

God's Message



The Church Christ Built

The Bible Way Online

Introduction

Having died to sin and having been buried with Christ through immersion, baptism, into Christ's death you have been cleansed, made pure, by the blood of Christ (the atoning sacrifice), you are a new creation, a child of God in the Body of Christ.

You need to grow in the knowledge of the Word of God and to live a godly life pleasing to Him. In your quest to grow read directly from the Bible proving what you read. Reading more than one translation or version may give you a clearer understanding and analyze words and meanings that are not familiar to you.

Do not blindly accept another's opinion or some scholar's interpretation, including those presented in these lessons. Verify everything against the Bible.

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Randolph Dunn

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Man's Situation

Lesson 1

From whom has man been separated that he should desire to be reconciled? What is forgiveness and redemption? Why is it so important?

We do not know how long Adam and Eve lived in their perfect state but in Genesis chapters one and two we read that they made a decision to disobey God, or sin. This choice and action changed their relationship with God. God removed them from that perfect relationship and from Paradise, the Garden of Eden. They were separated from their loving father and creator. But God had a plan for bringing man back into that perfect relationship. He told the serpent, Satan the deceiver and father of lies, in Genesis 3:15: "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."

Later following Cain's unacceptable offering, God again warned of the consequences of man's rebellious actions: Genesis 4:7: "If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it." Cain did not listen to God's warning. He sinned even more by killing his brother Abel. So God caused him to be a wanderer or fugitive.

During the days of Noah, we read "The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time" (Genesis 6:5). God totally removed all evil before him by destroying by the flood all people living upon the earth, except righteous Noah and his family of eight.

God revealed to Abraham his thoughts about Sodom and Gomorrah. Genesis 18:20-21 and 19:24-25 "And the LORD said, 'Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grave, I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry against it that has come to Me; and if not, I will know.' ... Then the LORD rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, from the LORD out of the heavens. So He overthrew those cities, all the plain, all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground." God removed all evil from Sodom and Gomorrah."

These events clearly show that God does not tolerate wickedness, disobedience or sin and will take action against those who practice such.

Paul states in Romans 3:23; 6:23 "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" ... "For the wages of sin is death, but **the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus** our Lord."

James, addressing those **IN** Christ, tells us in chapter 1:12-15 stated: "Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him. When tempted, no one should say, 'God is tempting me.' For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death." Knowing there are consequences for sin, you and I need to be forgiven, redeemed, reconciled and brought back into a righteous relationship with God. Those who are forgiven and reconciled are put into the Body of Christ, His Church.

So, what does the Scripture say about reconciliation?

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

2 Corinthians 7:10 -- Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.

Acts 4:11-12 This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

2 Corinthians 5:10 -- For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

Romans 5:10-11 -- For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

2 Corinthians 5:17-19 -- Therefore, **if** anyone is **IN** Christ, he is a **new creation**; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of

reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.

Questions

1. Why did God remove man from the Garden of Eden?
 - a. ___ Eden was only a temporary until Paradise was ready
 - b. ___ To protect them as Satan was roaming around outside
 - c. ___ They disobeyed God's command
 - d. ___ Eden was overcome by water from the flood

2. Consequences for sin did not exist prior to Christ?
T. ___ F. ___

3. God overlooked the grave sin of Sodom and Gomorrah?
T. ___ F. ___

4. The wages, consequences, of sin is death?
T. ___ F. ___

5. What causes man to sin?
 - a. ___ God tempts him
 - b. ___ Evil desires
 - c. ___ Yielding to evil desire

Choices

Lesson 2

God Has Made Choices

Before the beginning of time on earth God made choices as evidenced from the Bible. The decision to create and the creating of various levels of angels had already occurred including Michael, Gabriel and Satan. Some angels chose not to keep their proper domain, but rebelled. God chose to reserve these angles in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment (Jude 1:6).

God [Father, Son and Holy Spirit] chose to create man with the ability to choose. We know this because he said "And the LORD God commanded the man, 'You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die'" (Genesis 2:16-17).

Therefore Adam and Eve had a choice of what to eat. God also gave Adam an assignment "The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it" (Genesis 2:15).

God, the Son, chose to become flesh in the form of Jesus to live among men and face temptations, trials and rejection by the very beings he had created (Philippians 2:6).

All through life we make choices. Sometimes the choices are routine; e.g., when to get up each morning, what to eat, and where to go.

Some choices affect our relationship with God

Have good companions	or	evil companions
Make coarse jokes	or	don't let corrupt speech proceed out of your mouth
Arrogance and pride	or	humility
Jealousy	or	caring for others
Be idle	or	work
Liars	or	truthful
Gossip	or	build up others
Murders	or	love your neighbor
Be homosexual	or	be Godly
Love God	or	love the world
Hear and believe God	or	reject God's Word
Repent	or	rebel
Continue in the Word	or	fail to study what pleases God
Obey	or	refuse to obey
Give God credit	or	take credit for self
Heaven with God	or	torment in hell with Devil

When tempted, we have some difficult decisions with severe consequences. James put it this way "but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death" (James 1:14-15).

Choices Result In Consequences

The principle of sowing and reaping expresses choices this way: "Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life" (Galatians 6:7-8).

Some consequences become known in this life while others will be revealed in the Day of Judgment.

Our choices will lead us away from sin toward eternity with God and the righteous in Heaven or toward sin to eternity with Satan and the wicked in everlasting punishment.

Choices	Consequences
Adam & Eve chose not to obey	Death, pain, sorrow, driven from Eden
Cain's sacrifice unacceptable	Rebuked by God
Cain chose to murder	Cursed by God
Noah chose to obey	Saved in the Ark
Abraham chose to live righteously	Father of many nations and his seed, a descendant, will bless world
Moses chose not to be son of Pharaoh's daughter	Made great ruler
Pharaoh chose not to listen	Suffered sorrow, humiliation and defeat
Israel chose to rebel	Many of God's chosen people died in wilderness, never going to Canaan, their earthly place of rest
Joshua chose to follow God	Entered promised land
Eli chose not to restrain sons	Jehovah destroyed them
King Saul chose to disobey	Lost throne being told by Samuel "to obey is better than sacrifice."
David chose to lust and yield	Sinned against God, Bathsheba and Uriah
David chose to hide his sin	Sinned by having Uriah murdered
David chose to repent and beg for forgiveness	God forgave but David suffered for his sins
Mary chose to be servant of God	She would bare a child who would save his people from their sins

Choices Christ and His Followers Made

Christ chose to become man	Through Him is the forgiveness of sin
Christ chose not to worship devil	Devil fled
Christ chose to fulfill all righteousness	Was baptized in Jordan
Judas chose to betray Jesus	Took his own life
Peter chose to deny Christ	Great sorrow
Peter repented and returned to Christ	Was given keys of Kingdom of Heaven
Christ chose to allow man to crucify him	God chose to make Salvation available to all who obey
Demas chose pleasures of the world	Forsook Paul and consequently Christ

The Choice Is Ours!

Joshua gave the right answer "But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD" (Joshua 24:15). We all must make that same choice.

The POWER of God unto salvation is in the Gospel – Christ. His life, death, burial, resurrection and ascension. Forgiveness and salvation occurs when the Gospel reaches a receptive heart that puts its trust in God and obeys his Word.

The decision to come to Christ seeking forgiveness and thus be added to His church is ours. CHOOSE NOW.

Remember what Christ said "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened" (Matthew 7:7-8). And what Paul said "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life"

(Galatians 6:7-8). Do we seek the spiritual or are our choices the physical?

Questions

1. God created man with the ability to choose.
True _____ False _____
2. Everyone is tempted by their desires but only yielding to temptation is a sin.
True _____ False _____
3. Choosing to satisfy sinful desires has consequences, for whatever a man sows he reaps
True _____ False _____
4. Some choices lead to righteousness others lead to sin
True _____ False _____
5. The power of God unto salvation is in the death and resurrection of Christ
True _____ False _____

Salvation Comes Through Christ

Lesson 3

Daniel interpreting King Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the statue of gold, silver, iron and clay, prophesied in Daniel 2:44: "And **in the days** of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed."

God proclaimed before Jesus' birth that He would be called "the Son of the Most High", and that He would "save His people from their sins" (Luke 1:32 and Matthew 1:21).

"The next day John [John the Baptist (rd)] saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, 'Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world' " (John 1:29-30)!

When Jesus was baptized, immersed, by John in the Jordan river, the heavens opened: "And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, 'You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased'" (Luke 3:22). Jesus received what

he emptied himself, his deity, when he became man.

For the next several years Jesus taught as one having authority confirming His message by miracles, signs and wonders such as causing the blind to see, the deaf to hear, the lame to walk and raising the dead to life again.

It was while Jesus and His disciples were in Caesarea, Philippi that Jesus asked “who do people say that I am”, and “who do you say that I am.” Peter stated, “You are the Christ (Messiah), the Son of God” (Matthew 16:15). Jesus stated that upon the fact that He was the Son of God He would establish a group of people obedient to Him – “My church”.

Jesus told Peter that His church was still in the future. Matthew 16:18: "And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock **I will build My church**; and the gates of Hades [abode of the souls of dead (rd)] shall not overpower it." Hades cannot keep righteous souls forever.

However, Mark states “Truly I {Jesus} say to you, there are some of **those who are standing here who shall not taste death** until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power.” Mark 9:1

This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. 12 And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." Acts 4:11-12 ESV

Christ is the foundation of the church. Ephesians 2:20: “having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone”; 1 Corinthians 3:11: “For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ” and 2 Timothy 2:19: “Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, "The Lord knows those who are His."

Ephesians 1:18-23 states “I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come – the everlasting age. And He put

all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fulness of Him who fills all in all.”

Questions

1. At the baptism of Jesus what did the voice from Heaven say
 - a. Behold the Lamb of God who takes away sin
 - b. Now He shall be called the Son of God
 - c. You are my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased

2. Who is the foundation of the Church?
 - a. Peter
 - b. Christ
 - c. Apostles
 - d. Pope

3. Christ established His church prior to His crucifixion
True False

4. God made Jesus of Nazareth Lord and Christ
True False

5. What did the 3,000 do after receiving Christ’s message of reconciliation from Peter and the apostles
 - a. Nothing all were saved when they believed
 - b. Sacrificed a lamb in the temple as a sin offering
 - c. Were baptized, immersed
 - d. Continued in the apostles teaching
 - e. b and c
 - f. c and d

What Did Jesus Build?

Lesson 4

The word church, *ekklesia*, means those called out for some purpose. Those called out from a sinful life into a holy and righteous life through obedience to Christ are the church Christ established. They strive to live a life following Christ, the righteous one - who had no sin, because without holiness no one will see the Lord. (Hebrews 12:14)

Jesus asked his disciples "But what about you?" he asked "Who do you say I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living

God.' Jesus replied, 'Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock [the foundation that Jesus is the Christ (rd)] I will build my church, and the gates of Hades [the temporary residence of souls of the dead (rd)] will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven' " (Matthew 16:15-19).

He was more specific about the time His Kingdom would come for "he said to them, 'I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God come with power'" (Mark 9:1). Therefore, we see Christ would be establishing his church during the lifetime of some of his hearers.

Following Jesus' ascension to heaven the apostles returned to Jerusalem as he had commanded them. Many Jews were gathered in Jerusalem, because it was Pentecost.

“And when the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like **a violent, rushing wind**, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. **And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit** and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.” Acts 2:1-4 (fulfilling Mark’s statement of “come with power”).

The great sound of rushing wind brought a great crowd to the assembled apostles. Peter and the other apostles seized the opportunity to remind them of what they and their religious leaders had done, stating, "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.' When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, 'Brothers, what shall we do?' Peter replied, 'Repent ¹ and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off [the Samaritans and gentiles (rd)] - for all whom the

¹ Repentance is “Not a mere feeling; it has not the uncertainty of moods and sentiments. It is not a simple change in the weather of the soul. It is a distinct alteration of the focus of the intelligence; it carries with it a movement of the will; in short, it is a revolution in the very ground of the man's being.” (Al Maxey in Reflection)

Lord our God will call" (Acts 2:36-39).

“So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and there were **added that day about three thousand souls**. And they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.” (Acts 2:41-42)

“And day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people. And **the Lord was adding to their number** day by day those who were being saved”. (Acts 2:46-47).

These people realizing their sinful condition put their trust in Christ by calling upon God to forgive them by being immersed in water (baptism) into Christ's death after which God added them to his disciples thus establishing or building His *ekklesia*, His body of forgiven people, His church.

A short time later Luke records "The apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders among the people. And all the believers used to meet together, assembled, in Solomon's Colonnade. No one else dared join them, even though they were highly regarded by the people. Nevertheless, more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number" (Acts 5:12-15). "So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith" (Acts 6:7).

But things changed, the Jewish leaders who had rejected Jesus and His miracles by crucifying Him now turned against His people, that body of obedient disciples referred to as His Church. "... On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria" (Acts 8:1). "But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off men and women and put them in prison" (Acts 8:3). Only people can be destroyed by persecuted not inanimate objects such as buildings.

The persecution was against the church. Therefore, the church was already in existence prior to this persecution. This persecution resulted in even greater growth as "Those who had been scattered [the Christian body as a preacher was not mentioned (rd)] preached the word wherever they went." (Acts 8:4)

Paul, previously known as Saul, was now preaching the Gospel in Antioch. "While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.' So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off" (Acts 13:2-3).

"From Paphos, Paul and his companions sailed to Perga in Pamphylia" (Acts 13:13a). "On the next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. When the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and talked abusively against what Paul was saying. Then Paul and Barnabas answered them boldly: 'We had to speak the word of God to you first. Since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles. For this is what the Lord has commanded us: 'I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth'" [from Isaiah 49:6]. When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord" (Acts 13:44-48a).

"At Iconium Paul and Barnabas went as usual into the Jewish synagogue. There they spoke so effectively that a great number of Jews and Gentiles believed" (Acts 14:1). On this and several other trips they proclaimed the gospel in many cities, Lystra, Debre, Lycaonia, Corinth, Ephesus, Athens, Phillipi and eventually Rome, the Imperial city, where "For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. Boldly and without hindrance he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 28:30-31). Everywhere he went he preached Jesus death and resurrection, the Gospel - the good news. It is this Gospel that Paul said "I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile" (Romans 1:16).

God, the Son, intentionally emptied² Himself of His divine nature, left Heaven, became flesh and lived among His created beings. He then intentionally gave his life as the sin-offering, a sacrifice, to atone for man's sin by allowing the Roman government to crucify him. They buried him in a secure grave with guards to prevent the theft of his physical body. But God, the Father, raised Him the third day before his body decayed, conquering death and the grave. Some forty days later his return to Heaven was witnessed by the apostles. The Holy Spirit was sent to guide them in preaching and recording the Gospel, the power of God unto salvation. Initially many Jews and later many Gentiles acknowledged Him as God,

² Refer to BibleWay lesson Jesus of Nazareth – Human or Deity

the Christ (the Anointed One). Many witnesses in Judea, Galilee and Samaria who lived while He lived and taught, testified of His coming back to life (resurrection) and His return to Heaven (ascension).

It is of grave importance for mankind to know what Christ instructs them to do for them to receive forgiveness and salvation. God adds to Christ's church those being called out of a life of sin having put their trust in Christ and obeyed His commands through faith based upon knowledge. These called out people are His Church, His Bride, His Body, His Kingdom, His *ekklesia*.

He built a community of changed people. He did not build an unorganized group of people without direction. He called these people His body, having many functions and compared it to the human body. Each member has a function to perform in the His Body. But Jesus is the head of that organism giving it direction (Ephesians 5:23).

Questions

1. Christ built His church during the life time of some people who were alive when Jesus was living upon the earth doing the Fathers will.
True ____ False ____
2. Christ's church is the sanctuary, facility, for worship.
True ____ False ____
3. People God put into Christ's Body are
 - a. ____ All mankind as everyone is saved
 - b. ____ Everyone who believes
 - c. ____ All who obey His commands and remain faithful
4. How is one put into Christ Body, His church?
 - a. ____ by baptism
 - b. ____ by direct act of God
 - c. ____ by vote of members present in an assembly
5. Anyone who rejects Christ's death and resurrection does not consider themselves worthy of eternal life
True ____ False ____

How Did Christ Organize His Church?

Those in Christ, His Body, are called out of sin unto righteousness, a changed forgiven people and part of the One Body. “Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.” No part is any more or less important than another as each member has their own function for the body to function properly. Therefore, don’t consider yourself more highly than you should.

The Body of forgiven people are given functions to perform – NOT an office or position to hold. For example:

Romans 12:6-8 “Prophecy, teach, serve, encourage, give, lead (administer) and show mercy.”

1 Corinthians 12:7-10 “Wisdom, knowledge, faith, gifts of healings, working of miracles, discerning of spirits, prophecy, kinds of tongues (languages), interpretation of tongues (languages).”

1 Peter 4:8-11 – “Love for one another, hospitable without grumbling, minister to one another, speak as oracles of God, minister [Gk. *diakonos* serve (rd)] with the ability which God’ supplies.”

Ephesians 4:11-14 “And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fulness of Christ.”

Apostles

Apostolos - one sent forth, a messenger. The word is used of the Lord Jesus to describe His relation to God, Hebrews 3:1 “Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus,”

Apostello – set apart, to send out, John 17:3. “And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.” According to Acts 1:21- 22 an apostle of Jesus was “one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us - one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection.” The appointing of apostles appears to have ceased following the selection of Mathias except for Paul who was appointed as

an apostle out of season.

Prophets

Prophetes – a foreteller, an inspired speaker. The "prophet" proclaimed the message given to him, as the "seer" beheld the vision of God. (See Numbers 12:6, 8.) Thus a prophet was a spokesman for God; he spoke in God's name and by his authority (Exodus 7:1). He is the mouth by which God spoke to men (Jeremiah 1:9; Isaiah 51:16). 1 Corinthians 13:8 states that the need for prophecies, thus prophets, would cease: "Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they would cease. Cease is from the Greek word *katargeo* meaning to be (render) entirely idle (useless). (Biblesoft's New Exhaustive Strong's Numbers and Concordance with Expanded Greek-Hebrew Dictionary)

Evangelists

Euangelistes - one who proclaims good tidings, good news, the gospel. Only Philip and Timothy were specifically called evangelists. Philip taught the gospel and Timothy assisted Paul in teaching the Gospel to the Gentiles. One who goes forth to proclaim may go far or near and he could stay for a longer period of time in one location than another, as in the case of Paul. No doubt the receptivity of hearers was a criterion to determine whether to stay or go. One may also feel compelled to remain in one area, perhaps even longer than originally intended, until they have completed the task(s) they set out to accomplish.

Preacher

The word *kerux* is translated preacher meaning one who proclaims - a herald, 1 Timothy 2:7 and 2 Timothy 1:11. In Romans 10:14, the verb *kerusso* is used meaning preach. *Kerux* indicates one giving a proclamation; *euangelistes* points to his message as glad tidings. (Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Thomas Nelson Publishers)

Pastors and Teachers

Elders, Pastors, Overseers (guardians, sentinels, watchmen) are English words describing a specific function or work. {Some translators consider this an office or position rather than a work or function even though Paul called it a work (*érgou* –work, labor, deed)} 1 Timothy 3:1. These words come from three Greek words:

1. *presbuteros* - elder, older and senior
2. *episkopeés* - one who alerts others of pending danger, one who oversees or watches over - a guardian, sentinel or watchman. The English translation of the Greek Septuagint (Greek Old Testament) translates *episkopeés* as sentinel.

3. *poiménas* - shepherd, pastor (those who tend or feed those under their care).

“Notice the following classifications:

- (1) *presbuteros* is Greek; elder is Anglo-Saxon and the two designate ‘maturity’
(2) *episcopos* is Greek, ‘bishop’ is Latin, ‘over-seer’ is Anglo-Saxon and these three convey the idea of ‘oversight’ [as a shepherd watching over or guarding his flock from predators (rd)]
(3) *poimen* is Greek, “pastor’ is Latin and ‘shepherd’ is Anglo-Saxon mean ‘tending’ or ‘feeding’ [teaching (rd)].” (Garland M. Robinson, Gospel Advocate p. 105 Feb 21, ‘80)

Men selected as a guardian, sentinel, watchman, elder, shepherd³ are to have certain spiritual criteria and character traits as recorded in 1 Timothy 3:2-7 and Titus 1:6-9. They devote their time feeding, teaching, equipping and maturing Christians that the Holy Spirit put under their care. This requires that they know the spiritual condition and needs of those they care for, individually and collectively. They protect by alerting those under their care of false teachers and false teaching, building up, teaching, the brethren in the Word, restoring those who have fallen away and promoting unity in Christ. This requires that they know God’s Word and be aware of Satan’s cunningness - that roaring lion on the prowl seeking someone to destroy. It is essential that they lead the flock by their examples as submissive servants of the Lord and not drive them by edict or demand. They are not the head but servants fulfilling certain activities.

Scripture describing activity of these men:

1 Timothy 5:17 Let the elders who **rule {well leading – YLT direct the affairs - NIV}** Greek *proistemi*, "to **preside** rule," also means "to **maintain**," (Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words,) will be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching. (RSV) (NKJV has doctrine rather than teaching). James 5:14-17 Is any among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them **pray** over him, **anointing him with oil** in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith [not the oil but the prayer (rd)] will save the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man has great power in its effects.

³ Refer to BibleWay Functions of Spiritual Shepherds

1 Peter 5:1-4 The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers [provide spiritual nutrition (rd)], not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.

Acts 20:17 & 28 “And from Miletus, he [Paul] sent to Ephesus and called for the elders ... Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God (**to feed** the church of the Lord – ASV) which he purchased with his own blood”. [The Holy Spirit puts Christians under the care of the shepherds, watchmen, sentinels, rather than someone requesting the elders to accept oversight of their spiritual life (rd).]

Acts 20:34-35 "In everything I showed you (elders from Ephesus) that by working hard in this manner you must **help the weak** and remember the words of the Lord Jesus that He Himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

Titus 1:5 & 9 “For this reason I left you in Crete, that you might set in order what remains, and appoint elders [note plural (rd)] ... he may be able both to **exhort in sound doctrine** [teaching] and to **refute those who contradict.**”

Deacons

Diakonos / diaconus a servant either male or female - to run errands, assist another or to execute orders of another. Qualifications are given in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

In verses 1-7 of 1 Timothy 3 Paul discussed the function or work of the guardians/watchmen/sentinels. Some translators consider this function to be an office or position rather than a work even though Paul called it a task or work (*érgou* –work, labor, deed). After giving the character or qualifications of guardians/watchmen/sentinels Paul discusses other servants with specific spiritual traits:

- a. Servants in general (*diakonos* - gender neutral) - vs. 8
- b. Women (*gunaikas* – woman or wife) – vs. 11 [The Greek word *gunaikas* means either woman or wife depending on context; e.g., your woman would be wife.]

c. Married men servant (*diákonoi*) vs. 12

Diakonos translated as deacons were to have specific characteristics or traits similar to guardians / sentinels / watchmen apparently to assist them in their important spiritual shepherding work. (1 Tim 3:1 and 12 and mentioned in Philippians 1:1 with elder.

Some people infer that the seven selected in Acts by the Apostles and the whole Body of Christ to take care of the Grecian widows' needs were deacons, men with qualifications specified in 1 Timothy and Titus. They are not referred to as servants, *diakonos*, but men to perform a specific work or service to relieve the apostles so they could “devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word”.

All Christians

All Christians are *diakonos* being servants or ministers [Latin translation of *diakonos*] performing functions needed by Christ's Body for it to grow and be fruitful in bringing others to Christ and in encouraging all members of the Body to remain faithful.

Romans 12:3-6 “ For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. 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 [functions or activities given (rd)] differing according to the grace that is given to us, **let us use them:**”

2 Timothy 2:20-21 “But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor. Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.”

The Church Christ built is an organism, a body of faithful, obedient and believing people, organized by functions (gifts) in a way that the body may fulfill its mission of caring for one another and carrying out all the services that Jesus Christ, the Head of the Body, may desire.

Questions

1. Christ organized His church into functions to equip, train and build up (mature) to attain unity of faith

True _____ False _____

2. Apostles were eye witnesses of Christ's life, teachings and miracles.

True _____ False _____

3. Who went and proclaimed Christ's death and resurrection

- a. _____ Evangelists
- b. _____ Pastors
- c. _____ Pulpit ministers
- d. _____ Christians
- e. _____ a and b
- f. _____ a and d
- g. _____ a, b and d

4. The work of pastors (guardians, sentinels) is to

- a. _____ Be the administrative officer of the church
- b. _____ Preach sermons to the assembled Christians
- c. _____ Feed and nurture, those under their care

5. All Christians are to perform the many differing functions needed for a spiritual body to grow and mature.

True _____ False _____

Who Does God Put into Christ's Body- His Church?

Lesson 6

When God created man He made him from the dust of the earth but also in His image, likeness, nature. Following the creation God walked and talked with man as he was a perfect creation, righteous, and a creation having the ability of choice. God placed him in the Garden of Eden with the instruction to tend it (work), not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil (obey) and to be fruitful and multiply (reproduce). After some period of time they disobeyed becoming subject to physical and spiritual death.

God is the source of life and all sinners are under the curse of eternal death. The only way to remove the curse and to return to the original relationship with Him is to be reconciled to God.

When the recognition of our need to be reconciled to God causes our attitude to change to a desire to do whatever it takes to receive forgiveness, we will unashamedly acknowledge to the whole world that Jesus Christ is God. "That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved." (Romans 10:9-10) "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

This recognition comes from our hearing and understanding God's message, the Gospel. Then we put our trust in Christ as our sin sacrifice. With the change in our attitude and our desire to be forgiven, we repent (change from sin and rebellion to righteousness and trust) of our wickedness, confess our sinfulness and acknowledge to all that Jesus is God, the Christ. From our conviction that Christ alone can save us we die to sin, are united to Him in His death, buried and resurrection through water baptism. This is stated in Romans 6:3-7 "Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin because anyone who has died has been freed from sin."

Therefore, it's up to us individually. We have a choice to make. What choice have you made?

Questions

1. Man can only be reconciled to God through death of Christ
True _____ False _____
2. Repentance is
 - a. _____ Feeling sorry
 - b. _____ Being forced to change
 - c. _____ A change in one's way of living
3. Baptism is an immersion into Christ's death in order to be raised to a new life.
True _____ False _____

What Does It Mean To Be In Christ?

Lesson 7

When one obeys the Gospel message of the crucified and resurrected Christ, he becomes a cleansed, forgiven and redeemed new creation, added to the Body of Christ, the Church. He is then in Christ and "In him (Christ) we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins" (Ephesians 1:7).

The following scriptures explain the importance of being in Christ.

"He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men" (John 1:2-4).

"He predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment – to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ" (Ephesians 1:5-10).

"For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ [if means that not all are in Christ (rd)], he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation" (2 Corinthians 5:14-19).

"See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ. For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority. In him you were also

circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead" (Colossians 2:8-12).

"Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died – more than that, who was raised to life, is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: 'For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.' No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is **IN Christ** Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:34-39).

“My little children [those in Christ (rd)], I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous One, and he himself is the atoning sacrifice for our sins” (1 John 2:1-2).

So Just What Must One Do to be in Him, in Christ?

1. Obtain an understanding of Christ's Gospel,
2. Recognize that there is sin and unrighteousness in their life.
3. Decide to change from living sinful life to living a godly life.
4. Trust that God through Christ can forgive sins
5. Acknowledge that Jesus as God came in the flesh to earth to become the sin sacrifice for us.
6. Obey Christ's message of redemption plead for forgiveness by:
 - a. Dying to sin by a change in lifestyle.
 - b. Being buried with him by immersion in water, baptism.
 - c. Being resurrected from death to sin, following the water burial, into a new and different lifestyle (new creation).
 - d. Continuing to live in the teachings of Christ and the Apostles.
 - e. Remembering His sin offering, crucifixion and resurrection.
 - f. Be a functioning part of Christ's Body

When those in Christ stand before God to give an accounting for their

actions while on earth, they will have Christ as their advocate beside them acknowledging to the Father that they are one of His. (1 John 2:1)

Questions

1. In Christ we have forgiveness of sins
True _____ False _____
2. In Christ Our old man of sin was crucified, buried and raised a new creation.
True _____ False _____
3. In Christ all the fullness of deity lives
True _____ False _____
4. In Christ no one, except self, can separate from the love of God
True _____ False _____
5. In Christ one has an advocate to plead his case before God
True _____ False _____

Fellowship

Lesson 8

“Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.” 37 Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” 38 And Peter said to them, “Repent [change your way of life (rd)] and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. . . . 41 So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. 42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers” (Acts 2:36-38; 41-42 ESV).

How did they receive fellowship and what did they do afterwards?

“God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord” (1 Corinthians 1:9 NASU).

What did they do after receiving this fellowship?

“And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; and they began selling their property and possessions and

were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need” (Acts 2:44-45 NASU).

Other expressions of fellowship and lack thereof

“We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, 2 for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. 3 For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own free will, 4 begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints— 5 and this, not as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us.” 2 Corinthians 8:1-5 ESV

“At present, however, I am going to Jerusalem bringing aid to the saints. 26 For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make some contribution for the poor among the saints at Jerusalem. 27 They were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have come to share in their spiritual blessings, they ought also to be of service to them in material blessings” (Romans 15:25-28 ESV).

“There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold 35 and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need. 36 Thus Joseph, who was also called by the apostles Barnabas (which means son of encouragement), a Levite, a native of Cyprus, 37 sold a field that belonged to him and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet” (Acts 4:34).

“But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, 2 and with his wife's knowledge he kept back for himself some of the proceeds and brought only a part of it and laid it at the apostles' feet. 3 But Peter said, ‘Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? 4 While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God’” (Acts 5: 1-5 ESV).

What fellowship is not.

1. It is not harmony- “We are not in fellowship because we walk in peace, but we walk in peace because we are in fellowship.”
2. It is not an endorsement – “Endorsement is an act of individual will in which one approves or supports the opinion or acts of another when he agrees with or concurs in such opinions or acts.”
3. It is not contingent upon unanimity of opinion – “The unity of the Spirit is based upon community not conformity.”
4. Equality of spiritual knowledge is not the foundation – “Those born of the water and of the spirit are not born in a state of maturity.” (quotes from Our Heritage of Unity and Fellowship, Cecil Hook)

What is this fellowship to which they were devoted?

Fellowship is the English translation of *koinoonia* (Greek) or *communio* (Latin).

- The Thayer Greek Lexicon defines *koinoonia* as the share which one has in anything, participation; contact, fellowship, intimacy.
- Strong’s states in Strong’s # NT:2842 that fellowship is association, community, communion, joint participation, contact.
- Wikipedia referencing the American Heritage Dictionary defines it as sharing in common, comradely. *Koinoonia* is also translated eleven times as fellowship, seven times as communion and one time as distribution.
- Easton’s Bible Dictionary has fellowship defined as mutual affection, enjoyment of his presence.

Therefore, fellowship (*koinoonia*) could be expressed as – a non-sexual intimate relationship based upon love, the likeness or nature of God. This is the relationship in which God created man and the way man originally lived with God before he sinned. The great two commands of Matthew 22 is the fulfillment of the creation fellowship.

"Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" 37 And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. 38 This is the great and first commandment. 39 And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. Matthew 22:36-40 ESV

Who can remove one from fellowship with God?

When Adam and Eve were created God placed them in Paradise and His fellowship. But they chose to reject Him by their sin of disobedience. God removed them from Paradise and their intimate relationship with Him.

After Christ established His body, His church, consisting of those who call upon God to cleanse them of their sin being buried, immersed, into Christ's atoning blood sacrifice and raised a new creation with God putting them into Christ's Body and into fellowship with God himself. Like Adam and Eve they can choose to disobey God and God can choose to remove them from His fellowship.

John the apostle records a message in Revelation 1 and 2 to the seven churches.

- Revelation 1:17-20 "Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades [the abode of the souls of man]. Write therefore the things that you have seen, those that are and those that are to take place after this. As for the mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands, the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches." Most were slack in their obedience to Christ.
- Revelation 2:4-5 To the church in Ephesus "But I have this against you, that you have **abandoned** the love you had at first. 5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent.

So, it is God who removes one from His fellowship. However, His servants or assembly of servants can withhold the common sharing for the purpose of bring them unto repentance from the lifestyle that leads to eternal death – not their personal understanding of some scripture.

Personal understanding of some apostle teaching may differ among those in the Body Christ. These differences may result from lack of knowledge, whether new born Christians or not; intellectual ability endowed by their creator; pre-Christian background or their spiritual growth and maturity.

Questions

1. One becomes in fellowship with God by:
 - a. _____ Belief that Jesus was God in human form
 - b. _____ Approval by local church leaders
 - c. _____ God himself.

2. Members, church leaders or a church body can remove one from fellowship with God.
T. _____ F. _____
3. God approves a Christian not fellowshiping anyone who disagrees with them on some biblical teaching.
T. _____ F. _____
4. Fellowship is:
- a. _____ mutual affection
 - b. _____ a common sharing of love and comradery
 - c. _____ a non-sexual intimate relationship
 - d. _____ all the above.
5. Once a person is in fellowship with God, that relationship cannot be removed.
T. _____ F. _____

Christian Discipline

Reprove, Rebuke and Exhort

Lesson 9

The church established by Christ, also referred to as the Body of Christ, has many parts each performing different functions. It is a living organism not an inanimate organization. Like the human body sometimes the members of Christ Body do not perform as desired. For His Body to be healthy occasionally disciplinary action may be necessary. Most of the time this action is minor, a few times it is major but seldom radical.

There appear to be four types of treatment for the ailments of the spiritual body depending of situations:

Brother sinning against brother

"If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. 16 But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. 17 If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector" (Matthew 18:15-18).

Note:

There was sin present. Fellowship and relationship between brothers is strained and in need of restoration. The offended brother is to go to the offender, face to face, not - send a letter, someone else, an e-mail, phone call or text message. They need to meet face to face and to resolve the situation.

When one-on-one does not produce repentance and restoration then other Christians must become involved. Two or three Christians respected by the offending brother and the whole congregation should go with offended, not your buddy who always agrees with you, to discuss his situation (Matthew 18:16). In the unlikely event this action does not result in repentance and reconciliation, radical action by the entire Body of Saints must be taken as his everlasting life is at stake.

As a last resort the whole congregation need to confront him in person, not by letter, e-mail, text message, tweet, phone call or public announcement. It is not the elders' problem it is the whole congregation's problem and all are to be involved (Matthew 18:17).

Brother living a sinful and ungodly life

“I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people- 10 not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. 11 But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler-not even to eat with such a one. 12 For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? 13 God judges those outside. "Purge the evil person from among you" (1 Corinthians 5:9-13).

This lifestyle choice has severe consequences as a brother is living an ungodly life that leads to eternal destruction if he does not change his way of living and return to his redeemer and loving Father.

God's people are to correct their brethren sometimes in what may appear to be extreme punishment. 1 Corinthians 5 states "Purge (cleanse - ESV) out the old leaven" (V7) "not to keep company (associate- ESV) with

anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of" (v 11)

- Immorality (fornication-KJV) - Sexual relations with someone other than spouse whether heterosexual or homosexual, married or unmarried.
- Covetousness - One who takes advantage of another for unjust gain. This can occur among elderly, youth, men or women. - I want it and I will do whatever it takes to get it.
- Idolatry - Putting things or activities ahead of God; e.g., self-indulgence.
- Reviling (railer - KJV; slanderer - NIV) - slander, gossip.
- Drunkenness - Lack of self-control while under the influence of alcohol (or drugs).
- Wickedness (extortioners - KJV) - Laziness or inactivity by one capable of caring for self while obtaining another's possessions by deceit, trickery, undue force, power, or intimidation.
- Disorderly - Out of Step with others in Christ, offensive conduct.
- Divisive - One willing to fight and divide in order to get their way. It must be what 'I' want or understand regardless of the consequences. Thus believing one's interpretation is the correct and only valid interpretation causes divisions.

What does not associate with or keep company with entail? Is it shunning, not speaking to, not giving aid to, prohibit from assembling with, not eating or sleeping with family and the ceasing of close companionship? The purpose of discipline is to cause a change, a return to God and reconciliation with His Body. So, no association of any kind prevents communication thus defeating the purpose of disciplinary action. Stopping all close companionship; such as, not eating the communal meal, agape meal, when the Lord's Supper was observed, is the intended action

Brother who wanders from the truth

"My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins" James 5:19-20.

This brother is in process of moving away from Christ. For Jesus said in John 14:6 "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the

Father except through me." He was wandering from the truth, Christ. It is worth noting that some "Christians" referred to as Gnostics denied that Jesus was God in the flesh or human so no atoning sacrifice, sin offering.

Brothers having different understanding of apostolic teaching

"Now concerning food offered to idols: we know that "all of us possess knowledge." This "knowledge" puffs up, but love builds up. 2 If anyone imagines that he knows something, he does not yet know as he ought to know. 3 But if anyone loves God, he is known by God. 4 Therefore, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that "an idol has no real existence," and that "there is no God but one." 5 For although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth-as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"- 6 yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist. "7 However, not all possess this knowledge. But some, through former association with idols, eat food as really offered to an idol, and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. 8 Food will not commend us to God. We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do. 9 But take care that this right of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. 10 For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will he not be encouraged, if his conscience is weak, to eat food offered to idols? 11 And so by your knowledge this weak person is destroyed, the brother for whom Christ died. 12 Thus, sinning against your brothers and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. 13 Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble" (1 Corinthians 8).

Christ crucifixion, (sin offering, atoning sacrifice), burial, resurrection and ascension are actions supported by both biblical and secular facts, documented evidence. Teachings, although inspired truth, are not facts therefore are subject to interpretations. Questions

1. A Christian can stray or wander from the saving grace of God?
T ___ F ___
2. Once one becomes a child of God his lifestyle does not matter.
T ___ F ___
3. There is only one possible interpretation of apostolic teachings
T ___ F ___

4. A Christian cannot sin against another Christian
T ___ F ___
5. Christ crucifixion is a fact evidenced by biblical and secular documents.
T ___ F ___

Other questions to test your knowledge of this study

1. Christ said He would build “My church” - those obedient believers called out of a life of sin into a life of righteousness.
T ___ F ___
2. On Pentecost Day Peter told those believers who asked what they needed to do to be saved to “Repent and be baptized, everyone of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”
T ___ F ___
3. Leaders of the Jews attempted to destroy the church Christ established by persecuting those God had added to Christ church.
T ___ F ___
4. Man’s choices always have consequences sometime immediate, sometimes later in life or sometimes only after death.
T ___ F ___
5. To receive eternal life with God and all the righteous, a person must:
a. ___ Believe the Gospel of Christ - his life, death, burial, resurrection and ascension
b. ___ Chose to live in obedience to God’s will
c. ___ Be baptized into Christ for forgiveness of sins
d. ___ Live faithful to God
e. ___ All the above
f. ___ a, b and d,
6. Redemption from sin is found in many religions.
T ___ F ___
7. Every one in Christ is a new creation.
T ___ F ___

8. The new creation occurs when one dies to sin, calls upon God to forgive, is buried in the waters of baptism, resurrected by God and put into Christ Body.
T ___ F ___
9. There is no instance in the Old Testament of God's reaction to man's sin.
T ___ F ___
10. Sin caused or causes:
a. ___ Death.
b. ___ Separation from God.
c. ___ Both a and b.
11. The church Christ established is actually people redeemed from sin and reconciled to God by the sin-offering blood sacrifice of Christ when they trust and obey His word, the Gospel.
T ___ F ___
12. Who is the head of the church?
a. ___ Peter
b. ___ Paul
c. ___ Pope
d. ___ Christ
13. When was the church established?
a. ___ Will be built during the 1000 years reign.
b. ___ The church is only figuratively.
c. ___ During the lifetime of apostles and disciples.
14. The most important person in the church is:
a. ___ Pope.
b. ___ Bishop, Pastor, Elder, Overseer, Shepherd.
c. ___ Deacon.
d. ___ Every Christian is of equal importance.
e. ___ Preacher
15. Whose choice is it for one to receive eternal life?
a. ___ Man does not have any choice
b. ___ It is the church one attends that determines.
c. ___ Every individual makes their own choice

