

The Detroit Church of Christ Study Series (2006)

"I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ." Philemon 6

Our faith is so valuable (1 Peter 1: 7). Yet only in sharing our faith can we fully appreciate its value. The goal of this study series is to help us share that faith in an effective and powerful way by conveying the truth of God's word. Obviously, there are other studies and scriptures that we can use, but this study was put together to provide the basics of true biblical conversion. The material in the Appendix is given to provide resources to deepen the convictions of new (and older) disciples in many important areas of life as a disciple.

The primary source of this study series is the original First Principles series of the International Church of Christ. There were other contributions from various resources throughout the churches and from other knowledgeable sources as well. We want to thank the Greater Las Vegas Church of Christ for their study series, upon which this was based. Our intent is to create a new compilation of studies free of copyright, that may be used by all disciples without any special permission.

Remember that sharing our faith is not only teaching the scriptures. Studying the Bible with our friends involves love, sharing not only the gospel but our lives as well (1 Thessalonians 2:8). A huge part of studying with others effectively is also setting a personal example of repentance, not hypocrisy. We hope that all the disciples will continually experience the delight of sharing their faith and their lives to those that they love.

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The Love of God

Who is God?

| | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|---|
| <u>Genesis 1: 1</u> | - God is the creator | - We were created in God's image (Psalm 139:14) |
| <u>1 John 4:7-8</u> | - Love comes from God | - God is love |
| <u>Hebrews 1:1-3</u> | - Jesus is God | - He is the exact representation of God |

How does God love us?

| | | |
|-------------------------|---|--|
| <u>Hebrews 2: 14-18</u> | - Jesus became like one of us | - He shared in our temptations and struggles |
| <u>Romans 5:6-11</u> | - God allowed Jesus to die for our sins | - He wants to have a personal relationship with us |

How should we respond?

| | | |
|---------------------------|---|--|
| <u>1 John 4:19-21</u> | - Love God back | - Get into fellowship with God's people |
| <u>Jeremiah 29: 11-13</u> | - Understand that God has a plan for our lives | - He will listen to our prayers |
| | - We will find God if we seek Him with all our heart | |
| <u>Acts 17:24-27</u> | - God sets the times and places for people | |
| | - God gives us a choice to seek a relationship with Him | |
| <u>1 John 5:3</u> | - To love God is to obey His Word | - Obedience is the right response to God's grace |

Practical Application - Begin by prioritizing your schedule to study the Bible every week

Memory Verses: Jer 29:11; 1 John 4:21

The Word of God

Facts about the Bible:

- Over 40 authors of 66 different books within the Bible - Written in 3 languages - Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek
- Approximately 400 prophecies regarding Jesus in Old Testament fulfilled in New Testament
- Over 1500 years period of writing
- Not one archaeological find has ever contradicted the Word. Many have supported it.
- There are more ancient copies of the Bible than any other ancient manuscript

The Purposes of God's Word:

- Romans 10: 17 - It helps us to develop faith
- 1 Timothy 4: 16 - It is crucial for salvation - we need the right life and the right doctrine
- 2 Timothy 3:16-17 - All scripture in the Bible is inspired by God
- It is useful and is applicable to our lives and equips us for good work

The Power of God's Word

- John 8:31-32 - If we hold on to Word, it will set us free - Intellectual belief is not enough
- 2 Peter 1:20-21 - The scriptures did not originate from man's own ideas
- The Holy Spirit inspired the men who wrote the books of the Bible
- Hebrews 4: 12-13 - The Word is relevant today - It penetrates to the deepest part of our lives - it will hurt

The Priority of God's Word

- Mark 7:1-13 - Traditions & culture cannot supercede God's Word
- Priority over people's opinions (pastors, ministers, parents, friends, denominations, etc.)
- Acts 17: 10-12 - We must have the desire and character to check what the Bible says .
- Application - The Berean Challenge: to read the Bible everyday!
- John 12:48 - Why study the Bible? - Ultimately, God's Word will judge us

Memory Verses: John 8:31-32; 2 Timothy 3:16-17

Discipleship

The word "disciple" and its variations occur nearly 300 times in the four gospels and the book of Acts. Jesus dearly called people to be his disciples. In fact, the word "Christian" was initially a derogatory term given to the "followers of Christ" (Acts 11: 19-26).

The Call to Discipleship

- Mark 1:14-18
 - At the beginning of Jesus' ministry he called his first disciples to follow him
 - He gave them a vision for their lives
 - The new disciples responded with great eagerness
- Mark 12:28-31
 - Called to love God with all our heart, mind, soul, strength
 - And to love others as ourselves
- Luke 11:1-4
 - Need to learn how to pray - developing a relationship with God
 - Basics of prayer: worship, expressing physical needs, humility and openness

The Cost of Discipleship

- Luke 9:23-26
 - "If any man"... The same standard for everyone - This is the commitment of a disciple
 - Foundational heart of self-denial for Christ - denying sins in our lives
- Luke 14:25-33
 - "Hate" is the comparative difference between two loves
 - Lifelong relationship with Jesus - faithful follower to the end
 - Everything is second to Jesus - people, things, careers, and self

The Mission of a Disciple

- John 13:34-35
 - Loving one another is a true mark of a disciple
 - We need to love as Jesus loves, not according to our own standard.
- Matthew 28: 18-20
 - Jesus' commandment had three parts
 - Disciples go and make disciples of all nations
 - Baptize disciples
 - Continue to teach disciples to obey everything he had commanded them
 - He will be with the disciples till the very end of the age

Practical Application - Am I a disciple? What do I need to do to become one?

Memory Verses: John 13:34-35; Mat 28:18-20; Mat 22:37-39

Kingdom of God

What is the Kingdom of God? (for example see: Mat 21:43; Mark 4:26-32) Jesus told many parables comparing various things to the Kingdom of God. So, what is it? When did it come on earth? Read on!!

Old Testament predictions of the Kingdom

(The height of Israel's glory was under the kingship of David, around 1000BC)

- A Isaiah 2: 1-4 (750 BC) - Last days - All nations - Jerusalem
- B Daniel 2:31-45 (500 BC) - Daniel interprets the King's dream. Empires identified:
 1. Babylonian: Gold
 2. Medo-Persian: silver
 3. Alexander the Great (Greeks): Bronze
 4. Roman: iron (iron and clay)
 - Rock - cut out by God - Rock becomes huge mountain that fills the whole earth
 - During 4th Kingdom (Rome) God will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed (v.44)

New Testament Predictions of the Kingdom [Look for – is the Kingdom here yet?]

C. John the Baptist (25 AD.)

- His main message: the Kingdom is near (Matthew 3:1-6) [not here yet – just near]

D. Jesus (30 AD)

- Jesus' first message: Kingdom is near (Mat 4:17) [not here yet]
- Kingdom will come with power, in lifetime of some of the disciples (Mark 9: 1) [time limit]
- Kingdom entered by new birth (John 3: 1-7)
- This kingdom is different: it is a Spiritual kingdom, within you (Luke 17:20-21)
- (Matthew 16: 13-19) Peter has the keys, petros = pebble = Peter; vs petra = cliff = truth that Jesus is the son of God. (1 Cor 3:11) [not here yet – still future]
- Joseph of Arimathea still waiting for kingdom when Jesus died (Luke 23:50-51) [still future]
- Repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached first in Jerusalem to all nations (Luke 24:46-47) [kingdom not here yet]

Fulfillment of Old and New Testament Predictions - Acts 1-2 (33 AD.)

E Kingdom predicted to come during the last days (Acts 2: 17) – fulfils Isaiah 2:2

F All nations (Acts 2:5) – fulfills Isaiah 2:2; Luke 24:47

G Jerusalem (Acts 2:5) – fulfills Isaiah 2:3; Luke 24:44-49

H Eternal Kingdom (Acts 2:37-42) – fulfills Daniel 2:31-45

I Lifetime of “some” of apostles (Acts 1:18-19) – fulfills Mark 9:1; (Date of coming on Earth approx 33 AD)

J Came with power (Acts 1:8, Acts 2:1-4) – fulfills Mark 9:1

K Enter through new birth (Acts 2:38) - Water and Spirit (John 3:1-7)

L Kingdom is within (Acts 2:37) – recall Luke 17:20-21

M Peter has the keys (Acts 2:14,38) – fulfills Matthew 16:19

N Repentance and forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38) – recall Luke 24:44-49

Conclusion

O. **The church is the part of the kingdom of God that is on Earth;** started ~33 A.D.

P. Acts 2:42 - As citizens in God's kingdom we must be devoted to our times together:

- Apostles Teaching - Fellowship - Breaking Bread -Prayer

Practical Application: - (Mat 6:33) Seek his kingdom first; be active and giving at all possible “meetings of the body of Christ” (Col 1:17), Sunday, midweek, small group meetings, retreats, seminars, discipling times

Memory Verses: Acts 2:38, Mat 6:33

Light and Darkness

- 1 Peter 2:9-10

| | |
|--|--|
| Darkness Not a people of God No Mercy | Light People of God Mercy |
| Lost Not a Christian Not a disciple | Saved Christian Disciple |

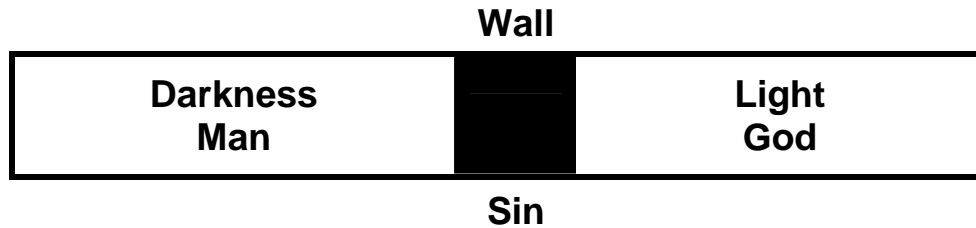
Every person is either in the darkness or in the light. There is no twilight zone. Where are you?

Darkness

What is the consequence of our sins?

- Isaiah 59: 1-2

- Sin separates us from God



- Romans 6:23

- The consequence of sin is eternal separation from God

Where does sin come from?

- Mark 7:20-23

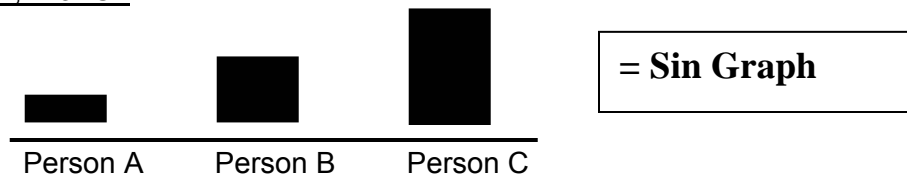
- Sin comes from within our own hearts;
- we cannot blame our environment, upbringing or society
- there are over 30 such sin lists in the NT alone

Who has sinned?

- Romans 3:23-25

- Everyone!
- A lesser degree of sin cannot save us - all are lost
- Only through faith in Jesus can one be saved

Who is more lost? A, B or C?



Answer: All equally lost!!

What is sin?

- Galatians 5:19-21

- Sins of commission (See Appendix D)

- 2 Timothy 3: 1-5

- Sins of the heart

- James 4: 17

- Sins of omission, apathy

Light

- John 3:1-7

- We must be "born again" - Of water and the Spirit

What must we believe?

- Genesis 6:5-6

- God sees our sins

- Sins hurt God deeply

- Acts 2:22-24

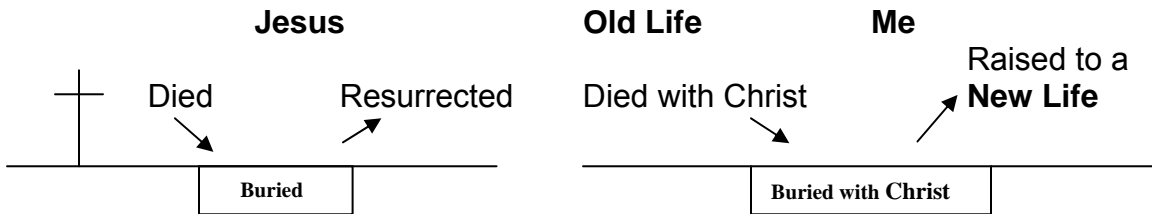
- Jesus is from God

- Jesus went to the cross for our sins

- Jesus was raised physically from the dead

How do we need to respond?

- Acts 2:36-38
 - Cut to the heart - we need to see our sin through God's eyes
 - Willingness to change and a deep desire to get right with God
 - Repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of sins.
- 2 Corinthians 7:8-13
 - "Repent" in Greek means to turn, a change of mind
 - Godly sorrow brings repentance while worldly sorrow brings death
- Romans 6: 1-4
 - Respond with Baptism
 - Baptized into Christ
 - "baptized" in Greek means to be immersed (not sprinkled, poured or dipped)
 - Participation in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ



- 1 John 1:5-10
 - Walk in the light (life of openness and honesty)
 - True Christian fellowship begins with openness with God and one another
 - When we take responsibility for our sins, God will forgive and purify us

Practical Application - Find personal time to think, reflect, and pray - Write out a list of your personal sins

Memory Verses: Romans 3:23, James 5:16

Repentance

Who needs to repent?

- 2 Peter 3:8-12 - God wants everyone to come to repentance & NOT perish

What is repentance (and what is it Not)?

Our English word "repent" (as used in Acts 2:38) comes from the Greek: μετανοέω = metanoēō - pronounced: *met-an-o-eh'-o* Definition = **to think differently or afterwards, that is, reconsider** => has been widely misinterpreted as a need to pay or be punished or feel pain to atone for past sins. Early Latin translators (wrongly) translated the word into the Latin "*penitentium agite*", from which the concept of "do penance" (acts done to pay for your sins) comes from. Other words derived from this Latin are "pain" and "penitentiary" (jail). This is a **Wrong translation!!** True translation of original Greek word involves a straining forward toward a changed and refreshing future, not a regretful wallowing in the past.

- Acts 26:19-21
 - Repentance is a decision, change of heart & mind
 - Involves turning to God
 - Involves turning away from all sin
 - is shown by action following the decision
 - Why need to "prove repentance"? A: Many who claim repentance are lying. No fruit!
 - can be done in a moment, but effects last a lifetime
 - v21: Most religious people will hate the preaching of true repentance

Questions:

- 1: Have you ever had a significant change in your behavior? Ever had a time when others noticed that you act differently?
- 2: Are you eager to do the will of God or do you have to be coaxed and pushed?

3: Do you have God's attitude about sin? = a radical aversion

All three questions must be yes in order to have repented.

4: Have you ever biblically repented? - see the following scriptures to make it more clear.

2 Corinthians 7:10-11

What is your reaction to a call to leave your sin forever?

| Godly Sorrow | Vs | Worldly Sorrow |
|--|-----------|--|
| No regret, no harm in any way | Vs | Regret, feel harmed, feel pushed |
| Eagerness to clear yourself, earnestness | Vs | Reluctance, not ready, not serious |
| Indignation, alarm, longing, concern | Vs | Hard to see any change in behavior |
| Ready to see justice, not afraid of punishment | Vs | Not ready for exposure, controlled by fear |
| God's intent | Vs | Not God's intent |
| Leads to repentance | Vs | Doesn't lead to repentance |
| Leads to salvation | Vs | Leads to death |

Matthew 5:29-30 - radical attitude about sin: cut it off!! God's attitude about sin – deal with it drastically
 - World's attitude about sin = "OK in moderation", no clear "right & wrong"

Ephesians 4:17,20-24 - Put off your old life - put on a new life - don't live any more like the rest of the world
 - its all about your attitude!! Take off the old attitude & put on new attitude.
 - takes faith and the power of God
 - We become a new creation – like God in true righteousness, not just outward

Final Question: Have you biblically repented?

Memory Verses: Luke 13:5; Acts 26:20; 2 Cor 7:10-11

The Cross of Jesus

(Please see – and read - the Passion Account - which is the first article in the Appendix)

- Matthew 26:31-28:10

Physical Death of Jesus

- Read the medical account Jesus' death
- Although cruel, crucifixion was not rare at the time. Many died this way.
- The difference, Jesus was crucified for us, not for his own sin.

Personal Responsibility

- Romans 3:21-24 - We are all sinners - We can only be justified through God's grace on the cross
 - Put our faith in Jesus' blood
- Isaiah 53:1-6 - God had already planned for Jesus to die
 - Jesus willingly suffered for our sins
 - God laid on Jesus the consequence of our sins
- Acts 2:36-37 - People were convicted by the message of the cross
 - They took personal responsibility and expressed a desire to get right with God with great urgency

Practical Application - Get the person you are studying with to talk about and confess their sins

Memory Verses: Matthew 26:39; 1 Peter 2:24

The Church

What is the Church?

- Colossians 1:15-18
 - Jesus is the head of the body
 - The body of Christ is the church
 - Church is translated from the common Greek word ekklesia for “assembly”
 - In the New Testament, “church” is mostly used in a spiritual sense as the assembly of God’s people both eternally and locally
- Ephesians 2:19-22
 - The church is God’s family
 - God’s church must be built on the foundation of His Word
 - Jesus as chief cornerstone: built on faith in Him & His Word

Church Membership

- Ephesians 4:3-6
 - There is only one body in God’s eyes
 - We must strive to keep the unity
- 1 Corinthians 12:12-20 (Romans 6:3-4)
 - Entrance through one baptism
 - There are no racial or economic distinction
 - We are all valued in God’s church
 - We need each other and belong to each other

What was the early church like?

- Acts 2:42-47
 - Devoted to God’s Word and to the fellowship daily
 - Met together for Communion and prayer
 - They met each other’s needs
 - God added to their numbers
- Ephesians 5:1-10
 - As God’s children we are to live a life of love
 - Purity in the church – at times a need for church discipline (Acts 5: 1-11)
 - We must learn how to please God
- 1 Corinthians 1:10-12
 - God expects a unified family in the church
 - Denominations and divisions are forbidden

Church Responsibilities

- 1 Peter 4:8-11: Ministry of the Local Church (i.e. shared responsibilities of all disciples)
 - Teaching each other (Romans 15:14)
 - Encouraging each other (Hebrews 10:24, 25; Hebrews 3:12-14)
 - Benevolence (1 John 3:16-18)
 - Evangelism: Go into all the world (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16)
 - Conflict Resolution (Matthew 18:15-20)
 - Financial support of the fellowship (2 Corinthians 9:6-8, 1 Corinthians 16:1-2)
 - Respecting leadership and those who lead (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13, Hebrews 13:7, 17, 24)
- Ephesians 3:10-12
 - Through the church, the world will see the many-sided wisdom and glory of God
 - The church represents God’s eternal purpose for man

Practical Application - Go through these scriptures and get a personal conviction about God’s standard for your life

Memory Verses: Hebrews 10:24-25, Hebrews 3:12-13

False Doctrines of Conversion

1. Review the Major Conversions in Acts:

A. Conversions

1. [Acts 2:36-47](#) First Christians in Jerusalem
2. [Acts 8:26-39](#) Ethiopian Eunuch
3. [Acts 16:22-34](#) Philippian jailer and his family
4. [Acts 9:1-22](#) Paul
[Acts 22:3-16](#) Paul
5. [Acts 18:24-26](#) Apollos
6. [Acts 19:1-5](#) Ephesians

B. Questions concerning Conversions

1. What was preached?
2. What was their response to the message?
3. How long did they take to make the decision?
4. What was their life like after baptism?

2. Bible Answers to Common False Doctrines About Conversion:

A. "Pray Jesus into your heart":

This is a common doctrine of conversion in evangelical churches such as Baptist and Bible churches. This phrase is never mentioned in the Bible. People may use [Revelation 3:20](#) about Jesus knocking at the door, however, you must examine this Scripture in context. This scripture does not teach lost people how to become a Christian and be saved, but saved people to come back to God after becoming lukewarm. It is addressed to disciples who already responded to Christ in faith, repentance, confession and baptism.

B. "Accept Jesus into your heart":

(same teaching as praying Jesus into your heart-just different terminology.) Based on [Romans 10:9](#). You must look at this scripture in context. Paul is addressing the problem of the Israelites: the main obstacle in their relationship with God was unbelief that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God. Read further on to [Romans 10:13](#). When do you call on the name of the Lord? At baptism ([Acts 22:16](#)).

C. Infant baptism:

A baby cannot have faith, and since we are baptized through faith in the power of God ([Colossians 2:12](#)), babies don't need baptism. Connected to false doctrine of "original sin": [Ezekiel 18:20](#) teaches: each person is responsible for his/her own actions and will be judged accordingly.

D. "Baptism does not save you":

[1 Peter 3:21](#) says that baptism **does** save you through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. [Acts 2:38](#) teaches that sin is forgiven at baptism-one is saved at the point sin is forgiven.

E. "Baptism is a work – it can't save you because we are not saved by works, but by faith":

([Ephesians 2:8-9](#)): [Colossians 2:9-15](#) teaches we are saved by faith-in the working of God at baptism.

F. "Baptism is an outward sign of an inward grace": (This phrase is not in the Bible)

[Romans 6:2-4](#) states that baptism is an actual participation in the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. It is not merely an outward sign, seal or symbol of a forgiveness that already happened internally. See also [Acts 22:16](#); There is no "inward grace" (forgiveness) until ones sins are washed away at baptism.

G. "Baptism isn't important, after all, look at what Paul said about it in 1 Corinthians 1:17":

Paul does not diminish the importance of baptism here. (Paul himself was baptized to have his sins forgiven in [Acts 22:16](#).) In context (read [1 Corinthians 1:10-17](#)), he makes the point that he does not want people following men (denominationalism). It doesn't matter **who** baptizes you, but it does matter that you get baptized! You are not a better disciple if you were baptized by an apostle.

H. **"The thief on the cross was not baptized and Jesus told him that they would see each other in paradise"**: Jesus on the cross had not died yet, and baptism is participating in his death ([Romans 6:2-4](#)). On earth, Jesus had the power to forgive sins personally, without baptism ([Matthew 9:2-6](#)).

I. **"Believers baptism"**: (This doctrine involves baptism as an adult, but is **not** done with the understanding that I am being saved at this point in time)

This is not the baptism of the Bible ([John 3:5](#), [Acts 2:38](#)). It doesn't work for me to get baptized first and later come to an understanding of what I did. See [Colossians 2:6-15](#). How is this different than saying that since I went swimming in a pool when I was younger (I believed in God and I was immersed in water) I have been baptized and am therefore saved? Baptism occurs when I am immersed in water, understanding that I am lost and separated from God, and that when I come up out of the water my sins will now be forgiven and I will be raised to a new life. [Hebrews 12:1](#) explains that in order to have faith we must be **sure of what we are hoping for**, and certain of the things happening that we don't see with our eyes (such as forgiveness of sins!). The Colossians passage says that it is faith with understanding that God's power is working **at the moment of baptism** that makes it a baptism of forgiveness, not a normal swim in the pool.

Memory Verses: Galatians 1:8; 2 Timothy 2:15; Colossians 2:12

Lordship

Jesus is Lord

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|----------------|
| - Philippians 2:3-11 | - Jesus came in love and humility | - Jesus is God |
| | - All will confess Him as Lord one day | |
| - Acts 2:36-37 | - First sermon in the Church era | |
| | - Peter taught Jesus as Lord and Christ | |
| | - The Greek word for Lord used here is "master" | |
| | - The people's attitude was one of surrender | |

Lord of Our Lives

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|--|--|
| - Luke 6:46-49 | - Put Jesus' words into practice | |
| | - Not an emotional relationship with God but one rooted in His Word | |
| | - The downpour will come – we will go through many struggles | |
| - Luke 14:28-33 | - Jesus advises us to count the cost and make sure our decision is solid | |
| | - No looking back if we decide to make Jesus Lord | |
| | - Lord of all or not Lord at all | |

Lord of Our Mission

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| - Matthew 28:18-20 | - Jesus commanded us to make disciples of all nations |
| | - We are to obey everything and teach others likewise |

Some other Areas under the Lordship of Jesus

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Relationship with God - Revelation 3: 14-18• Relationship with one another - John 13:34-35• Finances – Matthew 6:19-24• Priorities – Matthew 6: 31-34• Thoughts – 2 Corinthians 10:5• Devotion – 1 Peter 1:13-16 Holiness means being set apart for God |
|--|

Practical Application – Are you willing to make Jesus Lord in every area of your life? Set a time to be baptized.

Memory Verses: 2 Corinthians 10:5; Luke 6:46

A Medical Account of the Crucifixion

Simplified and Amended

This is a simplified medical account of Jesus' crucifixion (an adaptation of the Davis' version). Other medical reports have been written, all useful but usually rather technical. This account aims to be accessible to the average reader. Douglas Jacoby created this adaptation, with the assistance of Alex Mnatzaganian, in December 1989.

Hanging, electrocution, knee-capping, gas chamber; these punishments are feared. They all happen today, and we shudder as we think of the horror and pain. But as we shall see, these ordeals pale into insignificance compared with the bitter fate of Jesus Christ: crucifixion. No one is crucified today. For us the cross remains confined to ornaments, jewelry, stained-glass windows, and romanticized pictures and statues portraying a serene death. Crucifixion was a form of execution refined by the Romans to a precise art. It was carefully conceived to produce a slow death with maximum pain. It was a public spectacle intended to deter other would-be criminals. It was a death to be feared.

SWEAT LIKE BLOOD

Luke 22:44 says of Jesus, "and being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground." His sweat was unusually intense because his emotional state was unusually intense. Dehydration, coupled with exhaustion, further weakened him.

BEATING

It was in this condition that Jesus faced the first physical abuse: punches and slaps to the face and head while blindfolded. Unable to anticipate the blows, Jesus was badly bruised, his mouth and eyes possibly injured. The psychological effects of the false trials should not be underestimated. Consider that Jesus faced them bruised, dehydrated, exhausted and possibly in shock.

FLOGGING

In the previous twelve hours Jesus had suffered emotional trauma, rejection by his closest friends, a cruel beating and a sleepless night, during which he had to walk miles between unjust hearings. Despite the fitness he must certainly have gained during his travels in Palestine, he was in no way prepared for the punishment of flogging. The effects of the crucifixion would be worse as a result. A man to be flogged was stripped of his clothes and his hands tied to a post above his head. He was then whipped across the shoulders, back, buttocks, thighs and legs, the soldier standing behind and to one side of the victim. The whip used, known as the flagellum, was designed to make this a devastating punishment, bringing the victim close to death. It consisted of several short, heavy leather thongs, with two small balls of lead or iron attached near the end of each. Pieces of sheep's bone were sometimes included. As the scourging proceeded, the heavy leather thongs produced first superficial cuts, then deeper damage to underlying tissues. Bleeding became severe when not only capillaries and veins were cut, but also arteries in the underlying muscles. The small metal balls first produced large, deep bruises that were broken open by further blows. The fragments of sheep bone ripped the flesh as the whip was drawn back. When the beating was finished, the skin of the back was in ribbons and the entire area torn and bleeding. The words chosen by the gospel writers suggest that the scourging of Jesus was particularly severe: he was certainly at the point of collapse when he was cut down from the flogging post.

THE MOCKING

Jesus was allowed no time to recover before facing his next ordeal. Made to stand, he was dressed in a robe by jeering soldiers, crowned with a twisted band of thorny twigs and, to complete the parody, given a wooden staff as a king's scepter. Next they spat on Jesus and struck him on the head with the wooden staff. The long thorns were driven into the sensitive scalp tissue, producing profuse bleeding. Even more terrible was the reopening of the wounds on Jesus' back when the robe was torn off again. Further weakened physically and emotionally, Jesus was led away to be executed.

THE CRUCIFIXION

The wooden cross used by the Romans was too heavy to be carried by one man. Instead, the victim to be crucified was made to bear the detached crossbar across his shoulders, carrying it outside the city walls to the place of execution. There the heavy upright portion of the cross was permanently in position. Jesus was unable to carry his load . a beam weighing approximately seventy-five to one hundred twenty-five pounds (35-55 kilograms). He collapsed under the burden, and an onlooker was ordered to take it for him. Jesus refused to drink the wine and myrrh offered him before the nails were driven in, which would have dulled the pain.

Thrown down on his back with arms outstretched along the crossbar, nails were driven through Jesus' wrists into the wood. These iron spikes, about six inches long and three-eighths of an inch thick, severed the large sensorimotor median nerve, causing excruciating pain in both arms. Carefully placed between bones and ligaments, the spikes were able to bear the full weight of the crucified man. In preparation for the nailing of the feet, Jesus was lifted up and the crossbar fixed to the upright post. Then with legs bent at the knee, a single nail was used to pierce both feet, one foot being placed over the other. Again there was severe nerve damage and the pain caused was intense. It is important to note, however, that neither the wounds to the wrists nor the feet caused substantial bleeding, since no major arteries were ruptured. The executioner took care to ensure this in order that death would be slower and the suffering longer. Now nailed to his cross, the real horror of crucifixion began. When the wrists were nailed to the crossbar, the elbows were intentionally left in a bent position so that the crucified man would hang with his arms above his head, the weight being taken on the nails in the wrists. Obviously this was unbearably painful, but it had another effect: It is very difficult to exhale in this position. In order to breathe out and then to take in fresh air, it was necessary to push the body up on the nailed feet. When the pain from the feet became unbearable, the victim would again slump down to hang by the arms. A terrible cycle of pain began. Hanging by the arms, unable to breathe, pushing up on the feet to inhale quickly

before again slumping down, and on and on. This tortured activity became more and more difficult as Jesus' back scraped against the upright post, as muscle cramps set in because of the inadequate respiration, and as exhaustion grew more severe. Jesus suffered in this manner for several hours until, with a final cry, he died.

CAUSE OF DEATH

Many factors contributed to Jesus' death. A combination of shock and suffocation killed most victims of crucifixion. In Jesus' case, however, acute heart failure may have been the final trauma. This is suggested by the loud cry, followed by his sudden death, after only a few hours . sooner than expected, it would seem, as Pilate was surprised to find Jesus already dead. A fatal cardiac arrhythmia, or perhaps cardiac rupture, are likely possibilities.

THE SPEAR WOUND

As the executioners broke the legs of the criminals crucified alongside him (in order to speed their deaths), Jesus was already dead. Instead, we read that a soldier pierced Jesus' side with a spear. Where on his side? The Greek wording in the Gospel of John suggests the ribs, and if the soldier intended to make Jesus' death certain, a wound to the heart was the obvious choice.

From the wound came a flow of blood and water. (John 19:34). This is consistent with the spear blow to the heart, especially from the right side, the traditional site of the wound. Rupturing the pericardium (the sac surrounding the heart) released a flow of watery serum followed by blood as the heart was pierced.

CONCLUSION

The detailed accounts given in the Gospels, combined with the historical evidence on crucifixion, bring us to a firm conclusion: modern medical knowledge supports the claim of the Scriptures that Jesus died on the cross.

NOTES

Douglas Jacoby, Ph.D., *Shining Like Stars*. Woburn, Mass.: Discipleship Publications International, 2000.

C. Truman Davis, M.D., M.S., *The Passion of Christ from a Medical Point of View*,. Arizona Medicine, March 1965.

BIBLE HISTORY

1. The word Bible comes, through Latin, from the Greek word biblia, meaning "books," which in its turn comes from byblos, meaning "papyrus," the material from which books were made.
2. We are used to speaking of the Bible as "a book," but in fact it is a collection of books, of different authorship and written at different times, by 40 or so different men to make up the Bible as we know it.
3. The word canon, meaning "a rule," denotes the list of books that are considered to be the authoritative collection.
4. 1400-400 BCE: This is the period that the Old Testament was written and which the writers lived. There are 39 books in the OT.
5. 285 BCE: The Hebrew (OT) scriptures were translated into Greek. The completed translation is known as the "Septuagint," from the Latin word for 70 (72 scholars in 70 days). This version was very popular with the early church as well as the Jews outside Palestine who no longer spoke Hebrew.
6. 50-90 CE: The New Testament was written during this time period.
7. 95 CE: The historian Josephus identified the Old Testament canon (works officially accepted as scripture) as the 39 books we have now. Some people believe Ezra had collected them all as early as the 5th century BCE.
8. 397 CE: A meeting of church leaders known as the Council of Carthage acknowledged the 27 books of the New Testament as we know them. Most of the books had already been treated as scripture for many years, but a half dozen or so warranted further discussion and final approval.
9. 400 CE: The entire Bible was translated into Latin, primarily by Saint Jerome. This version is known as the "Vulgate," meaning, "written in the language of the people." (In the west, Latin was the language of the people.)
10. The Early and High Middle Ages (the 5th through the 14th centuries). Intense scholarship and study took place during this time, but little in the way of Bible translation. The Bible of the Christian Church was still the Vulgate.
11. 1380 CE: An English theologian named John Wycliffe began a translation of the Bible into English. The project was completed by friends after his death.
12. 1456 CE: The Gutenberg Bible was printed. It was an edition of the Vulgate, significant as the first major work printed with movable type.
13. 1525-1530 CE: William Tyndale, a scholar in the reform movement, translated the New Testament and the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Old Testament) into English despite persecution. He was martyred before he could complete the Old Testament.
14. 1548 CE: Members of the Council of Trent voted to accept the 12 books of the Apocrypha as part of the Biblical canon - a decision that was rejected by the reform movement.
15. 1611 CE: King James I of England commissioned a translation of the Bible that would become the primary Bible of the English-speaking people for more than 300 years - the King James Version.
16. 1782 CE: The first English Bible was printed in America. It was known as the Aitken Bible.
17. 1881-1884 CE: A group of English and American scholars assembled to translate The Revised Version of the Bible, using manuscripts that had not been available at the printing of the King James Bible.
18. 1900-1901 CE: The American Standard Version of the Bible was translated.
19. 1947 CE: The Dead Sea Scrolls were found in the caves of Qumran. The scrolls have been confirmed to be a thousand years older than any existing Hebrew manuscript. When the existing Hebrew manuscripts were checked against the earlier ones, the faithfulness of the text was confirmed.
20. 1978 CE: The New International Version of the Bible was completed.

HISTORICAL MANUSCRIPTS AND EVIDENCES OF THE BIBLE

The "originals" have been lost, but that is no reason to fear. The "originals" of nearly every work from ancient history have been lost - but copies have been made, for the most part by very careful copyists. Whenever there is a difference between a copy and another, historians do their very best to reconstruct the original version accurately.

The Transmission of Various Ancient Manuscripts

| Author | Date | Oldest Copy | Interval | # Of Copies |
|---------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|
| Aristophanes | 400 BC | 900 AD | 1300 years | 45 |
| Aristotle | 340 BC | 1100 AD | 1440 years | 5 |
| Demosthenes | 300 BC | 1100 AD | 1400 years | 200 |
| Julius Caesar | 50 BC | 900 AD | 950 years | 10 |
| Herodotus | 435 BC | 900 AD | 1335 years | 8 |
| Homer | 800 BC | 100 AD | 900 years | 643 |
| Plato | 360 BC | 800 AD | 1160 years | 15 |
| Sophocles | 415 BC | 1000 AD | 1415 years | 7 |
| Thucydides | 410 BC | 900 AD | 1310 years | 8 |
| Old Testament | 1500-500 BC | 200 BC | 200-400 years | 1,000 |
| New Testament | 50-90 AD | 325 AD | 250 years | 5,000 |

Despite the long intervals between the time of the original texts and the oldest surviving copies, historians do not conclude that these writings are "unreliable" or "corrupt." If we refuse to accept the reliable transmission of the Bible, we would logically have to reject almost everything else from ancient history!

The New Testament is supported by more manuscripts than the Old Testament, but both are extremely well attested. Included are some facts about the Bible:

- Most of the New Testament was written between 50 and 70 AD.
- The earliest fragment of a New Testament manuscript dates from 100 AD. It's from the gospel of John, which was written a generation or two earlier.
- Manuscripts of entire books of the New Testament date from 200 AD.
- The oldest copy of the complete New Testament dates from 325 AD, a gap of only 250 years, compared with gaps of four or five times as long (1000 years or so) for most works of classical authors.
- The gap for most Old Testament books, for comparison, is as little as 200-400 years.
- There are more than 5000 ancient Greek copies alone of the Old Testament.
- The most significant Biblical find of the century is undoubtedly the Dead Sea Scrolls. They were discovered in 1947 next to the Dead Sea not far from Jerusalem. The scrolls contain many religious writings, including partial or complete Biblical texts from every book of the Old Testament dating back to the 3rd century BC. Before this incredible discovery, the oldest surviving manuscripts were from a thousand years later! Their significance for establishing the accuracy of the Biblical text obviously cannot be underestimated!
- Including ancient copies in other languages, there are more than 40,000 complete and partial manuscripts of the New Testament.
- In addition, there are tens of thousands of quotations from the New Testament made by early writers, almost all of which date earlier than the oldest surviving NT manuscripts. Thus, even if all our NT manuscripts were lost, it would not be difficult to reconstruct most of the NT from these references.

SINS OF GALATIANS 5:19-21

Sexual immorality: Fornication, any sexual union outside of marriage. Denotes ungodly sexual acts and relationships; prostitution, rape, homosexuality, petting, adultery, child abuse, bestiality.

Impurity: Any sinful thinking. Anything vulgar, wrong thoughts, lust, masturbation, wrong motives, pornography, fantasy.

Debauchery: Any misuse of the body. Usually referring to sexual excesses, but in general, refers to a readiness to indulge in any pleasure (indecent, lewd dancing, etc). There is no respect for anyone else. In this state, man is at the mercy of his passions, impulses, emotions, etc. He is completely undisciplined (i.e. gives in to gluttony, laziness, smoking, cravings, masturbation, unlimited pleasure.)

Idolatry: Worshipping anything other than God. Giving or devoting one's time, substance, talents, and/or self to anything that keeps one from obeying and following God in every way (i.e. status symbols, investments, engrossing sports or hobbies, selfish ambitions, relationships, property, possessions, pleasure and wants, school, work, pride). Praying to anyone other than God, Jesus or the Holy Spirit.

Witchcraft: Seeking or being involved in any spiritual realm other than God's. Includes astrology (i.e. the stars control; consequently, God does not rule), horoscopes, Satan worship, the occult, magic spells, good luck charms or pictures, praying to saints, drug use, tarot cards, palm reading, channeling (the New Age movement), Ouiji board, etc.

Hatred: Wishing ill or harm on anyone. Looking down on anyone, bitter feelings, resentment, and wanting revenge. Murder and abortion.

Discord: Anything that breaks up relationships. Stirring up trouble, an inability to get along with people, arguing, slander, gossip, malicious talk and criticalness.

Jealousy: Possessiveness, not sharing.

Fits of rage: Uncontrolled anger, losing your temper, temper tantrums, quick temper, angry shouting, cursing and profanity, fighting.

Selfish ambition: Living to please self. Wanting one's own way, getting what one wants at any cost, desiring to be first at any cost, overly competitive spirit. Not willing to do menial or demeaning tasks, refusing to admit being wrong, arrogance, doing things for honor or glory, wanting to look good for others, refusing to compromise, pride, selfishness, and independence.

Dissent: Rebelling against authority. Not submitting. Habitually disagreeing, arguing, causing division, starting arguments, stirring up trouble.

Factions: Feeling superior to others. Cliques, refusing to associate with anyone because they are different or for any other reason. Wanting to be with "own" kind, prejudice, bigotry, and racism.

Envy: Desiring something another person has while wishing that they did not have it at all. (i.e., wealth, status, ability, physical features, spirituality, relationships).

Drunkenness: Anything that causes one to lose control. Intoxication, alcohol, drug abuse.

Orgies: Living without restraint. Includes "partying," sexual parties, unrestrained sex, vandalism, carousing.

And the like: Lying, stealing, cheating, deceit, etc.

Definition of sin:

Commission — Breaking God's laws. (1 John 3:4). Sin is lawlessness, going beyond God's boundary. Sin is doing wrong.

Omission — Sin is not doing right. Not doing the good we are asked by God to do. (James 4:17) (Ex: evangelism, discipleship, service, contribution, attendance, quiet times, prayer, Bible study)

JESUS I

Introduction

- Ask them if they had a chance to review the notes from last time or think about seeking God more.
- Inspire them about really understanding the truth about God.
- The best way to really know and seek God is to understand Jesus. Jesus had one purpose in his life - to help people know God.
- What do you know about Jesus already? Let's look at what the Bible says about Jesus.

1. Jesus is a Historical Fact

Luke 1:1-4

- The author: Luke was a physician and noted historian. He wrote the books of Luke and Acts. The book of Acts is well regarded as an accurate history of that period. The book of Luke is also widely admired for its eloquent beauty. It reflects the education of its author.
- Purpose: To show that Luke is an intelligent, thinking man whose writing about Jesus can be trusted.

Luke 2:1-7

- Ask your friend what he sees. Explain the birth of Jesus is a historical event. (For there to be a real historical event, you must have a time, a place, and a name.)
- Time: Caesar Augustus' reign, time of Roman census. Quirinius is governor of Syria.
- Place: Nazareth, Galilee, and Bethlehem (all these towns still exist today).
- Name: Quirinius governor of Syria. Jesus, son of Mary and Joseph would be written in this census.
- If your friend still doesn't believe because he hasn't seen with his eyes, use the example of Alexander the Great. Although we haven't seen him we believe that he existed because we read about him in history books and we can see his accomplishments.
- **Conclusion:** Jesus is a fact of history. Jesus is not a legend or fairy tale. We can learn about Jesus through many witnesses like Matthew, Mark and John. They wrote an orderly account of Jesus. They wrote at different times and all the things written about Jesus match perfectly. Therefore, we are confident that Jesus is a fact in history.
- Even beyond what the Bible says, think of some other things that show Jesus was real:
 - Christmas: Most of the world celebrates his birthday even after 2000 years! Why don't we celebrate Superman's birthday?
 - Calendar: Historians worldwide chose and accepted Jesus as the center of the measurement of time (B.C./A.D.)
- Jesus is a fact in history just like Napoleon or Alexander the Great. There are no historians that question this fact.

2. The Character of Jesus

Jesus was a real man - but what was he like? We could talk for days about all of his great characteristics, but for the sake of time, we will just focus on two for now. We will look at two events that took place in Jesus' life and see what we can learn about his character:

a. John 8:1-11 The Love of Jesus

- What happened here?
- What characteristic of Jesus do you see?
- The LOVE of Jesus! Jesus loves like no one else!
- Love that protects - Jesus stood up to protect this woman from punishment. Jesus said, "If anyone of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her." People began to go away, starting from the old (the older the person, the more sin). No one stoned her because everyone sins. So she was saved.
- Love that forgives - Jesus said, "Then neither do I condemn you." Jesus could have stoned this woman because Jesus had never sinned, but Jesus forgave her.
- Love that challenges - Jesus told her, "Leave your life of sin." We believe that this woman will stop sinning because she almost died as a result of her sin Jesus loved her enough to give her another chance to begin a new life.
- We need to have this kind of love today! What would it be like if everyone loved like this? We need to imitate Jesus' love!

b. John 2:13-17 The Courage of Jesus

- What happened here?
- What characteristic of Jesus do you see?
- The COURAGE of Jesus!

- Jesus was not quiet and religious. When he saw people sinning or doing what was wrong in the eyes of God, he was angry. He didn't lose his temper – he just acted out of his conviction and challenged what was wrong. He was not afraid of what people thought, even though he was only 30 and they were probably over 60! He had courage to stand up for what was right and challenge what was wrong.
- We need this kind of courage in America and in our own lives. Courage to stand up for what is right and challenge what is wrong in others and us.

3:Summary

- Jesus was definitely a real man in history!
- Jesus was amazing in his love and courage.
- When can we get together again to study more about Jesus?

JESUS II

Introduction

- As always, start out by asking if they had a chance to review the notes from last time.
- Ask, "What do you remember from the last time we got together?" Make sure they understand and remember what they have studied before you go on.
- Last time we looked at the human side of Jesus. He was real and had an incredible character. We will look at another side of Jesus even more amazing - his divine side. Specifically, we will look at the spiritual power that Jesus had.

1. Power Over Evil Spirits

Luke 4:31-37

- What happened here?
- We all grow up with such a fear of ghosts (i.e. a scary show on TV).
- We can be so confident with Jesus - only he has authority over all evil spirits.

2. Power Over Sin

Matthew 9:1-8

- What happened here?
- The crowd saw this and believed it was a miracle (They were critics before).
- Only Jesus can forgive sins! And he can forgive all sins!
- He can help you change any sin!
- Wouldn't it be great to have all your sins forgiven?
- (Share from your life how you felt when your sins were forgiven.)

3. Power Over Nature

Matthew 8:23-27

- What happened here?
- These men were fishermen. They grew up on this sea; yet, they were sure they were going to drown.
- They watched Jesus calm the storm instantly, with a word!
- They did not expect Jesus to have this much power, but Jesus convinced them he did!

4. Power to Create Something from Nothing

John 6: 1-13

- Facts: 5 small loaves, 2 small fish, over 5,000 people.
- "Enough to eat" with 12 full baskets left over!
- The point is Jesus can do anything!
- Jesus did many miracles like this during his lifetime. The most amazing thing about his miracles was that no one could deny them - they were clearly, absolutely miracles. Look at some of the ways people responded to the miracles:

John 2:11 The disciples, or followers, believed because they saw the power clearly.

John 3: 1-2 The main critics, the Pharisees, really knew Jesus was from God because of the miracles.

John 6:14 After people saw, they believed.

John 11:45-48 Even the biggest critics knew everyone would believe in Jesus if they saw his miracles.

John 20:30-31 The Bible is written so that we can see enough about Jesus to really believe and know the truth.

Conclusion

- What do you think about Jesus so far?
 - When can we get together again?
-

JESUS III

Introduction

- As always, ask if they reviewed the last study or remember what it was about. Do they have any questions about it?
- Now we will go over the last study about Jesus and by far the most important of them all so far. Let's talk about the greatest event in the life of Jesus – his resurrection from the dead! This is the foundation of the Christian faith.
- We will examine four facts:

1. Jesus Predicted His Suffering, Death, and His Resurrection

Matthew 16:21, Matthew 20:17-19

- Jesus clearly predicted his suffering, death, and resurrection after three days.
- Why would Jesus predict it so specifically, even to the exact day he would rise? If it did not happen, who would ever follow him?
- He knew it would happen.

2. Jesus Suffered and Died, as He Predicted

Matthew 27:26-35 He was tortured and crucified.

John 19: 31-37

- He died.
- He was stabbed with a spear to make sure.
- Lymph and blood came out - a condition only occurring after death.
- If he was not dead, only blood would come out.

3. Jesus Rose from the Dead

John 20: 1-10 Jesus' disciples thought the body was stolen—they didn't really expect him to rise from the dead.

John 20:11-18

- Jesus did rise as predicted.
- Mary did not recognize Jesus for two reasons:
 - 1) She did not expect to see him alive.
 - 2) It was still dark (John 20:1).

John 20:24-29

- Thomas, one of Jesus' disciples, was absent when Jesus appeared before the disciples. He didn't believe at first, so Jesus made it very obvious!
- Today, though we cannot see Jesus, we have the written record of eyewitnesses to believe. (i.e. we cannot see Alexander the Great, but we believe because of the written record of eye-witnesses).

4. The Disciples Changed Dramatically

John 20:19 They were afraid, hiding and discouraged.

Acts 4:1-4, 18-20 They were not hiding anymore—they were full of zeal and courage! Something happened!

Acts 4:20

- They were fully convinced that Jesus rose from the dead. They became strong and very bold.
- 10 of the 11 disciples were killed because of their preaching. One was sentenced to prison on an island for the rest of his life. None of them ever changed their conviction - they truly saw Jesus raised from the dead.

Questions and Summary

If Jesus did not rise from the dead, where would Jesus' dead body be? There are 3 possibilities:

1. Jesus' disciples stole the body.

- Would the disciples believe in Jesus themselves if Jesus predicted that he would die and on the third day rise to life and the prediction did not come true?
- Would the disciples be willing to die for a lie? Many of the disciples were persecuted and martyred.
- Probability = 0%

2. His enemies stole the body.

- If you were Jesus' enemy, you had Jesus' body, and the disciples were preaching that Jesus rose from the dead, how would you refute the disciples' claim?
- Jesus' enemies never had the body. If they did, Christianity would have ended at that time.
- Probability = 0%

3. Jesus rose from the dead.

- At first, the disciples did not believe and were afraid. After Jesus appeared to them, they believed and were not afraid anymore - even death did not stop them from preaching about the resurrection of Jesus.
- Probability = 100%

Was Mary hallucinating when she saw Jesus?

- It is possible that Mary was hallucinating when she saw Jesus.
- However, as we read in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, all 11 apostles saw him as well and over 500 other people.
- This means more than 1000 eyes saw and recognized Jesus after he rose from the dead.
- Also, Acts 1:1-3 shows he gave many convicting proofs over a period of 40 days.
- The possibility of the hallucination of over 500 people for 40 days = 0%.

Conclusion

- Summarize Jesus I, II, and III.
- Ask them "Who do you think Jesus is?"
- There are only 4 possibilities of who he was:
 1. Jesus is a lunatic—"He is crazy! He only thought he was the Son of God." He spoke with such wisdom, that many people tried to trap him in his words or find a fault in his life but they were unable! Jesus changed so many lives - can a lunatic do that?
 2. Jesus is a legend—"He did some good things, but the stories got bigger and bigger over the centuries." There were many witnesses, many written accounts about his life that all support each other, and many actual followers and believers.
 3. Jesus is a liar—"He was deceiving the people about who he really was." Again, he spoke with such accuracy and conviction about the truth, that no one could ever trap him in his words or deny the power of his miracles.
 4. Jesus is Lord—"He is not a lunatic, not a legend, not a liar. He must be who he said he was—Lord! Son of God!"
- What do you think? I want to give you the same challenge Jesus gave Thomas - "Stop doubting and believe!"
- The next time we get together, we will study about what it means to really follow Jesus. When can we get together again?

Baptism with the Holy Spirit

Introduction: Jesus was given the Spirit in full measure, no limit (John 3:34). There are three measures of the Holy Spirit:

1. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit

Received at baptism (Acts 2:38)

2. The baptism with the Holy Spirit

A. Characteristics in Acts 2 and Acts 10

1. Promise (not command), **Acts 1:4-5**
2. Predicted (prophesied)
3. Came without warning. (People were not specifically praying for it.)
4. Languages
5. Purpose: to usher in the Kingdom with power

B. Accounts of the baptism with the Holy Spirit

1. To the Jews-in Jerusalem (**Acts 2**)
2. To the Gentiles-begins with Cornelius (**Acts 10**)
 - a. Note: Cornelius and his household were water baptized in v. 48, saved at baptism.
 - b. Peter explained actions to the Jews (**Acts 11:1-18**).
 - c. "At the beginning," (**Acts 11:15**)

C. Does the Baptism with the Holy Spirit still exist today? Ephesians 4:4-6: There is one baptism-which one? (Written about 60-62 A.D.) There are three options:

1. John's baptism-passed when new covenant began (**Acts 19:1-5**).
2. The baptism with the Holy Spirit (**Acts 2 and 10**). No longer present as it was a prophecy/promise that has been fulfilled. It was never a general command for all Christians.
3. Baptism with water in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins to receive the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.
 - a. Jesus commanded this baptism (**Matthew 28:18-20**).
 - b. This baptism is recorded all the way through the book of Acts and the epistles. **1 Peter 3:21** (also written around 62 a.d.) makes reference to this water baptism of salvation.
 - c. It had to be the one baptism of **Ephesians 4:4-6** as it was the only one practiced by 60-62 A.D. when Ephesians was written.

3. The miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit (next lesson).

- A. Received by the apostles' laying on of hands
- B. No longer present today

Miraculous Gifts of the Holy Spirit

1) Types of Miraculous Gifts

A) 1 Corinthians 12:8-10

- a) Wisdom
- b) Knowledge
- c) Faith
- d) Healing
- e) Miracles
- f) Prophecy
- g) Distinguishing Spirits
- h) Tongues
- i) Interpretation

B) (Mark 16:16-18) Some will be able to:

- a) Drink poison and not die
- b) Be bitten by snakes and not die (**Acts 28:5**)

2) Types of "Laying on of Hands":

A) Blessing (Acts 13:3)

B) Healing

- a) Ananias heals Paul's blindness (**Acts 9:17-18**).
- b) Paul heals Publius' father on Malta (**Acts 28:8**).

C) Passing on the Gifts

- a) Apostles would pass on the gifts (**Acts 8:18**).
- b) These people could not pass on the gifts they received.
 - (1) **Acts 6:1-8**: Context is the choosing of "The Seven". This is the first occasion that the gifts were passed. Stephen immediately starts to perform miraculous signs among the people with God's power (v. 8).
 - (2) **Acts 8:1-25**: Context is after Stephen's martyrdom. Great persecution breaks out. Many leave, but apostles stay in Jerusalem. Philip, one of the seven who had received the gifts in **Acts 6:1-8**, goes to Samaria. He performs many miraculous signs and healings to get people to believe (v. 12), including Simon the Sorcerer (v. 13) and they are baptized. (They became Christians and thus receive the forgiveness of sins and the gift (indwelling) of the Holy Spirit, **Acts 2:38**.) When apostles come to Samaria, Simon saw the Spirit's gifts were only given by apostles' laying on of hands and offers them money for the ability (**Acts 8:18**). Note: Simon didn't ask Philip for the gifts because Philip could not pass them on. Simon is rebuked for having the wrong motivation.
 - (3) **Acts 19:1-6**: Paul finds disciples in Ephesus who didn't know what the Holy Spirit was because they had only received John's baptism of repentance. Then they were baptized into the name of Jesus Christ to receive the forgiveness of their sins and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (v.5). Then they receive the miraculous gifts of prophecy and speaking in tongues by the laying on of Paul's hands (v.6). Paul is an apostle.

3) General Observations

- A) Apostles were able to pass on the gifts because they were apostles. The Apostles possessed the ability to perform miracles even during the ministry of Christ (**Luke 9:1**). This ability to pass and perform the gifts were not given at Pentecost.
- B) **1 Corinthians 12** and **14** are not the directives on how to receive tongues (the church there had already received them), but rather the correctives on how to use them because everyone was speaking at the same time and misusing the tongues. **1 Corinthians 12:28-30** shows that tongues as a gift were not given to everyone in the church. Thus the concept of a "Pentecostal church" (every member speaking in tongues) is against scripture.
- C) **1 Corinthians 13:8-10**. "Perfection" here could not mean the coming of Christ because it is in the neuter gender in Greek, not the masculine gender. When perfection comes probably refers to the canonization of the Bible sometime after the first century. At that time, all the miraculous gifts would be gone because all the apostles and those to whom they passed the gifts would have died.
- D) The purpose of the miraculous gifts from **1 Corinthians 14:20-22**
 - a) To get non-believers to believe (tongues were only to be used to bring non-believers to faith.)
 - b) To edify the Christians and strengthen their faith.
 - c) Now the Bible fulfills these needs-thus the church today does not need apostles or miraculous gifts.
- E) **2 Thessalonians 2:9-10** shows there can be miracles by Satan today. Satan's purpose is to deceive people about the truth, so they will not be saved.

- F) Speaking in "tongues" is common in many religions (Mormon, Catholic, Islam, etc.) because religion gets dried and staid. These are also called "ecstatic utterances"-non-understandable sounds and fragments of speech.
- G) A person can be filled with the Spirit without speaking in tongues (**Ephesians 5:18-19**).
- H) Jesus never spoke in tongues and he was accorded the full-measure of the Spirit (**John 3:34-36**).

MATURING IN CHRIST

1. Maturity Is The Natural Process Of Growth

- Luke 13:6-9 Example of the fig tree that didn't grow – not healthy and in danger of being cut off.
- Hebrews 5:11 - 6:2 God's plan is for us to grow and mature in our faith.
- 1 Peter 2:2 God wants us to be eager to grow up in our faith

2. God's Instruments To Build Maturity

- a. Ephesians 4:11-15 - Leadership
 - i. To provide needed guidance and training
 - ii. Builds unity
 - iii. Maturity will provide spiritual stability
 - iv. Additional Scriptures: Hebrews 13: 7; Hebrews 13:17; Titus 2:1-8
- b. 1 Peter 1:22-24 - Relationships
 - i. Once we become Christians, we have the ability to genuinely love
 - ii. We must put into practice what God has enabled us to do
 - iii. Love is something we all need to receive and all need to give to others
 - iv. Additional Scriptures: 1 John 4:7-12; 1 Thess. 4:9
- c. James 1:2-4 - Testing and Trials
 - i. Trials produce perseverance which in turn develops maturity
 - ii. How we deal with trial (our attitudes) is indication of our maturity [Joy vs. Discouragement]
 - iii. Additional scriptures: 1 Peter 1:6-7; Romans 5:3-5; 2 Timothy.3:12

3. Steps Towards Maturity

- a. 2 Peter 1:5-11 - Maturity Is Constantly Adding Spiritual Qualities to Our Faith
 - i. Faith>Goodness>Knowledge>Self-Control>Perseverance>Godliness>Brotherly Kindness>Love
 - ii. Growth keeps us 'effective' and 'productive'
 - iii. Growth keeps us from falling away
- b. Hebrews 5:14 - Continual Implementation of Spiritual Principles Brings Discernment

4. The Choices Of Maturity - One way to evaluate spiritual maturity is by looking at the choices we make.

| <i>Mature choices</i> | <i>Versus</i> | <i>Immature choices</i> |
|---|----------------|--|
| Teaching others | rather than... | just being taught. |
| Developing depth of understanding | rather than... | struggling with the basics. |
| Self-evaluation | rather than... | self-criticism. |
| Seeking unity | rather than... | promoting disunity. |
| Desiring spiritual challenges | rather than... | desiring entertainment. |
| Careful study and observation | rather than... | opinions and half-hearted efforts. |
| Active faith | rather than... | cautious apathy and doubt. |
| Confidence | rather than... | fear. |
| Feelings and experiences evaluated in the light of God's Word | rather than... | experiences evaluated according to feelings. |

Follow-up studies are crucial to nail down and deepen the convictions of new disciples. These were taken from, and are expansions of, the studies in the book "Shining Like Stars" with some new material added in.

FU-1: Prayer

Being a disciple is not a list of duties and rules. God wants a relationship. What would be more normal between two people that love each other than that they talk? What should happen between a man or woman and the God they love with all their heart, soul, mind and strength? (Mark 12:28-34)

- ⇒ Problem: this kind of communication is not normal or natural, it must be learned.
- ⇒ There are lots of obstacles to us praying!
- ⇒ Satan wants you to be distracted so you won't pray
- ⇒ You have to give prayer the priority in your life it deserves

Why Pray?

- Jer 30:21 – God longs for us to devote ourselves to be close to him
- Deut 4:7 – God draws near when we pray (see also Dan 10:11-12)
- Luke 22:46; Mark 14:38 – Prayer gives us the strength to avoid sin
- Luke 18:1-8 – We pray because God is really in control of the world, and he helps us when we pray – need to develop spiritual mindset = all day long aware of God
- Mat 6:6 – Pray because God wants it and will reward us (also 2 Chron 7:14)
- 1 Sa 12:23 – Samuel said it would be a sin to fail to pray for people
- 1 Peter 5:7; Phil 4:6-7 – pray to be at peace in mind & heart, not anxious, in control of your emotions – such as anger or fear

Priority

- Mark 1:35 – Jesus was very busy, yet he always made time to pray
- He worked hard to find a place where he wouldn't be distracted
- He had to go early in the morning to keep others from finding and distracting him
- Ps 5:1-3 – David devoted himself to praying in the morning
- Challenge – set a consistent time early in the morning, make a list of people / things to pray for.
- Other Scriptures: 1 Thes 5:17-18; Col 4:2-4; Psalm 42:1; 63:1; Luke 6:12; Heb 5:7; Eph 6:18-20
- Fasting to emphasize to God your desire to have him answer Mat 6:17-18

Learning Process

- Luke 11:1-13 – prayer is not natural, even Jesus' apostles asked to be taught
- Mat 6:5-15 – Jesus gave clear instruction

Hindrances

- 1 Peter 4:7 – have to concentrate and not be distracted – pray aloud?
- Psalm 66:18-20 – First set your heart on God, or he won't listen. Do you love sin?
- 1 John 5:14-15 – Is what you are asking for God's will for you? If it is against the Bible, or sinful God will oppose you. We don't always know what is best. We need to leave room that it may be better if God doesn't give us what we ask for because he knows better than us.
- Mark 11:24-25 – If you don't believe when you pray, it keeps God from answering
- Other scriptures: Mat 6:5-8; John 9:31; 14:12-14; Jas 5:13-18, Luke 18:10-14

FU-2: Bible Study

While prayer is our chance to talk to God, Bible study is his way to communicate to us. Remember when we studied the "Word of God" study (2 Tim 3:16-17) that the scriptures are from God and are meant to be used in our lives. They make us equipped for doing everything good for God. Answer this follow up question: Have you decided to make the Bible your "standard" – to obey it? This is not just a "goal", but needs to be a solid decision.

Why Read the Bible?

- It keeps us alive spiritually - Mat 4:4 – “every word” Jesus compared to physical bread, and essential for life. Clearly not for this life, but absolutely for eternal life.
- It is crucial to build our faith - Rom 10:11-17 – “faith comes from hearing the message” “the message is heard through the word of Christ”. The Bible is the source of our faith. If you don’t read, your faith will eventually die. Faith is what saves us (See Eph 2:8).
- It teaches us how to obey God, we are saved by obeying it - 1 Cor 15:1-2 – “*By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you, otherwise you have believed in vain*”. If you don’t dig into the Bible and learn to obey the gospel message day to day, all of your efforts to follow God are wasted = “in vain”. (See also 2 Peter 3:14-18; Eph 6:17; 1Peter 3:15; Titus 1:9-11; Eph 4:11-16; 2 Tim 2:15)
- The Goal is to Purify Your Heart – (Ps 51:10-12; Heb 4:12-13; 2 Tim 2:22) Change what you think and what you like & love.
- God wants us to “delight in the law of the Lord” - (Ps 1:1-3) Don’t let it be a burden.

Practicals

- Key – apply it to your life! – James 1:22-25 – if do it will be blessed, otherwise not.
- Read how long? - Go for chunks of time every day – Acts 2:42 “*They devoted themselves to the apostles teaching*”; Acts 17:11 “*...examined the scriptures every day...*” Unless you put in the time, the Bible will not affect your thinking as it should.
- Meditate and talk with others about what you read – Deut 6:4-9 – Not only read the Bible, have to take time to think about what it means for your life! Like sipping wine – not just gulping it down, but concentrating on the taste (other passages on this: Joshua 1:8; Psalm 48:9; Psalm77:12; Psalm119:15-16,23-24,27,48,78,97-100,148; Psalm143:5; Psalm 145:5)
- Jesus had amazing understanding – we his disciples need to as well – Luke 2:46-47 – key: go after being taught! Ask a lot of questions! Make time for special classes at church. Even if you were not a good student in school, or if reading is just not your “thing” – become a great student of God and the Bible. Get extra books (Bible handbooks, commentaries etc) Read the Bible all the way through! (Diff’t versions)
- Learn how to study out topics / questions – When someone asks you a question you can’t answer, take note! Go back and study it out. Get & learn how to use a concordance (or get Bible software where you can search for words). Write out the answers. Prepare notes to share with others, It makes your convictions more solid. (1 Peter 3:15) Study the Bible with the lost & other disciples! Like any activity, you get better at it the more you use it. (see www.douglasjacoby.org)
- Read spiritual books – (See www.dpibooks.org, www.cbd.com) So many excellent books are out there on every spiritual topic. Read some that apply to challenges in your own life, read some that help you with others (raising children, forgiveness, discipleship, purity, dating, marriage, evangelism).

FU-3: Faith, Works & Grace: Balance

It is easy to get out of balance in our perspective on following God. For some it is our religious background, some of us get off track through mis-teaching while we were studying the Bible, some of us get off track by observing “older” disciples who are themselves off track and imitating them. Where do you tend to be “off balance” spiritually?

| | Ultra Hard-Line | Balanced | Ultra-soft |
|-------------------------|---|--|---------------------------------------|
| Faith | Saved by own effort | Faith motivates action | Inactive belief |
| Grace | Only get one chance, if blow it – lost | Grace motivating repentance | Over-tolerance of sin |
| Discipleship | Co-dependent / overly need direction | Friends - trained to have personal convictions | Weak relationships / weak convictions |
| Free Will | Self reliance / saved by works & effort | Chosen by God & motivated by love | Once saved, always saved |
| Preaching topics | Fear, punishment and hell | Faith motivating effort | Avoid anything challenging |

Faith:

- Need faith to please God – Heb 11:1,6 – what is faith?
- Faith is more than intellectual belief – James 2:14-24 – faith is made complete by what you do. Faith results in actions of obedience to God.

Works:

- Not saved by our own efforts & actions – Eph 2:8-10 – God does expect us to serve and do good! Rom 1:28;2:7 – it is not what you accomplish, but that you persist.
- Grace is an unearned gift, but: conditional on obedience – 2 Kings 5:1-14

Grace:

- We don't get saved because of our righteous deeds – Titus 3:5
- If grace of God doesn't motivate you – you will not care about sinning – Jude 4
- Understanding of Grace will motivate you to work hard – 1 Cor 15:10, Titus 2:11-14

How to Build a Balanced Life:

- Set mind & heart on things of God – Rom 6:15-23 live like a slave to God; Rom 8:5-6 to live according to the Holy Spirit is to set your mind on the things of God. Don't let your time, thoughts, attention get sucked up by other things in your life.
- Jesus set the "balance" – Philippians 2:1-7 – (v5) our attitude should be like Jesus; (v7) Jesus made himself nothing, became a servant (of others not himself) – if selfishness rules your life you will never be "balanced"; (v4) live a life with priorities – look out for yourself AND others. (See also 1 Cor 9:19-27) – A balanced life is one that is heavily focused on others.
- Questions to ask yourself about your priorities and schedule:
 - Is my schedule helping me grow spiritually? If not - what is missing?
 - Am I excellent at loving my family / the disciples around me / even strangers?
 - Is God pleased with my focus on the lost? What can I do differently?
 - Do I run guilty a lot? – Am I making decisions in advance about my schedule?
 - Am I both peaceful and disciplined? – (we all need help with this)
 - Am I excellent at handling the basics – eating habits, bills, work, keeping house up, exercise?
 - Is my life attractive? (will always need help with this)
 - How much time do I spend watching TV, hobbies, video, being distracted? Are other, higher priority things being neglected when I do this?

FU-4: Relationships in the Body

When you become a Christian, you have become part of God's family. It is not about "attending church" or participating in meetings. It is about building love relationships and transforming into someone who loves and gives to meet the needs of your new brothers and sisters. Part of repentance in a new disciple is to turn away from having your primary relationships be with those who are not disciples to being with those who are – and who will help sustain your faith and obedience to God. Also repent of shallow relationships.

God Expects Kingdom Relationships to be Different:

- Our love for each other shines to the world – John 13:34-35 – What will it take for you to have deep relationships like this? Who are you working toward making into your best friends – that are disciples? You will need at least 5 – 7 great relationships with other disciples to be strong. Who can you call in times of discouragement?
- We help each other get active in doing God's Will – Mark 3:31-35 – Jesus needed the disciples to help him stay focused on his mission, and chose time with them over his family or old friends.
- We love deeply, and have purpose in our relationships - 1 Peter 1:22-2:3 – Purpose is this – to help each other grow up in our salvation. Be fruitful together, disciple each other to be better at relationships, to learn to think in a spiritual not worldly way.
- We give our energy to teach and remind each other of God - Col 1:28-29 – and God gives us the ability to encourage each other. Humility in teaching is crucial.

- We set our minds to work on changing our characters - Eph 4:26-5:2 – We work to give, not to take. We work to love not to be angry with others. We work to say encouraging things that will build others up, not things that cut each other down. We work to forgive, not hate. We work to live a life of love, not of selfishness.
- We don't just have casual relationships, but devote ourselves to one another – Acts 2:42-47 – This incredible atmosphere of closeness made others want to be a part of it. (See also 1Peter 1:22)

Practical Challenges:

- Make sure you have one or more clear discipleship partners = people you have invited into your life, including your secret inner thoughts. Give your trust! Give someone permission to challenge you on anything they see in your life that is not like the Bible. – (Heb 3:12-13)
- Make sure you work on your kingdom relationships – so that your top 2 – 3 friends are disciples. It takes spending lots of time together. Friendships with those who are not disciples are good – but make sure **you** influence **them** *toward God*, and don't allow them to influence you *away from God*.
- Challenge: Cut out relationships that pull you away from God - including boyfriend / girlfriend. – (Mat 10:32-39; 2 Cor 6:14-7:1; Mark 3:14)
- Learn to be friendly! – Introduce yourself to at least one new person at each meeting of church.
- Pray for other disciples every day!
- Be encouraging - Write notes of encouragement, remember birthdays, go on dates
- Note: Not everyone at church will help you grow – seek out the strong, not the weak! – Spiritual people are those who are most likely to make you feel uncomfortable.

FU-5: Communion & Confession

As disciples, we have committed ourselves to obeying the Bible. The church in the New Testament has several practices that are no longer common in modern churches. This study gives the biblical background for three of these.

Communion (also called “The Lord’s Supper” or “The Eucharist”)

- Mat 26:26-29 – The disciples sat down with Jesus to celebrate the Jewish Passover meal. This involved unleavened bread and wine. As it turned out, this was his last meal before he died. He told them that the bread was “his body” and the wine was “his blood of the covenant”
- 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 – Paul started off this section to correct ways they were improperly handling communion. Our understanding of the early church is that they celebrated this every “Lord’s Day” (Sunday). (v23-26) He then explains that communion is us “proclaiming the Lord’s death until he comes”. It is a participation in the body and blood of Jesus. (v18) It was wrong for them to have divisions between them (people who didn’t like or get along with each other). They needed to resolve their differences. (20-21) Some were coming early and eating up all the bread and getting drunk on the wine without waiting for the rest of the disciples. (v22) Paul challenges them to eat at home if they are hungry, and treat communion not as a meal but as a spiritual time.
- Acts 20:7 – Our understanding of this event, together with church history tells us that the early church celebrated communion every Sunday. They counted the new day as starting at sunset, so the actual meeting time was Saturday night after sunset. Many in the early church had to work 7 days a week.
- Other scriptures: Mark 14:12-26, Luke 22:7-20; Act 2:42;

Confession

- Let other disciples into your life by opening up about your sins - James 5:16 Disciples pray for and help each other stay on the path of repentance.
- Confession (agreeing with God) keeps your heart soft – 1 John 1:8-2:2 – Don’t act like you have no sin, that’s what religious people today (like the Pharisees in Jesus’ day) do, and it keeps us from being able to be purified – be able to repent and change.
- If you have a strongly religious background, put extra effort into being always aware of your particular sins. It is important that those disciples closest to you know your struggles so they can pray and help you. Wicked people are those who flatter themselves too much to be able to see their own sins, they

can only see sins in others, which is very hypocritical (see Psalm 36:1-4). Exercise – can you say right now what are three ways you have sinned this past week?

- Lost people are much more moved by the sin you share about that you have overcome and are working on overcoming than by your apparent perfection if you don't share any of your weaknesses!

FU-6: Greed, Contribution, & Money Issues in the Church

Money is a neutral thing to God. It is something God knows we need to live (Mat 6:25-34). It is something we may use to serve others and meet many needs. The challenge comes that our hearts are drawn to idolize money above God. It is something Satan uses to corrupt the hearts of many people. It is a great source of temptation. Money issues are a major source of divorce. We need to deal with greed in our lives and use our money to advance God's kingdom in this lost world.

Dealing With the Love of Money:

- The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil - 1 Tim 6:9-10 – “The love of money”, not money itself, is a root of all kinds of evil. Why do you like money? It allows you to get the things *you* want. How easy is it for you to share with others? How much does the love of money have a hold of your heart? Deal with your selfishness.
- For from within, out of men's hearts come... Greed – Mark 7:21-23 – Greed makes you “unclean”. It is a sin that leads to other sins in your relationships with others.
- Greed is improper for God's Holy People Eph 5:3 (See also Col 3:5; Rom 1:29; Luke 12:13-21; Lk 11:39; 1 Tim 6:17-19)

Contribution:

There are three main ways we give our money in the church:

A) Our “regular” contribution - supports the operations of the church – pays the ministers and allows us to rent buildings. *This is your first priority in giving.*

B) Our giving to the poor - supports needy people in the church (50%) as well as half going to HOPE *worldwide*, a benevolent organization founded by the ICC churches that runs special projects in the places of greatest need around the world (such as clinics in Afghanistan, Cambodia & Africa, Leper housing in India, PNG clinics & schools, orphanages in Romania etc.) (see www.hopewww.org for details).

C) Special Missions Contribution – once a year we take up a contribution (usually in August) of about 10x our normal weekly giving to support the spreading of the Gospel. This giving supports ICC churches in Kerala, India and in Papua New Guinea & Michigan.

- Those who preach the Gospel should earn their living from it – 1 Cor 9:14 – The church is God's family, and has financial needs. We need to pay to have a place to meet, and the Bible commands us to take care of & pay our leaders. Where does the money for this come from? Our “regular” contribution. (Also 1 Cor 9:6-14; Gal 6:6)
- See that you excel in the grace of giving - 2 Cor 8:7 – This scripture particularly refers to giving money. But this giving heart includes being willing to give your heart in friendship to others, your time and energy to serve others, and to reach out to the lost and help them be saved. Have you radically repented in your level of selfishness? (In context read 2 Cor 8:7-15)
- Give willingly, according to what you have – 2 Cor 8:12 – If you have a lot, give a lot, if you have only a little, *give at least a little*. (See also Mark 12:41-44)

Other Money Issues in the Church:

- We are commanded to be content with what we have, and to share - 1 Tim 6:3-10; 17-19 This passage also warns against using the fellowship of disciples to get rich, watch out for Amway, and other sales schemes that use the relationships in the church as a route for personal benefit. Our attitude is not to be to come to church to get support from other, giving disciples, (or to sell our goods to them) but instead to work hard so you have something to share (Eph 4:28).
- Make your treasure be in heaven and the Kingdom of God (=the church) – Mat 6:19-24 – Giving financially is a huge heart issue for everyone, especially here in the US. Is your heart a slave to greed

and selfishness, or has it really become a slave to God and advancing God's purposes on earth? If your heart is tied to money, you are not really a disciple.

- Let no debt remain outstanding – Rom 13:8 – It's OK to get loans for cars, homes etc... and then pay them on time. Debts that are "Outstanding" are ones where you are not current on the payments. This passage teaches that we shouldn't borrow unless we are clearly able to afford it, and repay on time. *Live within your means.* Many church members have been hugely selfish and built up debts, then can't "afford" to give to God. This is sinful, and greedy. Get help with this.
 - We discourage giving each other loans, or getting tangled up in each other's businesses without first getting a lot of advice from strong disciples. (2 Thes 3:6-14) Every disciple is to earn their own living, not be a burden to each other- this includes paying your fair share of bills, and doing your fair share of the work in shared (single) households. Living with other disciples is a privilege.
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FU-7: Evangelism, Boldness, Tact

Disciples have a great message to share with a world that is lost and separated from God. When most people become aware of this as they study the Bible, there is an urgency to share this message with family, friends and strangers. Most people err strongly toward the two extremes: either they are so tactful that they say little, or so bold that they are overly offensive and damaging to these relationships.

Evangelism:

- Because we know and fear God, we try to persuade men - 2 Cor 5:10-21 – Evangelism is not an option. We are Christ's ambassadors and God has given us the ministry of reconciliation. However, note that the goal is to persuade, not start arguments, to reconcile, not cause more distance in relationships. It is selfish to allow yourself to be timid.
- Evangelism is for everyone, not just leaders - Acts 8:1-4

Boldness:

- Don't be ashamed of the Gospel - Romans 1:16-17 – The Gospel is about the power of God to save everyone who is willing to develop true faith.
- If we are ashamed of Jesus he will be ashamed of us – Luke 9:23-26
- Pray for boldness, God will answer – Acts 8:1-4

Tact:

- Be wise and shrewd in your evangelism – Mat 10:16
- Watch for reckless and hurtful words – Prov 12:18
- Watch out for too frequent contact (stalking) – Prov 25:17
- Watch out for time of day, being too strong and annoying – Prov 27:14
- Try to fit in with your hearer 1 Cor 9:20-23
- Make the Gospel attractive – Titus 2:10 – Be joyful! This is most attractive.
- Show gentleness and respect – 1 Peter 3:15-16
- Steer away from quarrels – 2 Timothy 2:23-26 – respectful debates can turn out well, but this requires significant skills of diplomatic speech. Religious people love to argue their point, but lacking tact, these discussions can often turn into heated quarrels. Focus your time with people who are truly "open" and seeking God, not religious people who want to argue. Jesus spent the bulk of his time with the disciples, not arguing with the Pharisees. (This is also the meaning of Mat 7:6).

Practical Challenges:

- Evangelism is a way of living, where life is prioritized to maximize saved souls.
- Push yourself to become more friendly, start conversations wherever you go.
- Work on changing an area of your life that will make the gospel attractive for the people who know your life. (How about being peaceful, not anxious!)
- Go evangelizing with someone. Set goals for how many new people you will start spiritual conversations with and invite to Bible Talk or church.

- What motivated you to come to church or Bible Talk the first time? Figure out how to motivate others to come to events – through love, friendship and curiosity.
 - John 13:34-35 – People are always looking for friends. Groups that are eager to welcome others, as opposed to being exclusive, are very attractive.
-

FU-8: Laziness, Idleness, Self-discipline

Following after the study on evangelism, disciples of Jesus are people who have stopped living a worldly life, focused on pleasing themselves (2 Cor 5:11-20), and instead are living as ambassadors of Christ in a dark world. *Have you made this decision?* Self-discipline and hard work are not spiritual ends in themselves. While some people worship these traits, because they can bring fame and fortune, we do not. A disciple is motivated to be disciplined and work hard in order to bring glory to God by saving others (John 15:5-8). In 1 John 2:6 it says we are to “walk as Jesus did”. Jesus was not lazy, but worked hard to love others and spread the Gospel. We are to do the same with our lives.

Living a life of Purpose:

- 1 Cor 9:19-27 - We “beat our bodies” so that both we and others may be saved. Have you decided to make yourself a slave to win as many as possible? (v24) Are you running in such a way as to get the prize? Takes strict training (v25).
- Assignment: List out areas of your life in which you need training. (Suggestions: ability to study the Bible with others persuasively, being on time, being organized, overcoming shyness, being consistently joyful, overcoming impurity...)

Laziness:

- Heb 6:10-12 – God watches and cares that we work hard to help people. He is not pleased with laziness and selfishness. Follow examples of hard workers for God.
- Other scriptures: Prov 12:1; Prov 24:30-34; Prov 26:13-16

Idleness:

- 1 Thes 4:11-12 – Live a life that is attractive and wins the respect of outsiders.
- 2 Thes 3:6-14 – “keep away from” implies disfellowship people who claim to be disciples but are idle. (Idle = not doing anything, not working) Don’t be a “busybody” = someone who appears busy, has a lot of talk but does not really accomplish anything in serving or building the church.

Self-Discipline:

- Heb 5:12-14 – Mature are those who have trained themselves to do what is good.
- Other possible passages: Prov 1:7; Prov 5:21-23; Prov 6:23; Prov 23:23; 2 Tim 1:7

Practicals:

- Eph 5:15-16 – *“Be very careful how you live” “Making the most of every opportunity”*. When you live a lazy, idle, undisciplined life, it shows a lack of love for the lost.
 - Self-discipline is about prayerfully setting your priorities and then making your life match what you say your priorities are.
 - The hardest part of this is saying “no” to yourself on areas that are a low priority, but that you like doing (For example: TV, hobbies, games, idle time) Recall Paul in 1Cor9:19-27 *“I beat my body and make it my slave”*. Plan ahead times to read the Bible, pray, meetings of the Body, evangelism, time with family and extended family, fellowship with believers, times to serve. Last of all is work, sleep, hobbies, TV etc.
 - It is not wrong to have hobbies, games, even to take time to rest. But self-discipline is about prioritizing your time according to the Bible. Getting enough sleep is a priority because tired people get unloving. However, over-doing it with sleep is laziness and “debauchery”.
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FU-9: Being Discipled, God's Plan for Growth

The word “disciple” (Gk μαθητής, *mathētēs* “a learner”, from *manthánō*, “to learn”; Latin *discipulus*, “a scholar”) is found in the Bible only in the Gospels and Acts. But it is good Greek, in use from Herodotus down, and always means the pupil of someone, in contrast to the master or teacher. In all cases it implies that the person not only accepts the views of the teacher, but that he is also puts those teachings into practice in his life. It can be applied to anyone, the NT records disciples of John the Baptist, disciples of Moses and disciples of the Pharisees. It's widest use in the Bible is for the followers of Jesus. It is the only word used for them in the Gospels. Many members of our churches today think of it as something you become at repentance and baptism, but don't understand the ongoing lifestyle the word implies.

How Disciples Learn:

- Being taught by others: - Luke 6:40 – The idea that someone who wants to be excellent at a sport implies years of intense training by someone who is worthy of imitation is well accepted by athletes, because it works, and it is necessary in order to win. The same is true about being a disciple of Jesus. Many reject this because of a lack of willingness to undergo the hardships of training, and the constant feedback of winning and losing games is not present – resulting in complacency, in many.
- Jesus' final command was for every convert to be taught to obey everything he had given the apostles: - Mat 28:20 – Being “taught to obey” is different than “taking classes” “Learning the Bible” – it is not only book learning, it compares much more closely to being coached as you practice and play a sport – involving teaching, corrections, rebukes and practice.
- Great disciplers use lots of Bible: - 2 Tim 3:16-17 – The Bible is “useful” = meant to be used, not just to teach, but also to correct, rebuke and train. Jesus used it all the time. We also need to make the Bible “useful” by applying it to ourselves.
- Disciples need daily encouragement – Heb 3:12-13
- Mature disciples work hard to train themselves: - Heb 5:11-14 – “by constant use” “distinguish good from evil” – **discipling is a retraining of how you think**, from your worldly or religious past, to gaining Bible convictions in everything. *It is not just taking the parts you agree with, and ignoring the rest.* It is a very serious thing to be a disciple – Heb 12:1-3 – requiring perseverance and an attitude of great effort.
- God disciplines us directly through the hardships of life: - Heb 12:4-11 – The hardships of life are allowed by God to train your character and produce holiness, for your own good – like a father trains his children to approach life maturely.

Bible Examples of Discipling:

- 2 Tim 2:2 – Choose carefully who to train, that those most apt to grow and impact many others are to be chosen. By this definition, could you be called “a reliable man”? If not, deal with the character issues that hold you back from this.
- Col 1:28 – 2:1 – Paul worked at discipling with all the energy he could get from God. “Admonishing and teaching” = some of the components of discipling.
- 1 Cor 11:1; 1 Cor 4:14-17; Heb 6:12; Heb 13:7 – Imitate good examples.
- Practicals: Make it verbally clear that you want discipling, agree to accept training and input from your discipler, strive for daily contact, get frequent time together (weekly) to “walk” together through life – including evangelism, work, home life.

FU-10: Service with a Smile

The word “to serve” (Gk: διακονέω *diakoneō* to *be an attendant*, that is, *wait upon*, as in the preparing and serving of food) is something Jesus taught that he was himself, and set as an example that we are to imitate in his life. The world teaches us about “rights” and has us strive to be served by others. Jesus teaches us to give up our rights in order to love and serve. This is a teaching that is very unnatural, yet very necessary for every disciple.

The Heart of a Servant:

- Mat 20:26-28 – Jesus didn't come as a king, expecting to have an easy life and to be served, but rather as the carpenter, oldest son of a single Mom with ten kids. He came to give his life up for others and asks the same of us.
- Phil 2:3-8 – “Consider others ‘better’ than yourselves” – others are to be more important to you than yourself, just as a waiter at a restaurant strives to meet the needs of the customer first, before his own. “Do nothing out of selfish ambition” – the motive is not to gain praise or respect or ‘thanks’ from others. ‘vain conceit’ – not looking down on those you serve, considering yourself better. “attitude” is everything! “Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others” – it is not wrong to care for your own needs, but you treat the needs of others as if they were also your own – very much like a parent of small children cares about both themselves and their kids... sometimes meaning their own needs are not met as well as they otherwise might be. This teaching applies to all disciples, not just those who would lead.
- Luke 17:7-10 – The first stage is learning to serve. Next comes developing the attitude that we have only done our duty, and don't deserve special thanks. There is no room for complaining (Phil 2:14), no expectation of reward... except from God, in heaven.
- Col 3:23-24 – Serve with all your heart, not half way, and then get tired and give up – which is faithless (Rom 14:23b), but with your whole heart, with faith, that you are really serving God.
- Other scriptures – Psalm 100:2; Prov 3:27-28; John 13:1-17; Gal 6:2, 6:10; Eph 6:7-8; Phil 4:4-5

Practicals:

- Learn to serve without being asked. Make it your habit to look for needs in everyone around you, learn to see them and then meet them.
- When asked to help in a particular way, do it excellently, and eagerly!
- Kill complaining in your speech & heart

FU-11: Developing a Good Heart

The Hebrew word for “heart” is לֵב = *leb* = *labe*; the *heart*, also used (figuratively) very widely for the feelings, the will and even the intellect; likewise for the *center* of anything. Likewise the Greek word is καρδιά = *kardia* = *kar-dee'-ah*; Prolonged from a primary κόρ *kar* (Latin *cor*, “heart”); the *heart*, that is, (figuratively) the *thoughts* or *feelings* (*mind*). 1 Sam 16:7 – God is most concerned about our hearts. The biblical word for heart implies the center of our thoughts, attitudes and feelings. As our thoughts and attitudes can be good or bad, so we can have a good or bad heart, and the Word of God judges the thoughts and attitudes of your heart (Heb 4:12).

What kind of Heart do you Have?

- Jer 17:9 – deceitful heart: wanting to hide sins and not face truth.
- Mark 7:18-23 – the heart is the hidden inner source of outward sins.
- Heb 3:12-13 – your heart can become hard and unbelieving (doubtful) and turn away from God.
- Gen 6:5-6 – Everyone has evil inclinations – how do you deal with it? Disciples work to “put off” evil desires and actions that fill God's heart with pain.
- Deut 8:1-5 – God uses hardship to humble us and see what's in our hearts. How do you respond in times of testing?
- 2 Kings 22:19 – God gets very responsive to a heart that changes in response to reading the Bible.

Practicals

- Psalm 51:17 – cultivate a contrite heart. A broken spirit involves giving up your fight against God and what is good and surrendering your desires to God.
- Prov 3:5-6 – trust God with all your heart, realize that he understands better than you, and that by obeying him you will be blessed.
- Prov 4:23 – guard your heart (desires and thoughts), watch out what you desire and think about, Col 3:1-6 – set your heart on things above, set your mind on heavenly things. Phil 4:8 – Think about good things
- Phil 4:4-7 – Don't be anxious hearted, pray about your life and God will give you a peaceful heart.
- Heb 3:12-14 – Don't let heart get unbelieving, make sure you have encouragement, and encourage others daily. Hardness from discouragement and unbelief.