2), holiness (Acts 3:14), and creatorship (Colossians 1:16, 17). The class then shifts to examining how Jesus is referred to as God in the New Testament, referencing passages like John 10:29-33, John 20:28, and Hebrews 1:8.

Another key topic is the uniqueness of Jesus, described using the Webster's definition of "unique" as being the sole instance of its kind. This uniqueness is seen in his virgin birth prophesied in Isaiah 7:14 and fulfilled in Matthew 1:18-25, his sinless life (Hebrews 4:14-16), his death, resurrection, and the spiritual power bestowed upon believers through his victory over death and sin.

The class further emphasizes Christ's desire to live through his followers (Galatians 2:20), and how Jesus' life was the only one that pleased the Father (Luke 9:35). The importance of faith in Jesus as the sole way to the Father is emphasized, along with the call for intercessory prayer among believers.



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(I) JESUS POSSESSES ALL THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

(A) Omnipresent - Matthew 28:18-20

(B) Omnipotent-Matthew 28:18

(C) Omniscient-John 16:30

(D) Eternal John 1:1, 2

(E) Holy-Acts 3:14

(F) Creator-Colossians 1:16, 17

(II) JESUS IS CALLED GOD IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

(A) John 10:29-33

(B) John 20:28

(C) Who is called God in Hebrews 1:8?

(III) THE UNIQUENESS OF JESUS

(A) Webster's definition of unique "being the only one".



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(B) Unique in His virgin birth:

(C) Prophesied in Isaiah 7:14

(D) Fulfilled in Matthew 1:18-25

(E) Unique in His sinless life-Hebrews 4:14-16

(F) Unique in His death:

1) Why did He die? 1 Peter 3:18

(2) He was separated from the Father for the first time-Matthew 27:46.

(G) Unique in His resurrection from the dead (**can not be disproved**).

(1) It is recorded in the Bible-Matthew 28;

(2) Mark 16; Luke 24; John 20, 21

(3) Witnessed by over 500 people-1 Corinthians 15:1-8

(4) Because of His power over death and sin, we too have spiritual power in our lives. (1 Corinthians 15:12-14, 56, Romans 5:10)

(5) The Christian faith rests on His resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:17)



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(IV) CHRIST DESIRES TO LIVE HIS LIFE THROUGH HIS CHILDREN

(A) Galatians 2:20

(B) What do I receive in exchange for my life before Christ?

(C) How do I allow Christ to live through me?

(V) THE ONLY LIFE THAT PLEASED THE FATHER WAS THE SON'S

(A) Luke 9:35

(B) The only way to the Father is through Jesus, John 14:6. There is only one life that pleased the Father - Jesus.

Pray for one another.



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LESSON #7

CHRISTIANS BELIEVE IN GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT



OBJECTIVE: This class delves into the nature and attributes of the Holy Spirit. It begins by emphasizing the Holy Spirit's personhood, using Greek pronouns to address Him and highlighting terms like "Helper," "Comforter," and "Counselor" to describe His role. The class explores how the Holy Spirit performs actions only a person can do, such as teaching, calling individuals to service, convicting of sin, and leading.

Further, the Holy Spirit's sensitivity to human attitudes and actions is discussed. The class covers various ways in which humans can interact with the Holy Spirit, including lying, grieving, quenching, and insulting. The attributes of God are attributed to the Holy Spirit - omnipresence, omnipotence, omniscience, eternality, and holiness.

The Holy Spirit's distinctness within the Trinity is emphasized, as demonstrated in passages like Matthew 28:19 and Luke 3:21-22. The transformative impact of the Holy Spirit upon believers is highlighted: regeneration, indwelling, meeting needs, and the seal of salvation.

The class also offers a summary of the doctrine of the Trinity, demonstrating its implicit presence in the Old Testament and explicit affirmation in the New Testament. The concept of one God in three persons, each with identical attributes, is explored through metaphors like the space and the tripartite nature of humanity.

The conclusion underlines the idea that understanding the Trinity may be challenging, but it is a matter of faith.



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(I) THE HOLY SPIRIT: HIS DIETY AND PERSON

- (A) The Holy Spirit is a person: In Greek, personal pronouns are used - He, Him, etc.
- (B) Greek (parakletos) - "One called alongside to help", Helper, Comforter, Counselor.
- (C) In John 14:16, who is the "He" referring to?

(II) HE DOES THE THINGS ONLY A PERSON CAN DO

- (A) He teaches and helps us to remember. John 14:26.
- (B) He calls men to service (He speaks). Acts 13:2.
- (C) He convicts us of sin. John 16:8.
- (D) He leads. Romans 8:13,14.

(III) BEING A PERSON HE CAN BE EFFECTED BY OUR ATTITUDES AND ACTIONS

- (A) We can lie to Him. Acts 5:1-3.
- (B) We can grieve Him. Ephesians 4:30.
- (C) We can quench Him. 1 Thessalonians 5:19.
- (D) We can insult Him. Hebrews 10:29.

(IV) THE HOLY SPIRIT POSSESS ALL THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

- (A) Omnipresent. Psalms 139:7-10.
- (B) Omnipotent. Luke 1:35.
- (C) Omniscient. John 14:26; 16:12,13.
- (D) Eternal. Hebrews 9:14.
- (E) Holy. Romans 1:4;



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(F) Creator. Job 33:4; Psalms 104:30.

(V) HE IS DISTINCT FROM THE FATHER AND THE SON

(A) Matthew 28:19; Luke 3:21-22

(VI) WHEN WE ARE SAVED:

(A) He regenerates us (makes us spiritually alive). John 3:3-8; Titus 3:4-7

(B) He indwells us. 1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19

(C) He brings satisfaction for our needs. John 4:13-14; 7:37-39

(D) He is the seal of our salvation (Security of Ownership). Ephesians 1:13-14

(E) The Holy Spirit is recognized as God in Acts 5:3,4 and is active upon man, convicting him of sin and guiding the believer into all truth. John 16:7-11.

Summary of the Trinity

1. Genesis 1:1 - The word for God in Hebrew is Elohim.

Singular word for God - El; dual tense - Elah; three or more - Elohim (uniplural noun).

2. The doctrine of the Trinity is not explicit in the Old Testament, but it is implied:
Genesis 1:26; 3:22; 11:7.

3. It is explicit in the New Testament:
Matthew 3:16, 17; 1 Peter 1:2; Jude 20, 21.

4. The Bible teaches there is only one God:
Deuteronomy 4:39; 2 Samuel 7:22; Isaiah 43:10.

5. Even creation implies the doctrine of the Trinity:
Space - length, width, depth in 1 space;
Man - body, soul, spirit in one man.

In the Holy Trinity we have one God manifested (revealed) to us in three distinct persons, all having the same attributes and all being called God. It is difficult to understand totally; we must accept it by faith.



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1 x 1x 1=1

Besides even if the pieces came together to function as a watch (which certainly would never happen) somebody still made some very complicated mechanisms that each interact with each other in order to make functioning clock. Anything created requires a creator.



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LESSON # 8

CHRISTIANS BELIEVE IN THE TRINITY: THE ONE TRUE GOD



OBJECTIVE: This class explores the concept of the One True God, drawing parallels between Christianity and its Jewish roots. The origin of Judaism is traced to Abraham, highlighting his pivotal role in shifting from a pluralistic society of multiple gods to the revelation of the ONE TRUE GOD, YHWH. This transition marked a turning point from a plethora of explanations for the universe to the recognition of a personal God with a distinct identity and personality.

The class delves into biblical references that reinforce the idea of one true God while explaining that although God is singular, He possesses a plural nature. The notion of "compound unity" is elucidated, demonstrated through phrases like "Let 'US' make man in 'OUR' image" and the term "Elohim," signifying God in the plural form.

The class also elaborates on the references to Christ and the Holy Spirit as God. Verses are presented that identify Jesus as God through titles, attributes, and worshipped acts. Similarly, the Holy Spirit is shown to be called God and plays a significant role in believers' lives.

The importance of understanding the concept of One True God is emphasized, as misinterpretation of this doctrine can lead to theological errors and confusion. The worship of Jesus throughout the New Testament is explored, emphasizing the reverence He receives and the role He plays in the Godhead.

Overall, the class underscores the theological significance of the one true God in Christianity and its implications for believers' faith and worship.



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THE ONE TRUE GOD

Christianity has all of its roots in the Old Testament religion of the Jews. It is quite accurate to say that Christianity is actually Jewish.

To fully understand the Jewish religion and its God, YHWH, we must understand something of their background. The first real Jew was Abraham. The Bible informs us that Abraham's father was actually an idol worshipper (Joshua 24:2). All of civilization at this time worshipped a variety of different gods. There were sun-gods, rain-gods, gods of luck, gods of fate, and even unknown gods. In brief, anything that could not be explained by the human mind was attributed to a god. We will call this condition of many gods "pluralistic society." By this we mean that there were many explanations for the universe, meaning and existence and a corresponding god for each answer. This is the environment that Abraham lived in.

Abraham was a regular sort of guy, there was nothing "special" or different about him other than the fact that God decided to "reveal" Himself to him (Gen. 12:1). The fact of the matter is that God "chose" to "reveal" Himself to Abraham for no reason at all except that He decided to. The calling of Abraham was a total act of grace, yet Abraham did choose to follow. When God did choose to reveal Himself, He did so as the ONE TRUE GOD, a personal God with a name and personality, thereby making all other "gods" false and the product of the unaided imagination man. He was YHWH, the King of kings and Lord of lords.

It is important to realize that we also live in a pluralistic society and that God has chosen to "reveal" Himself to us as the ONE TRUE GOD. May this cause us to be grateful and thankful!

(I) **THE ONE TRUE GOD**

- A. The Bible continually reinforces the idea of ONE TRUE GOD.
 - 1. "Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord."
(Deut. 6:4)
 - 2. "First...last...besides me there is no God."
(Isa. 44:6-8)
 - 3. "There is none else, there is no God beside me."
(Isa. 45:5)
 - 4. "There is one God."
(I Tim. 2:5)
 - 5. There is no other God but one.
(I Cor. 8:4)



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(II) ALTHOUGH GOD IS ONE, HE IS PLURAL IN NATURE

(the idea is one of "compound unity.")

- A. "Let 'US' make man in 'OUR' image, after 'OUR' likeness."
(Gen. 1:27-28)
- B. Elohim = God in the plural.
- C. Father speaking, Servant and Spirit mentioned.
(Isa. 42:1; Mt. 12:18)
- D. All three members at the same time.
(Isa. 48:16-17)
- E. Baptismal formula.
(Matt. 28:19)
- F. Family is a singular word for a plural reality

(III) CHRIST IS REFERRED TO AS GOD

- A. "The Word of God...the Word was God."
(Jn. 1:1, 18)
- B. God calls the Son God.
(Heb. 1:8)
- C. YHWH attributed to the Son the New Testament.
(Ps. 24:7; I Cor. 2:8)
- D. "Unto us a child is born...mighty God, everlasting Father."
(Isa. 9:6)

(IV) SPIRIT IS REFERRED TO AS GOD

- A. Never grieve God's Spirit.
(Eph.4:30)
- B. Holy Spirit is called God.
(Acts 5:3-4)
- C. The Lord is that Spirit.
(II Cor. 3:17)

(V) WHY IS THIS SORT OF THING EVEN IMPORTANT?

- A. If there isn't one true God than one god is as good as another.



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B. Wherever this concept is misunderstood, another plan of salvation follows.

1. Jews, because of their misunderstanding of Deut. 6:4 crucified Jesus Christ.
2. Cults always deny this doctrine.
3. It answers theological questions; thereby, making the Bible a unity.
4. We can know we are right and this is important.
5. $1 \times 1 \times 1 = 1$

(VI) JESUS AS GOD REVEALED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

CREATOR

Job 33:4-----Heb. 1:8-12

Gen 1:1-----Jn. 1:3

FIRST AND LAST

Isa. 48:12-----Rev. 1:17

Isa. 44:6-----Rev. 2:8

Isa. 43:10-----Rev. 22:13

SAVIOR

Ps. 106:21---Jn. 4:42

Is. 43:3-----Acts 5:31

ROCK

I Cor. 10:4- Deut. 32:4

II Sam. 22:32-I Pet. 2:6-8

I AM (EGO EIMI)

Exo. 3:13-14

Jn. 8:58

Jn. 13:19, 18:5

JUDGE

Joel 3:12-----II Tim. 4:1

Gen. 18:25-----II Cor. 5:10

Rom. 14:10

KING

Jer. 10:10---Matt. 2:1-6

Isa. 44:6----Lu. 23:3

Ps. 47:8-----Jn. 19:21

SHEPHERD

Isa. 40:11---Jn. 10:11

Ps. 100-----Heb. 13:20

Ps. 23-----I Pet. 5:4

LIGHT

Isa. 60:20---Jn. 1:9, 8:12

Ps. 27:1-----Lu. 2:32

Gen. 1:2 - The Spirit in creation.



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- Ps. 139:7-10 - The Spirit is present everywhere.
- Heb. 9:14 - The Spirit is eternal.
- Acts 5:4 - The Spirit is called God.
- Jn. 20:28 - Thomas says "My Lord and my God", Jesus doesn't argue.
- I Jn. 5:20 - His Son, Jesus Christ, this is the true God.
- Jn. 1:1 - The Word was God.
- Jn. 1:3 - All things were made through Him.
- Matt. 18:20 - For where two or more are gathered...Jesus is everywhere.

(X) WORSHIP OF JESUS

The Bible demands that only God be worshipped, yet throughout the New Testament
Jesus
is worshipped and receives worship:

Matt. 2:2 "and asked, 'Where is the One who has been born King of the Jews? We saw
His star
in the east and have come to worship Him'."

Matt. 9:18 "While He was saying this, a ruler came and knelt before Him and said, 'My
daughter
has just died. But come and put your hand on her and she will live'."

Matt. 14:33 "Then those who were in the boat worshipped him, saying, 'Truly You are
the Son
of God'."

Matt. 15:25 "The woman came and knelt before Him. 'Lord, help me!' she said."

Matt. 20:20 "Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Jesus with her sons and kneeling
down,
And asked a favor of Him."

Matt. 28:9 "Suddenly Jesus met them. 'Greetings,' He said. They came to Him, clasped
His feet
and worshipped Him."

Lu. 5:8 "When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, 'Go away from me,
Lord; I
am a sinful man!'"

Lu. 24:52 "Then they worshipped Him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy."



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Jn. 5:23 "that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, Who sent Him."

Jn. 9:38 "Then the man said, 'Lord, I believe,' and he worshipped Him."

I Cor 1:2 "To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy, together with all those everywhere who call on the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ - their Lord and ours."

Phil. 2:10 "that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,"

Heb. 1:6 "And again, when God brings His firstborn into the world, he says, 'Let all God's angels worship Him'."



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LESSON # 9

THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD



OBJECTIVE: This class delves into the nature of God, focusing on His greatness, sovereignty, and goodness. It begins by emphasizing the greatness of God, drawing from various Psalms that magnify His attributes. The class highlights God's incomprehensibility, pointing out that it encompasses what He knows, does, and His very essence. His incorruptibility is discussed, rooted in His holiness and eternality. Additionally, the class underscores God's incomparability, rooted in His unique position and power, citing verses that demonstrate His ability to answer prayers and save humanity.

Moving on to the nature of God's sovereignty, the class explains His powerful control over all things. His position, power, and pleasure are cited as bases for His authority over creation. The class explores God's providential care, delving into His ways, wisdom, work, and will, demonstrating His involvement in the course of events.

Lastly, the class delves into the goodness of God. His unique and unlimited power is explored, evident in His creation, control over time and events, and care for His people. Miracles like Isaac's birth, Job's experiences, and the resurrection of Jesus are presented as demonstrations of God's unlimited power. His power is experienced by believers in various aspects of their lives, including salvation, suffering, supply of needs, inner strength, and sharing the gospel.

Overall, the class provides a comprehensive overview of the multifaceted nature of God's greatness, sovereignty, and goodness.



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(I) NATURE OF GOD: HIS GREATNESS

A) THE GREATNESS OF GOD - Psalm 8:1, 9; 83:18; 96:1-6; 145:1-3,5-6; 150:2

B) HE IS INCOMPREHENSIBLE! - Judges 13:17-18, 22; Isaiah 9:6; Psalm 145:3

1) It refers to what He **KNOWS** - Job 42:3; Psa. 139:1-6; Isaiah 28:29

2) It refers to what He **DOES** - Isa. 25:1; Romans 11:33

3) It refers to who He **IS** - Psalm 145:1-3

C) HE IS INCORRUPTIBLE!

1) Because His name is **HOLY** - Psalm 38:4; 97:12; 99:3, 5, 9; 111:9; 145:21

2) Because His name is **ETERNAL** - Psalm 72:17; 182:11-12; 135:13

D) HE IS INCOMPARABLE!

1) Because of His **POSITION** - Ephesians 1:19-23; Philippians 2:9-11; Hebrews 1:1-4

2) Because of His **POWER** - Psalm 66:1-4; 68:32-35

a) To answer prayer - John 14:13-14; 15:16; 16:23-26

b) To save people - John 1:12; Acts 4:12; I Peter 1:3-5

(II) THE NATURE OF GOD: HIS SOVEREIGNTY -

A) HIS POWERFUL CONTROL OF ALL THINGS

Based on three things:

1) His **POSITION** - Psalm 97:1; 99:1-3; 163:19; 113:1-6; Daniel 4:17, 25, 34-35

2) His **POWER** - Isaiah 43:13; Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 1:3

3) His **PLEASURE** - Psalm 115:3; 135:5-6; Proverbs 16:4 cf. Ezekiel 18:23, 32

B) HIS PROVIDENTIAL CARE OF ALL THINGS



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Involves four things:

- 1) **His WAYS** - Isaiah 55:8-9; Romans 11:33 cf. Genesis 58:19-21
- 2) **His WISDOM** - Daniel 2:20-23
- 3) **His WORK** - Philippians 1:6; 2:13 cf. Acts 15:18
- 4) **His WILL** - Ephesians 1:11

(III) THE NATURE OF GOD: HIS GOODNESS

(A) HIS POWER IS UNIQUE!

(No one can do what God can do!) - Psalm 71:19; 77:13-14

- A) **Seen in His CREATION** - Isaiah 44:24; 45:5-7, 18
- B) **Seen in His CONTROL** of time and events - Isaiah 44:6-8; 46:5, 9-11
- C) **Seen in His CARE** of His people - Isaiah 43:1-13

(B) HIS POWER IS UNLIMITED!

(There is nothing too hard for Him to do!) - Psalm 145:1-6, 18-13

- A) **EMPHASIZED** in the miraculous birth of Isaac –Genesis 18:11-14
- B) **EXPLAINED** in God's answer to Job - Job 48:9, 15, 19; 41:1, 18; 42:1-6
- C) **EXERCISED** in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead - Ephesians 1:19-21
- D) **EXPERIENCED** in the life of the believer (in five ways)
 - 1) In the **SALVATION** we receive - Matthew 19:23-26
 - 2) In the **SUFFERINGS** we encounter - II Cor. 12:9-10
 - 3) In the **SUPPLY** of our needs that we face –Philippians 4: 11-13, 19
 - 4) In the **STRENGTH** we need in the inner man –Isaiah 40:28-31; Ephesians 3:14-21
 - 5) In the **SHARING** of the gospel - Acts 1:8; 4:31-33



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LESSON # 10 THANKSGIVING STUDY

OBJECTIVE: The introductory class on Thanksgiving begins by engaging students in a discussion about their knowledge of Thanksgiving. The instructor then delves into the concept of holidays, providing a comprehensive definition that encompasses various types: national, religious, and universal.

The class explores different examples of each type, including Veterans' Day, Christmas, and New Year's Day. The focus then shifts to the specific holiday of Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving is singled out as a unique Christian holiday of American origin, originating from the Pilgrims who expressed gratitude for the provisions from God. The class is then presented with the history of Thanksgiving, detailing its origins with the Pilgrims in Plymouth, Massachusetts, their interactions with Native Americans, and establishing of a day of public Thanksgiving.

The narrative also highlights the efforts of Mrs. Sarah J. Hale, who played a pivotal role in making Thanksgiving a national holiday. The class explores the contemporary observance of Thanksgiving, with a focus on the Thanksgiving dinner, traditional foods like roast turkey and pumpkin pie, as well as parades and football games. The class concludes with discussion questions prompting students to reflect on the historical context and religious aspects of Thanksgiving. The instructor encourages the class to spend time reading and discussing relevant scriptures that emphasize the act of giving thanks. Overall, the introductory class provides students with an in-depth understanding of the history, significance, and traditions associated with Thanksgiving.



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ARTICLE ON THANKSGIVING

Thanksgiving Day is observed each year as a national holiday on the fourth Thursday of November (between November 22nd and 28th).

The Historical Events that Created the Holiday

Thanksgiving Day originated with the Pilgrims who settled in Plymouth, Massachusetts in the early 1600s. The Pilgrims were devout Christians who wanted to separate themselves from the established Church of England. In 1620 they emigrated to America to build their own church in a new land so that they could have freedom of worship.

Shortly after the Pilgrim colony was established in Plymouth the English settlers received help from friendly Indians. Samoset, an English-speaking chief from Maine who was visiting Massasoit, a local chief friendly to white men, built a bridge of friendship between the Pilgrims and the neighboring tribe. He also introduced them to Squanto, an Indian who would later be described by the Pilgrim leader as "a special instrument sent of God for their good, beyond their expectation." Prior to the arrival of the Pilgrims, Squanto worked with English traders as an interpreter and even visited England on two occasions. Upon returning from his second visit, he discovered that his whole tribe had died due to a plague. Living with a neighboring tribe, he "adopted" the English Pilgrims and taught them how to survive in the new land.

In April of 1621 Squanto taught the Pilgrims how to plant corn the Indian way, and by harvest time in the autumn they realized they had more than enough corn to get them through the second winter. As their leader, Governor William Bradford declared that a day of public Thanksgiving should be observed in October. The Indian chief Massasoit and ninety of his men not only came for the festivities, they hunted for much of the food: five deer and more than twelve turkeys. The Pilgrims provided the vegetables from their harvest and baked many kinds of fruit pies. Opening the celebration was a prayer by William Brewster, thanking God for providing for all their needs and for the friendship of the Indians. In addition to the meals there were contests of foot races, wrestling and shooting (gun and bow). And, in the end, this initial day of thanksgiving lasted for three days.

In April of 1623 the annual planting of corn was once again underway, but a dry spell in the month turned into a drought that lasted from the third week in May until the middle of July. Conditions were desperate, and according to a Pilgrim named Edward Winslow, they chose "to humble ourselves together before the Lord by fasting and prayer. To that



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end, a day was appointed by public authority, and set apart from all other employments." The results were immediate and phenomenal.

In the words of Winslow, But, O the mercy of our God who was as ready to hear, as we were to ask! For though in the morning, when we assembled together, the heavens were as clear and the drought as like to continue as it ever was, yet (our exercise continuing some eight or nine hours) before our departure, the weather was overcast, the clouds gathered on all sides. On the next morning distilled such soft, sweet and moderate showers of rain, continuing some fourteen days[!] and mixed with such seasonable weather, as it was hard to say whether our withered corn or drooping affections were most quickened or revived, such was the bounty and goodness of our God!

Governor Bradford phrased it this way in his account, Of Plymouth Plantation, "And He was pleased to give them a gracious and speedy answer, both to their own and the Indians' admiration that lived amongst them. . . .For which mercy, in time convenient, they also set apart a day of thanksgiving." It is possible that this second day of thanksgiving was observed on July 30, 1623.

The Historical Process that Shaped the Holiday

Long before there was a "National" holiday the various colonies in America observed a day of thanksgiving. The Massachusetts Bay Colony had their first thanksgiving day in 1630 and frequently in following years until 1680, when this observance became an annual festival. Connecticut set aside a day for giving thanks in 1639, and by 1641 it was an annual event. In the colony of New Netherlands (today, the state of New York) the Dutch observed such a day in 1644 and occasionally thereafter.

During the Revolutionary War against England in the 1770s the American Continental Congress appointed at least one day of thanksgiving each year (except for 1777) and encouraged the governors in the different states to observe it in their region. George Washington, the first President of the United States, issued a proclamation that the entire nation set aside November 26, 1789 as a day for prayer and for giving thanks to God. In 1795 Washington appointed another day of thanksgiving, and twenty years later President James Madison did the same thing at the conclusion of the War of 1812 with England.

But the establishment of a national religious holiday of giving thanks to God on one special day each year was largely the result of the efforts of one lady: Mrs. Sarah J. Hale. From 1827 when she was editor of the Ladies' Magazine in Boston, she argued for a national day of thanksgiving. When her magazine consolidated with Godey's Lady's Book, her opportunities for influence increased since this grew to a circulation of 150,000, the largest periodical in America. Writing personal letters to the governors of every state and to the President, she persuaded many of the governors to set aside the last Thursday in November for Thanksgiving. Her efforts for a national holiday finally paid



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off when she persuaded President Abraham Lincoln, in the midst of the Civil War, to establish such a day. In her final editorial (September 1863) she wrote these words:

Then he said unto them, Go your way and eat the fat and drink the sweet and send persons unto them for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is holy unto the Lord; neither be ye sorry, for the joy of the Lord is your strength. – Nehemiah 8:10

Thus commanded the inspired Leader of the Jews when they kept the "Feast of Weeks"; in a time of national darkness and sore troubles shall we not recognize that the goodness of God never faileth, and that to our Father in heaven we should always bring the Thanksgiving offering at the ingathering of the harvest?

Wise lawgivers and great patriots have acknowledged the salutary effect of appointed times for national reunions which combine religious sentiment with domestic and social enjoyment; thus feelings of benevolence are awakened and gratitude to the giver of all the blessing is seen to be the great duty of life. Owing to the different economy of different churches among Protestant denominations, except the Christian Sabbath, all our religious commemorations are partial and local.

Can we not then, following the appointment of Jehovah in the "Feast of Weeks," or Harvest Festival, establish our yearly Thanksgiving as a permanent American National Festival which shall be celebrated on the last Thursday in November in every State of the Union? Indeed, it has been nearly accomplished. For the last twelve or fourteen years the States have made approaches to this unity. In 1859 thirty States held their Thanksgiving Festival on the same day - the last Thursday in November.

The Contemporary Observance of the Holiday

In America the heart of the Thanksgiving holiday is the Thanksgiving dinner. This is observed not only in almost every home but also by the President at the White House in Washington. In keeping with the association with the Pilgrims and their thankfulness at harvest time the favorite meat is roast turkey, the favorite fruit is cranberries, and the favorite dessert is pumpkin pie. An ancient harvest symbol, the cornucopia or horn of plenty, has also become associated with this holiday. For some people the emphasis on giving thanks to God for blessings experienced during the year is central to the holiday, but for many the healthy emphasis on family reunion overshadows or replaces the focus on God and His blessing. Thanksgiving has also become a day for parades and football games that some attend in person but most watch on television

(V) DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

A) Explain what you knew about the reasons the Pilgrims came to America.

B) What did you think about what Abraham Lincoln said about Thanksgiving?



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C) Were you aware that in the past God had been such an open part of Thanksgiving and that thanks to God was the purpose of the day?

D) What did you think about the paragraph by Lincoln where he spoke of God judging us for our national sins yet still being gracious to us?

(VI) SPEND SOME TIME GIVING THANKS OR READING A FEW OF THESE SCRIPTURES WHICH TALK ABOUT GIVING THANKS

Psalm 30:12

that my heart may sing to you and not be silent.
O Lord my God, I will give you thanks forever.

Psalm 35:18

I will give you thanks in the great assembly;
among throngs of people I will praise you.

Psalm 75:1

For the director of music. To the tune of "Do Not Destroy." A psalm of Asaph. A song.

We give thanks to you, O God,
we give thanks, for your Name is near;
men tell of your wonderful deeds.

Psalm 79:13

Then we your people, the sheep of your pasture,
will praise you forever;
from generation to generation
we will recount your praise.

Psalm 105:1



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**Give thanks to the Lord, call on his name;
make known among the nations what he has done.**

Psalm 106:1

Praise the Lord.

**Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
his love endures forever.**

Psalm 106:47

**Save us, O Lord our God,
and gather us from the nations,
that we may give thanks to your holy name
and glory in your praise.**

Psalm 107:1

**Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
his love endures forever.**

Psalm 118:1

**Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
his love endures forever.**

Psalm 118:29

**Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
his love endures forever.**



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LESSON # 11

MORE ON THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD (What is God Like?)



OBJECTIVE: The class delves into Jeremiah 9:23-24, where God calls for humility and points out that true cause for boasting lies not in wisdom, strength, or wealth, but in understanding and knowing Him—the Lord who embodies kindness, justice, and righteousness. This verse sets the tone for the course, emphasizing the paramount importance of a spiritual and saving knowledge of God for every individual. The foundation of genuine knowledge of God is established as a clear comprehension of His perfections as disclosed in Holy Scripture.

The class categorizes the Attributes of God into natural and moral attributes. Among the natural attributes are God's omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence, and His unchanging nature. This immutability is explored in-depth, highlighting that God's essence, attributes, consciousness, and will are unchangeable. This unchanging nature sets Him apart from the fluctuations of creation and confirms His wisdom, holiness, and other qualities are eternally constant.

Through numerous scriptural references, the class underscores God's unchanging nature and the implications for His sovereignty. Despite the world's fluctuations, His plans and promises remain steadfast. Participants are encouraged to continue in prayer and mutual love, guided by the understanding of God's unchanging and sovereign nature.



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(I) Jeremiah 9:23-24 *This is what the Lord says: "Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches, [24] but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight," declares the Lord.*

(II) A spiritual and saving knowledge of God is the greatest need of every human creature.

(III) The foundation of all true knowledge of God must be a clear mental apprehension of His perfection as revealed in Holy Scripture. *An unknown god can neither be trusted, served, nor worshipped.* (The Attributes of God)

(IV) THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD ARE GENERALLY DEFINED AS MORAL AND NATURAL:

The Natural Attributes Are:

1. Omniscience of God
2. Omnipotence of God
3. Omnipresence of God
4. Eternity/Immutability of God

The Moral Attributes Are:

1. The Holiness of God
2. The Righteousness of God
3. The Faithfulness of God
4. The Sovereignty of God
5. The Mercy of God
6. The Loving-Kindness of God
7. The Love of God

(V) THE IMMUTABILITY OF GOD: (God never changes!)

By this we mean that in essence, attributes, consciousness, and will of God are unchangeable. All change must be for the better or the worse. But God cannot change to the better, since He is absolutely perfect; neither can He change for the worse for the same reason. He is exalted above all causes and even the



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possibility of change. He can never be wiser, more holy, more just, more merciful, more truthful, nor less so. Nor do His plans and purposes change. (Thiessen)

Some Scriptures:

James 1:17 _____

Malachi 3:6 _____

Psalms 33:11 _____

Psalms 102:26-27 _____

Hebrews 1:12 _____

Romans 4:20-21 _____

Isaiah 46:10 _____

Romans 11:29 _____

I Kings 8:56 (promises) _____

2 Corinthians 1:20 _____

Psalms 103:17 _____

Genesis 18:25 _____

Numbers 23:19 _____

I Samuel 15:29 _____

Psalms 110:4 _____

If God is immutable and never changes, how do we view His Sovereignty?

Keep praying and loving one another.



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LESSON # 12

CHRISTIANS BELIEVE GOD MADE MAN UPRIGHT (But Something Happened)



OBJECTIVE: This class focuses on the Doctrine of Humanity, highlighting the significance of understanding the fall of humanity to fully comprehend the plan of salvation. It underscores the importance of comprehending God's original intentions for humanity and the subsequent implications of the fall. By exploring questions about the unchanging nature of God and the necessity of salvation, the chapter emphasizes that the fall's impact reaches beyond just historical events.

The class begins by examining the state of humanity before the fall. It describes how people were created innocent, with direct fellowship with God and dominion over the earth. The concept of being created in the image of God is explored, emphasizing moral resemblance and the capacity for unique attributes. The narrative then shifts to the fall and original sin, discussing Eve's interaction with Satan, the implications of her decision, and how it led to a drastic change in humanity's condition. The fall's impact on various aspects of life, including death, relationships, and creation, is discussed in detail.

The class also highlights the connection between the fall and salvation. It notes that only the upright could fellowship with God, and God's promise of a Messiah is introduced as a way to address the fall's consequences. The role of Jesus in bearing the curse of the fall and providing redemption is underscored. Overall, the chapter underscores the profound effects of the fall on humanity and its relationship with God, emphasizing the need for salvation and the redemptive work of Christ.

The chapter concludes with an encouragement to pray for one another and for the schools we attend.



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THE DOCTRINE OF (TEACHING ABOUT) HUMANITY

Without a proper understanding of the fall of Man we cannot fully understand the plan of salvation. Also, without such understanding, we will fail to comprehend God's original plan for man or His future purpose and plan for man. Unless we gain the necessary insight, we will only have a partial understanding of our world and the Bible.

Question: If things were the same today as they were on the day of creation, what may we conclude about God by observation?

Question: If man is the same as he always will be then why must we be saved?

(I) MAN BEFORE THE FALL

- A. Man was created in innocence and upright.
 - 1. Ecc. 7:29; Gen 3:8-13
- B. Man had unseparated fellowship with God.
 - 1. Gen 2:15-17, 3:8-13
 - 2. The separation we see testifies to our sinfulness.
- C. Man was given the earth to rule.
 - 1. Gen. 2:19-20 (denotes ownership)
 - a. What did Adam do when he named woman?
 - 2. Gen. 1:26, 28-30
 - 3. Gen 9:1-2 (even in this age)
- D. Man was created in the image of God.
 - 1. Gen. 1:26, 6:9
 - 2. I Cor. 11:7; Ja. 3:9
- E. What is the image of God?
 - 1. Is it a physical likeness? No.
 - 2. Is it a representation of the Trinity?
 - 3. Moral resemblance and sharing of the unique divine attributes.
 - a. In so much as man surpasses animals.
 - b. Capacity for justice and compassion, for love and hate.
 - c. Ability to relate to the past, present and future.
 - d. Ability to need to establish long meaningful relationships.
 - e. Ability to communicate and "philosophize."
 - f. Ability to choose, ability to create.



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(II) THE FALL AND ORIGINAL SIN

Question: How many ate of the fruit in the garden?

Question: Why do we suffer the sin they committed?

- A. Eve listened to Satan rather than God.
 - 1. She set her will against God.
 - a. The will is a "free" thing affected by the mind, the soul, and the spirit.
 - 2. "Aspiration" is a key word to understanding the fall.
 - 3. We should notice the Scripture twisting going on.
- B. The "Fall"
 - 1. Everything in us fell; mind, body, emotions, spiritual capacity.
 - 2. The appetites of the flesh became lust.
 - 3. The will is now in bondage to Satan.
(Rom. 6:6)
 - 4. Man ceases to become upright and became a sinner.
 - 5. Inability to do good (spiritually).
 - 6. Gen. 6:5; Job 14:4, 15:14-15; Isa. 1:5-6; Jer. 3:33, 17:9; Rom. 3:10-18;

(III) DEATH AND FALL

- A. Death did not exist before the fall.
- B. What did Adam and Eve see when their eyes were "opened?" (Gen. 3:7)
- C. A drastic change occurred in man's relationship with animals.
- D. Sickness enters into the scene.
- E. Hate, suspicion, murder, extended through ALL creation.

(IV) THE FALL IN RELATION TO SALVATION

- A. Only the upright man could fellowship with God. (Isa. 64:6)
- B. God did not set down a law to save Adam but gave the promise of a Messiah.
- C. When Adam tried to cover his own sin to no avail, God Himself covered it.
- D. I John 3:8
- E. Jesus bore the curse of the fall. (Jn. 3:36)

Keep Praying for Each Other and Pray for Your Schools!!!!



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LESSON # 13

CHRISTIANS BELIEVE IN SIN & FORGIVENESS



OBJECTIVE: In this class, the focus is on the concept of sin and its implications for humanity. We begin by exploring what sin is, referencing Isaiah 1:2 and Isaiah 53:6. The question of who sins is addressed through Romans 3:23, emphasizing that all individuals are susceptible to sin. The origin of sin is examined using Isaiah 14:12-15, delving into its roots.

The class delves into the reasons behind human sin, tracing it back to Adam's decision in the Garden of Eden. God's instructions to Adam regarding the trees of Knowledge and Good and Evil are cited from Genesis 2:9, 16, 17, and the consequences of Adam's disobedience are discussed, leading to the separation of humanity from God. The concept of salvation is introduced, defined as being saved from sin's penalty, power, and dominion, both in life and in eternity. The instructor elaborates on salvation as a gift from God, supported by verses like John 3:16 and Romans 6:23.

The process of salvation is explained using Ephesians 3:8-9 and Romans 10:9, 10, 13. The topic of forgiveness is then explored, defining it as an act of pardon. The class delves into God's desire to deal with human sin, referencing 1 John 1:7-10. The importance of willingness to forgive and seek forgiveness is discussed using Mark 11:25, 26. The transformation of how God sees human sin is highlighted through verses like Isaiah 43:25 and Jeremiah 31:34.

The response to God's gift of salvation is described as recognizing one's sin, receiving Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and rejoicing in the eternal life given through Him. The class concludes with a call to pray for one another.



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Discussion and review of last week's meeting, readings and events.

(I) WHAT IS SIN?

- (A) Isaiah 1:2
- (B) Isaiah 53:6

(II) WHO SINS?

- (A) Romans 3:23

(III) WHERE DOES SIN COME FROM?

- (A) Isaiah 14:12-15

(IV) WHY DO I SIN?

- (A) Adams's decision in the Garden of Eden:
- (B) God told Adam not to eat the fruit of the tree of Knowledge and of the tree of Good and Evil – Genesis 2:9, 16, 17
- (c) Sin in the human race originated in Adam's free decision to disobey God's will - Genesis 3:1-6
- (D) The effects of Adam's decision on us today:
 - (1) Sin entered the world through one man, Adam – Romans 5:12
 - (2) Adam's sin separated man from God – Genesis 3:22
 - (3) Adam's sin resulted in both physical and spiritual death for man:
 - (a) Physical Death – separation of the soul from the body, Gen 3:19
 - (b) Spiritual Death – separation of the soul from God for eternity
- (E) Therefore I sin because I am a _____.



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(V) SALVATION

(A) Definition of salvation

(1) Being saved from the penalty, power and dominion of sin in our life and from eternity apart from God.

(2) What is God's gift (grace) to us? John 3:16; Romans 6:23

(B) How are you saved?

(1) Ephesians 3:8-9

(c) What do we put our faith in for salvation?

(1) Romans 10:9, 10, 13

(VI) FORGIVENESS

(A) Definition of forgiveness is an act of pardon.

(B) What does God want to do with your sin?

(1) 1 John 1:7-10

(C) What must we be willing to do?

(1) Mark 11:25,25

(D) How does God now see my sin?

(1) Isaiah 43:25

(2) Jeremiah 31:34

(E) What is our response to God's gift (grace) of salvation to us (grace)?

(1) Ephesians 2:10

(F) Salvation is a free gift from God. We have to "Recognize" our sin, "Receive" Jesus Christ as our personal Lord and Savior, and "Rejoice" that God has given us eternal life in His Son.



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Pray for one another.



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LESSON # 14

CHRISTIANS BELIEVE YOU CAN KNOW YOU ARE SAVED



OBJECTIVE: This class focuses on the concept of assurance of salvation, which is the certainty that one has eternal life. The foundation of this assurance is rooted in the authority of God's Word. The class delves into various scriptural references that provide evidence for knowing that salvation has been attained. It explores promises found in the Bible, such as John 1:12, John 3:16, and John 5:24, that affirm eternal life for those who believe in Christ.

The Holy Spirit's role in providing assurance is also discussed, with references to Romans 8:16-17 and Ephesians 1:13-14. The book of 1 John is highlighted as a source of assurance, where the author employs phrases like "we know" to foster confidence in believers. The class examines verses from 1 John that detail how one can truly know and have assurance of salvation.

It concludes with the message that God desires believers to be certain of their eternal life, emphasizing that salvation rests on God's faithfulness and promises. Praying for God's reminder of His faithfulness is encouraged for those who may doubt their salvation.



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Discussion of last week's meeting, readings, events.

(I) KNOWING YOU ARE SAVED IS WHAT SOME CALL "ASSURANCE"

(A) Assurance (certainty) of salvation is based on the authority of God's Word. There are many evidences we can look at so that we can know we are saved and have eternal life.

(B) God promises eternal life in His Word.

(1) According to John 1:12, what is the promise associated with receiving Jesus?

(2) John 3:16 states that whoever believes in Christ

(3) John 5:24 says that the one who believes in God will not experience

(4) In John 10:27-28 we learn that we will never

(C) The Holy Spirit gives us assurance of our salvation.

(1) According to Romans 8:16-17, what does the Holy Spirit bear witness of in our lives?

(2) Who is the guarantee of our future life according to Ephesians 1:13-14?

(D) Turn to the book of 1 John.

(1) What is the purpose of John's letter in 1 John 5:13?

(2) John uses the phrase "we know" (assurance) throughout his letter to help these believers come to a place of assurance about their salvation.

(3) According to 1 John 2:3-5, how do we know for sure that we "know Him?"

(4) In 1 John 2:23, what is the action here that rules out the assurance of salvation?

(5) What is the basis of assurance in 1 John 3:14-15?



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- (6) In 1 John 4:13, what has God given to his children to bring us assurance of salvation?
- (7) According to 1 John 4:14-15, what work does the Spirit produce in us that brings assurance?
- (E) Read Philippians 2:12-13.
- (1) Verse twelve states that the Christian life is a life of obedience. But what power is available to live the Christian life according to verse 13?
- (F) God wants you and I to know that we have eternal life (1 John 5:11-13). It is not His will that we live our life on a daily basis wondering if we are saved. If you doubt your salvation remember that our salvation rests only on God's work for us. Even if our hearts at times forget that, it is still true. (1 John 3:19-20). Pray and ask God to remind you of His faithfulness to keep His promises.



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LESSON # 15

CHRISTIANS BELIEVE THAT YOU MUST BE BORN-AGAIN (Part 1)



OBJECTIVE: This class focuses on the concept of assurance of salvation, which is the certainty that one has eternal life. The foundation of this assurance is rooted in the authority of God's Word. The class delves into various scriptural references that provide evidence for knowing that salvation has been attained. It explores promises found in the Bible, such as John 1:12, John 3:16, and John 5:24, that affirm eternal life for those who believe in Christ.

The Holy Spirit's role in providing assurance is also discussed, with references to Romans 8:16-17 and Ephesians 1:13-14. The book of 1 John is highlighted as a source of assurance, where the author employs phrases like "we know" to foster confidence in believers. The class examines verses from 1 John that detail how one can truly know and have assurance of salvation.

It concludes with the message that God desires believers to be certain of their eternal life, emphasizing that salvation rests on God's faithfulness and promises. Praying for God's reminder of His faithfulness is encouraged for those who may doubt their salvation.



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Together read the Gospel of John Chapter 3, find where Jesus talks about being born-again and discuss it together.

HOW TO RECEIVE JESUS

We live in a difficult world, in difficult times. Everyone it seems, has an opinion, and it's not easy to figure out what to believe about life, why we are here, and what is the purpose of it all. We have our inner moral compass, and just when our instincts tell us we may be on the right track, someone we may look up to is caught in some area of moral failure, or a spiritual leader falls to the temptation of the world.

Well, I found out the hard way, that there is really only one uniform source of truth, and that's the Holy Bible. This tract is not to convince you of the veracity of the Bible, but instead is for folks who are past that step, and just don't know what to do with what they know is in the Bible.

Before we get into the practical steps which lead you into receiving Jesus as Lord and Savior, let's look at some simple but profound facts, using the Bible as our standard of truth, otherwise this all would just be one person's opinion. I know that the Bible seems to have contradictions and inconsistencies, but really, that's only how it appears on first look. No man can really know the truth of the Bible without 2 prerequisites:

- 1) We must be **open and honest**, so that we can be led of the Holy Spirit. The Bible is understood by Divine revelation, not by intellect alone.
- 2) We must receive the revelation in steps, as we live out the principles of the Bible in his daily life.

As you are led into what you need to know by the Spirit, and live out that which you discover, the seeming contradictions and inconsistencies seem to fade away, and the true harmony of the "whole counsel of God" becomes evident.

So...the first revelation you need is of the Lordship of Jesus Christ. After that get ready for the rest of your life, as God produces in you the character and attributes of a true Christian.

Here's a few other concepts to grasp before we begin:

- 1) Don't get **religion**, get **relationship**. The first step is not about churches, personalities or organizations. It's about getting right with God. After that God can place you in a fellowship of believers where you can grow.



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2) Don't judge Christ by Christians. Christians are just people. Leaders fall and fail, but you don't hear that much about the ones who serve God faithfully, never cheat on their wives or husbands, never get in trouble. Believe me, these far outnumber the ones you hear about. Billy Graham is a phenomenon to have been so faithful and well known with never a hint of scandal. Get your eyes off of men, and look to God for your answers. If you approach Him with an honest, questioning heart, He will satisfy your need to know. (Seek and you will find....)

3) Don't wait to get your life together before you get right with God. This is a "come-as-you-are" party. Jesus loves you right where you are. It's only he who can affect real change in your life, because real change only comes from the inside out. Our attempts at self-improvement usually are usually working from the opposite premise, and that kind of change seldom works, and NEVER works on the eternal level.

4) Don't make the mistake of thinking that you are too evil for God to forgive. The Bible says that "when we repent, He is faithful and just to forgive, and cleanse us from ALL unrighteousness. If you are truly repentant, there is nothing that cannot be forgiven. Jesus loves YOU, no matter what your past.

5) Don't think that if you become a Christian, that you won't have fun anymore. Hollywood, TV, books etc., have in general painted Christianity to be something for a bunch of losers..dried up prunes of people who have lost their zest for life. Not true. God will change your mind about what you think is fun, but true Christians have real joy in their lives and really know what real fun is. I'm glad the days of partying down and "having fun" without remembering what happened to me because I was passed out are over. What kind of fun is that?

Let's move along, with a few more facts to consider:

1) Everyone in the world has missed God, and needs to be saved. No matter who you are, without Jesus in your life, you are lost. No matter how good a life you may lead, you are lost without Christ. Men have fallen from godliness and need to have relationship with God restored, which can only happen through the cross of Calvary.

2) Your salvation cannot be earned. This is something God has done for us, we can't earn it, we must just receive it.

3) Your salvation cannot be learned. You don't need to go to Bible school to be saved. Wouldn't it be unfair if only theologically literate people could get right with God? No, God made this so simple that a 10 year old child can receive Jesus as savior. He truly made it so simple that "the foolishness of God would confound the wisdom of the world." It's a matter of faith, not intellect.



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4) You must recognize your need. You ARE a foul depraved Godless person, as we all were before receiving Jesus. Even the good things you do have a selfish agenda if you really be honest. You must be willing to call sin, and turn from it, change your lifestyle completely, pick up your cross and follow Him. Difficult club to join, you say? Yes, and I want you to know it isn't always pretty. It's losing your life for His sake that you may gain it back. It's suffering sometimes because you do the right thing. It's not easy. Don't join if you're looking for an easy way. Yet, at the same time this life is filled with joy and satisfaction. Think of the life that Jesus led. Full of suffering, rejection and pain, and yet Jesus was the happiest most well-adjusted person who ever lived, because He did it God's way.

5) You must receive Him by faith. You won't know all the answers, you may not even have thought of many of the questions. It's a matter of knowing in your heart that what Jesus said is right, then acting on it.

What did Jesus say?

1) "I am the way, the truth, the life. No man shall see the Father if not through me. He didn't say, as many gurus and spiritual leaders do that He knew a way to get truth, He said He WAS the way the truth, the life. He also said He was the ONLY way. (A hard one for a lot of people, but I didn't say it, HE did.)

2) They that call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. Self explanatory.

So.. How do I receive Him?

It's so simple you may have a hard time believing it. No costly seminars to attend, no years spent in Bible school, only a simple prayer of faith.

Here are the steps, (not a formula, but steps)

1) Repent. Recognize your sinfulness and turn from your ways. Be willing to change what needs to be changed.

2) Receive His forgiveness. He died on the cross so that you may be forgiven. Your forgiveness was purchased 2000 years ago. Receive it now.

3) Don't wait for a bolt of lightning. Most conversion experiences are not dramatic. You may or may not experience an emotional release, it doesn't matter, we walk by faith, not sight.



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4) Pray words to this effect: "Jesus, I need you in my life." I've not been tremendously successful without you, and so now I'm going to try it your way. I repent of every wrong thing I've ever done, and receive the forgiveness that You offer. I believe that You are God, and that you died on the cross and rose from death to conquer all the works of darkness. I surrender my life to You this day, and pledge to do my best to be obedient to You from this day forth. You have made me a new creation, and I am now "born again" of the Spirit of God. Because of You, I will go to heaven when I die. I pray all this in the Name of Jesus."

What now?

1) Go tell somebody! "If you confess Me before men, I will confess you before my father. I'd love for you to let ME know. E-mail me, or fax me, or whatever, I'd love to hear what God did for you."

2) Get a Bible..Read it a little every day.

3) Go to church! *"Don't forsake the assembling of yourselves together."* God's got a home for you.

4) Pray daily. Talk conversationally to God. The Spirit that is within you will put you in touch with Him. He does speak to us today, but you have to learn how to hear His voice.

Pray for one another by name. Pray for others. Pray for your school.



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LESSON # 16

CHRISTIANS BELIEVE THAT YOU NEED TO BE BORN-AGAIN (Part 2)



OBJECTIVE: The class discusses the concept of acknowledging one's spiritual need and the universal nature of sin. It explains that sin is essentially "missing the mark" of God's perfection and emphasizes the universality of sin by referencing Romans 3:23. The consequences of sin, described in Romans 6:23 as death, are explored, emphasizing that we bring judgment upon ourselves by rejecting God's truth.

The class then transitions to the solution for sin through Jesus Christ. It highlights the role of Christ as a bridge between humanity's imperfection and God's perfection. The central message of John 3:16-17 and Romans 5:8 is presented: God's love is demonstrated through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for the salvation of humanity. The class emphasizes that receiving Christ is a choice and requires acknowledging one's sinfulness, accepting Christ as the solution, and responding to His invitation.

The final section focuses on the practical steps to receive Christ, involving a sincere acknowledgment of sin, a turn to Christ for forgiveness, and a prayer of acceptance. The idea that this decision brings forgiveness and a place in heaven is emphasized, along with the encouragement to grow spiritually through reading the Bible, praying, and attending church.

The class concludes by highlighting the inseparable relationship between true repentance and faith. They are presented as interconnected, necessary elements for receiving Christ and experiencing a transformed life. The class encourages students to share their newfound faith and to actively live out their beliefs by telling others about their journey.



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“HOW CAN I KNOW GOD?”

Admit your spiritual need. We are all sinners....people don't always like that title. The one word that defines all sin is the Greek word "harmatia" which means "to miss the mark." What is God's mark? Jesus said, "Be perfect as My Father in heaven is perfect." Unless a person is perfect, he has missed the mark; therefore, he is a sinner. Romans 3:23 states "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

What is the result of sin? In Romans 6:23 we read "The wages of sin is death..." Every one of us has missed God's mark. Every one of us falls short of being perfect. We are getting only what we deserve, and we are bringing judgment upon ourselves. One thing we need to remember is that God never sends anyone to hell. We send ourselves there by rejecting His truth

Since we can never measure up to God's standards on our own, God has reached out to man. We cannot solve the problem of sin, but God, who is perfect, can and has. He has become a bridge for us. John 3:16-17 states "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.." In Romans 5:8 we read, "God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us

If a person acknowledges that he is a sinner, and he accepts the promise that Christ is the solution, he is at a crossroads. Either the person must reject God's solution and accept the consequences, or he must accept Jesus Christ as his Savior. What must a person do to accept this gift? Simply receive it! Matthew 11:28-30 states "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me...for My yoke is easy and My burden is light

His invitation is clear. We must come to Him. All that remains is a response. In Romans 6:23 we read "...the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." What do we have to do to receive that gift? Take it! Revelation 3:20 states "Behold I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with me." Jesus stands at the door of your heart and knocks, seeking



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entrance into our lives. John 1:12 states "For as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become the children of God." If you would like to receive Jesus Christ into your heart and life right now, pray a prayer something like this from the sincerity of your heart...

Dear Lord Jesus, I know I am a sinner. I believe you died for my sins. Right now, I turn from my sins and open the door of my heart and life. I receive you as my personal Lord and Savior. Thank you for saving me. Amen.

If you just prayed that prayer and really meant it, Jesus Christ has now taken residence in your heart! Not only that, but he has forgiven you of all your sin. The Bible tells us, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9) God also promises, "As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us." (Psalms 103:12)

Your decision to receive Christ also means that you are now going to Heaven one day. That's a lot to be thankful for! You need to take some practical steps to grow strong spiritually: Read the Bible, pray, and go to church.

THE ABOVE SECTION IS HOW WE COME TO KNOW GOD ON A PRACTICAL LEVEL, THIS SECTION EXPLAINS IT FROM THE BIBLE.

REPENTANCE AND FAITH

(I) REPENTANCE

(A) To repent means to change your mind and attitude about sin, so that you turn from your sin and you turn to God (Jesus Christ) for forgiveness and cleansing

(1) Who Preached Repentance?



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- (a) Matthew 3:2
- (b) Matthew 4:17
- (c) Mark 6:12
- (d) Acts 2:38
- (e) Acts 17:30

(B) What are characteristics of true repentance?

- (1) 2 Corinthians 7:9, 10
- (2) Luke 18:9-14
- (3) 1 Thessalonians 1:9

(C) Repentance is a change of 3 elements:

- (1) Intellectual element - a change of mind. What we think.
- (2) Emotional element - change of heart. What we desire.
- (3) Volitional element - a change of will. What we do.

(D) It is to be our message to the unbeliever:

- (1) Luke 24:44-48

(II) FAITH



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(A) What is faith?

It is the confident assurance that something we want is going to happen. It is the certainty that what we hope for is waiting for us, even though we cannot see up ahead.

(B) How does the Bible define faith?

(1) Hebrews 11:1

(C) Where does faith come from?

(1) Hebrews 12:1-2

(D) How do we receive our faith?

(1) Romans 10:17

(5) The importance of faith

(1) We should live by it - 2 Corinthians 5:7

(2) We are saved by it - Ephesians 2:8,9

(3) It is our defense (shield) against the enemy - Ephesians 6:16

(4) It never gives up - Hebrews 11:7, 30

(5) It gives us victory over the world and its problems - 1 John. 5:4

(6) The principle element in repentance is a change of mind and attitude about

Christ; a change from an unbelieving and rejecting attitude to a believing and



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accepting attitude.

(7) True faith in Christ involves the confession and forsaking of sin.

(III) TRUE REPENTANCE AND FAITH ARE INSEPERABLE. THEY ARE MUTAULLY DEPENDENT ON EACH OTHER.

Tell someone about your new life in Christ. That's called witnessing.



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LESSON # 17

CHRISTIANS BELIEVE IN SHARING THEIR FAITH



OBJECTIVE: Sharing one's faith is often challenging for Christians due to fears of rejection, yet it's a responsibility commanded by God. The class underscores the importance of effective evangelism, following principles provided by God. The process should be led by the Holy Spirit, with conversion being the Spirit's work and occurring in God's timing. God's Word forms the foundation of the message, and the class emphasizes that God's Word will not return void.

Effective sharing involves investing time, engaging in sincere concern for the lost, adapting to different contexts without compromising the gospel's truth, and using discernment to avoid uninterested audiences. Tact and love play essential roles: the story of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8 illustrates tactful sharing backed by love. The class encourages a prayer for holy boldness and guidance from the Holy Spirit to approach those who need Christ.

Ultimately, the love of God, combined with the unchanging Word of God, can effectively reach people and lead them to repentance.



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How do I share my faith

One of the hardest things to do as Christians is to share our faith. We're often reluctant to share our faith for fear of having a person reject us and our message; yet God has given us clear marching orders to go out into the world and preach the gospel "making disciples of all the nations" (Matthew 28:19-20)

God has given us some sound principles that will enable us to effectively lead others to Christ. God will never ask us to do anything He will not give us the power to do. The calling of God is the enabling of God (see 2 Cor. 3:4-6).

Effective sharing must be led by God's spirit. Jesus said, "No one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father." (John 6:65) Conversion must be the work of the Holy Spirit, and it must be in God's timing. That's why the Scripture tells us to be prepared to share the gospel message "in season and out of season." (2 Tim 4:2)

Effective sharing is grounded in a knowledge of God's word. Although our message may begin with a personal testimony or illustration, the thrust of it must be the Word of God! We must not neglect this powerful witnessing tool, for God promises, "My Word...shall not return to Me void, but shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it." (Isaiah 55:11)

Effective sharing takes time. Some of the most profound things Jesus ever said were found in His one-on-one conversations. He took time with these individuals (see John 3 & 4). We must remember that we are not called to make converts, but disciples.

Effective sharing is sincere. For evangelism to be effective, it must begin with a genuine concern for the lost.

Effective sharing is flexible. In 1 Corinthians, Paul encourages us to tailor our approach, though not our message to those we are trying to reach for Christ. Evangelism is meeting someone at his or her level in order to bring that individual to Christ's level without compromising the truth of the gospel.

Effective sharing is discerning. We need to be discerning so that we will not "cast our pearls before swine," offering the truths of God to someone who is not genuinely interested. Rather than anger someone who's uninterested, it is best to simply present the truth and move on.



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Effective sharing is tactful. A good example of tact is found in the story of Philip's encounter with the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8). As Philip heard the Ethiopian reading from Isaiah, he simply said, "Do you understand what you are reading?" A number of more judgmental Christians might have shouted, "Did you know you're going to burn in hell unless you repent?" A fruitful witness is a tactful witness.

Effective sharing is backed by love. This final principle is the most important one we need to employ. Whenever Jesus came into contact with people, He genuinely loved them. Such love and concern will speak volumes before we even utter a word. The world today is flooded with religious cults, which are Satan's way of flooding the market with imitations. Those imitations ought to motivate us to make the truth known. Our edge over these spiritual counterfeits is the love in our hearts that Jesus had when He walked this earth, combined with the Word of God, which shall not return void.

Why not ask God for His holy boldness right now? Ask the Holy Spirit to lead you to someone who needs Christ. Love him with the love of God, and then share the truth of the gospel. Then you'll see how "the goodness of God leads you to repentance" (Rom 2:4)



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LESSON # 18

CHRISTIANS BELIEVE SATAN IS REAL, BUT NOT THE OPPOSITE OF GOD



OBJECTIVE: This chapter discusses the character and operations of Satan, as well as strategies to counter his attacks. Satan is referred to by various names like "Satan," "the devil," and "the accuser of our brothers," each giving insight into his adversarial and deceitful nature. His methods include scheming, lying, deceiving, and engaging in spiritual warfare. The text emphasizes the need to stand strong against his schemes and lies.

To counter Satan's attacks, the chapter introduces the concept of spiritual armor as described in Ephesians 6:10-18. This armor consists of the Belt of Truth, the Breastplate of Righteousness, the Sandals of the Gospel, the Shield of Faith, the Helmet of Salvation, and the Sword of the Word of God. It underlines the importance of continual prayer as a weapon and the recognition that spiritual battles are not physical but rather spiritual.

The chapter also examines how Jesus responded to Satan's temptations, drawing from Matthew 4:1-11. Despite facing temptations, Jesus relied on the Word of God as his offensive weapon. This passage suggests that handling trials or temptations should involve utilizing the Word of God. The chapter concludes by highlighting the promise of 1 John 4:4, which speaks of the power of the Holy Spirit within believers to overcome the forces of darkness.



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(I) HIS NAMES GIVE US INSIGHT INTO HIS CHARACTER

(A) Satan - (Greek) Satanas (adversary or opponent) most common name used 52 times.

(B) The devil (slanderer) 35 times.

(C) A liar and murderer - John 8:44.

(D) The god of this age - 2 Corinthians 4:4.

(E) An counterfeit angel of light - 2 Corinthians 11:14,15.

(F) Ruler of the kingdom of the air - Ephesians 2:2.

(G) The tempter - 1 Thessalonians 3:5.

(H) Apollyon (destroyer) - Revelation 9:11

(I) The accuser of our brothers - Revelation 12:10.

(II) HOW DOES SATAN OPERATE?

(A) As a schemer - Ephesians 6:11

(B) As a lion - 1 Peter 5:8,9



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(C) As a liar - John 8:44

(D) As a deceiver- Genesis 3:13, Revelation 20:10

(E) Spiritual Warfare - Ephesians 6:10-18

(F) How do we stand strong against Satan's schemes, lies and attacks?

1. Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might; not by ourselves.

Ephesians 6:10

2. Put on the full armor, not part of it or there will be a weak spot for Satan to attack Ephesians 6:11, 13

(a) The Belt of Truth - Truth overcomes deceit and lies and is key to every area of the Christian life.

(b) The Breastplate of Righteousness - This speaks of right acts as practiced by the believer. The breastplate was to protect the heart of the soldier.

(c) The Sandals of the Gospels - The sandals speak of mobility and preparedness. We are to be ready to use God's Word in spiritual battle (1 Peter 3:15).

(d) The Shield of Faith - (Above all take this up) - the shield of faith



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protects us from the attacks (those fiery darts) of Satan.

(exam. temptations, impure thoughts, etc.).

(e) The **Helmet of Salvation** - It refers to the intake of the Word which will help protect our thoughts from doubt and the world, the flesh, and the devil. It will make us secure in our relationship with the Lord.

(f) The Sword which is the Word of God - It is the only offensive weapon. When attacked, respond with the Word.

(III) REALIZE IT IS NOT A **PHYSICAL** BATTLE, BUT **SPIRITUAL**

(A) Ephesians 6:12.

(B) Read 2 Corinthians 10:4-5. What can spiritual weapons accomplish?

(IV) **PRAY ALWAYS**: CONTINUAL PRAYER IS GOD'S WILL

(A) 1 Thessalonians 5:17

(B) Ephesians 6:18.

(V) HOW DID JESUS RESPOND TO SATAN'S ATTACK?

(A) Read Matthew 4:1-11



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- (B) What was Jesus' physical condition?
- (C) What did Jesus respond with to Satan's three offers? - Matthew 4:4,7,10
- (D) What is the only offensive weapon we have in the spiritual armor? See Ephesians 6.
- (E) What does this tell us about handling temptation, or trials of any kind?
- (F) What is the promise of 1 John 4:4?



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LESSON # 19

CHRISTIANS BELIEVE IN BIBLICAL SEXUAL ETHICS



OBJECTIVE: The lesson discusses the sensitive topic of biblical sexuality and its relevance for 7th and 8th grade students. It emphasizes the importance of teacher preparedness and parental consent when addressing this subject. The lesson outlines a respectful approach by seeking parental input on whether their child should participate in the class, prioritizing parental wishes and avoiding potential divisions. The lesson begins by emphasizing that biblical sexuality is rooted in God's creation of male and female, as described in the Book of Genesis. It highlights Jesus' affirmation of this concept when asked about divorce.

The lesson then delves into the origin of marriage, family, and sexuality, pointing out that God designed monogamous marriage and the family unit as the ideal. It also explores the concepts of harmonious interpersonal relationships and equality of personhood between men and women, emphasizing the value of each individual in the eyes of God.

Lastly, the lesson acknowledges the challenges humanity faces due to sin, which has led to confusion and brokenness in matters of sexuality and gender, and it encourages compassion and understanding for those struggling with these issues.

In summary, the lesson addresses the sensitive topic of biblical sexuality, emphasizing the importance of teacher readiness and parental consent. It explores the biblical foundation of sexuality, God's design for marriage and family, and the challenges posed by sin and brokenness in this area. Throughout, it underscores the value and equality of each individual in the eyes of God.

THIS IS A SENSITIVE SUBJECT AND MAY OR MAY NOT BE TAUGHT.

This material is geared towards 7th & 8th grade students, which may or may not be problematic.



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It is important that (1) The teachers are comfortable leading the class, and feel like their students are prepared and ready for the class (2) That parents are informed and given a 'heads up' concerning the material and it's content. Outlines should be sent to all parents seeking consent, agreement or disagreement.

Parents wishes are respected and adhered to. Parents will be asked (1) if they agree to the material being taught to their child. (2) if they want their child to not participate. Which also might mean maybe we should not do it at all rather than cause questions, divisions, suspicions.

Because 'The Know Series' is a two year curriculum it might be that

Regardless of all of the above, the topic is vital, and needs to be taught, addressed, and understood in some arena of Family Ministry.

(I) BIBLICAL SEXUALITY IS GOD'S IDEA AND GOD'S INVENTION

A) As such God knows the purpose, use, best use, and misuse of sex and sexuality

B) The traditional dictionary and cultural definition of 'sexes' has referred male and female, men and women. It should be noted that since about the year 2015 with Olympic decathlete (10 track and events) at age 65 with six children declared himself to identify as a women. The language, idea, and concept was a relatively novel idea introduced into mainstream culture and history.

C) The Book of Genesis (meaning 'beginnings) tells us that God created people in two sexes / genders

Genesis 1:25-28

*Then God said, "Let us make human beings in our image, to be like ourselves. They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth, and the small animals that scurry along the ground." So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; **male and female he created them**. Then God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it. Reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground."*

D) Jesus affirmed this when He was asked a question about divorce by the religious leaders

Matthew 19:2-6

Some Pharisees came to Jesus, testing Him and asking, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce



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his wife for any reason at all?" And He answered and said, "Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE, and said, 'FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH'? "So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate."

(II) ORIGIN OF MARRIAGE, FAMILY, SEXUALITY & COMPANIONSHIP

(Vss. 20 -25)

A) First time God says something isn't good.

Genesis 2:17-19

Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him." Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name.

B) Everything was good except Adam's loneliness

"The institution of monogamous marriage, home and family as the basic medium for the propagation of race and the training of the young is so common to human history that people seldom pause to reflect on how or why the such a custom came into being."

(Henry Morris in his commentary on Genesis)

B) GOD'S IDEAL AND ORIGINAL FAMILY PLAN

1) Not Polygamy; Not Mistresses; Not Adultery; Not Same-Sex Marriages; Not Promiscuity; Not Co-Habituating; Not Fornication; Not Serial Marriage

C) OK, but what's this helpmate thing? God reveals Himself as the same:

1) The word 'helper' is also used of the Holy Spirit, the third and equal, although different in role, member of the Trinity. The Godhead

a) Deuteronomy 33:29 Blessed are you, O Israel! Who is like you, a people saved by the Lord? He is your shield and helper and your glorious sword.

b) Psalm 33:20 We wait in hope for the Lord; he is our help and our shield.

D) The creation of 'man' as male and female reveals the Image of God in:



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- 1) Harmonious interpersonal relationships
(like in the Trinity)
- 2) Equality of Personhood
(like in the Trinity)
- 3) Difference in Roles (like in the Trinity)
(Not in society, but in marriage!)

I) HARMONIOUS INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

- 1) We were not created to be isolated
- 2) A spiritual and emotional unity of profound dimensions
- 3) God created two distinct persons, rather than ONE person to reflect His Image..
plurality of persons = one
 - a) Male and Female share (*ideally & before the fall*) love, communication and mutual giving of honor to each honor
- 4) But God is three and we are two....
 - a) It might be that children complete the reflection
 - b) Each child is loved equally and would be a picture of God's love towards us...
 - c) God enjoys each member of the church and there is an absolute spiritual unity that lasts forever....

J) EQUALITY OF PERSONHOOD

- 1) If God created each equal , then each are of equal value to God
 - a) Societies have often tried to play this down and distort the Image of God by making women less than men.
 - b) Each has equal worth before God for all eternity!



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c) That each is created in the image of God should exclude all feelings of PRIDE or INFERIORITY....

d) If God thinks us to be of equal value then that settles the question

e) God's evaluation is the true standard of personal value for all eternity!

IF MEN AND WOMEN ARE OF EQUAL VALUE THEN THEY SHOULD GIVE EQUAL HONOR AND RESPECT TO EACH OTHER

Proverbs 31:10 *"A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies. Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her: Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all. ...a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised."*

(III) WE'RE QUITE A DISTANCE FROM WHAT GENESIS DESCRIBES

A) The Baptist Faith and Message has summarized the issue and problem of humanity, sex, and sexuality in their Statement of Faith

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

B) We learn from this that people have wandered far from God's ideal and purpose of Male, Female, Sex, Sexuality, Marriage, Family, and relationships

C) When we rebelled against God it effected every aspect of our lives. Our will, our personalities, our sexualities. Something went wrong, and confusion entered the life and experience.

(IV) PEOPLE SIN, PEOPLE ARE BROKEN, PEOPLE ARE CONFUSED



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A) From our other studies we know that the Bible speaks of ‘original sin, sins’ and ‘trespasses.’

- 1) ‘Original Sin’ refers to that which “fell from his original innocence whereby his posterity inherit a nature and an environment inclined toward sin.
- 2) ‘Sin’ refers to ‘missing the mark.’ Missing God’s ideal. We may be trying our best, but we still fall short.
- 2) ‘Trespasses’ men deliberately doing what we know we should not be doing, but we do it anyway.

B) Sex, Sexuality, Gender, Gender Dysphoria, all are effected by the above.

- 1) Sexual sin can include a list of various sins: adultery, fornication before marriage, lust, pornography, polygamy, homosexuality, rape, incest, etc.
- 2) Sexual Dysphoria (being internally confused about sex and gender) is complicated. If people did not ‘fell’ that way, most likely they would not ‘act’ that way.
 - (a) Confusion does not make the issue any less sinful (missing the mark) but leads us to be compassionate and accepting of people (not necessarily their practices) who are struggling with brokenness in their identities.
 - (b) Of Jesus it is said, “A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out. In faithfulness he will bring forth justice”
 - (c) In Matthew 11:28-30, the verse reads, “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” The verse is often interpreted as God’s intention to give us rest, not to weigh us down. The verse also says that God’s purpose is not an unbearable burden, but an appropriate weight. Jesus can help those experiencing Gender Dysphoria.

(V) MARRIAGE

God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God’s unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the



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channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race.

The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people.



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LESSON # 20

CHRISTIANS BELIEVE IN JUSTICE, DIVERSITY & EQUALITY



OBJECTIVE: "Christianity and the Origins of Equality, Diversity, and Justice" explores fundamental concepts in the context of Christian beliefs. The class delves into the essence of Christianity, which centers around a relationship with God through Jesus Christ, addressing profound questions about existence, identity, purpose, and the afterlife.

The class then discusses the origins of various concepts, starting with the concept of origins itself. It contrasts the belief in a purposeful creation by God with the idea of randomness and chance as the source of order and meaning. This section highlights Christianity's emphasis on design and intelligence in the universe's creation.

Equality, diversity, and justice are subsequently examined. Christianity's teaching that all humans are created in God's image is presented as the foundation for the inherent equality and value of every individual. Diversity is celebrated as part of God's creative design, reflecting uniqueness within a unified order. The class further delves into the idea of justice, tying it to morality and universal principles.

Throughout, the class encourages self-reflection and engagement with these concepts. Each section prompts readers to jot down their thoughts, feelings, responses, and questions, fostering a deeper exploration of the themes presented. Overall, the class provides a thought-provoking exploration of the philosophical and theological underpinnings of these fundamental concepts.



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CHRISTIANITY & THE ORIGINS OF EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND JUSTICE

(I) WHAT IS CHRISTIANITY?

A) It is about “Christ” which the dictionary describes as: (1) “The Messiah, as foretold by the prophets of the Old Testament (2) Jesus.”

B) It is a relationship with God through Jesus Christ whereby God is speaking directly to us through Jesus Christ and His Word (the Bible)

C) It answers all the big questions (1) Where did I come from? (2) Who Am I? (3) Why Am I Here? (4) Why Do Bad Things Happen/ (5) What Happens When I Die?

NOTES, FEELINGS, RESPONSES, QUESTIONS _____

(II) WHAT ARE ORIGINS

A) The point at which something comes into existence or from which it derives or is derived. Ancestry.

B) “In the Beginning God Created the Heavens and the Earth.”

C) Christianity teaches an origin of thought and order. The choices:

(1) Time plus nothing, plus nothing, plus nothing created order beauty, purpose and meaning

(2) God created by design and intelligence the universe and everything in it, of which show the fingerprints of a Common Creator / Maker

NOTES, FEELINGS, RESPONSES, QUESTIONS _____



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(III) WHAT IS EQUALITY AND WHERE DOES IT COME FROM?

A) Having the same quantity, measure, or value as another. Being the same or identical to in value. Having the same privileges, status, or rights:

B) Genesis 1:27 “So God created humans (humanity) in his own image, in the image of God he created; male and female he created them.”

1) Being made in God’s image means characteristics we share with God that the rest of the creation does not share

- a) The ability to love long-term by decision
- b) The ability to appreciate art, creativity and beauty for it’s own sake
- c) The ability to connect to our past in a meaningful way
- d) The ability to look to the future with forward thinking and hope
- e) The Book of Genesis teaches that God mandated that humanity search out the secrets of creation, to use, subdue and replenish

C) With all of humanity having a common ancestral state, our value and equality is derived from the One that created us

NOTES, FEELINGS, RESPONSES, QUESTIONS _____

(IV) WHAT IS DIVERSITY AND WHERE DOES IT COME FROM?

A) The fingerprint / signature style of the Artist / Creator of the Universe is full of diversity set within an order of unity. God is the author of diversity. Those that honor Him, accept, celebrate and honor diversity.

B) No two fingerprints, snowflakes, leaves or human personalities are exactly alike. Yet they are very much the same

C) It appears in the universe that all electrons are alike, as an elementary building blocks. But everything that is made is made exists in diversity, though unified.

NOTES, FEELINGS, RESPONSES, QUESTIONS _____



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(V) WHAT IS JUSTICE? WHERE DOES IT COME FROM?

A) What is Justice? (Dictionary Definitions)

- 1) The principle of moral rightness; equity.
- 2) Conformity to moral rightness in action or attitude; righteousness.
- 3) The upholding of what is just, especially fair treatment and due reward in accordance with honor, standards, or law.
- 4) *Law*: The administration and procedure of law.
- 5) Conformity to truth, fact, or sound reason.

B) OK. SO where does “morality” “rightness of attitude and action” come from?

C) Basics of universal morality exist in everyone of us.

- 1) “I was in line first.”
- 2) “That’s my seat.”
- 3) “Hey let me have one of those apples, I gave you one of mine.”

D) Finally what ‘is’ truth? Jesus is the only person of historical significance that claimed to be “The Truth.”

John 14:6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

NOTES, FEELINGS, RESPONSES, QUESTIONS _____



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Lesson # 21

CHRISTIANS BELIEVE IN THE FUTURE!



OBJECTIVE: "Study of Things to Come (Part 1)" delves into the exploration of eschatology, the study of last things and future events, particularly focusing on personal eschatology. The class acknowledges that the curiosity about the future and life after death transcends religious boundaries and that Christianity addresses these profound questions.

The class examines the methods by which insights into the future can be gained, including prophecy, personal experiences, and accounts of resurrection and otherworldly encounters.

The class then delves into the concept of death, which goes beyond physical cessation to include spiritual and eternal dimensions. It discusses how both physical and spiritual death result from the fall of humanity, and Christ's mission to restore life and eliminate physical death in the future.

The topic of resurrection is explored, with references from both the Old and New Testaments, discussing the nature of bodily resurrection and the redemption of the body. The class highlights the potential improvements and attributes of the resurrection body, drawing from biblical accounts, including Christ's resurrection.

Throughout, the class encourages introspection and engagement, inviting participants to take notes on their thoughts, feelings, responses, and questions. This class serves as an introduction to the intricate study of eschatology, focusing on the concepts of death, resurrection, and the nature of the future body.



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STUDY OF THINGS TO COME (Part 1)

The study of last things is not by any means restricted to Christian circles. Wherever there are people that think about meaning, purpose, the origins of man, etc., there are people that think about last things. Today, people everywhere want to know what the future bring and what will happen when we die. It is only fitting that if Christianity be true, it would address these issues.

I. HOW CAN WE KNOW ABOUT SUCH THINGS?

A. Through the foretelling of the future.

1. The Bible is largely a book of prophecy.
2. Deut. 18:20-22 and 13:14 warn that prophecy must be true.
 - a) Jesus warned about false prophets.
 - b) Bible 100% accurate; Jeanne Dixon 20%-30% accurate.

B. Through personal experience.

1. Nobody has been to the future.
2. Nobody has died and come back, or have they?
 - a) Jesus was resurrected from the dead.
 - b) Lazarus was resurrected from the dead. (Jn 11:1)
 - c) Jarius' daughter was raised from the dead.
(Matt. 9:18, Lk. 8:41)
 - d) The widow's son raised from the dead. (Lk. 7:11)
 - e) Dorcas was raised from the dead.
(Acts 9:36)



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f) Other accounts are recorded. (Matt. 27:52-53)

C. Has anyone been to the future?

1. Timelessness, eternity, and Einstein's Theory of Relativity
2. Jesus said He came from heaven.
3. Mount of Transfiguration (Matt. 17:1-9)
4. In the book of Revelation, Jesus appears in the future.
5. In the book of Revelation, John appears in the future.
6. The Old Testament prophets

At this point, we will break our study into two categories:

- 1) personal eschatology
- 2) general eschatology

Personal eschatology deals with death, resurrection and judgment of the unsaved and the reward of the righteous.

II. DEATH

A. The Scriptural concept of death goes beyond the physical to the spiritual and eternal.

1. Both physical and spiritual death are a result of the fall (one can be avoided, the other cannot unless you've raptured).
2. Christ came to restore our positions and to give us life.



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3. We do not yet "see" all things subject to Him.
 - a) I Cor. 15:26-28
 - b) Physical death will be eliminated in the future.

B. Resurrection from the dead

1. Is taught both in the Old and the New Testaments
2. References in the Old Testament

a) Job 19:25-27; Ps. 16:9,15,17; Dan. 12:1-3

3. References in the New Testament

a) Jn. 5:28-29; Lk. 14:13-14, 20:35-36; Acts 24:15; I Cor. 15; Thes. 4:14-16; Rev. 20:4-6,13

I

C. Nature of the resurrection

1. Bodily resurrection

a) Jn. 5:28; I Cor. 15:22; Rev. 20:12; I Cor. 5:10

2. The resurrection of the body of Jesus was physical yet without limitations.

3. A new heaven and earth

D. Redemption of the body included "total redemption."

1. Rom. 8:11-23; I Cor. 6:13-20; Jn. 6:39; Job 19:25-27; II Cor. 5:4

E. Nature of the resurrection body

1. I Cor. 15:36-37

2. Not necessarily like the grave body



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3. Possibly some organic connection (Matt. 27 saints came out of the grave)
4. Vast improvements over this present body
5. Phil. 3:21
 - a) Christ's Resurrection body
 - 1) Read (Lk. 24:39)
 - 2) Recognizable (Lk. 24:31; Jn. 20:16)
 - 3) Powerful (Jn 20:19)
 - 4) Not flesh and blood, but flesh and bone, not pure spirit
 - 5) Incorruptible (I Cor. 15:42)
 - 6) Glorious, heavenly, powerful (I Cor. 15:43-49)



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LESSON # 22

CHRISTIANS BELIEVE IN THE FUTURE (Part 2)



OBJECTIVE: Chapter III of the book explores the theme of judgment, primarily focusing on Christ's role as the judge. The chapter emphasizes that Christ will be the ultimate judge, as supported by passages from the New Testament such as John 5:22-23, 27; II Timothy 4:1; II Corinthians 5:10; Acts 10:42, and Acts 17:31. This concept of Christ as the judge is also rooted in the teachings of the Old Testament, as evident in Psalms 96:13.

The chapter examines various aspects of judgment, including judgment of saints based on their works (not for salvation), as highlighted in passages like I Corinthians 3:8-16, II Corinthians 5:1-10, and I Corinthians 4:5. It also discusses the judgment of nations, referencing Matthew 25:31-46. A significant part of the chapter is dedicated to the depiction of the Great White Throne judgment, involving the wicked dead and living, as described in Revelation 20:11-15.

Furthermore, the chapter touches upon the judgment of Israel, angels, and the hope tied to the second coming of Christ. It notes that the second coming of Christ is foretold in numerous scriptures, with over 300 references in 216 chapters. This event is considered a source of hope for the Church, as stated in Titus 2:13 and II Peter 3:12. The second coming is described as personal and visible, supported by passages such as Acts 1:11, I Thessalonians 4:16-17, and Revelation 1:7.

The chapter concludes by discussing the practical applications of these teachings, highlighting their positive impact on mental health, motivation for righteous living, comfort, hope, and the excitement they bring to believers.



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III. THE JUDGEMENT

A. Christ to be the judge

1. Jn. 5:22-23, 27; II Tim. 4:1; II Cor. 5:10; Acts 10:42, 17:31

B. Taught in the Old Testament

1. Ps. 96:13

C. Taught in the New Testament

1. Acts 17:31; Heb. 9:27

D. Of saints (of works, not salvation)

1. I Cor. 3:8-16; II Cor. 5:1-10; I Cor. 4:5

E. Of nations

1. Matt. 25:31-46

F. Great White Throne (wicked dead, wicked living Matt. 25)

1. Rev. 20:11-15

G. Of Israel

1. Eze. 20:33-44; Ps. 50:16-22

H. Of angels

1. Jude 6; II Peter 2:4; I Cor. 6:3



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IV. THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

- A. First prophecy before Noah's flood
 - 1. Jude 14

- B. In the Scriptures
 - 1. 318 references in 216 chapters
 - 2. Matt. 24; Mk. 13; Lk. 21; I & II Thess.; Jn. 14:3, 21:22; Acts 1:11; Heb. 2:2; 9:28; I Jn. 2:28; Jude 14, 15

- C. Hope of the Church
 - 1. Titus 2:13; II Peter 3:12

- D. Personal and visible
 - 1. Acts 1:11; I Thess. 4:16-17, Rev. 1:7

- E. Application
 - 1. Good for mental health
 - 2. Motivation for right living
 - 3. Hope and comfort
 - 4. Exciting!



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LESSON # 23

CHRISTIANS BELIEVE IN PRAYER



OBJECTIVE: This chapter, taken largely from Chuck Smith's "Effective Prayer Life," underscores the universal nature of prayer, asserting that even those who claim not to believe in God often find themselves uttering prayers during moments of crisis.

It examines the multifaceted nature of prayer by delving into specific aspects of prayer and their relevance to the believer's life. The chapter is organized into sections that address different aspects of prayer, including the identity of those who should pray, the subjects of prayer, the locations and timings of prayer, the motivations for prayer, and the methods of praying.

Through the use of various biblical references, the chapter offers a comprehensive exploration of these topics. It discusses the "who, what, where, when, why, and how" of prayer, shedding light on the principles that guide an effective prayer life. The chapter concludes with an invitation to pray, encapsulating the essence of the teachings presented.

Overall, these chapter lay the foundation for a deeper understanding of prayer as a powerful and transformative practice in the lives of believers, providing insights into its various dimensions and encouraging readers to embrace prayer as a means of connecting with God.



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Everyone engages in prayer at one time or another. Even that person who says "I don't believe in God," cries out when the crisis looms, "Oh God, help me!" We are all acquainted with prayer to some extent or another. Prayer is one of the greatest privileges God has given man. We can come into the presence of God, the Creator of this universe, and talk with Him. And what's more, He always listens! Effective Prayer life (Chuck Smith) - Pg.43

(I) WHAT IS PRAYER?

(II) WHO SHOULD PRAY?

(A) Psalms 32:6

(III) WHO SHOULD PRAY?

(A) Matthew 6:6, 9

(IV) WHAT SHOULD WE PRAY FOR AND ABOUT?

(A) Philippians 4:6

(B) Matthew 6:10

(C) Matthew 9:38

(D) 2 Thessalonians 3:1

(E) James 5:13-16



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(F) Ephesians 3:14-19

(V) WHERE SHOULD WE PRAY?

(A) 1 Corinthians 1:2

(B) Luke 19:46

(C) Matthew 6:6

(VI) WHEN SHOULD WE PRAY?

(A) Luke 18:1

(B) 1 Thessalonians 3:10

(C) Psalm 61:2

(VII) WHY PRAY?

(A) Luke 22:40

(B) Ephesians 6:10-12

(C) Ephesians 3 :20



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(D) John 15:5

(VIII) HOW SHOULD WE PRAY?

(A) Romans 8:26

(B) 1 John 5 :14

(C) Matthew 6:5

(D) Jude 20

(E) 1 Corinthians 14:15

(IX) HINDERANCES TO PRAYER

(A) Isaiah 59:2

(B) 1 Peter 3:7

(C) James 1:6-8

(D) Luke 18:9-14

LET'S PRAY!!!



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LESSON # 24

CHRISTIANS BELIEVE IN PRAYER (Part 2)



OBJECTIVE: This session looks into the Lord's Prayer as a model or outline for prayer. The chapter emphasizes that the Lord's Prayer, found in Matthew 6:9-13, is not just a recitation to be memorized, but rather a guide that Jesus provided to teach his disciples how to pray. The prayer is broken down into various components, each with its own significance and purpose.

The session discusses the key elements of the Lord's Prayer, highlighting their deeper meanings and implications for personal prayer lives. It starts with "Our Father in Heaven," emphasizing the focus on God and His majesty. The concept of God's Kingdom and His will is explored, inviting believers to seek the establishment of God's rule in all areas of life. The prayer's teachings on forgiveness and relationships are also examined, emphasizing the importance of mending broken relationships and seeking forgiveness.

The chapter concludes by emphasizing the need for guidance, deliverance from temptation, and returning to praise and adoration in prayer.

Overall, the chapter encourages readers to use the Lord's Prayer as a template for their own prayers, guiding them through various aspects of communication with God, from acknowledging His greatness to seeking His guidance and acknowledging His sovereignty and glory.



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(I) LORD'S PRAYER AS A MODEL OR OUTLINE OF PRAYER

Many people are familiar with this prayer and it is often recited. Most likely Jesus gave it as an outline or a guide, rather than something to be recited or simply memorized. But memorizing it and reciting it are fine providing we think about what we are saying when we repeat it.

A. Matthew 6:9-13

1. The Lord outlined this prayer as an example. The same account in Luke 11:1 has the prayer given in answer to the request that Jesus, "teach us to pray."

B. Our Father in Heaven

1. Begin with the focus on God, not ourselves.
2. Praise, majesty

C. Hallowed be Your Name

1. Hallowed means set apart.
2. The different names of God are descriptions.

D. Your Kingdom Come, Your Will be Done



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1. The Kingdom of God is where He rules and reigns.
 - a. Family, immediate and blood relatives.
 - b. Friends and associates.
 - c. Church, home groups, leadership.
2. You have the priestly ability to release the Kingdom of God.

E. Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread

1. After him, then others, then us.
2. Matt. 6:33

F. Forgive Us Our Debts As We Forgive Our Debtors

1. Time to get relationships right.
2. Matt. 6:14, 15



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G. Lead us Not Into Temptation, But Deliver Us From the Evil One

1. Asking for leading, guidance, direction.
2. James 1:13-15

H. For Yours is the Kingdom and the Glory

1. Return to praise and adoration.
2. Phil. 4:6

I. Let's Pray Using this Model of Prayer

Pray this week using the model from the Lord's Prayer.



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LESSON # 25

CHRISTIANS BELIEVE IN PRAYER (Part 3)



OBJECTIVE: Building off of Chuck Smith's "Effective Prayer Life" this lesson explores various types and forms of prayer, providing insights into their definitions, biblical foundations, and practical implications for believers. The chapter begins by acknowledging the diversity of prayers and aims to help readers better understand prayer. It emphasizes that prayer is essentially a dialogue with God, involving both speaking to God and listening for His voice.

The lesson highlights that intercession involves coming between parties or acting as a mediator on behalf of others. It draws from biblical references in I Timothy 2:1 and Ephesians 6:18, and emphasizes the role of believers in representing God to others through prayer.

Petition is defined as asking for something. The chapter explores the concept of asking God for specific needs and desires, referring to passages like I John 5:14 and Philippians 4:6. It is noted as the



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There are many different kinds of prayer. We'll try and define some of them so we can understand prayer better. There are also a variety of forms for praying. Basically it is simply talking to God and listening for His voice.

I. INTERCESSION

A. Biblical background

1. I Timothy 2:1

2. Ephesians 6:18

B. Definition: To come between parties or act as mediator or advocate

C. We represent God to others having been with Him.

II. PETITION

A. Definition: To ask

B. I John 5:14

C. Philippians 4:6

D. Most common type of prayer



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III. IN SPIRIT

- A. I Corinthians 14:14
- B. Not men but rather to God's understanding (14:2)
- C. Personal edification (14:4)
- D. Romans 8:26-27 valuable resource

IV. PRAYING DIRECTLY FOR AND WITH OTHERS

In this kind of prayer we pray FOR other people. Other kinds of prayer do have a place

- a. Praise
- b. Intercession
- c. Petition - asking God for our own healing.

(V) FASTING/SOLITUDE

A. Fasting

- 1. Definition



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a. Not to be motivated by vanity or the desire for power

b. Demonstrates total dependence upon God for substance

2. Biblical references to fasting

a. Luke 4:2

b. Daniel 10:3

c. Esther 4:16 and Acts 9:9

d. Deut. 9:9 and I Kings 19:8

e. Lev. 23:27

f. Joel 2:15, II Chron. 20:1-4 and Ezra 8:21-23

g. Zac. 8:19 and Luke 18:12

3. The purpose of fasting

a. Matthew 6:16-18

b. Fasting reveals the things that control versus helping with the transformation process. Anger, bitterness, jealousy, strife, fear, etc.

c. I Cor. 6:12

d. Other values of fasting are increased effectiveness in intercessory prayer, guidance in decisions, increased concentration, revelations, etc. God rewards those who diligently see Him.

4. The practice of fasting



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- a. Start out slow, try a fruit fast or partial fast by skipping lunch, then on to a normal fast.
 - b. Drink plenty of water during fast
 - c. Don't be worried about your false hunger pains
 - d. Please don't just rush out into a prolonged fast, start small with one
- 5) Fast never changes God's mind, only yours.

B. Solitude

- 1. Definition
 - a. Settle yourself in solitude
- 2. Christ's example
 - a. Matthew 4:1-11
 - b. Luke 6:12
 - c. Matthew 14:13
 - d. Matthew 14:23
 - e. Mark 1:35
 - f. Mark 6:31



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- g. Luke 5:16
- h. Matthew 26:36-46
- i. We could keep going. Do you think Jesus held a high priority on the value of solitude?

3. The purpose of solitude

- a. James 3:1-12
- b. Solitude is intimately related to trust
- c. Solitude is also intimately related to compassion

3. Developing the discipline of solitude

- a. Take advantage of "little solitudes" daily
- b. Find a place in or around your house and make it your quiet place
- c. Discipline yourself so your words are few not full
- d. Three or four times a year you may want to spend a few hours in silence developing inner solitude
- e. You will feel a renewed sensitivity and compassion for others

Pray quietly this week. Try fasting a meal and pray for unsaved friends, family and co-workers.



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LESSON # 26

CHRISTIANS BELIEVE IN HAVING A DEVOTED LIFE



OBJECTIVE: This lesson focuses on the devotional life of a believer, addressing the personal relationship and interaction between an individual and God. It emphasizes that the church is composed of individual believers who must develop a personal, open, and responsible relationship with God in addition to their participation in corporate worship.

This lesson defines "devote" and "devotions" as dedicating and setting apart time for God, encompassing religious exercises beyond corporate worship. The purpose of devotions is highlighted as giving one's life to God, creating a space for personal growth and transformation.

The lesson outlines how to start a devotional life, emphasizing the need for commitment, seeking help, setting aside time, and being accountable to others. Warnings are also provided to avoid pride, routine, haste, and an overly spiritual attitude, reminding readers that devotions are a means to deepen one's connection with God, contributing to personal growth and spiritual development.

In essence, this lesson encourages believers to cultivate a meaningful and intentional devotional life as an essential aspect of their personal relationship with God, helping them to grow spiritually and live out their faith practically in their daily lives.



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(I) THE DEVOTIONAL LIFE OF THE BELIEVER (Devotions, Prayer and Memory)

This study will concentrate on our own personal lives. We deceive ourselves if we only hear the word and partake of sound doctrine. We must also be doers of the word.

We must realize that before the church is a gathering of believers, it is individuals under the Lordship of Christ. In order to be effective as a believer we must become effective in having an open and responsible relationship with God. This session is designed to challenge us to do so.

(I) DEFINITION OF DEVOTE/DEVOTIONS

- A. Webster – To dedicate, give over, to give center of attention, set apart
- a B. Devotion: A religious exercise other than the regular corporate worship of congregation (Webster).
- C. Giving of our lives to God

(II) WHAT FORM SHOULD DEVOTIONS TAKE?

- A. Variety of forms depending on needs, circumstances, schedule
- B. Should be practical
- C. Should involve action
- D. Should involve change



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1. In attitude, viewpoint
2. In lifestyle, deed

(II) WHAT WOULD BE SOME SUGGESTIONS?

- A. Study how the Bible characters served God in their personal life.
 1. Daniel
 2. David
 3. Paul
 4. Etc.
- B. Read, think about and apply one verse of Proverbs.
 1. No need to “cram” a lot in
- C. Find verses that tell you to do something.
 1. **Underline them**
 2. Go back and answer “Do I do this?”
 3. Think about how you may apply the verse.
- D. Read books that challenge!
 1. Not only “light reading”
- E. Implement what you have learned.
 1. Share it with others.
 2. Share how you want your life to change.



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F. Study subjects which deal with life.

1. Money
2. Manners, speech, courtesy
3. Giving
4. Time
5. Service
6. Witnessing
7. Etc.

G. Apply the subjects!

(IV) HOW DO YOU BEGIN A DEVOTIONAL LIFE?

- A. Read Rom. 12:1-3
- B. Determine to live a practical life.
- C. Confess you need to change.
- D. Admit you need help.
- E. Set apart a time (Make time!)
- F. Go to the bookstore!
- G. Begin to do what you already know.
- H. Commit yourself.
- I. Share your commitment with others (now you are accountable).

(V) WARNINGS

- A. Don't get proud.



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- B. Don't get "stale" and routine.
- C. Don't be afraid to change habits.
- D. Don't be in a hurry.
- E. Don't get "over-spiritual."
- F. Don't "display" what you've learned.
- G. Devotions are a "means" not an "end."



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LESSON # 27

CHRISTIANS BELIEVE IN PUTTING CHRIST FIRST



OBJECTIVE: This lesson explores the concept of the Lordship of Jesus Christ in the lives of believers. The lesson starts by defining Lordship as the continuous surrender of oneself to Jesus' authority and leadership. This submission is rooted in acknowledging Jesus' sovereign right to rule over every aspect of our lives. The foundational Scripture, 2 Corinthians 5:14-15, underscores the essence of Lordship in recognizing Christ's authority over us.

This plan involves denying oneself, taking up one's cross daily, and following Jesus wholeheartedly. Lordship is described as the process of replacing self on the throne of one's life with Jesus, trusting Him to lead and guide. The lesson addresses common obstacles to acknowledging Christ's Lordship, such as fear of obedience and doubts about God's intentions.

The indicators of Jesus' Lordship in one's life are explored, emphasizing obedience to His commands and a commitment to reading and applying the Word of God. The lesson highlights the blessings that come from putting Christ first, including a transformed mind, a renewed life, and the experience of true faith living.

The lesson concludes by encouraging participants to pray for each other by name and to contemplate the implications of being followers of Christ. Overall, the lesson underscores the significance of Christ's Lordship in a believer's life, emphasizing the transformation that occurs when one wholeheartedly submits to His authority and guidance.



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Discussion of last week's meeting, readings and events.

(I) DEFINITION OF LORDSHIP

2 Corinthians 5:14, 15 - the Lordship of Jesus Christ is the daily submission and surrender of our entire self to the authority and leadership of Jesus, recognizing His sovereign right to rule over us. (Colossians 1:18).

(II) WHAT IS CHRIST'S PLAN FOR HIS DISCIPLES?

(A) Luke 9:23 states the heart of discipleship.

(B) Deny yourself - Putting the Lord and others first; refusing to live my life to please myself.

(C) Take up your cross daily - Submitting our will to the will of God. Luke 22:42.

(D) Follow me - Following Jesus and no one or nothing else. Matthew 4:19; 1 Peter 2:21.

(E) The whole principle of Lordship is the removal of self off of the throne of one's life, and the invitation to Jesus to sit on the throne and rule, trusting Him to do what is best for us.

(F) The battle of submission: two reasons why people do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord of their life.

(G) We're afraid God may ask us to do something we don't want to do.



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(H) We are not sure that God has our best interest at heart. Jeremiah 29:11.

(III) HOW DO I KNOW IF JESUS IS LORD OF MY LIFE?

(A) We show our love for Jesus by obeying His commands. John 14:15, 21, 23.

(B) We must read the Word of God, see what God's will is for our lives and then we must do it. James 1:22-25.

(IV) WHAT IS THE BLESSING OF PUTTING CHRIST FIRST IN MY LIFE?

(A) 1 Peter 3:15-16

(B) Romans 12:1-2

(C) Romans 6:22

(D) The Lordship of Jesus Christ is the most crucial issue of any Christian's life. We are all aware of those around us who are reaping in their lives the by-products of their lack of obedience. Jesus has our best interests at heart. We must give Him our entire life and we must live only for Him daily. Only then will we experience the full life that He has promised us. As we continually confess Jesus Christ as Lord of our lives, we are assured of true faith living in our hearts. (Romans 10:9-10)



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Pray for one another by name. Think this week what it means to be a follower of Christ.



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LESSON # 28

CHRISTIANS BELIEVE IN THE RESURRECTION



OBJECTIVE: This lesson delves into the profound significance of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, examining its conquest over death, its foundational role in Christianity, and its remarkable scrutiny throughout history.

This section also presents medical evidence from an article published in the Journal of the American Medical Association, confirming Jesus' death. The Resurrection is defined as rising from the dead, distinct from temporary resuscitations like that of Lazarus. It emphasizes that Jesus' resurrection signifies the defeat of death, which has universal dominion.

The second section asserts the Resurrection as the cornerstone of Christianity. The empty tomb, the broken Roman seal, the left-behind grave cloths, and the accounts of eye-witnesses are presented as compelling evidence for the Resurrection.

The third section acknowledges the Resurrection's status as the most scrutinized event in history. It discusses how people have examined this event from different perspectives—seekers, skeptics, cynics, believers, and detractors. It mentions Frank Morrison, an English journalist who initially sought to disprove the Resurrection but ended up being convinced by the Biblical record.

The final section presents four possible explanations for the empty tomb: Jesus truly rose as He said, hallucination theory, conspiracy theory, or swoon theory. The lesson concludes by affirming that the Resurrection is not only historically validated but also foundational for the Christian faith, reminding believers of Jesus' promise and their hope of resurrection.

In summary, the lesson underscores the Resurrection's pivotal role in Christianity, examining its historical validity, transformative power, and its implications for believers' faith and future.

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- (I) It's the conquering of death
- (II) It's the Cornerstone of Christianity
- (III) It is the most scrutinized event in world history

(I) IT'S THE CONQUERING OF DEATH

A) Jesus Died A Real Death

- | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------|
| 1) He was Scourged & Crucified | John 18:12-40 |
| 2) He was Certified Dead | John 19: 1, 18 |
| 3) Laid in the Tomb | John 19:32-34 |
| 4) Large Stone Door Closed | Mark 15:46 |
| 5) Roman Guard posted | Matt. 27:63-65 |
| 6) Secured and Sealed | Matt. 27:66 |
| 7) Dead for days | Luke 24:1 |

B) Jesus was Certified Dead

“Pilate was surprised to hear that he was already dead. Summoning the centurion, he asked him if Jesus had already died. [45] When he learned from the centurion that it was so, he gave the body to Joseph.” Mark 15:44-45

“Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jews did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down. [32] The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. [33] But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. [34] Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water.” Jn 19:31-34



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C) In 1986 William D. Edwards, MD; Wesley J Gabel, MDiv; Floyd E Hosmer, MS, AMI wrote an article on the crucifixion for the Journal of the American Medical Association, titled On the Physical Death of Jesus Christ

D) The final conclusion of their report was that, *“Modern medical interpretation of the historical evidence indicates that Jesus was dead when taken down from the cross.”*

E) What is a Resurrection?

1) The Dictionary says,

- A) The act of rising from the dead or returning to life.
- B) The state of one who has returned to life.
- C) The act of bringing back to practice, notice, or use; revival.
- D) The Resurrection. Theology.

(1) The rising again of Jesus on the third day after the Crucifixion.

(2) The rising again of the dead at the Last Judgment.

2) There were several that were not permanent in the scriptures, most notably that of Lazarus

a) Jesus resurrection was never to die again



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b) Death is losing it's grip

a) It is "real death" not "near-death" that they are brought back from...
Lazarus and Jesus it had been days...

c) Death is universal and nobody has been able to beat it

a) None powerful enough

b) None rich enough

c) Not wise enough (Buddha, Gandhi)

d) THE GRAVE ALWAYS WINS!!

d) Universal Death applies not only to people, but to all of creation. (bondage of decay)

(II) THE RESURRECTION IS THE FOUNDATION OF CHRISTIANITY

A) Christianity was founded after all His disciples lost hope

B) From an April 1996 US News & World Report

"Some extraordinary event occurred in Jerusalem to account for the radical change of behavior in the disciples."

C) "Jesus' Tomb Was Empty (a well established fact)



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- 1) A known Grave site, anyone could visit it
- 2) A Broken Roman seal (a capital offense)
- 3) Stone was rolled away
- 4) Grave cloths were left behind
- 5) Disciples were confused
- 6) Enemies believed it was empty
- 7) Eye-witnesses said Jesus was alive

(III) IT IS THE MOST SCRUTINIZED FACT IN ALL OF HISTORY

A) People have been looking at this issue for thousands of years from every conceivable angle and position

- 1) Some as seekers, some as skeptics, some as cynics, some as believers, some to destroy faith

a) Frank Morrison was an English journalist who set out to prove that the story of Christ's resurrection was nothing but a myth. However, his probing led him to discover the validity of the Biblical record in a moving, personal way.

(IV) WHY WAS THERE **NO BODY** IN THE TOMB?

(Four Possible Answers)

- 1) Jesus Died and Rose exactly as He said He would



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- a) This is the cornerstone of Christianity
- b) Everything stands or falls on the truthfulness of God's Word
- c) Luke tells us in Acts that Jesus *"showed with many convincing proofs that He was alive."*
- d) This was the worst fear of those who put Jesus to death

(1) They did NOT want the Body to disappear

(2) They did everything in their power to insure that it didn't. Now it's gone. (27:62-64)

(3) The earliest explanation was, "His disciples came and took the body at night while we (the guards) were sleeping."

(1) If you were sleeping how do you know who took it?

(2) I realize ALL you guys are sound sleepers, but didn't anybody hear those guys trying to roll away that big stone?

(3) What soldiers are going to admit to sleeping? And all of them?

(4) Why would His deserting disciples return to steal the body? Especially when they were depressed. Couldn't remember He said it!!



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(5) Why would thieves take the time to put all the grave clothes in a neat and orderly fashion?

(a) These are the kinds of things investigating officers notice for false claims of thief. Neatness.

(b) Why would you be cleaning up when there were armed guards outside the tomb you just sneaked in to?

(c) If this really happened how come there were no investigations into wrong doing?

e) Nobody disputes the empty tomb

2) “Jesus didn’t arise, the apostles were deceived. Hallucination Theory

a) They wanted this so bad they saw Him

b) Much positive evidence against these facts

c) Post resurrection Appearances

1. To Mary Magdalene (John 20:11-18)
2. To the other women (Matthew 28:8-10)
3. To Peter (Luke 24:34; I Corinthians 15:5)
4. To the two on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35; Mark 16:12)
5. To ten of the disciples (Luke 24:36-43)



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6. To all eleven disciples, eight days later
7. To seven disciples by the Sea of Tiberias (John 21:1-23)
8. To five hundred followers (I Corinthians 15:6)
9. To James (I Corinthians 15:7)
10. To the eleven, at the ascension (Acts 1:3-12)

11. All saw the same hallucination in different places?

a) Indoors, Outdoors, Along a road, by a lake

b) Some of them touched Him

c) Skeptics having the same hallucination?

12) A similar version of this one is that the disciples went to the wrong tomb.

a) Then why didn't the enemies of Jesus point to the right one?

b) The apostles preached in Jerusalem and 1000s got saved... they talked about the empty tomb in their preaching...

3) Jesus Died, Didn't Rise, the disciples deceived (**Conspiracy Theory**)

a) This is morally impossible

1) They were devout and genuine and preached righteousness



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a) Says they were cheap frauds – nobody really believes that...

b) They were confused and distraught over the crucifixion

c) There was a sudden change in their lives after the resurrection...

4) Jesus Didn't Die (Swoon Theory)

Popularized by Hugh Schonfield in Passover Plot

a) It's physically impossible.

1) He never could have survived the extent of His tortures

2) The Romans were convinced He was dead

3) Those who had Him crucified were convinced

b) It's religiously impossible.

1) These disciples would not be worshipping a Jesus in need of medical attention

2) Their conviction and message was that He rose gloriously from the grave!

c) It's biographically impossible

1) Makes Jesus out to a deceiver and charlatan



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d) None of these were passed around in Jesus day...

b) WITNESS OF THE APOSTLES

CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS

1) It says the women went on the first day of the week... that's Sunday, today....

a) People have been worshipping the Risen Son on Sundays ever since that morning...

2) Jesus keeps His Promises

a) Said He would Rise. He did.

b) Said you will rise. You will



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LESSON # 29

CHRISTIANS BELIEVE IN FELLOWSHIP



OBJECTIVE: Summary of Lesson on Fellowship:

This lesson delves into the concept of fellowship, emphasizing its significance in the lives of believers, its distinguishing aspect between the saved and the lost, its motivation, its nature, and the activities associated with it.

The lesson begins by defining fellowship as a deep sharing and friendly companionship, often built around shared interests and values. It emphasizes that as believers build their lives around Christ, they also form relationships with other believers within the church.

The distinction between the saved and the lost is explored through 1 Peter 2:9-11, highlighting the names that the Lord calls believers, the transformation that being part of His people brings, and how believers are described in the present world.

The lesson underscores the motivation for fellowship, grounded in love and commitment. Scriptures like Romans 8:35-39, 1 John 2:3-6, and Hebrews 10:25 emphasize the enduring nature of God's love and the call to continue meeting together.

Activities shared by early believers, such as studying the Word, prayer, breaking bread, and meeting needs, are presented as examples of fellowship in action, both in spiritual and practical contexts.

In conclusion, the lesson underscores that fellowship is not merely an option but a vital aspect of the Christian life, promoting spiritual growth, mutual support, and the demonstration of love among believers.



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(I) DEFINITION OF FELLOWSHIP

(A) Fellowship. Sharing something with another person in a deep way. Friendly relation and companionship.

(B) An association of people with similar interests and tastes.

(C) As we build our lives around Christ, we build them in relationship to other believers that He has placed in the church with us.

(II) THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE SAVED AND THE LOST 1 Peter 2:9-11.

(A) What names does the Lord call us in 1 Peter 2:9?

(B) Have we always been His people according to 1 Peter 2:10?

(C) How are we described in this present world in 1 Peter 2:11?

(D) What should be our response to 1 Peter 2:9

(III) WITH WHOM DO WE FELLOWSHIP?

(A) 2 Corinthians 13:14



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(B) 1 John 1:3

(C) 1 John 1:7

(IV) WHAT IS OUR MOTIVATION FOR FELLOWSHIP?

(A) Romans 8:35-39

(B) 1 John 2:3-6

(C) Hebrews 10:25

(V) WHAT ACTIVITIES DID THE EARLY BELIEVERS SHARE IN?

(A) Acts 2:42-47

(B) Colossians 3:15-16

(VI) THE KEY ISSUE OF FELLOWSHIP IS LOVE

(A) John 13:34-35

(B) 1 John 3:18

(C) Galatians 6:10

(VII) WHAT DO WE DO WHEN WE FELLOWSHIP?



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(A) Hebrews. 10:25

(B) James 5:16

(C) Hebrews 10:24

(D) 1 Corinthians 11:24-26

(E) 2 Corinthians 8:4

(F) Romans 15:25

(G) Romans 12:13; Acts 11:29

(H) Romans 15:1-2

(I) 1 Peter 2:2-3

(J) Matthew 18:19-20

(K) Colossians 3:16

(VII) IS FELLOWSHIP AN OPTION ACCORDING TO HEBREWS 10:25?

(A) What are the dangers of not fellowshiping with other Christians regularly?



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THE ONE ANOTHERS

REFERENCE/STATEMENT

ROMANS 12:10 Be devoted to one another

Give preference to one another

12:16 Be of the same mind toward one another

13:8 Love one another

14:13 Let us not judge one another

14:19 Pursue the things which make for peace for the building up of one another

15:5 Be of the same mind with one another

15:14 Admonish one another

I CORINTHIANS

12:25 Care for one another

GALATIANS

5:13 Serve one another

6:2 Bear one another's burdens

EPHESIANS

4:1-2 Show forbearance to one another

4:32 Be kind to one another

5:18-21 Speak to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.

Be subject to one another.



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COLOSSIANS

3:9 Do not lie to one another

3:12-13 Bear with one another

3:16 Teach and admonish one another

I THESSALONIANS

3:12 Increase and abound in love for one another

4:18 Comfort one another

HEBREWS

3:13 Encourage one another

10:23-25 Stimulate one another to love and good deeds

JAMES

4:11 Do not speak against one another

5:9 Do not complain....against one another

5:16 Confess your sins to one another

Pray for one another

I PETER

1:22 Love one another

4:9 Be hospitable to one another

5:5 Clothe yourself with humility toward one another

I JOHN



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3:11 Love one another

3:23 Love one another

4:7 Love one another

4:11 Love one another

4:12 Love one another

II JOHN

5 Love one another



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LESSON # 30

CHRISTIANS BELIEVE IN THE CHURCH



OBJECTIVE: The lesson emphasizes the importance of being part of a local church in the journey of spiritual growth and walking with the Lord. It highlights that the church, established by Christ, provides believers with instruction, worship, support, and opportunities to serve using their unique gifts and abilities. The church's primary purpose is to glorify Christ and be a light to the world, and becoming an active member is a crucial step toward this goal.

The lesson explains the concept of a healthy church and describes its characteristics based on the model of the first-century church. Regular gatherings, Bible study, caring for members, corporate prayer, worship, and sharing the Gospel are among the features of a vibrant church. The article warns against false teachings and cults that deviate from biblical principles.

The lesson concludes by emphasizing the importance of finding the right church where individuals can grow in their love for the Lord, serve Him, and contribute to the life of the church. It encourages believers to seek a church that preaches the Gospel faithfully and practices its beliefs in daily life, guiding readers to trust God's guidance in finding their place in the church.



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(I) THE DOCTRINE (TEACHING) OF THE CHURCH

The church is God's idea. It is where we worship, grow together and accomplish His purposes on earth until he returns. The Bible encourages us to fellowship in the context of the church and Christianity that tries to exist without or outside of the church is both inferior and disobedient.

The church consists of those who are partakers in the blessings and benefits of Christ. The work translated church (Greek - ecclesia) in other places means an assembly or gathering. For our purposes, we will use this definition compounded with the concept of those being in the church as called out of the world by God. In essence, then, our understanding of the church means those "called out and assembled together." The church is always corporate, while Christians are individuals.

There are two common errors in understanding the church. The first error sees the church as being limited to a local concept, organization, denomination, or group. The second error sees the church as being only universal and invisible in nature. To limit our view of the church to either of these concepts will lead to ineffective witness and mission. The church is BOTH universal and local, yet it is important to see ourselves as part of both. The Roman Church was in gross error to think that both concepts could be brought together perfectly on earth. They set up a system of government which would identify and unify the church around the world. This eventually lead to church authority and power superseding that of Christ and the Bible. The other error is to simply see ourselves only as individuals separated from the Body at large.

Another common error is to let the church take priority over the kingdom of God. The church does not exist as an end in itself, but rather a means to an end. Our purpose is the furthering of the Kingdom of God, through the groups of bodies God has raised up to do this in a particular locality. When the kingdom takes precedence, the local body and believers suffer, when the church takes precedence, the Kingdom of God suffers. There is a fine balance somewhere in-between which we need to learn.

(II) DEFINITION OF THE CHURCH



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A. Ecclesia

1. Used 111 times in the New Testament
2. Used for assembly or called out (Mt. 16:18; Acts 19:39; Rom. 8:30, 16:4; I Cor. 1:2; II Cor. 6:17)

B. The Church Belongs To The Lord

1. He is the Head, He has dominion and authority.
 - a. Therefore, the church, universal or local, can have no other "head."
2. The church is the Body of Christ.
 - a. Col. 1:18; I Cor. 12:27 - this refers to both universal and local bodies.
 - b. Stresses unity
 - c. We can function together with Christ.
(Eph. 1:22-23)
 - d. No life apart from the Head. (Col. 1:18; 2:19)

C. Temple of the Holy Spirit of God.

1. I Cor. 3:9-17; 6:19; Eph. 2:20-22; I Pet. 2:5

D. The Jerusalem that is above

1. Counterpart of the old Jerusalem, dwelling place of God, where the people are brought in communion with God, while on earth belongs in the heavenly sphere.
2. Gal. 4:26; Heb. 12:22; Rev. 21:2,9,10



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- E. Pillar and ground of truth
 - 1. The church is the guardian of truth, the citadel of truth.
 - 2. Defender of the truth
 - 3. I Tim. 3:15
- F. The church is the **Bride of Christ**.
 - 1. II Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:25-27; Rev. 19:7; 22:17; 21:2
- G. The church is a **flock**.
 - 1. Acts 10:28

(III) ESTABLISHING THE CHURCH

- A. Foretold in prophecy by Christ
 - 1. Matt. 16:16-18; 18:15-20
- B. Founded by the Apostles (historically speaking)
 - 1. Acts 1 - 2:47; Acts 2:46; 12:12

(IV) CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

- A. **Repentance** and Baptism
 - 1. Acts 2:38-41; Matt. 28:19; Rom. 10:9-10
- B. Faith in Jesus Christ



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1. Matt. 16:16-18; Acts 2:38-39.
- C. Adherence to the Apostles teaching, i.e. the Bible
 1. Acts 2:42; Eph. 2:20
- D. Characteristics of the Early Church
 1. Believers, Acts 4:32
 2. Brethren, equality among believers
 - a. Matt. 23:8-10; Acts 11:29; Rom. 1:13
 3. Saints
 - a. Acts 9:13; I Cor. 1:2; Rev. 13:7
 4. Elect
 - a. Mk. 13:27; Rom. 8:33; Eph. 1:4

(V) THE ORDINANCES OF THE CHURCH

- A. Baptism
 1. Matt. 28:19-20; Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38,41; 8:36-40; 10:47-48
- B. The Lord's Supper
 1. Acts 2:42,46; 20:7; I Cor. 11:20-34

(VI) THE PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH

- A. To **worship God**
 1. Eph. 1:4-6
- B. To **build up the Body**



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1. Eph. 4:11-15
2. Failure to be part leads to trouble.
 - a. Heb. 10:25-28; I Thes. 5:11; I Cor. 12, 14
- C. To evangelize the world and make disciples
 1. Mat. 28:19-20 - GO!
 2. Acts 5:42; 6:5-8; 13:1-7; Eph 3:8; Acts 15:7; Acts 1:8
- D. To be glorified in Christ in the future
 1. Eph. 3:20,21; Rev. 21:9-27



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**READ THE ARTICLE ON “FINDING YOUR PLACE IN THE CHURCH”
BY DAVID McGEE**

*“An Important First Step in Walking With the Lord:
Your Place in the Church”*

An Important First Step in Walking with the Lord

Now that you have decided to follow Christ and live a life pleasing to Him, you are probably wondering, "What do I do? How do I go from here? Which path will bring spiritual growth?"

One of the essential building blocks of spiritual growth is to become a part of a local church. The church, meaning the entire body of Christians, was established by Christ to provide you with biblically sound instruction, allow you to express genuine worship with other believers, enable you to use your God-given gifts and abilities as He intended, and keep you accountable to spiritual leadership.

But the church is not designed to only benefit the believer. The ultimate goal of the church is to bring attention and glory to the Person who unifies it: Jesus Christ. When the church operates as God intended, it serves as a powerful witness of His love and provision to a watching world.

Your Place in the Church

The first-century church had the reputation of "turning the world upside-down" with Christ's message. It was a place for devoted fellowship and valuable instruction, and it serves today as our model. God wants the church, also called in Scripture "the body of Christ", to stand out and be His light in these ever-darkening days. Any Christian who wants to please God and make a positive impact for Christ must become part of a local church.



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Christ designed the church to provide you with tremendous blessing and opportunity. Involvement in the local church is necessary for your spiritual growth, and it is something you will never outgrow. God has placed spiritually gifted people in the church to both instruct you and encourage you to lead a holy life. No Christian can endure or prosper long if he lives in isolation without the support of the church. Not only do you need the Church, but the Church needs you! God has given you, as a Christian, unique gifts and abilities that will be a blessing to others.

The Bible instructs us to, "...consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together..." (Hebrews 10:24-25).

Christians need to gather for corporate (united) worship. The benefits you receive from expressing your thanksgiving and praise with other believers, publicly reading and studying the Scriptures and praying in accord cannot be duplicated or replaced. This is one of the ways God has instructed us to worship Him in "spirit and in truth" (John 4:23-24).

The church provides an ideal outlet for serving Christ. God has created you with unique spiritual gifts and talents that benefit the rest of the body of Christ. Scripture explains that the Holy Spirit displays God's power through each of us as a means of helping the entire church (1 Corinthians 12:7). No one is "left out" so to speak. If you fail to regularly fellowship in a church with other believers, you are neglecting the opportunity to use what God has given you.

Following Christ's example, the early believers shared food, clothing, and housing with each other. The Bible asks, if you see a fellow Christian who is in need and you say to him "Well, good-bye and God bless you, stay warm and eat hearty," without giving him any food or clothes, what good have you done? (James 2:16). The body of Christ should look out for its own.

Characteristics of a Healthy Church



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The church is not really an organization so much as an organism. It thrives by keeping its members spiritually active and well fed. The Bible has plenty to say about the characteristics of a healthy, vibrant church, and you can measure its vitality by comparing its qualities to the characteristics of the first-century church (Acts 2:42,44-47).

A healthy church meets together regularly, places a high priority on Bible study and develops caring people who concern themselves with the well-being and spiritual development of each member. It recognizes the power of corporate prayer and worship and demonstrates Christ's love in meaningful ways. Its members desire to minister to others and seek to share God's good news with others.

In any Biblically-sound, God-centered church the following beliefs should be obvious:

The Bible is held as the inspired and only infallible authoritative word of God (2 Timothy 3:16)

God is eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit (John 14:26, Matthew 28:18, 19)

Salvation is the free gift of God to all who will repent of their sins and acceptance of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior is the only way to come into a relationship with God (John 14:6, Ephesians 2:8-9)

A healthy church is also a growing church. But growth alone should not necessarily be viewed as proof of God's blessing. The first disciples had a "gladness and a singleness of heart" about the early church. Your church home should be a place you look forward to attending not only on Sundays, but throughout the week.

Among other things a feeling of discomfort in a church can be a prompting from the Holy Spirit that the church is unscriptural. The Bible warns of false teachers and only by growing in your understanding of the Scriptures and through prayer will you be able to discern truth from error. Avoid any group that teaches doctrines, beliefs or rituals that



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deviate from the Bible. Many false teachers speak only parts of the truth and their messages have been aptly described as the "skin of the truth stuffed with a lie." Most cults are identifiable because they refuse to:

Adhere solely to the sixty-six books of the Bible. Instead, they add their "special revelations."

Accept that our relationship to Jesus Christ has been provided by God through His grace and is received through faith alone. Instead they practice salvation by works.

Acknowledge Jesus Christ as the divine Son of God and give Him the full recognition He merits.

Commonly known cults are Jehovah's Witnesses, Latter-Day Saints or Mormons, Unification Church, Worldwide Church of God, Unitarians, Spiritists, and Scientologists.

Finding Your Place

It has been wisely said, "The church is a hospital for sinners, not a museum for saints." Regular fellowship and participation in the church for a disciple cannot be overemphasized. As you come to church and find your place in it, you will then be in a position to give to others what God has given to us.

The church that is right for you will be a place where you can grow in your love for the Lord and serve Him by contributing to the life of the church. Remember we are all sinners doing our best to follow God's teaching. Rely on Him to show you the way.

Billy Graham offers this advice, "First, . . . I would select a church which preaches the Gospel faithfully. However, it is not enough to be sound theologically. I would choose a church which endeavors to practice what it preaches, translating its beliefs into everyday life. . . ."



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Remember that the model for a God-honoring church is in the Scriptures. Study God's design and pray to be led to the place He has prepared for you. God bless you as you grow in your faithfulness.



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LESSON # 31

CHRISTIANS BELIEVE IN GIVING AND SERVICE



OBJECTIVE: The lesson covers three essential aspects of a believer's relationship with God: tithing, giving, and service. Tithing, described as offering a tenth of one's income to support God's work, is rooted in biblical examples such as Abram's giving in Genesis 14:18-20 and the principle reiterated in Leviticus 27:30. Proverbs 3:9 highlights the importance of honoring God with the first fruits, while Malachi 3:10 speaks of abundant blessings for those who open the floodgates of giving.

Beyond tithing, the concept of giving is explored, emphasizing a cheerful attitude and generosity as advocated in II Corinthians 9:6-7.

The teaching of freely receiving and giving, as mentioned in Matthew 10:8, reinforces the idea. Luke 16:10-13 underlines the significance of being trustworthy stewards. The lesson also delves into the idea of service, drawing examples from passages like Matthew 26:7-9, where the act of serving is depicted as a selfless gesture, and John 13:4-5, where Jesus sets an example by humbly washing feet.

The lesson's overarching message is that God seeks a people who desire a genuine connection with Him and are willing to break free from selfishness and greed through acts of giving and service. It highlights that God's power empowers believers to serve Him and others. The lesson emphasizes the joy in giving and serving, viewing these actions as continuous sources of fulfillment. Finally, the concept of every member having a role and responsibility within God's family is reinforced, echoing the call for wise servants in His service.



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GIVING

I. TITHING - A **tenth** of all income given to God for furthering His work in this world. The word tithe itself means a “tenth.”

- A. Genesis 14:18-20 - Abram gives a tenth of everything.
- B. Leviticus 27:30 - A tenth of everything belongs to God.
- C. Proverbs 3:9 - Honor the Lord with the first fruits.
- D. Malachi 3:10 - Flood Gates

II. GIVING - Above and beyond the tenth.

- A. II Corinthians 9:6-7 - attitude: cheerful, not reluctantly.
- B. Matthew 10:8 - freely you have received, freely give.
- C. Luke 16:10-13 - trusted servants

III. SERVICE



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- A. Matthew 26:7-9 - wasting perfume?
- B. I Peter 4:11 - serving in God's power.
- C. Luke 4:39 - at once she waited on Him.
- D. John 13:4-5 - our example washes feet.

IV. OVERVIEW

- A. God wants a people who want Him.
- B. Selfishness and greed are taught and learned. God wants to break into these areas of our lives and free us from ourselves by instituting giving and service.
- C. God desires us to serve Him and others in "His power".
- D. God is looking for wise servants.
- E. Serving and giving should be a joy, continually.
- F. Everyone in God's family has a job and responsibility.



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LESSON # 32

CHRISTIANS BELIEVE IN HAVING THE RIGHT ATTITUDE



OBJECTIVE: The lesson focuses on the topic of attitudes, highlighting the need for a transformation of old attitudes when approaching God. It emphasizes cooperation in the renewal process, explaining that actions are rooted in attitudes. The concept of humility through service is discussed, indicating that humility is best nurtured through selfless service rather than direct pursuit. Serving in hiddenness and relinquishing control are emphasized as ways to discipline the desires of the flesh and grow in humility.

The lesson further explores the idea of submission as a path to true freedom. It explains that self-denial, holding others' interests above one's own, is central to submission and leads to a liberation from self-centeredness.

The teachings of Jesus and the epistles regarding submission are referenced, along with the need to discern the limits of submission while relying on the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Acts of submission encompass devotion to God, following Scripture, interactions with family, neighbors, and the community, including those who are marginalized. The lesson concludes with a call to pray for others and perform secret acts of goodness known only to God.

Throughout the lesson, key biblical passages and teachings are used to illustrate these concepts, encouraging individuals to cultivate attitudes of humility, service, and submission in their lives.



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(I) ATTITUDES

A. Out with the old and in with the new

1. Eph. 4:22-24

a. First, we need to recognize that when we come to God we come with defeated thinking and actions due to wrong old attitudes.

b. Secondly, we need to understand that we are to cooperate with the renewal process. Romans 12:1,2

c. Actions spring from attitudes. That's why Jesus attacked attitudes during His sermon on the Mount.

d. We will begin to work on rearranging our attitude, thus affecting our action.

2. Humility through service

a. Humility is never gained by seeking it. The more we pursue it, the more distant it becomes. Service is the most conducive to the growth of humility.

b. Nothing disciplines the inordinate desires of the flesh like service and nothing transforms the desires of flesh like serving in hidden ness.



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c. The old nature is infatuated with natural human power and abilities without any dependence upon God. 1 John 2:16

d. We must make a daily discipline of service in order to keep our flesh in check, we must also see the difference between choosing to serve and choosing to be a servant.

e. When we choose to serve, we are still in charge. When we become a servant, we give up the right to be in charge.

f. Service is not connected with status. We are all to become servants.

g. Service must have a visible outworking if it is a genuine attitude so this is how it may look in our lives.

1) The service of hiddenness to cultivate tasks of service that remain generally unknown.

2) The service of guarding the reputation of others. Titus 3:2

3) The service of small things like Dorcas. Act. 9:39

4) The service of being served. Peter refused at first to let Jesus wash his feet.

5) The service of common courtesy. Titus 3:2

6) The service of hospitality. 1 Peter 4:9

7) The service of listening. To listen to others quiets and disciplines the mind to listen to God.



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8) The service of bearing the burdens of each other. Gal 6:2

9) The service of sharing the word of life with one another.

3. Submission way to true freedom

a. Freedom through the ability to lay down the terrible burden of always needing to get our way.

b. The touch stone for the biblical understanding is Mark 8:34

1) Self-denial is the lesson, the result is our happiness is not dependent upon getting what we want.

2) Self-denial means to hold others interests above self interest. In this way, self-denial releases us from self pity.

3) Self-denial is the touchstone for the discipline of submission.

c. Submission as taught by Jesus

1) Phil. 2:8

2) Mark 8:34

3) Mark 9:35

4) John 13:15

d. Submission as taught in the epistles



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- 1) Eph. 5:21
- 2) Phil. 2:3
- 3) Col. 3:18-22

e. The limits of submission

- 1) Matt. 22:37-39
 - a) 1 Peter 2:13,14 reconciled with Acts 4:19-20 and Acts 5:29
 - b) Romans 13:1 reconciled with Acts 16-37
- 2) When defining the limits of submission we are thrown upon a deep dependence upon the Holy Spirit.

f. The acts of submission

- 1) To the triune God
- 2) To scripture, first to hear, second receive, third to obey.
- 3) To our family. Phil. 2:4
- 4) To our neighbors and those we meet in the course of our daily lives.
- 5) To the believing community, the body of Christ.
- 6) To the broken and despised. James 1:27



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7) To the world. Live as a responsible member of an increasingly irresponsible world.

Pray for friends, family and co-workers. Do something good this that only God knows about.



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LESSON # 33 GOD AND POSSESSIONS: **THE CHRISTIAN BELIEVES GOD OWNS EVERYTHING**

OBJECTIVE: The lesson delves into the relationship between God and possessions, exploring what the Bible teaches about the dangers of becoming attached to wealth and materialism. Various passages from both the Old and New Testaments are highlighted to illustrate the potential pitfalls of covetousness and an idolatrous pursuit of riches. Jesus' teachings on materialism are examined through passages in Luke and Matthew, emphasizing the need to prioritize spiritual and eternal values over worldly possessions.

The Epistles also echo these concerns, emphasizing the perils of placing too much trust in wealth. The central point of the lesson is finding balance through the discipline of simplicity. This involves seeking God's kingdom and righteousness as the primary focus, using disciplines like prayer and meditation to connect with God.

The concept of simplicity is explored inwardly, involving receiving and caring for possessions as gifts from God, and outwardly, through practical steps like buying for utility, giving generously, and rejecting materialism.

The lesson encourages a mindset shift away from addiction to consumerism, fostering an appreciation for creation and a rejection of distractions. It concludes with a call to pray for one another's use of possessions and lives, promoting a sense of communal support in living out the principles of simplicity and detachment from excessive materialism.



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(I) GOD AND POSSESSIONS

A. What Does the Bible Say?

1. Warnings against the inner spirit of slavery that an idolatrous attachment to wealth brings.

a. Though your riches increase, do not set your hearts on them. Ps. 62:10

b. The 10th commandment is against covetousness, the inner lust to have, which leads to?

c. He who trusts in riches will wither - Proverbs 11:28

2. Jesus comments on materialism

a. Luke 16:13

b. Luke 6:24

c. Matthew 6:21

d. Matthew 6:19

e. Luke 12:15

f. Relate a remembered incident where Jesus addressed the issue of money or possessions.

3. The Epistles reflect the same concern



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- a. I Tim. 6:9
 - b. I Tim. 3:3
 - c. I Tim. 6:8
 - d. Hebrews 13:5
 - e. James 4:1,1
 - f. I Tim. 6:17-19
 - g. A note of caution, forced poverty is evil and should be renounced. Scripture declares consistently and forcefully that the creation is good and to be enjoyed.
4. Now we come to the central point in this teaching. How do we stay in balance and not give too much or too little.
- a. Matthew 6:24-33
 - b. This is the central point for exercising the discipline of simplicity. Seek the Kingdom of God and the righteousness of His Kingdom first. First things first.
 - c. Using the other disciplines we have learned like prayer, solitude, meditation, get silent and seek God.
5. The inward reality of simplicity.
- a. To receive what we have as a gift from God "daily bread", sun, water, air.



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b. To care for what we have. God is able to protect what we possess. We can trust Him.

c. To have our good's available to others. Fear of the future.

6. Outward expression of simplicity

a. These should not be viewed as laws, but as an attempt to flesh out the meaning of simplicity into twentieth century life.

b. Buy things for their usefulness rather than their status

c. Reject anything that is producing an addiction in you

d. Develop a habit of giving things away

e. De-accumulate

f. Refuse to be propagandized by modern gadgets

g. Learn to enjoy things without owning them

h. Develop a deeper appreciation for the creation

i. Look with healthy skepticism at all "buy now, pay later" schemes.

j. Obey Jesus' instructions about plain speech - Matthew 5:37

k. Reject anything that will breed the oppression of others



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1. Shun whatever would distract you
from your main goal

Pray for one another and how we use our lives and possessions.



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LESSON # 34

CHRISTIANS BELIEVE IN WATER BAPTISM (COL. 2:12)

OBJECTIVE: The class delves into the concept of water baptism and its significance for Christians, with reference to Colossians 2:12. It emphasizes that water baptism is an outward expression of an inner reality, following the foundation of saving faith, repentance, and confession of Jesus as Savior. The act of baptism is seen as symbolic of purification from sin and a representation of dying to the old self and rising to a new life.

The Greek term "baptizontes" is explored, highlighting its root "bapto," which signifies immersion or plunging.

The lesson also underscores the spiritual meaning behind the symbolism of baptism. It draws parallels between Christ's death, burial, and resurrection and the symbolism of water baptism, illustrating the believer's identification with Christ's journey. Baptism is described as a demonstration of one's union with Christ, shedding the old identity and embracing a new life found in Him.

The class concludes with a call to consider being baptized, encouraging attendees to read related materials and memorize relevant verses, while also prompting reflection and prayer about the decision to obey through baptism.

Throughout the discussion, the class focuses on the profound spiritual symbolism and the deep significance of water baptism in the life of a Christian.



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Discussion of last week's meeting, readings and events.

A) Saving faith precedes baptism, along with repentance, and confession of Jesus Christ as Savior.

B) Thus, water baptism is an outward symbol of an inward reality.

C) Baptism is the answer of a good conscience toward God.

D) We must always remember that it is by grace that we are saved through faith:

E) The Greek word for baptizing is baptizontes, a participle of the verb baptizo. This word is derived from bapto, which means primarily, to dip, plunge or immerse

(I) THE WATER

A. Symbolizes purification from sin

B. Symbolizes a water grave where we die to the old, or a grave (death) which is the result of sin.

(II) THE ACT



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- A. **Die** to self
- B. **Rise** to life

(III) THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SYMBOLISM

- A. Christ baptized into death (Mark 10:38)
- B. Went into the grave
- C. Resurrected
- D. We receive by faith

(IV) INTO CHRIST

- A. Demonstrated outwardly your inward union
- B. Lost identity found in Christ
- C. Public declaration

(V) READ TOGETHER Matthew 28:18



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A. If you have been born-again consider being baptized

Read our pamphlet on Baptism available in the church lobby.

Memorize Matthew 28:18-20.

Pray about when and how you will follow the Lord in obedience through baptism.



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LESSON # 35

THE FOUR SPIRITUAL LAWS

OBJECTIVE: The lesson revolves around "The Four Spiritual Laws" written by Bill Bright which are fundamental principles guiding spiritual understanding. Participants take turns reading aloud the laws to ensure comprehension and the ability to share them with others. The laws discuss sin, salvation, and forgiveness.

Sin is explored through Isaiah 1:2 and 53:6, along with Romans 3:23 affirming that everyone has sinned. The origin of sin is linked to Isaiah 14:12-15 and Adam's decision in the Garden of Eden. This decision led to sin entering the world, separating humanity from God both physically and spiritually.

Salvation is defined as being saved from sin's consequences and eternal separation from God. It's God's gift of grace, emphasized in John 3:16 and Romans 6:23. Ephesians 3:8-9 explains how salvation is attained, and Romans 10:9, 10, 13 describe faith's role.

Forgiveness is presented as an act of pardon. God desires to forgive our sins, as seen in 1 John 1:7-10. Mark 11:25 emphasizes the importance of forgiving others. God's perspective on our sins changes after salvation, as stated in Isaiah 43:25 and Jeremiah 31:34. Responding to God's grace, believers are called to good works (Ephesians 2:10).

Ultimately, salvation is a free gift from God. It involves recognizing one's sin, receiving Jesus Christ as Savior, and rejoicing in the eternal life granted through God's grace.



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Take turns reading aloud “The Four Spiritual Laws” until you are sure you understand everything in there.

Try to learn how to share them with someone else.

Is there anyone in the room that wants to pray the prayer in the pamphlet and give their life to Christ?

SIN, SALVATION AND FORGIVENESS

(I) WHAT IS SIN?

(A) Isaiah 1:2

(B) Isaiah 53:6

(II) WHO SINS?

(A) Romans 3:23

(III) WHERE DOES SIN COME FROM?

(A) Isaiah 14:12-15



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(IV) WHY DO I SIN?

- (A) Adams's decision in the Garden of Eden:
- (B) God told Adam not to eat the fruit of the tree of Knowledge and of the tree of Good and Evil - Genesis 2:9, 16, 17
- (C) Sin in the human race originated in Adam's free decision to disobey God's will
 - Genesis 3:1-6
- (D) The effects of Adam's decision on us today:
 - (1) Sin entered the world through one man, Adam - Romans 5:12
 - (2) Adam's sin separated man from God - Genesis 3:22
 - (3) Adam's sin resulted in both physical and spiritual death for man:
 - (a) Physical Death - separation of the soul from the body, Gen 3:19
 - (b) Spiritual Death - separation from God for eternity
 - Romans 6:23, 2 Thessalonians 1:8-10, Revelation 21:8
- (E) Therefore I sin because I am a sinner.

V) SALVATION

- (A) Definition of salvation



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and (1) Being saved from the penalty, power and dominion of sin in our life
from eternity apart from God.

(2) What is God's gift (grace) to us? John 3:16; Romans 6:23

(B) How are you saved?

(1) Ephesians 3:8-9

(C) What do we put our faith in for salvation? _____

(1) Romans 10:9, 10, 13

(VI) FORGIVENESS

(A) Definition of forgiveness is an act of pardon.

(B) What does God want to do with your sin?

(1) 1 John 1:7-10



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(C) What must we be willing to do?

(1) Mark 11:25,25

(D) How does God now see my sin?

(1) Isaiah 43:25
(2) Jeremiah 31:34

(E) What is our response to God's gift (grace) of salvation to us (grace)?

(1) Ephesians 2:10

(F) Salvation is a free gift from God. We have to "Recognize" our sin, "Receive" Jesus Christ as our personal Lord and Savior, and "Rejoice" that God has given us eternal life in

