

**The Basics of
Discipleship
*Workbook***

by James D'Souza

Copyright Details

Please feel free to quote from these works in context and with proper citation. Please feel free to distribute and teach from these materials in their entirety, without profit, and with proper citation. The author retains the right to prohibit others from distributing copyrighted works for illegitimate purposes.

Lesson 1: How It All Began

The first verse of the Bible states the following: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (**Gen. 1:1**). God existed before time began and, in fact, created time itself. He created the heavens and the earth, and everything that is in them, for His good pleasure and to manifest His glory (**Psa. 19:1**). He created them and saw that they were good. He designed vegetation and creatures to roam the earth and eventually formed man out of a combination of the dust of the earth and His own breath. The Bible explains that God created man in His own image (**Gen. 1:26-27**). He created us that He should be our God and that we might walk with Him, and He with us (**Lev. 26:12**).

The primary purpose for which man exists is to worship and glorify God (**I Cor. 10:31**). God desires for us to walk after Him, to fear Him, to keep His commandments, and to obey His voice; to serve Him and hold fast to Him (**Deut. 13:4**). In the beginning, God and mankind walked together in a special garden He had made for him. As described in **Genesis 3**, mankind, with the encouragement of Satan, disobeyed God, falling short of His glory, and breaking fellowship with Him. Consequently, an infinite gap of separation was established between God and mankind, because God has an eternal hatred for sin and all that is evil (**Isa. 59:2**).

The Character of God

Though scripture reveals to us that we may know that there is a God, and that we may understand even His eternal power and Godhead based on our observations of creation in its orderly and beautiful design, it is only through understanding what is specially revealed in the scriptures that we may come to know God (**Rom. 1:18-20**). For this reason, we will look to the scriptures to understand more clearly the nature and character of God.

Read **I Peter 1:15-16** aloud. What characteristic of God do these verses reveal?

Next read **Habakkuk 1:13** aloud. What characteristic of God does this verse reveal?

Now read **Romans 2:5-11** aloud. What characteristic of God do these verses reveal?

Read **Psalms 11:7** aloud. What characteristic of God does this verse reveal?

Next read **Psalms 97:2** aloud. What two things are the foundation of God’s throne?

In the space below, draw a small throne and write the first letter of each of these things at the foundation of this throne.

Let us now examine God’s standard of righteousness and justice summarized in a list of commandments which He has revealed.

Read **Deut. 10:12-13** aloud. Why does God give His commandments?

Read **I Tim. 1:5** aloud. What is the purpose of His commandments?

What set of commandments, found in **Exodus 20**, outlines God’s perfect standard of righteousness and justice?

Read **Exodus 20** aloud, and write down each commandment next to the numbered lines below. List any New Testament clarifications of these commands if applicable.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____
- 6) _____
- 7) _____
- 8) _____
- 9) _____
- 10) _____

* The first five of these commands are related to our relationship toward God, and the last five are related to our relationship toward other people.

The Character of Mankind

The scriptures also give insight into the nature and character of mankind.

Read **Isaiah 53:6** aloud. What characteristic of man does this verse reveal?

Read **Philippians 2:21** aloud. What is one implication of the characteristic mentioned above?

Read **Ephesians 2:2** aloud. What is another implication of the characteristic mentioned above?

Read **Romans 3:23** aloud. What characteristic of man does this verse reveal?

What is the most obvious way that man displays the characteristic mentioned in **Romans 3:23**?

Read **Genesis 6:5** aloud. What is another way that man displays this characteristic?

Read **Matthew 12:34-37** aloud. What is a third way that man displays this characteristic?

Read **James 4:1-4, Jeremiah 17:9, Romans 2:12-16** aloud. What is the war in the soul of mankind being described in these verses?

In the space below, write the question, “How do I fair concerning God’s perfect law?” Now draw three blank squares that are vertically aligned. To the right of the first box write *actions*, to the right of the second box write *thoughts*, and to the right of the third box write *words*. Have you ever sinned by your actions? If the answer is yes, which the Bible says it must be, place a checkmark in the first box, signifying that you acknowledge your guilt in this area of life. Follow the same procedure for the other two manifestations of sin.

Next, below the above exercise, draw three sheep side by side. Color the first dark gray, the second light gray, and the third leave white. The first sheep represents the worst of the worst in people's minds. These people are generally the ones that everyone compares themselves to in an attempt to say that they are good people (the gray sheep) compared to others. However, when comparing the gray sheep to the white sheep (God's standard of perfect goodness) we see that even the nicest and friendliest of people fall short of God's perfect standard of righteousness. It is for this reason that scripture declares, "For there is not a just man on earth who does good and does not sin," (**Ecclesiastes 7:20**).

The Predicament

Now that we have discussed the character of God and the character of man, we will return to the wall of separation caused by sin which we discussed toward the beginning of the lesson. Based on the equation, "1 s/d * 70 yrs. = 25,550 sins", where *s/d* represents "sin per day", and * is a multiplication sign, a seventy year life span sinning at the rate of one sin per day will yield 25,550 sins at the end of life. This is quite an underestimate of how much sin each of us will have committed by the time we face God on Judgment Day.

Read **Romans 6:23** aloud. What wage or payment is earned by sin?

Read **Hebrews 9:27** aloud. What is one variation of the wages of sin?

Read **Ephesians 2:1** aloud. What is another variation of the wages of sin?

Read **II Thessalonians 1:8-9** aloud. What is a third variation of the wages of sin?

Now read **Matthew 25:41**. Those who receive the third variation of the wages of sin, or the answer to the previous question, spend their earnings in what? What is the name of this location?

Now that we realize the predicament that man is in as well as the fairness of it, we are going to examine a few different ways that man tries to solve this problem.

Read **Matthew 7:21-23** aloud. What is one way that man tries to remedy the predicament?

Read **Colossians 2:8** and **I Corinthians 1:20** aloud and discuss them briefly. What is another way that man tries to remedy the predicament?

Read **Ephesians 2:8-10** and **Hebrews 9:14** aloud. What is a third way that man tries to remedy the predicament? How is this way more specifically described in **Hebrews 9:14**? Write the answer to the second question in parentheses next to the first answer.

What excuse might man give regarding how he is currently attempting to live? What might he say he is doing, believing that God would understand? Read **Isaiah 64:6** and **James 2:10** aloud and discuss them briefly in regard to the questions.

* Some people do not like the nature of the justice of God. However, no one can rightfully choose to accept the parts of God that he likes and then disregard the parts that he dislikes. If God were unjust, He would not be perfect or trustworthy. We are to both fear and love God for His perfect justice.

Now that we have discovered that there is no human remedy for sin, what can we do about this predicament? Are we all damned to an eternity in hell with no way out?

God's Solution

Read **I Corinthians 2:2** aloud. Who did Paul declare that he knew to the Corinthians?

We have discovered that despite the fact that there is no human remedy for sin, God has provided a remedy. This remedy is a Man whom scripture also reveals to be God. Let us now discuss the credentials by which we can verify that this Man is indeed also God Himself, having taken human form.

Read **John 10:30-33** aloud. What is the credential identified in these verses?

Read **John 14:11** aloud. What is the credential identified in this verse?

Read **II Corinthians 5:21** aloud. What is the credential identified in this verse?

Read **Luke 24:27** and **Isaiah 53** and aloud. What is the credential identified in these verses?

Read **John 2:18-22** aloud. What is the credential identified in these verses?

Now that we have discussed the credentials of Jesus Christ, let us return to and read again **I Corinthians 2:2** aloud. What did Paul declare to know about the Man he identified?

Read **Isaiah 53:5** and **I Peter 3:18** aloud. What requirement of God was satisfied on the cross?

Read **Romans 5:8** and **I John 4:16** aloud. What characteristic of God, which has not yet been discussed, is explained in this verse as being demonstrated by God toward mankind on the cross?

People often describe God as being omni-benevolent. The word prefix *bene* means “good” and the suffix *volencia* means “will”. God’s will for us is good and He desires the best for us. However, what we think is best may be quite different from what God thinks is best. God is right in every case. He knows our every need better than we ever could.

It was almighty God’s infinite wisdom alone that could bring these two together on the cross. The cross is the ultimate demonstration of God’s mercy and love. It is the only means by which we may enter through Christ into fellowship with His Father. However, one question still remains: Are you willing to lose your life while crossing over to God?

Read **Acts 17:30**, **Proverbs 28:13**, **I John 1:8-9**, and **II Corinthians 7:9-10** aloud and discuss them briefly. What must take place in your heart if you desire to cross over the gap of sin to know and fellowship with God?

Jesus said that if a man wants to save his own life, he will lose it; but if he loses it for Christ’s sake, he will be saved (**Luke 9:24**). You must leave your old man behind on the cross as you “cross” over to new life in Christ. Read **Isaiah 55:6-8**. The ways of the world cannot be your ways any longer. You must now live by God’s ways which are outlined in His word (**Isa. 55:6-8**). You must deny yourself and climb upon the cross (**Luke 9:23**). He has paid the price

and wants to redeem you through the cross. Your purpose in life should be to no longer live for yourself, but to live instead for the One who died for you and rose again, for you were purchased by His blood and owe Him your life (**II Cor. 5:15, I Cor. 6:19-20**). He has paid the price and wants to redeem (receive what He has paid for) you through the cross. Once you have died with Christ, it is necessary to receive and walk in new life with Him.

Read **Galatians 2:20** aloud. Paul claimed to have been crucified with Christ and that Christ had been living within him. What principle was Paul living by which made it possible for Christ to live within Him?

Now read **II Corinthians 5:7** aloud. Discuss the significance of this verse in relation to crossing over. It is by the previous answer alone that you can cross over to God.

As you cross over to God, it is necessary to identify with Him.

Read **Romans 10:9-10** aloud. What must you do as an expression of your new found loyalty to Jesus Christ? Read **Luke 9:26** and discuss this verse in relation to the previous answer.

Read **I Peter 3:21** and **Colossians 2:12** aloud. It is important for you to be baptized after you make a decision to surrender your life to Jesus, as it is one of the first steps of obedience for a new believer. This is an accompaniment to the previous answer (Ex.: **Acts 2:36-38**). For more information concerning biblical baptism, see the “Xtra Notes - Biblical Baptism” document found at www.truthfreesus.com/discipleship.php.

Read **John 3:16** aloud. What must occur in one’s life to inherit everlasting life with God?

It is important to distinguish between two different types of believing. Read **James 2:19** aloud. This is having an intellectual belief in God with your mind, which is important, but is not “the substance of things hoped for, [nor] the evidence of things not seen” (**Heb. 11:1, NKJV**). To “believe” as it is stated in **John 3:16** implies that you have chosen to trust and follow God with all your heart. **Romans 10:10** says that we must believe with our hearts unto righteousness. Read **Matthew 6:21** aloud and discuss briefly.

Do you know the Lord? If not, do you desire to know Him? Cry out to Him today and trust Him to save you from your sins.

-all Bible verses in NASB unless otherwise specified

Lesson 2: The Way of Salvation

With such a wide variety of philosophies and religions present in the world today, the question of which one is right is doubtless pondered by many. Though these systems of belief commonly diagnose many of the same moral failures of mankind, only one offers an adequate remedy. Jesus Christ clearly proclaimed, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me” (**John 14:6**). Jesus Christ is the Way of Salvation.

Turn to Hebrews 2:1-4 and read aloud

In the first chapter of Hebrews, the author explains that though the word of God was in past times spoken through His prophets to His people, He has now spoken by His Son. The writer continues, proving that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is greater than all of God’s messengers, even His angels, and that He is the perfect image and revelation of His Father (**Heb. 1:3**).

Due to the abundance of revelation from God made available to us through the prophets, the Son of God, and those whom He called into apostleship, we are exhorted to pay earnest heed to what has been said, lest we be ignorant of or apathetic to its implications. In light of the fact that the message of the prophets has proven true, and that the justice of God has been demonstrated and upheld over Israel and among the nations, the author of Hebrews poses the question, “How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?” (**Heb. 2:3**). This great salvation is embodied in Jesus Christ.

What makes this salvation so great?

Whereas the various religions and philosophies of the world are mere attempts by men to attain to their own form of righteousness, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is a clear portrayal of God reaching out in love to save men and impart His own righteousness to them (**Matt. 5:20; II Cor. 5:21**). This salvation is so great because it is God who saves people from sin and its effects, and because people are utterly incapable of saving themselves. It is a salvation that surrounds us, dealing with our standing before God, the continual removal of sin in our daily lives, and a future deliverance from the very presence of the sin and death around us in the world. Below are examples of each tense of salvation present in scripture.

- **Have Been and Are Saved (Eph. 2:5; I Cor. 15:2)**

The first tense of salvation deals with the satisfaction of the penalty due for sins against God, and this is often referred to as justification. Scripture explains that all have sinned against God and are unworthy of His glory (**Rom. 3:23**). The Bible teaches that sinners must be punished with an eternal penalty for sins, because they have sinned against an eternal God who is infinitely holy and righteous. Jesus Christ was the only One able to take this eternal penalty upon Himself and justify His people once for all, because He is eternal in nature and was Himself without sin (**I Tim. 2:5; I Pet. 3:18**). Only He could become sin for us (**II Cor. 5:21**). The one justified is said to be “born again” as a new creation and able to walk in newness of life,

having been brought into right standing before God once and for all (**John 3:7**). This aspect of salvation experienced in Christ is permanent and incorruptible (**I Pet. 1:22-25**). Once God has justified a person, He is faithful to complete the work He has started in him and promises to never leave nor forsake those He has saved (**Phil 1:6; I John 5:4; Heb. 13:5; John 10:28**). The essence of the New Covenant is that God will give His people new hearts that desire to obey Him, put His Spirit within them to cause them to walk in His statutes, and put His fear in them so that they will never forsake Him; and all of this He will do for the sake of His name and glory, and so that all will know that He is the Lord (**Ezek 36:22-32; Jer. 32:38-41**).

- **Are Being Saved (I Cor. 1:18)**

The next tense of salvation deals with the bondage of sin in the life of the justified, and it is often referred to as sanctification. Sanctification is the process of being set apart from the practice of sin to live in greater holiness unto the Lord. Though a man may be justified before God, he still must battle sin in his life. The salvation of Christ not only satisfies the penalty of sin we are due, but continually breaks the very power of sin in our lives through the cross. Indeed, the evidence that someone has been justified is that they are being progressively sanctified. Because of the crucifixion of Christ, the Holy Spirit may now permanently make His residence within the hearts of the justified (**Gal. 3:14**). It is the Holy Spirit who works sanctification out in our lives through our cooperation with Him and submission to His leadership rather than the desires of our flesh (**Phil. 2:12-13; II Thess. 2:13; Rom. 8:13-14**). His work is to bring us out of conformity to the world so that we might be conformed to the perfect image of Christ (**Rom. 12:1-2; Rom. 8:29**). God desires to lead us out of the bondage of disobedience, freeing us to walk in obedience toward Him. It is for this reason that scripture can claim, “The one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked” (**I John 2:6**).

- **Will be Saved (Matt. 10:22; Rev. 2:10)**

The last tense of salvation pertains to our current existence in a world full of sin and death, and it is often referred to as glorification. God desires to deliver His people from the presence of sin once and for all that they might enjoy fellowship with Him in His glory forever (**Rom. 8:16-30**). If people *have been* justified and *are being* progressively sanctified, then they can be assured that they *will be* glorified. In exchange for the corrupt bodies we currently occupy, He plans to give believers new, glorified bodies which will be able to endure His holy presence forever. The infinite greatness and magnificence of this eternal abode, entirely free from the presence of sin and evil, is simply unimaginable and unfathomable. Read **Revelation 21:1-22:5** for a glimpse of what it will be like.

How does one receive this great salvation?

Turn to Ephesians 2:8-10 and read aloud

Salvation in Christ is administered by the grace of God. Grace is defined as an unmerited favor, giving, or help. In essence, the grace of God causes justification through the unmerited

gift of Christ's atonement upon the cross (**Rom. 3:24**), sanctification by the power of the Holy Spirit *given* for freedom from sin and obedience to Christ (**Tit. 2:11-14; II Tim. 2:1; Rom. 5:2**), and glorification, whereby we will be *given* new, glorified bodies which can endure the holy presence of God and enable us to enjoy fellowship with God apart from sin and its effects for eternity (**John 3:16; Rom. 6:23**). Truly His grace is sufficient for all things and is the only source of true salvation from sin (**II Cor. 12:7-10**). The purpose of creation is to glorify God, and it is only when we live by grace, rather than our own strength and understanding, that He will be glorified in us (**Eph. 1:6; I Cor. 10:31**).

Though many experience certain measures of grace from God (**Acts 14:17; Matt. 5:45**), few have tasted the grace of God that brings salvation (**Tit. 2:11**). Scripture clearly identifies repentance and faith as the conditions upon which salvation is received and through which grace can be administered (**Acts. 20:21**). Like two sides to a coin, repentance is a turning of one's faith in self and other things, to trust and believe upon the Lord Jesus Christ from the heart, for life, sustenance, purpose, and direction. Genuine sorrow and repentance will lead to a changed life; whereas a self-pitying sorrow will leave someone in his sin and the death it produces (**II Cor. 7:9-10**). People can offer no true merit to God, and the Bible teaches that our works of righteousness apart from God are dead, because they are tainted and contaminated with our sinfulness and our pursuit of self glory and self seeking (**Isa. 64:6; Psa. 14:2-3**).

It is interesting to note, in **Ephesians 2:10**, that though salvation is not of works, yet those who believe in the crucified and resurrected Christ are God's workmanship and therefore serve the purpose of walking in good works according to God's plan and will for their lives. Essentially, this passage teaches us that good works are not a *means* of salvation, but rather, the *fruit* of it. Salvation is not of good works, but for good works. So in summary, true salvation in Christ is *by grace, through faith, and for works* according to God's perfect plan. Grace is not an excuse for sin, but rather a destroyer of sin (**Rom. 6:1**). Defining grace as a license to sin portrays God as unrighteous and unloving, as well as, weak and unable to bring about the deliverance from sin He desires in the lives of those He claims to save (**I Pet. 2:16; I Pet. 1:15-16; Heb. 13:21; Rom 6:1**).

Have You Been Saved?

Turn to II Corinthians 13:5a and read aloud

Evidences of a non-believer:

I Corinthians 6:9

Galatians 5:19-21

Colossians 3:5, 8-10

Evidences of a true Christian:

Hunger for God's word (**I Pet. 2:1-3**)

Obedience to God's word (**John 14:23; Heb. 5:8-9**)

Fruit of holiness (**Rom. 6:22**)

Fruit of the Spirit (**Gal. 5:22-23**)

Zeal for good works (**Tit. 2:14**)

Practice of righteousness (**I John 3:10**)

Hatred of sin and fear of God (**Prov. 8:13; Rom. 12:9**)

Flees from sin and temptation (**Rom. 13:14**)

Desire to worship God (**John 4:23-24**)

Service (**Matt. 20:25-28; Gal. 5:13**)

Shares Christ with others (**Matt. 10:32; Matt. 28:19-20**)

Desire to be actively involved in a church body (**Heb. 10:25**)

Loving other believers (**John 13:34-35; John 15:12**)

Make sure you are!

Turn to II Peter 1:10a and read aloud

Regardless of where you are in regard to salvation, it is never a bad thing to make sure you are where you need to be. Make the commitment to surrender your whole heart to Jesus as your Lord and Savior, for the first time, or once again. Purpose your heart toward the Lord and His purposes (**Acts 11:23**). Seek to please God rather than yourself (**II Cor. 5:9**). Salvation from sin is one thing you will never regret.

-all Bible verses in NASB unless otherwise specified

Lesson 3: The Cost of Following Christ

The scriptures are clear in emphasizing that all people need salvation from their sin because it separates them from God. The Bible teaches that salvation comes when we meet the conditions of repentance from sin and faith in Jesus Christ (**Acts 20:21**). Jesus expounded upon this principle in Luke 9 and again in Luke 14.

Jesus often challenged people who gathered around Him to search their hearts and know their true intention for coming to Him. Many came to see miracles, others wanted to know what benefits they could reap from joining His “entourage”, and few truly wanted to please the Lord. This challenge extends toward us as we study the Bible and seek to understand its message. Are we willing to bear the cost of being a follower of Christ? Salvation is free in the sense that we cannot earn its benefits; however, it proves costly in regard to the consequences of the transformation it produces in our lives.

Turn to Luke 9:23-26 and Luke 14:25-33 and read both aloud

Self-Denial

In **Luke 9:23**, Jesus gives us an explanation of what must occur in a man’s life before he can become His follower. The first step presented is to deny oneself. This principle is expanded in Luke 14.

- **Luke 14:26**

You may be wondering why Jesus would ask you to hate your family and your own life. The point He is trying to illustrate is that our love and esteem for others ought to pale in comparison to our love and esteem for God. Before we can rightly love our families, and even our own lives, we must have an all pervading love for God from which all other loves may flow. If we come to Christ for salvation, we must be willing to love Him more than anyone or anything else. We must be willing to trust His word above all. We must be willing to love God more than our family and friends; more than fame and fortune.

How do we know when we really love God though? Scripture explains, “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome” (**I John 5:3**). A Christian’s obedience to God’s commandments is an evidence of his love for Him. It is also important to realize that we must fear the opinion of God more than the opinions of people. Such a concept may seem difficult, especially when it involves those closest to us, but is necessary in order to walk in peace with the Lord Jesus.

It is also possible to love an object more than God. The rich young ruler in **Matt. 19:16-22** is an apt example. When Jesus told him he had to give away his earthly treasures to be His disciple, “he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions (NKJV).” Jesus further emphasizes that, “no one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the

other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and [money]” (**Matt. 6:24**).

Turn to Isaiah 53:6 and read aloud

Truly our greatest problem is the esteem we have for ourselves. It is a desire for independence and self determination in life that leads us to sin against God and miss His will. The reason we esteem other things above God is because we first esteem ourselves above Him in our lives and believe that our ways are better. It is our desire to stand alone which separates us from God, because we, as His creation, are meant to be dependent upon Him and to glorify Him. This is the reason for which Jesus demands that we deny ourselves. One of the most powerful examples of denying self comes from Jesus in **Luke 22:41-42**. As a human, He had a natural desire to live in peace and avoid all the suffering and death that would result from the cross, if it were at all possible. However, the only way for mankind to have any hope of reconciliation with God would be for Christ to suffer the penalty of sin, namely death. As His death was the will of the Father, He chose to deny His natural desire to live and took up the cross for you and for me.

Turn to Proverb 14:12 and read aloud

The bad decisions we make are appealing at face value, yet they lead us further and further down the path of destruction. This is why people must stop trying to live their lives their own way and yield to Christ’s lordship and leading. Jesus must be your Lord, if He is to be your Savior. We must listen to His voice through His word and follow Him (**John 10:27**). We ought not to live by our own wisdom, but by His wisdom, which we find in scripture and which the Holy Spirit of God ministers to our hearts. To be a disciple of Christ, we must choose to no longer live for ourselves, but rather, to live for the One who died for us and rose to victory over sin and death (**II Cor. 5:15**). It is necessary for us to turn from our own philosophies and from our own way of life to follow Christ, seeing as He is “the Way, and the Truth, and the Life” (**John 14:6**). Are you willing to abandon any philosophy that conflicts with a command of scripture?

Taking up the Cross

- **Luke 14:27**

As we deny our own will and way, we must replace it with the will of God. Continuing with our example from **Luke 22:41-42**, we find that, denying Himself, Jesus prayed to His Father, communicating His willingness to take up the Father’s will before His own human desires by dying on the cross. The cross was God’s will for Jesus, and He selflessly embraced it (**Heb. 12:2-3**). For us, our cross is a symbol of God’s will for our lives. We are told in **Luke 9:23** that we ought to take up our cross daily. Therefore, the Christian life is not a weekly meeting or a creed to recite, but a surrender and submission of one’s whole life, in all of its aspects, to God. He created you so that He might display His glory in you and share His love with you, and thus He deserves to have your whole heart. Truly there is no

greater thing than to have an all-wise, all-powerful, and all-loving God in complete control of your life and possession of your very heart and soul. God has a general will for all men, as well as a specific and unique will for each individual. This will is the greatest possible desire that could be had for your life, as it is authored by a perfect God who knows all things. Trust Him to guide and care for you and to be your greatest delight.

Following Jesus

We cannot stop at picking up the cross, but we must continue onward in the footsteps of Jesus, dying daily and receiving the grace that raises us and renews us for the day. The remaining lessons of this discipleship book are devoted to communicating what the Bible teaches about following Jesus Christ.

Consider the Cost

- **Luke 14:28-33**

Nothing should by any means diminish or compete with your love and obedience to Christ. This does not mean you have to quit your occupation, throw everything you have away, or drop your family to follow Christ. On the contrary, a Christian ought to work hard at his occupation, be a good steward of the possessions that God gives him, and love his family with a godly love. It is possible, however, that your job or your family may drop you. You must be willing to lose these to gain Christ.

Turn to Philippians 3:7-11 and read aloud

There should be nothing you would not be **willing** to give up or lose if the Lord asked it of you. You must set your mind on things above, choosing to do things of eternal significance as opposed to indulging in temporal things (**Col. 3:2; Matt. 6:19-21**). Jesus wants your life in exchange for His (**I Cor. 6:20; Rom. 12:1-2**). You should want Christ to infiltrate every area of your heart and life. You should want to be a billboard upon which He displays His glory and message of salvation to the world. Yield yourself in full surrender to Him today, for when you truly consider the cost of following Christ, you will realize, as the Apostle Paul did, that “the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in [those who follow Jesus]” (**Rom. 8:18, NKJV**).

-all Bible verses in NASB unless otherwise specified

Introduction to the Garden Illustration

Lesson 4-9 of *The Basics of Discipleship* are to be taught along side the Garden Illustration. This diagram is derived from the parable of the sower (**Mark 4:1-20**). During the next few weeks, we will work through this illustration, updating it after the introduction of each corresponding lesson, as we seek to understand the key principles involved in following Christ and being His disciple. Each of the next seven lessons focuses on specific aspects of the Garden Illustration and their importance in the genuine Christian life. It will be necessary for students to bring their incomplete copy of the illustration with them over the next few weeks until it has been completed. Upon completion of the simple version of the Garden Illustration, a more in-depth version, composed of verse references and fill-in-the-blank answers, will be taught.

Lesson 4: The Soil of the Heart

The heart, in the spiritual sense, represents the intentions, desires, passions, and willingness of a person (**Gen. 6:5; Rom. 10:1; Ex. 25:2**). The physical heart of a man is perhaps the centermost driving force of life in his body. Scripture reveals to us that life is in the blood, making the blood of sacrifice a necessary payment for the wages of sin, which is death (**Lev. 17:11; Rom. 6:23**). The heart is the organ that pumps blood throughout the body, and death is indicated when it has ceased to beat. It is for this reason that the heart is chosen to represent the spiritual life force of a man. The heart of a man defines him (**Prov. 27:19**). It is fitting then that scripture declares that all of life's issues spring forth from the heart (**Prov. 4:23**).

What is the current condition of man's heart?

Turn to Jeremiah 17:9-10 and read aloud

In what three ways is the heart of a man described?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

The hearts of men are under a gravely ill condition. They are said to be more deceitful than anything, even the devil. Only the fool is said to trust and follow his heart (**Prov. 28:26**). The hearts of men are deeply and desperately wicked and so blinded that men cannot even fully know their own hearts. The Lord alone can fully know and discern the hearts of men (**I Kgs. 8:39**).

As mentioned above, the issues of life spring forth from the heart. Scripture teaches us that wickedness, in practice, flows from wickedness in heart (**Mark 7:20-23; Matt. 12:33-37**). Paul, in his letter to the Roman churches, declares that as well as a wicked heart, man also has a conscience that bears witness to the law of God written upon his heart (**Rom. 2:15**). The conscience of a man can be seared in varying degrees (**I Tim. 4:2**). Searing the conscience will make it less and less effective in his life, which explains why there are people in the world who are said to have "no conscience." They have seared their consciences and suppressed the truth in unrighteousness to the point that they have virtually killed them. Even these are not without hope, however, for the Lord has a history of performing resurrections. Though meat that is seared becomes hard on the outside, a sharp knife and enough applied force can cut to the tenderness hidden beneath.

Turn to Mark 4:1-20 and read aloud

Jesus said understanding this parable is key to understanding all other parables, as it teaches the foundational principle of God's word being the seed from which life can come forth if it finds a heart of soil that will receive it and in which it can prosper. Jesus identifies four kinds of soils of which a heart may consist and they are listed as follows:

- _____ – (by the side of the road) – hard like packed dirt and not an environment for plant-life; Satan stirs up lies and pride against the word sown in the heart or distracts to the point of forgetting the word and the seed is stolen away.

- _____ – springs up fast but this burst of zeal ends fast as well, because this zeal is for gain rather than for God; they like the sound of what they hear, but never understand its depth; they cannot stand the lightest wind and will abandon the principles of the word the moment it becomes inconvenient for them.
- _____ – weeds and thorns choke up the word; divided, trying to serve world and God; like the rich young ruler, wants benefits of the righteous while living the life of the unrighteous; seeks glory and reputation before men for religion, but indulges in the world in private
- _____ – a heart receptive to God’s word; hear, accept, and bear fruit; good and honest heart mentioned in **Luke 8:15** is contrasted with the deceitful and wicked heart of **Jeremiah 17:9**. This heart is one that has been prepared and regenerated by the Lord. “You must be born again!” (**John 3:7; I Pet. 1:23**).

Which soil describes your heart?

Despair not if your heart appears to be represented by one of the first three soils, for hope is not lost. The soil of your heart can be broken up and tilled until it is ready for seed. You must cry out to God and ask Him to work into you a heart of good soil (**Jer. 4:3; Hos. 10:12**). God promises that those who seek for Him with all their hearts will find Him (**Jer. 29:13**).

The need for a new heart

Though the hearts of men are in a fallen state, we may understand from multiple verses of scripture that God has intended for us to receive new hearts. Man is in need of a new heart; a heart to know God (**Jer. 24:7**). Whereas before, the law of God was written upon the hearts of men, God has promised not only to write the law upon the hearts of His people, but to put His law in their hearts so that they desire to obey it (**Jer. 31:33; 32:40**). He wants to give us obedient hearts (**Rom. 6:17**). We learn from Ezekiel that God desires to remove the hearts of stone and replace them with hearts of flesh whereby His people may know His ways and do them willingly; hearts that exhibit life (**Ezek. 11:19-20**). He does not stop with the provision of a new heart, but further promises to put His Spirit within it, to dwell in it (**Ezek. 36:26-27; Eph. 3:17**). Even after receiving a new heart, God does not desire for us to live apart from Him, but to depend on Him for all things. Though obedience may be our desire, we still need the power of His Spirit of grace in order to walk in that obedience to Him. He desires to be our God, and for us to be His people (**Ezek. 36:28**).

If you have not received a new heart and have not been born again; if the power of God does not rest upon you for obedience to God’s commands and true love toward Him and others, “seek the LORD while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near (**Isa. 55:6**). If you have received a new heart, ask the Lord to expose soil in your heart that is not good and which needs to be broken up and tilled. Praise the Lord for His amazing grace which brings new life to those who believe Him.

-all Bible verses in NASB unless otherwise specified

Lesson 5: The Word of God

When the soil of the heart is properly laid and tilled, the seed, which is the word of God, can be effectively planted. Without this seed, the tree will never be. As the seed contains the DNA and other materials necessary to produce a tree, so the word of God contains the direction and power necessary to generate new spiritual life in man when properly applied.

The Holy Bible and Its Composition

The Holy Bible is the inspired word of God. It was penned by holy men of God who were moved by the Holy Spirit as they wrote, and acted as instruments by which God could manifest His message to the world (**II Pet. 1:20-21**). The Holy Bible is a collection of 66 books, written by approximately 40 different, God-inspired authors, on 3 continents, over the span of about 1500 years. Miraculously, despite the stylistic, geographical, and chronological differences between these authors, none of the books of the Bible contradict each other, but rather carry and collectively contribute to the same message, strongly evidencing their divine guidance and authorship.

The Bible is divided into two major sections: the Old Testament [Hebrew – 22 books, English - 39 books; (some of the books in the Hebrew Old Testament were broken up into more books in the English version, but both the Hebrew and the English contain the same scriptures)] and the New Testament (27 books). The Old Testament predates the birth of Jesus Christ and the New Testament postdates it. The Old Testament is made up of three subsections called the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings (**Luke 24:44**). The New Testament is comprised of historical accounts of the life of Christ and the birth of the church, letters written by the apostles of Christ to some of the first churches they established, individuals involved with their ministry, or persecuted Christians, and a book of prophecy. The original language of the Old Testament is Hebrew, while the New Testament is written in Greek, and both contain a small amount of Aramaic.

The scriptures of the Bible are often referred to collectively as the word of God. This does not necessarily mean that each word is a record of God's personal utterance or thoughts, yet it does mean that the record of these words was thoroughly and entirely guided by the Holy Spirit of God. For example, there are many passages that do display God's personal words and ideas, however, there are also a number of passages that display the bad advice and actions of people as an example of what ought not to be believed, said, or done.

Jesus Christ is also referred to as the "Word of God" (**John 1:14**). Jesus is the Word of God become flesh. He is the fulfillment of a multitude of promises made by God in the Old Testament, namely that God would send a Savior for His people who would deliver them from their sin and its effects and bring them into a perfect and righteous relationship with God. Jesus claimed not to have come to destroy the Law or the Prophets (sections of the Old Testament mentioned above), but instead explained that He had come rather to fulfill them. He further affirmed that though heaven and earth may pass away, God's word will stand true and all that He has spoken will come to pass (**Matt. 5:17-18**). So in essence, the Old Testament and the New Testament are in perfect harmony with each other in Christ.

Turn to Jude 3 and read aloud

Is it possible that there are additional scriptures or contemporary apostles and prophets needed to provide entirely inerrant and authoritative revelation outside of what has already been revealed by God in the Holy Bible? Why or why not?

A friend once told me, “The B.I.B.L.E. stands for ‘The Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth.’” The purpose of God’s word is to reveal His heart and will to us. The Bible states that out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks, and though this speaks in the context of evil men, it is applicable to all moral beings (**Matt. 12:35**). It is in the Holy Scriptures that we find the abundance of God’s heart revealed to us. It is the revelation of God’s will and desire for mankind. If you want to know why God made you, and what He wants out of you, there is no need to look any further than His word. It makes known to us what is good and right in the sight of God (**Deut. 12:28**). He has exalted His word as the supreme revelation of who He is, even above all His name (**Psa. 138:2, NKJV**).

The Holy Bible and its Authority

The word of God is the final and authoritative standard for truth. Match the following phrases with their corresponding verses, connecting them with lines. Briefly discuss these principles and their relevance to the authority and truth of God’s word.

- | | |
|--|------------------------|
| 1) God is God and His words are true | a. John 17:17 |
| 2) God cannot lie | b. Jas. 1:18 |
| 3) God’s word is right and His work true | c. Psa. 33:4 |
| 4) God’s word is truth and He sanctifies people by it | d. II Sam. 7:28 |
| 5) God brings people forth in salvation by the word of truth | e. Heb. 6:18 |

The Holy Bible and Our Need of It

Turn to I Peter 1:22 - 2:3 and read aloud

What made the original recipients of Peter’s letter able to love one another?

The audience is said to have been “born again” of an incorruptible seed. Identify the seed.

Whereas the word of the Lord is incorruptible and endures forever, what will one day wither and fall away?

What is the relationship between the word of the Lord and the good news of Jesus Christ?

In what ways do the desires of those who are truly born again change (from what, to what)?

The Holy Bible and Its Sufficiency

Turn to II Timothy 3:16-17 and read aloud

What percentage of the scriptures contained in the Bible is considered to be inspired by God?

Identify and describe four specific actions that require the scriptures for proper accomplishment?

The word of God is sufficient to thoroughly equip the man of God for _____ good work.

In what ways is the word of God described in scripture?

1. His word is everlasting (**Psa. 119:89; Matt. 24:35**)
2. His word is proven and is a shield (**Psa. 18:30**)
3. His word is pure (**Psa. 12:6; Prov. 30:5**)
4. His word is a lamp to guide our paths (**Psa. 119:105**)
5. His word is a source of hope (**Psa. 130:5**)

Turn to Heb. 4:12 and read aloud

The word of God is described as living and active and able to discern the thoughts and intentions of the heart. The verses listed below help us understand the different ways the word of God becomes effective toward and within those who believe and apply it.

1. His word effectively works in believers (**I Thess. 2:13**)
2. His word known and obeyed frees us from sin (**John 8:31-32**)
3. His word can keep us away from the wrong paths (**Psa. 17:4**)
4. His word restores the soul and makes the simple wise (**Psa. 19:7**)

5. His word rejoices the heart and enlightens the eyes (**Psa. 19:8**)
6. His word gives life (**Psa. 119:50, 93**)
7. His word produces good judgment (**Psa. 119:66**)
8. His word yields deliverance from sin (**Psa. 119:133**)
9. His word gives promise of peace & not stumbling for those who love it (**Psa. 119:165**)
10. His word can help a man keep his way pure (**Psalm 119:9**)

The True Gospel as Revealed in the Holy Bible

In a time when many come in the name of the Lord, there are few who truly seek the glory of God over the praise of men. God has given us the perfect standard of his unchanging word by which we can test what we hear and read, so that we might be able to discern what is good and what is evil (**I Thess. 5:21**). Paul warns in his epistle to the churches at Galatia that no one, not even an angel from heaven, should be trusted if he preaches a different message than what the apostles first preached, that which has been recorded for us in the scriptures of the New Testament and was also foreshadowed in the scriptures of the Old Testament (**Gal. 1:6-9**).

The preaching of an altered view of God's word is Satan's age old tactic (**Gen. 3; Matt. 4:1-11**). Many popular authors and preachers give messages that appear to, and may in fact, include many truths from God's word, yet they make additional statements and misinterpretations that directly contradict Scripture's intended meaning. There are many who seek after mystical experiences with God or help from God in ways that do not accord with what has been taught in the Scriptures, and these are easily lead astray by false signs and wonders from false prophets (**Deut. 13:3; I Cor. 1:22-23; II Thess. 2:9-10**). We have very clear warning from scripture that those who add to the words of the Lord will be rebuked by God Himself (**Prov. 30:6**).

The Holy Bible as the Foundation for Life

Turn to Matthew 7:24-27 and read aloud

This passage records the conclusion of a sermon Jesus preached to His disciples often referred to as the Sermon on the Mount. In this concluding segment, Jesus highlights the central purpose of His message, namely that those who heard His words should obey them. He likens those who build their lives upon His words to people who build their homes upon a solid rock which will cause them to withstand the worst of storms. He likens those who build their lives upon the thoughts and philosophies of men and of their own hearts, to people who build their homes upon sand, which will perhaps endure for a small while, slowly sinking, but eventually they will be washed away. Believe, as Peter did, that Jesus Christ has the words to eternal life (**John 6:68**). Make the word of God the final standard and authority in your life for all matters of faith, practice, and truth. Do not live "by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (**Matt. 4:4; Deut. 8:3**).

-All Bible verses in NASB unless otherwise specified

Lesson 6: A Life of Prayer

For a plant to mature from a seed to a fruit bearer, it must receive ample water. Prayer is a posture of heart in which one thirsts for the living waters of the Holy Spirit and seeks to worship the living God. Prayer in a general sense is communion and communication with God, through the mediation of Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit (**Rom. 8:26, 34**).

It is in true prayer and meditation that the word of God is brought to life and proper application of it is made to the heart by the Holy Spirit (**II Cor. 3:6**). It is the Spirit of truth who is able to guide us into all truth within the confines of scripture (**John 16:13**). Indeed the word of God and prayer are inseparable in their effectiveness and are often associated and referred to together in scripture (**I Tim. 4:5; Acts 6:4**).

Prayer is meant to be more than mere ritual; it is meant to be a way of life. Scripture enlightens us to the example of Jesus' life on the earth. He rose early for prayer, and also prayed through the night on a number of occasions; He prayed much (**Luke 5:16**). If He, though the Son of God, needed to pray, how much more ought we to live in prayer.

Types of Prayer

- Unceasing prayer
 - praying without ceasing (**I Thess. 5:16-18**)
 - being in a constant state of awareness and mindfulness of God (**Col. 3:2**)
 - walking in a spirit of prayer; staying in communication with God
 - constantly listening to the voice of the Shepherd (**John 10:27**)
- Personal prayer
 - private, closet prayer (**Matt. 6:6**)
 - time devoted in seclusion to focus on God
- Corporate prayer (**Acts 1:14**)
 - believers united in prayer
 - still must be done for the glory of God, not to impress others (**Luke 20:46-47**)

Modes of Prayer

Match the following modes of prayer with the corresponding verses, connecting them with lines.

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 1) Adoration | a. I John 5:15 |
| 2) Confession | b. Psa. 103:1 |
| 3) Thanksgiving | c. Eph. 6:18 |
| 4) Petition | d. I Thess. 5:18 |
| 5) Intercession | e. I John 1:9-10 |

Definitions

- Adoration – praise, worship, and esteem of God
- Confession – admittance of sin and the need for forgiveness and cleansing
- Thanksgiving – expression of gratefulness for what God has done and has yet to do
- Supplication – asking
 - Petition – asking God to supply on one’s own behalf (**Phil. 4:6-7; I Pet. 5:7**)
 - Intercession – asking God to supply on someone else’s behalf

Things we are exhorted to intercede for:

- the unsaved to be saved (**I Tim. 2:1, 4**)
- all who are in authority (**I Tim. 2:2**)
- fellow believers in Christ (**Eph. 6:18; Acts 12:5-10; Heb. 13:3**)
- God to send forth laborers to minister the gospel (**Luke 10:2**)
- those who wrongfully oppose us (**Matt. 5:44**)
- Israel (**Psa. 22:6**)

* Jesus’ prayer in **John 17** is a prime example of intercessory prayer

Principles of Prayer

Turn to Matthew 6:5-15 and read aloud

This passage is an excerpt from a larger portion of scripture often referred to as the Sermon on the Mount. In this message, Jesus teaches His disciples, covering a number of foundational areas of the Christian faith, including the topic of prayer. We will examine this passage to understand some basic principles of Christian prayer.

- What sets genuine Christian prayer apart from all other types of prayer?

Verse 5-6 _____

Verse 7-8 _____

- What does prayer express?

Verse 8 _____

- Observe **verses 9-12**. Who appears to be the focus in this model prayer?

- In light of the observation above, we will identify the specific aspects of the subject highlighted in this prayer. Take time to discuss and make additional notes to the side about each.

Verse 9	<u>His fatherhood</u>
Verse 10	<u>His authority</u>
Verse 11	<u>His physical provision</u>
Verse 12-13	<u>His spiritual provision</u>

The heart of this prayer is essentially an expression of dependency upon God and an acknowledgement of His willingness and ability to provide for our needs. True Christian prayer recognizes the role of God as sovereign (possessing rule or authority) over all things, and one's own role of being in continual submission to Him and His will. This model prayer is not meant to bind people to a set of words, as Christ warns of vain repetition beforehand, but to be a guide as to the manner in which one ought to pray.

Turn to James 4:2-3 and read aloud

These verses highlight two wrong attitudes one may have toward prayer. These attitudes prove to be great stumbling blocks. Identify them below.

Verse 2 _____
Verse 3 _____

* It is important to note that God provides what we need, not necessarily what we want.

Conditions for answered prayer

- In Christ (**John 15:7; 14:6; I Tim. 2:5; Eph. 3:12; Heb. 4:15-16; 10:19-22**)
- Trusting Him (**Jas. 1:6; Mark 11:24**)
- According to His will (**I John 5:14; John 16:23-24**)
- According to His word; a sure way to pray God's will (**John 15:7**)
- By the Holy Spirit, who knows His will (**Rom. 8:26-27**)
- Humility (**Luke 18:9-14; Dan. 9:18; II Chr. 7:14**)
- Penitent, moldable heart (**Jas. 5:16; Psa. 37:4**)
- Fervency, passion (**Jas. 5:16**)
- Persistence (**Luke 11:5-13**)
- Perseverance (**Luke 18:1-8**)

Answers to prayer

- Yes – Hannah's prayer for a son (**I Sam. 1:11; 19-20**)
- No – Paul's prayer about the thorn in his flesh (**II Cor. 12:7-10**)
- Not yet – Abraham's prayer for a son (**Gen. 15:2-5**)
- Different – God knows best (**Eph. 3:20**)
- Self imposed judgment – Israel presumptuously demands a king (**I Sam. 8:5-18**)

Fasting and Prayer

Prayer in the Bible is often linked with the concept of fasting. Biblical fasting is typically abstinence from food for a certain period of time to focus in prayer and seeking God's will, however, one can fast from just about anything if it becomes distracting or if an unhealthy attachment has formed toward it in the heart of the believer. We should seek to live a fasted lifestyle, as Jesus expected His people to be both fasting and praying (**Matt. 6:5; 16**).

Turn to Matthew 6:16-18 and read aloud

- What particular concept about fasting does Jesus emphasize in the passage above?
-

Purposes of fasting

- to humble self (**Psa. 35:13**)
- to draw near to God (**Jas. 4:8**)
- for God to grant repentance (**Joel 2:12**)
- to find God's will and direction (**Ezra 8:21**)
- to seek intervention (deliverance) by God (**II Chr. 20:1-22**)
- to help focus in prayer and intercession

“A man who is intimate with God will never be intimidated by men” – Leonard Ravenhill

God likens Himself to a fountain gushing with life-giving water and His desire is for us to come and drink of this water and thereby depend on Him for life (**Jer. 2:13**). He promises that those who believe in Him and drink of His living water will in turn have hearts that overflow with living waters for the blessing of others (**John 7:38**). Give yourself to a life of prayer and see the glory of God transform you and become manifest all around you (**II Cor. 3:17-18**).

Memory Verses: I Thess. 5:16-18

-All Bible verses in NASB unless otherwise specified

Lesson 7: The Fellowship of Believers

When the soil of a heart has been properly prepared, the right seed has been planted within it, and it has been well-watered, the increase of the Lord will produce a fruit-bearing tree (**I Cor. 3:6; Mark 4:20**). As a disciple of Christ begins to grow in a personal relationship with God through the eating of His word and drinking of the living waters of His Spirit in prayer, it ought to fill and overflow from his heart. Just as natural fruit is a carrier of both seed and moisture to surrounding soils, so the fruit of a healthy relationship with God will carry His word and the living waters of His Spirit to the people that surround the believer in Christ (**John 7:38**). There are two major ways in which the word of God and His living waters can be ministered to people, and the first, which we will discuss in this lesson, is in the context of fellowship among fellow believers in Christ.

Breaking Fellowship with Darkness

Briefly explain principles of breaking fellowship with darkness outlined in the following verses.

I Pet. 2:9-10 _____

II Cor. 6:14 _____

Eph. 5:8-13 _____

I John 1:5-6 _____

The True Christian Church

The true Christian church consists of a people who have truly been birthed anew by the Spirit of God and set apart as a special people, eager to obey God and live according to His will (**Tit. 2:14**). Within this universal community, there are smaller, local communities referred to as churches (**Gal. 1:1-2**). The local church is the primary and most essential venue for Christian fellowship and is not defined as a building, but a community of people who have covenanted to worship God together and to facilitate various biblical ministries in a free, yet orderly manner (**John 4:24; I Cor. 14:40**).

Turn to Acts 2:42 and read aloud

This verse outlines various ministries of the true church.

- Continuing in the Apostles' doctrine – an accurate preaching and teaching of God's word
- Fellowship
- The breaking of bread – the practice of the ordinances of Christ
 - Baptism (**Matt. 28:19**) and the Lord's Supper (**Luke 22:19-20**)
- Corporate prayer
- Additional ministries
 - Church discipline and accountability regarding sin (**Matt. 18:15-20; I Cor. 5:11**)
 - Evangelizing a lost world (**Matt. 28:18-20**)

In addition to the ministries highlighted above, the true church is further marked by its leadership. The leadership of the church ought to consist of elders or pastors who meet the requirements laid out for them in scripture (**I Tim. 3:1-7; Tit. 1:5-9**). With proper leadership in place, it is beneficial to have deacons or servants to help the eldership of the church with administrative tasks so that they might be better given to the ministry of the word and prayer (**Acts 6:1-7**). Certain qualifications must also be met by people desiring to serve as deacons (**I Tim. 3:8-13**). A solid, biblical church body will hold its elders and deacons accountable to the standards laid out for them in scripture and will call them to step down if they disqualify themselves.

The Called Out Ones

Turn to Romans 12:1-21 and read aloud

What principle does the Apostle Paul give concerning how individuals should view themselves in relation to others in the church and what is his reasoning behind this principle? (**v. 3-5**)

In light of this principle, how are Christians exhorted to respond toward one another? (**v. 6-8**)

What is to characterize and fuel this response? (**v. 9-21**)

* Take a few moments to discuss the various gifts and ways of serving mentioned in the passage referred to above. Also discuss the various qualities that should characterize the manner in which spiritual gifts and service are to be practiced.

Christians are not called to join a church merely to receive benefits for themselves and to meet their convenience and comfort, but they are called to be established and to mature in the faith for the sake of serving one another in love. Regular attendance to and involvement in a local church body is a command of scripture and an essential part of the Christian life (**Heb. 10:24-25**). True Christian fellowship, in reality, is a form of fellowship with God (**I John 1:3**). A mark of true belief in Christ is that one desires to participate in fellowship with other Christians and to serve in the local church (**I John 1:5-7**).

Metaphors Representing the Church

Identify each metaphor and describe how each helps explain the nature of the church.

II Cor. 6:18 _____ - _____
John 15:1-7 _____ - _____
Rom. 11:17-24 _____ - _____
I Cor. 3:6-9 _____ - _____

Lesson 8: Bearing Witness of Christ

As mentioned in the previous lesson, there are two major ways by which the word of God and His living waters may overflow from within us toward other people. Whereas our ministry toward believers in Christ takes place in the context of fellowship, in this lesson we will discuss the ministry of bearing witness of Jesus Christ to those who know Him not as Lord and Savior.

The Mission of Jesus

Turn to Luke 19:1-10 and read aloud

Why did the crowd react the way they did to the initial interaction between Jesus and Zacchaeus.

Why did Jesus say salvation had come to the house of Zacchaeus?

What mission did Jesus claim and demonstrate He was on in this passage?

Called to be His Ambassadors

If Jesus claimed that one of the primary reasons for which He came to the earth was both “to seek and to save that which was lost,” then this must likewise be one of the fundamental purposes for which we live out our redeemed lives in Him. He came into the world to save sinners (**I Tim. 1:15**). We ought to walk as He walked, consistently seeking out men to whom we may impart the gospel of grace and peace (**I John 2:6**). Recall Jesus’ command in **Matt. 4:19** to the fishermen who would become His disciples: “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.” If you are a follower of Christ, He is making you a fisher of men. One of our primary aims in life should be to see lost souls come to a saving knowledge of Christ, by His amazing grace, through the preaching of “Christ and Him crucified” (**I Cor. 2:2**). If a concern for those lost and without Christ does not burn in your heart, it is questionable whether you are a true follower of Christ. Indeed, if you know Jesus Christ as your Lord, you ought not to be able to keep silent about Him (**Acts 4:20**).

Turn to Luke 15, read aloud, and discuss

Oh, the celebration that takes place in heaven over one sinner who repents and believes in Christ. We must seek the lost as Jesus did. We cannot just sit at home and expect them all to flock to our front doors. The Lord very clearly states, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest” (**Luke 10:2**). As well as being in prayer for God to send forth laborers, we must also yield ourselves to the Lord to be His laborers in His mission to save the lost from the spiritual death they walk in

and the eternal punishment for which they are bound. We must get out into the harvest and seek out the lost who are ripe and ready.

Turn to II Corinthians 5:14-21 and read aloud

What is it that should so compel a Christian to share the good news of Jesus Christ?

What ministry, mentioned in this passage, did God give to the apostles and to all Christians?

In what way do we represent Christ and His message to a lost world?

In what manner should we relay the message of Christ to sinners?

- **What is required for the gospel to go forth?**

- A godly person
- A godly proclamation

A godly person. The first step toward being an effective witness of Christ is to live a godly life in Him. You must be committed to the truth of God’s word and dependent upon the grace of the Holy Spirit, seeking and drawing near to God through prayer and fasting. Jesus explains in **Matthew 5:14-16** that Christians are the light of the world and that when they are obedient to God, people in the world will know that He is the Lord and will give Him glory. Truly Christians are to be like billboards that exist to display the light of Christ. He can advertise the victory over sin He offers by demonstrating it in the lives of His people. Do not let sin in your life be a hindrance to the gospel, but rather, confess and forsake it through the blood of Christ (**Prov. 28:13**). Remember, you are a witness both in doing well at the first and in failing at the first but confessing and forsaking that sin by which you failed. “Conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ” (**Phil. 1:27**).

A godly proclamation. Being a witness does not only concern the way one behaves, but involves a further commitment to preach the gospel that has produced the godly character one possesses. I have often heard it said that there are only two times to preach the gospel: in season and out of season (**II Tim. 4:2**). Essentially that means we ought to be consistent in preaching the gospel. There is never a time when it is not important. Paul asks an appropriate question in his epistle to the Romans: “How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?” (**Rom. 10:14, NKJV**).

The Gospel

- The message should center on _____ and _____ (**I Cor. 2:2**).
- We are called to preach the _____ of God (**Acts 20:27**)
- Below are a few points that help summarize the whole counsel of God
 - God is holy and righteous (**I Pet. 1:15-16; Psa. 11:7**)
 - The 10 Commandments summarize God’s standard of justice
 - Jesus expands on these principles in a large portion of **Matt. 5**, **Mark 12:29-31**, and elsewhere in scripture
 - All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (**Rom. 3:23**)
 - Jesus used the law of God to share the gospel in **Luke 18**
 - The law shows people their sin (**Rom. 3:19-20; Rom. 7:7**)
 - If humbled by the law, they may see their need for grace and mercy (**Jas. 4:6**)
 - The wages of sin is death (**Rom. 6:23a**)
 - mortal death – end of life on earth (**Heb. 9:27**)
 - spiritual death – present separation from God (**Eph. 2:1**)
 - eternal death – eternal punishment in hell (**Matt. 25:46**)
 - The gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus (**Rom. 6:23b**)
 - Jesus died to save people from sin (**Matt. 1:21**)
 - He came that we might have life (**John 10:10**)
 - You must repent and believe to receive Christ (**Acts 20:21**)
 - You must receive Him as both Lord and Savior (**II Pet. 3:18**)
 - Obedience is evidence that you have been saved (**Eph. 2:10**)

The Weapons of our Warfare

Jesus said the Pharisees were in error because they did not truly know the _____ nor the _____ of God (**Matt. 22:29**).

- The word of God (**Heb. 4:12**)
 - Take opportunities to share the biblical gospel using God’s word
 - Get the word of God to them and encourage them to read in the NT (if it will be difficult for them to understand the OT); the gospel of John is a great place to start, as it speaks simply and clearly about the nature and character of Jesus Christ. The scriptures are able to make them “wise unto salvation” (**II Tim. 3:15**).
 - The Christian faith is reasonable; therefore one should reason from the scriptures, defending and explaining the truth. On multiple occasions scripture refers to Jesus, Paul, and others reasoning from the scriptures and either effectively leading people to Christ, or being led to Christ themselves in this manner (**Luke 24:27; Acts 17:1-3, 11-12; 28:23-24**).

- The power of God
 - Pray for God to work in hearts of those with whom you will share
 - Ask God to show you how to pray for them
 - Pray through scripture for them
 - Pray that the Holy Spirit would convict them (**John 16:7-8**)
 - Understand the power of the gospel for salvation (**Rom. 1:16**)
 - Ask and trust the Holy Spirit to guide and fill you (**Luke 11:13**)
 - Pray for boldness from God to preach the gospel (**Acts 4:29**)
 - Share testimonies of how God has worked in your life and others'

Our Manner of Ministry

It must be understood that there is no exact, cookie-cutter formula for sharing the gospel. Each opportunity to share will be unique, and only by giving yourself to be led by the Holy Spirit, according to the principles of God's word, will you be successful in communicating this life-giving message about a life-giving Messiah. Scripture does, however, give us some parameters to work within, and therefore we must look to them to test our thoughts and methods. God's word explains that we are responsible for the preparation of our hearts and our minds to share the gospel. Always be prepared to give a defense of your hope in Christ and to share His gospel of peace (**I Pet. 3:15; Eph. 6:15**). Understand that you are responsible for the preparation and submission, and that God will take care of the rest. The keys to be prepared to be a successful steward of the gospel are to fast, pray, and meditate upon God's word. These are fundamentals upon which growth in all areas of the Christian life is channeled. Again, the Pharisees were in error, for they did not know the scriptures, nor were they dependent upon the power of God.

We find great wisdom in Jude, concerning discernment, as to what emphases we should apply each time we share the gospel (**Jude 22-23**). A great many people need to first be humbled by the preaching of the law of God and receive encouragement to flee from the wrath to come, however, there are also times when people are in a humbled state with godly sorrow and are ready to hear about the love and grace of Christ. Ask the Lord to grow you in discernment.

The fruit of the Spirit is a noteworthy list of characteristics that should be employed while sharing the gospel and at all times in the Christian life. What can we learn from the fruit of the Spirit about the manner in which we ought to present the gospel message?

The Fruit of the Spirit (**Gal. 5:22-23**)

- love (**I John 2:16; John 3:16**)
 - we must seek to be filled with the love of the Father and not the love of the world
 - the love of the Father teaches us to give and forgive with the heart of a servant; it's a sacrificial love as opposed to a self-indulging love of the world
 - you must seek to love those you share the gospel with more than yourself
 - the only way this is accomplished is to be a vessel for God's love (**Rom. 5:5**)
 - love your enemies and pray for them (**Matt. 5:44**)

- joy
 - whether in situations of peace or persecution, we are said to be blessed and ought therefore to be joyful; we are commanded to rejoice always (**I Thess. 5:16**)
- peace
 - seek to reconcile people to God and be a bearer of peace as much as possible without compromising the truth of the gospel (**Heb. 12:10**)
 - Christ is a Rock of offense, so do not be surprised when the lost do not want to pursue peace with you because of the message you proclaim (**I Pet. 2:8**)
- longsuffering
 - you must be patient with the lost; do not expect them to behave like believers
 - it often takes a large investment of time and service to win someone to Christ
 - do not lose heart (**Gal. 6:9**)
 - remember you were once lost like them (**Tit. 3:1-3**)
- kindness
 - always be courteous and respectful
 - do not force or over-pressure someone to talk with you
 - apply just enough pressure to talk to let them know the importance of the message you preach and the love you have for them
 - make sure you are not making them late for something against their will
 - always be above reproach and without blame (**Tit. 1:7**)
 - be of good report to those who are outside (**I Tim. 3:7**)
 - be giving and seek to bless people and meet spiritual and physical needs by grace
- goodness
 - you must preach the truth, even when it is severely offensive
 - Jesus, Steven, and others offended people often (**John 8; Acts 6**)
 - You must demonstrate a moral purity toward them
 - “Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you” (**I Tim. 4:16**).
- faithfulness
 - you must be dependable and accessible
 - you must be that friend that he or she can always come to in time of need
 - be careful to not make promises you will fail to keep
- gentleness
 - be approachable
 - no matter how angry someone becomes, you must render gentleness to them
 - often you must be firm and direct, just as Jesus was, yet maintain gentleness
 - the best guide to discerning whether your actions are of the Spirit of God is to test the motivation behind them; is the action out of self-sacrifice for the gospel’s sake or is it out of self-indulgence for our sake
 - often people are afraid to offend others and this keeps them from sharing the truth
- self-control
 - very rarely raise your voice
 - be careful, clear, and honest with your words
 - do not get stuck in useless arguments and disputes (**I Tim. 1:4**)

* Pray that the Lord would bear the fruit of the Spirit in you daily, and pray before specific times that you know it is likely you will be sharing the gospel.

- A final note

Matthew 28:18 is a verse often used to verify the necessity for people to go overseas as missionaries to share the gospel. While it is indeed a necessity to preach Christ in all the nations, the imperative of the verse is not to go, but to make disciples as you go, wherever you go. Evangelism is to be a way of life. When you go to the store, class, work, gym, home, or wherever it may be, you should always have your mind set on things of eternal value and be watching and praying for opportunities to share the gospel. God has placed you where He has for a distinct purpose, and your family, neighbors, friends, classmates, coworkers, and community should be of great priority in your pursuit of souls for the Lord Jesus Christ (**Acts 17:26-27**). In closing, I invite you to meditate upon Paul's passionate explanation of the necessity of preaching the gospel.

“For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for I am under compulsion; for woe is me if I do not preach the gospel. For if I do this voluntarily, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have a stewardship entrusted to me” (**I Cor. 9:16-17**).

Memory Verses: I Cor. 2:2

-All Bible verses in NASB unless otherwise specified

Lesson 9: Spiritual Warfare

As a tree grows and matures, it is sure to experience periods of calm, bright, sun-shiny weather, as well as severe and destructive storms and everything in between. A tree must be firmly rooted and properly nourished in order to withstand the inevitable storms of life. In this lesson, we will learn how to withstand the forces of darkness, walking in victory over sin and death through Jesus Christ, and how to lead others to experience that same victory in Him.

Another Reality

Turn to II Kings 6:8-18 and read aloud

What reality does the servant of Elisha, the man of God, have his eyes opened to see?

Though we walk in this physical world and its existence is readily observable to us, there is a spiritual reality that is just as real existing all around and within us. It is of utmost importance that every Christian be aware of it. The Holy Bible teaches that God is spirit, and that we are to interact with Him in spirit and in truth (**John 4:24**). Scripture reveals to us that we also are spirit, yet we have bodies as well (**Gen. 2:7; Rom. 8:16**).

Turn to Matthew 12:22-28 and read aloud

What two kingdoms are mentioned in this passage?

Who are the two leaders of these kingdoms?

How do these two kingdoms relate to one another?

The kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan are diametrically opposed to one another. The kingdom of Satan and all who are under it are the enemies of God. The kingdom of God stands for all that is good, while the kingdom of Satan stands for all that is evil and contrary to God. All people who are not of the kingdom of God are under the authority of Satan and are referred to as children of the devil (**John 8:44; I John 3:10**). Through the cross, God desires to turn those people who are under the sway of the wicked one to Himself and make His enemies to be at peace with Him (**I John 5:19; Rom. 5:10; Acts 26:18**).

Identifying the Enemy

As believers in Christ and members of His kingdom, we encounter a three-fold spiritual enemy.

- Satan

The name “Satan” carries the idea of an adversary. He is the ultimate adversary of God. According to scripture, Satan first made his appearance in the Garden of Eden for the temptation of Eve. He is more clearly portrayed in the book of Job in which he brings accusation against Job, the servant of God (**Job 1:6-2:10**). He was originally created as an angel of God, and was given great beauty, yet he desired to be equal to God. Therefore, his pride caused him to be cast out of heaven by God along with others angels who followed him in his rebellion (**Isa. 14:12-15; Luke 10:18; Ezek. 28:11-19**). These fallen angels are now referred to as demons or devils.

Match the following verses with the various names attributed to God’s great adversary that they reveal, and briefly discuss their significance and the context in which they are given.

1) Satan (the adversary)	I Pet. 5:8
2) The father of lies	John 10:10
3) The prince of the power of the air	I Thess. 3:5
4) The god of this age	Matt. 12:24
5) The accuser of the brethren	Rev. 12:10
6) Thief, murderer, and destroyer	II Thess. 2:9
7) Roaring lion	John 8:44
8) Beelzebub (The lord of the flies)	II Cor. 4:4
9) Tempter	Eph. 2:2

- The world (sinful, rebellious world system)

The whole world is said to be under the sway of the devil (**I John 5:19**). What is meant by the world in this context is that rebellious world system that operates under the powers of darkness and advocates principles of wickedness and all that is contrary to the ways of God. James tells us that by being allied with this world system, one makes himself an enemy of God (**Jas. 4:4**).

- The flesh (our sinful nature)

The flesh, in certain contexts, refers to the evil lusts, desires, and passions of depraved men. It is by our sinful, fleshly nature that we walk in worldly passions and lusts and seek to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin (**Eph. 2:2-3; Heb. 11:24-26**). Essentially, walking according to the flesh is a life of dependency upon one’s own abilities and strength, whereas walking according to the Spirit is a life of dependence upon God for righteousness and strength to be obedient to God (**Gal. 5:16-18; Rom. 8:1-8, 13**).

How Does the Enemy Fight Us?

Turn to Genesis 3:1-13 and read aloud

What did Satan tempt Eve to do?

What tactics did he use to tempt her?

Turn to I John 2:15-17 and read aloud

What two types of love are contrasted in this passage?

What three things are described as being “all that is in the world?”

How is this related to what we read in **Genesis 3:1-13**?

Turn to Matthew 4:1-11 and read aloud

What three temptations does Satan bring against Jesus?

How is this related to what we read in **I John 2:15-17**?

How does Jesus refute the temptations of the devil?

Satan tempts us to act according to our own ways, our own strength, our own plans, and our own judgment. He tempts us to please ourselves rather than seeking to please God. He does this by leading us to question what God has said and to disbelieve the truth of His word. He accomplishes this through the art of deception.

Turn to II Cor. 10:3-6 and read aloud

What are the various vessels of deception that are to be cast down and made subject to Christ?

Where does spiritual warfare in the life of a believer take place?

Satan wants to turn you away from obeying God's will by leading you to doubt or misinterpret His word and to question His counsel. He is referred to as the "father of lies" and portrayed as a deceiver throughout scripture (**John 8:44; Rev. 20:7-8**). He blinds the minds of all who are under his authority (**II Cor. 4:3-4**). He uses deceitful temptations that appeal to the "lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" (**I John 2:16**). Satan does not just give a glass of poison to someone, but rather gives a glass of water with a few drops of poison in it. The Bible says that he appears as an angel of light, looking like something good, but in reality he is full of darkness (**II Cor. 11:14**). Whether he is attempting to paralyze with fear, puff up egos with arrogant thoughts, or lead people to make excuses for sin, he ultimately seeks to render the believer ineffective for God and to bring reproach upon God's name. Do not be ignorant of his schemes (**II Cor. 2:11; Matt. 16:21-23**).

It is for this reason that we must be given to believing the truth and entrusting our entire lives to the true Jesus Christ (**I John 5:4; II Cor. 11:3-4**). Christians are in a battle for the truth, contending for the faith (**Jude 3**). Jesus said that if we live in His word, the truth will be made known to us, and this will lead to freedom from darkness and sin (**John 8:31-32**). The apostle Paul highlights the departure of mankind from God in the first chapter of his epistle to the churches at Rome, emphasizing the suppression of truth in unrighteousness that has caused mankind to be condemned by God (**Rom. 1:18-25**). This is why we are told in the twelfth chapter of Romans that our minds must be renewed from operating according to the principles of the world so that they might be conformed to godliness; from deception to truth (**Rom. 12:2**).

The Weapons of Our Warfare

The foundation of our deepening victory over sin, death, and the powers of darkness in our day to day lives is the fact that the victory has already been won through the cross of Christ (**II Cor. 2:14**). For indeed, just before giving up His spirit to God upon the cross, He uttered the words "It is finished" (**John 19:28-30**). Three days later, people began to speak of His victory over sin and death, proclaiming and bearing witness that "the Lord [had] risen indeed!" (**Luke 24:34**).

Turn to Colossians 2:13-15 and read aloud

List the various accomplishments of Christ on the cross mentioned in this passage? (v. 13-14)

Who has Christ disarmed in His triumph on the cross? (v. 15)

Turn to Ephesians 6:10-18

What is the purpose of putting on the armor of God?

Identify each piece of armor that we are called to put on and what it represents.

_____	-	_____
_____	-	_____
_____	-	_____
_____	-	_____
_____	-	_____
_____	-	_____
_____	-	_____
_____	-	_____
_____	-	_____
_____	-	_____

Keeping on Track

False teachers and doctrines of demons are rampant today, and we are told in scripture that these are going to increase and that people will actually raise false teachers up amongst themselves to teach deceptions and lies that accord with their fleshly desires (**I Tim. 4:1-5; II Tim. 4:2-4**). The idea that “the devil made me do it” is false. Scripture clearly teaches us that people are led astray by their own desires, making them susceptible to the enticement and deceptions of the devil and his demons (**Jas. 1:14**). The Bible speaks much of the dangers of self deception (**I Cor. 3:18; Gal. 6:3; Jas. 1:22; I John 1:8**). When we allow ourselves to be led astray by desire and harbor sin in our hearts, we give place to the devil and open the door for his schemes (**Eph. 4:26-27**). Do not give him authority in your life through sin, but rather confess and forsake your sins (**Prov. 28:13**).

Believers must be careful to hold to sound doctrine that is built upon the word of God. Scripture speaks of counterfeit miracles, signs, and wonders that will deceive many who are not properly grounded in truth (**II Thess. 2:9; Matt. 24:24**). When people consider these signs and

wonders, the question often arises: “Does Jesus always physically heal believers?” The answer is, “No.” Paul the Apostle, with as much physical healing as God empowered him to minister, was himself not without illness and infirmities (**II Cor. 11:30; Gal. 4:13**). On one occasion, Paul prayed to God to remove a “thorn in his flesh,” which he referred to as “a messenger of Satan,” and it was likely an infirmity, yet the Lord did not heal him, but said His grace would be sufficient to carry him (**II Cor. 12:7-10**). God allowed him to stay in that position in order to keep him humble and dependent upon Him. It is also important to note that there are no longer people who operate in the office of apostleship, but these people and certain people around them, were anointed to do the special task of laying the foundation of the church and giving us inerrant, written revelation from God in the New Testament. Thus there are no longer men who walk in the offices of healing, miracles, etc., though God is able to heal, do a miracle, etc. through the prayers of the saints as He desires. These signs and wonders followed the apostles to confirm them as givers of the inerrant prophetic word and affirm the gospel they preached as true revelation from God (**II Cor. 12:12; Acts 14:3; Heb. 2:1-4**).

We are called to move on to maturity and have our senses trained to discern good and evil (**Heb. 5:12-6:3**). This is accomplished by immersing oneself in the word of God and prayer, developing a relationship with God and understanding His thoughts and ways. Only then will one increase in his ability to distinguish the true from the counterfeit. Growing in discernment helps to prevent us from turning aside to the right or to the left from the straight and narrow path of God’s will (**Deut. 28:14**). In life, our options for courses of action often fall on a spectrum, with either extreme being dangerous. For example, take the concepts of lawlessness and legalism. The lawless err in that they reject the authority and rule of God in their lives by seeking to avoid His law altogether. The legalists err in that they reject the authority and rule of God in their lives by misinterpreting and misrepresenting His law to their advantage, creating their own manmade rules to follow (**II Cor. 6:14; Matt. 15:1-9**). Each seems to be the solution to the other with an undiscerning glance; however, both fail to bring about submission and obedience to the will of God. He desires for us to be His workmanship, being obedient to His law of love, by His grace, that He might be glorified in us (**Eph. 2:10**).

You must learn to be vigilant, “watching and praying lest [you] be tempted” (**Col. 4:2; I Pet. 5:8; Matt. 26:41**). Purpose your heart to depend upon the word of God instead of your own thoughts (**Deut. 29:19**). Be careful to keep yourself from situations in which you will be tempted to sin (**Rom. 13:14**). Scripture teaches us to take extreme action against sin; not the literal destruction of the physical body, but a relentless seriousness about avoiding and resisting sin (**Matt. 5:27-30**). To resist the devil, you must first submit to God (**Jas. 4:7**). It is only by the power of the Holy Spirit and through the sacrifice of Christ, that we may accomplish these things. The Spirit convicts us of sin and empowers us to obey the will of God (**John 16:13**). The true believer in Christ can take hope in the fact that Jesus makes intercession for him and He will see him through every trial he experiences and every dart that Satan fires at him (**Luke 22:31-34**).

Memory Verses: Col. 2:13-15

-All Bible verses in NASB unless otherwise specified

Lesson 10: The Heart of Discipleship

Over the last several weeks, a number of subjects in regard to discipleship have been touched, laying the foundation of the gospel message and how it should affect people, introducing the necessary avenues for interaction with God and other people, and giving insight pertaining to the spiritual battles of life and the enduring victory and perseverance that may be experienced in Christ. Over the course of this study, the aim has been to help the student grasp and implement the basic principles associated with growing as a disciple of Jesus Christ, as well as to equip the student to be faithful to lead others into a proper understanding and application of these principles (**II Tim. 2:2**). In this final lesson, we will discuss the latter objective, seeking to prepare the student to be faithful to teach others what he has been taught and to take on the heart of discipleship.

The word often translated “disciple” in the New Testament comes from the Greek word *mathetes*, which means “learner.” Therefore we may conclude that a disciple of Jesus is one who is given to His instruction and desires to follow His teaching. But what exactly are the disciples of Jesus to be learning? We can look to the very words of Jesus to find the answer.

The Great Commission

Turn to Matthew 28:18-20 and read aloud

What does Jesus commission His audience to do?

What three things are necessary in accomplishing this objective?

Who is Jesus’ audience in this passage?

Ultimately the discipleship of believers is a ministry of the church and was committed to the apostles who were used by God to lay the foundation for, build, and oversee the development of the church. Truly all ministries of the church ought to be spurring the saints on to greater obedience toward God. Discipleship is not limited to the one-on-one discipleship or discipleship group formats, but is meant to occur in all that takes place in the church. We all need to grow in our obedience to God, and we all ought to be helping each other grow as disciples of Christ. That being said, there is great value in one-on-one and small group discipleship and mentorship as you have been able to observe through the course of this study, and it was practiced by Christ. Jesus spent time teaching His twelve disciples together on multiple occasions (**Luke 6:12-16**), spent time with three specific disciples (**Matt. 17:1-2**), and also spent time one-on-one with His disciples (**John 13:23**).

A Word of Caution

Turn to I Corinthians 3:1-7 and read aloud

What issue was Paul rebuking the disciples for at Corinth?

What problems did this issue cause among them?

As you seek to be used by God in making disciples, you must keep in mind that the biblical objective is to help people become followers of Christ, living from His words and by His Spirit, enjoying a personal walk with Him that could operate independently from you. Do not seek to build a name or a following for yourself that revolves around and exalts you, but rather seek to minister in a way that leads others to be blessed and exalted in Christ for His glory. Give yourself to leading people into the discovery, development, and practicing of their gifts, for the edification of the saints, the salvation of the lost, and the exaltation of Christ (**I Cor. 14:26; Eph. 3:20-21**).

The Heart of a Disciple-Maker

Turn to I Thessalonians 2:1-12 and read aloud

Answer the following questions, outlining the principles involved in disciple making that were exemplified in the ministry of the apostles according to the passage above.

What do we need to strengthen our proclamation of the gospel of God?

v. 1-2 _____

With what characteristics should our exhortation not be associated?

v. 3 _____

v. 5 _____

v. 6 _____

Whose opinion should we be most concerned with in ministering the gospel and what competing temptations should a commitment to this opinion override?

v. 4 _____

What qualities should mark our ministry of the gospel?

v. 7 _____
v. 8 _____
v. 9 _____
v. 10 _____
v. 11-12 _____

Final Remarks

As you seek to be faithful regarding the commitment to teach others what you have learned of obedience to Christ as His disciple, there are several things to keep in mind. Be prayerful and vigilant as you consider becoming involved in a person's life to disciple him. That your effort might not be in vain, identify men that demonstrate some level of faithfulness, teachability, and eagerness to seek God; because those who are faithful with little can be entrusted with more, and those who seek God with all their hearts are on course to find Him (**II Tim. 2:2; Luke 19:17; Deut. 4:29**). Do not seek to teach the deeper things of God to those who do not yet have good soil and have not yet been born again, for until these have repented, they simply need the basic gospel preached to them repeatedly until they turn to God (**Matt. 7:6; Mark 4:13-20**).

Be honest with those you disciple, being sure to share your mistakes with them so they do not have to make the same mistakes, and share your triumphs so they can share in your triumphs in Christ. Be sure to teach from biblical principles as opposed to prescriptive applications and experience alone. Principles can be applied in a number of ways, and one particular application is not necessarily suitable in all situations. It is similar to the concept of feeding a man a fish as opposed to teaching him to fish. If you hand him a prescriptive application, it may be helpful to him in a certain situation, but if you teach him the biblical principles from which applications are derived, you have trained him to be ready for the various types of situations and challenges in life that may confront him. Do not lose sight of the objective to make disciples, which involves leading people to Christ and teaching them to obey Him.

Speaking of the establishing and equipping of new believers, Augustine advised that, "we should endeavor to meet them with a brother's, a father's, and a mother's love" and seek to be "united with them thus in heart" (De Catechizandis Rudibus 12.17).

Be blessed as you embark on the journey of making disciples!

Memory Verses: Matthew 28:18-20

-All Bible verses in NASB unless otherwise specified

Weekly Assignments

Purpose: The aim of these assignments is to enhance the understanding of principles discovered through the lesson materials, to cultivate godly discipline in the life of the student, and to give hands on application of the principles discussed during the lesson time. It is expected for the student to reflect upon material discussed during the lesson time in addition to the assignments.

- Week 1: Read and look up verses from “Basic Christian Doctrine.”
- Week 2: Listen to A.W. Tozer’s sermon entitled, “What Does it Mean to Accept Christ?”
- Week 3: Keep track of how time is spent during one week of life to realize and evaluate order of priorities in one’s own life. This exercise will help the student evaluate whether Christ truly takes precedence in his everyday life.
- Week 4: Listen to the two free sermons which can be found through the "The Heart of the Problem - Kerry Skinner” link.
- Week 5: Read "How to Study the Bible - Interpretation" by Dr. John MacArthur. Begin memorizing the order of the New Testament books. Once these have been mastered, memorize the order of the Old Testament books. This will help in navigating the scriptures. Begin memorizing verses – **II Tim. 3:16-17**.
- Week 6: Read article by Leonard Ravenhill entitled “Prayer.” Begin setting aside at least 30 minutes each day to spend alone with God in His word and in prayer and develop a daily Bible reading plan. Memorize **I Thess. 5:16-18**.
- Week 7: Read the “The 9 Marks Overview” by Mark Devers and explore the 9 Marks website. If in a group setting, begin meeting with a partner to pray and review material together on a weekly basis. Memorize **Acts 2:42**.
- Week 8: Listen to “Hell's Best Kept Secret.” Using gospel tracts, the scriptures, and principles learned during the lesson time and from the sermon, approach people with your partner or teacher and engage them in conversation about the gospel. Be sure to pray beforehand. Another alternative is to practice role-play evangelism, having one person pretend to be a non-believer while the other attempts to evangelize. Begin to live a lifestyle of evangelism, praying for opportunities to share the gospel, being vigilant to see the opportunities, and being faithful to embrace and act upon the opportunities at all times. Memorize **I Cor. 2:2**.
- Week 9: Review the material covered during the lesson time and begin applying biblical principles of spiritual warfare, identifying specific areas in which to grow. Memorize **Col. 2:13-15**.
- Week 10: Review the material covered during the lesson time and pray for opportunities to lead people to Christ and to be involved in the discipleship of believers. Learn of evangelism and discipleship opportunities through your local church and seek to get involved. Memorize **Matt. 28:18-20**.
- All of the documents assigned to be read or listened to can be accessed via links on the www.truthfreesus.com website under the “Christian Growth” section.

Biblical Baptism

The word “baptize” is translated from the Greek word *baptizō*, and its meaning is “to dip or immerse”. In the New Testament, when a person was baptized, he or she was temporarily immersed in a large volume of water. Jesus, as well as countless others, were baptized by John the Baptist in the Jordan River (**Matt. 3:5, 15**). When the Ethiopian eunuch was ready to be baptized in Acts 8, both he and Philip went down into the water together (**v. 38**).

Baptism, however, is more than just getting wet. It embodies the powerful message of the cross. As a person is submerged under the water, they are portraying the death and burial of Christ; as they are being lifted up out of the water, they are portraying the resurrection of Christ and His victory over death (**Col. 2:12; Rom. 6:3-4**).

The ordinance of baptism serves many purposes. For the one being baptized, it is an opportunity to express a good conscience toward God (**I Pet.2:21**). It must be noted that baptism is not a means by which to obtain a good conscience toward God, nor does it have any saving merit. If one examines the above mentioned verse in I Peter 2 carefully, they will see that the baptism which now saves us is referring not to the physical cleansing of the body by water, but the spiritual baptism which takes place beforehand “through the resurrection of Jesus Christ” (**v.21**). Baptism is the “answer” of a good conscience toward God, implying that it ought to be one of the first acts of obedience for the new believer (**v. 21**).

As well as an expression of good conscience toward God, baptism is also a depiction of the reason one has a good conscience toward God, which is unity with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. The apostle Paul gives us one of the most explicit explanations of this concept in the sixth chapter of his epistle to the saints in Rome. When a person is spiritually baptized into Christ, he or she is baptized into His death (**v. 3, 4**). Baptism symbolizes a death to sin and the old self that has already occurred in the life of the one deciding to be baptized (**v. 2, 6**). As a person is raised up from under the water, he or she affirms his or her unity with Christ in His subsequent resurrection and victory over sin and death. This raising in baptism symbolizes rebirth into a new life of faith in Christ (**v. 5, 8-11**).

Baptism is a way of making this answer of good conscience toward God and identification with His death, burial, and resurrection for one’s own sin public. Christ only confesses before His Father, those who confess Him before men (**Matt. 10:32**). It is a wonderful opportunity to make known to peers and to fellow believers, one’s own turning from sin and commitment to follow Christ by grace through faith. It is an outstanding moment in the life of a believer and greatly increases the realization of salvation as a point of no return. Identity with Christ has been made public and the public is now watching to see the fruit of this rebirth. Especially in areas that are resistant or hostile toward Christians, baptism is a powerful challenge to take on the name of Christ and likely be the object of much persecution.

Based on the points discussed above, we may conclude that baptism should only occur in the life of one who has turned from sin in repentance, putting off the old man, and has trusted in Christ for new life. As baptism is an answer of a good conscience toward God, one must first have a good conscience toward God before being baptized. Having good conscience toward God is impossible without being born again by the Spirit of God and coming into right relationship with Him.

-all Bible verses in NKJV unless otherwise specified

Practical Advice for Grasping God's Word

Hear* God's Word. **Romans 10:17*

As we hear God's Word and see its perfection proven, our potential for greater faith in Christ increases. This is an important first step in coming to know God and continuing to pursue Him. Open yourself to the opportunity to hear God's Word through preaching, godly edification, or audio versions of the Bible.

Read* God's Word. **Deuteronomy 17:19*

As we read God's Word we learn how to fear Him and love Him. Establish a daily Bible reading plan that works for you and stick with it. Be careful not to make it complicated.

Study* God's Word. **II Timothy 2:15*

Studying is more than just reading; it is a process of digging into the scriptures and searching the depths of God. Study methods include a verse by verse approach, or searching the Bible to learn about various topics. Use a Greek or Hebrew lexicon and study the words in their original form. Commentaries and Christian books can be helpful, but it is important to learn to study the scriptures first and consult secondary sources second.

Memorize* God's Word. **Psalms 119:11*

God instructs us to hide His Word in our hearts so that we may not sin against Him. Memorizing scripture richly enhances the other aspects of grasping God's Word. Determine a scripture memory plan you will be consistent with and commit to it. Memorizing scripture with others provides a great opportunity for accountability and growing in fellowship. The importance of this discipline cannot be emphasized enough.

Meditate* on God's Word. **Psalms 1:2*

This helps move the scriptures from our minds to our hearts. Depend on the Word of God to daily sustain you as you depend on food to daily sustain your body. A healthy diet of the pure Word of God makes for a healthy spirit. It may be necessary to meditate on the same verse or passage for long lengths of time. Give God the opportunity to teach you through diligent meditation upon His word.

Apply* God's Word. **James 1:22*

When we receive God's Word in the ways mentioned above, but fail to make application of it in our lives, we run the risk of self deception, believing that we are in good standing with God simply because we have a knowledge of scripture. When God's Word is not applied to our lives the first five steps to grasping God's Word become void. Allow God's Word to expose the sin in your heart. As you see your sinfulness, allow the Word of God to guide you, receiving freedom from it through confession, repentance and consequent obedience by grace through faith.

The Word of God Defended

- **What items do people claim were left out of today's Holy Bible?**

- The Gnostic Writings – Gnosticism was a religion that identified the human body as evil and believed it entrapped the human soul. Thus, they believed that though you may be living in sin, it is the wickedness of your body, and not your soul, that is at work. This philosophy is simply an attempt to escape the guilt of sin. This religion preaches an esoteric wisdom or knowledge as necessary for salvation or escape from this world. The term “gnostic” is derived from the Greek word *gnosis*, which means “knowledge.” These writings are dated after all the apostles of Christ had died and are clearly not God’s word. The Gnostic writings include: *The Gospel of Thomas, The Secret Book of James, Naassene Fragment, Gospel of Mary, Dialogue of the Savior, Gospel of the Savior, Marcion, Epiphanes, Ophite Diagrams, Ptolemy, Gospel of Truth, Excerpts of Theodotus, Heracleon, Acts of Peter, Acts of Thomas.*
- The Apocrypha – This is the collection of additional writings which the Catholic Church includes in their canon of scripture. Prior to the Council of Trent, at which the Catholic Church decided to deem these writings of Jewish tradition, as well as Catholic tradition, as authoritative, the Apocrypha had not been considered part of the inspired Scriptures.

➤ “Do not add to His words, lest He rebuke you ...” (**Proverb 30:6**)

- **Additional Compromises against the Word of God**

- The Qur'an – Islam teaches that the New Testament was written because the Old Testament had been corrupted, and then that the Qur'an was written because the New Testament was corrupted. Thus they believe God was not true to His promise that His word would never pass away. Furthermore, they believe that the Quran is the only book without corruption and the only reliable source of God’s word.
- The Book of Mormon – Similar to Islam, Mormons believe that the Gospel had been completely lost and that the book of Mormon was necessary to bring restoration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. They believe they have modern day prophets and continue to add to their scriptures.
- The New World Translation – This translation is issued by a cult known as the Watch Tower Society or the Jehovah’s Witnesses. Essentially, the translators have broken rules of the Greek and Hebrew language to render an erred version of the Bible that suits their teachings.
- Denying the authority and inerrancy of God’s Word – This is done in many religions to escape accountability for sin and to avoid the truth that there is only one way to God through Jesus Christ. When an individual denies the authority of God’s word or yields themselves to teaching that denies the authority of Scripture, his standards of righteousness will quickly crumble as well.

The Way of Salvation Diagram

(Isaiah 53:6)

The Way of Salvation Diagram

(John 14:6)

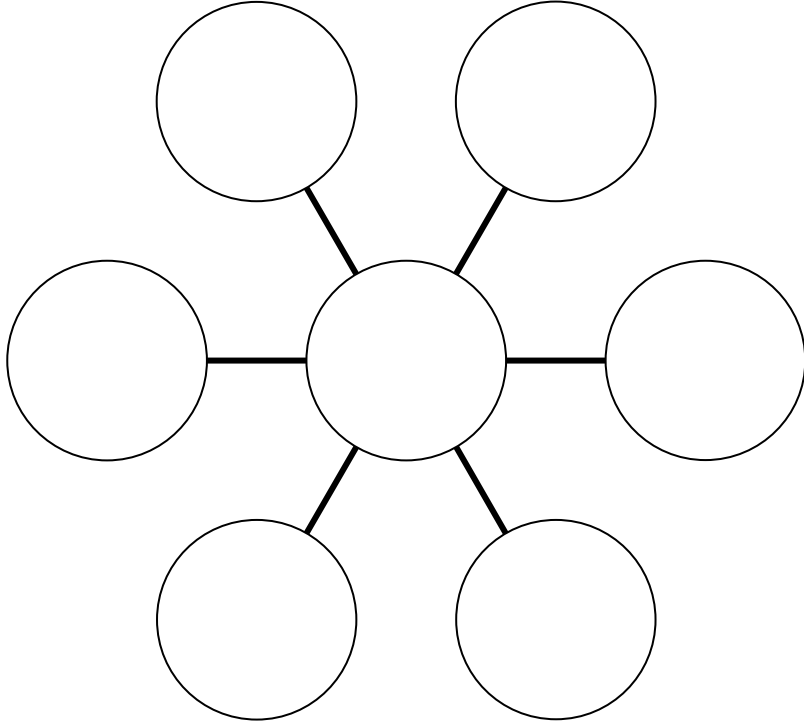
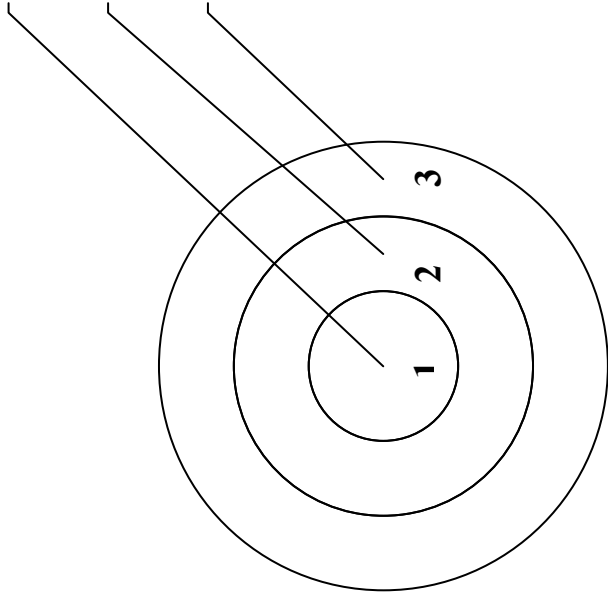
5) Rom. 8:16-18 - _____

II Thess. 2:13 - _____

Rom. 5:18 - _____

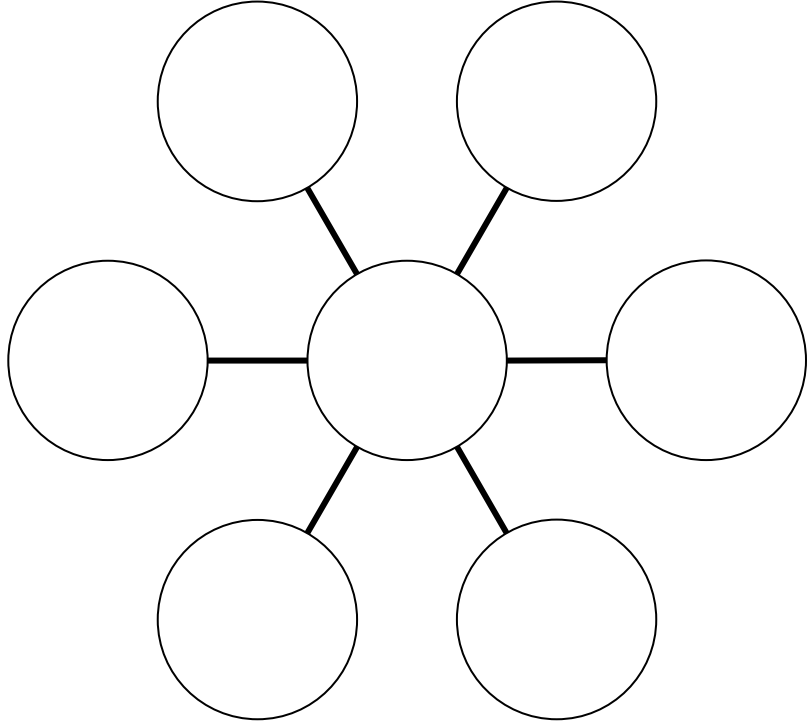
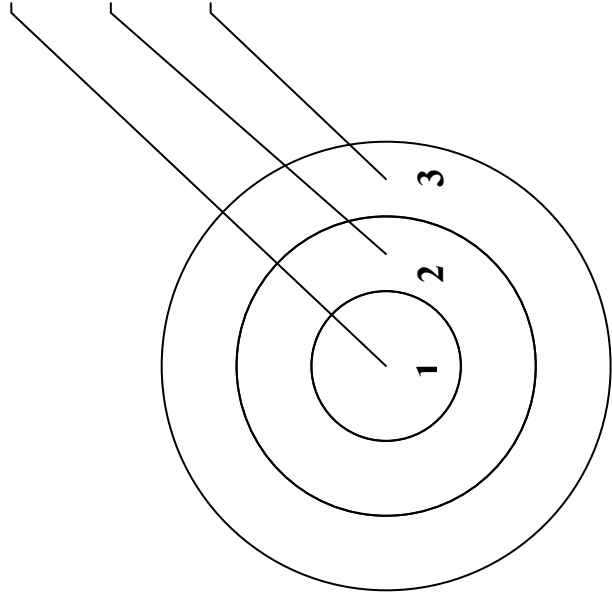
The Cost of Following Christ Diagram

Before initial repentance from sin and faith toward Christ:



The Cost of Following Christ Diagram

After initial repentance from sin and faith toward Christ:



The Garden Illustration

1

2

3

4

The Discipleship Cycle Diagram

