

FAITHFUL MEN · A LIBRARY OF CHRISTIAN CLASSICS

Intermediate Christian Training

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(contributing writer, editor)

Faithful Men
PlymouthBrethren.org · KEE Philippine Missions

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“The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.” (2 Timothy 2:2)

How to Get the Most Out of This Course

There can be no training without standards or requirements. Indeed, training without standards is like a game without rules. There is no way to measure results or effectiveness of participation. The following guidelines will make the training both effective and meaningful.

1. **Attendance.** Trainees should plan to attend the full 13 sessions in order to obtain maximum benefit from the training. Past experience has shown that excessive absences (three or more) leaves the trainee inadequately prepared for the next training class. Trainees should enroll in the beginning of the training cycle as the lessons are progressive and cumulative. Whenever you can, let your leader know in advance about your absence.
2. **Homework.** Missed homework should be turned in the first meeting following an absence. Successful completion of ICT requires that all missed homework be completed well in advance of the final lesson.
3. **Promptness.** Tardiness displays a contempt for the value of other's time. Prompt attendance at meetings will allow the sessions to start and finish on time.
4. **Memory Work.** ICT trainees are required to memorize one verse a week in the Personal Evangelism Packet (Appendix A).
5. **Evangelism Training.** Trainees in ICT are required to attend one evangelism outing (or equivalent) during the 13-week cycle. If personal circumstances prohibit attendance at planned outings, it is the responsibility of the trainee to request alternate means of fulfilling this requirement.
6. **Completion Of Training/Evaluation.** Each trainee will be evaluated by the group leaders. More important than this, however, is that every one involved in the training seek the "AUG" degree—Approved Unto God. We should consider that training makes us more responsible before God. Unto whom much is given, much is required (Luke 12:48). The ultimate test of the training is personal application of God's truth. The proof is in our changed lives. If we have made no adjustments after looking into the "mirror" of the Word, then the training has failed (James 1).
7. **Record Of Completion.** The Record of Completion, when fully filled in and signed by the group leader, is your graduation record. Upon your leader's recommendation, you are eligible to enroll in the Advanced Christian Training class.

Lesson 1: Authority Of The Bible

“HE TAUGHT THEM AS ONE HAVING AUTHORITY, and not as the scribes” (Matthew 7: 29). The people who heard the Lord Jesus were astonished. They listened spellbound while He gave them a Word of power, of conviction and of truth that could not successfully be challenged. What had been a mark of the preaching of the great prophets of old was also evident in Him, yet in an even more convincing way. It was authority. What was its source? It was the Word of God (Mark 7:13; Luke 4:4; 8:11; 11:28). It was the Word which the Lord Jesus distinguished from the words of men (Matthew 15:3). It was called “the oracles of God” (Romans 3:2). When He said, “It is written,” there was no doubt as to what He was referring. The holy Scriptures, or sacred writings, were continually in His mouth. This was truth (Daniel 10:21; John 17:17). Error was not in the Scriptures, but error came from not knowing them (Mark 12:24).

Authoritative Claims Of The Bible

“All Scripture is God-breathed” (2 Timothy 3:16 NIV). The Scripture came from God as He breathed through men to produce the writings. “Men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God” (2 Peter 1:21 NASB). The Scriptures are given “not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words” (1 Corinthians 2:13 NIV). The words are not said to have been dictated. The way in which God breathed them is not stated. Yet all Scripture was included and the words were those of the Spirit of God, not the product of the unaided intellect of man. Thus the Lord Jesus could refer to what “God said” (Matthew 15:4 NASB). The smallest flourish of a letter, indicating the most minute portion, could not fail (Matthew 5:18-19). Scripture could not be broken (John 10:35). It must be fulfilled, He said. How could it be otherwise when it came from “the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4)?

The prophets were simply God’s messengers (Matthew 11:10). They were men “to whom the Word of the Lord came.” From Moses onward they repeated these claims (Exodus 4:10-16; Deuteronomy 4:2; Jeremiah 1:7-9; 9:12; Isaiah 40:5; 58:14; Amos 3:8; Micah 4:4). “Thus saith the Lord,” or variants, is used about 2600 times in the Old Testament. Succeeding writers acknowledged the authority of those who went before and were careful not to contradict them.

The New Testament repeatedly quotes the Old Testament as the Word of God or the Holy Scriptures (Romans 1:2). Much of the New Testament, in fact, is made up of quotations from this source. Paul spoke in the same manner concerning his own writings (1 Corinthians 14:37). Peter supported Paul as writing Scripture (2 Peter 3:15-16). There was Divine authority for New Testament writing (Matthew 10:19-20; John 14:26; 16:12, 15). The concluding book is attributed to God (Revelation 1:1) and ends with a warning against adding or subtracting to its words (Revelation 22:18-19). When the Bible speaks of the Word of God as “quick living and powerful” (Hebrews 4:12), an “incorruptible” seed which generates new birth in a man (1 Peter 1:23), it is speaking of itself. Here is an interlocking of prophecy and fulfillment, of reference and cross-reference, of authoritative claim and authoritative acknowledgement. Here are 66 different books, written by over 40 men, over a period of 1500 years, fitted together like many stones in an amazing unity of testimony spread over the entire world, the greatest book ever given among men.

Transmission of the Bible

How can we be sure that we have the very words that God gave, and no others? Do we have the correct books and the correct text of those books as they were first given? Whatever God gave miraculously, He was certainly capable of preserving. The unity of our present Bible is itself a witness. The 66 books of our standard Bible today have been continuously received by communities of believers as being of Divine authority since their origin. Whenever men met to consider the subject, they sought to recognize what had already been accepted by believers generally. Their value and authority was not established by any decree of a church or vote of men. It already existed. The authors were men of leadership and standing. Such men of God in the Old Testament as Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, Isaiah and Jeremiah—or Paul, Peter, John and Matthew in the New Testament—were already accredited. The believers accepted their writings from the first, just as the Lord Jesus accepted the Old Testament (John 10:31-36; Luke 24:44) as that which came with divine authority.

In 1546 the Roman Catholic Church added the 14 books known as the *Apocrypha* to the Old Testament books accepted by the Jews. This came in the midst of the Reformation controversy about whether the Bible or the church should be considered the final authority in matters of the faith. The very word “apocrypha” means “that which is of doubtful authenticity.” No book of the *Apocrypha* claims to be the Word of God. Neither the Lord Jesus nor any New Testament work quotes a single reference out of any of them. Today’s standard versions of the Bible, other than those of the Catholic Church, use the same Old Testament books as those recognized by the Jews. The last book of the Old Testament was written before 400 B.C. and the accepted group, corresponding to our 39 books, was established no later than 200 B.C.

The earliest New Testament book was written about 45 A.D. and the last (Revelation) prior to 100 A.D. By 95 A.D. all of Paul’s epistles were collected. By 150 A.D. the four Gospels were collected. By 170 A.D. the New Testament in its present form was settled, except for a final agreement about 2 Peter. Other books were considered to be helpful but not divinely inspired (*1 and 2 Epistles of Clement, Barnabas, the Didache*). Some were rejected (*Gospel of Thomas*). Some were plainly labeled as forgeries (*Gospel of Peter*). There are no “lost books of the Bible.” The New Testament today contains the accepted 27 books of those days and no other.

Have the texts of these books been altered in any substantial way since these days so that they are not reliable? No, the Lord has guarded His Word. In 1947 there was a discovery of Old Testament manuscripts dating from 125 B.C. among documents called the Dead Sea Scrolls. The texts confirmed the reliability of our present versions. They were in accord with an extremely careful Hebrew version of 900 A.D. called the Masoretic text. This particular copying effort from earlier manuscripts required that each word and letter be counted and compared with the original. An Old Testament textual specialist, Dr. R. Laird Harris, says, “Except for trivialities, not one part in a thousand is in serious doubt and we have no objective evidence to make us think that doctrinal differences or substantial matters are involved in the whole process of Old Testament copying.”¹

New Testament specialists have available to them over 4500 Greek manuscripts (some partial) of the New Testament, including fragments as old as 130 A.D. Substantial parts of the New Testament could be reconstructed from quotations by early church leaders of the second Century. Complete Bibles in their original form, dating from the Fourth Century, are available in museums. “Both the *authenticity* and the *general integrity* of the books of the New

Testament may be regarded as finally established,” said Sir Frederick Kenyon, former director of the British Museum.²

It is obvious that multitudes of copies agree as to the correct Bible text. But what about the original writings? It is notable that we do not have any original copies of works by such ancient writers as Plato, Cicero or Herodotus, but no one seriously questions the texts of their writings. Bible documents are dated closer to the originals than any other ancient writings and there are many more of them. Caesar’s Gallic Wars have only 10 old manuscripts, the earliest dating 900 years after the original, according to Dr. F. F. Bruce.³ The same is true of many other classics. The New Testament copies are within 100 years of composition in fragments and within 250 years in substantial sections. There is no valid basis for skepticism about our copies.

Testimony Concerning the Bible

The Bible is a book of history, not just of philosophical speculations. It is filled at the proper time period with references to ancient world empires (Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome). World leaders of those periods appear on its pages (Nebuchadnezzar, Darius, Sennacherib, Cyrus, Herod and Roman emperors). Cities, tribes, place names, titles and events occur from beginning to end. Customs, trade practices and other items of culture are intertwined with one another in the text. There were countless opportunities for inaccuracy at every step if the writers were making up stories at later dates or giving us mere legends or myths as critics often try to prove. Repeatedly attacks have been made upon certain statements as errors, only to be reversed by later evidence. The existence of cities (Ur of the Chaldees), peoples (the Hittites), personages (listed in Genesis 12-14), rulers (Belshazzar) and skills (writing in the time of Moses) have been denied and then reversed by later evidence. Critical bias and antagonism against the Bible has no precedent; other ancient writings are not treated this way. Yet despite word-by-word examination and historical investigation for centuries, it has stronger confirmation than ever, seemingly growing with each new Middle Eastern discovery. It is more impressive to consider the mammoth accumulation of positive evidence of truth rather than the trifling and minute things still being questioned.

Biblical archaeology is presently a separate division of this field of study, due to its development. The growth of confirmatory material over the past 100 years, unavailable in the past, is amazing. The foremost names in this field, including those who make no profession of being committed believers, have brought out detailed evidence in their books, confirming Biblical statements.

One of the foremost Jewish investigators, Nelson Glueck, has written: “No archaeological discovery has ever controverted a Biblical reference.”⁴ The greatest scholar of the western world in this field, Dr. W. F. Albright of Johns-Hopkins University, has written, “There can be no doubt that archaeology has confirmed the substantial historicity of the Old Testament tradition.”⁵ Other names and volumes of proofs could be added as reinforcement.

Prophecy in the Bible

Prophecy is a prediction, in the form of an inspired utterance, concerning the future. It may be true or false. It may come from a man of God or from a deceiver. No stricter test for verification could be laid down than by Scripture itself. “When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not

spoken" (Deuteronomy 18:22). In other words, anything less than 100% fulfillment cannot come from the God of Truth who knows all things, including the future. It is God's method whereby we may verify the one who speaks for God and bears His word. This area is one of the most impressive evidences of God's hand upon the Bible. Efforts have been made to destroy this argument by late-dating prophecies or by other devices, but many individuals are still brought to faith by the evidence.

A few simple guidelines demonstrate where the Bible prophecy differs from heathen imitations or those of modern spiritists, astrologers or fortune tellers. True prophecy must be:

1. **Beyond Human Foreknowledge** or influence. Normal means could not project the result. An example among many would be Daniel 9:24-26. Fulfillment began in 444 B.C. with the decree of King Artaxerxes to rebuild Jerusalem. It was climaxed with the death of Jesus the Messiah 483 years later.
2. **Detailed, Specific Predictions** to rule out chance in terms of mathematical odds. The series of rulers in Daniel 11:1-35 and their histories is so matched with later history during the second and third century B.C. that critics insist it was written after the events. The destruction of Tyre by Alexander the Great exactly fulfilled Ezekiel 26:12.
3. **Not Ambiguous**, or capable of more than one interpretation. The prediction that Messiah would be born in Bethlehem of Judea is precise (Micah 5:2) as is the Lord's betrayal for 30 pieces of silver (Zechariah 11:12).
4. **Exactly Fulfilled**, as in the destruction of Jerusalem (Matthew 24:1-2) when not one stone was left upon another of the temple.

The strongest and most obvious area of fulfilled prophecy is in the predictions about Messiah in the Old Testament, fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth. Isaiah 53 and Psalm 22 are but two of hundreds of passages that spell out predictions pointing unerringly to Him. The national history of the Jews, reaching to their present condition as a reestablished nation in the midst of hostile neighbors, is another vivid example. There are scores of other fulfillments for which naturalistic explanations are most unsatisfactory.

Difficulties in the Bible

The Bible tells us that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him" (1 Corinthians 2:14). "The sinful mind is hostile to God" (Romans 8:7 NIV). Man does not reject the Bible because he has carefully investigated it, with a willingness to submit to the God and Savior there revealed, and then been unable intellectually to accept the evidence. Rather his prejudice and rebellious spirit have led him to study the propaganda of unbelief or to accept the casual misstatements of the uninformed.

Any fair mind would admit there are difficulties in the Bible. However, our minds are corrupted by sin and secular pressures. We have little knowledge of ancient history and customs. We may never have seriously studied the Scripture, unhindered by biased criticism. It is a wonder that we ever come to read and believe its pages at all. If it were not for the grace and mercy of God we would not. Keep in mind the following factors before deciding that a difficulty prevents you from believing God's Word.

1. **Historical Questions** have been raised repeatedly, only to be overcome by later evidence. Lysanias is named as a ruler in the times of John the Baptist (Luke 3:1). For a time, the only

Lysanias known reigned 60 years before. Critics said the Bible erred until the later Lysanias was proved to have ruled in John's time.

2. **Bible Statements May Seem To Be In Conflict.** The superscriptions on the cross of Jesus are recorded differently in the four Gospels. Yet each writer emphasized what was important to his own purpose. Were there two blind men or one outside a city when Jesus healed them? Obviously He met and healed the blind several times and on different occasions.
3. **Errors In Interpretation** are made. Jesus said that "this generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled" (Matthew 24:34). He was not speaking of those then living. He was speaking of the race or stock of the Jewish people. "No man hath seen God at any time" (John 1:18) does not oppose Genesis 32:30. This statement refers to the essence of God, not manifestations in certain forms.
4. **Differing Aspects Of A Certain Doctrine Or Word** are puzzling. God does move in the hearts of men according to *His own will*. Yet man is responsible to God and has a genuine *choice to make*. Both are true. God *does not tempt* man to do evil (James 1:13). He *does test* man as to faith (Genesis 22:1).
5. **Miraculous Events Seem Beyond Possibility.** Could a man live for three days in the belly of a great fish (Jonah 1:17)? Seamen have had such an experience for shorter periods even in the last century. But a God who created the universe would not find this difficult, any more than raising the dead, which Jesus did, as also did the apostles.
6. **Ignorance Of The Facts Or Background** create a number of problems. Many times, questions are answered when we find out more information. Proofs that we *can* understand are greater than matters which we *do not* understand.

Lives Submitted to the Authority of the Bible

Heathen religions often leave their followers in a state of degradation. One considers the effect of Hinduism in India, animism in Africa and Asia and witchcraft in many places. The effect of the Bible upon the lives of those who conscientiously live according to its moral precepts is evident historically in nations or tribes and in the lives of people. Here is a spiritual message that liberates people from the tyranny of drug abuse, crime, gross immorality and savage practices. What person would not live a better life if he followed the Ten Commandments or lived by the teachings of Jesus? Yet beyond this, the Bible has a message about the way of eternal salvation through faith in Christ and His finished work on the cross. It answers the great questions which cannot be answered by philosophy, psychology and science. Where did I come from? Why am I here? What should I be doing with my life? How can I live eternally? Who is God and how can I know Him?

The source of the authority of the Bible is the God who has given His Word. The focus of that authority is the Lord Jesus Christ to whom the Father has given all power in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:18). The moral authority of the Bible effectively will control my life when I am under the authority of the Lord Jesus. We truly believe the Bible when we submit to God, to His Word and to Christ.

Authority Of The Bible

1. Since the Bible was *written* by men, critics doubt its authenticity (truthfulness) and its inerrancy (lack of error). What do the following writers indicate about the origin of their

words?

Joshua - Joshua 1:1

David - 2 Samuel 23:2

Isaiah - Isaiah 42:5; 43:1

Jeremiah - Jeremiah 1:1-2; 2:1

Ezekiel - Ezekiel 1:2-3; 2:1; 3:1; 6:1

Paul - 1 Corinthians 11:23

2. What does Peter say about the authority of the Word? (2 Peter 1:21)

About his own writings (2 Peter 1:16-19)?

About Paul's writings (2 Peter 3:15-16)?

3. How did Christ lend His authority to the validity of the Old Testament?

Luke 24:25-27

John 5:39, 46-47

4. The Genesis account of the creation of man, as well as other supernatural events described in the Bible, are being attacked by those who wish to discredit the Bible. Still others "spiritualize" the events, making them allegorical rather than literal. What attitude does Jesus take toward such events recorded in the Old Testament?

Mark 10:6 (Compare with 1 Corinthians 11:8-9; 1 Timothy 2:13)

Matthew 12:39-40

Matthew 24:37-39

5. The authority of the Word of God is often subtly attacked by the argument that certain Scripture has local application only, and therefore "does not apply to us today." This argument is especially used against Pauline teaching regarding the role of women, for example.

How does Paul emphasize to the Corinthians that his teachings are not limited to them only (1 Corinthians 14:36)?

How might you answer the argument of some that Paul's writings reflect merely personal opinion or cultural bias (1 Corinthians 14:37)?

6. What are four things that Scripture is good for (2 Timothy 3:16)? Explain what you think each one means.

You may wish to refer to the NOTES in answering 7, 8 and 9.

7. How would you respond to the statement, "I really don't think the Bible is completely adequate for a lot of issues that we face today. I think that the church and individual Christians have to use other resources for some of the problems we face today."

8. How would you respond to the criticism that modern study has proved that the Bible has errors?

9. How would you respond to the question, "How do you know the Bible is true?"

10. What practical difference does it make in your life whether or not the Bible is inspired of God?

Read Appendix A, "Personal Evangelism Packet," and begin memorizing one verse per week (odd numbers: A-1, A-3, etc.).

Lesson 2: The Believer's Position In Christ

The position of a child of God is so exalted that it seems almost too good to be true! How could one even imagine that a sinner, saved by God's marvelous grace, is brought to the very highest place in the sight of God? Yet listen to these words: In the Lord Jesus Christ "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and ye are complete in Him, which is the head of all principality and power" (Colossians 2:9-10). We are complete in the One Who has the preeminence in all things! We are complete in the One beloved of the Father, Who is worshipped by all the hosts of heaven. The believer does not have limited acceptance but rather the highest standing. He is not seen in the imperfection of human failings. He is seen as "perfected for ever" (Hebrews 10:14). He has been made as acceptable to the Father as the Lord Jesus Himself. What an amazing transformation! The one who once was dead in trespasses and sins has now been placed in Christ (Ephesians 2:1-7).

When did this occur? When a sinner hears the gospel of salvation, believes it and trusts the Lord Jesus Christ, he is sealed in Him by the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13). The Spirit of God baptizes or fully incorporates that one into the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13). *In Christ* all believers are blessed with every spiritual blessing that God can bestow (Ephesians 1:3). *In Christ* we are made the righteousness of God (2 Corinthians 5:21). *In Christ* we are loved and accepted just as He is because we are united with Him. Grace, or undeserved favor, is freely bestowed upon us because we are *in the Beloved One* (Ephesians 1:6). As the hymnwriter put it, "God sees my Savior and then He sees me, in the Beloved, accepted and free."

Position Versus Practice

These glorious truths are difficult for many to understand. Will not a belief in them make us cease from all spiritual efforts to please God? No, they are intended to arouse a wondrous appreciation of the Author of "so great salvation." They are to produce a life in keeping with this high calling. It is for this reason that such books as Ephesians lay down our position in Christ in the opening chapters and then call upon us to live up to that calling in the remainder of the book. Our *position* is the way God sees us because of what Christ has done for us; our *practice* is the way we live out our daily lives. What about the various warnings, exhortations and corrections to believers? They are to be understood by remembering that *position in Christ* is not the same as *practice in life*, though our practice should increasingly correspond to our position. Compare the following:

POSITION IN CHRIST	PRACTICE IN LIFE
Our unshakeable standing through God's salvation (Colossians 2:10)	Our response in light of so great a salvation (1 Corinthians 15:58)
According to God's estimate of His Son (Colossians 1:13)	According to our appreciation of His Son (John 14:15, 21)
Eternal, unchanging (Ephesians 1:13-14)	Temporal, variable (1 Corinthians 3:1-3, 15)
We are holy (Colossians 3:12)	We must seek to be holy (1 Peter 1:16)
We are perfect (Hebrews 10:14)	We must seek to be perfect (Philippians 3:12)
We are righteous (Philippians 3:9)	We must live righteously (1 John 3:7)
We died to sin (Romans 6:2)	We must count ourselves dead to sin (Romans 6:11)
We are the elect of God (1 Peter 1:2)	We must make our election sure (2 Peter 1:10)

The difference is plainly illustrated in the church at Corinth. The believers were fully accepted in Christ. He promised to confirm them unto the end (1 Corinthians 1:2-9). Their position was absolutely perfect (1 Corinthians 1:30; 6:11). Yet in practice they were contentious (1:11), carnal or fleshly (3:1-3), puffed up (4:18), at fault (6:7) and failing to judge immorality in their midst (5:1-5).

Relationship Versus Fellowship

Another way of expressing this difference is to compare relationship with fellowship. By receiving the Lord Jesus in genuine faith we become children of God. We are born again by the Word of God (1 Peter 1:23) through the Holy Spirit (John 3:5-6). We become children of God, members of His divine family (Romans 8:16; 1 John 3:2). This is relationship. The child who sins is not ejected from the family. There is a break in fellowship. This invites the discipline of God when there is not prompt correction in self-judgment (Hebrews 12:5-6). The discipline of God may involve bodily affliction and even death (1 Corinthians 11:30-32). Self-judgment involves the confessing and forsaking of sin (Proverbs 28:13; 1 John 1:9; Psalm 32:5; 51:1-4). When there is sin the joy of salvation is lost but not the salvation itself (Psalm 51:12). Relationship is not fellowship. Position is not practice. To confuse the two is to invite turmoil of soul and contradiction of the Scriptures.

Variability in the believer's daily life makes him question his position in Christ only when salvation is mistakenly thought to involve man's work for God. Scripture teaches that salvation is God's work for us. Salvation is by grace (Ephesians 2:8), through faith (Galatians 2:16) and is the free gift of God (Romans 6:23 NASB; Revelation 22:17). Peace with God is solely through the blood of His cross (Colossians 1:20). No human effort can be added to this merciful work of God in our souls (Titus 3:5). God's work through us results in good works (Ephesians 2:10; Titus 3:8). Abiding in Christ brings fruit unto His glory (John 15:1-16). Devoted living brings future rewards (1 Corinthians 3:10-15). Only faith in Christ forms a basis for our being placed in Christ and remaining there.

Aspects Of Positional Teaching

The believer's position in Christ is stated from many standpoints. A thoughtful consideration of any one of them would convince us of a standing that is beyond challenge. We would fully understand why God invites us to draw near to His throne in boldness and full assurance (Hebrews 10:19-22). As we review each declaration of God, please note that none of them has the slightest thing to do with our feelings. Each statement is a revelation from the Word of God and is to be believed because God says it is so, not because of emotional stirrings within. Consider these spiritual blessings which are so graciously granted to us in Christ.

1. **Forgiveness Of Sins.** Countless souls today are crushed beneath a load of guilt before a holy God. With what relief we read, in Christ "we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins" (Colossians 1:14 NASB). Even the prophets of the Old Testament proclaimed remission of sins on the ground of faith (Acts 10:43). Sins as scarlet are made as white as snow (Isaiah 1:18). They are blotted out as a thick cloud (Isaiah 44:22). They are put as far from the believer as the east is from the west (Psalm 103:12). It is the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29). When we have redemption through His blood, then we have forgiveness of sins (Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14; 1 John 1:7; 2:12). He "loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood" (Revelation 1:5). How can we read these verses and doubt that God has completely forgiven us for Christ's sake? Our sins are remembered

no more (Hebrews 10:17). The confession of sin by *believers* is made to restore broken fellowship (1 John 1:9). It is not to establish relationship. As believers, we seek forgiveness from a Heavenly Father rather than pardon from a Holy Judge.

2. **Justification.** This is a divine act whereby a holy God pronounces the sinner who believes in Christ to be righteous before Him and acquits him from all charges, apart from any merit of his own. This is done freely by His grace (Romans 3:24). This is a declaration of God, not an experiential thing (Romans 4:4-25). Justification is by faith, not human effort (Romans 5:1; Galatians 2:16; 3:11). It is on the basis of the blood of Christ alone (Romans 5:9). When James 2:14-24 speaks of justification by works, it means that faith was displayed in outward actions and thus demonstrated its reality before others. Justification does not mean “to make righteous,” but rather to “declare” that we are righteous. A significant action of God in this connection is imputation or reckoning to the account of another. This is Divine accounting. God imputed, reckoned or laid upon Christ our sins (Isaiah 53:5-6; 1 Peter 2:24). On the other hand, He reckoned to the believer the righteousness of God (Romans 3:22; 2 Corinthians 5:21). It is the only kind of righteousness which makes us acceptable for the presence of God (Philippians 3:9; cf. Isaiah 64:6). We stand, therefore in the presence of God completely cleared of all charges and clothed in the very righteousness of God. We stand without accusation before God because we are in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1).
3. **Sanctification.** The root word is used in such forms as “holiness,” “sanctify,” and “saints” (literally, “holy ones”). It means “to set apart.” God has set us apart in Christ (1 Corinthians 1:30) for His own eternal and sacred purposes. Every believer is sanctified in Christ and for that reason is called a saint (1 Corinthians 1:2; Ephesians 1:1; Philippians 1:1). Though the Corinthians had sin among them, they were still saints. Just as all believers among them were justified, so all of them were sanctified (1 Corinthians 6:11). It was a work of the Holy Spirit and based upon the blood of Christ (1 Peter 1:2). Believers are called upon to be in practice what they are in position. Thus the Lord Jesus prayed for their sanctification (John 17:17). In Christ all are sanctified forever, yet we are exhorted to be holy (1 Peter 1:15).

Such profound blessings given by our gracious God should fill each of us with a devotion which never runs dry. We ought to be occupied with the glory of the Lord (2 Corinthians 3:18). Turning our thoughts within, upon our own failings, is misplaced vision. Rather we should glory in Him (1 Corinthians 1:31; 2 Corinthians 4:6-7). As we focus on Christ, our risen Lord, our hearts will be filled with love and worship for Him, the worthy Lamb of God (Revelation 5:9-13).

The Believer's Position In Christ

Read the book of Ephesians in a modern translation. Then answer the questions below.

1. What was our position with God prior to salvation (Ephesians 2:1-3, 12; 4:18-19)? What were some of the things we practiced?

Position	Practice

2. What is our position with God as believers (Ephesians 2:4-6; Colossians 3:1-3)?

What does it mean to be “in Christ”?

- How is a person brought into a position “in Christ” (1 Corinthians 1:30a; Ephesians 1:6; 2:8-9)?
- Read Ephesians 1:1-14 and complete the following questions: Identify, by verse reference, the occurrence of the phrase “in Christ,” “in Him,” or similar renderings.

What does the believer have “in Christ”?

What characteristics of God are mentioned, and how do they relate to the benefits He bestows on the believer?

How do these things increase your appreciation for the Lord and your position “in Him”?

- Why does God want us to know about our position in Christ (Ephesians 1:17-19a)?
- What aspects of the believer’s standing “in Christ” are emphasized in the following verses?

Romans 8:1

1 Corinthians 1:30

2 Corinthians 5:17

2 Corinthians 5:21

Ephesians 2:10

Colossians 1:14

- Paraphrase (rewrite in your own words) Colossians 2:9-10a. What do these verses mean?
- Compare the *position* of the Corinthian believers with that of their *practice* (1 Corinthians 1:2-9, 11, 30; 3:1-3; 4:18; 5:1-5; 6:7, 11).

Position	Practice

- In view of our exalted position “in Christ,” how shall we then live?

Ephesians 4:1

Ephesians 5:1-2, 8

Colossians 3:1-3

List the changes that living this way will bring in our lives (Ephesians 4:2-3, 22-32; 5:3-4, 11-13, 22-33; 6:1-9).

- Write a brief paragraph explaining why you think a believer should be taught the truths in this lesson.

How will these truths help you live a more godly life?

Lesson 3: Doing The Will Of God

Is there a divine plan for your life? Is there a path to follow and a light to guide you into the perfect will of God? Listen to this plea: “Be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is” (Ephesians 5:17). God wants us to know His will. He wants us to be filled with the knowledge of it (Colossians 1:9). He is the most wonderful of all Counselors (Isaiah 9:6), and whatever He tells us will stand the test of eternity (Psalm 33:11). How could the Creator have no plan or offer no guidance for His creature?

How do we experience the guidance of God and walk in the path of that perfect will? The Lord Jesus is our example. The key was His willingness, His fervent desire to do the will of God. “Not My will, but Thine, be done” (Luke 22:42). “I came down from heaven not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me” (John 6:38). “I come to do Thy will, O God” (Hebrews 10:9). He taught the disciples to pray in this manner: “Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10). The secret of knowing the will of God is to be truly willing to do it.

The key to the Divine plan is the Word of God. The will of God and the Word of God are inseparable. The Scriptures are the revealed will of God. Here are His promises, commands, warnings and principles of life. He gave the Word to man that he might know and do the will of God. To be ignorant of that Word or to neglect its precepts, while professing to seek the will of God, is contradictory. There are, of course, circumstantial matters not directly covered by the Word. These include matters of places, times, persons and details of life. Where should I go? What should I do in this instance? Here the Holy Spirit is properly our guide as we faithfully seek to know God’s will. Even so, the Word of God is the instrument of the Spirit. Principles and incidents from the Word often can be used to illuminate the path of life.

To summarize then: God has a plan for your life, a path to follow. Two principles to keep in mind are first, to be willing to follow His guidance; second, to know the Scriptures and search them daily to perfect your knowledge of the will of God.

What Is the Value of Seeking God’s Will?

It is surprising that most decisions of life are made by professing believers without making a serious effort to know the will of God. We may feel confident that we know best, even when surrounded by those making grievous mistakes. We may assume that God’s guidance is an automatic thing. Yet we would not fail to consult knowledgeable people in other areas of needed action, nor ignore those in authority over us, if we exercised good judgment. Another obstacle may be the fear or doubt that God’s will is best for us. There is a need to reconsider these attitudes.

1. **God Knows The Future And Therefore Knows What Is Best.** “If I had only known that was going to happen, I would not have done it,” we often hear. That is just the point. We do not know what a day may bring forth (Proverbs 27:1), but God knows the end from the beginning (Isaiah 46:10). Multitudes consult horoscopes, psychics, experts and consultants of all types in order to anticipate future developments. How foolish to ignore the God that knows everything, including the wisest course of action in every situation.
2. **God Loves And Wants To Direct His Child.** It would be incredible for a parent with any care for his own children to be disinterested in guiding them. The best of human parents, however, cannot compare with the goodness of our heavenly Father. If parents want the best for their children and make every effort to see them receive the fullest provision, how

much more would the Lord “give good things to them that ask Him” (Matthew 7:11). Hear the promise of the Lord to His people: “I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go; I will guide thee with Mine eye” (Psalm 32:8).

3. **God Wants To Bless Us According To His Wisdom.** It is sad that there are some who fear the will of God. How could His wisdom prescribe evil for His children? “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future’” (Jeremiah 29:11 NIV). If the Lord’s plans call for the cross, as it did for His Beloved Son, it still is for the blessing of multitudes and the glory of His Son. The wisdom of God holds out for us the higher blessing. Often His thoughts are not our thoughts, nor are His ways ours, but they are higher and better (Isaiah 55:8-9).

When Will God Guide?

1. **When We Want To Do His Will.** At times we ask God to bless our plans and confirm our choices. At other times we seek to bargain with Him, making promises in return for His agreement to our desires. We may go through the form of asking, with no real interest in knowing and obeying His perfect will. We may even distrust or fear His will. But the Lord said, “If any man is willing to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God” (John 7:17 NASB). Light upon the path comes with yieldedness (Romans 6:13). Present your body to Him and He will take control (Romans 12:1). We must also obey what we already know. “But if ye will not obey the voice of the Lord, but rebel against the commandment of the Lord, then shall the hand of the Lord be against you” (1 Samuel 12:15). Why should the Lord give further direction when we have not obeyed what He has already shown?
2. **When We Believe That He Will Guide.** “It is God who works in you to will and to act according to His good purpose” (Philippians 2:13 NIV). The conviction that this is so releases us from a frantic worry that we must find out everything on our own, without Divine assistance. We are to believe this: “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths” (Proverbs 3:5-6). We must realize that His guidance may not come with powerful subjective emotions. Quivering, weeping and other flashes of emotion are not necessarily the evidence of the witness of the Spirit.
3. **When We Maintain Right Attitudes.** Be meek in coming to God and do not give Him ultimatums (Psalm 25:9). Confess anything in thought or outlook that is wrong (Psalm 66:18). When you are bitter, self-pitying, jealous, resentful, ungrateful or complaining, you are in poor condition to experience the guidance of the Spirit.

How Can We Do God’s Will?

It is not a question of knowing God’s will in order to think it over. The true goal should be action. We should:

1. **Pray And Patiently Seek God’s Will.** “Wait on the Lord” is one of the Bible’s great imperatives, but it chafes the human spirit. We want instant answers and have little time for the persistent “Ask ... Seek ... Knock” at the door of Heaven, commanded by the Lord (Matthew 7:7). The Psalmist said, “Hear, O Lord, when I cry with my voice, and be gracious to me and answer me. When Thou didst say, ‘Seek My face,’ my heart said to Thee, ‘Thy face, O Lord, I shall seek’” (Psalm 27:7-8 NASB). The Apostle Paul exhorted continuance in prayer. “Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this

in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints" (Ephesians 6:18 NIV). We must consider that God's will is often revealed a step at a time.

2. **Know Biblical Principles And Read Scripture Thoughtfully.** The Lord Jesus said the errors of the religious leaders of His day were because of ignorance of Scripture (Matthew 22:29). When we do not take the trouble to know the direct commands, clear principles and love warnings of God, we fall into many a pit. If we are clear about what the Word commands and what it forbids, then we will not ask Him to change or add to what He has said. When we ask according to His will, He hears (1 John 5:14-15). There are matters not directly covered, such as the habit of smoking. But there is a principle that applies. The human body is the temple of the Spirit and should not be defiled. The Scripture directly forbids marriage to an unbeliever (2 Corinthians 6:14). One must weigh this in the western custom of dating. When reading prayerfully, regularly and consecutively, verses often come alive upon the page and God speaks to us. We need this communication from Him.
3. **Put God's Interests First.** "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33). Decisions should be built around God's interests rather than upon career and home interests. God's direction may or may not agree with our personal preferences. God does promise to give us the desires of our hearts (Psalm 37:4), but this is not without qualification or exception. The will of God was for Jonah to go to Ninevah, something that was far from his desires (Jonah 1:1-3). The experience taught him the value of submission to the will of God, however. God does give grace in difficult times.

Russ Johnston has observed that most questions about the will of God involve either vocation or location. Yet these are hardly mentioned in the Bible. "God is not as concerned about where we live or what we do for a living as He is about what we are."⁶ In questions concerning romance or what person to marry, we should first determine questions about our life goals and when we will be able to consider a partner. Then we can attempt to choose between one person and another.

4. **Weigh Circumstances Carefully.** We tend to rely exclusively on circumstances. A favorable and easy road may seem attractive. The wrong path is often easy and may be favored by our bias. A difficult path, with much opposition, might be the path to which God has called us (1 Corinthians 16:9). This was often true of the Apostle Paul, yet he was a man manifestly in the will of God, even while in prison. The opening and closing of doors must be of God, confirmed by other factors. God can providentially clear the way through giant obstacles and provide in unexpected ways. However, it is wise to remember that it is the broad way that leads to destruction, not the narrow one (Matthew 7:13). Do not take circumstances apart from other confirming factors.

What about asking for signs, or "putting out the fleece" (Judges 6:36-40)? This is practiced by many believers. In one sense, this might be used to eliminate all that has been set down before. Gideon's request followed a promise of God and therefore was not an act of faith, yet God graciously answered. When you are anxious to do His will, you may ask God to clarify it through circumstances. But the path of genuine faith is not the one marked by things God sends us to see (Hebrews 11:1).

5. **Seek Godly Counsel** (Proverbs 1:5; 11:14; 15:22; 24:6). The word "godly" does not mean "any" person. Look to spiritual leaders that know you (Hebrews 13:7, 17). Moreover, the best counsel is not of the quick variety, but is drawn out slowly (Proverbs 20:5). Self-willed

people tend to avoid counsel altogether or to consult with friends who will not oppose their ideas.

How Do We Apply the Principles of Guidance?

As you put God's interests first, He will guide you through prayer, the Word, counsel, and circumstances. Since God does not contradict Himself, these should all speak as one voice, not as several conflicting voices, to show you the proper course of action. Record all the input you have which bears on the decision. Make a "pro/con" list wherein you set down reasons for and against each alternative open to you. Weigh carefully all the input, giving greater weight to the objective factors than to the subjective factors. As you prayerfully consider your intended course of action, do you have peace or do you experience inner turmoil? Wait on the Lord when you have serious doubts. Perhaps additional counsel and prayer are required to clarify all the factors involved. However, you need not procrastinate or agonize endlessly. In faith, ask God for His wisdom (James 1:5-6). By faith, choose the course of action most clearly directed by the light He has given you. The decisive man of faith enjoys the peace of God that passes all understanding (Philippians 4:6-7). When you are committed to the Lord, you can be confident that He will guide you. He wants you to know and do His "good and acceptable and perfect will" (Romans 12:2).

Doing The Will Of God

1. Why is God's will for our lives worth seeking? Why should we not lead our lives the way we want to? Use the following verses in your answer:

Psalm 139:15-18

Proverbs 16:25

Proverbs 27:1

Jeremiah 10:23

John 10:10b

Ephesians 5:17

2. What happens when one disobeys the revealed will of God (1 Samuel 12:15; Ecclesiastes 11:9)?
3. Study the following examples and explain the results of disrespect for the will of God. What applications can we make from their lives? What dangers can we avoid?

Moses: Numbers 20:7-12

Saul: 1 Samuel 15:2-23

Unnamed prophet: 1 Kings 13:6-24

4. Why do we often fear the will of God for our lives?
5. What would make us have the attitude of David (Psalm 40:8)?
6. Practically speaking, what does God desire for His children?

John 14:27

James 1:17

John 15:5

John 15:11

Psalm 84:11

Psalm 37:1-4

7. What effect do the following things have on discerning God's will?

Our attitude - John 7:17; Ephesians 6:6

Our diligence in Bible study - Psalm 119:9-11

Prayer - Colossians 4:12; Daniel 10:12

Counsel - Proverbs 11:14

Circumstances - 1 Corinthians 16:8-9

8. Why are circumstances alone insufficient for determining the will of God (1 Corinthians 16:9; 2 Corinthians 2:12; 1 Thessalonians 2:18)?

9. What things should be considered for a Christian choosing a career? a mate? a new location? Select one of these areas and give applicable verses in your answer.

10. In what areas of your life are you concerned to know the will of God? What steps have you taken to discern His will?

Lesson 4: Attaining Life Goals

God is a planner. What He plans He will do. “I have purposed it, I will also do it” (Isaiah 46:11b). His purposes are worked out according to His own will (Ephesians 1:11). The Divine plan covers the entire future, of which He has complete foreknowledge. In Scripture God set down prophetically the highlights of the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus. He was the key to God’s plan for our redemption. At the end of His earthly ministry, the Lord said, “I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do” (John 17:4). There was nothing haphazard in what He said, what He did or where He went. He was busy doing the will of the One who sent Him (John 4:34).

The purposes of God reach down to the life of every believer also. “‘For I know the plans that I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope’” (Jeremiah 29:11 NASB). God desires to see every believer growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus (2 Peter 3:18), then mature in Christ (Colossians 1:28) and ultimately conformed to the image of Christ (Romans 8:29). In short, we are to become Christ-like. The Lord has set down His perspective as to the way our lives should be patterned.

1. God and His kingdom must be first (Matthew 6:33).
2. The eternal takes precedence over the temporal (2 Corinthians 4:18).
3. The spiritual takes precedence over the physical (Matthew 6:19-20).
4. People take precedence over things (Mark 8:36-37).

When we see these purposes, or pattern our lives after His perspective, we will live our lives successfully by God’s standards.

Developing Goals (Where Do I Want To Be?)

A vague longing for progress, without any plan or specific commitment to action, is not a goal but a dream. To shoot at nothing is to be sure to hit it. Progress is made usually when specific goals take the place of generalized hopes. We must look to the Lord for guidance and depend on His enabling power. Yet this does not rule out the need for setting goals and defining necessary actions. A goal is an aim or objective to be reached or accomplished. For example, the goal of the Lord Jesus was to build His church (Matthew 16:18). To this end He trained and commissioned the Twelve Apostles to establish it.

Goals should be within the framework of Scriptural priorities (things of primary importance) and responsibilities. Our relationship to God (Matthew 22:37-38), ministry (Matthew 6:33), family (1 Timothy 3:4-5) and job responsibilities (2 Thessalonians 3:10) are major areas of consideration. Ask yourself: What do I want to accomplish in each of these areas? Is it eternally significant? Realistic? Am I overly concerned with tasks and not concerned about goals? Why do I want these things to come about? Are they selfish or God-oriented goals? What is my life purpose?

Next, these goals should be set in a proper time frame. When should they be accomplished? Can I set a reasonable time period for progress to be shown? Time is limited. Set your target for lifetime goals, long-range goals, intermediate goals, and short-range goals. Short-range goals should move you along the path to long-term ones. If you have no long-range or life goals, the shorter ones tend to lack significance.

1. **Life Goals.** When I get to the end of life, what do I want to look back upon as having been accomplished? A life goal will usually be broad, yet achievable. Example: "To know the whole counsel of God by mastering the English Bible."
2. **Long-Range Goals.** Where do I want to be in my life 10 or 15 years from now, if the Lord has not come? Example: "To be skillful in the Word of God by mastering the New Testament, and gaining a broad knowledge of the Old Testament."
3. **Intermediate-Range Goals.** Where do I want to be in two to five years? What must be established in my life? Example: "To master the major books of the New Testament and to gain a general overview of the whole Bible."
4. **Short-Range Goals.** If I had six months or a year to live, what changes would I make? What preparations are needed *now*, if I have longer to live? Example: "To gain a general familiarity of the Bible by reading it through in a year."

Taking Inventory (Where Am I Now?)

1. **Forces Helping.** Analyze your life in reference to each specific goal. What strengths do I have that will help me reach this goal? What successes have I had in the past in this area? How can present positive habits help me? How can my present church environment and church leaders help me? What things in my current life style will be conducive to growth in this area?
2. **Forces Hindering.** What has to be changed in my life in order to successfully achieve my goal? What weaknesses have I had in the past in this area? What negative habits must change? What harmful relationships have to be changed? What changes must be made in my life style? What priorities are wrong in my life?

Designing Activities (How Do I Get There?)

Activities are actions we must take in order to achieve a goal. The number of activities required to achieve a goal will depend on the time range (short-range, intermediate-range, etc.) The type of activity will depend on the area of life involved. The activity(ies) must take into account any hindrances or problems that must be overcome.

If your short-range goal is "To build a consistent daily devotional life which strengthens my relationship with God and promotes fruitfulness in daily life," then your activities might include:

- a. Meet with the Lord each morning for consecutive study and meditation upon the Word, together with prayer.
- b. Maintain a devotional notebook of entries for each day, with notations of text considered and personal application or insights about God. Plan to share with a mature friend.
- c. Study key books on prayer life and applicational Bible study.

It would be difficult to carry out these specific activities without making substantial progress toward achieving this objective. That is the test of any series of activities.

Scheduling Activities (How Do I Use My Time?)

An activity is not "do-able" unless it can actually be scheduled. First, you need to complete a time inventory sheet to determine how you are currently using your time. Believers are exhorted about "making the most of your time, because the days are evil" (Ephesians 5:16

NASB). The thought here is buying up every strategic opportunity to use your days and hours for God. Time is something we are told to manage as carefully as money. People often say, “I don’t have the time.” The Bible indicates that there is time enough to do everything that God requires, but there is none to be wasted. How can we recover lost time and make better use of it?

1. **Analyzing Present Time Use.** Keep track of everything you do for one week, in 30-minute segments, on a Time Inventory worksheet.
 - a. Notice where time use has been excessive (sleep, meals, getting dressed, prolonged conversations, routine details).
 - b. Find the time-wasters. Where can you save time? Where can you consolidate activities? What can you eliminate?
 - c. What are you doing that is not a priority activity (TV watching, trivial reading matter, unnecessary involvements)?
 - d. Consult with others (mature friend, spouse) for suggestions. Where do they see you wasting time?
2. **Making A Weekly Schedule.** A time schedule must be completed to ensure all necessary activities can be accomplished.
 - a. Write down all activities you are presently doing and all activities you must begin in order to achieve your goals.
 - b. Estimate the time required for each activity and total the amounts.
 - c. Assign priorities for each activity. Mark the “Must-do” activities by “A.” These include routine activities over which you have no choice (sleep, work, etc.) and the activities related to your goals. Mark “should-do” activities by “B” and “can-do” activities by “C.”
 - d. Fill in your Weekly Schedule, recording the “A” activities first, then the “B” activities and finally the “C” activities. Activities with “C” and “B” priority may have to be eliminated or adjust to fit the 168-hour week.
3. **Improving Time Use.** As you make your time schedule week by week, look for ways to increase your time efficiency. Here are a few suggestions:
 - a. Divide your week into daily work plans. Devote a few minutes each day to write them down.
 - b. Evaluate your priorities. Are you accomplishing your most important activities? Set your priorities so that you get the most important things done, even if others are left undone.
 - c. Keep a “to do” list each day, assigning priorities. Cross off activities when done. Reschedule things not accomplished.
 - d. Dual activities save time. For example, when you eat lunch, invite a friend with whom you can share your testimony. Listen to tapes while driving your car. Memorize Scripture while washing dishes.
 - e. Organize errands and duties to cut down extra trips.

Evaluating Progress (How Am I Doing?)

How will you review your progress? There is often a breakdown in well-laid plans involving solid goals. We often fail to do what we commit ourselves to do, or we do not do it well, or we have not solved a major hindrance. There is a tendency to accept this condition and remain defeated unless there is a periodic review of progress. This requires that we have a mature friend, leader or prayer partner with whom we agree to meet and who has a copy of our goals. Even the prospect of this review is a stimulus. When there is a good, point-by-point analysis of progress, this is of further help. This review should lead to suggestions for change in some of the activities or in the goal. The one who has prepared these goals should be prepared to either carry through the commitment or to eliminate them from the schedule. Consider reasons for breakdowns:

- a. The goals are unrealistically high. Remedy: Rewrite them.
- b. There has been a lack of faithfulness in performance. Remedy: Repent before God and keep the commitment.
- c. Some significant hindrance is identified. Remedy: Deal with it forcefully.
- d. Too much has been scheduled for time available. Remedy: Reduce and simplify where necessary.

Conclusion

God is not so much interested in *how long* we live as *how well* we live. Jesus Christ began His public ministry at the age of 30. In three and one half years He accomplished all that the Father planned for Him to do (John 17:4; 19:30). The Apostle Paul was able to say, at the end of a much longer life, "I have finished my course" (2 Timothy 4:7). There was a crown of righteousness laid up for him. Will you be a finisher?

Attaining Life Goals (Part I)

- 1. What activity of God is emphasized in Isaiah 46:11b and Ephesians 1:11?
- 2. What are God's goals for every believer (Romans 8:29; 2 Peter 3:18)?
- 3. What goals did the Lord Jesus have for His earthly ministry (John 4:34; 17:4)?
- 4. Identify Paul's goals and the activities he pursued to reach them.

Passage	Goals	Activities
1 Corinthians 9:19-27		
Colossians 1:28-29		
Philippians 3:12-14		

- 5. How did Paul evaluate his life in relation to his goals (2 Timothy 4:6-8)?
- 6. What lessons do you learn about planning in Luke 14:28-32 and Proverbs 16:3, 9?
- 7. What caution must you consider in your planning (James 4:13-15)?

8. When you get to the end of your life, what do you want to look back upon as having been accomplished?

(Before completing items 9-10, carefully read the NOTES for this lesson.)

9. *Goal Planning.* Using the “Goal Planning Worksheet,” identify your short-range (6 month) goals in the areas of responsibility listed. Make these goals as comprehensive and detailed as possible.
- List your goals in answer to the question, “Where Do I Want To Be?”
 - Answer the question, “Where Am I Now?” and indicate the things that are presently helping and hindering you in reaching your goals.
 - Identify possible activities for obtaining your goals under the question, “How Do I Get There?”
 - Review your “Goal Planning Worksheet” with your leader who will help you identify several goals that you can begin to concentrate on.
10. *Time Inventory.* Analyze your present use of time using the “Time Inventory” worksheet. Take the following steps:
- Keep an exact record of everything you do for one week. Record what you *actually did* in every 30-minute interval of time, not what you *should have done* or *intended to do*.
 - Record the total hours per week that you actually spent in each activity listed under “Stewardship of Time.”
 - Analyze your use of time by answering the questions under “Time Inventory Analysis.”

Goal Planning Worksheet · Time range: _____

Area of responsibility	Step 1: Where do I want to be?	Step 2: Where am I now? (forces helping / hindering)	Step 3: How do I get there?
Relationship with God			
Family: spouse, children, other			
Ministry / Christian training			
Job / school			
Other: financial, physical			

Time Inventory · Week of _____ to _____

	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN
5:00							
5:30							
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Stewardship of Time (hours per week)

Activity	Hours	Activity	Hours	Activity	Hours
Devotions		Bible Study		Meditation	
Evangelism		Church Activities		Sleep	
Meals		Family		School	
Housework		Shopping		Employment	
Commuting		Social Time		Recreation	
Telephone Time		Wasted Time		Miscellaneous	

Time Inventory Analysis:

1. Which activities were time wasters? Why? How can they be eliminated?
2. Which activities consumed too much time? How can these be done more effectively?
3. On which activities should you spend more time? How can this be accomplished?

Lesson 5: Managing God's Resources

"WHO THEN IS THAT FAITHFUL AND WISE STEWARD?" asked our Savior (Luke 12:42). He answered His own question by three parables. These involved a householder and his servants, a bridegroom and waiting virgins, and three servants who were given a sum of money to invest (Matthew 24:45–25:30). Three things are common to the parables. First, there is an absent Lord, plainly representing the Lord Jesus. Second, there are those left behind with responsibilities. Obviously, these are believers with duties and opportunities. Third, there is the necessity of awaiting the master's return and being suitably prepared, just as believers are to be alert for the Second Coming of Christ. The challenge and warning for us as stewards is to be prepared for a reckoning with our Master, who will come and assess how we have managed what He has given us in trust.

What is a steward? He is one who manages the household or property that belongs to another. In the Old Testament it meant "one over a house." The believer's status is that of a manager because God is the owner of all things. "All that is in the heaven and in the earth is Thine" (1 Chronicles 29:11). "All things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee" (1 Chronicles 29:14). "What do you have that you did not receive?" (1 Corinthians 4:7 NIV). The evident answer is, "Nothing!" Moreover, the Lord has purchased us by means of His precious blood (1 Peter 1:18–19). We are not our own, because we are bought with a price (1 Corinthians 6:19–20). Therefore, all we are and have belongs to our Owner. Thus we simply manage for Him all that is in our trust and render to Him a return on His investment. Our management is a test of (1) our *faithfulness* in diligently handling our responsibilities (1 Corinthians 4:2); (2) our *honesty* in not wasting or otherwise misusing His goods (Luke 16:11); (3) our *productivity* in bringing a large return on the investment (Matthew 25:20–21); and (4) our *loyalty* to Him as our absent King (Luke 19:13–14). We need also to understand the principle that good managers are rewarded and bad ones are penalized or removed.

What Do We Manage?

Life itself is a sacred stewardship. The Lord gave us life or we would not have it. All souls are His (Ezekiel 18:4). He is "the God of all flesh" (Jeremiah 32:27). As a vapor we appear upon earth and vanish at His pleasure (James 4:14–15). Therefore, we live according to His pleasure, not our discretion. This simple realization should impress upon us our responsibilities to God. The wise believer, therefore, will present his body to the Lord (Romans 12:1). He will yield every member to God's service (Romans 6:13). Stewardship may be considered under several headings.

1. **Time.** "My times are in Thy hand," cried a godly man (Psalm 31:15). The Lord may prescribe a normal lifespan (Psalm 90:10). He may shorten it (Psalm 102:23–24). He may lengthen it (Proverbs 10:27; Isaiah 38:5). God advises us to number our days and apply our hearts to wisdom (Psalm 90:12). We should "redeem the time" (Ephesians 5:16), using each moment wisely. The Scriptures greatly emphasize the brevity of life, likening it to grass, or flowers that fade or a tale that is told. The moral is: use time for God—do not waste it!
2. **Talents.** The word "talents" in Scripture refers to a sum of money, but it represents varying abilities (Matthew 25:14–30). Intelligence, special knowledge or skills, physical aptitudes and appearance flow from the provision of God, although men often take credit for them. Spiritual gifts are given believers as enablements to build up others in the church (1

Corinthians 12:4-7). We are to use these for the common good (1 Peter 4:10). Self-development for selfish interests is contrary to God's purpose.

3. **Truth.** We are "stewards of the mysteries of God" (1 Corinthians 4:1). All spiritual knowledge, especially that of God and the Gospel, is a sacred trust in a world of ignorance and darkness. When we know the Word of God we are like the owner of a house with a storeroom of treasure (Matthew 13:52 NIV). We must share the treasure with others, not stockpile it for our own enjoyment.
4. **Treasure.** There is a peculiar temptation, even for believers, to live with our highest value upon material possessions rather than upon the things of God. Either riches or God will tend to rule us. The Lord Jesus said we cannot serve both (Luke 16:13). Money gains us friends when we invest it for eternity (Luke 16:9). However, it can become our enemy through misuse and be used as evidence against us (James 5:1-3). The rich man who wound up in hell forgot that possessions were only in his care for a time (Luke 16:19-26). Gold and silver all belong to God, not to the monetary kings of the earth (Haggai 2:8). The cattle of a thousand hills belong to God, not to wealthy ranchers (Psalm 50:10).

Specific attention must be given to the subject of material offerings to the Lord (Exodus 35:5, 22). Please note that an offering is not a donation. It is a presentation of a representative portion of what God has graciously placed in our hands. God carefully notes our stewardship here as is seen in Mark 12:41-44, where Jesus is observing the people as they cast money into the treasury. He said that a poor widow, with two coins, gave more than all the rest combined because she gave her all out of poverty, while they gave out of abundance. There are several principles that ought to govern our offerings.

- a. Principle of Firstfruits (Proverbs 3:9-10). Just as the first harvest grain was given to God, so also the first part of our income should be set aside for Him. Obviously, by this method, we do not run out of money before we get around to God.
- b. Principle of Sacrifice (2 Samuel 24:24). If it does not cost you something, then do not give it to God. Leftovers or inferior offerings insult God (Malachi 1:8). Note the example of the Lord Jesus as a sacrificial giver (2 Corinthians 8:2-15).
- c. Principle of Worship (Matthew 26:7-13; Mark 14:3-9; Luke 7:37-38). In two separate instances, women came to the Lord Jesus and anointed Him with costly perfume as an act of devotion. This was considered more valuable than a gift to the poor. All giving should be an act of spiritual worship, the privilege of God's saints. People are sometimes given the impression that God is always needy or low on funds. Jesus is never recorded as taking a public offering at any of His meetings or asking for funds. Disciples "ministered unto Him of their substance" (Luke 8:3). The earliest Christian workers "went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles" (3 John 7). Regrettably, later generations took a great deal from them.

What About the Tithe?

It has been seen that Jesus thought the widow had given more proportionately than all the other contributors. For hundreds of years, however, many believers have used a *tithe* (or tenth) as a minimum yardstick. What about this today? Let us review the history of the tithe:

1. Tithes were given before the Law of Moses (Genesis 14:20; 28:22).
2. Tithes were given under the Law of Moses (Leviticus 27:30; Numbers 18:21-28; Deuteronomy 12:6, 11, 17). At the end of the Old Testament period, lapse of tithing was

condemned by God as robbery (Malachi 3:8-10; Haggai 1:4-6). At the time of the Gospels, tithing was practiced, although with self-righteousness (Matthew 23:23; Luke 11:42; 18:12).

3. Giving after Pentecost (the beginning of the church of Christ) is evidently on a different principle because there is no mention of the tithe in the Acts or the epistles. In 1 Corinthians 16:1-2, the believers were commanded to give *regularly* ("the first day of the week"), *inclusively* ("every one of you"), *systematically* ("lay by him in store"), and *proportionately* ("as God hath prospered him").

Love and appreciation for Christ should be the Christian's motivation for giving, not the Mosaic Law or the example of Old Testament saints. Christ's sacrificial self-giving on the cross is our example. Our motivation should be the inner prompting of the Spirit, not the outward compulsion of a prescribed yardstick. This is a differing, but not a lesser, motivation. Should a Christian under grace do less than a Jew under the Law? The call of discipleship demands for believers to "forsake all" (Luke 14:33; Matthew 19:29). No such demand was imposed by the Law. Sacrificial giving under the new standard should exceed, not fall below, the old standard. Giving is to be *unto Christ*, not to projects, persons or organizations, although it may be channeled through the local church or directed to godly individuals.

Here are some guidelines in stewardship of money. Pray about your gifts, instead of deciding impulsively. Confer with knowledgeable, mature believers. Read carefully good missionary magazines or reports. Be responsible to the work of your local church. Disregard the flood of mail or radio solicitations as necessarily being God's voice for you to give. Support those who genuinely look to God for their support and who do not beg for funds. Avoid giving to those who have a high overhead in promotional expenses, lavish publications or expensive building enterprises. Particularly avoid those who use manipulative techniques, such as trying to extract money by using pictures of starving orphans or by promising you a financial return for giving.

How Must We Manage?

One is impressed with the great emphasis in the New Testament upon being faithful. It is the faithful steward who is praised (Matthew 25:21-23). It is the faithful servant who is noted (Colossians 1:7; 4:7, 9). Jesus said, "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much" (Luke 16:10). God often uses small things to test our readiness to manage larger things. Material things test us for responsibility in spiritual things (Luke 16:11). Earthly responsibilities determine our fitness for eternal responsibilities (Luke 19:17, 19). Furthermore, the more we are given to manage, the more we will be accountable to God (Luke 12:48).

What hinders us as stewards? Selfishness overcomes our call to share our lives with others. We covet instead of being satisfied with what God has given. We are proud instead of humbly realizing that all we have is a gift of God. We are ungrateful, crowding out a spirit of thanksgiving and praise. We are fearful and anxious instead of trusting our Father who knows our needs and promises to sustain us. We are short-sighted, looking much at the things of time and little at the things of God's eternal kingdom.

Conclusion

Every manager must expect to be evaluated by his superiors. So it is with the believer before God. "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad" (2 Corinthians 5:10 NASB). This judgment is to evaluate our life and service as stewards. It is

not a judgment upon our sins. Managing our lives and God's resources is likened unto building a house upon a foundation. That foundation is Jesus Christ and His finished work on the cross (1 Corinthians 3:11). Our work is to build wisely upon that foundation. If we do well, we receive a reward. If not, we suffer loss (1 Corinthians 3:14-15). How are you managing what God has entrusted to you?

Managing God's Resources

1. A steward is one who takes care of or manages another's property or possessions. From the following passages make a list of things that God owns but over which He has made us stewards:

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Matthew 25:14

Ephesians 5:16

Haggai 2:8

1 Peter 4:10

1 Corinthians 4:7

2. What two areas of stewardship does God consider to be a part of our worship to Him?

Romans 12:1

Philippians 4:18

3. What character traits does God look for in a steward?

Matthew 24:45-51

Matthew 25:1-13

Matthew 25:14-30

Luke 19:11-27

4. As shown above, giving of our material possessions is an important area of stewardship.

Read 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 and answer the following questions:

When is the Christian instructed to give?

Who should give?

What expression emphasizes *planning in advance* to give?

How much should one give?

5. How much did the Old Testament patriarchs Abraham and Jacob voluntarily give (Genesis 28:22; Hebrews 7:1-2)?

How much were the Jews *commanded* to give under the Law (Hebrews 7:5)?

What should be our pattern for giving today (2 Corinthians 8:9)? How is it different from the Old Testament pattern?

6. What should be our attitude in giving (2 Corinthians 9:7; 1 Corinthians 13:3; Matthew 6:1-4)?

What was lacking in the Corinthians' giving (2 Corinthians 8:8-11) in contrast to the way the Macedonians gave (vv. 1-5)?

7. Does God need our gifts (Psalm 50:10-12)? _____ Who really benefits from our giving (Philippians 4:17)?
8. From the following verses list the positive results of giving to God versus the negative results of withholding material goods:

Verse	Giving	Withholding
Proverbs 11:24		
Proverbs 28:27		
Malachi 3:8-10		
Matthew 6:20-21		
Luke 12:20-21		
2 Corinthians 9:6, 8		
1 Timothy 6:9-11		

9. Who should we consider in our giving (Proverbs 19:17; 1 Corinthians 9:14; Galatians 6:6; James 2:15-16)?
- What principles would you consider in giving to a Christian organization other than the local church?
10. Are you satisfied with your current giving to the Lord? What will you do differently as a result of this lesson?

Lesson 6: Attaining Life Goals (Part II)

After having completed the “Goal Planning Worksheet” and the “Time Inventory” worksheet in Lesson 4, you are ready to write your short-range goals and to complete a weekly schedule. You should review the NOTES for Lesson 4 before doing the exercises below.

1. *Short-Range Goals.* You have reviewed various areas of your life with your leader and before the Lord.
 - a. Select three goals from your “Goal Planning Worksheet” that you wish to pursue during the next few months. These goals should be challenging and should contribute to a disciplined, victorious Christian life. If you only had six months to live, what goals would you pursue?
 - b. Record your goals and the activities needed to achieve them by answering the questions on the “Goals and Activities” worksheet.
2. *Weekly Schedule.* Having analyzed your present use of time and established your short range goals (Lesson 4), complete a weekly schedule that will ensure that all necessary activities are done. Take the following steps:
 - a. Consider the areas of responsibility listed on the “Schedule Planning Worksheet.” For each area, write down all the activities you are presently doing and all activities you must do to achieve your short range goals.
 - b. Estimate the time required for each activity and record it under “Time Needed.” Total.
 - c. Assign priorities for your activities. Mark the “must do” activities by “A.” These include routine activities over which you have no choice (sleep, work, etc.) and the activities related to your goals. Mark “should do” activities by “B” and “can-do” or low value activities by “C.”
 - d. Fill in the “Weekly Schedule” recording the “A” activities first, then the “B” activities and finally the “C” activities. The “C” and “B” priority activities may have to be eliminated or adjust to fit the 168-hour week.
3. *Optional.* It would be worthwhile to complete a “Goal Planning Worksheet” for Intermediate, Long-Range and Life Goals.
 - a. Start with Life Goals first. (See Lesson 4 under “Developing Goals.”)
 - b. Long-Range Goals should include subgoals that will help you meet the Life Goals.
 - c. Intermediate Goals should help you achieve the Long-Range goals.
 - d. You may now have to adjust your Short-Range goals to ensure that you can meet the Intermediate Goals.
4. *Check-Up and Review.* Ask for help from your leader when needed. Adjust your goals and time schedule as necessary. Have someone review you periodically on your progress.

Goals and Activities

Goal	What do you want to achieve, and why? How will you know when you have reached it? By what date?	How will you achieve it? (list activities)
Goal A		1. 2. 3.
Goal B		1. 2. 3.
Goal C		1. 2. 3.

I commit myself, before the Lord, to seriously pursue these goals.

(signed)_____ (date)_____

Schedule Planning Worksheet

Area of responsibility	Step 1: Specific supporting activities	Step 2: Time needed (daily / weekly)	Step 3: Priority (A, B, C)
Relationship with God			
Family: spouse, children, other			
Ministry / Christian training			
Job / school			
Other: financial, physical			
Total			

Weekly Schedule · Week of _____ to _____

	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN
5:00							
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Lesson 7: The Spirit Of God: His Person And Work

When Paul, the Apostle, met some of the disciples of John the Baptist at Ephesus, he asked them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” They answered, ‘No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit’” (Acts 19:2 NIV). Today most professing Christians have heard of the Holy Spirit but they do not know much about Him or the ministries which He performs. Likewise the Lord’s disciples had little understanding of the Holy Spirit. The Lord introduced the Holy Spirit to them in a startling way. “It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you” (John 16:7). This Comforter or divine Helper, was none other than the Holy Spirit (John 7:39). The Lord Jesus considered that the Spirit’s coming would more than make up for the Savior’s departure in physical presence.

At the very outset, the Bible tells us, “The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters” (Genesis 1:2). The “Spirit of God” is more than a generalized expression for God, even in the Old Testament, where often the Spirit of the Lord is seen as distinct in His ministries. Admittedly, the New Testament is the place where the one true God is seen more clearly as three distinct Persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Luke 3:21-22; Ephesians 4:4-6; John 14:16). We must repeat the teaching of Scripture in this regard.

1. There is one God (1 Timothy 2:5; Mark 12:29; Ephesians 4:6).
2. There is plurality within the one God (Genesis 1:26). He speaks of Himself in the plural. One of His names in the Old Testament is the plural *Elohim*, used about 2600 times.
3. The plurality of God is shown in three distinct Persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (1 Peter 1:2; Jude 20-21). Each of these Persons is fully God. The Father is God (1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Peter 1:17). The Son is God (John 1:1, 14; 20:28; Romans 9:5; Colossians 1:15; 2:9; Hebrews 1:8). The Spirit is God (Acts 5:3-4; 2 Corinthians 3:17).

Picture this relationship as a triangle, representing the triune God. The triangle represents the one God. The three sides represent respectively the Father, the Son and the Spirit. Each side differs from the other, yet each is part of the triangle representing the one God. Amazingly, the Scripture reveals that the three Persons interact with one another in personal address (Hebrews 1:8). Our finite minds may have difficulty with such a Being who has no parallel in our experience or observation. But we must accept what God has revealed concerning Himself, whether we can understand it fully or not.

The Deity of the Spirit

Further proof that the Holy Spirit is God is evidenced below:

1. **He Has The Names Of God**, being also co-identified with Him. He is called God (Acts 5:3-4). He is the Spirit of the Lord (2 Corinthians 3:18), the Spirit of God (Romans 8:14), and the Spirit of the Father (Matthew 10:20). He is identified with the Old Testament names of God, *Jehovah* and *Adonai* (Compare Acts 28:25 and Isaiah 6:1-13; also Hebrews 10:15-17 and Jeremiah 31:31-34). He is also the Spirit of Christ (Romans 8:9) and the Spirit of Jesus Christ (Philippians 1:19), showing the oneness of the Godhead, as well as the distinction of Persons.

2. **He Has The Attributes Of God.** He is eternal (Hebrews 9:14), possesses inherent life (Romans 8:2), is omniscient (1 Corinthians 2:10-11), and is omnipresent (Psalm 139:7-10) to name those most obvious divine traits.
3. **He Has Full Honor As God.** To speak against Him is to speak against God (Matthew 12:31-32). To sin against Him is to sin against God (Acts 5:3-4). To defile the temple where He resides is to defile the temple of God (1 Corinthians 3:16-17).

The Personality of the Spirit

The word “person” when applied to the Father, the Son and the Spirit means that each has the three qualities of personality. The Holy Spirit has intellect (1 Corinthians 2:10-11). He knows certain things. He has emotion (Ephesians 4:30). He can be grieved. He has personal feelings. He has a will (1 Corinthians 12:11). He decides what spiritual gifts to give believers. “Person” also means that each possesses an inner distinction from the other within the unity of the one God. It does not mean that each is a different Person in the sense that there are three Gods. Keep in mind the triangle illustration given previously.

It is important to note that personal pronouns are used in referring to Him (John 15:26; 16:13-14). The Spirit is “He,” not “it” (as if He were simply an influence or impersonal force).

Our relationship with the Spirit is very important. We should be conscious of Him in a thoughtful way, not slighting, ignoring or resisting Him. He is to be cherished (Psalm 51:11). We are not to sin against Him (Isaiah 63:10). He is to be obeyed (Acts 10:19-21). We need to wait upon Him, submit to Him and be observant of His leading.

What Is He Like?

Various symbols or emblems of the Spirit are used in Scripture which help us understand and appreciate His ministry.

1. **Wind** suggests to us the effect of His mighty, invisible power. The Lord Jesus referred to Him in this way as His explanation of the new birth (John 3:8). God is a spirit (John 4:24) and no man can see Him in the essence of His being (John 1:18) for He is invisible. The great power of the Spirit is seen in His manifestation in Acts 2:2 as the sound of a rushing mighty wind. The power of the Spirit working is inconceivably greater than all other power (Zechariah 4:6).
2. **Fire** is both purifying and consuming (Hebrews 12:29). The Spirit came to the disciples in the appearance of tongues of fire which separated and rested upon each of them (Acts 2:3-4). The symbol is also associated with the judgment of God (Isaiah 4:4; Matthew 3:12). The purifying effect of fire is seen in connection with the testing of believers, manifesting true faith (1 Peter 1:7; Revelation 3:18). The Spirit of God cleanses and judges in His ministry.
3. **Water** expresses the thought of the flowing of abundant life like a river (John 7:37-39; Revelation 22:1). There is the quenching of thirst, particularly that which is spiritual (John 4:14). Water is life-giving and hence symbolizes the giving of new life in the new birth of believers (Titus 3:5; John 3:5). Water is also a symbol of judgment and death to the old man (1 Peter 3:20-21). The ministry of the Spirit can result in either life or death, depending on our response to God.
4. **Oil** is associated with the word “anointing” which comes from the word meaning “to rub.” The Spirit is the anointing of the believer in Christ (1 John 2:20, 27; 2 Corinthians 1:21). Oil

provided fuel for the lamps of the Old Testament Tabernacle of God and was used in consecrating priests for the service of the Lord. It symbolizes gladness (Hebrews 1:9; Psalm 104:15) and healing (James 5:14). Consecration for service and testimony is the sanctifying work of the Spirit.

5. **The Dove** is even today symbolic of peace and purity. The Spirit descended like a dove upon the Lord Jesus at His baptism (Matthew 3:16; Mark 1:10; Luke 3:22; John 1:32). It suggests the harmless (Matthew 10:16), the gentle, the heavenly. All these virtues should characterize the Spirit-controlled believer.

What Does He Do?

Certain ministries seem to be associated with each of the persons of the Godhead. The Father purposes and wills. The ministry of the Son was to take upon Himself humanity and be the visible manifestation of God. The invisible Spirit apparently has the ministry of empowering or enablement. We note the following general ministries which He performs.

1. By His power, all things are accomplished, whether it be creation (Genesis 1:2; Psalm 104:30) or the resurrection of Christ from the dead (Romans 8:11). All divine miracles are by His power (Matthew 12:28, Luke 4:14-18). His omnipotence is able to overcome any obstacle.
2. He is the Revelator of God to man and the One who inspired the written Word of God (2 Peter 1:21; 2 Samuel 23:2). Further, He is the Teacher and Illuminator of the mind of man in spiritual understanding (John 16:13). He is the True Guide to a correct pathway in any situation (Isaiah 48:16; Romans 8:14).
3. He is the One who brings spiritual life to sinful men. He convicts them of sin (John 16:8), enables them to see spiritual truth and regenerates them (John 3:5). There is no saving work apart from His ministry.
4. He alone was the agent of conception in the incarnation of the Son of God (Luke 1:35). The Lord Jesus was saturated with the ministry of the Holy Spirit in every aspect of His life.

The Dividing Line of Pentecost

The Holy Spirit, being God, is changeless in His person, deity and character. However, He does alter the manner of His ministry from time to time. A most significant change in the ministry of the Holy Spirit is evident after the Lord Jesus rose from the dead and ascended into heaven. This change came upon the day of Pentecost, a Jewish agricultural festival which was one of the seven feasts of Jehovah (Leviticus 23). *Pentecost*, from the Greek word for “the fiftieth day,” is so named because it came fifty days after the Passover sabbath.

Many believers are plainly confused in their understanding of the ministry of the Holy Spirit because they do not pay attention to the plain statements of the Lord Jesus. Note carefully these verses which show the change in the Spirit’s ministry and the precise point where that change occurs:

1. JOHN 14:16. The Lord Jesus said He would ask the Father to give believers the Spirit to abide with them forever. Obviously this had not previously occurred.
2. JOHN 14:17. He said that the Spirit was then *with* them but later would be *in* them.
3. JOHN 7:39. He said that the Spirit was not yet given (in the sense of being in believers) and this would not be accomplished until Jesus was glorified (i.e., after His death, resurrection

and ascension).

4. LUKE 24:49. Just before His ascension, He told them to wait in Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high. This reflected the promised coming of the Holy Spirit to dwell in them.
5. ACTS 1:4-5. He again commanded them to wait for the Spirit's coming "not many days hence." He said they would be baptized in (with) the Holy Spirit.
6. ACTS 2:1-4. Precisely on the day of Pentecost, fifty days after the death of the Lamb of God on the cross (Christ, our Passover), the Spirit descended, indwelt the believers and filled them with His fullness.

Before Pentecost the Spirit "came upon" believers (Judges 3:10; 11:29; 1 Samuel 16:13) and, when displeased, departed from them (1 Samuel 16:14). Thus David could pray, "Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me" (Psalm 51:11), because the Spirit did not yet dwell permanently in believers. The Spirit empowered for certain tasks, as in the workmanship of the Tabernacle (Exodus 31:3; 35:30-35). He also gave strength or power to such men as Samson (Judges 13:25; 14:6, 19; 15:14) or Jephthah (Judges 11:29). This empowering was not necessarily related to spiritual qualities of those empowered. Men were filled with the Spirit, but none is recorded as being indwelt in an abiding way, nor was there baptism or sealing by the Spirit. Thus, we note the significance of the words of the Lord Jesus in John 7:39 and 14:17.

After Pentecost the Spirit came to live within believers (1 Corinthians 2:12; 6:19-20). Without this indwelling, a person is not a child of God (Romans 8:9; Jude 19). Further, believers are sealed until the day of redemption (2 Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 1:13; 4:30). Moreover, all believers are baptized into, or incorporated into, the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13). No such thing as the "body of Christ," the "church of Christ" or the "bride of Christ"—three equivalent expressions—was known prior to Pentecost. Clearly the day of Pentecost was a significant dividing line in the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Accordingly, pre-Pentecostal verses like Psalm 51:11 and 1 Samuel 16:14, should never be applied to prove doctrine about the Spirit after Pentecost, as so many have sought to do.

Conclusion

One may be very well informed on the doctrine of the Spirit and still know very little about the reality of His inner working in a powerful way in daily life. We want to be spiritually intelligent about the Holy Spirit. But we also need to be completely yielded to His strong moldings as clay in the hands of the Potter (Jeremiah 18:6). The Lord is that Spirit and we need to be open in every area to His mighty work. The result will be Christ-like character and life, not frenzy and unstable behavior. It is God Himself who lives within, and He is not the author of confusion.

The Spirit Of God: His Person And Work

1. The Holy Spirit is not just a force or influence. He is a person having the attributes of personality: intellect (ability to know), emotions (ability to feel), will (ability to do). How are these characteristics of personality demonstrated in the following verses?

1 Corinthians 2:10-12

Ephesians 4:30

1 Corinthians 12:11

2. How would you use the following verses to show that the Holy Spirit is God?

Acts 5:1-4

Romans 8:14

2 Corinthians 3:18

3. The Holy Spirit possesses the characteristics of Deity. Match the following verses with the attributes listed below: Hebrews 9:14; Psalm 139:7-9; 1 Corinthians 2:10-12.

Eternal existence_____

Unlimited knowledge_____

Everywhere present _____

4. The Bible sometimes uses “pictures” (called “emblems”) such as the wind (John 3:8), fire (Acts 2:3-4), water (John 7:37-39), oil (Leviticus 8:12; Acts 10:38), and a dove (Matthew 3:16; Luke 3:22) to show us what the Holy Spirit is like. From your general knowledge of the characteristics of these emblems, what does this tell you about the Holy Spirit? (Example: The Holy Spirit, like the wind, is invisible).
5. Pick one of the emblems above and explain how you can apply the related characteristics to your own life.
6. Identify the various activities of the Holy Spirit in the world:

Genesis 1:2

John 3:5-6

John 16:7-11

John 16:13-14

2 Peter 1:21

7. Has the Spirit always worked in the same way in every age, or are there distinctions in His mode of operation from age to age? Look up the verses on the graph below. Under “Comments” indicate the central thought of each verse as it relates to the Holy Spirit’s ministry. Note specifically any change from one age to another.

Period	Verses	Comments
Old Testament period (Creation to John the Baptist; the Law of Moses)	1 Samuel 16:14; Psalm 51:11	
Gospel period (John to Pentecost; the birth of Christ to the cross)	Luke 11:13; John 14:16-17	
Church age (Pentecost to the present)	Romans 8:9, 11; 1 Corinthians 6:19	

Lesson 8: The Spirit Of God: His Work In Believers

The Spirit of God is the powerful provision of the risen Christ for His people to live the life that they are called to live on earth. “Whoever believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.” By this He meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified” (John 7:38-39 NIV). Here was the power and wisdom of God provided to reside within us. As the One alongside, He would encourage, guide, teach, enable and pray on our behalf, just as Jesus did when He was on earth. He would be “another Comforter,” like the One who walked the Holy Land and ministered tirelessly to His disciples as well as to needy souls. This is a Person, not an influence, not a mystic cosmic energy, not an enlightened part of man. He is God within us.

The work of the Spirit begins before the child of God is ever born again. When Peter preached his famous sermon on Pentecost that led to the conversion of about 3000 souls, there was a profound impact through the Spirit's ministry. “When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, ‘Brothers, what shall we do?’ Peter replied, ‘Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven’” (Acts 2:37-38 NIV). What the people experienced is called conviction of sin. Without it, there is not likely to be repentance, which the Lord Jesus said was essential lest they perish (Luke 13:3). The Spirit's ministry is to convince the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment (John 16:8). He has also come to regenerate the soul of fallen man and bring him to eternal life (John 3:3-8; Titus 3:5).

What the Spirit Does at the New Birth

1. **Indwelling.** The Lord Jesus promised that after the Holy Spirit came He would be in believers to abide there forever (John 14:16-17). This continual indwelling is uniquely true since Pentecost and repeatedly affirmed (Romans 8:11; 2 Timothy 1:14; 1 Corinthians 2:12; Galatians 4:6; 1 John 3:24; 4:13). If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ within, he does not belong to Christ (Romans 8:9). Only the unsaved do not have the Spirit (Jude 19). The Spirit enters at the new birth. The indwelling makes every believer's body the temple of God (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). God lives in people, not in buildings, today.
2. **Sealing.** When someone believes the gospel of salvation, he is marked with a seal, which is the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13). The Holy Spirit seals us until the day of redemption when Christ returns for His saints (Ephesians 4:30). This indicates the permanency of genuine new birth. It is a seal of God's ownership (2 Corinthians 1:22). The same word is used of the sealing of Christ's tomb by the Roman guard (Matthew 27:66) and indicates security of a true believer in Christ.
3. **Earnest.** The word “earnest” is also translated “deposit,” indicating a pledge or guarantee that the transaction of salvation will be completed by God (2 Corinthians 1:22; 5:5; Ephesians 1:14). Each believer has been bought by the precious blood of Christ and will be claimed by Him when He returns. The Spirit will not depart from the believer, any more than Jesus would leave us (Hebrews 13:5). This is entirely different from the pre-Pentecostal work of the Spirit.
4. **Anointing.** In the Old Testament kings and priests were anointed with oil to indicate consecration of their service unto God. Today believers are anointed with the Spirit to set

them apart for His sacred purposes. Jesus Christ has made all believers kings and priests unto God (Revelation 1:6). Therefore, every believer is anointed of God, not just a few preachers with special spiritual abilities or power (1 John 2:20).

5. **Baptism.** This term was used by John the Baptist to predict a future activity of the Holy Spirit (Mark 1:7-8; John 1:33). The ascended Christ repeated the prophecy in Acts 1:5 to make clear that it was soon to come on Pentecost (Acts 2). No person is plainly identified as being baptized by, in, or of the Spirit *before* Pentecost. Thus Pentecost fulfilled the earlier prophecy of the Lord (John 7:39; 14:16-20). The only Scripture which deals with the baptism of the Spirit doctrinally is 1 Corinthians 12:13 where we are told that by one Spirit we were *all baptized* into one Body. That Body is elsewhere identified as the Church (Ephesians 5:23, 30-32), formed at Pentecost. This indicates that the Baptism of the Spirit unites us to the Body of Christ, and all Christians have been included. Baptism of the Spirit is a once-for-all action that takes place at the new birth.

Nowhere is a believer exhorted to seek the Baptism of (in) the Spirit. The 120 believers tarried in the upper room in Acts 2 to “wait” for the Spirit’s coming. Their tarrying did not cause the Spirit to descend, nor was it a sign of spiritual attainment for them. All received the baptism as a group. No single believer is ever seen in Scripture as seeking by some spiritual means to receive the Baptism of the Spirit or any of the spiritual gifts. The believer is not exhorted to do this nor instructed in how to do it. The Samaritans (Acts 8:14-20), Gentiles (Acts 10) and disciples of John (Acts 19:1-6) received the Spirit as groups, according to the will of God and not their seeking.

The question still remains as to why there were three separate baptisms for the groups mentioned above. Why did they not receive the baptism when the others did at Pentecost? The first believers in Christ were Jews. They were shown that Gentiles were also to be welcomed into full participation in the Body. Further, they were shown that a despised and hated group called Samaritans were equally to be received. This entire body of Samaritans was taken into the Church as a group. The supernatural signs were to prove their acceptance by God to a people who would not otherwise have received them as full-fledged Christians. Samaritans cannot properly be used as examples of Christians today who lack the Holy Spirit and need to individually seek “the baptism.” Similarly, the disciples of John the Baptist were not Christians until they as an entire group were given the Spirit through the laying on of hands by the Apostles amid supernatural signs. No believer today has been baptized with John’s baptism, nor could he say that he had not so much as even heard of the Holy Spirit.

It must be stated that so-called “Pentecostal” or “charismatic” believers understand baptism in/by/with the Spirit in an entirely different way. They insist that this baptism is a deeper spiritual experience, subsequent to and distinct from salvation, usually signified by speaking with tongues. They urge others, even unbelievers in some cases, to seek “the Baptism,” usually by means of seeking the “tongues” gift. The tongues are often demonstrated in church or elsewhere and then instruction given in how to receive the gift. Glowing experiences are cited as proof of the doctrine. Public healing services are also used as supportive evidence. However, there are several problems with their use of Scriptures on baptism of the Spirit.

- a. They freely confuse and interchange words which are not synonyms. “Filling of the Spirit,” as in Ephesians 5:18, is made to be the same as “baptism.” Yet here the word is “be continuously filled” and does not refer to a single event such as baptism. Moreover, filling occurred prior to the baptism’s institution. Filling is repeated with the same person (Acts

2:4; 4:8, 31). Baptism is a single event. Believers are exhorted to be filled with the Spirit. No believer in Jesus Christ is exhorted to seek the baptism of the Spirit, or even to seek to speak in tongues. The confusion of terms is made possible by the fact that filling and baptism happened simultaneously at Pentecost.

- b. They consider the Samaritans, Gentiles and disciples of John to be examples of powerless believers in churches today who, though saved, have not experienced the baptism of the Spirit. They utterly ignore the historic setting in Acts and the necessity of accrediting these groups in a public way. They further ignore the lack of instruction to seek the baptism of the Spirit in any of the epistles, particularly in passages about spiritual life.
- c. The Bible does not divide the Body of Christ into “charismatic” and “non-charismatic” groups. The Scriptures do not teach that there are two baptisms: one into Christ (conversion) and one into the Spirit (subsequent to salvation).

What the Spirit Commands the Believer

1. **Definition Of Filling.** “Be filled with the Spirit,” we are urged (Ephesians 5:18). The verb “be filled” indicates continuous action in the believer’s life, not a single experience. We understand what it means to be filled with the Spirit by understanding how the word “filled” is used elsewhere in Scripture. For example, the word “filled” is used to express controlling emotion such as being filled with wrath, fear, madness, sorrow, joy, envy or amazement. It also expresses the idea of saturation, such as a sponge with sour wine, a house with odors or a city with a certain teaching. It is also used to express a dominating trait, such as to be filled with deceit, grace or truth. The sum of these uses, as well as the special use in connection with the Spirit, makes clear that the control of our daily lives in a powerful way by the Spirit of God is what is meant by being filled with the Spirit. The term “filling” means “control.” It does not mean getting more of the Holy Spirit.
2. **Hindrances To Filling.** Anything that hinders the free working of God in our lives runs counter to the filling of the Spirit. *Resisting* the Spirit in an open way seems to be especially the activity of unbelievers (Acts 7:51). *Quenching* the Spirit, as water upon a fire, may be done by an entire church or its leadership (1 Thessalonians 5:19). *Grieving* the Spirit is something to be avoided by devout believers (Ephesians 4:30). The word indicates the sensitivity of the Lord to unbecoming, fleshly conduct. The Spirit will not work in power and blessing when treated in such a manner.
3. **Nature Of Filling.** Since the blessing and power of God depend upon the Spirit’s control or filling, how shall we experience the filling? It must be recognized that the Spirit is sovereign and may act entirely apart from any activity of man. This is illustrated by the fact that John the Baptist was filled from the womb (Luke 1:15). The Lord Jesus, as the Perfect Man, was always filled with the Spirit (Luke 4:1). Filling takes place when we seek to live, act or speak under God’s direction, without necessarily seeking the experience of filling itself. For example, when the apostles prayed for boldness to speak God’s Word, against great opposition, they were filled with the Spirit and testified with great power. The filling was not something that was rare. It was a requirement for the work of deacons (Acts 6:3) and present in every devout believer (Acts 11:24). It was sometimes manifested in surprising ways. Paul was filled in order to denounce a wicked man (Acts 13:9). Filling is for the accomplishment of God’s purposes, not man’s ambitions.

The Spirit possesses us, rather than our possessing Him. He directs our life in an unhindered way to do God's will, not to assert spiritual superiority.

4. **Conditions To Filling.** Conditions seem to be related in most cases to the response of our souls to God's work as He seeks to bring us into conformity with Christ (Roman 8:29; Galatians 4:19). A Spirit-filled life comes from:
 - a. The rich indwelling of the Word of Christ (Colossians 3:16; cf. Ephesians 5:18 ff).
 - b. Reckoning ourselves dead to sin but alive unto God (Romans 6:11).
 - c. Presenting our bodies to Christ for His purposes (Romans 12:1-2; 6:13).
 - d. Obedience flowing from the Lordship of Christ (Luke 6:46; John 14:21). We cannot expect to pray some kind of set prayer or go through a church ritual and expect thereby to become filled with the Spirit while by-passing the study of the Word and clinging to defiling habits. Filling or control of the Spirit is the effect of a vital relationship with Christ rather than a seeking for an experience.
5. **Results Of Filling.** The effect of the Spirit upon our lives depends upon our openness to His ministry. A Spirit-controlled life is one in which believers grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18), not an instant spirituality brought about by a crisis experience.

Results of the filling are seen in many of the practical expressions listed below:

- a. Character change or "fruit of the Spirit" (Galatians 5:22-23).
- b. Spiritual learning, especially from the Word (John 16:12-15; 1 John 2:27; 1 Corinthians 2:9-10).
- c. Knowing and doing God's will (Romans 8:14; 12:1-2).
- d. Effective prayer life (Ephesians 6:18; Romans 8:26-27).
- e. Boldness in witnessing (Acts 4:29-31).
- f. Outflow of blessing for others (John 7:38-39).
- g. Overflow in worship, song, praise (Ephesians 5:19).
- h. Christ-centered living (Galatians 2:20).

What the Spirit Does for the Believer

There are other specific ministries of the Spirit which include:

1. **Glorifying Christ.** The special ministry of the Spirit is to magnify not Himself but the Son to every believer (John 16:14).
2. **Teaching.** If we are to learn anything from the Word or about the Lord's ways, it must be taught through that Great Illuminator, the Holy Spirit (1 John 2:27; 1 Corinthians 2:9-14).
3. **Guiding.** Without direction we are like the spiritually blind. He is able to take us down the right path as we wait upon Him and listen to His counsel, whether given directly or through His servants (John 16:13; Proverbs 3:5-6).
4. **Assuring.** The Word is the basis of knowing our salvation, but inner conviction comes from the witness of the Spirit to our spirit (Romans 8:16; 1 John 3:24; 4:13; Galatians 4:6).

5. **Praying.** When we are far from praying the right things, the Spirit will intercede with what is needful (Romans 8:26).
6. **Sanctifying.** He is the Spirit of holiness. His very presence within our bodies is both an incentive to holiness (1 Corinthians 3:16-17) and an enabler of holy living.

Conclusion

Christian life is a personal relationship with God on a day-by-day basis. The Object of our faith is the Lord Jesus Christ. When we make Him the King of life and live under His Lordship, yielded to His every will, then the Spirit of God controls our lives and directs in the paths that honor God. Such a relationship brings the blessed fruit of the Spirit which are love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23). It is in seeking to glorify the Lord Jesus and being submissive to Him that we are victorious in our daily walk.

The Spirit Of God: His Work In Believers

1. What is the work of the Holy Spirit in bringing people to Christ and why is it necessary (John 16:7-8; 3:5-9; Titus 3:5)?

2. What term is used in Matthew 3:11 to indicate a future activity of the Holy Spirit?

From 1 Corinthians 12:13, how many are viewed as having been “baptized into one body”?

From the context of 1 Corinthians 12, what “body” is the Apostle Paul speaking of?

What conclusions, then, do you make of the “baptism with (in) the Spirit”?

3. How are seals used in relation to official documents today and what does that tell you about the ministry of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13)?
4. Ask a realtor about “earnest money.” What is the “earnest” of the Spirit (Ephesians 1:14)?
5. What personal assurance do you gain from Ephesians 1:13-14 and 2 Corinthians 1:22?
6. From Romans 8:8-11 we can draw several conclusions about the indwelling of the Spirit. See if you can list one for each verse.

v.8

v.9

v.10

v.11

What personal application can you make from 1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19-20?

7. How does the Holy Spirit continue to minister to the believer after his conversion?

John 16:13

Romans 8:14

Romans 8:26-27

8. Compare Ephesians 5:18-25 with Colossians 3:16-19. Notice that both passages begin with a command (Ephesians 5:18; Colossians 3:16) and then list a series of actions that should result from obeying that command. The first command (Ephesians 5:18) is to “be filled with

the Spirit.” By comparing these two commands in the two passages, what do you think it means to be “filled with the Spirit”? What part do you have in the “filling”?

9. Identify the hindrances to the Spirit-filled life:

Ephesians 4:30

1 Thessalonians 5:19

What hindrances have you dealt with in your own life?

10. What are the marks of a Spirit-filled Christian (Galatians 5:22-23)?

According to this description, are you living a Spirit-filled life? Why, or why not? What practical steps can you take to more fully live under the Spirit's control?

Lesson 9: Spiritual Gifts

One of the striking features of the early or apostolic church was the widespread participation and spiritual function within the body of believers. The word was not done by the apostles alone, nor by a small group of trained “clergymen.” An examination of such passages as Acts 2:46-47; 5:13-14; 6:2-6; 8:4 indicates that many believers were involved in proclaiming the gospel and in other activities. During this period there was great multiplication of the believers and considerable spiritual fervor. This widespread participation was a major cause of the spread of the Christian faith throughout the civilized world.

There has been a rediscovery of this vision of every-member participation today and a return to New Testament practice. At the same time there has been a flood of interest in the doctrine of spiritual gifts. When Jesus ascended He gave these gifts unto His followers (Ephesians 4:8, 11). The purpose was “to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up” (Ephesians 4:12 NIV). Gifts are to be used in the development of all of God’s people so that they can do the work of the ministry. Paul used the picture of the human body and its parts in teaching this doctrine in 1 Corinthians 12. Proper functioning of the body requires that every part or member do its assigned task. No body could work properly if it were all mouth or hands. God has given to each believer something to be used for the benefit of others and the glory of God can change our lives and those of others.

Nature of the Gifts

1. **Definition.** Spiritual gifts are God-given capacities for spiritual service, supernaturally bestowed upon believers only. Our English word comes from two principal Greek words. One is *charismata*, which has given us our word “charismatic.” The root is *charis*, which is the word for “grace” or “undeserved favor.” The other word is *pneumatika*, meaning “spiritualities” or “something from the Spirit,” indicating its source is God, pertaining to the realm of the Spirit.

Gifts differ from natural talents, although both have their origin in God and may work together in certain instances. Natural talents come from the first or natural birth. Gifts come at the second birth. When spiritual gifts are properly developed and exercised, something supernatural takes place. There is an impact upon another believer in Christian growth and encouragement. Playing instruments, singing, doing artistic works are talents from God, but are not listed as spiritual gifts. The unsaved can also possess these. Gifts also differ from the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). Fruit proceeds from within, pertains to character and is part of the process of growth for all believers. Unlike spiritual gifts, each quality of the fruit of the Spirit is available to all believers.

2. **Source.** Every good and perfect gift comes from God (James 1:17). So it is with spiritual gifts. Since God is one, gifts come from the Father (Romans 12:3), from the Son (Ephesians 4:8), and from the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:11). Every believer receives one or more gifts from the risen Christ (Ephesians 4:7-8; 1 Corinthians 12:7; 1 Peter 4:10). There is no such thing as a believer who has received no gift. In this sense, all believers are “charismatic,” whether they realize it or not. The body of believers cannot be divided Scripturally between “charismatic” and “non-charismatic” groups, although this is widely done in the Christian world. Gifts are not the property of a few ordained people. The force of this truth is to remind us of our responsibility to stir up this gift within us and make use of it (1 Timothy 1:6). We must not neglect it.

What determines which gift we receive? Some believers point to 1 Corinthians 12:31 and 14:1 as indicating that it depends on our aspiration and asking God. Yet the first reference uses the plural rather than a singular pronoun and evidently is addressed to the church as a whole placing special value, or desiring, for the local body, the more important gifts, such as prophecy. Gifts come from the grace of God and are not a reward for holiness or striving (Ephesians 4:7). It is the Lord's discretion, not ours, which governs the apportionment of gifts. Are we wise enough to instruct Him as to our proper place in His body?

3. **Purpose.** The timing of this provision is related to the ascension of the Lord Jesus to heaven after His resurrection. It is particularly His provision for the church. The formation of the church at Pentecost makes clear that this is a new provision for believers, not available in prior ages. Gifts are to build up other believers so that they can do the work of the ministry (1 Corinthians 14:12, 26; Ephesians 4:12); to promote growth in unity and love (Ephesians 4:16); to assist in the care of one another (1 Corinthians 12:25-26; 1 Peter 4:9-10); and to glorify God, especially in the ministry of the Word (1 Peter 4:11). There is no hint in any of this of self-improvement, self-edification or self-importance as a goal. Gifts are to be others-directed. But does it not say that tongues are to edify self in 1 Corinthians 14:4? This verse is a comparison between prophesying to edify the church and the Corinthian practice of tongues-speaking. The comparison makes tongues the lesser. The verse does not state that self-edification is a purpose of any spiritual gift. Edifying of self is a by-product. Gifts are to build others.

Classification of the Gifts

Bible scholars disagree as to the exact number of gifts. As few as nine and as many as twenty-two are recognized. Moreover, there is no agreement as to whether those listed in Scripture represent a complete catalog. Many believe that the major gifts are mentioned, but there could be others that are not listed in Scripture. Note the following lists of gifts:

1 Corinthians 12:8-10

1 Corinthians 12:28

Romans 12:6-8

Ephesians 4:11

Word of wisdom	Apostles		Prophecy	Apostles
Word of knowledge	Prophets		Ministering	Prophets
Faith	Teachers		Teaching	Evangelists
Healing	Miracles		Exhortation	Pastors
Miracles	Healings		Giving	Teachers
Prophecy	Helps		Leading (ruling)	
Discerning of spirits	Governments (administrations or wise counsels)		Mercy	1 Peter 4:11
				Speaking
Tongues				Serving
Interpretation of tongues	Tongues			

The question is intensely debated as to whether some gifts passed from the scene with the apostolic church. Many conservative writers believe that the sign gifts, such as healing, were for the times of the apostles primarily. Others vigorously deny this and say that the proof is lacking Scripturally. Many leaders have claimed that they are apostles of God, even possessing the powers and authority of the original Twelve. But apostles could only be with us in the secondary sense of the word, since none today could be a witness of the Resurrected Christ as was required (1 Corinthians 9:1; Acts 1:21-22). The matter of whether some gifts yet remain with us or whether others have now been added is still debated. It is beyond the scope of this lesson.

Various ways of classifying gifts have been used. Examples are (1) according to their nature (speaking, serving, signifying); (2) according to their sphere (church at large or church local); (3) according to their aspects (motivations, ministries, manifestations); (4) according to their duration (permanent or temporary). A description of the gifts, classified according to their nature, is given in Appendix B.

Utilization of the Gifts

Each of us is responsible to function as a servant of the church by using our gift. The New Testament does not present the picture of a few workers doing most of the service for God while others merely attend, enjoy the ministry and help a little financially. Remember the parable of the talents and our coming reckoning before God (Matthew 25:14-29). Each Christian is to be vitally involved in a body of believers and ministering according to God's plan. How are we to go about doing this?

1. **Discovery Of Gifts.** This is not directly commanded in Scripture. However, there are many commands to serve the Lord in the fellowship of His church. Thus we can begin by serving in whatever way we can help. We need not wait until we discover our own particular gift before serving. We are commanded to function in many gift areas, without having that gift. These areas include serving (Galatians 5:13), exhortation (Hebrews 10:25), giving (2 Corinthians 9:7), faith (2 Corinthians 5:7), evangelistic work (Acts 1:8), discerning or distinguishing spirits (1 John 4:1), teaching (Titus 2:4) and shepherding (1 Corinthians 12:25). The special blessing of God in one of these areas of ministry is a sign of spiritual gift. But who would limit giving, faith and helping others only to the gifted? It appears that one person may have more than one gift (Paul, Philip). In any event, there should be no occasion for claiming spiritual superiority (1 Corinthians 12:21-24).
2. **Development Of Gifts.** Normally this comes when we are actively using them for God. They do not seem to be conferred in full bloom. Growth in the use of spiritual gifts seems to be governed by the same principles governing all areas of spiritual development. The command to present our bodies to Christ for His service that we might be a living sacrifice precedes a passage on gifts (Romans 12:1-2). A plea to walk worthy of our calling precedes another such passage (Ephesians 4:1). Such factors as obedience, effective prayer, diligent study of the Word, sharing our faith, active local church fellowship and a desire to do God's will effects the development of our gift(s). No short cuts or speed-up processes exist to develop gifts. As in other areas of spiritual progress, there must be gradual growth.
3. **Guidelines For Recognizing Gifts.** The following guidelines may be helpful:
 - a. Be Others-Directed. Spiritual gifts minister to others, particularly in building them up so that they also can serve in the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:12). Do not concentrate on

yourself.

- b. Look for “Open Doors” Of Service (Galatians 6:10). Do not wait to discover your gift before serving. It may not be what you had in mind but there is a need and you could do it, if you made the effort. When needs and opportunities abound, it is not spiritual to be waiting around to “discover my gift first.” Jesus said, “I am among you as He that serveth” (Luke 22:27). Trying to concentrate on one area too soon may be a handicap.
- c. Pray for Opportunities to Serve the Lord Jesus. Do not wait for someone to come and seek you out. Part of taking the whole armor of God is to be prayerful (Ephesians 6:18). Ask God for wisdom (James 1:5) to understand where He wants to use you. Review the list of gifts and seek to find some opportunity to serve. Do not underestimate your capacity to do what God opens up for you. Appropriate His sufficiency (2 Corinthians 12:9).
- d. Seek the Counsel of Mature Believers Who Know You (Proverbs 11:14). We are often not the best judge of our own gift (1 Corinthians 14:29). Our personal desires may be utterly at variance with the mind of the Spirit. For example many gifted preachers of the Word at first shunned the whole idea of preaching. On the other hand, many actively seek the pulpit when their ministry obviously lies elsewhere. Be open to counsel. Accept closed doors.
- e. Be Active in Serving. Activity may lead to discovery of your gift (2 Timothy 1:6; 1 Timothy 4:14). We rarely have need to fear “running ahead of God” when we serve where we can and where needed. Are you available or seeking to avoid responsibility? Are you faithful in present duties?
- f. Do Not Expect Instant Development. Growth is the Scriptural way of development in almost all areas of Christian life (2 Peter 3:18). A gift does not spring into being fully developed. Unimpressive beginnings and discouragements often mark our stumbling beginnings. Beware of premature judgments which may shut off areas of growth.

Your life may be a dynamic reservoir of unused potential for God. You may serve prominently or quietly. You may serve in a humble ministry, such as helps, or in a compassionate ministry, like mercy. There seems to be no end of opportunity in these areas. In any case, commit yourself to use whatever God has given you and exercise it in the sufficiency of God. Do not neglect your gift. Stir it up!

Spiritual Gifts

1 List the various spiritual gifts shown in the following verses:

1 Corinthians 12:8-10

Romans 12:3-8; 28-30

1 Peter 4:8-11

Ephesians 4:11

2. How would you answer a statement to the effect that:

- a. Only the more spiritual Christians have a spiritual gift (1 Corinthians 12:7).
- b. Any one gift is meant for all believers (1 Corinthians 12:28-30).
- c. A person should pray to receive a spiritual gift (1 Corinthians 12:11,18).

3. What are two purposes for spiritual gifts according to the following verses:

1 Corinthians 14:12 and Ephesians 4:11-13

1 Corinthians 14:20-25 (especially 14:22) and Hebrews 2:2-4

4. What two attitudes did Paul warn against in regard to spiritual gifts?

1 Corinthians 12:15-16 1 Corinthians 12:21

What would be the practical result of such activities?

5. What did Paul say about the Corinthian church concerning gifts (1 Corinthians 1:4-7)?

Did their gifts make them a spiritual church (1 Corinthians 3:1-3)?

6. From 1 Corinthians 14: What was the purpose of the gift of tongues?

How were the Corinthians abusing this gift?

What regulations did Paul lay down regarding tongues?

Explain the statement, "Five is better than ten thousand."

7. In the following passages what is said about our attitudes in using our gifts? What is said about the way we exercise our gifts? What cautions appear to be associated with the gifts mentioned?

Romans 12:6-8

1 Timothy 4:13-15

1 Peter 4:8-11

8. According to 1 Corinthians 13:1-3, 8-10, 13 does God place more emphasis on knowing and exercising our spiritual gift, or on developing Christ-like character and exhibiting the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23)? Explain.

9. What do you think your spiritual gift is? How have you been using it in your local church? How do you plan to use it in the future?

10. What responsibility do you have if you do not know what your spiritual gift is?

Lesson 10: Servanthood

"I AM AMONG YOU AS HE THAT SERVETH," said our Lord (Luke 22:27). "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45 NASB). The Father said of Him by the mouth of Isaiah, "Behold, my Servant" (Isaiah 42:1).

In the world there is the constant striving for pre-eminence. The competition is for first place, self-elevation. The goal is to be the top one, the boss of all. Jesus modeled and taught a revolutionary new way. The disciples were disputing among themselves who should be the greatest. Jesus corrected them explaining, "If any one wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all" (Mark 9:35 NIV).

Becoming Great Through Serving

"Whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant," Jesus exhorted, "and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all" (Mark 10:43-44 NASB). Jesus taught that in the kingdom of God *the only way up is down*. The concept of serving is so radical that it is recorded in all four gospels (Matthew 20:25-28; Mark 9:33-35; 10:35-45; Luke 22:24-27; John 13:1-17). Every aspect of His life displayed servanthood. Although the subject is vital, it is difficult to grasp.

1. THE DISCIPLES STRUGGLED FOR GREATNESS. There was strife among the disciples over which of them would be considered the greatest (Luke 22:24). James and John, the sons of Zebedee, even requested that they could sit one on His right hand and one on His left hand in glory (Mark 10:35-37). Jesus was not surprised by their request. "Those who are recognized as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great men exercise authority over them," He explained (Mark 10:42 NASB). But God's kingdom is not like the kingdom of the world. Jesus is the Supreme One in God's kingdom, yet He came not to be served, "but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45 NASB). He asked the probing question, "Who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves" (Luke 22:27 NIV). Jesus Himself is a servant. Should His followers seek pre-eminence? "The servant is not greater than his Lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him" (John 13:16).
2. JESUS MODELED SERVANTHOOD. At the last Passover Jesus took the lowly role of washing the disciples' feet. Afterward He explained, "Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you" (John 13:13-15). Although Jesus was God, He purposely set aside His privileges as God when He left heaven to take on the form of a man. He was not concerned for His personal rights. He was burdened for a lost world. For the benefit of sinful man He humbled Himself to the point of death. He gave His all for others. Because of Jesus' sacrifice, God the Father has now "highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name" (Philippians 2:9 NASB). He chose the last place for Himself but will be elevated to first place for all eternity.

Serving God by Serving People

A high calling in the life of a Christian is to serve God by serving others. Paul proclaimed, "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake" (2

Corinthians 4:5). He commends the churches of Macedonia who “gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God” (2 Corinthians 8:5). It is easier to think of serving God, whom we have not seen, than to serve people we see every day. Nonetheless, we are admonished to minister “one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God” (1 Peter 4:10).

1. **The Attitude Of A Servant.** Servanthood begins in the heart. A servant is one who takes a low place for himself that he might concentrate on the needs of others. He is willing to do the dirty work, the humble tasks, the behind-the-scenes job. His actions are not motivated by “selfish ambition or vain deceit.” The servant is more concerned about the needs of others than self (Philippians 2:3-4 NIV). The motivation for his service is love (Galatians 5:13).
2. **The Actions Of A Servant.** We are called to serve spiritual leaders and fellow believers in the church (Romans 16:1). We are exhorted to do good to all men, especially those of the household of faith (Galatians 6:10). Practical ministry is necessary for those who are needy—either physically or spiritually (Proverbs 31:20). Servanthood may involve personal risk, as it did for Priscilla and Aquila (Romans 16:4) and Epaphroditus (Philippians 2:25-30). It may require investments of time or possessions. The Shunammite woman made a special room for the prophet Elisha (2 Kings 4). Epaphras was a faithful servant who encouraged others to grow in faith in Christ and love for all the saints (Colossians 1:7). Dorcas was one who abounded with “deeds of kindness and charity, which she continually did” (Acts 9:36 NASB). Among other things she sewed tunics and garments for widows. Servanthood also involves submission to God-appointed authority. Joseph was noted for his dependable service to his supervisors (Genesis 39). Doing a good job at work is one essential form of servanthood (Ephesians 6:5-8).

Serving in a Faithful Manner

Scripture abounds with examples of those who were faithful servants of God and His people. Faithfulness is one of the most desired qualities in a servant (Luke 16:1-12). It is a prerequisite to future opportunities (Matthew 25:24-30). Faithfulness involves trustworthy, dependable, loyal service to others.

1. **Examples Of Faithful Servants.** Joshua became a great leader in Israel, but first he was the servant of Moses (Exodus 24:13). Because he faithfully served Moses (Joshua 11:15), he was qualified to be the leader when Moses passed on (Joshua 1:5). Similarly, Elisha ministered to Elijah as a servant for six years. When Elijah was translated, God honored Elisha as heir to the prophetic office (2 Kings 2:9-11). Timothy was a servant to the Apostle Paul “like a child serving his father” (Philippians 2:22 NASB). When Paul’s life and ministry was complete, Timothy would continue the work he began.
2. **Examples Of Unfaithful Servants.** Others in Scripture are noted for unfaithful service. Saul was unfaithful in completing delegated tasks (1 Samuel 15:1-3, 20-21). Because he was unwilling to go all the way, God took the kingdom from him (1 Samuel 15:26). Absalom looked faithful but was not. He was unwilling to serve his father, the king. He wanted the allegiance and affection of the people for himself (2 Samuel 15:1-6). Demas, Paul’s helper, started out well but did not last out. The affairs of this world were more important to him than serving (2 Timothy 4:10). What is hindering you from being faithful in God’s service? One encouraging example gives us hope. It is possible to change. John Mark traveled as a

servant to Paul and Barnabas, but deserted them at Pamphylia (Acts 15:38). Later he was given a second chance and was championed by Barnabas who was willing to take him along in the Lord's service (Acts 15:39). Although Mark was unfaithful at first, he later proved faithful.

Conclusion

The benefits of servanthood are numerous. For faithful service we might receive greater responsibility in the way Joshua did (Joshua 4:14) or see spiritual fruit the way Aquila and Priscilla did (Acts 18:26-28; 1 Corinthians 3:6). But most important of all, the lessons we learn in servanthood will be eternally significant. Our performance as servants will be evaluated by the Lord Jesus Himself at what is called the Judgment Seat of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:10). Not our sins, which He paid for, but our lives and service will be reviewed there when rewards are given for faithfulness unto Him. He expects all His servants to be profitable. Even before the eternal throne of God and of the Lamb, we read "His servants shall serve Him" (Revelation 22:3). Servanthood is an eternal occupation, dignified and blessed by our Lord. It will not lose its reward at His hands.

How has God called you to serve? Whom are you serving? Will you be like Saul, a halfway man; or like Demas, a quitter; or like Absalom, a self-seeker? Or will you be like Joshua, a plodder; or like Elisha, a second-mile man; or like Timothy, the proven servant? Jesus promised a great blessing to all who loyally serve Him. "If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am there shall My servant also be; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him" (John 12:26 NASB).

Servanthood

1. Contrast the world's concept of greatness with the Lord's teaching on servanthood (Luke 22:24-27; Mark 10:45).

What promise is given to one who serves the Lord (John 12:26)?

2. Study Philippians 2:3-11 and answer the following questions:

What place does self-elevation have in the Christian life?

Whose interests should we be primarily concerned about?

Who is our example?

What is the end result of Christ's voluntary servanthood?

What additional aspects of servanthood do you see in this passage?

3. How would you practically apply John 13:4-17 to your own life? From this passage what is the best way to teach servanthood?
4. Read Colossians 3:22-25 and answer the following questions:

How should we serve our "employers"?

Who are we really serving at work?

What will be the result of a poor job performance?

5. What great stumbling block hinders most Christians from being real servants in the church (Philippians 2:19-23)?
6. In what ways did Timothy and Epaphroditus serve the Apostle Paul (Philippians 2:19-30)?

7. What are some practical ways in which you might serve the leadership of your church?
What would be the first step?
8. In the following verses identify the sphere of service (ministry, job, family, etc.) and the attitude displayed by (or required of) the servant:

Verse Sphere of Service Attitude

Luke

17:10 _____

2 Corinthians

4:5 _____

2 Corinthians 12:15

Philippians 2:3-4

Colossians 3:22-

25 _____

1 Peter

4:10 _____

9. Read Appendix B, "Not to Be Ministered Unto," and record any additional insights regarding attitudes and servanthood.
10. As a practical exercise, please complete the sheet entitled "Opportunities for Ministry." If you are already involved, indicate the areas of involvement. If you are undecided as to how you might serve, so indicate. Everyone should turn in the "Opportunities for Ministry" sheet with this homework.

Opportunities for Ministry

There is a continual need for those who desire to serve. If you feel that the Lord has burdened you with a desire to serve in any of the following areas, check as indicated:

_____ Evangelism in the community.

_____ Follow-up of new believers.

_____ Correcting correspondence courses and answering student's questions.

_____ Kitchen: helping with dinners, lunches, etc., for various fellowship activities.

_____ Hospitality: opening your home for others to come to after Sunday morning or evening meetings.

_____ Women's Ministry: Day Time Bible Class _____ Craft Class _____ Available to help sick, etc. _____

_____ Children's Ministry: Nursery _____ Pre-School _____ Elementary _____

Jr. High _____ High School _____

_____ Music Ministry: Choir _____ Organ _____ Piano _____ Experience in these areas _____

_____ Missionary Activities: Prayer Group _____ Write Letters _____
 _____ Outside Work: Gardening, Watering, Clean-up, etc. Hours per week _____
 _____ Inside Work: Janitorial Clean-up. Hours per week _____
 _____ Secretarial Work and Clerical Help. Experience in these areas _____
 _____ Counseling (Practical) in areas of jobs, money matters, etc.
 _____ Home Bible Study or Fellowship Groups. Hosting _____ Leadership _____
 _____ Visitation (Evangelistic or Pastoral). _____
 _____ Other: _____

What is the best time during the day/week for you to serve in any of these areas? List day and hours: Day _____ Hours _____

Name _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY/ZIP _____

CODE _____

TELEPHONE _____

*Some opportunities listed may not be available in your church. Also, your leader may advise you of additional opportunities not listed.

Lesson 11: Personal Holiness

The God of the Bible is a holy God. His appearance is awesome. It drained the color from the face of one godly prophet (Daniel 10:8 NASB) and caused another to cry out that he was ruined (Isaiah 6:5 NASB). Yet another fell at His feet as a dead man (Revelation 1:17). The angelic guardians of this holiness incessantly cry before His throne, “Holy, holy, holy” (Isaiah 6:3; Revelation 4:8). Nothing that defiles can enter the place where He dwells (Revelation 21:27). Without holiness no one will see the Lord (Hebrews 12:14). Therefore the people of God must be a holy people and He has called us to that (Ephesians 1:4). He says, “Be ye holy, for I am holy” (1 Peter 1:16; cf. Leviticus 11:44; 19:2).

Unless God’s holiness is firmly implanted before the mind’s eye, we will be prone to low standards in personal living. “We have learned to live with unholiness and have come to look upon it as the natural and expected thing,” says A. W. Tozer.⁷ This laxness causes us to suppose that sinful living and easy forgiveness are perfectly acceptable. Those who continue in sexual immorality, drunkenness and such behavior will not inherit the kingdom of God, no matter how secure they feel in their prayers and church attendance (1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Galatians 5:19-21; Revelation 22:15). The believer is warned to flee immorality (1 Corinthians 6:18). Since the word “holy” is applied to the Spirit, to the Scriptures and to Christ Himself, it does not have an inferior meaning when applied to the kind of people we are to be.

Such varied words as “sanctify,” “saint,” and “consecrate” come from the same root as “holy.” The fundamental meaning is “set apart.” The words occur more than 800 times in the Bible. Non-living things, such as the vessels of the temple, were considered to be holy when set apart for God. Israel was set apart for God’s purposes in the Old Testament and therefore called a holy nation. The people of God in the New Testament are called a holy nation as well. God speaks of sanctifying Himself, for He is the Holy One. This indicates the absolute purity of His being and His separateness from the slightest taint.

Aspects of Holiness

1. **Positional Holiness.** We are brought into a position of eternal sanctification when we trust Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior (Acts 26:18; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 6:11; Hebrews 10:10, 14). We are made holy by being “in Christ” (2 Corinthians 5:17). Therefore God calls every believer a “saint,” or holy one, as the salutation of almost every Pauline epistle makes clear (1 Corinthians 1:2). By grace we are given a holiness which would otherwise be impossible to attain.
2. **Progressive Holiness.** “Progressive” implies a process of becoming holy in practice. This is the holiness that Christ prays for (John 17:17). God intends for our positional holiness in Christ to stimulate us to practice holiness in our daily lives. Unholiness is a mark of corrupt men bound for God’s eternal judgment (1 Timothy 1:9-10; 2 Timothy 3:2-5). We are called to “cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2 Corinthians 7:1). There are stern warnings and strict penalties connected with unworthy practices (1 Corinthians 11:27-31). We are called to sanctification in this life, not simply in the one to come (1 Thessalonians 4:7; 2 Peter 3:11).

This practical, or daily holiness, involves both *separation unto God* and *separation from evil*. We are called to be set apart for God’s purposes and for the Master’s use (2 Timothy 2:21). This is a holy availability to God. We are also called to be separate from defilement in any form.

This includes such things as fornication (1 Thessalonians 4:3), “fleshly lusts, which war against the soul” (1 Peter 2:11) and “every form of evil” (1 Thessalonians 5:22 NASB). We are not to be “unequally yoked together with unbelievers,” but we are to be separate from such alliances (2 Corinthians 6:14-17).

3. **Perfect Holiness.** We will not be set apart from all defilement forever until we see the Savior in heaven. After death we will have ultimate, final, perfect holiness in all aspects (Ephesians 5:27; Colossians 1:22; 1 John 3:2; Jude 24). We cannot expect perfection in this sense until then.

Errors About Holiness

1. **Perfection After Conversion.** Some groups have taught the doctrine of instantaneous and “entire” sanctification in this life, based upon Romans 6:6 and Galatians 2:20. Believers are urged to seek an experience whereby the “old man is crucified,” and the “body of sin ... destroyed.” By seeking this experience believers are said to find and enjoy a perfection not possible at regeneration. They are said to achieve, all at once, a holier life than ever before by reason of this experience. However, this doctrine is at variance with the Scripture’s teaching of a moment-by-moment walk with Christ, rather than a once-for-all “crisis” (Luke 9:23). No single experience produces consistent, perpetual holiness or “sinless perfection.” Walking in the Spirit and abiding in Christ is a day by day matter.
2. **Pharisaism.** The members of a religious party of Jesus’ time were called “Pharisees,” meaning “separated ones.” They based their holiness before God upon meticulous observance of ceremonials, such as the washing of vessels and hands. They paid tithes (a tenth) even of the vegetables in their gardens (Luke 11:42 NASB). But they disregarded justice and the love of God. They would “strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel” (Matthew 23:24). The Pharisees were extremely judgmental of Jesus for His contact with sinners and outcasts and for His indifference to their ceremonials (Mark 7:2-5). If we seek to achieve holiness by ceremonials or religious duties that do not touch the inner life, then we are guilty of pharisaism. Today, this form of “holiness” is manifested in an extreme judgmental spirit toward other believers in matters of dress, hair style, customs or perhaps in minor details of doctrine. Yet the critics often lack genuine love and true spirituality in their own lives.
3. **Elitism.** Sometimes believers think they have arrived at spirituality because they have had a certain experience, or have developed a certain lifestyle (such as living in poverty), or have gathered around a certain school of doctrine that is THE truth. These are the ones to whom the phrase “holier than thou” so well applies (Isaiah 65:5). When we are guilty of elitism, we focus on our attainments and compare ourselves with those we think have not come so far (2 Corinthians 10:12). Our attitude is “there is one class of believers, namely ‘us,’ with our doctrines, our lifestyles, our special training, our leader—then there are all the other poor unenlightened souls.”
4. **Isolationism.** It is easy to think that if we could just get away from the world and keep to ourselves, then we would be holy before God. We can stay away from sinners. We can live in the mountains or in a remote spot. We can adopt special dress, to identify ourselves as different. We can spend all our time with believers. We can refuse to read or hear any news from the general world. We might do all these things to try to achieve holiness. However, the example of the Lord Jesus forbids this. He ate with sinners, visited among all

the people and was fully aware of what was going on. Yet He never compromised His personal standards. Our calling is rather to be *in* the world but not *of* the world (John 17:14-16). If the Lord wanted otherwise, He would remove us.

Areas of Holiness

Personal holiness involves every aspect of a believer's life. Some of the more notable areas, particularly evident to others, are our speech, disposition, moral conduct, personal relationships, outward appearance and dietary practices.

1. **Speech.** Our speech should be worthwhile. Gossip and meaningless chatter should be avoided. Our words should be not only honest (Leviticus 19:11; Proverbs 12:22), pure (Ephesians 5:3-4), and gracious (Colossians 4:6), but also edifying (Ephesians 4:29). We should speak with reverence about the things of God, particularly avoiding puns or jokes about the Bible or spiritual matters. Perhaps we would be more mindful of our speech if we kept the admonition of Jesus Christ ever before us: "Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Matthew 12:36-37).
2. **Disposition.** Concern for others should dominate the Christian's personality. We are exhorted to be kind, tenderhearted and forgiving (Ephesians 4:32). Our temper must be held in check (Ephesians 4:26). Righteous anger is anger for God's cause, not for our own. A crabby, grouchy, critical, complaining, jealous, vindictive, contentious, covetous or stubborn disposition cannot be justified in believers as "human nature." It must be condemned in our lives as carnal nature and as sin. The adage, "sinners at home, saints abroad," indicates that the great proving ground in this area is in the home or with the people we rub shoulders with day by day.
3. **Moral Purity.** Although God created sex, He also limited it to the security of marriage (Proverbs 5:18-20). The world clamors for a modification of God's standards, saying, "It's all right if you love each other," or "Homosexuality is the way I am." Yet the consequences remain. Improper use of sex can destroy a man both mentally and physically (Proverbs 5:1-11; Romans 1:27; 1 Corinthians 6:18). Samson and Joseph in the Old Testament are contrasting examples of defeat and victory in the area of moral purity (Judges 14-16; Genesis 39). Samson lost his testimony and his life; Joseph lost a job, but ended up as a leader in a kingdom. Moral purity begins with purity in the thought life (Matthew 5:28) which must be controlled by an act of the will (Job 31:1). Our thoughts must be redirected to that which is worthy (Colossians 3:1-5; Philippians 4:8).
4. **Relationships.** The Lord Jesus ate with tax collectors and sinners, since He came to call them to repentance. He was in contact with them, but He did not allow Himself to be compromised by their conversation, sinful practices, or worldly orientation. How is this delicate interaction achieved? First, He made no alliances of any kind with them. The Scripture says, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" (2 Corinthians 6:14). True fellowship between light and darkness, between believers and unbelievers, is spiritually impossible on any righteous grounds. Second, He did not engage in defiling practices or descend to the level of sinners in order to witness. In summary: Have contacts with the unregenerate that have an impact on their lives by your testimony. Never compromise standards of holiness to do so.

5. **Dress.** The Christian should dress to enhance his testimony, not detract from it. We want to draw attention to Christ, not ourselves. As ambassadors for the King (2 Corinthians 5:20) our dress should not be showy or costly (1 Timothy 2:9). Adornment with good deeds is more important than fancy clothes (Titus 2:10). Luxurious clothes belong to the world (Luke 7:25). Women should take care to be feminine, but not suggestive or alluring. Men should select masculine clothes. God hates both cavorting in nudity and confusion of sexes (Deuteronomy 22:5).
6. **Food And Drink.** Although all foods are clean (Mark 7:18-29 NASB; 1 Timothy 4:3-5), gluttony (over-eating) should be avoided. The story of Eli (1 Samuel 2-4) is instructive on the result of lack of control in this area and its effect on succeeding generations. As for drink, one cannot make a Biblical case against total abstinence from wine. However, we should avoid stumbling others (Romans 14:21; Galatians 5:13).

Guidelines for Questionable Areas

How does a believer determine proper conduct in areas not specifically addressed in Scripture? What about certain *amusements* (a word which comes from a root meaning “not to think”)? Are certain *habits* sinful if not directly forbidden in the Bible? Is any kind of music or television program or practice out of bounds for the one who is serious about following Christ? On matters not directly covered in the Bible, consider the following questions, with appropriate verses, as a test:

1. Would God be glorified in it (1 Corinthians 10:31)?
2. Would I be ashamed to be doing it when the Lord returns (1 John 2:28)?
3. Is it good stewardship of time and money (Ephesians 5:16; Luke 16:9)?
4. Is it addicting or habit-forming (1 Corinthians 6:12)?
5. Does it make provision for my flesh, paving the way for sin (Romans 13:14)?
6. Would my example in this matter cause others to stumble or sin (Romans 14:13; 1 Corinthians 8:13)?
7. Do I have doubts about it (Romans 14:23)?
8. Does it have the appearance of evil (1 Thessalonians 5:22)?
9. Is it of the world (1 John 2:15-16)?
10. Would it abuse my body, the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19)?
11. Would the Lord Jesus do it (1 Peter 2:21; 1 John 2:6)?

Principles for Holy Living

A holy life must be cultivated as a tender plant in a hostile environment. It takes time, thought and effort. Here are some major principles to consider:

1. **Cultivate Godly Habits.** Faithfully feed upon the Word of God as food for your soul (Psalm 119:9-11). Apply it obediently to your life rather than skim through it. Meditate upon its precepts (Psalm 1:2-3). Spend time alone with God in genuine supplication before His throne. Maintain a deep prayer life, which includes worship. Practice fellowship with the people of God in their meetings (Hebrews 10:25). Particularly, spend time in the company of the godly. Listen to the preaching (in person, on cassette tape or on the air) of Spirit-

empowered men. God uses certain men to change the lives of others. Listen to them. Read their books or articles, especially those by godly men who may now be with the Lord. Avoid the flood of trivial and superficial material coming from the presses. Keep the Lord's Day for God (Revelation 1:10); otherwise, call it "Your Day."

2. **Develop And Live By Convictions.** Determine where you stand in your principles. Then live by them regardless of the cost. That relieves you of making decisions under pressure from others, especially by the world's standards. Daniel was a notable example of a man of principle (Daniel 1). You must learn to say "NO" to temptation even to the point of taking drastic action (Genesis 39:10-12; Matthew 5:29-30). Seek God's help by calling out to Him when under pressure (Proverbs 18:10). Remove anything from your life that might be a source of temptation, such as acquaintances, items in the house, or certain job demands. Choose close friends carefully since they can have great influence (1 Corinthians 15:33). Make sure they share your convictions, or at least will respect them.
3. **Control Your Thought Life.** The Lord taught that it was from the inner thoughts of men that defilement chiefly came (Matthew 15:19-20). How can your thoughts be kept pure? First, control the input. Censor your reading material or other exposure to the world. The famous phrase of computer experts is "Garbage in, garbage out." This applies to the mind, which is man's computer. Do not let your gaze linger on defiling sights or temptations. The nephew of Abraham looked the wrong way and wound up in Sodom (Genesis 13:10-11). David looked wrongly and fell into disaster (2 Samuel 11:2). Keep busy, especially for God. The Bible does not say "an idle mind is the Devil's workshop," but the statement has a measure of truth. Focus on the Lord Jesus, the most worthy of all our thinking (Colossians 3:1-2). Think about the pure, the true, the worthwhile (Philippians 4:8). Be persuaded that you can, by God's enablement, direct your thoughts properly. Do not regard your mind as an open barn in which any flying thought can enter and roost like an unwelcome bird.

We conclude by noting that the soon return of the Lord Jesus Christ is constantly held up in the New Testament as an incentive for holy living (1 John 3:2-3; Titus 2:12-13; 2 Peter 3:14). If He came today, would we want to be found in any condition contrary to His holiness? If not, then we need to begin at once to take time to be holy.

Personal Holiness

1. Define holiness using the following verses as a guide: 1 Peter 1:15-16; Romans 12:1-2.
2. Identify the reasons for holy living indicated by the following verses. Which of these verses encourages you the most to live a holy life? Explain.

Romans 14:12

2 Corinthians 5:14

2 Corinthians 7:1

Galatians 5:13

Hebrews 12:14

1 Peter 1:15-16

1 Peter 2:24

2 Peter 3:10-12

3. One area of personal holiness is purity. Galatians 5:19 gives a catalogue of sexual sins. Define the vices listed and explain the difference between them. Use a dictionary or Bible dictionary if necessary.

Why is moral purity so important to God (1 Corinthians 6:15-20; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-9)?

4. Although men and women can both be tempted sexually, the man's primary temptation is to look (Proverbs 27:20b) and the woman's main temptation is to allure (Proverbs 23:28).

What does Jesus say about mental impurity (Matthew 5:28)?

What effect does a woman's chasteness (modesty, discretion) have on:

Husbands out of fellowship with the Lord (1 Peter 3:1-6)?

The Christian testimony (Titus 2:5)?

The woman's own beauty (Proverbs 11:22; Ezekiel 16:25)?

5. Controlling the tongue is another challenge to holy living. What are some of the dangers in speech? Use the following references to list key offenses in speech:

Proverbs 17:27

Proverbs 26:17-28

Ephesians 5:3-4

Ephesians 4:29

6. What principles of separation are detailed in 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 and what reasons are given?

Considering 2 Corinthians 6:14-17, what counsel would you offer in the following situations:

- a. A Christian you know is dating and even considering marriage to a fellow she knows is not a believer. She justifies this on the basis that she is "witnessing" to him and is sure he will eventually become a Christian.
 - b. A new Christian, recently saved in an evangelistic crusade, discovers that the church he has been attending does not teach people how to be saved and does not even require a person to be saved in order to be a member of that church.
 - c. A person is considering entering into a business partnership. He is not sure the prospective partner is a Christian.
7. Sometimes the teaching of separation is abused to justify isolation from non-Christians, divorcing an unbelieving mate, or separation from other Christians who hold minor doctrinal differences. How would you confront those issues using the following Scriptures: Matthew 9:10-11; 11:19; 1 Corinthians 7:12-16; 1:10-13.
8. Holiness, in a practical sense, means "being different." How is your life different from the unbelievers that you know?
 - a. In your speech?
 - b. In your disposition?
 - c. In your dress?
 - d. In your choice of music?

- e. In your observance of holidays?
 - f. In your choice of friends?
 - g. In your decisions regarding food and drink?
 - h. In your choice of reading matter, social activities, entertainment?
9. Review the “Guidelines for Questionable Areas” in the NOTES and explain how you would apply them in the following situations:
- a. You are invited to a cocktail party by your boss.
 - b. You want to buy an attractive outfit, but you are not sure if it is modest enough
 - c. The store down the street has pornographic magazines openly displayed at the checkout counter. Should you continue to patronize the store?
 - d. You have some music that you enjoy, but you are uncomfortable about playing it around your mature Christian friends.
10. List an area of personal holiness (purity, dress, speech, temper, food and drink, etc.) that you have struggled with and share how you gained victory in that particular area.

Lesson 12: Away From The Lord

“For day and night Thy hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was drained away as with the fever heat of summer” (Psalm 32:4 NASB). “For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me” (Psalm 51:3 NASB). How tragic is our experience as believers when we have broken fellowship with the Lord! We are away from the Lord! Fellowship that was once sweet and joyous has turned sour. The joy of salvation has gone (Psalm 51:12). We may wrap something of temporal satisfaction from the passing scene (2 Timothy 4:10). We may wrap the robe of self-justification about this wretched state by appealing to circumstances. Yet this lamed condition has no inner satisfaction in the present life for a true child of God. Beyond this, there is loss of eternal reward in the life to come (1 Corinthians 3:14-15). We have despised the love of the Savior, who reproves, disciplines and calls us to repentance (Revelation 3:19).

We must see that broken fellowship is a miscarriage of God’s purposes for us to be fruitful in this life (John 15:2). We are saved unto a life of good works (Ephesians 2:10; Titus 3:8). To be estranged from God is to make such a life impossible. One ought to consider well the attitude of the Lord Jesus toward fruitless trees (Matthew 12:33; Luke 13:6-9). As disease, pests and drought blight the trees of earth, so do spiritual scourges blight the intended fruit of God’s Spirit. We will do well to heed the call of the Lord, “Return unto Me, and I will return unto you” (Malachi 3:7).

The Christian world commonly uses the word “backsliding” to refer to this condition of broken fellowship. It is amazing how often it is used to explain the conduct of those who show little evidence of being regenerated to a new life in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17). Yet we should note that the word “backsliding” is not even used in the New Testament. Its occurrence is confined to the books of Jeremiah and Hosea, with the possible exception of Proverbs 14:14. It is used especially of Israel as a nation far from God, not of individuals out of fellowship. It basically describes a condition of apostasy (rejection of the faith) and is so translated in such verses as Jeremiah 5:6; 8:5; 14:7 and Hosea 14:4 (NASB). Considering Hebrews 6:4-6; 2 Peter 2:20-22 and Jude 5-19, one scarcely would describe a child of God as an apostate. Contextually then these Old Testament verses which use the word “backsliding” do not generally describe true believers.

Out of Fellowship—or Unsaved?

The first consideration in examining the life of one who claims to be a Christian but whose ways do not confirm the claim is to look for genuine conversion. Are we born again? The question is not whether we once prayed a prayer and asked Jesus into our heart; or whether we worked with some Christian group; or whether we were a member of some local fellowship. The question is, “Did we receive the Holy Spirit *when* we believed?” (Acts 19:2 NASB). If we did not, then we are not born again. How can we be sure? If we *continue* to be sexually immoral, drunken, a thief, or a jealous, envious, angry trouble-making person, we will never inherit the kingdom of God, no matter how sure we are of salvation (1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Galatians 5:20-21). If we say we know the Lord Jesus but do not keep His commandments, God says we are a liar (1 John 2:4). “But who of us *always* keeps these commandments?,” says the objector. Of course, no one does this sinlessly. According to 1 John 3:7-9 (NASB) it is the *practice* of sin, or *continuing* in sin, that is in view. There is no example in Scripture, other than the Lord Jesus, of a sinless person. The rest of us still sin and, therefore, must confess and forsake sin to maintain fellowship with God (1 John 1:9-10). Thus a distinction is made

between single-action sin and the practice of sin. Therefore, we must make sure our life and testimony support our claim to be born again. If in doubt, we must submit ourselves to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and turn from our sin. We must have a relationship with God before speaking of broken fellowship.

Causes of Broken Fellowship

There can be no fellowship with God if we walk in darkness (1 John 1:6). “When I kept silent about my sin, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long” (Psalm 32:3 NASB). The sin of sinner and saint alike always has the effect of separating from God. “But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear” (Isaiah 59:2). One may cease to abide in Christ. “If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch, and dries up” (John 15:6 NASB). What begins as wrong priorities and neglect of fellowship with God soon moves to decline in interest, loss of commitment and then absorption in the things of this life (Matthew 13:22). A later stage is reached when one begins dabbling in questionable things, is drawn away by lust (James 1:14) and finally commits flagrant sin.

New Testament examples of broken fellowship are less common than one would suppose. Yet here is a sample of warning symptoms:

1. **Loss Of Love For Christ** (Revelation 2:4). Our “first love” for Christ begets a deep appreciation for Him and a warm zeal. It is like the love between an engaged couple and is one that God cherishes (Jeremiah 2:2). When we let this change to indifference and take Him for granted, much more than the “honeymoon” is over. We are in danger of becoming like the lukewarm person whom the Lord Jesus promises to spit out of His mouth (Revelation 3:15-16).
2. **Bad Attitudes** (Ephesians 4:31; Hebrews 12:15). Some bitter attitude, rather than forgiveness and reconciliation, may be left to linger. Argument and turmoil may replace kindness and peace within. Resentments toward God and man become like ugly weeds in the soul.
3. **Lax Conscience** (1 Corinthians 11:28-29). If we do not judge sin in our lives, God will judge it for us (1 Corinthians 11:31). He will discipline us that we may be partakers of His holiness (Hebrews 12:10). We must be sensitive toward God and His claim upon our lives and conduct. As one has said, “Keep short accounts with God.”
4. **Worldliness** (Titus 2:12). The system of values, morals, power, pride and ambition which pertains to this world scene has no part with Christ, nor should we have part with it (John 17:14). We are instructed to forsake worldly desire and to live unto godliness in this present age. The desire to accumulate possessions is a part of that system and it is ruinous (1 Timothy 6:9). When we love the world system, rather than recognizing its ugliness and passing nature, we are disobeying God (1 John 2:15-17). Consuming our time with worldly activities is also a danger sign.
5. **Missing Church Meetings** (Hebrews 10:25). When we love Christ, we love His people. When we love His people we want to be with them. People can be away from the Lord while still attending services. Yet it is a bad sign when departure from God has reached the point of neglecting the assembling of ourselves together at the church meetings. It was the custom of the Lord Jesus to be in the synagogue on the Sabbath day (Luke 4:16). It is never

recorded that He used the excuse that it was not necessary to do this to be in fellowship with God.

6. **Unbelief** (Mark 16:14). When we refuse to believe what God has said, or to lay hold of it because of hardness of heart, we justify His solemn rebuke. “Where is your faith?” was His frequent challenge (Luke 8:25). Direct disobedience to God, such as marrying a non-Christian (2 Corinthians 6:14), is an evidence of unbelief.

Other symptoms include the neglect of our devotional time alone with God, the failure to confess Christ openly before men and withholding of resources from the needy or the servants of God. Immaturity and carnality (pleasing the flesh) is the seedbed of estrangement from God (1 Corinthians 3:1-3).

Cost of Broken Fellowship

Once we understand the difference between relationship and fellowship, we need not fear that a breach with God will cause loss of salvation. We will not come into judgment for our sins because we have been set apart through the once-for-all offering of the body of Jesus Christ on the cross (Hebrews 10:10). We will not come into judgment for sins because we have passed from death to life (John 5:24). That being the case, why not enjoy our salvation and the world as well? Why worry about sin if Jesus has paid for it all? God forbid such thinking (Romans 6:1-2)! It is symptomatic of a loss of perspective about eternity and the love of God. The consequences of fellowship broken through sin are enough to make us pause, if not tremble.

1. **To You.** There is the possibility of ruining your testimony. The unsaved will trample it under foot as so much salt without flavor (Matthew 5:13). You will come under the discipline of God (Hebrews 12:5-7). You may experience emotional distress, physical illness, even death (1 Corinthians 11:30). You may lose opportunities for service. You may lose the joy of salvation (Psalm 51:12). The Scriptures no longer will come alive as you read or hear them. You pray but He does not hear (Psalm 66:18), for the heavens have turned to brass. Fellowship with other believers is no longer the same. Satisfaction goes out of even the simple pleasures of life. You will lose reward at the Judgment Seat of Christ for the wood, hay and stubble with which you are building your life (1 Corinthians 3:12-15). You may become a shipwreck on the shores of life (1 Timothy 1:19).
2. **To Others.** You will put a stumbling block in the way of believers who have looked to you for an example (Romans 14:13). You may give the unsaved an occasion to reject Christ because you became one of the “hypocrites in the church.” You may cause the loss of life of someone close to you (2 Samuel 12:14) or those under your responsibility (1 Chronicles 21:14, 17).
3. **To God.** You will bring reproach upon the name of Christ (1 Timothy 5:14). The unconverted can sneer at the Lord because of the conduct of those who profess to be His followers (2 Samuel 12:14). You testify by a lagging or wayward life that you have no real devotion to the blessed One who loved you and gave Himself for you. He is nothing to you.

Do you now say that nothing matters in life as long as you are saved?

Cure For Broken Fellowship

God will not leave us to despair if the calamity of being away from God has occurred. However, the enemy may tempt us to give up. In his book, “There’s a Way Back to God,”

William MacDonald characterizes the voice of doom with these phrases: "It's hopeless. There's absolutely no use trying. You might as well give up. All you can do is cooperate with the inevitable. Things could never be the same anyway... You've sinned away your day of opportunity. You've passed the point of no return."⁷⁶ Of course, this is a denial of the Word of God for one who is the child of God. To begin with, nothing can ever separate us from the love of God (Romans 8:38-39). We are never ejected from His family for misconduct (John 10:28). In the second place, He is the Great Shepherd of the sheep. He will ever seek those who stray (Luke 15:4). The Lord sought Adam while he was still seeking to hide from God (Genesis 3:8-9). He is the God of Recovery. He found Adam and restored him. He sought out David and restored him (2 Samuel 12:13) and gave him lasting rejoicing which is enshrined in the Psalms for our comfort (Psalm 32:1-2). He restored Peter with a triple confession which blotted out the memory of his triple denial (John 21:15-17).

What is the road to restoration? We begin at the point where we got off the track. We confess and forsake our sin (Proverbs 28:13). He will not despise a broken and contrite spirit (Psalm 51:17; Isaiah 57:15). We repent and do the deeds we did at first (Revelation 2:5). We must bring forth fruit (deeds) in keeping with our professed repentance (Matthew 3:8). Confessions which do not involve forsaking sin and changing our lives are empty words. We need to deal with sin — root and branch. We must cry out to God with deep sincerity just as we see in Psalm 51.

Can we be sure that He will forgive us? We have only to believe His Word on this point. He will have mercy and abundantly pardon (Isaiah 55:7). He will bind us up and heal the wounds (Hosea 6:1). His way is to deal with sin and then be done with it. There may be temporal consequences, such as debts, unholy alliances, sinful children and damaged health. Yet we can have sweet fellowship once again with Him who loves our souls. That is the priceless possession that we forfeited so lightly, then regained with such pain. Those who fear they have committed the "unpardonable sin" (Matthew 12:22-32) should study the words of our Savior carefully. The wide-spread fear of this sin is heaviest with those who have the least knowledge of what it is. The wicked men of Jesus' day said that His miracles were done by the power of the Devil rather than by the power of the Spirit of God. Their willful refusal to believe those works of God and their insult to the Spirit were the works of ungodly men, not believers.

Commitment to Unbroken Fellowship

The blessedness of restoration should not tempt us to believe that straying from God has an easy remedy always available. We should learn a lesson which will prevent any repetition. We should resolve to stay close to God. If we have dealt thoroughly with sin in major areas that have stumbled us, recurrence is less likely. Yet the one who thinks that he stands secure should take heed lest he fall (1 Corinthians 10:12). We must learn to hate sin as that which brought suffering to our Lord Jesus and which has ruined the lives of millions and cast many into hell. We need a healthy fear or awe of God, which will not trifle with His holiness or presume upon His grace. We must learn to abide in Christ and to draw daily from the spiritual resources available in Him. Day by day, we must learn to draw near unto God and know that He, in turn, will draw near unto us (James 4:8). Then our new perspective on life will reflect the desire to live daily only for the glory of Him who loved us so deeply and gave Himself for us so sacrificially. Hopefully, He will restore unto us the "years that the locust hath eaten" (Joel 2:25), the wasting of precious days which could have been spent for the kingdom of God.

Away From The Lord

1. What are the tests of being a real Christian in the following verses? Romans 10:9-10

1 John 2:4-5; 5:2-3

1 John 3:14

James 2:14-26; Ephesians 2:10

Galatians 5:19-21; 1 John 3:8-10

Galatians 5:22-24; 1 John 3:7

Why is it important to establish reasonable assurance that a person is a Christian before labeling him as “out of fellowship” or “backslider”?

2. Identify the causes of broken fellowship in the following verses, and make a specific application as to how these might apply today:

Hosea 11:2, 7

Jeremiah 2:13; 5:6-7

1 John 2:15-16

3. What did David do that caused him to turn from God (2 Samuel 11:1-4)?

4. What does a person usually do after committing a sin if he does not immediately confess it (2 Samuel 11:5-17; Proverbs 25:5-6)?

What method does God often use to get the attention of someone out of fellowship (2 Samuel 12:1-7)?

5. From the following verses write a brief definition of confession (Psalm 32:5; 38:18; 66:18; Proverbs 28:13).

How have you applied this in your own life?

6. What steps did David take that brought him back to God (Psalm 51:1-10)? List the steps.

7. Some people get the idea that a Christian can sin and get away with it. What did David's sin cost him?

Psalm 51:12

2 Samuel 12:14a

2 Samuel 12:10,14b

1 Chronicles 22:8

8. What may happen to someone who does not confess and forsake his sin (1 Corinthians 5:3-5)?

9. When we truly repent, God promises to restore “the years the locusts have eaten” (Joel 2:25). How do the following references illustrate this principle in the life of David?

Psalm 51:12

Psalm 51:13

Matthew 1:1, 6, 16

1 Chronicles 22:9-10a

10. In your own experience what have you found has helped you “get back on the right track” when you were away from the Lord?

What aspects of “preventive maintenance” are indicated in the following verses?

Matthew 18:21-35

Romans 12:9b

Romans 14:22-23

Romans 13:14

Lesson 13: He Will Come Again

The return of Christ will be the logical and inevitable terminus of all history. The Creator, Who permitted rebellion against Himself, will “gather out of His kingdom all things that offend and them which do iniquity” (Matthew 13:41). The God who gave His Son to redeem sinful man and then saw Him shamefully crucified will see to it that His Son will be exalted in the place where He was once rejected. The Lord Jesus Christ will return. He promised His disciples, “I will come again” (John 14:3). He will come with great power and glory (Mark 13:26). He will come at a day and an hour no man can know (Matthew 25:13). He will fulfill this prediction as surely as He fulfilled an earlier one when He arose from the dead on the third day.

The first coming was literal in every detail from birth to death. The second coming will also be literal. Acts 1:11 is explicit. “This same Jesus ... shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go,” said the angels as He ascended in a visible, bodily way to heaven. It will be the very same One returning in person to this earth. Such a thought makes the saints rejoice and the wicked tremble. The last prayer of the Bible utters this expectation: “Come, Lord Jesus!” (Revelation 22:20).

Why must Jesus Christ return? He must fulfill the Old Testament Scriptures promising a reigning Messiah upon earth. When Jesus was upon earth, many were puzzled that He did not seize the reins of government from the Romans and establish the Messianic kingdom as they expected. The prophets wrote that He was to reign in Jerusalem (Isaiah 24:23), subdue the nations under the feet of Israel (Psalm 47:3), make Israel dominant (Zechariah 8:23), rule the world (Psalm 2:6-8; 110:1-3) and establish the throne of the kingdom forever (2 Samuel 7:13). During His earthly ministry, even devout students of the Word failed to see that two comings, not one, were prophesied in the Scriptures. First He would come as a suffering Messiah to be slain for the sins of His people. Later He would come as a reigning Messiah. The disciples were still thinking of this when they asked Him before the ascension, “Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?” (Acts 1:6). He indicated to them that this was yet future.

Distinct future events often merge in Scripture in what is called the “Prophetic perspective.” Differing events are brought together and they appear on the future horizon like distant mountain peaks that are hardly distinguishable. An example of this is in Isaiah 61:1-2 where both the first and the second comings of Christ appear together with no indication of a separation. But when Jesus reads this passage and stops at a critical point (Luke 4:18-21) we see where the first coming ends and the second is left future. This merging makes very careful study necessary in the field of prophecy and accounts for some differences of opinion among groups of believers about the exact order of future events. These events will be studied here from the point of view of the purposes of Christ’s return. These purposes are to receive His church, to rule the earth and to renew all things. See Appendix D for more detail.

Christ Comes to Receive the Church

1. **The Return Of Christ For The Church.** Among the several symbolic terms for the church of Christ, the believing company of all who are born again by the Spirit, is that of the Bride of Christ (Revelation 21:9). Our Savior is the great Bridegroom (Matthew 9:15; 25:1-6). He will come back to claim His Bride, which is likened unto a pure virgin (2 Corinthians 11:2). Since the church is a unity in the mind of God, the Bride must be claimed as a whole (1 Corinthians 12:12-13). Therefore the Lord will return to translate the living believers from the earth, as well as to raise the dead in Christ (1 Thessalonians 4:14-17). This event is

sometimes called “the rapture,” from the Latin word meaning “to seize,” referring to the saints being “caught up” to meet the Lord in the air (v. 17). The dead in Christ will rise first, followed by those who are still alive! Believers will receive new glorified bodies, fitted for heaven (2 Corinthians 5:1-4; Philippians 3:21). The entire event occurs within the “twinkling of an eye” (1 Corinthians 15:52) which involves the instant disappearance from earth of living believers.

2. **The Judgment Seat Of Christ.** Following the rapture of the church is the Judgment Seat of Christ (Luke 14:14; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 2 Timothy 4:8; Revelation 22:12). It is true that salvation through the blood of Christ delivers believers from all condemnation for sin (Romans 8:1; John 5:24; Hebrews 10:17). Their sins have been paid for in full. Yet Scripture plainly teaches that there will be an evaluation of our life and service for Christ (1 Corinthians 3:11-15), resulting in eternal reward or in eternal loss. This evaluation will take place at the Judgment Seat of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:10; Romans 14:10). The expression “Judgment Seat” is taken from the example of the raised platform used in biblical times by an official or judge for review and reward (Acts 18:16). God is not unrighteous to forget our labor of love as believers. Therefore, crowns or rewards will be given out (1 Thessalonians 2:19; James 1:12; 2 Timothy 4:8; 1 Peter 5:4).
3. **The Marriage Supper Of The Lamb.** It has long been the custom of many peoples to hold a feast of celebration after a marriage ceremony. So it must be with Christ the heavenly Bridegroom and His Bride (Revelation 19:7-9). The marriage itself takes place in heaven, after rewards have been given.

Christ Comes to Rule the Earth

1. **The Tribulation On The Earth.** The word “tribulation” has the general sense of affliction, anguish and trouble. Most people, including believers, have had their share of it in life. But there is a coming time of trouble, persecution and disaster such as never has been experienced in the history of the world, nor will ever be again. It is called the Great Tribulation, and it begins when Christ takes His church out of the world. Unless the time were shortened all humanity would be exterminated (Matthew 24:21-22; Mark 13:19-20; Revelation 3:10; 7:14). There will be a worldwide judgment period that will last for seven years, being divided into two roughly equal periods (Revelation 11:2-3; 12:14; 13:5; Daniel 7:25; 12:7). The entire period is covered by a week of years (seven) in the famous Seventy Weeks Prophecy (Daniel 9:24-27). This prophecy was fulfilled as to its first 69 weeks of years stretching from the decree to rebuild Jerusalem to the time of the death of the Messiah, a period of 483 years of 360 days each by Jewish procedure of reckoning. The final week pertains to the same nation, “Daniel’s people,” which is to say, Israel. Hence it is called “the time of Jacob’s trouble” (Jeremiah 30:7).

The destructive nature of this period is intimated many times in the Old Testament as well as in the New. There is a wasting of the entire earth (Isaiah 24:1,3,6,19-21; 26:20-21); the sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to an appearance of blood (Joel 2:31; Revelation 6:12); distress, trouble and ruin will be on every hand (Zephaniah 1:15); God will punish Israel for her idolatry (Zephaniah 1:4); God will purify and deliver the nation (Zephaniah 3:9-13) and punish all the nations that come against her (Zephaniah 3:8; Obadiah ch. 15-17; Joel 3:16-17). The punishing judgments described under the figure of seals, trumpets and bowls (Revelation ch. 6-16) are directed against those who reject the Lamb, yet seek to flee His wrath (Revelation 6:15-17). This will be the time of the great battle of Armageddon (Revelation 16:16), and the

Antichrist world figure (known as the “beast”) and the “false prophet,” energized by the dragon or Satan (Revelation 16:13; 13:1-18). The false religious and commercial system under the code name “Babylon” will be destroyed (Revelation 17-18). The devil will be active in this time, especially against Israel and the saints of God (Revelation 12:12-17; 13:7). But the major source of judgment is the wrath of the Almighty God upon a wicked world which rejects His Son (Revelation 16:16-19; 11:18; 14:10,19; 15:1-7). The general purpose of this period is one last call for the people of the world to repent of their sins. The specific purpose, however, is to prepare Israel for Messiah’s public coming when He will be mourned by the nation that pierced and rejected Him (Zechariah 12:10).

2. The Return Of Christ With The Church. Where is the church during the period stated above? The Bride has been kept from that hour of trial which engulfed the whole earth (Revelation 3:10). God has not appointed the church to wrath (1 Thessalonians 5:9) and the Tribulation period is supremely the hour of His great wrath upon earth. At the end of these seven years of tribulation, the Lord Jesus will return visibly, spectacularly from the skies to the earth (Matthew 24:26-30). His Bride will follow Him (Jude 14; 1 Thessalonians 3:13), as will the angels of God (2 Thessalonians 1:7). His feet will touch down on the very spot where He ascended to heaven, the Mount of Olives (Zechariah 14:4). There will be great judgment upon rejectors of the gospel (2 Thessalonians 1:8-9). He will overthrow the Antichrist (2 Thessalonians 2:8). Both the beast and the false prophet will be thrown into the lake of fire (Revelation 19:20-21). Satan will be bound in the abyss for the next 1000 years (Revelation 20:2-3). Israel will be saved (Romans 11:25-27; Acts 15:16; Zechariah 14:1-20; 12:7-9). He will judge the nations, especially on the basis of their treatment of Christ’s brethren (Matthew 25:31-46). There will be a selective removal of people from the earth (Luke 17:34-37). The martyrs of the Tribulation will be raised (Revelation 20:4-5). The Old Testament saints will be raised (Daniel 12:1-2).

3. The Earthly Kingdom Established. The kingdom of God or Christ is that over which He reigns and where He is accepted as rightful ruler. One can enter that kingdom at present by receiving Christ as Lord and Savior, and rightful King, and being born again into the family of God (John 3:3-5). Thus we can become part of His eternal kingdom over which He has always ruled (Psalm 10:16; 29:10; Jeremiah 10:10; Lamentations 5:19). But the kingdom of the world must become the kingdom of Christ in the future so that He may rule the earth (Revelation 11:15; Zechariah 14:9). He will demonstrate His perfect government upon the earth where once He was rejected. This period of government will last for 1000 years (Revelation 20:2-6). This 1000-year period is often called the “millennium,” after the Latin expression for “1000 years.” The world has yet to experience the following millennial conditions: war will be ended and weapons will be converted to agricultural instruments (Micah 4:3-4; Isaiah 2:4); the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea (Habakkuk 2:14; Isaiah 11:9); sorrow will be gone (Isaiah 25:8), replaced by lasting joy (Isaiah 51:11; Jeremiah 31:12); violence will be gone even from the animal kingdom (Isaiah 65:25); a man of one hundred years of age will be considered a youth (Isaiah 65:20).

The Lord Jesus is rightfully the King of the Jews and He will rule over them on earth. Israel will occupy the now disputed holy land from the Nile to the Euphrates (Genesis 15:18; Ezekiel 36:28; 37:25-28) and will live as a holy people under the Lord. They will be a blessing to the nations and will be supreme over them (Zechariah 8:13, 22-23; Romans 11:12-15). Jerusalem will be the world capital (Isaiah 2:2-3; Jeremiah 3:17). The world will come to pay homage to the

Lord in that city (Zechariah 14:16-21). He will rule the nations with a rod of iron, or absolute strictness (Revelation 19:15). His dominion will be worldwide. The righteous will flourish (Psalm 72:7-11). The heavenly Jerusalem, associated with the church, will hover over the earth (Revelation 21:1-2). The Temple will once again be rebuilt upon earth (Ezekiel 40:1-46:24). All creation will be delivered from corruption caused by sin and be gloriously beautiful (Romans 8:19, 21).

Christ Will Renew All Things

1. **The Final Earthly Rebellion And Judgment.** It is difficult to see how sin and rebellion could develop, even in the human heart, under such ideal conditions as listed above. Yet God will demonstrate once again during the millennial period that “the heart is deceitful ... and desperately wicked” (Jeremiah 17:9). God will give permission for those who have been born in the millennial generation, but have not yielded their hearts to Christ the King, to turn from Him. The arch-enemy of God will be released temporarily from the abyss to help them. “When the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever” (Revelation 20:7-10). This terrifying event demonstrates that God ever judges the wicked, that all will not be saved, and that eternal punishment has no point of termination.
2. **The Great White Throne Judgment.** The unregenerate leave this life and go directly to a place of torment (Luke 16:22-24), just as the righteous die and go to be with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:6-8). Our final destiny is sealed by our response to the Lord and the gospel (John 3:18). The righteous will not come into condemnation for their sins (John 5:24). It is after the wicked die that they must come into judgment (Hebrews 9:27). This judgment is described in Revelation 20:11-15 and takes place after the final earthly rebellion. Those whose names were never written in the Book of Life are summoned before a “great white throne” to be judged of God. They will see and hear of their sins from birth to death written in the records of God. They are then cast into the lake of fire, which is the second death. This ought to make everyone outside of Christ tremble.
3. **The Eternal State.** Scripture now looks beyond judgment to the new heaven and the new earth (Revelation 21:1; 2 Peter 3:13; Isaiah 65:17; 66:22; cf. Matthew 24:35; Hebrews 1:10-12). Christ will subject everything to the Father (1 Corinthians 15:24-28). Righteousness will dwell forever in this eternal kingdom. The Lord guaranteed Israel that their land and existence as a nation would be forever. This demands an eternal earth for fulfillment. (The church of Christ has its promises in the realm of the heavenly.) The section between Revelation 21:9 and 22:7 is debated by many as to whether it speaks of the New Jerusalem during the millennial period or during the eternal state mentioned above. Whether or not the heavenly city exists above earth during the millennial period, it is clear that the conditions described endure forever. Although its beauty is described in earthly terms, the splendor is evidently beyond any human conception. Here, at the New Jerusalem, God will dwell amidst His people.

Conclusion

Every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ needs to live this brief present existence in the light of the realities of the eternal perspective outlined above. To live for now and not for Christ and eternity's values, is an act of unbelief. For this reason the Second Coming of Christ is constantly held before believers as an incentive for holy living (Titus 2:12-13; Jude 20-21). The earliest saints were taught to wait eagerly and expectantly for the return of the Lord as something that might occur at any time (1 Corinthians 1:7; Philippians 3:20; 4:5; 1 Thessalonians 1:10; 5:6; James 5:9; 2 Timothy 4:8; 1 John 2:28; Revelation 3:3). The last prayer of the Bible appeals to the Lord Jesus to come quickly (Revelation 22:20). The Lord Jesus asked the question, "When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8). Will He find you living the life He has called you to live and eagerly anticipating His return?

He Will Come Again

1. The first coming of Christ refers to the 33 years Christ lived and walked on the earth. The "second coming" points to the time when He will return. In Scripture, the two comings are often merged. Distinguish between the two in the following passages:

Isaiah 9:6-7

Isaiah 52:14-15

Isaiah 61:1-2

Psalms 34:15-16

Micah 5:2-4

Zechariah 9:9-11

Luke 1:31-33

Hebrews 9:26, 28

2. What was one of the reasons that Jesus ascended into heaven (John 14:2)? What two promises did Jesus make (v. 3)?
3. Christ's return for the saints is described in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. List in chronological (time) order the events as they will take place.
4. How do the "days of Noah" compare with the events leading up to the revelation (the return of Christ with His saints)? Compare Matthew 24:37-39 with Genesis 6:1-12.
5. Contrast the believer's attitude toward the Lord's return with the attitude of the scoffer (Titus 2:13; 2 Peter 3:3-4). How do people respond today?
6. What reason does Paul give in 2 Timothy 4:6-8 for a Christian to look for Christ's coming (v. 8)? Why would this be an incentive for godly living?
7. One of the events that will take place after Christ's return for His saints is the Judgment Seat of Christ. In 2 Corinthians 5:9-10, how does Paul use the Judgment Seat of Christ as an incentive for godly living?
8. Further amplification of the Judgment Seat of Christ is given in 1 Corinthians 3:11-15. What is on trial here (v. 13)?

What two possibilities are presented in vv. 14-15?

Does this mean that a Christian could be lost (v. 15b)?

9. What attitudes/actions are suggested in the following verses in connection with the believer's preparation for the Lord's return?

1 John 3:2-3

1 Thessalonians 1:10

Luke 12:37

1 Corinthians 15:58

10. Write a brief paragraph describing the changes you would like to make in your Christian life in view of the Lord's return and the Judgment Seat of Christ.

Appendix A: Personal Evangelism Packet

(The verse cards, Gospel outline and flow chart that came with the original packet are not reproduced in this edition.)

The Personal Evangelism Packet is designed to aid Christians in sharing their faith.

The Verses

The verses are arranged topically under the various headings of the Gospel outline. Two verses are given for each subheading. The entire Gospel outline can be memorized in twelve weeks by learning one odd-numbered card (i.e., A-1, A-3, etc.) per week. In the same way, the additional back-up verses can be learned in another twelve weeks by memorizing the even-numbered cards (A-2, A-4, etc.). The odd-numbered verses will be memorized in the ICT course. The cards are printed in two translations. It is best to memorize in one version all the way through.

The Gospel Outline

The outline is arranged in five major headings indicating the major elements of the Gospel. Subheads, with appropriate verses, provide more detail. The first verse listed is considered the primary verse in most instances. The questions to the left of each major division are to help the Christian evaluate the response to that portion of the presentation. The outline is developed modularly so that the presentation may begin at any of the five divisions. The Lord Jesus Christ began at Step 1 in the case of the woman at the well (John 4), but in the case of the rich young ruler He essentially began at Step 2 (Matthew 19).

The Gospel Presentation Flow Chart

This shows how the outline may be used in a dynamic (live) setting. Both positive and negative responses are given along with typical appropriate responses. It is important to realize that negative responses may be an indication that the Spirit is not working conviction in the life, or that the timing is not right. It is best not to continue with the next point when there is lack of conviction and/or understanding. A more detailed explanation of the gospel is given in the Advanced Christian Training manual.

Using the Verse Pack

The following memory techniques have been suggested by the Navigators and should prove helpful in memorization and retention of this material:

1. **Start Early.** Begin your memory work early in the day
2. **Carry Your Pack.** Keep your cards with you; review in free moments during the day.
3. **Learn Topics And References.** Always state the topic first, then the reference. Next quote the verse and repeat the reference.
4. **Maintain Word Perfection.** Keeping your standards high will bolster your confidence.
5. **Review All Verses Daily.** For success review all memorized verses at least once each day, six days a week.
6. **Check Out New Verses.** Be certain you have learned all new verses correctly. At week's end write them out for yourself or quote them to a friend.

7. **Overlearn Your Verses.** At least 36 repetitions, once a day for six weeks, are necessary to give a verse sufficient overlearning to assure instant recall. After this they should be kept available for periodic review in order to keep them sharp.

Appendix B: Description Of Spiritual Gifts

The following definitions may be helpful in understanding where we should be functioning in the body of Christ. The divisions of speaking, serving and signifying are used, but these are not specified in the Bible.

The Speaking Gifts

1. **Apostleship.** “Apostle” means “sent one,” a messenger or delegate sent with orders. The word involves the concept of being commissioned to be an ambassador. An ambassador is more than just a messenger, and the thrust of the word is on the commission. The word is used in at least six ways in the New Testament: (1) Jesus is called an Apostle (Hebrews 3:1); (2) The Twelve Disciples are called the Twelve Apostles (Revelation 21:14); (3) A larger group of followers of Jesus who saw Him after his resurrection and received a commission from Him are called apostles (1 Corinthians 15:7); (4) There were counterfeit apostles (Revelation 2:2); (5) A delegate or envoy commissioned by a church for a specific task is called an apostle (Philippians 2:25); (6) Certain other persons who were commissioned by the Holy Spirit to do pioneer missionary work were called apostles (Acts 13:2; 14:4,14). Exactly how this was determined is not clear. Timothy, Barnabas, Andronicus and Junias were called apostles; but Titus and Apollo were not, perhaps because they were involved in follow-up work.

The doctrine of apostolic succession held by the Roman Catholic Church implies that through the “ordination process” there are still apostles today. However, this doctrine is not in Scripture. There are no apostles alive in the primary sense of men personally commissioned by the Risen Lord to go into all the world and preach the gospel. But the gift of apostleship has a secondary meaning. This applies to individuals who have been commissioned by the Holy Spirit to do pioneer missionary work among a certain group of people. William Carey was in this sense an apostle to India, Adoniram Judson to Burma, Hudson Taylor to Interior China. The gift of apostleship implies more than just being an evangelist or a messenger. He is an ambassador for the Lord with an unusual sense of authority and responsibility.

2. **Prophecy** is a gift to be coveted in the church because “everyone who prophesies speaks to men for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort” (1 Corinthians 14:3 NIV). The Biblical revelation ends with a warning in Revelation 22 about anyone ever adding to the Scriptures. In that sense there have been no prophets since the first century. But the word “prophecy” also means to forthtell the Word of God, and so, in that sense, there continues to be the gift of prophecy among men who powerfully preach and apply the Word of God. Prophetic insight enables one to put his finger on the sin of a person as John the Baptist did, and as Peter did in Acts 5. It also enables the person to apply a certain truth of Scripture to a situation.
3. **Evangelism** is the gift of proclaiming the Good News effectively so that people respond in conversion.
4. **Pastoring** simply means “shepherding.” Jesus is called the Good Shepherd. The gift of shepherding involves guiding the flock, helping them to feed on the Word of God and guarding them from wolves and from Satan, who goes about like a roaring lion. Paul exhorted the Ephesian elders “to feed the church of God” (Acts 20:28). A pastor must be able to use God’s Word to minister to the sheep.

5. **Teaching** is the ability to effectively and systematically instruct someone (Romans 12:7). A teacher can explain and interpret the doctrines of Scripture and has a good grasp of the facts of the Biblical record.
6. **Encouragement** is sometimes translated as “exhortation” (Romans 12:8). Jesus used the same root word when describing the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The word implies “one who is called to one’s side to help, encourage, exhort, appeal to, entreat.”
7. **Word Of Wisdom** means literally “wise speech” (1 Corinthians 12:8). It has to do with a godly practical advice or good judgment about the problems facing a Christian. It is the wisdom that God imparts to those close to Him as per Solomon or the practical good sense of Stephen (Acts 6:3). It is the kind of wisdom found in the book of Proverbs.
8. **Word Of Knowledge** involves the knowledge of the intimate things of the Lord (1 Corinthians 12:8). The early Christians would contrast this with the special knowledge of the pagan mystery religionists about the intimate things of their gods. Paul used the term for those who displayed unusual insight into the ways of the Lord. Paul used the same word in Philippians 3:8, in which he says he counted all loss “for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus.”

The Serving Gifts

1. **Helps** carries the meaning of lending assistance to someone. It is the same word used in Acts 20:35 indicating “support” of the weak. It is also related to the idea of waiting on tables (Acts 6:2). John Mark was taken on the first missionary journey by Paul and Barnabas as a “helper” (Acts 13:5 NASB). Other examples are Timothy and Erastus (Acts 19:22).
2. **Hospitality** means “love of strangers” (1 Peter 4:9). Hospitality was highly valued among early Christians. Hospitality is to be given to strangers and to all God’s people, not just to one’s friends (Matthew 5:46-47).
3. **Giving** conveys the idea of sharing. All Christians are to give, but some have the gift of giving. Romans 12:8 indicates giving is to be done “with simplicity,” “with singleness of mind,” “without pretense,” “freely, with delight,” “generously, with liberality.” These are all translations of this phrase in different versions. Barnabas had not only the gift of encouragement but of giving (Acts 4:34-37).
4. **Administration Or Government.** Three words are used for this gift. The first one means to “superintend, preside over, to rule.” The second word has the concept of “shipmaster, helmsman or steersman.” The third word means “to go before, lead, have authority over.” Paul says “he that ruleth” should do it “with diligence” (Romans 12:8). The idea is one of being a leader, or being able to graciously organize and direct people.
5. **Showing Mercy.** Romans 12:8 says “he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.” The word may be translated “to have compassion on” or “to give undeserved favor.” Dorcas is an example of one who had this gift because of her many “deeds of kindness and charity” (Acts 9:36-39 NASB). One must have the ability to empathize with someone in sorrow or pain and must do it cheerfully.
6. **Faith** means “firm persuasion.” The object of faith is God. It is a simple child-like trust in Him. Faith is the confidence in God that He will answer their prayers. Such faith is a stimulus to others. Examples are Stephen (Acts 6:8) and Barnabas (Acts 11:23-24).

7. **Discernment** means to distinguish or judge. The most dramatic case of this being practiced is by Peter with Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-10). Discernment is the ability to distinguish that which is truth and from the Holy Spirit from that which is counterfeit and from Satan. Paul exercised this in Acts 13:10-11. Discernment may relate to doctrine as well as life. It has to do most dramatically with teachings that come from Satan and not from the Holy Spirit. People as well as teaching ministry might be included in things discerned.

The Signifying Gifts

1. **Miracles.** Three words are used in this connection. One means “power,” another “wonders” and still another “signs.” Jesus exercised these repeatedly. Scripture records 35 specific miracles He performed and alludes to hundreds of others. Paul performed some mighty deeds (2 Corinthians 12:12) that helped authenticate his apostleship. In perspective, it appears that miracles or signs have a function in the beginning of a work, especially to pagans; but because they can be duplicated by Satan, they may become counter-productive and distracting. Man’s exercising the gift of miracles differs from God’s miraculous working in lives or through circumstances.
2. **Healing.** Peter had the gift of healing (Acts 3:6-8; 5:15-16; 9:32-41). Not every sick person was healed; Paul himself was ill (as was Timothy) and not healed. Like miracles, this gift seems most prevalent in the beginning of the Acts. Nonetheless, God miraculously cures people today. Elders may go and pray for those who are ill, as described in James 5.
3. **Tongues And Interpretations.** Tongues means a language. Supernatural speaking in another language to preach the gospel occurred in Acts 2. Speaking in tongues is valid and from the Holy Spirit if someone can interpret what is said by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 14). Most of the so-called “speaking in tongues” does not qualify. A gift from the Holy Spirit ought to minister to others.

A special word must be said about the gift of tongues since many believers press it upon others as necessary to a life of power and holiness. Most advocates of tongues believe that speaking in tongues is the outward sign of the baptism of the Spirit, subsequent to conversion. Whether genuine tongues are being spoken by someone or not at present does not make it more significant than other gifts with which it is listed. It is one of many. Not all can, or should, have it (1 Corinthians 12:30; 14:19-24). It is not the most important gift. It should be regulated by Scripture (1 Corinthians 14:27-34). Some avoid this regulation by teaching that there are several varieties of tongues (sign to the unbeliever or in the church, differing from private or devotional tongues). However, this subdivision is not clearly set forth in Scripture.

How should one respond to those who press tongues-speaking on others? Do not try to prove that tongues have ceased or that they are of the Devil. Do not belittle the importance of tongues or forbid them to speak in tongues (1 Corinthians 14:39). Do not debate the details of their experience. Rather establish the following principles from Scripture:

1. No Scripture expressly states that tongues are a sign of Spirit-baptism.
2. “Baptism,” “filling,” “sealing,” and “anointing” by the Spirit are not identical terms.
3. No Scripture tells us expressly that tongues are the “language of the Spirit,” the “language of prayer” or the “language of heaven.”
4. Tongues did not deliver the Corinthians from carnality and gross sin and do not succeed in this any better today.

5. Tongues in the book of Acts did not come when individuals sought the gift. God granted this manifestation to certain groups in a public way on His own initiative, not theirs.
6. Tongues are not elevated in Scripture to be the key to victorious life.
7. Tongues in Scripture often came simultaneously with other events, but should not be confused with them.
8. No Scripture teaches how to speak in tongues. No person should coach another on how to “get” the gift, any more than getting any other gift.

Appendix C: Not To Be Ministered Unto

Formerly issued under the title of, **“What Made You Cross?”**

By J. H. Horsburgh, M.A.

For even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.” (Mark 10:45)

A great fact is here stated concerning the Son of Man. The speaker is our Lord Himself. Who in this, as in all matters, left us an example that we should follow in His steps.

The incident that gave rise to His words is a sad one. Two of His disciples, James and John, wanted to be ministered unto by being granted the chief places in His glory (Mark 10:35-37). When the others heard it, they were highly indignant, for they wanted to be ministered unto by having the chief places themselves. But out of the ferment the Lord brought good. He made it an occasion to remind His disciples that they were not of the world, and that their distinguishing mark must be lowliness and readiness to serve one another.

“Jesus called them unto Him” (Mark 10:42). Notice the tenderness and pathos here. He had been telling the Twelve about Himself—of the awful betrayal, the cruel sufferings and indignity, the shameful death that awaited Him at Jerusalem (Mark 10:32-34). Surely their hearts are melted? Nay, they seem unable to think of Him. They begin to quarrel among themselves as to who should be the greatest. Picture their flushed faces, their angry tones, their violent gestures! “But Jesus called them unto Him,” and gently quelled the storm. Earthly rulers, He tells them, exercise lordship over others: “but so shall it not be among you: but whosoever desires to be great among you must be your servant, and whosoever of you desires to be first must be the bondsman of all. For even the Son of Man came NOT TO BE MINISTERED UNTO, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Mark 10:42-45). In a word, “Remember that you are My disciples. The disciple must be as his Master.”

Evidently this is something which closely concerns us all if we are Jesus’ disciples. It tells us something of what spirit we should have and what our life ought to be today—and every day.

The passage tells us that the Son of Man came to minister. This is a great subject. It is not that incidentally He ministered unto a few or to many; but He came to minister. It was His set purpose.

But this wonderful passage tells us something else about the Son of Man. He “came NOT TO BE MINISTERED UNTO.”

We are apt to slur over this, to forget it, or perhaps to pass it by altogether unnoticed. The disciples of Jesus are to be “even as the Son of Man” in coming to minister. Yes, and the disciples of Jesus are to be “even as the Son of Man” in coming “NOT TO BE MINISTERED UNTO.”

If a word of personal testimony may be allowed, I should like to say this. In the ups and downs, the wear and tear of daily life, there are few passages of Scripture which search me as this does. It convicts, rebukes, and condemns me. It is always finding me out. And, yet, how it encourages, quiets, strengthens, comforts, and helps me!

This desire to be ministered unto is at the bottom of disagreements in the nursery, fights in the school, quarrels amongst private individuals, wars among nations. And, alas, not only in the world is this spirit prevalent, but in the Church also. As Christians we do not adequately

realize—perhaps we hardly realize at all—how much of sin and failure, how much of vexation and discontent, how much of peevishness and irritability, how much of discord and unhappiness in our lives, is due to our DESIRE TO BE MINISTERED UNTO instead of coming not to be ministered unto.

Are we not too often cross, vexed, rasped, indignant? Sometimes we show it by a foolish exhibition of temper; sometimes we restrain ourselves, but there the nasty feeling is. And why? In all probability because we want to be ministered unto and have been disappointed.

The fact is we are always wanting to be ministered unto by people, by circumstances, by fortune (“luck” perhaps you call it), by the weather, by something. To be ministered unto is so natural, so necessary, so proper! We have been brought up to expect it. And if we are thwarted as we often are, we are apt to get cross, sulky, moody, nervous, and perhaps end by making ourselves miserable, and others too.

How different it would be if, like the Son of Man, we always “came NOT TO BE MINISTERED UNTO.” Take a few illustrations.

Are You Slighted

You are slighted, ignored, brushed aside. Or your employer, or employee, does not show you proper consideration. Or your neighbor does not treat you with the respect which is due to your position, your abilities, your character. You feel it very much; in fact, you are upset about it. Why? Is it because you came to minister, and were deprived of the privilege? No, not that at all. It is because your feelings, your rights, your gifts, your position, your dignity, your importance were not recognized. YOU were not ministered unto. And you came to be ministered unto. Hence the storm!

Are You Jealous

Or consider that most hateful thing, Jealousy. What is it? Another is praised or put before you. Another does better than you. Another is more fortunate than you. The honor, the success, the money, the popularity, the reward has gone to him. You wanted it for yourself. You came to be ministered unto. And because he has been ministered unto, and not you, you are jealous!

Not Right to Ignore Me

“But it was not right,” you say, “he had no business to ignore me, to snub me, to treat me as he did. And it was most unjust; that other person ought not to have been placed over my head.”

That may be perfectly true, and we make no excuse for wrong and injustice. But you are a disciple of Jesus (I am speaking only to such), and I ask you—if you had come, like your Master, “NOT TO BE MINISTERED UNTO, but to minister,” would you be feeling so sore and angry and jealous? The trouble is, you came to be ministered unto.

Not Praised

You have been kind to someone. You have rendered him a service. It has cost you something to do it. Naturally you thought your goodness would be appreciated. And it wasn't, at least not as much as you think it ought to have been. You expected profuse thanks and quite a little fuss to be made over it; and your friend took it coolly. You are disgusted. You wish you hadn't helped him. And you feel half inclined to say in your haste you will never do anybody a kindness again! Why? You have ministered unto another: you have helped someone who was in need. Yes, but you *have not been ministered unto*. You wanted to be thought exceedingly

good and kind and generous. That is to say, you expected to be ministered unto by the thanks and praise, and a little flattery too, perhaps, of the other. Yes, when we come to be ministered unto we do meet sometimes with severe shocks!

Not Consulted

You are a person of excellent taste, sound judgment, and good common sense. And you find your advice has been ignored—perhaps it was not even asked in a matter, too, in which you pose as an authority. You cannot understand it. You feel rubbed the wrong way. Your Spirit within you is ruffled. Your equilibrium is quite disturbed. What is the trouble? Is it that you came wanting to minister to your friend, and by neglecting to take your advice he has got himself into a sad mess? Not at all. As it happens, he has managed very nicely indeed without your help. The trouble is this: *you* have not been acknowledged. Your reputation as an “authority” in the matter of taste or judgment has not been ministered unto. You came not to minister but to be ministered unto. And you have been disappointed!

Are You a Public Speaker

You had been announced to speak on a special occasion. A good audience assembled, and you noticed with peculiar satisfaction that Mr. X, a well-known and influential Christian man, was present. You had a great subject, and waxed very eloquent. At the close you felt extremely pleased with yourself, and you naturally expected Mr. X to come up at once, grasp your hand, and thank you warmly “for such an able, interesting, and moving address.”

But Mr. X walked quietly out of the hall without a word! How crestfallen you were! The joy you had felt was extinguished like a snuffed-out candle! How was this? You had the opportunity of ministering to a number of people. But this was not quite what you came for. In your heart of hearts you wanted that speech to minister *unto* you. It is the old trouble again. *You came to be ministered unto.*

About Your Work

You are a professional man, or you are a man of business. You are doing fairly well. You have enough for all your needs. But you have set your heart on great things. And your success has fallen short of your expectations. This is weighing on your mind. It is a daily trouble to you. You are feeling constantly depressed. What is really at the bottom of it? Is it that you came to minister, and you are disappointed not to be able to minister as fully as you hoped to do? No, not that. But you desire to gratify yourself more; you want to make a bigger show; to be thought more of; you covet to be rich. And your desire for these things is not gratified. *You are not ministered unto.*

And Play

Even your recreation is disturbed by this coming-to-be-ministered-unto spirit. You went in for a race, a competition, a game. You failed; you were beaten. How “horrid” you felt! To this day that feeling haunts you.

A Cambridge athlete won a race three years in succession. If he could win it a fourth year it would be a record. And he was expected to win. But he lost! I am told that for weeks he never smiled. He wanted that race to minister to his family. He wanted people to be able to point to him and say, “He has done what nobody else has done.” And because he was not ministered unto, he was crushed.

"But," you reply, "in our sports and competitions we are out to do our best and to win, our aim is to be ministered unto." Yes, of course. But after all, it is only a game. And a disciple of Christ must not take his games too seriously. Even on the playing fields he can manifest the came-not-to-be-ministered-unto-but-to-minister spirit. When he is beaten he can enjoy the satisfaction of knowing that in losing he has been the means of ministering unto the winner.

Christian Service

But to return to something more serious than sport. You are engaged in Christian work. You are a Sunday School teacher, or a District visitor or a church officer. Or perhaps you help at the Mothers' Meeting, the Band of Hope, or the Mission Room. Now you are thinking of giving up the work. Why? Has your health failed? Have you not now the time for it? Are home duties too pressing? No, none of these is the reason. Then you are not wanted? Is there no longer need of your services? Is the opportunity to minister withdrawn from you? No, the need is as great as ever. The door of opportunity remains wide open. Then why are you giving up? Well, you are tired of the work, so you think you will drop it. You expected it would be an interest to you. It would bring you into touch with others. It would give you a position in the Church. In fact, *you thought you would like it*. And you did like it for a time, but now you are tired of it. Ah! we are beginning to understand. You thought the work would minister unto you. And as long as it ministered unto you, you were willing to go on with it. Now that it no longer ministers unto you, you will give it up. But "the Son of Man came NOT TO BE MINISTERED UNTO, but to minister, and to give His life..." And are you not His disciple?

These are only a few illustrations. They may not be applicable to you. But think it out, and whatever may be your walk in life, or your relation to your fellow-men, you will be surprised to find how much of your unrest, how many of your troubles, arise from this same cause—THE DESIRE TO BE MINISTERED UNTO, instead of coming to minister.

In The Home

You and your friend are living together. Your mutual happiness is interrupted by little jars. You are quick, and your friend is slow. You are economical, and your friend is extravagant. You are punctual, and your friend is unpunctual. You are a very tidy person, and your friend is untidy. You like everything done in your own particular way, your friend does them anyhow! So there is constant friction. But *why*? Is it because you cannot minister to your friend? No, indeed. It is because your love of tidiness or whatever it may be, your liking to have things your own way, is not ministered unto.

Or, perhaps you are the free and easy person, and you are annoyed because your happy-go-lucky way is not ministered unto!

Suppose you both try desiring NOT TO BE MINISTERED UNTO, but to minister and to give?

It is astounding what a number of little things disturb us. Your plan for the afternoon is upset. You desire a wet day; it persists in being fine. A visitor calls just when you want to go out. You are asked to sing and your voice is husky and does not do you credit. The answer to your letter has not come. Your request is not granted. You are interrupted in the middle of an interesting book. The pen won't write. The dress doesn't fit. The fire won't burn. Something is wrong with dinner. The children are so noisy!

Sometimes everything seems wrong. There is nothing big, nothing we can lay our finger upon. But we are always coming into the world with our likes and dislikes, our whims and fancies,

our wishes and hobbies, our fads and foibles. And if we are not ministered unto in these little things, we are apt to be distressed and to get put out with ourselves and with everybody else.

The Happy Way

I am persuaded that the happiness of our lives depends enormously on the spirit in which we come afresh into the world each day. If we come to be ministered unto, we shall soon be fretting and inwardly fuming. But if we come NOT TO BE MINISTERED UNTO, but to minister, it will be very different. "It is more blessed to give than to receive." It is happier to minister than to be ministered unto. And it is far nobler: "Whosoever will be *chief* among you, let him be your servant." (Matt. 20:27).

A Word of Caution

Now for a word of caution. Our text does not say that we are to be like Stoics, that whatever happens we are not to feel it. Annoyances, rubs, disappointments— the things that we have been talking about—of course we feel them. (They would be of no use to us if we didn't feel them.) But they need not distress us. Someone has said: "You cannot prevent a crow from alighting on your head, but you can prevent its building a nest in your hair." When we want to be ministered unto, we harbor a grievance, we exaggerate it, we give way to it, we let it build its nest and hatch its mischievous eggs. But when we desire NOT TO BE MINISTERED UNTO, but to minister, we do not harbor the grievance, we give it no welcome, we pay it scant attention, we are too occupied to trouble about it. Let us be like Jesus. He was always too busy thinking of others, and ministering to them, to concern Himself as to whether He was being ministered unto or not. One sovereign remedy against touchiness is to be busy caring for your neighbor.

Another Word of Caution

Again our text does not say that we are not to be ministered unto. It does not say that we are always to be slighted, never courted; that we are never to meet with success; that no reward and prizes are ever to come our way; that we are to go about the world looking for injustice, insults and ill-treatment. Nothing of the kind. There is no harm in being ministered unto. The Son of Man was often ministered unto, and He appreciated it very much. We shall often be ministered unto; perhaps all the more if we do not expect it. The harm is in *always to be ministered unto* instead of to minister: in wanting to be ministered unto: in seeking it, setting our heart upon wanting it, and in being disappointed, chagrined, ruffled and cross if we are not ministered unto.

We have lingered long talking about this failing—THE WISH TO BE MINISTERED UNTO—because it is so prevalent, its consequences are so sad, and chiefly because so many of us who are habitually guilty are unconscious of the fact.

Self Must Die

And now for a few brief words concerning the remedy. Be well assured that at the bottom of the trouble, and in all its ramifications, is SELF. And this old enemy Self must be mortified—put to death. We must give Self no quarter. "I send you my best wishes for your birthday. I hope you are dead," wrote one. And she was right. "I seem spoiled for everything but to see people die," wrote another. And she was right. SELF MUST DIE.

With this fact in view, in what a different light must we regard NOT BEING MINISTERED UNTO. Welcome disappointment! Welcome hardship! Welcome slight! Welcome thorns and

pricks! *These may all be turned to excellent account.* To fail in getting what we want may be a piece of good fortune! To be thwarted may be so good for us! To have our wishes crossed may be positive blessing! To be trampled upon may be a splendid thing! For every time we are not ministered unto, a fresh opportunity is given for Self to die! And the person who snubs us may well be regarded as a friend for administering to our arch enemy—SELF—a stout knock on the head! SELF MUST BE MORTIFIED. For it is only as Self dies that we can live the happy and victorious life.

Christ Must Live

But it is not enough that Self Dies. Something else must happen. Christ must live. Self dying—Christ living. And it is in proportion as Self dies in us that Christ can live in us. Let us not then be afraid of death—death to the Self-life. It is only as Self dies and Christ lives in us that we shall be able to come fresh into the world each day “NOT TO BE MINISTERED UNTO, but to minister,” and in our tiny measure to give our lives, to sacrifice OURSELVES, for the glory of our God and the good of our fellows.

Appendix D: Differing Views Of Christ's Return

1. **Literal Or Allegorical Interpretation.** It is evident that there is much figurative language in Scripture, plus many symbols, types and parables. However, the literal interpreter of prophetic passages takes the ordinary, usual, natural and customary meaning of words to indicate the true sense, without ignoring figures of speech or symbols. Even when the figurative language is noted, the words are not spiritualized in such a way as to ignore literal truth in plain statements. If the normal sense of words makes good sense, then no other sense should be sought. If Messianic prophecies were fulfilled literally in the past, then companion, yet unfulfilled, future prophecies should be taken literally. An example of literal versus allegorical interpretation can be seen in reference to the millennium: Those who believe in a coming earthly millennium ruled by Christ and those who do not differ over whether certain prophecies are to be taken literally or to be "spiritualized." It is generally admitted that a literal interpretation of Old Testament prophecies gives us a picture of a coming earthly, glorious reign by the Messiah. This is exactly what the Jews, in the days of the Lord Jesus, expected. Yet they did not understand that He first must fulfill a coming which was to end in suffering and death before coming to fulfill literally the prophecies of a glorious world reign. In short, there were to be two comings, both involving literal fulfillment. The deniers of an earthly millennium ignore the literal, ordinary and historic sense of passages and assign to them a moral, allegorical meaning. Statements about Mt. Zion, Israel and the promised land become, in their own minds, statements about the church and her spiritual portion in Christ.
2. **Distinguishing Israel And The Church Of Christ.** The proper order of future events is tangled when Israel and the church are confused. There is a major principle of difference between systems of interpreting prophecy. The common argument is that Israel was God's people in the Old Testament and the church represents God's people in the New Testament and that both alike are saved by the blood of Christ. This sounds simple enough. Yet it fails to note that distinction is made in the New Testament between the Jews, the gentiles and the church of God (1 Corinthians 10:32). In fact, Jews and gentiles are distinguished continually in Scripture, especially in Romans. These differing groups were brought together in a new unity in the church and this one body is called "a mystery," something not previously recorded in Scripture (Ephesians 2:11-3:6). One became an Israelite by natural birth. One becomes a Christian by the new birth. Israel *had* a priesthood. The church is a priesthood. Israel is likened to an adulterous woman divorced by her husband Jehovah (Isaiah 50:1; Jeremiah 3:1, 20). Yet she is promised future restoration (Hosea 1:9-11; Romans 9:26-27; 11:11-27). The church is a pure virgin engaged to Christ and soon to be married after the rapture (2 Corinthians 11:2; Revelation 19:1-9). Israel is appointed to an earthly kingdom (Ezekiel 37:21-28). The church will be in the heavenly Jerusalem (Revelation 21:2) and has no promises concerning earthly inheritance (Philippians 3:20). Israel is a branch that was cut off in judgment. The church was grafted into the root as a wild olive tree (Romans 11:15-27). But the natural branches will yet be brought back.
3. **Distinguishing The Resurrections And Judgments.** Some people teach that Christ will come at the end of all earthly history when there will be both a general resurrection and a general judgment of all mankind, good and evil. Usually this is accompanied by the idea that people will find out whether they are going to heaven or not at this time, based on

weighing good deeds and bad. This is contradicted by many Scriptures. First, salvation is determined by our response to Christ and the gospel in this life, not at a future judgment. Weighing of good against evil works is not the way of salvation. Second, there are many resurrections over a long period of time, not one. The clearest evidence of differing resurrection times is in Revelation 20:4-5 where the martyrs are raised at the beginning of the millennium and the wicked are raised at the end. The first to be raised to die no more was Christ, in the order of resurrections (1 Corinthians 15:23). Shortly after this, there were other saints raised (Matthew 27:52-53). The saints of the Bride of Christ will be raised at the rapture. "Daniel's people" (Israel) will be raised at a differing time (Daniel 12:1-3).

There is no single judgment day in Scripture, any more than a single resurrection day. Scripture sometimes uses "day" as in "day of the Lord" to cover an extended period. God's judgments are varied as to purpose, people and time. There are at least five future judgments mentioned in Scripture. (1) The Judgment Seat of Christ occurs after the rapture and surveys believers' lives and works on the foundation of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:10; 1 Corinthians 3:11-15). (2) The Judgment of the Great White Throne deals entirely with the unsaved and their sins (Revelation 20:11-15). (3) The judgment of fallen angels seems to occur at the same time (Jude 6; Revelation 20:10). (4) The judgment of the nation of Israel is prior to the beginning of the millennial kingdom (Ezekiel 20:33-44; Zechariah 13:8-9; 14:4). (5) The judgment of the gentiles, or heathen peoples, will involve those surviving the Tribulation and will concern their treatment of God's people, especially the saved of Israel (Joel 3:11-16; Matthew 25:31-46).

4. **Millennial Views.** There are three major beliefs about a future, earthly kingdom of Christ.

- a. *Premillennial* means "before the millennium." Advocates of this view teach that Christ will return to earth to punish His enemies and establish the Messianic kingdom here. The mention of 1000 years six different times (Revelation 20:2-7) is taken literally to be fulfilled, as also the Old Testament promises of coming peace, prosperity and universal knowledge of the Lord. Only the Lord, in a personal, visible and powerful manifestation of Himself, could accomplish the task of bringing the earth to be "filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Habakkuk 2:14). This was the view of the early church.
- b. *Postmillennial* means "after the millennium." Postmillennialists believe that Christ comes after the gospel has triumphed throughout the world and brought peace, prosperity and spiritual glory. The millennium is spiritualized and is seen as a term for an indefinite period of time when Christ reigns spiritually in the hearts of His people preceding His second coming. The church is the Israel of the new covenant. The world is seen as getting better all the time, becoming gradually converted. As a leading advocate L. Boettner puts it: "Postmillennialism is the view of last things which holds that the kingdom of God is now being extended in the world through the preaching of the gospel and the saving work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of individuals that the world eventually is to be Christianized and then the return of Christ."⁸ This will also be followed by a general resurrection and general judgment. Needless to say, this view has few followers today since historic conditions so clearly contradict it. Those of this view, largely liberals, have either converted to amillennialism or abandoned any belief in the trustworthiness of Scripture at all.
- c. *Amillennial* means "no millennium," or no literal, earthly reign by Christ. This view arose in the church during the time of Augustine in the Fourth and Fifth centuries. It became

dominant in the Roman Catholic church and is held today by many Protestant denominations. Fulfillment of millennial prophecy is seen as Christ reigning spiritually in the hearts of believers on earth between His resurrection and second coming. The 1000 year period is spiritualized into an indefinite period. According to Matthew 12:29, Satan is thought to be bound on earth in his ability to deceive and prevent the spread of the gospel. Amillennialists give no explanation for problem verses as 2 Timothy 2:26; James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:9; and Revelation 2:10. Demonic activity which shows no evidence of any satanic restriction within the meaning of Revelation 20:1-3 is not accounted for. Passages like Isaiah 11:6-9, concerning an idyllic age, are to be fulfilled only in the new earth, they say. Christ is to return in glory, with no prior rapture of believers, to raise the dead and conduct a general judgment before entering the eternal state. The kingdom of God is now being extended to the world through the preaching of the gospel. The amillennialist denies any national future for Israel. Promises to her of a golden age are spiritualized and made to apply to the church now. The promised judgments, however, are left to her as being literally fulfilled.

5. **Tribulation Views** revolve around the question of when Christ will come with respect to the period of worldwide upheaval predicted in such passages as Matthew 24:3-30; Revelation 7:14; and Daniel 12:1.
 - a. *Pre-Tribulation* advocates believe that Christ will come for the church before the tribulation period. The Bride, being translated as was Enoch and removed from the judgment as Noah, will be spared the wrath of God which is coming upon a Christ-rejecting world. They believe there is a distinction in the New Testament between Christ coming *for His saints* and Christ coming *with His saints*. These two phases bracket the seven-year Tribulation period which constitutes the final week of Daniel's Seventy Week prophecy (9:25-27). The Olivet Discourse in Matthew 24:1-30, dealing with the period immediately prior to Christ's second coming, speaks of "the abomination of desolation," those in "Judea" and flight upon the "Sabbath." The context refers to Jewish believers, not the church. Chapters 4 to 18 of Revelation cover the same period and do not mention the church by name. References to believers abound in terms applicable to Israel, not the church (cf. chapter 7). Hence the church is not seen on earth during this time.
 - b. *Mid-Tribulation* advocates believe that Christ comes with the sounding of the seventh trumpet in Revelation 11, at the end of the first 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ years, or middle, of the seventieth week of Daniel. Most of its arguments follow those of post-tribulationism (see below). The timing of Christ's coming is related to equating "the last trump" of 1 Corinthians 15:52 with Revelation 11:15 and 1 Thessalonians 4:16.
 - c. *Post-Tribulation* advocates believe that Christ will return after the Tribulation. There are several variations of this view and no one system is apparent. In general, the following arguments are used: (1) the church has always had tribulation so why should this be any different? (no distinction is made between general tribulation and the Great Tribulation); (2) the pre-tribulation view is novel, only coming into being in the 19th century; (3) imminence of Christ's coming is denied; (4) all the dead are resurrected only at the second coming of Christ, not prior to it, and takes place in one day; (5) the Scripture does not distinguish explicitly between Christ's coming *for* and coming *with His saints*. Many post-tribulationists are also amillennialists.

d. *Partial Rapture* advocates, using verses like Luke 21:36 and Hebrews 9:28 as proof, believe that only the believers who are watching and waiting for Christ will be translated at the rapture. Thus part of the body would be left on earth while the rest was in heaven. This view seeks to encourage holy living and watchfulness for Christ's return but has the disadvantage of denying the unity of the body of Christ as taught in 1 Corinthians 12:12-13 and Ephesians 5:30.

Outlining The Gospel

Is there interest?

1. OFFER MADE

ETERNAL AND ABUNDANT LIFE John 10:10b; John 5:24

LOVE OF GOD John 3:16; Romans 5:8

PERSONAL TESTIMONY

Is There A Sense Of Need?

2. OFFER NEEDED

WHAT IS SIN? Romans 3:23; Isaiah 53:6

DEATH AS CONSEQUENCE (SEPARATION) Romans 6:23; Revelation 20:14-15

NEED TO REPENT Acts 3:19; Isaiah 55:7

Is There Understanding?

3. OFFER IS JUST

CHRIST'S SUBSTITUTIONARY DEATH AND RESURRECTION

1 Peter 2:24; 3:18

THE GOD-MAN 1 Timothy 2:5; John 1:1, 14

GRACE NOT WORKS (A GIFT) Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5

Is There Willingness To Have Jesus Reign Over Them?

4. OFFER MUST BE ACCEPTED

UNDERSTAND GOSPEL CONTENT 1 John 5:11-12; 2 Corinthians 15:3-4

TRUST, RECEIVE CHRIST Revelation 3:20; John 1:12

SUBMIT TO LORD AND SAVIOR Romans 10:9-10; Philipians 2:10-11

Do They Understand The Consequences Of Rejecting The Gospel?

5. OFFER REJECTED

WARNING TO REJECTORS John 3:36; 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9

Notes

1. *Can I Trust My Bible* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1963), p. 132.
2. *The Bible and Archaeology* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1940), p. 289.
3. *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?* (Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter-Varsity Press, 1964), p. 16f.
4. *Rivers in the Desert* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1959), p. 31.
5. *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel* (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1942), p. 176.
6. "How to Know the Will of God" (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1976), p. 10.
7. *The Knowledge of the Holy* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1961), p. 110.
8. "There's a Way Back to God" (Kansas City, Kan.: Walterick Publishers, 1967), p. 19.

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To God be the glory.