

# SPIRITUAL MILK

## Some Basic Principles Of The Christian Faith

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### INTRODUCTION

These lessons are called “Spiritual Milk” because they were written for new Christians or new babes in Christ. They compare the needs and growth of a new Christian to those of a newborn baby. **There are five basic stages in the development of a newborn** and the sequence of the lessons follows this progression.

Like a newborn baby soon after its birth starts seeking the mother’s breast to feed, as a newborn Christian, you need to feed yourself with the Word of God. Before understanding theology and doctrines; before knowing how to crawl or walk; even before understanding the importance of nutrition to your health, **you need spiritual nutrition**. It comes from the Word. Lesson 1.

The newborn baby leaves his mother’s womb to enter into a new world. This can be a big shock but there is no turning back. He can never return to his mother’s womb. The same thing happens to the new Christian. The change of life is radical and there is no return. You need to **understand the nature of your new life in Christ in order for you to assume your new identity**. Who are you now that you’ve been born of the water and of the Spirit? Lessons 2, 3 and 4

It is not considered normal when a child is born but does not grow. If he does not grow mentally, he is called retarded. If he does not grow physically, he is called a dwarf: But if you don’t **develop your Christian life**, you’re going to die! God tells us how to grow spiritually. Lesson 5

When a baby is born, being a newborn, he starts to be fed and to be cared for almost exclusively by his mother, receiving much more than he contributes. But there comes the time when he is going to assume his place in the family. He starts eating at the table with the others, building relationships, accepting responsibilities and fulfilling duties. All this is part of his development. You also, as a new Christian, need to take **your place in the family of God**, the church. Lessons 6, 7, 8 and 9.

Living beings multiply themselves. The child that was generated from the love of his parents grows and soon the day arrives to repeat the process. God said to Adam and Eve: "Be fruitful and multiply." We are here today because of this blessing from God. In the spiritual life the command is also "Be fruitful and multiply." You were born and live with the purpose of **reproducing yourself spiritually**. Disciples are to make disciples. Lesson 10

The rest of these studies – Lessons 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16 are designed to provide some **additional practical information** you will need as you progress in your Christian life. May God bless you and guide you in the greatest blessing and challenge of life - living the Christian life.

### FIRST STAGE– YOU NEED SPIRITUAL NUTRITION

#### Lesson 1

#### "WERE YOU BORN? IT’S TIME TO EAT!"

"As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious." 1 Peter 2:2-3

Like a newborn baby soon after its birth starts seeking the mother’s breast to feed, as a newborn Christian, you

need to feed yourself with the Word of God. Before understanding theology and doctrines; before knowing how to crawl or walk; even before understanding the importance of nutrition to your health, you need spiritual nutrition. It comes from the Word. So, start now. Do not wait even a single day. Take the Bible and start your daily nourishment. Here are some suggestions to help you get started.

### **LISTEN TO THE WORD**

Do not miss the meetings of the church and, when you attend, pay attention to the sermons and Bible classes. Always have pen and paper with you to make notes. You may need to review them at home and get together with someone to clear up any doubts. Be diligent in doing this. Be like that newborn baby that sometimes acts as though it is dying of hunger! And of course, you will never want to arrive at the church meetings without your Bible.

### **READ THE WORD**

Read the entire Bible in one year. There are printed plans where you can record each chapter you've read. By reading three chapters a day and five on Sundays, you will read the whole Bible in one year! This will give you a general survey of the Bible. Since it is a reading and not an intensive study, it may be helpful to use an "easy-to-read" version of the Bible. For deeper studies use a more literal translation like NKJV or NASB

### **STUDY THE WORD.**

**Pray, asking God for understanding.** Let God's Holy Spirit speak to you through His Word. Instead of studying what somebody else thinks about some passage, read for yourself in the words that the Holy Spirit directed to be written. Read directly from the Bible. This will be your own personal study.

**Follow a system of study.** It's not wise to open blindly to just anywhere in the Bible and start studying without thinking about the context. The diligent student is always building on what he has already learned. So study a book, a chapter, or some Bible topic.

**Take notes** of your thoughts, questions, doubts and reflections during your study. Keep a special notebook to do it in. All of us know that a good thought, a special perception or a new understanding is easily forgotten. Write down the results of your studies.

**Think about the following questions** and make notes of the answers in your study notebook:

What does this word mean? Analyze verse by verse. Define the difficult words. Take note of a reference to a parallel passage. Make an outline of the paragraph.

What don't I understand? Write your doubts and questions. Many of your doubts will become clear as you study other parts of the Bible.

What is the summary of this passage? Be brief.

**Choose some verses to memorize.** Without a doubt, Jesus did this. Make a list of the memorized verses to review them frequently.

**Meditate** on what you've studied. This is a very important step. Meditation is what will give depth to your study of the Word. It doesn't mean a method of meditation like some Eastern religions use (transcendental meditation, for example), but simply that you reflect, think, apply and analyze what you've learned in the Word.

### **MAKE A PERSONAL APPLICATION OF THE WORD.**

Apply the lesson to yourself, asking about each passage:

Is there some example I can follow?

- Is there something that I must avoid?
- Is there a commandment that I should obey?
- Is there a promise that would prove beneficial?
- What does this passage teach about God or Jesus?
- Is there some difficulty to be examined?
- Is there something that I should pray about?
- What will help me with my problems?

### **SHARE THE WORD**

Choose somebody and share with him some significant truths that you are learning in your studies. This serves for his edification and more. When you express to others what you've studied, then this knowledge becomes your own personal property.

### **PRACTICE THE WORD**

As James wrote, "Be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves." (James 1:22) The true knowledge of the Word of God comes when you put into practice what it teaches. Be like the wise man that built his house on the rock instead of on the sand. (Matt. 7:24-28)

### **A SUGGESTION**

Choose a commandment, attribute or biblical principle each week to practice. Write this in your study notebook and day by day, look for opportunities to practice what the word is teaching you. This way the Word of God becomes the Living Word in you.

### **MEMORIZE:**

II Timothy 3:16, 17. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

### Questions

1. As a newborn Christian are you feeding on God's word?  
True \_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_
2. How does one learn what God desires of them?
  - a. \_\_\_\_ Read their Bible
  - b. \_\_\_\_ Study with other Christians
  - c. \_\_\_\_ Search the Internet
  - d. \_\_\_\_ All the above
  - e. \_\_\_\_ a and b
3. A diligent student is always increasing his knowledge of God's word by determining if there are other scriptures about the subject being studied.  
True \_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_
4. A good student must understand the meaning of words in their context in order to understand what God has stated in His message to them.  
True \_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_
5. How does one make application of God's word
  - a. \_\_\_\_ Is there some example I can follow?
  - b. \_\_\_\_ Is there something that I must avoid?

- c. \_\_\_\_ Is there a commandment that I should obey?
- d. \_\_\_\_ Is there a promise that would prove beneficial?
- e. \_\_\_\_ What does this passage teach about God or Jesus?
- f. \_\_\_\_ Is there some difficulty to be examined?
- g. \_\_\_\_ Is there something that I should pray about?
- h. \_\_\_\_ All the above

## SECOND STAGE - UNDERSTAND YOUR NEW IDENTITY

### Lesson 2

#### **YOUR BODY IS NOW THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD.**

The newborn baby leaves his mother's womb to enter into a new world. This can be a big shock but there is no turning back. He can never return to his mother's womb. The same thing happens to the new Christian. The change of life is radical and there is no return. In fact, whoever thinks about going back should know that for the ones who return to the old life after having been born again in Christ, "the latter end is worse for them than the beginning." (II Peter 2:20-22). You need to understand the nature of your new life in Christ in order for you to assume your new identity. Who are you now that you've been born of the water and of the Spirit?

"...therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold all things have become new."

II Corinthians 5:17

"Therefore. we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" - Romans 6:4

#### **YOUR BODY WAS PURCHASED BY JESUS CHRIST**

Read 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 and notice the following:

**Your physical body now has a divine purpose** - vv12, 13. Think about this: the purpose of a suitcase is to carry clothes and the purpose of a stove is to cook food. So, what do you do with the suitcase and stove? Sweeping the floor with the suitcase, or playing games on the stove would not be the correct use for these things. It is the same with your body now that it belongs to the Lord and is to be used for His purposes.

**Your body is so important** that, someday, God will raise it from the dead - v14. All who have the Holy Spirit living in them have the guarantee that they will be raised to the glory of God. The Bible says "you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory" (Ephesians 1:13-14). You have a guarantee from God that He will not leave your body in the grave, but, in the resurrection, you will receive a glorified body, no longer subject to pain, sickness, loneliness or sorrow. You will have a body suitable for the good things of life: joy, happiness, immortality, peace and eternal fellowship in Heaven with Jesus, God and all His other sons.

**Your body is a member of the Lord** - v15. If you had the power to control the legs, the arms, the eyes or the hands of Jesus, what would you do with them? Would you carry them to indecent places? Would you expose them to pornography? Would you participate in filthy habits? Would you commit immoral acts? Would you smoke? Would you drink? Would you take drugs? Would you hurt these members of His body? Would you kill them? Of course not! Even so do not treat your body, which is a member of Christ's body, in this way.

**Your body is a sanctuary of the Holy Spirit** of God - v19. God's sanctuary is a place for worship to take place in a spirit of reverence and dedication.

**Your body is not yours.** - Vv19-20. You are only a caretaker (steward, administrator) of God's belongings and not the owner so always ask yourself: "What does God want me to do with this body of His?"

**"I live in a house.** It's not a perfect house. It has its good points and bad points but in spite of everything, I like it. I've lived in it for so long that I've grown accustomed to it. Some time ago, the richest, purest, most generous, kindest and most wonderful man in the world bought my house. He paid a high price for it - more than it was worth - so, evidently, he wanted it very much. He bought it but did not evict me from it. In fact, He came to live in the house with me. I have to confess that it is great to have him in the same house with me, but I also have to confess that I had to make some changes. Now, I feel the need to take better care of the house, to keep it clean and to never do anything that he disapproves of because he bought it - the house belongs to him. It's not mine anymore." It's obvious that this house is my body. Jesus bought it and came to live in it with me, through the Holy Spirit. Now I want to use it as He wishes because He is the owner and I am the tenant. Now, before doing anything, speaking any word, thinking any thought, or participating in any activity, I want to ask: "Is this the right thing to do with the body that belongs to Jesus?"

### **QUESTIONABLE USES OF GOD'S TEMPLE**

Sometimes it's hard to decide if a certain activity is prohibited or allowed. Even among religious people, there are big differences of opinions about certain things. For example dancing, drinking alcoholic beverages, smoking, watching TV, playing football and other sports, playing cards, going to the movies, going to the swimming pool, playing the lottery, working in a bar, wearing a mini-skirt, voting in the elections, being a politician, listening to certain music, using drugs, getting married to an unbeliever, being in the military, etc.

We don't find specific rules about these things in the Bible. It's not always enough to just look for a simple prohibition or permission in the Bible. The Bible often teaches by principles instead of rules and regulations. Here are some thoughts, then, that you might want to consider before taking part in some activity:

Decide, first of all, that you are going to do God's will, before even knowing what His will is. (Read John 7:17.) Ask yourself honestly:

1. "What is the desire of my heart? To please God or please myself?" (See Matthew 6:33 and Romans 12:1, 2.)
2. Does the Bible have some clear instruction or teaching about this activity?
3. Will this activity force me to have some association that could corrupt me by its influence? (I Corinthians 5:13)
4. Is this activity unnecessarily harmful to my health? (Romans 12:1; I Corinthians 10:31)
5. Is this activity going to hinder me in fulfilling my responsibilities as a Christian? (II Corinthians 6:14-18)
6. Can this activity damage my influence as a Christian before others? (Romans 12:2; I Corinthians 8:7-13; 10:23-38; II Corinthians 7:1; Titus 2:12)
7. Could this activity cause my brother to stumble (to fall into sin)? (Romans 14)
8. Do I have doubts about this activity? If I do it, would I be acting against my own conscience? (Romans 14:23)

## 9. What would Jesus do in my place? (I Peter 2:21)

### Questions

1. Being buried with Christ in baptism and walking a new life means one has did to their sinful past.  
True \_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_
2. A Christian's physical body belongs to Christ.  
True \_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_
3. A Christian's body is a sanctuary of the Holy Spirit, therefore they are a servant of God, not their own master.  
True \_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_
4. Since the Holy Spirit lives within a Christian's body, one needs to
  - a. \_\_\_\_ Take physical care of their body
  - b. \_\_\_\_ Keep it clean of sinful practices
  - c. \_\_\_\_ Do nothing as the Holy Spirit is spirit not physical
  - d. \_\_\_\_ An agreement to those who put their trust in Christ by obedience that their sins are forgiven and eternal life awaits.
5. The New Covenant established by Christ is
  - a. \_\_\_\_ A set of rules and regulations one must follow
  - b. \_\_\_\_ A set of principles to be applied and followed

### Lesson 3

#### **YOU ARE STILL IN THE WORLD BUT YOU ARE NO LONGER OF THE WORLD**

#### **CHRIST'S PRAYER FOR HIS DISCIPLES**

"I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world." (John 17:15-16) When you received Christ as Lord and Savior, you rejected the world ("world" here refers to the bad things of this life: the illicit desires, selfishness, works of the flesh, materialism, etc.). Your loyalty is no longer to the world. It's even considered your enemy. Not only are you to love Christ and His way, but you are also to stop loving the world. Open your Bible and read I John 2:15-17 and see the relationship between you, the Christian, and the world. Think about the following truths:

The love of the world blocks man's heart so that he is not able to receive God's love. Like water and oil, the two do not mix. (v15)

None of the ways of the world comes from God. The illicit desires, the pride, the egotism - these things come from the world, from the evil one, and not from God. (V 16)

The world, with its desires, will be destroyed. He who remains is the one who does God's will. (V 17)

#### **WE ARE DIFFERENT FROM THE WORLD**

The Christian and the world are opposed to one another and are mutually exclusive. The Christian has to be separated from the world! But how? Does it mean that you have to stop studying and working, or that you have to run away to a desert island, where none of the contamination of the world could reach you? Of course not!

The Christian is in the world but he is not of the world. He is very different from the people of the world and this difference is reflected in his life. Anyone who observes your life, seeing your behavior, should easily notice that you are now a follower of Jesus Christ! Brethren, we are different!

Read Colossians 3:5-16. And notice the things that the Christian does and does not practice. See how different it is from the world's way. **The Christian does not practice** fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, covetousness, anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language, or lies. **The Christian Practices:** tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering, bearing with one another, forgiving one another, love, peace, thankfulness

### **NOW THAT YOU ARE A CHRISTIAN YOU CAN RESIST TEMPTATION**

The eternal purpose of God for us is to make us holy, blameless and without reproach. (Read Colossians 1:21, 22 and Ephesians 1:4; 5:25-27). Our situation is that we are in the world but we don't belong to the world. Even though we are being sanctified (separated) to serve God (I Corinthians 6:9-11) and live holy lives (Romans 6:11-12), we are still subject to temptations. However, now that we are Christians there is a big difference. We have heaven's help in the fight against sin! Let's note some things about temptation and the Christian.

**The danger of temptation is the possibility of apostasy** (a falling away from God). Read Hebrews 3:1-19 and notice:

This warning is sent to " holy brethren, partakers of the Heavenly calling," v 1  
The condition to receive the blessing is to remain firm until the end. v6, 14

An example of apostasy was Israel in the Desert. vv 7-11

The warning: sin can deceive you and harden your heart and you can end up losing your promised "rest." vv 12, 13, 19

**A summary:** "Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience" (Hebrews 4:11) and "He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight; if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard" (Colossians 1:22, 23).

### **HOW CAN WE REMAIN FIRM, RESISTING SATAN'S TEMPTATIONS UNTIL THE END?**

"Put on the whole armor of God". Ephesians 6:10-18.

"Add to your faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, love." II Peter 1:5-11.

The Divine Assurance (I Corinthians 10:13) "God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able"

Our Divine help (Romans 8:26, 27) The Holy Spirit, who lives inside you, helps you in your weakness, interceding for you.

### **WHAT SHALL WE DO WHEN THE TEMPTER COMES?**

(Matthew 4:1-11). Remember that even in the life of Jesus temptation was necessary. (Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted. Or in Mark's words, the Spirit drove him.) He was perfected; that is, qualified to be our sacrifice and High Priest (Hebrews 2:17, 18; 4:15, 16) in the process. As in Jesus' case, your faith has to be tried also. Is there a risk in this? Yes, but he who never enters the race, will never be a winner. God tests our faith (I Peter 1:7; James 1:2-4, 12, 13) but He doesn't tempt us to sin. Jesus was taken by God to

be tested but He was not tempted by God.

Recognize that Satan is the tempter. He is the one who wants to overthrow us. When he comes around saying things like, "Do it, nobody will know"; "Do it, God does not care if you do"; "Do it, God does not know what you need"; "Do it, you will feel good"; "Do it, you just live once so have some fun while you can"; "Do it, God wants you to be happy", remember that these thoughts come from someone who is only trying to destroy you.

When the tempter comes to you, then say as Christ said, "No, I will not do that, because it is written ... You'll need to be able to do something else too. You'll need:

To know God's Word.

To believe in God's Word.

To decide to do God's will in advance.

To remember God's word when the tempter comes around.

When the tempter came to Eve, she knew God's Word but she did not believe it. In Ananias and Saphira's case, they knew and believed but did not decide to obey Him. When temptation came to David, he knew, believed and decided to obey in advance but he did not remember at the moment of the temptation. Jesus knew, believed, decided to obey in advance and at the time of temptation He remembered it. That's why he was able to resist Satan's attacks.

**MEMORIZE:** Ephesians 6:10-18

#### Questions

1. The word world in "you are not of the world" means acts fulfilling the illicit desires of man's nature.  
True \_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_
2. A Christian's lifestyle is different as Christians do not practice fornication, evil desires, covetousness, anger, blasphemy, lies or filthy language.  
True \_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_
3. Being tempted is a sin  
True \_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_
4. Yielding to temptation hardens a Christian's heart which can lead to losing eternal life with Christ.  
True \_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_
5. When the tempter comes you need to
  - a. \_\_\_\_ To know God's Word.
  - b. \_\_\_\_ To believe in God's Word.
  - c. \_\_\_\_ To decide in advance to do God's will.
  - d. \_\_\_\_ To remember God's word
  - e. \_\_\_\_ All the above
  - f. \_\_\_\_ b and c

#### Lesson 4

#### **YOU ARE NOW A DISCIPLE OF JESUS CHRIST!**

"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn



from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls, for My yoke is easy and My burden is light." (Matthew 11:28-30)

## **WHAT IS A DISCIPLE OF JESUS?**

The Christian life is a learning process (John 6:45 and Matthew 28:18-20) and a disciple is a student. But in the New Testament, its meaning is a little bit different than today. In the days of Jesus, there were masters (teachers) and disciples (students) but they did not sit in classrooms like we do today. The master taught in practical ways. He walked with his students. He showed them how to do things. That's why the word disciple in the New Testament has often been translated as "follower". It was the same with Jesus. And the word disciple could very well be translated as "apprentice". Imagine a master mechanic and his apprentice. The "master", in this case, would teach his apprentice how to use some tools, and how to repair some problems. The apprentice hears and observes the teacher doing this. Afterwards, he takes the tools and imitates his master's work. He is a disciple (apprentice, learner, follower, student) of the teacher (master mechanic). A disciple is the most used term for followers of Jesus in the Gospels- 269 times.

- If we are the learners, then who is the teacher? It is Jesus Christ.
- What does Jesus teach us? He teaches us how to live, how to be, to do and to teach. It is on-the-job training about lifestyle and personal commitment
- Where is His classroom? In every place.
- When does His class meet? All the time.
- What is His teaching method? Show and tell, model and teach. (See Philippians 2:3-8 and 2 Corinthians 3:18.
- It is not the power of positive thinking or a mechanical system of moral improvement.
- What is the goal of a disciple? To know Christ John 17:3 and to be like him Romans 8:29
- When can we say we have learned His lesson? When we are practicing what He has taught us.
- When is a person considered a disciple? When he enrolls in Jesus' school or when he graduates? When you became a Christian, you enrolled in the School of Jesus!!! You will spend your whole life learning as Jesus is being formed in you.

## **THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP**

Remind yourself that there's a price you have to pay to be Jesus' disciple. The enrollment price in Jesus' school is high! With the blessings come responsibilities and for the Christian you must live worthy of His call. Speaking about the life of the disciple, Jesus said "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me." (Luke 9:23). Notice four important points in this verse:

**"Deny himself"** - The Christian is a slave of Christ, and as such, has no will of his own to fulfill but only his Lord's will. We can't pursue the world's desires nor give in to temptation. Jesus, with the same weapons against sin that are available to us, faced temptation and always overcame it. He is our High Priest who can sympathize with our weaknesses, because He "was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin." (Hebrews 4:15)

**"Take up his cross daily"** - What does the word "cross" mean in this passage? Is it a medal that a person wears around their neck? Is it a symbol of Christianity? Does it mean torture and suffering? None of these give the correct meaning. The idea in the first century, when Jesus spoke these words, was to die to your old life, saying, like Paul "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me." (Galatians 2:20)

**"Follow me"** - Here is the source of our strength - Jesus is the key. He gives us the strength to bear the difficult things in life. He guides our way! He gives us success over temptation (1 Corinthians 10:13). We must follow Him (John 14:6). Being a Christian doesn't mean to just stop sinning but, also, to put Jesus and His word first in our

life, following Him and imitating Him in everything.

**"Daily"** - We made the decision to deny ourselves and take up our cross for the first time in the day that we embraced Christ as our Savior and Lord. But that day is gone and today is another day! Every day we need to make the decision to follow Jesus, again! When Jesus said "daily", He was telling us that we need to make this decision each day. Our faith has to be a dynamic, living faith. We must daily renew our purpose of becoming like Christ.

Also read: Luke 14:25-33; Romans 12:1, 2; Mark 8:36.

### THREE TRAITS OF A DISCIPLE

Jesus, in the gospel of John, mentioned three characteristics of a disciple:

**Abide in His Word** (John 8:31). It's more than simply believing (See John 8:29-59). It involves knowledge of the Word. We have to study Jesus' words. It means to practice what we have learned. Do you hold to the Word? How often do you study the Bible? Daily?

**Love one another.** (John 13:34-35). How should we love? Like Christ loved us. (John 13:34 - He gave Himself for us). How shall we be disciples? By helping one another, talking to each other about spiritual subjects, studying the Bible together and being sensitive to the necessities of one another. Do you love your brothers in Christ? What are you doing in practical ways to help them?

**Bear much fruit** (John 15:8) What kinds of fruit do we bear? Children and families, fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22), glory to God for having created us, bringing others to Christ, etc. Why should we bear fruit? To glorify God. To not be cut off (John 15:1-2). To save others. For gratitude (Psalms 5 1:12-15). To fulfill our purpose in life. How can we bear more fruit? By abiding in Jesus. (John 15:5) When the branch is cut off the vine, it does not bear any fruit. Are you producing much fruit?

### JESUS IS OUR MODEL!

We know Him through the Bible. We see how He acted, talked and treated people. We learn what is important to Him. We see His attributes, such as His love, meekness, humility, mercy, purity and righteousness. By meditating on Him and admiring Him, we seek to become like Him. To the Christian, He is our example in all things.

### Questions

1. A disciple of Christ is obedient and committed to Him and His teachings.

True \_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_

2. What \_\_\_\_\_ does \_\_\_\_\_ Christ \_\_\_\_\_ teach \_\_\_\_\_ us?  
a. \_\_\_\_\_ How \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ live  
b. \_\_\_\_\_ Practice \_\_\_\_\_ what \_\_\_\_\_ He \_\_\_\_\_ taught \_\_\_\_\_ us  
c. \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ Positive \_\_\_\_\_ thinking  
d. \_\_\_\_ a and c

3. A servant of Christ does the will of Christ not his own.

True \_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_

4. How often is a child of God to deny himself and do God's will?

- a. \_\_\_\_ Weekly of Sunday
- b. \_\_\_\_ Every day after his personal chores are completed
- c. \_\_\_\_ Daily, all the time

5. Take up your cross means

- a. \_\_\_\_ A medal or symbol worn around one's neck
- b. \_\_\_\_ Torture and suffering
- c. \_\_\_\_ Dying to old sinful way of life

### **THIRD STAGE - SPIRITUAL GROWTH**

#### **Lesson 5**

#### **YOU MUST GROW OR ELSE YOU WILL DIE!**

It is not considered normal when a child is born but does not grow. If he does not grow mentally, he is called retarded. If he does not grow physically, he is called a dwarf: But if you don't develop your Christian life, you're going to die! See what God said about the necessity of spiritual growth:

"... we have much to say and hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. For though by this time, you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." (Hebrews 5:11-14)

"As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby." (I Peter 2:2)

"Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure." (Philippians 2:12, 13)

#### **WHAT IS SPIRITUAL GROWTH?**

Remember that we are talking about spiritual growth and not physical or numerical growth. It means becoming more and more similar to Jesus Christ. (II Corinthians 3: 18)

It involves learning to distinguish between good and evil. (Hebrews 5:14)

It means walking more and more by the Spirit and less and less by the flesh. (Galatians 5:13ff)

It means possessing and increasing in the Christian graces in your life - faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, love (II Peter 1:5-11). If these things exist in us and are growing in us, we will be active, fruitful, firm, and we are not going to stumble. We can understand spiritual growth as a change for the better in our own character.

A note: Spiritual growth comes, not only when you practice such virtues, but also when you err and reflect about your mistakes. Sometimes, suffering because of your failures helps you grow. This is the value of the Lord's discipline. (Hebrews 12:1-13)

#### **THE SPIRITUAL GRACES OF 2 PETER 1:**

**Faith** - Read Romans 10:17 to see the source of faith. It is in the Word that we learn that God always fulfills His promises (Mark 10:29; Romans 8:28). He always keeps His word to us. Tragedies may happen in life, but knowing that God is sustaining us increases our faith. Living by faith increases faith. Can you remember some times in your life when, trusting in the Lord, you faced some fear or struggle and overcome?

**Virtue** - means moral courage. It is the characteristic that helps people to do what is right, even when it is very difficult or when others are against it. An example of one who showed great moral courage is Joseph. Read Genesis 39 and see virtue in action. Can you think of someone else who has shown great virtue (moral courage) in their life?

**Knowledge** – of God and His will, of Christ and His life. The lack of knowledge caused God's people to be destroyed. (Hosea 4:6). Since Jesus' words will judge us, we need to know what He taught (John 12:48-50) ... The way to obtain knowledge is by reading and studying the Bible. (Psalm 1:1-3). Reading spiritual books and biblical commentaries can also help. Make a practical plan to grow in knowledge. (Refer back to lesson 1)

**Self-control** - We should have self-control over our bodies: passions, appetites, moods, etc. (1 Corinthians 9:27). Self-control is a fruit of the spirit. (Galatians 5:22, 23) Consider making a list of the areas in your life where you need to have more self-control. Pray constantly to God for growth in these areas.

**Perseverance** - means "steadfastness, persistence, patience". It is the characteristic of a man that is unshakable in his purpose and loyalty to the faith, not going astray even in the greatest of trials and suffering. James 5:7-11 gives us a biblical example of perseverance.

See James 1:2-4 to learn how to develop perseverance. We will have problems and temptations in our lives. However, the one who remains firm until the end (he who perseveres) will be saved. (Hebrews 3:6). Can you think of people and situations in your life that motivated you to persevere?

**Godliness** This refers to personal devotion to God or reverence. Cornelius is an example of godliness (piety) in the Bible. (Acts 10:2, 7). Godliness is always a valuable virtue to possess. I Timothy 4:8. Here are some suggestions to help you to keep your mind on spiritual and holy things:

Listen to Christian songs

Have days of fasting and prayer

Form a prayer group

Have home worship

Save a time daily to read, pray and meditate on God's Word

Describe your practice of personal devotion. Do you have a plan? Goals?

**Brotherly Love** is love among brothers (fellow Christians). One example: the churches that helped the Christians in Jerusalem during the famine. II Corinthians 8:1-5. Another example: the prayers that the Christians made for Peter, showing brotherly kindness. (Acts 12:1-5) It can include the practice of hospitality. Read Galatians 6:10 and try to think of a brother or sister in Christ that needs your help? What can you do for him/her? Is there a brother or sister in Christ that needs a friend? Get closer to this person to possibly start a good friendship.

**Love** - Christian love is an action. It means to actively desire and seek the good of others and always involves serving. If serving means to supply the needs of others, and we recognize that the true needs are not necessarily what the person wants, then we can understand that to love is almost the same as to serve. Jesus came to serve. He loved us. He saw our need for forgiveness and He died on the cross to obtain it. In the same way, let us serve (love) one another. Many people only come to understand God's love when they have their own children. The love of parents for their children helps us understand how God loves us. Read 1 Corinthians 13 (all) I John 3:11-18 and 1 John 4:7-21 to gain a greater awareness of what Christian love really is. Write down the name of people or events in your own life that helped you to understand and practice love.

Questions

1. Who decides what God's message, His teachings, means?

- a. \_\_\_ Priest
  - b. \_\_\_ Rabbi
  - c. \_\_\_ Preacher/evangelists
  - d. \_\_\_ You - by personal study
2. Spiritual growth is
- a. \_\_\_ Learning to distinguish between good and evil
  - b. \_\_\_ Possessing and increasing in faith, virtue, knowledge self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness and love.
  - c. \_\_\_ Practicing the Christian virtues
  - d. \_\_\_ All the above
3. The source of faith comes from knowledge of God's word.  
True \_\_\_ False \_\_\_
4. What is greater
- a. \_\_\_ Knowledge of God's word
  - b. \_\_\_ Self- control
  - c. \_\_\_ Love
5. Love is
- a. \_\_\_ a feeling
  - b. \_\_\_ A desire to do what is best for another

#### **FOURTH STAGE—TAKE YOUR PLACE IN THE FAMILY OF GOD**

##### **Lesson 6**

##### **TAKE YOUR PLACE IN THE FAMILY OF GOD**

When a baby is born, being a newborn, he starts to be fed and to be cared for almost exclusively by his mother, receiving much more than he contributes. But there comes the time when he is going to assume his place in the family. He starts eating at the table with the others, building relationships, accepting responsibilities and fulfilling duties. All this is part of his development.

You also, as a new Christian, need to take your place in the family of God. You surrendered your life to Jesus Christ, repenting of your sins, and being buried with Him in baptism. At that moment you entered into a new relationship with the other followers of Jesus. You became a part of the "church". The Christian life is not lived in isolation but in company with the other members of the church. This is God's plan for you.

##### **THE CHURCH IS A VERY SPECIAL GROUP OF PEOPLE**

This group is very special because it consists of those whom God called out of darkness into His wonderful light (I Peter 2:9). They are a group of people saved through the blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The church is people separated by God for Himself. The church (literally, the called out ones), have been called:

- Called by God. Romans 8:28-3
- Called out of darkness. I Peter 2:9; Colossians 1:13
- Called through the Gospel. II Thessalonians 2:14
- Called into fellowship in Christ I Corinthians 1:9
- Called to sanctification (being set apart). I Thessalonians 4:7
- Called to the Kingdom I Thessalonians 2:12; Galatians 1:6, 5:13; Colossians 3:15; Hebrews 9:15; I Peter 5:10)

NOTE: In the New Testament, the word "church" refers either to an assembly of Christians in a certain place (Romans 16:16; I Corinthians 1:2; Ephesians 1:1; Philippians 1:1) or to the universal body of Christ (composed of all the people in the world that are saved in Christ - Matthew 16:18).

Somebody once said: "I am a Christian but I am not a member of any church because I don't see such a commandment in the Bible." This person did not study the Bible, because, if he had, he would understand that the local church is highly emphasized in the New Testament: " ... not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some." (Hebrews 10:25)

The local church chooses missionaries and supports them, maintains Bible schools, helps people that are in need, promotes prayer meetings, worship, devotionals and evangelism. It's the local church that serves as an instrument to accomplish God's work here on earth. There is and always will be a future for the church of Jesus Christ because God's work should be and is going on. You are to take an active part in this great work of God in the local church!

### **BIBLICAL TERMS FOR THE CHURCH**

In the Bible we find no specific title given for the church. Instead, we find various descriptions that illustrate some special aspect of this group of people called the church – terms of either relationship or function.

**House (family) of God** - I Timothy 3:15; Ephesians 1:3; Galatians 3:26, 27. God is the Father, Jesus is the oldest brother and all of us are brethren. The church is a family that God constituted to be always with Him. We have fellowship with Him, with His son Jesus and with one another as children of God. The love, kindness, help and approval that we find in the human family also have to exist in God's family and in an even more profound way. The Bible exhorts us: "Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms." (James 5:13) Be a faithful and loyal brother on whom the church can count. Serve the other brethren in love.

**Kingdom of God (or of Christ)** - Revelation 1:5; Matthew 16:18-19; Colossians 1:13. God's kingdom is the kingdom of His Son to whom He already gave all the authority and whom He appointed "King of kings and Lord of lords" (Matthew 28:18 & Revelation 19:16). As God has always reigned over all, now His Son reigns over all creation. The most important part and the purpose of His reign is the church. The church of Jesus is the group of people that voluntarily subject themselves to King Jesus to serve Him in this world.

**Temple (sanctuary) of God** - I Peter 2:5; I Corinthians 3:16, 17. We are the spiritual house, the residence, the sanctuary of God. We must maintain our personal holiness, worthy of His presence. God dwells in the church (not in the building, but in people). We live in God's presence and in His presence, we pray, sing, praise, worship and serve. Be a participant of this worship, treating with respect and care His temple, the church.

**Flock of Christ** - Acts 20:28. We follow Jesus, our good and supreme Shepherd.

**A chosen people, holy nation, royal priesthood, people of God** – (I Peter 2:9). We exist to adore, honor and praise our Creator.

**Church of Christ (or church of God)** - Matthew 16:18; Acts 20:28; Romans 16:16; I Corinthians 1:2; 10:32; 11:22; 15:9; II Corinthians 1:1; Galatians 1:13; I Timothy 3:5,15. We are the exclusive property of Christ and God. We belong to Him, not to others, not even to ourselves.

**Bride (wife) of Christ** - Ephesians 5:23-32 The emphasis in this term is our faithfulness and allegiance to the one we have pledged ourselves to love and serve.

**Church** - We are the people of God and have been called out of the world, out of the wrong way. We were separated (sanctified) and we should be different from the world. We should live holy lives.

**Body of Christ** - Ephesians 5:23; Colossians 1:18; I Corinthians 12:12-27 & Romans 12:4, 5. The church is Christ's instrument to continue His mission in the world. We are His hands, mouth, eyes, feet, heart. The church is a living organism and all the parts are joined and mutually dependent one of another. As the arm needs the hand, the members of the body of Christ need one another. So you should seek your function in the church. Exercise the gifts that God has given you for the good of Christ's body, the church.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERS**

Knowing our identity as a member of Christ's body, we recognize that we cannot be individualist or selfish. We are part of something much bigger than ourselves. There is nothing more important in our lives than this. You are part of the most privileged group of people in the world. It's an honor to have the opportunity to serve, work and participate in the church of Jesus Christ.

#### Questions

1. The church Christ established is
  - a. \_\_\_ Temple
  - b. \_\_\_ Meeting place such as a building
  - c. \_\_\_ People
  - d. \_\_\_ People called out of darkness (sin) into Christ
2. Christians are
  - a. \_\_\_ Members in the Body of Christ
  - b. \_\_\_ Servants of God
  - c. \_\_\_ People cleansed by the blood of Christ through obedience
  - d. \_\_\_ All the above
3. The Bible specifies one name for Christ's church.  
True \_\_\_ False \_\_\_
4. Christ's church is referred to as a Kingdom, Bride, Body.  
True \_\_\_ False \_\_\_
5. The church is
  - a. \_\_\_ an organization
  - b. \_\_\_ a living organism

## **Lesson 7**

### **THE PURPOSE AND MISSION OF THE CHURCH**

The church of the Lord is His living spiritual body. Our mission comes from Him, our head (Ephesians 1:21, 22). The church is the body and He is the head and so the church carries out His will. We are the church, anointed by His Holy Spirit, born of His Father. We establish His church and His peace in the whole world. The church continues His work here on earth and although His work is varied, we can summarize it in three general areas:

### **EVANGELISM**

We are to preach the gospel, make disciples of all nations, be the light of the world and salt of the earth, fight against the principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places and make manifest the very character of God. When Jesus answered

questions about His mission here on earth, He said things like – “The Son of Man came to seek and save the lost.” We, as His body, have been given the job of carrying out this very same mission.

## **EDIFICATION**

The church can be referred to as living stones or bricks. It is not just a pile of loose bricks. God wants a construction of living stones. If the bricks are not in place, if they are not cemented together, then they are not a building. Evangelism brings in bricks but God wants them formed into a building. (Ephesians 2:19-22; 4:6; I Peter 2:5) In the process of things we may lose a lot of new bricks if we just throw them into a pile or if we cement them in a very haphazard manner so that they soon fall apart. We must work at making sure each one is cemented into the place God gave him. This is called edification.

For some, the church is a place you go to observe others. The center of attention is a person, probably the pastor or priest. If someone needs help, who do they call? They call the leader. If someone has a problem or doubts, they call only the preacher. It wasn't this way in the primitive church. The church is not an institution but rather a family. They met in homes. Due to persecution, they often met in secret in small groups so as not to call attention to themselves. An example was the church at Thessalonica. Paul went there and established the church but only stayed a very short time before he was cast out of the city. It was a new church, suffered persecution and had problems with sin and doctrine. The missionaries were gone and yet they survived. How? Read I Thessalonians 5:11-14 and see how. Everything did not depend on the preachers, elders, etc. They recognized that they were the building of God and their identity as Christians could be seen in their involvement with each other. We must edify one another and be involved with one another.

Still, some want to protect their private lives: "I want to be independent, free to do as I want." But if you really want to be the best possible Christian, then you should invite others into your personal life, tell them to look for your faults, and help you to be better. In this way you can grow even more.

These, then, are the goals of edification:

- II Peter 1:5-11 every member is active, productive, firm, saved.
- Ephesians 4:16 every member in the place God assigned him, linked to the others, working, cooperating, growing, edified in love.
- Colossians 1:28 all are to be presented perfect in Christ.

**Let's note some examples of opportunities** that God gives us to edify one another. Read each passage and write the mutual obligation of Christian in the blank:

John 13:34-35 \_\_\_\_\_

Romans 14:19; 15:14 \_\_\_\_\_

I Corinthians 12:25 \_\_\_\_\_

Ephesians 4:2; 5:21 \_\_\_\_\_

Galatians 6:2 \_\_\_\_\_

Colossians 3:12-14 \_\_\_\_\_

I Thessalonians 4:18; 5:11-14 \_\_\_\_\_

Hebrews 3:12; 10:24, 25 \_\_\_\_\_

James 5:16 \_\_\_\_\_

I Peter 4:9 \_\_\_\_\_

Meditate on these commandments of the Lord and your responsibility as a follower of Jesus and as a member of His body, the church. This work is not reserved only for the leadership but rather each member shares in it. Love, edify, counsel, care for, support, carry burdens, conserve the peace and unity, comfort, exhort, warn,



confront, help, encourage, motivate, confess, pray, take in, fellowship. Jesus called all of us to do all of this for one another.

## **SERVICE**

One way we serve the Lord is through serving other people. This service is not a competition between us but rather cooperation. We are to use our gifts, working together (I Corinthians. 12:12-27). Jesus did not come to be served but to serve and so His church must have the same vision. The church exists to defend the oppressed, help the needy, and do good works. (Ephesians 2:10)

You are going to want to help or be helped by your brothers. This help is sometimes spiritual (encouragement, edification, etc.) and sometimes material. Giving and receiving, this mutual help will develop love and friendship that unites us in the Christian family.

### **Consider the following verses:**

Galatians 6:10

Acts 6:1-6

Acts 11:27-30

Romans 15:25-27

Acts 11:19-26

Acts 13:1-12

Acts 6:1-7

Ephesians 4:1-16

Colossians 3: 1-17

### **Questions**

1. The mission of Christ's church is to
  - a. \_\_\_ Build buildings in which to meet
  - b. \_\_\_ Proclaim the gospel of Christ
  - c. \_\_\_ Encourage other Christians to remain faithful
  - d. \_\_\_ Do good works
  - e. \_\_\_ All the above
  - f. \_\_\_ b, c and d
2. The church is an active body of saved people  
True \_\_\_ False \_\_\_
3. The center of the assembled church is
  - a. \_\_\_ the priest
  - b. \_\_\_ the preacher
  - c. \_\_\_ Christ
4. For the church to be legitimate it must assemble in a building such as a temple or sanctuary  
True \_\_\_ False \_\_\_
5. During persecution it is acceptable to gather in secret and in small groups.  
True \_\_\_ False \_\_\_

## **Lesson 8**

### **THE CHURCH ASSEMBLES FOR WORSHIP AND EDIFICATION**

“Let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.”  
(Hebrews 10:24-25)

One of the saddest things you will ever see is a “Christian” who does not eagerly await the opportunities when the whole church assembles together for worship and edification. Some even consider it as only one of their “Christian duties”. In truth, God did command it because we need it so much and many have sacrificed their very lives to protect our liberty to do this very thing.

**THE CHURCH ASSEMBLES FOR WORSHIP** We must understand clearly that there is no certain time or place for a Christian to worship God. Jesus made this very plain in John 4:19-26. We worship in our spirit (heart) at any time in any place. Worship describes the expression of our heart characterized by awe, veneration, and respect. It always occurs individually, whether one is in an assembly or not. Group worship is just a "number of individuals worshipping God together at the same time in the same place. The actual worship occurs in the heart or spirit of each one. All the others in an assembly may be worshipping while one individual is not. Or an individual may be worshipping while the others are not. The forms or acts such as singing, offering, eating the Lord’s Supper and praying are not actually the true worship. They are just means of expressing the sense of reverence that is in the heart.

Normally, in church meetings God’s Word is read, taught or proclaimed. When the Scriptures are read or quoted, we ought to listen like it is God speaking to us through His Word (if in fact, the one speaking is speaking God’s words). Listen with personal active participation: What does this mean? What does God have to say to me? What does He want me to know to be, to do? How can I share this with others?

**ARE YOU A WORSHIPPER OR A SPECTATOR?**

We are becoming a nation of spectators. TV has revolutionized the world. Participants have become viewers. Doers have become couch potatoes. Being creative and industrious demands too much of us. Being just a spectator demands very little. When you add to TV viewing, live sports events, videos, and movie theaters, you have our #1 pastime – “spectating”. The spectator mindset affects the church and creates certain conflicts because the overwhelming Biblical emphasis in Christianity is being a participant and not just a spectator.

When it comes to the assembly of the church, some have a hard time trying to change from being a spectator to a participant. They get up from the game on TV and assemble to worship in the church meeting. Some TV addicts, after an hour or two of hype and pizzazz on TV, come to church and expect to feel the same level of emotions. But think about this: TV advertisers spend \$1,000,000 on a 30-second commercial. Programs dazzle you with the latest sophistication in light and sound. On TV the visual impression is changed about every 5 to 10 sec. Then you come to a church meeting. Can you honestly say that the word “boring” doesn't sometimes flash across your mental screen?

But our problem doesn't lie in the church’s inability to compete. The problem is the wrong notion that the church is supposed to compete. Like it or not, many Christians are comparing Christianity to spectator sports. If the worship service or game is not exciting, that is; “doesn't edify me”, they feel that time is being wasted in boredom. It’s so easy to just chill out and change the channel. Though some would never admit it, their mindset is: “I’m a spectator. I don’t sing. I don’t bring my Bible, read along, enter into the discussion, take notes or listen carefully. I’m a watcher and a listener. And this service had better be good.” Thus, the spectator expects to have his needs (or desires) met without any concern about the needs of the others present.

**THE CHURCH ASSEMBLES FOR EDIFICATION.** The most detailed description of the New Testament church

assembly is found in 1 Corinthians chapter 14 and the summary verse 26 says "Let all things be done for edification." Edification is what we do in order to build each other up in the most holy faith. The way we do it is mainly

				through				words:
Through	words	in	prayer.	I	Timothy	2:1,	Acts	4:23-31
Through	reading		the	word.	I		Timothy	4:13
Through	words	of	exhortation	and	rebuke.	I	Timothy	4:13, 5:20
Through		speaking.		1			Corinthians	14:3
Through	spiritual		songs.	Colossians		3:16;	Ephesians	5:19

Because we usually worship when we assemble, many call the church meeting a "worship service". Since we assemble to edify one another the meeting can also be called an "edification service". There is one very special activity God planned for Christians to do when they assembled that should involve both worship and edification. It is called "The Lord's Supper".

### THE LORD'S SUPPER

The Lord's Supper is a meal of great importance for the church. It is a symbolic meal. That means that its purpose is not to satisfy our physical hunger but rather to remind us of important spiritual things by means of material things. The elements, the acts, the words - all the symbols involved help us according to what they represent. The Lord's Supper is not something mystical or miraculous but is a memorial. "...do this in memory of Me" (Luke 22:19). The purpose of a memorial is to remind us of people, events, truths, relationships, commitments, etc.

The bread - reminds us of Christ's body that was sacrificed for us.  
The fruit of the vine - reminds us of Christ's blood that was shed for the remission of our sins.

Not only are the elements used in the Lord's Supper significant but our actions are also. Think about what we do with the bread and the fruit of the vine. We don't just look at them. We don't just admire them. We don't bow down before them. We **eat** the bread and **drink** of the cup. Jesus took the bread gave it to his disciples and said: "**Eat it**". He passed the cup and said: "**Drink it**". What is the significance of eating and drinking instead of only gazing upon them? It speaks a message that Christ has to be on the inside. It is a moment for individual, personal participation. Each one says something like this to the Lord, "Jesus, come into my heart and my life." It is not enough to just be in the room where Jesus is present. He has to be in us. The Lord's Supper is one of those special moments when we say to God "Come in!" Jesus said in John 6: 51, 54-56: "I am the living bread which came down from heaven. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him."

#### Questions

1. There is no specific time or place for Christians to worship.  
True \_\_\_ False \_\_\_
2. In an assembly or group of Christians
  - a. \_\_\_ All worship God because they are present in the group
  - b. \_\_\_ Worship is from one's inner being, their heart, so it is the individual who worships
3. When Christians come together all things are for strengthening those assembled.  
True \_\_\_ False \_\_\_
4. One can sing, pray, and partake of Lord's supper but not worship.  
True \_\_\_ False \_\_\_
5. In the Lord's Supper the bread represents God, Jesus, from heaven in an earthly body while the fruit of the vine represents Jesus' blood of His atoning sacrifice that cleanses faithful obedient people from sin.  
True \_\_\_ False \_\_\_

## Lesson 9

### WHO ARE YOU IN THE BODY OF CHRIST?

“...grow up in all things into Him who is the head; Christ; from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.” (Ephesians 4:15, 16)

“As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God...” (1 Peter 4:10).

“For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them ...” (Romans 12:4 – 6)

Now that you are a Christian it is important for you to assume your place in the family of God. The quote from Ephesians 4 clearly shows the importance of 100% involvement of the members in the work of the church. In fact, the church is organized by the Lord to do its work.

### THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH

Jesus is the head of the body, the church. He is not just a figurehead but rather is actively involved in all the church's work. It is Jesus who guides, organizes, oversees and shepherds the body in order for us to be what He wants us to be and to do what He wants us to do.

Jesus organizes the church by giving a gift(s) (functions) to each and every member. These gifts include elders, deacons, preachers and teachers but they also include every single member in some way. No one is unnecessary. None are unimportant. No one is excluded or excused. Jesus works through the Holy Spirit, distributing spiritual gifts to the members of the body, for the work of the church.

### SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Spiritual gifts are functions (ministries, assignments, works or services) that you, as a member of Christ's body, exercise. See Romans 12:3-8. Spiritual gifts are not talents. Even unbelievers have talents but spiritual gifts are only given to Christians. Spiritual gifts are not personality traits (patient, impulsive, kind). The gift of Peter and Paul was apostleship - they had the same gift but had different personalities.

Note: The types of gifts under consideration in this lesson are the permanent, non-miraculous gifts of service and not the temporary, miraculous gifts mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12.

Each member of the church is important. Each one is necessary. Perhaps you think "I am not a preacher or teacher. The body does not need me." How would the church be if everybody did the same thing? The Lord does not call everybody to do the same thing that is, not everybody has the same responsibility in the church. The Holy Spirit gives to each member of Christ's body ministries according to the body's needs. The Lord, being the head, knows how to coordinate the body. He gives to the body different kinds of ministries to supply the needs of the whole church.

### WHO AM I IN THE BODY OF CHRIST?

This is the question each one of us needs to ask. How can I know what my God given ministries are? The New Testament does not give a concise list of steps for determining one's spiritual gift. Some steps are suggested below but they ought not to be considered the final word on the subject. It should be remembered that the goal

here is not so much to **decide** what our own individual gifts are (as if the decision were ours) but to **discover** what God has decided our gifts are. Remember that God (Christ, the Spirit) "God has set the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He pleased" - 1 Corinthians 12:18. Here are some suggestions to help you answer this question for yourself.

**1. Become A Christian:** This is logical because spiritual gifts are given by God to members of the body. They aren't talents but services or functions of members of the body of Christ.

**2. Place Yourself Entirely At God's Disposal:** This is a definitive personal objective decision which should have been made at your conversion to Christ and needs to be continually renewed. Say to God with all your heart as Isaiah did: "Here am I, Lord, send me." Isaiah 6:8. If we are not willing to be used by the Lord in a way that He desires, we aren't ready to ask Him what He wants us to do.

**3. Pray:** You know that God has a purpose for you in the body of Christ so now just ask Him to show you what it is, knowing that He will answer because it is His will. Read and meditate on Psalm 25:12. "To the person who fears the Lord, He will show him the way he should choose." You might ask the opinion of others but the most obvious person to ask is the Head of the church.

**4. Consider The Needs Of The Church:** Peter plainly tells us that we are to employ our gifts by serving one another as good stewards of God's varied grace (I Peter 4:10). Gifts are ministries or services. To serve is to meet a need. The purpose of the gifts is not to keep people busy but to meet needs so we must look to the needs of the church. One of the most helpful things we can do is to develop the heart and habit of a servant. Spiritual gifts are services which the members are called by Jesus to exercise in a special way.

**5. Review the Lists of Gifts in the N.T.:** You need to start thinking about what God calls a ministry. These lists should give you an idea. See Romans 12:3-8; I Cor. 12:28; Ephesians 4:11, 12; I Peter: 10, 11.

Some Examples of Gifts, Ministries, In the N.T. -not including temporary or miraculous ones:

- Servant (I Peter 4:11; Romans 12:7)
- Teacher (I Corinthians 12:28; Romans 12:7; 2 Timothy 1:11)
- Exhorter (Romans 12:8)
- One who gives (Romans 12:8)
- One who gives aid/helps (Romans 12:8; I Corinthians 12:28)
- One who shows mercy (Romans 12:8)
- Administrator (I Corinthians 12:28)
- Shepherd, Pastor, Bishop (Acts 20:28; Ephesians 4:11; I Timothy 3:1, 2; Titus 1:5, 7)
- Evangelist, Preacher, Minister (I Corinthians 9:16, 17; Ephesians 4:11, 2 Peter 2:5; I Timothy 4:6; 2 Timothy 1:11)
- Deacon (I Timothy 3:8)

Within all of these, there are myriads of things to be done in which you could serve the Lord. For example:

- Pre-marriage and/or marriage counseling,
- Organize activities for youth groups,
- Sing at funerals,
- Church secretary
- Prepare Lord's Supper
- Do a Church Bulletin

(Don't be limited by this list. There are several lists in the New Testament of spiritual gifts or functions in the church and they are not identical. They are all different. This leads us to think that there is not one fixed list of

gifts. When we consider that all these gifts (ministries, functions) are services and that to serve means to meet needs, then we could conclude that the list of gifts might be as long as the list of the needs of the church. We need to expand our areas of service. Look around to see what needs to be done that is not being done.)

**6. Look for Opportunities to serve:** As you have developed the habit of serving, you might even start a journal of doors that God has opened for you to serve. As time goes on you may begin to see a direction that He is leading you in. Remember that gifts are services which the members are called by Jesus to exercise in a special way. All of us should serve but there are servants (deacons) in the church. All of us should evangelize but there are evangelists in the church. All of us should exercise mercy but there are Christians who exercise this function in a special way. All of us should contribute but there are some with this gift. All of us should take care of one another but some are shepherds

We are able to be involved in many services but there are some services for which some were especially called. These are our “gifts”. The right question here is not “Lord, what do You want me to do?”, but “Lord, in which service would You want me to dedicate myself or specialize in?” It is like a student who studies many subjects but “majors” in one area.

**7. Seek Guidance from Church Leadership:** Ephesians 4:11, 12 says that these gifts are given to the church for the equipping of the saints. Make good use of these gifts of leadership.

**8. Take The Initiative:** You have prayed to the Lord, reviewed the list of ministries in the N.T., taken into account the needs of the church that the Lord has brought to your attention and possibly even put the desire in you to fulfill. You have noted that God is always opening up doors of opportunity in certain directions and you have talked things over with the leadership in the church. With a willing heart, are sincerely asking the Lord to let you see what it is that He has for you to do. Take the initiative and get on with what the Lord would have you to be doing.

Got the idea? Go through the steps given. Begin to serve the Lord by employing your gift for one another as good stewards of God's varied grace. May the Lord bless you in everything good that you desire to do.

#### Questions

1. Each member of the church has a function to perform.  
True \_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_
2. Gifts (functions) of evangelizing, shepherding and preaching are more important than other functions.  
True \_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_
3. The Holy Spirit gives each member ministries (activities) according to the needs of Christ's Body.  
True \_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_
4. The New Testament provides a list of functions God requires Christians to perform.  
True \_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_
5. Before a function can be performed by a Christian it must be authorized by a church leader.  
True \_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_

## STAGE 5 - REPRODUCE YOURSELF SPIRITUALLY

### Lesson 10

#### BE FRUITFUL AND MULTIPLY

Living beings multiply themselves. The child that was generated from the love of his parents grows and soon the day arrives for him to repeat the process. God said to Adam and Eve: "Be fruitful and multiply." We are here today because of this blessing from God. In the spiritual life, the command is also "Be fruitful and multiply." You were born and live with the purpose of reproducing yourself spiritually. Disciples are to make disciples.

"Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit." (John 15:2)

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations. (Matthew 28:19)

"But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty." (Matthew 13:23)

### **THE PRINCIPLE OF "MULTIPLICATION"**

Can you imagine how the church would grow if each member reproduced themselves 30, 60 or 100 times? It would be fantastic! Even more interesting is seeing the results if each disciple of Christ would make at least one new disciple every year who would then, in turn, do the same thing. See how the principle of multiplication works: If you fold this sheet of paper you are reading, its thickness is going to double (from 3/256 inch to 3/128 inch). Folding it 10 times, its thickness will be 12 inches. The interesting fact is that if you could fold this booklet 39 times, its height would be greater than the distance from the earth to the moon! You can check it with a calculator. That's the principle of multiplication.

### **THE DREAM OF THE CHURCH:**

We want to transform this whole society, from the smallest to the largest. We want to make the wolf to live with the lamb. We will see the leopard lying down with the goat. The infant will play near the hole of the snake. "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain; For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea..." (Read Isaiah 11)

Have you ever imagined living in a world of headlines void of murder, robbery or violence? Movies and TV without pornography? Streets without beggars? Commerce without exploitation? Homes without confusion, fights or betrayals? Neighborhoods without bars, drunkards, addicts? "You are dreaming," somebody says. "The church is poor, young and small. We aren't able." But, if we were many, rich, powerful, with 1,000 years of experience, we still would not be able. It will only be done through the power of God. The difference between dreams and reality is God.

So how can our dream be realized? Not by force nor military or political power. Our weapon is the gospel. We are a people (church) dedicated to take this world out of darkness into the wonderful light of Jesus Christ.

You, a new Christian, need to have the vision of multiplication. Like in the example of the paper doubled 39 times reaches the moon, if each Christian multiplied himself once each year, even during his lifetime there could be billions of disciples of Christ on the earth. This view of multiplication should challenge us in many things.

### **THE FRUIT OF THIS DREAM OF INCREASING IN NUMBER**

**First of all, this vision gives motivation and enthusiasm.** Let's do it! Let's transform this world, our society, bringing millions to salvation through the knowledge of the Son of God. Let's start it now!

**Secondly, this vision shows us how wise is the plan of Jesus to conquer the world.**

"And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." (II Timothy 2:2)

"I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word." (John 17:20)

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen...." (Matthew 28:19-20)

This is Jesus' plan: disciples making other disciples, teaching these new disciples to do the same thing.

The evangelism of your city will not be done through somebody with a charismatic personality, great financial resources, and with an army of Ph.D.s in theology. It does not depend on buildings, money, or well-developed hierarchy. It is done when you pass your faith onto another person in your own personal way, simple and sincere, instructing this person to go and do the same. That's how the kingdom of God will go from one end of the earth to the other.

**Thirdly, this vision of multiplication shows us the necessity of being a disciple and making disciples.** We do not just baptize people. In Matthew 28:19 Jesus ordered his disciples to baptize the people that became disciples. The plan is that each individual is to follow Jesus. Yes, there are leaders in the church - elders, evangelists, teachers. but Jesus' plan is for each person to be totally dedicated to following Him and being like Him. The true meaning of baptism is "converted people"; people who died to self and sin, were buried in union with Christ and raised to walk in newness of life. Baptism means a new birth into a new life.

### **YOU CAN START RIGHT NOW!**

Do your best and the Lord will help you to develop more and more. Take advantage of all the opportunities; whether in your family, with neighbors, friends or colleagues. In personal conversations, public preaching, acts of charity, according to the gifts and opportunities that God gives you. Start now to practice this great vision of multiplication. "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners..." (I Timothy 1:15). Remember: you exist in this world as a Christian to fulfill exactly the same purpose.

### Question

1. God left the proclaiming of Christ's message of reconciliation to those God put into His church.  
True  False
2. The members of Christ's church must be dedicated to taking the world out of the darkness of sin into the wonderful light of Jesus Christ.  
True  False
3. Evangelizing is to be done by someone with
  - a.  A charismatic personality
  - b.  Great financial resources
  - c.  Highly trained theologians
  - d.  Christ's Christian family
4. For evangelizing to be successful there must be
  - a.  A church building
  - b.  Lots of money
  - c.  An organized hierarchy
  - d.  All of the above
  - e.  A proclaiming of the death, burial, resurrection of Christ
5. Before one can become a Christian they must
  - a.  First become a disciple
  - b.  Accept Christ as God in human form
  - c.  Obey his teachings by dying to a life of sin



- d. \_\_\_\_ Be buried following death in water immersion
- e. \_\_\_\_ Resurrected by God and placed into Christ kingdom
- f. \_\_\_\_ All the above
- g. \_\_\_\_ a, b and c

## **Lesson 11**

### **JESUS IS LORD!**

"That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved..." (Romans 10:9)

"...that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Philippians 2:10-11)

"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth." (Matthew 28:18-20)

### **WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO CALL JESUS "LORD"?**

It means that He is the King, the First One, the Maximum Authority, the Boss, the Ruler, the Potentate, the Emperor, the Head. What He says goes. He doesn't just suggest or recommend. Jesus commands and the entire universe obeys. Listen to the way Jesus talked to people, to demons and even to nature and their responses:

- Mark 1:17 - To Simon and Andrew: "Come, follow me". "They immediately left their nets and followed Him."
- Mark 5:41 - To Jairus' dead daughter: "Little girl, I say to you arise". "Immediately the girl arose and walked."
- John 11:43 - To Lazarus in the tomb: "Come forth". "He who had died came out bound hand and foot."
- Mark 9:25 - To the unclean spirit: "Come out of him and never enter him again." "The spirit came out of him."
- Mark 5:8 - To the demon: "Come out of the man, unclean spirit! Then the unclean spirits went out."
- Mark 1:41 - To the leper: "Be clean". "Immediately the leprosy left him, and he was cleansed."
- Mark 2:11 - To the paralytic: "Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house". "Immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went out in the presence of them all."
- Mark 2:14 - To Levi, the tax collector: "Follow me". "So he arose and followed Him."
- Mark 4:39 - To the winds and waves: "Quiet, be still". "The wind ceased and there was a great calm."

The LORD doesn't have to ask. He doesn't have to say "Please". He commands and all must obey!

### **WE ALL LIVE IN ONE OF TWO KINGDOMS**

It is either the kingdom of Darkness or the kingdom of Light. It is by our own choice and there is no middle ground. In the kingdom of Darkness, everybody does what they want to do. There is full liberty. It is like the captain of a sinking ship who announces: "We have struck an iceberg. There is a huge hole in the hull of the ship and we will shortly sink to the bottom of the ocean. Unfortunately, there are no lifeboats. Everybody may do as they wish. Those in the 2<sup>nd</sup> class may come up to the 1<sup>st</sup> class. Drinks are on the house. Nobody has to pay for anything. All the food in the restaurant is at your complete disposal. You can play basketball in the kitchen if you

wish and break all the plates and glasses. Do as you please!

Now some may think: "What a good captain. He lets us do anything we want to do." But soon, they'll all be dead at the bottom of the ocean. Even so, in the kingdom of darkness, there is only one law: "Do what you wish: Addictions, illicit sex, assault, jealousy, passion, pride, drunkenness, greed, hatred... You think that you are the king of your tiny kingdom but you are being guided by the spirit of this age. You are lost and will soon be thrown into the depths of the lake of fire!

But there is another kingdom: (Colossians 1:13) "(God) has delivered us from the power of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love." To be saved means that we are taken off the sinking ship of destruction and placed aboard another ship, another kingdom. This kingdom of Light also has only one law - do everything and whatever King Jesus commands.

In the kingdom of darkness, each one does his own will. In the kingdom of light, each one does the will of King Jesus. There are not three roads - the narrow, the wide and the medium-sized. There are only two. Jesus is LORD!

### **THE LORD IS TO BE OBEYED**

Jesus is the Lord; therefore, you must obey him in all things. There is no other option. I must either submit to Him or confess that Jesus is not my Lord.

Consider the matter of forgiveness, for example. In Matthew 6:14, 15, Jesus said simply to his disciples: "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Jesus did not advise, he did not ask, he did not suggest, He gave his followers an ultimatum! "If you don't forgive, you will not be forgiven." End of discussion! Period! It is not an option. The Lord did not just say that it is advisable or nice to forgive. He didn't plead: "We owe God so much." "It would be good." "It is so beautiful to forgive." "You will sleep much better." "You will be so much happier if you forgive." Jesus said "Do it or you are lost". Now once he put it that way, we have to decide. Will we or will we not? Our own eternal destiny depends on our decision. We can debate the subject of forgiveness forever. We can offer excuse after excuse to not forgive but what did Jesus say? Jesus is Lord! Will we submit to Him or resist Him?

### **JESUS IS LORD BECAUSE HE BOUGHT US!**

"For you were bought at a price; therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." (I Corinthians 6:20). From whom did He buy us? From our old master, the Devil. What price did He pay? He purchased us with His own blood. (Acts 20:28)

We are "*doulos*" (slaves) of Lord Jesus Christ. It was not forced on us. Rather we chose to voluntarily submit to the King of kings and Lord of lords to escape from the wrath of God against our sin and take advantage of the abundant life that He offers us. Of course, He is not like those slave owners that abused and mistreated their slaves. Our Lord is only interested in our eternal good.

We should do His will, not our own. Back then the slave did not want to displease his lord in anything, for fear of his wrath. Our Lord is good and kind so we want to please Him in everything we do. In our family life, let us do what He wants. Husbands, love and take care of your wives as Christ loved and died for His church. Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands as to the Lord Jesus, training your children in the fear of the Lord. Children, respect and obey your parents in the same way that you respect and obey Christ. Bosses, treat your employees as you are treated by your boss, Jesus. Employees, serve your boss as if it were Jesus who was paying your salary. Serve with honesty, doing the best work you can. "And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not

to men." (Colossians 3:23)

### Questions

1. Every person will in this world or eternity confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.  
True \_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_
2. All authority has been given to Jesus, the Christ.  
True \_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_
3. How many spiritual kingdoms are there
  - a. \_\_\_\_ One
  - b. \_\_\_\_ Two
  - c. \_\_\_\_ Many
4. Those in the Kingdom of Light one does
  - a. His own will
  - b. The will of God
5. Since Christ purchased those in His church they are to do
  - a. \_\_\_\_ What they think is right
  - b. \_\_\_\_ Study His word to learn His will
  - c. \_\_\_\_ Ask a religious leader what Christ desires
  - d. \_\_\_\_ Wait until Christ speaks directly to them

### Lesson 12

#### YOU ARE HIS SERVANT

Although "*doulos*" means "slave", when we read of how Jesus used the word, especially in the parables, we notice that He put a big emphasis on the responsibilities of these servants. The Lord's servants did not become "robots" that acted mechanically, without any of their own thought or initiative. On the contrary, the servants that Jesus talked about were trustworthy people with whom the Lord left the care of His possessions when he traveled. This is our position - servants of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are people that God entrusts with His possessions. To have Jesus as your Lord means that you are a steward (this subject is called "stewardship" because we are "stewards"), a man in charge, a manager of the things that belongs to God. Notice some things that God has entrusted to you.

#### MONEY

In truth, nothing belongs to us. Everything belongs to God, but He charged us with taking care of what belongs to Him. This includes our money (belongings, salary, etc.). Notice the following biblical truths:

- Psalms 24:1 "The earth is the Lord's, and all its fullness,"
- Haggai 2:8 "'The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine,' says the LORD of hosts..."
- Acts 4:32 "Now the multitude of those who believed was of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common..."

**When you think about giving your money to the Lord**, remember the main principle. Before giving anything to God, first surrender yourself to Him.

- II Corinthians 8:5 "And not only as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God..."
- Romans 12:1 "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service..."

**God loves the one who gives cheerfully** (II Corinthians 9:7). Imagine a husband who went on a trip and came back with a present for his wife. He came home, threw the present on the floor and said - "Take it, it's yours!" Would the wife like it? When your dear mother comes to eat dinner at your house, are you going to give her leftovers or will you give her the best? Even so, give out of love for the Lord or else God will not be pleased with your offering.

**God Blesses He Who Gives Generously.** Read II Chronicles 31:10, Malachi 3:10, and II Corinthians 9:6. God pays 10,000% interest on the investment. (Matthew 19:27-29)

**God removes blessings of the one who is not generous.** Read Malachi 3:8-9 and Acts 5:1-11.

**It is more blessed to give than to receive** Acts 20:35. Some people are afraid to talk much about the collection because they don't want to abuse it. Some religions seem to only be interested in getting people's money. But, let's not steal a blessing from those who contribute. He who receives without giving will not be as blessed as the one who receives and gives.

**How much should I give?** Under Moses' Law, the Jew gave 10% - the tithe. Moses' Law is not now in effect (Galatians 3:24-25), but in the New Testament, the same principle is applied. There is a ratio: he who has more, gives more and who has less, gives less (I Corinthians 16:2). No percentage is specified but the question is: Has God prospered you more or less than the Jew? There are several ways to give: the church collection, practicing charity in general, special offerings and more.

**If you say that you would give much if you were rich, then learn to give much while you are poor.** Luke 16:10

## **TIME**

Time is the only thing that God gives to all equally: everybody has 24 hours a day.

What the Bible Says About the Use of Time;

- Psalms 90:12 - recognize that life is brief; live it with wisdom.
- John 9:4 - use the time you have, to do the Lord's work. There is coming a time when there will be no more opportunity.
- Ephesians 5:15-17 - walk prudently in wisdom, redeeming (buying back, rescuing) the time. Be sensible, making good use of your time to do God's will.
- Colossians 4:5 - Take advantage of the opportunities.

How to Fill Your Day

- Reserve time to be in God's presence - praise, prayer, and study
- Reserve time for your family - to talk, and to have fun
- Reserve time for the church - to study, talk, and serve
- Reserve time for yourself- sports, reading, and education
- Reserve time for others - especially the lost and those in need
- Reserve time to plan - make a review of the week
- Reserve time to serve God - fulfill your ministry

If in a week we have: 168 hours minus 56 for sleep, minus 40 for work, minus 24 for meals and showers, that leaves only 48 for these other activities.

Abuses of Time

Laziness and disorder - II Thessalonians 3:11

"The idle mind is the devil's workshop" - See I Timothy 5:13, 14

A Christian Perspective: Romans 12:1, 2 - All that we are and everything that we possess (including time) belongs to God and we should offer ourselves to Him as living sacrifices. Thus, every activity now has a new meaning. Everything we do with our time should be analyzed on this basis. Every activity should have a purpose directed toward God. Whether to sleep, to work, to have meals, to take a shower, to clean the house, to practice sports, to entertain, to eat, to talk; it is all part of a God-guided, balanced Christian life.

## THE GOSPEL

Jesus went back to Heaven and the world still was not evangelized. He left this in His disciples' hands. Acts 1:1 tells about what Jesus started. What He started is for us to continue. And just as in the Parable of Talents (Matthew 25:14-30), the Lord will come back and everybody will have to give account of how they used what Jesus left to them. We are stewards of the gospel. We are in charge of sharing this gospel with the world.

### Questions

1. A trustworthy servant takes care of his masters possessions  
True \_\_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_\_
2. What possessions of man does he need to give to God
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_ Money
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_ Time
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_ Self
  - d. \_\_\_\_\_ All of the above
3. God loves those who cheerfully enjoy giving to Him.  
True \_\_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_\_
4. God is more pleased with
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_ The amount of money one gives
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_ Giving out of duty or command
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_ Any gift from the with the desire to please God
5. The greatest possession God has given man is the Gospel of Christ  
True \_\_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_\_

## Lesson 13

### REPRODUCTION OF AUTHENTIC CHRISTIANITY

**THE PRINCIPLE OF REPRODUCTION.** Some explorers found corn seeds in a cave in Arizona that had been left in the cave by Indians, centuries before. Being well preserved, the seed was planted. What do you think happened? Did it produce rice or wheat or potatoes? Of course not! That corn seed produced corn.

Some people discovered the New Testament, written about 2,000 years ago. They opened, read, believed and obeyed the things they found in the book. What happened? Was the result: Catholics, Protestants or Spiritists? Of course not. The word of God set in the minds and hearts of people produced Christians, members of the body of the Lord Jesus Christ

Corn seed makes corn, wheat seed makes wheat, and Christ's seed, the divine seed (the Word of God) makes Christians. It produces the church of the New Testament and nothing else.

The reproduction principle is the seed principle. To reproduce true Christianity in its pureness and simplicity, such as God revealed in the New Testament, it is necessary to preach the same word that God preached in the New Testament. Our goal is to always be reproducing what God intended in the beginning.

**THE BIBLE IS GOD'S INSTRUCTION BOOK**

God is like an artist who starts with an idea inside his mind. Contemplating and organizing, he makes some drawings until some details of his vision are well formed in his mind. Then he transfers the idea to the painting canvas with brush and colors. He pays attention to the smallest detail and when he is finally done, he takes a look at the canvas, satisfied for creating exactly what he wanted. As the picture is the artist's masterpiece, the Bible is God's masterpiece. It reveals exactly what God wanted to reveal and teaches perfectly what God wanted to teach.

II Timothy 3:16, 17 says: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." Also read Mark 13:31; John 12:48; I Corinthians 14:37; Matthew 7:24-27; Revelation 22:18, 19 and see how the Bible is our guidebook from God. If you want to know how to be saved, you have to look it up in the Bible. If you want to know how to live the Christian life you have to look it up in the Bible. If you want to know how the church should be, you have to look it up in the Bible.

The principle of reproduction is based on the conviction that the Bible is the Word of God and that it reveals our rule of faith and practice, completely sufficient for all our necessities. It is not only God's will revealed; it is ALL of His will revealed for all of mankind. It is complete!

Some religious groups are based on the idea that God's will includes the Bible, tradition and revelations of the last days. Others have the idea that the first century church departed from the truth and it is necessary to reform it. Some groups have the idea that there does not exist any pattern but "Everyone can do as they think best": "If you think something is good, then you can do it."

The principle of reproduction recognizes that God has revealed His whole will to the church. This will is found in the New Testament and we have no right to change what God has established. We should follow Jesus' example in all things, saying to God: "...not my will, but Yours be done". Luke 22:42.

The key phrase is: "COME BACK TO THE BIBLE", or as somebody said: "Speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent." We must always go back to the Bible if we want to reproduce Christianity exactly as Jesus intended in the beginning

**TO REPRODUCE BIBLICAL CHRISTIANITY IS POSSIBLE**

With so much confusion around the religious world today, some folks might think: "It is not possible to reproduce primitive Christianity." Everybody has his own denomination with its own beliefs and traditions. Is it too late to change all that?

But think about this: anyone today is able to become a Christian, accepting the same faith, practice and teaching as the apostles and Christians of the first century. It is not necessary to defend any doctrine that didn't come from the Bible, or to embrace any religious affiliation but the body of Christ. What is necessary is to have an open mind, an open Bible and a good heart. In truth, it is possible to reproduce Christ's church today. The real challenge is to live the life that Christ modeled.

NOTE: There is a three-fold goal in the desire to reproduce New Testament Christianity: We want to reproduce the life of Christ in ourselves. We want to reproduce the church as Jesus designed it to be. We want to reproduce ourselves by making other disciples of Christ.

Questions

1. The Gospel of Christ is the only thing that can produce a Christian.  
True \_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_
2. The Bible is the inspired Word of God that contains His will man  
True \_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_
3. The Scriptures are for
  - a. \_\_\_\_ Teaching
  - b. \_\_\_\_ Reproofing
  - c. \_\_\_\_ Correcting
  - d. \_\_\_\_ All the above
  - e. \_\_\_\_ b and c
4. If you think something is good then you will please God by doing it.  
True \_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_
5. An open mind, open Bible, and a good heart will reproduce Christ's Church.  
True \_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_

## Lesson 14

### TO BE JUST A CHRISTIAN

The religious world is full of confusion but God is not the author of it. Jesus Christ came to show the way that leads to the Father and His way is that of peace, unity and love. Confusion happens when people lay aside the way of the Lord. Traditions, divisions, denominations and human teachings can hide the Lord's way. Think about how some say: "I am Catholic", or "I am Protestant", or "I am Pentecostal", etc. Was it this way in the Bible? Of course not. Then, why does it have to be like this now? Is God happy with all this? Why not just be Christians, using only Christ's name and nothing else?

This confusion and chaos discourage many people. On the one hand, they see the deception, hypocrisy and exploitation that happen in the name of "religion". On the other hand, something keeps them from throwing away their respect for God and Christ. They feel that what some people call religion is really a far cry from the greatness and goodness of our Creator. To just such people, Jesus offered this invitation: "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls." (Matthew 11:28, 29)

Thank God, Jesus is still calling everybody to come to Him. No matter that the heavy burden may be a religion distorted by men or just a confused life without purpose, Jesus is calling all to Him. Be advised, though! He does not call one to follow or take part in a religious sect or denomination. He calls the weary ones to Himself,

An important principle is to look for and do what Jesus, His apostles and the first Christians were and did (the good things they did and not the bad, of course). If we use them as examples, instead of the men of today, we can find the original plan of God. The book of "Acts" tells the story of the beginning of Christianity. Read how things were in the beginning:

"Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit ... Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them." (Acts 2:37-41) This was the first preaching of the Gospel after Jesus' death and resurrection. In Jerusalem, thousands of Jews were assembled. Jesus, as He had promised, sent the Holy Spirit to start the preaching of the gospel. And, as we read on, we find that about three thousand people were saved. Now, when the Bible said, "they were added", somebody could ask: "To what religious denomination were they added?" What answer is given

in

the

Bible?

In the same context, the Bible says: "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers... So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people and the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved" (Acts 2:42-47) Again, ask yourself who were these people? To what denomination were they added?

Philip preached Jesus to the people in Samaria. Many "believed in him and were baptized, both men and women" (Acts 8:5-13). Also, Philip preached the gospel to an Ethiopian man. He believed, was baptized and continued on his way rejoicing (Acts 8:26-39). The same thing happened to Paul (Acts 9:1-9 and 22:1-16), Lydia (Acts 16:11-15), the jailer (Acts 16:25-34) and many other people in the New Testament. In all these cases, what did these people become?

The answer is obvious. First of all, there were not several churches at that time. In those days, nobody became Catholic, Baptist, Mormon or any other such thing. Denominations are human inventions and divisions and are not part of God's plan to redeem (save) man. People that heard, believed and obeyed the gospel became Jesus' followers (disciples) or Christians and nothing more. We read in Acts 11:26, "... The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." They wore the name of Jesus.

All these people just became Christians. To tell the truth, they refused to use any other title that did not give glory to their Savior. One time, some brothers tried to do that. They were strongly rebuked by Paul. Observe what happened when some began to give their allegiance to men:

" Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you. Now I say this, that each of you says, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas," or "I am of Christ." Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?" (I Corinthians 1:10-13)

Think about the way that men today say: "I am Lutheran", or "I am Calvinist", or "I am Mennonite", or "I am ... (you choose the answer) Do you think that God is content with this? Of course not! Why can we not just be Christians, just using Christ's name, nothing else?

The church Christ established is not a religious denomination (division). We don't need to be part of or promote any sect or religious denomination. Christians can meet together to worship God, for mutual edification, to work, etc., without becoming some sect or religious denomination.

For a church today to be the church that Jesus built, it will not be a new religious denomination, but rather the reproduction of God's original plan for the church. Consider these facts:

Christ built His church exactly as He wished (Matthew 16:18-19 and Acts 2:42). The church of the N.T. was what Jesus wanted. (We understand that the church is people and people are imperfect. We are a work in progress but what Jesus planned is His way of edifying imperfect people.) The Lord did not want anybody changing what He built (Read Ga1atians 1:6-9; Acts 20:29-31; I Timothy 4:1-2; II Timothy 4:2-4).

The church today is not to be a new church but the reproduction of the original church that was founded and established by Christ on the day of Pentecost. (Acts 2) It contains all the saved. This truth becomes evident when



we reason thusly: It is the gospel of Jesus Christ that saves. All those who obey the gospel are added to the church - the group of people who are saved in Christ (Acts 2:47). Anyone who preaches the gospel (recorded in the N.T.) is not starting a new church, but adding people to the original church. A simple way to define the church is all those who are in Christ.

It is possible to abandon human names and divisions, to just be Christians as God has planned and as our brethren were in the apostles' day. Everybody has the right to read, study and practice Christianity as it is written in the New Testament and not as some denomination determines. People in Berea "searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so" (Acts 17:11). We can do the same thing. Compare everything that is taught with the Scriptures. It may look terribly difficult today with so many established religions and denominations, but let's decide to respect Jesus' request on the night He was betrayed and arrested: "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in Me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as You are in Me and I am in You. May they also be in Us so that the world may believe that You have sent Me." (John 17:20, 21) Let us be dedicated to obey Jesus in this.

An important note: This is not just about calling ourselves by a certain name but sincerely following Christ in word and actions. If we wear the name of Christ (Christian) we had better reflect the beauty of Christ in our lives. What a shame it would be for a "CHRISTian" to not be like Christ!

#### Questions

1. Teachings and practices, traditions, following the first group of Christians in Jerusalem until now are just as important as the teachings of Christ and His apostles.  
True \_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_
2. Peter told those who desire to know God's will were told to repent (change lifestyle to godliness) and be immersed (baptized) by Christ's authority into His death for the forgiveness of sins.  
True \_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_
3. What happened to the 3,000 in Jerusalem who believed, repented and were baptized
  - a. \_\_\_\_ Added to apostles and disciples by God
  - b. \_\_\_\_ Received the Holy Spirit
  - c. \_\_\_\_ Continued in apostles teachings
  - d. \_\_\_\_ All the above
  - e. \_\_\_\_ a and c
4. God adds those saved to Christ's body not to some religious organization.  
True \_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_
5. Separation among the Christian body due to one's personal opinion and interpretation displeases God as He desires unity of all in Christ.  
True \_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_

#### Lesson 15

##### GOD'S PLAN FOR OUR SALVATION

"O happy day that fixed my choice on Thee, my Savior and my God!  
Well may this glowing heart rejoice, and tell its raptures all abroad'  
Happy day, happy day, when Jesus washed my sins away. He taught me how to watch and pray, and live rejoicing every day"

Birthdays, wedding anniversaries, Mother's Day or Father's Day are important dates, but the day of the most important event of your life was the one when you received Christ and was born again into God's family. It's

good to remember this day and your decision for Christ. It's good to remember your salvation in Christ because you will then want to share the good news of salvation with others. You can help them to make the same decision you made. Let us review the steps that led you to be saved in Christ.

**FIRST, WHAT HAPPENED?** Many people do not feel the need for a savior because they do not feel lost. What happened with you? Maybe, you heard a moving sermon; maybe a friend shared with you the truth; maybe you read a tract. Whichever, in some way you understood that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

As the prophet Isaiah had said, long ago: "our sins have hidden God's face from us so that He will not hear." (Isaiah 59:2). Our own sin separates us from God! "The wages of sin is death" you read in Romans 6:23. This is a spiritual death, which is a separation from God for those who are lost.

"But what about my good works?" you thought, "I am not such a bad person!" Then you read "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast" (Ephesians 2:8, 9). "But my sins are small" you said and then you read: "For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all." (James 2:10). It was more than enough to convince you, was it not? Human pride and self-sufficiency are the greatest barriers to salvation. He who refuses to admit that he is a sinner in need of forgiveness is lost and cannot be saved. You understood the despair of being a sinner in need of a Savior!

**YOU ASKED, "WHO IS THIS SAVIOR?"** Paul said: "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 6:23) You wanted to know more so you read on! God in human form, in the person of Jesus, passed through so many temptations but never sinned! (I Peter 2:21-25). He did so many signs and miracles to prove His divinity (John 20:30-31). He died for you as a sacrifice to God for all your sins! (Hebrews 10:10-14) Finally, He was raised from the dead, proving that He was the Son of God. (Romans 1:4-5 & I Corinthians 15:1) What a wonderful story! What Jesus did for us is called "the gospel", meaning "good news!"

**YOU RECOGNIZED THAT JESUS IS OUR ONLY HOPE OF SALVATION.** There was no other way. By his death on the cross, Jesus is able to save, set free, and ransom sinners. In John 14:6, Jesus declared: says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: No man comes to the Father except through Me." The only way we can get to God is through Christ. You also read in Acts 4:12, "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." We cannot be saved by relying on Mohammed, Buddha, Judaism, Hindu gods or any other religion. Neither can we devise our own system of "Christianity" as is being done today and expect it to save us. Only Jesus Christ can specify the conditions for our salvation, because He paid our price and is our only savior. There is no other way.

You were ready to throw yourself down at the feet of the only one who can save you - Jesus the Christ? Faith was born! "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Romans 10:17). You needed a Savior and you were sure you had found Him.

You believed this good news that Jesus Christ came to earth, lived a perfect life, was crucified for our sins, was buried but arose from the dead on the third day and now lives forever at God's right hand to intercede for us.

**YOUR FAITH LED YOU TO REPENT!** Jesus says in Luke 13:3, "... unless you repent, you will all likewise perish." It is either repent or perish; the choice is ours. Acts 17:30 says, "Truly these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent." All people everywhere, and that includes you and me, are commanded of God to repent. Repent of what? Repent of our sins. Repent of not fully serving and following all that God says. God is pleading with us to repent. He greatly desires that we turn to him. He tells us in 2 Peter 3:9, "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."

You were not just sorry for having sinned. 2 Corinthians 7:10 says, "For Godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death." Repentance is a change of heart and a change of mind. You made up our mind to stop living life your way and start living it God's way. You decided to serve God with all your might and do everything He says. Matthew 22:37, "Jesus said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.'"

Romans 2:4 says, "The goodness of God leads you to repentance." God has been so good to us, and this caused you to want to please Him in every way. God, because of His love for us, has done so much for us, and because of this we read in I John 4:19, "We love Him, because He first loved us."

For the love of God, you renounced all your sins and disobedience, deciding to give your life over to following and obeying Jesus. Jesus had said: "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." (Mark 8:34).

**You confessed Jesus.** In Matthew 10:32-33 Jesus says, "Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in Heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before my Father who is in Heaven." You were not ashamed to confess to other people that you believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. You did what Peter did in Matthew 16:16-17: "Simon Peter answered and said, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.'"

In Acts 8:36-37 a man asked the question, "See here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?" Then in verse 37, "Then Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart you may. And he answered and said, 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.'" That is the good confession.

But there is more. You not only confessed that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, you also confessed Him as our Lord. "... if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved" (Romans 10:9). You named Him as our leader, owner, ruler, chief, boss, and the one who has all the authority over our lives.

**FINALLY, YOU WERE BAPTIZED INTO UNION WITH JESUS CHRIST IN ORDER TO BE FORGIVEN OF YOUR SINS!** Acts 2:38 "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Someone said to you as Ananias said to Saul: "And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts 22: 16) You were baptized to have your sins washed away and in that action, you were calling on the name of the Lord. To call on the name of the Lord means to invoke Him to action. What did you call on Jesus to do? To save you! (to wash away your sins).

When you were baptized, you were saved. 1 Peter 3: 21 "Corresponding to that (eight souls saved by water in the ark), baptism now saves you - not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience through the resurrection of Jesus Christ," Baptism, according to Peter, is not an outer cleansing of dirt from the physical body. Rather, the baptism that saves us is an 'appeal' to God for a good conscience. It is a prayer to God for an inner cleansing of the guilty soul.

What saved you from your sins? It was the blood of Jesus! When did the blood of Jesus save you? When you were baptized! So where was the saving power? It was in the blood of Christ. (the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the event that validated the worth of his death on the cross). Faith-baptism linked you with the death, burial and resurrection of Christ.

Being baptized "into his death" and being "united with him in his resurrection" (Romans 6:3-5) is when salvation came to you in baptism. "Therefore, we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin" (Romans 6:4-6).

Salvation (forgiveness of sins) which comes from being united with God in Christ is given when our trusting hearts appeal to God for a good conscience. We do this when we are baptized. Baptism is faith crying out to God to save us based on the death of Christ on the cross.

You surrendered yourself to Christ and He saved you through your faith. Jesus said: "Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved ..." (Mark 16:16). "Lord, I trust in you to save me. I will die to self, to sin and to this world and be united with you in baptism. That was the defining moment of your life.

Consider some of the great changes that God effected in your life when you were baptized:

- You were saved – Mark 16:16
- You were born again – John 3:5
- You died, were buried and resurrected with Christ – Romans 6:4-6 and Colossians 2:12
- You were clothed with Christ – Galatians 3:27
- You became a new being – Romans 6:4

Christ washed your sins away. Was it at the beach? In the swimming pool? In the river or in the baptistery? It doesn't matter where it happened. What is important is that Jesus, through His blood, washed you! Just like He washed Paul's sins away! Acts 22:16. "Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Then your new life started (Romans 6:4). "Therefore, we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life!"

**AND NOW, WHAT IS HAPPENING?** You are walking in the light (1 John 1:7). You wish to know more and more (1 Peter 2:2). You are nourishing yourself with the Word and growing up in your faith (Hebrews 5:12-14). You are taking part in the fellowship with your brothers in the faith (Hebrews 10:24-25). You are learning how to share the gospel with your relatives and friends **you must be faithful until death!** Revelation 2:10 "Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life."

Colossians 1:21-23 "And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight; if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, ..."

KEEP ON GROWING!

Questions

1. Sin hides God from man so that He will not hear man.  
True \_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_
2. One who refuses to admit he is a sinner in need of forgiveness is lost and cannot be saved while in that condition.  
True \_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_
3. Sin has no consequences.

- True \_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_
4. Jesu is the only way to salvation, eternal life with God.  
True \_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_
5. One who does not repent will not be lost.  
True \_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_
6. Repentance is
- \_\_\_\_ A change of heart
  - \_\_\_\_ A change of mind
  - \_\_\_\_ A change in lifestyle
  - \_\_\_\_ A change toward godliness
  - \_\_\_\_ All the above
  - \_\_\_\_\_
7. Whoever denies that Christ is God, Christ will deny them before the Father  
True \_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_
8. Lack of belief that Christ is the Son of God hinders one from being baptized.  
True \_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_
9. Baptism, immersion in water, is not a cleansing of dirt from the physical body but a cleansing of sin from one's soul, his inner being.  
True \_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_
10. Being buried with Christ into His death results in a resurrection and a uniting with Christ.  
True \_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_
11. Changes that occur when one is baptized into Christ death
- \_\_\_\_ You were saved
  - \_\_\_\_ You were born again
  - \_\_\_\_ You died, were buried and resurrected with Christ
  - \_\_\_\_ You were clothed with Christ
  - \_\_\_\_ You became a new being
  - \_\_\_\_ All the above
  - \_\_\_\_ a and e
12. Salvation is conditional one must be faithful until his death to receive to crown of life, eternal life.  
True \_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_

## Lesson 16

### EVANGELIZE YOUR FAMILY

In Mark 16:15 Jesus commanded: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." We read these words, we get up to obey them, we open our eyes to see the world, and who do we see in front of us? Our own family! Some people say that the most difficult place to evangelize is in their own home. But why? It should be the best, the easiest, most convenient place. Jesus was raised in a family of unbelievers! At least His brothers were. But they were converted. James and Jude delayed but they became followers, too. Jesus conquered His own family!

Dear brother or sister in Christ, evangelize your family! But you ask, "How?" Think about this: How successful would Jesus be if He were part of your family? What effect would He have in your family if He were you? Thinking about your family, who would resist Jesus? So there is the answer. To reach your family with the gospel, you only need to do and be like Jesus. Let your family live with Christ through you. More than this, nobody can do.

Everything Christ said about evangelism in the world is applicable to our families. It's just closer to home. If you are not having an impact, maybe you need to reexamine your own view of Christianity and the church.

### **DRAW CLOSER AND NOT FARTHER AWAY FROM YOUR FAMILY.**

The gospel should bring us closer to the world and not remove us from it. The symbols of the church that Jesus used emphasizing evangelism are salt, light and leaven, but why these? What do these three have in common? The answer is that each one penetrates! The salt penetrates and gives a new taste. The light penetrates and gives new light. The leaven penetrates and gives new power.

### **BE LEAVEN - Matthew 13:13**

We cannot be leaven kept in a little package on the shelf of the kitchen. Leaven has to make contact. It has to penetrate the bread dough. Penetrating in the bread dough, the leaven loses its identity but notice the result - a delicious loaf of bread! Pass close to the bakery when they are taking bread out of the oven. You will want to stop, go in and buy some bread! This is like the Christian who penetrates his own family with the presence of Jesus Christ.

### **BE SALT - Matthew 5:13**

But what if the salt stays in the salt shaker? We can be pure salt but if we never get out of the salt shaker and are never put on the food, we will never give the taste of the gospel to our families. Make mashed potatoes with no salt and see how it has no taste. Now add some salt and mix it in. Now those who taste it will say: "I like mashed potatoes!" The members of your family, on seeing your life, might exclaim: "I like the Christian life!"

### **BE LIGHT - Matthew 5:14-16**

Don't put the light under a basket. That will do no one any good. Light has to illuminate the place where you live.

### **PRACTICAL APPLICATION**

How shall we proceed? How shall we reach them? How shall we have an impact on our own family? We must be salt, leaven and light! Note some practical examples:

**Contact** - It is important to spend time together, to converse, and to share experiences. Sometimes parents of Christians complain: "My son has no time for our family. I rarely see him. He is always doing something with the people of the church but has no time for us." Sometimes a non-believing husband says the same. Be careful to not allow this to happen in your family. Penetrate your own family as salt, leaven and light would.

**Temperament Controlled By The Holy Spirit** - You cannot be involved in fights, arguments and confusion in your family. When your parents fight, what should you do? Take part in it? Choose sides? Of course not! Remember: "A soft answer turns away wrath," The presence of the Holy Spirit bears His fruit which is peace (Galatians 5:22). It would be better to give good biblical advice and also to be a good example.

**Insist On Christian Principles** - Isaiah 55:8-9 says that God calls us to a higher way. The mother of a Christian girl insisted that she wear indecent clothes, but she refused. There are disciples who leave the room because their family insists on watching immoral programs. These Christians set their principles higher. If you put Jesus in first place, you will never lose. If you put Jesus in second place, you will never win. Trying to please your family by practicing sin will not win them to Christ.

**Practice Hospitality** - Observe the example of Jesus in John 1:38-39. When Jesus had a house, He took Andrew and others to spend some time with Him. This is important for evangelism. It's a way to make a contact. But what's the application in the family? It's simple - what is hospitality but opening your life, time, house and things

to share with others? It has special application in the family. Look for special opportunities to open your life, your room, your things, your clothes. Share what you have. Some people are less hospitable with their family than with strangers. "Don't wear my clothes." "Who was in my drawer?" "Where is my pencil?" "Who ate my chocolate candy?" And that's how the fight starts. It is not becoming of a Christian to be that way.

If you are a father or mother, you can practice hospitality by inviting people to your house. If you are a son or daughter, you can invite people of the church to visit you with your parent's agreement. Always be considerate of the members of your family.

**Be Accessible** - Be disposed to serve when you meet people who are suffering and in need. Jesus came into the world to serve, i.e., to fulfill people's needs. He gave us the same mission. Observe the world (your family). Notice when somebody suffers or hurts. Stay close to help, give comfort, and serve.

We are servants of the Lord, placed in houses of needy people. Shall we serve or not? Should we be accessible and open or should we build walls between us and the members of our own family? Again, for you to reach your family with the gospel, you simply need to do and be like Jesus. Let your family live with Jesus through you. It's not a guarantee that your family will be converted, but more than this, nobody can do.

#### **SOME THINGS TO DO:**

- Write down some good activities you can do with members of your family.
- Write down some important moments when you should be with your family.
- Who in your family needs help?
- Write down some of your family's bad habits you should reject
- Write down some things you have that you can share with members of your family.

#### Questions

1. The Gospel is restricted to certain classes of people.  
True \_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_
2. Christians are the salt of the earth since they have the gospel. The gospel like salt is useless if it is kept in a container and never used.  
True \_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_
3. Jesus is the light of the world so when Christians reflect Christ in their daily life Christ shines.  
True \_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_
4. Lack of self-control with fits of anger creates division and distrust, but a soft answer turns away wrath  
True \_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_
5. God expects His children to serve those in need not demand others serve them  
True \_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_

