



DISCIPLE GROUPS



LEADER GUIDE 2025-2026

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All Scriptures listed are from the *New American Standard Bible: 1995 edition*.

Objectives for Each Session

August/September (complete the listed sessions within the listed timeframe)

1. Discipleship

Read: Discipleship Lesson (The Environments for Disciple-Making)

Read: Romans 12:1-2, Hebrews 5:11-6:1, Luke 9:23-27

Memorize: 2 Timothy 2:2

Discuss in no particular order: highs and lows for the week, transparency/vulnerability sharing, D-group reading (Discipleship Lesson) churchwide Bible Reading plan, LG lesson, Sunday message

Leader only memorization: Philippians 2:3-4

2. Prayer

Read: Prayer Lesson (Luke 6:12-17)

Read: Matthew 6:5-15, Luke 11:1-10, Luke 22:39-46

Memorize: Philippians 4:6

Discuss in no particular order: highs and lows for the week, transparency/vulnerability sharing, D-group reading (Prayer), church Bible Reading plan, LG lesson, Sunday message

3. Bible Study

Read: Ch.1- Scriptures Baptist Faith and Message (BF&M)

Read: Bible Study lesson (James 1:19-25)

Read: 2 Peter 1:20-21, Hebrews 4:12

Memorize: 2 Timothy 3:16-17

Discuss in no particular order: highs and lows for the week, transparency/vulnerability sharing, D-group reading (Scriptures in BF&M and Bible Study lesson), church Bible Reading plan, LG lesson, Sunday message

4. Meditation

Read: Meditation Lesson (Psalm 119:15-16)

Read: Psalm 119:15-16, Philippians 4:8

Memorize: Joshua 1:8

Discuss in no particular order: highs and lows for the week, transparency/vulnerability sharing, D-group reading (Meditation), Bible Reading plan, LG lesson, Sunday message

October/November

1. Sin

Read: Ch. 6- Man (BF&M)

Memorize: Romans 3:23, Exodus 20:12a, 15, 16, James 2:10

Discuss in no particular order: highs and lows for the week, transparency/vulnerability sharing, D-group reading (Ch. 6- Man), churchwide Bible Reading plan, LG lesson, Sunday message

2. Salvation

Read: Ch. 7- Salvation (BF&M)

Read: Romans 1:16-18, Romans 3:10-12, Romans 5:8-10

Memorize: Romans 5:8, Ephesians 2:8-9 (good works will not save you)

Discuss in no particular order: highs and lows for the week, transparency/vulnerability sharing, D-group reading (Salvation), churchwide Bible Reading plan, LG lesson, Sunday message

3. Evangelism (3 sessions)

Read: Session 1- Evangelism is Part of Discipleship, Evangelism Training (Pt. 1- pgs. 31-35)

Memorize: emboldened questions and statements from the evangelism training

Discuss in no particular order: highs and lows for the week, transparency/vulnerability sharing, D-group reading (Evangelism is Part of Discipleship and Evangelism Training -pt 1), churchwide Bible Reading plan, LG lesson, Sunday message, role play using the questions learned during the session

Read: Session 2- Evangelism Training (Pt 2- pgs. 36-37)

Memorize: Romans 6:23a, Romans 10:9, John 3:16, emboldened commandments (bottom pg. 36)

Discuss in no particular order: highs and lows for the week, transparency/vulnerability sharing, churchwide Bible Reading plan, LG lesson, Sunday message, D-group reading (Session 2- Evangelism Training), Role play the evangelism information you learned from the week before

Read: Session 3- Evangelism Training (Pt 3- pg. 38)

Memorize: John 14:6, 1 John 5:13

Discuss in no particular order: Role play the evangelism information you learned from the week before, share evangelistic encounters, highs and lows for the week, transparency/vulnerability sharing, churchwide Bible Reading plan, LG lesson, Sunday message

Leader only memorization: *Romans 1:16*

(If you group has been able to get ahead then continue into Dec. material while still in Nov.)

December

1. Confession

Read: Confession Lesson (Psalm 51:1-12), 1 John 1:8-10

Memorize: 1 John 1:9

Discuss in no particular order: role play the Law method of evangelism (pgs. 34-37), highs and lows for the week, transparency/vulnerability sharing, D-group reading (Confession), churchwide Bible Reading plan, LG lesson, Sunday message

2. Trinity

Read: Ch. 3-5- Father, Son, and Spirit (BF&M), Psalm 139, page 43 in this notebook. (If you are ahead, you have the option to add Ch. 2 and read it with Ch. 3 one week and Ch. 4-5 the next week)

Memorize: Psalm 139:23-24

Discuss in no particular order: highs and lows for the week, transparency/vulnerability sharing, D-group reading (Ch. 3-5- Father, Son and Spirit), churchwide Bible Reading plan, LG lesson, Sunday message

3. Recite August-December memory verses

(this can be done one December session or over multiple December sessions)

4. God's Purpose of Grace (read over Christmas break if unable to meet for a session)

Read: Ch. 8- God's Purpose of Grace (BF&M)

Read: Ephesians 1:4-14, Romans 8:28-39

Memorize: John 10:28

If able to meet for a fourth time in December, then discuss in no particular order: highs and lows for the week, transparency/vulnerability sharing, D-group reading (Ch. 8- God's Purpose of Grace), churchwide Bible Reading plan, LG lesson, Sunday message

January

1. Church (2 sessions)

Read: Ch. 9- The Church (BF&M)

Read: Church lesson (Matthew 16:18)

Memorize: Acts 2:41

Discuss in no particular order: highs and lows for the week, transparency/vulnerability sharing, D-group reading (Ch. 9- The Church), churchwide Bible Reading plan, LG lesson, Sunday message

Read: Church Lesson (Acts 2:41-47)

Read: 1 Corinthians 5, 1 Corinthians 12:12-27, Hebrews 10:24-25

Memorize: Acts 2:42

Discuss in no particular order: highs and lows for the week, transparency/vulnerability sharing, D-group reading (Church lesson), churchwide Bible Reading plan, LG lesson, Sunday message

2. Giving

Read: God's Expectation for the Believer's Giving (pgs. 54-55)

Read: Ch. 16- Stewardship (BF&M)

Read: Malachi 3:8-10, 2 Corinthians 8:3-5, 2 Corinthians 9:6-7

Memorize: Matthew 6:19-21

Discuss in no particular order: highs and lows for the week, transparency/vulnerability sharing, D-group reading (Ch. 16- Stewardship), churchwide Bible Reading plan, LG lesson, Sunday message

3. Service

Read: Service Lesson (1 Corinthians 12:14-20) (pgs. 56-58)

Memorize: 1 Peter 4:10

Discuss in no particular order: highs and lows for the week, transparency/vulnerability sharing, D-group reading (Service Lesson), churchwide Bible Reading plan, LG lesson, Sunday message

Leader only memorization: Ephesians 4:32

February

1. Baptism

Read: Ch. 10- Baptism and the Lord's Supper (BF&M read Baptism portion)

Read: Baptism Lesson (pgs. 59-63)

Read: Baptism- Romans 6:1-4, Acts 10:34-48, Acts 19:1-5

Memorize: Baptism- Matthew 28:19-20

Discuss in no particular order: highs and lows for the week, transparency/vulnerability sharing, D-group reading (Ch. 10- Baptism and Lord's Supper and Baptism lesson), churchwide Bible Reading plan, LG lesson, Sunday message

2. Lord's Supper

Read: Ch. 10- Baptism and Lord's Supper (BF&M read Lord's Supper portion)

Read: Lord's Supper lesson

Lord's Supper- Luke 22:14-23, 1 Corinthians 11:17-34

Memorize: Lord's Supper- Ephesians 1:7

Discuss in no particular order: highs and lows for the week, transparency/vulnerability sharing, D-group reading (Ch. 10- Baptism and Lord's Supper and Lord's Supper lesson), churchwide Bible Reading plan, LG lesson, Sunday message

3. Family

Read: Ch. 21- The Family (BF&M)
Read: Genesis 1:26-28, Genesis 2:22-24, Ephesians 5:21-33, 6:1-4, Colossians 3:18-21, 1 Peter 3:1-7, 1 Corinthians 7:1-11, Proverbs 1:8, 1 Timothy 5:8
Memorize: Ephesians 5:22, 25
Discuss in no particular order: highs and lows for the week, transparency/vulnerability sharing, D-group reading (Ch. 21- The Family), churchwide Bible Reading plan, LG lesson, Sunday message

4. Evangelism/Missions

Read: Ch. 14- Evangelism and Missions (BF&M)
Read and learn: 3 Circles Method of Evangelism (practice evangelizing one another), Mission/Global Statistics
Read: Romans 10:13-17, Matthew 9:37-38, Matthew 28:19-20
Memorize: Romans 10:17, Acts 1:8
Discuss in no particular order: highs and lows for the week, transparency/vulnerability sharing, D-group reading (Ch. 14- Evangelism and Missions), churchwide Bible Reading plan, LG lesson, Sunday message

Leader only memorization: Romans 10:13-15

March

(If any group is behind due to weather cancellation, etc. and you need to cut out/skip one session then we encourage you to cut out Ch. 18- The Christian and the Social Order. If you do this, then please read that chapter in the summer, but only if you have fallen behind.)

1. Kingdom

Read: Ch. 12- Kingdom (BF&M)
Read: Acts 1:3, Matthew 6:9-15 (10)
Memorize: Matthew 6:33
Discuss in no particular order: highs and lows for the week, transparency/vulnerability sharing, D-group reading (Ch. 12- The Kingdom), churchwide Bible Reading plan, LG lesson, Sunday message, evangelistic encounters

2. Last Things

Read: Ch. 13- Last Things (BF&M)
Read: Matthew 24:36-44, Isaiah 65:17, Revelation 21:1-22:7
Memorize: 1 Thessalonians 4:16
Discuss in no particular order: highs and lows for the week, transparency/vulnerability sharing, D-group reading (Ch. 13- Last Things), churchwide Bible Reading plan, LG lesson, Sunday message

3. The Lord's Day

Read: Ch. 11- The Lord's Day (BF&M)

Read: Romans 14:1-6

Memorize: Romans 14:5

Discuss in no particular order: highs and lows for the week, transparency/vulnerability sharing, D-group reading (Ch. 11- The Lord's Day), churchwide Bible Reading plan, LG lesson, Sunday message

4. Apologetics (Bible)

Read: Apologetics Lesson (Bible)

Memorize: 2 Peter 1:20-21

Discuss in no particular order: highs and lows for the week, transparency/vulnerability sharing, D-group reading (Apologetics- Bible), churchwide Bible Reading plan, LG lesson, Sunday message

April

1. Apologetics (Creation)

Read: Apologetics Lesson (Creation)

Memorize: 1 Peter 3:15b (begin with "always")

Discuss in no particular order: highs and lows for the week, transparency/vulnerability sharing, D-group reading (Apologetics- Creation), churchwide Bible Reading plan, LG lesson, Sunday message

2. Apologetics (Resurrection)

Read: Apologetics Lesson (Resurrection)

Read: Prophetic fulfillment/eyewitness claims: Mark 15:44, Luke 24:36-44, Matthew 16:21, Psalm 16:10, 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, Acts 2:32

Memorize: 1 Corinthians 15:3-6

Discuss in no particular order: highs and lows for the week, transparency/vulnerability sharing, D-group reading (Apologetics- Resurrection), churchwide Bible Reading plan, LG lesson, Sunday message, evangelistic encounters

3. Multiplication

Read: The Stages of Discipleship lesson

(Before or soon after the "Multiplication" session, meet with each person in the group and reveal whether or not you believe he or she is ready to lead. Have them agree to being a D-group leader, participant, or one that will not be in a D-group the following year. Provide D-group leader covenant to those agreeing to lead. Provide D-group participant agreements for them to give to others as they recruit people to be in their group the next year. The agreements are in the back of this notebook.)

Memorize: Review memory verses

Discuss in no particular order: highs and lows for the week, transparency/vulnerability sharing, D-group reading (The Stages of Discipleship), churchwide Bible Reading plan, LG lesson, Sunday message.

May

1. The Christian and the Social Order

Read: Ch. 18- The Christian and the Social Order (BF&M)

Read: Matthew 5:13-16, 25:31-46, Romans 1:18-27, Romans 12-14,
1 Cor. 6:18-20

Memorize: 1 Corinthians 6:12

Discuss in no particular order: highs and lows for the week, transparency/vulnerability sharing, D-group reading (Ch. 18- The Christian and the Social Order), churchwide Bible Reading plan, LG lesson, Sunday message

2. Peace and War, Religious Liberty (BF&M ch 19-20)

Read: Peace and War- Matthew 5:43-48, Matthew 26:52, Heb. 12:14

Memorize: Romans 12:18

Read: Religious Liberty- Romans 13:1-7, Acts 4:18-22

Discuss in no particular order: highs and lows for the week, transparency/vulnerability sharing, D-group reading (The Stages of Discipleship), churchwide Bible Reading plan, LG lesson, Sunday message

3. Test on August-May memory verses

(If behind schedule move session 1 or 2 to summary reading. Do not remove “memory verse” session.)

Education, Cooperation (BF&M ch 15, 17)

(read on your own, no session to discuss these)

DISCIPLESHIP

THE ENVIRONMENTS FOR DISCIPLE MAKING

various texts

Jesus had many levels in which He interacted and thus disciplined the people. We, as well have levels in which we interact and are able to disciple others. Let's study the various opportunities to disciple others.

I. PUBLIC DISCIPLESHIP

(crowd)

We see an example of this in *Matthew 15:10-11*- "*After Jesus called **the crowd** to Him, He said to them, 'Hear and understand. 11 It is not what enters into the mouth that defiles the man, but what proceeds out of the mouth, this defiles the man.'*"

In *Luke 7:9*, after a centurion expressed great faith, Jesus ...*marveled at him, and turned and said to the crowd that was following Him, "I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such great faith."*

Jesus addressed the multitudes on numerous occasions. The Sermon on the Mount, the feeding of the four thousand, and the feeding of the five thousand were three of those occasions. Discipleship takes place this way. When God's Word is preached or taught in a public forum, it is an opportunity for the listener to be disciplined.

II. COMMUNITY DISCIPLESHIP

(70, 120)

During the ministry of Jesus, He equipped and trained 70 people to go out two by two to share the gospel.

Luke 10:1- Now after this **the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them in pairs ahead of Him to every city and place where He Himself was going to come.**

What did Jesus tell the 70? What instruction did He give them?

Luke 10:2-7- And He was saying to them, "*The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore, beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest. 3 Go; behold, I send you out as lambs among wolves. 4 Carry no money belt, no bag, no shoes; and greet no one on the way. 5 Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace be to this house.'* 6 *If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; but if not, it will return to you. 7 Stay in that house, eating and drinking what they give you; for the laborer is worthy of his wages. Do not keep moving from house to house.*"

The 70 were to go ahead of Him to those cities. Obviously, they had some **training**. Obviously, they had a closer bond with Jesus than those that were simply a part of the crowds of people. Jesus trusted them with this task. He was confident, through time spent with them, that they would represent Him faithfully.

Just after Jesus ascended back to heaven, Peter addressed 120 devoted followers of Jesus that had gathered to pray.

*Acts 1:15a- At this time Peter stood up in the midst of the **brethren (a gathering of about one hundred and twenty persons were there together)** ...*

These people prayed faithfully in wait of the Holy Spirit and the Father answered. It is implied in Acts 1 that the 120 witnessed the ascension of Jesus. They were privileged to spend more time with Him than the general population. Their devotion to prayer was an overflow of knowing the Lord Jesus and time spent being disciplined by Jesus.

In the **community discipleship** environment, people know many of the others by name. They know the story of *many* of the others in the group; but they don't know the story of *all* the others in the group.

III. PERSONAL DISCIPLESHIP (twelve)

Time and time again in the gospels, we find Jesus taking His **twelve** aside to give them additional instruction. Jesus was close with these twelve. He spent three years with them. The demands on them were greater than the demands upon others. They were called by Jesus to leave their occupations to follow Him. These twelve did just that, and He disciplined/mentored them.

*Matthew 20:17-19- As Jesus was about to go up to Jerusalem, He took the **twelve** disciples aside by themselves, and on the way He said to them, 18 "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn Him to death, 19 and will hand Him over to the Gentiles to mock and scourge and crucify Him, and on the third day He will be raised up."*

Notice that Jesus revealed His future; **not to the crowd or to the larger group of disciples; but only to the twelve**. The twelve were disciplined by Jesus at a level that surpassed that of the crowd and the seventy.

At the **personal discipleship** level, the disciple maker has a personal relationship with all twelve of the people he or she is discipling. The disciple maker knows them by name, and comes to know their strengths, weaknesses, and struggles, He then helps them follow Jesus through it all.

IV. INTIMATE DISCIPLESHIP (3 people: James, Peter, John)

"Good equippers do it like Jesus did it: recruit twelve, graduate eleven, and focus on three."

Lynn Anderson, They Smell Like Sheep

Scripture reveals that James, Peter, and John shared a closeness with Jesus that the other nine disciples did not.

These three witnessed the transfiguration of Jesus.

*Matthew 17:1-2- Six days later Jesus took with Him **Peter and James and John** his brother, and led them up on a high mountain by themselves. 2 And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light.*

In addition to the transfiguration of Jesus, James, Peter, and John were the ones to accompany Jesus into the Garden of Gethsemane on the night of His arrest.

*Matthew 26:36-37- Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to His disciples, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.” 37 And **He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee**, and began to be grieved and distressed.*

James, Peter, and John were seen as the leaders of the disciples and the closest to Jesus.

Intimate discipleship takes on many forms, but what is vital to intimate discipleship is *a relationship of trust*. Relationships must develop to the point that there is honesty, vulnerability, maturity, and then multiplication.

In the church you are a part of, is public discipleship happening? If so, how?

In the church you are a part of, is community discipleship happening? If so, how?

In the church you are a part of, is personal discipleship occurring? If so, how?

In the church you are a part of, is intimate discipleship happening? If so, how?

There was a time when the twelve disciples argued over who was the greatest among them. Jesus had spent time discipling them, but they were not understanding His mission. Later, when Jesus ascended to the right hand of the Father, they were ready to lead His church. They were ready to make disciples that make disciples. They were ready to multiply themselves. They had progressed from wanting to know what Jesus could do for them, to men who were all in to do what Jesus wanted of them. They had become humble and fully devoted followers!

I would rather you feel overwhelmed by the thought of discipling others than to feel like you have it all together. Understand, *“The disciple himself is not one who has arrived. On the contrary, he is a learner, a pilgrim, one who is on a quest to make his life all that God would have it to be.”*

Walter A. Henrichsen, Disciples Are Made Not Born, 23.

Will you allow yourself to be discipled?

Jesus discipled the Twelve, for them to then disciple others.

May you enjoy the process of becoming a fully devoted disciple that becomes a disciple-multiplier.

PRAYER

PRAYER AND SPECIFICALLY SOLITARY PRAYER

In the Old Testament God repeatedly called on His people to pray. In 1 Samuel 1, the barren Hannah is found praying in the house of worship. Eli the priest happened to see her praying with such a heavy and burdened heart that he believed her to be drunk. She was not drunk but simply seeking God in prayer. Her fervency and passion were misunderstood. Her anguish was too deep for words. Her persistence and passion were well-received by the Lord, for she conceived of her firstborn and named him Samuel. Hannah's story illustrates the impact of prayer.

In the Bible we read of the church gathering to pray, people praying at the temple, and we read of solitary prayer. The Psalms consistently present David privately (solitarily) praying for protection, deliverance, and victory against his foes. The Psalms also present him testifying of God's goodness and power, along with confessing his sin. The most famous of the penitent Psalms is Psalm 51. There David is seen confessing his sin of adultery, acknowledging the consequences of sin, and revealing his desire for reconciliation with the Lord.

When considering solitary prayer in the Old Testament, no one serves as a better example than Daniel. Daniel was taken to a faraway land with no temple, no respect for the Sabbath, and no remnant to gather with to worship the one true living God. After arriving in Babylon, he was taught the Babylonian language and culture. By the time one has read to Daniel chapter 6, Daniel has been in Babylon from his teenage years to that of a man approximately eighty years old. During those years, it is believed that Daniel devoted himself to solitary prayer three times every day. *Daniel 6* presents the king signing an injunction to make prayer illegal unless it be to the king. Daniel, however, kept praying to the one true God for *verse 10* states, "*Now when Daniel knew that the document was signed, he entered his house (now in his roof chamber he had windows open toward Jerusalem); and he continued kneeling on his knees three times a day, praying and giving thanks before his God, as he had been doing previously.*" Daniel was faithful to God to seek Him through prayer.

As one studies the New Testament, it becomes evident that solitary prayer was faithfully practiced by the heroes of the faith, specifically Jesus, Peter, and Paul. Acts 6:4, 8:15, 9:40, and 10:9 each refer to the apostle Peter and prayer. Acts 14:23 and 16:25 along with Philippians 1:4, Colossians 1:9, 2 Thessalonians 1:11, and 1 Timothy 1:3 all refer to the prayer life and teaching of the apostle Paul. It was common practice for Jesus to separate and isolate Himself to spend time with the Father. *Mark 1:35* records, "*In the early morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house, and went away to a secluded place, and was praying there.*" Luke 5:16 reveals, "*...Jesus Himself would often slip away to the wilderness and pray.*" Matthew 14:23 communicates, "*After He had sent the crowds away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray; and when it was evening,*

He was there alone.” Luke 6:12 reveals Jesus spent the entire night in solitary prayer before selecting the twelve disciples. On the night of Christ’s arrest, He is found in solitary prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane. Not only did Jesus practice solitary prayer, but He taught others to do the same.

*Matthew 6:5-6- When you pray, you are not to be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. But you, **when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father** who is in secret, and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.*

Solitary prayer was important to Jesus and to so many saints that we hold today in high regard. May you delight in solitude with God.

Kenneth Boa wrote, *“In solitude we remove ourselves from the influence of our peers and society. ... In this ...solitude...we discover a place of strength, dependence, reflection, and renewal, and we confront our inner patterns.”*¹

David Brainard, the American Missionary to the Indians wrote the following in his journal on Wednesday April 28, 1742:

*“I withdrew to my usual place of retirement in great peace and tranquility; spent about two hours in secret duties and felt much as I did yesterday morning, only weaker and more overcome. I seemed to depend wholly upon my dear Lord, wholly weaned from all other dependencies. ...God was so precious to my soul that the world with all its enjoyments was infinitely vile. I had no more value for all the favor of men than pebbles. The Lord was my ALL; and that He overruled all greatly delighted me. I think my faith and dependence upon God scarce ever rose so high. I saw Him such a fountain of goodness that it seemed impossible I should distrust Him again, or be any way anxious about anything that should happen to me.”*²

David Brainard understood the blessing, the importance, and the impact of solitary prayer.

In Luke 6:12, we find the Lord Jesus on the verge of making a paramount decision. By this time, He has many disciples (many followers) but it is time to choose Twelve to serve as apostles. The future church will rest upon their shoulders; therefore, His decision is of great significance.

¹ Kenneth Boa, *Confirmed to His Image*, 83.

² Donald Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, 188.

*Luke 6:12-16- It was at this time that **He went off to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God.** 13 And when day came, He called His disciples to Him and chose twelve of them, whom He also named as apostles: 14 Simon, whom He also named Peter, and Andrew his brother; and James and John; and Philip and Bartholomew; 15 and Matthew and Thomas; James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon who was called the Zealot; 16 Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.*

Jesus spent time along with the Father. So should you.

When one begins to have regular times of solitary prayer, he or she may struggle. It is difficult because it is new. It is like a student just learning to play the violin. It can be frustrating, and the results do not always come as the student thinks she should; but as one becomes an expert at the violin, she can pick it up and delight in the sound that it makes each and every time. So is the same with the one that has become an expert at solitary prayer.

Three truths concerning solitary prayer:

I. SOLITARY PRAYER IS TO PRECEDE YOUR DECISIONS

V. 12

Beginning in verse 12, we find Jesus receiving permission to call the Twelve.

Luke 6:12- It was at this time that He went off to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God.

Jesus got away. While no Scripture commands us to do the same, the example is an obvious one to follow. There are times when periods of quietness and solitude are necessary.

Jesus made it His practice to get away from the people in order to pray in solitude.

*Matthew 14:23- After He had sent the crowds away, He went up on the **mountain by Himself** to pray; and **when it was evening**, He was there **alone**.*

*Mark 1:35- **In the early morning**, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house, and **went away to a secluded place**, and was praying there.*

*Luke 5:16- ...Jesus Himself **would often slip away to the wilderness and pray**.*

*John 6:15- So Jesus, perceiving that they were intending to come and take Him by force to make Him king, **withdrew** again to the mountain **by Himself alone**.*

All four Gospels confirm that the demands on Jesus were great, and all four Gospels record Jesus withdrawing from people to have a season of solitary prayer with the Father.

II. SOLITARY PRAYER IS TO LEAD TO RIGHT DECISIONS

VV. 13-16

Verse 13- And when day came, He called His disciples to Him and chose twelve of them,

Jesus chose the twelve which included many fishermen, one known zealot (a zealot opposed the Roman government) and one tax collector (a tax collector obviously worked for the Roman government). The Lord Jesus prayed and the Twelve were given to Him by the Father.

III. SOLITARY PRAYER EQUIPS YOU TO MINISTER

V. 17

Verse 17- Jesus came down with them and stood on a level place; and there was a large crowd of His disciples, and a great throng of people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the coastal region of Tyre and Sidon,

The prophet spoke of the Lord equipping him to minister in *Isaiah 50:4*:

*The Lord GOD has given Me the tongue of disciples,
That I may know how to sustain the weary one with a word.
He awakens Me morning by morning,
He awakens My ear to listen as a disciple.*

We are invited to listen to the Lord through prayer.

Jesus received power in **private** to minister in **public**.

Application:

When is the last time you got away for a lengthy alone (solitary) time in prayer?

When is the last time you adjusted your schedule to get away and pray?

When is the last time you prayed until God assured you of His answer?

BIBLE STUDY

THE CALL TO BIBLE STUDY

“Two brothers were walking on their father’s extensive, wooded acreage when they came upon a young tree, heavy with fruit. Both enjoyed as much of the delicious fruit as they wanted. When they started back, one man gathered all the remaining fruit and took it home with him. His brother, however, took the tree itself and planted it on his own property. The tree flourished and regularly produced a bountiful crop so that the second brother often had fruit when the first had none.

The Bible Is like the fruit-bearing tree in this story. Merely hearing the Word of God is to be like the first brother. You may gather much fruit from the encounter and even bring home enough to feed on for a few days, but in the long run it doesn’t compare with having your own tree. Through the disciplines of reading and studying the Bible, we make the tree our own and enjoy its fruit.”³

*James 1:19-25- This you know, my beloved brethren. But **everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger**; 20 for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God. 21 Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. 22 But **prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves**. 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; 24 for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. 25 But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.*

I. THE CALL TO RECEIVE THE WORD

VV. 19-21

Verses 19-20- This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; 20 for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.

1. You receive the Word appropriately by **being quick to hear**.

*James 1:19- ... But everyone must be **quick to hear**...*

Thomas Watson wrote,

“Take every word as spoken to yourselves. When the word thunders against sin, think thus: “God means my sins;” when it urges duty, “God intends me in this.” Many put off Scripture from themselves, as if it only concerned

³ Donald Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, 41.

those who lived in the time when it was written; but if you intend to profit by the word, bring it home to yourselves; a medicine will do no good, unless it be applied.”⁴

2. You receive the Word appropriately by being slow to speak.

*James 1:19- But everyone must be quick to hear, **slow to speak**...*

You cannot be a good listener if you are always talking. Our tendency is to tell God our problems but not to listen to God answer prayer and speak to us from His Word.

3. You receive the Word appropriately by being slow to anger.

*James 1:19b-20- But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and **slow to anger**; 20 for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.*

*Proverbs 14:29- He who is **slow to anger** has great understanding, But he who is quick-tempered exalts folly.*

When we are angry, we do not listen well. In the case of James 1, we must calm down and listen **to God**.

1. You receive the Word appropriately when you put aside sin.

*James 1:21a- Therefore, **putting aside** all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness...*

It is imperative that we put aside sin by confessing the sin, so that we can hear clearly from the Lord.

*James 1:21- Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility **receive the word implanted**, which is able to save your souls.*

The Word of God has the greatest impact in *our* lives when we receive it the right way. Verse 21 is clear. We are to receive the Word with humility.

Your Bible study is most profitable when:

- 1) you listen with a humble and teachable spirit
- 2) you yield your tongue to His use only
- 3) you obey by putting aside sin and the influences of this world

⁴ Thomas Watson, “How We May Read the Scriptures with Most Spiritual Profit,” *Puritan Sermons* (1674; reprint, Wheaton, IL: Richard Owen Roberts, 1981), vol. 2, page 65. Recorded in *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, 57.

II. THE CALL TO ACT UPON THE WORD

VV. 22-25

*James 1:22- But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not **merely hearers who delude themselves.***

The believer is **not** blessed by simply **reading** the Bible.

The believer is blessed by **knowing** and **obeying** the Bible.

Donald Whitney wrote,

“How often have you closed your Bible and suddenly realized you can’t remember a thing you’ve read? How many Bible studies have you participated in and how many sermons have you heard where you left without an imprint of Scripture on your life at all? I’ve known people in as many as six Bible studies per week who grew only in knowledge but not in Christlikeness because they were not applying what they were learning. Their prayer life wasn’t strong, they weren’t influencing lost people with the gospel, their family life was strained. If we will begin to discipline ourselves to determine at least one specific response to the text before walking away from it, we will much more rapidly grow in grace. Without this kind of application we are not doers of the Word.”⁵

James 1:23-24- For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was.

A mirror reveals what you look like. Not what you wish you looked like. In similar fashion, the Bible reveals your true spiritual condition, not simply how you want to view yourself. The Bible reads you.

*James 1:25- But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, **this man will be blessed in what he does.***

We are to respond to the Word (law of liberty) by doing what it says. The blessed man is **not the man that hears** the Word. The blessed man is **the one who does** what the Word says to do.

Questions to ask when reading the Bible to help you be a hearer and a doer of the word:

- 1) Is there an example for me to follow?
- 2) Is there a sin to avoid?

⁵ Donald Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, 61.

- 3) Is there a sin to confess?
- 4) Is there a promise to claim?
- 5) Is there a truth to believe?
- 6) Is there a prayer to pray?
- 7) Is there a command to obey?

MEDITATION

THE BLESSINGS OF MEDITATION

Psalm 119:15-16

The word meditation means to ponder, to think deeply upon, to dwell on, to reflect on.

*Psalm 19:14- Let the words of my mouth and the **meditation** of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my rock and my Redeemer.*

Meditation is never a one second exercise. There is instantaneous prayer whereby one silently speaks to God, but there is **no such thing as instantaneous meditation**.

Meditation requires time, concentration, focus, and intensity.

Kenneth Boa writes, “*To meditate on the Word is to take the time to ponder a verse or a passage from Scripture so that its truth can sink deeply into our being.*”⁶

*“A simple analogy would be a cup of tea. You are the cup of hot water, and the intake of Scripture is presented by the tea bag. Hearing God’s Word is like one dip of the tea bag into the cup. Some of the tea’s flavor is absorbed by the water, but not as much as would occur with a more thorough soaking of the bag. In this analogy, reading, studying, and memorizing God’s Word are represented by additional plunges of the tea bag into the cup. The more frequently the tea enters the water, the more effect it has. **Meditation**, however, is like immersing the bag completely and letting it steep until all the rich tea flavor has been extracted and the hot water is thoroughly tintured reddish brown.”⁷*

*Psalm 119:15- I will **meditate** on Your **precepts**...*

God’s **precepts** are His commands and principles to guide one’s life.

Meditation is what assures you that you don’t get in a hurry as you meet with God.

Meditation demands your undivided attention for it takes time for the Scripture to take hold within you.

In Psalm 119 we find meditation to be a consistent claim of the writer.

*Psalm 119:23- ...Your servant **meditates** on Your statutes.*

*Psalm 119:48- I will **meditate** on Your statutes.*

*Psalm 119:78- ...I shall **meditate** on Your precepts.*

*Psalm 119:97- O how I love Your law! It is my **meditation** all the day.*

*Psalm 119:99- ...Your testimonies are my **meditation**.*

⁶ Kenneth Boa, *Conformed to His Image*, 84.

⁷ Donald Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, 48.

Meditation is not an eastern practice; it is a biblical expectation.

Sometimes one meditates upon a **verse**, sometimes one meditates on a **phrase** like “His love compels us” or “be holy as He is holy” or “He demonstrated His love toward us” or “without faith it is impossible to please God.” On occasion one may meditate on one **word**.

Psalms 119:15-16 reveals three results of meditating upon God and His word.

I. MEDITATION UPON GOD’S WORD WILL LEAD YOU TO EVALUATE YOUR WAY

*Verse 15b- I will meditate on Your precepts and **regard Your ways**.*

Meditation is done to know Him, obey Him, honor Him, and to live according to His ways.

*Joshua 1:8a- This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall **meditate** on it day and night, so that you may be careful **to do** according to all that is written in it...*

Meditation leads one to evaluate his ways.

II. MEDITATION UPON GOD’S WORD WILL LEAD YOU TO ENJOY THE WRITINGS

*Verse 16- I shall **delight** in Your **statutes**...*

The same delight in God’s truth is referred to in *Psalms 1:1-2* where it says, *Blessed is the man, ...whose ...**delight** is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he **meditates** day and night.*

The Law (referring to the first five books of the Bible) was given for us to read, to study, to meditate upon.

Meditating upon God’s truth leads to delighting in God’s truth.

III. MEDITATION UPON GOD’S WORD WILL LEAD YOU TO REMEMBER THE WORD

Those who faithfully meditate on the Word will evaluate their ways, they will enjoy His writings, and they will remember His Word.

*Verse 16b- ...I shall **not forget Your word**.*

Meditation will enhance memorization. Focusing on a truth will lead you to memorize the truth.

Why is it that many know worship songs better than they know Scripture?

There are multiple reasons, but the primary reason is **repetition**. Songs are sung repeatedly. **Repetition** leads to memorization. To meditate often includes reading and saying a word, phrase, or verse repeatedly.

One that **meditates** on the Word, **delights** in the Word.

One that **delights** in the Word, **remembers** the Word.

One that **remembers** the Word, will **properly evaluate his/her way**.

RESOURCES

Concordance:

James Strong, L.L.D., S.T.D., *The New Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*

Interested in reading on Bible Study:

Donald Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1991).

Howard Hendricks and William D. Hendricks, *Living by the Book*, (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2007).

Interested in Reading on Solitary Prayer:

Donald Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1991).

E.M. Bounds, *Power Through Prayer* (Chicago: Moody Press).

E.M. Bounds, *The Complete Works of E.M. Bounds*, (Radford: Wilder Publications, 2008)

Andrew Murray, *With Christ in the School of Prayer* (Norcross: Trinity Press, 2013).

Interested in reading on Meditation: (portions of the following books address meditation)

Donald Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1991).

Kenneth Boa, *Conformed to His Image* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001)

Theology Book:

Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology*

EVANGELISM

EVANGELISM V. DISCIPLESHIP

Ten evangelists, each leading one million people to the Lord every year, versus discipling one person every year, who will in turn disciple one person every year, and so on. There are currently 7.95 billion people on earth, in 35 years (2060) there will be 10.2 billion. What's the best way to reach them with the gospel.

1. 10,000,000	1. 1
2. 20,000,000	2. 2
3. 30,000,000	3. 4
4. 40,000,000	4. 8
5. 50,000,000	5. 16
6. 60,000,000	6. 32
7. 70,000,000	7. 64
8. 80,000,000	8. 128
9. 90,000,000	9. 256
10. 100,000,000	10. 512
11. 110,000,000	11. 1,024
12. 120,000,000	12. 2,048
13. 130,000,000	13. 4,096
14. 140,000,000	14. 8,192
15. 150,000,000	15. 16,384
16. 160,000,000	16. 32,768
17. 170,000,000	17. 65,536
18. 180,000,000	18. 131,072
19. 190,000,000	19. 262,144
20. 200,000,000	20. 524,288
21. 210,000,000	21. 1,048,576
22. 220,000,000	22. 2,097,152
23. 230,000,000	23. 4,194,304
24. 240,000,000	24. 8,388,608
25. 250,000,000	25. 16,777,216
26. 260,000,000	26. 33,554,432
27. 270,000,000	27. 67,108,864
28. 280,000,000	28. 134,217,728
29. 290,000,000	29. 268,435,456
30. 300,000,000	30. 536,870,912
31. 310,000,000	31. 1,073,741,824
32. 320,000,000	32. 2,147,483,648
33. 330,000,000	33. 4,294,967,296
34. 340,000,000	34. 8,589,934,592
35. 350,000,000	35. 17,179,869,184

EVANGELISM TRAINING

PART 1

*Now as Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, ...
19 And He said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.”*

Matthew 4:18-19

Nervousness, lack of confidence (knowledge of what to say), and the attempt to win people in our power is what keeps people from consistently attempting to evangelize. We will memorize Scriptures and will teach you some basic questions to ask to help you with confidence. Before we get to connecting questions and the proclamation of the gospel, let us spend a moment addressing nervousness, the work of the Holy Spirit, and the importance of prayer.

NERVOUSNESS

If you are waiting to be calm and completely confident before you evangelize, then you will never evangelize. You must persevere through the nervousness. Let your faith conquer your anxiety.

You don't wait to overcome your fears in a sport, or giving a presentation, or performing before people. You overcome your fear by pressing through them. Our love for Christ and His mission and purpose for our lives is to lead us to overcome any fear.

1 John 4:18- There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear...

HOLY SPIRIT

According to John 16, the Holy Spirit is the Helper (v. 7) who convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment (vv. 8-11). He is referred to as the Spirit of Truth (v. 13) that guides and speaks. He glorifies Jesus (v. 14). This same Spirit now resides within each of us who know Him.

1 John 4:4- ...greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.

*Acts 1:8- but you will receive power **when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.***

“Say to the Holy Spirit each day, ‘Work through me to reach a man or a woman for you. I want to be in the people business.’”

Bill Hybels and Mark Mittleberg, Becoming a Contagious Christian

PRAYER

James 5:16b- The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.

God is clear that when the righteous pray, it makes a difference.

Pray for the lost consistently.

Pray for the lost by name.

Pray by faith, believing God will save them.

Pray that God will use you to persuade others to believe.

*Acts 18:4- And he (Paul) was reasoning in the synagogue every Sabbath and trying to **persuade** Jews and Greeks.*

(Season of prayer for the lost)

CONNECTING

There are many environments whereby you may engage in a soul-winning encounter with a stranger or acquaintance (while watching children play a sport, while walking in the neighborhood, while shopping, engaging the waiter/waitress during a meal, while getting a haircut, while making door-to-door visits, etc.). The opportunities are limitless. There are also engagements we are to have with family and friends, whereby we intentionally take the time to proclaim the gospel to them. Finally, we have opportunities to visit those who visit your church. In those situations, you will want to notice if there are toys in the yard, the state on the license plate, do they have a fishing boat, etc. In order to make a connection with them. In the beginning of the conversation, you want the other person to talk so that later in the conversation the person may be so kind to listen to you. Let them share their experiences.

“In order to catch fish, it helps to understand their habits, preferences, and eating habits. Certain fish like smooth, still water, and others like to swim in rushing rivers. Successful fishing requires you to think like a fish.”

Rick Warren, The Purpose Driven Church [PAGE NO.](#)

*Matthew 4:19- And He said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you **fishers of men.**”*

It is important to make a connection, and if you do not have an initial question to ask, then use the following.

Are you new to this area? OR how long have you lived in the area?

What do you do for a living? OR where do you go to school?

What are you interested in? OR what is one of your hobbies?

If the person has shared something whereby prayer would be an appropriate response, then ask if you can pray for them right then.

The connection portion is for them to talk. If asking only one of the above questions is all it takes to progress to the transfer questions below than fine. If it takes three questions, that is fine. If you don't prefer any of the above questions, come up with your own while realizing that your initial goal is to get them to talk. People typically like to talk about themselves. They like to tell their stories, their experiences, and their interests. If you take the time to listen to them, then they are more likely to listen to you.

TRANSFER QUESTIONS

After asking two connecting questions, you will transfer to spiritual things by asking:

Do you think about spiritual things?

If so, what comes to mind when you think of spiritual things?

or

Do you consider yourself to be a spiritual person?

Follow one of these two options with:

Do you believe the Bible to be true?

If they say “yes” then you say, **“Since you believe the Bible to be true, may I share with you a few verses from the Bible?”**

If they say “no” then you ask, **“Have you ever taken the good person test?”**

Practice the connection and transferring questions throughout the week while pretending that you are speaking to a lost person.

EVANGELISM TRAINING PART 2

*Romans 3:19-20- Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God; 20 because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for **through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.***

A woman drives a car through a school zone. She does not realize she has driven through a school zone; therefore, she continues at the regular speed limit. A police officer stops the woman for speeding. He tells her that the fine for such a violation is \$300. The woman argues that there is no need for a fine because no traffic violation has occurred. **The woman is unaware of her wrongdoing; but she had broken the law none the less.** Once the officer explained to her that she had sped through a school zone, and that the fine was \$500 she changed her tone. She then knew that she was wrong and was guilty. The law shut her mouth. She stopped trying to defend her actions, for she realized she was guilty. God's Law does the same for the sinner. The Law is like a mirror. It bypasses who you think you are and reveals who you actually are.

*Romans 7:7- What shall we say then? Is the Law a sin? May it never be! On the contrary, **I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, "YOU SHALL NOT COVET."***

*Galatians 3:24- Therefore, **the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith.***

The Law reveals one's sin. It removes excuses and thus holds sinners accountable. It is the tutor to lead people to Christ Jesus, therefore let us present God's Law to show people their sin and thus their need for the Savior.

I begin this section with the Transfer Questions learned in the last lesson:

**In your opinion, do you consider yourself a spiritual person?
Do you believe the Bible to be true?**

If the person says "yes" then say, (*Romans 3:23*) **for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.** Then proceed to the commandments as shown below, beginning with commandment 5.

If the person says "no" then ask, **"Have you ever taken the good person test?"**

(Both "yes" and "no" answers lead you to share the commandments)

"Have you ever dishonored your parents? Maybe talked back to them, or did not obey them immediately, etc?"

Have you ever told a lie?

Have you ever stolen anything? (You might say:) Taken a toy or copied someone's homework. Taking anything without permission is stealing.

The 5th of the Ten Commandments says, ***honor your father and mother.***

The 9th commandment says, ***"You shall not bear false witness.***

The 8th commandment says, ***"You shall not steal.***

(You may also be led to share the 7th commandment: You shall not commit adultery. In Matthew 5:27-28 Jesus informs us that to lust is to commit adultery in the heart.)

(All the commandments provided are found in Exodus 20.)

If the person admits to breaking one of the commandments but you sense he/she is still not humbled then share:

James 2:10 says, for whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all.

We are sinners and our sin is costly.

Romans 6:23a- For the wages of sin is death.

Sin costs us. But God is gracious to save us from our sin.

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

John 3:16 (may also be shared) For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

Will you confess Jesus as your Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead? Will you trust in Jesus and be saved from your sin that has separated you from God?

End Session 2 with leader modeling what has been taught. Have one member pretend to be lost (not argumentative, but apathetic about Jesus) and then have that member be led to the Lord in the mock visit.

EVANGELISM TRAINING

PART 3

Evangelize one another (role play) and/or go out and evangelize at a local store or park, using the Law as taught in Sessions 1-2.

Scheduled Opportunities to Evangelize:

CONFESSION

THE NEED TO CONFESS SIN AS A BELIEVER

1 John 1:9- If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1 John is writing to believers. To those who have been adopted into the family of God, and God teaches them the importance of confession. In Psalm 51, we read King David's confession of sin. The sins that David repented of in our text are the sins surrounding his affair with Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11-12). We often think that David committed the sin of adultery, and that is certainly true, but David committed many more sins. He clearly broke commandments 5-10 of the Ten Commandments. Let us learn from David's confession.

The believer who has sinned longs to be restored. He longs to be made clean.

I. THE CONSEQUENCES OF SIN AND THUS THE NEED FOR CLEANSING

Psalm 51:2- Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.

1. Sin remains with you

Psalm 51:3- For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.

David's sin was ever before him because he was reminded of the suffering and death of his son that was conceived through his sin.

2. Sin is against the Lord

Psalm 51:4- Against You, You only, I have sinned

Yes, he dishonored his parents.

Yes, he neglected his soldiers.

But primarily, he sinned against God. God is the One that declares what is right and wrong therefore any wrong you and I commit is primarily against the Lord.

3. Sin removes your joy

Psalm 51:12- Restore to me the joy of Your salvation and sustain me with a willing spirit.

You only need the joy of your salvation restored if you have lost the joy of your salvation. David did not lose his salvation. **He lost the joy** of his salvation. He lost fellowship with the Lord.

There is only one kind of sin that can take your joy: yours. David's own sin robbed him of the joy of his salvation.

4. Sin devastates your spirit (conscience)

Psalm 51:10- Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

We all need a steadfast spirit. David had sinned and now, in his confession, we see his desire for God to renew a steadfast spirit within him.

II. THE BELIEVER'S CLEANSING OF SIN

For a believer to be cleansed of sin, and restored to right standing before the Lord, there will be:

1. A plea for restoration

Psalm 51:1- Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; According to the greatness of Your compassion blot out my transgressions.

David acknowledged God's lovingkindness, God's compassion.

David desired to be restored, not according to David's lovingkindness but God's. Not according to David's compassion but according to God's compassion. He referred to his transgression and the greatness of God's compassion. He humbled himself, and he exalted the Lord.

When guilty, go to God and plead for restoration.

David did. He said in...

Psalm 51:9- Hide Your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquities.

Psalm 51:11- Do not cast me away from Your presence and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.

David desired restoration. He sought to be right with God.

If you want to be cleansed of your sin, then there will be:

2. A confession of sin

Psalm 51:3- For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.

Psalm 51:4b- And done what is evil in Your sight, so that You are justified when You speak and blameless when You judge.

David confessed his sin. It is important to understand that **confession** is more than **admission**. You can admit to doing something, but that does not mean that you believe you were wrong. Biblical confession means **you agree with God** regarding your sin. David agreed with God concerning his sin. David agreed with the holy justice of the Father.

Do not try to cover your sin. David tried that for nine months and was miserable. It was not until he confessed his sin that he found compassion.

*Proverbs 28:13- He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who **confesses and forsakes them** will find compassion.*

1 John 1:9- If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

If you want to be cleansed of your sin, then there will be:

3. A hunger for holiness

Psalm 51:2- Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.

Psalm 51:7- Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

David wanted to be pure, undefiled, holy, and blameless. If you want to be cleansed of your sin, then there will be a plea for restoration, a confession of sin, and a hunger for holiness.

Confession is the way to cleansing and restoration!

Forgiveness removes the transgression.

Cleansing changes the debtor.

Forgiveness removes guilt.

Cleansing removes shame.

When one is forgiven and cleanse, the person is not the same.

TRINITY

Incorporate the following into your discussion of **God the Father**.

The memory verses for the session(s) on the Trinity are Psalm 139:23-24. These verses were chosen for multiple reasons: The verses teach us how to long for God. They also come at the end of a psalm that addresses the attributes of God the Father presented in Chapter 3 of the BF&M. God all-powerful (omnipotent) in verses 1-6 and all-present (omnipresent) in verses 7-12. We also see from this psalm and chapter 3 of the BF&M that God the Father is all-loving and all-wise and all-knowing (omniscience).

Some communication ideas as you discuss Chapter 3 of BF&M.

In prayer, what is the role of the Father, Son, and Spirit?

Jesus taught us to pray *“Our Father who are in heaven.”* We pray to the Father and we who now live after the resurrection of Christ Jesus, we pray in the name of Jesus. When He died, He tore the veil of the temple providing us access to God the Father. We now approach the Father through what the Son did (death and resurrection), and through the Spirit that now lives within us who have repented and believed.

In creation, what is the role of the Father, Son, and Spirit?

Genesis 1:1- *“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”*

In Genesis 1:2 we read that the Spirit of God hovered over the waters of the deep.

In Genesis 1:26 we read that God said, *“Let **Us** make man in **Our** image.”*

By the time we finish reading Genesis 1, we learn that God is multiple persons.

John 1:1-3 and John 1:14 teach us that God the Father made the world through the Son. Hebrews 1:1-3 also teaches us the same (Please read these texts in preparation for the session).

These texts teach that God the Father **appointed** God the Son to create the heavens and the earth.

In John 3:16 we learn that God the Father **sent** His only begotten Son. God the Father sent the Savior. John 7:28 also gives the same truth.

Whether you are a group covering the Trinity in one session or you are ahead and therefore dividing it into two sessions, the above information regarding God the Father will be beneficial during discussion.

CHURCH

SESSION 1
THE CHURCH CHRIST IS BUILDING
Matthew 16:18

I. WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

Verse 18 says, “I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church...”

The New Testament was written in Greek and the Greek word for church is ekklesia. It means “called out assembly.” The “called out” are those who are saved, born again, regenerated. The church consists of the called out and is seen by others when she is assembled. The gathering/assembling of God’s people matters. This is why Hebrews 10:25 urges us to not forsake the assembling of ourselves together.

In the New Testament, the church is described in multiple ways. Here are a few of those ways:

1) A Building

Jesus is the foundation of the building.

*1 Peter 2:6-7- For this is contained in Scripture: “BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A CHOICE STONE, A **PRECIOUS CORNER stone**, And HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED.”*
*7 This precious value, then, is for you who believe; but for those who disbelieve, “THE **STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE VERY CORNER stone...**”*

Jesus is the chief cornerstone; the One the builders rejected. The cornerstone is the foundation to the stability of the building. Without Christ Jesus, there is no church.

*1 Peter 2:5a- you also, as **living stones**, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood...*

We are the living stones, built upon the foundation of Christ Jesus. This truth reminds all of us that church is not about us. We exist for Him.

2) A Body

The letters to the Corinthians were written to the local church in Corinth. In the first letter to the Corinthians, the apostle Paul reveals that the church is a body.

*1 Corinthians 12:12- For even as **the body is one and yet has many members**, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ.*

*1 Corinthians 12:27- Now **you are Christ’s body, and individually members of it.***

Christ is the head and each of us are a part of His body. You may be a kidney, a kneecap, an ear, a hand, or a foot. No individual is the body. We collectively are His body. Each of us is a “part” of the body.

Every part of the body is important. Every member of the church is important. Now remember who the church is.

Notice that the body pictures each local church. The local church is to assemble. We cannot assemble each Sunday with all the Christians throughout the world. The church is seen as born again baptized believers assembling with one another for worship of God through song, through the word, and through giving. The church also gathers to observe the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper along with encouraging one another and displaying spiritual gifts. Each believer in the local assembly is a part of the body of Christ.

3) A Bride

*Revelation 21:9- Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and spoke with me, saying, "Come here, I will show you **the bride, the wife of the Lamb.**"*

We see clearly in Revelation 5 that God the Son, the Lord Jesus, is the Lamb. We, the church, are His Bride. The church in this sense includes all believers; but the church is still seen when God's people are assembled. Every Sunday there are assemblies of the called out (i.e. the church).

In *Ephesians 5:22-33* we find the marriage relationship being compared to the Christ's relationship with the church.

*Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the **church**, He Himself being the Savior of the body [Christ is the head; the church is the body]. 24 But as the **church** is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything. 25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the **church** and gave Himself up for her, 26 so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 that He might present to Himself the **church** in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. 28 So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; 29 for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the **church**, 30 because we are **members of His body**. 31 For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. 32 This mystery is great; but I am speaking with **reference to Christ and the church**. 33 Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband.*

Christ and the church are not one in the same. They are not identical; but they are inseparable. Christ is the groom, and the church is His bride. Marriage is to picture Christ's relationship with His church.

II. WHO OWNS THE CHURCH?

In *Matthew 16:18* Jesus says, “I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build **My church**...”

The church belongs to Christ and **Christ alone**. This is why, He says, **My church** and not *our church*.

The church does not belong to the local pastor(s).

The pastor is the under shepherd to the Chief Shepherd.

The church belongs to the Chief Shepherd.

The church does not belong to the staff.

The church does not belong to the deacons.

The church does not belong to the trustees.

The church does not belong to those who are the most vocal.

The church does not belong to those that have been at the church for the longest.

The church belongs to Christ Jesus.

*The pastor said, “When I went to seminary 45 years ago, the church in America was in bad shape. Books were being sold that promoted the demise of preaching, the decline of the church, and predicted that Christianity was on its way out. At that time there was a great attack on the inspiration and the authority of the Bible. Many **parachurch** organizations started in those days and the seminary students preferred those organizations over the church.” Someone asked what a parachurch organization was. **Parachurch ministries focus on one Christian thing.** Campus Crusade for Christ aims to win college students to Christ. Young Life aims to win teenagers to Christ. Samaritan’s Purse aims to help the poor. The **church**, on the other hand, **is a community of diverse people doing all kinds of things, such as worship, discipleship, evangelism, pastoral care, etc.** A church aims to minister to people from birth to death. The pastor said, “the parachurch ministries appeared to be making a difference in those days and the church seemed boring and ineffective.” He continued, “**in seminary**, myself along with the other seminary students would complain about the ineffectiveness of churches and the unfaithfulness of the church people.*

*One day while complaining about churches at the lunch table a **professor** approached us from behind me and asked me to turn in my Bible to Acts 20 and verse 28 so I did. The pastor then asked the group of 15 to turn in their Bible to Acts 20:28. The pastor called upon a man to read the very verse that his seminary professor had him read. It says, “Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.*

The pastor, like his professor 45 years earlier said, “what are you hearing the verse say?” A lady spoke up and said, “I believe God wants pastors to take care of themselves and the flock.”

The pastor asked, “What term is used to describe the leader?”

“Shepherd” was the answer.

What do shepherds do? They lead, guide, feed, and protect the flock.

Who are the flock? They said the church. Which church is He speaking about in the immediate context? The church of Ephesus. A local body of believers.

*The pastor then asked, “**Whose church is it?**”*

They answered, “God’s church.”

The pastor asked, “Why did you say God’s church?”

*They answered, “because **He bought it.**”*

“What did the church cost Him?” They said, “His blood.”

*The pastor then asked the group what his professor asked him and his friends some 45 years earlier. He asked, “**What does this tell you about God’s feelings about the church?**” God sees the church as precious, valuable, and important.*

*The professor when speaking to the students, left the encounter with this, “**perhaps you gentlemen need to think a little bit more before you talk so disparagingly about something that God cherishes so much that He gave his blood for it.**”*

*The group of church members that the pastor was meeting with heard this story and sat in silence, pondering times when they had spoken harshly of the church. Then one man said, “you have reminded us of something we already knew but so easily forget and that is that **the church is God’s!** We put money into the church, we volunteer our time and our talent to serve through the church but the church is not ours. We like to think it is ours; but it’s not.” One lady went so far to say, **if the church was hers; then she had stolen it from its rightful owner.** *Gordan MacDonald, Who Stole My Church, 13-20**

Who owns the church? Christ Jesus!

III. WHO IS BUILDING THE CHURCH?

*Matthew 16:18 says, “I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock **I will build** My church...”*

There is debate as to whether or not Jesus is saying that He will build His church through Himself or Peter. Even if one interprets Jesus to say that He will build His church through Peter; it is still **Jesus who is building His church.**

How is He building His church? Through His people.

Christ builds His church through evangelism, discipleship, and accountability.

Evangelism is seen in His last address to His followers:

Matthew 28:18-20a- Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you.

Matthew 16 and Matthew 18 are the only two recorded occasions that the word “church” was used by Jesus during His earthly ministry.

In *Matthew 18:15-17*, Jesus provides guidelines for how to handle unrepentant sin within the local church. It reads, *15 If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. 16 But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed. 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.*

In chapter 16, Jesus reveals that the church is His. In chapter 18, He teaches His followers about the necessity of **accountability**. He teaches how to handle sin within His church to keep her holy and pure. Christ builds His church in number through evangelism. Christ builds His church in holiness through discipleship and accountability. In short, Christ is building His church through His people!

IV. WHAT IS THE FUTURE OF THE CHURCH?

*Matthew 16:18- I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock **I will build My church**; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.*

“The good news is that the adversary will not spoil the growth of Christ’s church. It will prevail. The bad news? Satan will do all he can to dismantle the church. If he cannot bring it about suddenly, then he will chip away at it brick by brick.”

Chuck Swindoll, The Church Awakening, 26

The devil wants to destroy THE church.

He sets out to devour, but he will not succeed for Christ Jesus is building His church, and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.

SESSION 2
THE CHURCH FUNCTIONING GOD'S WAY
Acts 2:38-47

In Acts 2, Peter is preaching the gospel, for people from all over had come to Jerusalem for the celebration of Pentecost. At the end of Peter's sermon, we find his appeal to them and their response.

(Verse 38-41) Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself. 41 And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation!" 41 So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were about three thousand souls added.

In verse 41, "receiving the word" refers to one being converted (i.e. saved). Immediately upon being saved, the people were **water baptized**. While water baptism does not save a person from their sins, it is never to be minimized, for it is one of the two ordinances given to the church and it is commanded by God (Matthew 28:19, Acts 2:38). A person should be baptized as soon as it can be arranged by the individual and the church. Baptism is the outward picture and testimony of what God has done within.

Those who were saved in Acts 2:41 (on the day of Pentecost) were water baptized, and they were added to the number. What is the number? The 120 who had been praying in the upper room (Acts 1) and had received the Holy Spirit prior to Peter's sermon. The 3,000 converts provided a public response to the message, were baptized, and were added to the 120 to be the first church.

After reading that thousands were saved and baptized, we found a description of **how the first church functioned**.

I. THEY DEVOTED THEMSELVES TO GOD AND TO ONE ANOTHER V. 42

If you want to please God; be devoted to Him and His church! They devoted themselves to God and one another in four ways:

1) Apostles' teaching

Acts 2:42 says, they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching...

The apostles were the 11 faithful disciples; along with Matthias, who became the replacement for Judas, as recorded in Acts 1. These new believers devoted themselves to the teaching of God's truth by God's men.

2) Fellowship

Acts 2:42 says, They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship...

The reference to “fellowship” is a reference to being with other believers. **Biblical fellowship** involves people that are united in the Lord. They hold one another accountable; they care for one another; they testify to one another. In short, they participate in the lives of one another.

Acts 2:46 says, Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple...

The first church realized the need to gather with one another.

They gathered in homes in verse 42 and in the temple in verse 46.

God made us to be communal people. Whether you are introverted or extroverted, God created you and saved you to be in fellowship with other believers. This is why *Hebrews 10:23-25* says, *Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; 24 and let us consider how to **stimulate one another to love and good deeds, 25 not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.***

3) The Breaking of Bread

Acts 2:42 says, They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread...

The New Testament was originally written in Koine Greek and in the Greek text we find the definite article “the.” What this means is, the phrase is literally “the breaking of **the** bread” The word “the” reveals that we are not talking about any bread. The bread referred to is the unleavened bread partaken of at the Lord’s Supper.

4) Prayer

Acts 2:42 says, They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Prayer was a way of life for the first church. They did not wait until all their human efforts failed before turning to God. They devoted themselves to prayer. They looked to God first.

The first church was not apathetic or complacent. **They were devoted!**

II. THEY WERE UNIFIED

Acts 2:44 says, And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common;

They had all things in common because Jesus was their Lord. He was their foundation. He is the one that unified them. “*All things in common*” does not mean that all the church played the same musical instrument. It means that they had the same view of sin, of Jesus, of grace, of their responsibility to evangelism, of their privilege to worship and serve the Lord. These truths unified them.

There are many verses in Scripture that speak to how Christians within the church are to treat one another.

*Romans 12:10- Be devoted to **one another***

*Romans 12:16- Be of the same mind toward **one another***

*Romans 15:7- accept **one another***

*1 Corinthians 12:25- ...have the same care for **one another***

*Galatians 5:13- ...serve **one another***

*Galatians 6:2- Bear **one another's** burdens,*

*Ephesians 4:2- ...showing tolerance for **one another***

*Ephesians 4:32- Be kind to **one another**, tender-hearted, forgiving each other*

*Philippians 2:3- regard **one another** as more important than yourselves*

*1 Thessalonians 5:11- encourage **one another** and build up **one another***

*James 5:16- ...confess your sins to **one another**, and pray for **one another***

*1 Peter 1:22- fervently love **one another** from the heart*

*1 Peter 4:9- Be hospitable to **one another***

*1 John 3:11- love **one another***

(additional references in Colossians and Hebrews)

All these verses emphasize unity, community, and accountability.

Christianity is meant to be experienced with other like-minded Christians.

III. THEY GAVE GENEROUSLY

Acts 2:45- and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need.

The imperfect tense of the Greek verb reveals to us that their **sharing was continual**. The church family was helping one another. They sold their possessions to help one another. When the church is functioning as God would have it, there is giving and sharing among the church family.

IV. THEY FELLOWSHIPED WITH ONE ANOTHER

In verse 42, their fellowship centered around the teaching of truth and in verse 46 they gathered at the temple. In the second part of *Acts 2:46* it reads, *breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart...*

This fellowship was in addition to worship gatherings. The church people were breaking bread with one another. This does not refer to the Lord's Supper but to simply spending time with one another. They enjoyed each other's company. They wanted to be with one another.

V. THEY EVANGELIZED

Acts 2:47 says, *praising God and having favor with all the people.*

Anytime a person professes to be saved, that person should be known for **praising God**. Praise is the natural overflow of one that has experienced the forgiveness of God.

The members of the Jerusalem Church were praising God, and they were contagious!

They were having favor with all the people.

The result of the church's continuing faithfulness is found in *Acts 2:47b* where it says, *And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.*

People were being saved daily because the people of the church were sharing the gospel of Jesus daily. May you do as they did.

*"No matter how different they are on the surface, healthy churches share a number of key characteristics. They're **filled with people on fire for Christ** who put selfishness, politics, and personal agendas aside to the glory of God and His purpose. ...They give generously, evangelize tirelessly, and teach truthfully. They are a joy and a blessing to every member and visitor and a shining beacon in the communities they so faithfully serve."*

Gene Mims, "The Kingdom-Focused Church," 3

May you be a person on fire for Christ. May you be contagious and you be one who contributes to the church functioning as God would have it.

GIVING

GOD'S EXPECTATION FOR THE BELIEVER'S GIVING
2 Corinthians 9:6-8

I. WHAT ARE YOU CAPABLE OF?

VV. 6-7

1. You are capable of giving bountifully

2 Corinthians 9:6- Now this I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.

We reap what we sow. If we are not bountiful givers then we should not expect to be bountiful receivers.

2. You are able to give what God would have you to give

2 Corinthians 9:7a- Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart...

The statement is presented to a church that was ready to give. The statement assumes that the believer has sought the Lord. The statement calls on **each of us** to give.

3. You are able to give willingly and cheerfully

2 Corinthians 9:7- Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

Motive in giving is vitally important.

We give what we have, as an act of worship to our great God.

We give what we have, in response to Him giving His all for us.

We give what God has purposed in our hearts to give.

We give willingly and cheerfully.

We give out of love.

II. WHAT IS GOD CAPABLE OF?

V. 8

*2 Corinthians 9:8- And God is able to make **all** grace abound to you, so that **always** having **all** sufficiency in **everything**, you may have an **abundance** for **every** good deed...*

The word “sufficiency” in verse 8 means “He gives adequate resources.” His provision is sufficient. You do what you are capable of, and you will experience His grace. His grace will abound to you.

SERVICE

GOD'S EXPECTATION FOR THE BELIEVER'S SERVICE

1 Corinthians 12:14-20

The church is described as a body. Each part of the body needs one another. The Lord is describing how each within the local church works with the others in the local church.

They are one body with many members.

1 Corinthians 12:14- For the body is not one member, but many.

1. Each part is equally a part of the body

1 Corinthians 12:15-16- If the foot says, "Because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body," it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. 16 And if the ear says, "Because I am not an eye, I am not a part of the body," it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body.

Ponder the physical body: the heart does not look like or function as a liver, or a lung, or a foot. Each part of the body is unique, and each part is needed.

2. Each part has a unique function

1 Corinthians 12:17- If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be?

The church needs those who **cook**, those who **drive large vehicles**, those who **teach**, those who are **financially blessed**, those who provide **wise counsel**, those who provide a word of **encouragement**, those who are faithful **intercessors**, those who **sing well**, those who have **instrumental ability**, those who are **tech savvy**, those who are **extroverted**, and those that are **introverted**, those with **security** experience, those with **medical** experience, etc. **All are needed!**

3. Each part is by God's sovereign design

1 Corinthians 12:18- But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired.

Each part of the body matters, and each part of the body has a function given by the Lord.

Some opportunities for you to demonstrate your gift(s) to edify the body are provided by the church, but other opportunities arise in life for you to display gift(s) without a formal opportunity provided by the church.

Your gift is never to restrict you. It is meant to be demonstrated for the edification of the church.

If you have the gift of mercy;
participate by demonstrating mercy.

If you have the gift of giving;
participate by helping others you hear are in need.
If you have the gift of service;
use it to meet the needs of others.

*“A lady wrote her pastor. The emails she sent him contained the following:
‘I will be dropping out of church life. I tried to find a place of service, but I
was met with numerous roadblocks because I was relatively a new member.
I am outside the enclosed circle of influence and no long-term members
asked me to serve at all.*

*While it is true no one in the church was asking me to serve, that was only
a convenient excuse for me. I decided to start my own personal prayer
ministry for church members. I took the church directory every day and
started praying for church members and church staff by name. I then began
volunteering for a few opportunities where someone would offer a generic
invitation. I was selective in choosing those areas that really excited me.
Obviously, some of the longer-term church members began to notice me and
my work. I now have more opportunities for service than I can accept. I was
about to become a church dropout, but my reasons were rooted in my pride
because no one was asking me to serve. I learned that I can pray without
being asked. I’m glad I decided to put my foolish pride aside and seek to
serve in ways I knew I could.’”*

Thom Rainer, I Will!, 88-89

Everyone is to serve. Find ways to serve that do not require an official position within the church. Be a servant. Be a functioning part of Christ’s body. Fulfill your role!

A form to inform us of areas where you are willing to serve and a background check form are found in the last section of this booklet.

BAPTISM

Biblical Baptism

There are so many denominations and views on baptism that it is imperative that you understand what the Bible teaches on this subject.

Baptist Faith & Message 2000: VII Baptism and the Lord's Supper:

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience. Baptism is the picture of the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Saviour.

Baptism is a picture of the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in a new life in Christ Jesus. Baptism shows the believer's faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Baptism is required before church membership. Baptism is also required before taking the Lord's Supper.

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

I. WHAT DOES WATER BAPTISM DO AND NOT DO?

1. Water baptism does not save

*Acts 2:38- Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you **be baptized** in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."*

While Acts 2:38 appears to teach that one must be water baptized to be forgiven of their sins. Further study reveals, the Greek word *eis* (which is translated "for" in the phrase "for the forgiveness of your sins") can also be translated "on account of" or "on the basis of."⁸

Therefore, an accurate translation of Acts 2:38 could be:

"be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ [on account of] the forgiveness of your sins."

Acts 22:15-16- For you will be a witness for Him to all men of what you have seen and heard. 16 Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.

⁸ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996, c1989). The Bible exposition commentary. "An exposition of the New Testament comprising the entire 'BE' series"--Jkt. (Ac 2:14). Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.

It appears that baptism brings the removal of sins but Greek scholar Kenneth Wuest in his *Expanded Translation of the New Testament* puts it, “*Having arisen, be baptized and wash away your sins, having previously called upon His Name.*”⁹

In addition to these texts, we have to remember the many texts speak of salvation in Christ without mentioning water baptism.

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

One is saved by confession and faith; baptism is not mentioned.

Romans 10:13- WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.

One calls upon the Lord to be saved; baptism is not included.

Matthew 28:19- Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them

One becomes a disciple by faith in Christ; then the person is to be baptized. One does not become a disciple through being baptized. One is made a disciple *before* one is baptized. Baptism is an act of obedience that follows conversion.

1 Corinthians 1:17a- For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel...

If baptism had a part in saving a person, then Paul would have baptized many, but Paul made it clear that he was not sent to baptize. He was sent to preach the gospel.

2. Water baptism does provide a public testimony of being born again

Acts 2:38a- Peter said to them, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ...”

He was calling them to a public display of their devotion to Christ Jesus. Baptism was never meant to be a private matter. It is a testimony. It testifies of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. It testifies of the spiritual resurrection of the believer, and it speaks to the future bodily resurrection of the believer. While baptism does not save, baptism does testify of who you belong to and where your allegiance lies.

II. WHO IS TO BE BAPTIZED?

*Matthew 28:19a- Go therefore and **make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit...***

*Acts 2:41- So then, **those who had received his word were baptized**; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.*

⁹ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996, c1989). The Bible exposition commentary. "An exposition of the New Testament comprising the entire 'BE' series"--Jkt. (Ac 21:27). Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.

*Acts 10:47-48a- “Surely **no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit** just as we did, can he?” 48 And he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.*

Those who have received the word, and become disciples, and have thus received the Holy Spirit are to be baptized.

III. HOW IS ONE TO BE BAPTIZED?

1. Immersion provides the proper testimony and the testimony matters

Baptist Faith & Message 2000:

It is an act of obedience. Baptism is the picture of the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Saviour. Baptism is a picture of the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in a new life in Christ Jesus. Baptism shows the believer's faith in the final resurrection of the dead.

A baptism that does not present the picture of death, burial, and resurrection misses the testimony of baptism. Romans 6 provides the picture.

*Romans 6:3-4- Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been **baptized** into His death? 4 Therefore we have been **buried** with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was **raised** from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.*

Water baptism pictures your death to sin, the burial of the old self, and your resurrection to new life with Christ. **Water baptism pictures the spiritual baptism that took place at conversion.**

Only immersion provides the picture of death, burial, and resurrection. Only immersion provides the proper testimony.

2. Immersion is implied by the word

The word “baptism” comes from the Greek word *baptisma*; and the word “baptize” comes from the word *baptizo*.

There are differing views of baptism because the word means “dip, wash, immerse.”

Hebrews 9:10 and Mark 7:3-4 use the words for baptize and baptism but are not speaking of the ordinance of baptism. There are rare examples. The overwhelming majority of the time (Matthew 3:16, 1 Corinthians 1:14-17, Acts 2:41, Matthew 28:19) the words “baptize” and “baptism” are referring to the ordinance of baptism that follows faith in Christ Jesus.

We know without any biblical dispute that *baptizō* (βαπτίζω) does not mean “to sprinkle.” The Greek words for “sprinkle” are *ῥαίνω* (rano) and *ῥαντίζω* (rantizo).

3. Immersion is confirmed by the context

Acts 8:38b-39a provides us with what followed after the Eunuch believed the gospel and was saved. It reads ...*they both **went down into** the water, Philip as well as the eunuch, and he baptized him. 39 When they came **out of** the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away...*

No need to go down into the water if baptism was not by immersion. Sprinkling, for example, could have been done without getting *into* the water.

John 3:23- John (being John the Baptist) *also was **baptizing** in Aenon near Salim, because **there was much water there**; and people were coming and were being **baptized**.*

John baptized at Aenon because it had a sufficient amount of water. If immersion was not the practice of baptism, then John would not have needed a significant amount of water.

Immersion is confirmed by the context.

IV. WHY SHOULD ONE BE BAPTIZED?

Matthew 28:19- Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit...

Acts 10:48a- And he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

Baptism may not save; but baptism is commanded.

V. WHEN SHOULD ONE BE BAPTIZED?

Matthew 28:19- Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit...

Acts 2:41- So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.

They were baptized publicly as soon as it could be arranged after conversion; after receiving the Holy Spirit.

Acts 10:47- “Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we did, can he?”

Receiving the Holy Spirit was and is a prerequisite to water baptism.

VI. IS THERE BIBLICAL PRECEDENT FOR SOMEONE THAT HAS BEEN IMMERSSED TO BE IMMERSSED AGAIN?

*Acts 19:1-5- It happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the upper country and came to Ephesus, and found some disciples. 2 He said to them, “**Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?**” And they said to him, “No, we have not even heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.” 3 And he said, “Into what then were you baptized?” And they said, “Into John’s baptism.” 4 Paul said, “John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in Him who was coming after him, that is, in Jesus.” 5 When they heard this, **they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.***

They had been immersed, but they had not experienced biblical Christian water baptism. They had not been baptized after receiving the Holy Spirit. Not all baptisms by immersion are Bible-anchored Christian baptisms. One’s baptism is legitimate if the person had already received the Holy Spirit, and the church that baptized the person had an accurate teaching regarding the ordinance of baptism. The authority lies with the church that does the baptizing, not the individual being baptized.

LORD'S SUPPER

THE LORD'S SUPPER AS GOD WOULD HAVE IT

1 Corinthians 11:17-32

I. PURPOSE OF THE SUPPER

Baptist Faith and Message 2000: VII. Baptism and Lord's Supper

*The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby **members of the church**, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming.*

The Lord's Supper was presented to the Twelve by Jesus on the night before His crucifixion. Since it was His last meal with His disciples before His suffering, we call it the Last Supper. At that meal, Jesus introduced the New Covenant. It was to take unleavened bread, which symbolizes His body and consume it in remembrance of what He has done for us on the cross. Then the Christian is to take the fruit of the vine, representing His shed blood for us, and drink in remembrance of His death. Jesus taught His Twelve about this Supper so they, in turn, could teach the churches to partake of His Supper in remembrance of Him.

The second text that refers to the Lord's Supper is found in Acts 2:42. There, the newly born church was devoted to partaking of His Supper.

The third text is found in 1 Corinthians 11 whereby Paul explains the importance of taking the Supper appropriately and reverently. In this lesson, we will begin by addressing the various views of the Lord's Supper and then we will walk through 1 Corinthians 11:17-34.

I. VIEWS OF THE SUPPER

The Roman Catholic view of the Lord's Supper is called **transubstantiation**. They believe a priest consecrates the elements, and an actual metaphysical change takes place. The bread and wine are actually changed into Christ's flesh and blood. The whole of Christ is fully present at the Supper, within the bread and wine. All who partake of the Supper literally take the body and blood of Christ into themselves.

Where did they come up with this view?

In John 6, Jesus is speaking about what it means to be a true disciple.

John 6:54- He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.

They take John 6:54 and apply it to the Lord's Supper (also referred to as Communion). John 6 does not refer to the Lord's Supper, but because they apply it to such, they also believe that by partaking of the Supper they receive eternal life.

The Lutheran view of the Lord's Supper is slightly different from the Catholic view. Martin Luther, in the 1500's, held that the actual molecules do not change into the flesh and blood of Jesus. However, the body and blood of Christ are present physically, therefore the presence of Christ is in addition to the elements. Some call this view **consubstantiation**.

The reformed view is the Presbyterian view and since there are a variety of Presbyterians it is difficult to summarize their differences. In simple terms, their history presents the presence of Christ as more intense/special than at other times. They believe Jesus was and is spiritually present at the Supper but not physically present.

Baptists hold to the **commemoration** or **remembrance view** which was held by Luther Swingli who lived in the 16th century. Swingli's view emphasized the death of Christ and the remembering of all that Christ went through for those who had and would believe. Swingli did not believe Christ was in the elements or that His presence was more intense during the Lord's Supper than any other time of worship. He believed Jesus was in heaven at the right hand of the Father (Hebrews 1:3, 10:12, 12:2), and therefore he believed one was to partake of the Lord's Supper in remembrance of what Jesus had already done on the cross. This is the view that Baptists hold today for this is what Jesus taught at the Last Supper which Paul quotes from in 1 Corinthians 11.

*1 Corinthians 11:23-25- For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; 24 and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "This is My body, which is for you; **do this in remembrance of Me.**" 25 In the same way He took the cup also after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, **in remembrance of Me.**"*

We have addressed the various views of the Supper and why it is important to partake with the proper view.

II. WHO TOOK THE SUPPER?

We only have three occasions shared in Scripture whereby the Lord's Supper was taken.

First, it was at **the Last Supper** (which is presented in the Gospels) whereby the Lord Jesus instituted the Supper, explained its meaning, and taught the disciples how to lead believers through the ordinance. In that setting, the Supper was not open to all people. Only His Twelve were invited to be at the Passover meal and thus the introduction of the Lord's Supper.

The second occasion is in **Acts 2:42** where the believers in Jerusalem had been baptized and added to the number, then partook of the bread (i.e. the Lord's Supper).

In Acts 2:41-42 it says, *So then, those who had **received his word** were **baptized**; and that day there were **added** about three thousand. 42 They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to **the breaking of bread** and prayer.*

The third occasion is in **1 Corinthians 11**. 1 Corinthians was written to a local congregation of believers. In 1 Corinthians 11, Paul is speaking to them about when they partake of the Supper. In verse 18 it reads, *...when you come together as a **church**, I hear that divisions exist among you.* In Acts 2 and in 1 Corinthians 11, the church gathered to partake of the ordinance. The coincides with

The Baptist Faith and Message 2000: VII. Baptism and the Lord's Supper which says, ***The Lord's Supper** is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of **the church**, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming.*

The Lord's Supper is for those who know Him as Lord and even among the saved, some should not partake.

*1 Corinthians 11:27-29- Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an **unworthy manner**, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. 28 But **a man must examine himself**, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup. 29 For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly.*

Each believer is to examine him or herself to make sure he or she is not about to bring judgment upon oneself.

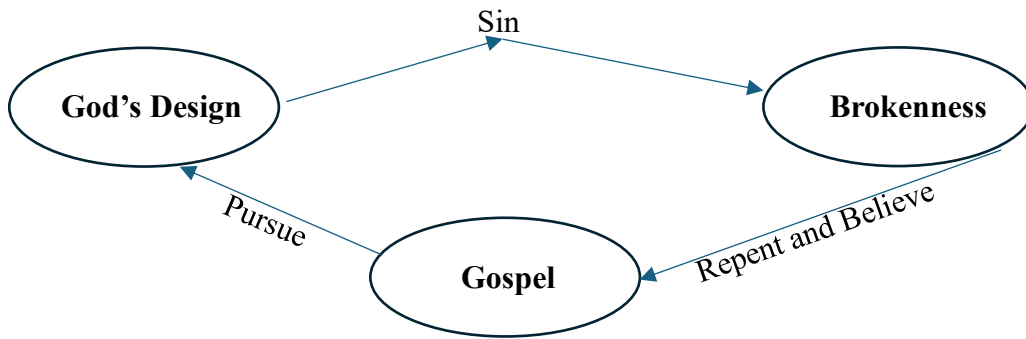
III. THE FREQUENCY OF THE SUPPER

*Verse 26- For **as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup**, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.*

Paul did not specify in 1 Corinthians 11, that there is a specific frequency in which we are to partake. This is why some take every week, some take monthly, others quarterly.

EVANGELISM/MISSIONS

3 CIRCLES



Watch 3 circles presentation.

Go to www.namb.net, search for 3 circles, then click 3 circles- North American Mission Board, you will then be on the 3 circles page, scroll down while looking for *share 3 circles*, right below that heading is *the 3 circles explanation* by Jimmy Scroggins.

Following the video, practice going through the process with the words above before you. Over time, you will have memorized the main headings to flow through the presentation.

As a side note: some start with brokenness because all people can relate to brokenness in the world. Then they go back to God's design in the beginning and move forward (mentioning brokenness since the fall) and then onto the gospel and receiving Jesus to be restored to God and His design for your life. (I recommend learning the flow of the presentation and only adapting it after you are fluent in it.)

You may also spend time sharing the gospel using the Law. It is important that we are always ready to proclaim the reason for our hope.

The following week, some time should be spent sharing evangelistic encounters from the previous week.

APOLOGETICS

(Bible)

In a day when the Bible is undermined, the creation account is distorted, and the resurrection is denied it is important that we know the truth, but also that we know how to articulate the truth to others. These lessons on “Apologetics” are written to equip you to properly defend the truth of the Bible, the resurrection, and creation.

THE SUFFICIENCY OF THE BIBLE

2 Timothy 3:16

*Isaiah 40:8- The grass withers, the flower fades, But **the word of our God** stands forever.*

The Baptist Faith & Message 2000: I. The Scriptures

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God’s revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.

The Bible is a collection of 66 books, written over 1,500 years of time, by approximately 40 different writers, from three different continents, who wrote one united and cross-referenced story of God redeeming human beings who call upon Him.

I. WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT ITSELF?

1. The Bible declares itself to be the word of God.

*1 Thessalonians 2:13- For this reason we also constantly thank God that when **you received the word of God** which you heard from us, **you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God**, which also performs its work in you who believe.*

Peter emphasized the difference between the Bible and all other books.

*2 Peter 1:20-21- But know this first of all, that no prophecy of **Scripture** is a matter of one’s own interpretation, 21 for **no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will**, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.*

The Bible declares itself to be the word of God.

2. The Bible is sufficient and complete.

*Proverbs 30:5-6- Every **word of God** is tested; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him. 6 **Do not add to His words** or He will reprove you, and you will be proved a liar.*

3. Jesus in the New Testament, declares the Old Testament to be from God.

In *Matthew 22:29* Jesus rebuked the Jewish Sadducees for their lack of understanding the Old Testament. But Jesus answered and said to them, “*You are mistaken, not understanding the Scriptures nor the power of God.*”

Jesus cited the following: creation (Luke 11:51), Adam and Eve (Matt. 19:4-5), Noah and the flood (Mt 24:37-39), Sodom and Gomorrah (Luke 10:12), and Jonah and the great fish (Matt. 12:39-41) to testify of their accuracy and that the Old and New Testaments are one continual story.

Jesus considered Scripture to be the final authority as is clearly seen when He was tempted by Satan. Three times, He responded ... “It is written” and then quoted from the Old Testament.

4. The Bible is profitable for all.

2 Timothy 3:16-17- All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

The Bible is not a book of suggestions.

It is a book of commandments.

The Bible is not a book of myths.

It is a book of historically dependable truths.

The Bible is not just a book of facts.

It is a book that transforms a life.

5. The Bible is living, active, and sharper than any two edged sword.

Hebrews 4:12- For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Martin Luther wrote: “*The Bible is alive, it speaks to me. It has feet, it runs after me. It has hands, it lays hold of me.*” Martin Luther—“*The Early Years,*” *Christian History*, No. 34.

6. The Bible is to be heard and obeyed.

In *Luke 8:21* the Lord Jesus said, ...*My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it.*

Psalms 119:105- Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

It has been reported that regular reading and studying of the Bible causes a loss of anxiety, a reduced appetite for lying, cheating, and stealing while producing increased sensations of love, peace, joy, compassion.

II. PROPHETIC EVIDENCE THE BIBLE IS RELIABLE

Many Bible prophecies have already been fulfilled. The number of fulfilled messianic (Jesus-related) prophecies exceed 300.

Psalm 22:1a, 12-18- My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?

(this is what Jesus said about 1,000 years later from the cross)

...12 Many bulls have surrounded me;

Strong bulls of Bashan have encircled me.

(the bulls reference the Jewish leaders that were present at the cross)

13 They open wide their mouth at me,

As a ravening and a roaring lion.

(both the soldiers and Jewish leaders mocked Jesus)

14 I am poured out like water,

And all my bones are out of joint;

My heart is like wax;

It is melted within me.

(when they pierced Jesus in the side, water and blood flowed out)

15 My strength is dried up like a potsherd,

And my tongue cleaves to my jaws;

And You lay me in the dust of death.

(Jesus was thirsty while on the cross. He was offered wine which He refused)

16 For dogs have surrounded me;

A band of evildoers has encompassed me;

They pierced my hands and my feet.

(this is a reference to the Roman soldiers)

17 I can count all my bones.

They look, they stare at me;

(His bones could be counted due to the scourging)

18 They divide my garments among them,

And for my clothing they cast lots.

(centuries after this prophecy the soldiers did cast lots and divide His clothing)

Psalm 22 is the revealing the details of the death of the future Messiah.

Isaiah 53:2-12- For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot,

And like a root out of parched ground;

He has no stately form or majesty

That we should look upon Him,

- Nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him.*
- 3 He was despised and forsaken of men,**
*A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;
And like one from whom men hide their face
He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.*
- 4 Surely our griefs He Himself bore,**
*And our sorrows He carried;
Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken,
Smitten of God and afflicted.*
- 5 But He was pierced through for our transgressions,**
*He was crushed for our iniquities;
The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him,
And by His scourging we are healed.*
- 6 All of us like sheep have gone astray,**
*Each of us has turned to his own way;
But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all
To fall on Him.*
- 7 He was oppressed and He was afflicted,**
*Yet He did not open His mouth;
Like a lamb that is led to slaughter,
And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers,
So He did not open His mouth.*
- 8 By oppression and judgment He was taken away;**
*And as for His generation, who considered
That He was cut off out of the land of the living
For the transgression of my people, to whom the stroke
was due?*
- 9 His grave was assigned with wicked men,**
*Yet He was with a rich man in His death,
Because He had done no violence,
Nor was there any deceit in His mouth.*
- 10 But the LORD was pleased**
*To crush Him, putting Him to grief;
If He would render Himself as a guilt offering,
He will see His offspring,
He will prolong His days,
And the good pleasure of the LORD will prosper in
His hand.*
- 11 As a result of the anguish of His soul,**
*He will see it and be satisfied;
By His knowledge the Righteous One,
My Servant, will justify the many,*

As He will bear their iniquities.
12 *Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great,*
And He will divide the booty with the strong;
*Because **He poured out Himself to death,***
And was numbered with the transgressors;
Yet He Himself bore the sin of many,
And interceded for the transgressors.

Isaiah 53 clearly prophesies the future death of the Christ. Every detail was fulfilled accurately.

In addition to messianic prophecies, the Old Testament provides numerous prophecies concerning other events that have come to pass: Israel's future exile, nations that would be destroyed, Israel's kingdom being restored, etc. These predictions further demonstrate that we can trust the Bible as truly inspired by God.

III. HISTORICAL AND ARCHEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE THE BIBLE IS RELIABLE

Dead Sea Scrolls:

One of the most important finds in the field of biblical archaeology is the discovery of **the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947** in the Qumran area on the northwest shore of the Dead Sea. There are approximately 900 documents and fragments that comprise the find. The scrolls predate A.D. 100 and **include a complete copy of the book of Isaiah**. The significance of the find is the age of the documents and the astonishing consistency with trusted Greek manuscripts such as the Masoretic Text, Codex Vaticanus, and Codex Sinaiticus which have been used to translate the New Testament into hundreds of languages.

This gives us the assurance that the text we have today in our Bible is the same as the early church had two thousand years ago. No other secular manuscripts can make the same claim.

Tel Dan Inscription:

This stone tablet contains an inscription that is the first reference to the Davidic dynasty outside of the Bible. It was erected by Hazael, king of Aram, which is present-day Syria. The inscription refers to a military victory and corresponds to the biblical account in 2 Chronicles 22. This inscription dates to the 9th century B.C., thus giving us accurate dating to the Davidic dynasty as well as verifying its existence.

Caiaphas Ossuary:

An ossuary is a stone or pottery box in which the remains of a deceased person are buried (an ancient casket). The Caiaphas Ossuary bears the inscription "Yeocef bar Qafa" and is dated to the second temple period. Yeocef (Joseph) was the son of Caiaphas. **This verifies that there was a high priest at the time of Jesus and his name was Caiaphas.** Caiaphas was the priest that presided over the illegal trial of Jesus (Matthew 26:57-68).

Pilate Inscription: This stone tablet was found in Caesarea on the Mediterranean coast. The tablet was found in the theater of Caesarea and bears an inscription mentioning the

name of Pontius Pilate the procurator of Judea, and the Tiberium, which was a building built in honor of the Emperor Tiberius by Pilate. There has been much written to discredit the biblical narrative in regard to the existence of Pilate; this tablet clearly says that it was from "Pontius Pilate, Prefect of Judea" and verifies that he was a person that lived during the time of Jesus, exactly as written in the biblical narrative.

Lucian was a second century writer who berated Christians. He writes this: "The Christians, you know, worship a man to this day—the distinguished personage who introduced their novel rites, and was crucified on that account. You see, these misguided creatures start with the general conviction that they are immortal for all time...and deny the gods of Greece and worship the crucified sage."

Lucian rejected Jesus as the Christ yet clearly testified that Christians in the 2nd century presented the same claims that we as Christians proclaim today.

All in all, there are **17 ancient non-biblical sources** corroborating the Gospel record. The testimony of the Gospel accounts is what was known and written about by non-biblical sources.

IV. TEXTUAL EVIDENCE THE BIBLE IS RELIABLE

There are at least 17,000 Hebrew scrolls and codices, dated earlier than the eighteenth century, that exist today. There are more than 24,000 partial and complete copies of the New Testament.

V. EYEWITNESS EVIDENCE THE BIBLE IS RELIABLE

The New Testament Gospels were written either by eyewitnesses to the events in Christ's life (Matthew and John) or by men who knew and interviewed eyewitnesses (Mark and Luke).

John wrote in *1 John 1:3*-, ***that which we have seen and heard*** we proclaim to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.

Peter wrote in *2 Peter 1:16*, *For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but **we were eyewitnesses of His majesty.***

John and Peter were witnesses of the resurrected Jesus. They wrote of what they had seen and experienced. They risked their lives in doing so.

Martyrdom Evidence:

The New Testament writers were able and willing to tell the truth even though had nothing to gain (from a human perspective) and much to lose for their efforts.

Once the apostles had spent 40 days with Jesus after His resurrection, not one of them denied Jesus. As a matter of fact, 10 of the original apostles died for their faith. They either died for a lie, or they died for the truth. If they knew it was a lie it would make no sense that they wouldn't just confess and save their own lives rather than die for something that was untrue.

The Holy Bible - Why So Many Versions?

Choosing a Bible

It only takes one trip to a bookstore to know that there are many different Bible translations. Some are better for devotional reading, and some are better for in-depth study.

The Bible was originally written in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek and has been translated into English and thousands of other languages down through the years. The differences in translations vary in reading levels and in style. There are basically four categories of Bible translations:

Literal

This is a word for word translation. It follows the Hebrew or Greek as closely as possible. Therefore, a literal translation will be the most accurate English translation of the original text.

Balanced

A process in which scholars attempt to mediate between a word-for-word approach and a thought-for-thought approach.

Dynamic-Equivalent

This is a thought-for-thought translation that translates biblical words and phrases into clear and contemporary English equivalents. The priority is not on each word as the literal translations are, but on keeping the intended meaning of each phrase of the original text. However, an issue with this type of translation is that in a few instances the original meaning of the text is not conveyed clearly.

Paraphrase (or Free Translation)

These translations are more concerned with clarity than exact wording. They are easy to read but can give the impression that the Bible was written in the 20th century. For example, in Psalm 119:105 “a lamp” in the King James Version and the New American Standard Version is translated as “a flashlight” in The Living Bible. This is an obvious drawback of this type of translation. It compromises the meaning of the original text. A paraphrase should not be considered a translation.

Levels of Most Popular Translations:

<u>Reading Level</u>	<u>Bible</u>	<u>Translation Type</u>
12 th grade	King James (1881 ed.)	Literal
11 th grade	New King James Bible	Literal
11 th grade	New American Standard (1995 ed.)	Literal
	Legacy Standard Bible	Literal
10 th grade	English Standard Version	Literal-Balanced
7 th -8 th grade	Christian Standard Bible	Balanced
7 th -8 th grade	New International Version	Dynamic-Equivalent
7 th grade	New English Translation	Dynamic-Equivalent
6 th grade	New Living Translation	Dynamic-Equivalent
5 th grade	God’s Word Translation	Dynamic-Equivalent
3 rd grade	New Century Bible	Dynamic-Equivalent
4 th -5 th grade	The Message	Paraphrase

How do you choose which is right for you? These three guidelines will help you make an informed decision:

- (1) **Is the translation a literal, balanced, dynamic-equivalent, or paraphrase?** For study, you want to use dependable and accurate translation.
- (2) **How easy is it to read?** Do you need a dictionary to read it because of all its sophisticated words or is it so easy to read that it insults your intelligence? For a prolific reader, comprehension is not a factor but for a child, the vocabulary can be overwhelming.
- (3) **What helps are in it?** Does it have cross references, maps, concordances, and footnotes? These helps will not determine the translation you use, but they will help you determine what Bible, within the same translation, to purchase.

Brief History of the Most Famous Versions

The Septuagint (LXX) This is the Hebrew **Old Testament which was translated into Greek about in the 2nd century B.C.** The Latin word Septuagint means seventy, and it is thought that 70 Jewish translators were involved in this work. With Constantine (272-337 AD, emperor from 306-337 AD) coming to the throne and Christianity becoming the official religion of Rome, Constantine ordered 50 copies of the Septuagint for use in the churches in his capital city.

The Latin Vulgate Under Emperor Diocletian's persecution (reigned 284-305 AD) the Scriptures began to flourish despite the opposition. The Hebrew and Greek scriptures were translated into Latin, Syriac, Egyptian, and Coptic. The next important translation came in 404 A.D. when Jerome who lived in Bethlehem **completed a Latin version of the Bible called the Vulgate.** It wasn't popular at first, but it became England's Bible for a thousand years and at the Roman Catholic Council of Trent in 1546 was declared to be the only authentic Latin Bible.

John Wycliffe No one knows for sure when the words of Scripture were first translated into English. Some appear as far back as the 7th century. The first major step at **translating the entire Bible into English came late in the 14th century (1380 AD)** with the help of John Wycliffe (*The Morning Star of the Reformation*). The first Wycliffe edition, translated direct from the Vulgate (not the original languages), appeared around the time of his death, and though its reading was forbidden by law, its **hand-written copies** circulated widely, and about 170 of them still exist today.

William Tyndale The next breakthrough came when **Scriptures in English were printed for the first time.** The key figure here was William Tyndale, who was determined to get the Bible into the hands of the common people in their own language. Tyndale translated the Old Testament from the Hebrew text, helped by Miles Coverdale. Tyndale was eventually strangled and burnt to death in 1536, but not before **the first printed version of the whole Bible in English was released** under Coverdale's name. Tyndale had started something and before long translations began to appear.

Geneva Bible Then there was the Geneva Bible (New Testament 1557, Old Testament 1560) translated in Switzerland by a group of exiles and dedicated to Elizabeth I. This was the finest translation of its time. It was written in the Puritan tradition with marginal notes which upset the royal family and Anglican Church. They tried to stop the

distribution and use of the Bible, but it remained in print for 80 years and became one of the major Bibles of the 16th century. **The Geneva Bible was carried overseas by the Plymouth Pilgrims in 1620.**

King James Version All of the previous translations were soon to be eclipsed by the most famous English Bible of all time. In 1604, King James I of England agreed to a suggestion that work should go ahead on a new translation. **In 1611 the Bible which later became known as the Authorized Version (AV) was published.** This was the best English Bible produced to that date and **for 300 years was to be the Bible for the entire English-speaking world (during that time it went through 21 revisions/updates).** It was a beautiful translation that stood the test of time. Nevertheless, for communicating the truth of God without confusion it has some drawbacks, not that the original translators were purposely misleading. They held a very high view of the inerrancy of Scripture. However, the English language changed over the years and with the changes came a need for translations which convey the original languages intent with clarity and truth.

Revised Version Until 1881 the Authorized Version reigned without any sign of a serious rival. Then after ten years of work, partly based on **manuscripts not available in King James' time**, the first part of the Revised Version was published in England. But neither the Revised Version or its counterpart the American Standard Version published in 1901, ever won popular appeal. This was mainly because in trying to be so minutely accurate in following the original languages word for word, they failed to translate the result into naturally fluent English. Nevertheless, it was the first real challenge to the King James version's monopoly.

Revised Standard Version In 1937 the International Council of Religious Education authorized its American Standard Bible Committee to undertake a new revision. The RSV then is a revision of a revision of the AV. Many archaic words have been eliminated.

New American Standard (1960-1971, updated 1995, updated 2020) This translation stems from the 1901 American Standard Version. When the Lockman Foundation realized that the version was fast disappearing, it prompted them to produce a new revision. It was **produced with the conviction that the words of Scripture as originally penned in the Hebrew and Greek were inspired by God.** Marginal notes are included in many of the better editions: things like weights and measures, literal meanings of original words, etc.

New King James Version In an effort to make a modern translation that reminded people of the KJV and to answer the critics of the post-1881 translations, a revision in 1979 of the KJV was made. However, this translation has not replaced the KJV among KJV only supporters.

English Standard Version (2008) This translation had quickly gained popularity for its intent to be accurate to the Hebrew and Greek while also using current vocabulary.

APOLOGETICS (CREATION)

THE PERFECTION OF GOD'S CREATION

*“**Science**, as such, can say nothing whatsoever about origins (how things began). Science is limited to the study of the physical phenomena and processes as they exist at present.”* Henry Morris, *The Beginning of the World*, 12

Morris goes on to write,

*“The scientific method involves reproducibility. That is, an experiment performed today which yields certain results will, if repeated next year, still yield the same results. It must be seen, however, that **prehistoric events are not subject to scientific experimentation and therefore no one can say scientifically what happened millions of years ago.** In order to project our knowledge of present processes into the prehistoric past, we must necessarily make certain assumptions as to the basis of such projections. And this involves a philosophy or a faith, not science.”*
*...Since ‘science’ can only deal legitimately with present processes, and since present processes are not creative or integrative in nature, **science as such can tell us nothing about origins.**”*

Henry Morris, The Beginning of the World, 12

Psalms 14:1a- The fool has said in his heart, “There is no God.”

*“‘**Creation**’ is defined simply as the work of God in bringing all things into existence.”*

Henry Morris, The Beginning of the World, 11

Second Law of Thermodynamics Confirms a Beginning

*The universe can be shown to have had a beginning, as even one of the most basic and fundamental laws of physics, the **second law of thermodynamics**, testifies. The second law states, in effect, that the universe must have had a beginning. Otherwise, since it is now running down like a battery that can't be recharged, it would already be dead. And **anything having a beginning had to have a cause.***

*The **first law of thermodynamics** (equally as important as the second law) states that **the universe could not have created itself.** Therefore, it must have been created by some greater cause beyond itself. This principle is clear and undeniable, yet some evolutionists dispute it. Only a person who has religious humanistic bias would be able to do so, since there is absolutely no evidence for such thinking. **Based on the known laws of science, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” is the***

*most scientific statement that could possibly be made about the origins of the universe.*¹⁰

Don't be deceived; there is nothing in this universe that can be studied that contradicts what we read in Genesis 1.

I. DAY 1

1. Light

Genesis 1:2-3 The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters. 3 Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light.

After God spoke light into existence, what did He do?

2. Day and Night

*Genesis 1:4- God saw that the light was good; and **God separated the light from the darkness.***

Genesis 1:5- God called the light day, and the darkness He called night.

There was day and night before God created the sun and moon. This should not lead us to demand that the "sun" be present for us to recognize day and night.

*Even man has been able to measure **day and night** without the usual references of sun and moon. Submarines today stay deep in the oceans, often cruising under thick polar ice caps, yet they can accurately measure the passing of days. ...Men who have been trapped underground in mine cave-ins or lost in underground caves have managed to maintain a calendar of sorts.*

One student associated with the University of Texas experimented by living in a cave for six months with no outside contact. Records were kept on a computer. He found he had a consistent internal clock telling him when to get up and when to go to sleep.

*Nature is full of plants, insects, animals and birds that have accurate internal clocks. Certainly the all-wise God can gauge time without the use of the sun or moon.*¹¹

Does the word "day" mean a 24-hour day or a period of time?

D. G. Lindsay argues that "day" refers to a 24-hour day. He writes,

¹⁰ Lindsay, D. G. (1991). *The origins controversy: Creation or chance*. Creation Series. Dallas, TX: Christ for the Nations.

¹¹ Lindsay, D. G. (1991). *The origins controversy: Creation or chance*. Creation Series. Dallas, TX: Christ for the Nations.

*Following scripture's own rules for usage, the word "day" in Genesis cannot mean anything other than a literal, 24-hour day. In addition, when a **numeral** precedes the word "day," it always indicates a 24-hour day. For instance, if we were to say, "in George Washington's day, there were no airplanes," we would be referring to a point in time covering many years. But when we say, "Wednesday is the fourth day of the week," we are referring to a 24-hour day. **Whenever a number is associated with the word "day," this signifies a 24-hour day.** This association is what we find in the creation account of Genesis one.¹²*

If a day in Genesis 1 meant 1 million years, then plants created on day 3 would have lived 1 million years without light from the sun which was created on day 4. From a scientific standpoint, no plants would have lasted; but from a literal 24-hour day point of view it would have been easy for mature plants to live one day until sunlight appeared the next.

The following is found on the *National History Museum's* website under "**Dating Methods.**"

Relative Dating

Rocks and sediments are deposited on the earth in layers. Unless the earth has been badly disturbed, for example by an earthquake (or could I add, a flood!), then the oldest layers of rock will be at the bottom and the newest will be at the top.

By looking at the layers we can find out what order they were deposited in, although we still do not know exactly how old the rocks are. This method is called relative dating.

Fossils can also give scientists important clues to the ages of rocks. Species change through time and they can be used to order the deposits they are found in. Many common fossils have been independently dated by scientists. If one of those fossils is found in a patch of rock then this will help determine how old that rock is.

Absolute dating

Absolute dating not only tells us which sediments were deposited first, it also tells us their exact age.

*For rocks that are relatively young, the best way of finding this out is to use **carbon dating**.*

*There are 3 different types of carbon atoms. All of them are found in rocks, plants, animals and other living things. For carbon dating, 2 forms of carbon are important: **Carbon-12** and a heavier atom known as **Carbon-14**, which is radioactive.*

*After an organism dies, the proportion of Carbon-14 atoms begins to decrease. 5,730 years later, the proportion of Carbon-14 has halved. **By***

¹² Lindsay, D. G. (1991). *The origins controversy: Creation or chance*. Creation Series. Dallas, TX: Christ for the Nations.

studying the proportion of Carbon-14 atoms, compared to the other carbon atoms, we can find out how old rocks and fossils are.

Problems with dating

*Carbon dating is often the most accurate way of finding out the age of a recent fossil and the rock or other deposit it was found in. **However, in old fossils, the proportion of Carbon-14 is so low that it is difficult or impossible to date them accurately*** (This is what non-believers are saying).

Carbon dating is not generally reliable for finds that are more than 40,000 years old, so other dating methods have to be used.

Carbon dating has been proven to be unreliable.

Example: **Mount Saint Helens** erupted in 1980. They studied the rocks that formed after that eruption and according to radiometric dating the rocks that are less than 35 years old were said to be between 210,000-490,000 years old. That is a clear example of the error of radiometric dating.

II. DAY 2

1. God made the expanse and separated the water

Genesis 1:6-7- Then God said, “Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.” 7 God made the expanse, and separated the waters which were below the expanse from the waters which were above the expanse; and it was so.

The word “expanse” in the NASU is translated “firmament” in some other translations. In the context of day 2 of creation, the “expanse” mentioned in verse 6 refers to the space between the ocean waters below and the canopy of water God relocated above.

In *Genesis 2:5-7* we see the 2nd account of God’s creation and it says, *Now no shrub of the field was yet in the earth, and **no plant of the field had yet sprouted, for the LORD God had not sent rain upon the earth, and there was no man to cultivate the ground.** 6 But a mist used to rise from the earth and water the whole surface of the ground. 7 Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.*

God provided a **mist** from the water to provide for the plants He would make on day 3. God provided an in-ground irrigation system.

*Verse 8- God called the expanse **heaven**. And there was evening and there was morning, a second day.*

Realize there is heaven where the Father and Son reside today. There is also the sky that is referred to as heaven. “Heaven” in verse 8 refers to the sky, the atmosphere.

III. DAY 3

1. Separation of land and water

*Verses 9-10- Then God said, “Let the waters below the heavens be gathered into one place, and let the **dry land appear**”; and it was so. 10 God called the dry land earth, and the gathering of the waters He called seas; and God saw that it was good.*

When day 3 began, the earth was completely covered in water, but it does not appear that the water was connected. It seems earth consisted of multiple bodies of water for verse 9 states, the waters were *gathered into one place*. Verse 10 states the same truth when it says, “*the gathering of waters He called seas.*”

On day 3 God brought forth land and thus He brought forth the **minerals** we get from the ground. Most of the elements on the periodic table were created on day 3.

2. Creation of plant and tree life

*Verses 11-12- Then God said, “Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees on the earth bearing fruit after their kind with seed in them”; and it was so. 12 The earth brought forth **vegetation**, plants yielding seed after their kind, and trees bearing fruit with seed in them, after their kind; and God saw that it was good.*

a. What benefit are plants?

*What makes the **food** that almost all animals eat? Where does the **oxygen** come from that we need to survive? The answer is **plants**. In every plant in your house, yard, or in the world, a chemical reaction is taking place that is so amazing that it is almost like a miracle. The name of this chemical reaction is **photosynthesis**, which takes place mostly in the leaves of plants. Through photosynthesis, energy is produced that is used to either directly or indirectly make every food that we eat. There are no exceptions!*

*Not only do plants make food, but they also make **oxygen** that we must have to survive. In photosynthesis, God set up a recycling program to replace the oxygen that is used when things decay, where there is combustion, or when we use energy to fuel our body's processes. All of these produce carbon dioxides. **Plants take this carbon dioxide and use it to make food and** (<http://www.doesgodexist.org/JulAug07/PhotosynthesisIsGodsMiracleinPlants.html>) **oxygen which helps to keep carbon dioxide at the right levels.***

God provided food to eat, and oxygen to breath prior to creating any creature that would need the food to eat or the oxygen to breathe. God is a systematic Creator. He knew not to create human beings and animals before He created food and oxygen.

b. Plants and trees yield seed

*Verse 12- plants **yielding seed** after their kind, and trees bearing fruit with **seed** in them.*

The trees and plants had seeds in them. The trees were bearing fruit from the start. This reveals that they were **mature plants and trees**. On day 3 there were healthy and functioning plants and trees. They were not created in the infancy stage.

On day 6 we read of why God made the plants and trees as He did.

*Genesis 1:29-30- Then God said, “Behold, I have given you every **plant** yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every **tree** which has fruit yielding seed; **it shall be food for you**; 30 and to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the sky and to everything that moves on the earth which has life, **I have given every green plant for food**”; and it was so.*

IV. DAY 4

1. The sun and moon are signs for the seasons

*Verse 14- Then God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night, and let them be for signs and for **seasons**...*

*Psalms 104:19- He made the **moon** for the **seasons**; the **sun** knows the place of its setting.*

2. The sun and moon are signs for days, months, and years

*Verse 14b- ...and let them be for signs and for seasons and for **days and years**...*

God uses the sun and moon to reveal the length of a day and the length of the year.

3. The sun and moon were created to be lights

*Verses 15-19- and let them be for **lights** in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth”; and it was so. 16 God made the **two great lights**, the greater light to govern the day, and the lesser light to govern the night; He made the **stars** also. 17 God placed them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, 18 and to govern the day and the night, and to separate the light from the darkness; and God saw that it was good. 19 There was evening and there was morning, a fourth day.*

*Psalms 136:8-9- The **sun** to rule by day, For His lovingkindness is everlasting, 9 The **moon and stars** to rule by night, For His lovingkindness is everlasting.*

*Psalms 19:1- The **heavens** are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands.*

V. DAY 5

1. Sea creatures

Verse 21a- God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarmed after their kind...

The word translated “created” is the word “bara” which we have found every time the word created has been used in Genesis 1. It means to create from nothing. It also implies to be created to function. God is the only one that can create something from nothing. We take materials and create something. He takes nothing and creates something extraordinary. And not only that, He creates everything to perform a function. Animals have their role in the world.

According to verse 21, God created large creatures from the start for they are referred to as sea monsters. He also made creatures so small they cannot be seen by the naked eye.

“Even a drop of ditch water can hold 500 million microscopic creatures so small that a teaspoonful of water would be to them what the Atlantic is to us. Only God who is infinite could have worked on such a majestic scale as we see in the skies and on such a microscopic scale as we see in the seas.”

John Phillips, Exploring Genesis, 44

Psalm 104:24-26- O LORD, how many are Your works! In wisdom You have made them all; The earth is full of Your possessions. 25 There is the sea, great and broad, In which are swarms without number, Animals both small and great. 26 There the ships move along, And Leviathan, which You have formed to sport in it.

2. Birds

*Verse 21- God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarmed after their kind, and **every winged bird after its kind**;*

VI. DAY 6

1. Land animals

Verses 24-25- Then God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures after their kind: cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth after their kind”; and it was so. 25 God made the beasts of the earth after their kind, and the cattle after their kind, and everything that creeps on the ground after its kind; and God saw that it was good.

“Cattle” speaks of four-footed domestic animals.

We believe “creeping things” would include crawling insects along with land reptiles. All creatures that crawl along the ground.

“Beasts of the earth” refers to wild animals.

According to Genesis 1, which came first:

The chicken or the egg?

The eagle or the horse?

The tiger or the dolphin?

Answers: chicken, eagle, dolphin

2. Humankind

*Verse 26a- Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness;
Verse 27- God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.*

What does it mean to be made in the image of God?

It means God made man (which in the context means male and female) with personality, with moral and spiritual capacities, with emotions, intellect, conscience, and will.

“What animal shows any desire to worship? What animal has hope of immortality beyond the grave? What beast can exercise abstract moral judgment or show appreciation of the beauties of nature? What animals have ever learned to read and write, to act with deliberate purpose, and set goals and achieve long-range objectives? What animal ever learned to cook its food, to cut cloth and make clothes, or invent elaborate tools? ...Man stands alone.”

John Phillips, Exploring Genesis, 45

We alone are moral, responsible, and spiritual beings. We alone were created in the image of God. We consist of body, soul, and spirit. All human beings carry with them a tarnished version of the image of God due to sin. Now we are also created in the image of man (Genesis 5:3), for we are fallen creatures with sin natures. Nonetheless, human beings are still the prized creation of God. We are the only ones that are spiritual beings. We are more important to God than any other creature.

Jesus emphasizes this truth in *Matthew 6:26* when he states, “*Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they?*”

Why did God make man?

1. To rule over all other creatures

*Genesis 1:26b- ...and let them **rule over** the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”*

*Genesis 1:28c- and **rule over** the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”*

2. To multiply

*Genesis 1:28a- God blessed them; and God said to them, “**Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it...***

What resulted from Adam's sin?

*Romans 5:12- Therefore, just as **through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin**, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned—...*

*Romans 5:17-18- For if **by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one**, ...18 So then as **through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men**, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men.*

APOLOGETICS

(Resurrection)

THE EVIDENCE FOR CHRIST'S RESURRECTION

Luke 23:55-24:11, Mt.28:1-8; Mk.16:1-8; Jn.20:1-10

What is it that makes Christianity different from all other religions?

First, all religions except for Christianity display man's effort to work his way to God. Christianity is the belief that God came to man and that man cannot do any works or deeds to ever be made right with God. Christianity alone emphasizes grace. All false religions promote the person getting what he or she deserves.

A second distinction between Christianity and all other religions, is that Christianity can be proven; others cannot be. Christianity claims that God sent His Son Jesus who lived among other human beings. Christianity then claims that Jesus died, was buried, and then rose from the dead. These are events that either happened in history, or they did not. If they did not happen then they can be proven to be false.

You might say, no one knows how Jesus came out of the tomb. The point isn't **how** He came out but **whether** He came out alive. If Jesus claimed that He would suffer, die, and then come back to life and then that happened, you and I had better take Him seriously.

This is what Paul was arguing when he wrote *1 Corinthians 15:14, ... if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain. And 1 Corinthians 15:17, ...and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins.*

The Bible itself testifies that if Jesus did not indeed resurrect from the dead, then Christianity is a lie, and we are wasting our time and energy worshipping Him. Let's investigate.

I. CHRIST HIMSELF CAME ALIVE THAT DAY

Luke 24:1-3- But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. 2 And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, 3 but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.

The dead body that was laid in the tomb was sealed by a large boulder and according to Matthew 27:62-66 soldiers were assigned to guard the tomb so that no one would steal His body and then claim He rose from the dead.

On Sunday morning, the first day of the week, the ladies went to the tomb, but the stone was rolled away, and His body was not there. If you are wondering where the soldiers were...

Matthew 28:4 says an angel of the Lord appeared and, "*the guards shook for fear of him and became like dead men.*"

They fainted; they passed out! They fell to the ground and were asleep.

The truth of this story is emphasized in that **women** were the first ones to find the tomb empty. If this were simply a made-up story, then the writers would have had men be the first ones to arrive at the tomb. Furthermore, the story does not present women that expected Jesus to have resurrected. The story does not promote their faith. It simply reveals that they found the tomb and it was empty.

*Verses 4-7- While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men suddenly stood near them in dazzling clothing; 5 and as the women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, “Why do you seek the living One among the dead? 6 He is not here, but He has risen. **Remember how He spoke to you while He was still in Galilee, 7 saying that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.**”*

The two men, who were angels, revealed that Jesus had done what He said He would do. He had been crucified and now it was the third day and therefore He was to resurrect from the dead.

If the resurrection did not occur, then non-believers need to explain what did occur. **If Jesus did not resurrect from the dead, then what did happen to His body?** Let's now address the three most popular explanations, by those who reject the resurrection, as to what happened to the body of Jesus.

1. The Disciples Stole the Body

This is the explanation perpetrated by the Jewish elders in Scripture.

*Matthew 28:11-13- ... **the guard** came into the city and **reported** to the chief priests **all that had happened**. 12 And when they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to **the soldiers**, 13 and said, “You are to say, ‘His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we were asleep.’”*

This view testifies that the soldiers neglected their responsibility and failed to guard the tomb. This view believes that people came, got passed the guards, removed the large boulder from the entrance, removed the body, and then did not place the boulder back but left it out of the way, thus providing evidence that the body was no longer in the tomb.

Issue number 1: The soldiers had been told that Jesus had prophesied that He would come back to life on the third day. The soldiers knew when they needed to be on alert. They also knew of their suffering to come if they failed to keep that body in the tomb.

Issue number 2: Typically, thieves do not want to leave evidence that they had been there. If the body had been stolen, you would think that they would have rolled the stone back over the entrance.

Issue number 3: What good is a dead corpse? Why steal a dead body? A dead body would not prove Jesus to be God. It would prove that Jesus was a liar. Jesus prophesied

that He would resurrect from the dead. Why would people make up the lie, and then later die for the lie? People will die for a lie if they believe the lie to be true; but the disciples would not have died for a lie.

2. Jesus Never Really Died (swoon theory)

This theory teaches that when Jesus was put into the cool tomb, He was not dead from the crucifixion but only unconscious and that He revived inside the tomb.

The problem with the swoon theory is that Roman soldiers that were professionals at executing people by crucifixion declared Jesus dead. They even pierced His side to prove it.

*John 19:31-34- Then the Jews, because it was the day of preparation, so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. 32 So **the soldiers came, and broke the legs of the first man and of the other who was crucified with Him;** 33 **but coming to Jesus, when they saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs.** 34 But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out.*

The first problem with the swoon theory is that Roman soldiers, who did not follow Jesus, declared Him to be dead. To believe in the swoon theory is not so much a rejection of Christianity but a rejection of the competence of the Roman soldiers and a rejection of their testimony.

The second major problem with the swoon theory is that it teaches that Jesus awakened from a sleep with enough physical energy (after having had His side pierced with a sword), to get up and roll away the stone.

Third, this theory which believes the Roman soldiers were incompetent at the crucifixion, must also believe that the guards at the tomb were incompetent. This theory has the guards at the tomb allowing the stone to be rolled away AND allowing Jesus to walk out of the tomb without stopping Him.

3. The Hallucination Theory

The Bible reports that after the resurrection, Jesus appeared to multiple people at different times over a period of 40-days.

The hallucination theory claims that the disciples merely saw things they wanted to see. They hallucinated. The major problem with this theory, according to Lee Strobel:

“...hallucinations are individual occurrences. By their very nature only one person can see a given hallucination at a time. Nor is it possible for

one person to induce a hallucination in somebody else. Also, the fact that Christ appeared multiple times to multiple people over a period of time proves that hallucinations were not the issue.” Lee Strobel, The Case for Christ

*1 Corinthians 15:5-6- He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. After that **He appeared to over 500 brethren** at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep.*

500 people cannot have the same hallucination at a given time.

These lies attempted to take root even though Jesus had publicly **prophesied** that He would be arrested, crucified, and then resurrect. These lies attempted to take root even after Jesus **fulfilled** the prophecies concerning His suffering, death, and resurrection. These lies attempted to take root even after Jesus appeared at least 7 different occasions during His 40 days on earth after His resurrection. During that time hundreds of people saw Him, others touched Him, and even some ate with Him.

Scriptural evidence for the resurrection

Luke 24:39, after Jesus arose, He appeared to the disciples and said, “See My hands and My feet, that it is I myself; touch Me and see...”

He prophesied that He would come back to life. He did, and then He proved that He did.

If 500 people testify that they saw a certain man commit a crime and every person gave exactly the same story, then we would all believe it. That is the testimony we have concerning Jesus.

If Jesus did not raise from the dead, then why would the disciples make up this story?

All the disciples gained by proclaiming Christ’s resurrection was **persecution and death**. Ten of the eleven remaining disciples were put to death for their faith. Yet none of them gave up their testimony of the resurrection. They died proclaiming the resurrection of Jesus!

The **disciples** were in a position to know without a shadow of a doubt whether Jesus had risen from the dead. They claimed that they saw Him, talked with Him, touched His hands, and ate with Him. If they did **not** believe that Christ was resurrected, they wouldn't have died for a lie.

How do I know that Christianity is truth, and all other religions are a lie?

Jesus resurrected from the dead, and He said He is the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Jesus.

MULTIPLICATION

THE STAGES OF DISCIPLESHIP

various texts

Jim Putnam wrote:

*“A **new scorecard** begins to take shape when people in a church begin to think of themselves as spiritual beings who start out as **infants** when they are born again and are to become spiritual **parents** in the end. When they understand that **this is God’s plan for all of us**, it changes their **perspective**. When they understand that every believer is to be a minister who serves Jesus and others with all they have, and then eventually to make disciples themselves, it changes the dynamic of the church.*

*...When people don’t have this vision, it becomes evident in the evaluation questions that come back to leaders. For instance, maybe someone comes to the pastor in the lobby and says, ‘We haven’t seen a baptism in a year at this church. What’s the matter, pastor?’ What would you say? A question like that is an indication that people have been trained to think a certain way and evaluate churches with a certain scorecard for success. The person asks this question because he or she thinks it’s the pastor’s responsibility to ensure that a steady stream of baptisms occurs, when really the question needs to be put back to the person who asked it. ‘Well, do you know anyone who’s lost? Have you shared the gospel with that person and led him to the Lord?’ The person who asked the question **is just as much a disciple who makes disciples as the pastor is.**”*

Putman, Jim; Harrington, Bobby; Coleman, Robert. DiscipleShift: Five Steps That Help Your Church to Make Disciples Who Make Disciples (Exponential Series) (p. 206). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

To be complete in Christ is to be a faithful and mature follower of Christ. It is to be a spiritual parent to others. Physically speaking, we go through a progression. We were all infants at one time, then we became children, then young adults, and then mature adults and many times mature adults are married and have children. The physical progression pictures the spiritual progression we also are to go through. Before being born again, we were spiritually dead. Once born again, we were infants in the faith, then children in the faith, then as we mature, we become young adults and eventually mature parents.

Let’s address these spiritual stages of discipleship.

I. THE SPIRITUALLY DEAD

In Ephesians 2, the apostle Paul addresses the Christians in the church of Ephesus and reminds them of who they were prior to being born again.

*Ephesians 2:1-3- And you were **dead** in your trespasses and sins, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them **we too all***

formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

Every person was either spiritually dead, living in sin as a child of wrath, or are currently spiritually dead; a child of wrath.

Beginning in verse 4, Paul describes the change from death to life.

*Ephesians 2:4-5- But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us **alive** together with Christ... (by grace you have been saved).*

You have either been made alive by God's grace or you are still dead in your sins. The reality is we live in a world that is one huge graveyard of walking dead people. Why are they dead? According to Ephesians 2:1, it is due to their own trespasses and sins.

What do the dead need from you?

1. They need love through honest friendship.
2. They need to hear the gospel of Jesus.
3. They need to see Christ lived through you.

II. THE INFANT

In 1 Corinthians 3 Paul reveals that there are **two types of saved people**: the **mature** and the **immature**; the immature also being referred to as carnal.

In the first few verses of 1 Corinthians 3 Paul expresses his frustration with the immature Corinthians. He says:

*1 Corinthians 3:1-3- And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to **infants in Christ**. 2 I gave you **milk** to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, 3 for you are still **fleshly**.*

Now please understand Paul is writing to saved people that have not matured in the faith. The "infants in Christ" are saved; they are alive. A baby is alive but doesn't understand much. The baby needs attention, needs nurturing. Infants do not feed themselves. They need another to feed them. The Corinthian believers were infants in Christ. They had not matured.

We are shocked when we hear of a parent that has abandoned their baby. We are horrified to know that the baby was left in the cold without any hope; but we are unmoved that a new baby in Christ is spiritually neglected. We are unaffected because it has become common. We see them baptized and then stay out of their way. This is wrong. We, the church, have the responsibility to care for them, to nurture them in the ways of God.

III. THE CHILD

*1 Thessalonians 2:10-12- You are witnesses, and so is God, how devoutly and uprightly and blamelessly we behaved toward you believers; 11 just as you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father would his own **children**, 12 so that you would walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.*

What are children like? In general, children are selfish. They want to know what is in it for them. Think about the difference between parents and children at an amusement park. Parents take the kids so they can have fun. Parents do not have to ride the rides to have fun, as long as the children have fun. I have never found a 10-year-old that would have fun watching all of his friends or siblings riding rides and not going to do what he or she wanted to do. Children are selfish. As they mature, they become less so. Spiritually speaking, children will look for what they get out of something. The parents will look for what they can do for others.

A spiritual child needs help **moving from dependency to independency**—from what the church can do for me, to what can I do for the Lord and His church to grow His kingdom.

*Philippians 2:3-4 summarizes what service to our Lord looks like when one has progressed beyond the child stage. It reads, **do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.***

When discipling a spiritual child, you address the **motive**. You go beyond doing right, to **why** one does right. They progress from selfishness to selflessness, and as they do, they progress to the next spiritual stage.

IV. THE YOUNG ADULT

*Ephesians 4:14:15- As a result, **we are no longer to be children**, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; 15 but speaking the truth in love, **we are to grow up** in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ,*

Notice how spiritual children are described. They are tossed around by different doctrines. They are deceived by the trickery of men, by crafty and deceitful scheming. Children simply don't have the discernment of spiritual young adults.

Spiritual young adults do not want to only sit and receive. They want to serve the Lord. They see that much work is to be done, and they want to be a part of it. They have transitioned from being about themselves, to focusing on what they can do for others.

Young adults have experienced others who have failed them. They now realize that not all Christians are as faithful as they once thought. Spiritual young adults have progressed and therefore they are not deterred by those who disappoint them.

Spiritual young adults are active and have transitioned to see life with a kingdom mindset. Young adults get hurt because they are trying to make a difference, therefore they need a sounding board of godly wisdom to encourage them to persevere; to run their race and not let up.

When speaking of young adults, Jim Putnam wrote:

*“As they grow more secure in Christ, they tend to grow **less judgmental** and find it **easier to overlook others’ faults**. They are **excited** about their involvement in the church, and even when they are not, they are **learning to be faithful**. They have begun maturing in their faith and are learning to focus on fitting their skills and passions to God’s kingdom purposes.”*

Putman, Jim; Harrington, Bobby ; Coleman, Robert. DiscipleShift: Five Steps That Help Your Church to Make Disciples Who Make Disciples (Exponential Series) (p. 68). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

V. THE PARENT

I use the word “parent” rather than “adult” because the emphasis here is multiplication. In *1 Corinthians 4:15* Paul wrote, “*For if you were to have countless tutors in Christ, yet you would not have **many fathers**; for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel.*”

Paul was a father to the Corinthian believers. Who are you a mother or father to? Who are you a parent to? A disciple serves as a parent to another believer.

How did Paul refer to Timothy?

*2 Timothy 2:1-2- You therefore, my **son**, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. 2 The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.*

Paul referred to himself as a spiritual parent to Timothy.

Physically and spiritually, parents are responsible for raising infants to become children, and children to become young adults, and young adults to become parents.

Now that we have covered the five stages, let me ask:

Do you have to be on the parent level to disciple someone? No.

Just be one stage ahead of the one you are discipling.

You can invest in anyone that you are more spiritually mature than and you can learn from others that are less mature than you. God uses all people in my life regardless of what stage of discipleship they might be.

Some don't disciple others because they believe they must have all the answers first; yet I know of no parents that waited to have children until they knew everything there was to know about parenting. You learn through experience.

"The disciple himself is not one who has arrived. On the contrary, he is a learner, a pilgrim, one who is on a quest to make his life all that God would have it be."

Walter A Henrichsen, Disciples Are Made Not Born, 23

*"The apprehension you will feel in assuming responsibility for helping a new Christian is quite natural. The application of these simple principles will help but will not eliminate all apprehension. Stick close by the person and **love** him as you would love your own family. God will do the rest."*

Walter A Henrichsen, Disciples Are Made Not Born, 98

Will you lead others next year as a D-group leader?

Will you live out 2 Timothy 2:2 and that in turn will disciple others?

We need people that will take discipleship seriously and pour into others.

The Jordan River runs from the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea. The Sea of Galilee is thriving with life because it has intake and outflow. The Dead Sea has no life in it because it has no outflow. It receives only. Be like the Sea of Galilee and not like the Dead Sea.

2 Timothy 2:2- The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

You have been equipped/trained/discipled regarding prayer, Bible study, meditation, memorization, discipleship, and evangelism. You have been discipled regarding key doctrines such as salvation, the church, baptism, Lord's Supper, the Trinity, etc. You have been equipped apologetically to defend the faith. Will you now be a funnel and pass along what you have learned?

If your D-group leader deems you ready to lead, will you lead?

If your D-group leader deems you to not be ready to lead, then will you agree to continue to be disciplined as a participant again?

Below are the three options for next year:

1. Lead a D-group (with permission of your D-group leader)
2. Participate in a D-group (with the endorsement of your D-group leader)
3. Not participate in a D-group

APPENDIX

The following provides you with examples for accountability.

D-GROUP LEADER

Expectations

Millington First Baptist Church

D-Group Leader Expectations - 2026-2027

Mission: We exist to glorify God by surrendering to Him and to the growth of His kingdom.

Core Values: Bible Anchored. Christ-centered. Discipleship Driven. Unity Focused.

Purpose: To help believers grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ, becoming more like Him in character and action. To fulfill the Great Commission—making more disciples who will go on to teach and train others.

Scripture Focus: *The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. 2 Tim. 2:2*

Who Serves as your Overseer

Discipleship Pastor

Time Commitment

The estimated time commitment for the D-Group leadership position is 2-3 hours a week for 10 months. Please decide on a time and place for your meeting before inviting others to your group.

Expectations

- Attend 80% of D-Group gatherings in person.
- Complete the reading assignments in preparation for each group conversation.
- Memorize the assigned Scriptures before each gathering.
- Intentionally ingrain what is learned into daily life.
- Keep confidentiality within the group.
- Equip D-group members to mature and thus lead a D-Group next year.
- Preserve the unity of the Spirit at MFBC.
- Pray for your D-Group participants regularly.
- Uphold membership expectations such as:
 - o Serving to edify the church
 - o Faithfully serving the Lord through financial giving
 - o Consistently attend Life Group & Worship
 - o Praying for the health and growth of the church
 - o Intentionally seeking to see lost people saved

I accept responsibility and commit myself to being a D-group participant.

Signature _____ Print Name _____ Date _____

D-GROUP PARTICIPANT

Expectations

Millington First Baptist Church

D-Group Participant Expectations - 2026-2027

We ask everyone committing to a D-Group to start by reading the following expectations and signing at the bottom to signify your acceptance of accountability and commitment to this experience.

Mission: We exist to glorify God by surrendering to Him and to the growth of His kingdom.

Core Values: Bible Anchored. Christ-centered. Discipleship Driven. Unity Focused.

Purpose: To help believers grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ, becoming more like Him in character and action. To fulfill the Great Commission—making more disciples who will go on to teach and train others.

Scripture Focus: *The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. 2 Tim. 2:2*

Who Serves as your Overseer

Discipleship Pastor

Time Commitment

The estimated time commitment for the D-Group participant position is 2 hours a week for 10 months.

Expectations

- Faithfully attend at least 80% the D-Group gatherings in person.
- Complete the reading assignments in preparation for each group conversation.
- Memorize the assigned Scriptures before each gathering.
- Intentionally ingrain what is learned into daily life.
- Keep confidentiality within the group.
- You lead a D-Group.
- Preserve the unity of the Spirit at MFBC.
- Pray for other D-Group participants regularly.
- Uphold membership expectations such as:
 - o Serving to edify the church
 - o Faithfully serving the Lord through financial giving
 - o Consistently attend Life Group & Worship
 - o Praying for the health and growth of the church
 - o Intentionally evangelizing the lost

I accept responsibility and commit myself to being a D-group participant.

Signature _____ Print Name _____ Date _____

MEMBERSHIP EXPECTATIONS

MEMBERSHIP EXPECTATIONS

(Church name)

Having received Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior, having been baptized by immersion after believing, and consenting to _____ (church name) doctrine (Baptist Faith and Message 2000), I now am led by the Holy Spirit to unite with Millington First Baptist Church. In so doing, I commit myself to God and to the members of First Baptist Church to uphold the following:

I. I WILL PROTECT THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH

1. By submitting to the authority of Scripture.

2 Timothy 3:16- All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;

2. By action of love and forgiveness toward another member.

Ephesians 4:32- Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

Sooner or later, another person in the church will hurt your feelings. Likely, you will go home hurt and the other will not even know that he or she hurt your feelings. Don't allow that hurt and bitterness to sprout within you. Instead, respond as Christ commands; be kind and forgive.

3. By watching my language.

Ephesians 4:29a- Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment,

By being a member you have covenanted with God and the church to not be a gossip, to not be one who uses foul language, to not slander, and to not use any language that may be harmful to the listener.

4. By practicing and receiving discipline when called for.

Hebrews 12:5b-6a, 11- "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, Nor faint when you are reprov'd by Him; 6 For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, ...11 All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

Psalms 141:5- Let the righteous smite me in kindness and reprove me; It is oil upon the head; Do not let my head refuse it,

The goal of discipline is always to lead the person to repent of sin and be restored to right standing with God and man. (Procedures to follow in disciplining a church member: Matthew 18:15-20, example: 1 Corinthians 5:9-13)

5. By following the leaders of the church.

Hebrews 13:17- Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.

Your leaders; your pastors give account. Let them serve with joy and not with grief.

II. I WILL SHARE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CHURCH

1. By praying for the health and growth of the church.

*Acts 1:14a- These all with one mind were continually devoting themselves to prayer,
1 Thessalonians 1:2- We give thanks to God always for all of you, making mention of you in our prayers;*

2. By inviting others to Christ and to assemble with the church.

*Luke 14:23- “And the master said to the slave, ‘Go out into the highways and along the hedges, and **compel them to come in**, so that my house may be filled.*

*Acts 1:8- but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; **and you shall be My witnesses** both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”*

3. By giving consistently.

FBCM members share in the responsibility to give regularly and cheerfully of their treasure to the Lord’s work through First Baptist Church. We consider giving to be an act of worship.

*Hebrews 7:4- Now observe how great this man was to whom Abraham, the patriarch, **gave a tenth** of the choicest spoils. (referencing Genesis 14:17-20)*

*Malachi 3:10- “Bring the **whole tithe** into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this,” says the LORD of hosts, “if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows. (also see Leviticus 27:30) God blesses the faithful giver.*

*Luke 11:42- “But woe to you Pharisees! For you **pay tithe** of mint and rue and every kind of garden herb, and yet disregard justice and the love of God; but **these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others.***

1 Corinthians 16:2- On the first day of every week each one of you is to put aside and save, as he may prosper, so that no collections be made when I come.

III. I WILL SERVE THE LORD THROUGH THE CHURCH

1. By discovering and using my gifts and talents.

*1 Peter 4:10- As each one has received a **special gift**, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.*

Whether your gift is mercy, faith, giving, or teaching; may you demonstrate it in serving the church.

2. By being equipped by my pastor and teachers to serve.

Ephesians 4:11-12- And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;

Pastors are not to do all the work. Pastors are to equip the church family to do the work of service.

3. By developing a servant's heart.

Philippians 2:3,4-7- Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; 4 do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.

IV. I WILL SUPPORT THE TESTIMONY OF THE CHURCH

1. By attending faithfully.

Hebrews 10:25- not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

2. By living a godly life.

Philippians 1:27- Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;

3. By fleeing evil.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20- Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? 20 For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.

Sign _____ **Date** _____

MENTORING CHRISTIAN

(to be taught to D-group leaders prior to

Matthew 28:18-20

Dr. Hendricks wrote the following in his book titled *Standing Together: Impacting Your Generation*:

*“Many of us in the church are under the mistaken impression that the way to produce spiritually mature Christians is to enroll people in a course on spiritual maturity. We give them books on the subject. We take them to passages of Scripture. We hand out assignments and worksheets. Nothing is wrong with these activities. But has it ever occurred to you that spiritual growth is rarely the product of assimilating more information? If it were, we could have transformed the world several million books ago. **But inasmuch as knowing Christ involves a relationship, growing in Christ also involves relationships.** One of the most helpful of these involves a **mentor**. That’s because most of us don’t need to know more, nearly as much as we need to be known more. We don’t need a set of principles to practice nearly as much as we need another person to help us. **We need someone to believe in us, stand by us, guide us, model Christ for us.** We need another’s encouragement, wisdom, examples, and accountability. We need his smiles, his hugs, his frowns, his tears...People will forget most of what you say; they will forget almost nothing of what you do.”*

Chuck Swindoll, The Church Awakening, 97-98

To **mentor** is a secular term for disciple—to invest time and energy to see another progress. Jesus discipled/mentored the Twelve. Paul was a mentor. A mentor/disciple is a “trusted counselor or guide; tutor, coach.”

Chuck Swindoll writes:

“I’ve discovered when individuals are young and unusually gifted, the most common tendency is to drift toward arrogance and, sometimes, raw conceit. Almost without exception when I detect conceit in an individual, I say to myself, ‘They haven’t been mentored.’ I have never met a self-important, arrogant individual who has been well mentored. Truth be told, arrogance doesn’t survive mentoring. A mentor will point out blind spots and will reprove you appropriately when you need to be confronted about your pride. And a mentor won’t back off. He or she relentlessly presses for excellence.”

Chuck Swindoll, The Church Awakening, 99

God is calling forth mentors! Will you heed the call?

*Matthew 28:18-20- And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 **teaching them** to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”*

The Great Commission is often thought of in regard to evangelism, but the Commission refers to leading the lost to salvation, and then baptizing the new believer, and then teaching (i.e. discipling) the believer. To fulfill the Great Commission, an individual and a church must intentionally disciple the believers.

As Chuck Swindoll wrote:

*“A church is not a gathering of people who sit and listen to one person preach. As important as the message is, it is only part of the passing of the baton. **One person’s life touches the life of another, who then touches the lives of people in his or her sphere of influence---those whom the originator would never have known.** To make it even more exciting, those recipients, in turn, touch the lives of others. That is a contagious ministry. The medical profession models the idea of multiplication very well. They don’t just educate and graduate medical students and then cut them loose, saying, ‘Okay, folks, lots of luck. Carve away!’ How would you like to be a patient lying on the bed, about to go in for surgery, and the doctor blurts, ‘You know, I’ve never really actually done surgery, but hey, we’ll give it the ol’ college try. Turn on the anesthesia, Doc ...and let’s get ’er done!’ You’d explode, ‘Wait! Stop!’ Why? You want somebody who’s been trained. Really trained. You want a skilled surgeon, one who has traveled across the country to study under the most outstanding doctor in his or her field. You want a professional who has learned specific, tried-and-true techniques of doing medical work correctly—one who has spent years being shaped, observed, confronted, reproofed, rebuked, and corrected. In a word, you need someone who has been mentored. ...Any education is most effective when the teachers are more than mere dispensers of information. Students need a school where the professors care about the lives of their students.”*

Chuck Swindoll, The Church Awakening, 94

Disciplers/Mentors model how to live the Christian life. They are devoted to the Word of God, devoted to living according to the teaching found in the Word of God, and they entrust it to those they are investing in. People need mentors.

“Howard Hendricks says that every Christian needs at least three individuals in his or her life. We need someone who has come before us who

mentors us. We need another beside us who shares our burden. And we need someone beyond us whom we're mentoring. Otherwise, we grow stagnant. The church then becomes a place where Christians sit, soak, and sour. They take notes, walk out, and return again next week...to sit, take more notes, and walk out...until (ho-hum) Jesus comes back. What's wrong with that picture? Virtually everything! There's no contagion. No application and change, personally. No passing of the baton. No multiplication. Just stagnation."

Chuck Swindoll, The Church Awakening, 97

A strong church today will only be strong tomorrow if the people are making disciples that in turn make disciples. Paul taught Timothy this truth!

2 Timothy 2:2- The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

People need meaningful relationships: A relationship with Christ and relationships with compassionate, caring, contagious Christians that will teach them and model for them the abundant Christian life. This is the goal of discipleship. This is your privilege!

