



18 LESSONS

FOR NEW BELIEVERS

NEW HOPE INTERNATIONAL CHURCH

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LESSON 1

REPENTANCE

GOAL OF THE LESSON

- To help new converts to understand the true meaning of repentance.
- They will know what they should do after they repent and believe in the gospel.
- They will understand how they should relate to the Lord.

ADVICE ON HOW TO USE THIS LESSON

- The spiritual helper (shepherd) must prepare himself/herself well by reading this lesson until they fully understand it.
- They should say words of congratulation to new believers because they accepted Christ into their lives.
- The shepherd should teach this lesson in an informal atmosphere and with enthusiasm. He/She should not be tense or nervous.
- The spiritual helper should finish teaching this lesson in one session.
- After finishing the teaching session, opportunity should be given to new converts to ask questions or to express their feelings and understandings.

INTRODUCTION

- The shepherd should say congratulation to new converts that they have made a decision to follow Christ. He/She should emphasize that to accept Jesus to be the Savior and the Lord of their lives is a powerful thing and the most important decision in their lives.
- Pray with new believers. Ask God to help them to understand the lesson.

CONTENT

Repentance to Jesus is the first attitude for anyone who puts faith in Him.

Acts 2:37-39 When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” ³⁸Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off--for all whom the Lord our God will call.”

A repentant Christian should have the same attitude as those people who heard the message of Peter in **Acts 2:37-39**. After they accepted that Jesus was their Lord and Savior, Peter told them to repent and be baptized.

1. What repentance is not?

1.1 It is not becoming conscious of one's faults

Becoming conscious of our wrong doings must happen before we repent. However, this is not repentance. Not everyone who becomes conscious of his sin will eventually repent as we can see an example in **Matthew 27:3-5**.

Matthew 27:3-5 When Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that Jesus was condemned, he was seized with remorse and returned the thirty silver coins to the chief priests and the elders. ⁴"I have sinned," he said, "for I have betrayed innocent blood." "What is that to us?" they replied. "That's your responsibility." ⁵So Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself.

Judas realized that he betrayed the Lord Jesus and hanged himself, but he never truly repented of his sin. True repentance will bring peace, joy and eternal life, not committing suicide nor destruction. Many people may feel sorry about their evil actions only when others find out that they sin and punish them. However, godly sorrow can bring repentance.

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

1.2 It is not trying to be a good man

Many people try to become good persons by changing their ways of life and depending on their own strength. This is not true repentance. No one can change himself to be perfect and holy in every area of his life at all times. Even though we know what is good and righteous and we want to do it, but we cannot carry it out (**Romans 7:18-20**).

Romans 7:18-20 I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. ¹⁹For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do-- this I keep on doing. ²⁰Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.

Isaiah 64:6 All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.

We cannot become a holy and righteous person by depending on our own ability. Those who think that they can become good and righteous persons by

depending on their own strength usually do not want to repent of their sins because they think that they are good enough.

1.3 It is not to be strictly religious

The Pharisees were strictly religious. They religiously fasted, prayed and participated in every ritual. However, they performed rituals in order to show off. They did not truly repent.

Matthew 6:1-5 Be careful not to do your 'acts of righteousness' before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. ²So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. ³But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. ⁵And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full.

Acts 26:5 They have known me for a long time and can testify, if they are willing, that according to the strictest sect of our religion, I lived as a Pharisee.

1.4 It is not to know Biblical truths

We may not repent even if we know Biblical truths. Satan knows that Jesus is the Son of God, but he does not repent.

James 2:19-20 You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that--and shudder. ²⁰You foolish man, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless?

2.The true meaning of repentance

2.1 Being sorrowful of our sins that we have done against God

Psalms 51:1-4 Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. ²Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. ³For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. ⁴Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge.

Psalm 38:8 I am feeble and utterly crushed; I groan in anguish of heart.

2 Corinthians 7:9 Yet now I am happy, not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repentance. For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us.

Matthew 5:3 Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

2.2 Confessing our sins to the Lord

Psalm 32:5 Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD"-- and you forgave the guilt of my sin. Selah

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

2.3 Turning away from our wicked ways

Proverbs 28:13 He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy.

Matthew 3:8 Produce fruit in keeping with repentance.

Acts 26:20 First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and to the Gentiles also, I preached that **they should repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds.**
We prove our repentance by turning away from wickedness and having an intent to following God's teachings.

Acts 3:19 Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord,

2.4 Hating sins and wickedness

Hebrews 1:9 You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy.

Ezekiel 20:43-44 There you will remember your conduct and all the actions by which you have defiled yourselves, and you will loathe yourselves for all the evil you have done. ⁴⁴You will know that I am the LORD, when I deal with you for my name's sake and not according to your evil ways and your corrupt practices, O house of Israel, declares the Sovereign LORD.

Romans 7:15, 23-25 I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. ²³but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. ²⁴What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? ²⁵Thanks be to God--through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.

2.5 Paying back of what we have done wrong

Luke 19:8 But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount."

CONCLUSION

To be a Christian means to repent and believe in the gospel. To repent does not mean to become aware of our sins, to do good, to be strict in religion, nor to know Biblical truths. But it means to feel sorry of our wickedness, to confess our sins and turn away from our old way of life. When we repent, we will hate sin and be willing to pay back what we have done wrong. We are willing to walk in God's way.

Romans 6:13 Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Ask new converts what sins that they still have and want to confess.
2. Ask them how they will live their lives in order to be upright before the Lord.
3. Ask them whether they can help themselves to be free from their sins.
4. Pray with them to ask God to deliver them from their sins.
5. Ask them to memorize **Acts 17:30**.

Acts 17:30 In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent.

LESSON 2

CONFIDENCE IN SALVATION

GOAL OF THE LESSON

- New believers will have real confidence in their salvation. They will understand that they are saved by God's grace and through faith, not from their own good deeds.
- They will be able to have confidence and know the right direction as they begin to walk a meaningful Christian life.
- They will learn how to have the right relationship with the Lord.

ADVICE ON HOW TO USE THIS LESSON

- The spiritual helper (shepherd) must fully understand this lesson and use his experience with God to be a part of his teaching.
- He/She should teach this lesson with a lively spirit. Their teaching must be sincere and meaningful so that new believers will realize that "salvation" is the most valuable thing in their lives.
- He/She should teach this lesson in an informal atmosphere. He/She should not be tense or nervous. He/She should not open the lesson to teach but should be able to remember it and have short notes to assist them with the teaching, so that new converts will open their hearts to receive God's truth.
- The spiritual helper should finish teaching this lesson in one session.
- If new believers have questions that are not related to this lesson during teaching, he/she should write the questions down and answer them after the teaching is done, otherwise he/she will not be able to finish the whole lesson.

INTRODUCTION

- Share your real experiences of God's blessings to you after you (the shepherd) had received salvation in Jesus Christ. You should emphasize the joy and confidence of your salvation.
- Teach new believers to sing "Thank you Jesus".
- Pray with new believers, so that they will realize the value of the Word of God and carefully listen to it.

CONTENT

Even though the world has offered many ways to heaven and salvation to man, such as through religions and different philosophies, man has never been fulfilled nor had confidence in salvation because these religions and philosophies never firmly

guarantee they are the only way to salvation (**Acts 4:12**). God has provided the true way of salvation for man so that he will have true peace and eternal life. Salvation comes from God, not from man's effort. Because man is a sinner, his way and philosophy is not perfect nor accepted by God. Jesus is the only way to salvation for man. He took the form of man and died on the cross in order to redeem the people in the world from their sins.

1. How can we be saved from sin?

1.1 By depending on God's grace

We are saved by God's grace, not by our own good deeds. **Romans 5:8** says, "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Ephesians 2:8-9 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--⁹not by works, so that no one can boast.

1.2 Through faith

Ephesians 2:8-9 says that we are saved through faith. We respond to God's love by putting our faith in Him and accepting the Lord Jesus as our Savior. We must believe in the good news. True faith must be accompanied by good actions.

James 2:14-17 What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? ¹⁵Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. ¹⁶If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? ¹⁷In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

2. How can we have confidence that Jesus is the only way to salvation for man?

2.1 Jesus claimed that He is the only way

In **John 14:6**, Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." What he said here means that He was the only way to heaven. After we believe in the good news, put our faith in Jesus, repent of our sins and make a decision to follow Him, we will be saved.

2.2 The disciples confirmed that Jesus is the only way to salvation

His disciples confirmed the same truth in **Acts 4:11-12** by saying, "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."

In **Ephesians 2:8-9** the apostle Paul also revealed the truth that, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith- and not from yourselves."

We can have confidence that our salvation through Jesus Christ is certain and eternal. Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Son of God and accepts Him into his life will be free from his sin and becomes God's child. He will not be condemned.

3. Why do we have confidence that we have been saved from sin?

3.1 We can have confidence in salvation because God never fails to keep His promises

1 Peter 1:5 who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

God promises that He will shield our faith by His power until the coming of the salvation. On the last day, He will return to receive us to be with Him forever.

Romans 8:38-39 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The Bible also encourages us by the truth that "nothing will be able to separate us from the love of God."

John 10:27-29 My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. ²⁸I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. ²⁹My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand.

God will never forsake us and no one can snatch us out of His hand after He has given us salvation.

3.2 We can have confidence by experiencing a new life

God promises in **2 Corinthians 5:17**, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation, the old has gone, the new has come!"

After we accept God's promise of salvation and eternal life, we are being transformed to be a new person. Sometimes we do not notice the gradual changes

in our lives, but when we look back we will be surprised by the many changes. These changes make us have confidence in our salvation. These are some examples of changes in our lives: peace in our hearts, desire to pray, the love for God, victory over sin, new habits and attitudes, desire to read the Bible, hating sin, etc.

4. How can we maintain our salvation?

4.1 We must recognize the value of salvation

1 Peter 1:3-12 says that our inheritance in heaven can never perish, spoil or fade. The Bible says that the prophets searched intently and with the greatest care in order to understand salvation and even angels long to look into the complete salvation on the day when Jesus returns. We must see the value of salvation and will never forsake the Lord Jesus.

4.2 We must regularly confess our sins

Certainly, we still commit sins but we can have confidence that God loves us and He is ready to forgive us. **1 John 1:9** says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." Immediately after we repent and confess our sins, God will forgive us. We do not have to feel guilty and we can always begin a new life with God. This is the grace of God that causes us to fear and love Him. We show reverent fear and love to the Lord by obeying Him and doing good.

4.3 We must have a close relationship with Him

John 15:6-7 If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. ⁷If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.

The Bible compares us to a branch. If we do not build a close relationship with God nor remain in His Word, our Christian life may come to an end.

4.4 What blessings do we receive after we put our trust in the Lord Jesus?

- Eternal life (**John 3:16**)
- The right to be God's child (**John 1:12**)
- Having an abundant life (**John 10:10**)
- God's peace that the world cannot give (**John 14:27**)
- A new life (**2 Corinthians 5:17**)
- God will be with us always (**1 John 4:15**).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When you realize that God loves you and gives you eternal life, what would you do in your daily life in order to respond to His love appropriately?
2. Share the new changes that have occurred in your life since the day you received salvation from Jesus Christ.

MEMORY VERSES

Ephesians 2:8-9 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith- and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God- ⁹not by works, so that no one can boast.

LESSON 3

SPENDING DEVOTIONAL TIME WITH GOD

GOAL OF THE LESSON

New believers will understand the meaning and the significance of devotional time. They will also know how to spend devotional time with God.

ADVICE ON HOW TO USE THIS LESSON

As spiritual helpers (shepherd), we must spend devotional time daily and regularly so that we can teach this lesson from our life's experiences.

INTRODUCTION

- We should share how God has blessed us because we spend devotional time with Him daily.
- We should challenge new converts to have expectation and faith in receiving God's blessings that will come through devotion.

CONTENT

1. What is spending devotional time?

Spending devotional time means to personally meet God on a daily basis. Therefore, it is very important for the spiritual growth of every Christian. It is composed of prayer, praising God, reading the Word of God and obeying it.

2. How important is spending devotional time

Spending devotional time with God is very important because it is the time that Christians will meet Him personally. Fellowshiping with God is essential for every Christian.

Ephesians 6:18 And 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.

Since God created Adam and Eve, He has designed man to fellowship with Him. When man fell into sin, the relationship between man and God was broken. Jesus died on the cross in order to bring God's forgiveness to those who put their trust in Him and also to make reconciliation between man and God.

Jesus set a good example in spending time with the Father. **Mark 1:35** says, “Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.”

Spending devotional time with God on a daily basis will help us to grow spiritually. Since our physical bodies need food, our spirits also need spiritual food. The Word of God is our spiritual food. If we lack spiritual food, our spirits will be weak. We will receive strength, joy, advice and words of correction from God during the devotion. As a result, we will be changed to become more like Christ daily and we will be able to consistently walk with Him. We will lack blessings if we ignore spending time with God. We will not grow spiritually and we also be denied of the privilege of being close to God. We will not experience His supernatural power and our hearts will not be revived by Him.

3. How should we spend devotional time?

Since we realize that spending devotional time with God is very important for our lives, we would like to know how to do it effectively.

3.1 Having the right attitude

We must have the right attitude when we meet God. He said in **1 Samuel 16:7**, “Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.” Christians may act right but with the wrong motive or wrong attitude.

2 Kings 14:3-4 He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, but not as his father David had done. In everything he followed the example of his father Joash. ⁴The high places, however, were not removed; the people continued to offer sacrifices and burn incense there.

When we spend devotional time with God, we should have an attitude of trusting Him, believing that He will answer our prayers, and enthusiastically wanting to meet Him. King David had these attitudes when he sought God.

Psalm 63:1 O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water.

Psalm 42:1-2 As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. ²My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?

If we have the right attitude, we will not be late in meeting Him. We will have a desire to exalt Him and obey Him. We will wait for His help and realize that God is greatly feared in the council of the holy ones and He is more awesome than all who surround Him.

Psalm 89:7 In the council of the holy ones God is greatly feared; he is more awesome than all who surround him.

The best way to respond to God when we spend devotional time is to obey His Word.

3.2 Choosing specific and appropriate time

The appropriate time for devotion of one Christian is different from another one. We should ask ourselves what time of the day is the most appropriate for us to spend time with God. We should choose the best hour of each day, which is the time when we are refreshed and ready physically. We should not choose the time when we are very tired physically. According to the Bible, early morning is the best time for spending devotion. These are examples of godly men in the Bible who spent devotional time with the Father early in the morning:

Jesus

Mark 1:35 **Very early in the morning**, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.

Abraham

Genesis 19:27 **Early the next morning** Abraham got up and returned to the place where he had stood before the LORD.

Job

Job 1:5 When a period of feasting had run its course, Job would send and have them purified. **Early in the morning he would sacrifice** a burnt offering for each of them, thinking, "Perhaps my children have sinned and cursed God in their hearts." This was Job's regular custom.

Jacob

Genesis 28:18 **Early the next morning** Jacob took the stone he had placed under his head and set it up as a pillar and poured oil on top of it.

Moses

Exodus 34:4 So Moses chiseled out two stone tablets like the first ones and **went up Mount Sinai early in the morning**, as the LORD had commanded him; and he carried the two stone tablets in his hands.

Elkanah and Hannah

1 Samuel 1:19 Early the next morning they arose and worshiped before the LORD and then went back to their home at Ramah. Elkanah lay with Hannah his wife, and the LORD remembered her.

David

Psalm 5:3 In the morning, O LORD, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait in expectation.

Psalm 57:7-8 My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast; I will sing and make music. ⁸Awake, my soul! Awake, harp and lyre! I will awaken the dawn.

A common question is, “How much time should I spend in devotion?” The answer depends on how much we want to spend time with God. We may spend 15 minutes in the first few times. We can later on gradually and naturally increase the amount of time we spend when we become more mature spiritually and have a closer relationship with Him. Whether we spend 15 minutes or one hour, we must use that time effectively. It is better to regularly spend devotional time with Him than to do it once a while.

3.3 Choosing an appropriate place

We should choose an appropriate place because it is the place where we meet our God. We should find a place where we will not be easily bothered so that we can concentrate in prayer and reading the Word. It should have enough light.

3.4 Preparing ourselves for devotional time

These are things that we need to prepare for spending devotional time: the Bible, a note book for recording what God teaches us during reading the Bible, and a song book for worship.

These are recommended steps in spending devotional time:

- Entering God’s presence with thanksgivings.
- Prayerfully confessing our sins to Him.
- Reading the Bible. Asking God to speak to us through His Word. Paying attention to what He speaks to us and receiving His promises with faith. Responding to His Word by praying.
- Meditating on the Word to see what specific lesson God wants to teach us and change us.
- Writing what we learn down in the note book.
- Worshipping God and praying to Him. Presenting our requests to Him according to the burdens in our hearts.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do Christians need to meet God daily?
2. What is the best time and location for your daily devotion?

MEMORY VERSE

Psalm 5:3 In the morning, O LORD, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait in expectation.

LESSON 4

KNOWING YOUR GOD

GOAL OF THE LESSON

- New believers will know God more. They will realize that God is the One who blesses those who trust Him.
- New believers will live their lives according to Biblical principles so that they will receive blessings from God.
- They will have a desire to commit their lives to the local church. They will recognize that the church is a community of blessing.

ADVICE ON HOW TO USE THIS LESSON

- Spiritual helpers (shepherds) must prepare themselves very well before they teach this lesson. They should prayerfully ask God to open new believers' hearts to receive the Word which will strengthen their Christian life.
- Spiritual helpers should prepare to share their personal testimonies of how God has blessed them in different ways so that new believers will be inspired to faithfully walk with the Lord.

INTRODUCTION

- Encourage new believers to share their experiences with God that they have had last week. Spiritual helpers should do the same thing. This sharing will help them to build a closer relationship with their sheep. Besides new converts will realize that God always takes care of them and blesses them.
- Spiritual helpers should enthusiastically share what miracles God has done in the church, such as healing, so that new converts will realize that the church is a community of blessing and that they want to commit their lives to the church.
- Teach them to sing the song "Count the blessing" in order to prepare the atmosphere of teaching.
- Lead in prayer. Thank God for His blessings.

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"To be a Christian" does not mean that we change our religion, but we have a new relationship with God. After we become Christians, we realize that God is the almighty heavenly Father and that we are all His children. As a result we have a Father-son relationship with Him and God wants to bless us because He is our

heavenly Father. Therefore, Christians are different from other people who do not believe in God.

1.The characteristics of God who blesses us

God is the One who blesses us. He relates to us in three different forms at different times. We call these three forms “Trinity.” There is the only one and true God who reveals Himself in three persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. These 3 persons are equal in power and authority. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit have existed since before the creation. Each person of the one God has His specific functions and roles.

The heavenly Father

God, the heavenly Father created all things with the Son and the Holy Spirit (**Genesis 1:1**). God revealed Himself to man in the Old Testament as the Father.

The Son

God, the Son, took the form of man named Jesus Christ (**Philippians 2:5-8**). He came into this world approximately 2,000 years ago in order to redeem man from the punishment of sin. He gives every believer a new life and eternal life in heaven. Whoever believes in His name will have the right to be God's child (**John 1:12**). He is one of the Trinity.

The Holy Spirit

God, the Holy Spirit, is our counselor who dwells in every believer. Man cannot see Him with their eyes nor touch because He is spirit. However, every Christian can experience His power in his or her life. Jesus said in **John 3:8**, “The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.” We cannot see the wind, but we can hear its sound. In the same way, we can experience the power and the work of the Holy Spirit in our daily lives. Today, God does His ministry through the Holy Spirit.

2. Our relationship with God brings responsibility and blessing to our lives

After we put our trust in the Lord Jesus, God becomes our Father who will take care of us and we become His children who must obey Him. This father-son relationship leads to mutual responsibility: children must obey the Father and God the Father takes care of His children and blesses them.

John 1:12 Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God--

We receive the right to become children of God when we put our trust in the Lord Jesus. Because we are His children, He will definitely bless us.

Matthew 6:32-33 For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

It is normal that a father will give good things to his children. Therefore, we can believe in God's provision.

3. Because we have the right to be heirs of God, we will receive His inheritance

Our God is the richest person in the universe. He has more than 6,000 kinds of blessings that He wants to give to us.

Romans 8:15-17 “....And by Him we cry, ‘Abba, Father.’ ¹⁶The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. ¹⁷Now if we are children, then we are heirs-heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ....”

Romans 8:32 He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all-how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?

Ephesians 1:3-14 also tells us about the many blessings that we receive in Christ.

In conclusion, as we are heirs of God we have the right to ask God for good things in our lives: for good health, our daily needs, for peace and joy in our hearts, for a new transformed life and many other blessings that God wants to bestow on us.

4. How can we receive God's blessings?

God has promised that He will give many blessings to His children, yet many Christians lack God's blessings. Often the lack of blessings is not because God tells a lie, but because many Christians do not put all of their faith and hope in God and they do not understand God's methods of receiving blessings. The Word of God teaches us many ways of how to receive His blessings.

Asking and praying

Matthew 7:7-8 Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. ⁸For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.

We should pray in Jesus' name (**John 16:24, 14:12-14**). God's blessings come to us by the power of His name. We must also pray with faith (**Matthew 21:22, James 5:15**).

Obeying God and following His Word

When we have a close relationship with God, obey His Word and live our lives in His will, not our own will, He will definitely bestow His blessings to us according to the level of our commitment and obedience.

1 John 3:22 and receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him.

John 15:7 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.

Giving

Luke 6:38 Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

The third way of receiving blessings is to “give”. If we give to others, God will pour out His blessings into our lives. **Malachi 3:10** tells us that when we give to God, He will pour out an abundance of blessings. **Acts 20:35** says “It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

CONCLUSION

God is the provider who gives us many kinds of blessings because we have a father-son relationship with Him. We are God’s heirs who have the right to receive an inheritance of blessings from the Father. The way of receiving blessings is “Asking God in prayer.” We can ask Him only when we know His promises for our lives, which come by reading and memorizing the Bible. After we receive God's blessings we should give to others and we will receive more. The Christian life is one of being blessed by God.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When you realize that God is your Father, what should you expect to receive from Him? You can ask from God by praying for specific requests.
2. As heirs of God, what kinds of rights do you have? Have you ever used your rights? Begin to start using them today.
3. Now that we know that many blessings come into our lives by having a close relationship with the Lord, what practical things should we do to keep this relationship strong?

MEMORY VERSES

Matthew 7:7-8 Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. ⁸For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.

Matthew 7:11 If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!

LESSON 5

THE MANUAL OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

GOAL OF THE LESSON

- New believers will realize the value of studying the Bible and spending devotional time with the Lord.
- New believers will learn how to apply God's Word in their daily lives.
- They will have the right attitude towards the Bible.
- They will learn to live their lives according to Biblical principles.

ADVICE ON HOW TO USE THIS LESSON

- As the spiritual helper (shepherd) teaches this lesson they should share different experiences they have had that are helped them to realize the importance of the Bible, so that new believers will see that the Bible is a very valuable book needed for their lives.
- The spiritual helper should make sure that they have a good understanding of the Bible. They should correct any misunderstandings that they might have and be available to give advice. They should not only teach new believers the importance of reading the Bible, but also assist them with learning some of the basic structure of the Bible (examples: the gospels, letters to the churches, books of the prophets, etc.), so that they know how to use it.
- They should be enthusiastic while teaching new believers. They should try to keep the atmosphere relaxed in order to make everyone feel at ease. They should try to finish the lesson in one session. If many questions are raised, they should answer them after finishing the lesson.

INTRODUCTION

- Encourage new believers to share any outstanding lesson that they have learned from their reading of the Bible, or any special experiences that they have had that have revealed to them the power of God's Word. Ask them to quote any specific Scriptures that have been a particular blessing or have made a deep impression on them, have them share why they like those particular Bible verses.
- The spiritual helper should give their personal testimony of how God has transformed their life through reading the Bible. They should be able to give examples of the blessings that they have received from God because they obeyed His Word.
- Pray with new believers stressing that it is a privilege to be able to study the Bible. Pray with a heart full of thanksgiving.

CONTENTS

There are countless numbers of books in this world, but there are no other books that can compare to the Bible because it was not written by man, but through the inspiration of God (**2 Peter 1:20-21, 2 Timothy 3:16-17**). As a result the Bible is God's revelation to man, free from human error. The Bible has authority and greatly influences the lives of its readers. Many people in the world, both in the past and in the present time, have had their lives transformed by reading the Bible every day.

1. Benefits of reading the Bible

1.1 The Word of God is spiritual food

In **Matthew 4:4** Jesus said, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

Why can't man live on bread alone? Why is food not enough to sustain man's life? Man is not made up of only a physical body, but he is composed of 3 different parts: physical body, mind and spirit. We are more than just a physical body, we also have soul (mind) and spirit. Our mind needs fellowship with others, but our spirit needs God's Word (the Bible). God's Word provides nourishment for our spirit which will cause it to grow and help us to become more like Jesus. Like an infant who needs milk, our spiritual lives need to have food. The food of our spiritual life is the word of God (**1 Peter 2:2**).

As Christians, we need spiritual food which is God's Word. Since our bodies cannot work properly with a lack of food, neither can our spirit lack God's Word. The Bible is the essential tool needed for walking a Christian life. We therefore must read the Bible every day.

1.2 The Word of God gives direction to our lives

Psalm 119:105 Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path. The Bible is compared to a lamp and a light which will guide our lives to walk the right path that God desires us to go. Often in our lives we have to make decisions, yet we do not always know which is the best direction we should choose to go. When we read the Bible, we will understand and know the right path to choose because God's Word will shine and be a light to guide us in the way we should go. We therefore should read the Bible on a regular basis in order to understand God's plan and His will for our lives.

1.3 God's Word is like a mirror

We can compare the Bible to a mirror which not only reveals the holiness of God but also reveals the imperfection of men. When we read the Bible, the Word will be like a mirror that will reflect our shortcomings and tell us what we should change (**James 1:23**). The Bible is therefore an essential thing for our lives.

1.4 The Word prepares us to be ready for every good work

2 Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

The Word of God can powerfully change our lives. It is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness according to the will of God, so that we can be thoroughly equipped for every good work. Every Christian should seek to know God and His will so that they can be righteous and holy in His sight. We can seek God's will by reading the Word of God and practicing it daily.

1.5 God's Word will change us to become more like Jesus

Matthew 5:48 Be perfect, therefore as your heavenly Father is perfect.

After we become Christians God calls us to have transformed lives and to be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect. God does not expect us to change in one day, but He does expect us to gradually develop our lives to become more like Him. We can become a more Christ-like person by studying the Word of God and responding to it with obedience.

2. Understanding about the Bible

The Bible is the most valuable book and it is not an ordinary text. No other books in the world can be compared to the Bible. It was written by the inspiration of God, in order for man to know God.

The Bible is composed of 66 books which were written by more than 40 authors, each coming from diverse cultural and occupational backgrounds. These included kings, peasants, a fisherman, a tax collector, a rabbi, philosophers, statesmen, scholars, poets, a doctor, a shepherd and a general. It was written over 1,600 years period, covering 60 generations. It was written from many different locations, under a variety of conditions and from three different continents (Asia, Africa, and Europe). It covers hundreds of controversial subjects, and is composed of a variety of literary styles including history, poetry, law, prophecy, and biographies. Yet in spite of this

multitude of contributing factors, the Bible is a single, unified book with a single unfolding theme concerning God's redemptive plan for mankind. A unity of such scope and magnitude gives strong testimony to its divine authorship and design.

- The Old Testament tells us that there is only one God. We can read about the law, relationships between God and man and also about the prophets and their prophecies. Most parts of the Old Testament were written in the Hebrew language.
- The New Testament tells us that Jesus Christ is the Savior of all mankind. He died on the cross for our sins and was raised from the dead. We can also read about the ministry of Jesus, His work as the head of the church, about His second coming and how the believers will reign eternally with Him. The New Testament was written in the Greek language.

3. The attitude towards the Bible

3.1 We must obey the Bible

2 Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Because the Bible is a holy book that was written by the inspiration of God, it is therefore different from other books. It is full of authority because it is the Word of God therefore it can powerfully transform our lives. Every Christian should sincerely be submissive and obedient to the Bible. Even though there may be times when we may fall short of obeying God's Word, we must have a sincere attitude of continually trying to follow the teachings in the Bible.

3.2 The attitude of hunger for God's Word

1 Peter 2:2 Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation.

When we read the Bible we must have an attitude of hunger of God's Word. We should desire to know and fully understand the Bible. Like an infant is hungry for milk, we must hunger and thirst after our Lord's Word. If this attitude is missing, we will lack enthusiasm and revelation while we are reading the Bible.

3.3 The attitude of faith

Hebrews 11:6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

The Bible is the revelation of God to man. As we read the Bible it allows us to draw close to the Lord and enter into His presence. We should read the Word of God with faith and not with the attitude of trying to disprove its truth. For without faith it is impossible to please God.

We have faith that the Bible is the Holy Word of God.

We have faith that it is free from human error and that it never fails because it was inspired by the one and only God.

We have faith that the Bible holds the highest standards, percepts and truths.

3.4 We have faith that the word of God is powerful and able to transform our lives

We receive what we believe. If we seek God's word with faith, it will influence and change our lives.

4.4 How to apply God's word in our daily life

The following examples show how we can apply some of the Biblical principles for use in our daily life:

- a. **2 Corinthians 6:14** Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?
We apply this verse by not being married to an unbeliever, or by not having a boyfriend or girlfriend who does not know the Lord. We should not be a partner in a business with non-Christians if they can control our decisions.
- b. **2 Corinthians 6:16-17** tells us that our body is the temple of the living God. We apply this teaching by taking care of our health by not drinking alcohol, not smoking, not doing anything that will destroy or harm our body.
- c. **Mark 12:30** says, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength."
We apply this verse in our lives by not letting anything hinder our relationship with the Lord, whether it is money, our loving family, our career or our lifetime goals, etc.
- d. **Mark 12:31** says, "Love your neighbor as yourself." We apply this teaching by helping those who are in need without seeking to benefit ourselves and by loving our Christian brothers and sisters unconditionally.

It is very important for us to put God's Word into daily practice. Our lives will be changed by God when we make a decision to apply His Word in our daily life.

In conclusion, the Bible is one of the essential things for our Christian life and we can not live without it. We must daily read the Bible with hope and faith that God's Word

will transform our lives. We must apply its principles for use in our daily walk with the Lord. The Bible is the manual of the Christian life.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. As you realize that the Bible is important and essential for your life, what will you do? Tell specifically.
2. You have learned 3 attitudes towards the Bible. What kinds of attitudes about the Bible do you have? What attitudes do you lack? How will you improve your attitude towards God's Word?

MEMORY VERSES

2 Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

LESSON 6

CONVERSATIONS WITH THE LORD

GOAL OF THE LESSON

- New believers will see the importance of spending a devotional time with God.
- They will realize that a close relationship with God is one of the most important parts of their Christian walk.
- They will get into the habit of spending a daily devotional time with the Lord.
- They will enthusiastically desire to have a close relationship with God.
- They will always enthusiastically want to have personal experiences with God.

ADVICE ON HOW TO USE THIS LESSON

- The shepherd should have a close relationship with God and spend devotional time with Him on a daily basis.
- The shepherd should teach this lesson with joy and enthusiasm. His/Her teaching should demonstrate his/her love for the Lord as he/she has had personal experiences of a close relationship with Him.
- They should create a sincere and exciting atmosphere because the relationship with God is new every day. The spiritually older Christians should encourage new believers to have a personal fellowship with God.
- He/She should always give examples of his own experiences with God. He/She should finish teaching in one setting. If there are many questions, he/she should answer new converts at the end of the session.

INTRODUCTION

- Share your experiences and blessings of spending a devotional time with God.
- Ask new believers to share the blessings that they have received since the last lesson.
- Pray with a sincere and thankful spirit for the teachings by the Holy Spirit. Thank God for His blessings.

CONTENT

To become a Christian means to have a new personal relationship with God the creator. It is not to follow a new religion. It is not to perform rituals or try to follow some religious laws. As Christians, we have a personal relationship with God. We can have a relationship with God by talking to Him. We can directly talk to God by using our own words. Christians have the privilege to be close to God and have personal conversation with Him

1. Why must Christians talk to God?

1.1 Prayer is a command of the Lord (**1 Thessalonians 5:17**).

1.2 It is normal for Christians to talk to God.

In **Matthew 6:5-13**, Jesus taught His disciples how to pray. As Jesus said, “But when you pray,” instead of saying “If you pray,” we can see that prayer is a normal part of the daily Christian life.

1.3 The Lord Jesus has set a good example of a consistent prayer life. **Mark 1:35** says, “Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.”

Jesus Himself, who is God in the form of man, also prayed to the Father (**John 17:1-26**). Therefore, prayer is a very important and essential practice in our Christian lives.

1.4 God is looking forward to hearing our voice.

Psalm 5:3 In the morning, O Lord, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you.

King David, the faithful servant of God, always prayed to Him every morning.

1.5 We will not be defeated when we face trials and temptations.

Mark 14:38 says, “Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.” If we do not want to be defeated nor fall into temptation, we must watch out and pray consistently. Talking to God in prayer is an intrinsic part of the normal Christian life because it is one way that we can have fellowship with God. God is our heavenly Father (**John 1:12**). Just as it is abnormal if a son does not talk to his father, Christians should not cease having conversations with the Lord either.

2. The components of prayer (Conversation with God)

“Conversation” is the communication between two persons. We communicate with God in our prayer life by not only talking to Him but also listening to Him. We approach Him with faith (**Hebrews 11:6**) when we talk to Him. These are important components of prayer.

2.1 Praises (Psalm 96:1-13)

Christians praise God for who He is and for what He has done for us. There are many things for which we can praise Him, such as we praise Him because He is just and faithful, we praise Him because He is merciful and He

loves us, we praise His power and mightiness, etc. Every time we pray we should praise God for who He is.

2.2 Thanksgiving (Psalm 106:1, Ephesians 5:20)

We should show our gratitude towards God. We thank God because He answered our prayers. There are many blessings that we can give thanks to the Lord for example, we thank Him that He has given us good health, we thank God for His provision. We thank God that we have good Christian brothers and sisters in our church and for our job and profession.

The most important thing that we should thank Him for is “salvation” that we receive from God through the death of Jesus. We therefore should never stop being thankful towards the Lord. When we thank God we also show that He is the owner of everything in our lives.

2.3 Confession of sin (Psalm 32:1, 1 John 1:9)

We should confess our sins, whether it is a small or serious sin, whether it is the sin against man or God. We commit sin when we disobey God and behave ourselves in a manner below God’s standards. Confession of sin will deliver us from the bondage of sin and it will give us freedom to start a new day with the Lord. Therefore Christians should confess their sins in their daily prayer.

2.4 Asking (Matthew 7:7-11, John 14:13-14)

As Christians we have the right to ask God for what we need because we are God’s children. Since we have a father-son relationship with God we can ask for many things from Him. But we must ask Him according to His will. We should not petition God for only what we need but we should ask God for other people’s needs as well.

2.5 Listening to God (Psalm 37:7, 2 Timothy 3:16-17)

Conversation is two-way communication between two persons. The first 4 components are our communication with God. We should receive His message or words too. God can communicate with us in many ways. Sometimes God speaks to us through other Christians. But God usually speaks to us through the Bible. God sometimes speaks directly to us through our spirits and we hear His voice deep in our hearts. Therefore one important component of our devotional time is to listen to His voice. We let Him speak to us by being quiet and listening to Him in our hearts or by prayerfully reading the Bible. It is better to read through a book in the Bible than to read it randomly.

3. We must set up a specific time to talk to God

Even though we can talk (pray) to God at any time and any place, it is very important for us to have our specific time to pray on a daily basis. In general the best time for prayer is the early morning because it is a quiet time when we feel relaxed. Jesus Himself and King David always woke up early in the morning to pray too (**Psalm 5:3, Mark 1:35**). However we should choose the most appropriate time for our lives so that we can concentrate on seeking the Lord without worrying about our daily problems (burdens).

CONCLUSION

- a. We set up a specific time to talk to the Lord on a daily basis.
- b. We find a specific place to pray.
Matthew 6:6 But when you pray, *go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.*
- c. We should use a humble position such as kneeling down so that we will have a fearful attitude towards God.
- d. We decide that we will absolutely not allow anything to hinder our personal prayer time with the Lord.
- e. We join the corporate prayer meeting (**Matthew 18:19-20, Acts 2:42**), such as the church early morning prayer meeting, all night prayer meeting, etc. Group prayer is powerful.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think that we should pray every day?
2. When is the most appropriate time and where is the most appropriate place for you to have your daily devotional time with the Lord?

MEMORY VERSE

Psalm 5:3 In the morning, O Lord, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you.

LESSON 7

BAPTISM WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

GOAL OF THE LESSON

- To help new believers to realize the importance and benefits of the baptism with the Holy Spirit. They should make the decision to receive the baptism with the Holy Spirit after they learn this lesson.
- To help new converts to understand how to live their Christian lives by depending on the power of the Holy Spirit. They will realize that the Christian life is clothed with God's power.
- To help new converts to have clear understanding of how to be baptized with the Holy Spirit. They will eventually help others to be baptized with the Holy Spirit.

ADVICE ON HOW TO USE THIS LESSON

- The shepherd should teach this lesson with enthusiasm as he or she is excited about God's power in his or her life, so that new believers will realize that the baptism with the Holy Spirit is valuable for their lives.
- He should share the experiences of God's power in his Christian life so that new converts will have more faith and expectation in walking the life of God's power.
- 2.3 The teaching of this lesson is complete when we can challenge new converts to believe in God's power and eventually are willing to be baptized with the Holy Spirit.

INTRODUCTION

- Share the differences between your Christian life before and after you were baptized with the Holy Spirit. Tell of the blessings that you have received after being baptized with the Holy Spirit.
- Pray with new believers that they will have the same experience after they learn this lesson.

CONTENTS

In **Mark 16:17-18** Jesus said, “And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons, they will speak in new tongues, ¹⁸they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well.” There are many Bible verses that mention about the miracles and God’s power being

demonstrated through many Christians. For those who already have repented and become Christians, even though they may look like normal people from the outside, they are actually not normal people. Because Christians have God who is able to perform miracles in their lives. God's power is in their lives as **Mark 16:17-18** says that the signs and miracles will accompany those who believe. As Christians who believe in God, we should expect to live the life that is full of God's power. We should not expect to live a normal life like those who do not know God yet. We should expect to live an exciting life because we will see God's power being demonstrated through us. The baptism with the Holy Spirit is the way to receive God's power in our Christian life.

1. The baptism with the Holy Spirit is the way of receiving God's power

1.1 **Acts 1:8** But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth.

In this verse Jesus clearly said that we will receive power when we are baptized with the Holy Spirit. We will use His power in spreading the good news and being witnesses for Jesus Christ. The baptism with the Holy Spirit is therefore the way to receive God's power into our lives.

1.2 **Acts 2:4** All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

The sign to prove that we receive the baptism with the Holy Spirit is speaking in other tongues (**Acts 10:44-45, Acts 19:1-6, Acts 8:14-17**). Speaking in new tongues is the clearest evidence of God's power in our Christian lives after the baptism with Holy Spirit. Therefore when we are baptized with the Holy Spirit we should expect to speak in a new tongue.

1.3 **Acts 19:6** When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.

We can see that when Paul placed his hands on the believers, they were baptized with the Holy Spirit. They spoke in tongues and prophesied. This event showed the miracle of God's power. According to the Bible the baptism with the Holy Spirit is the way that Christians will receive the power from God.

2. The benefits and purposes of the baptism with the Holy Spirit

2.1 **Acts 1:8** When we are baptized with the Holy Spirit we will receive God's power in being witnesses for Jesus Christ.

2.2 Acts 19:6 The baptism with the Holy Spirit will enhance the demonstration of the gifts of the Holy Spirit such as gift of prophecy, gift of healing, etc..

2.3 1 Corinthians 14:4 ‡ When we speak in tongues we edify ourselves.

2.4 Romans 8:26-27 ‡ The Holy Spirit speaks through us by using His language, which we call a new tongue. We do not understand His language but the Lord does. God will answer when we pray in the spirit because the Holy Spirit speaks for us in His will. Prayer in tongues (spirit) is useful when we do not know what to pray.

In conclusion, the baptism with the Holy Spirit which follows by speaking in a new tongue, is very valuable and beneficial in our Christian lives. We therefore should be baptized with the Holy Spirit as soon as we can. We should also pray in tongues every day.

3.The method of receiving the baptism with the Holy Spirit

In **Luke 11:13** Jesus said, “If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!”

From this Scripture God compares giving the Holy Spirit to Christians who are His children to a father who wants to give good gifts to his children. Therefore the baptism with the Holy Spirit is the good thing for our Christian lives. In this verse we can see that God does not set up any conditions for us to be filled with the Holy Spirit except we have to ask Him. There are no conditions in receiving the baptism with the Holy Spirit except “asking” God. God already has the desire to give the Holy Spirit to His children. Nevertheless, we find 4 reasons that cause Christians to not receive the baptism with the Holy Spirit. These are the four reasons:

- a. Not really wanting to receive God’s power.
- b. Having some sins that they haven’t confessed, such as unforgiveness etc.
- c. Lack of faith
Some Christians do not really believe that they can be filled with the Holy Spirit and be able to speak in new tongues. Lack of faith perhaps comes from the past experience of failure to receive the Holy Spirit.
- d. Lack of understandings
Many people misunderstand that when they are baptized with the Holy Spirit, their mouths will move by itself. Therefore they shut their mouth tightly and wait for the Holy Spirit to move their mouth to talk. This is a misunderstanding!
The sign of receiving the baptism with the Holy Spirit is speaking a new tongue. No one is baptized with the Holy Spirit without speaking in tongues. When we speak in a new tongue, we use our voice and move our mouth to speak out the

new language that comes from the Holy Spirit. Speaking in tongues is the clearest evidence of God's power in our lives.

Normally when we talk we have to think of the words we say in order to communicate. But when we receive the baptism with the Holy Spirit we use our mouths to speak out the language that we have not learned or prepared. Prayer in tongues is therefore a miracle because we speak without using our thinking process.

Therefore when we receive the baptism with the Holy Spirit, we must open our mouths to be ready to speak. We should not close them tightly and wait for the Holy Spirit to move it. We do not have to think of any words because God will give us the words.

In **Acts 18:14-17** and **Acts 19:1-6**, the Bible tells us the common way of receiving the baptism with the Holy Spirit in the early church. Christians who already received the baptism with the Holy Spirit can lay hands on those who have not received yet.

CONCLUSION

The methods of receiving the baptism with the Holy Spirit are:

- a. Asking God with a sincere desire because we see the value of the baptism with the Holy Spirit (**Luke 11:13**).
- b. Confessing all of our sins that we are aware of.
- c. Having faith that we will undoubtedly receive (**John 7:38**).
- d. Opening our mouths to be ready to speak with the faith that we will definitely receive the Holy Spirit. We should not think of any words of the languages that we know.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Ask new converts whether or not they have received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. If they say "yes", ask them about their experience of that moment.
2. If they have not received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, ask them whether they want to receive and challenge them to receive it as soon as possible.
3. Give them the opportunity to ask questions before laying hands on them as they want to receive the Holy Spirit.

MEMORY VERSE

Luke 11:13 If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him.

LESSON 8

WORSHIP

GOAL OF THE LESSON

- Christians will have clear and correct understanding of worship.
- Christians will worship the Lord with proper attitudes.
- Realize that worship is the way to show love for God and know that God is present while He is being worshiped.
- Understand that worship is a way to be close to the Lord. True worship will deliver Christians from the bondage of sin.

ADVICE ON HOW TO USE THIS LESSON

- Indicate that music and songs influence man's life. Therefore Christians need to understand worship.
- Christians have always used music and songs in worship in every generation.
- Share a personal testimony of how you have received blessings while worshiping God. Examples might include being physically healed, discerning direction from God to walk the Christian life, receiving answers of prayer, or being delivered from problems.

INTRODUCTION

- Share about blessings that you received when you worship God.
- Ask new converts to give their personal opinions regarding the difference of the Christian and non-Christian worship.
- Ask them to share how they felt when they went to the church worship service or when they participate in worship in the care group meeting.

CONTENTS

Worship is an extremely important part of the Christian life. Worship is the way to build a close relationship with God. The Lord created us to worship Him.

John 4:23-24 Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. ²⁴God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.

True worship does not depend upon where you are, nor upon who you are. True worship depends upon your heart attitude towards God.

Because God is Spirit, those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit, not only by thoughts, rituals, or feelings.

Because God is also truth, those who worship Him must worship Him in truth, truth which comes from the Bible. God will not accept the wrong kind of worship. Therefore we should not worship Him by using our own ways, culture or traditions. For example, God did not accept Cain's worship (**Genesis 4:5**). When we are walking in sin we cannot worship God fully.

1. The meaning of worship

1.1 In a general sense, worship includes every action of our lives. The Bible tells us to present our own life to God as a living sacrifice (**Romans 12:1-2**). Accordingly, our daily actions are acts of worship: Performing our trade or profession with honesty, obeying our leaders, being diligent and responsible in our school, and following God's will are all acts of worship.

1.2 Specifically, we should set up a certain time and occasion to worship God in order to proclaim His goodness and to praise His name. We gratefully proclaim who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in the future. We can worship Him in our personal devotional time and with the congregation of His saints. We can worship in various ways, such as singing praises, lifting our hands, and dancing with joy, etc.

The book of Psalm teaches the correct way to worship. As we love the Lord we should show our love to Him in words and actions, instead of keeping our feelings in our hearts.

2. Why should we worship God?

2.1 God has established to be a way that man can fellowship with him.

Exodus 25:8 Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them.

2.2 God will restore David's tent or "worship" on the last day.

Acts 15:16 After this I will return and rebuild David's fallen tent. Its ruins I will rebuild, and I will restore it,

2.3 Christians will continue to worship the Lord in heaven eternally.

2.4 God is seeking true worshippers. This means that worship is very important in His sight (**John 4:23-24**).

2.5 The Bible commands us to worship.

Psalm 29:2 Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness.

Psalm 95:6-7 Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker; ⁷for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care.

2.6 Worship is an act of honoring God.

Psalm 50:23 He who sacrifices thank offerings honors me, and he prepares the way so that I may show him the salvation of God.

2.7 God is worthy to be praised and worshipped (**Revelation 4:8-11, 5:12, 2 Samuel 22:4, Psalm 96:4, 99:2**) because:

The Lord is good (**Psalm 34:8**).

We recognize His benefits and wonderful deeds (**Psalm 103:1-3, 107:21**).

The LORD has chosen us to be saved from sin as his treasured possession (**Psalm 135:4**). Our Lord is the great and awesome God (**Psalm 135:5, 92:1-2, 150:2**).

Psalm 92:1-2 It is good to praise the LORD and make music to your name, O Most High, ²to proclaim your love in the morning and your faithfulness at night,

3. Biblical characteristics of worship

3.1 God is the center of our worship (**John 4:24**).

3.2 We must have a genuine relationship with God and be willing to receive His forgiveness.

Jeremiah 31:31-34 “The time is coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. ³²It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them,” declares the LORD. ³³“This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time,” declares the LORD. “I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. ³⁴No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,” declares the LORD. “For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.”

3.3 True worship does not depend on the place where we worship.

John 4:21-24 Jesus declared, "Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. ²²You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. ²⁴God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth."

3.4 We must worship God in spirit and with sincerity (**John 4:22-23, Isaiah 29:13**).

Isaiah 29:13 The Lord says: "These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is made up only of rules taught by men."

3.5 We worship Him in truth according to Biblical principles. We should understand the meaning of outward actions of worship, which are recorded in the Bible (**John 4:22-23**).

4. The Biblical pattern of worship

Our God is the God of order and pattern. We should choose His Biblical pattern of worship when we worship Him, not man's pattern.

- Singing praises to the Lord (**Psalm 95:1, 81:1, 100:1, 147:1**)
- Shouting (**Isaiah 12:6, Psalm 47:1, 35:27, 32:11, 132:9, 16**)
- Clapping our hands (**Psalm 47:1, 98:8**)
- Lifting our hands (**Psalm 134:2, 141:2, 63:4, 143:6**)
- Standing (**Psalm 134:1, 135:1-2**)
- Kneeling down and bowing down (**Psalm 95:6**)
- Praising God with our spoken words (**Psalm 145:21, Philippians 2:11, Psalm 148:1-2**)
- Being still before the Lord (**Psalm 46:10**)
- Dancing with joy (**Psalm 149:3, Exodus 15:20, Jeremiah 31:4, 2 Samuel 6:14, 1 Chronicles 15:29, Psalm 150:4**)
- Singing new songs (**Psalm 33:3, 40:3, 96:1, 98:1, 144:9, 149:1**)
- Using musical instruments (**Psalm 150:3-5, 1 Chronicles 23:5, Revelation 14:2-5**)
- Laughing (**Psalm 126:2**)
- Walking and singing (**2 Chronicles 20:20-22**)
- Rejoice before the Lord (**Deuteronomy 12:11-12, Leviticus 23:40**)

5. Results (Outcomes) of correct worship

- 5.1 God will dwell amongst worshippers or He will visit us (**2 Chronicles 5:13-14, Zephaniah 3:17**).
Psalm 22:3 Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One; you are the praise of Israel.
Exodus 29:41-46 Sacrifice the other lamb at twilight with the same grain offering and its drink offering as in the morning --a pleasing aroma, an offering made to the LORD by fire. ⁴²For the generations to come this burnt offering is to be made regularly at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting before the LORD. There I will meet you and speak to you; ⁴³there also I will meet with the Israelites, and the place will be consecrated by my glory. ⁴⁴So I will consecrate the Tent of Meeting and the altar and will consecrate Aaron and his sons to serve me as priests. ⁴⁵Then I will dwell among the Israelites and be their God. ⁴⁶They will know that I am the LORD their God, who brought them out of Egypt so that I might dwell among them. I am the LORD their God.
- 5.2 Worship brings the spirit of prophecy (**2 Kings 3:11-17, Acts 13:1-3**).
Acts 13:1-3 In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. ²**While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said**, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” ³So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.
- 5.3 It brings God’s power and victory (**2 Chronicles 20:21-22, Acts 16:25-34**).
2 Chronicles 20:21-22 After consulting the people, Jehoshaphat appointed men to sing to the LORD and to praise him for the splendor of his holiness as they went out at the head of the army, saying: “Give thanks to the LORD, for his love endures forever.” ²²As they began to sing and praise, the LORD set ambushes against the men of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir who were invading Judah, and they were defeated.
- 5.4 Worship inspires Christians to sing new songs from their hearts to the Lord (**2 Chronicles 29:27, Colossians 3:16, Ephesians 5:19**).
2 Chronicles 29:27 Hezekiah gave the order to sacrifice the burnt offering on the altar. As the offering began, singing to the LORD began also, accompanied by trumpets and the instruments of David king of Israel.
Colossians 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.
- 5.5 Worship gives victory to Christians when their spirits are full of despair.

Isaiah 61:3 and provide for those who grieve in Zion--to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendor.

5.6 Worship brings peace, joy and happiness to God's people.

Psalms 34:1-4 I will extol the LORD at all times; his praise will always be on my lips. ²My soul will boast in the LORD; let the afflicted hear and rejoice. ³Glorify the LORD with me; let us exalt his name together. ⁴I sought the LORD, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How often are you willing to spend devotional time to worship God?
 Every day 3 times per week Once a week Rarely
 Never
2. How much are you willing to wholeheartedly worship the Lord by following Biblical principles?
 I will follow every teaching in the Bible. As much as I can.
 I will follow only some teachings. Very little. None.
3. Are you willing to submit your life to the Lord by worshiping and obeying Him?
 Fully offering my life to Him Giving everything in my life
 Giving a part of my life to Him Not giving at all.

MEMORY VERSES

John 4:23-24

HOMEWORK

Listen to a tape of the sermon "Understanding Worship."

LESSON 9

VICTORY OVER TEMPTATION

GOAL OF THE LESSON

- To help new believers understand the truth about temptation and know how to cope with it.
- To help new believers understand the Biblical principles of how to overcome temptations.
- To help new believers understand the various kinds of temptations and the methods of avoiding them.

ADVICE ON HOW TO USE THIS LESSON

- The spiritual helpers (spiritually older Christians) should teach this lesson with eagerness and with the attitude of victory (positive attitude). Do not teach this lesson with a negative attitude or fear of being defeated by temptations.
- The spiritual helpers can teach this lesson by sharing personal past experiences of overcoming or defeating the temptations.
- Conduct the teaching session in a natural and relaxed way. Emphasize that temptation is the normal thing that we will face in our daily Christian walk, but God has prepared the path of victory for us.

INTRODUCTION

- Ask new believers to share their personal past experiences of temptation and its consequence.
- Share the testimony of the blessings that we received after we overcame a temptation.
- Pray with new believers that God will help us to understand the Biblical principles of how to overcome the temptation.

CONTENT

Because Christians believe and follow the unseen God, the Christian life depends on faith as the Scripture says, “For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: **‘The righteous will live by faith.’**” (Romans 1:17).

Since Christians live by faith, they face temptations and trials in their lives, which come from 2 sources with 2 different purposes, in order to test their faith: The first source is God who tests us. His goal is that we will pass the test

The second source is Satan who tempts us to forsake our faith and fall away from God. His goal is that we will be defeated.

In conclusion, temptations and trials occur to prove our faith and whether it is true or not (**Luke 8:13**). Temptations may come in many forms.

1. Facts about temptations

Christians are the only kind of people who have the privilege in receiving trials from God and the temptations from Satan. Non believers do not require to receive the tests from God because they do not live by faith, but by what they can see.

1.1 Trials and temptations are the normal things in the life of every believer

1 Corinthians 10:13 says, “No temptation has seized you except what is common to man.”

We must realize that temptations are normal in the Christian life. Our problem is therefore not about being fearful that temptations will seize us, but instead that we should make a decision to stand firm and try to overcome every temptation that comes into our lives.

The realization that it is normal to face temptations and trials will help the believers to have courage in facing difficulties. We realize that it is not only we who face temptations and trials but every Christian faces them too. Such as:

- Abraham was tested about his faith to give his son to God.
- Job was tempted to curse God because he faced difficulties.
- Joseph was tested about his faith in God’s vision by being put into jail.
- Moses was tested to walk with God by abandoning the position of kingship.
- Christians in the early church were tested in their faith by being persecuted.

Our problem therefore is not being worried that we may be tempted or tested, but knowing how to overcome the temptations.

1.2 We will not be tempted beyond what we can bear

1 Corinthians 10:13And God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear.

If we realize this fact, we will have hope in overcoming all the temptations because God’s grace is for everyone. When we face temptations or trials in our lives, we should realize that God allows them to happen because He knows that we will be able to bear them. We should therefore be confident in God that He will help us to overcome the

temptations or to pass the tests. This attitude of confidence will build us up to have a positive hope and trust in the Lord.

1.3 There is always a way out in every temptation and trial

1 Corinthians 10:13 continues to say, “...But when you are tempted. He will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.”

When we face temptations and trials we should realize that there is always a way out. There is no word as “hopeless” for Christians because God will not allow us to face temptations or trials without providing a way out. We should understand the method of how to avoid the temptations. For example:

- We avoid committing adultery by not reading pornographic books or pictures, or not being with a person of the opposite sex in a hidden place.
- We avoid cheating others by not counting money alone without other witnesses. We should always have witnesses in counting money and doing accounts.
- We try to avoid being married with a non believer by not dating a non believer without other friends around or not spending time with him/her too much.
- We avoid the temptation of not tithing to God by giving tithe to Him right away after we receive our salary and not using the tithe of the Lord.
- We avoid seeking honor or praise from others by doing everything to glorifying God.
- We avoid being a greedy person by thanking the Lord for what we already have, etc.

1.4 God has the goal for us to pass the trials and overcome the temptations

1 Corinthians 10:13 ...so that you can stand up under it.

If we realize that God allows temptations and trials to seize us so that we will have victory and pass the tests, we will have courage and inner strength to overcome them. The Bible clearly says that God does not want us to fail the tests but He expects us to stand up and overcome them. This is why God provides us a way out so that we will have victory. Because God does not want us to fail the tests, He will not allow us to face the difficult temptations or trials that are beyond our ability to overcome. Realization of this fact will greatly encourage us to live the Christian life victoriously. We can be confident that we will at least be even or we will win.

2. The method of victory

The trials from God are for testing our faith so that when we pass the tests we will grow in the spirit. For example, God may test us about our pride, anger, unforgiveness and trust in the Lord, etc. In each trial God allows some situations to happen in our lives. When we pass each test we will become more mature Christians. We will grow in our spirits in each issue of our lives, for example instead of being an arrogant person, we become a humble person; instead of being easily angered, we will be patient and gentle; instead of being unforgiving we will forgive and love others; instead of being anxious, we will have more trust in the Lord etc. If we fail a test in some specific issue, God will bring another test into our lives so that we eventually will pass and grow in the Lord in every issue of our lives. The most impressive thing about our Lord is that “He loves us very much to the point that He will not let us continue to be an imperfect person. God’s love is high enough that He comes to intervene in our lives until we are changed to be like Jesus.”

Therefore every time we face temptations and trials in our lives, we should realize that God’s test comes to us with His love in order to transform us and will grow up to another level of spiritual maturity.

Romans 8:35, 37 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?...³⁷No in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

CONCLUSION

The tests from God help us to grow in our spirits. We should try to pass the tests. The temptations from Satan lead us to destruction and defeat. We should try to avoid temptations and be careful not to fall into temptation by “watching and praying” (**Matthew 6:13, Matthew 26:41, Mark 14:38**).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When we know that God tests us with love, what should we do when we are tested?
2. Share your experiences of being afraid of being tested or tempted. What is your attitude towards temptations and testings today?
3. What are the temptations or tests that Christians usually face?

MEMORY VERSE

1 Corinthians 10:13 No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

LESSON 10

THE COMMUNITY OF BLESSING

GOAL OF THE LESSON

- Christians will realize the importance of having a commitment to the church.
- They will acknowledge that they will be blessed when they commit themselves to a local church.

ADVICE ON HOW TO USE THIS LESSON

- The spiritual helper (shepherd) must prepare himself/herself well by reading this lesson until they fully understand it.
- He/She should teach the lesson with a burden in his/her heart for the church.
- He/She should teach this lesson in an informal atmosphere and with enthusiasm. He/She should finish teaching this lesson in one session.

INTRODUCTION

- Spiritual helpers should share their experiences of having received the blessings from God because they have committed themselves to the church.
- Pray with new believers. Ask God to help them to understand the lesson.

CONTENT

God has placed us in a natural family where our parents take care of us. After we become Christians, God considers us His children. Therefore we are the members of God's family which is the church.

Since we need our parents to take care of our lives, we should also desire to have mature Christians take care of our spiritual lives. God wants us to be taught, trained and spiritually taken care of by His shepherds. Therefore God has the perfect plan to settle local churches as spiritual families for His people.

1. The definition of the church or God's community

The church is a group of born again Christians who put their trust in the Lord Jesus and believe that He is God who came into this world in order to die on the cross for man's sin. They have a personal relationship with God. When committed Christians gather together as a local community, they are called a local church. The universal church means all believers throughout the world in every generation.

The church means a group of committed Christians, not a building

Matthew 16:18 And I tell you that you are **Peter**, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.

Acts 8:3 But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off men and women and put them in prison.

Philippians 3:6 as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for legalistic righteousness, faultless.

Paul persecuted the believers in the early church time. This means that the church is not a building or a sanctuary, but a group of people who put their trust in the Lord Jesus.

The church means a group of committed Christians who gather together to serve and worship God

In **Acts 5:1-11**, Ananias, and Sapphira were judged to death by God because they lied to the Holy Spirit and to the apostles. This caused great fear to seize the whole church and all who heard about these events.

In **Acts 8:1**, a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.

In **Acts 15:4-5**, the church in Jerusalem was composed a group of the believers. God gave them different kinds of spiritual gifts. They were led by the apostles and elders.

The importance of the church

The church is the will of God. God wants to reveal His will and His plan of salvation through the church. It proclaims God's victory and His ruling authority over all things in the world.

Ephesians 3:8-10 Although I am less than the least of all God's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ,⁹ and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things.¹⁰ His intent was that now, **through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms,**

Ephesians 5:23 For the husband is the head of the wife as **Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior.**

Ephesians 1:22 And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church,

2. The primary requirements of being a member of a local church

Repentance

Acts 2:38 Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

John 1:12 says, “Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.”

The first primary requirement of being a church member is “repentance” or “being born again,” which means that we decide to turn away from our sins and from the life of disobedience to the Lord, and we will then become His children and join God’s family or the church.

We are willing to follow the Lord Jesus to the end of our lives

In **Mark 8:34** Jesus gave a command to the members of God’s family, that is “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.”

This command means that we make a definite decision to follow the Lord Jesus in spite of facing hardships and difficulties.

3. What blessings do we receive when we commit ourselves to a spiritual family?

We will receive spiritual care (John 21:15-19)

God compares us to His sheep who can not live alone without a shepherd. We will have a shepherd only by committing our lives to a spiritual family which is a local church. The good shepherd in a local church will take care of our lives, physically, mentally and spiritually. They will correctly guide us to God’s will and they will give us good advice according to the Bible in order to bring us to the full knowledge of Christ.

We will be protected from the attacks of Satan (1 Corinthians 5:5)

We will not be under spiritual protection if we do not commit our lives to a local church. The Bible teaches us that the church should discipline those who have hardened their hearts and do not want to repent by taking them out of the fellowship, so that they will repent when Satan attacks them. Therefore the life in the church is a safe life.

We will be protected from false teachings or cults (Acts 20:28-31)

In a local church, we will learn Biblical doctrines so that we are able to differentiate between God’s teachings and cults. If we do not commit our lives to a local church, we will not have a chance to learn the right kind of teaching according to the Bible and we will be deceived by false teachers.

Ephesians 4:14 Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming.

We will have the opportunity to have genuine fellowship with other Christian brothers and sisters in our church (1 John 1:7)

God wants to bless us through our Christian brothers and sisters.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Since you have learned the importance and blessings of committing your life to a local church, will you decide to come to church and cell group on a regular basis? (If so, pray with new believers that God will help them to commit their lives to a spiritual family).
2. One of the blessings that Christians will receive from God when they commit themselves to a local church is that they will have a good shepherd who takes care of their lives. The spiritual helpers and new believers should open their lives to each other and pray that God will bless their relationships.

MEMORY VERSE

Hebrews 10:25 Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another-and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

HOMEWORK

Listen to the sermon tapes:

- a. Understanding the church
- b. Understanding the Christian fellowship.

LESSON 11

SHARING OUR PERSONAL TESTIMONY AND THE GOSPEL

GOAL OF THE LESSON

- To help new believers realize the importance of sharing their personal testimonies and the good news of Jesus with other people.
- New believers will learn how to share their personal testimonies and the good news of Jesus in a clear and correct way.
- To help new believers to develop a firm faith in God as they begin to experience how He has changed their lives.

ADVICE ON HOW TO USE THIS LESSON

- Spiritually mature Christians should teach this lesson by emphasizing the importance of sharing personal testimonies, which is necessary to bring other people to salvation.
- Spiritually mature Christians should be clear in teaching this lesson step by step so that new believers will have a clear and correct understanding of how to effectively witness for Christ.
- They should also impart the spirit of evangelism into new believers by bringing them along with us as we go to witness, so that this lesson will become real in their Christian walk.

INTRODUCTION

- Share our personal experience of witnessing to others when we were new believers.
- Pray with new believers and ask God to help them to have the opportunity to witness for Christ and to bring others into God's kingdom.

CONTENT

In **Matthew 10:32-33** Jesus said, "Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. ³³But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven."

To acknowledge Jesus before men means to witness to others about our faith in the Lord Jesus. This Scripture shows us the importance of witnessing to others. Sharing our personal testimony is the way to demonstrate that we accept Jesus before men. If we do not accept Jesus before men, He will not accept us before the Father. In the time of the early church, Christians were persecuted in various ways. Some were put to death because they refused to deny Jesus. Christians in the early

church continued to witness for Christ even though sharing about Jesus was illegal. This was because at that time the government considered Christianity a false religion. It was very difficult for them to witness for Jesus because they knew there was a price to pay. Nevertheless they were willing to sacrifice their lives in order to spread the good news.

In this era Christians in the U.S. are prohibited to spread the good news in many places, such as in public schools. Yet often we do not speak up for the Lord for fear of being mocked, embarrassed or rejected from our society. If we are ashamed of sharing that we have accepted and believe in Jesus, He will also be ashamed to accept us as His disciples before the Father in heaven.

Another reason why many Christians do not witness is a lack of knowledge of how to witness. In this lesson, we will learn how to prepare ourselves to be ready to share our personal testimonies and the good news of Christ with others. Jesus gave the great commandment, "Go, therefore and make disciples of all nations."

1. Sharing personal testimony

Sharing our testimony means to share personal experiences of what God has done for us. It is easy to share this because we are telling others about our own story. In order to give a good personal testimony, it is often helpful to write our personal story of how we repented on paper. This can help us organize our thoughts and memorize it. There are 3 components of personal testimony according to the Bible:

1.1 Sharing about our lives before we became Christians

We start with sharing about our general backgrounds: family, education, religion, and general circumstances, our ideas, philosophy, life goals, our behaviors and actions.

We do not have to tell every detail of our backgrounds but we should share factors that prepared or influenced our decision to repent and to become Christians. For example, we can share that we came to know God because we tried to seek the meaning of life. We may share about personal problems that lead us to find answers in Christ, such as drug addiction, gambling, sickness, etc.

1.2 Sharing about the event of our repentance and decision to become a Christian

- Where did we hear about Jesus Christ for the first time?
- How did we feel about the gospel before we believed?
- Sharing the reasons that helped us to make a decision to accept Jesus Christ
- Sharing about the time of accepting Christ

In this part of our personal testimony, we should be clear in our presentation of why we decided to believe in Jesus.

1.3 Sharing about our lives after we become Christians

- Sharing how God has solved problems in our lives that we faced before we became Christians.
- Sharing about new habits or behaviors that have been changed by God, such as we stopped drinking alcohol or smoking etc.
- Sharing about various kinds of blessings that we have received since we became God's children.
- Sharing personal experiences we have had with the Lord.
We should be clear in our presentation of how God has changed our lives and has given us a new way of how to handle our problems.

2. Sharing the good news

Sharing the good news of Jesus Christ is an important key in witnessing to non-believers. Our personal testimony often helps people become interested in the love of Jesus Christ, but we need to lead people to accept Christ by sharing the main content of the gospel, which is the good news that Jesus Christ loved us so much that He was willing to be crucified and die for our sins. There are 5 steps in presenting the gospel.

1. Telling about God's character (Drawing an illustration)

He is the almighty God and the Creator (**Romans 1:20**).

He is holy and just (**1 Peter 2:22**).

He is full of unconditional love (**1 John 4:8**).

2. Telling about man

By illustrating that God, the Creator, gave us the freedom of choice. Everyone can choose to do good or evil. But man decided to do his own will (or sin) by making choices apart from God.

a. God's character -----> He is the Creator.

b. God created man -----> Freedom of choice (to do good or evil).
But men choose to commit sin (**Romans 3:23**).

3. Telling about sin and the wages of sin

Draw an illustration to show that God is righteous, holy and just, and that sin can not dwell in His presence. Because man chooses to commit sin, he is automatically separated from God. The penalty of sin is eternal death (**Romans 6:23**).

- a. God's character -----> Holy and just
- b. Man -----> Choose to commit sin (**Romans 3:23**)
- c. Sin -----> Death -----> in eternal lake of fire

The Bible says “The wages of sin is eternal death.” In other words the payment of our sin is eternal death in hell. Mankind is therefore in a hopeless situation and can not save himself to be free from the penalty of sin.

4. Telling about salvation through Jesus

Besides being just, God is also full of love. He does not want man to go to hell. He therefore has provided the way of salvation for man by sending His Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross in order to redeem us from the punishment of sin (**John 3:16**).

- 1) God -----> Full of love
- 2) Men -----> Choose to commit sin
- 3) Sin -----> Death -----> Hell
- 4) Jesus -----> Died for men's penalty of sin

Man cannot be saved from the penalty of sin by any other means except by putting their faith and trust in the Lord Jesus who died for them (**Acts 4:12**).

5. Telling about what men will receive after they believe in Jesus

- a) **John 3:16** , We will have eternal life.
- b) **John 1:12** , The right to be God's children
- c) **John 14:27** , We will have peace.
- d) **2 Corinthians 5:17** , We will have a new life.

After explaining the 5th step of the good news, we should challenge the listeners, who seem to be interested, to make a decision to accept Jesus Christ as their savior. Read the four Bible verses in step 5 for them so that they Holy Spirit will convict them through God's word. We should emphasize that these four blessings can not be bought by money we earned by good works (**Ephesians 2:8-9**). God would like to give His love and blessings as free gifts to those who put their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

When we mention about having a new life in Christ, we should share our personal testimony of how God has changed our lives. If they are ready to accept Christ, we should persuade them to accept Him. We should write the illustration while we are explaining the gospel because the listeners will not be confused with its content.

Note: We should memorize every step of witnessing so that we will not forget any important part of the personal testimony and the gospel.

CONCLUSION

In **Romans 1:14-15** the apostle Paul said, “I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish. That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are at...Seattle..”

Sharing the good news of Jesus is not a choice but it is what we should do with eagerness because of what we owe Jesus because He died for us. Jesus commands us to preach the way of salvation to others after we receive salvation. As Christians, we all have the responsibility to witness for Christ and share the gospel with others. Therefore learning how to witness and to share the gospel helps us to be productive in serving God.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What have your ideas been sharing the good news in the past? What do you think about telling the gospel today?
2. Who do you want to share your personal testimony and the good news with?

MEMORY VERSES

Please memorize the following verses because they are very important Scriptures that you can mention while witnessing.

John 3:16

John 1:12

John 14:27

2 Corinthians 5:17

Romans 3:23

Romans 6:23

HOMEWORK

1. Encourage new believers to write and memorize their personal testimony.
2. Encourage them to memorize the five steps of how to share the good news. They should share and draw the illustration when they meet their teachers next time.
3. Bring new believers along to witness to non-believers and the teachers should evaluate their performance.

LESSON 12

COMMUNION - THE COVENANT OF THE LORD

GOAL OF THE LESSON

- Every Christian will participate in communion with a clear understanding and faith.
- Every Christian will realize the value of communion and receive it in a meaningful way.
- Every believer will take the bread and drink the cup with the realization that God does not only deliver him/her from sin but He also gives him/her a new life.

ADVICE ON HOW TO USE THIS LESSON

- Open the lesson with questions or comments that will stimulate the thoughts of new believers. For example, we can say, “Do people sometimes forget things in their life; even important events?” The answer will be, “Yes, everyone has the experience of forgetting something in his life.” Communion is an important ceremony that helps us remember the greatest thing that God has done for mankind.
- When we sing the song “Amazing Grace”, we may cry because we realize the love of Jesus for us. When we receive communion, we should understand its meaning and the value of Jesus’ body and blood, which redeem us from the bondage of sin.

INTRODUCTION

- Ask new believers to share the meaning of communion according to their understanding.
- Pray with new believers. Ask God to help them to understand the lesson.

CONTENT

Communion is one of the two ceremonies that Jesus commanded us to participate in. Communion reminds us of the great commission of the Lord Jesus - that He died on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins (**Matthew 26:25-29**). Jesus initiated this ceremony, which His disciples and Christians in every church have performed since the time of the early church. Jesus took communion only one time with His twelve disciples before He went to the cross.

1. When we receive communion, how should we receive it?

1.1 **Luke 22:24-30**

We should prepare our hearts when we receive communion so that we will worship God in spirit and not by rituals. The twelve disciples did not prepare their hearts to receive communion. They were concerned with their worldly positions rather than thinking spiritually.

1.2 **John 13:1-20**

We must be humble towards God. Jesus showed His humility by washing His disciples' feet. We must be humble towards each other before we come into God's presence in communion. If we have done wrong to someone or there is someone we have not forgiven, we must examine our hearts, confess our sins, and forgive that person before we receive communion.

Matthew 6:14-15 For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

1.3 **Matthew 26:21-25**

We realize that we have made the covenant of loyalty with Jesus. The Lord Jesus proclaimed that one of His disciples would betray Him. Judas was not loyal to the Lord Jesus. Communion is a ceremony that represents a covenant of loyalty and love towards Jesus. We should make a decision to be loyal and fully commit our lives to Him as we take the bread and drink the cup.

1.4 **Matthew 26:21-23**

When we take communion, we make a decision to love Jesus and commit ourselves to Him. The disciples asked Jesus, "Surely not, I Lord?" Before we receive communion, we should ask ourselves whether we are committing our lives to Him and whether or not we love Him. We should not participate in this ceremony without spiritual meaning. We will be ready to receive communion if we commit our lives to Him and make a decision to follow Him.

1.5 **John 13:21-22**

We should realize God's grace in our lives. Jesus ate the bread and drank the cup even with a disciple who betrayed Him. By this we can notice His grace and love. He gave Judas the chance to repent. In the same way, He is willing to love us even though we have shortcomings. We can come into His presence not by our good works, but by His grace. We should examine our actions and attitudes. When we receive communion, we should expect the Holy Spirit to open our spiritual eyes

to see our weaknesses. We should also realize God's grace toward us and should allow God to transform our lives. In **Luke 22:19**, Jesus took bread, broke it and gave it to His disciples. This means that Jesus initiated this ceremony and He wants us to have a personal relationship with Him.

We do not need to follow exactly every detail of the ceremony, which was done by the twelve disciples in the early church. Outward ritual of this ceremony is not as important as its main purpose, which should be in our hearts. The main purpose of communion is to remind ourselves of the love of Jesus, who died on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins. We should maintain the meaning and Biblical principles behind communion.

2. The goal of communion

Because we have already been forgiven by God, we remember Jesus' sacrifice when we receive communion. This ceremony does not have power to forgive anyone's sin. The bread and the cup are merely symbols of Jesus' body and His blood. This ceremony is not only a command of the Lord Jesus for every Christian to observe, but it also reminds us of His second coming (**1 Corinthians 11:26**). We can have confidence that Jesus will definitely return. This ceremony also proclaims Jesus' death for the sin of the whole world. It reminds us of God's new covenant of His eternal love and faithfulness toward us.

3. Who should receive communion?

This ceremony is for every believer who has been born again and truly understands the love of Jesus. Every born again Christian should not deny the opportunity to receive communion. Some Christians have the misunderstanding that they are not good enough to participate in this ceremony. Actually, we can come to the Lord if we have a repentant heart and a desire to walk a new life with Him. We receive communion with the recognition of God's grace. This ceremony reminds us not to continue in sin. God will bless us through this holy ceremony if we receive it with the right attitude and understanding. God blesses us not because the bread and the cup themselves have power. The ceremony is holy because God is there with us.

4. How do we receive communion?

4.1 Together as a united group

Communion is the highlight of corporate worship and Christian fellowship. It should not be done by only one person. Jesus had the last supper (communion) with His disciples (**Luke 22:15**). A loaf of bread that is broken and divided among Christian brothers and sisters is a

symbol of unity. We should have unity with other believers and with the Lord.

4.2 With faith

Communion is a ceremony that represents spiritual meaning like water baptism. We should not receive it as a ritual, but we should meditate about the cross, which points to God's grace. In communion, we offer our lives to God and also receive blessing from Him (**1 Corinthians 10:16**). Furthermore, this ceremony also bring healing and deliverance of our sickness and bondage.

1 Peter 2:24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.

4.3 As often as possible

Because communion is the ceremony, that bring blessings to our lives, we should receive it as often as we can.

In the early church time, the Christians broke bread in their homes and in the temple everyday (**Acts 2:46**). We can participate in this ceremony at any convenient place as long as we realize its spiritual meaning, such as in our homes, in care group meetings, in the church, at the annual retreat and in any special meetings.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. To what degree do you touch God's grace that came through the cross?
 Very much Some
 Little Almost none
2. Do you intend to walk with God without breaking the covenant made between He and you?
 With high confidence
 With confidence
 I am not sure
 Not at all
3. Are you willing to receive communion in a meaningful way in order to be transformed by God?

MEMORY VERSE

1 Corinthians 11:26 For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

LESSON 13

WATER BAPTISM

GOAL OF THE LESSON

- New believers will understand that water baptism is one of Jesus' commands. Those who believe in Him should show their faith by acting on this command.
- New believers will realize that to receive water baptism is a privilege only for those who follow the Lord Jesus and repent, not for non-believers.
- They will understand the meaning of water baptism.
- They will understand how to be baptized in water according to Biblical principles. They will make a decision to be baptized in water.

ADVICE ON HOW TO USE THIS LESSON

- The spiritual helper (shepherd) must be baptized in water before he or she teaches this lesson.
- He/She should thoroughly teach this lesson in order that new believers will recognize the value and importance of water baptism.
- He/She should have faith and expectation that they will obey this command.

INTRODUCTION

- Share the blessings and joy you (spiritual helpers) personally experienced after being baptized in water.
- Give other Christians the opportunity to share their experiences of receiving water baptism.
- Pray and give thanks to the Lord for sending Jesus to die on the cross. His sacrifice has caused us to forsake our old sinful nature and become new creations.

CONTENT

In **Matthew 28:19**, Jesus commanded every believer to be baptized in water in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Therefore, Christians must realize the importance of water baptism. They should study God's Word in order to have a correct understanding about this command of Jesus and put it into practice.

1. Why must Christians be baptized in water?

Because Jesus commanded every believer to be baptized in water.

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

2. Who should be baptized in water?

Water baptism is an important and privileged ceremony which can be participated in only by those who repent and put their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. Non-believers cannot be baptized in water. These are some examples in the Bible.

On the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:31-41)

Acts 2:37-38, 41 ³⁷When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” ³⁸Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven. And you will receive the gift of Holy Spirit.” ⁴¹Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

The people of Samaria

Acts 8:12 But when they believed Philip as he preached the good news of the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

Cornelius and his household (Acts 10:44-48, 11:16-18)

Acts 10:47 Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have.

Newborns, infants and children, who have not repented and have not made a personal decision to accept Christ, cannot be baptized. But children who have an understanding of the good news and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ can be baptized in water. Some 4-5 years old children can make their own decision to repent and follow Jesus. They then should be baptized in water.

There is not even one account in the Bible where newborn babies were baptized in water. Even though the Bible mentions that some groups of people or families were baptized in water (**1 Corinthians 1:16, Acts 16:31-34, 16:14-15, 18:8**), we should not assume that babies were baptized in any of these events.

If we carefully read **Acts 16:32-34**, we will see that only the jailer and his family members, who could understand the good news and believed in the Lord Jesus, were baptized. Infants and small children were definitely not baptized in water at that time, since they could not make a decision to believe in the Lord. We can present or dedicate infants and small children to the Lord, but we should not baptize them.

Luke 2:22-23 ²²When the time of their purification according to the Law of Moses had been completed, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. ²³(as it is written in the Law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord”),

Being baptized in water is the ceremony in which a believer proclaims that he/she is ready to follow the Lord Jesus Christ forever.

The Bible records the fact that those who believed in Jesus and were baptized in water made a firm decision to follow Him and to become His disciples for the rest of their lives. They demonstrated their faith by committing themselves to His teachings and fellowship.

Acts 2:41-42 Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. ⁴²They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

3. How are Christians baptized?

3.1 By being immersed in water

The Bible does not teach us to baptize believers by sprinkling or pouring water on their heads.

“Baptism” comes from the Greek word “Baptizo” which means immersion. This word was used when pieces of cloth were immersed in dye in order to change their color.

The Ethiopian eunuch

In **Acts 8:36-39**, an Ethiopian eunuch repented and believed in the gospel after Philip explained the Scriptures to him. As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch requested to be baptized (**verses 36-37**).

Acts 8:38 And he ordered the chariot to stop. Then both Philip and the eunuch **went down into the water** and Philip baptized him.

Acts 8:39 When they **came out of the water**, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing.

If water baptism could be done by sprinkling water as some have taught, the eunuch did not have to wait until he found the water, but Philip could use his drinking water to sprinkle on his head right away after he believed.

The act of immersion in water is a physical representation of the true meaning of water baptism.

Romans 6:1-5 What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? ²By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? ³Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was

raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. ⁵If we have been united with him in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.

The death of Jesus symbolizes our death to our old sinful nature. His burial in the tomb represents being immersed under water (water baptism). His resurrection points to coming out of the water and having a new life.

3.2 Being baptized in God's name

In **Matthew 28:19-20**, Jesus commanded Christians to be baptized in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

It is recommended that this statement be said just before the person is immersed: "...(name), upon the profession of your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, I now baptize you into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, even the Lord Jesus Christ. Just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, you also shall rise to walk in newness of life."

4. The importance of water baptism

- 4.1 In order to pledge a good conscience toward God (**1 Peter 3:21**).
- 4.2 In order to proclaim Jesus' death, burial and resurrection (**Romans 6:1-4**).
- 4.3 Water baptism symbolizes the burial of our old-self or sinful nature, which is legally dead once we have put our faith in the Lord Jesus (**Romans 6:6-7, 14**).
- 4.4 In order to proclaim the defeat of Satan (**Colossians 2:12, 15**).
- 4.5 In order to proclaim our faith and to acknowledge Jesus before men (**Matthew 10:32-33, 5:16**).
- 4.6 Water baptism reveals the unity of Christians (**Galatians 3:26-28**).
- 4.7 It is a way to show obedience toward Jesus (**Matthew 28:19-20**).
- 4.8 In order to receive spiritual blessings (**Acts 8:39, John 14:15-24**).

5. When should Christians be baptized in water?

5.1 As soon as possible

The day of Pentecost - a few hours after accepting Christ

Acts 2:41 Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousands were added to their number that day.

The people of Samaria - they were baptized right after they believed in the good news

Acts 8:12 But when they believed Philip as he preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

The Ethiopian eunuch - the day he accepted Christ

Acts 8:35-37 Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus. ³⁶As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptized?" ³⁸And he ordered the chariot to stop. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized Him.

The apostle Paul was baptized in water when Ananias visited him right after he converted

Acts 9:17-18 Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord - Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit." ¹⁸Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized.

Cornelius - he was baptized as soon as he believed in the Lord Jesus

Acts 10:48 So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.

5.2 We should be baptized as soon as possible even though our lives may not seem good enough. No one is perfect nor good enough in God's sight. We should not think that we are not good enough to follow Jesus because we are saved by His grace. We should be willing to follow Jesus and obey His commands, which include being baptized in water.

6. Can we choose not to be baptized?

- 6.1 In **Acts 2:38**, Peter said, "Repent and be baptized; **every one of you**, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins."
- 6.2 In **Acts 10:48**, Peter ordered that the new converts be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.
- 6.3 In the time of the early church, no one who accepted Christ was not willing to be baptized. Actually water baptism does not help anyone to be saved from his sin. It is just an outward action that shows faith in his heart. Therefore, if we sincerely believe in Jesus, we should certainly be willing to be baptized.

6.4 The denial of being baptized is being disobedient to Jesus' command.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. After you proclaim your faith by being baptized in water, how will you live your life in such a way to show that you genuinely follow the Lord Jesus?
2. Are you willing to be baptized? When?

MEMORY VERSE

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

LESSON 14

GIVING FROM OUR HEARTS

GOAL OF THE LESSON

- Christians will have the correct understanding about giving money and materials to the Lord.
- To have the right attitude in giving according to the Bible.
- Christians will understand the Biblical principles of how to give from their hearts.
- Christians will realize the value and blessings of giving.

ADVICE ON HOW TO USE THIS LESSON

- The teachers should have a personal experience of giving to the Lord. They should understand the attitudes and the method of giving according to the Bible so that new converts will learn from real experience.
- The manners of the teachers should be lively and enthusiastic so that new converts will be eager to obey God's Word.

INTRODUCTION

- Share the personal experience of various kinds of blessings that we have received from God because we were willing to give in the Biblical way.
- Ask if any students have given tithes to God, which is the first step of giving.
- Give the examples of how God blessed the godly men in the Bible who were willing to give to the Lord.
- Quote the Scriptures, which relate to giving.

CONTENT

Giving is one of God's teachings. He wants us to show our love for Him by giving. **Matthew 6:21** says, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Actually, all things in this world belong to God.

Haggai 2:8 'The silver is mine and the gold is mine,' declares the LORD Almighty.

When we give money to God, our hearts will be with Him and we will live our lives for His temple.

1. Biblical principles regarding giving

1 Chronicles 29:11-12

We must realize that God is the owner of everything and He gives us material blessings so that we will be good stewards who will properly manage them.

1 Chronicles 29:14

We must realize that everything comes from God. We give to Him for the benefit of His works.

Colossians 3:23

We give everything with all our hearts as giving to the Lord.

Luke 6:38

It is the command of Jesus that Christians should give.

2. Why should we give to the Lord?

To show love to God and to tell Him that we trust Him

2 Corinthians 8:7 But just as you excel in everything--in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us--see that you also excel in this grace of giving.

Hebrews 13:16 And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

Luke 21:1-4

It is a way to honor God

Proverbs 3:9-10 Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; ¹⁰then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine.

We give financial offerings every time we worship God

Luke 21:1-4 As he looked up, Jesus saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. ²He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins. ³"I tell you the truth," he said, "this poor widow has put in more than all the others. ⁴All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on."

2 Corinthians 9:5 So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to visit you in advance and finish the arrangements for the generous gift you had promised. Then it will be ready as a generous gift, not as one grudgingly given.

Giving helps us to have reverent fear towards the Lord

Deuteronomy 14:23 Eat the tithe of your grain, new wine and oil, and the firstborn of your herds and flocks in the presence of the LORD your God at the

place he will choose as a dwelling for his Name, so that you may learn to revere the LORD your God always.

Because God commands us to give, it is our responsibility

Matthew 22:21 “Caesar’s,” they replied. Then he said to them, “Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s.”

Malachi 3:10 Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the LORD Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.

It is a key to receive God's prosperity

Malachi 3:10-12 Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the LORD Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it. ¹¹I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not cast their fruit,” says the LORD Almighty. ¹²“Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land,” says the LORD Almighty.

2 Corinthians 9:6 Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.

It is a way to financially support God's fulltime workers

Numbers 18:21 I give to the Levites all the tithes in Israel as their inheritance in return for the work they do while serving at the Tent of Meeting.

1 Corinthians 9:14 In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel.

Luke 10:7 Stay in that house, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house.

It is a way to show that we receive spiritual blessings

2 Corinthians 9:11-14 You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God. ¹²This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God’s people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. ¹³Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, men will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. ¹⁴And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you.

God uses the giving of His people to support His work

Malachi 3:10

3. Right attitudes in giving

God does not want us to give our possessions and money to Him out of outward rituals, but He wants us to have the right attitude in giving so that He will bless us more.

- 3.1 We give everything to God with a cheerful attitude, not reluctantly or under compulsion (**2 Corinthians 9:7, Deuteronomy 12:11-12**).
- 3.2 A generous attitude (**2 Corinthians 9:11**)
- 3.3 Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion (**2 Corinthians 9:7**).
- 3.4 With a worshipful spirit (**Romans 12:1-2, 1 Corinthians 16:2**).
- 3.5 We realize that giving is a way to show that we accept Jesus' lordship over our lives (**Malachi 3:10**).
- 3.6 We want to dedicate our lives to the Lord (**2 Chronicles 31:4-6**).
- 3.7 We give with a loyal attitude toward God (**2 Chronicles 31:5**).
- 3.8 With a thankful attitude (**Genesis 14:20**).
- 3.9 With a sacrificial spirit (**2 Corinthians 8:2-3**).
- 3.10 With willingness (**2 Corinthians 8:4, 1 Chronicles 29:5**).
- 3.11 Without telling anyone or without seeking praises from men (**Matthew 6:1-4, Luke 18:12**).
- 3.12 Giving faithfully (**Acts 5:1-4**).
- 3.13 Giving regularly and persistently (**1 Corinthians 16:2**).
- 3.14 Giving with faith
2 Corinthians 8:3 For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own,

4. Giving all kinds of offerings to the treasury of the temple of the LORD (2 Chronicles 29:8)

- 4.1 Giving to the local church (**1 Corinthians 9:9-11**) for God's fulltime servants, rental cost of the worship building, various ministries of the church, pastoral ministry, church administration, and Seminary, etc. God's Word teaches us to give 10% of our income to the local church of which we are members (**Malachi 3:10**) and where we receive spiritual care.
- 4.2 Giving to evangelistic ministries and other missions. For example, for missionaries (**Philippians 4:14-18**). We should participate in special giving for planting churches and bringing salvation to all nations.
- 4.3 We should give to Christian brothers and sisters who are in need (**2 Corinthians 8:4, Acts 2:45**).

5. What do we give to the Lord?

- 5.1 Tithe (**Luke 18:12, Matthew 23:23, Malachi 3:8-12, Genesis 14:20**)

Christians should tithe to the Lord. We are God's stewards who are taking care of all the things in the world for Him. Tithing means to give 10% of our income back to God who is the real owner of money in this world.

- 5.2 Special giving (**Exodus 30:14**)
Besides the tithe, we also give special offerings to the Lord for some special ministries in our church. For example, giving money to buy the land for the church or to build the church building, to missionaries, to buy some equipments in the church office or to the needy, etc.
- 5.3 Giving materials (**Exodus 30:12, 35:21**)
Exodus 36:3 They received from Moses all the offerings the Israelites had brought to carry out the work of constructing the sanctuary. And the people continued to bring freewill offerings morning after morning.
- 5.4 Singing praises and dancing for the Lord (**1 Chronicles 16:9, 23, Psalm 135:3, 19**)
- 5.5 Giving or devoting ourselves, and our time to the Lord (**Romans 6:13, 2 Corinthians 8:5**)
We should devote ourselves to serve the Lord and other Christians (**1 Corinthians 16:15**).

6. The blessings of giving

- 6.1 God will bless us.
Luke 6:38 Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap.
- 6.2 We will have all the things that we have need of and we will be able to use them in every good work.
2 Corinthians 9:8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.
We will receive more blessings from God than what we have given to Him. We will never outgive God.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Do you think God is pleased with your giving?
2. Do you have peace and joy when you give offerings to the Lord?
3. Ask new believers to write the blessings of obeying God in giving.

MEMORY VERSES

Proverbs 11:24-25 ²⁴One man gives freely, yet gains even more, another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty. ²⁵A generous man will prosper, he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed.

LESSON 15

OBEYING GOD AND LEADERS

GOAL OF THE LESSON

- New believers will understand the real meaning of obedience according to the Bible.
- They will have an obedient attitude.

ADVICE ON HOW TO USE THIS LESSON

- The spiritual helper (shepherd) should have a good life example in obeying God and his/her leader. He/She himself/herself must understand the issue of authority and realize its importance so that he/she can impart the obedient spirit into new converts.
- He/She should enthusiastically share his/her experiences of obeying the authority. He/She should not feel embarrassed to share his/her failure in the past because he/she intends to change to become like Christ.

INTRODUCTION

- Share how God has blessed you when you obey Him.
- Pray with new believers. Ask God to help them to understand the lesson.

CONTENT

“Obedience” is a basic and important principle of the Christian life. The disobedience of Adam and Eve resulted in mankind being under the influence of Satan and sin (**Genesis 3**). Jesus was obedient to the heavenly Father to death on the cross (**Philippians 2:8**). This one act of sacrificial obedience has brought blessings to the world. We therefore must understand the issue of obedience.

1. Why does God want us to be obedient?

Actually God desires for man to be blessed. Since every earthly father wants to give good things to his children, our heavenly Father also wants to bless us. He teaches us that obedience will bring blessings and prosperity to His children.

- 1.1 Obedience is a way to show our love to God. The result of obedience is that God will love us and be with us.
John 14:23 Jesus replied, “If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.”

- 1.2 Obedience brings every kind of blessings to our lives (**Deuteronomy 7:12-15**). God will bless our family, work, and finances. He will honor us among the nations.

In **Genesis 22:15-18**, Abraham obeyed God. He was willing to sacrifice his son, Isaac, as a burnt offering on one of the mountains. As a result, God promised Abraham that He would bless him and make his descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore and through his offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because he had obeyed God.

2. Obeying God and His Word

We start our Christian lives by turning away from our sins and following the Lord Jesus Christ. We should obey God and His Word.

- 2.1 The Bible commands us to obey God.

Deuteronomy 27:10 Obey the LORD your God and follow his commands and decrees that I give you today.

Matthew 17:5 While he was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!"

The Lord Jesus Christ humbled Himself and became obedient to death—even death on the cross in order to fulfill the plan of the Father.

Luke 22:42 Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours to be done.

Philippians 2:8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!

In **Acts 5:29**, Peter and the other apostles confidently said: "We must obey God rather than men!" We should follow the good example of the early church apostles.

- 2.2 When we truly obey God and His Word, we will obey our leaders.

Romans 13:1 Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.

God commands His people to obey His Word (**Exodus 34:10-28**).

Joshua 1:7-8 Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. ⁸Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.

James 2:17 In the same way, **faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.**

James 2:22 You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his **faith was made complete by what he did.**

3. Obeying our leaders

Hebrews 13:17 Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.

The Word of God commands us to obey our leaders and submit to their authority. We should obey church leaders whom God appoints to take care of us, protect and teach us. They are the ones who lead us to the will and the plan of God. Leaders must give account to God on the last day. Obeying leaders is equal to obeying God. What attitudes should we have towards our leaders?

3.1 We should have a submissive attitude toward our leaders.

Romans 13:1-4

3.2 We should sincerely obey them.

1 Peter 2:18 Slaves, submit yourselves to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh.

3.3 We should listen to their words of correction and advice even though we may not understand nor agree with them as long as their advice and teachings do not contradict Biblical principles.

When their commands are not Biblical, we do not have to obey but should still have a submissive spirit.

4. Obeying those who have authority over us

4.1 We should respect and obey our parents or those who have authority to take care of us in our family.

Colossians 3:20 Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.

4.2 We must obey governmental laws and leaders such as the President, king, the prime minister, and leaders at different levels in the government.

1 Peter 2:13-14 Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, ¹⁴or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right.

4.3 We should obey our boss or our employer.

Colossians 3:22 Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord.

- 4.4 We should obey the pastor and church leaders at every level.
1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 Now we ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you. ¹³Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other.

5. What blessings will we receive when we obey?

Obedience is very important in the Christian life because it makes God's promises recorded in the Bible become true in our lives. When we obey God, His Word, and leaders whom He appoints, His blessings will abundantly pour out on our lives.

- 5.1 Obedience helps us to develop our character and habits.
Ephesians 4:11-14
1 Peter 1:13-14, 22 Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. ¹⁴As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. ²²Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart.
- 5.2 It makes us have more wisdom and understanding.
Proverbs 9:10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.
Psalm 19:7 The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple.
- 5.3 We will be spiritually protected.
Hebrews 13:17 Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.
- 5.4 We will receive advice and guidance from God.
Psalm 32:8 I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you.
- 5.5 God will keep us free from every disease.
Deuteronomy 7:15 The LORD will keep you free from every disease. He will not inflict on you the horrible diseases you knew in Egypt, but he will inflict them on all who hate you.
- 5.6 God will bless us to be prosperous and successful in every work we do.
Deuteronomy 7:12-14, 28:2-6, 11-12, Genesis 22:15-18
- 5.7 The Lord will lift us up.
Deuteronomy 28:1, 13 If you fully obey the LORD your God and carefully follow all his commands I give you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations on earth. ¹³The LORD will make you the head, not the tail. If you pay attention to the commands of the

LORD your God that I give you this day and carefully follow them, you will always be at the top, never at the bottom.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. Share any situations of how you were disobedient towards those who have had authority over you.
 - a) Family (Parents or husband).....
 - b) Government.....
 - c) School or office.....
 - d) Church.....
- 2. How can we refuse to obey the commands that lead us to sin?

MEMORY VERSE

Hebrews 13:17 Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.

LESSON 16

BASIC CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES

GOAL OF THE LESSON

- To help new believers understand the basic doctrines of the Christian faith.
- To help them stand firm in their faith and in the Biblical teachings.
- To help them put the Biblical teachings into practice.

ADVICE ON HOW TO USE THIS LESSON

- As spiritual helpers, you must have a clear understanding of this lesson and teach it in an orderly fashion, using appropriate examples, since you will be teaching new believers the foundations for the Christian faith.
- You should teach this lesson with an enthusiastic attitude. You should try to finish the whole lesson in one session. Do not teach the lesson in a way which will bore the new believers.
- Allow new believers to ask questions. You should check whether they have a clear understanding of each basic Christian doctrine.

INTRODUCTION

- Share your personal experiences of not compromising God's teachings in your daily lives.
- Share about the blessings that you have received from not conforming to worldly principles.
- Encourage new believers to stand firm on the Biblical principles.

CONTENT

In **Matthew 5:13**, Jesus said, "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men."

From this teaching of the Lord Jesus, we can see that Jesus compared the Christian life to the salt of the earth, which means "the life that influences society." Salt will usually influence the things that it comes into contact with. When it is mixed with meat, it will keep the meat from spoiling. When we put salt on food, it will enhance the taste of the food. Our Christian lives should be like the salt of the earth. We should positively influence the society in which we live. Wherever we are, that place or community should be influenced to change towards a better condition. Christians

can influence the world only if they have different life standards from others in their society. They must stand firm in following God's principles and teachings. As Christians, we must know the basic Christian doctrines so that we can live according to God's standards without compromising.

1. The importance of standing firm in the Christian doctrines

If we stand firm on the Christian doctrines, we will know where we are standing and where we are going. They are also the dividing lines between what we should do and what we should not do. We should clearly understand the basic Christian beliefs according to the Biblical teachings and stand firm on them. If we do not stand firm on the basic Christian teachings, we will be like the salt that loses its saltiness. Therefore, to stand firm on the basic Christian doctrines is very important for our lives.

- 1.1 **2 Timothy 1:13-14** ¹³What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. ¹⁴Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you - guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.

These Scriptures command us to obey and follow the pattern of sound teaching. Therefore, we must be careful to live according to God's teachings, otherwise we may fall away from His truth.

- 1.2 **2 Timothy 4:3-4** For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.

Christians must stand firm on the basic doctrines so that they will not turn away from the truth and turn to myths and false teachings.

- 1.3 **2 John 7-8** Many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the Antichrist. Watch out that you do not lose what you have worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully.

We follow Christ by standing firm on Biblical principles and obeying His Word. This life of obedience makes us the salt of the world and stand firm on our faith until the last day.

2. Biblical doctrines of the Christian faith

God

The Bible teaches us that there is only one true and living God, the creator of everything, who reveals Himself as the Trinity: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. God is spirit and has a personality, which is shown by the ability to make decisions, show emotion and moral conscience. He is not limited by the dimensions

of time, space and capability. Therefore, He is all powerful, able to do all things. He can be everywhere at the same time (omnipresent). He has all knowledge (omniscient). He is the creator who is just, holy and righteous. He also unconditionally loves mankind.

The Bible

We believe that the original manuscripts of both the Old and New Testament were inspired by God and given to men who recorded them by writing. Therefore, the Bible is infallible and has the highest authority that all men must obey. It is the Word of God, the only standard for our faith and the source for all revealed and unchanged truth (**2 Timothy 3:16-17**).

Jesus

John 1:1-3

Luke 1:28-35

The Bible teaches us that Jesus is God. He is the second part of the Trinity or the Son of God. He was born of a virgin by the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit. He is completely God and completely man, died on the cross to bring redemption for mankind, and on the third day was physically raised up from the dead to fulfill the purposes of the Father concerning salvation for all men. He bodily rose up to heaven and now is at the right hand of the Father and one day in the future will come back again a second time to establish fully the kingdom of God.

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Acts 1:11 “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.”

The Holy Spirit

The Bible teaches us that the Holy Spirit is God, one of the 3 parts of God. He is not a form of energy, but He is a person who has personality. The Holy Spirit is the Counselor and the Helper whom Jesus promised to give to every believer (**Luke 24:49, John 15:26**). Thus, He has important roles for the lives of Christians in this present age, which are: convicting people of their sin, bringing a new spiritual birth to them, living in every believer so that he might walk in holiness (the fruit of the Holy Spirit, which touches a person’s character), and giving different spiritual gifts to all who believe in order to serve the body of Christ (**1 Corinthians 12:7-11**). He helps believers to understand the will of God (**John 16:13-15**).

Mankind and sin

The Bible teaches us that man was created by God to be different from all other creatures (**Genesis 1:26**). Man is very precious in God’s sight. He is not composed only of a physical body and mind, but he also has a spirit, which is in God’s image.

Initially, God created man to be good and sinless, having the freedom of choice. He also had a wonderful destiny for mankind. But man fell into sin because he decided not to obey the Lord (**Genesis 3:17**). Therefore, man has missed God's destiny for his life.

Salvation

The Bible teaches us that God has prepared the way of salvation for man, who has fallen into sin (**Romans 5:20, John 3:16-17**), by sending His Son, Jesus, to die on the cross in order to pay for the penalty for his sin. Every man can be saved from the wages of sin and its influence by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ and accepting Him into his life. Man is saved and redeemed from sin through faith in God and by His grace, not by his good works (**Ephesians 2:8-9**).

The Church

The Bible teaches us that "the church" is a group of people who have put their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. The church is the community of God's people, which reveals His character and glory to this world. **Ephesians 3:9-10** tells us that the church is the God's vehicle for bringing His will into this world. The church is the center of God's will for this world. The church is compared to the bride for whom Jesus will come back. The church is also like a body which is doing His works in this world. Each member is like a part of the body. He or she must function differently and corporately. The body cannot function as well if one of its parts are missing, (**1 Corinthians 12:12-27**). Therefore, every believer must commit his/her life to a local church.

Angels and evil spirits

The Bible teaches us that God created angels in order to serve and obey Him (**Genesis 16:9, 24:7, Exodus 23:20, Hebrews 1:14**). A group of angels intended to rebel and disobeyed God. They were chased out of heaven to become evil spirits. Their leader is Satan. Therefore, there are both good and evil angels. Good angels obey the Lord and help Christians according to His commands (**Luke 4:10, Acts 12:15, Hebrews 1:14**). But evil spirits and Satan try to destroy God's plan and people's lives.

The eternal judgment

The Bible says that the end of this world will occur when the Lord Jesus Christ comes back for His Church. Those who have believed will be resurrected from their physical death on the last day and they will live eternally with God in heaven. But those who do not believe in Jesus will be judged with eternal punishment in hell, which is the second death.

3. How to apply basic Christian doctrines to our lives

To apply basic doctrines to one's daily life is very important because each Christian faces different kinds of situations. There is no fixed formula for applying them. Christians need to be led by God's wisdom in applying each doctrine to their daily lives. The following are some examples of how to apply the basic doctrines to our lives.

The Bible

We will use God's Word as the highest standard and truth for our lives because it is infallible. Therefore, the Word of God is used to weigh what is right or wrong for the different issues of our lives. We are willing to submit ourselves to every truth in the Bible.

God, Jesus, The Holy Spirit

If someone says "Jesus is not God, The Holy Spirit is not a person and He does not have a personality because He is a form of energy", we will not believe him because we know that this is a false teaching.

Man is a sinner

Mankind is very precious in God's sight because God created them in His image and Jesus died for them. Therefore, we should recognize the value of other people. At the same time, we do not put our trust in our own ability nor in other people because men are sinners. We love and see the value of other people, but we put our trust in God, rather than in men.

Salvation

We are saved by God's grace, not by our good works. As Christians, we have confidence in our salvation because we depend on God's grace.

The Church

We are willing to commit ourselves to a local church because we realize that the church is the main instrument for accomplishing God's will for this world. We will not miss the church meetings. We will serve God in order to expand the church, which is the way of enlarging His kingdom (**Ephesians 3:9-10, Hebrews 10:25**).

The eternal judgment

We should fear God and we will not love the things of this world. We ought to always be prepared to meet the Lord Jesus Christ by living a holy life and being quick and diligent to do His works.

We can find the basic Christian doctrines in the Bible which was written by godly men under the inspiration of God (**2 Timothy 3:16-17**). As Christians, we must obey

the Bible so that we become the salt of the world that will bring multitudes of people to Christ and to receive salvation.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In view of what you have learned, which areas in your life do you think you need to develop?
2. Ask the new believers to share an example of how they will apply the basic doctrines to their lives.
3. Which basic doctrine is the most difficulty for you to practice?

MEMORY VERSES

2 Timothy 1:13-14 What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you - guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.

LESSON 17

VICTORIOUSLY OVERCOMING PROBLEMS IN OUR LIVES

GOAL OF THE LESSON

- To help new believers understand and apply Biblical principles of how to have victory over the problems of their lives.
- To help new believers have the right attitude towards facing their problems.
- They will have victory over different kinds of problems in their lives.

ADVICE ON HOW TO USE THIS LESSON

- Spiritual helpers should sincerely and non judgmentally teach this lesson so that new believers will realize that everyone faces problems.
- Spiritual helpers should share examples about God's greatness, so that new believers will realize that God is able to solve every problem in their lives.
- They should teach new believers with a relaxed and sincere manner. They should not open the manual and read the lesson to them, instead they should memorize the content. They should try to finish teaching this lesson in one session and answer any difficult questions at the end.

INTRODUCTION

- Share the differences of how you have faced problems, before and after becoming a Christian.
- Ask new believers how they face their problems. (Give examples.)
- Pray with new believers to ask the Lord to teach them the Biblical principles of how to overcome problems in their lives.

CONTENT

As we accept and acknowledge that every man is a sinner, we should also realize that every man will face problems. Sin is the root of many kinds of problems. We often face problems that originate from our own sin; but they also can come from the sins of other people. Therefore as long as we are in the world and in society, we will definitely always face different kinds of problems. As Christians, we should understand how to have victory over problems that we unavoidably have to face.

1. The origin of problems

Sin

This world was cursed because man chose to sin against God. No one in this world is free of hardship and suffering. When Adam and Eve sinned, curses came into the

world. This is why we face the consequences of sin even though Jesus already died for us.

Genesis 3:16-19 To the woman he said, “I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.” ¹⁷To Adam he said, “Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You must not eat of it,’ “Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. ¹⁸It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. ¹⁹By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.”

We are living in the world that is controlled by the devil. Satan wants to destroy man's life causing man to face sufferings and persecution.

John 16:33 I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.

John 10:10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

When Adam and Eve sinned, they lost the perfect condition of man. Therefore everyone faces problems and sufferings. Because of sin, everyone is under the curse and falls short of the glory of God. The wages of sin is death. Many times we face problems and suffer because we sin such as being unfaithful, lazy, disobedient, etc. Sin causes us to lack peace and joy in our lives.

Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Galatians 6:19-21 The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; ²⁰idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions ²¹and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

James 4:1-4 What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? ²You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. ³When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. ⁴You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.

Trials and temptations

God allows trials to happen in our lives in order to test our faith, love, sincerity and trust in Him. Sometimes Satan brings temptations to us so that we may sin against God.

James 1:12 Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.

Job 1:6-2:13

God disciplines us when we sin

God will discipline us when we commit sin and disobey Him. We can be reconciled to God by repenting of our sins and putting our trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 12:5-11 And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons: “My son, do not make light of the Lord’s discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, ⁶because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son.” ⁷Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? ⁸If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons. ⁹Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live! ¹⁰Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. ¹¹No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.

When King David sinned against God by committing adultery, God brought calamity to his household (**2 Samuel 12:10-18**). After he repented and confessed his sin to God, God forgave him and blessed him later.

Suffering for Christ

It is our privilege to share in Christ’s suffering. **1 Peter 2:21** says, “To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.” Jesus received glory from the Father after He suffered many things for mankind. In the same way, we will receive glory after we go through sufferings for Him. Sometimes God allows us to be despised, mocked, and persecuted for His name so that we will fully understand Jesus’ suffering on the cross. God will give us sufficient grace when we face suffering and persecution for Him.

1 Corinthians 10:13 No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can

bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

Romans 8:17 Now if we are children, then we are heirs--heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

2. How to overcome problems in our lives

By having the right attitude

The most important factor in overcoming problems is our inner attitude towards them.

Proverbs 4:23 Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.

This Scripture tells us the importance of our heart attitude, because our hearts are the wellspring of life. If we have bitterness, hatred, or jealousy, we will definitely face many problems. In order to overcome the problems of our lives, we need to check the attitude of our heart. If our attitude is right before the Lord, we will have victory, instead of defeat.

Philippians 4:13 I can do everything through Him who gives me strength.

We should have confidence in the Lord. This will enable us to face all kinds of difficulties without fear. When we have trust and complete confidence in God, we will have victory.

By following Biblical principles

As we have learned, the root of all our problems is sin. If we attempt to solve problems by our own ways or by using worldly principles, we will find only temporary solutions. God has given us the Bible as a guide and manual for our lives. The best way to approach our problems is by using the Biblical principles that God has provided us with, through His Word, not by using our own desire or standards of this world.

For example:

- If someone wrongs us, we can use the principles in **Matthew 18:15-17** which says, "If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. ¹⁶But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. ¹⁷If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector."
- If we are financially poor, we can apply the Biblical principles in **Malachi 3:9-10** which says, "You are under a curse - the whole nation of you - because you are robbing me. ¹⁰Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not

throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessings that you will not have room enough for it.”

- When we are tempted, we remember **1 Corinthians 10:13** which says, “No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.”
- Proverbs 3:5-6** Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; ⁶in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.

By seeking the Lord God and by depending on Him

When we are facing difficult problems, which seem to be unsolvable, we should remember and realize that, “Our Lord God is the answer of every problem.” To seek and depend on God is the way of having victory over our problems.

- **Psalms 34:10** The lions may grow weak and hungry, but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing.
- **Psalms 33:18-19** But the eyes of the Lord are on those who fear Him, on those whose hope is in His unfailing love, to deliver them from death and keep them alive in famine.
- **Matthew 6:33** But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.
- **Matthew 7:7-8** Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.
- **Psalms 46:1, 10** God is our refuge and strength, and ever-present help in trouble. ¹⁰“Be still and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.”

Often we feel defeated and at times we are faced with situations that may seem impossible to solve or overcome. Yet as we have confidence that we will definitely overcome them by depending on God, we will be able to rise up again and victory will belong to us. We must always remember, “I can do everything through Him who gives me strength.” (**Philippians 4:13**)

3. What is the benefit of facing problems?

God allows problems and hardships to happen in our lives because He knows that good things will also come to our lives at the end. If they ultimately cause destruction to our lives, He will not let them happen.

Matthew 7:9-11 Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone?
¹⁰Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? ¹¹If you, then, though you are

evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!

The Lord Jesus was willing to suffer many things and die for us so that we will be blessed and saved from sin. God has the best plan for our lives. We may not fully understand His will and His plan. Therefore, we should joyfully accept everything that He allows to happen.

Romans 5:6-8 You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. ⁸But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

God may allow us to suffer for a temporary period in order to help others to know Him.

1 Peter 1:6-7 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. ⁷These have come so that your faith--of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire--may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

James 1:2-4 Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, ³because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. ⁴Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

From these Scriptures, we can see that trials and difficulties benefit our lives. When the Lord Jesus comes back, we will receive praise and glory because we can overcome them. We will receive glory and rewards in heaven. Not only that, we will be mature and complete in the kingdom (**James 1:4**).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Because we know that the root of all problems is sin, and that God is the answer, how can we practically face our problems?
2. What kinds of problems do you avoid facing? What are the principles you will use to solve them?

MEMORY VERSES

Philippians 4:13 I can do everything through Him who gives me strength.

Psalms 46:1 God is our refuge and strength, and ever-present help in trouble.

LESSON 18

COMMITMENT TO A LOCAL CHURCH

GOAL OF THE LESSON

Christians will realize the importance of having a commitment to the church.

ADVICE ON HOW TO USE THIS LESSON

Spiritual helpers must teach this lesson from their experiences of having received the blessings from God because they have committed themselves to the church.

INTRODUCTION

- Spiritual helpers should share their experiences of having received the blessings from God because they have committed themselves to the church.
- Challenge new converts to become members of the church and to commit themselves to the church.

CONTENT

God has placed us in a natural family where our parents take care of us. After we become a Christian, God considers us His children. Therefore we are the members of God's family which is the church.

Ephesians 3:14-15 For this reason I kneel before the Father, ¹⁵from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name.

Galatians 6:10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

After we were born again spiritually, we should become members of a spiritual family or a local church. We should commit ourselves to a local church so that we will have spiritual covering, care and training. In the church, we can also develop our spiritual gifts and life character until we become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Ephesians 4:12-13 to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

1. The importance of the church

- 1.1 God wants to reveal His eternal purpose and His plan of salvation through the church. The church is the important instrument that God uses to expand His kingdom in the world.
Ephesians 3:10-11 His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, ¹¹according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.
- 1.2 The Lord Jesus intended to build His church.
Matthew 16:18 And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.
- 1.3 The Lord Jesus loves His church and gave Himself up for her. He cares for the church. Jesus bought the church of God with His own blood.
Ephesians 5:25, 29 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her... ²⁹After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church--
Acts 20:28 Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which **he bought with his own blood.**
1 Corinthians 6:20 you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.
- 1.4 The church gives glory to God (**Ephesians 3:9-21**).
Ephesians 3:21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever! Amen.

2. The meaning of the church

The church derives from the Greek word "Ekklesia" which appears in the Bible 115 times. It means a group of people who are called to come out and to be free from sin and the power of Satan and enter the righteousness and the light of God. The Bible never uses this word in the context of a building or a sanctuary, but as a group of committed Christians. There are two kinds of churches:

- 2.1 The universal church is used in the Bible 20 times. The universal church means those who believe in the Lord Jesus, repent, and are born again spiritually in every place, every generation, in the past, present and future throughout the world.
- 2.2 The local church is found in the Bible 95 times. The Bible emphasizes the local church more than the universal church. **Galatians 1:2** and all the brothers with me, To the churches in Galatia:
1 Corinthians 11:16 If anyone wants to be contentious about this, we have no other practice --nor do the churches of God.

1 Corinthians 16:19 The churches in the province of Asia send you greetings. Aquila and Priscilla greet you warmly in the Lord, and so does the church that meets at their house.

The local church means a group of committed Christians that gather together in the same area and meet together on a regular basis. It therefore clearly demonstrates the characteristics of the universal church. We cannot see the universal church in a practical way. Therefore, the local church relates to the daily life of Christians.

3. Characteristics of the local church

The Bible compares the church to many things. The Biblical symbols of the church always emphasized the commitment between its members.

3.1 The body of Christ

All parts of a body relate to each other. They need to depend to each other.

Romans 12:5 so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.

Ephesians 5:30 for we are members of his body.

We should not separate any part or organ from our bodies. When one part suffers, every part suffers with it. Therefore, God does not want Christians to be alone. In the practical sense, we should not just go to the church meeting, but we must also commit ourselves to the fellowship.

1 Corinthians 12:26 If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

3.2 The temple

Each Christian is compared to a brick or living stone which is connected with other bricks to become a temple.

Ephesians 2:21 In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord.

1 Peter 2:5 you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

We cannot build a temple by just putting bricks as a pile in an unorganized way. Each brick must be joined together with other bricks at its six surfaces: its top, bottom and its sides. We must build a close relationship and fellowship with our spiritual leaders who take care of our lives. At the same time, we should relate to our Christian friends around us and to spiritually younger believers who are under our care. It is not

God's will that Christians will stay alone and avoid fellowshiping with other believers.

3.3 The family

Family members usually commit their lives to each other. They also go out together for different activities.

Ephesians 5:30-31 for we are members of his body. ³¹“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.”

Ephesians 2:19 Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and **members of God's household,**

We must share responsibility in our home and carry each other's burdens. In the same way, we must share responsibility of God's work in our local church. The church is not just a social club where people just gather together and then leave on their own direction.

3.4 The Bride

A bride must commit herself to her groom.

Ephesians 5:31-32 “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.”

³²This is a profound mystery--but I am talking about Christ and the church.

1 Corinthians 7:14 For the unbelieving husband has been sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified through her believing husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy.

Revelation 19:7 Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready.

Revelation 21:2 I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.

Revelation 21:9 One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, “Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.”

The church of God must be holy, pure, loyal and faithful to the Lord Jesus who is the Groom. She should also commit herself to Him.

3.5 The field

The church is compared to the field. We are like seeds that fall to the ground and root ourselves in it. The seed cannot sprout and grow to

become a big tree if it does not root itself into the ground. We must commit ourselves to our local church so that we will grow spiritually and become fruitful in our lives of ministry.

John 12:24-25 I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. ²⁵The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

3.6 The army of God

The church is compared to the army of God.

Ephesians 6:10-17 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. ¹²For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. ¹³Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. ¹⁴Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, ¹⁵and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. ¹⁶In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

1 Timothy 6:12 Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

Every Christian is a soldier in the army of God. Christians must join together in unity in order to fight spiritual warfare. They must have discipline in their lives and obey their leaders.

4 Why do we need to become members of a Biblical local church and commit ourselves to it?

4.1 The early church Christians joined the membership of the local churches.

Acts 2:41, 47 Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. ⁴⁷praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

4.2 If we do not commit our lives to a local church, we will not be trained for the life of service and we will not be able to use our potential gifts fully.

- 4.3 God desires for us to fellowship with one another in the Christian community.
1 John 1:3 We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.
1 John 3:16-18 This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. ¹⁷If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? ¹⁸Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.
- 4.4 We will be taken care of by our spiritual leaders.
John 21:15-17 When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?" "Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs."
¹⁶Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me?" He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep." ¹⁷The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep."
- 4.5 God wants us to develop the character of Christ in our lives.
Ephesians 4:13-14 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. ¹⁴Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming.
- 4.6 If Christians do not commit themselves in a local church, spiritual leaders will not clearly know who is under their care. Spiritual leaders must give an account to God on the last day.
Hebrews 13:17 Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.
John 10:3-5, 14 The watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. ⁵But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice." ¹⁴"I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me--
- 4.7 If we do not commit our lives to a local church, we will not be able to obey God's commands, such as to carry each other's burdens (**Galatians 6:2**), to encourage one another (**Hebrews 3:13**), to show

hospitality to one another (**Matthew 25:35**), to submit to one another (**Ephesians 5:21**), and to be example to one another (**Philippians 3:17**).

- 4.8 If we do not commit our lives to a local church, we will not be protected from false teachers and cults.

Acts 20:28-31 Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. ²⁹I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. ³⁰Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. ³¹So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears.

Matthew 24:4, 24 Jesus answered: "Watch out that no one deceives you. ²⁴For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect--if that were possible."

- 4.9 If we do not commit ourselves to a local church, we will not be protected from the attack of the devil.

1 Corinthians 5:5 hand this man over to Satan, so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord.

5 How can we become a committed member of a local church?

- 5.1 We should attend church meetings on a regular basis except when we are sick in a hospital or face an emergency situation.

Hebrews 10:25 Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Acts 20:7 On the first day of the week we came together to break bread. Paul spoke to the people and, because he intended to leave the next day, kept on talking until midnight.

Acts 14:27 On arriving there, they gathered the church together and reported, all that God had done through them and how he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.

- 5.2 We should join the vision of our local church. We should obey, honor and submit to our spiritual leaders and the pastor.

Hebrews 13:7, 17 Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. ¹⁷Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.

1 Timothy 5:17 The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching.

1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 Now we ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you. ¹³Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other.

5.3 We should diligently pour out our strength, abilities, gifts and time to serve God in our church.

1 Peter 4:10 Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.

Romans 12:3-8 For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. ⁴Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, ⁵so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. ⁶We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. ⁷If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; ⁸if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

5.4 We should give financial offerings to our local church in order to support various ministries.

Malachi 3:10 Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.

1 Corinthians 16:2 On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.

2 Corinthians 8:4-9 they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints. ⁵And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will. ⁶So we urged Titus, since he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of grace on your part. ⁷But just as you excel in everything--in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us--see that you also excel in this grace of giving. ⁸I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others. ⁹For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.

5.5 We should share the burden with our leaders and with other members.

1 Thessalonians 5:14 And we urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone.

1 John 3:18 Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.

5.6 We will not cause division in the church.

Romans 16:17 I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them.

2 Thessalonians 3:5-7, 13-15 May the Lord direct your hearts into God's love and Christ's perseverance. ⁷For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example. We were not idle when we were with you, ¹³And as for you, brothers, never tire of doing what is right. ¹⁴If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of him. Do not associate with him, in order that he may feel ashamed. ¹⁵Yet do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother.

Hebrews 12:14 Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.

5.7 When it is necessary to move to another local church, we should ask for a letter of recommendation from the pastor and give it to that church.

Acts 8:27 When Apollos wanted to go to Achaia, the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples there to welcome him. On arriving, he was a great help to those who by grace had believed.

Romans 16:1 I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant of the church in Cenchrea.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you need to commit yourself to a local church?
2. What are the negative consequences of not committing yourself to a local church?

HOMEWORK

1 Memory verse

Hebrews 10:25 Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another-and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

2 Listen to the sermon tapes:

Understanding the church and understanding Christian fellowship.