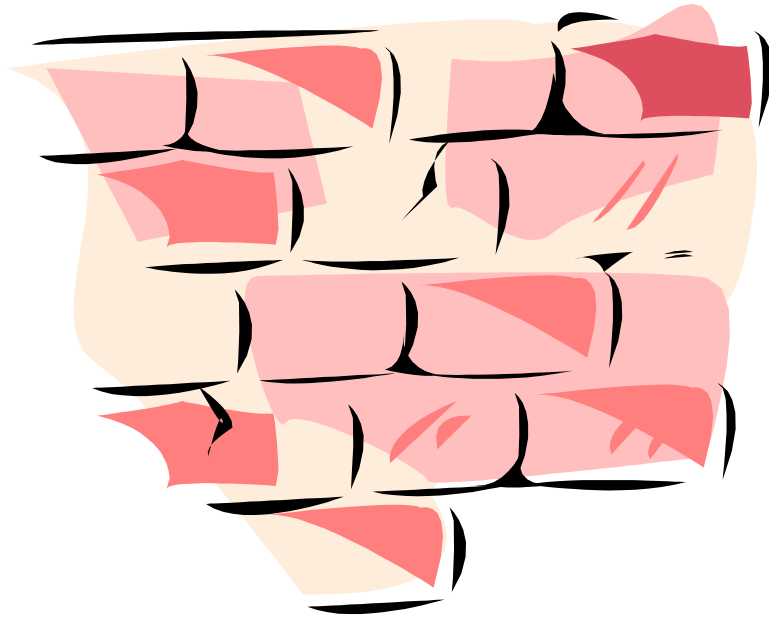


# Foundations of Faith



**A Study Guide for Laying Down a Solid Spiritual  
Foundation with Jesus Christ Being the  
Cornerstone.**

*“Each one should be careful how he builds. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.” — 1 Corinthians 3:11 NIV*

## Introduction

This study of basic Christian doctrines was prepared for you with love, care and concern. They are elementary in nature, a type of first layer that you will build upon over the years.

These teachings should also be used to disciple new Christians — to help establish a solid foundation upon which to build.

At the end of each Lesson you will find questions which will help reinforce what you have learned. But answers to questions are only the beginning of true knowledge. Truth is confirmed in how it has become life. The important thing is to act upon what you learn and allow the Holy Spirit to take you step by step to a higher walk with God.

Whether you are a new Christian or not, both young and old in the Lord will benefit by these teachings. Give yourself to them. Be faithful to each lesson. God will work in you mightily and you will go on to spiritual maturity in Christ.

The following *In the beginning* is an overview of creation, the fall of man and God's redemptive plan through Jesus Christ to bring you such a great salvation. We hope this will help you see yourself in the whole of God's plan from beginning to end. We wanted to give you a bigger picture before you began to look at the parts. Blessings.

Yours in Him

*Greg Manalli*

## In The Beginning

God loves you and has planned for your salvation long before you could imagine. We want to take you back to the beginning so you can see what happened and why we need salvation from God. Letting you see the bigger picture first should help you see how the parts of your faith fit into the whole.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth and filled it with all manner of vegetation, fish and animal life. He then created man and placed him in the center of a beautiful garden called Eden. All of it was for man to enjoy and oversee. God finished all his creative works with man being made in the image of God. This was so man and God could have fellowship. It was out of love that God created the first man and woman.

Adam had rights to all of creation except that he was forbidden to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He could however, eat of the tree of life and thus partake of its sustaining life power. God said that if Adam were to eat of that tree he would die.

But Satan tempted Adam and Eve with the promise that they would be as God if they would eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. When Eve saw that the fruit of this tree was *good for food, was pleasant to the eyes and would make one wise*, she and later Adam fell to this temptation, Gen. 3:5-6. These three things, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life still plague men today, 1John 2:16.

The consequences of their disobedience brought about separation from God as the Lord banned Adam and Eve from the Garden. This separation was more than physical, it was spiritual. The connection between man and God was by the spirit and it had been broken. Since God is spirit, God and man communicated through the spirit. His disobedience (sin) brought spiritual death.

This spiritual death brought about the second consequence, physical death. It took several generations for the life span of man to dwindle to the length we know today. Not only were Adam and Eve forbidden from eating of the tree of life, sickness and disease also worked to shorten mankind's life span. This was the natural result of lives absent of the spiritual connection with God. Man could still relate to the spiritual realm, just not with God. The connection needed to be restored.

So God in His goodness and wisdom made provision for our redemption. When Adam and Eve discovered their nakedness, they sought coverings of leaves, Gen. 3:7 The knowledge of good and evil made them aware of the fact they had disobeyed and lost the original covering of glory. But God took off their man made coverings and put “garments of skin” upon them both Gen.3:21. This meant that animals had to be slain, their blood poured out and their skins then placed on the two transgressors.

These animal sacrifices foreshadowed the redemptive act of Jesus who would later shed His own blood for our sins on the cross. But before the Lord could come into the world, a nation had to come into existence with a set of laws that would point the way to two important things. First these laws came to show us our inability to keep them, not perform them. These laws are referred to in Galatians as our “school master” showing us our failure to be righteous in our own strength. Second these laws bring us to Jesus Christ that we might be justified by our faith in Him Who perfectly kept the whole law, Gal.3:24-25.

But first there had to be a nation of chosen people whom God would commit these divine laws to. This nation, Israel, came into existence because of the faithfulness of one man, Abraham. His obedience to God would be rewarded handsomely. When Abraham was first apprehended by God, he was a fatherless man. He and his wife Sarah were barren. God’s promise to Abraham for his obedience is that he would be the father of a multitude. In faith he and Sarah left their own country and traveled towards a new land not knowing where they were going, only that they were obeying the Lord. The end result was the miraculous birth of Isaac, born when Abraham was 100 and Sarah well past 90. This was the beginning of the lineage that would become the heads of the 12 tribes of Israel.

Israel became the chosen nation on the face of the earth. They were given the laws (commandments) of God and priesthood that maintained God ordained worship within the kingdom. They had animal sacrifices to take away the sins of the transgressors and were keepers of the Tabernacle, the holy dwelling place of God with them and the Ark of the Covenant in which was kept the commandments. God was always with them and in battle showed Himself to be their miraculous Savior. He supernaturally fed them in the wilderness and provided their every need. He asked only for their love and that they would have no other gods before Him. They were to trust Him in everything. When they did this, no power on the face of the earth could withstand them. When they were disobedient, they were easy prey for their enemies.

Israel was ripe for her Messiah and all the signs pointed to His coming.

But when He came, the Jews who were looking for a worldly type king, didn't recognize Him. His claims as their Messiah led to His death. They wanted him crucified for blasphemy as the Son of God. But His death was for our benefit.

Jesus death accomplished several amazing things for those who believe in Him. First, He paid our penalty for sin and cancelled the curses for our disobedience. Failure to fulfill the law completely in any detail meant we were guilty of failing the whole law. It was not a matter of the good outweighing the bad. Galatians 3:13 says Jesus redeemed us from all of the Laws' curses being made a curse for us as he hung on the "tree." We are now guilt free and curse free. No penalty to pay as Jesus paid it all.

Second, Jesus took all of our sins off of us and bore them away in His own body, 1Peter 2:24. This leaves us in a condition as if we never had any sins committed in our bodies.

Third, we can experience healing for our bodies. "By His stripes we are healed." is the promise of 1Peter 2:24. By faith in this we can be healed.

Fourth, Jesus took our "old man" complete with it's body in which it conducted it's sinning to the cross with Him. When He died we died and when He was buried we were buried with Him and when He was raised up we were raised up with Him, Romans 6:4-7. This is why we practice water baptism.

This death of Jesus concluded the Old Covenant as He became the final sacrifice. Jesus cried "it is finished" at the moment He gave up His spirit on the cross. But this death of our Lord was also the only sacrifice necessary in the New Covenant which is founded on *better sacrifices*, with a *better mediator*, (priesthood) and with *better promises*, Hebrews 8:6.

We can become partakers and benefactors of this New Covenant by confessing our faith in what Jesus did and is continually doing on our behalf as He ever lives to make intercession for us, Romans 10:9 and Hebrews 7:25.

We now are not just benefactors of a New Covenant, but of a new life. We are not what we were before we received Jesus as Lord and Savior, we are totally new as a result of *rebirth*. This rebirth is spiritual. The part that gets reborn is our spirit in as much as Adam died spiritually, then he died physically. Since we all come from Adam, we were all born spiritually dead to God. We must be born again, John 3:3. That which is born of the Spirit is spirit and that which is born of the flesh is flesh, John 3:6.

Being born again is a supernatural act accomplished by the Holy Spirit. It is an event that comes about at the moment one is enlightened by God of the person of Christ as Lord and Savior, the One who bears away our sins and penalty and brings forgiveness to us through His shed blood. At the moment we accept Christ and His work on our behalf, we are born again.

Once a person is born again by the Holy Spirit, all things become new and all these things are of God. Further, old things pass away as we literally become a new creature, 2Corinthians 5:17-18. This act restores that vital connection that was lost in the fall. Now all things are changing for the good. This process will continue through ones life as the nature of Christ is formed in us and the “old man” dies with all of his sinful and carnal ways.

At the time of the fall, man lost his primary communication element with God as his spirit became “deadened.” Now fallen man had to live in the realm of the soul. This soulish man had only one thing guiding him and that was his carnal appetites. They took over as a result of the temptation of Satan. Man lived for himself. Wars and factions were the natural outcome of self-centeredness. In place of divine guidance came demonic influence like in the garden at the fall. So we will look at the whole man, spirit, soul and body.

When God created Adam, He blew His own Spirit into him and thus Adam became a living soul, Gen. 2:7. That infilling of Spirit into Adam occurs in us when we receive the Lord and we are born of His Spirit. Our spirits are now able to receive from Him.

Our *spirits* are the dwelling place of God. They are born again by Him and inhabited by Him in the person of the Holy Spirit. There is interpenetration of God’s Spirit with our spirit. The spirit of man can be divided into three parts: *intuition, fellowship and conscience.*

Our *intuition* is the area by which we perceive, sense and receive vital urges and influences from God to us. It is the primary seat of communication.

Next, our spirits are the meeting place for *fellowship* with God. This is Spirit to spirit. Here a knowing of divine connection is established. Union is understood. Peace and joy of God bring about a tranquil and harmonious state.

*Conscience* is the place of “right and wrong.” Nobody has to tell you it is ok or not when our consciences are restored. When they become seared due to repeated sin, they are “dumbed down” to accept behavior that is wrong. A restored conscience is the peace keeper of the person.

Our *souls* consist of the *mind, emotions and will.* Here it is that a person understands, develops intelligence, experiences emotions and makes decisions

and develops one's personality. The soul can receive from the spiritual realm and from the natural realm. It is the hub of man, managing all of the influences and making the decisions either in line with the will of God or outside of the will of God. It needs to be influenced by the Spirit through our spirits.

The *body* receives from the outside world. With our bodies we hear, see, touch, taste and smell. Many desires and lusts come to us from the body. All of them are not wrong. They need to be brought under the dominion of the spirit, then through the soul's new decision making processes. Then our bodies do not have authority over us with carnal appetites ruling us.

When we are living in this type of harmony with our spirits born of the Spirit of God and our soul and body in union with our spirits, we are experiencing the first reach of the Kingdom of God. The Holy Spirit exudes righteousness, peace and joy. As these conditions grow inward in us, they will ultimately extend outwardly to those around us. This is how the Kingdom of God grows, Romans 14:17.

But the whole matter is a process in motion and one of great discovery whereby we encounter the old soulish nature and no longer want it as part of our lives. Jesus put it this way, "He that finds his life shall lose it: and he that loses his life for my sake shall find it." Mat. 10:39. The Greek word for life here is *psuche* or soul. Jesus is saying that when you encounter the old soulish man with all of his wrong decisions, desires and understandings, then desire him dead and you will find your new life the one receiving from the Holy Spirit. .

Another way Jesus made this point was when He said that "if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." Luke 9:23. The cross here is used as a instrument of death to the old nature and the following of Jesus an indication of the new life.

The topics of death, resurrection and life will be ongoing in your new life. Everything will become new and all of it is in God. He is the author of your salvation. All of His work is already done, yet He is going to enable you to experience it day by day so you enjoy growth in Christ.

From this time on you will begin saying "I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me." He has come to give you life and that more abundantly!

## Lesson 1: Jesus Christ, Our Foundation

**For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.  
1 Corinthians 3:11**

The purpose of this lesson is to know our God better, to become strong and do exploits (Daniel 11:32). It is to establish a firm foundation for life. A house built upon a rock (Jesus, the Solid Rock) withstands the trials of life (Matthew 7:24). Also, we must know the claims of Jesus about Himself and His demands upon our lives that we might serve Him as Lord.

### I. **Whom Do Men Say That I Am? His Person**

Jesus asked Peter this question for a good reason. Jesus can be no more to us than we perceive Him to be. When we confess the total Lordship of Jesus, convinced in our hearts of His death, burial and resurrection for us, then we receive salvation. — Romans 10:9-10.

- A. He is **God** (Hebrews 1:8; John 10:30), and the **Son of God** (John 3:16), having equality in deity, yet submissive in relation to the Father (Philippians 2:6-8).
- B. He is **Man and God**, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin (Matt. 1:18-23), tempted, yet without sin (Hebrews 4:15). He physically died to pay for our sins (1 Corinthians 15:3), rose from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:4), and has the right to return as Lord (Revelation 22:12) and to judge mankind (Romans 2:16). Jesus is the standard.
- C. Unity in the Godhead. (John 14:16-18, 23; Col. 2:9). The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are mysteriously united as one divine Spirit, eternally manifested as Father, Son and Holy Spirit (John 4:24) — equality and submission coexist.

### II. **For This Cause, Came I Into This Hour. His Work**

Jesus came to die. Men are born to live, their goal is life. Jesus' goal was death. In His death, He becomes our guarantor of life (John 12:24-27; John 10:10).

- A. His work in creation. Jesus, the Prince of Life (Acts 3:15), is its author (Genesis 1:26; Hebrews 1:10). But Adam and Eve sinned against God. — Genesis 2:16-17; 3:6-8. Mankind died and was separated, not annihilated. Sinners were followers of Satan. — John 8:44 & Ephesians 2:1-3. So we see that Jesus was the author of life and creation (Hebrews 1:3 & 10), but Satan came to destroy what God created. Man fell and all creation became cursed. — Romans 6:23, 8:21 & Genesis 3:14-19.
- B. His work in redemption is God's plan. What Jesus created and was the author of, man and this world, He came to redeem — literally to buy back. Satan's work was to be destroyed and man restored. That is all who would repent and believe on Jesus would be redeemed. — Genesis 3:15; John 1:12,13; John 10:10; Acts 10:38; Ephesians 2:4-10). Because of Jesus' work, we have new life through His substitution.
  - 1. Jesus, who didn't deserve death, died at the cross on our behalf. — 2 Corinthians 5:17-21), bearing away our sins.



2. He grants to us His righteousness and a great exchange takes place at the cross (2 Corinthians 5:21).
  3. We are becoming newer every day, and these new things are of God (2 Corinthians 5:17-18).
  4. He openly triumphed over Satan at the cross. — John 19:30; Colossians 2:14-15. Satan, being a legalist, used God's commandments against us. Jesus fulfilled them for righteousness sake (Matt. 5:17), and we, who are in Him, receive the benefit of His obedience. Satan can no longer hold our failures against us. He's defeated. Jesus destroyed the works of the devil. — 1 John 3:8.
  5. Colossians 1:13 says that we are, "delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of His dear Son."
    - a. God is all-powerful.
    - b. Satan has limited authority and limited power. He is not all-powerful.
      1. The word "power" in verse 13 has the sense of ability privilege (delegated influence of, having the lawful right); something that is permissible or allowed.
      2. The word "darkness" means an obscurity, a shadiness or a darkness of error. Satan is not sovereign. He can influence us through our not understanding our authority, or through error. He can influence us if we yield to him.
      3. Some facts about Satan.
        - a. He is a created being. — Ezekiel 28:13. The creation is never greater than the Creator.
        - b. He has already fallen from his position of authority. — Isaiah 14:12; Ezekiel 28:17; Luke 10:18; Hebrews 2:6-7.
        - c. He is a fallen angel. — Luke 10:18.
  6. Jesus not only pays the penalty for our sins, but releases the repentant from the effects of those sins. — Isaiah 53:4-6. We get health and we receive a new nature (2 Peter 1:4). Satan cannot get away with his lies anymore.
  7. 1 John 1:9 reveals that not only are we forgiven when we confess our sins, but we are also cleansed from unrighteousness.
  8. Jesus came to die, but He also came to rise again. His divine purpose was two-fold.
    - a. To give us life through His death
    - b. To enable us to experience His resurrection power so that we can be raised up in Him.
- C. Through Jesus' death we learn that we, too, are to die to ourselves.
1. If we die to ourselves then we are no longer slaves to sin.

2. If we are raised up in Christ then we are free to be a new creation in Christ Jesus, leading a powerful life of the spirit. — Romans 6:3-11; Philippians 3:10.

### III. He Is The Mediator Of A Better Covenant. His Covenant

We'll call it "**His Covenant**" because God is the originator of it. Without Jesus, we have no bargaining power. It is God who moves towards us first (1 John 4:10). We simply were without any hope until God made the first move. Thank you, God.

- A. A "covenant" means literally a cutting. Therefore, blood is most likely to flow, signifying that the terms of agreement in the covenant are ratified by the blood. Many heathen exchange blood. But with God, He had to prepare a body in order for blood to flow. Jesus said, "This is my blood of the new testament" (Matthew 26:28). He refers to it as a testament which sounds like a will. It is in that, that the inheritance or blessings come after the death of the testator. Jesus didn't just cut His wrists, He poured out His blood. The life is in the blood (Leviticus 17:11). So this covenant is sealed with Jesus' life blood. A better assurance of the promises of the covenant.
- B. It's a better covenant than the original (Hebrews 8:6). This one has a better mediator or priest — Jesus. He was sinless and ever lives to intercede on our behalf. — Hebrews 7:25. We already know it is ratified with better blood. — (Hebrews 10:1-4. It has better promises and blessings (Hebrews 8:6). This covenant is now written on our hearts (Jeremiah 31:33).

### IV. My Lord And My God. His Lordship

It is probably far easier to call Jesus "Savior" and mean it, than it is to call Him "Lord" and mean it. He warned us of those who would call Him Lord and not do the things He asked of them (Matthew 7:21). None of us want to be in that group.

- A. My "Lord" as an understanding (John 20:28). When Thomas first saw Jesus after His resurrection he doubted it was Him. He had said he wouldn't believe until he saw the nail prints. As soon as he saw and touched, he exclaimed, "My Lord and my God!" Reach your hand into Jesus' side by faith. See the wounds and resurrected One, Lord Jesus. He has the right to be called Lord. He bought us and we are not our own (1 Corinthians 6:19-20) so therefore we fall under His care and protection. It is His responsibility to meet all our needs. Our responsibility is to seek His Kingdom and His Lordship of it. — Matthew 6:33.
- B. My "Lord" as an experience. There is this Scripture in Judges 17:6 which says, "*In those days there was no King in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.*" This is a most troubling Scripture. The Lord uses it on me so that I will examine whether I am doing that which I think is right in my eyes or right in *His* eyes. We can learn by this Scripture where the Lordship of Jesus is, what areas He really controls and those that we control. It has been said that Jesus must be Lord of all, or He is not Lord at all.

**Answer the following questions as a review of this chapter.**

1. Whom do you believe Jesus to be, and what is your prayer of Jesus' Lordship?
2. Can you see that by understanding the Person of Jesus better that you draw closer to Him and draw more from Him?
3. How do you now understand your covenant with God?
4. How do you see the work of Jesus, as superior to Satan and the power of sin?
5. What is your attitude towards a more victorious life in light of God "buying us back" at the expense of Jesus' life?
6. If you forget some of your sins at salvation, are you still forgiven? Why?
7. If I don't confess my sins after I become a Christian do I go to hell? Why not?
8. What is "backsliding"?

## Lesson 2: Authority of Scripture

*“The Book is a divine production; it is perfect, and is the last court of appeal — the judge which ends all strife.”* Charles Spurgeon

*“We owe to the Scriptures the same reverence which we owe to God; because it has proceeded from Him alone and has nothing belonging to man mixed with it.”* John Calvin

### I. The Bible’s Inerrancy and Authority

To say the Bible is inerrant is to say it is without mistake. Our infallible God isn’t hampered by fallible men. In spite of man’s imperfection, a perfect recording of divine wisdom and history has been made. To say the Bible is the final authority in the government of human affairs is equal to giving God the right to govern our lives. God and His Word are the same. Differences in opinion by men doesn’t create confusion or make the Word wrong. These help reveal the truth. The truth of God’s Word will manifest, and misunderstandings will be brought to light for proper action and corrected thinking.

- A. Jesus taught inerrancy and authority (Matthew 5:17-18). Jesus said not to think that He came to destroy the law and prophets (a reference to the Old Testament) but that He came to fulfill all. Jesus often quoted Scripture for the standard, rule and government of His life. When tempted by the devil (Matthew 4) Jesus’ favorite rebuttal was, “It is written.”
- B. The Bible declares inerrancy and authority. In its own statement about itself, we have these texts: 2 Peter 1:20-21, *“Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit”*. 2 Tim. 3:16 says, *“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness”*. Note that these four areas governing human life — instruction, conviction and correction of sin, correction of error and discipline in obedience, and training in holy living and conformity to God’s perfect will.
- C. The Church supports inerrancy and authority. Through history God’s righteous have always confirmed the perfectness of His Word. The Church is proof of the Scriptures’ incorruptibility. Two areas of proof would be:
  1. Predictability — the prophetic truths revealed hundreds of years before occurrence are without question. But also, the predictability of human behavior and its relationship to God in either obeying or disobeying the Word and resulting outcome is unequalled. Read the Book of Proverbs. The Church has been the positive side of scriptural confirmation, the world the negative.
  2. Reliability — the believing Church, willing to trust the inerrancy and authority of scripture, have confirmed that time, circumstances, society and Satan have no effect on God’s Word.

### II. The Bible — Its Structure

The Bible is a library of 66 books written by over 35 authors in 3 languages (Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek) on 3 continents (Asia, Africa and Europe) over a period of about 1600 years (1500

B.C.—100 A.D.). These men were a cross section of society, educated, uneducated, kings, farmers, fishermen, physicians, teachers and public officials. Yet, they wrote in perfect unity on a variety of subjects, many controversial. God's prophecies through them were fulfilled. The possibility of even 8 prophecies being fulfilled by Jesus is 1 in 10 to the seventeenth power, so calculated Peter Stone in his book entitled, 'Science Speaks'. Jesus is in every book of the Bible. The Bible is divided into 2 major sections — the Old Testament consisting of 39 books and the New Testament with 27 books.

- A. Old Testament
  - 1. Law (Genesis — Deuteronomy)
  - 2. History (Joshua — Esther)
  - 3. Poetry (Job — Song of Solomon)
  - 4. Prophets (Major: Isaiah — Daniel)  
(Minor: Hosea — Malachi)
  
- B. New Testament
  - 1. Gospels (Matthew — John)
  - 2. History (Acts)
  - 3. Epistles (Romans — Jude)
  - 4. Prophecy (Revelation)

### III. Themes of Old and New Testaments

- A. Old: The preparation of a *Redeemer* for a fallen society and the preparation of a *people* for the Redeemer. Many shadows, types, illustrations and examples which all point the way to Jesus and the redeemed community (Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 10:11; Hebrews 10:1).
  
- B. New: The manifestation of the *Redeemer* and the manifestation of the *redeemed people*.

### IV. Some Principles and Ways of Bible Study

Bible study is as necessary to our spiritual growth as food for natural man's growth.

- A. Begin with prayer for Holy Spirit to open truth to you (John 16:13).
  
- B. Take notes
  
- C. Ask questions. Who is speaking? To whom is he speaking? What about? What does it mean to me?
  
- D. Methods of study
  - 1. By book
  - 2. By chapter
  - 3. By subject
  - 4. By topic
  - 5. By word
  - 6. By characters

- E. Follow the A, B C's of Bible study.
1. *Accuracy.* Make sure all people, places, events and words are accurately defined.
  2. *Background.* Understand the context, setting and events surrounding the Scriptures you are studying. Study each verse in light of the whole chapter, and each chapter in light of the whole book.
  3. *Common Sense.* When the plain sense makes common sense, seek no other sense. Therefore, take the primary, usual, ordinary, literal meaning unless clearly stated otherwise.
- F. Expect that the Bible is the best interpreter and commentator of itself. It is not inconsistent. Learn to use your cross-reference and concordance to find the other passages relating to your study. You'll find that this will expand your understanding. Often, it can explain, to your satisfaction, the meaning of one text by seeing the same subject in another text.
1. For example, here is a cross-reference illustration. In Matthew 13:14 we have a reference to Isaiah 6:9,10 which also helps to explain Acts 28:17-28 and Romans 11:8, all of which helps us to understand the failure of many Jews to receive Jesus, and why salvation comes to the Gentiles.
  2. Another example would be to follow Matthew 6:25 to...  
 Psalm 55:22  
 Luke 12:22-31  
 Philippians 4:6  
 1 Peter 5:7  
 ...where we get instructed and comforted about not being anxious, but to rather put our trust in God.

## V. Benefits

God and His Word are One. When we read the Scriptures, we are being spoken to by God. We are getting to know Him. He wants to be known. The Bible is His personal letter to us. It shows the love of the Father for us. He is saying, "*This is the way; walk in it,*" — Isaiah 30:21. We can trust Him, because God magnifies His Word even above His Name. — Psalm 138:2. Please note these 7 points about God's Word.

- ① It will prosper us (Psalm 1).
- ② It will guide us (Psalm 119.105).
- ③ It will heal us (Psalm 107:20).
- ④ It will shield us (Psalm 91:4).
- ⑤ It will produce faith (Romans 10:17).
- ⑥ It pleases God when we receive His teaching (Isaiah 55:11).
- ⑦ It is up to me to make my commitments to God's Word. Here they are God...and thank You for Your love letters to me — the Scriptures.

## Lesson 3: Repentance from Dead Works

A Sunday School teacher once asked a class what was meant by the word “repentance”. One child said, “It’s being sorry for your sins.” Another said, “It’s being sorry enough to quit.”

Repentance from dead works is the first of the six foundation stones in Hebrews 6:1-2. Its importance in being listed first will become clear in this lesson. It is of primary importance for the Christian to lead a successful life.

### I. What Repentance Is and Is Not

#### A. What repentance is.

1. **True repentance is a decision followed by appropriate action.** It is a change of mind. The Greek word for repentance, *metanoein*, is exactly that, “to change one’s mind.” A classic illustration of a change of mind followed by the appropriate act is Acts 2:38. When Peter preached on the day of Pentecost, many who were pricked in their hearts asked what they should do. Peter said, “Repent and be baptized.” The repentance is the change in mind, and being baptized is the appropriate act. See verse 41.
2. **Repentance then is related to the sinful condition of man.** Sins are the acts of the sinful state of fallen man. Our attitude in repentance is that we wish to change the sinful state. The sinning won’t stop until the condition of the person changes. A preacher once said feeling bad about sins is like complaining about cobwebs. When the real problem is the spider.
3. **We need a new way of living.** Read the following verses in Ezekiel 18:21-22. *“But if a wicked man turns from all his sins which he has committed, keeps all My statutes, and does what is lawful and right, he shall surely live; he shall not die. None of the transgressions which he has committed shall be remembered against him; because of the righteousness which he has done, he shall live..”* Repentance is a vital part of rebirth. In the moment our spirits are being made alive to God, we immediately desire to change and live according to Kingdom principles.
4. **In repentance, we see sin as God does.** Read Isaiah 6:1-5. In verse 5 it says, *“Woe is me! For I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.”* A revelation of Jesus’ holiness must come first.

#### B. What repentance is not.

1. **It is not an emotion** — that of feeling bad or sorry for doing wrong. It’s easy to feel bad about doing wrong and still not stop doing wrong. There are two Bible figures who felt bad about sin, but didn’t do anything about it.
  - a. Judas felt bad for his sin. He also produced a “dead” work as will see

later. Matthew 27:3-5 shows us that Judas recognized his wrong. It says *“The Judas, His betrayer, seeing that He had been condemned, was remorseful and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying “I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.” And they said, “What is that to us? You see to it!” Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself.”* The word ‘repented’ is a different Greek word, *metamelein*, and means emotion, remorse and anguish. Judas went to the wrong people with the wrong act. Bringing back the money (verse 4) indicated he was sorry, but what he needed was forgiveness that only Jesus could provide and then a decision not to live as he was. But he had gone too far. A thief can get caught, bring back what he stole, only to steal again.

Judas’ experience can be illustrated with 2 Corinthians 7:10, *“For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.”* Literally, that happened with Judas. — Matthew 27:5.

- b. Esau is the second example of a man who suffered regret but not repentance. Esau, Jacob’s brother, sold his birthright for a morsel of meat. Jacob was a scoundrel, but one who had a turning place with God. Esau didn’t (Hebrews 12:16-17). It says that he sold his birthright...afterwards, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears. Literally it means, “no way to change his mind.” Emotion certainly isn’t repentance.
2. Repentance is not an act of self-justification.
    - a. Often penance is confused with repentance. One can carry on religious practices and not repent. Some try to redeem themselves with good deeds to cover their sin. But this sadly ignores the need for a Savior and a change.
    - b. King Saul was in disobedience and admitted to it. He didn’t thoroughly destroy the Amalekites but (1) made an excuse about taking some as prisoners and (2) was influenced by the people both complaining and blaming as if he could transfer guilt. See 1 Samuel 15:10-23. Pressure to sin is not a release from the responsibilities of our sin. Saying that ‘the devil made me do it’ cannot be used as an excuse. Neither is, “I was feeling bad”, or “so-and-so hurt me”.

## II. Repentance is from God

- A. No major move of God in the Bible or history is conducted without a call to repentance.
  1. God called the children in Egypt to go sacrifice to Him before He eventually led them out of Egypt. — Exodus 8:8; Exodus 10:25-26.



2. John the Baptist—"*Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*" — Matthew 3:2.
  3. Jesus — "*Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*" — Matthew 4:17.
  4. Disciples — "So they went out and preached that people should repent." — Mark 6:12.
  5. Paul — "*Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent.*" — Acts 17:30.
  6. Jonah in his warning to Nineveh. — Jonah 3:5-10; Matthew 12:41.
  7. The revivals in various lands — the Welsh Revival, the Great Awakening in America both were initiated with repentance.
- B. Distinctly a gift.
1. The Bible teaches it is a gift. "*God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life.*" — Acts 11:18. See also 2 Timothy 2:25.
  2. We should respond to that gift immediately.

### III. Dead Works or Fruit?

- A. Dead works.
- In the truest sense, this is a reference to the works of the Law, which works could never truly justify the person and bring life. The Book of Hebrews contrasts the shadows with the substance—Jesus, to illustrate this. Today, dead works take an additional meaning as believers and non-believers become entangled in:
1. Humanistic activities not birthed by the Holy Spirit. These are man-centered endeavors that often leave out Jesus as the one to be glorified or leave out the wisdom of God's Word. Man and God don't always think alike.
  2. Fruit that doesn't remain. The kind Jesus looked for (John 15:16) has eternal consequences and displays His character.
  3. Works that are designed to bless primarily the doer of the work are also not works "meet for repentance," (Acts 26:20).
- B. Real repentance, real fruit.
- It is contrasted with self-righteousness. There is no need to prove oneself, only a cry for mercy, forgiveness, forsaking sin and restoration and restitution. The "fruit" is shown in:

1. Being sorry for and admitting sin as David did after sinning with Bathsheba. *“For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is always before me.”* — Psalm 51:3.
2. Forsaking sin. David did this as well. *“Create in me a clean heart, O God: and renew a steadfast spirit within me.”* — Psalm 51:10.
3. Restitution and Restoration. Zacchaeus did just that in Luke 19:8 — *“Look Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusations, I restore fourfold.”*

**Answer the following questions as a review of this chapter.**

1. What do you think now about regret, penance, sorrow, self-justification and Godly repentance?
2. What would you say about repentance as concerning its importance to you and to God?
3. Having come to this wonderful understanding about repentance, can you see why it is first?
4. What are your new attitudes toward maintaining a proper view of repentance in your life and in sharing the Gospel?

## Lesson 4: Faith Towards God

*“Have faith in God. For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says.” — Mark 11:22-23.*

*There is a marginal rendering of verse 22 in the King James Version which says, “have the faith of God.” But no man can have faith like God until he has faith in God.*

*This foundation teaching is the other side of repentance from dead works, and the second foundation stone of Hebrews 6. As we stop doing our own things that are self-righteous and self-supporting, we begin putting our trust in God. We now look to Him for everything pertaining to the course of this life and in eternity, too. That’s faith towards God.*

*Please know that trying to teach faith in one lesson in one book is like trying to put the ocean in a glass. It takes a world to hold the oceans and a lifetime to know faith.*

### I. Based on His Person

- A. “Believe in the Lord your God, and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper.” — 2 Chronicles 20:20. King Jehoshaphat of Judah said this when the enemies came against Judah. The prophet Jahaziel had just spoken and declared that the battle was not theirs, but God’s. Jehoshaphat’s proclamation is outstanding in its revelation of faith. I call it “20-20” faith.
1. It puts the emphasis on the object and ground of our faith — God.
  2. The word for *believe* is the same word for *established* suggesting we become what we believe. The word can be translated — confirm, endure, trust, steadfast, faithful, honesty, firm.
  3. Therefore, believing in the steadfast enduring, trusting characteristics of God causes us to be established (i.e. steadfast, trusting, faithful) like Him.
  4. You can still believe His prophets, which today is His Word, since it, too, reveals His character and will.
- B. Faithfulness, a characteristic of God, is given to us as a gift in order that we can believe in Him. God actually imparts His believing ability to us. Ephesians 2:8 says, “*For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.*” Romans 12:3 says, “*God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.*”
- C. This faith of God is not a mental assent, but a spiritual force with consequences. Some scriptural expressions of faith to support this follow.
1. Hebrews 11:1, “*Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*” It will produce substance! It will stand up in God’s court.

2. 2 Corinthians 5:7 says, “*We walk by faith (trust, firmness, endurance in God), not by sight.*” The material and physical world doesn’t dictate to people who trust God. They have “20-20” vision in faith.
- D. This faith in God is relational. It’s great to learn to trust God and obtain blessings in faith, but from God’s side, there is something he enjoys — it is *us*.
1. Hebrews 11:6 — “*But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.*” God wants to be sought for Himself.
  2. Matthew 14:29 — “Come” was the Lord’s reply when Peter questioned Jesus and asked if it be Him if he could come to Him on the water. When Peter was in faith, both God and man benefited by the relationship created by faith. Peter walked on water to get to Jesus and Jesus got Peter. Until, of course, Peter doubted.

## II. Built on His Promises

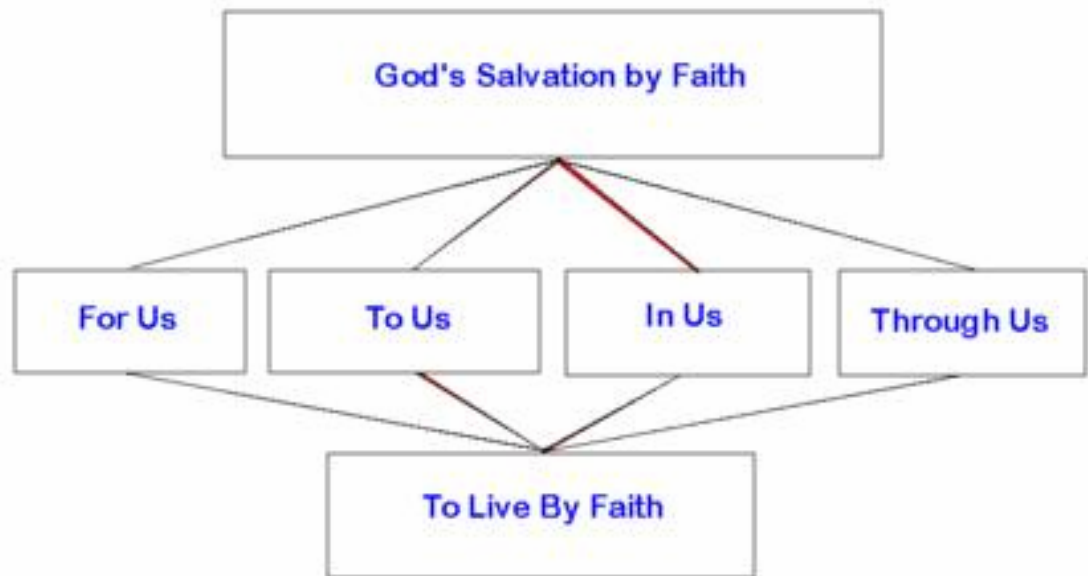
While we receive faith as a gift, it must be stimulated by the Word of God. God can use His Word to direct the course of our lives. The Holy Spirit can bring to remembrance those precious scriptures which give answers to questions, solutions to dilemmas and, of course, confidence to trust God with our lives. By faith, we become more like God.

- A. The Word is a faith builder to believe God.  
Romans 10:17 — “*So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*” The more the Word is imparted upon your spirit, the more active your faith. A caution should be made to avoid repetitious reading and confession of scriptures and in so doing forgetting the Author and Finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:2). Knowing the scripture of God and not the God of the scripture is dangerous. The Word must lead us to God.
- B. The Word is a faith builder to be like God.  
2 Peter 1:4 — “*By which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*” While we are receiving blessings promised in God’s Word, we are also being conformed into His image. To be a partaker is to share commonly God’s nature. Remember 2 Chronicles 20:20. We become like the one we believe in. Hallelujah! The Word is a faith builder to be transformed and renewed by God.
- C. The Word is a faith builder to live like Jesus.  
Jesus said that a man can’t live by bread alone, “*but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God*”. — Matthew 4:4. This is an encompassing statement. It says, in no uncertain terms, that every area of man’s life of faith can be covered by God’s Word. Psalm 107:20 says, “*He sent His Word and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions.*” The point is in God’s sending that we come to realize we need all of the

Word to build a life of faith, not merely a few selections, but the healing, delivering and life changing Word. See Proverbs 4:20-22.

### III. Believing His Plan

- A. Faith is a verb. No way can you have faith and not behave in accordance with the Word. 2 Corinthians 4:13 says, “*And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, ‘I believed, and therefore I spoke,’ we also believe and therefore speak.*” To believe, we must hear.
1. Hearing is acting in accordance. *Hupakoe*, the Greek for obedience means “under hearing.” Literally, someone who has put himself “under” what he hears.
  2. Speaking is acting in accordance. We say the same thing God would say. It is our confession, “*homologia*.” Jesus becomes the High Priest and defender of what we say. — Hebrews 3:1.
- B. Faith is a lifestyle. Romans 1:17 — “*The just shall live by faith.*” The life we live we live by faith in the Son of God. — Galatians 2:20. God has this plan for our life of faith.



- C. Faith overcomes. Real faith will always have obstacles. That’s how you know it is real. The solution:
1. Count it all joy (James 1:2-3). You are on the right track. Don’t give up. The reward comes according to Hebrews 10:35.
  2. Since you are born of God and are now walking in faith with God, have and

enjoy victory. 1 John 5:4 says, *“For whosoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.”*

**Answer the following questions as a review of this chapter.**

1. What areas of your life should God send His Word into?
2. Tell the Lord how you want your faith to draw you closer to Him.
3. Make your statement of how you would like to live in faith.

## Lesson 5: Baptisms

*The teaching on baptisms is a plural teaching, perhaps better understood if linked together as is done in this lesson. The student may be able to gain more of a united concept of each baptism as the truths of one help build the truths of the others. We may better obtain God's view on this subject. Our faith in these experiences can increase and transform our lives even more.*

*Hebrews 6:1-2 refers to the doctrine of baptisms as the third foundation stone of six. Peter made reference to the linking of these baptisms in Acts 2:38 wherein he said, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."*

*The word 'baptizo', from which we derive our word 'baptism' means to dip, immerse, plunge, submerge, overwhelm. With these words in mind, let's consider that we can be baptized "in", "with" and "into".*

### I. Baptized Into Christ — His Body

A. This first baptism corresponds to the salvation experience when a person *repents* from dead works and receives Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

1. At the moment of repentance (turning), we are immersed, *baptized into Jesus Christ*, and become part of one body (Christ's) here on earth. 1 Corinthians 12:13, "*For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.*"
2. The typology (illustration) of this is the symbolic baptizing of Israel leaving Egypt. 1 Corinthians 10:1-2 says that "*our fathers...all passed through the sea, all were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea.*"

Moses is a type of Christ — a deliverer — a savior. The sea was the water that they passed through, separating them from the old life (Egypt) and in Moses were brought into a new land and new life.

3. This baptism by the Holy Spirit into Jesus serves to help us identify with Jesus' life which was given for us. It helps us recognize our "head" and enables us to see other "members" of the same body — now one. We further identify totally with Christ's work on our behalf. Once, we were all in Adam. He sinned and we all sinned. Now, we are in Christ. Hallelujah!

### II. Water Baptism

A. This second baptism is a *command* and an act of *faith*.

1. As an act of faith, we are told in Acts 2:38, "*Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.*" If we have repented, we will be baptized.

Faith is a verb. If we believe, we act. James 2:17 says, “*Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.*” Here the believer is baptized **in**.

2. As a command, the same scripture, Acts 2:38 says, “*Repent...be baptized...*” This is an act of obedience as well. Even Jesus, who did not need water baptism, did so by example and to fulfill all righteousness (Matthew 3:15).
3. We are commissioned to baptize believers. “*He who believes and is baptized will be saved*” (Mark 16:16).

B. Water baptism enables us to understand Christ’s death, resurrection, our union with Him, and experience the blessing of this truth.

1. Romans 6:3, “*Or do you know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus (the first baptism) were baptized into his death?*” It is only natural that after the death there is a burial. The water symbolizes the burying of the “old man.” Christ paid the price for the sins of that man. He died for all, then we’re all dead, 2 Corinthians 5:14.
2. Romans 6:4, “*Therefore, we are buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life*”. We therefore have a death and resurrection of Jesus and of ourselves. — Romans 6:5.
3. There has been an inner change, repentance followed by an outward expression of water baptism.
4. We no longer need to serve sin but righteousness. There has been a putting off of the old man and a putting on of Jesus as we are raised up with Him, Romans 6:4. Also see Colossians 2:11-12 and all of Romans 6.
5. We now *reckon, account, yield, see ourselves as*, alive to God (Romans 6:11) and dead to sin.

### III. Baptism in the Holy Spirit

- A. This third baptism brings enabling from God, to live in the newness of life, as the scripture says in Acts 2:38, “*...and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*” Whereas we have been baptized **into** Christ and **in water**, now the Holy Spirit comes **into us**. This also is an immersion.
- B. Holy Spirit is.....
  1. *A Person*. While there are different manifestations of the Holy Spirit, He is the third member of the Godhead present in eternity, divine in person, powerful in the purposes of God. Genesis 1:2; Acts 5:3-4; Luke 1:35.
  2. *Promised Comforter*. Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit coming into His present



ministry in Luke 11:5-13; John 14:16-26; Acts 1:4, 5, 8. These all refer to the coming of the Holy Spirit to take up with the believer where Jesus left off.

- A. He is a Gift (Luke 11:13 and Acts 2:38).
- B. He is another Comforter—like Jesus was, so is He, now. John 14:16 who reveals the Trinity in us (John 14:18, 20-23).
- C. He is *with us* and *in us* (John 14:17).

3. His Ministry

- A. In the world — *Draw people to Jesus* (John 16:8-11) and *Regenerate* them (John 3:3,5).
- B. In the believer
  - 1. *Seal us and Fill us* (Ephesians 1:13-14; Ephesians 5:18).
  - 2. *Comfort and Guide us* in all truth (John 14:16; John 16:13; Romans 8:14).
  - 3. *Empower us* (Acts 1:8).
  - 4. *Minister His gifts* through us (1 Corinthians 12).
  - 5. *Bear His fruit* through us (Galatians 5:22-23).
- C. Tongues — Initial evidence and ongoing benefit
  - 1. Initial evidence for the reception of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4). Holy Spirit fills and the believer speaks, “*And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues*” ...It is still applicable for today (Acts 2:39). While there are illustrations that don’t specify tongues, tongues is either implied or later referred to, such as in Acts 8:17-19. In Acts 9:17 Simon “saw” something. And Paul later confessed that he spoke in tongues more than most (1 Corinthians 14:18). There are these illustrations of tongues that definitely indicate tongues. In Acts 10:46, “*For they heard them speak with tongues.*” And Acts 19:6, “*The Holy Spirit came upon them; and they spoke with tongues.*” Praying in tongues means that you are speaking to God in a way that you don’t understand, but that He does. The Holy Spirit gives you the word and often also gives you understanding.
  - 2. Ongoing benefit
    - a. Edifying (1 Corinthians 14:2,4; Jude 20 praying in the Holy Spirit).

- b. Glorifying (Acts 2:46-47; Acts 10:46 magnifying God)
- c. Intercessory (Ephesians 6:18; Romans 8:26)
- d. Because tongues are a supernatural experience, they “open the door” for the believer to be sensitive to other gifts and manifestations of the Holy Spirit.

#### IV. Baptism by Fire

- A. Matthew 3:11 — *“I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance (John the Baptist; ie., a believer), but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with **fire**.”*
  - 1. This fourth baptism brings a holy purification of the heart or the inner man. An inner sanctification.
  - 2. Leviticus 20:7 “Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be holy: for I am the Lord your God.” And 1 Peter 1:16 says, “Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy”. An example can be found in Luke 15:11-32 in the Parable of the Prodigal Son. The wayward son needed to repent of his outer sin. The son who stayed with the Father had to repent and be cleansed of his inner sin — the issues from his heart.
- B. Creation of a pure heart.
  - 1. Revelation 3:18 “I advise you to buy from me gold refined by fire, that you may become rich, and white garments.....”
  - 2. Zechariah 13:9 “And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and I will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my Name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The Lord is my God.”
  - 3. Malachi 3:3 “And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver that they may offer unto the Lord an offering of righteousness.”
- C. Works that are pure.
  - 1. 1 Corinthians 3:12-15 “Now if any man build upon this foundations (Jesus Christ) gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man’s work shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is. If any man’s work abide which he has built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man’s work

shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.”

B. Creation of a pure heart.

1. Revelation 3:18 “I advise you to buy from me gold refined by fire, that you may become rich, and white garments.....”
2. Zechariah 13:9 “And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and I will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my Name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The Lord is my God.”

C. Progression of Baptisms of Water, Holy Spirit and Fire

<b>Baptizer</b>	<b>Agent</b>	<b>Result</b>
<b>A believer</b>	<b>Water</b>	<b>Resurrected life; a new creation in Christ</b>
<b>Jesus</b>	<b>Holy Spirit</b>	<b>Comforter &amp; Helper; Power &amp; gifts</b>
<b>Holy Spirit</b>	<b>Fire</b>	<b>Purification and holiness</b>

**Answer the following questions as a review of this chapter.**

1. Can you see how your being baptized into Christ can strengthen your faith for daily living?
2. Can you see the linking and progression of Baptisms?
3. How do you see the value of this doctrine for your own life?
4. Christ is your life. You are in Him. Make your declaration of His Lordship now.

## Lesson 6: Laying on of Hands

*“Had it been left merely to human understanding to decide which are the six basic doctrines of the Christian faith, it is quite probable that this doctrine of laying on of hands would never have been Included. However, in the last resort, the best commentary on scripture is provided by scripture itself; and in this particular case, we have the authority of scripture itself of placing this doctrine of layin on of hand amongst the great foundation doctrines of Christianity.” —Derek Prince*

*This fourth of six doctrines of Hebrews 6, carries with it great blessings and deep spiritual understanding. We pray the believer will appreciate and practice the ministry of laying on of hands with wisdom, faith and discernment.*

### I. Old Testament Illustrations

#### A. Transferring authority

1. Joshua had the *authority* of Moses transferred to him by Moses in view of the congregation (Numbers 27:18-23).
2. Moses *imparted* to Joshua wisdom. Actually, the Lord graced Joshua. The laying on of hands was the evidence of impartation (Deuteronomy 34:9), and Joshua, the son of Nun, was full of the spirit of wisdom for Moses had laid his hands upon him.
3. The congregation of Israel acknowledged this transfer and recognized the ordaining of God by the public ceremony. The only authority any man has, whether in the secular world or spiritual realm, is that which God authorizes (Romans 13:1-2).

#### B. Transferring guilt and sin

1. The old covenant practice of placing the priest's hand on the animals to be sacrificed was the act signifying the transfer of guilt and sins of the people onto the innocent sacrifice (Leviticus 1:4; 3:2; 4:15; 16:21).
2. This act is a Shadow and Type. The innocent, sinless Jesus bore away our sin and guilt when He died on the cross. He was our sacrifice (Hebrews 8:6) and brings us freedom from our sins. He was the lamb slain from the foundation of earth and the “Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:6).

#### C. Blessings conferred

1. When Jacob blessed the sons of Joseph, he laid his right hand on the younger Ephraim's head and his left hand on Manasseh's head, reversing the order (Genesis 48:14-20). Joseph objected, but the blessing was imparted and was irrevocable.

2. This should establish in the mind of the believer an awareness of divine guidance in this act and all acts of laying on of hands.

## II. New Testament Illustrations

### A. Healing

1. We'll illustrate the most common first. There are many references by Jesus in the book of Mark alone. Mark 5:23; 7:32; and 8:23.
2. Other references of the believers ministering healing through laying on of hands.

Apostles	Acts 3:7 and 5:12
Disciples	Acts 9:12,17 (Ananias prays with Paul)
Paul	Acts 28:8
Elders	James 5:14
All	Mark 16:18

### B. Receiving the Holy Spirit

1. By the apostles — Acts 8:17,18
2. By the disciples — Acts 9:17  
(Please note that while very effective, the laying on of hands to receive the Holy Spirit baptism isn't necessary, as countless scores of believers have received without hands being laid on them like the Gentiles in Acts 10:44-47).

### C. Imparting spiritual gifts

1. In Romans 1:11, Paul indicates he longs to be with them that he might impart some spiritual gift that they may be *established*, the end of which is that both would be *comforted*.
2. In 2 Timothy 1:6 we read that Timothy's ministry was strengthened as he was encouraged by Paul to "stir up" the gift he received at the hands of Paul. This is probably the same gift that was imparted at Ephesus by the elders (presbytery). It was accompanied by prophecy, a further encouragement. See 1 Timothy 4:14 and 2 Timothy 1:14.

### D. These same scriptures and illustrations prove the value of ministry and gifts being confirmed by laying on of hands.

### E. Blessings

1. Genesis 48:14-16 reminds us of the parental role of imparting blessings to our children. These blessings can be prophetic, prayerful, instructional, or protective.

2. These blessings can be prophetic, prayerful, instructional, or protective.
  3. Jesus loved putting his hands on the little children (Mark 10:16).
- F. Ordaining for service
1. Ordaining is a “setting before” or “setting aside for” a particular ministry.
  2. In Acts 6:6, the first deacons were designated to take care of the administering of food to church widows. These men were the first deacons. The apostles appointed them by prayers and laying on of hands.
- G. Sending out of ministries  
The separation of ministries divinely appointed by the Holy Spirit is illustrated in Acts 13:1-4. Prophets and teachers, fasting and praying, ministering to the Lord, were divinely instructed to separate Paul and Barnabas for a work they had been called for. They (Paul and Barnabas) had an inner knowledge of this and that is why the prophecy served to *confirm* their ministry, not to initially inform. The brethren laid their hands on them and sent them out.

### **III. Laying Hands with Wisdom, Discernment and Faith**

- A. Mark 16:18 gives every believer the commission to lay hands on the sick. Such a ministry requires wisdom in use.
- B. 1 Timothy 5:21-22 is advice to Timothy and us to show us partiality. *“Do not lay hands on anyone hastily, nor share in other people’s sins; keep thyself pure.”* Practice and use discernment. Whenever there is contact for healing, ministering a gift, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the one ministering should be sure of his own purity and the sincerity of the one on whom hands are being laid. Never exercise this ministry lightly and always by discernment of the Holy Spirit.
- C. Believe  
Our faith must be released at the point of contact. This is not a mere ecclesiastical practice. It is a spiritual act of tremendous significance. Let’s believe God.

#### **Answer the following questions as a review of this chapter.**

1. How do you feel about the ministry of laying on of hands?
2. For yourself, or when laying them on others?
3. How do you perceive Church delegation of authority and service by the presbytery laying on of hands?

## Lesson 7: Resurrection of the Dead

*No subject known to man can produce more horror or hope than death. The resurrection of the dead is the fifth of the great doctrines of Christianity listed in Hebrews 6:1-12. The doctrine is really about death, its immediate state and the resurrection, the ultimate state of all.*

*In the year 125 A.D., Aristeides, a Greek, was writing to a friend about Christianity and its extraordinary success. One line read, "If any righteous man among the Christian passes from this world, they rejoice and offer thanks to God and they escort his body with songs and thanksgiving as if he were setting out from one place to another nearby." How very correct his observation was.*

### I. The Origin and Nature of Death

#### A. Death's origin

*"Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned." — Romans 5:12. We can safely say that sin and Satan are the origin of death.*

1. Genesis 3:19 is the pronouncement of death as a consequence to Adam and Eve falling to Satan's temptation. *"For dust you are, and to dust you shall return."*
2. Genesis 3:4 is where the deceiver tempted Eve saying, *"You will not surely die."* He is still confusing man over this issue.
3. Hebrews 9:27 declares that *"it is appointed for men to die once."* Satan would suggest many things about death to soothe man's horror. But Hebrews 9:27 further says, *"after this the judgment."*

#### B. The Nature of Death

To say the least, the nature of death is unnatural. It is unnatural because:

1. It is an affront to God's original plan for man. The warning in Genesis 2:17 was to safeguard man's continual existence, not plan for his death.
2. Death is a separation of the parts of the triune being...man. We read in Genesis 2:7 that the *body* receiving the *spirit* (both life sustaining force and spiritual receptivity to God) produced a living soul. When death occurs, the soul and spirit vacate the body and it dies. Conscious awareness of existence continues (Luke 16:19-31) as the spirit and soul (united) exist in another realm. This is one reason why the resurrection is so necessary — to restore the triune nature of man.
3. Death is not only a cessation of physical life enjoyed on this earth. The person in sin is "dead" to God even though alive. One can be dead and alive at the same time. — 1 Timothy 5:6. This death is separation from God.

#### C. Various theories dispelled

There are many unchristian theories about death. They range from *reincarnation* to

*nothingness*. The former teaches endless lives and deaths (if you don't do good in this life, you could come back as a pig). The latter teaches, "*Eat, drink; for tomorrow we die.*" — 1 Corinthians 15:32. This was the philosophy of the Epicureans, who do not believe in after life. Scripture dispels both extremes and everything in between.

## II. The State of the Christian at Death

### A. An absence and a presence

1. 2 Corinthians 5:8 says, "We are confident, I say, and rather willing to be *absent* from the body, and to be *present* with the Lord."
2. In Philippians 1:21-23, Paul expressed his concern over staying with the saints or going to be with the Lord.
3. Stephen, when stoned in Acts 7:59 cried, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."
4. If we are alive at the return of Jesus, we will see the saints who have preceded us in death come back with the Lord — 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14.
5. Luke 16:19-31 clearly teaches a total awareness, even feeling of pain and torment, and a separation of those who lived apart from God in this life. After death the separation cannot be passed.

### B. Hades, not Hell

1. Lazarus was in Abraham's Bosom — Luke 16:19-31. Hell appears in the King James Version, but the Greek is Hades, the place of departed spirits not "Gehenna" or hell which is the "lake of fire". Hades corresponds to Sheol in the Hebrew.
2. Hell is the state of everlasting punishment. See Luke 12:5. Nobody is there yet.

## III. The Resurrection

### A. The history of the teachings — 1 Corinthians 15:4.

1. The Pharisees, of whom Paul was a member, as Jews believed in a resurrection. The dispute waged on — Matthew 22:23.
2. Many scriptures declare such an event — Job 19:25-27; Psalm 16:10-11; Isaiah 26:19; Daniel 12:2.
3. A look at the exit of Enoch and Elijah causes the expectation of the resurrection.

### B. It is central to Christianity.

1. Paul asserts to the Corinthian Church how vain and pitiful Christianity would be



without the resurrection — 1 Corinthians 15:12-14,19.

2. Jesus is the “Firstfruit” (the promise of more to come) of all those that slept and all those that are His at His coming — 1 Corinthians 15:20-23.
  3. “After Jesus was resurrected, many bodies of the saints which slept rose...went into the Holy City and appeared unto many — Matthew 27:52-53.
  4. The promise that since we are planted in the likeness of His death, we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection — Romans 6:5.
  5. Romans 8:10-11 gives us the promise that we have “quickenings” life giving power now and for the resurrection which will occur.
  6. Such resurrection power should be sought after — Philippians 3:10-11. See also Ephesians 1:19-20. [We can have this resurrection life and power now!](#)
- C. It is Hope for our future. — 1 Corinthians 15:42-52. We have promises of the changes which occur at the resurrection. Such changes are the same for those who remain at the return of Jesus — 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17.
1. From corruption to incorruption.
  2. From dishonor to honor.
  3. From weakness to power.
  4. From natural to spiritual.
  5. From earthly to heavenly.
  6. From mortal to immortal.

#### **IV. The General Resurrection**

Not only will the righteous be resurrected, but also the unrighteous. While we are being fitted to eternal Glory, they will be fitted to eternal destruction — Romans 9:22.

**Answer the following questions as a review of this chapter.**

1. How do you see the value of the resurrection as a present power and future hope?
2. What is your concern for the lost as a result of this understanding?

## Lesson 8: Eternal Judgement

*Before becoming a Christian and a mighty preacher, Charles Finney was preparing to be a lawyer. Prior to completing his course, he was asked, “Finney, what are you going to do when you finish your course?”*

*“Put out a shingle and practice law.”*

*“Then what?” “Get rich.”*

*“Then what?” “Retire.”*

*“Then what?” “Die.”*

*“Then what?” And the words came trembling, “The Judgement.”*

*Finney ran to the woods, prayed all day, made his peace with God by receiving Jesus as Lord and Savior and became a chosen vessel of God, bringing untold thousands to Jesus.*

*This is the 6th of the great doctrines of Christian faith in Hebrews 6:1-2. We are succinctly reminded that “And as it is appointed for men to die once; but after this the judgement.” — Hebrews 9:27.*

### I. The Nature of Judgement

There is in man an internal mechanism that demands that “wrongs” and “rights” be dealt with accordingly. Because of this, man often establishes his own code of judgement. But the judgement that counts is God’s. “*Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?*” — Genesis 18:25.

#### A. By what Person? **Jesus!**

*“Because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead” — Acts 17:31.*

1. Jesus has been raised from the dead and all judgement is committed to the Son — John 5:22,24.
2. He is uniquely qualified because He is the Son of man — John 5:27.
3. His judgement is just — John 5:29.
4. His intentions are not to condemn but to save — John 12:47-48.

#### B. Standards of Judgement

1. By *truth*: “The judgement of God is according to truth” — Romans 2:2. Truth is in Jesus (Ephesians 4:21) and His Word — John 17:17; Ephesians 1:13; Colossians 1:5.
2. By *deeds*: Romans 2:6 reminds us that God is keeping a record of man’s works (Revelation 20:12) and the secrets of their hearts (Romans 2:16).
3. By *impartiality*: The fairest Judge of all time and eternity will not show any favoritism or be influenced as mortal man. “*For there is no partiality with God* — Romans 2:11.

4. By light: *“For as many as have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law”* — Romans 2:12. God will never apply the strictest requirement of the law to those who had limited access to it and Jesus, but it will still be sufficient to either excuse or accuse — Romans 2:14-15. See Romans 1:20 and Matthew 11:20-24.

## II. Present Judgements (Judgements in Time)

- A. By us. *“For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened (instructed and corrected) by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world”* — 1 Corinthians 11:31-32. Paul would say he “keeps himself under” — 1 John 5-10. If we miss it, God will correct us (chasten) so that we aren’t condemned.
- B. By God — He is not standing idly by His Creation. Often God has made judgements in history to dissuade man from sinning and also to reconcile man through Christ to Himself.
  1. Exodus 20:5-6, *“...for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.”* Read also Jeremiah 32:18. Both judgement and blessing are invoked.
  2. Because of immorality, pride, fullness of bread and abundance of idleness, Sodom and Gomorrah were turned into ashes — 2 Peter 2:6; Ezekiel 16:49; Genesis 19:1-28. Judgements, of course, are released in Christ when true repentance takes place. Curses can be reversed and freedom gained. If ten righteous men were in Sodom, the Lord would not have destroyed it. Jesus is our righteousness.
  3. These judgements in history are not an excuse for eternal judgement. In Ezekiel 18:1-4, Israel used the proverb *“The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge?”* In other words, our problem, said the Jews, is the result of generations before us. The Lord’s response is *“Behold, all souls are Mine”* — verse 4. God is saying, while I am making judgements in *history* (time) these do not replace personal responsibility for decisions of *eternal consequence*. See also Ecclesiastes 11:3. The condition of the soul determines its destiny.
- C. A present judgement to rely upon is Romans 8:1-2, that we who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit, have *now no condemnation*. Our sins have passed from us to Christ at the cross.

### III. Eternal Judgements

#### A. The judgement of the unrighteous — The Great White Throne.

1. This judgement is revealed in Revelation 20:11-15, “*And I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.*”
2. Such judgement is based on: (a) *the Book of Life*, a reference to the Lamb’s book of life which contains the names of all the righteous in Christ — Revelation 21:27. The second reference is to: (b) *the books*, which records the works of the wicked. These are sinful deeds. The righteous have no works recorded there.
3. This judgement occurs at the revelation of Jesus from heaven with His mighty angels. Those who have not obeyed the gospel will be punished with *everlasting* destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the Glory of His power — 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9.
4. This place of punishment is the “lake of fire” (Revelation 20:11-15) and a place of *darkness, weeping and gnashing of teeth* (Matthew 8:12; 22:13; 25:30), and where “*their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched*” — Mark 9:46.

If hell and punishment were not real, there would be no need for these illustrations. They speak of separation, pain and punishment. They don’t occur on earth. They are for an appointed time. We are blessed we don’t face them. But what of those that do? Isn’t it good fortune to share with them the love of God through Christ and warn them if they won’t repent what they face? God help us be less worried of the fear of our rejection by the unsaved and more concerned of their receiving salvation.

#### B. The judgement of the righteous — the Judgement Seat of Christ.

1. This judgement is described variously in Romans 14:10-13; 1 Corinthians 3:11-15; 1 Corinthians 4:5. Only the Christians’ works are to be judged and reward, not our sins. Because our names are in the *Book of Life*, our names are not in *the books*.
2. The occasion of this judgement, or rather judgements, and rewards is the “day” (2 Timothy 4:7-8) “at His coming” (1 Thessalonians 2:19), “when the Chief Shepherd shall appear,” (1 Peter 5:2-4).

3. The nature and rewards of the Judgement Seat of Christ can be summarized as follows:

**The Nature:** Reward based on motive and service of Christian life. God will give us many opportunities to serve Him. The motive and obedience, even the initiation of service is what is in question. Works initiated by God, to His Glory and for His purposes in the power of the Holy Spirit, will be rewarded. Acts of self-righteousness, works initiated without the move of God and all deceptive purposes, will not receive reward. They will be burnt up — 1 Corinthians 3:11-15; 1 Corinthians 4:5.

**The Rewards:** The rewards for our Christian service are expressed as crowns. They are illustrated as follows:

- a. **Crown of Life** — This will be rewarded for faithfulness to Jesus, in temptation and trial, to those that love Him — James 1:12; Revelation 2:10.
  - b. **Crown of Glory** — This crown is rewarded to faithful overseers of the flock of God. All those who share in oversight through delegated authority will receive this crown — 1 Peter 5:2-4.
  - c. **Crown of Righteousness** — This reward is to those who fight the good fight of faith, who finish their course and keep the faith and all who love His appearing — 2 Timothy 4:7-8.
  - d. **Crown of Rejoicing** — “*What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?*” — 1 Thessalonians 2:19. This is the soul winners crown — Proverbs 11:30.
  - e. **Incorruptible Crown** — This is the reward for mastering a disciplined life. “*And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown*” — 1 Corinthians 9:25.
4. These are the only rewards mentioned. What further application, understanding and appreciation for these rewards lies ahead of us when we receive them at the Judgement Seat of Christ? Will it not be wonderful to enter heaven rewarded by our Lord who says, “Well done thou good and faithful servant...enter into the joy of thy Lord” and there join in casting our crowns before His throne — Revelation 4:10-11.

**Consider the following statement as a review of this chapter.**

1. In the light of your awareness of judgments and rewards to come, tell the Lord how it is that you wish to consecrate your life to Him and share the Gospel of the Kingdom of our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ.

## Lesson 9: The Church — Part 1

### I. Introduction

- A. The Apostle Paul gave his life to “*preach...the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places*” — Ephesians 3:8-10. A brief synopsis of the intention of God would be:
1. The Church empowered by the Holy Spirit is the most meaningful expression of God in the world.
  2. It is the “Emmanuel” God with us; dwelling place of God. As such it is potentially a full expression of all God wants known of His loving *person* through Jesus in the Church, and His *power* — Ephesians 1:22-23; 1:19.
  3. He who is Head over all things (Ephesians 1:22) is Head also of the Church, His body, the fullness of Him (Ephesians 1:23), and the Church therefore shares in this dominion (1 Corinthians 3:21-23). There is no separation between head and body by any dimension. The union, while mystical, is real. 1 John 4:17 reminds us that “*as He is, so are we in this world.*”
  4. We then become expressions of these purposes of God in all of our behavior with God, ourselves, other believers, and the world. We are governed by the Head of the Body, Jesus Christ.
  5. In order to comprehend and act, we must likewise pray as Paul “*that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints*” — Ephesians 1:17-18.

### II. A Look at Yourself — The Church

- A. *Individually* — When you received Jesus as Lord, you were born of the Spirit, and you became a member of the Body of Christ. You are no longer independent, but you are mutually dependent and reciprocal even as the foot is dependent on the leg and so forth — 1 Corinthians 12.
- B. *Collectively* — Each of us make up the Body of Christ (whose Head is in the heavens and us, the body on earth) which is the Church. The Greek word for *Church* is *ecclesia*, which means ‘assembly of called out’. That is precisely what we are whether we are locally referred to or to the total of all believers as the general assembly and Church in Hebrews 12:23.

- C. *Church is local* — visible. Since the New Testament epistles often refer to “*unto the Church*” of the: Thessalonians, Galatians, Corinthians, and even the Church in their house, we see that the Church is both local and visible. Wherever we are as members of the body, collectively we form the Church...identifiable, completely functional.
- D. *Church is universal* — mystical. It is as much an error to think only of Church as local and not universal as it is to see it as universal only. It is mystical in that many local complete churches make up one universal complete Church all having the same Head, Jesus, and recognized individually as well as the seven Churches — Revelation 2-3.
- E. *An organism with organization*. Inasmuch as the human body is a living organism, so is the living Church. As the body is organized with every part doing its part, so is the Church organized. The life of the Church isn't dependent upon ecclesiastical structure to support it. Men do not run it or give it life. The Head — Jesus does. Men receive their life and placement through Him and then function with authority and power to serve in love.
- F. *Order — Government — Supply*. The Church, like the human body, has life support systems (those who equip — Ephesians 4:12) and working, supplying members (every joint supplies — Ephesians 4:16). All mutually edify each other in love.
1. The Church has received:
    - a. Apostles — those who lay foundations of Churches, strengthen and oversee one or a number of churches — 1 Corinthians 3:10.
    - b. Prophets — those who receive revelation and give direction for local churches and the universal Church — Acts 11:28; 13:1.
    - c. Evangelists — those who proclaim the Gospel to the unsaved and at times exhort the Church — Acts 8:5; 21:8.
    - d. Pastors — those who are the local overseers and feeders of the flock, having the vision and direction to guide — John 21:16.
    - e. Teachers — those who locally and trans-locally share the Word of God — 1 Timothy 2:7.
  2. Sometimes these ministries work in combination. Sometimes one person can have more than one ministry — 1 Timothy 2:7. Such ministries can also change. They all are equippers.
  3. The governing members of the local body are the *elders*. The Pastor who oversees the church is an elder, also — Acts 20:28. The number of pastors and elders within a given church may vary. The Holy Spirit guides. Not all pastors are elders, and not all elders are pastors. Sometimes an apostle will also pastor or be involved with the local government. Paul did essentially that, spending over 2 years in Ephesus — Acts 19.

4. The supplying and service to the body is exemplified in the deacons who, along with the ministries of helps, really demonstrate godly care for the members — Romans 2:7; 1 Corinthians 12:28; 1 Timothy 3:12. They, along with the whole church, every member gifted by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:7) grow together in love (Ephesians 4:16).

G. Descriptive metaphors

All that the Church is by design, purpose and function is almost more than can be put into words. All the following metaphors are needed for the believer to adequately comprehend God's design and our purpose as each one portrays a uniqueness of the Church. A brief description of seven metaphors follows:

1. Body— Ephesians 1:23; 4:16  
To enable us to see our mutual dependence, need, cooperation, union, and support for one another as well as perfect submission to the Head.
2. Family — Ephesians 2:19; 3:15  
To enable all of God's children to relate to one another through the most common unit of life — the family.
3. Bride — Ephesians 5:27  
To enable us to comprehend the intense and vibrant love that Jesus has for us.
4. Temple/Building — Ephesians 2:21  
To enable us individually and collectively understand we are the dwelling place of God with men.
5. Army — Ephesians 6:11  
To enable us to remember our common enemy and marshal ourselves to victory in that which Jesus has already won for us.
6. People — 1 Peter 2:9  
Literally, a people possessed by God, to enable us to understand we are His purchased possession — not Satan's. We are not even our own. We are a nation for Jesus.
7. Priesthood — 1 Peter 2:9-10  
To enable us to appreciate that of all God's creation, we alone are able to offer up sacrifices of praise acceptable to Him with our wills.

### **III. The Churches Responsibility**

The Church is bought with a price. We are able to glorify God and to be to the praise of His Glory — 1 Corinthians 6:20; Ephesians 1:6. Practically, this means we should:

- A. *Honor* Jesus as the “Head” of all things — Ephesians 1:22.
- B. *Represent* Jesus to the world as He is — 1 John 4:17.



- C. *Maintain* the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace — Ephesians 4:3.
- D. *Accept and be subject* to our placement in the local Church and its divinely placed authority — 1 Corinthians 12:18.
- E. *Believe* that God will do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us — Ephesians 3:20. We must live expecting the power of the Holy Ghost to work *in* us believers for our good, *through* us to the world for the saving of the lost and above all, to the glory of our God. We will put no limits on the Holy Spirit to heal the sick, do all manner of miracles and just do as He wishes to have done.

In so doing, we will let Jesus be all in all. We will become fulfilled, complete, satisfied. Hallelujah.

**Answer the following questions as a review of this chapter.**

1. How does it make you feel to learn about all you mean to God?
2. What are you beginning to understand about the Church and your place in it?
3. What kind of commitment can you give Jesus to glorify Him in the Church?

## Lesson 10: The Church — Part 2

*“As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone round about him a light from heaven. Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?” — Acts 9:3-4*

*Instantly, Paul received a revelation that was to produce a major portion of doctrine of the New Testament, namely the intimate and indivisible oneness between the head and the body. Jesus confessed He shared in the saints suffering. Such identification and awareness of the body is the need of the Church today. Whether one member suffers or rejoices, all members suffer and rejoice — 1 Corinthians 12:26.*

### I. The Church’s Responsibility To Itself

#### A. Awareness of body life

The strength and support of the Church lies in our recognizing our oneness with one another as forming a living entity. We all have been guilty of treating the “Church” like going to a theatre. Dr. James Kennedy said, “Most people think of the church as a drama, with the minister the chief actor, God as the prompter, and the laity as the critic. What is actually the case is that the congregation is the chief actor, the minister is the prompter and God is the critic.” As long as our eyes are on the wrong thing, we never see ourselves for what we are. The first order of business is for us to see ourselves as one body. Just as when we see with our eye, we say “I saw”, so shall we come to respect the contribution and support of every member. It begins with awareness.

#### B. Unity of body life

“Now I beseech you brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that there be no divisions among you; that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and the same judgement. Is Christ divided?” — 1 Corinthians 1:10,13. Satan seeks to divide. Since we are not ignorant concerning Satan’s devices, we won’t allow for:

1. Sectarian, party spirit. This can be recognized when people have fellowship based on an alliance to certain people instead of Jesus. It is usually quite prejudiced fellowship. It separates.
2. Individual peculiar spirit. This person is highly individualistic and easy prey for the enemy. He would rather maintain behavior that keeps him peculiar and draws attention to himself — an absence of meekness. This is not to ignore that there are legitimate differences in us. We are created as individuals. What we seek for is unity in the body, not uniformity. What we don’t do, is our own thing.
3. Spectator. This person is non-involved. He watches. Often with critical eyes, he judges the body. Self-righteousness moves in. He becomes or already is ineffective for Jesus and useful to the devil. What he really has to give never is released, while he deprives himself of receiving. Unity is given to us by the Holy Spirit and is to be zealously kept in peace — Ephesians 4:3.

C. Respect for authority

The authority of Jesus Christ as head of the Church and the integrity of the scriptures always have their application in the body. Governing truths have governing agencies.

1. The *authority of apostles and elders*, as delegates by the Holy Spirit, to oversee the Church — Acts 20:28. We are asked to obey with profit — Hebrews 13:7,17. It is unprofitable to do otherwise. Paralysis occurs when authority is rejected. Just like in the physical body, when signals from the head are no longer received by the members, certain body functions stop.
2. The *authority and covering of the body itself* for government and restraint. The brethren are often a governing element of 2 or 3 as is in, Matthew 18:15-16. Jesus is with these 2 or 3 in matters concerning faults of one against another.
3. The *safety restraint* cannot be overlooked as believers are enjoined to mutually submit themselves one to another and abandon the go-it-alone attitude — Ephesians 5:21. Proverbs 11:14 reminds us that there is safety in the counsel (deliberation, talking, sharing and clever seasoned wisdom of the older, mature brethren) of many.

D. True fellowship

Christian fellowship has its roots in the right relationship with the Father and Jesus. — 1 John 1:3. Out of that fellowship which produces light, we have real fellowship with one another — 1 John 1:7. In this realm of loving, caring and sharing, there is no room for jealousy, envy, covetousness, inadequacy or strife. We *all* have *all* things together because we *all* have Jesus together.

E. Order — Harmony

Order and harmony are trademarks of God's creative power. Everything is in place. Harmony reigns. So is this true, concerning the Church...every member set in local bodies as God is pleased. — 1 Corinthians 12:18. Each of us is graced with gifts (1 Corinthians 12:7) and ministry (Ephesians 4:16). To be "out of order" is to either not function in that which we are graced, or to try to do that for which we are not graced. A third way to be "out of order" is to avoid being in fellowship where God has placed you.

F. Support

If we take the time to see ourselves in God's economy as absolutely essential in the body of Christ, we would begin appreciating the importance of our support to the body. To God and the rest of the body, our absence is like a missing organ in the natural body. Both the natural (human) body and the church body need their functioning supporting parts for healthy life. Our lives, ministry gifts, time, prayers, and tithes belong to the local church. It's family; it's first; it's God's way.

G. Life

The apostle John's revelation of Jesus in John 1:4 is that "In Him was life". God is alive. His creation is alive, and the Body of Christ is alive. Life is consciousness, automatic, reflexive. There is flow. *All* parts are alive at the same time. No single part can

grow or bear fruit without the whole. If you think otherwise, try it. Nothing can exist without relationship to the head and to the other parts. A lack of consciousness is “death”. Jesus has come to give us “life” and life more abundantly. — John 10:10. That is why our church is named “**The Fellowship of Life**”. Hallelujah.

## II. The Church’s Responsibility to the World

“*Freely you have received, freely give*” — Matthew 10:8. This one statement of Jesus has often been a reminder to my personal ministry. I have earned nothing, yet I have received everything. So, this encouragement to me has been my pastoral encouragement to the church. Everything we receive we have the privilege of giving. We have no right to withhold the manifold blessings of Jesus. The secret of a successful, thriving church, spreading the Kingdom and walking victoriously, every member fulfilled in their call, with all holding Jesus up high, lies in releasing what God gives us. It is our privilege and responsibility to the world and to each other.

God will grace you with gifts and give you the proper outlet through this church or the church you are a member of. Our ministry is continuous, as ongoing as our very lives. Jesus said that we are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Our lives should reflect the glory of God and thereby penetrate the very darkness of secular society — Matthew 5:13-14. Glory!

- A. As salt, our very existence and everything we represent and stand for, that is holy and righteous, that honors our King, Jesus, and resists Satan and sin, is identified with the preserving character of salt. In other words, our lives “check” the spread of sin and Satan’s domain. In sharing the gospel, living righteous lives, ministering forgiveness and love, healing and restoring God’s way — we check Satan. We live “*ready*” always to give an answer to every man who asks a reason of the hope that is in us with meekness and fear (1 Peter 3:15) and to let our speech be always with grace, seasoned with *salt*, that we may know how we should answer every man (Colossians 4:6).
- B. As light, we have the positive influence of spreading and shining in darkness. We must always, “*Arise, shine; for your light has come! And the glory of the Lord is risen upon you. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and deep darkness of the people: but, the Lord will arise over you, and His glory will be seen upon you*” — Isaiah 60:1-2. We cannot be hid. Through us, God will deliver others from the power of darkness. — Colossians 1:13. As sons of God, we shine as lights in the world, and hold forth the word of life — Philippians 2:15. Jesus proclaimed in Matthew 5:14 that we are a “city on a hill.” John saw such a city in Revelation 21:9 (the Lamb’s bride) which was described as that “great city, the holy Jerusalem.” Revelation 21:11 says, “*having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.*” It is only fitting that God would begin with light and end with light — Genesis 1:3. Darkness will never win. Wherever it exists, it is our privilege to shine. Isn’t it truly amazing what God does **for, to, in, and through** us?

**Answer the following questions as a review of this chapter.**

1. What is the Church’s responsibility to itself?
2. Where are the roots of Christian fellowship found?
3. How important is your life to the Kingdom of God here on earth?