

# FOUNDATIONS

Bible Truths  
For Christian  
Growth



DISCIPLESHIP SERIES

# Foundations

Bible Truths For  
Christian Growth



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FOUNDATIONS: BIBLE TRUTHS FOR CHRISTIAN GROWTH. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition,  
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Unless otherwise noted, all Bible quotations are taken from the *New American Standard Bible* : 1995 Update. LaHabra, CA : The Lockman Foundation, 1995.

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## Foreword

The *Foundations: Bible Truths for Christian Growth* was initially used at Grace Church of Mentor and its church-planting ministries. The study was well-received and proved to be helpful for both infant and mature believers. They eventually attracted a wider audience, prompting us to publish them in their present form.

This study bears the “fingerprints” of the entire staff of Grace Church and its branch churches. Pastors Robert Potter and Tim Potter initially had the burden and vision for the studies. Pastor Chris Anderson carried out the writing process. Pastors David Cannon, Greg Habegger, Kent Hobi and Todd Nye assisted with editing, and countless others made recommendations and corrections that were extremely helpful. The combined pastoral staff agreed on the final content. It was our aim to produce a discipleship series that is biblically astute and theologically accurate, yet easily understood. We recognize that the studies will be beneficial only to the extent that they prompt believers to study and apply God’s inspired and sufficient Word (2 Timothy 3:16).

Ours is a day in which an increasing number of professing Christians are biblically illiterate. We pray that the Lord will use this series as one step in alleviating that problem. It is our hope for individuals that these studies will help you to become grounded in the basic, life-changing truths of Scripture. It is our hope for churches that this study will be a useful tool in your discipleship ministries. For us, they have especially filled a void in our efforts to follow-up new converts, enabling us to be as aggressive and effective in our edification as in our evangelism.

May the Lord be magnified!

## Basics for This Study

- The Bible is one large book broken down into two sections—the Old Testament, before Christ came to earth, and the New Testament, Christ’s life and work after He came to earth.
- The Bible is comprised of several books usually named for the author (John), the recipients (Galatians), or type of Scripture included (Psalms or Revelations).
- When someone refers to a Bible passage, he lists the small book title, the chapter number, then the verse number. This is the **reference** to the verse. For example John 1:1 is the book of John, chapter one, and verse one. Some short books do not have chapters but instead would list only a verse like Jude 24 (book of Jude, verse 24). Likewise the study may have you refer to a full chapter like John 1.
- Some books may have similar names like John and 1 John or 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians. Make sure that you find the right book noted in your study. You will have difficulty finding the answers otherwise!
- When someone studies Scripture he may see a reference to only a portion of a verse such as 1 John 2:1a. This is the book of 1 John (not John), chapter two, verse one, only the *first* section up to a major punctuation mark (like a period, colon, or semicolon). “b” is second section, “c” is third, etc.
- The content of the *Foundations* book is based on the New American Standard version of the Bible. Any other version may be used; however, the specific words and blanks from Scripture may be different than another version.
- As with any Bible study, partnering together with another Christian (preferably one who has more experience studying the Bible) helps immensely! If you have no spiritual mentor, ask a pastor to work with you in this study. But, if you cannot work with another person, please contact *Grace Church of Mentor* for any questions that you may have.

# Foundations: Bible Truths for Christian Growth

**Chapter 1 – Salvation**  
God's Gift to You

**Chapter 2 – Eternal Security**  
Your Relationship with God

**Chapter 3 – Confession**  
Your Fellowship with God

**Chapter 4 – Baptism and the Lord's Supper**  
Your Remembrance of Christ

**Chapter 5 – The Word of God**  
God's Communication to You

**Chapter 6 – Prayer**  
Your Communication to God

**Chapter 7 – The Local Church**  
Your Place of Ministry

**Chapter 8 – Temptation**  
Your Struggle with Sin

**Chapter 9 – The Holy Spirit**  
God's Presence in You

**Chapter 10 – Progressive Sanctification**  
God's Work in You

**Chapter 11 – Stewardship**  
Your Gift to God

**Chapter 12 – Evangelism**  
Your Ministry to the World



*Do you know that the Bible has a lot to say about you? It does! Although it doesn't mention you by name, it does have something to say about every member of the human race, including you. It contains some good news, some bad news, and some great news. Let's start with the good.*

## You and God

Scripture is unlike any other book. It is not primarily a history book. Nor is it a rulebook. It is far more than a “roadmap” for life. Scripture is first and foremost the *self-revelation* of God. It is God's autobiography—His communication to mankind about Himself. Therefore, it is appropriate to begin this series of Bible studies with several foundational truths about God:

- God is eternal—without start or end (**Psalm 90:2**).
- God is absolutely holy—He is set apart from everything that exists; there is no other like Him (**Isaiah 6:3**).
- God is completely sinless and cannot allow sin in His presence (**Habakkuk 1:13**).
- God is all-powerful (**Psalm 86:10**).
- Thankfully, God is also good (**Psalm 86:5**).
- God is absolutely just—everything He does is right (**Psalm 145:17**).
- God is love (**1 John 4:8**).

Scripture assumes God's existence and reveals Him to be the Creator of everything that exists. Acknowledging God as the Creator of all is essential to everything else Scripture teaches. Read **Genesis 1:1**. This is the first verse of the Bible. What does it say?

According to **Genesis 1:27**, from where did you come?

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Although it is commonly taught today that mankind is the result of countless years of evolution, Scripture teaches clearly and repeatedly that *“all things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being”* (**John 1:3**).

**Psalm 19:1** tells us that the heavens and all of creation “are telling of the glory of God.” **Romans 1:20** concurs, saying that creation teaches two key lessons about God: that He exists and that He is powerful. It concludes by saying that those who reject God and His creative power are *“without \_\_\_\_\_.”*

The Bible’s teaching that you are created by God is not intended merely to solve the question of man’s origin. Rather, it has two implications that are very great for you personally:

❶ **Because God made you, you are accountable to Him.**

If you were merely the product of “chance” as evolution teaches, you would be your own master. You

**Principle:**

Because God created you, you will one day appear before Him as your Judge.

would be answerable to no one. But because you are a creature, you must give an account of your life to your Creator. The Bible records that time of judgment in **Revelation 20:11–15** and refers to it as *the Great White Throne*.

According to verse 12, both “the great and the small” will appear before God to be judged. Who does that indicate will give answer to God? \_\_\_\_\_

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What does **Hebrews 9:27** say to reinforce this fact?

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② **Because God made you, He owns You.**

**Colossians 1:16** again teaches that “*by Him (Christ) all things were created, both in the heavens and the earth.*” It concludes by saying that “*all things have been created \_\_\_\_\_ him and \_\_\_\_\_ him.*”

Read **Revelation 4:11**, a record of the worship of Christ in heaven. Why is God worthy to receive worship—“glory and honor and power”? \_\_\_\_\_

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From this verse why do you think God created you?

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**“The chief end of man...”**

The Shorter Westminster Catechism—a statement of Bible doctrine that has been especially useful for the instruction of new believers since the 17<sup>th</sup> century—asks students the purpose of God in creation: “*What is the chief end of man?*” The pupils respond with an answer that is biblically accurate and personally challenging: “*Man’s chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever.*” Not only did God make you, but He made you for Himself!

God wants to have fellowship with you and know you. Read the Bible’s account of creation in **Genesis 1–3**. As far back as the

**Principle:**  
God loves you and created you to glorify Him.

Garden of Eden, God’s pleasure was to walk and talk with His creatures (**Genesis 3:8**). Just as God was with Adam and Eve in the garden, He wants you to be with Him in Heaven forever...that’s the **good news**. Sadly, Adam and Eve broke their fellowship with God when they sinned (**Genesis 3:6**). Because of their sin, you are now *born* a sinner (**Romans 5:12; Psalm 51:5**). That’s the **bad news**.

**You and Sin**

You are not only a sinner by birth—you are a sinner by *choice*. Explain **Romans 3:10–11** in your own words. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Now read **Romans 3:23**. How many people have sinned? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**1 John 3:4** defines sin as “breaking God’s law.” What is God’s law? \_\_\_\_\_

Give some examples of sin (**1 Corinthians 6:9–11**).  
\_\_\_\_\_

It is popular today to say that man is basically good. Yet, Scripture teaches that every man, woman and child is a sinner. How does **Jeremiah 17:9** describe the heart? \_\_\_\_\_

**Principle:**  
You are a sinner,  
both by birth  
and by choice.

**Isaiah 53:6** summarizes the sinfulness of all men as intentional and determined *rebellion against God*.

Like sheep, we have each “gone astray” from God and chosen our “own way” rather than His way. The fact that you’ve sinned is bad news, but it gets worse. Read the following verses and explain what they teach about the effects of sin:

**Isaiah 59:2** \_\_\_\_\_

**Revelation 21:27** (this verse is talking about heaven)

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**Romans 6:23** is a very important verse regarding you and your sin. It says that “the wages of sin is death.” What is a wage? \_\_\_\_\_

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According to **Romans 6:23**, because you sin, what do you deserve? \_\_\_\_\_

The Bible speaks of two deaths. The first is *physical* death. God promised Adam and Eve that if they sinned, they would “surely die” (**Genesis 2:17**). However, there is a far worse death than physical death, and that is *spiritual* death. Because of Adam and Eve’s sin they were immediately dead *spiritually* and would eventually die *physically* (see **Ephesians 2:1**). Before salvation, a person is spiritually dead—even though they are physically alive. When an unbeliever dies physically, he is condemned permanently. How does the Bible describe permanent, eternal condemnation in **Revelation 20:14–15** and **21:8**? \_\_\_\_\_

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### Hell is temporary, but...

Revelation 20:14 says that *hell* will one day be cast into the lake of fire. Hell is a terrible but *temporary* place of judgment where sinners await *the Great White Throne*. It could be compared to a county jail where criminals await trial. However, following the “trial” of sinners at the *Great White Throne*, they will be cast with hell into the lake of fire—a place of *eternal* torment. Those who go to hell at their death will be punished in the lake of fire for eternity.

The truth of eternal damnation is hard for most people to swallow, but *the Bible teaches that everyone who has sinned deserves to be punished for that sin forever in the lake of fire.*

#### Principle:

Sin separates you from God and makes you deserving of the lake of fire.

Many people think that hell and the lake of fire are just for men like Hitler or Charles Manson. But the Bible says that hell is not just for murderers; it is for *sinner*! The fact is, because you sin, you deserve to be punished for eternity in the lake of fire. That is not just bad news—it is terrible.

Many people try to compensate for their sin by doing good works. They reason that if they do more good things than bad, they’ll go to heaven. The problem is that Scripture teaches that no one can earn heaven.

**Romans 6:23** teaches that eternal life (*with God in heaven*) is a “gift.” Can you earn a gift? \_\_\_\_\_

Read **Ephesians 2:8–9**. The Bible teaches that salvation is by grace (*undeserved kindness*) through faith (*trust in God*). What does verse 9 say? What does it mean? \_\_\_\_\_

What are some things that people do to try to earn heaven?

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So far the news has been very bad. We all have sinned. Because of that sin, we deserve judgment. Further, there is *nothing* we can do to earn salvation. If that were all that Scripture said, it would be a tragic book. Thankfully, it goes on. The Bible says that God made a way for you and all other sinners to avoid the lake of fire. You *deserve* hell, but you don't have to go there... that's the **great news!**

## You and Jesus

The Bible has much to say about who Jesus is:

- He is eternal (**John 1:1, 2**).
- He is God (**John 1:1**).
- He is the \_\_\_\_\_ (**John 1:3**).
- He became “flesh” (**John 1:14**). What do you think that means? \_\_\_\_\_
- He is absolutely sinless (**Hebrews 4:15**).

**Romans 5:8** teaches something else about Jesus. It says that He loves us, His creatures. How did He demonstrate His love for us? \_\_\_\_\_

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Most people know that Jesus died, but very few understand *why* He died. **1 Peter 3:18** answers that question:

- It says that “Christ died for sins once.” When did He do that? \_\_\_\_\_

Since Scripture teaches that Jesus never sinned, for whose sins did He die? \_\_\_\_\_

- **1 Peter 3:18** teaches that Christ died, “the just for the unjust.” Who is the “just” (*righteous*) One?
- 

Who are the “unjust” (*unrighteous*) ones? \_\_\_\_\_

Don't miss this important point: Jesus (*The Righteous One*) died for you (*the unrighteous one*).

He was your *substitute*. He

paid the penalty that you deserve! Remember **Romans**

**6:23**. Because of sin, you deserve *death*. Jesus paid that penalty by dying on the cross!

Instead of *you* paying for your sins in the lake of fire, Jesus

suffered death one time on Calvary. He paid for your sins!

**Principle:**

Because of His great love, God sent Jesus Christ to die on the cross as your substitute.

Now look back at **1 Peter 3:18**. “*For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust,* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_”

What great news! Jesus died to pay for your sins so that you can avoid hell and enjoy heaven with Him!



## Guilty...yet free!

The story is told of two brothers who immigrated to the U.S. from China in the early 1900's. The older began his new life by getting a job and a house. The younger, however, was determined to "enjoy" his new freedom. He spent his days and nights drinking and gambling. One fateful night he began fighting with a man who had accused him of cheating. In his drunken state, the younger brother drew a knife and murdered the man. He knew that if he were caught he would be hung. He fled to his brother's home.

The police began to search from house to house, looking for the murderer. As the older brother entered his home, he found a pile of blood-stained clothes. Immediately he knew what his brother had done. A few moments later, the police approached the home, only to find the older brother wearing the bloody clothes. Throughout his questioning and trial he remained silent. He eventually died for a crime he didn't commit, motivated by love for his brother. He died as a *substitute*, the innocent for the guilty, a very small picture of the death which Christ suffered for you.

Though innocent, Christ died for the sins of others.  
Though guilty, the sinner may be free, ransomed by his Substitute's blood.

## You and Salvation

The Bible teaches that you will live somewhere forever—either in heaven or the lake of fire. Jesus died to allow you to go to heaven. Although people teach that there are many ways to heaven, the Bible teaches that there is only *one way*. Read **John 14:6** to find out what it is. \_\_\_\_\_

Jesus is offering a tremendous gift: freedom from hell and eternity in heaven. Sadly, many people reject Jesus and His offer of salvation. Instead of

rejecting Christ, **John 1:12** instructs you to “receive” Him. The key question is this: *How can you receive Jesus Christ and His gift of salvation?* There are two simultaneous aspects to receiving Christ:

**1. You must repent of your sins.**

You have offended God by sinning. You now need to turn *from* that sin and *to* God—that is what Scripture calls **repentance**. It is not cleaning up or reforming yourself. Remember, you cannot earn heaven. Instead, repentance is *changing your mind* about God and sin. It is desiring God instead of your sin. C. S. Lewis puts it this way: *“Fallen man is not simply an imperfect creature who needs improvement: he is a rebel who must lay down his arms ... This process of surrender...is what Christians call repentance.”*<sup>1</sup>

What does **Acts 3:19** require for your sins to be forgiven? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**1 Thessalonians 1:9** defines repentance and conversion as *“turning to \_\_\_\_\_, from \_\_\_\_\_.”*

Indeed, the very move toward Christ demands a move away from sin and idols. Christ *replaces* your way. He will not be merely added to it.

According to **Matthew 1:21**, from what does Jesus save you? \_\_\_\_\_

There are some people who believe they are forgiven, yet have never turned from sin. They believe that they have the best of both worlds: they can “bear—

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<sup>1</sup> *Mere Christianity* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1952), p. 59.

hug” their sin and refuse to let it go, then they can go to heaven. Yet, according to **Matthew 1:21**, Christ saves His people from *sin*, not just hell. Anyone who has not repented of his sin has not been saved! That is not to say that a saved man will not struggle with sin. However, a saved man has “*changed his mind*” about sin. He may struggle with it, but he won’t relish it.

**Isaiah 55:7** gives a clear picture of repentance. Explain it in your own words. \_\_\_\_\_

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If you have not yet turned from your wicked way, you have not yet been saved!

## **2. You must trust in Jesus Christ alone.**

**John 3:16** is probably the most well known verse of

**Principle:**

Your only hope of salvation is to repent of your sins and trust Jesus Christ as your personal Savior.

the Bible. It teaches that you must believe in Jesus. That means more than just acknowledging that He lived and died. The Bible word *believe* means to *be convinced*, to *trust* or to *place your faith in someone*. You must realize that

Jesus is your only hope of going to heaven and place your faith completely in Him. Not Jesus and good works...not Jesus and baptism...not Jesus and church...Jesus alone.

## Two sides of the same coin...

Faith and repentance cannot be separated. Genuine faith includes repentance, and genuine repentance includes faith. Think of it this way...

**Your Way ← God's Way**

Isaiah 55:7 pictures you as a rebel who insists on going your own way, the exact opposite of God's way. It then instructs you to "forsake" your way (repentance) and "return" to the Lord (faith).

**Your Way → God's Way**

In order to be saved, you must turn *to God* and *from sin*.

If you have not turned from your own way,  
you have not turned to Christ.

In **Acts 16:30**, a sinful man asks the Apostle Paul and Silas a vital question: "What must I do to be saved?" What was their simple answer in **Acts 16:31**? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Read **John 3:36**. Notice that the Bible divides all of humanity into two groups—there is no middle ground. How do the two groups respond to Christ?  
\_\_\_\_\_

What happens to each of these groups? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

You obviously don't want to be the object of God's wrath. What do **Romans 10:9, 13** require of you to be saved? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The only way to “call upon the name of the Lord” is to speak to Him in prayer. Many have asked Jesus Christ to be their Savior. According to **1 John 5:13**, those people *know* that they have eternal life. Do you have that assurance? If you have never trusted Jesus as your Savior, you can do it now, right where you are.

**Principle:**

God promises eternal life to all who receive Jesus Christ as Savior.

*In a simple prayer, acknowledge to God that you are a sinner. Tell Him of your desire to turn from that sin, and ask for His forgiveness. Thank Him for sending Jesus to die for your sins, and ask Jesus to be your personal Savior and to give you the gift of eternal life.*

Once you have trusted Jesus Christ as your Savior, you are a Christian! Now it is essential that you mature in your relationship with Christ.

Here are some key steps in that direction:

1) Although you are a Christian, you will still struggle with sin. Sin will not remove you from God’s family, but it will remove you from fellowship with God. Fellowship must be restored by confessing sin directly to God as soon as you are aware of it. This matter will be dealt with in greater detail in Chapter 3, so keep going!

2) Begin reading your Bible. Start with the book of John. Make notes of who Jesus is, what He did, and what He has done for you. The importance of immersing yourself in the Word of God will be addressed in Chapter 5.

3) Get involved in a church that faithfully preaches the Bible. The importance of being committed to a godly church will be covered in Chapter 7.

4) Begin memorizing God's Word on your own. Memorizing Scripture will help you to better understand it, will prepare you to share it with others, and will help protect you from error and sin. Here are some verses to start on:

## **Scripture Memory**

### **John 3:16**

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

### **Romans 6:23**

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

### **Ephesians 2:8-9**

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; <sup>9</sup> not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

## Check Your Progress

What are the three most significant lessons that you have learned in this Bible study? Why are they important?

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Answer the following questions to measure your understanding of salvation:

1. Two important implications arise from the fact that God created you. What are they? (pp. 5–6)

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2. How many people have sinned? (p. 7) \_\_\_\_\_

3. Because of your sin, what do you deserve? Be specific. (p. 8) \_\_\_\_\_

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4. What is the difference between hell and the lake of fire? (p. 9) \_\_\_\_\_

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5. Is it possible to *earn* eternal life? Why/why not?  
(p. 9) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. In what sense was Jesus your Substitute? (p. 10)

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Why is Jesus the only way to get to the Father?  
(p. 11, 14–15) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

8. What is repentance? (p. 13) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

9. What must you do to be saved? (p. 15–16) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

10. Check off the following verses only when you can say them from memory:

John 3:16

Ephesians 2:8–9

Romans 6:23

Do you believe that you know this material well enough to teach it to someone else? \_\_\_\_\_ If not, review it until you do!





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Your Giving to God

**Chapter 12 – Evangelism**  
Your Message to the World

*Does being a Christian mean that you will never sin again? If you commit a sin, are you still saved? Do you need to be saved again each time you sin?*

These are important questions, and the Bible gives clear answers.

The Bible teaches time and time again that once you are a Christian, you are eternally secure—that is, you cannot lose your salvation. As it is often stated, “once saved, always saved.” Work through this study to find out what the Bible says about Christians, sin and eternal security.

The Bible teaches that the salvation you received at the moment you repented of your sins and trusted in Christ is irrevocable. This vital doctrine is called *eternal security*. Once you have been saved from sin by grace and through faith, you are eternally secure. You cannot be lost. Eternal security is indeed a “foundational” doctrine, and it is supported by the entirety of Scripture.

When you trusted Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, a lot of things changed, and they changed permanently. You were hopeless and lost before you trusted Christ, but now...

## You are Saved by Grace

**Ephesians 2:8–9** were discussed in Chapter 1 regarding your salvation. They apply also to your security. Verse 8 states that you “**are**” saved by grace—not “were.” It is a *present tense* verb, indicating that the salvation which you received by

grace—God’s *undeserved favor*—you continue in by grace.

**Amazing Grace!**

John Newton wrote the following words in his hymn,  
*Amazing Grace* :

*“Tis grace that brought be safe thus far,  
and grace will lead me home.”*

You became saved by Christ’s work, not your own.  
Similarly, you remain saved by Christ’s work, not your  
own.

Read **Galatians 3:3**. How did you enter God’s family—by faith (“the Spirit”) or your own effort (“the flesh”)? \_\_\_\_\_

So how will you remain in God’s family and mature (what the Bible describes as “being perfected”)—by faith or by your own effort? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**You are in God’s Family**

Read **John 1:12–13**. What privilege (or “right”) did Jesus give you when you received Him as your Savior? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What strict qualification must you meet to enter into Christ’s kingdom, according to **John 3:3**? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Nicodemus had a good question in the next verse: “How can a man be born twice?” Jesus explained what it means to be “born again” in **John 3:5–7**. Your first birth was physical. When did that happen?

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Your *second* birth was spiritual. When did that happen? \_\_\_\_\_

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When you received Jesus Christ, you became a child of God—you were born into His family! God is your Heavenly Father!

Is the parent–child relationship temporary or permanent? \_\_\_\_\_

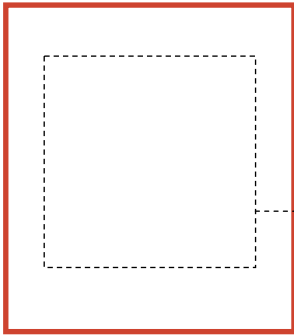
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Once you become God’s child, you are His child forever. Here’s an illustration:

- As you grew up, did you ever make your father or mother angry by disobeying them? \_\_\_\_\_  
When you did, were you still their child? \_\_\_\_\_

You still had a *relationship* with them—you didn’t have to go to the courthouse downtown and become adopted! You are their child regardless of what you do. Your relationship was unchanged, but your *fellowship* was broken—you weren’t as close as you had been. The same is true of your relationship with your Heavenly Father. When you sin, you are still His child—that’s your ***relationship***. But you aren’t close to Him—that’s your broken ***fellowship***.

Perhaps a picture will help explain:



Your **Relationship** with God:

- *permanent*
- *unbreakable*
- *determines your eternal destiny*

Your **Fellowship** with God:

- *dependent on obedience*
- *breakable*
- *determines daily joy*

You have a relationship with God—you became part of His family the moment you were saved. You are secure in Him! Though your sin hurts your fellowship with God, your relationship as His child is eternal and unchanging.

## You are in Christ

The Bible teaches that when you trust Jesus as your Savior you gain a new position: you are *in Christ*. You are intimately joined to Christ. Since you are in Christ, you have the same position and privileges before God that Christ does!

**Romans 8:1** says that since you are “in Christ” you will not face \_\_\_\_\_. That means that you will not be condemned for your sins. Christ already paid for them!

**1 Corinthians 15:22** says that though you were dead before salvation, in Christ you have been \_\_\_\_\_.

2 Corinthians 5:17 says that you are a \_\_\_\_\_

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The second half of the verse lists the practical results of your new birth. What are they? \_\_\_\_\_

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**Romans 5:1** says that when you put your faith in Christ as your Savior you were “justified.” That means that at that moment God *declared you to be righteous*. **Romans 4:11, 23–24** teaches that at the moment of salvation, Jesus’ righteousness was “imputed” to you—it was *counted for your credit*. Although you continue to struggle with sin (in your *practice*), God now sees you as being as righteous as Jesus Christ (in your *position*). Why? Because you are in Christ!

### As good as done!

Romans 8:30 uses several words to describe God’s work of salvation on your behalf. One of them is “glorified,” and it describes the condition of those in heaven who are free from sin, disease and death. The verse says that God has already glorified you (past tense). In other words, in God’s eyes your salvation and glorification in heaven are so certain that He describes it as already having occurred!

You are eternally secure!

## You are Kept by the Power of God

Throughout church history, the matter of eternal security has been addressed from two different perspectives:

1. **Perseverance** is the teaching that genuine believers will all persevere until they are with Christ in heaven. Read **1 John 2:19**. It teaches that those who don’t

“persevere” do not lose their salvation. Rather, they prove that they *never were* believers.

2. **Preservation** is an even stronger argument. Its focus is not on the Christian, but on God Himself. It is the teaching that God will preserve all who are genuinely saved. According to **1 Peter 1:5**, you do not keep your salvation by human effort. Rather you are “*protected by the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.*”

Read **John 6:37–40**. Christ teaches that He will not lose any that the Father has given him. Similarly, Paul says in **2 Timothy 1:12** that He knows that Christ is able to “keep” the thing committed to him until His return—Paul’s salvation. Now read **Jude 24**. It teaches that God is “*able to \_\_\_\_\_ you from \_\_\_\_\_, and to present you faultless*” in heaven. The question is not whether you could lose your salvation...it is whether God could lose you!

Were it up to you to keep yourself saved you would be in trouble. Thankfully, God has made “keeping” you Christ’s responsibility. You are perfectly secure!

Read **John 10:27–29**. In verse 27, what does Jesus call those who have received Him as their Savior?

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How do saved people prove that they belong to Him (v. 27)? \_\_\_\_\_

---

Jesus gives 3 promises in verse 28. What are they?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_



What promise does Jesus make in verse 29? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Is God *able* to keep you? \_\_\_\_\_ Is He *willing*? \_\_\_\_\_

What important promise did Jesus make in **John 6:37**? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## You are in God's Love

**Romans 8:35–39** are comforting verses for the Christian. What question is asked in verse 35? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What difficulties are mentioned in verse 35–36? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What answer is given in verse 37? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

List all of the things in verse 38–39 that *cannot* separate us from God's love. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Jeremiah 31:3** describes God's love as "everlasting." What does that mean? \_\_\_\_\_

Can you lose your salvation? Only if God stops loving you, and Scripture says that is impossible.

## God's Spirit is in You

So far, we have learned that you are saved by grace, in God's family, in Christ, kept by the power of God

and in His love. Scripture also teaches that God is in you! Read **1 Corinthians 6:19–20**. What does it call you? \_\_\_\_\_

In the Old Testament, God lived in the Tabernacle (a portable, tent-like place of worship). He later lived in the Temple, the permanent place of worship in Jerusalem. Of course, God is everywhere (*omnipresent*), but the Tabernacle and Temple were His special dwelling places among His people. Now, God's special dwelling place is in His people...including you!

Some people believe that the Holy Spirit lives only in obedient Christians, but the Bible teaches that He lives in all Christians. Read **1 Corinthians 3:1**. How does God describe the people in the church of Corinth? \_\_\_\_\_

Though saved, the Corinthian Christians were disobedient. Yet, just 15 verses later, God calls them the “temple of God.” Do you lose the Holy Spirit and your salvation when you sin? \_\_\_\_\_

Read **Ephesians 1:13–14**. Verse 14 says that the Holy Spirit is the “pledge of our inheritance.” When you purchase a home you make a down payment or *pledge*. What does the pledge signify? \_\_\_\_\_

In the same way, God gave His Spirit to you as a pledge—it is His promise that he will complete the transaction. You are assured that your eternity in heaven (inheritance) is settled. In fact, verse 13 says that you have been “sealed” by the Spirit, like a letter whose contents are secure.

## God's Life is in You

Throughout Scripture God promises life to those who have received Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. Have you repented of your sin and asked Jesus to be your Savior? \_\_\_\_\_

If so, **John 5:24** is one of God's many promises to you. What does it promise? \_\_\_\_\_

According to Scripture, those who trust in Christ have eternal life (**John 3:16, 36**). Eternal life does not become yours when you die—you have it now if you've trusted Christ.

## You are a New Creature

This point is an important safeguard of the doctrine of eternal security. Some who criticize this teaching argue that it might lead to a life of sin because the Christian has no fear of losing his salvation. Such belief that eternal security is “dangerous” is based in reason, not Scripture. Charles Spurgeon responded aptly to this groundless charge: *“The question is, is it in the Bible? If it is there let none of us ever say it is dangerous.”*<sup>2</sup>

In **2 Corinthians 5:17**, Paul states that the Christian is a “\_\_\_\_\_.” The results of the new birth are evident in everyday life as “*the old things \_\_\_\_\_*; *behold, \_\_\_\_\_ things have come.*” A genuine believer doesn't want to sin! He has no

<sup>2</sup> *Spurgeon's Sermons* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999), vol. X.

desire to return to the bondage from which Christ delivered him. Does your life demonstrate that type of change? \_\_\_\_\_

It is true that there are some who claim to be saved, yet continue in sin without consequence or regret.

What about them?

1 **John 2:19** provides the answer. Those who appear to fall away “*went out from us, but they were really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us.*” Those who

continue in sin with no sign of “new-creature living” are not saved, nor have they lost their salvation.

Rather, they ***never were saved***. Indeed, John teaches that true Christians will “no doubt continue.” That’s the perseverance of the saints!

Scripture teaches that true believers are indeed secure in Christ—secure to obey, not to sin. The true believer walks in obedience, but he is not motivated by fear (like those who believe they can lose their salvation).

### Fear or Love?

*“There is nothing like a belief in my eternal perseverance, and the immutability of my Father’s affection, which can keep me near to Him from a motive of simple gratitude.”*<sup>3</sup> This fact is proven throughout church history. Many of the most devout Christians—from the Apostle Paul to the conscientious Puritans—believed wholeheartedly in the security of the believer.

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<sup>3</sup> Charles Haddon Spurgeon, “A Defense of Calvinism” in *A Great Heritage of Evangelical Teaching* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1996), p. 928.

Rather, he is motivated by love for his gracious Savior. The difference is life-changing!

## Fact, Faith & Feeling

There may be times when you don't *feel* saved. Such lack of assurance<sup>4</sup> may be caused by sin which you've allowed to be part of your life. It may be Satan's attempt to discourage you. Whatever the cause of doubt, you must remember that your salvation is not based on how you *feel*. It is based on the *facts* of God's Word. Your responsibility is to respond to God in *faith* based on Bible *fact* regardless of how you *feel*.

The facts are that you are saved by grace. You are now in God's family. You are in Christ. You are in God's hand and love. His Spirit and life are in you. You are a new creature. God has promised that He won't cast you out.

What do we learn about God from **Titus 1:2**? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How does that description of God prove you cannot lose your salvation? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The belief that you can lose your salvation—one point of a theology called *Arminianism*—is not a  
\_\_\_\_\_

<sup>4</sup> It is important to distinguish the objective and unchanging security of the believer with subjective assurance of salvation. **Assurance** refers to your confidence and certainty that you are saved. Although assurance of salvation is important and grounded in Scriptural teaching (such as Romans 8:16), **security** is based in objective fact, not subjective experience.

minor issue. It is believed by millions. Its implications for individuals are obvious. However, its implications for Bible doctrine are also great. The stakes are very high:

**1. This false teaching has a low view of salvation.**

It teaches that you receive eternal life by grace, but keep it by works (contrary to **Galatians 3:2–3**). In reality, it amounts to works salvation. The result of such teaching is the pride condemned in **Ephesians 2:9**.

**2. This false teaching has a low view of sin.**

Many who teach that you lose your salvation by sin also teach—of necessity—that it is possible to live a life entirely free from sin (contrary to all of Scripture and the experience of the Apostle Paul in **Romans 7**). To justify the belief that one can be sinless, they often redefine or minimize sin. They boast of not being drunkards,

adulterers or liars, but they neglect sins of the heart such as anger, pride and lust. No one who

*“If ever it should come to pass  
That sheep of Christ could fall away,  
My fickle, feeble soul, alas,  
Would fall a thousand times a day.”*

**C. H. Spurgeon** <sup>5</sup>

correctly understands the holiness of God would presume to be called sinless himself.

**3. This false teaching has a low view of God.**

It teaches that God would bestow a gift, then change His mind (contrary to **Romans 11:29**). It teaches that He would exact punishment for one sinner two times

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<sup>5</sup>*Spurgeon’s Sermons*, vol. X, p. 23.

(contrary to **Hebrews 1:3** and **1 Peter 3:18**). It makes him fickle.

Read **Malachi 3:6**. Here God states the reason why He did not “consume” (or *destroy*) Israel, though they certainly deserved it. What reason does He give for His continuing mercy?

“For I, the LORD, do not \_\_\_\_\_.”

God’s preservation of His people had more to do with His character than theirs. Similarly, your security as a Christian does not rest in your performance. Instead, it rests in the unchanging Word of God and character of God.

#### 4. This false teaching has a low view of Christ.

It teaches that although He died for sin, His death is inadequate to pay for all sins (contrary to **1 John 1:7**) and insufficient to satisfy God’s justice (contrary to **1 John 2:1–2** and **Isaiah 53:11**).

**John 19:30** tells of Christ’s sixth cry from the cross. It was a declaration of victory: “*It is \_\_\_\_\_!*” That glorious phrase comes from one single Greek word: *tetelestai*.<sup>6</sup> It is a word used to describe a payment or purchase, and it means that the account in question has been paid in full. So Christ

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<sup>6</sup> Grammatically, *tetelestai* is a **perfect passive indicative**. Though that fact may seem like a technicality, it is very important for the following reasons:

- The **perfect tense** means that it “has been” finished. It happened in the past, but its results continue today.
- The **passive voice** means that our salvation was accomplished by someone else. Christ finished it, not us!
- The **indicative mood** means that it is a certainty, not merely a possibility.

paid in full for your sins. No more payment is required. *It is finished.* For God to require two payments (one by Christ and one by you) would be unjust.

Consider this: When Christ died for your sins nearly 2000 years ago, how many sins had you committed?

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All of your sins were yet in the future, including those you committed yesterday, today, and even tomorrow. Yet, according to **1 John 1:7**, how many of them are washed away by Christ's blood (even those you have not yet committed)? \_\_\_\_\_

In the words of Charles Wesley, *“Love’s redeeming work is done, Hallelujah! Fought the fight, the battle won, Hallelujah!”*

Finally, **1 John 2:1** contains a very strong proof of eternal security, and it is found in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Although God's desire is that you “not sin,” He has also provided an “Advocate” or representative for us when we sin. Who is it? \_\_\_\_\_

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Furthermore, Christ is called the “propitiation” for our sins in 1John 2:2. That means that He has already satisfied God's wrath on our sin by dying on the cross. As stated earlier, Christ bore God's punishment for your sins...even those you have yet to commit.



## Conclusion

It is essential that you put the issue of eternal security to rest. Be certain that you have indeed trusted Christ. Make sure that your lifestyle indicates the change befitting a “new creature.” Compare your life with the fruits of a Christian listed in **1 John**. In the words of **2 Peter 1:10**, *“be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you.”* Lewis Sperry Chafer provides this warning: the Bible offers *“no divine promise of keeping for the mere professor who does not truly believe.”*<sup>7</sup>

Once you have placed your faith in Christ alone, rest in Him. As long as you doubt your salvation, your insecurity will prohibit you from growing or serving. Take God at His word and stand secure in the promise of **1 Peter 1:5**—you are “protected by the power of God.” Move past your doubts and get busy!

### Secure to Serve

*“During initial construction on the Golden Gate Bridge, no safety devices were used and 23 men fell to their deaths. For the final part of the project, however, a large net was used as a safety precaution. At least 10 men fell into it and were saved from certain death. Even more interesting, however, is the fact that 25% more work was accomplished after the net was installed. Why? Because the men had the assurance of their safety, and they were free to wholeheartedly serve the project.”*<sup>8</sup>

Remember, sin does not change your *relationship* with God. However, sin does break your *fellowship*

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<sup>7</sup> *Salvation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1973), p. 71.

<sup>8</sup> Source unknown.

with God. Chapter 3 will discuss maintaining your fellowship with God.

## Scripture Memory

### John 6:37

All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out.

### John 10:27-29

My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; <sup>28</sup>and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. <sup>29</sup>My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.

### 1 John 2:1

My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;

## Check Your Progress

What are the three most significant lessons that you have learned in this Bible study? Why are they important?

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Answer the following questions to measure your understanding of eternal security:

1. Why does being saved by grace mean you are secure? (p. 22–23) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. How will you remain in God’s family and mature—by faith or by effort alone? (p. 23) \_\_\_\_\_

3. What is the difference between relationship and fellowship? (p. 24–25) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. What can separate you from the love of God? (p. 28) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Is it possible to be struggling with sin, yet saved? (p. 29) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. When does eternal life begin? (p. 30) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. What motivates Christian obedience? (p. 31–32) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. What is the difference between security and assurance? (p. 32) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

9. If it were possible to lose salvation by sinning, who would remain saved? (p. 33) \_\_\_\_\_

10. Check off the following verses only when you can say them from memory:

John 6:37

1 John 2:1

John 10:27–29

Do you believe that you know this material well enough to teach it to someone else? \_\_\_\_\_ If not, review it until you do!



# Foundations: Bible Truths for Christian Growth

**Chapter 1 – Salvation**  
God's Gift to You

**Chapter 2 – Eternal Security**  
Your Relationship with God

**Chapter 3 – Confession of Sin**  
Your Fellowship with God

**Chapter 4 – Baptism and Communion**  
Your Remembrance of Christ

**Chapter 5 – The Word of God**  
God's Communication to You

**Chapter 6 – Prayer**  
Your Communication to God

**Chapter 7 – The Local Church**  
Your Place of Ministry

**Chapter 8 – Temptation**  
Your Battle with Sin

**Chapter 9 – The Holy Spirit**  
God's Presence in You

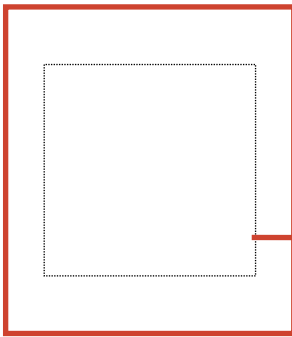
**Chapter 10 – Progressive Sanctification**  
God's Work in You

**Chapter 11 – Stewardship**  
Your Giving to God

**Chapter 12 – Evangelism**  
Your Message to the World

*Chapter 2 emphasized your relationship with God. Remember, once you receive Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, you are a child of God—your relationship with Him cannot be broken.*

*This book will emphasize your fellowship\* with God. Even though you cannot lose your salvation, sin can remove you from fellowship with God. Look again at the difference between your fellowship and relationship with God:*



**Your Relationship with God:**

- permanent
- unbreakable
- determines your eternal destiny

**Your Fellowship with God:**

- dependent on obedience
- breakable
- determines your daily joy

*\*(Fellowship is continuous, unhindered communication between two people.)*

## Committing Sin

Read **1 John 2:1a**. What is God's desire regarding you and sin?

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*("a" means the first half of a verse and "b" means the second half)*

According to the second part of this verse and **1 John 2:2**, God makes a provision—a plan B—for when you do sin. What is it? \_\_\_\_\_

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*(An "advocate" is someone who comes "along side" to help or defend*

you. A “propitiation” is a satisfaction. Jesus satisfied God’s wrath on your sins by dying for you.)

What does **1 John 1:8** say about a person—Christian or non-Christian—who claims to be without sin?

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Do not make light of sin—although Scripture teaches that you will still struggle with sin, it also indicates that you will be sinning less and less. Read **2 Corinthians 5:17**. What does the Bible call someone who is saved (“in Christ”)? \_\_\_\_\_

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Describe the last part of this verse in your own words. \_\_\_\_\_

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Someone who genuinely has been saved is a different person. In **1 Corinthians 6:9–11**, Paul was writing to Christians in the city of Corinth. What specific sins had they been involved with *before* they were saved? (Note: The key word is “were.”) \_\_\_\_\_

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What does the Bible say of them *after* their salvation?

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As a Christian you will still struggle with sin. However, if you continue in the same sin as though you were never saved the Bible calls into question whether you were ever legitimately saved.



*(See 1 John 3:4–10. Note: The Greek words here are present tense verbs, which indicate repeated action: “practices,” “does,” “sins,” etc. These words address continuous habitual sinning, and not a normal struggle with sin that is common to all Christians.)*

## Consequences of Sin

The Bible teaches that you will struggle with sin until your death. How to win battles with temptation will be covered in a later chapter. When you lose the battle with temptation and sin, you are still saved. However, there are some dire consequences of sin.

The first consequence of sin is that you offend God. What did David say about his sin in **Psalm 51:4a**?

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What does **1 John 1:5** teach about God and sin?

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Why is God offended by sin? Because sin is not just breaking a rule; it is breaking God’s rule. According to **1 John 3:4**, whose law do we ignore when we sin?

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What is the “law” referred to in that verse? \_\_\_\_\_

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A second serious consequence of sin is revealed in **Psalm 66:18**. What is it? \_\_\_\_\_

*(the word “regard” means to cherish or hold, the opposite of confession)*

As was stated earlier, a Christian’s sin breaks his fellowship with God. You don’t need to be saved again, but you need to restore your fellowship with Him. A child who disobeys his parent is still part of

the family, but communication is hindered until the child confesses his disobedience.

Yet another consequence of sin is discipline from God.

## Discipline for Sin

**Hebrews 12:5–11** is the classic passage on discipline for sin. Other versions of the Bible use the word “chasten” or “correct”.

Read verses 5–7. What human relationship parallels our relationship with God? \_\_\_\_\_

According to verse 6, what emotion motivates God’s discipline? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Explain the above answer. How can that be?

\_\_\_\_\_

Read verses 7–8. What is true of someone who continues in sin but is never disciplined for it?

\_\_\_\_\_

Verse 8 makes sense. You may discipline your own child for disobedience, but you don’t discipline a stranger’s child for doing the same thing. Discipline proves that you are God’s child and is a very serious test of genuine salvation.

Read verses 9–11. God does not discipline us for His pleasure, but for our good. Verses 10–11 give two goals for God’s chastening or disciplining of his

children. What are they? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Conviction of Sin

The word “conviction” means *proof of sin*. Conviction is the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart of someone who has sinned. The Spirit *convinces you of your sin*. According to **Ephesians 4:30**, how does your sin affect the Holy Spirit? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What does that mean, and why should it motivate you to avoid sin? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

You can be sure of this: when you sin and grieve the Holy Spirit, He will grieve you back. He makes you uncomfortable about what you have done. One of the clearest instances of such conviction in the Bible comes from King David in **Psalm 32**. In the first two verses he speaks of the happiness (“blessed”) of someone who has had his sins forgiven. Why does he state that forgiveness bring happiness? Because he knows by experience that sin brings misery to a believer’s heart until it is confessed and forgiven.

How did David describe the Holy Spirit’s conviction of sin in **Psalm 32:3–4**? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

David literally felt sick because of his sin. Thankfully, he responded to conviction by confessing his sin in **Psalm 32:5**.

## “No stone unturned...”

David obviously took time for introspection, searching his heart for un-confessed sin. Yet, he also realized the possibility that he had sinned in ways that were a mystery even to him. Therefore, he asked for help as he confessed his sin. Notice his prayer in Psalm 139: 23–24: *“Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my anxious thoughts;<sup>24</sup> And see if there be any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way.”*

This is a model prayer for Christians: *“Lord, You know if I’ve sinned. Please search my heart and make me aware of sin so that I may confess it.”*

It is essential that you understand the difference between *conviction* and *condemnation*. Satan wants Christians to feel guilty so that they will be useless for the Lord. What is Satan called in **Revelation 12:10**? \_\_\_\_\_

Satan accuses you before God, but Christ is your Advocate there (**1 John 2:1**). However, Satan also accuses you to yourself. He wants you to doubt God’s forgiveness. He delights in reminding you of sin and making you feel guilty.

Perhaps you have experienced a feeling of guilt when you have sinned. If so, you are experiencing God’s conviction, and it will continue until you “confess and forsake” your sin (Proverbs 28:13). However, if that feeling of condemnation lingers even after you have confessed and forsaken your sin, it is no longer a work of God’s Spirit. What are the differences between *conviction* and *condemnation*?

<u>Conviction</u>	<u>Condemnation</u>
Conviction is a work of God.	Condemnation is a work of Satan.
Conviction urges you to return to God and be forgiven for your sin: <i>“You sinned again, but Christ paid for that sin. Confess it and return to fellowship with Him.”</i>	Condemnation urges you to give up your walk with God: <i>“You’re a failure. You call yourself a Christian? You tried and failed. Just quit. God couldn’t forgive you again.”</i>
Conviction ends the moment you confess your sin to God. It will never be brought up again.	Condemnation continues even after you’ve confessed your sin to God. Satan delights in reminding you of past sins.

Conviction of sin is only a means toward an end. God’s ultimate desire is that you confess your sin to Him.

## Confession of Sin

What promise does God give to Christians in **1 John 1:9**? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

The word “confess” means *to admit, to acknowledge guilt*. Many people believe that confession is something done before a priest. However, Biblical confession is a matter between the sinner and God alone. Look at David’s definition of confession in **Psalms 32:5**. What does he say? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What is the opposite of confession from this verse?

---

To whom did David “acknowledge” his sin? \_\_\_\_\_

### No Middle Man!

The word “confession” may cause you to think of going to a church to confess your sins to a priest. Yet, Scripture instructs you to confess your sins directly to God, not to a man. Why?

- Because you have sinned against God and not man (Psalm 51:4).
- Because only God can forgive your sins (Mark 2:7).
- Because you don’t need a “go-between.” In the words of 1 Timothy 2:5, there is *“one Mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.”*

Another verse which deals with confession of sin is **Proverbs 28:13**. What does it promise to someone who covers sin? \_\_\_\_\_

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Compare the previous answer to David’s experience in **Psalm 32:3–4**. \_\_\_\_\_

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Back to **Proverbs 28:13**, what two things does someone need to do in order to “find compassion”?

---

You know what “confesses” means. What does “forsake” mean? Why is that necessary?

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Compare the end of **Proverbs 28:13** with **Psalm 32:5**.  
What is God's promise to the person who confesses  
sin to Him? \_\_\_\_\_

God has said that your sin will remove you from His  
fellowship until it is confessed. With that in mind,  
sin should be confessed *immediately* and *specifically*.

**No Blankets Allowed!**

Many Christians are content to offer blanket confessions,  
asking the Lord to forgive them "if they have sinned." Yet,  
Scripture encourages us to confess our "**sins**" (1 John 1:9),  
not just our **sin**. Here is a good rule to apply: *Be as specific  
when you confess your sin as you were when you commit-  
ted the sin.* Deal with them individually as soon as you  
become aware of them.

What does God promise about forgiven sin in  
**Hebrews 10:17**? \_\_\_\_\_

What does God say about forgiven sin in **Micah  
7:18–19**? \_\_\_\_\_

Read **Psalm 103:8–14**. How do these verses describe  
God? \_\_\_\_\_

What does God say about forgiven sin in **Psalm 103:12**?  
\_\_\_\_\_

## How is God described in **Psalm 86:5**? \_\_\_\_\_

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The last several verses teach that God is *eager* to forgive you when you sin. Yet, many Christians refuse to confess their sin, and therefore, they have no fellowship with God. Confess your sin as soon as you become aware of it. Don't let un-confessed sins accumulate. Rather, make it a life pattern to keep short sin accounts with God.

*Nothing between my soul and the Savior,  
So that His blessed face may be seen;  
Nothing preventing the least of His favor:  
Keep the way clear! Let nothing between.*

**Charles A. Tindley**

Let's review the facts from Scripture:

1. Although you are a Christian, you still have a sin nature—you were born with a desire to sin, and that desire continues in you until your death.
2. Sin won't remove you from God's family (your relationship), but it will remove you from fellowship with Him.
3. When you break fellowship with God, you must confess that sin to God immediately and specifically. God will then forgive you, and your fellowship will be restored.



## Scripture Memory

### Psalm 66:18

If I regard wickedness in my heart, The Lord will not hear;

### Proverbs 28:13

He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper,  
But he who confesses and forsakes them will find  
compassion.

### 1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to  
forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all  
unrighteousness.

## Check Your Progress

What are the three most significant lessons that you  
have learned in this Bible study? Why are they  
important?

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Answer the following questions to measure your  
understanding of confession:

1. What is God's desire concerning you and sin? (p. 42)

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What provision has God made for when you sin?  
(p. 42) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. What are some of the consequences of sin for the  
Christian? (pp. 44–45) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Why does God discipline Christians? (p. 45) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. What is the difference between God’s conviction  
and Satan’s condemnation? (p. 47) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. Why do you confess your sins to God and not men?  
(p. 49) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. Finish this phrase from page 50: “*Sin should be  
confessed \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.*”

8. Does God hold confessed and forgiven sins against  
you? (pp. 50–51) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

9. What specific sins is God convicting *you* about?  
Take time now to confess and forsake them.  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. Check off the following verses only when you can say them from memory:

- Psalm 66:18
- 1 John 1:9
- Proverbs 28:13

Do you believe that you know this material well enough to teach it to someone else? \_\_\_\_\_ If not, review it until you do!

# Foundations: Bible Truths for Christian Growth

## **Chapter 1 – Salvation**

God's Gift to You

## **Chapter 2 – Eternal Security**

Your Relationship with God

## **Chapter 3 – Confession of Sin**

Your Fellowship with God

## **Chapter 4 – Baptism and Communion**

Your Remembrance of Christ

## **Chapter 5 – The Word of God**

God's Communication to You

## **Chapter 6 – Prayer**

Your Communication to God

## **Chapter 7 – The Local Church**

Your Place of Ministry

## **Chapter 8 – Temptation**

Your Battle with Sin

## **Chapter 9 – The Holy Spirit**

God's Presence in You

## **Chapter 10 – Progressive Sanctification**

God's Work in You

## **Chapter 11 – Stewardship**

Your Giving to God

## **Chapter 12 – Evangelism**

Your Message to the World

*Baptism and communion, the two ordinances\* of the church, are precious parts of the Christian's worship. Yet, both are tragically misunderstood. It seems that every denomination has a different understanding of their purposes and meaning, resulting in grave errors and unnecessary confusion. As with other topics, our desire is to discover and apply what the Bible teaches about these two important activities.*

*\*Baptism and the Lord's Table are referred to as the two "ordinances" of the local church because they were ordained by Christ as a memorial of His work on the cross.*

## Part 1: Baptism

### The Purpose of Baptism

Before we study what baptism *does* accomplish, it is vital that we understand what baptism *does not* accomplish.

#### 1. **Baptism does not save you.**

Read **Acts 16:16–34**, the record of the salvation of a jailer in the city of Philippi. Verses 30–33 are the important verses for this lesson.

What was the jailer's question (v. 30)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What answer did Paul and Silas give (v. 31)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

In Chapter 1 you learned that the word "believe" in the New Testament means to *place faith in someone*. Paul told the jailer that there is one thing necessary

for salvation—faith in Jesus Christ. Notice that baptism was *not* part of Paul’s answer.

Look back at verse 32–33. When were the jailer and his family baptized (v. 33) in relation to their salvation (v. 31–32)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**2. Baptism does not wash away your sins.**

Many people believe that baptism washes away sins, but Scripture teaches otherwise. According to **1 John 1:7**, only one thing is able to wash away sins.

What is it? \_\_\_\_\_

Remember, you are cleansed from your sins the moment you receive Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, and you are baptized *after* that point. By the time you are baptized, your sins have already been washed away!

This point is extremely important. *If baptism were able to wash away sin, then Jesus’ death was unnecessary.* You are cleansed with the shed blood of Christ, not with water.

**3. Baptism does not earn you special favor with God.**

Some churches teach that baptism is a *means of grace*. That means that baptism is a way of gaining God’s grace. However, grace is undeserved kindness. You cannot earn something that is undeserved! So in that sense, there is no such thing as a means of grace—you cannot earn God’s favor.

If baptism does not save you, cleanse you or earn special favor with God, *then why be baptized?* The Bible lists at least three reasons:

**Reason #1: Baptism was commanded by Jesus Christ.** The primary reason for being baptized is that Christ commanded it. Every Christian needs to be baptized in order to be obedient to Christ.

Read **Matthew 28:19–20**. After assuming that His hearers will “go,” what three commands did Christ give His disciples in these verses?

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The order of the three commands is important. Notice that baptism immediately follows *making disciples*, or salvation. Baptism is not a part of salvation, but it should follow very closely. The very first step of obedience that a new Christian takes should be baptism.

*You can be a Christian without being baptized, but you will never be more than a disobedient Christian.*

**Reason #2 Baptism identifies you with Jesus Christ.** The word *baptize* was used in the first century to describe the process by which cloth was dyed. When a white cloth is immersed into a dye, the cloth comes into the dye and the dye into the cloth. The two become one. Similarly, each person who has received Jesus Christ as Savior has been *immersed* into Christ. At the moment of salvation, He came into us and we came into Him (remember chapter 2: You are *in Christ*).

Water baptism is an *outward* symbol of an *inward* reality. Our immersion into water pictures our immersion into Christ. Read **Galatians 3:27**. It describes your *spiritual* baptism, which became a reality the moment you were saved. Water baptism follows spiritual baptism and symbolizes it.

<u>Spiritual Baptism</u>	<u>Water Baptism</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Takes place at the moment of salvation.</li><li>• You are “immersed” into Christ, permanently joining you to Him.</li><li>• This is a spiritual, inward reality.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Takes place following salvation and is not part of salvation.</li><li>• You are immersed into water as a picture of your union with Christ.</li><li>• This is a physical, outward symbol.</li></ul>

Read **Romans 6:1–7**. Verses 3–5 teach that when we were baptized into Christ (spiritual baptism), we took part in His death, burial and resurrection. We are spiritually dead to sin, yet alive to “walk in newness of life” (v. 4). This truth is pictured by water baptism by immersion: being completely submerged into water pictures Christ’s death and burial and our death to sin. Emerging from the water pictures Christ’s resurrection and our new life. Just as Jesus died, was buried and rose again, so every believer is *dead to sin* and *alive to God*.

**Reason #3: Baptism is your testimony for Jesus Christ.** Another important reason for being baptized is that it is a testimony of your salvation—it shows to others that you have trusted Christ as your Savior. Hence, baptism in the Bible was often a very public event (e.g., **Matthew 3:6, Acts 2:38, 41**).



### *“With this ring...”*

*A good illustration of baptism’s importance as a testimony is a wedding ring. Why do people wear wedding rings?*

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Do wedding rings *make* people married? \_\_\_\_\_

Is it possible to be married without wearing a ring? \_\_\_\_\_

Is it possible to wear a ring without being married? \_\_\_\_\_

A wedding ring is a *symbol* of marriage and baptism is a *symbol* of salvation. Just as a wedding ring does not make someone married, baptism doesn’t make someone a Christian. People wear wedding rings to *demonstrate* to others that they have already been married. Similarly, Christians are baptized to *demonstrate* to others that they have already been saved. Just as someone could wear a wedding ring without being married, many people have been baptized, but never truly saved.

Conversely, just as someone can be married without wearing a ring, someone can be saved without being baptized...though the “spouse” would be displeased in both circumstances.

Those who are preparing to be baptized should take seriously the importance of what they are doing and pray about what they will say. Often you will have the opportunity to describe how you came to know Christ as Savior. Do it, and pray for the Lord to use your testimony. Many people have come to know Jesus Christ as their Savior as a result of seeing a friend or family member baptized. Your act of obedience may become an opportunity to give the gospel to someone who needs Christ!

## The Prerequisite for Baptism

We have learned that it is important to obey Christ by being baptized, but let's review when it should take place.

**Acts 2:41** says, “*So then, those who had \_\_\_\_\_ were baptized.*”

Read **Acts 8:5–6**. What was Philip doing? \_\_\_\_\_

Continue reading in verse 12. What did the people of Samaria do with Philip's message “the good news” (or the gospel)? \_\_\_\_\_

The phrases “received his word” (Acts 2:41) and “believed” (Acts 8:12) both refer to faith in Christ. What is the prerequisite for baptism? \_\_\_\_\_

Once again we see that baptism immediately *follows* salvation by faith in Jesus Christ. The same sequence is seen in **Matthew 28:19–20** and **Acts 16:31–33**.

## The Perversion of Baptism

Unfortunately, baptism is misunderstood by many people and mistaught by many religions. Some misunderstand its purpose. Others are mistaken regarding who is to be baptized. Still others err on the mode (or method) of baptism. Let's quickly address these three errors.

### 1. The *baptismal regeneration* error.

*Baptismal regeneration* is a mouthful, but its meaning is simple. Some churches teach that a person is not born again (regenerated) until they are baptized. Some even refer to baptism as “the

*“Baptism no more makes one a Christian, than putting a crown on one’s head makes him a king.”*

**Augustus Strong** <sup>9</sup>

ticket to Heaven.” The evidence against this teaching is abundant. As stated previously, salvation precedes baptism (**Acts 8:36–37; 16:31–33**).

### 2. The *infant baptism* error.

Several churches teach that a child must be baptized in order to wash away his original sin. However, Scripture has much to say in opposition to this teaching, as well.

First, we have already noted that sins are washed away by Christ’s blood, not water (**1 John 1:7**).

Second—as we have repeated time and time again—baptism in Scripture always follows salvation. If a baby is not old enough to understand repentance from sin and faith in Christ, how can he give testimony of salvation through baptism? The baby has not chosen Christ and therefore cannot choose baptism. The idea that the decision of a parent is somehow credited to or held against a child is absolutely contrary to Scripture.

Finally, infant baptism is unnecessary. Many parents fear—at their church’s insistence—that an

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<sup>9</sup> *Systematic Theology* (1907), p. 597.

infant who dies without being baptized is destined for punishment in hell. Yet, Scripture's hope for grieving parents is based in God's grace, not a church's water.

What statement did the grieving King David make when his baby died just after its birth (**2 Samuel 12:23**)? \_\_\_\_\_

Parents can rest assured that their baby is safe even in the event of an untimely death—not because of baptism, but because of God's grace. The evidence is staggering: the Bible *never* records a single example of a baby being baptized.

### **3. The mode of baptism error.**

Mode of baptism refers to how someone is baptized. Some churches believe in sprinkling water on someone's head (called *aspersion*) or pouring it (called *affusion*). However, the Bible teaches baptism by *immersion*.

The first reason for baptism by immersion is the meaning of the word. Baptize comes from the Greek word "*baptizo*", meaning *to dip*. As stated earlier, it was a term used to describe the process of dipping (or immersing) an object completely into liquid.

Second, baptism is a picture of Christ's death, burial and resurrection, all of which are symbolized by immersion.

A final reason for baptism by immersion is seen in the Bible's record of baptisms. What is the common wording in the following baptism records:  
**Matthew 3:16; Mark 1:10 & Acts 8:39.**

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This last reason is the weakest of the three. However, the three arguments together provide conclusive evidence that immersion is the prescribed mode of baptism.

Biblical baptism is *baptism by immersion*. Only those who have already repented of sin and trusted Jesus Christ as Savior may participate in it. Hence, it is called *believer's baptism*.

## Part 2: Communion

The second ordinance of the church is *communion*, *the Lord's Table*, *the Lord's Supper*, or *the breaking of bread*.

The terms are used interchangeably. As with baptism, many people ignore the clear teaching of Scripture and pervert communion. Therefore, it is vital that you know what the Bible has to say about it.

### The Purpose of Communion

Like believer's baptism, communion was commanded by the Lord and is a memorial of His sacrificial death on the cross. **Luke 22:7–20** records the very first observance of the Lord's Table. Christ had entered Jerusalem with His disciples just prior to His crucifixion. He had them prepare the **Passover** meal, a memorial celebrated by Jews each year. The Passover was a God-ordained celebration which commemorated the Jews' deliverance from Egypt by the Lord. At the time of the Exodus from Egypt (some fifteen centuries before Christ's earthly ministry), each Jewish family had been commanded to sacrifice a Passover lamb in order to avoid the wrath which God sent against Egypt (**Exodus 12:13**).

Almost 1500 years later, Christ entered Jerusalem and died during the Passover celebration. The symbolism here is rich: *Christ is the new Passover Lamb*, slain to provide salvation from sin for all who believe! The Old Testament sacrifices were a foreshadowing of Christ's sacrificial death. At the institution of the Lord's Table, Christ identified Himself as the perfect and final Passover Lamb, slain to provide deliverance from sin.

What is Christ called in **John 1:29**? \_\_\_\_\_

What does John say Christ is able to do? \_\_\_\_\_

Compare **Hebrews 10:4** with **1 John 1:7**. What can Christ do that Old Testament sacrifices could not?

Read **Luke 22:7–20** and answer the following questions:

In verse 19, what did Christ use to represent His body? \_\_\_\_\_

### Unleavened Bread

*The bread which Christ used in instituting the Lord's Table was the unleavened bread of the Passover. Leaven is often used in Scripture as a symbol for sin. Christ was sinless—"a lamb unblemished and spotless" (1 Peter 1:19)—as is symbolized by the unleavened bread.*

Why would Christ's body be "given for you" (v. 19; see v. 15)? \_\_\_\_\_

Jesus instructed the disciples to eat the bread "in remembrance of me" (v. 19). What does that mean?

Following the bread, Christ used something as a representative of His blood (v. 20). What was it?

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*The “cup” means the drink or juice used during Communion.*

Why was Christ’s blood so important for our salvation? (See **Hebrews 9:22** and **1 John 1:7**.)

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The Apostle Paul used the first communion to teach later believers how and why to continue it. Read **1 Corinthians 11:23–31**. As He did with the bread, Christ said that the cup was to be taken “in remembrance of me” (v. 25). He concludes in verse 26 that when we eat the bread and drink from the cup we “proclaim the Lord’s death.” The bread and juice are simply symbols which help us remember and show Christ’s death!

Communion is first of all a remembrance of Christ’s death. However, it is also a reminder of something else (**1 Corinthians 11:26** and **Luke 22:16 & 18**).

What is it? \_\_\_\_\_

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No wonder the Lord’s Table is so precious to Christians! It is a memorial of Christ’s death for our sins and a reminder that Christ will return to take us to be with Him in heaven! There is indeed cause for a memorial celebration. Yet, it must be observed solemnly and carefully.

## Participating in Communion

In **1 Corinthians 11:27–31**, Paul warns against taking the Lord’s Table “in an unworthy manner.”



The Lord is serious about this warning—what are some extreme examples of judgment for abuse of the Lord’s Table (v. 30)? \_\_\_\_\_

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We need to be careful to partake of the Lord’s Table in a worthy fashion! What does that mean?

**1. Only Christians should partake of the Lord’s Table.**

Anyone who has not trusted Jesus Christ as Savior cannot “judge the body rightly” (*take communion with understanding and judgment* —v. 29). Further, Christ set this precedent at the institution of the Lord’s table: Judas (an unbeliever) departed to betray Jesus *before* the Lord’s Supper and so was not present to partake (see **John 13:21–30** and **Mark 14:21–22**). Communion is for Christians!

**2. Only Christians who are in fellowship with God should partake of the Lord’s Table.**

Between the warnings in **1 Corinthians 11:27 & 29** is a command in **verse 28**. What is it? \_\_\_\_\_

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What promise is given those who “judge themselves” (v. 31)?

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**Psalm 139:23–24** is a good passage to consider during this time of self–examination and confession. Once you are sure that there is no unconfessed sin hindering your fellowship with the Lord, you are free to partake of the Lord’s Table.

### 3. Christians must partake of the Lord's Table reverently.

Communion is not something to be taken lightly. Rather, it is a time of worship, remembering Christ's

death. If communion is intended to be a memorial of Christ's death for you, what should your mind dwell on during the communion service (in addition to self-examination)? Be specific.

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Through the Lord's table we look...

**backward** to Christ's death,  
**forward** to His coming and  
**inward** at our own hearts.

### 4. Christians must partake of the Lord's Table in unity.

The Lord's Table provides the church an opportunity to fellowship with the Lord (vertically) and with one another (horizontally).

*The Lord's Supper is "the simple rite which at once expressed the domestic (family) idea of the Church and the worth of Christ's death, while it separated the partakers from this crooked generation and bound them into one."*

**Alexander Maclaren** <sup>10</sup>

It is not a private ordinance, but a public one, one for which the disciples "gathered together" (**Acts 20:7**). Indeed, it seems that the Lord's Table was commonly (if not

exclusively) observed in conjunction with a love feast, a meal taken together as a symbol of the church's family-like unity.

Sadly, the church at Corinth had been abusing this time. It had become a huge feast for the rich, while the poor had nothing, promoting division rather than

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<sup>10</sup> *The Acts of the Apostles* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1959), p. 24.

unity (1 **Corinthians 11:18–22, 33–34**). This is the opposite of observing communion in a worthy manner.

The church at Jerusalem provides a far better example in **Acts 2:42–44**. What four things did Christians continue doing (v. 42)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What was their attitude toward each other (v. 44)? \_\_\_\_\_

A final note about communion is in order. Unlike baptism, which is practiced only once following salvation, the Lord’s Table is repeated. Why? (see **1 Corinthians 11:26**) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## The Perversion of Communion

1. **The *means of grace* error.**

This point was made earlier (p. 57) about baptism. Contrary to the teaching of many religions, there are no special ways of obtaining God’s grace. Grace is given freely, not in response to an act intended to earn it.

2. **The *Mass* error.**

It is believed by some that during every observance of the Lord’s Table (referred to as the “Eucharist” as part of the Mass), the Lord is crucified again. This is a very

The Lord’s Table is a **remembrance** of Christ’s death, not a **repetition** of it!

serious doctrinal error because it calls into question the sufficiency of Christ's death on the cross.

According to **1 Peter 3:18**, how many times did Christ suffer and die? \_\_\_\_\_

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**Hebrews 10:10–12** contrasts the Old Testament priests and their sacrifices with Christ's sacrifice of Himself. Which words describe the number of times Christ had to be sacrificed (v. 10)? \_\_\_\_\_

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By comparison, the priests' work was unending. Which words describe the number of times the priests had to offer sacrifices (v. 11)? \_\_\_\_\_

Verse 12 concludes by saying that Jesus "offered one sacrifice for sins for all time." What did He do to signify that He was finished? \_\_\_\_\_

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*Note: Priests never sat down during their ministry in the holy place... because they were never finished. Christ—"the author and finisher of our faith" (Hebrews 12:2) —did.*

3. **The change of substance error.**

A final error regarding the Lord's Table is the belief that the bread and juice actually become the body of Christ, rather than merely symbolizing it. According to this teaching, the worshipper actually is eating and drinking Christ!

The two variations of this error are called *transubstantiation* (the bread and juice *become* Christ's body and blood) and *consubstantiation* (Christ is spiritually present in the bread and juice). Either way, the error is the same.

This error stems from a misinterpretation of Scripture and is easily refuted. It arises from a basic misunderstanding of the use of symbolism in Scripture. Christ often used a physical symbol to represent a spiritual truth. We must not confuse the two. The difference is easy to distinguish.

### **Doors and Foxes**

Did Christ say that the bread was His body and the juice His blood? Yes! He also called Himself a door (**John 10:7**) and a light (**John 8:12**). Both are obviously physical symbols of spiritual truths. Similarly, Christ called Herod a fox in **Luke 13:32**. We could take this literally, but it would be hard to explain. Picture Herod with a bushy tail and sharp teeth! Instead, Christ's reference to Herod as a fox is an obvious figure of speech, meaning that Herod was sly and vicious.

The same interpretative principles must be used when understanding Christ's statement that the bread is His body and the juice His blood. No, we are not eating and drinking His flesh and blood. Rather, we are carrying out the symbolic act which He instituted when He spoke figuratively of the elements which would "show His death" (**1 Corinthians 11:26**) and serve as a "remembrance" of Him (**Luke 22:19**).

It is essential that your understanding of baptism and communion be Bible-based. Both ordinances are done in remembrance of the Lord's death on the cross, and both follow salvation.

Neither earns you special favor with God, but both are done in obedience to Him.

## Scripture Memory

### Matthew 28:19–20

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,<sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

### 1 Corinthians 11:26

For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

## Check Your Progress

What are the three most significant lessons that you have learned in this Bible study? Why are they important?

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Answer the following questions to measure your understanding of the church ordinances:

1. What won't baptism accomplish? (p. 56–57) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. What are the biblical reasons for being baptized?  
(p. 58–59) \_\_\_\_\_

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3. Distinguish water baptism from spiritual baptism.  
(p. 59) \_\_\_\_\_

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4. What is the prerequisite for baptism? (p. 61)

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5. Why is infant baptism unbiblical? (p. 62) \_\_\_\_\_

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6. What is the purpose of communion? What do the  
bread and juice represent? (p. 65–67) \_\_\_\_\_

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7. What is involved in partaking of the Lord's Table  
in a worthy manner? (p. 68–69) \_\_\_\_\_

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8. About what should you be thinking during the  
communion service? (p. 69) \_\_\_\_\_

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9. Check off the following verses only when you can say them from memory:

Matthew 28:19–20     1 Corinthians 11:26

Do you believe that you know this material well enough to teach it to someone else? \_\_\_\_\_ If not, review it until you do!





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## **Chapter 6 – Prayer**

Your Communication to God

## **Chapter 7 – The Local Church**

Your Place of Ministry

## **Chapter 8 – Temptation**

Your Battle with Sin

## **Chapter 9 – The Holy Spirit**

God's Presence in You

## **Chapter 10 – Progressive Sanctification**

God's Work in You

## **Chapter 11 – Stewardship**

Your Giving to God

## **Chapter 12 – Evangelism**

Your Message to the World

*To say that the Bible is important is an understatement. Indeed, it is central to every part of Christianity. But why is it important? From where did it come? How can you understand it? How does it apply to you?*

*The answers to these questions are vital to your continued spiritual growth. As the title to this lesson states, the Bible is “God’s communication to you.” You need to learn to understand the Bible and apply it to your every-day life, and there is no better place to learn about it than from the Bible itself. Let’s dig in!*

## Inspiration of Scripture

**2 Timothy 3:16** is the key passage on the inspiration of the Bible. The beginning part of the verse teaches that the Bible is *inspired*. The Greek word which is translated as “*inspired by God*” literally means “God-breathed.” The inspiration of the Bible refers to the process by which God “breathed out” the words of Scripture through human instruments—the writers. The result is that the Bible is God’s Word, not merely man’s words.

### Trombones and Trombonists

When a musician plays a trombone, he blows air through it. The trombone affects the sound, making it different from that of a trumpet or tuba. Yet, the trombone is not credited with creating the music. The talent and creativity belong to the musician; the music is essentially his. Audiences applaud trombonists, not trombones. The musician *breathes* through his instrument to create his music. Similarly, God *breathed through* holy men. They were but instruments which He used to accomplish His purpose. The Bible is much more than the words of men—it is the Word of God!

Some people teach that the Bible merely *contains* the Word of God. Use **2 Timothy 3:16** to discover what is wrong with that statement. \_\_\_\_\_

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*(Note: Many people believe that there is only one English version of the Bible that is inspired. That belief is not grounded in Scripture.)*

How could the Bible be God's Word when it was actually put to paper and ink by men? **2 Peter 1:20–21** tells us. What does verse 20 teach about the Bible? \_\_\_\_\_

The statement “no prophecy of the Scripture is a matter of one's interpretation” means that Scripture did not *originate* with men. The writers of Scripture did not write their own (private) opinions; they wrote God's Word.

What does verse 21 teach about the Bible? \_\_\_\_\_

Scripture writers didn't write of their own volition (*will*). Rather, they were *borne along*\* (“moved”) by the Holy Spirit. They picked up pens to write, but the words were God's.

*\*Acts 27:15 uses the same word for a ship being driven by wind. Just as wind fills a sail and drives a ship, God's Spirit filled and “drove” the writers of Scripture.*

Because the Bible is the Word of God, it is without error—a teaching referred to as the *inerrancy of Scripture*. In **John 17:17** Jesus states that God's Word is \_\_\_\_\_. It is impossible for God to *breathe out* falsehood or error.

The Bible further teaches that Scripture is absolutely reliable.

What does Jesus say about the Bible in **John 10:35b**?

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Jesus is even more specific in **Matthew 5:18**. Read it. The *letter* or *stroke* (what the KJV calls *jot* and *tittle*) Jesus referred to are the smallest parts of Hebrew letters. The *tittle* is the very slight corner which makes two Hebrew letters differ.

Jesus' statement was similar to the modern phrase "the dot of an 'i' and the cross of a 't'." What was His point? \_\_\_\_\_

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Matthew 5:18 teaches the following two essential aspects of inspiration:

1. **The very WORDS of Scripture are God-breathed and inerrant.** (This is referred to as *verbal inspiration*.)
2. **The ENTIRETY of Scripture is God-breathed and inerrant.** (This is referred to as *plenary* or *full inspiration*.)

## Benefits of Scripture

We learned from **2 Timothy 3:16** that the Bible is *inspired*. The verse goes on to say that the Bible is "profitable"—it is a benefit to those who read it. According to the last part of this verse, with what four areas does the Bible help?

1. \_\_\_\_\_ (what *is* right)

*This word specifically refers to the Bible as a teacher.*

2. \_\_\_\_\_ (what is *not* right)

*This word refers to a strong rebuke. The Holy Spirit uses the Bible to prick our consciences about our sin. Scripture exposes to us our sinfulness.*

3. \_\_\_\_\_ (how to *get* right)

*This word is used of setting a broken bone or straightening a crooked spine. Scripture gives spiritual mending—it sets us right again.*

4. \_\_\_\_\_ (how to *stay* right)

*This word is used of child-training. As parent to child, the Bible trains and disciplines us, bringing us to spiritual maturity.*

It is obvious that the Bible is helpful, but with what specific areas does it help?

1. **The Bible is essential for salvation.**

What does **2 Timothy 3:15b** say that Scripture is able to do? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Were it not for Scripture, we would not know our lost condition, much less that Jesus died to provide our salvation.

How is saving faith developed in non-believers according to **Romans 10:17**? \_\_\_\_\_

What does **Romans 1:16** says that the Bible is “the power of God... \_\_\_\_\_.”

2. **The Bible is essential for Christian growth.**

Scripture paints a vivid picture when it says that you are “born again” at the point of salvation. You are a Christian, but you are only a baby Christian. You need to grow!

1 **Peter 2:2** describes the process of spiritual growth. From what do babies get nourished? \_\_\_\_\_

As a baby Christian, what is your *spiritual milk*?

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(See *Job 23:12* and *Hebrews 5:13–14*)

How often do babies eat? \_\_\_\_\_

What would happen if a baby didn't eat? \_\_\_\_\_

What does this passage teach regarding your "feeding" on Scripture? How often do you need it? Why?

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(See *1 Thessalonians 2:13* and *Acts 20:32*)

### 3. **The Bible is essential for godly living.**

The writer of **Psalm 119:9** asked a question that every Christian struggles with: *how can I be clean from sin?*

What is his answer at the end of the verse? \_\_\_\_\_

**Psalm 119:11** is very similar. Explain it in your own words.

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Before Jesus ascended into heaven, He prayed for His disciples and all future Christians, as recorded in **John 17**. One request was that we would be "sanctified" (*made holy*). How are Christians sanctified according to **John 17:17**? \_\_\_\_\_

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Many Christians say they want to grow, yet they never spend time studying God's Word. Scripture is clear: there can be no growth and no godliness apart from consistent, disciplined Bible study.

#### 4. The Bible is essential for knowing God intimately.

Remember, the Bible is not merely a book; it is God's word. It is God's self-revelation...what He has chosen to tell us about Himself. In the words of A. W. Tozer, *"The Bible is not an end in itself, but a means to bring men to an intimate and satisfying knowledge of God, that they may enter into Him, that they may delight in His Presence, may taste and know the inner sweetness of the very God Himself in the core and center of their hearts."*<sup>11</sup>

Jesus tells us in **John 5:39** that the Bible—even the Old Testament, written before His physical birth—"testified" of Him. To know God personally and intimately, you need to study about Him in His Word. In the Christian classic, *Evening by Evening*, C.H. Spurgeon said the following about John 5:39: *"No more powerful motive can be urged upon Bible readers than this: he who finds Jesus finds life, heaven, all things. Happy [is] he who, searching his Bible, discovers his Savior."*<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> *The Pursuit of God* (Camp Hill, PA: Christian Publications, 1982), p. 10.

<sup>12</sup> *Evening by Evening, or Readings at Eventide for the Family or the Closet* (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1861), p. 161. This work is sometimes combined with his other work *Morning by Morning* and published under the title *Morning and Evening*.



### Think of Scripture as an Autobiography...

The main topic of Scripture is a Person, not a program. Scripture teaches us about sin and salvation. It addresses relationships with spouses, employers, children, servants and persecutors. It is filled with both good and bad examples. It tells us what God expects. It brims with promises. Yet, the Bible is first and foremost an autobiography. It is God's revelation of Himself. When you read it, don't just look for commands, promises and examples...look for God and what He's like!

### Sufficiency of Scripture

For years, Bible-believers have stated that “the Bible is our only rule of faith and practice.” However, many men and churches teach that the Bible is a good starting place, but must be supplemented by tradition, psychology, etc.

**2 Peter 1:3–4** teaches that God has given us “everything pertaining to life and godliness.”

What do these verses say about the sufficiency of Scripture? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

We looked at **2 Timothy 3:16** in our discussion about *inspiration*. Verse 17 goes on to say that the Bible will make Christians spiritually mature (“adequate”) and fully prepared (“equipped”) for ministry. Based on the fact that Scripture can do all of those things, what “charge” does Paul give to the young pastor, Timothy, in **2 Timothy 4:2**?

\_\_\_\_\_

Sadly, many preachers today seem to preach anything *but* the Bible. There is a reason for that. **2 Timothy 4:3–4** says that people will eventually refuse to hear the Bible. What will they want instead? \_\_\_\_\_

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Although the Bible is thought by many to be antiquated or out of touch, Scripture teaches that God’s Word alone contains everything we need to know about how to live. Christians from the city of Berea were commended for their attitude toward the Bible and Bible teachers.

How did they respond to the preaching of God’s Word (**Acts 17:10–11**)? \_\_\_\_\_

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Pastors are only helpful to the extent that they direct people to Scripture. Indeed, *this book* is only helpful to the extent that it points you to Scripture. Your faith and convictions must rest securely on Scripture, not hearsay or opinion. The Bible alone is “God-breathed” and therefore is both helpful and sufficient.

## Application of Scripture

Now that you know your need for Scripture, let’s be very practical: How do you go about Bible study? **Joshua 1:8** gives a three-step process.

1. **Read it**—“This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth” (Joshua 1:8a).

What are some excuses that Christians (yourself included) give for not reading Scripture consistently?

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How would you refute those excuses from Joshua 1:8?

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**Deuteronomy 6:6–9** is a similar passage. According to these verses, when and how often should you place yourself under the influence of the Bible? \_\_\_\_

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Reading Scripture with understanding is not easy. You need help! **1 Corinthians 2:14** teaches that the unsaved (“natural”) man cannot and will not “accept the things of the Spirit of God” (Scripture). Why not?

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By contrast, the Christian (“he who is spiritual”) is able to discern (“appraise”) Scripture (v.15). Why? Because through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, he has \_\_\_\_\_ (v. 16).

As a Christian, you have the Author of Scripture living in you, helping you to understand and apply what it means!

*(Note: The ministry whereby the Holy Spirit helps you to understand Scripture is called illumination. It will be covered in Chapter 9.)*

Write out the prayer uttered in **Psalm 119:18** and explain it. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*“Texts will often refuse to reveal their treasures till you open them with the key of prayer.”*  
**C.H. Spurgeon** <sup>13</sup>

2. **Think about it**—“but you shall meditate on it day and night” (Joshua 1:8b).

Meditation in Scripture is not thoughtlessness. Rather, it is thinking about Scripture with an emphasis on personal application.

**“Hmmm....”**  
The Hebrew word which is translated as “meditate” in Joshua 1:8 literally means to *moan or mutter*. It communicates the idea of deep thought, as though someone were muttering to himself under his breath, so consumed in his concentration that he is oblivious to those around him. God commands you to meditate—to think about the Word, especially regarding its application to your life (see Psalm 1:1–2 and 119: 97, 99).

Included in meditation is Scripture memory. You cannot always carry a Bible, but you can carry portions of it in your memory. Read **Psalm 119:11** again and explain how it addresses Scripture memory. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. **Obey it**—“that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it...” (Joshua 1:8c). Here is

<sup>13</sup> C.H. Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students* (reprint, Pasadena, TX: Pilgrim Publications, 1990), p. 42.

the most difficult step of the three, yet the most important. Reading the Bible is good, but doing it must follow directly on its heels. You must apply what you read in Scripture to your everyday life! **James 1:22–25** discuss two different kinds of people. Who are they and what is the difference between them? \_\_\_\_\_

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Obedience to Scripture demands a difficult thing: *change*. You must be ready to begin doing things the Bible commands and stop doing things the Bible forbids. This process of change has a final goal: that you should become more and more like Jesus Christ (see **2 Corinthians 3:18**).

*“The Holy Spirit of God uses the Holy Word of God to make me more like the Holy Son of God.”*

**Ken Collier**

The Wilds Christian Camp

Your goal for every time you read the Bible should be to *change* in order to be more pleasing to God! Stewart Custer, a godly Bible teacher and scholar, writes, *“What is in the Bible is not there just to give you historical background or theological precision; it’s there to make you what you should be and to mold your understanding of Scripture, so that it may mold your character and transform you into the kind of person that God wants you to be.”*<sup>14</sup>

**Joshua 1:8** does not end with a command, but with a promise. If you read, apply, and obey the Bible, you

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<sup>14</sup> Stewart Custer, “Biblical Balance” in *Balance*, vol. 20, No. 4, p. 2.

will be rewarded with spiritual prosperity and success! Get busy!

*Let's review what we've learned:*

- The Bible is **inspired**—it is God's Word, not man's word. It is therefore without error.
- The Bible is **profitable**—it tells you what you need to know about life and eternity.
- The Bible is **sufficient**—it is our only rule for faith and practice. It needs no supplement.
- The Bible must be **applied**—read it, think about it, and obey it. The goal of Bible study is change to Christlikeness.

## Scripture Memory

### 2 Timothy 3:16

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;

### 1 Peter 2:2

Like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation,

### Psalm 119:18

Open my eyes, that I may behold wonderful things from Your law.

## Check Your Progress

What are the three most significant lessons that you have learned in this Bible study? Why are they important?

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Answer the following questions to measure your understanding of the Word of God:

1. What is meant by the following terms:

*Inspiration* (p. 78) \_\_\_\_\_

*Inerrancy* (p. 79) \_\_\_\_\_

*Sufficiency* (p. 84–85) \_\_\_\_\_

*Illumination* (p. 86) \_\_\_\_\_

*Meditation* (p. 87–87) \_\_\_\_\_

*Application* (p. 85–88) \_\_\_\_\_

2. What three steps of Bible study are found in Joshua 1:8? (p. 85–87) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. What is the goal of your personal Bible study?  
(p. 88) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. What can you do to begin to benefit from your own  
study of God's Word? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Check off the following verses only when you can  
say them from memory:

- 2 Timothy 3:16       Psalm 119:18
- 1 Peter 2:2

Do you believe that you know this material well  
enough to teach it to someone else? \_\_\_\_\_ If not,  
review it until you do!





# Foundations: Bible Truths for Christian Growth

## **Chapter 1 – Salvation**

God's Gift to You

## **Chapter 2 – Eternal Security**

Your Relationship with God

## **Chapter 3 – Confession of Sin**

Your Fellowship with God

## **Chapter 4 – Baptism and Communion**

Your Remembrance of Christ

## **Chapter 5 – The Word of God**

God's Communication to You

## **Chapter 6 – Prayer**

Your Communication to God

## **Chapter 7 – The Local Church**

Your Place of Ministry

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## **Chapter 9 – The Holy Spirit**

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## **Chapter 10 – Progressive Sanctification**

God's Work in You

## **Chapter 11 – Stewardship**

Your Giving to God

## **Chapter 12 – Evangelism**

Your Message to the World

*Few Christians, if any, would deny the importance of prayer.*

*Andrew Murray refers to prayer as “the pulse of the spiritual life.”<sup>15</sup> Yet, most Christians must admit that their prayer lives are lacking. Few believers understand—much less practice—biblical prayer.*

*Sadly, prayer is talked about much and employed little.*

*Although volumes have been written about prayer, the Bible, as always, is the best teacher.*

## What Is Prayer?

A very simple definition of prayer is *communication to God*. God speaks to you through His Word, and you speak to God through prayer. However, the New Testament uses several different words to describe prayer. Two different words for prayer are used in **Acts 1:14** and **Philippians 4:6**. What are they?

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1. **Prayer**—This is the broadest and most common term. It especially focuses on God as the object of worship. It emphasizes personal devotion and reverence.
  2. **Supplication**—This is a petition or request made to God. It focuses on God as the believer’s source of help.

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<sup>15</sup> Andrew Murray, *The Prayer Life*. (Chicago: Moody Press) p.8.

## Why Should I Pray?

Prayer is not an option for the believer; it is mandatory. What specific command is given in **1 Thessalonians 5:17**? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What does **1 Samuel 12:23** teach about forgetting to pray? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Sadly, many Christians have the same attitude toward prayer that they do toward spinach: both are good for you, but must be endured, not enjoyed.

*“We grow, we wax  
mighty, we prevail in  
private prayer.”*

**C.H. Spurgeon** <sup>16</sup>

What a shame! Prayer is a privilege. In prayer you have the ear of the God of eternity. Think of it! You have the glorious honor of speaking to the One who

created you and saved you. You don't *have* to pray ... you *get* to pray! Read the following verses and list some of the many benefits that are gained from biblical prayer.

**Hebrews 4:16** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**James 4:8a** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**James 5:15–16** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

<sup>16</sup>*Lectures to My Students* (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1881), p. 41.

## Philippians 4:6–7

(Hint: God replaces anxiety with what in verse 4.)

What three promises does Jesus give in **Matthew 7:7**? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Will God Hear My Prayer?

God is not unwilling to answer prayer. Rather, He is eager! What does God promise in **Jeremiah 33:3**?

\_\_\_\_\_

How is God described in **2 Chronicles 16:9a**? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Although God is eager to answer your prayers, you must come to Him on *His* grounds and conditions.

### ❶ The Grounds of Prayer

God does not answer prayer because you are worthy of His attention. You have nothing that could gain

*“...for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies.”*

**Daniel 9:18**

your entrance into God’s presence. Therefore, you come on the basis of Christ’s person and work. He is God’s holy Son, and on the basis of His death on the cross for your sins, you

have access to the Father (**Ephesians 1:3–6**). What instruction did Jesus give regarding prayer in **John 14:13–14** and **John 16:24**? \_\_\_\_\_

Many Christians close their prayer by saying, “In Jesus’ name, Amen,” without having any idea what the statement means. To pray in Jesus’ name means to pray with His authority. In New Testament culture, the wealthy who were away from home for an extended time would appoint a faithful servant as a personal steward. The steward could then carry on business in the name of his master—with his master’s authority.

When you pray in Jesus’ name, you are in essence saying, *“Father, I know that I have no right to be heard by you, but I come on the basis of my relationship with Your Son, Jesus Christ. Because of what He has done for me, I come to you with His authority and righteousness, in His name.”* It is vital that you pray specifically in the name of Jesus. Only those who have been born again by repenting of their sins and placing their faith in Jesus Christ can pray in Jesus’ name.

## What is God's Name?

It is certainly true that praying 'in Jesus' name' is praying on the basis of His position and authority. Yet, it is also true that we can claim the *specific* names of God revealed throughout Scripture. Here are but a few:

**Elohim**, *The Great Creator*—Genesis 1:1

**El-Roi**, *The God Who Sees Me*—Genesis 16:13

**El-Shaddai**, *God Almighty*— Genesis 17:1

**Jehovah-Jireh**, *The Lord Our Provider*—Genesis 22:14

**Jehovah-Rapha**, *The Lord Our Healer*—Exodus 15:26

**Jehovah-Nissi**, *The Lord Our Banner (of Victory)*—  
Exodus 17:15

**Jehovah-Mekaddishkem**, *The Lord Who Sanctifies You*—  
Exodus 31:13

**Jehovah-Shalom**, *The Lord Our Peace*—Judges 6:24

**Jehovah-Rohi**, *The Lord Our Shepherd*—Psalm 23:1

**Jehovah Tsidkenu**, *The Lord Our Righteousness*—  
Jeremiah 23:6

**1 Peter 2:9** teaches that every Christian has been made a priest by Jesus Christ. Because of our salvation, we can go *directly* into the presence of the Father—we don't need to go through a human priest. According to **Hebrews 4:14–16**, we need only one High Priest to gain entrance to the Father. Who is it?

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**1 Timothy 2:5** calls Jesus the \_\_\_\_\_ between God the Father and men. The Lord Jesus Christ himself is your representative before the Father—you don't need another!

According to **Hebrews 7:25**, what is Jesus doing on your behalf at this very moment? \_\_\_\_\_

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## 2. The Conditions of Prayer

Prayer is a conditional covenant between God and His people. Read the following verses and list the conditions God places on prayer.

Psalm 66:18 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2 Chronicles 7:14 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Matthew 5:23–24 & 1 Peter 3:7 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

1 John 3:21–22 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

John 15:7 \_\_\_\_\_

1 John 5:14–15 \_\_\_\_\_

*(Note: God's will is not a mystery—it is usually revealed in His Word. Biblical **promises** and **principles** should always guide our prayers.)*

It is essential that your prayers be consistent with Scripture. For example, you don't need to pray for God to "be with" another believer. Rather, thank Him that He has already promised to be with him (**Matthew 28:20b**). Pray *biblically*!

Hebrews 11:6 \_\_\_\_\_

Matthew 21:21–22 \_\_\_\_\_



What does **James 1:6–7** say to those who pray in doubt rather than faith? \_\_\_\_\_

*(Some of the best demonstrations of faith are praise and thanksgiving—  
Philippians 4:6–7)*

**Luke 11:5–8** (also see **Romans 12:12b**) \_\_\_\_\_

**Matthew 18:19–20** \_\_\_\_\_

## For What Should I Pray?

Many people feel uncomfortable praying because they don't know how to pray. If that describes you, you are not alone. What did the disciples ask Jesus in **Luke 11:1**? \_\_\_\_\_

In **Luke 11:2–4** (also see **Matthew 6:9–13**), Jesus

**Scripted Prayers?**  
*“We pray without a  
prompter because  
from the heart.”*  
**Tertullian** <sup>17</sup>

responded with a model prayer. This prayer—often called *The Lord's Prayer*—has been memorized and repeated by countless people.<sup>18</sup> However, it was intended as an *example* of

prayer, not merely a prayer to be quoted. It teaches us about biblical prayer:

### “Our Father which art in heaven,”

- Prayer is based on a relationship with our Father. Those who have never become His

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<sup>17</sup> Tertullian, *Aploget*, c. 30. Quoted by C.H. Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students* (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1881), p. 54.

<sup>18</sup>For the sake of familiarity, we will quote the Lord's Prayer from the *King James Version*.

children through faith in Jesus Christ have no basis on which to call upon Him in prayer.

How does Jesus describe God’s willingness to answer prayer in **Matthew 7:9–11**? \_\_\_\_\_

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- Prayer is addressed to God. Prayer to anyone other than God (*e.g.*, Mary, saints or departed loved ones) is *idolatry* and is expressly forbidden in Scripture (**Exodus 20:3**; **Matthew 4:10**; **1 John 5:21**; **Revelation 19:10 & 22:9**).
- Prayer is God-centered, not man-centered.

**“Hallowed be thy name.”**

Prayer is—above all else—worship. It is not rushing to God with requests, but bowing before Him in reverence. Prayers throughout Scripture are saturated with praise and thanksgiving. Requests are few and always follow worship. (See **Nehemiah 1:5–11** and **Luke 1:46–55**)

According to **Psalm 100:4**, how should you enter into the Lord’s presence (*e.g.*, “gates” and “courts”)?

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The book of Psalms is your “worship textbook.” Want to learn to worship? Study the Psalms:

1. **Praise the Lord for who He is—His character.**

**Psalm 86:5, 10, 15** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Psalm 103:8** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Psalm 106:1** \_\_\_\_\_

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2. **Praise the Lord for what He has done—His blessings.**

**Psalm 103:1–5, 10–14** \_\_\_\_\_

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**“Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done  
in earth, as it is in heaven.”**

- Prayer is agreeing with *God’s will*, not arguing for yours.

In **Luke 22:42**, Jesus made a request of the Father. With what words did He close His prayer? \_\_\_\_\_

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- Prayer is seeking the furtherance of *God’s work* and *Kingdom*.
- Prayer is motivated by *God’s glory*.

What is Jesus’ motivation for answering prayer, according to **John 14:13**? \_\_\_\_\_

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**“Give us this day our daily bread.”**

- Prayer is dependence on God for daily provision. It is asking God to meet your needs, not your selfish desires.

What promise does Scripture make in **Philippians 4:19**? \_\_\_\_\_

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According to **James 4:3**, what is one reason for unanswered prayer? \_\_\_\_\_

**“And forgive us our debts (*sins*),  
as we forgive our debtors (*those  
who have sinned against us*)”**

- Prayer is dependent both upon your confession of sin and your forgiveness of others.

What warning does Jesus give in **Matthew 6:15**?

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**“And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.”**

- Prayer should include requests for increased godliness. It asks not only for forgiveness of past sins, but also for protection from future sins.

What specific prayer did Jesus command in **Matthew 26:41** that corresponds to the closing of His model prayer? \_\_\_\_\_

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#### **CAR**

Jesus' sample prayer is indeed a model to be followed. Most notably, it demonstrates that prayer begins with worship, then moves on to requests.

The following acronym to help people remember the important aspects of prayer:

**Confession, Adoration, then Requests**

Jesus mentioned several specific requests in His model prayer, but the Bible has many, many more. Read the following verses to discover more things for which you should pray.

**2 Thessalonians 3:1–2** (Hint: The Apostle Paul wrote this passage during a missionary journey. What specific requests should you make to God for missionaries?) \_\_\_\_\_

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**Colossians 4:3–4** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Matthew 9:37–38** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**1 Timothy 2:1–5** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Matthew 5:44** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Hebrews 13:18** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**James 1:5** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**James 5:13** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Prayer Pitfalls

In Matthew 6:5–8, Christ warns against two errors of religious hypocrites. The first error is the use of prayer as a demonstration of supposed spirituality (v. 5). He teaches that prayer is a matter of private devotion, not public display.

G. Campbell Morgan writes that *“prayer is preeminently a matter between the soul and God; certainly not to be a means of advertising self’s piety.”*<sup>19</sup> And C. H. Spurgeon’s words are even more biting: *“It is a little short of blasphemy to make devotion an occasion for display.”*<sup>20</sup>

The second error is the use of “vain repetitions” (v. 7). Christ is here describing repetitive and thoughtless phrases which are said more out of mere habit. At best, they lack sincerity. At worst, they are superstitious. Remember that you are praying—not reciting or performing—and that your prayer is being attended to by a loving Father (v. 6, 8).

## When & Where Can I Pray?

Scripture teaches that you can—and should—pray anytime, anywhere. Remember, **1 Thessalonians 5:17** commands you to “pray without ceasing.” And that “pray-on-the-go” command really is possible, for God knows your secret thoughts (**Matthew 6:6**). Therefore, you can pray silently.

Although Scripture commands constant prayer, it also encourages you to set aside consistent times devoted specifically to prayer. What do you notice about Jesus’ pattern of prayer in **Matthew 14:23** and **Matthew 26:36**? \_\_\_\_\_

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<sup>19</sup>*Discipleship* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1973), p. 24.

<sup>20</sup>*Lectures to My Students* (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1881), p. 56.

What example do you see in **Mark 1:35** and **Psalm 5:3**? \_\_\_\_\_

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Since Jesus, God's perfect Son, made consistent, fervent prayer a priority, how can you do less?

### **Private & Public Prayer**

The Bible says much about private prayer—times when you are alone with God and seeking His face (Matthew 6:6; Psalm 27:8). Yet, it also stresses the necessity of public prayer—times when groups of believers gather for joint prayer. Notice the following texts and their record of joint prayer among fellow-Christians: **Matthew 18:19–20; Acts 1:14; 4:24–31; 12:12b.**

Oftentimes Christians are hesitant about praying in front of others. Yet, the Bible clearly teaches the value of joint prayer. Work at it. Become comfortable through experience and practice. And begin at your church's regular prayer meeting!

Prayerlessness is essentially arrogance. It is saying to God, *"I have no need of You. I can make it alone."* How much better to humbly kneel before the Lord and acknowledge, *"Lord, I need You. Without You, I can do nothing!"*

"God is vitally concerned that men should pray. God does His best work for the world through prayer."

**E. M. Bounds**



For a better understanding of biblical prayer, spend some of your Bible study time reading and meditating on some of the prayers recorded in Scripture. Here are some exemplary prayers from godly men:

Ezra 9  
Nehemiah 9

Daniel 9  
Psalm 51

## Scripture Memory

### Jeremiah 33:3

Call to Me and I will answer you, and I will tell you great and mighty things, which you do not know.

### Psalms 66:18

If I regard wickedness in my heart, The Lord will not hear.

### John 16:24

Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be made full.

### Philippians 4:6-7

<sup>6</sup>Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. <sup>7</sup>And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

*By the way, don't forget to review the memory verses from previous chapters! Try them now and see how you do!*

## Check Your Progress

What are the three most significant lessons that you have learned in this Bible study? Why are they important?

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Answer the following questions to measure your understanding of Prayer:

1. On whom does prayer focus (p. 94)? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What three promises does Jesus make in **Matthew 7:7** (p. 96)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What does it mean to pray “in Jesus’ name”? (p. 97–98) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Why is it important to know the specific names of God revealed in the Bible (p. 97)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. List several conditions of prayer (pp. 99–100).

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6. What is the main benefit of the Lord’s Prayer (p. 100)? How is it abused? \_\_\_\_\_

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7. What are the three main components of prayer (p. 104)? \_\_\_\_\_

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8. What are the two “prayer pitfalls” of **Matthew 6:5–8** (p. 105)? \_\_\_\_\_

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9. Why are both private and public prayer so important (p. 107)? \_\_\_\_\_

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10. Check off the following verses only when you can say them from memory:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jeremiah 33:3 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 66:18       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> John 16:24    | <input type="checkbox"/> Philippians 4:6–7 |

Do you believe that you know this material well enough to teach it to someone else? \_\_\_\_\_ If not, review it until you do!

# Foundations: Bible Truths for Christian Growth

## **Chapter 1 – Salvation**

God's Gift to You

## **Chapter 2 – Eternal Security**

Your Relationship with God

## **Chapter 3 – Confession of Sin**

Your Fellowship with God

## **Chapter 4 – Baptism and Communion**

Your Remembrance of Christ

## **Chapter 5 – The Word of God**

God's Communication to You

## **Chapter 6 – Prayer**

Your Communication to God

## **Chapter 7 – The Local Church**

Your Place of Ministry

## **Chapter 8 – Temptation**

Your Battle with Sin

## **Chapter 9 – The Holy Spirit**

God's Presence in You

## **Chapter 10 – Progressive Sanctification**

God's Work in You

## **Chapter 11 – Stewardship**

Your Giving to God

## **Chapter 12 – Evangelism**

Your Message to the World

*Many individuals and families seem determined to function as Christian “Lone Rangers.” They choose to “go it alone” rather than becoming intimately involved with a community of believers. Sadly, they are forsaking Scripture’s plan in favor of their own, for the Bible allows you—and commands you—to be actively involved in a local body of believers, the local church.*

## Understanding the Local Church

In order to understand the meaning and significance of the local church, we first need to define what the church is. The English word “church” is the translation of the Greek word *ekklesia*. *Ekklesia* is a combination of two Greek words: *ek* (out) and *kaleo* (to call). It was used by the Greeks to refer to a group of citizens who were called out (gathered together) to discuss affairs of the state. As used in the New Testament, the church is **an assembly of Christians who are called out from the world and who belong to God**. The Greek words *ek* and *kaleo* appear together in **1 Peter 2:9**. From what have Christians been “called out”? \_\_\_\_\_

The church, then, is not a building; it is a group of born-again Christians. In the words of a children’s rhyme, “The church is not a steeple...it’s a people!”

The Bible uses the term *ekklesia* in two basic ways: 1. **The universal church** is comprised of all true born again Christians from Pentecost (shortly after Christ ascended into heaven; see **Acts 2**) until the rapture (Christ’s appearance to “catch up” all Christians to heaven; see **1 Thessalonians 4:13–18**). It is not limited to a particular denomination. Indeed, Scripture teaches that there is only one universal (or

invisible) church (**Ephesians 4:4–6**). Based on that definition, what must one do to become part of the universal church? \_\_\_\_\_

The first mention of *ekklesia* in the Bible is in **Matthew 16:18**, and it refers especially to the universal church. Read it and answer the following questions:

Was the church past, present or future from the moment when Christ made this statement? \_\_\_\_\_

What did Christ promise to do? \_\_\_\_\_

Who is the church's Owner? \_\_\_\_\_

Who is the church's Builder? \_\_\_\_\_

Since Christ alone can “build His church,” how should that affect the way we minister to people? Conduct worship services? Tell people the gospel?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Each **local church** is part of the universal body of Christ. It is a group of individual believers who meet together in specific geographical locations around the globe (hence the name “local”) and who subscribe to the Christian

*“The church of Christ consists of particular churches, guided by their own overseers. And every Christian must be a member of one of these churches.”*

**Richard Baxter** <sup>21</sup>

<sup>21</sup> *The Reformed Pastor* (1656), p. 11.

faith. It is also called the “visible” church. Most references to *ekklesia* in the New Testament refer to local churches.

**Acts 14:23** refers to the establishment of leaders in “every church.” Is that a reference to the universal or local church? \_\_\_\_\_

Many local churches are mentioned throughout the New Testament. The following verses name but a few of them. What are they?

**Acts 13:1** \_\_\_\_\_

**Romans 16:1** \_\_\_\_\_

**1 Corinthians 1:2** \_\_\_\_\_

**Revelation 3:14** \_\_\_\_\_

### Think of the Golden Arches...

The relationship of the universal church to local churches is similar to the relationship of a large corporation to its individual franchises. Each McDonald’s franchise has its own local leadership and unique characteristics, but each still has a central owner and common product—a Big Mac, for example. So each Bible-based local church has its own local leadership, yet each is owned by Christ and has a common message: *salvation from sin by faith in Christ*.

Rather than simply describing the church, the New Testament offers at least nine different pictures of the church. Each communicates important information regarding the church:

## 1. The church is Christ's BODY.

This is the most common picture of the church in the New Testament. Read the following passages, then answer the questions which follow them.

**Romans 12:4–5; 1 Corinthians 12:12–27; Ephesians 1:22–23; Ephesians 5:23; Colossians 1:18**

What lesson do we learn from the fact that the human body—though one—has many parts?

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What if every member of your body wanted to carry out the function of your eyes? What lesson does that teach concerning the church? If your hand or foot is injured, the entire body is affected. What does that tell you about the church? \_\_\_\_\_

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*“Every man, woman or child who is in our churches should be set to work for the Lord.”*

**C. H. Spurgeon<sup>22</sup>**

**Ephesians 4:15–16** is a little bit more difficult to understand. It teaches that every joint contributes to the unity of the body, and it teaches that every member of the local church should be involved in ministry. Ministry is not the job of the pastor or of a select few. Rather, it is the responsibility of the entire body! The church honors the Lord through **every-member ministry**. The result is a healthy and growing body.

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<sup>22</sup> *The Soul Winner* (New York, Fleming H. Revell, 1895), p. 129.



A Christian without a local church is like a hand without a body. *You need the local church!*

## 2. The church is Christ's FAMILY.

A second major picture of the church highlights the intimacy that every believer has with God and with other believers. What lessons do we learn about the church from the following verses?

1 John 3:1–2a; John 1:12 \_\_\_\_\_

Galatians 3:26–28 \_\_\_\_\_

Galatians 4:5b–7 \_\_\_\_\_

In 1 John 3:1, the Apostle John is astounded that God would grant us the privilege of being the sons of God. Yes, we are the *creatures* of a powerful God. Yes, we are the *servants* of a great Master. Yes, we are the *subjects* of a majestic King. But we are much, much more; we are the *children* of a loving Father! What influence should our being children of God—and the hope we have of an eternal inheritance in heaven—have upon the way we live (1 John 3:3)? \_\_\_\_\_

What are some significant privileges and responsibilities that come with being part of a family? How do those apply to the church? \_\_\_\_\_

How might we minister to others (especially new believers) in a family-like manner? \_\_\_\_\_

Why will a genuine family spirit attract unbelievers to Christ? \_\_\_\_\_

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### **What a big family!**

If you have ever seen a family with a lot of children, you have probably noticed that the other children—especially daughters—often function as “second moms.” Rather than being frustrated or sickened by the immaturity and dirty diapers of their brothers and sisters, they roll up their sleeves and help them grow up!

So it should be within the body of Christ. All too often supposedly mature believers distance themselves from new believers. Because they are offended by the habits of new Christians, they avoid them altogether, seemingly afraid that they will become soiled if they associate with Christians “less mature” or “less spiritual” than themselves. Such a spirit is even more carnal and harmful than the hang-ups of new believers! Instead, more mature believers are intended by God to help the younger, both by example and loving instruction. To whom can you be a “big brother?”

A Christian without a local church is like an orphan without a family. ***You need the local church!***

### **3. The church is Christ's FLOCK.**

One of the most precious images of Christ in Scripture is His ministry as the Good Shepherd (**John 10:11**). Christ often refers to His followers as sheep, and He specifically calls the church His flock. In **Acts 20:28–31**, Paul addresses the elders (spiritual leaders) of the church of Ephesus as shepherds. Read it, then answer the following questions.

Who gave the “shepherds” their position of leadership (v. 28)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

To what are false teachers compared (v. 29–30)? Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

From where did many of the false teachers arise (v. 30)? Why is the church in need of continual “warning” (v. 31)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The word “feed” in verse 28 is literally “shepherd.” Indeed, the English word *pastor* is the translation of the Greek word for *shepherd*.

What specific ministries does a pastor provide for a local church that a shepherd provides for sheep (refer to **Psalm 23** and **John 10:11–18**)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

A Christian without a local church is like a sheep without a flock or shepherd.  
***You need the local church!***

**4. The church is Christ’s BUILDING.**

This image communicates several more unique aspects of the church. Just as **Matthew 16:18** refers to the universal church as being built by Christ, so **1 Corinthians 3:9b** says of the local church at Corinth that they collectively are “Christ’s building.” This picture especially highlights the church’s *owner* and its *progress*—it is still “under construction.”

What role do *spiritual leaders* (such as pastors) play in Christ’s church “building” (1 **Corinthians 3:9–10**)?

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In addition to being its Owner and Builder, Christ is the church’s cornerstone and foundation (**Ephesians 2:20** and 1 **Corinthians 3:11**). What does a foundation do for a building that Christ does for His church? \_\_\_\_\_

What role did the apostles and prophets—and the Scripture which they penned—play (**Ephesians 2:20**)? \_\_\_\_\_

1 **Peter 2:5** compares you to a “stone”—a brick that is part of the building. What specific ministries can you carry out to contribute to the building up of Christ’s church? \_\_\_\_\_

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A Christian without a local church is like a brick without a building. ***You need the local church!***

## 5. The church is Christ’s **BRIDE**.

Throughout the New Testament, God compares the relationship between Himself and His church to that of a husband and wife. This picture especially highlights the *intimacy* between Christ and His church.

*“The pastor is not merely a big sheep. He is a shepherd.”*

**Bruce McAllister**<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Bruce McAllister is the Director of Ministerial Training at Bob Jones University.

**Ephesians 5:23–33** says much about the human marriage relationship. Yet, it also addresses the relationship between Christ and the church. Read it and answer the following questions:

Verse 23 says that Christ is the \_\_\_\_\_ and “\_\_\_\_\_ of the body”.

How then should you—as part of the church—respond to Christ (v. 24)? \_\_\_\_\_

According to verse 25, how did Christ demonstrate His love for the church? \_\_\_\_\_

Who was the Initiator of this relationship? \_\_\_\_\_

Christ continues to show his love for you by sanctifying and cleansing you (v. 26). What does He use to accomplish that? *The water with the* \_\_\_\_\_. How, then, can **you** contribute to the process of your personal cleansing from sin? \_\_\_\_\_

What words does verse 29 use for Christ’s care for the church? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

One more thought concerning your marriage relationship to Christ: **James 4:4** refers to those who have a relationship with the world as “adulterers and adulteresses.” Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Are there instances in which you are committing spiritual adultery? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## 6. The church is Christ's ARMY.

This picture is strikingly different from the last. In describing us as an army, Scripture highlights the church's militancy and ministry. The church is no monastery; we do not "hide out" from the world. Rather, we battle it, actively pursuing souls for Christ. What do the following verses teach about the church's militant nature?

1 Timothy 1:18 \_\_\_\_\_

2 Timothy 2:3-4 \_\_\_\_\_

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### No Retreat...or Treaties!

Ours is a day in which many Christians are seeking to form "alliances" or "treaties" with the world and with false teachers. Yet, Jude 3 instructs us to "contend earnestly for the faith." The church's response to sin and false teaching has always been—and must continue to be—militancy. As stated by President Roosevelt in his declaration of war against Japan following Pearl Harbor, we must "*win through to absolute victory*." No retreat from the world...or treaties with the world!

**Ephesians 6:11-18** describes the Christian's spiritual armor. Space does not permit a thorough treatment now, but you would greatly benefit from a detailed study on your own.

## 7. The church is Christ's FIELD.

Read **1 Corinthians 3:6-9**. The passage compares the body of Christ to a cultivated field. This picture highlights the church's dependence on God. It also describes the necessity of *laborers*.

Consider the work of a farmer. He is required to labor intently in his field. He must be diligent and see to it that the field is properly watered and cared for.

The farmer must also be dependent. Despite his careful work, he still is dependent on God to bring growth and fruit (v. 6b). What implications does Paul make from the joint effort between the church and God in verse 7–9? \_\_\_\_\_

**8. The church is Christ’s PILLAR and GROUND of the TRUTH.**

1 Timothy 3:15 describes each local church in a unique fashion—a “pillar and support of the truth.” A pillar provides support for a building—it holds it up. Similarly, the church ought to *defend* and *declare* God’s truth, the Bible.

**9. The church is Christ’s NATION.**

Another interesting picture of the church is as a nation, led by Christ and peopled by believers.

Ephesians 2:19 teaches that although you are no longer \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, but you are \_\_\_\_\_.

Colossians 1:13 gives a more detailed description: you have changed kingdoms. To which kingdom did you belong before you were saved? \_\_\_\_\_  
After? \_\_\_\_\_

1 **Peter 2:9–12** makes a similar statement, but profoundly applies your change of position by requiring a change of conduct. According to these verses, how should our change of citizenship affect the way we live...at home, work, etc.? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

You have learned much about what the church *is*. Now look briefly at **Acts 2:42** to discover what the church does. In what four activities did the early local church “continually devote themselves”?

1. **The apostles’** \_\_\_\_\_.

This is the study and proclamation of the Word of God. How do we continue in that today? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Notice that biblical teaching comes first, even before other aspects of worship. Scripture is central in God’s design for the church.

2. \_\_\_\_\_.

The Greek word used here is *koinonia*. In addition to godly friendships, it literally means to “have things in common.” Each of the following verses contains the word *koinonia*. What behaviors does Scripture include under the term “fellowship”?

- **Romans 15:26** \_\_\_\_\_
- **Philippians 1:5** \_\_\_\_\_
- **Philippians 3:10** \_\_\_\_\_



### 3. Breaking of \_\_\_\_\_.

This describes the observance of the Lord's Table, as was discussed in Chapter 4.

### 4. \_\_\_\_\_.

Refer to Chapter 6.

Notice that the focus of all of these activities is either God or His people. What is striking in its absence? *Evangelism*. How interesting this is, considering the fact that many modern churches going to great extremes to make the “unchurched” feel at home in their services. Unfortunately, their efforts are spiritually ineffective and biblically indefensible. Worship services are for worship, not evangelism.

It has been well said that the church “gathers for worship and scatters for evangelism.”

## Appreciating the Local Church

As you can tell, Scripture has much to say about the local church. The lack of emphasis placed on local church ministry today is in stark contrast to the great emphasis the church receives in Scripture. There are several reasons why you must value the local church:

### 1. The local church is central in the New Testament writings:

- The book of Acts tells of the founding and activity of the first generation of local churches.

- Much of the New Testament was written to specific local churches: Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians\*, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 2 John and Revelation\*.
- Several books were written to the leaders of specific local churches: 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus\* and 3 John.

*\* Note: The books of Galatians and Titus were written to geographic regions that probably contained numerous local churches. Revelation was sent to seven local churches in Asia Minor. The other books mentioned were usually sent to one specific church and then shared with others.*

- Several of the books already mentioned focus on the church as their main topic, especially Ephesians, Colossians and Paul's letters to Timothy.

**2. The local church is central in God's plan for His work:** The local church is key to Christ's great promise in **Matthew 16:18** (as discussed on pages 112–113).

The local church is key to Christ's great command in **Matthew 28:19–20; Mark 16:15, Luke 24:46–68** and **Acts 1:8**. Although the first emphasis of the Great Commission is evangelism, the second is intense edification, which requires the local church. What specific command does Christ give in **Matthew 28:20**? \_\_\_\_\_

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Why does fulfilling that command require the local church? \_\_\_\_\_

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The book of Acts records the early church's fulfillment of the Great Commission, especially tracing the ministry of the Apostle Paul. Paul's missionary journeys

especially highlight the importance of the local church: *everywhere the gospel went in the first century, the result was the establishment of a local church.*

**Principle:**

The local church is God's tool for working in this present age.

## Submitting to the Local Church

Scripture clearly commands every believer to submit to the local church. Unfortunately, many believers have fallen into one of two ditches. Some reject biblical authority altogether. Others confuse a mindless, cult-like gullibility with biblical submission. Both extremes are dangerous. As is often the case, the truth lies in the middle. Let's consider what Scripture says about leadership within the local church.

There are two primary reasons for submitting to local church leadership;

1. **God has instituted the local church.**

During God's dealing with humanity, He has established three institutions which He intends to minister to men on His behalf. God ordained the first human institution shortly after creation: the family. Scripture records God's institution of the family in **Genesis 2:18–25**. The second human institution established by God was government. God granted humanity the authority to govern itself in **Genesis 9:6**.

The final human institution established by God is the local church.

How does God command children to relate to their parents (the first human institution) in **Ephesians 6:1–2**? \_\_\_\_\_

How does God command you to relate to government (the second human institution) in **Romans 13:1**? \_\_\_\_\_

How does God command you to relate to the church (the third human institution) in **Hebrews 13:7** and **17**? \_\_\_\_\_

It is worth noting that one of the first steps to submitting to the leadership of the local church is becoming an active member. Membership is an expression of like-mindedness and support, but also of submission to your God-ordained authority.

## 2. God has ordained spiritual leadership within the local church.

God has established a system of human leadership within the local church. A thorough treatment of church government is not possible in this brief study. However, the following texts give some basic instructions regarding leadership in the church:

- **Mark 10:42–45**—God has ordained servant leadership.
- **1 Timothy 2:12**—God has ordained male leadership.
- **1 Timothy 3:1–13**—God has ordained qualified and spiritual leadership.

- **1 Timothy 4:12** and **1 Peter 5:3**—God has ordained exemplary leadership.
- **Exodus 18:13–18; Acts 6:2–4** and **1 Timothy 5:17**—God has ordained shared leadership.
- **1 Timothy 5:17–18**—God has ordained financially-supported leadership.
- **1 Thessalonians 5:12–13**—God has ordained respected leadership.
- **James 3:1** and **Hebrews 13:17b**—God has ordained accountable leadership.

### Friend or Foe?

There is a troubling trend among some Bible-believers today. In an attempt to promote the importance of the home, many Christians are minimizing the importance of the local church—sometimes forsaking it altogether. The mindset that makes the home and the church adversaries is both unbiblical and unwise. Both institutions are ordained of God, and both are essential in the process of developing godly Christians. They are not competitors, but co-laborers. Emphasis on the church and home is a matter of both/and, not either/or. Both are essential, and both benefit from each other. Scripture’s finest example of the joint effort of church and home is Timothy. Timothy was a product of a godly home (1 Timothy 3:14; 2 Timothy 1:5) and a godly mentor outside the home (2 Timothy 1:2, 6).

Richard Baxter, the 17<sup>th</sup> century English pastor, provides wise counsel for those who would forsake the fellowship and reject the leadership of the local church: *“Read the Scriptures and see if they who obeyed God’s messengers, or they who despised and disobeyed them, fared best.”*<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>*The Reformed Pastor* (1656), p. XVIII.

## Ministering in the Local Church

Attending a Bible-based church is good. Becoming a member is even better. However, you are not obeying Scripture until you are actively serving in the local church. Throughout Scripture, every believer is commanded to actively serve the Lord through the local church. The motto of the New Testament church is “every-member ministry.”

**Hebrews 10:25** is often used as an argument that believers should attend church regularly. What command does it give you? \_\_\_\_\_

What reason does it give? (“and all the more” ) \_\_\_\_\_

While it is true that this passage commands the believer to attend church (and that as many times per week as possible), it requires much more than “showing up.” The previous verse, Hebrews 10:24 commands you to be active in the church—to “consider how to \_\_\_\_\_ one another to \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.” How might you be such a catalyst, encouraging other Christians to love and serve the Lord?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*“That minister is most successful who gets the whole body to move, and who renders the church independent of himself.”*

**Augustus Strong** <sup>25</sup>

Perhaps the most important passage regarding the

<sup>25</sup> *Systematic Theology*, p. 908.

ministry of believers in the local church is found in **Ephesians 4:11–12**. The pastor–teacher has been given as a gift to the church. His responsibility is described in the first phrase of verse 12. What is it?

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Occasionally, a key lesson can be learned from the original language of Scripture that is not readily apparent in English. Such is the case here. Although verse 12 appears to list three jobs for the pastor–teacher, in reality it does not. That fact is clear in the original Greek because of an important change in words. The pastor was given for (*pros*) the equipping of the saints “for” (*eis*) the work of the ministry and “to” (*eis*) the building up of the body. In other words, Scripture commands pastors to get the rest of the church ready so that *they* can do the work of the ministry. Commenting on this passage, Bill Hull writes, “*The most sacred duty of the pastor is to get the work of the ministry done through others.*”<sup>26</sup>

**2 Timothy 2:2** describes what may be called the “ministry chain.” Complete the links of mentoring ministers described in this verse (specific men to general groups):

Barnabas → Paul → Timothy → \_\_\_\_\_ →

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<sup>26</sup> *The Disciple Making Pastor* (Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1996), p. 88.

**“To church or parachurch...that is the question.”**

The last two centuries have seen a rise in the existence and prominence of Christian organizations which are outside of the local church. Such institutions function *beside* the local church, and are therefore referred to as “parachurch.”

While it is undeniable that such bodies as mission boards and educational institutions have contributed much to the cause of Christ, it is also true that many parachurch organizations have been harmful.

Massive “movements” for evangelism or ministry to men, women and families almost always become ecumenical, drawing a crowd by minimizing important doctrinal issues. Radio and television preachers often replace the local church. National Bible studies and discipleship programs often deprive the church of its most gifted leaders.

Not all parachurch organizations are illegitimate, and many have contributed greatly to the advancement of the universal church. However, the New Testament pattern of ministry is ministry through the local church. Your loyalty, your effort and your financial support should be invested in the ministry which the Lord has raised near your home.

A final argument for your active ministry in the local church is the fact that you—like every other believer—possess a spiritual gift. God has given you a particular ability that perhaps no one else has in the church. Furthermore, your spiritual gift was not given for your sake, but for the church’s (**1 Corinthians 12:7**). Without you, the local church will not function as God designed it to. It was stated several times that *you need the church*. It is equally true, however, that *the church needs you*.



## Spiritual Gifts

Scripture lists a “catalogue” of spiritual gifts in **Romans 12:4–8**; **1 Corinthians 12:4–11**; **Ephesians 4:11** and **1 Peter 4:10–11**. Many of the gifts were temporary, functioning only during the formation of the New Testament and the lives of the Apostles. The gifts which are still functioning today are as follows:

- **Teaching**—the special ability to understand and communicate Scripture.
- **Ministering**—the special ability and desire to see needs and provide help.
- **Administration**—the special ability to provide leadership in spiritual matters.
- **Giving**—the special ability, desire and means to meet physical needs.
- **Mercy**—the special ability and burden to comfort the afflicted.
- **Exhortation**—the special ability to encourage and move people to action.
- **Evangelist**—the special ability to communicate the gospel to the lost, especially in the realm of missions and church-planting.
- **Pastor-teacher**—the special ability and call to shepherd the flock of God. It seems to be a combination of other gifts, including teaching and administration.<sup>27</sup>

The list contains at least one gift which God has especially given to you to use for Him. Which of the gifts listed do you believe you may have? \_\_\_\_\_

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How might you use it effectively in your local church?

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You must remember that God has gifted you for His purpose and glory, not your own. The respected Bible

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<sup>27</sup> Some conservative Bible scholars would add *faith* and *prophecy* to this list.

teacher A.W. Tozer made the following statement about spiritual gifts and their use: *“Our gifts and talents should also be turned over to Him. They should be recognized for what they are, God’s loan to us, and should never be considered in any sense our own. We have no more right to claim credit for special abilities than for blue eyes or strong muscles.”*<sup>28</sup>

What does this information about the local church mean for you? You are directly in God’s will when you are actively attending and ministering in the local church. And you are not in God’s will if you are not actively attending and ministering in the local church. Failing to assemble with other believers is sin.

It is imperative that you find a Bible–preaching, fundamental<sup>29</sup> church and get active in it as soon as possible. However, be very careful in your choice of a church. Be sure that its teaching and practices line up with Scripture.

## Scripture Memory

### Hebrews 10:24–25

And let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds,<sup>25</sup> not forsaking our own

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<sup>28</sup> *The Pursuit of God* (Camp Hill, PA: Christian Publications, 1982), p. 28.

<sup>29</sup> The term *fundamental* is a term used to distinguish between churches and organizations that believe and practice the Bible (fundamentalists) and those that don’t. Ask the pastor if the church you are considering is *fundamental* and he will be able to give you an answer. Pray for clear wisdom. Also, use these 12 *Foundations* chapters as a “yardstick” by which you can measure the teaching of a prospective church.

assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

### Check Your Progress

What are the three most significant lessons that you have learned in this Bible study? Why are they important?

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Answer the following questions to measure your understanding of the local church:

1. What is the difference between the universal church and the local church? (p. 112–114) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What different “pictures” does the New Testament use to describe the church? (p. 115–122) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What were the four main activities carried out by the early church? (p. 112) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Where did local churches appear in the New Testament? (p. 124–126)

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5. What are the two main reasons for submitting to spiritual leadership in the local church? (p. 126–127)

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6. How does Timothy exemplify the cooperative effort that God intends to take place between the church and home? (p. 128) \_\_\_\_\_

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7. Which Christians does God intend to be actively involved in the work of the ministry? (p. 129)

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8. Describe the “ministry chain” of 2 Timothy 2:2. (p. 130)

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9. Why should your efforts and financial gifts be directed through the local church rather than a parachurch ministry (p. 131)? \_\_\_\_\_

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10. Check off the following verses only when you can say them from memory:

Hebrews 10:24–25

Do you believe that you know this material well enough to teach it to someone else? \_\_\_\_\_ If not, review it until you do!

# Foundations: Bible Truths for Christian Growth

## **Chapter 1 – Salvation**

God's Gift to You

## **Chapter 2 – Eternal Security**

Your Relationship with God

## **Chapter 3 – Confession of Sin**

Your Fellowship with God

## **Chapter 4 – Baptism and Communion**

Your Remembrance of Christ

## **Chapter 5 – The Word of God**

God's Communication to You

## **Chapter 6 – Prayer**

Your Communication to God

## **Chapter 7 – The Local Church**

Your Place of Ministry

## **Chapter 8 – Temptation**

Your Battle with Sin

## **Chapter 9 – The Holy Spirit**

God's Presence in You

## **Chapter 10 – Progressive Sanctification**

God's Work in You

## **Chapter 11 – Stewardship**

Your Giving to God

## **Chapter 12 – Evangelism**

Your Message to the World

*The life of the Christian is filled with temptation.*

*Every believer experiences a constant battle: to sin or not to sin. Thankfully, God has promised forgiveness for those who sin and later confess it. Yet, focusing on confession of sin instead of purity from sin is dangerous—like building a hospital at a cliff's bottom rather than a guardrail at its top. God's desire for you is that you “not sin” (1 John 2:1).*

*Let's work on making that idea a reality.*

## The Need for Holiness

**1 Thessalonians 4:1–7** is a key passage regarding your lifestyle as a Christian. In it, you are told...

- To please God (v. 1);
- That your holiness (“sanctification”) is God’s will (v. 3);
- To use your body (“vessel”) in a way that is holy and honorable (v. 4);
- That your lifestyle and purity should not be like the unsaved (v. 5);
- That God has called you unto holiness (v. 7).

## The Tragedy of Sin!

Most Christians take temptation lightly because they take sin lightly. The late English pastor D. Martin Lloyd-Jones laments, *“There is no doubt whatever that an inadequate view of sin is the chief cause of a lack of holiness and sanctification, and indeed of most of the false teaching with respect to sanctification.”*<sup>30</sup> Why is sin so tragic?

- It offends God (Psalm 51:17).
- It grieves God (Ephesians 4:30).
- It breaks your fellowship with God (Psalm 66:18).
- It destroys the life of the believer (James 1:15). As Robert Leighton said in the 1600’s, *“The way of sin is downhill; a man cannot stop whenever he wishes.”*<sup>31</sup>

Is God concerned about holiness? YES! In the words of **1 Peter 1:15–16**, He has called you to be holy in every area of your lifestyle (or “behavior”). According to verse 16 (which quotes **Leviticus 19:2**), how holy does God require you to be? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Though living a life that is set apart from sin is considered “quaint” or “puritanical” by many, it is demanded by God. You are to be perpetually “lay aside” sin (**Ephesians 4:22**) and “put on” righteousness and holiness (**Ephesians 4:24**). Yet, it is inevitable that you will be tempted to sin. What exactly is temptation and—more importantly—how do we deal with it? How can we be holy?

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<sup>30</sup> *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1959), p.244.

<sup>31</sup> Quoted by J.C. Ryle, *Thoughts for Young Men* (Amityville, NY: Calvary Press, 1996), p. 11.



## Understanding Temptation

Scripture speaks of two different kinds of *temptation*, both of which are addressed in **James 1**. The first, which is discussed in **James 1:2–5**, can best be defined as a *trial* or *difficult situation*. (The word for “testing” in verse 3 is translated as *trial* in a parallel passage in **1 Peter 1:6–7**.)

The second kind of temptation is seen in **James 1:12–15**. The Greek word (*peirazo*) is the same as in verse 2, but the meaning is very different. It is best defined by one of the last words in **James 1:14**: “enticed.” The Greek word for entice literally means *to bait*. Explain how that picture assists you in understanding the nature of temptation. \_\_\_\_\_

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(This second kind of temptation has become the standard meaning of the word in modern English and is the primary focus of this study.)

Both senses of temptation are presented in Scripture as tests intended to *prove* and *improve* one’s character. Can you clearly differentiate between the two types of temptation? Do so, and give examples of each.

## Reasons for Temptation

For centuries—even millennia—people have discussed a perplexing question: *Why would God allow temptation?* God certainly could have created Adam and Eve without the possibility of sinning.

Why did God allow temptation? As strange as it sounds, temptation brings with it many benefits.

**1. Temptation offers a test of love.**

Could God have created mankind without temptation or the choice of succumbing to it? Theoretically, yes. But such creatures would not be moral—they would be *amoral*. They would be robots whose so-called love would be involuntary. There can be no genuine love without the freedom to choose. Love includes both a positive choice (reception) and a negative choice (rejection). How does **Psalm 97:10** demonstrate that fact? \_\_\_\_\_

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**“Forsaking all others...”**

A common part of a traditional wedding ceremony is the groom’s vow to his bride. His promise includes the statement that he will, *“forsaking all others, keep...only to her.”* Why? Because love demands separation. No bride would be content to be the first among many loves.

In loving her, he is required to forsake all others.

So it is with your relationship with God: your love for Him requires you to forsake sin.

Because He desires an intimate relationship with man, God allows him the opportunity to prove his love by rejecting temptation. Using the word *temptation*, explain Jesus’ test of love in **John 14:15** *“If you love Me, \_\_\_\_\_.”*

and **John 14:23** *“If anyone loves Me, \_\_\_\_\_.”*

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This brings us to our second reason for temptation:

**2. Temptation offers an opportunity for obedience.**

We typically think of temptation in a negative sense, as an opportunity to sin. Yet, it is just as true that temptation is an opportunity *not* to sin—to obey!

Job offers a tremendous example of the privilege of being tempted? *Privilege?* You bet! Read **Job 1:1–12** and explain why being tempted is a privilege.

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Notice that Job experienced both senses of temptation. He suffered tremendous trials, including loss of his family, possessions and health. Throughout those trials he was also enticed to sin, most notably in **Job 2:9**. Job passed both tests. What was his response to trials and enticement in **Job 1:21–22**? \_\_\_\_\_

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Job maintained his integrity. Yet, only Jesus endured temptation without a single compromise. **Hebrews 4:15** says of Christ that He “has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.” The biblical account of Christ’s temptations is given in **Matthew 4** and will be discussed later. Jesus glorified God through His temptations in a way that would have been impossible had He not been tempted. Though He was tempted, what amazing statement did he make in **John 8:29**?

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*(Notice that being tempted is not a sin in itself. Even Jesus was tempted!)*

**3. Temptation offers an opportunity for maturity.**

**James 1:2** commands believers to rejoice when they encounter temptations (difficulties and the temptation to sin which usually accompany them).

Although the command to rejoice seems strange, what is the reason given in **James 1:3–4**? \_\_\_\_\_

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Difficulties are used by the Lord to bring spiritual progress, described as “endurance” in verse 3 and “perfect” and “complete” in verse 4. As was mentioned earlier, trials are not intended merely to prove you, but also to *improve* you. Like a chisel in the hand of a gifted sculptor, so God uses temptation to shape your character. Painful? Yes. Worthwhile? Absolutely.

**Romans 8:28** promises that God causes *all* things—even trials and enticements—to work together for your good if you are a believer who loves God. Verse 29 then goes on to describe exactly what your “good” is. Using **Romans 8:29**, finish this statement: *God’s desire for me is* \_\_\_\_\_

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God accomplished His goal of proving and improving Job through temptation. Read **Job 23:10**. Job viewed the furnace of difficulty as an opportunity for refinement!

**4. Temptation offers an opportunity for reward.**

Read **James 1:12**. What promise is given to those who successfully endure temptation? \_\_\_\_\_

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At first glance, temptation seems to be an absolute negative. Yet, believers are able to *benefit* from temptation. It provides a test of love and opportunities for obedience, maturity and reward, none of which could be realized without it. Hence, temptation exists not because of God’s negligence, but because of His goodness.

## Recognizing Temptation

If you are to successfully endure temptation, it is essential that you understand from where it comes. Scripture teaches that there are basically three sources of temptation: the flesh, the world and the Devil. These three are often referred to as the three enemies of the believer.

### 1. Enemy #1—The Flesh

The response of many people to their sin is “The Devil made me do it.” Yet, Scripture teaches that not all temptation is from without. When it comes to temptation, you are “your own worst enemy.” Read **James 1:13–15**. Verse 13 teaches that \_\_\_\_\_ is *not* the source of temptation.

According to verse 14, where does temptation come from? Restate the verse in your own words. \_\_\_\_\_

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Scripture teaches that every person that has existed (with the exception of Jesus Christ) was born with a *sin nature* (also referred to in the Bible as *the old man* and *the flesh*). In plain speech, that means that we are not sinners because we sin. Rather, we sin because we are sinners. Scripture’s description of humans is not flattering. How are we described in

## Jeremiah 17:9?

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*(The theological term used for this teaching is **total depravity**. It means that every part of our nature is ridden with sin.)*

## What did David say regarding his birth in **Psalm 51:5**?

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*(The circumstance of his birth was not sinful—his mother was not an adulteress. Rather, he is saying that he was a sinner by nature—even in the womb.)*

Biblical teaching here goes directly against the current of modern thought. Whereas sociologists and psychiatrists may teach that you are basically good, Scripture teaches that you are “desperately sick.” Even the godliest of men is sinful to the core. Read **Romans 7:14–25**. What did the Apostle Paul say about himself in **Romans 7:14, 18, and 24**?

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Notice two things: first, Paul was a *saved man*, yet he acknowledged his sinful heart and inability to do right. Second, he defined his *flesh* as “sin which dwells in me” (v. 17 and 20). Every person—the Christian included—has a sinful nature which is bent on doing wrong.

*“God, harden me against myself,  
The coward with pathetic voice  
Who craves for ease and rest and joy.  
Myself, arch-traitor to myself,  
My hollowest friend,  
My deadliest foe,  
My clog, whatever road I go.”*

**Christina G. Rossetti**<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> “Who Shall Deliver Me” from *Poems of Christina Rossetti* (London: Macmillan, 1918), pp. 87–88.

**Galatians 5:16–26** describes a battle which rages inside of you. Two combatants are engaged in a constant struggle to determine which will control you. Who are they? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The Christian has two natures, and he will until he is with Christ in heaven. The first is *the flesh*. When was that received? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What are some of the “works” typical of someone controlled by the flesh (**Galatians 5:19–21**)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The second nature within the Christian is *spiritual*. It is the result of his being born again and indwelt by the Holy Spirit. When was the spiritual nature received? \_\_\_\_\_

What are the “fruits” typical of someone controlled by the Holy Spirit (**Galatians 5:22–23**)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Although some churches and theologians teach otherwise, Scripture is clear that the battle between your flesh and the Spirit will continue until your death. Hence, you had better learn how to win it. What does **1 John 1:8** and **10** say about someone who claims to be *above sin*? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*(The teaching that Christians can attain perfection in this life comes under many names: complete sanctification, “zap” theology and living “above sin” are among them. Whatever the title, the teaching is erroneous.)*

Finally, it is essential that you understand the progressive nature of your flesh's temptation. Achan directly disobeyed God by taking spoil from the city of Jericho following a victory which God had provided. What four steps did he take in succumbing to his flesh (**Joshua 7:21**)?

“I \_\_\_\_\_” “I \_\_\_\_\_”  
“and (I) \_\_\_\_\_ them”  
“they are (I) \_\_\_\_\_.”

## 2. Enemy #2—The Devil or Satan

The second tempter revealed in Scripture is Satan. Although Satan is often pictured as wearing red pajamas and carrying a pitchfork, the Bible teaches that those who make light of him do so to their own hurt. How is Satan described in **2 Corinthians 11:14**? \_\_\_\_\_

**John 8:44b** describes Satan in two ways. What are they? “*He was a \_\_\_\_\_ . . . he is a \_\_\_\_\_.*” What instruction do these descriptions provide regarding his temptation?

### Deceiver and Destroyer

John 8:44 pictures Satan as both a deceiver (liar) and destroyer (murderer). Similarly, 1 Peter 5:8 compares him to a lion. He uses his cunning and stealth to deceive, and his sole intent is to “devour” you. In Romans 7:11, Scripture teaches that all temptation is an attempt to do the same thing: deceive and destroy you. No wonder Peter warns you to be “sober and alert.” Satan detests you!



Thankfully, although Satan is powerful, he is not all-powerful. Restate **1 John 4:4** in your own words.

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The first instance of Satan functioning as a tempter is recorded in **Genesis 3:1–8**. Read it and answer the following questions:

What word describes the serpent (Satan) in verse 1?

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Notice Satan's tactics. He first *questioned God's Word* ("has God said?" v. 1b), then blatantly *contradicted God's Word* ("You surely will not die!" v. 4), and finally *attacked God's character* ("For God knows" v. 5). Rather than resisting Satan, Eve conversed with Him, sinned and was punished.

Conversely, Jesus Christ successfully endured Satan's temptation in **Matthew 4:1–11**.

What can we learn about the timing of Satan's temptation from verse 2? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the essence of all of Satan's temptations (v. 9)? \_\_\_\_\_

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### 3. Enemy #3—The World

The third enemy of the believer is called *the world*. The term "world" (*aion*) refers to the system of values and beliefs of unsaved men that is controlled by Satan and is anti-God. According to **Romans 12:2**, what is the world trying to do to believers?

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Notice in **Romans 12:2** that the world is trying to press you into its mold. Therefore, what do you have to do in order to "be conformed?" Nothing!

The world is described in more detail in **1 John 2:15–16**. What command is given in verse 15? \_\_\_\_\_

What does disobedience to that command indicate, according to verse 15? \_\_\_\_\_

Verse 16 specifically lists three “lusts” that characterize the world. What are they? \_\_\_\_\_

Satan effectively uses these three lusts to tempt you. Notice how he used them against Eve in **Genesis 3:6**.

<b>Lust of the flesh</b>	She saw that the fruit was good for food
<b>Lust of the eyes</b>	She saw that it was pleasant to the eyes
<b>Pride of life</b>	She saw that it was desired to make one wise

Notice the same appeals in Satan’s temptation of Jesus in **Matthew 4:1–11**.

<b>Lust of the flesh</b>	“Command that these stones be made bread.”
<b>Lust of the eyes</b>	“Look at these kingdoms...I will give you all.”
<b>Pride of life</b>	“Cast thyself down...the angels will save you.”

You are in a perpetual battle with your three enemies: the flesh, the devil and the world. The stakes in this battle are high.

According to **James 1:15**, what are the consequences of yielding to the flesh? \_\_\_\_\_ “*gives birth to*” \_\_\_\_\_ which “*brings forth*” \_\_\_\_\_.

What are the consequences of yielding to Satan (1 Peter 5:8)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What are the consequences of yielding to the world (James 4:4)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Resisting Temptation

Do you get the sense that your tempters are extremely strong and dangerous? You should! However, our God is not only strong—He is omnipotent (all-powerful)! Since God has commanded you to be holy and resist temptation, He has also provided a way. As a Christian, you no longer *have to sin*! How is God described in 1 Corinthians 10:13?

\_\_\_\_\_

Although you may feel that your struggle with temptation is hopeless, Scripture does offer encouragement. There is hope! Your struggle is not unique. Rather, it is “common to man.” What two promises does God make regarding temptation in 1 Corinthians 10:13b? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The “ways of escape” that God has provided are many.

### 1. The Holy Spirit

Your most important defense against temptation is God Himself. Remember, if you’ve trusted Jesus Christ as your Savior, the Holy Spirit lives in you (1 Corinthians 6:19–20). As we mentioned earlier,

He constantly battles your flesh. The two are fighting over control of you. You must decide whose prompting you will listen to and obey: your flesh or the Spirit.

What promise does **Galatians 5:16** make to those who consistently submit to and fellowship with the Spirit?

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In addition to keeping you from sin, the Holy Spirit is actively changing you into the image of Christ (**2 Corinthians 3:18**).

## 2. Scripture

Another important protector from temptation is the Bible. In **Ephesians 6:17** it is called “the sword of the Spirit.” It is essential in your battle with temptation. Notice how Jesus Christ used Scripture to fend off Satan’s three temptations in **Matthew 4**. What phrase did He repeat each time he responded to Satan’s temptation (v. 4, 7, 10)? \_\_\_\_\_

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Quoting Scripture is vital to enduring temptation. It is especially helpful to memorize passages which deal with your particular sin habits and temptations. Some of those habits and the Scripture passages that address them are listed at the end of this study. You cannot quote what you don’t know, so you had better get busy!

### 3. Prayer

A third defense against temptation is prayer. For what did Jesus command prayer in **Matthew 6:13** and **Matthew 26:41**? \_\_\_\_\_

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Notice your “partnership” with God. You are commanded to resist and flee temptation, and you must. Yet, you are continually in need of His grace to “deliver you from evil.” Thus, the Christian life is a perfect balance of *diligent dependence*.

### 4. Fear of God

Yet another defense against temptation is a proper fear of God. You may be confused by the term *fear*. Why would you *fear* your own Father? In Scripture, particularly in the Old Testament, the “fear of God” is best defined as a *great awe and reverence* for God. Yet, it also includes a *dread of displeasing Him* and even a *dread of sin’s consequences*. Although God is both Father and Friend to the Christian, He is still the holy God of creation who cannot tolerate sin. He is to be feared.

Joseph demonstrated a proper fear of the Lord when he was tempted to commit adultery with his employer’s wife. According to his words in **Genesis 39:9**, what was his reason for refusing? \_\_\_\_\_

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Remember, every sin is a sin *against God*. That realization should motivate obedience! Restate **Proverbs 16:6b** in your own words. \_\_\_\_\_

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## 5. Fleeing feet

Joseph's fear of God resulted in what we might call "fleeing feet". Read **Genesis 39:12** and describe Joseph's defense against temptation. \_\_\_\_\_

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**Romans 13:14** commands you not to make "provision for the flesh." In other words, don't give your flesh

*"There are several good protections against temptation, but the surest is cowardice."*

**Mark Twain** <sup>33</sup>

an opportunity to sin. Stay away from the place of temptation. For example, a recovering alcoholic should not sit in a bar praying for deliverance from temptation—he should stay out of bars! Have a healthy respect for your own tendency to sin,

and take the necessary precautions to avoid the opportunity!

## 6. Accountability

Yet another important defense against sin is accountability. While many Christians try to be "The Lone Ranger", it is wise to find a close Christian friend who can help you resist temptation, both by praying for you and by checking up on you. What benefit does **Ecclesiastes 4:9–10** describe that makes *two better than one*? \_\_\_\_\_

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Praise God for providing these many "ways of escape." Remember, you do not have to yield to temptation. You can now be the servant of God rather than sin (**Romans 6:18, 22**). However, there will be times when

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<sup>33</sup> *Following the Equator* (Hartford, Connecticut: American Publishing Co., 1898).

you do yield to temptation and sin. Chapter 3 focused on maintaining and restoring your fellowship with God, so reviewing it now would be helpful.

A final look at **1 John 2:1–2** should also be an encouragement. What is God’s desire for you, according to **1 John 2:1a**? \_\_\_\_\_

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Thankfully, there is also a “plan B.” What is your hope for the times you do sin (**1 John 2:1b–2**)?

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*(“Advocate” = someone who comes alongside to help or defend;  
“Propitiation” = satisfaction; appeasement)*

God has provided a way of forgiveness and restoration. However, sin is a great grief to Him, and it should be the same to you. You would do well to take heed to Christ’s words to a sinful woman: “Go. From now on, sin no more” (**John 8:11b**).

## Scripture Memory

### 1 Corinthians 10:13

No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.

## Specific Passages

Take time to memorize a few passages that address specific temptations you have. See the next page for a brief list of temptations and some helpful passages. Use a bible concordance ( a word index to the Bible) for a more detailed list of topics and corresponding passages. Often a good study Bible will have a concordance appended to the end of it.

### Passages for particular temptations:

**Anger**—Romans 12:19; Ephesians 4:26, 31–32; James 1:19–20

**Authority**—Proverbs 1:8–9; 13:1; Romans 13:1–2; Ephesians 6:1–2

**Bitterness / Forgiveness**—Ephesians 4:31–32

**Entertainment (TV, videos, etc.)**—Psalm 101:3; Prov. 14:9; Eph. 5:16

**Friends**—Proverbs 13:20; Proverbs 27:17; Psalm 1:1

**Gluttony**—Proverbs 23:20–21; 1 Corinthians 6:19–20; 9:27

**Laziness**—Proverbs 13:4; 20:4; Rom. 12:11; 2 Thess. 3:10

**Materialism**—Luke 12:15; 1 Timothy 6:6–10; Philippians 4:11

**Music**—Ephesians 5:19; Philippians 4:8; Colossians 3:16

**Pornography**—Job 31:1; Psalm 101:3; Matthew 5:28

**Pride**—Proverbs 16:5; James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5–6

**Sexual Purity**—Ephesians 5:3–4; 1 Thes. 4:3–7; Hebrews 13:4

**Smoking / Drugs / Alcohol**—Rom. 14:21; 1 Cor. 6:19–20; Eph. 5:18

**Sinful thoughts**—Psalm 19:14; 2 Cor. 10:5; Philippians 4:8

**Tongue**—Psalm 19:14; Proverbs 21:23; Col. 4:6; James 1:26

**Worry**—Matthew 6:30–31; Philippians 4:6–7; 1 Peter 5:7



## Check Your Progress

What are the three most significant lessons that you have learned in this Bible study? Why are they important?

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Answer the following questions to measure your understanding of temptation:

1. What are 4 “tragic results of sin”? (p. 139)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. How do you demonstrate your love for Christ?  
(pp.141–142) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. What are your three enemies and tempters?  
(p. 144–148) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Define and describe what the Bible calls your  
“flesh.” (pp. 144–147) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Who is it that “battles” your flesh? (p. 146)

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Describe Satan’s appearance and tactics?  
(pp. 147–148) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. What is “the world”? (p. 148) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. What 3 “lusts” will your 3 enemies use to tempt  
you? (p. 149) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

9. What are the 6 “ways of escape” described in this  
study? (p. 150–153) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. Check off the following verses only when you can  
say them from memory:

1 Corinthians  
10:13

Two verses that deal  
with your particular  
temptation

Do you believe that you know this material well  
enough to teach it to someone else? \_\_\_\_\_ If not,  
review it until you do!



# Foundations: Bible Truths for Christian Growth

## **Chapter 1 – Salvation**

God's Gift to You

## **Chapter 2 – Eternal Security**

Your Relationship with God

## **Chapter 3 – Confession of Sin**

Your Fellowship with God

## **Chapter 4 – Baptism and Communion**

Your Remembrance of Christ

## **Chapter 5 – The Word of God**

God's Communication to You

## **Chapter 6 – Prayer**

Your Communication to God

## **Chapter 7 – The Local Church**

Your Place of Ministry

## **Chapter 8 – Temptation**

Your Battle with Sin

## **Chapter 9 – The Holy Spirit**

God's Presence in You

## **Chapter 10 – Progressive Sanctification**

God's Work in You

## **Chapter 11 – Stewardship**

Your Giving to God

## **Chapter 12 – Evangelism**

Your Message to the World

*Perhaps no biblical doctrine is as misunderstood and misapplied as Pneumatology, the study of the Holy Spirit. Activities ranging from being knocked unconscious to having uncontrollable fits of so-called holy laughter are attributed to the Holy Spirit. However, Scripture's teaching regarding the person and work of the Holy Spirit is very clear.*

## The Person of the Holy Spirit

Scripture teaches that the Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Trinity, co-equal and co-eternal with God the Father and God the Son (**Matthew 28:19**). How does **Ephesians 4:30a** prove that He is a Person and not merely some sort of force? \_\_\_\_\_

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How does **Matthew 3:16–17** prove that the Holy Spirit—though equal with them—is also *distinct* and *separate* from the Father and Christ? \_\_\_\_\_

---

The Holy Spirit is sometimes referred to as the “silent” member of the Trinity. That is not to say that He is any less God than the Father and the Son. Rather, it means that He is not prominent; He does not gather attention to Himself. Who does the Spirit glorify, according to **John 16:13–14**? \_\_\_\_\_

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There are many movements today that focus on the Holy Spirit to the point of distraction—they glorify Him rather than Christ. Such movements do not originate with God's Spirit. On the other hand, many Bible-believers have overreacted to this error by failing to speak of the Holy Spirit at all. It seems

that some would try to convert the Trinity into a “duet.” Both the extremes of over–emphasis and under–emphasis are *dangerous*.

A proper understanding of the Holy Spirit is essential not only for proper theology but also for godly living.

## The Works of the Holy Spirit

The works of the Spirit fall into three main categories: *works of creation, works to the unsaved, and works within the saved.*

Though most of our time will be spent on the Spirit’s ministry in believers, we will briefly address His other works as well. The Holy Spirit first

appears in **Genesis 1:2**. What did God the Father, Son and Spirit accomplish in that first chapter of Scripture? \_\_\_\_\_

---

### Principle:

The **silence** of the Spirit means that He seeks to glorify *Christ*, not Himself.

Secondly, the Holy Spirit carries out two works among unbelievers:

1. **2 Thessalonians 2:7** is an obscure passage. It refers to the Holy Spirit as “He who now restrains,” and who will continue to do so until the rapture of the Church when Christ returns to take Christians from earth to be with Him in heaven.

2. The second ministry of the Spirit to the unsaved was promised directly by Christ in **John 16:8** before He ascended into heaven and sent the Holy Spirit. Of what does the Holy Spirit *convict* the world? \_\_\_\_\_

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*(To “convict” means to prove guilt.)*

Through His ministry of conviction, the Holy Spirit draws unsaved people to salvation. Yet, His work is just beginning, for most of the Holy Spirit’s work is done in the lives of those who have trusted Christ as Savior.

## The Regenerating of the Holy Spirit

The first ministry of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer occurs at the moment the unsaved man becomes saved. **John 3:3–6** describes the need of all people to be “born of the Spirit.” The new birth is accomplished by the Holy Spirit. How does Jesus describe that new birth in John 3:3?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

---

*(Titus 3:5 also teaches that the Holy Spirit is the agent of the new birth, or regeneration.)*

You were born once physically. If you have trusted in Christ, you have also been born spiritually. The Holy Spirit brought spiritual life where there was spiritual death.

**Principle:**  
The **regeneration** of the Spirit is experienced *permanently* by every believer at *the moment of salvation*.

### The Math of Regeneration:

The Bible speaks of two births: one physical and one spiritual. It also speaks of both a physical and spiritual death—the second for eternity in the lake of fire (Revelation 20:14; 21:8). Notice the Bible’s unique math:

**1 birth = 2 deaths**

**2 births = 1 death**

Far better for you to have a second birth than  
a second death!

## The Baptizing of the Holy Spirit

The baptism of the Spirit is perhaps the most misunderstood of the Spirit’s ministries. In order to get a good understanding of it, consider first who has received the baptism of the spirit. The book of **1 Corinthians** was written to Christians living in the ancient city of Corinth. According to **1 Corinthians 12:13**, how many of them had received the baptism of the Spirit? \_\_\_\_\_

Notice that *all* Christians have been “baptized” into the body of Christ by the Spirit of God—even Christians who are “fleshly” (**1 Corinthians 3:1**). What does that mean? Some review is in order. The English word “baptize” is a transliteration of the Greek word *baptizo*, “to immerse”. Remember, water baptism is only an outward symbol of Spirit baptism. You must not confuse the two. The Bible teaches that at the moment of salvation the Holy Spirit *immersed* (baptized) you into the body of Christ (like a cloth dipped into dye). Because of spiritual baptism, you are now *in Christ* and He is *in you*. The two of you have been inseparably linked. **Galatians 3:27–28**



makes the application that since you have been baptized into Christ by the Holy Spirit, you are no longer merely a Jew or Gentile, man or woman; first and foremost, you are a Christian! There is no room for division or sectarianism in the body of Christ!

Although some churches teach that you must seek the baptism of the Spirit subsequent to salvation, Scripture teaches that you receive spiritual baptism when you are saved. You are never commanded to seek it because as a Christian you already *have* it!

**Principle:**

The **baptism** of the Spirit is experienced *permanently* by *every* believer at *the moment of salvation*.

## The Sealing of the Holy Spirit

**2 Corinthians 1:22** says that all believers have also been *sealed* with the Spirit. He is not merely the *sealer*—He is the *seal*. Like the baptism of the Spirit, the sealing of the Spirit was done *once* and *permanently*.

To seal something in the ancient world (and until the nineteenth century) was to make an impression in wax with an insignia often contained in a ring. A letter would be closed (or rolled), have hot wax dripped onto its edge, then sealed. The purposes of the seal were several:

1. First, it showed the *authenticity* of the letter.  
How? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

According to **Romans 8:16**, how does the Holy Spirit prove that you are a legitimate child of God? \_\_\_\_\_

---

2. Second, the seal was used to show *ownership* of an object. The sealed letter was not to be opened by anyone other than the person for whom it was intended. According to **2 Corinthians 1:21–22**, it is God who has given you the seal of the Spirit and has thereby claimed you as His own.

3. Finally, the seal would render the object *secure*. According to **Ephesians 4:30**, how long will you be sealed with the Spirit? \_\_\_\_\_

---

The “day of redemption” is the time when Christ will return for His people and take them to be with Him in heaven. By giving you the Holy Spirit as a seal, Christ has guaranteed that He will indeed claim you for His own when He returns. If you have trusted in Christ for salvation, you cannot and will not be lost (see **John 17:12**).

**Principle:**  
The **sealing** of the Spirit is experienced *permanently* by every believer at the *moment of salvation*.

In addition to teaching that you are sealed with the Spirit, **Ephesians 4:30** commands you not to “grieve” the Holy Spirit of God who is in you.

According to **Ephesians 4:31**, what 5 things grieve Him? \_\_\_\_\_

---

Notice that although your sin grieves the Holy Spirit and hinders your fellowship with Him, it does not cause Him to depart—He will still be present until the day of redemption.

**2 Corinthians 1:22** and **Ephesians 1:13–14**, in addition to saying that you have been “sealed” with the Spirit, call Him the “pledge of your inheritance.” When one is making a purchase, what is the purpose of “pledge” money? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
*(A pledge is somewhat like a down payment.)*

How does Christ giving us His Spirit as the pledge of our inheritance assure us of our ultimate redemption when He will take us to heaven? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## The Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

Another ministry of the Spirit which begins at salvation is the indwelling of the Spirit. Its meaning is simple: He dwells in you! God is omnipresent (everywhere), but He lives within His people in a unique sense.

In the Old Testament, God had two unique dwelling places. He lived in the tabernacle from the time of Moses to the time of Solomon, David’s son. He then began living in the temple. Whereas the tabernacle was a temporary place (literally a tent), the temple was more permanent.

For God to dwell in any specific location was special. In order to prove to His people that He was indeed in their midst, God performed special signs, both at His

entrance into the tabernacle and His entrance into the temple.

Those signs are described in **Exodus 40:34–38** as a “cloud” or “fire” which “covered” the tabernacle and in **1 Kings 8:10–11** as a *rushing wind* which filled the temple. Similarly, on the day of Pentecost (the beginning of the church), God began dwelling in His *people*.

He again demonstrated His presence with signs (**Acts 2:1–4**), two of which are very similar to the ones just mentioned. What were they? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

In the Old Testament the Spirit of God would typically enter or come upon leaders to enable them to carry out an important ministry. What particular positions were empowered by the Spirit in the following passages?

**Judges 6:11–16, 34** \_\_\_\_\_

**1 Samuel 16:1–13** \_\_\_\_\_

*(Note: Psalm 51:11 is often cited by those who claim that you can lose the indwelling of the Spirit. However, David was praying that he would not lose the Lord’s empowering ministry which **could** be lost (see 1 Samuel 16:14). Indwelling cannot be lost.)*

**1 Chronicles 12:18** \_\_\_\_\_

**Ezekiel 2:2** \_\_\_\_\_

To what kind of people did God promise His Spirit in **Joel 2:28–29**? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Joel's prophecy was partially fulfilled in the New Testament in **Acts 2:16–18**. God now dwells in all of His people, regardless of age, position or race. God does not live in a building...He lives in *you* if you've trusted Christ as your Savior.

What does God call the Christians living in the city of Corinth in **1 Corinthians 3:16**? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the significance of being called the “temple” of God? \_\_\_\_\_

*(Hint: Think of the Old Testament temple mentioned earlier)*

Some people teach that the Holy Spirit lives only in those who are actively obeying Christ and that He will leave those who sin. Yet, how did Christ refer to the Corinthian Christians in **1 Corinthians 3:1**, just 15 verses before calling them the “temple of the Holy Spirit?” \_\_\_\_\_

*(“Men of flesh” describes those who are living in disobedience to God.)*

### **Brass Tacks**

Remember this important truth: ***Doctrine is always practical.*** The fact that God's Spirit dwells in you should greatly affect your daily living. Just as you wouldn't defile a church building or the Old Testament temple, you must not defile your body, God's new temple (1 Corinthians 3:16–17).

That means you need to take care of yourself physically. Alcohol, tobacco, tattoos, laziness and obesity dishonor your body, which is God's temple. Further, you need to avoid sexual sins that cause God's temple to be impure (1 Corinthians 6:18–20). *Glorify God with your body!*

The implication here is very important: *God lives in all Christians, even those who are disobeying Him.*

The indwelling of the Spirit of God is permanent and is not dependent on godly living, although it motivates godly living. As a Christian you neither seek nor endeavor to keep the Spirit's presence. If you do not have the Spirit, you do not belong to Christ (**Romans 8:9b**).

## The Filling of the Holy Spirit

Yet another ministry of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer is Spirit *filling*. **Ephesians 5:18** is the classic command to “be filled” (or literally, “be being filled”) with the Spirit. What is the first command of the verse? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

The analogy to wine makes Spirit filling easy to understand. When a person is under the influence of alcohol, he behaves abnormally. What might an intoxicated person do? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Just as alcohol changes the behavior of someone who is under its influence, the Holy Spirit changes the behavior of someone under His influence. One who is controlled by the Holy Spirit does not behave normally—He behaves *spiritually*.

Being filled with the Spirit does not mean that you get more of Him—you already have Him if you are a Christian. Rather, it means that He gets more of *you!* To be filled with the Spirit is to allow the Holy Spirit to call the shots— it is yielding your will to His, moment by moment.

Being filled with the Spirit, then, is different than the other ministries of the Spirit which have been discussed. How many Christians are regenerated, sealed and baptized by the Spirit? \_\_\_\_\_

Being filled with the Spirit is not a one-time decision but a series of decisions to obey Him. If you desire to be filled with the Spirit, you don't need a dramatic experience. Rather, you need to submit to Him consistently, especially by spending time in prayer and Bible study. How many Christians are "filled" (or controlled) by the Spirit? \_\_\_\_\_

---

*(Hint: Remember, in Ephesians 5:18 you are commanded to be "filled.")*

Here are three very practical ways for you to be controlled by the Spirit of God continually:

1. Confess and forsake sin in your life (**Proverbs 28:13; 1 John 1:9**; see page 48).

2. Study and obey the Word of God (**2 Timothy 2:15; John 15:7–8**; see Chapter 5).

Notice the striking similarities between **Ephesians 5:18–19** and **Colossians 3:16**. The best way to be filled with the Spirit of God is to be filled with the *Word* of God!

3. Fellowship with God each day in prayer (**John 15:1–11; 1 Thessalonians 5:17**; see Chapter 6).

A parallel passage to **Ephesians 5:18**—and one of Scripture's most important passages for your spiritual progress—is **Galatians 5:16–23**. What is commanded in verse 16? \_\_\_\_\_

---

### Just Walking

Scripture often describes the Christian life as a “walk.” Is a walk exciting? Not usually. Heroic? No. Impressive? Not really. It is just very, very *consistent*. Christianity is step by step, moment by moment obedience.

The term *walk* describes a consistent and careful relationship with the Lord. If you maintain fellowship with the Spirit of God, He will produce His “fruit” through you as evidence of the life He has given (**Galatians 5:22–23**). Fruit demonstrates that a tree is alive and healthy; spiritual fruit demonstrates that you are a Christian and that you are under the Holy Spirit’s control. What are the fruits of the Spirit? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
*(Notice that spirituality is demonstrated by these virtues, not by miraculous signs.)*

The fruit of the Spirit is more than a list of positive virtues—it is a description of a life that is Christ-like. Remember, these are called the fruit of the Spirit. Try as you might, you cannot produce them yourself. Beware! **Galatians 5:17** says that there is another force seeking to control you. What is it? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Scripture teaches that there is an opposition between our flesh and the Holy Spirit who dwells within us. Your flesh (also known in Scripture as the “old sin nature” or “old man”) battles the Spirit for control over you. If you submit to the Holy Spirit, you will produce godly fruit. However, if you submit



to your flesh, you will fulfill the evil works of the flesh (**Galatians 5: 19–21**). What are they? (generalize) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Notice that each of the works of the flesh is the exact opposite of one of the fruits of the Spirit. Your two natures will be warring with each other for the rest of your life. In fact, **James 1:14–15** says that your flesh is your greatest source of temptation, so you would do well to respect and fear it. The only way you can resist your powerful flesh is to be in constant submission to the Spirit of God. Want to avoid sinning? Walk in the Spirit!

**Principle:**  
The **filling** of the Spirit may be experienced *moment by moment* by believers who *submit* to Him.

### Cars & Cats

It may be helpful to think of your flesh and the Spirit as passengers in the “car” of your life. Both of them will always be in the car...the question is, *who are you allowing to steer?*

Yet another silly, but accurate, illustration is the battle cartoon characters sometimes have within themselves. Remember when Tom catches Jerry, then gets suggestions from an “angel” cat on one shoulder (*“let him go”*) and a “devil” cat on the other (*“eat him”*)? That’s not far from the truth for the Christian. Don’t be irreverent, but make sure you get the point: the Holy Spirit is giving you constant promptings that are the opposite of the promptings of your flesh. *Who will you obey?*

## The Illuminating of the Holy Spirit

1 **Corinthians 2:14–16** teaches that the Holy Spirit of God *illuminates* you—He enables you to understand the Bible. Whereas unsaved (“natural”) people don’t have spiritual understanding, you do if you are a Christian. Your prayer each time you open your Bible or hear a sermon should be the prayer contained in **Psalm 119:18**. What is it? \_\_\_\_\_

---

When studying a book, it would be a tremendous help to have the author explain its meaning to you. The Bible is not merely a human book that can be understood and applied through human effort or reason alone—it is *inspired*, the very Word of

God. What a privilege to have the Author of Scripture living in you and actively explaining and applying His Word to you! You need the Holy Spirit’s help to understand the Bible!

### Principle:

The **illuminating** of the Spirit may be experienced *regularly* by believers who seek to *understand* Scripture.

### Turn on the Light!

The word *illuminate* refers to the turning on of a light. A light does not create objects; it simply sheds light on what is already there. Similarly, the Holy Spirit does not reveal new information today; He simply helps you understand what Scripture already says. That’s illumination!

By the way, 1 **Corinthians 2:14–3:1** lists three types of people and compares the way each of them responds to the Word of God. What are the three kinds of people?

1. \_\_\_\_\_ (2:14a—unsaved)
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
(2:15a—saved living like it), and
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
(3:1b—saved, living like the unsaved)

## The Gifting of the Holy Spirit

At the moment of salvation, every Christian is given a unique ability for service in the local church. These special abilities are specifically listed in **Romans 12:6–8**; **1 Corinthians 12:8–10, 28–30** and **Ephesians 4:11**. Many of them were miraculous sign gifts which were in use only during the lifetimes of the apostles and only in the absence of the New Testament Scriptures. Every believer has at least one of the remaining spiritual gifts. They are given at the Holy Spirit's discretion (**1 Corinthians 12:11**) and are to be used in humility, not with arrogance (**Romans 12:3**).

Read **1 Corinthians 12**. To what does Scripture compare the church (v. 12)?

\_\_\_\_\_

Why is that comparison so appropriate, especially when discussing spiritual gifts?

\_\_\_\_\_

According to this passage, which parts of the body are important? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### Principle:

The **gifting** of the Spirit is experienced by *every* believer to some degree at the *moment of salvation* for the benefit of the body of Christ.

## Temporary and Permanent Gifts

1 Corinthians 12:8–10 lists several gifts that were *revelatory* in nature (including healing, prophecy, tongues, etc.). That is, those gifts were part of God’s *direct* communication to men during the ministries of the apostles and prior to the completion of the New Testament. Hebrews 2:3–4 and Mark 16:20 clearly explain that the purpose of such “signs and wonders” was to authenticate the message God was giving through the Apostles. Once that message was completed (with the last word of the book of Revelation), the gifts were no longer needed. Thus, they ceased (1 Corinthians 13:8). The gifts that are still functioning today are:

**Evangelist** —missionaries and church planters

**Pastor-teacher**—pastors/shepherds

**Teaching**—the ability to explain God’s Word to people

**Exhortation**—encouraging, comforting, and admonishing

**Leadership**—ruling/governments/organization

**Service**—exceptional ministry in physical helps

**Giving**—superlative giving without thought of return

**Mercy**—overwhelming desire to help those who hurt

## The Empowering of the Holy Spirit

The empowering of the Spirit is the special blessing of the Spirit on a believer’s particular ministry for the Lord’s glory and the furthering of the Lord’s work. A clear example of the Spirit’s giving a “divine enabling” for ministry is Paul’s statement regarding his preaching in

**1 Corinthians 2:4**, “*And my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.*”

### **Principle:**

The **empowering** of the Spirit may be experienced by *every* believer during times of ministry.

Scripture repeatedly teaches your need for the Lord's blessing on your ministry efforts, whatever they may be. As the Lord instructed Zerubbabel in **Zechariah 4:6**, ministry is *“Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the LORD of hosts.”*

Since the work of ministry is God's, the glory belongs to God as well. Paul writes in **1 Corinthians 1:27–29** that God often uses unlikely tools so that *“no man may boast in His presence.”* Be delighted if God uses you, but return the credit to Him!

### Elephants and Mice

Someone has well said that a believer who boasts because of a ministry which God performs through him is like a mouse who crosses a bridge with an elephant and brags, *“We sure shook that bridge, didn't we?”*

## The Sanctifying of the Holy Spirit

**2 Corinthians 3:18** describes the process by which Christians are transformed into the image of Christ. This transforming process is sanctification. Chapter 10 will discuss the topic of *progressive sanctification*. For now it is sufficient to answer one question: According to this verse, who accomplishes your sanctification? \_\_\_\_\_

*You have just taken in a lot of information!*

*Here is a quick review:*

- The ***silence*** of the Spirit means that He glorifies Christ, not Himself.
- The ***regeneration, baptizing, sealing*** and ***indwelling*** of the Spirit all take place at the

moment of salvation and are permanent. At the same moment, He gives to every Christian at least one spiritual *gift* to be used for God's glory and the church's good.

- The *filling* of the Spirit takes place when Christians allow the Holy Spirit to *control* them. It is not permanent but is the result of confessing sin, submitting to the Lord and fellowshiping with Him in the Word and prayer.
- The *illuminating* of the Spirit is His explaining and applying His Word to the believer's life.
- The *empowering* of the Spirit is His particular blessing on the ministries of His people.
- The *sanctifying* of the Spirit is the process through which he changes believers to make them like Christ.

## Scripture Memory

### Galatians 5:16

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.

### 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? <sup>20</sup> For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.

## Check Your Progress

What are the three most significant lessons that you have learned in this Bible study? Why are they important?

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Answer the following questions to measure your understanding of the Holy Spirit:

1. According to John 16:13–14, who does the Holy Spirit glorify? (p. 160) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What is *regeneration* and who accomplishes it? (pp. 162–162) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Explain the relationship between spiritual baptism and water baptism? (p. 163–164) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Into what are you *baptized* by the Spirit? (p. 163) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What is the *sealing* of the Spirit? When is it accomplished? (pp. 164–165) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. How many Christians are *indwelt* by the Spirit?  
(pp. 168) \_\_\_\_\_

---

7. What is the *filling* of the Spirit? (pp. 169) \_\_\_\_\_

---

8. What is the *illuminating* of the Spirit? (pp. 173)

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9. Which of the Spirit's ministries in the Christian's life are permanent? Which are "occasional," happening moment by moment? (pp. 164–177) \_\_\_\_\_

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10. Check off the following verses only when you can say them from memory:

Galatians 5:16

1 Corinthians 6:19–20

Do you believe that you know this material well enough to teach it to someone else? \_\_\_\_\_ If not, review it until you do!





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## **Chapter 12 – Evangelism**

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## The Meaning of Sanctification

The word *sanctification* sounds very theological and is therefore somewhat intimidating. In reality, the concept is very simple. Sanctification means to be “set apart.” In both Old Testament Hebrew and New Testament Greek, the same root word that is translated as *sanctify* is also translated as *holy*. So to sanctify something is simply to *make it holy*.

The *separation* (being set apart) described by sanctification has both a negative and positive aspect to it:

1. Through sanctification, you are separated from sin.
2. Through sanctification, you are separated unto God.

### “Forsaking all others...”

An apt illustration to this separation from one thing and to another is marriage. At the moment a bride is married, from whom does she separate herself?

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To whom does she separate herself?

---

### The Old Testament Term for Sanctification

The Old Testament Hebrew word for sanctification is *qadash*. It is often used to describe the process by which the Tabernacle, Temple, their tools and priests were ceremonially purified for service to God—they were *consecrated* to Him (another translation of *qadash*).

What items were “set apart” unto God in the following passages?

Genesis 2:3 \_\_\_\_\_

Exodus 13:2 \_\_\_\_\_

Exodus 28:3 \_\_\_\_\_  
*(The word “consecrate” is qadash.)*

Exodus 29:44 \_\_\_\_\_

Leviticus 11:44–45 \_\_\_\_\_

The Old Testament teaches two primary lessons regarding sanctification:

1. God *demands* holiness (**Leviticus 11:44; 19:2; 20:7**).
2. God *provides* holiness (**Exodus 31:13b**).

### **Jehovah Mekadishkem**

*Exodus 31:13 describes one of the many names of the Lord: **Jehovah Mekadishkem**—“The Lord Who Sanctifies You.” What a blessed truth that the very holiness which God demands, He also provides through Jesus Christ!*

### **The New Testament Term for Sanctification**

The New Testament Greek term for *sanctification* is very similar to its Hebrew counterpart. The Greek word for sanctification is *hagiazō*, a derivative of the word *hagios*, which means holy. Once again, to be sanctified means to be (or become) holy.

## The Need for Sanctification

Chapter 9 described your battle with your flesh. Your flesh is the natural bent toward selfishness and sin with which you were born. When you trusted Christ as Savior, you gained a new nature (the Spirit), but your old nature (the flesh) remains with you—your “old man” moved over, but not out. Your flesh is very much alive and well.

How is your heart described in **Jeremiah 17:9**?

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*The reality and pervasiveness of your sin is generally referred to as **total depravity**. It means that every part of your person has been affected by sin.*

How does **Jeremiah 17:9** stack up against the popular concept that people are “basically good”?

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Are Christians “basically good”? \_\_\_\_\_  
**Romans 3:10–18** describes the sinful condition of all people—the condition that is retained in your own heart. How are you described in this passage?

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The Apostle Paul lamented his experience with his flesh in **Romans 7:18–25**. Notice that he acknowledged that his heart was evil rather than good (v. 18), admitted his tendency to do evil rather than good (v. 19–23) and concluded that he was a “wretched man” (v. 24). Surely you can relate to the experience of Paul. Your flesh is powerful!

Christian author Jim Berg states the following truths from Scripture to clearly demonstrate your need for sanctification:

1. Your flesh will **deceive** you (James 1:14, 22; Jeremiah 17:9).
2. Your flesh will **defile** you (Galatians 5:19–21).
3. Your flesh will **destroy** you (Galatians 6:7–8).<sup>34</sup>

Explain the principle of sowing and reaping from **Galatians 6:7–8** in your own words (“*corruption*” in v. 8 means “*destruction*”). \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The stakes are high! The existence and wickedness of your flesh make your need for sanctification great.

## Positional Sanctification

It is essential that you understand the difference between *positional sanctification*—sanctification of position, and *progressive sanctification*—sanctification of lifestyle. Scripture teaches that there is a sense in which you are already sanctified. Find the English equivalents for the following Greek words:

1 Corinthians 1:2—“to those who have been \_\_\_\_\_ (*hagiozo*) in Christ Jesus, \_\_\_\_\_ (*hagioi*) by calling.”

*Note: A New Testament “saint” is simply any Christian.*

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<sup>34</sup> Jim Berg, *Changed into His Image* (Greenville, SC: Bob Jones University Press, 1999), pp. 38–42.

**1 Corinthians 6:11**—“But you are washed, but you were \_\_\_\_\_ (*hagiazō*), but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.”

**1 Peter 2:9**—“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a \_\_\_\_\_ (*hagios*) nation, a people for God’s own possession; that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.”

These passages teach that in God’s sight, you are already holy. That is, God considers you to be as holy as Jesus Christ is because you are “*in Christ*” (**1 Corinthians 1:2**). Remember from previous lessons, this is called *imputed righteousness*—Christ’s righteousness credited to your account<sup>35</sup>. You are *positionally* sanctified. The challenge is to make your *practice* line up with your *position*. That is what we call *progressive sanctification*.

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<sup>35</sup> It is important that you understand the difference between justification and progressive sanctification. Justification is the **one-time act** by which God **declares** you to be righteous. Progressive sanctification is the **life-long process** by which God **makes** you to be righteous in daily living. Almost **all** man-made religions confuse these two, resulting in attempts to earn justification.

## Progressive Sanctification

### Princess or Pauper?

According to Russian legend, Anastasia Romanov—the daughter of the last Russian Tsar—was lost when her family was executed during the Bolshevik Revolution in the early 1900's. Although royalty, Anastasia is said to have lived a life of poverty. She was a princess by position, but a pauper by practice.

The story of Anastasia may or may not be true, but it is a striking illustration of the experience of most believers. Though God sees us as pure as Christ, our practice is sadly inconsistent with our position. Although we have been born into God's family and have been given the position and privileges of children, we often live in spiritual poverty and enslavement to sin. *Progressive sanctification*, which is also called *practical sanctification*, is the process by which believers are made to *experience* in daily life the holiness which is already theirs positionally. As you are sanctified, you will begin to enjoy the riches that are yours as a member of God's household.

The balance between positional and progressive sanctification is communicated in **1 Peter**. In **1 Peter 2:9** you are described as “holy.” Yet, Scripture repeats a command two times in **1 Peter 1:15–16**. What is it? \_\_\_\_\_

In what areas of your lifestyle (“behavior”) are you to be holy? \_\_\_\_\_

One area of your life which Scripture commands to be “set apart” unto God is sexual purity.

**1 Thessalonians 3:11–4:8** deals with purity and mentions some form of the words “holy” or “sanctification” no less than six times. What do the



following verses from **1 Thessalonians** teach about sanctification?

**4:3** \_\_\_\_\_

**4:7** \_\_\_\_\_

Progressive sanctification has everything to do with how you live on a daily basis. The areas of your life that are not holy need to become holy. You must become increasingly “set apart” from sin and to God. In a nutshell, Scripture repeatedly commands you to *change* your character, thinking and behavior. The words which Scripture uses to describe that change may differ (*grow, be transformed, walk, put off and put on, etc.*), but the concept is the same: In your nature you are sinful. You must change to be holy!

*Sanctification is “the Christianizing of the Christian.”<sup>36</sup>*

## The Goal of Sanctification

Scripture does not command change for change’s sake. There is an objective biblical goal for sanctification. God’s purpose for you is that you become increasingly like Jesus Christ. How is that purpose stated in the following verses?

**Philippians 2:5** \_\_\_\_\_

**Romans 8:29** \_\_\_\_\_

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<sup>36</sup> Author Unknown.

### Happy or Holy?

*God's major concern is not that you be happy, but that you be Christlike.*

**Romans 8:28** is often taken out of context. God does indeed work all things together for good to those who love God and are called according to His purpose. But

what is that purpose? Verse 29 reveals that it is conformity to Christ-likeness. Romans 8:28, then, teaches that God uses even bad things to change you into the image of Christ.

**2 Timothy 2:21** explains that your becoming more like Christ should lead to action. According to this verse, what does sanctification prepare you for?

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## The Process of Sanctification

### 1. Sanctification is a work of God.

It must never be thought that sanctification is something that you seek to accomplish by sheer human effort. Indeed, almost the entire book of Galatians teaches that just as your salvation was begun by faith, so it continues by faith, not works (especially note **Galatians 3:2–3**). How do the following passages address your inability to make yourself holy?

*“True Christian character is produced **in** the believer, but not **by** the believer.”*

**Lewis Sperry Chafer** <sup>37</sup>

### **Romans 7:18** \_\_\_\_\_

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<sup>37</sup> *He That is Spiritual* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1976), p. 46.

## Galatians 5:17

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Notice the solution in verses 22–23: “the fruit of (which is produced by) the Spirit.”

## Exodus 31:13b

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According to **Romans 15:16**, **2 Corinthians 3:18** and **1 Peter 1:2**, who is it that accomplishes your sanctification? Who works to change you into the image of Christ? \_\_\_\_\_

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*“The Holy Spirit of God uses the Holy Word of God to make you more like the Holy Son of God.”*

**Ken Collier**

What a tremendous encouragement to know that God is actively working in you...even today! What promise does He give you in **Philippians 1:6**?

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**1 Thessalonians 5:23–24** offers a prayer for sanctification followed by a promise. What is the promise?

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### **Knocking Off the Rough Edges**

Sanctification is comparable to the work a sculptor performs on a piece of stone. The sculptor carefully—though firmly—chisels away what is harsh and unbecoming in order to produce a work of art. The Holy Spirit of God is progressively chiseling away your carnality and selfishness in order to make you like Christ. While having your rough edges chiseled away is often painful, it is always rewarding.

God uses a variety of tools to accomplish His work of sanctification. According to the following verses, what are they?

**John 17:17** \_\_\_\_\_

**Ephesians 5:26** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mark 14:38** \_\_\_\_\_

**1 Peter 1:7** \_\_\_\_\_

**Proverbs 27:17** \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Sanctification requires your participation.**

Although it is God who makes you holy, don't imagine that you are passive. Remember the study on Spirit-filling: You must allow the Lord to control you and sanctify you. Which of God's tools previously mentioned are you able and responsible to apply to yourself? \_\_\_\_\_

**Romans 6:19c** addresses your cooperation with God in the process of sanctification. What are you commanded to do? \_\_\_\_\_

How is the balance between God's work and your participation communicated in **Philippians 2:12–13**?

**2:12** \_\_\_\_\_  
*Note: "work out your salvation" is a command to demonstrate that you have been saved, not to save yourself.*

**2:13** \_\_\_\_\_

How can the two verses both be true? God works \_\_\_\_\_ you (v. 13) so that you can work \_\_\_\_\_ (v. 12) as a demonstration of your salvation.

**3. Sanctification works from the inside out.**

While it is essential that you develop standards of Christian conduct (such as activities you will or will not participate in or places you will or will not go), you must never equate outward standards with holiness. It is entirely possible to follow a strict list of “do’s and don’ts”, yet be carnal. Why? Because God wants a change of heart, not merely a change of habit.

The Greek word translated as “changed” in **2 Corinthians 3:18** is *metamorphoo*, the root of our English word “metamorphosis”. It describes a change in nature, not merely appearance. Sanctification is not merely looking or acting holy—it is *becoming* holy. Sanctification works from the inside out, not the outside in. God repeatedly states in Scripture that He desires a godly heart, not merely right conduct. Explain the following verses in your own words:

**Isaiah 1:11–15** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Isaiah 29:13** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Amos 5:21–23** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Psalm 51:16–17 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Ephesians 3:16 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

1 Peter 3:3–4 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Matthew 15:18 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Proverbs 4:23 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

You must not misunderstand this portion of the lesson. Are standards of Christian conduct important? Yes—and they should be high! Yet, they must be the result of a sanctified heart, not a substitute for it. God’s desire for your life is not merely a change of *habit*—it is much, much more! He desires a change of *heart*, which will in turn bring about a change of habit.

**Inside Out**  
*God doesn’t merely want a change of habit. He wants a change of heart, which will lead to a change of habit.*

How does that fact affect your understanding of your own sanctification? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Is it important to have high moral standards? Yes! But can they make you holy? No! On the other hand, someone who is genuinely holy will have high moral standards. Holiness of heart results in holiness of habit!

How should realizing that outward change is a reflection and result of heart change affect your relationship with others—especially new Christians?

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**4. Sanctification is a process.**

**2 Corinthians 3:18** teaches that you are changed into the image of Christ “from glory to glory.” What does that mean? It means that progressive sanctification is a process. It is not immediate. Rather, you will be continually progressing in your Christ-likeness from the moment of your salvation to the moment you are with Christ in heaven.

According to **Philippians 1:6**, when will God finish the work that He is doing in you? \_\_\_\_\_

*Note: That is, the day when Christ appears to “rapture” His church.*

The fact that God is continuing His work in you should lead you to several conclusions:

**1. Lack of progress is regression.**

You are responsible to continue growing more like Christ, regardless of how long you have been a Christian. There is no room for stagnancy. The status quo is unacceptable. You must continually progress toward Christ-likeness.

**2. Don’t expect immediate sanctification—especially from others.**

The tendency of many Christians is to expect *progressive*

*To God, a heart of love.  
To others, a heart of grace.*

sanctification from themselves, but *immediate* sanctification from everyone else. However, it is interesting to note that the sins that frustrate us most in the lives of others are often the very sins that we excuse in our own lives. You must exhibit patience and grace toward others, allowing the Lord to have time to work in their lives.

### **3. Failure need not be final.**

Quickly read the book of Philemon, the apostle Paul's account of the life of a man named Onesimus. Notice the change that the gospel brought to his life. Verse 11 contains a tremendous message of hope: *One who has been useless can be made useful by God's grace!*

How should the testimony of Onesimus affect your relationships with others—particularly those in sin?

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### **4. Complete sanctification will not be accomplished in this life.**

Some teachers claim that it is possible to stop sinning—to “live above sin.” However, in the words of a wise old saint, “the only way to ‘live above sin’ is to rent a room over a pool hall.” Although you are commanded to strive for holiness, don't be so arrogant as to claim to have achieved it.

What do **1 John 1:8, 10** say about someone who claims to be above sin? \_\_\_\_\_

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According to **1 John 3:2**, when will we finally be like Christ in our character and conduct? \_\_\_\_\_

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Only when you are with Christ in glory will you be sinless. However, until that time you must progressively sin less.

For a thorough and practical study on progressive sanctification, read Jim Berg's book, *Changed into His Image* (Bob Jones University Press, 1999).

## Scripture Memory

### Romans 8:28-29

And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren;

### 1 Peter 1:15-16

But like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; <sup>16</sup>because it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."

## Check Your Progress

What are the three most significant lessons that you have learned in this Bible study? Why are they important?

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Answer the following questions to measure your understanding of sanctification:

1. To be *holy* is to be “set apart.” Through sanctification, you are progressively separated from \_\_\_\_\_ and unto \_\_\_\_\_. (p. 182)

2. Explain *positional sanctification*, the Bible’s teaching that you are holy. (pp. 185–186) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Explain *progressive sanctification*, the Bible’s teaching that you are becoming holy. (pp. 187–188)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. What is the goal of sanctification? (pp. 189)  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. What are some of the “tools” that God uses to sanctify you? (p. 191) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. In what sense is sanctification a “cooperative effort” between you and God? (p. 191–192) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. What is the relationship between the *internal* working of God’s Spirit and the *external* working of the obedient Christian? (pp. 192–194) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. When can you expect to be “sinless”? (p. 195)

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9. When must you begin to “sin less”? (p. 196) \_\_\_\_\_

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10. Check off the following verses only when you can say them from memory:

Romans 8:28–29

1 Peter 1:15–16

Do you believe that you know this material well enough to teach it to someone else? \_\_\_\_\_ If not, review it until you do!

# Foundations: Bible Truths for Christian Growth

## **Chapter 1 – Salvation**

God's Gift to You

## **Chapter 2 – Eternal Security**

Your Relationship with God

## **Chapter 3 – Confession of Sin**

Your Fellowship with God

## **Chapter 4 – Baptism and Communion**

Your Remembrance of Christ

## **Chapter 5 – The Word of God**

God's Communication to You

## **Chapter 6 – Prayer**

Your Communication to God

## **Chapter 7 – The Local Church**

Your Place of Ministry

## **Chapter 8 – Temptation**

Your Battle with Sin

## **Chapter 9 – The Holy Spirit**

God's Presence in You

## **Chapter 10 – Progressive Sanctification**

God's Work in You

## **Chapter 11 – Stewardship**

Your Giving to God

## **Chapter 12 – Evangelism**

Your Message to the World

## The Meaning of Stewardship

Scripture refers to Christians as *stewards* on a number of occasions (see **Luke 12:42**, **Luke 16:1–8** and **Titus 1:7**). The Greek word often translated as *steward* is actually a compound from words meaning “house” and “law” (or “rule”). The *steward* or *house–manager* had the authority to conduct business on behalf of the owner. In our culture, the steward’s authority is comparable to someone who has the “power of attorney” for someone else.

Although the steward may have managed great possessions, who was the owner of the possessions?

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To be a steward was a great privilege—and responsibility!

## The Basis of Stewardship

The Bible teaches that you are a steward for the Lord. The foundation for good stewardship is the realization that you and all you possess belong to God.

At the moment of your salvation you were inseparably linked to Christ—you are now “in Christ.” Scripture goes on to teach that you belong to Christ. How does **1 Corinthians 6:19–20** teach that God owns you? \_\_\_\_\_

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According to **1 Peter 1:18–19**, with what did God purchase you? \_\_\_\_\_

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Since you belong to God, it follows that all you possess belongs to God. How does **James 1:17** teach that you are a steward of what belongs to God?

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*Someone has well said that a steward is responsible to manage his time, talents and treasure for the Lord. The focus of this study is on your treasure.*

How does **1 Corinthians 4:7** teach that you are a steward? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### Selective Credit

Men tend to give God *selective credit*. One who rises from rags to riches is called a “self-made man.” Many boast how they have made a life by the sweat of their brow. Yet, catastrophes and tragedies are often called “acts of God.” Men credit themselves with good things and God with bad. Yet, Scripture teaches that everything you possess was received. Your job—even your ability to work—is from God! Everything you have is a gift of God.

Accepting the fact that you are a steward is easy. Accepting the implications of stewardship is not.

As a steward, what do you personally own? \_\_\_\_\_

As a steward, who owns the talents and possessions you manage? \_\_\_\_\_

As a steward, what is your responsibility to God?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How does that fact influence the way you manage your money? How *should* it? \_\_\_\_\_

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### Money: “the root of all evil?”

It is essential that you not misunderstand this study.

The Bible does not teach that money is evil in itself. Indeed, many great men from the Bible were extremely wealthy—Abraham, Job and Solomon to name a few.

Yet, *the love of money* is the root of all [sorts] of evil” (1 Timothy 6:10). Having money and nice possessions is not necessarily a sin, and giving away all you own is not necessarily a virtue.

The question is, *Is money your tool or your tyrant? Do you own your money, or does your money own you?*

*Throughout the rest of this study, you will notice frequent references to **2 Corinthians 8–9**. This is the classic text on giving in the New Testament.*

## Five Principles of Giving

### 1. Scripture requires SPIRITUAL giving.

**2 Corinthians 8** begins its first verse by referring to financial giving as a *grace*. The word *grace* is then used a total of seven times in **2 Corinthians 8–9** (**8:1, 6, 7, 9, 19; 9:8, 14**). Remember, grace is God’s doing for you what you cannot do for yourself. In this context it means that your giving of your finances to the Lord is done in response to the work of the Holy Spirit in your heart.

In your flesh, you are selfish and possessive. Under the Spirit’s influence, you are selfless and generous.

Giving—like all ministry—is empowered by the Lord before it is enacted by men. God “gifts” you with the ability to give.

The Apostle Paul refers to the people from the region of Macedonia (including the cities of Philippi and Thessalonica) as examples of gracious givers in **2 Corinthians 8:1–5**. He notes that they gave despite their poverty and affliction (v. 2) and that they gave extremely generously. Yet, their financial gift to the Lord and His work was secondary to an earlier and greater gift that is described in **2 Corinthians 8:5**. What is it? \_\_\_\_\_

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The implications of this principle are many:

- Giving is a result to godly living, not a substitute for it.
- Giving is more a matter of the heart than the pocketbook. Once you’ve given yourself to the Lord, giving your resources to Him is easy.
- Giving is first and foremost an act of worship, as much so as praying and singing praise to the Lord.



2. Scripture requires CONSISTENT giving.

**2 Corinthians 8–9**

presents a method of giving that is well-planned and consistent, rather than haphazard.

**2 Corinthians 8:12**

teaches that you are to give according to what you have, not according to what you don't (or what you hope to)

have. Hence, God's desire is that you put what He has already provided to good use.

**Faith Promise?**

Many churches practice "faith promise" giving, a process in which members make a promise to give based on what they believe the Lord will provide in the next year. While this practice is common and is not necessarily unbiblical, it is not best. Scripture commends giving from what you have, not from what you hope to have.

**2 Corinthians 8:13–15** goes on to teach equality in giving—not each member giving equal amounts, but each member making equal sacrifice. Not everyone can give the same amount, but everyone can give. Like the believers in the city of Corinth, your giving should be well-planned and consistent.

**Proverbs 3:9–10** gives important instructions regarding giving. Although many Christians base their giving on what they have remaining after all other expenses are covered, what does **Proverbs 3:9** teach regarding the priority of giving? \_\_\_\_\_

The word translated as "first" is also the very first word of the Bible. How is it translated in **Genesis 1:1** (the first 3 words of the verse)? \_\_\_\_\_

It is natural for other priorities to crowd out your giving to the Lord—God won't send you an overdue notice or disconnect your phone if you don't pay Him. Further, many people determine their giving based on how their finances are looking at the end of the year—they give just enough to get a good tax break. Yet, Scripture teaches that giving to the Lord should be your first priority. He is deserving of—and demands—"the first of all your produce," and not your leftovers.

In **Genesis 14**, Abraham won a great military battle, and along with it, the spoils of battle. As Melchizedek, the priest of the Lord, came to greet him, Abraham offered him a *tithe* (*tenth*) of all He had obtained (v. 20). Read the beginning part of the verse. What did Abraham recognize concerning his possessions that caused him to give a portion of them to the Lord? \_\_\_\_\_

#### Why Tithe?

The giving of a tithe is a recognition that everything you possess actually belongs to the Lord.

#### Suppose you had ten lollipops...

Many Christians reason that 10% is simply too much to give, yet forget that everything they have has been given to them by God. To be very mundane, if Johnny gives Joey ten lollipops, Joey is not being overly generous to give one of them back!

Many people have suggested that the tithe is not valid for today because it was a part of the Old Testament Law. Indeed, the tithe appears most often in the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible. Yet, Abraham's tithe in **Genesis 14** (and

Jacob's in **Genesis 28:22**) was “pre-Law”—the Law wasn't given until **Exodus 20**. So the tithe supersedes the Old Testament Law.

Further, Christ condemned the Pharisees for the hypocrisy of tithing even of the smallest portions, yet ignoring the major commandments of Scripture. However, notice His conclusion concerning the tithe: “*these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others*” (**Luke 11:42**). Christ commended their tithing but rebuked their hypocrisy. The New Testament generally teaches consistent, joyful giving without mentioning the word *tithe*. For the New Testament believer responding to God's gift to us, the tithe is a good starting point!

#### **“Hold the Sprinkles, Please.”**

The story is told of a boy who visited a restaurant and asked his waitress how much an ice cream cone would cost. After she replied that it would be 20 cents, he asked how much it would be with chocolate sprinkles. Irritated and in a hurry, she snapped that it would be 25 cents. After considering his options for a few moments, the boy quietly asked for a plain cone. The lady's spirit softened when she returned to the place where the boy had finished and paid for his cone and found a 5 cent tip.

What is the lesson from the boy with the ice cream cone? Tithing doesn't just happen—it is the result of intentional planning and determination to live within that plan. In other words, budget and stick to it. The math is simple (10% of your income), but the practice often is not. Discipline yourself to give the first 10% of every paycheck to the Lord's work. Then live within your means (the remaining 90%) and determine to increase that percentage as the Lord allows you to prosper. You may need to do without some “sprinkles.” Yet, honoring and obeying the Lord is worth making small adjustments to your lifestyle.

### 3. **Scripture requires SACRIFICIAL giving.**

In **Malachi 3:8**, God condemns the people of Israel for having robbed Him. They quickly questioned in what sense they had robbed Him. What was God's answer? \_\_\_\_\_

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*Note: In the book of Malachi, God addressed people that had fallen into apostasy—that is, they had “fallen away” from Him. Again we see that giving is a response of the heart to God. It naturally stops when the heart wanders from God.*

The Bible makes a distinction between a tithe and an offering. An offering is given above and beyond the normal tithe. Therefore, an offering is an especially sacrificial gift.

**Mark 12:41–44** records a scene in the Temple. Although many worshippers gave large gifts, Jesus commended a widow who gave only two mites (less than a cent). According to verse 44, why was her small gift more acceptable than others' large gifts?

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What general principle of giving can you draw from Jesus' words in **Mark 12:41–44**? \_\_\_\_\_

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Back in **2 Corinthians 8–9**, notice the various ways Scripture describes the giving commended by God:

- *abundant giving despite a great trial (8:2)*
- *liberal (generous) giving despite deep poverty (8:2)*
- *giving beyond ability (8:3)*
- *abounding giving (8:7)*
- *bountiful giving (9:6)*

\* *Note: Scripture is commending sacrificial giving, not irresponsible giving. It is no virtue to give large amounts to the*

*detriment of your family or the neglect of your obligations. However, to limit other expenditures to increase giving is perfectly consistent with Scripture's teaching.*

#### **4. Scripture requires JOYFUL giving.**

One of the most important passages regarding giving in the New Testament is found in **2 Corinthians 9:7**.

Draw principles of giving from this verse.

I am to give as I have \_\_\_\_\_.

Second, I am not to give \_\_\_\_\_.

Finally, God loves a \_\_\_\_\_ giver.

Once again, notice how Scripture commends the willingness of the giver in **2 Corinthians 8–9**:

- *forward (eager, determined) giving (8:10; 9:2)*
- *giving from a ready will (8:11) and a willing mind (8:12, 19)*
- *zealous giving (9:2)*

#### **5. Scripture requires PRIVATE giving.**

In **Matthew 6:1–4**, Jesus condemned some people even though they may have given consistently and sacrificially. What were they doing wrong?

\_\_\_\_\_

What did Jesus mean when he said that your right hand shouldn't know what your left hand is doing (v. 3)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What do you think was Jesus' purpose in calling for anonymous giving? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Undercover Giving

Scripture is very clear that giving is a personal matter. Your responsibility is to guard your own motives and to avoid drawing attention to yourself. Keep your giving secret and discreet!

Your church's responsibility is to encourage secret giving and to protect your anonymity. Therefore, only those responsible for counting the offering and keeping financial records should know your giving habits, and they must keep that information confidential. This principle should also curb practices like publishing giving records or encouraging "memorial offerings."

## The Motivations of Stewardship

It should be clear that financial giving is not motivated by a desire to become more spiritual. Neither is it motivated by a desire to appear spiritual. Rather, giving which is acceptable to God is motivated by obedience, love and gratitude.

### 1. Giving is motivated by OBEDIENCE to God.

Scripture's teaching on giving has been explained throughout this book. Therefore, obedience to God's Word should be reason enough to give.

### 2. Giving is motivated by LOVE for God.

Paul teaches in **2 Corinthians 8:8** and **24** that financial giving offers you the opportunity to prove the sincerity of your love for Christ. In essence, he is telling you to "put your money where your mouth is."

#### Thermometer or Thermostat?

Giving is a thermometer, not a thermostat. It doesn't make you spiritual, but it definitely shows where your heart is.

What did Jesus teach regarding finances in **Matthew 6:21**? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**3. Giving is motivated by GRATITUDE to God.**

What compelling motivation for stewardship does **2 Corinthians 8:9** give? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How does Paul “clinch” his two chapters on giving in **2 Corinthians 9:15**? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## The Blessings of Stewardship

As with every endeavor of the Christian, the first and most important blessing of giving is that it glorifies God (**2 Corinthians 9:12–13**). Yet, there are many other blessings that result from financial faithfulness to the Lord.

**1. Good stewardship assures physical provision for the church.**

**2 Corinthians 9:12** explains that the giving of God’s people “supplies the needs of the saints.” What particular financial needs are mentioned in the following verses?

**1 Corinthians 9:6–14** and **1 Timothy 5:17–18**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**3 John (verses) 5–8** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Galatians 6:10 \_\_\_\_\_

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1 Timothy 5:3–4, 16 \_\_\_\_\_

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1 John 3:17 and Acts 11:29 \_\_\_\_\_

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**2. Good stewardship assures physical provision for you.**

To what does **2 Corinthians 9:6** compare giving, and what truth does it draw from the comparison?

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What promise does God make in **Proverbs 3:10** following His command to give first of all your produce in **Proverbs 3:9**? \_\_\_\_\_

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*Notice that physical provision is listed as a blessing of stewardship, not a motivation of stewardship. While God does promise to meet your needs, and while it is true that you cannot outgive God, the emphasis many teachers place on “giving to get” is absolutely contrary to Scripture. See **Matthew 6:33** for the attitude and promised provision of godly stewards.*

**3. Good stewardship assures spiritual reward for you.**

God’s reward for your faithfulness is not merely physical—in fact, it is primarily spiritual. For example, **2 Corinthians 9:9–10** equates financial stewardship with righteousness.

What promise does Scripture make regarding giving (and other ministries) in **Hebrews 6:10**? \_\_\_\_\_

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What does **3 John** (verse) **8** call those who financially support missionaries? \_\_\_\_\_



What an exciting prospect! Those who give to support the ministry will be rewarded along with those who actually carry it out!

#### 4. **Good stewardship assures spiritual joy for you.**

What is the well-known instruction regarding giving at the end of **Acts 20:35**? \_\_\_\_\_

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*Note: The word “blessed” means a genuine and spiritual happiness.*

## Practical Suggestions about Giving

The following practical suggestions answer some commonly asked questions concerning giving and the local church.

- **Does it matter where my tithe is given?**

The biblical pattern is for you to support financially the ministry that serves you spiritually (**1 Corinthians 9:11**). Further, the local church is the primary means through which God is working in this age. Therefore, your tithes and offerings should be given to the local church. Further, you should normally give your tithe to your church’s general fund, then make an additional offering for any designated gifts (*e.g.*, building fund, benevolence fund, etc.).

- **Am I required to give a tithe of money that I obtain apart from my normal income (i.e., a gift)?**

First, remember that giving is a privilege to be enjoyed, not a burden to be borne. Compare your situation to **Proverbs 3:9**. Of course, a gift is additional provision from the Lord. You may not need to claim it on your tax forms, but you still should honor the Lord for it.

- **What if I’m in debt? Should I still tithe?**

The first step to getting out of debt is a recognition that—with few exceptions—poor stewardship got you there. If necessary, confess your lack of discipline to the Lord as sin. Next, determine to “honor the Lord” with what He gives

you...starting now! Don't wait to obey. Delayed obedience is really disobedience. Begin tithing now, and trust the Lord to be true to His Word. Next, determine where you can decrease your spending to allow you to pay off your debts. Emulate the boy with the ice cream cone: *"hold the sprinkles!"* The quickest way out of debt is simply to stop spending! Finally, prayerfully seek the Lord's help, both to provide for you and to work in your heart to control your spending.

- **Does the money I pay for Christian education or for Christian books count as part of my tithe?**

Again, this question misses the spirit of biblical giving. Money given for a service rendered or an item purchased should not be considered a gift unto the Lord. This is an attempt to find a loophole, not a tithe or offering. Notice David's spirit in **2 Samuel 24:24**: *"I will not offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God which cost me nothing."*

- **What if I miss a week of giving due to illness or vacation?**

Enjoy your vacation from work. However, don't vacation from obedience and worship. If you miss a week of giving, make it up as soon as you return. Determine to be conscientious about the Lord's money. Don't spend it elsewhere.

- **Is it legitimate to spend the Lord's money on buildings, vehicles and equipment even though the early church didn't have them?**

All three of these things are tools for ministry. They must not become an end in themselves. Many churches raise edifices as monuments of their greatness, not God's. Yet, these items are legitimate to the extent that they enable and facilitate spiritual ministry.

## Scripture Memory

### Proverbs 3:9-10

<sup>9</sup>Honor the Lord from your wealth and from the first of all your produce; <sup>10</sup>So your barns will be filled with plenty and your vats will overflow with new wine.

### 2 Corinthians 9:7

Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

## Check Your Progress

What are the three most significant lessons that you have learned in this Bible study? Why are they important?

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Answer the following questions to measure your understanding of Stewardship:

1. What is a steward? In what sense are you a steward of God's possessions? (p. 200) \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is "the foundation for good stewardship?" (p. 200) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. What are the five principles for giving listed in this study? (pp. 202–208) \_\_\_\_\_

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4. What is the practical application of Proverbs 3:9's command to give the Lord first of all your produce? (pp. 211) \_\_\_\_\_

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5. What is a tithe? (p. 205–206) \_\_\_\_\_

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6. What is the difference between a tithe and an offering? (p. 207) \_\_\_\_\_

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7. Why did Jesus call for private giving? (p. 208)

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8. What are the 3 basic motivations for giving? (p. 209–210)

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9. Where should you give your tithes and offerings? Why? (p. 212)

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10. Check off the following verses only when you can say them from memory:

- Proverbs 3:9–10       2 Corinthians 9:7

Do you believe that you know this material well enough to teach it to someone else? \_\_\_\_\_ If not, review it until you do!

# Foundations: Bible Truths for Christian Growth

**Chapter 1 – Salvation**  
God's Gift to You

**Chapter 2 – Eternal Security**  
Your Relationship with God

**Chapter 3 – Confession of Sin**  
Your Fellowship with God

**Chapter 4 – Baptism and Communion**  
Your Remembrance of Christ

**Chapter 5 – The Word of God**  
God's Communication to You

**Chapter 6 – Prayer**  
Your Communication to God

**Chapter 7 – The Local Church**  
Your Place of Ministry

**Chapter 8 – Temptation**  
Your Battle with Sin

**Chapter 9 – The Holy Spirit**  
God's Presence in You

**Chapter 10 – Progressive Sanctification**  
God's Work in You

**Chapter 11 – Stewardship**  
Your Giving to God

**Chapter 12 – Evangelism**  
Your Message to the World

*The emphasis which the New Testament places on evangelism can hardly be overstated. Indeed, one could argue that every book of the New Testament—and of the Old—contains a command or example of evangelism.*

*Evangelism is of utmost importance to God and must therefore be of utmost importance to His people. Charles Haddon Spurgeon, the great English preacher of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, writes, “Soulwinning is the chief business of the Christian minister; indeed, it should be the main pursuit of every true believer.”<sup>38</sup> God has entrusted the gospel message to human messengers (like you!). Therefore, it is essential that you learn what it is, why it is important and how to do it effectively.*

## The Meaning of Evangelism

The first step in our study of evangelism is to define it. We cannot obey a command which we don't understand. What exactly is evangelism? The word “evangelize” is the English equivalent of the Greek word *euangelizo*. Both the English and Greek words mean “to proclaim good news.”

*(Note: The term gospel comes from the same Greek root and means “good news.”)*

A few clarifications are in order regarding the meaning of evangelism:

### 1. **The work of evangelism is proclaiming.**

Many well-meaning Christians substitute a number of activities for biblical evangelism. They mistake evangelism for “getting someone saved.” They believe that the work of the evangelist is to argue, convince or manipulate a sinner into praying the sinner's prayer. Yet, the Bible teaches that

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<sup>38</sup> *The Soulwinner* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1895), p. 9.

evangelism is simply the proclaiming of the good news of Jesus Christ.

*Telling* is the work of the believer...*convicting* and *saving* are the works of God.

**2. The message of evangelism is God's message.**

Part of the Greek word *euangelizo* comes from the word *angelos*. What English word do we get from this word? \_\_\_\_\_

*Hint: They often are portrayed with wings.*

The general meaning of the word *angelos* is “messenger.” A messenger is sent with a message by someone else; he does not develop his own message.

**2 Corinthians 5:20** uses a similar title for Christians who share Christ's message. What is it? \_\_\_\_\_

What important message has Christ committed to our care (v. 19b)? \_\_\_\_\_

The job of an ambassador is not to be creative with his message. Rather, it is to be accurate with his message.

A prominent and influential American church boasts in its literature that they give the gospel a “softsell.” Compare that statement with your previous answer. Is something wrong? \_\_\_\_\_

The message of the gospel is God's, not yours. You do not have the right to alter it or tone it down. How



arrogant it is to assert that God was too firm when He wrote the Bible, included too many objectionable elements, and therefore needs us to serve as His filter! God's message must not be changed.

**3. The message of evangelism is good.**

Although the gospel contains hard things such as sin and judgment, it is vital that you remember that evangelism is sharing *good* news. Christ's death and resurrection to save sinners is good news, not bad! Unfortunately, some Christians present the gospel with little joy or tact. Sin and judgment are an essential part of the gospel, but they are only a part. You must tell people that God is holy and that they are deserving of hell, but you must immediately follow those facts with the love of God that caused Him to send Christ.

How does **Romans 6:23** balance the positive and negative aspects of the gospel? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How does **Romans 5:8** do the same? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How does **John 3:16** do the same? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Some may object to the Bible's teaching on hell by saying that a loving God would not send anyone to hell. However, Scripture teaches that many people will choose to reject Christ and will therefore spend eternity apart from God in hell.

What important fact does **2 Peter 3:9** teach about God's desire? \_\_\_\_\_

People who spend eternity in hell do so in spite of God, not because of Him. The message of the gospel is good, and it needs to be heard.

## The Motivation for Evangelism

What motivates people to evangelize? At least two reasons for evangelism are prominent in the New Testament.

### The Great Commission

A person's parting words are often very significant. Just prior to Jesus Christ's ascension into heaven, He gave His disciples important instructions, which are often called the *Great Commission*. Read the records of the Great Commission in **Matthew 28:19–20**; **Mark 16:15**; **Luke 24:46–48** and **Acts 1:8** and answer the following questions.

*(Note: A commission is a responsibility and the authority to carry it out.)*

Notice the four verbs used by Christ in **Matthew 28:19-20**. He first assumes immediate action: *Go* (literally "*having gone*"). He then commands them to *make disciples*. To whom are they commanded to take the gospel? \_\_\_\_\_

The Great Commission does not end with making disciples. In this passage the Holy Spirit assumes that the new believer will desire to be baptized without delay. Remember from Chapter 4 that baptism is a physical demonstration of a spiritual reality.

The last command presented in verse 20 is the ongoing work of the church. What is it? \_\_\_\_\_

Compare Mark's account of the Great Commission (**Mark 16:15**) with Matthew's account. What are the similarities? \_\_\_\_\_

According to Luke, what is the content of the gospel (**Luke 24:46–48**)? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the proper *response* to the gospel and the result of that response (v. 47)? \_\_\_\_\_

Where was that message to be preached (v. 47)? \_\_\_\_\_

What were the disciples called by Christ, and what does it mean (v. 48)? \_\_\_\_\_

Finally, compare **Acts 1:8** with Luke's account. Notice the similarities: "You shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth." Christ's blueprint for the spread of the gospel was specifically carried out in the book of **Acts**:

- *Jerusalem* (local)—**chapters 1–7**
- *Judaea* and *Samaria* (regional)—**chapter 8**

- *The remotest part of the earth*  
(international)—**chapters 9–28**

How does this command relate to you? What are your specific local, regional and international mission fields? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

How can you carry out the Great Commission in each of those places? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

The Great Commission was not merely a responsibility laid on the disciples; it is a continuing responsibility of the church. Read **Acts 8:1–4**. The word *euangelizo* appears five times in this chapter, first in verse 4. Who “went about preaching the Word”? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

*(Hint: the people “scattered” in verse 1.)*

Evangelism is the job of every believer, not merely pastors! You are the Church’s outreach program! Scripture uses many pictures to highlight your ministry of evangelism. Fill in the blanks using the following verses:

**Acts 1:8; Luke 24:48**—*I am a* \_\_\_\_\_  
*so I should* \_\_\_\_\_ .

**2 Corinthians 5:19–20**—*I am an* \_\_\_\_\_  
*so I should* \_\_\_\_\_ .

**Matthew 4:19**—*I am a* \_\_\_\_\_  
*so I should* \_\_\_\_\_ .

**Matthew 5:16**—*I am a \_\_\_\_\_  
so I should \_\_\_\_\_.*

**A Genuine Compassion**

The first motivation to evangelism is the Great Commission. Evangelism is done in obedience to Christ. A second motivation is compassion on the unsaved.

*“The most sobering reality in the world today is that people are dying and going to hell today.”*  
**Bob Jones III** <sup>39</sup>

How should compassion motivate evangelism? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How are sinners described in **Ephesians 2:1–3, 12** and **Luke 19:10**? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

According to **Luke 19:10**, why did Christ come? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Although the Great Commission and compassion are strong motivators, few Christians are faithful in carrying out the ministry committed to them. What do you think are some reasons that some believers neglect evangelism? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Let’s list a number of *obstacles* to effective evangelism:

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<sup>39</sup> Dr. Bob Jones III of Bob Jones University often repeated this statement in the school’s chapel services to remind the students of the desperate condition of lost men.

**HYPOCRISY prohibits evangelism.** Many people are embarrassed to give the gospel because the way they live would not support their words. How does **Matthew 5:16** address this excuse? \_\_\_\_\_

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**FEAR prohibits evangelism.** Perhaps the most common hindrance to evangelism is fear. How does **Proverbs 29:25** address this excuse? \_\_\_\_\_

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What was the disciples' prayer amidst persecution in **Acts 4:29**? \_\_\_\_\_

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*“...the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it.”*

**Matthew 7:13**

Fear to speak out is certainly real. However, it is no excuse for silence. Indeed, Christ's description in **Matthew 7:13** of the “many” people who are on the wide road to eternal destruction demands that you move past your personal inhibitions and give a bold warning to lost friends, family members, and acquaintances. Richard Baxter,

the 17<sup>th</sup> century English preacher, writes, *“It should cast us into great distress to see so many men in such plain danger of being everlastingly undone. And if we by faith did indeed look upon them as within a step of hell, it would more effectively untie our tongues.”*<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> *The Reformed Pastor* (Marshallton, DE: The National Foundation for Christian Education), p. 15.

**MONASTICISM prohibits evangelism.** Religious men and women over many centuries have demonstrated a supposed godliness by leaving the normal life of the world and entering monasteries. The monastic movement is absolutely unbiblical. Yet, many Christians have placed themselves into a type of modern monastery—they allow themselves no contact with unsaved people for fear of being defiled. The Bible, however, calls for separation from the world, not isolation. In **John 17:11–16**, Jesus says that we are still *in* the world, though not *of* it. For what was Christ criticized in **Matthew 9:10–11**? \_\_\_\_\_

*“Those men who keep themselves to themselves, like hermits, and live a supposed sanctified life of self-absorption, are not likely to have any influence in the world, or to do good to their fellow-creatures. You must love the people, and mix with them, if you are to be of service to them.”*  
**C. H. Spurgeon**<sup>41</sup>

What was His response in verses 12 and 13?  
\_\_\_\_\_

<sup>41</sup> *The Soulwinner* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1895), p. 72.

Christian author John Stamm has rightly said that “every relationship into which one enters becomes an evangelistic opportunity.”<sup>42</sup> List several practical ways that you can develop such friendships with unsaved people as a means of giving them the gospel. Be specific. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**EXCUSES prohibit evangelism.** Many Christians—perhaps for one of the reasons just mentioned—have a list of reasons why they cannot or should not share the gospel.

- **“It’s none of my business” or “It’s a private matter.”**

How does **2 Corinthians 5:19b** address these excuses? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- **“I just live a Christian life.”**

Christianity was shaken several years ago by a philosophy called “Lifestyle Evangelism.” Its proponents argued that a verbal witness was not necessary if a living witness was maintained. Certainly we are commanded in Scripture to live a godly life before the world. However, your lifestyle should be a support of your verbal testimony, not a substitute for it.

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<sup>42</sup> *Evangelism and the Christian Experience* (Board of Publication, Evangelical Church, 1930), 62.



What is the specific command given to believers in **Mark 16:15**? How does that address “Lifestyle Evangelism”? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

From where does faith come, according to **Romans 10:17**? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How does that address “Lifestyle Evangelism”? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- “I don’t know enough.”

This excuse may be true, but it does not exempt you from your responsibility. Whether or not you feel qualified, the fact is that God has “committed to us the word of reconciliation” (**2 Corinthians 5:19**).

Ready or not, God has commanded you to tell the good news of salvation through Christ to lost men. Here is a suggestion: If you don’t know enough to present the gospel to the unsaved, get busy learning! The next section will help address the “how-to’s” of evangelism.

## The Method of Evangelism

There are many methods of personal evangelism. This book will not propose a particular method which you must use in evangelism. Rather, it will present basic principles and their biblical bases. Probably the most effective method is one which incorporates these principles but which fits your particular personality. All sound methods of evangelism have at least three things in common:

1. **A commitment to the importance of Scripture.**

People will not be won to Christ by your explanations or illustrations. While both of those may be helpful, they are legitimate only if they clarify Scripture. The power of the gospel is in God's Word, not yours.

What is the Bible called in **Romans 1:16**? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What does Paul say regarding his presentation of the gospel in **1 Corinthians 2:1-5**? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*(hint: He did not use \_\_\_\_\_, but rather used \_\_\_\_\_.)*

According to verse 5, why was he so careful? Explain his concern. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What promise is given regarding Scripture in **Isaiah 55:10-11**? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How does it apply to the work of evangelism?

\_\_\_\_\_

## 2. A clear presentation of Biblical truth.

The following six basic truths and their Biblical references should be included in your presentation of the gospel:

*(Note: It is best to show the verses to your hearer rather than merely quoting them. Also, pause regularly and ask if your hearer understands what you've said.)*

- **God's Purpose (1)**—Man was created by God to honor and serve Him (**Revelation 4:11 and Colossians 1:16**).
- **Man's Problem (2)**—All men are sinners, both by birth and by choice (**Romans 3:10, 23**).
- **Sin's Consequences (3)**—Sin separates man from God (**Isaiah 59:2**), keeps him from heaven (**Rev. 21:27**) and makes him deserving of hell (**Romans 6:23a and Rev. 20:15**).<sup>43</sup>
- **Christ's Payment (4)**—Because of His great love, God sent Jesus Christ to die on the cross as our sinless substitute (**John 3:16; Romans 5:8 and 1 Peter 3:18**).

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<sup>43</sup> Notice that you must show the sinner his dreadful condition *before* you show Him Christ's wondrous solution. As Spurgeon writes, you must "throw sinners down in utter helplessness, that they may be compelled to look up to Him who alone can help them." Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *The Soulwinner* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1895), p. 18.

- **Our Pardon (5)**—Scripture commands us to **turn** from sin and to God (*repentance*—**Acts 3:19**) and **trust** in Christ as our only hope of salvation (*faith*—**Acts 16:31**). The sinner must place his confidence in Christ alone, not his own good works (**John 14:6** and **Ephesians 2:8–9**). Salvation must be received as a free gift (**Romans 6:23b**).

### **Must Sinners Repent?**

Contrary to the teaching of many Christian leaders, repentance is a condition of salvation. If a sinner does not repent of his sins, he remains unsaved.  
(Consider **Acts 3:19; 11:18; 17:30; 20:21; Luke 13:3 & 5; 2 Timothy 2:25; 2 Peter 3:9** and many, many others.)

- **God’s Promise (6)**—God promises eternal life to all who receive Jesus Christ as Savior (**John 5:24** and **1 John 5:11–12**).

### **3. A personal testimony and invitation to respond.**

God will often use your testimony of salvation to cause others to realize their own need. A changed life is a strong tool to show people their need of salvation. Even baby Christians can echo the words of the man whom Jesus healed of blindness: “one thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see” (**John 9:25**).

## The Miracle of Evangelism

One word of caution is appropriate as you prepare to share the gospel with others. Salvation is a work of God, not men. Only God can bring conviction...only God can draw men to repentance...only God can do the work of regeneration.

In your zeal to see people saved, do not usurp the authority and function of the Holy Spirit! The result can be disastrous—you may pick fruit that is not yet ripe and the person may make a *profession* of faith without a *possession* of faith (see **Matthew 7:21**). That person will then be even less likely to come to genuine salvation because of a false assurance.

### Gospel Vaccinations

Pressing for a decision when a person is not genuinely under conviction and ready to repent of his sins and trust Christ is like giving him a vaccination.

He will have only enough of the truth to make him “immune” to it in the future! Far better to allow him to sit under the convicting influence of the Spirit for a time and finally embrace Christ as his personal Savior!

What does **Jonah 2:9** teach regarding salvation?

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What responsibility does Jesus assign to the Father in **John 6:44**? \_\_\_\_\_

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How should those two passages affect your presentation of the gospel? \_\_\_\_\_

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In conclusion, a review of Chapter 1 will be helpful as you prepare to share the gospel with others. Also, there are many effective tracts available that can be a tremendous help both as you give the gospel and as a reminder to your hearer when you have finished. Two particularly useful tracts are *The Bridge to Eternal Life* and *God's Simple Plan of Salvation*. Ask your pastor for help in obtaining these and other resources. Finally, you would do well to participate in a more thorough evangelism training course through a solid, Bible-teaching local church.

## Scripture Memory

### Acts 1:8

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”

### Mark 16:15

And He [Jesus] said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.

### Luke 24:46–48

And He [Jesus] said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.

## Check Your Progress

What are the three most significant lessons that you have learned in this Bible study? Why are they important?

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1. Which portion of the work of evangelism is given to believers? Which is given to God? (pp. 218–220) \_\_\_\_\_

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2. How does Scripture—and how must you—balance the “good news” and “bad news” of the gospel? (pp. 220) \_\_\_\_\_

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3. What are the two main motivations for evangelism? (pp. 221, 224) Describe each of them. \_\_\_\_\_

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4. Which of the obstacles to evangelism listed on pages 225–228 most affects you? Why? What will you do to overcome it? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. Why is simply “living a Christian life” before the lost only sufficient to support an actual gospel presentation? (p. 227–228)

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6. Why is it essential that the person to whom you give the gospel place confidence in Scripture rather than in

you personally? (pp. 228–229) \_\_\_\_\_

7. List and briefly explain the six basic truths that should be included in every gospel presentation. (pp. 230–231) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

8. What is the “disastrous” result of pressing for a salvation decision when there is no conviction? (p. 232)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

9. How should Jonah 2:9 and John 6:44 affect your evangelism? (p. 232–232) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

10. Check off the following verses only when you can say them from memory:

Acts 1:8     Mark 16:15     Luke 24:46–48

Do you believe that you know this material well enough to teach it to someone else? \_\_\_\_ If not, review it until you do!



