

LifeBuilders

Step One

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Introduction

Ten Marks of a Disciple

A disciple is defined as “one who accepts and follows a teacher.” As a disciple of Jesus Christ your life will be rich and full. If you study, pray, and apply what you are learning you will mature in your spiritual life. The following is a list of goals for you to attain. They should become marks of your life!

1. A Disciple has placed his life in the hands of Christ without any hesitation, reservation, or expectation, except what God desires to give to, or do with him. *(Mark 8:34)*
2. A Disciple hears and obeys the voice of God. *(1 John 5:3)*
3. A Disciple is able to handle life’s difficulties without falling apart. A disciple stand firm under pressure. *(Philippians 4:1)*
4. A Disciple enjoys time alone with God, reading the Word of God, and praying to become more acquainted with the One to whom he is surrendered. *(2 Timothy 2:15; 1 Thessalonians 5:17)*
5. A Disciple knows his spiritual gift and uses it in a local body. *(1 Corinthians 12:11)*
6. A Disciple knows Who owns, not only him, but the things that he has of this world. *(1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Matthew 6:21)*
7. A Disciple has his gaze fixed on Heaven, and sees himself as a sojourner in a foreign land. *(1 Peter 2:11)*
8. A Disciple has the heart of God for the world. His desire is that all should come to repentance. *(2 Peter 3:9)*
9. A Disciple loves other disciples. *(John 13:35)*
10. A Disciple is in love with Jesus and therefore is willing to give up everything for his Master. *(Luke 14:33)*

God bless you as you seek to grow in grace!

Commitment to Discipleship

Nothing is accomplished in life without some kind of commitment. An athlete must commit to hours of hard work preparing for each contest; a musician must practice and practice before becoming proficient. Yet, in the Church, too often believers live as if being a Christian ends with the decision to accept Christ as Lord and Savior—no more hard work, energy, discipline, commitment is believed to be required!

Paul said in 2 Timothy 2:15, *Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.* And in Philippians 2:12, *work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.*

The Christian life is a process of becoming more like Jesus and it takes a commitment of your time and energy. The following is a list of commitments that will help you become more like your Master:

1. Plan to read the Bible on a regular basis.
2. Have a regular Quiet Time with God each day.
4. Meet with a Small Group at least once a month.
5. Do the lessons in the **Springs of Life** manual as instructed.
6. Worship regularly at Grace Fellowship.
7. Be willing to make any adjustments to your life as God instructs.
8. Seek to become a discipler of others.
9. Follow the leadership of your Pastor and Mentor, and Small Group leader.
There will be times when your discipler may need to confront you about your commitment. Remember, the discipler's responsibility is to help you keep your commitment to growth. Let me encourage you to receive the instruction and keep your commitment.

Commitment

I promise to be a faithful servant of my Lord, Jesus Christ, and desire to become the disciple He wants me to be. I dedicate myself, with His strength, to the commitments listed above.

Signature

Date

Quiet Time

1. God desires your attention every day. In an appointed place, at an appointed time, He desires to hold communion with you. Not only does He desire it, but ***you need it***. A Quiet Time, a daily appointment with God, will become the best time of the day for you! Look at the following scriptures and write down any insights you glean concerning having a daily time with God.

Matthew 6:6 _____

James 4:8 _____

Psalms 1:2 _____

Matthew 6:33 _____

Mark 1:35-37 _____

2. The following is a suggested outline of a thirty-minute **QT**. The outline follows the word ACTS to help you remember.

A ADORATION (7 minutes)

- Adoration is acknowledging God's character and attributes.
I Chronicles 29:11 Psalms 145:1-6
- Read the Psalm of the day (*ex.: on Dec. 1 read Ps. 1, etc.*)
- Circle or write down things that relate to God's character or attributes.
- Listen to or sing along with a Worship song. (*Online, computer, phone, etc.*)
- Tell the Lord that you love Him.

C CONFESSION (7 minutes)

- Pray Psalm 139:23-24, *Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts; And see if there be any hurtful way in me, And lead me in the everlasting way.*
- Ask the Lord to show you any actions, reactions, thoughts, or desires that are not consistent with His character. Name them for what they are: sin!
- I John 1:9 says, *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*
- List your sins and ask the Lord to forgive you and cleanse you. Speak each sin individually and ask the Lord for forgiveness. Do not use a blanket prayer covering them all at once. There is something very important about naming each sin and asking forgiveness.
- Take time to thank the Lord for His forgiveness and your cleansing.

T THANKSGIVING (5 minutes)

- Being grateful is very important. Thank Him for prayers answered, forgiveness, salvation, etc.
- Read Ephesians 5:20 and Psalms 100:4
- Ask the Lord to give a grateful heart.

S SUPPLICATION (11 minutes)

- You are now ready to ask God for things.
Matthew 7:7-8 and James 4:2
- Submit even these requests to the Lord by asking Him to lead you to the right things to ask for.
- Be specific!
- Begin with things for yourself.
- Pray for the church.
- Pray for other people's needs.
- Pray for missionaries, evangelists, and pastors.
- Keep a list of things you are asking the Lord to answer so you can write down when the Lord answers them.
- Make your **last request** be that you live your life that day bringing glory to God.
- Go about your day in the power of Christ!

3. My QT commitment:

Time _____

Place _____

When I will begin _____

*Jesus' call to spend time with Him can be seen in
Revelation 3:20*

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

Lesson 2: The Gospel • What Really Happened to You

1. Write down the character of God beside each Scripture reference:

- John 3:16 _____
- Psalm 22:3 _____
- Romans 3:26 _____
- Ephesians 2:4 _____
- Romans 2:4 _____
- Deuteronomy 10:14 (*what does God own?*) _____

As you can see, God is magnificent! He is best defined as *holy*. He is completely unlike us. He is not just a super human, but of a completely different nature than we are.

2. Look at the following verses and see what the human nature is like.

- Jeremiah 17:9 _____
- Romans 3:10 _____
- Psalm 14:2-3 _____
- Romans 3:23 _____

3. We are very different from God. Because of this difference, God cannot allow us into His presence. That means we cannot pray to Him, speak to Him, or go to be with Him in Heaven. We must become like Him in order to have a relationship with Him. Here is where character really matters. Unless we have His character we will not see Him. How does one become like God in character? Look at the following verses:

- John 1:12 _____
- Romans 5:1 _____

4. To be ***justified*** means that God considers you as if you had never sinned! He decrees that you are without blame. How is this possible since we know from Romans 6:23, *For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord*, that we should die for our sins? Read the following verses and write down what Christ has done for you.

- 1 Peter 3:18 _____
- Isaiah 53:5 _____
- Romans 5:8 _____

5. Christ died for you. He took your place—He was your substitute! This is called *substitutionary atonement*. He did for you what you could not do for yourself. What is your responsibility now?

- John 1:12 _____
- Romans 10:9-10 _____
- Romans 10:13 _____

6. When you believe in your heart that He has been resurrected, and confess Him as your Lord there are two specific attitudes that must accompany your believing. Read the two Scriptures and note them:

- Ephesians 2:8-9 _____
- Luke 13:3 _____

7. **Faith** is the certainty that God will do what He says. (*see Hebrews 11:1*). **Repentance** is a change in attitude that now says you want to follow Him and obey Him. Where once you did according to **your** will, now you will do according to **His** will.

8. Write down the word that best summarizes **God's involvement** in your salvation from each of the verses below:

- John 15:16 _____
- John 1:17 _____
- Romans 11:6 _____

9. **Grace** is the unmerited favor of God. Paul used the word grace in the introduction to every letter he wrote. He wanted us to remember our place in the salvation process.

When you consider that God could only be known if He chose to, you are left with only a grateful heart toward Him! You realize that you could do nothing to force Him to make Himself known. Salvation is a gift that is **unmerited, undeserved**, and completely under God's sovereign control.

10. List some of the **benefits** (*things that are a result*) of your salvation:
From the following Scriptures

- Ephesians 1:1-14 (*pick out 4*)
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____

- Romans 5:1 _____
- Romans 8:1 _____
- Titus 3:7 _____
- John 12:50 _____
- Ephesians 2:18 _____

11. We have seen the nature of God, our own nature, our need to become like God, and the benefits of being a Christian. Has there come a time in your life when you prayed and gave your life to Him, confessing Him to be your Lord and Savior? **If so**, put the date that occurred below your signature.

- Signature _____
- Date _____

If not, read and pray the following prayer:

Salvation Prayer

Lord Jesus, I recognize that I am a sinner in need of forgiveness. I also recognize that Jesus died for me on the cross, taking the punishment for my sins. I further acknowledge that I have been following my own way and desire now to change and follow you. I want to be Your disciple. I give You my life to do with as You please. You are my Lord and Master. Thank you for forgiving me and I receive the Holy Spirit as the seal of this new agreement today.

In the Name of Jesus, Amen.

If you prayed the above prayer for the first time today, sign your name below and place today's date as a seal of your commitment to Jesus as your Lord and Master!

- Signature _____
- Date _____

12. Read the following Scriptures and write down a word or phrase to help you remember their meanings:

- 1 John 4:15 _____
- 1 John 5:13 _____
- John 5:24 _____

13. Thank the Lord for your life in Christ!

Lesson 3: The Bible

1. Some interesting facts about the Bible:
 - The Bible is God's written revelation of His will to men.
 - The central message is summed up in John 14:6, *Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*
 - The Bible contains 66 books, written by 40 authors, covering a period of approximately 1600 years.
 - The Old Testament (comprising 39 books) was written mostly in Hebrew.
 - The New Testament (comprising 27 books) was written in Greek.
 - The word *Bible* comes from the Greek word *βιβλιο* (biblio) meaning *book*.
 - The word *testament* means *covenant* or *agreement*.
 - In the Old Testament we find the covenant of law.
 - In the New Testament we have the covenant of grace.
 - The New Testament is the fulfillment of the Old.
 - Number of verses: 31,102
 - Number of words: 775, 693
 - Longest chapter: Psalm 119
 - Shortest chapter: Psalm 117
 - Longest verse: Esther 8:9
 - Shortest verse: John 11:35, *Jesus wept.*
 - Longest book in the OT: Psalms
 - Longest book in the NT: Luke
 - Ezra 7:21 contains every letter of the Hebrew alphabet except *j*.
 - The Bible is one book, one history, one story. Behind all the various events stands God! The Bible is His story as He interacts with mankind. He is at its beginning and end.

2. It actually takes only 80 hours to read the entire Bible! Try it. You'll like it!

What the Bible says about itself

1. The Bible is the **Word of God**. Both Testament view the words of Scripture as God's own words.
 - **Psalm 119** is replete with the phrase *Thy word*, thus equating the words of the OT with God's word.
 - **Romans 3:2** is the NT view of the OT as the oracles (words) of God.
Great in every respect. First of all, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God.
 - **1 Corinthians 2:9-13** is an example of the NT view of itself. Verse 13 states,
Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.
2. Jesus treated the Scriptures as the Word of God. Read Matthew 22:30-32.

According to Jesus, who was speaking in the Old Testament? _____
3. The Scriptures are **God-breathed**. Read 2 Peter 1:21 and 2 Timothy 3:16.

Who *moved* these men to write? _____

How much of the Scripture is authored by God? _____
4. The Scriptures were **written by men** of God. That is why their individual styles come out in each of their writings. Paul does not write like John; neither does Luke sound like Mark! God in superintending the transmission of His Word allowed each man to reveal his own character through his writing! That, however, does not change the fact that the Bible is the Word of God Himself. These men were *lifted up* by the Spirit of God and *carried along* as they wrote. This is our understanding of 2 Peter 1:21.
5. Write down a word or phrase to summarize each verse below:
 - Psalm 119:11 _____
 - Psalm 119:105a (*a = first part*) _____
 - Psalm 119:105b (*b = second part*) _____

The Word of God is a *lamp* to show us where we are, and a *light* to show us where we are going! Many a Christian has prayed for God to speak directly to them not realizing that He has already done that in the Bible. The following section will guide you in what to do with the Bible as God's written Word to you personally!

What should you do with the Bible?

1. **Read God's Word!** You would be surprised how many Christians never really read their Bibles. It is impossible to live the Christian life without a good understanding of the Word of God.

What is God's promise in Proverbs 1:23? _____

2. **Love God's Word!** From Psalm 19:7-10, how much did David value God's Word?

3. **Memorize God's Word!** After reading 1 Peter 3:15 and Psalm 119:11, give two reasons why you should memorize the Word of God.

1. _____

2. _____

4. **Meditate on God's Word!** Edmund Burke wrote, "Reading without reflecting is like eating without digesting." When you spend time reflecting on God's Word it drives deep into your spirit. Remember Romans 10:17, *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.* Your faith will be strengthened as you meditate on His Word and it takes control of your spirit and then your soul! List some things that come as a result of meditation from the following verses:

• Joshua 1:8 _____

• Psalm 1:2-3 _____

• 1 Timothy 4:15 _____

5. **Obey God's Word!** What good is reading, memorizing, and meditating if you don't obey God's Word? The goal is to let it change you into the character of Christ and that takes obedience! What does James say we are to be?

• James 1:22 _____

• According to John 15:14, how can you know you are a friend of Christ?

Following you will find a 61-day reading through the Bible.

Start reading today.

Bible Readings: The Essentials in 61 Days

Insights on Reading the Bible

1. The *61 Readings* are designed to give the disciple a *general overview* of the Bible.
2. *This is not a Bible Study.* For many, this will be the first time you have read through the Bible. You cannot know what the Bible means until you know what it says. Use these readings to become familiar with the Bible's overall message of salvation.
3. *It would also be helpful to use a study Bible.* The ESV Study Bible is an excellent choice. When you start to read a new Book, read the introduction notes in the study Bible. This will help you understand the purpose of each book.
4. *Mark your Bible.* *Underline* important verse, and *circle* important words. The point of marking is to be able to return to the text at a later date and see those things quickly. Be careful not to mark everything, just the things that stand out to you.
5. *Ask the Lord to speak to you.* God speaks through His Word. There will be times when the Lord challenges you to *believe* something, *do* something, *quit* something, or *change* something. Determine some way to remember what He has instructed you. One idea is to mark the Scripture with a color ink or write a note in the margin.
6. *Keep an abbreviated journal.* Take a moment to write down questions you have. I say 'abbreviated' because this could very well get huge, quickly! Ask your Mentor to answer your most important questions. Remember, your goal is to learn the overview. There will time to learn more later.
7. *Fall in love with the Word.* The more you read, the more God will reveal Himself. Get to know Him and love Him. His Word is a window into His character.
8. *Apply the Word.* Never just read for information. Read to know the truth, to know God, and to obey Him. Practice obedience from your first reading.

Bible Readings: The Essentials in 61 Days

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Matthew 1-2, 5-7 | <input type="checkbox"/> 32 Joshua 1-6, 23-24 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Matthew 17, 26-28 | <input type="checkbox"/> 33 Judges 1-4, 13-16 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 Mark 1-4, 10, 15-16 | <input type="checkbox"/> 34 Ruth 1-4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4 Luke 1-2, 4-6 | <input type="checkbox"/> 35 1 Samuel 7-10, 12 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5 Luke 8-10, 22-24 | <input type="checkbox"/> 36 1 Samuel 15-20, 28, 31 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 6 John 1, 3-4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 37 2 Samuel 5-8, 11-13, 15, 18 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 7 John 13-17, 19-21 | <input type="checkbox"/> 38 1 Kings 3, 6-12 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 8 Acts 1-4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 39 1 Kings 17-19, 21 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 9 Acts 8-10, 12-15 | <input type="checkbox"/> 40 2 Kings 1-2, 6-7, 11-12 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 10 Romans 5-8, 12 | <input type="checkbox"/> 41 2 Kings 17-23 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 11 1 Corinthians 1-2, 13 | <input type="checkbox"/> 42 1 Chronicles 15-17, 21-22, 28-29 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 12 2 Corinthians 4-5, 8-9 | <input type="checkbox"/> 43 2 Chronicles 5-10, 14-16 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 13 Galatians 5-6 | <input type="checkbox"/> 44 2 Chronicles 24-26, 29-35 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 14 Ephesians 4-6 | <input type="checkbox"/> 45 Ezra 3, 6-7 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15 Philippians 2, 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 46 Nehemiah 1-2, 4, 6 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 16 Colossians 1, 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 47 Esther 1-4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 17 1 Thessalonians 2, 4
and 2 Thessalonians 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 48 Job 1-3, 38-42 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 18 1 Timothy 1, 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 49 Psalms 1, 8, 19, 23 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 19 2 Timothy 3-4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 50 Psalms 51, 100, 103, 139 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 20 Titus 2 and Philemon | <input type="checkbox"/> 51 Proverbs 1-3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 21 Hebrews 10-13 | <input type="checkbox"/> 52 Ecclesiastes 1-5, 12
and Songs 1-2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 22 James 1-3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 53 Isaiah 1-2, 6, 40, 52-55 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 23 1 Peter 1, 5 and 2 Peter 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 54 Jeremiah 1-5 & Lamentations 3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 24 1 John 1-2, 2 John, and 3 John | <input type="checkbox"/> 55 Ezekiel 1-3, 18, 33 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 25 Jude, Revelation 19-22 | <input type="checkbox"/> 56 Daniel 1-2, 4-6 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 26 Genesis 1-3, 12, 15, 22 | <input type="checkbox"/> 57 Hosea 1-4 and Joel 2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 27 Exodus 1-5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 58 Amos 3, Obadiah, and Jonah 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 28 Exodus 12-14, 20 | <input type="checkbox"/> 59 Micah 1-2 and Nahum 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 29 Leviticus 1, 10, 16, 25 | <input type="checkbox"/> 60 Habakkuk 1, Zephaniah 3,
Haggai |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 30 Numbers 3-4, 6, 11-14 | <input type="checkbox"/> 61 Zechariah 1-2 and Malachi 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 31 Deuteronomy 5-8, 28-31, 34 | |

Lesson 4: The Heart of a Giver

1. Three reasons to study the disciple's use of money.

- a. **How we handle money affects our relationship with the Lord.** Read Luke 16:11. In this verse Jesus equates how we handle money with the quality of our spiritual life.
- b. **Our possessions compete with the Lord for lordship.** Read Matthew 6:24. You cannot serve the Lord and money at the same time.
- c. **Much of life revolves around our use of money.** Consider how much time you spend earning, spending, determining how to save or invest your money. Is there any doubt that money, and the lack of it, makes a significant impact on your actions and reactions?

2. God owns everything

Read the following verses and fill in the blanks.

- Psalm 50:10-12 _____ belongs to God
- 1 Samuel 2:7 “poverty and _____ depend on God
- 1 Corinthians 6:20 my _____ belongs to Him

3. God doesn't share ownership

- According to Deuteronomy 8:11-18, who gives you the ability to earn wealth?

Since God gives even the ability to earn wealth, He remains in control of everything. He does not share His ownership just by allowing us to be responsible for part of His universe.

4. The disciple as a steward

Read Luke 19:11-19.

- a. **Each disciple has time, talents, and treasure.** These three components are given by God to every disciple to manage. Even though we differ as to the quantity and quality of each, we are still all given a portion of each. In Luke 19 Jesus tells a story of a king and his servants. He leaves each with one mina and tells them to invest it (or do business with it). He then returns to see how they have done with what was given them. Just as they were evaluated, so will you be evaluated for what you have done with you time, talents and treasure. **His question to you would be, “Is the Kingdom better off because of what you did with what I gave you?”**

Read: 1 Cor 3:11-15 and 1 Cor 5:10-11

- b. Each disciple will give an account.** You will stand before God and give an account. Your use of the possessions, and specifically, your money will be evaluated and you will be rewarded appropriately.

From Luke 19

1. For faithful service the disciple will *(verse 17)*

- hear God say _____
- and receive a Kingdom inheritance (rule over _____ cities)

2. For “half” faithful service the disciple will *(verse 19)*

- receive a Kingdom inheritance (rule over _____ cities)

3. The worthless servant

The worthless servant played it safe. He hid his mina and had nothing to show. What was his punishment?

1. Jesus called him a *(verse 22)* _____
2. Jesus took *(verse 24)* _____

5. God’s Part: ownership, control, and care

a. God owns everything. We have already said this but it needs to be restated.

Listen to the Psalmist in Psalm 24:1,

“The earth is the Lord’s, and all it contains.”

b. God has ultimate control of every event that occurs.

1 Chronicles 29:11-12 states, *“Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor; for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, O Lord, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all. Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all.”*

According to these verses, who controls wealth, honor, strength, and power?

Is your promotion in His hands? Even difficult circumstances have to flow through His hands before they come to you. While He is not the author of evil, He does allow certain freedoms that end in sinfulness. But Romans 8:28 says that all things work together for good to those called according to His purpose. Is there any doubt that God is still in control?

God sometimes acts to intervene in human events. We call that, *miracle*. But He does not always do as we wish. That is His sovereignty at work. Remember, it is His world—not ours!

According to 1 Corinthians 10:13, is there any event that comes to you in which you are left powerless to win a victory? _____

God is faithful. You can depend on Him, He is in complete control.

This ought to give you great peace. Better God to be in control than some inordinate, impersonal “fate” that does not know you or care about you! Better God to be sovereign, than you or me!!! He’s much better at it!

c. God promises to provide for our needs.

Read the following verse and rewrite it in your own words, personalizing it.

Matthew 6:33

What did Abraham call God in Genesis 22:14? (*Jehovah-jireh*)

“The Lord will _____.”

Do you think He will also provide for you?

What is the promise of Philippians 4:19?

6. Our Part: Faithfulness

a. Faithful with all our resources. As stated earlier, you will be evaluated by the Lord for your faithfulness, not for the quantity of your abilities, talents, or wealth.

b. Faithfulness in little things. Read Luke 16:10. How would you know if a child will take care of his first car? You would observe how he cares for his bike! Faithfulness in little things brings the proper discipline in a person’s life that will make him faithful in the big things.

7. Faithfulness in giving

a. Attitude in giving.

Read 1 Corinthians 13:3. What should be our primary attitude in giving?

If giving is merely to a church, ministry or to a needy person, it is only *charity*. But if it is to the Lord, it becomes an act of worship. That is why it must be done in love. We express our gratefulness, our love by giving our gifts to Him.

To give without love for God turns giving into a shameful, manipulative event. Some give to get!! What a travesty. When one gives out of a heart full of love for God, there is never anything expected in return—it is a gift! When we expect a return on our giving it is no longer a gift but an investment. It is gain we want, not love that we give.

b. Advantages in giving.

Acts 20:35 states, “*It is more blessed to give than to receive.*”

There are several benefits to giving.

1. Giving develops our character.

Read 1 Timothy 6:18-19. We are encouraged to be generous because it is the character of God to be so. Remember John 3:16, “... *God so loved...that He gave...*” George Mueller spent his entire life sharing generously to the needy and is remembered as a man whose prayers were answered and by whom orphans were fed.

2. Giving increases intimacy with God. Read Matthew 6:21.

Where is your heart? _____

It takes a great deal of money to live. If there is nothing left for giving you should consider changing your budget, or your lifestyle.

3. Giving is an investment for eternity. Compare Matthew 6:20 and Philippians 4:17. Consider where your giving account is being held.

4. Giving increases our material blessings.

According to Proverbs 11:24-25, what will the generous man be?

_____.

According to 2 Corinthians 9:6-8, what will you have in return for giving bountifully? _____.

What will you be able to do with this abundance?

c. Amount to give.

1. The Old Testament. In the Old Testament the *tithe*, or tenth, was

required to be given by every Hebrew. Read Malachi 3:8-9.

How were they robbing God? _____

They were also required to give offerings above their tithe. This means that under the Law, without the benefit of the power of the Spirit, normal, everyday Hebrews gave over 10% of their income to God. Sometimes as much as 30%!! We are no longer under the Law but it is certainly a guide for us. Does it even sound right that those without the Spirit were required to give at least 10%, while those with the Spirit would, out of love, give less?

2. The New Testament. There is no specified amount in the New Testament. The tithe is not specifically rejected or recommended. From 2 Corinthians 8-9 we learn that our giving should be:

2 Cor 8:12-14 **Proportional** to our wealth (not all the same amount)

2 Cor 9:6 **Bountiful** (never stingy)

2 Cor 9:7 **Cheerful** (not out of duty, but joy-hilariously)

Each disciple should **begin** to work towards giving a tithe. The tithe is systematic and easy to compute. But the amount should never replace the leading of the Holy Spirit. The closer you are to the Lord the more you will give—it is His character to give. Besides, the more you give, the more He returns, and the more you will have to give, and want to give!

d. To whom do we give?

1. The local Church, Christian Workers and Ministries. Far too many Christian workers have been distracted from their ministry because Christians have not obeyed the Lord in giving.

Read 1 Timothy 5:17. By double honor Paul means “pay”. In order to properly minister to the flock the Pastor must be paid an adequate salary. The local Church cannot continue to function, providing you with opportunities to grow, minister, worship and pray, and reach the lost unless you support it financially. While it does not seem very glorious to give for the light bill—how will you see to read the Word without the light?

2. Your Family. Read 1 Timothy 5:8. It is your first responsibility to provide for your family. One note of caution: wants are not needs! Take care of your family, but do not indulge them at the expense of the Church or the truly needy.

3. The Poor. Jesus personally identifies with the poor. Read Matthew 25:34-45. Do you want to minister to Christ? Give to the poor!

8. Begin giving today!

Lesson 5: Sources of Authority

1. This lesson deals with the disciple's belief system and how it impacts his or her life. The issue is **authority**.

The word authority carries with it the idea of supremacy and control. When a decision needs to be made that which is considered to be our authority will determine our actions. For many, the ways of the world have great influence and therefore authority in their lives. According to Romans 12:2, *And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God,* we are to have our minds transformed in order to do the will of God. At the heart of this issue of transformation is authority.

2. From the following list, rate each thing from 1 to 11 (*1 being the most necessary and 11 being the least necessary*) according to **how necessary each is for making a good decision**.

- ___ Parents
- ___ Knowledgeable but non-Christian friends
- ___ What others are doing
- ___ Bible
- ___ Feelings
- ___ Holy Spirit speaking to you
- ___ Christian writings
- ___ What you want to do
- ___ Godly counselors
- ___ Non-Christian books
- ___ Past experiences

3. Are these listed in the order that **you** use them in making a decision? _____

Consider the following in determining what should inform your decisions:

4. Read Psalm 1:1-3.

Whose counsel should you ignore? (*verse 1*) _____

What should you meditate on? (*verse 2*) _____

Do you think this only applies to *spiritual* things? _____

5. According to Psalm 119:105 and 2 Timothy 3:16-17

How can the Bible help you with all of your decisions?

Ps. 119 It is _____ and a _____

2 Tim. 3 _____

6. There are two ways the Bible helps in decision making. One is to give us *explicit instructions* such as in the Ten Commandments, *Do not commit adultery*. Another way is by *principles*. An example of a principle is found in 2 Corinthians 9:6-7.

Do these verses tell you how much to give? _____

What should be your attitude in giving? _____

The principle here is that you should give unsparingly and with a cheerful attitude. As to how much to give: follow the principle!!

7. There are many pressures on the disciple to make decisions not in keeping with the Bible. That is why you need godly counselors. They will help keep you consistent with the Word. Read Proverbs 11:14.

How many counselors should you have? _____

What is the result of seeking many counselors? _____

8. *Feelings* are a necessary part of our make-up. God has created us with emotions. How we use them will determine their goodness! For instance, assume that you are on the edge of a very steep cliff; to fall would mean certain death. You should feel fear! That fear will keep you from harm—it is God-given.

However, if the Lord instructs you to do something and fear overtakes you, keeping you from obedience, that fear is not from God and should not control your actions! Read Romans 14:23. Faith is the opposite of fear in that faith acts upon the Word of God rather than on the emotion of the moment.

Feelings are very hard to differentiate from God speaking to us. Many Christians believe God is speaking when in fact it is their own emotions in control! That is why we must balance these feelings with the counsel of others, the Word of God, and finally with the circumstances.

9. Read 1 Kings 18-19.

In this account we first see Elijah, the great prophet, calling down fire from heaven to consume the offering and the altar! (18:38). But in chapter 19 Elijah is running in fear of his life.

What was he afraid of?

What words best describe Elijah's emotions:?

___ courageous ___ boldness ___ fear ___ anxiety

___ calmness ___ hopelessness ___ anticipation of good

___ lonely

What did God ask him in 1 Kings 19:13?

God's response to his fear was to speak to him and tell him to go.

What did he tell Elijah to do? (*1 Kings 19:15-16*)

Did Elijah obey? (*1 Kings 19:19*)

10. Elijah obeyed the word of the Lord—not his feelings, nor the circumstances. Everything inside of him told him to run. That is why the Lord asked him what he was doing there. In the midst of our fears and troubles we have God's promise of His presence with us. We are to obey!
11. Elijah considered God's Word to him as his authority and therefore did what he was told. How can **you** know what God wants **you** to do?
12. There are four parts to the puzzle of knowing God's will in any situation. They are: the Bible, godly counsel, circumstances, and the Holy Spirit.

• **The Bible.** Is the action being considered consistent with the Word of God? I once was told by a member of my Church that the Lord had brought his secretary into his life to give him sexual fulfillment (*he and his wife were fighting a great deal*). Most of us would agree that his belief is not biblical since the Bible is very clear that sex is only proper within the bonds of marriage. But this man's authority had become his feelings; *How could something that feels so good be wrong?* Often we reinterpret the Bible to fit our desires.

If the Bible is not specific about an action then you must look for principles. We discussed this earlier under #6. Here is where godly counselors are very helpful.

• **Godly Counsel.** What do a group of godly people say?

Note two things: *godly*, and *group*. If you are looking for people to tell you that what you are doing, or what you want to do is alright, you are not seeking godly counsel! You want those disciples who are more experienced to help you understand God's leadership in your life. They must be willing to show you biblically why something is correct or incorrect.

We are a **community of faith**. This concept is lost in the American Church. Individualism rules most Christians. A great Christian once stated about modern Christians, "*They just will not be pastored!*" To submit to the body is very difficult for most.

Remember, the concept here is balance. God speaks to us through His Word, the counsel of others, in our circumstances, and the Holy Spirit. If you neglect any one of these, you will be out of balance, and probably in sin!

• **In our Circumstances.** What's happening around us?

There is a balance between faith (stepping out when there seems no place to step) and waiting for the situation to be right. Consider witnessing to an unsaved relative. You know it's God's desire for all to be saved (2 Peter 3:9). You know what you want to say. When to say it will be determined by the circumstances. Speaking at the wrong time could bring resistance; but at the right time, salvation. So you wait!

God waited to send Jesus until *the fullness of time* (Galatians 4:4). Even God waited for the right time. Having everything in order is part of God's plan.

Assume that you believe that you should go to Africa to share the Gospel. Is it your desire or God's? Here are some questions that you should consider asking:

- Has God spoken to me? How?
- What are my feelings?
- What does the Word of God say?
- What do other godly people think?
- Is there any group I can go with?
- Is there an invitation to go?
- Who will send me?
- Am I qualified to go or should I get training?

13. Making good decisions is difficult but not impossible. You must settle the issue of authority. In the next lesson we will consider the Holy Spirit's leading in your life.

Lesson 6: The Holy Spirit, The Disciple's Guide

1. This lesson is a continuation of the lesson on authority, and deals specifically with the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. Later we will look more in-depth at the Holy Spirit, but for now we will contain ourselves to His nature, purpose, and leadership in decision making.
2. In the following chart, read each verse and give the appropriate **name**, **description**, or **activity** for the Holy Spirit:

Verse	Name, Description, or Activity
Genesis 1:2	Spirit of the Lord
Nehemiah 9:20	_____
Job 33:4	_____
Isaiah 11:2 (<i>give 4</i>)	_____

Zechariah 12:10	_____
Romans 8:2	_____
Romans 8:15	_____
Ephesians 1:13-14	_____

2 Timothy 1:7	Gives us _____

3. Read The Gospel of John chapter 14 . This chapter records Jesus' last words to His disciples. What two names does Jesus give the Holy Spirit and what does He say the Spirit will do?

Name	What the Spirit will do
(v. 16) _____	(v. 16) _____
(v. 17) _____	(v. 26) _____

4. The name Jesus most often used for the Holy Spirit is *parakletos*. Depending on which Bible translation you use, this word might be rendered "helper," "counselor," "comforter," or "advocate." Actually, each of these words describes one aspect of a *parakletos*, but none of them captures the extensive ministry of the Holy Spirit in a believer's life. Paraclete means "one who is called alongside" - *para* means alongside, and *cleo* means to call

5. Read the story in Acts 5. Note especially verses 4 and 9.
 To whom did Peter say Ananias had lied? _____
 To whom did Peter say Sapphira had lied? _____
 From these verses we can conclude that the Holy Spirit is _____ .

6. The Holy Spirit must be obeyed because He is God! He is not an *influence, force, or another god—He is God in us!!*

7. Read Ephesians 1:13-14. In Paul’s description of the benefits of being a Christian he describes the Holy Spirit as the One who seals the believer, *meaning that the believer is marked by God*. If God looks at you and does not see the mark, the Holy Spirit, He does not consider you His child!
 Paul also describes the Holy Spirit in verse 14 as _____ .
 The earnest of our inheritance is the certainty of the receiving of the inheritance. The Holy Spirit is the confidence that what God starts, He finishes (see Philippians 1:6).

8. Note *when a believer receives the Holy Spirit*. Ephesians 1:13 says that *after believing, ye were sealed*. Believing must precede the receiving of the Holy Spirit—nothing else. When you placed your faith in Christ, repented of your sins, claimed Him as Lord and Master, He gave you the Holy Spirit as He promised.

9. Let’s review:
 - The Holy Spirit is God.
 - He has various purposes in us: comforter, counselor, advocate, etc.
 - He is the earnest of our inheritance.
 - He is given to us when we become a Christian.
 - Without Him we are not a child of God.

10. For the remainder of this lesson we will consider how the Holy Spirit is our *counselor* in making decisions. Read John 10:4. What are you to hear?

Many things can interfere with you hearing Him.

- **Past failures** can cause you to believe, falsely, that you will fail again. But God loves you and will lead you. Just keep asking Him to speak through His Word and through the Spirit.
- **Poor teaching** can hinder you immeasurably. If you have been taught that God no longer speaks to His children, you will not even be listening. Make sure that your beliefs line up with the Word of God.
- **Personal expectations** can confuse you. Setting aside your expectations is necessary to hearing God. You have to be willing to obey God no matter what He might ask of you.

- **Lack of faith** will always limit your ability to hear God. Hebrews 11:6 says that you cannot please God without faith. Faith opens your ears to hear the Lord's voice more clearly.
 - **Sin** (for example: covetousness) will stand between you and God's voice. You don't have to be perfect, but you must spend time asking God to forgive and cleanse you and thereby keep your line of communication clear.
 - **Deception** (thinking it's God speaking while you are disobeying the clear teaching of the Bible). Always balance what you hear with the Word.
11. Most Christians do not experience God speaking to them in an audible voice. They sense a **strong impression** or **urge** from **within**. Generally it comes as the believer is reading the Word or in prayer. The believer must understand his or her own personality and weaknesses. To assume that one never confuses God's voice with his or her own voice is arrogance, at best, and deception, at worst. The difficulty is in discerning that it is really God.
 12. **Balance is the key.** You must balance these inner promptings with the Word of God, godly counselors, and your situation.
 13. Consider the situation from the lesson on Authority: Should you go to Africa on a mission trip? **Remember the issue is authority.** That which I consider to be my authority will be used to make my final decision. Many people will say that the Bible, Holy Spirit, and counselors, are their authorities; but the truth is, they do not listen to any of them. They do not question themselves enough. You must be honest with yourself. Don't be afraid to question your motives—God will lead you to the right decision. Here are some questions to consider in determining if it is God's will.
 - When did the opportunity come to you?
 - after a prolonged period of praying for an opportunity?
 - after reading the Word and being challenged to win the lost?
 - just out of the blue?
 - Have you considered why **you** might want to go?
 - it would make you look more spiritual
 - going to another country would be exciting
 - just want to see people saved
 - What do godly people who know you advise?
 - you aren't prepared. (maybe you should get trained)
 - you are not spiritually ready (get disciplined)
 - sounds good - go!!
 - What does the Word of God say?
 - God wants everyone to be saved - go!!
 - Do you have the time and finances to go?
 - time is not a problem
 - money can be raised or worked for

Once you seek counsel, search the Word, listen to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, and evaluate the circumstances, you are in a better position to know the will of God.

14. One last caution. There are times when God speaks and others don't agree. *The timing is probably wrong.* Wait for God to confirm His Word to you and then proceed.

Lesson 7: Forgiveness

1. Read Matthew 6:5-15.

According to verse 15, in what manner does God forgive us? _____

2. Read Matthew 18:21-35.

How many times are we commanded to forgive someone for the same offense? (v. 22) _____

Does Jesus mean that we are to keep count? _____

How much did the first servant owe his master? (v. 24) _____

What did the master do for him? (v. 27) _____

How much did the fellow slave owe the first slave? (v. 28) _____

What did the first slave do to him? (v. 30) _____

What was the master's response to this unforgiveness? (v. 32-35) _____

3. There are several lessons to be learned here:

- We are to be like God in forgiving people.
- We are to forgive as many times as a person sins against us.
- We are to respond to the grace given to us by giving grace.
- We will be *tormented* for being unforgiving.

(The following is a summary of the material found in Jeff Floyd's notebook "Axe to the Root", and may be purchased from Jubilee Ministries, Indianapolis, IN.)

4. According to Hebrews 12:15, *Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;* what is the result of unforgiveness?

Unforgiveness is the result of failing to find grace in our time of need. Without the grace of God we are left to our own self-will and determination. But our natural response to injury is not forgiveness, but retaliation.

5. There are three groups of people who hurt us the most:

- Those we are closest to. (*loved ones, friends*), because they mean so much to us and what they do to us is important.
- Those we expect a great deal from. (*spiritual leaders, officials*), because our expectations are high.
- Those to whom we give respect and honor. (*well-known people*).

All three groups hurt us when they fail to treat us the way we believe that we should be treated. Instead of forgiving them for failing to treat us correctly, we take on hurt. This hurt is a sign of unforgiveness and is sin! Mark the following equation in your mind:

$$\text{offense} + \text{unforgiveness} = \text{hurt} = \text{sin}$$

6. There are two identifying marks of unforgiveness and bitterness:

- **Hurt:** While most Christians will not tell you that they are bitter or unforgiving, they will say that they are hurt. But hurt is proof of unforgiveness!

Let's look at an example. Suppose you are teaching a class of children and another adult tells you that you did a poor job explaining the verses to the children. Before you knew it a sense of hurt overwhelms you. You had worked hard on the lesson and felt that you had done the best job possible. You concluded that the person was simply trying to hurt you. You now have a choice: you can choose to ask God for grace to forgive the person, or you can become upset, angry, and defensive. The latter response is unforgiveness.

- **Anger.** For many, anger is all too prevalent. Generally when a person is unforgiving, anger will spring up when it otherwise would have been under control. This popping-up of anger is a sign of unforgiveness. Often the person with bitterness and unforgiveness will exhibit inappropriate anger. By this I mean a level of anger that is not equal to the offense.

When unforgiveness is harbored in the heart, anger will boil over before the person is able to stop it. The parent who yells at his child for little offenses; the child who hits his brother for no apparent reason; or the boss who explodes at the minor errors of his secretary are all examples of misplaced anger and unforgiveness. Read Proverbs 4:23, *Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.*

What are we to guard? _____

Why? _____

An unguarded heart results in defilement.

Read Matthew 15:15-20. According to these verses, what defiles a person?

The following will help you clean up your heart so that you will not defile yourself and others.

7. Action guide for healing from hurts.

- Admit to yourself and to God that there are unresolved hurts in your heart.
- Give up the right to blame those who have offended you for the hurt which you have accepted as a legitimate part of your life.
- Confess to a responsible and spiritually wise person the presence of these hurts and your intention to address them by the healing power of God.
- Pray the prayer of forgiveness for **each person** who has hurt you, **specifically** addressing **each hurtful memory** of this experience.
- Begin to immediately implement the following steps to cement healing and to restore fellowship with the offender(s):
 - a. *Renounce all negative feelings toward him/her.*
 - b. *Receive him/her as he/she is.*
 - c. *Restore him/her to your personal favor.*
 - d. *Rejoice about him/her in and out of his/her presence.*
 - e. *Respond to him/her in a loving and godly fashion.*
 - f. *Resist the devil's attempt for ruin your relationship.*
 - g. *Rest in the Lord.*

8. The Prayer of Forgiveness.

The following prayer agenda was developed over many years and includes every detail necessary to set you free. Do not leave any part out!

The italicized-bold words are important parts of the prayer:

Dear Heavenly Father,

It is **my choice** today to forgive (*name the person who offended you*)

...for the offense which he/she brought against me (*describe the offense briefly*).

I forgive him/her **unconditionally** for the things done which brought hurt in my life.

I **drop every charge** which I have brought against him/her and **give up the right** to ever charge him/her again for this offense.

I **cancel every judgment** I have made against him/her.

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ **I release** him/her **from all responsibility** for the hurt which he/she caused me regardless of how badly I was hurt.

Heavenly Father, I drop every charge I've had against you for permitting this to happen to me and please forgive me for any way that I have blamed you in this offense.

Continued on next page....

As I have forgiven _____ for the hurt I have experienced, please forgive me of my hurt, bitterness, anger, and unforgiveness.

Holy Spirit, *please come and heal my thoughts, my emotions and my memories* from all the damage and defilement caused by my offense.

Thank you, Father, for my healing.

(It may be necessary to repeat the prayer. Continue until you have peace.)

9. There are several things about the previous prayer you must understand:
 - Hurt is a choice to refuse to forgive, and therefore is sin.
 - Forgiveness is not dependent upon the one you are forgiving.
 - Once forgiven, the offender is free from all charges.
 - The Holy Spirit will cleanse you to the same degree as you forgive.
10. Use this prayer consistently to keep your heart pure. Every time the Lord shows you unforgiveness in your heart, pray!

Church Ordinances

Baptism

According to Matthew 28:18-20, what two commands did Jesus give His disciples to do after they were to “make disciples”?

1. _____
2. _____

Baptism and **teaching** were commands from the Lord. Baptism is not an option! It is the first act of obedience for every believer. Teaching then follows as well. It is completely foreign to the Lord that a disciple would “get saved” and not learn and grow. Being a lifetime learner is as much a part of the Christian life as baptism.

In response to the people’s question, “What shall we do?” in Acts 2:38 Peter lays out the initial elements of the Christian life. List them:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Luke 13:3 says, I tell you, *Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Repentance (which involves believing and a desire to change), baptism, and the presence of the Holy Spirit in a person’s life are all a part of the beginnings of the Christian life.*

Read the following Scriptures:

- | | |
|---------------|--------------|
| Acts 2:41 | Acts 8:12-13 |
| Acts 16:29-34 | Acts 18:8 |

What always came before baptism?

Baptism always follows believing. Infant baptism is nowhere in the Scriptures! Roman Catholics believe that infant baptism takes away original sin but there is no Scripture that teaches it. Other denominations, Presbyterians for example, believe in infant baptism followed by Confirmation at the age of accountability, about 12. The concept is that in Confirmation they confirm their baptism and election by God and learn the basic concepts of the Christian life. There is no Scriptural basis for such a practice.

We believe in **believer’s baptism**.

Read the following Scriptures:

John 3:23 Matthew 3:16 Acts 8:34-38 Mark 1:4-5

In what was each baptized? _____

Water was used in all these Scriptures when someone was baptized. The Greek word used in each case is *baptidzo*. In its original first century definition, *baptidzo* meant to immerse, submerge, or completely cover. In Acts 8 we have Philip coming up out of the water, and in John 3:23, John the Baptist is baptizing people in a specific area because there was much water there. There would be no need for much water if he were sprinkling or pouring water.

The word baptism is a transliteration of the Greek word *baptidzo*. Transliteration simply means that the original Greek letters were converted into English letters to make a new word. Regarding the meaning of *baptidzo*, the majority of scholars and Greek lexicons agree that it always means immersion, or to submerge.

*We practice **believer's baptism by immersion.***

Water baptism openly identifies us with Christ. Jesus said in Matthew 10:33, *But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.*

Someone who is unwilling to be baptized is denying Jesus. Baptism is a public declaration of a person's commitment to Christ.

Read the following Scriptures:

Romans 6:1-7 Colossians 2:11-12

Water baptism openly identifies us with Christ in His...

1. _____

2. _____

We identify with Christ's *death* and *resurrection*. In Romans 6:4 (last part) our new life is identified with His life. We are to live a life in the power of His life. In other words, our life should reflect His character.

Just as a wedding ring is an outward sign that a couple is married, so in water baptism we are publicly identifying our commitment to Christ. What if a couple were to simply wear wedding rings without actually being married? They would only have an empty symbol not the *substance*. So baptism, the wedding ring of the Bride of Christ, doesn't make anyone the bride. It is a fitting *outward sign*, but without the inner reality of salvation, it is void of meaning.

*We practice **believer's baptism by immersion**
as an outward sign of an inward work.*

Acts 8:36 states, *As they (Philip and the eunuch) traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptized?"*

The eunuch wanted to follow Jesus in believer's baptism. He had placed his faith in Christ and wanted to make a public expression of his new-found faith.

When were you baptized? _____ (*at least a rough guess*)

If you have not, ask your Pastor or mentor when you can follow Christ's command to be baptized.

The Lord's Supper

Read the following Scriptures:

Matthew 26:17-30

Mark 14:12-26

Luke 22:7-23

In each case Jesus commanded the disciples to observe the Lord's Supper after He was gone. Each reenactment of the Supper is considered an **Ordinance** (*defined as a decree or command*) of the Church. It is **not** a **sacrament**. By sacrament churches mean that grace is received in doing the specific act. We do not believe any grace is passed to the believer by observing the Lord's Supper. When you received Christ as your Savior you received the Holy Spirit into your life. You received all of Him then. There is no longer any receiving of Him like Roman Catholics believe in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

Ordinances are **symbolic** acts that set forth primary facts of the Christian faith and are obligatory for all who believe in Jesus Christ. Baptism dramatically pictures our entering into covenant relationship with God through Jesus Christ by faith, and the Lord's Supper portrays our continuing in this relationship.

Roman Catholic view: Transubstantiation

Transubstantiation means there is a change of the substance of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist. However, the believer does not sense any change in the substance of the bread and wine. Catholics understand the Lord's Supper as a sacrament in which the partaker actually receives Christ. We believe you receive Christ by faith when you are saved not in the Eucharist (Lord's Supper).

Lutheran view: Consubstantiation or Real Presence

Consubstantiation means that Christ is present with the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper as the believer receives it. This is also considered a sacrament.

Baptist view: Memorialism

Memorialism means the bread and cup that symbolize the broken body and shed blood offered by Christ remind us today of God's great love for us. While the Lord is present in a spiritual sense, blessing and encouraging, He does not enter the believer in the taking of the Lord's Supper. We are commanded to remember His death for us.

Various designations have been used for the Lord's Supper by different churches due to the fact that the act is referred to in a variety of ways in the New Testament. These designations include:

1. Breaking of bread (Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Cor 10:16)
2. Communion (1 Cor 10:16)
3. Eucharist (from the Greek word for giving thanks, cf. Matt 26:27; Mark 14:23; Luke 22:17, 19; 1 Cor 11:24)
4. The Lord's Supper (1 Cor 11:20)
5. The Lord's table (1 Cor 10:20).

The accounts in the Gospels show that the Christian ceremony of the Lord's Supper has its roots in the Jewish Passover festival. This festival was a ceremony observed by the Jewish people to remind them of the Exodus -- that awesome event when the Lord rescued them from 400 years of degradation and slavery in Egypt.

Through great miracles and displays of power, Yahweh brought them out of Egypt, rescued them from the cruel oppression of Pharaoh and brought them into a beautiful land they could call their own. Although by definition the Exodus was a non-repeatable event, its significance was preserved for future generations of Israelites by the institution of the ceremony of the Feast of Passover (Exodus 12:24-27), celebrated every year at the Spring Equinox.

Just before Jesus was betrayed and handed over to the rulers to be crucified, he celebrated this "freedom meal" with his 12 disciples. As he did so, he turned the symbolism of the meal in a new direction.

He used the Passover festival to act out in a symbolic drama the meaning of His coming death at the hands of the Jewish and Roman rulers. The unleavened bread and the wine were no longer symbols of deliverance from slavery in Egypt, but picture Him as the Passover Lamb sacrificed so that His people might be delivered from slavery to sin and death. As the leader of a new exodus, He instituted a new ceremony to commemorate it.

Read 1 Corinthians 11:17-26

There are six themes revealed in these verses:

1. ***Saving sacrifice.*** This is my body. (1 Corinthians 11:24)

In the Lord's Supper the Passover bread, without yeast, and the sacrificial lamb are combined by Christ into a single meaning that He is our Passover Lamb sacrificed for us.

2. ***Covenant.*** This is my blood. (1 Corinthians 11:25)

In the Old Testament God entered into a covenant with Israel at Mount Sinai. So in the New Testament, God enters into a new covenant by a better sacrifice, the blood of Jesus. The cup represents the fact that Jesus died to pay the penalty due unto us for our sins, and that through trust in him and in his death for us, we are forgiven and completely pardoned. It speaks of a covenant relationship with God in which he says, "*I will be your God, and you shall be my people.*"

3. **Commemoration.** Do this in remembrance of me. (1 Corinthians 11:26)

The Lord's Supper has its origins in the Jewish Passover. This feast was a memorial -- a reminder of the Exodus by the use of symbols.

4. **Participation.** Community. (1 Corinthians 11:23)

Paul says that the Lord's Supper is teaching given by Christ and handed on to you. The "you" here and the commands "to eat" and "to drink" (v. 26) are all in the plural (meaning all of you as a group). So, this instruction is given to a community, a community of believers, those who are the followers of Jesus. It is always understood as a community event.

5. **Expectation.** Future hope. (1 Corinthians 11:26)

We are commanded to observe the Lord's Supper until the Lord Jesus comes back. We expect Him to return!

6. **Proclamation.** Evangelism. (1 Corinthians 11:26)

Finally, Paul says that by performing this ceremony, we proclaim the death of the Lord Jesus. The Lord's Supper dramatizes in symbolic fashion the central facts of the Christian faith and announces these facts to all who observe.

Preparation for taking the Lord's Supper

1. **Only for baptized believers.**

Since the Lord's Supper is an expression of continuing in the faith, it follows that only baptized believers should participate. We do not practice closed communion, (only for local church members). It is, however, only open to baptized believers.

2. **Examine and judge yourself.**

1 Corinthians 11:28-31. *A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment.*

Paul says that some are sick, while others sleep (are dead) because they did not judge themselves before taking the Lord's Supper! This is a serious matter.

3. **Proper preparation.**

- a. **Ask the Lord to reveal any sin in your life.** Psalm 139:23-24, *Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*
- b. **Confess them, and ask the Lord to cleanse you.** Claim 1 John 1:9, *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*
- c. **Make any restitution needed.** Matthew 5:24, *Leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.* Correct anything possible that the Lord reveals to you. Let Him lead you in this.

- d. ***Focus your mind on the Lord***, no one or nothing else. Hebrews 12:2, *Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

We celebrate the Lord's Supper four times a year. This keeps it from becoming a ritual and allows you the opportunity to remember Christ's sacrifice in a special way. We use a wafer instead of bread because the bread used by Jesus was unleavened (*without yeast*). While Jesus did use wine, we use grape juice to keep from it becoming a problem. It is still the fruit of the vine as Jesus said. In 1869 Thomas Bramwell Welch, a strong supporter of the temperance movement, produced a non-alcoholic wine (grape juice) to be used for church services in his hometown of Vineland, New Jersey.

The Lord's Supper is a very special celebration in Church. It is done in community with our eyes and hearts focused on Jesus.

Grace Fellowship

1. The **four main functions** of the Church are worship, discipleship, evangelism, and ministry. When a church fails to function well in all four areas she becomes weak and deformed. This lesson will help you understand each area and why it is necessary for a strong vital fellowship.

Worship is the church ministering unto the **Lord**. It would be impossible to claim to be a Christian and not spend time with the Lord in worship

Give a *brief* summary of each passage as it relates to **worship**:

Exodus 20:2-6 _____

Psalms 29:1-11 _____

Psalms 100:1-5 _____

Romans 12:1 _____

Revelation 14:7 _____

Discipleship is the church ministering to **itself** to encourage spiritual growth. It is the responsibility of every believer to mature in Christ. It is the church's responsibility to provide opportunities for this growth to occur.

Give a *brief* summary of each passage as it relates to **discipleship**:

Ephesians 4:11-13 _____

2 Timothy 4:2-4 _____

Titus 2:15 _____

Galatians 6:1-2 _____

2 Timothy 2:5 _____

Ephesians 3:16-19 _____

Acts 2:42 _____

Evangelism is the church ministering to the **world**. It is the requirement of every believer to be a witness for Christ. While there are those with the gift of evangelism who are a gift to the church, everyone is called to be a witness to what Christ has done for them.

Give a *brief* summary of each passage as it relates to **evangelism**:

Matthew 28:19-20 _____

Acts 1:8 _____

Colossians 4:3-6 _____

Ministry is the church ministering to those in **need**.

Give a *brief* summary of each passage as it relates to **ministry**:

Matthew 25:34-36 _____

Luke 3:10-14 _____

Acts 4:34-35 _____

Galatians 6:10 _____

James 2:14-26 _____

2. Evaluation. Spend some time this week evaluating your time and answer the following questions (*all questions are to be answered in hours or minutes for a typical week*):

• How much time do you spend ministering to others? _____

Give an example: _____

• How much time do you spend witnessing? _____

List an opportunity _____

• How much time do you spend in discipleship? _____

List any discipleship activities: _____

• How much time do you spend in worship? _____

List your times of personal and corporate worship: _____

• How are you doing? List the areas that the Lord has shown you that you need improvement: _____

3. Grace Fellowship's Mission Statement

**To bring people to Jesus, disciple them to Christlike maturity,
and equip them for ministry, in order to bring glory to God.**

4. Principles underlying our functions and Mission Statement

- **God is sovereign and His grace is at work**

For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure (Philippians 2:13). The Christian life is about God, His will, His purposes, and His desires. The Christian enters into God's Kingdom as a slave and becomes a family member with all its privileges and responsibilities. Galatians 4:7 says, So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.

- **Authority of the Word**

The Bible is our final authority for all we do, both at Grace and individually.
2 Timothy 3:16 (*See Lesson 4*)

- **People need Jesus**

Without a personal relationship with Christ a person is without hope. It is our God-given responsibility to tell people the Good News of Christ and to make that a priority of our lives (*Matthew 28:18-20*).

- **Competency of the soul**

Everyone has the right and responsibility to go directly to the Lord for guidance through intimacy with the Holy Spirit and Bible study. The disciple should follow the leadership of Grace Fellowship as Paul instructed in *1 Corinthians 11:1, Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.*

- **Freedom of the Spirit to move as He pleases**

Legalism, the attempt to please God through our own activities, and Antinomianism, the release of the believer from obeying the moral law, are two great threats to the well-being of any church. Grace Fellowship focuses on the work of God in and around us and rejects legalism and its restrictions on the freedom of the believer, and antinomianism and its unrestrained freedom to the believer.

Paul addressed the issue of legalism in the Book of Galatians, *I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing! (Galatians 2:21).*

And he addressed the issue of antinomianism in *Galatians 5:13, You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love.*

We do not intend to dictate to the Lord how He should move in our midst. We are free to obey Him, but subject to Him and His Word. Nothing will be done at Grace that does not square with the Scriptures.

- **Spiritual growth is expected**

1 Thessalonians 4:3 states, For this is the will of God, even your sanctification.

What the Lord desires is our growth toward becoming like Him in character. This growth involves intimacy with God and transformation in us (*Romans 12:2*). The Christian life is an adventure that is both exciting and demanding.

- **Authority rises with responsibility**

The Lord expects each believer to live up to his calling (*Ephesians 4:1*) and to minister to others according to giftedness and passion. The Lord expects each believer to use what has been given to him (*Luke 12:48*). No one will have more authority than the responsibilities they hold based on their gifts and calling.

- **Love requires coaching and confrontation**

Each believer needs someone to guide them in following Jesus (*1 Corinthians 11:1; 2 Timothy 2:2*). Paul states in *Galatians 6:1, Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently.* Love confronts with the goal of restoration.

- **God is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we hope or think**

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us (Ephesians 3:20). God is for us. He wants every believer to succeed.

5. Becoming a member of Grace Fellowship

- **Purpose of membership**

Membership is about **commitment**. When you become a member, as a disciple of Jesus, you commit to following the spiritual leadership of Grace. You also commit to taking responsibility to support the ministries of Grace both in giving financially and finding places to serve.

Grace then commits to help you become like Christ by providing opportunities for growth, challenging you to a life of obedience, and encouraging you in your walk.

- **Three ways to become a member**

a. Baptism. After becoming a follower of Jesus you must be baptized. We practice believer's baptism by immersion.

b. Transfer of Letter. If you are a member of another Baptist church then you may transfer your membership to Grace.

c. Statement. If you are a follower of Jesus and have been scripturally baptized you may request membership by statement. This is usually necessary if we are unable to obtain a Letter of Transfer.

- **Process**

To begin the process just talk to your mentor or the Pastor. Once approved you will be voted into membership by the Leadership Team and at the Annual Church Conference.