

FUNDAMENTALS OF THE

13 LESSONS TO GROW IN THE GRACE & KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST





GPS-Transition Guide Book 1

TEACHER'S GUIDE

13 LESSONS TO GROW IN THE GRACE AND KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST

INTRODUCTION BY

John MacArthur

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WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Fundamentals of the Faith (FOF) may be the best-kept secret at Grace Community Church.

It was born out of a joyful necessity decades ago when I was a young pastor and Grace Church was relatively small. We were growing. Families and individuals—some new to the faith and others simply new to the area—were coming to the church in droves. So many new faces. So many unique backgrounds. We needed to ensure this growing congregation was firmly rooted in the fundamental doctrines of the faith.

FOF has played a key role in the spiritual growth of our congregation ever since. It provides new believers with a rock-solid theological foundation. It helps more mature Christians sharpen their understanding of key doctrines and equips them for evangelism and discipleship. It fosters the only kind of unity that truly means anything in the church—unity based on a shared understanding of God's truth.

In spite of its importance to Grace Church through the years, *FOF* remains, as I have said, somewhat of a secret. Except for a handful of churches, its resources have been largely untapped.

That is, until now. By God's grace, we now have a platform from which we can put this powerful resource into churches across the country. What you hold in your hands has undergone decades of refining. It is the fruit of many years of preparation, instruction, and application. Having been taught and tested in the classroom, it has proven itself effective through the lives it has influenced.

Of course, the power behind this curriculum is not in its format or layout, but in the Word of God on which it is based. We know that when the Holy Spirit uses His Word in people's hearts, their lives are transformed. And that's why I am so thrilled that these materials have found their way to you. *FOF* has welcomed thousands upon thousands of people into the church and into the family of Christ. It has helped believers build a spiritual foundation of solid rock.

I trust it will benefit you and your church in the same way.

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Pastor-Teacher Grace Community Church Sun Valley, California

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INTRODUCTION

The *Fundamentals of the Faith* (*FOF*) Bible study has become foundational to the life of Grace Community Church. It is used for our new believers' classes, for evangelistic outreaches, and as an introduction to what our church believes. A typical class has about 10 students. Some are non-Christians taking the class because a friend encouraged them to. Others are seasoned saints looking to be refreshed on the basic doctrines of our faith. This diverse environment encourages interaction between teacher and students, and this interaction often forms relationships that last a lifetime. The size of the classes allows them to function effectively as small groups and minimize the tendency for the teacher to "lecture" or "sermonize" the material. Class members who complete the assigned lessons and participate in the discussions report great benefits from this study.

A common testimony at Grace Community Church is from people who thought they were saved and then took an *FOF* class, only to see that they did not really understand the gospel. Through the class they finally learned the truth about Christianity and then saw their lives transformed by the gospel. It is impossible to tell how many people have come to saving faith through these classes, but it is easily the most effective evangelistic tool we have used.

FOF is the outgrowth of the belief that the essence of Christianity is truth—truth about God the Father, Christ, and the Holy Spirit; truth about man's sin and God's plan of salvation; and truth about God's revealed will for the church and our individual lives. What you believe matters, and it matters eternally. Wrong beliefs about God lead people to hell (Matthew 7:22–23). Christianity is a faith anchored on the truths in the Bible, which is God's only inspired written revelation.

This material is best used in a small group of committed people. If you commit to attending these classes, doing the work beforehand, and participating, you will gain an increased understanding of the fundamentals of the Christian faith.

HOW TO USE THE LESSON ASSIGNMENTS

Fundamentals of the Faith (FOF) Class Basics:

1. Prepare for each session by downloading the assignment message from www.gty.org/fof, taking notes and identifying questions you may have, and filling in the answers in the workbook. You will need your Bible handy while you complete the assignments and when you are in the class sessions.

2. The class or group sessions will *not* involve filling in the answers in the workbook. Class time will be used to expand and discuss key topics within the lesson and to answer any questions that you have relative to the lesson.

3. The better you prepare, the better you will be able to participate and the more you will benefit from the class interaction.

4. Come prepared to interact and learn.

FOR THE TEACHER/INSTRUCTOR

HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK

Fundamentals of the Faith (*FOF*) is a curriculum designed to give new believers a solid foundation to their faith. Because of the comprehensive nature of this material, it is a useful tool for not only new Christians, but also for older saints and even those examining Christianity from the outside.

To the *FOF* teacher: Remember the days after your own conversion, the questions you had, your excitement, and your hunger to learn. Pray that those in your class will have that same anticipation about what they are about to learn. Your responsibility is to lead them through the workbook and bring the lessons down to the students' level so that they can take in the milk of the Word of God and grow thereby (1 Peter 2:2).

Working with new believers can be challenging. They come with myriad questions, some of them having little to do with the lesson at hand. Many of their questions come from prior teachings about Christianity, parental bias, and other areas of influence. It is essential that you be thoroughly prepared prior to teaching the class. You may not have all the answers, but you should know where to find them, even if that means answering them in a future class. One general preparation is to know the flow of content in *FOF* and to keep the Table of Contents handy. There will be times when you will need to temporarily set aside a question from the class by saying, "We will be taking up that subject in lesson X." One of your challenges will be to keep the class on track.

The teacher's notes given after each lesson are meant to supplement the information in the students' assignment. In your own study and preparation you should gather information that extends beyond what is found in the students' assignment so that you can guide the class through the material in each lesson and answer questions. These notes are designed to help give you parameters for each lesson and to give you ideas on how to direct the class.

You should prepare each lesson in a way that anticipates the questions that the students may potentially raise on each topic. Keep track of your own questions and the answers you discover from further study. Try to think of the questions you had as a new believer and be prepared to answer them with solid biblical answers. Members of your class are likely to have the same questions.

Use your notes as a starting point for your own teaching notebook. Take what is useful from the teaching notes and build a class plan that is geared toward your specific class.

THE VISION OF FUNDAMENTALS OF THE FAITH

The vision of *FOF* is twofold: first, the *salvation of the lost*, and second, to *disciple and equip the saints for ministry*.

The salvation of the lost

Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 2:2, "For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." In 1 Thessalonians 2:4 he writes, "But just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who examines our hearts." *FOF* is a unique opportunity to impart the gospel message to those in your class who may not be saved. Therefore, *it is important to weave the gospel message into your class plans*, especially in the first several lessons, because those who are unbelievers may fall away after the first few weeks.

Discipleship and equipping of the saints for ministry

Paul writes in Ephesians 4:11–12, "And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ."

Note: *It is your task as the teacher to move your students to the next level of spiritual maturity so they are better equipped to minister within the church.*

LESSON LAYOUT AND CLASS LENGTH

All the lessons have a similar layout. They begin with a memory verse and are followed by an outline of key points relevant to the topic. Each section of the outline contains various questions taken directly out of Scripture. Each lesson concludes with an application section. During the week, as homework, the students will complete the next lesson within the workbook and listen to a sermon on a topic that parallels the lesson. The workbook lesson and the sermon message will be used during class as launching points into discussion around the key topics within each lesson.

The *FOF* curriculum takes approximately 21 class sessions to complete. (Assume 1½ hour sessions, with one hour devoted to teaching.)

Introduction1 session
Lesson #13 sessions
Lesson #21 session
Lessons #3 through #7 2 sessions each
Lessons #8 through #131 session each

Correcting the lessons

Once the class discussion on a given lesson is completed, the student is to tear out the lesson from the workbook and hand it in to be corrected. Ask the students to purchase a 1-inch notebook to hold the lessons that are returned and any handouts distributed.

Note: You must correct each lesson so that your students do not have wrong answers in their workbook. Hopefully, they will refer back to their lessons many times in the years to come.

Handouts

Handouts are used by most *FOF* teachers. These help to supplement the lessons and give additional information for the students to keep in their notebooks.

Note: It is up to the teacher to produce handouts.

DIALOGUE TEACHING

Classes are kept small to foster a discussion-oriented environment for learning. As the teacher, you will be using informal lecture and the dialogue teaching methods. **You are not to preach, but to teach.** Dialogue teaching is a method where, *instead of giving the students the answers*, the teacher leads the students through the subject matter, *helping them to search out the answers for themselves*. This forces the students to participate, react, respond, and think.

The key to dialogue teaching is the use of questions. Questions are used to:

- Bring in information—to develop the subject
- Stimulate discussion
- Guide a discussion
- Stimulate thinking
- Maintain students' attention
- Pull students into the subject matter

Since you will be asking questions and stimulating the students to ask questions, this assumes that you have the answers! Therefore, dialogue or discussion-oriented teaching requires the instructor to be well prepared. *You need to be overprepared!* You need to be ready to answer any questions relevant to the subject matter that are asked during the teaching session. Therefore, lesson preparation is of utmost importance.

LESSON PREPARATION

Teachers must develop their own class plan that expands upon the main points within the lesson. The teacher's lesson plan should substantiate and support the concepts learned from the homework. For example, lesson #1, *Introduction to the Bible*, has only one verse on the inspiration of the Scriptures, namely, 2 Timothy 3:16. This is a key subject and needs further discussion. Therefore, you would prepare a section of your class plan to address the inspiration of Scripture and launch into the discussion when that topic in the lesson is covered.

Note: If you teach the class by merely walking through the answers in the homework and not opening the class up for discussion on key points, the class participation, and therefore the student learning, will be lower.

To prepare for a lesson, you should identify what points you want to cover, what verses will bring out those points most clearly, and then what questions you need to ask the students to get them to pull out the key points in the selected verses. Anticipate likely questions and prepare answers for them. If a particular class does not ask a question you feel is important to cover, then ask the class the question and watch them reason through it with each other. Then cover verses that lead the students to the correct answer, always guiding the discussion through questions.

To help you in your preparation, in this teacher's guide there are *Teacher's Notes* for each lesson. These notes will give a starting point from which to write a class plan. The *Teacher's Notes* will also help you to think logically through each lesson, and may be helpful in answering class questions.

Some teachers have also found it helpful to use PowerPoint to help guide each class. This can save the time spent flipping to many different books and can also force the class to follow a certain structure. The negative of PowerPoint is it does not allow the students to see the verse in their own Bibles, and it adds a certain rigidness to the class since you cannot be as flexible in responding to student questions.

QUESTIONS ARE THE KEY TO DIALOGUE TEACHING

You must resist the temptation to use the class as an opportunity to preach or lecture. A good class has a prepared instructor who directs the students by the use of questions. Questions are the key to dialogue teaching. They promote student involvement with the lesson material.

Types of questions

There are many ways to ask questions. You can ask direct, overhead, rhetorical, reverse, or relay questions.

Direct questions are when you ask the question and then call on a specific person in the class using his or her name. For example, "How did you answer question 3 about Jesus calling Himself the Son of Man? Bill, what do you have?" Note, the name of the person always follows the question, otherwise all the other students will tune out. There are many uses for the *direct question*; however, always use a *direct question* when the answer is obvious or else the class will go silent.

Different from a direct question is an *overhead question*. An overhead question is not directed to a particular student but is opened to the entire class. The *overhead question* is great for stimulating discussion. For example, "What does it mean to be controlled by the Holy Spirit?" You accept all answers: **repeating the correct answers**, and for incorrect answers stating, "that's close" or "not exactly," but not repeating the incorrect answers.

The *rhetorical question* gives out the information and does not expect an answer. It is asked to simply pique the interest of the students. For example, "Have you ever wondered what it took for Paul to write a letter about joy from prison?"

Reverse questions are reversing the question back to the student. For example, if a student asks, "How do I become a Christian?" you can reverse the question back to the student as, "How do you think you become a Christian?" This allows you to determine where the student is at.

A *relay question* is one of the most important questions. It is used to move a question from one student to another. It is most important, as you must never ever put a student on the spot. If that happens he may never come back or will shy away from future discussion. To take a student off of the hot seat, relay the question to someone else. If a question is asked and the student does not know the answer or answers incorrectly, then relay the question to another student, or turn the question into an overhead question. For example, if Bill is sitting quietly, on the spot, and does not know the answer, then simply say, "Sally, what do you think?" And then repeat the question. If Bill answers incorrectly, then say, "That's close, but not exactly what I am looking for. Can anyone else help?" And then repeat the question.

Discussion questions

When the instructor wants to guide the students through Scripture, there are three basic discussion questions. They are discovery questions, thinking questions, and application questions.

Discovery questions simply get the student to observe some basic elements of the Scripture: *who, what, when, where,* and *how.* You should always have a *discovery question* ready to be asked immediately after a student reads a verse. Otherwise, the class will go silent and you will end up preaching or asking a thinking question before observations are made. Also, remember, when a student reads a verse, he most likely does not recall what he has read. *Discovery questions* allow the class to observe the verse before a thinking question is asked. Never ask a thinking question until discovery questions have been asked to review and pull out the facts from the passage.

Thinking questions require the students to put together the facts, gathered by the discovery questions, and come to a conclusion. How you ask the *thinking question* will direct the student to the "point" that you are trying to make. Once the student states the <u>correct answer</u>, <u>repeat it</u>. *Thinking questions* often begin with *why* or *how* and push students toward connections and conclusions based on the passage.

Application questions seek to apply the text to everyone, to identify the universal truth being communicated in the passage.

Not every passage needs to be handled in this sequence, but the teacher should think through how to lead students to discover, think, and apply verses that pertain to the main points of each lesson.

The goal is to lead a class by discussion or dialogue. With a carefully guided discussion, the teacher leads the students through the subject matter, helping them to search for the answers themselves. This helps students learn for themselves and forces them to think through Scripture. The students will retain much more of what they are taught when they discover it for themselves.

Please note, dialogue teaching is not simply asking the question, "What do you think this means?" Rather, dialogue teaching helps students see where the answers are and guides them through the process so they learn on their own.

CLASS PLAN

Your class plan, at a minimum, should contain the following:

- A road map stating what topics you are going to cover and the points that you will be making.
- An outline with a section for each topic.
- A subsection for each key point and the verses to support each point.
- Embedded Scripture and *discovery*, *thinking*, and *application* questions to be asked on each Scripture.
- A conclusion and application section.

MOTIVATIONS IN TEACHING FOF

It is easy as a teacher to instruct for the wrong reasons. Many teach out of desire to please people. Paul writes in Galatians 1:10, "For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ." An effective and godly teacher must first be a bond-servant of Christ, not of men.

People can be tempted by pride when put in positions of leadership and authority. Pride seeks to take the place of glory from God and is the root of many sinful tendencies in man. Peter wrote concerning pride, "Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble" (1 Peter 5:5). Therefore, follow Peter's admonition in the next verse. "Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time" (1 Peter 5:6).

Give yourself wholeheartedly to your students just as Paul did for the Corinthians when he wrote, "I will most gladly spend and be expended for your souls" (2 Corinthians 12:15). And give God all the glory for the time spent teaching students about Him. "Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen" (1 Peter 4:11).

There should be a desire to cultivate a love for God's Word not only in your heart but also in the hearts of others. You should passionately teach others about what you have personally learned through your own study of the Bible.

We pray that you will find these sessions an encouragement to your own faith and an exciting adventure in seeing others come to faith in Christ and develop a firm doctrinal foundation.

INTRODUCTION TO FOF: THE FIRST CLASS

Prior to teaching Lesson #1, it is profitable to hold an introductory class to review the class goals and to prepare the students as to what lies ahead over the next several months. During the introductory class, the teacher should give out the student workbooks and explain that the messages that go with each lesson can be downloaded from www.gty.org/fof.

Once the workbooks are handed out, tell the students something about yourself and your background. Then get to know the students; have them introduce themselves. Find out why they are taking the class and a little about their background. The goal is to get to know them deeper so you can better meet their needs and foster a close learning environment.

After everyone has introduced themselves, take them through the introductory information in the workbook and make sure they see the Table of Contents and the sequence of topics. Exhort them to be committed to completing the lesson assignment and listening to the message before coming to class. Make sure they understand that the lessons are *not* to be filled out in class, but will be the foundation for your discussions in class.

Finally, review the goals of the class:

- To have assurance of eternal life—1 John 5:11–13
- To become equipped for ministry—2 Timothy 3:16–17; Ephesians 4:11–12
- To know God more deeply—Exodus 33:13

After the introductory class, every subsequent class should follow more or less the same format. Review the memory verse, then ask if there are questions from the homework or the message. Lead the students through the lesson plan that you created to cover the content of that week's homework. Your lesson plan should capture the key points and ideas that you want the students to understand by the end of that lesson.

Remember: You lead your students by asking questions and directing the discussion rather than by preaching or giving a sermon.

PASTORAL DYNAMIC OF FOF

You should build relationships with your students, pray for them, call them during the week, and encourage them. Ask them how they feel the class is progressing and take time to minister to special needs or trials they may have. Ask for prayer requests, and pray for them at the start of each class. Have sharing times as necessary. Remember, a student who is going through a trial, such as the loss of a loved one, is not ready to be taught; he or she first needs to be ministered to.

At Grace Community we require the teachers to hold a potluck around the third week of class. After a potluck, students tend to be more open in class, asking questions and participating to a greater extent.

Remember: They will not care how much you know until they know how much you care!



INTRODUCTION TO THE BIBLE

Prepare for Your Assignment

- 1. Along with this workbook, you will need a Bible and a journal or notebook for personal notes from the message you will hear.
- 2. Download message #1, "Our God-Breathed Bible," from www.gty.org/fof.
- 3. Using your Bible, fill in the answers on the following pages.

Memorize 2 Timothy 3:16

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness.

♦ I hope you have an appreciation for the Scripture. I hope you have an appreciation for it not as a fetish but because it is the greatest treasure, apart from God Himself, that we have. It is His very Word, His very self-revelation. When people ask me why it is that I systematically teach through book after book, why it is that I pay so much attention to detail and to every verse and every phrase and touch all the words, I tell them it's because I understand them to be the words of God revealed to us from Him. And I would not second-guess the necessity of those words being then presented, taught and understood by all of us.

— John MacArthur

The Bible is the Word of God. It claims to be the truth, the message from God to man. Second Peter 1:21 says that "men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God."

- ► The Scriptures were written by approximately 40 different men.
- ► These men lived in several different countries and cultures.
- ► They lived in different eras (1400 B.C. through A.D. 90).
- ► They wrote in three languages: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek.

Despite these differences, God moved the writers to focus on His glory in man's redemption through one central figure— Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

I. THE OLD TESTAMENT (39 BOOKS)

A. The Pentateuch (5 books)

The first five books of the Old Testament were written by Moses around 1400 B.C. They often are referred to as the "Five Books of Moses" or the "Pentateuch."

List the books of the Pentateuch in the order you find them in your Bible.

1. <u>Genesis</u> The book of beginnings: Creation, man, sin, redemption, God's nation

2. <u>Exodus</u> God delivers His people from Egypt

3. <u>Leviticus</u> Atonement, holiness, and worship through sacrifice and purification

4. <u>Numbers</u> God's people continually disobey and wander in the wilderness for 40 years

5. <u>Deuteronomy</u> Moses' great discourses to prepare Israel to enter the Promised Land

B. History (12 books)

The historical books were written between 1400 and 450 B.C. and describe God's dealings with His chosen people, Israel, the Hebrew nation.

List these books in order.

1	Joshua	5	2 Samuel	9.	2 Chronicles
2	Judges	6	1 Kings	10.	Ezra
3	Ruth	7	2 Kings	11.	Nehemiah
4	1 Samuel	8	1 Chronicles	12.	Esther

C. Poetry (5 books)

The following five books are poetic, describing in poetry and song God's greatness and His dealings with men.

List these books in order.

1	Job	The suffering and loyal trust of a man who loved God
2	Psalms	Songs of praise and instruction
3	Proverbs	God's practical wisdom for daily life
4	Ecclesiastes	The emptiness of an earthly life without God
5	Song of Solomon	A celebration of marital joy

D. Major Prophets (5 books)

A prophet was a person commissioned by God to deliver His message to men. These books are called "Major Prophets" because they generally are longer than the writings of the "Minor Prophets." The Major Prophets were written approximately between 750 and 550 B.C.

List these books in order.

1	Isaiah	3	Lamentations	5	Daniel	
2.	Jeremiah	4.	Ezekiel			

E. Minor Prophets (12 books)

The last 12 books of the Old Testament were written approximately between 840 and 400 B.C.

List these books in order.

1	Hosea	5	Jonah	9.	Zephaniah
2	Joel	6	Micah	10.	Haggai
3	Amos	7	Nahum	11.	Zechariah
4	Obadiah	8	Habakkuk	12.	Malachi

II. THE NEW TESTAMENT (27 BOOKS)

The New Testament, or New Covenant, reveals Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of men. In it we find:

- ► The life of Christ
- ► The way of salvation
- ► The beginning of Christianity
- ► Instruction for Christian living
- ► God's plan for the future

A. History (5 books)

1. The Gospels (first 4 books)

- a. <u>Matthew</u> The life of Christ, written especially for the Jews, revealing Jesus Christ as their long-awaited Messiah
- b. <u>Mark</u> The life of Christ, revealing Jesus as the obedient Servant of God; written especially to the Roman world
- c. <u>Luke</u> The life of Christ, revealing Jesus as the perfect man, emphasizing His humanity; written by Luke, a Greek, to the Greek world
- d. _____ John _____ The life of Christ, revealing Jesus as the Son of God, stressing His deity; very evangelistic

What two reasons are given for the writing of John's Gospel (John 20:31)?

1. To show that Jesus is the Christ (Messiah), the Son of God (Deity)

2. That in believing in His name, sinners can have life

2. History of the Early Church (1 book)

Acts The beginning and spread of the Christian church; it could be called the "Acts of the Holy Spirit," and was written as an evangelistic tool

B. Letters or Epistles (21 books)

These books were written to individuals, to churches, or to believers in general. The letters deal with every aspect of Christian faith and responsibility.

List them in order.

1. Paul's Letters (13 books)

a	Romans	h	1 Thessalonians
b	1 Corinthians	i	2 Thessalonians
с	2 Corinthians	j	1 Timothy
d.	Galatians		2 Timothy
е.	Ephesians		Titus
f	Philippians		Philemon
g	Colossians		

2. General Letters (8 books)

a	Hebrews	e	1 John
b	James	f	2 John
с	1 Peter	g	3 John
d	2 Peter	h	Jude

C. Prophecy (1 book)

The last book of the New Testament tells of future events.

- ► Return of Christ
- ► Reign of Jesus Christ
- ► Glory of Jesus Christ
- ► Future state of believers and unbelievers

This book is called _____ Revelation

III. CHRIST IN THE BIBLE

A. The Old and New Testaments should be seen together, as both portray Jesus Christ as the central figure.

Read the following verses and fill in the blanks.

1. Luke 24:27. Christ is seen in _____all the Scriptures

2. John 5:39. Jesus said the Scriptures "bear witness of <u>Me</u>.

B. The key is Jesus.

5	12	5	17	4	1	21	1
Law	History	Poetry	Prophecy	Gospels	History	Letters	Prophecy
Promises of Christ		icipation of C periences, and		Manifestation of Christ		church hrist	Coronation of Christ

IV. WHY IS THE BIBLE IMPORTANT?

When tempted by Satan, Jesus alluded to Deuteronomy 8:3: "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4).

A. What does 2 Timothy 3:16 say about the Bible? (Choose the correct answer.)

- O Some of the Bible is inspired by God.
- O There are a few parts that are not inspired.
- ⊗ The entire Bible is inspired by God.
- O Only those parts that speak to us in a personal way are inspired by God.

The Old Testament is the revelation of God to show man what God is like, who God is, what God tolerates and does not tolerate, and how God desires holiness and punishes sin. The New Testament is God revealed by His Son in the life of His Son, in the message of His Son, in the understanding of the work of His Son, and in the culmination and the coming of His Son to establish His eternal kingdom. But in either case, Old Testament, New Testament, God spoke. And what we have is indeed the Word of God. This is not the word of man.

So, men were not inspired, but Scripture is. God breathed into them and they wrote it down, word by word, what God breathed into them. It was more than dictation. They weren't just listening to some voice and writing mechanically every word; it was flowing through their heart and their soul and their mind and their emotions and their experiences. But it came out every word the Word of God. As God breathed into them the message and they were carried along by the Holy Spirit, they said it and some of them wrote it down. Miraculous, supernatural, inexplicable process that yields to us the Word of God.

— John MacArthur

B. How do the following verses show the importance of God's Word?

1. 2 Timothy 3:15 The Scriptures are able to give wisdom that leads to salvation.

2. Hebrews 4:12 _____ "For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and

piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the

thoughts and intentions of the heart."

C. What four things does God's Word do?

1. Psalm 19:7a	Restores the soul
2. Psalm 19:7b	Makes wise the simple
3. Psalm 19:8a	Gives joy to the heart
4. Psalm 19:8b	Gives light to the eyes

V. APPLICATION

Based on what you have learned about the Bible, what should your response be?

(Answers will vary)

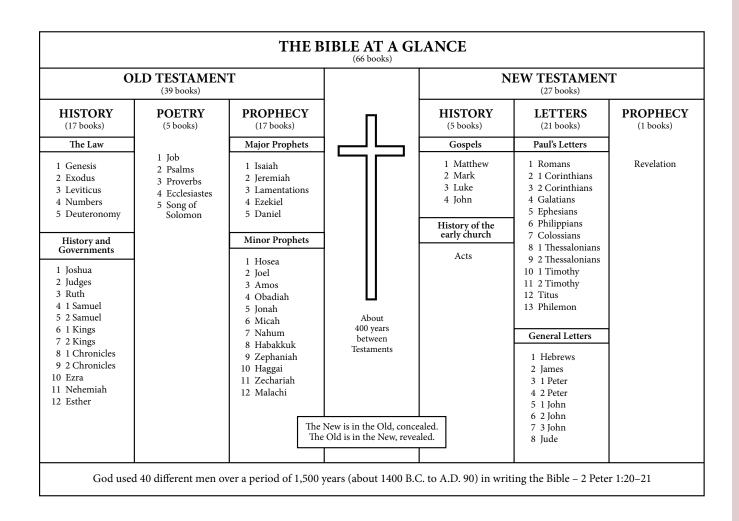
When it comes to godly living and godly service, to growing in "the discipline and instruction of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4), God-breathed Scripture provides for us the comprehensive and complete body of divine truth necessary to live as our heavenly Father desires for us to live. The wisdom and guidance for fulfilling everything He commands us to believe, think, say, and do is found in His inerrant, authoritative, comprehensive, and complete Word.

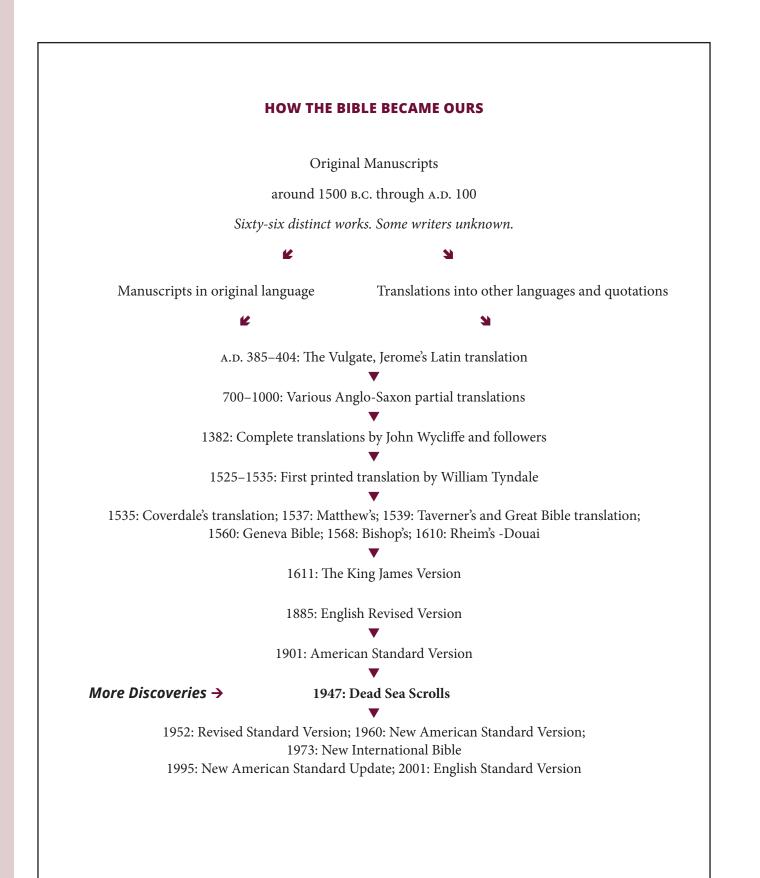
It goes without saying that it is impossible to believe, understand, and follow what you do not even know. It is completely futile, as well as foolish, to expect to live a spiritual life without knowing spiritual truth. Biblically untaught believers, especially those in biblically untaught churches, are easy prey for false teachers. They are spiritual "children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming" (Eph. 4:14). Throughout most of redemptive history, God could have said what He said in Hosea's day: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (Hos. 4:6). It is for that reason, as well as for the even greater reason of honoring the Lord, that regular, systematic, and thorough study of the doctrine in God's Word is imperative for God's people.

— John MacArthur

The MacArthur New Testament Commentary series, 2 Timothy (Moody), © 1987 by John MacArthur. 154–55.

Use the following chart to picture the relationships between the various books of the Bible.







INTRODUCTION TO THE BIBLE

THE OBJECTIVES OF LESSON 1

- 1. To explain the origin of the Bible, including revelation and how God used men to write His words.
- 2. To give the student a brief overview of the Bible, its structure and the basic content of each book.
- 3. To present the main themes of the Bible: Jesus Christ, His glory, and the plan of salvation.
- 4. To present the Bible's claim to be the inspired words of God.
- 5. To impress upon the student the dynamic, the authority, the veracity, and the completeness of the Holy Scriptures.

THE CLASS PLAN FOR LESSON 1

- 1. Natural and special revelation.
- 2. General information about the Bible, including its origin, titles, and translations.
- 3. Bible survey: Old Testament and New Testament. (This may take two sessions to accomplish.)
- 4. The inspiration and believability of the Bible.

COMMON QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 1

Where did the Bible come from?

Why are there so many different Bible translations?

How do we know the Bible is God's inspired Word?

How can men have written the Bible and yet we say God wrote the Bible?

SUGGESTED TEACHING OUTLINE LESSON 1

1. Warm-up

If the group has added members since the last time, take a moment for introductions. Ask those who listened to the lesson from the Web site to share one personal highlight from it.

Review the Scripture memory verse, 2 Timothy 3:16. Follow with a statement about the starting point of these lessons: Holy Scripture is the foundation from which all of the *FOF* material will draw its authority (2 Timothy 3:16). Therefore, let the Scripture speak for itself, for it is living and active (Hebrews 4:12). It is the words of Scripture that are powerful and able to change the hearts and thoughts of men.

Give the student a road map as to what you will be covering in the lesson:

- 1. We will discuss revelation: both natural revelation and special revelation.
- 2. We will look at the Bible: general information, structure, content, and themes.
- 3. We will look at the Bible's claim of inspiration: being the very words of God.

2. Revelation

There are two categories of revelation: natural revelation and special revelation. Lead the students through a discussion on both; however, first discuss the definition of revelation.

A. Definition

Use your notes from the MacArthur message and lead the group in working out a definition of *revelation* and *inspiration*. Expand on the principle of God as the source of *revelation*, while *inspiration* is the process God used to give us the special revelation of the Scriptures (2 Timothy 3:16).

Revelation: The act of God whereby He discloses to man what would otherwise be unknown.

Inspiration: A process by which God, as the instigator, moved men by the Holy Spirit to write the words of God.

B. Natural Revelation

Natural revelation, also called general revelation, is God revealing Himself to man through creation and conscience.

- ► Through creation—Romans 1:18–20
- ► Through conscience—Romans 2:14–15

Review theses passages with your students and discuss the importance and limits of natural/general revelation. You can bring the students into the discussion by asking the following questions on Romans 1:18–20:

1. *How has God revealed Himself to man?* Answer: Through creation and through His law written within our hearts.

2. *What does creation show us about God?* Answer: We see His invisible attributes; His eternal power and divine nature.

Then ask the following discussion questions:

1. *What is the purpose of natural/general revelation?* Answer: To cause man to search for a fuller revelation of God.

2. *How does natural/general revelation fall short of giving people enough information to lead directly to salvation?* Answer: Natural revelation gives evidence that God exists; however, it does not reveal how man can be saved from his sinfulness and separation from God. This is why God has also provided special revelation.

C. Special Revelation

Special revelation is God revealing Himself to man through miracles and signs, dreams and visions, theophanies (appearances of God in tangible form), through the prophets and the greatest prophet Jesus Christ, and through the written words of God in the Bible.

Take time to look at Hebrews 1:1–2. Remind the class of the statement by Dr. MacArthur from the online message:

The writer of Hebrews is in effect saying God spoke on two occasions. He spoke once long ago; He speaks in these last days by His Son. Now I believe that we are fair in assessing the fact that he has in mind here Old Testament revelation and New Testament revelation. God spoke long ago to the Jewish fathers. Those were the Old Testament prophets, those who received God's Word long ago under the Old Covenant. He spoke to those fathers by means of the prophets in many portions, *polumeros*, many books, many sections. And you know that there is the Pentateuch and there are the prophetic books and the historical books and there are the books of poetry. And in many, many portions and in many books, God spoke. He spoke to the Jewish fathers. He spoke by means of the prophets.

He also spoke, it says, in many ways, *polutropos*. That means through vision and prophecy and parable and type and symbol and ceremony and theophany and sometimes audible voice. And He even wrote with His finger on stone. There were many ways in which God spoke many things, collected in many texts, put into many books, and He spoke to those of old by means of the prophets. That is a statement with reference to the fact that the Old Testament is God speaking.

— John MacArthur

1. Types of special revelation

The class may find it helpful to review a few of the following Scripture passages for examples of God's special revelation outside of His revealed Word:

- ► Theophanies
 - To Abraham—Genesis 17:1
 - □ To Isaac—Genesis 26:2
 - To Jacob—Genesis 32:30
 - To Moses—Exodus 3:2–6
- Dreams and Visions
 - Jacob's ladder—Genesis 28:12–16
 - Daniel—Daniel 2:19, 28
- Miracles and Signs
 - Flood—Genesis 7
 - Burning bush—Exodus 3
 - Plagues in Egypt—Exodus 7–13
 - Parting of the Red Sea—Exodus 14

2. The sufficiency of special revelation

The special revelation of God, through His written Word, the Bible, goes beyond natural revelation. The Bible is sufficient to lead one to salvation but does not reveal everything about God to man.

- ► Use 2 Timothy 3:15–17 to show students that the Bible is sufficient for salvation, as well as equipping of the saints.
- ► Yet the Scriptures do not reveal everything to Christians. Some things are left in the mystery of God (Deuteronomy 29:29; Romans 11:33).

3. General information on the Bible

Briefly go over the following general information regarding the Bible, especially the section on the Old and New Covenants. This is a chance to present the gospel to those who may not understand the difference between works-based salvation and salvation based solely on the blood of Christ.

A. How did we get the Bible?

Have a student read 2 Peter 1:21.

Point: God spoke through men to write His words \rightarrow Manuscripts

- ▶ Written over 1600 years: 1500 B.C. to A.D. 100
- ► 40 different authors
- ► 66 books (Old Testament 39; New Testament 27)

Note: No original manuscripts (i.e., autographs) exist today.

Languages:

- ▶ Old Testament written in Hebrew and Aramaic (Daniel 2–6 and Ezra 4–7 written in Aramaic)
- Septuagint—a Greek translation of the Old Testament written in 3 B.C. Called the "LXX" (Roman numeral for 70) since it was the work of 70 Jewish elders
- ► New Testament written in Greek

B. Titles of the Bible

Briefly discuss the different references to the Bible.

- ▶ Bible—meaning book or scroll; became known as *The Book*
- ► Canon—Greek word means *rule*; came to mean the Scripture itself
- ► Scripture—John 7:38
- ► The Writings—2 Timothy 3:15
- ► The Word of God—1 Thessalonians 2:13
- ▶ The Law, Prophets, and Psalms—Luke 24:44

C. The Old Testament and the New Testament

The word "Testament" is derived from the Latin *Testamentum*, meaning a will. The Greek word for "will" is *suntheke*, meaning an agreement or a covenant entered into by contracting parties.

- ► The Old Testament was based on the Old Covenant (Exodus 19:5; Deuteronomy 28:1, 15). A covenant of obedience and blessing.
- ► The New Testament is based on the New Covenant.
 - The New Covenant is better than the Old (Hebrews 7:22; 8:6).
 - The Old Covenant has passed away (Hebrews 8:13).
 - The New Covenant is through Christ's blood (Luke 22:20).
 - The New Covenant is not of the Law but of the Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:5–6).

D. The Apocrypha

It is important to discuss the apocryphal writings because they are included in the Catholic Bible, and many *FOF* students have a Catholic background.

Note: Apocrypha means "hidden."

There are 14 books of the Apocrypha. We do not accept them as inspired of God because:

- ► They are never quoted in the New Testament. Also Christ never mentions them in His list in Luke 24:44.
- ► They lack the endorsement of the ancient Jewish writers.
- ► There are problems with content. For example, the book of Tobit teaches that almsgiving can save you from death and the dark abode (Tobit 4:8–10; 12:9). Second Maccabees 12:43–46 states that one can make atonement for the dead. It is clear that these teachings are inconsistent with biblical teachings.
- ► They do not have prophetic power (this is a powerful mark of true Scripture).

E. Bible Translations

Be prepared to give the class a brief overview of the different Bible translations. Depending on the experience of your class, keep this fairly nontechnical. Often the best illustration of the differences between Bible translations is to choose a familiar passage like Psalm 23 or John 3:16 and have people with different translations read the verses. Are these translations saying something different or are they saying the same thing in a different way? Explain that the NASB translation, used in the *FOF* lessons, is an English translation ideally suited for a detailed study of the Bible.

Note: The last page of the lesson lists the various Bible versions and the date of each translation.

4. Bible survey (lesson #1 sections I and II)

You are now ready to do a survey of the Old Testament, and then of the New Testament. You will be giving a brief overview of each book of the Bible and how it fits into the major themes of Scripture. This usually takes 1½ class sessions.

Timelines and Maps: It is suggested to fit the Bible survey into a timeline. This gives the student a reference point as you talk about each of the books and associated people and events. It is also helpful to put up a map of the time period that you are covering. This allows the student to envision the events talked about in their geographical locations.

A. Old Testament Bible Survey

1. Important Old Testament people and events

Use this information when doing the Old Testament survey below.

- ► 4000 B.C. Creation
- ► 2300 B.C. Flood
- ► 2000 B.C. Abraham (Abram)
- ▶ 1860 B.C. Isaac
- ► 1820 в.с. Jacob
- ▶ 1700 в.с. Joseph \rightarrow Egypt; Famine; Jacob \rightarrow Egypt
- ► 1446 B.C. Exodus (10 plagues/Passover instituted)
- ► 1000 B.C. Kings (Saul, David, Solomon)
- ▶ 900 B.C. Divided kingdom
- ► 700 B.C. Assyria destroys Israel
- ► 606 B.C. Babylonian captivity of Judah (70 years)
- ► 536 B.C. Jews return to Jerusalem—Ezra (rebuilds temple); Nehemiah (rebuilds wall)

2. Sections of the Old Testament

Before starting the Old Testament survey, discuss the different sections of the Old Testament. Explain that the 39 Old Testament books are divided into 3 major sections:

- 17 Historical books
- 5 Poetical/Wisdom books
- 17 Prophetical books

Note: Even though the 17 historical books are in chronological order, the poetical and prophetical books are not, but need to be interwoven into the historical time period.

Have your students open to the start of lesson #1, section IA.

Ask: What are the first five books of the Bible called? Answer: The Pentateuch.

Have a student read the names of these 5 books, and then talk through each book using your timeline and map, covering key people and events.

Important: Be sure to cover the Passover (Exodus 12:3–13) and talk about Christ as the final Passover Lamb (John 1:29, 36; 1 Corinthians 5:7; Isaiah 53:7). <u>This is a chance to present the gospel!</u>

Note: You need to know this information so well that you can fluently talk about the major events and people, and form questions as you go. Have your students interact as you are going through the material. Let the students who have some Bible knowledge describe the events and tell about key people as you guide them along.

Need help?: To help you with key events and people within each of the books of the Bible, there are various resources available such as *The MacArthur Bible Handbook*, by John MacArthur.

Time limit: The amount of time you spend on the individual books of the Bible during this review will depend on the class time allotted. Remember, there are 66 books, so you must move quickly, only dwelling on key people and events.

Have your students turn to lesson #1, section IB.

Ask: What are the next 12 books of the Bible called? Answer: The historical books.

Have a student read the names of these 12 books, and then talk through each book using your timeline and map, covering key people and events.

Have your students turn to lesson #1, section IC.

Ask: What are the next 5 books of the Bible called? Answer: The poetical books.

Have a student read the names of these 5 books, and then give a brief overview of each book, explaining when in the historical time frame it took place.

Have your students turn to lesson 1, sections ID and IE.

As above, do the same for the major prophets and the minor prophets.

Start by asking the students, *Why are the major prophets called "major" and the minor prophets called "minor"?* Answer: Major prophets are longer books than the minor prophets.

B. New Testament Bible Survey

You will follow the same format to present the New Testament Bible survey as you did for the Old. Some helpful information for you to fit into your presentation:

1. Sections of the New Testament

The sections of the New Testament are similar to the Old Testament. Explain that the 27 New Testament books are also divided into three major sections:

- The first 5 books of the New Testament are historical.
- The next 21 books are doctrinal epistles.
- The last book, Revelation, is prophetical.

- 2. Key points and events to highlight when surveying the New Testament
 - ► Matthew, Mark, Luke are called the Synoptic Gospels (*synoptic* means "seeing together"). They cover the following key events and people:
 - Birth of Christ
 - John the Baptist
 - Christ's temptations
 - Choosing of the 12 disciples
 - The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:1–7:29)
 - The Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24–25)
 - Christ's miracles
 - Christ's parables
 - Lazarus raised from the dead
 - Christ's arrest, trial, crucifixion, burial, and resurrection
 - ► The Gospel of John presents Christ as God.
 - The book of seven signs (miracles of Christ)
 - The book of I AMs
 - ► The Book of Acts gives the transition from Judaism to the church of Christ.
 - Ascension of Christ
 - Pentecost—50 days after Passover
 - Key people: Peter, Paul
 - Paul's conversion and missionary journeys (use a map)
 - ► Epistles—give a brief overview of each
 - Letters to churches (point out on a map)
 - Letters to individuals
 - Revelation (the only prophetical book)
 - The tribulation and the return of Christ
 - The kingdom and final judgment

5. Christ in the Bible (lesson #1, section III)

Discuss the students' answers to each of the questions in this section.

A. Luke 24:27. Christ is seen in all the Scriptures.

B. John 5:39. Jesus said the Scriptures "bear witness of Me."

Be prepared to explain how Christ is seen throughout the Old Testament Scriptures. A few examples are:

- ► Christ is promised through the blessing of Abraham's line (Genesis 12:1–3).
- ► Christ is pictured in the Passover, as He was to be the true Passover Lamb (Exodus 12; John 1:29, 36).
- ► Christ's crucifixion was predicted (Psalm 22:1–8; Isaiah 53:4–7).
- Christ's birthplace was predicted (Micah 5:2).
- ► Christ' future kingdom, dominion, and glory were predicted (Daniel 7:14).

6. Why is the Bible important? (lesson #1, section IV)

Section IV, B, 1, of the lesson introduces the Bible as the inspired Word of God. This claim of Scripture is a key doctrine of the Christian faith. Be prepared to discuss this doctrine with your class. Below are notes to help in your preparation for the discussion.

THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE

Start the discussion by asking, What does inspiration mean?

After the discussion, give the definition: *Inspiration is God overseeing and directing men to write His words. It is the process by which God, as the instigator, worked through human prophets without destroying their individual personalities and styles, to produce divinely authoritative writings.*

Discuss with the class some of the misconceptions regarding the Bible in the lives of unbelievers as well as some believers. These preconceived concepts may be that the Bible contains errors or has lost its original meaning through the last two thousand years.

Ask, How do we know the Bible is the inspired Word of God?

Key points to be made:

- ► The Scripture claims to be the Word of God
- ► The sovereignty of God in preserving His revealed Word

A. The Scripture claims to be the Word of God

The Bible is its own best source when the topic of inspiration is discussed. Paul claimed that the message he and the other apostles were proclaiming was from God (1 Thessalonians 2:13). Throughout the Old Testament there are statements such as, "God said," or "the Lord said," or "the Word of the Lord." The Scripture repeatedly uses these terms in relation to divine inspiration.

In fact, Paul writes to Timothy, "All Scripture is inspired by God" (2 Timothy 3:16). Take time in the classroom to discuss this passage and what "inspired" means. Lead them to the truth that "inspiration" literally means "God-breathed."

Paul makes explicit claims of receiving his words from the Spirit of God (1 Corinthians 2:12–13). It is important for students to recognize the divine nature of the Scriptures. All the words in the Scriptures are of divine inspiration (2 Peter 1:20–21; Psalm 16:7–10; Acts 13:32–35).

B. The sovereignty of God in preserving His revealed Word

The sovereignty of God is an important discussion relating to this topic. Remember, God is in control of all things, including His Word. God's purpose cannot be challenged in any realm (Isaiah 46:10), and this is true of His Word as well. Explain that God's purposes and will preserve His Word (Isaiah 40:8; Matthew 5:18; 1 Peter 1:25).

THE CANONIZATION OF THE BIBLE

Common Question: "How was the Bible Canon recognized?"

Many people come out of the Roman Catholic Church and do not understand why so many of the Bibles being used do not have the Apocrypha. Therefore, take time to address the issue, teaching the students why we have 66 books in the Canon.

When discussing the nature of the Canon, it is important to stress that God is in control of all things (Isaiah 46:10; Ephesians 1:11). God not only superintended the writing of the books, but also providentially collected and preserved those writings He inspired. However, this does not exclude human responsibility. In fact, God used human means to recognize and receive the Canon. The church in no way determines the Canon, as stated above; the church only recognizes and receives that which God has already inspired and preserved.

Start the discussion by asking, So this raises the next question, why these 66 books?

There are eight prospective reasons for the 66 books.

- 1. Testimony of God the Holy Spirit to the authority of His own Word
- 2. Prophetic authorship (2 Peter 1:20-21)
- 3. God's providential care in preserving that which He desires to preserve according to His own will (Isaiah 40:8; Matthew 5:18; 1 Peter 1:25).
- 4. God's people responding in recognition of God's Canon in faith and submission
- 5. Many of the books in the present Canon claim to be the Word of God.
- 6. In regard to the O.T., Christ validated the Old Testament books (Luke 24:44; 11:51; Matthew 4:4, 7, 10; 22:29–30).
- 7. In regard to the N.T., Peter recognized Paul's writings as being equal with Scripture (2 Peter 3:15–16). Paul recognized Luke 10:7 as Scripture in 1 Timothy 5:18.

These arguments may be used to support the inclusion of the books that are in the present-day Canon. The books that are in the Bible have the quality of inspiration and were recognized by the early church as authoritative.

THE BELIEVABILITY OF THE BIBLE

Believers cannot prove to unbelievers that the Bible is God's Word. The reason is because unbelievers are spiritually dead (Romans 3:10–18) and thus incapable of affirming Scripture's believability. Unbelievers should be confronted with the gospel itself. Once saved, the Holy Spirit will convict the person of the fact that the Bible is God's Word.

The purpose of this section is to strengthen a believer's conviction that the Bible is God's Word. Some of the reasons to find the Bible believable:

- ► Ordinary men wrote the Scriptures. In fact, John and Peter were both fishermen, while Matthew was a tax collector. God did not use the philosophers of the day; rather, He used common men to write an uncommon book!
- ► The Bible is also internally consistent. That is, there are no errors or contradictions. The Bible was written over a period of 1600 years by 40 different authors in three different languages. Yet the Bible remains without errors and contradiction! Those who oppose God and His Word have sought to discredit the Bible. However, no man has ever found information in the Bible that can be proven to be wrong. No book has been more scrutinized than the Bible, and it still stands strong as God's infallible Word.
- ► The Bible is a powerful and dynamic book that has not only changed the lives of millions of people, it also convicts God's people of sin and leads them down the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. The Bible has had more influence than any book ever written.
- ► The Bible is historically accurate, giving credible evidence for creation, fossil records, and so on.
- ► Jesus Christ Himself confirmed the believability of the Scriptures. Jesus believed in the law and prophets (Matthew 5:17–18), believed in Jonah (Matthew 12:40–41), and believed the historical narrative of Sodom and Gomorrah (Matthew 10:15).
- ► There are various prophecies concerning the Messiah that confirm the believability of the Bible.
 - The birthplace of the Messiah was predicted 700 years before His birth, saying that He would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2, fulfilled in Luke 4–7).
 - Christ would be born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14, fulfilled in Matthew 1:18–25).
 - Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem was predicted 700 years before it occurred (Zechariah 9:9, fulfilled in John 12:12–15).
 - Christ's crucifixion and suffering were also prophesied 700 years before fulfillment (Psalm 22:14–18, fulfilled in John 19:23–37; Isaiah 53:4–7, fulfilled in Matthew 26:63).
 - Each of these prophecies can be used to help believers strengthen their resolve about the believability of the Scriptures.

The Bible was written over a period of 16 centuries by 40 different authors, yet it is remarkably consistent. Prophecies made about events that would occur hundreds of years later were fulfilled. It has proven to be historically accurate. Most important, the Bible claims to be the Word of God. The Bible has all the marks of being the inspired Word of God.

7. Application (lesson #1, section V)

Exhort your students to spend time in the Bible and to dig deeply into the truths revealed in it. Encourage them by telling them that they do not have to be scholars to understand Scripture. Psalm 119:130 states, "The unfolding of Your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple."





HOW TO KNOW THE BIBLE

Prepare for Your Assignment

- 1. Download message #2, "How to Study Scripture," from www.gty.org/fof.
- 2. Use your notebook to take notes on the message.
- 3. Work through the questions and tasks on the following pages.

Memorize 2 Timothy 2:15

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.

♦ It is very obvious, I think, to every Christian, that the Bible is the revelation of God, that God has written His Word for us. It is the only rule we have for life. It is the only standard we have for behavior. It is the only authority. There may be other things you learn in life that help you through life, but they don't have the authority that God's Word does. When the Bible speaks, that is the voice of God. And it is authoritative and it becomes, then, for us, the standard of life.

There are some Christians who read all kinds of books rather than the Bible. And we say they study about the Bible but they don't study the Bible. The primary thing to do is to study the Word of God. Through it God speaks. Now there are other good books that other men speak through with emphasis on Scripture and application and interpretation, but there is no substitute for the Bible. So in the life of every Christian there must be that daily nourishing in the Word of God. It is critical. The "how" of learning and applying Scripture to life is something every Christian should know. This lesson covers five ways to make the Bible yours: hearing, reading, studying, memorizing, and meditating. Compare those five methods of learning Scripture to the fingers on your hand. If you hold the Bible with only two fingers, it is easy to lose your grip. But as you use more fingers, your grasp of the Bible becomes stronger.

If a person hears, reads, studies, memorizes, and then meditates on the Bible, his grasp of its truths becomes firm; they are part of his life. As the thumb is needed in combination with any finger to complete your hold, so meditation combined with hearing, reading, studying, and memorizing is essential for a full grasp of God's Word.

HEAR THE BIBLE

So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ. *—Romans 10:17*

READ THE BIBLE

Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near. —*Revelation 1:3*

STUDY THE BIBLE

Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so. —*Acts 17:11*

MEMORIZE THE BIBLE

How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Your word. With all my heart I have sought You; do not let me wander from Your commandments. Your word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against You. —*Psalm 119:9-11*

MEDITATE ON THE BIBLE

But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night. He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season and its leaf does not wither; and in whatever he does, he prospers. *—Psalm 1:2-3*

— John MacArthur

I. WHY KNOW THE BIBLE

List five reasons for knowing God's Word.

- ► 2 Timothy 2:15 _____ to be approved by God
- ▶ 1 Peter 2:2 _____to grow in salvation
- Psalm 119:11 _____to not sin against God
- Psalm 119:38 produces reverence for God
- Psalm 119:105 _____a light to my path; guidance

We study Scripture because it is sufficient.

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness. —2 TIMOTHY 3:16

II. HOW TO KNOW THE BIBLE

A. Hear It

"So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ" (Romans 10:17).

1. Whom did Jesus say would be blessed (Luke 11:28)?

Those who hear the Word of God and observe it

2. In proclaiming the Word, what should pastors and teachers do (Nehemiah 8:7-8)?

Read the Word and give the sense, so that people understand.

B. Read It

"Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near" (Revelation 1:3).

1. Write Revelation 1:3 in your own words.

When you read and obey God's Word, you will be blessed.

2. To what did Paul ask Timothy to give his attention (1 Timothy 4:13)?

To public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, and to teaching

If you do not have a daily reading plan, start with the Gospel of Mark or John. At the rate of two chapters each day, you will complete the New Testament in 19 weeks!

C. Study It

When the apostle Paul left Thessalonica, he came to Berea and shared the gospel with unbelieving Jews. What he found was that they "were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so" (Acts 17:11).

Attitudes toward Bible study:

1. According to Acts 17:11, what two traits did the Bereans demonstrate as they received the Word of God?

With eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so

2. How should we search for wisdom or understanding (Proverbs 2:4)?

Like "silver" and "hidden treasures"

Bible study is more than just reading the Bible; it involves careful observation, interpretation, and application. Reading gives you the overall picture, but study helps you think, learn, and apply what you read to your life.

D. Memorize It

"How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Your word. . . . Your word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against You" (Psalm 119:9, 11).

- 1. How did God command Israel to remember His Word?
 - a. Deuteronomy 11:18a By keeping it in their hearts and minds
 - b. Deuteronomy 11:19 By teaching children all day
- 2. Read Matthew 4:4, 7, 10.
 - a. During the three confrontations with Satan, what did Jesus do to overcome His temptations?

He quoted the Scriptures.

b. How might you apply this example to your own life?

If memorizing Scripture was important for Jesus, it is more important for Christians.

3. Write Psalm 40:8 in your own words.

The desire to do God's will happens when the Word is in our hearts.

It is easier to memorize with a purpose. Understanding the meaning or application of the passage will make memorizing easier.

E. Meditate on It

"How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers! But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night. He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season and its leaf does not wither; and in whatever he does, he prospers" (Psalm 1:1–3).

Meditation is prayerful reflection on Scripture with a view toward understanding and application. Give prayerful thought to God's Word with the goal of conforming your life to His will.

1. Meditation on Scripture can be done as you:

a. Hear the Word preached.

b. Read the Bible.

c. Pray about what you are studying.

d. Reflect on the verses you have memorized.

2. How does meditation assist you (Joshua 1:8)? ____ It helps Christians to "be careful to do according to all

that is written in it."

3. Do you think God's Word can affect your speech and actions? How? (See Luke 6:45.)

(Answers will vary) You speak that which fills your heart, so we must fill our hearts with God's Word.

4. Besides being diligent in learning God's Word, what else should we do in order to understand it (Psalm 119:73, 125)?

We need to pray for understanding.

III. THE BIBLE STUDY PROCESS

A. Step 1: Preparation

1. What should we do before we approach the Scriptures (1 Peter 2:1–2)?

We must confess our sin.

2. What should be the content of our prayer as we prepare to study God's Word (Colossians 1:9-10)?

Pray for wisdom and understanding.

Spend a short time in prayer before each study. Confess any sin and ask the Holy Spirit, "Open my eyes, that I may behold wonderful things from Your law" (PSALM 119:18).

B. Step 2: Observation

"What is taking place in the passage? What do I see?"

- 1. Ask questions as you read, and write them down. Who? What? Where? When?
- 2. As you observe the passage, look for:
 - a. Key words
 - b. Key subjects (people, topics)
 - c. Commands (particularly verbs)
 - d. Warnings
 - e. Repeated words or phrases
 - f. Comparisons (things that are similar; things that are different)
 - g. Questions, answers given
 - h. Anything unusual or unexpected

Note: These are just a few examples of things to look for when observing a passage.

Warning: Take your time! Don't give up too soon!

C. Step 3: Interpretation

"What does it mean?"

1. Scripture can be clear. Whom has God given to teach us (1 John 2:27)?

The Holy Spirit

- 2. Begin by asking interpretive questions.
 - a. What is the importance of:
 - (1) A given word (especially verbs)?
 - (2) A given phrase?
 - (3) Names and titles?
 - (4) Dates?
 - (5) Others?
 - b. What is the meaning of a particular word?
 - c. Why did the writer say this?
 - d. What is the implication of this word, phrase, or name?

- 3. To find answers to your interpretive questions, use:
 - a. The context-the verses before and after the passage you are studying
 - b. Definitions of words
 - c. Grammar and sentence structure
 - d. Other passages of Scripture
 - e. Bible study tools, such as:
 - (1) Bible dictionaries
 - (2) Concordances
 - (3) Bible handbooks
 - (4) Bible encyclopedias
 - (5) Bible commentaries
- 4. When interpreting, remember:
 - a. That all Scripture will agree. It will not contradict itself.
 - b. To let the passage speak for itself in its context. Be careful not to draw conclusions that the author did not intend.

There is only one correct interpretation of any particular passage of Scripture—the author's originally intended meaning.

D. Step 4: Application

"What effect will this have on my life?"

This part of the Bible study process takes the truths that have been observed and seeks to incorporate them into everyday life and practice.

- 1. Once we have heard the Word of God, what should our response be (James 1:22)? We are called to be "doers of the word."
- 2. A simple tool to help you apply what you have learned is to "put on the SPECS." Is there a:

Sin to forsake? Promise to claim? Example to follow? Command to obey? Stumbling block to avoid?

While there is only one correct *interpretation* of a given passage of Scripture, there are many *applications*.

E. Step 5: Repetition

Bible study is a repetitive process. When studying a verse, steps 2, 3, and 4 are used over and over. *Observe*, then *interpret*, then *apply*. You may choose to do this for each word, phrase, or thought.

The more passes you make through the verse, the deeper its meaning is opened to you.

It is necessary to study the Scripture in order to be blessed. I don't know about you, but I like to be happy rather than sad. I'd much rather be happy than miserable. And I know that life is made up of miserable times and happy times. I also know this: The more I study the Word of God, the happier I am no matter what the circumstances are. The Word of God makes me happy.

That's really practical. When you see a miserable person, the first question to ask him is: Have you studied the Bible today? This simple question is the answer to their problem. Psalm 1:1–2 tells us, "How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers! But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night." That's a happy man. A happy man is somebody who studies the Bible.

— John MacArthur

IV. STUDY EXERCISE

"But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you" (Matthew 6:33).

Using Matthew 6:33 and the worksheet:

- 1. Make as many observations as you can, listing them in the "Observations" column below.
- 2. Write "Interpretive Questions" about your observations.
- 3. Write the meaning of your observation in the "Interpretations" column.
- 4. Once you have completed your observations and interpretations, fill in the "Application" section.

Note: The first six have been supplied as examples.

Observations	Interpretive Questions	Interpretations
1. The verse starts with the conjunction <i>but</i> .	1. Why does the sentence start with <i>but</i> ?	1. This verse is linked to the previous verses. Must read Matthew 6:31–32 for context.
2. Key word: Seek	2. What does it mean? What action does <i>seek</i> require?	2. It means to pursue or search. It is a command.
3. The verb <i>seek</i> is in the present tense.	3. What does present tense indicate?	3. I must seek <i>now</i> .
4. Note the use of the word <i>first</i> following <i>seek</i> .	4. What is the importance of <i>first</i> ?	4. Implies priority. Must seek as a top priority.
5. Next key word is <i>kingdom</i> .	5. What does the word <i>kingdom</i> signify?	5. It is a sovereign rule or dominion over a specific realm or region.
6. The word <i>kingdom</i> is preceded by the personal pronoun <i>His</i> .	6. Whose kingdom is identified? To whom does <i>His</i> refer?	6. Looking back to verse 32, <i>His</i> refers to the "Father." It is God's kingdom.
7.	7.	7.
8.	8.	8.
9.	9.	9.

"But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you" (Matthew 6:33).

Observations	Interpretive Questions	Interpretations
10.	10.	10.
11.	11.	11.
12.	12.	12.

Application

Write out one application based on your observations and interpretations. (Refer to SPECS in the "Step 4: Application" section.)

V. APPLICATION

Are the 168 hours in your week being invested well? Should you make any changes?

The following table will help you analyze your habits for making the Bible yours. As you fill in the numbers of hours spent per week, pray about setting new goals.

Time in the Word	My Present Program	New Goals and Plans
Hearing the Word		
Reading the Word		
Studying the Word		
Memorizing the Word		

It is necessary also to study Scripture in order to help others. You really can't help anybody else unless you know something they need to know. God never put a premium on ignorance. Your ignorance not only makes you unable to help yourself, but it makes you unable to help anybody else. And Christianity is all about helping other people, isn't it? How best can you help a person in trouble? By showing them God's solution to their trouble. How best can you solve a person's problem? By knowing what the Bible says about their problem, and how to handle it.

So you are able to help others when you know the Word of God. For example, 2 Timothy 2:2 tells us we are to teach faithful men in order that they may teach others also.

— John MacArthur



THE OBJECTIVES OF LESSON 2

- 1. To motivate the student to read and study the Bible.
- 2. To teach the student basic Bible study skills.

THE CLASS PLAN FOR LESSON 2

- 1. Discuss five compelling reasons for knowing God's Word: growth, defeating sin, preparing for service, to be blessed, and to help others.
- 2. Review the process of Bible study.
- 3. Review a practical Bible study exercise.

COMMON QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 2

How do I study my Bible instead of just simply reading it?

Why is the Bible sometimes hard to understand, even for Christians?

SUGGESTED TEACHING OUTLINE FOR LESSON 2

1. Warm-up

Briefly discuss the lesson's memory verse. Ask for definitions of "diligence" and "accurately." To handle God's Word accurately is not an easy task; it takes work, but it is commanded by God. To handle the Scripture accurately means to "cut it straight," finding the true meaning.

2. Why to know the Bible (section I)

A. Five ways to know the Bible

Discuss the five ways to know the Bible listed on the first page of the lesson. Use this chart as a launching point into the lesson since you will be covering each of the five areas.

B. Why study the Bible?

Discuss the students' responses for reasons for knowing God's Word in section I.

Supplement this discussion with the following:

- ► To prepare oneself for service (1 Peter 3:15; 1 Timothy 4:6).
- ► To sanctify our lives (John 17:17; 1 Peter 1:14–19).
- ► It is God's will that we dwell on the Word and obey it (Joshua 1:8; Colossians 3:16).

Understanding the Scriptures helps Christians know God more deeply (John 5:39; Proverbs 2:1, 5; 1 John 2:14).

Ask, What do we mean when we describe the Bible as "sufficient"?

3. How to know the Bible (section II)

A. Hear it

Take time to address the need for students to attend a Bible-preaching church emphasizing the public reading of God's Word (1 Timothy 4:13) and the preaching of Scripture (2 Timothy 4:1–2), not simply preaching man's opinions or cultural trends. It is also important for people to hear the Word preached on a regular basis. Tell students about radio programs or sermons available online that may help in their pursuit of Christ.

B. Read it / Study it

Discuss the particular Bible translations they are using. When reading, it is sometimes very helpful to have more than one translation available. But encourage them to carefully decide on a particular Bible they will become familiar with through study.

Exhort your students to have a reading schedule. We recommend reading one book every day for a month. For example, for devotional time, read Ephesians every day for a month, then move on to another book. For longer books, read a set of ten chapters every day for a month. In this manner, students will begin to grasp the authors' intent and flow of thought. It also helps students to retain more.

C. Memorize it

Ask, Why is memorizing the Word of God so important?

Tie this into their answers in section II, D, 2–3.

Ask the class if they would like to be able to share the gospel message with others. If so, what do they need to know? Answer: key gospel verses, memorized!

D. Meditate on it

Read Psalm 1:1–3 and Joshua 1:8 (noted in the lesson) and the reasons for meditation. Then ask an overhead question to the class: *What does it mean to meditate on Scripture?*

Answer: To ponder on; to think upon prayerfully with a goal to a fuller understanding and application.

Note: Meditation is not trying to empty our minds of all conscious thought. People who have been exposed to Eastern religious thought are often confused about the nature of biblical meditation. Eastern religions urge followers to meditate on emptiness or nothing, while biblical meditation is definitely about content—God's Word. We are chewing and digesting God's Word. The blessed person in Psalm 1:2 is meditating on God's law day and night. Biblical meditation is not the emptying of our minds, but it is a prayerful reflection on Scripture with a view toward understanding and application. It is giving prayerful thought to God's Word with the goal of conforming our lives to His will.

Do it: Have the class meditate on Romans 10:9. Do this by having each student read the verse, one student after another, each student *emphasizing the next word* in the verse. By the time the verse has been read twenty-six times, they will have pondered the verse and the gospel!

4. The Bible study process (section III)

There are actually formal rules for studying the Bible, as there are rules for the study of any serious subject. The name for these rules is "hermeneutics." The objective of hermeneutics is to allow the text to speak rather than "reading into the text" what we think or feel. Hermeneutics considers the historical, grammatical, and cultural nature and context of the passage being studied in order to understand what the original writers meant to say.

Step 1: Preparation

Review section III, A, in the lesson. Emphasize the need to confess sin in prayer before approaching the Word of God. You can supplement the verse in the lesson with James 1:21. Have the student read the verse and then ask, *How are we to approach the Word of God?* Answer: In purity and humility.

Also talk about the need to pray for understanding as brought out in section III, A, 2, of the lesson.

Step 2: Observation

Based on the information in the lesson, ask the class what observation is. Then emphasize the need to ask observation questions on the passage being studied.

- ► If you can motivate your students to simply write down questions on what they are studying and then find the answers, you have given most of them a major tool to use in their Bible study.
- ► Go over the list, as given in the lesson, of things to look for in a given passage. Impress upon the class that Bible study starts with asking questions and then involves finding the answers!

Step 3: Interpretation

Review the information given in the lesson.

Ask, How would finding other passages in the Bible that talk about the same subject as the passage at hand help in your interpretation of a verse?

Ask, Why have believers always said that the best commentary on the Bible is the Bible itself?

Bible study tools: To help your students find the answers to their observation and interpretative questions, bring in some of the Bible study tools. Let them see and touch a commentary, a Bible handbook, a Bible encyclopedia, etc.

Common question: "Why is the Bible sometimes hard to understand, even for Christians?"

Suggested answers: One possibility might be sin in a person's life. Sin might blind someone to the truth of a passage because they do not want to submit their lives to it. Another possibility, and this is more likely, is that the person is not mature enough in the faith to understand the passage. Scripture itself speaks of some truths that are elementary and others that are for more seasoned saints (Hebrews 6:1). Peter himself mentioned that some of Paul's letters were hard to understand (2 Peter 3:15–16). Finally, because God is infinite and His Word depicts His character, there may be some truths that are too deep to be understood in this life. For example, the tension between God's sovereignty and man's responsibility, or between the deity and humanity of Christ.

Step 4: Application

Ask, What does it mean to put on the SPECS as part of Bible study? How should looking into God's Word affect the way we look at our lives?

Step 5: Repetition

Impart that studying a verse is a repetitious process. One pass through a passage—observing, interpreting, and applying—is not enough. This process needs to be repeated, over and over, until the deeper meaning of the passage is opened to you.

5. Study exercise (section IV)

Have the class share the different observations, interpretive questions, and interpretations they noted about the verse. Each time, ask the rest of the group if others saw that point. Ensure that the observations made are truly in the passage and not read into it.

Ask the group to share their written applications from the exercise. Point out that while interpretation of a passage should be uniform, there can be many personal or general applications of the truth in a passage.

6. Application (section V)

Filling out a chart like this can certainly be revealing about personal priorities. The chart functions like an accountability partner. Give group members an opportunity to share how they plan to change their Bible study habits as a result of this lesson.



GOD: HIS CHARACTER AND ATTRIBUTES

Prepare for Your Assignment

- 1. Download message #3, "God: What Is He Like?" from www.gty.org/fof.
- 2. Use your notebook to take notes on the message.
- 3. Work through the questions and tasks on the following pages.

Memorize 1 Chronicles 29:11

Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, indeed everything that is in the heavens and the earth; Yours is the dominion, O Lord, and You exalt Yourself as head over all.

"Plunge yourself in the Godhead's deepest sea; be lost in His immensity; and you shall come forth as from a couch of rest refreshed and invigorated. I know nothing which can so comfort the soul, so calm the swelling billows of sorrow and grief; so speak peace to the winds of trial, as devout musing upon the subject of the Godhead."

-C. H. Spurgeon on January 7, 1855

I. INTRODUCTION

In the religions of today's world, there are many so-called gods and just as many opinions about what God (or god) is like. The Bible, on the other hand, claims to be the revelation of the one true God. The Bible never tries to prove that God exists; it simply states, "In the beginning God…" (Genesis 1:1).

A. How does Psalm 89:7-8 describe God?

God is to be feared; He is awesome and mighty.

B. What statement is made to point to the fact that there is only one God (Isaiah 43:10)?

"Before Me there was no God formed, and there will

be none after Me."

C. What is it that God will not give to another (Isaiah 42:8)?

He will not give His glory or His praise.

II. THE IMPORTANCE OF KNOWING GOD

A. Jesus equated knowing God with what (John

17:3)? Eternal life

B. Rather than boasting in wisdom, might, or riches, what one thing does God say a man should boast about (Jeremiah 9:24)?

"That he understands and knows Me [God]."

A right conception of God is basic not only to systematic theology but to practical Christian living as well.... I believe there is scarcely an error in doctrine or a failure in applying Christian ethics that cannot be traced finally to imperfect and ignoble thoughts about God.¹ – A. W. TOZER

III. HOW CAN ONE KNOW GOD?

A. What does Jesus say about the means for knowing God (John 14:9–10)?

"Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me

has seen the Father; how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father,

and the Father is in Me?"

B. What does Paul say about Christ in Colossians 2:9?

"For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form."

C. The writer of Hebrews says that God has spoken to us in His Son. How is Christ described (Hebrews 1:3)?

"He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by

the word of His power."

IV. GOD'S ATTRIBUTES

A. What are attributes?

An attribute is a quality or characteristic that is true about someone. Studying God's attributes allows us to have a limited understanding of His Person. Even though some concepts exceed the limits of our comprehension, our ideas concerning God need to be as true as possible.

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
Holiness
Righteousness and Justice
Sovereignty
Eternality
Immutability
Omniscience
Omnipresence
Omnipotence
Love
Truth
Mercy
Note: These are just a few of God's attributes.

¹ Quote from *The Knowledge of the Holy* by A.W. Tozer, © 1961 by Aidan Wilson Tozer. Used by permission of HarperCollins Publishers Inc.

B. God's attributes defined

First look up the following Scripture verses, then write down the part of the verse that best describes the given attribute.

Second, in the Personal Application section, write out how that attribute personally applies to you based on your understanding of the attribute.

1. Holiness

God's attribute of holiness means that He is untouched and unstained by the evil in the world. He is absolutely pure and perfect.

a. Exodus 15:11 ____ "Who is like You, majestic in holiness?"

b. Psalm 99:9 "Worship at His holy hill, for holy is the Lord our God."

Because God is holy, we are exhorted to be holy (1 Peter 1:16). We are to be set apart from sin unto God. Our lives are to shine as a reflection of God in an unrighteous world.

Personal Application:	(Answers will vary)

2. Righteousness and Justice

Righteousness and *justice* are derived from the same root word in the original language of the New Testament. The meaning is being right or just.

Righteousness designates the perfect agreement between God's nature and His acts. Justice is the way God legislates His righteousness. There is no action that God takes in relation to man that violates any code of morality or justice.

There is no law **above** God, but there is a law **in** God.²

a. According to Psalm 119:137, God's righteousness is displayed in His ____judgments.

² Quote from *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, Volume 5, ed. Merrill C. Tenney, © 1975, 1976 by The Zondervan Corporation. Used by permission.

b. In Psalm 89:14, righteousness and justice are referred to as _____ the foundation of Your throne.

How does *your standard* of what is right and just compare with *God's standard*?

Personal Application:	(Answers will vary)	

3. Sovereignty

The word *sovereign* means chief or highest, supreme in power, or superior in position to all others.

a. Isaiah 46:9–10 "I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me,

declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things which have not been done,

saying, 'My purpose will be established, and I will accomplish all My good pleasure.'"

b. Isaiah 45:23 "I have sworn by Myself, the word has gone forth from My mouth in righteousness

and will not turn back, that to Me every knee will bow, every tongue will swear allegiance."

The idea of sovereignty is encouraging, for it assures the Christian that nothing is out of God's control and that His plans cannot be thwarted (Romans 8:28).

Personal	Application:
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(Answers will vary)

4. Eternality

Since God is eternal, there has never been a time when He did not exist. He had no beginning and will have no end.

a. Isaiah 44:6 _____"I am the first and I am the last, and there is no God besides Me."

b. Isaiah 43:13 "Even from eternity I am He."

Being eternal, God is not bound by time. Having always existed, He sees the past and the future as clearly as He sees the present. With that perspective, He has a perfect understanding of what is best for our lives. Therefore, we should trust Him with all areas of our lives.

Personal Application:	(Answers will vary)

5. Immutability

God never changes in His nature or purpose.

a. Malachi 3:6 _____For I, the Lord, do not change."

b. Hebrews 6:17–18 _____ "the unchangeableness of His purpose . . . it is impossible for God to lie."

The Bible contains numerous promises for those who belong to Him. He can be trusted to keep His Word.

Personal Application:	(Answers will vary)	

6. Omniscience

God knows all things present and future. Nothing takes Him by surprise.

a. Job 34:21 "For His eyes are upon the ways of a man, and He sees all his steps."

b. Psalm 139:1–6 "O Lord, You have searched me and known me. You know when I sit down and

when I rise up; You understand my thought from afar. You scrutinize my path and my lying

down, and are intimately acquainted with all my ways. Even before there is a word on my tongue,

behold, O Lord, You know it all. You have enclosed me behind and before, and laid Your hand

upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is too high, I cannot attain to it."

Since God is omniscient, He knew all our sins (past, present, and future) at the time of our salvation. Yet He still forgave us and received us into His family forever. What does that say about the security of our salvation?

Personal Ap	oplication:
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(Answers will vary)

At one point in my life I thought about the doctrine of omniscience with anything but confidence. When I was a little kid, my parents used to say, "We may not know what you do, but God does. God sees everything." Remember that beauty? I used to get that. He knows.

As a result, I used to think the doctrine of omniscience was really a bummer. I mean, what a deal. God knew me in ways I wasn't sure I wanted to be known.

Then I studied John 21 and grew up a little bit. And I remembered Peter's conversation with Jesus on the lakeside days after Peter firmly denied knowing Him. Peter kept trying to convince the Lord he loved Him. Remember that? "Lord, I'm telling You, I love You." And the Lord kept asking him and asking. . . . Finally, Peter said, "Lord, look, You know all things, You know that I love You."

What did he appeal to? What doctrine of God? What attribute? Omniscience—omniscience is a great thing. It's not so much that God looks down and spies you out; that's only half of the truth. Do you know that if it weren't for omniscience there are some days when God wouldn't even know you loved Him because it isn't obvious? And if He didn't know everything, He wouldn't even know you cared. I suppose in my life there are plenty of days when I am indistinguishable from one of the world's people. Would you agree that is true for your life? How does He know I care? He has to know a lot. He has to know everything. He has to know my heart. Oh, that gives me confidence even when I blow it. My love is still secured because He knows my heart.

—John MacArthur

7. Omnipresence

God is present everywhere in the universe.

a. Proverbs 15:3 "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, watching the evil and the good."

b. Psalm 139:7–12 _____ "Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I

ascend to heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, behold, You are there. If I take the

wings of the dawn, if I dwell in the remotest part of the sea, even there Your hand will lead me,

and Your right hand will lay hold of me."

Since God is everywhere, it is foolish to think we can hide from Him. This also means that a believer may experience the presence of God at all times and know the blessings of walking with Him.

Personal Application: _____ (Answers will vary)

8. Omnipotence

God is all-powerful, having more than enough strength to do anything.

a. Jeremiah 32:17 "Ah Lord God! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great

power and by Your outstretched arm! Nothing is too difficult for You."

b. Revelation 19:6 _____ "For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns."

God's omnipotence is seen in:

- ► His power to create (Genesis 1:1)
- ► His preservation of all things (Hebrews 1:3)
- ► His providential care for us (Psalm 37:23–24)

"Do not fear, for I am with you; do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand" (Isaiah 41:10). What can you learn from Isaiah 41:10 about God's omnipotence?

Personal Application:

(Answers will vary)

9. Love

God is love. His love is unconditional; it is not based on the loveliness or merit of the object.

a. John 3:16 _____ "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes

in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."

b. Romans 5:8 _____But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners,

Christ died for us."

Love expresses itself in action. God is our example. He demonstrated His love for us in sending Jesus to die in our place (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Personal Application:	(,	Answers wil	ll vary)

10. Truth

God is the only true God.

a. Psalm 31:5 <u>"O Lord, God</u> of truth."

b. Psalm 117:2 _____ "the truth of the Lord is everlasting."

God's truth is above all. He is truthful even if all men are found to be liars. Therefore, His words and His judgments always prevail (Romans 3:4). In light of this, how should you view God's Word and the truths it contains?

Personal Application:	(Answers will	i vary)

11. Mercy

God's great mercy is the practical expression of His compassion to those who have opposed His will.

a. Psalm 145:8–9 _____ "The Lord is gracious and merciful; slow to anger and great in lovingkindness.

The Lord is good to all, and His mercies are over all His works."

b. Psalm 130:3–4 _____ "If You, Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But there is

forgiveness with You, that You may be feared."

God's great mercy is contrasted with man's sin. His mercy is displayed in our salvation (Ephesians 2:4–5).

Personal Application:	(Answers will vary)

V. APPLICATION

In light of the attributes of God discussed in this lesson, answer the following questions.

A. How will your prayers be affected?	(Answers will vary)

B. How would you respond to a major trial in your life, such as:

1. The death of a close relative (spouse, child)?

(Answers will vary)

2. An accident that leaves you physically disabled?

(Answers will vary)



GOD: HIS CHARACTER AND ATTRIBUTES

THE OBJECTIVE OF LESSON 3

- 1. To provide the students with a fuller understanding of God's attributes so they may offer Him truer and more honoring worship.
- 2. To give the student a glimpse of the infinite majesty and glory of God.

THE CLASS PLAN FOR LESSON 3

- 1. General information on the person of God.
- 2. Survey of the attributes of God.

COMMON QUESTIONS FROM LESSON 3

If God is all-powerful and all-loving, why is there suffering in the world?

If God is sovereign, why doesn't He keep people from going to hell?

SUGGESTED TEACHING OUTLINE FOR LESSON 3

1. Warm-up

Welcome everyone and spend a few moments reviewing the memory verses from the first two lessons. Remind everyone that lessons 1 and 2 focused on the Bible as God's revelation. This lesson will focus on the character of God as revealed in His Word.

2. Introduction (section I)

Introduce the lesson by having one of the students read the introductory paragraph in the lesson. Launch off of the Genesis 1:1 passage and talk about the self-existence of God.

A. The self-existence of God

- ► God's existence is assumed—Genesis 1:1
- ► The significance of His title *I AM* implies self-existence—Exodus 3:14
- ► God has existed since eternity—Isaiah 43:13

Now ask the questions, *Why do men question the existence of God?* and *How has God revealed Himself to man?*

Review Romans 1:18-22; 2:14-16, and talk about:

- ▶ How God has made Himself evident within men—Romans 1:19
- ▶ How God can be seen in His creation—Romans 1:20 (also Psalm 19:1)
- ► How God has revealed Himself to men within their conscience—Romans 2:15

Ask the class, *What is the result when men ignore God's creative power, ignore their conscience, and turn from God?* Answer: Romans 1:21–22—their foolish hearts are darkened and they become fools. (Also see Psalm 14:1.)

B. There is only one God

Ask the students for their answer to I, B, in the lesson. Bounce off of this answer to talk about the fact that there is only one God. You can supplement with Isaiah 45:22 and 44:6–8.

Note on the Trinity: Once you have established that there is only one God, it is interesting to note that God refers to Himself in the plural. Note Genesis 1:26a and Genesis 3:22. God refers to Himself as "Us" and "Our." This allows you to introduce the Trinity. Tell the students that the Trinity will be developed further after we study the lesson on Jesus Christ (lesson #4) and the lesson on the Holy Spirit (lesson #7). We will see that the Father, the Son (Jesus Christ), and the Holy Spirit all claim to be God, and moreover, each is a different person.

C. General information regarding God

This information is not mentioned in the lesson; however, you can use it to supplement the lesson:

- ► The Father is in heaven—Matthew 6:9; 16:17
- ► Christ is in heaven at the right hand of the Father—Hebrews 10:12
- ► The Holy Spirit is ministering within believers—Romans 8:11; 1 Corinthians 3:16; John 14:26
- ► God is an invisible spirit—John 4:24; Colossians 1:15
- ► God's glory can be seen—Exodus 24:16–17

3. Knowing God (sections II and III)

A. Can we know God?

Ask the class, Can we know God?

Answer: Have someone read their answer in II, B (Jeremiah 9:24).

Use this answer to branch into the following discussion about the depth of God:

- ► God is incomprehensible—Romans 11:33–34
- ► God has no boundaries—Job 11:7
- ► God can only be divinely perceived:
 - ► Through the Holy Spirit—1 Corinthians 2:9–16
 - ► Through Christ—Matthew 11:27

Now go back to the lesson and have someone read John 14:9–10 (III, A), and give the answer they wrote down. Then ask: *Why does knowing Christ equate to knowing God?* Answer: Because Christ is God. As Colossians states, "For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form." Review III, B and III, C and discuss this truth.

Mention to the class that the deity of Christ will be looked at more in-depth when we study the person of Christ in lesson #4.

Then ask, What is the difference between knowing God and knowing about God?

How is it that we can know Him? How can we know God? Well, you know, the prophet said, "If you seek Me with all your heart, you'll surely find Me," didn't he? Solomon gave some wise information in Proverbs 2:3–5. He said, "For if you cry for discernment, lift your voice for understanding; if you seek her as silver and search for her as for hidden treasures; then you will discern the fear of the Lord and discover the knowledge of God." Solomon said there is only one way to really know God and to know all that's revealed about God and that way is to make that the pursuit of your life. If you are looking for money, if you're looking for success, if you're looking for something else, you'll not really discover all that there is to know about God. But, he says: "My son, if you seek God like silver and search for God as if for hidden treasure, you'll find the knowledge of Him."

— John MacArthur

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Point: God wants us to know Him. God wants us to pursue Him. And that's why we take time to study His Word—in order for us to better know Him.

B. Practically knowing God

- ▶ Set your mind and desires to seek God—Psalm 27:8
- ▶ Fill your mind with His Word and obey it—John 14:21
- ► Learn to fear God; this is the beginning of wisdom—Proverbs 9:10

Discuss the fear of God. The fear of God should include practical aspects such as obedience to God's commandments, falling before God in all humility, and praying. Ask, *How does* fearing *God keep* knowing *God from becoming a casual relationship*?

Transition: Knowing God also involves knowing God's attributes or His characteristics. That is what we will be discussing during the final portion of this lesson.

The worst deed committed in the universe is failure to give God honor, or glory. Above everything else, God is to be glorified.

To glorify God is to exalt Him, to recognize Him as supremely worthy of honor, and to acknowledge His divine attributes. **Since the glory of God is also the sum of all the attributes of His being**, of all He has revealed of Himself to man, to give God glory is to acknowledge His glory and extol it.¹

-John MacArthur

4. God's Attributes (section IV)

A. Attributes of Deity

Discuss the special way in which God's attributes are different from ours. For example, some of the attributes of God we cannot possess, such as:

- ► Eternality—No beginning or end
- ► Omnipotence—God is all-powerful
- ► Sovereignty—God is chief or highest; supreme
- ► Omniscience—God is all-knowing
- ► Omnipresent—God is present everywhere

However, some of God's attributes we can possess, but not to the perfection that God possesses them, such as:

- ► Holiness
- ► Righteousness and justice
- ► Love

B. The harmony of God's attributes

Also note that all of God's attributes work together in perfect harmony. For example, God is love and yet God is also just. Ask the class, *How does God's love and God's justice harmonize together*?

Answer:

- ► God is love and desires none to perish; so He gave His Son to die in our place.
- ► God is just and will judge man for his sin and for his rejection of Christ.

Rhetorical questions: Would our society be just if we did not punish a murderer? and Would God be just if He did not punish sinners?

Point: There must be a harmony between God's attributes.

Transition: Let's look at some of God's attributes, and as we do, let us dwell on the attributes' applications upon our lives. First, let's look at God's holiness.

C. Looking at some of the attributes of God

When reviewing the following attributes of God:

1. For each Scripture listed in the lesson for the given attribute, have one of the students read what they wrote down as the key part of the verse that best described the attribute.

2. Then give a brief definition of the attribute.

3. Dwell on and discuss the application of the attribute on our lives. This will turn into a praise and worship time of God.

Note for each of the attributes below:

- ► Verses to supplement those in the lesson will be included, to be used as you wish.
- ► Application responses will be given—to aid in starting the class discussion (you want the students to give their application responses. Only use the ones below to supplement the discussion).

1. The Holiness of God

God is absolutely pure and perfect. It should be noted that holiness is the most often repeated attribute in Scripture.

Supplemental verses:

- Revelation 4:8—Holy, Holy, Holy—emphasis (Trinity?)
- Psalm 89:35—God swears by His holiness

Application questions:

- ▶ When you dwell on God's holiness, what is your response?
- ► How does God's holiness affect you practically?
- ► How does God's holiness affect your worship of God?

Application responses:

- ► Fear over my sin
- ► Unworthiness
- ► The need for a Savior
- ► Causes me to praise God for His majestic holiness

2. The Righteousness and Justice of God

Review the difference between righteousness and justice. Righteousness means that God only does that which is right; He does no wrong. Justice is God legislating His righteous standards.

Supplemental verses:

- ▶ Numbers 20:7-12—Moses not allowed into the Promised Land because he disobeyed God
- ► Matthew 5:48—God's standard for man is perfection
- ► Hebrews 9:27—Unbelievers will be judged
- ► 2 Corinthians 5:21—Believers have Christ's imputed righteousness

Application questions:

- ► How does God's righteousness affect you personally?
- ► How does God's righteousness affect your prayer life?

Application responses:

- Drives us to a need for a Savior
- ► God's law must be the standard of my life
- ► God's judgment on unbelievers should cause me to witness
- Causes me to be thankful for the righteousness that I have in Christ
- > Drives me to my knees, in humility, asking for forgiveness for my sinfulness

3. The Sovereignty of God

God is subject to no one; He does as He pleases.

Supplemental verses:

▶ Romans 8:28—All things work together . . . according to His purpose.

Application questions:

- ► How does God's sovereignty affect you?
- ► How does God's sovereignty affect your worship of God?

Application responses:

- ► Nothing is out of God's control.
- God is in control of my life, including my trials.
- ► I should stop worrying.
- Security—there is nothing that can separate us from Christ.
- ► I can praise God for His power.

4. The Eternality of God

God has no beginning and no end.

Supplemental verses:

► John 3:16—God offers eternal life.

Application questions:

- ► What significance does God's eternality have on our salvation?
- ► What consequence does it have for an unbeliever?

Application responses:

- Our eternal salvation has meaning.
- ► Our hope of eternal life rests in God's eternality.
- ▶ Praise: We will forever be in God's presence.
- ► For the unbeliever—he will be eternally separated from God in hell.

5. The Immutability of God

God never changes His nature or purpose.

Supplemental verses:

► James 1:17—God does not vary.

Application questions:

- ▶ What application does God's immutability have on our salvation?
- ► What effect does it have on an unbeliever?

Application responses:

- ► God will not change His mind about my salvation.
- ► God will not change His mind about the judgment of sin.

6. The Omniscience of God

God is all-knowing.

Supplemental verses:

- ▶ Psalm 147:5—God has infinite understanding.
- Romans 11:33–34—God possesses all knowledge.
- ► Matthew 12:25; Isaiah 66:18—God knows man's thoughts.

Application questions:

- ► How does God's omniscience affect your view of your sin?
- How does God's omniscience relate to God's perfect justice?
- ► How about God's care for us?

Application responses:

- God knows all my sin—I cannot hide from God.
- God knows my thought life.

- We can never sin and get away with it.
- He can be the perfect judge, since He knows all the facts perfectly.
- God knows what is best for us.
- God knows us better than we know ourselves—He knows our future.
- God loves me even though He knows all the sins I will ever commit.

7. The Omnipresence of God

God is present everywhere.

Supplemental verses:

► Jeremiah 23:23–24—God is near.

Application questions:

- ► What does it mean that God is near?
- ► How does God's omnipresence affect you?
- ► How does God's omnipresence affect your prayer life?
- ► How about the indwelling of the Holy Spirit?

Application responses:

- ► We cannot hide from God.
- ▶ We can be in God's presence at all times.
- ► When we pray, God is near.
- ► The presence of the Holy Spirit is in every believer—all over the world.

8. The Omnipotence of God

God is all-powerful.

You should review the extra verses listed in the lesson:

- ► Genesis 1:1, 27—Creator God
- ► Hebrews 1:3—God upholds all things
- ► Psalm 37:23–24—God controls our lives
- ► Isaiah 41:10—God will uphold us

Application questions:

- ► When you stop and ponder on God's power, what is your response?
- ► How about your problems?
- ► How about your needs?
- ► How about your prayer life?
- ► How about your salvation?

Application responses:

- God has the power to bring about all the promises He has made.
- ► No problem is too big for God.
- God has the power to provide for all of our needs.
- ► Our salvation is secure in His power.

9. The Love of God

From the lesson verse, Romans 5:8. Ask, How does God demonstrate His love?

Supplemental verses:

- ▶ 1 Corinthians 13:4–6—Love is patient, kind, etc.
- ► Ephesians 2:4–5—God's great love demonstrated in His mercy
- ▶ 1 John 4:19—"We love, because He first loved us."

Application questions:

- ► How does God's love affect you?
- ► What should be your response to God's love?
- ► How should this affect your prayer life?

Application responses:

- ► Our response should be to love God . . . through our obedience to Him.
- ► We should be thankful for His mercy.
- ► We should want to love others, like God loves us, in good deeds.

10. The Truth of God

God is absolute truth, and His truth is firm.

Supplemental verses:

- ► John 14:6—Jesus Christ is truth.
- ▶ John 16:13—The Spirit of truth will guide you into all truth.
- ▶ 2 Timothy 2:15—God's Word (Scripture) is truth.
- ▶ Romans 1:18–22—Unrighteous men suppress the truth.
- ► John 8:32—God's truth can make one free from sin.

Application questions:

- ► What should be your response to God's truth?
- ► How does the truth of God affect your life?
- ► How do you view God's Word and the truth it contains?

Application responses:

- God's Word is truth so I should be studying it.
- God's truth should be the foundation of my life.
- ► God's Word needs to permeate my life.
- ► I must share the truth of the gospel with others.
- ► God's truth is powerful and can save.

11. The Mercy of God

Mercy is God's compassion or forbearance upon those who have opposed His will.

Supplemental verses:

- ► Ephesians 2:4–5—God being rich in mercy, saved us because of His great love.
- ▶ 1 Peter 1:3—God's mercy is great and has caused us to be born again.
- ▶ Romans 3:25—Because of God's forbearance, He passed over our sins.
- ► Ephesians 4:2—We are exhorted to show forbearance to others.

Application questions:

- ► How does the mercy of God affect your life?
- ▶ Why is God's mercy called "great mercy" in 1 Peter 1:3?
- ► What is your response when you think upon God's mercy?

Application responses:

- ► I am sinful and have violated God's holiness. I am in need of God's mercy.
- ► I am so thankful that God had mercy upon me and saved me.
- ► I am so thankful that God continues to have mercy upon me as every day I fall short of His holiness.
- ► I am not worthy of God's mercy.
- ► Because God showed mercy to me, I should show mercy to others.

5. Application (section V)

A. The conclusion is:

- ► Fear God—Proverbs 9:10; Revelation 15:4 (to fear God is to revere and worship Him)
- ▶ Desire to know God—Psalm 27:8
- ▶ Proclaim God—1 Peter 2:9

Take some time to discuss the students' answers to the application questions in the final section. These are rubber-meets-the-road issues that we can benefit from pondering ahead of time, rather than waiting until they happen and then trying to figure out how we should respond.

B. Final Exhortation

Exhort your students to reflect upon God's attributes when they pray. Praising God by reciting His attributes back to Him lays the correct foundation for prayer that drives one to confession and humility.

Close with a time of prayer focused on praising God's attributes.



THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST

Prepare for Your Assignment

- 1. Download message #4, "Christ Above All," from www.gty.org/fof.
- 2. Use your notebook to take notes on the message.
- 3. Work through the questions and tasks on the following pages.

Memorize John 1:1, 14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.... And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. Jesus Christ is the central figure of all human history. There has never been anyone like Him. He was regarded as a great teacher, a religious leader, a prophet, the Son of God, even God Himself. The claims He made, as well as those that others have made about Him, have propelled Him into the center of endless controversies throughout history.

Pontius Pilate phrased the question perfectly when he asked, "Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" (Matthew 27:22). Before you can answer that question, you must first understand who Jesus is. This lesson will introduce Him to you.

I. THE GOD WHO BECAME MAN

Jesus Christ came into the world in human flesh. He voluntarily set aside the independent use of His divine attributes and took on the form of a man. He was fully human, a man in every way, except that He was without sin. This is referred to as the "incarnation."

A. What does Philippians 2:6 say about Jesus before He became a man?

"Although He existed in the form of God, [He] did

not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped."

B. According to Philippians 2:7, what did Jesus do?

"Emptied Himself, taking the form of a

bond-servant, and being made in the likeness

of men."

C. Jesus was fully human.

1. Describe Jesus' human growth and development as a youth (Luke 2:40, 52).

He grew and became strong; increased in

wisdom.

2. What was Jesus' response when He was tired (Mark 4:38)? He slept.

3. W	hat was Jesus' response to lack of food (Luke 4:2)? <u>He became hungry</u> .
	ow did Jesus feel after a journey (John 4:6)? <u>He was weary</u> .
— 5. Ho	ow did Jesus react when He was grieved (John 11:35)?"Jesus wept."
6. W	hat did Jesus say about Himself (Luke 24:39)? "See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself;
	touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have."

II. THE MAN WHO IS GOD

Even though Jesus took on the form of a man, He was still fully God. Consider the following marks of deity attributed to Christ.

A. Attributes

Look up the following verses, which describe various attributes of Christ.	
1 John 1:1–2	
Colossians 2:2b-3	
Acts 3:14–15	
John 14:6	
•	

Christ demonstrated His power (omnipotence) in His earthly ministry in the following ways:

1. Matthew 8:23–27: power over	creation by calming the storm	
2. Luke 4:40: power over	sickness and disease	
3. Luke 4:33–36: power over	demons	
4. John 11:43–44: power over	death	

What additional authority did Jesus claim and exercise (Mark 2:3-12)?

(Hint: see verse 10.)

(v 10); Christ has authority on earth to forgive sins.

According to Mark 2:7, who alone can forgive sin? <u>God alone forgives sin</u>.

Since Jesus had the authority to forgive sins, and only God can forgive sins, who is Jesus Christ? He is God.

B. Titles of Deity

- 1. Matthew 1:23 Immanuel ("God with us")
- 2. Philippians 2:10–11 Lord (sovereign)
- 3. John 8:58 I Am (a title reserved for God; Exodus 3:14)

✤ It stands to reason, I believe, that the One who is first in rank in the universe; the One who is the point of reference for history; the One who is the Agent, the Goal, the Forerunner, the Sustainer, the Governor in the sphere of creation; the One who is the Head of the church, and the One who is the beginning, the source, and chief One, the One who is the ranking One of all those resurrected, the One who is the Firstfruits, if you will, of them that slept; that One has the right to the title "Preeminent." Wouldn't you say?

— John MacArthur

C. Statements of Deity

Write out the key statements.

- 1. Colossians 2:9 "For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form."
- 2. Hebrews 1:1–3a _____ "And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature."

3. John 1:1, 14: Jesus Christ ("The Word") is <u>God.</u>

4. Titus 2:13 _____our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus."

III. THE CHRIST WHO IS SAVIOR

According to John 3:17, Jesus is the Savior of the world. List the following titles that describe God's saving grace.

1. John 1:29 _	Lamb of God
2. John 6:35 _	Bread of Life
3. John 14:6 _	the way, truth, and life

IV. THE KING WHO COMES TO RULE

Jesus is not just a person of the past. He is the destined King of kings and Lord of lords (1 Timothy 6:14–15) who will someday reign over all the earth.

A. According to Daniel 7:14, what three things has Christ been given?

- 1. dominion
- 2. ______glory
- 3._____kingdom

B. What did Jesus tell His followers in Matthew 25:31-32?

"But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His

glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one

another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats."

C. When Christ ascended into heaven 40 days after the resurrection, what were the apostles

told (Acts 1:11)? _____They also said, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking in to the sky? This

Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have

watched Him go into heaven."

D. Describe the return of Jesus Christ (2 Thessalonians 1:7b–10). "When the Lord Jesus will be

revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do

not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. These will pay the penalty

of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He

comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed—

for our testimony to you was believed."

V. APPLICATION

Christ is:

- ► God
- ► Savior
- ► King/Ruler

A. In light of this, how can you best prepare for His second coming (2 Peter 3:14)?

"Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless

and blameless."

(Verse quoted for teacher's convenience. Answers will vary.)

B. What can you do this week to acknowledge who He is (Revelation 5:11-14)?

"Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and

the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands, saying with

a loud voice, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might

and honor and glory and blessing.' And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and

under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, 'To Him who sits on the throne,

and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever.' And the four living

creatures kept saying, 'Amen.' And the elders fell down and worshiped."

(Verse quoted for teacher's convenience. Answers will vary.)



THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST

THE OBJECTIVES OF LESSON 4

1. To present the person of Christ:

- ► As God
- ► As man
- ► As Lord and Savior

THE CLASS PLAN FOR LESSON 4

- 1. Discuss the incarnation and the humanity of Jesus.
- 2. Discuss the true divinity of Jesus.
- 3. Discuss Jesus' role as Savior and King.

COMMON QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 4

How can Jesus be both 100 percent man and 100 percent God at the same time?

How can Jesus be the Son of God and yet equal to God?

SUGGESTED TEACHING OUTLINE FOR LESSON 4

1. Warm-up

Your group should now be hitting its stride and eager to get into the meat of the lessons. Congratulate them on their efforts. Continue to review the memory verses for the lessons, inviting people to reflect on insights they have had into these verses as they have meditated on God's Word.

2. Introduction

When discussing the person of Jesus Christ, people usually do not have a problem accepting Christ as being a man. However, the issue they struggle with is Christ being equal to God, and in fact *is* God. Therefore, it is important in this lesson to explain what happened in the incarnation. You need to explain what happened during the *kenosis* (Philippians 2:6–8), and then to cover the essential deity of Christ.

However, before launching into a discussion on the deity of Christ, as an introduction it is helpful to look at the titles and I AMs of Christ. The titles and I AMs of Christ are very powerful and set the stage for the discussion on His essential deity.

A. The names and titles of Christ

The title Lord Jesus Christ:

- ► Lord—title of honor; we are subject to Him (1 Corinthians 7:23; 1 Peter 1:18–19; Romans 6:22)
- ► Jesus—Greek word Joshua, meaning savior (Matthew 1:21) Savior—Christ was God's Lamb (John 1:29; Isaiah 53:7)
- ► Christ—means "Anointed one"; Messiah (John 1:41); the official title of our Savior

A list of names, appellations, and titles of Christ can be found in *Nave's Topical Bible*, under "Jesus, the Christ; Names, Appellations, and Titles."

B. The I AMs of Christ

- ▶ I am gentle and humble in heart—Matthew 11:29
- ► I am the Son of God—Matthew 27:43
- ► I am with you always—Matthew 28:20
- ▶ I am the bread of life—John 6:35
- ► I am the light of the world—John 8:12
- ▶ I am not of this world—John 8:23
- ► I am the door—John 10:9
- ► I am the good shepherd—John 11:25
- ► I am the resurrection and the life—John 11:25
- ▶ I am the way, the truth, and the life—John 14:6
- ► I am the vine—John 15:5
- ▶ I am a king—John 18:37
- ▶ I am the Alpha and the Omega/Almighty—Revelation 1:8; 21:6
- ▶ I am the First and the Last, the living one, alive forever—Revelation 1:17–18
- ▶ I am He who searches the minds and hearts—Revelation 2:23
- ► I am coming quickly—Revelation 3:11
- ▶ I am the root and offspring of David, the bright morning star—Revelation 22:16
- ► I AM—John 8:58

3. The God who became man (section I)

As mentioned above, the issue of Christ being a human being, "flesh and bone," as Luke 24:39 states, is normally accepted. However, it is important for the student to learn that Christ's existence did not start at His human birth. Rather Christ existed in the form of God prior to His incarnation, and at His birth He took on humanity, becoming 100 percent God and 100 percent man.

A. The incarnation

Start by having a student read Philippians 2:6–7 and give the answers to lesson #4, questions I, A and I, B. Then launch into a discussion about the incarnation.

Key points to cover during the discussion on the incarnation:

- Christ never ceased being deity—Colossians 2:9 (this also will be expanded upon when you cover section II of the lesson).
- ► Christ added humanity to His deity. His glory was veiled in flesh; the transfiguration was a display of Christ for a moment, unveiling His glory—Matthew 17:1–8.
- Christ voluntarily set aside, or emptied, Himself of the independent exercise of some of His divine attributes (Philippians 2:7).
 - Set aside His glory—John 17:5
 - Set aside His independent authority—Philippians 2:7
 - Set aside the open display of His divine attributes—Matthew 24:36
 - Set aside His eternal riches—2 Corinthians 8:9
 - Set aside His face-to-face relationship with the Father—Matthew 27:46

Important: As a result of His self-emptying or self-humbling, Christ took on the form of a bondslave. This explains passages that people have problems with that imply that Christ is not God, such as:

- "I can do nothing on My own initiative.... I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me" (John 5:30).
- "The Father is greater than I" (John 14:28).
- Christ had to be man, to die in man's place (Matthew 20:28).
- ► Christ had to be God, to be the perfect sacrifice. Christ's sinlessness cannot be explained apart from His deity (Romans 3:23; 1 Corinthians 15:45–48).

B. The humanity of Christ

Briefly cover the humanity of Christ by having the students read their responses to lesson #4, section I, C. Don't spend much time here; this is fairly straightforward. You want to move on to the deity of Christ.

4. The man who is God (section II)

This is the core of the lesson, clearly showing the deity of Jesus Christ. Start by reviewing sections II, A, B, and C in the lesson:

A. The deity of Christ demonstrated in His attributes

- ► Go over the table of Christ's attributes, in section II, A. **Note:** If you do not go over these verses, the students will most likely bypass them.
- ► Talk about Christ's attribute of omnipotence.

- Have the students read their answers to II, A, 1–4 and talk about Christ's power.
- Review the box at the end of II, A—talk about Christ's power to forgive sins.

B. The deity of Christ demonstrated through His titles

► Review the titles of Christ, II, B (which you already covered in the introduction).

C. Statements declaring the deity of Christ

Review the statements of Christ's deity, in II, C. Additional passages to supplement the lesson:

- ▶ Thomas's testimony to Christ's deity—John 20:28–29
- ▶ Christ as the only Sovereign, King of kings—Matt. 28:18; Rev. 17:14; 19:16
- ► Christ claimed to be God—John 10:31–33

Note: The Jews did not miss Christ's claim to be God. The Jews got the message and understood *exactly* what Jesus was saying. And that's why they took up stones to kill Him, according to their law (Leviticus 24:16).

❖ John 10:33 clearly records the fact that the Jews got the message when Jesus made a lot of claims. People say, "Well, Jesus never claimed to be God." Oh baloney! And that's mild. Notice their words to Jesus as they planned to kill Him, "The Jews answered Him, 'For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God" (John 10:33). They got the message. Believe me, they got the message. They knew exactly what He was claiming; He had claimed divine authority over angels; He had claimed divine authority over men; He claimed, in fact, divine authority over everything when He said, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth" (Matthew 28:18). He claimed divine authority over the Law, over the Sabbath, over the tradition of the elders, every bit of it. He claimed power to forgive sin, power to raise Himself from the dead, and He proved it.

— John MacArthur

5. The Christ who is Savior (section III)

Review Christ's titles as the Savior of the world. Make sure that the class realizes there is a great difference between saying, "Jesus is the Savior," and saying, "Jesus is my Savior."

Ask, What is the difference between admitting that Jesus is the Savior, and going beyond that and claiming that Jesus is my Savior?

Ask, Based on the verses you read in this section, what does it mean to use the title "Savior" when talking about Jesus?

6. The King who comes to rule (section IV)

Never leave Christ on the cross. Conclude the lesson by presenting the resurrected and exalted Christ who will come again in power.

A. The exaltation of Christ

Have one of the students read their answers to IV, A.

Verses to supplement the lesson as you see helpful:

- ► Highly exalted—Philippians 2:9–10
- ► At the right hand of the Father—Hebrews 1:3

Ask, When we say that Jesus is King, in what different ways are we thinking of His rule?

B. The second coming of Christ

Have the students read their answers to IV, B through IV, D.

Verses to supplement the lesson as you see helpful:

- ► Coming in judgment—2 Thessalonians 1:7–10
- ► His glory revealed—Matthew 24:30
- ▶ The power of Christ's second coming—Revelation 19:11–16

Ask, What images or ideas fill your mind when you think about Jesus returning in glory?

7. Application (section V)

The first verse in this section urges a certain way of living in the light of Christ's return; the second provides a picture of what that return will look and feel like. Ask some of the students to share with the class what they wrote as an answer to each of the application questions.

People have often called the Bible the "Jesus Book," and in a sense that is true. If you understand the Bible, you understand that it is the Book about the Lord Jesus. In the Old Testament there is the preparation for Jesus' coming. In the Gospels there is the presentation of Christ; He is come. In Acts there is the proclamation, the message of salvation in Christ is announced. In the Epistles we study the personalization, that is, for to me to live is Christ. Christ, who has died and risen from the grave, returns to live in His people. And in Revelation there is the predomination, or the Christ on the throne, the reign of the King, the Lamb on the throne.

In every sense, the Bible is Christ's story. It is the Book that tells us all about Him. In Acts, chapter 8, the focus on Christ is indicated to us in verse 35, when Philip, talking to the Ethiopian eunuch on the road to Gaza, the Holy Spirit says, "Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture he preached Jesus to him." Of course, he was beginning in the Old Testament with the prophet Isaiah. He met the eunuch exactly where he was in Scripture and showed him Christ.

— John MacArthur



THE WORK OF CHRIST

Prepare for Your Assignment

- 1. Download message #5, "The Suffering Jesus: Our Substitute and Shepherd," from www.gty.org/fof.
- 2. Use your notebook to take notes on the message.
- 3. Work through the questions and tasks on the following pages.

Memorize: 1 Corinthians 15:3-4

For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.

Some people think Jesus died as a martyr. They think that Jesus is just a great example of someone who died for a cause. That's the "Jesus Christ Superstar" mentality—that Jesus was a martyr who lived for a good cause and sets a great example of how to be so sold out to a cause that you are willing to die as a martyr. And admittedly, a martyr can be an example of suffering, but a martyr cannot be a substitute. A martyr cannot take away my sin by the sacrifice of himself.

— John MacArthur

The Scriptures tell us that "He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness" (1 Peter 2:24).

I. MAN'S NEED FOR CHRIST'S WORK

A. According to Romans 3:10–12, every man is guilty of what six things?

1.	none righteous		
2.	none who understands		
3.	none who seeks for God		
4.	all have turned aside		
5.	they have become useless		
6	no one does good		
0.			

Romans 3:23 sums up the problem: "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

- D. Because we were dead in trespasses and sins, whom did we follow and what kind of children were we (Ephesians 2:1-3)?

"You formerly walked according to the course of

this world, according to the prince of the power of

the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons

of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly

lived the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of

the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature

children of wrath, even as the rest."

E. Whose wrath will the "sons of disobedience" experience (Ephesians 5:6)?

God's wrath

Will God Tolerate Sin?

"Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, to perform them." $-G_{ALATIANS 3:10}$

As we studied in lesson #3, God asserts His holiness and demands conformity to that holiness. Man is faced with:

- ► Sin (Romans 3:23)
- Having God as his enemy (James 4:4b)
- Subjection to the power of Satan (1 John 5:19)
- Being helpless to save himself (Romans 5:6)
- ► Death (Romans 6:23)
- ► Condemnation and eternal separation from God (2 Thessalonians 1:9)

II. THE COST OF CHRIST'S WORK

A. Read Philippians 2:7-8.

1. What are three things Christ did when He came to earth (verse 7)?

a	emptied Himself	
b	took the form of a bond-servant	
c	found in appearance as a man	

2. In what way did Jesus humble Himself (verse 8)? <u>"He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the</u> point of death, even death on a cross."

B. What happened to Jesus on earth, according to Isaiah 53:3?

"He was despised and forsaken of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief."

C. Forgiveness of sins requires what (Hebrews 9:22)?

"According to the Law, one may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding

of blood there is no forgiveness."

D. What price did Christ pay to redeem us (1 Peter 1:18-19)?

His shed blood

E. What did Jesus cry out on the cross (Matthew 27:46)?

"My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

F. What did God do to Jesus while He was on the cross (Isaiah 53:6)?

"The Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him."

III. THE PROVISIONS OF CHRIST'S WORK

Jesus Christ came to earth to pay the price for sin. That price was His own life, which He gave voluntarily (John 10:11, 17–18). His sacrifice was the only way to take away sin for all time (Hebrews 9:12).

Describe what Jesus' death accomplished.

- A. 1 Peter 3:18 "For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit."
- **B. Romans 5:10** "For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life."
- C. 2 Corinthians 5:21 "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."
- **D. Galatians 1:4** "[Jesus] gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father."
- E. Ephesians 1:7 <u>"In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses,</u> according to the riches of His grace."

At the heart of the church's worship is the beautiful ordinance of the Lord's Table, with which we are very familiar. There at the Lord's Table we take the bread and the cup in remembrance and communion with Christ. At the heart of the Lord's Table is a doctrine and that doctrine is the very core of the Christian gospel. It is summed up in the words of our Lord who said, "This is My body which is given for you." The essence of the Christian gospel is that Jesus Christ has done something for us. Most specifically, He died *for* us. That's the point. His death was *for* us. And that is precisely what Peter says in 1 Peter 2:21, "Christ also suffered for you." He suffered for you. It was for us that Christ suffered, that's his point.

— John MacArthur

F. Romans 6:6–7 _____Our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done

away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin."

Jesus Christ: The Answer to All Man's Problems Concerning Salvation

Christ's work on the cross and His resurrection are the only solution to man's problems. That is why Peter could proclaim of Jesus Christ:

"And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved." —Acts 4:12

Refer to your answers in the first section of this lesson, and note how Christ is the answer to each of man's problems.

Man's Problem	The Solution in Christ	Scripture
A. Guilt before God 1. Not righteous	"Through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous."	Romans 5:19
2. Not understanding	"The Son of God has come, and has given us understanding."	1 John 5:20
3. Not seeking God	"The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."	Luke 19:10
4. Turned away from God	"You were straying but now you have returned to the Shepherd."	1 Peter 2:25
5. All have become useless	"These qualities render you neither useless nor unfruitful in Christ."	2 Peter 1:8
6. No good works	"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works."	Ephesians 2:10
B. Slavery to sin	"Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death."	Romans 8:2
C. Facing death	"He who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life."	John 5:24
D. Facing the wrath of God	"Justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him."	Romans 5:9

IV. THE MOTIVE FOR CHRIST'S WORK

A. Why did God save men (John 3:16; Romans 5:8)? Because He loves us.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall

not perish, but have eternal life. . . . God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were

yet sinners, Christ died for us."

B. What attribute of God is demonstrated in His salvation of men (1 Peter 1:3)? Mercy.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has

caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

C. Why does the author call God's mercy great? (Hint: Romans 5:6, 8)

Because He died for the unworthy

V. THE RESOLUTION AND CONTINUATION OF CHRIST'S WORK

Christ's death on Calvary finished His redemptive work for man (John 19:30). But salvation's story does not end there. The grave could not hold Christ; He lives and continues the work He began for us.

A. How was Christ declared to be the Son of God (Romans 1:4)?

"... with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ

our Lord."

B. After Christ made purification of sins, how was He exalted (Hebrews 1:3)?

"... He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high."

C. We experience spiritual death through Adam's sin. What benefit do we gain through Christ's resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:21–22)? _______ "in Christ all will be made alive."

The Bible refers to Christ's resurrection as "the firstfruits." This is an Old Testament term that speaks of the firstfruits of the harvest; these fruits were set apart for the Lord. When used in the New Testament, "firstfruits" implies a pledge of more harvest to follow. Therefore, Christ's resurrection holds the promise of resurrection for others also. 1 CORINTHIANS 15:20-22; 1 Peter 1:3

D. Now that we have been drawn to God through Christ, what is Jesus able to do (Hebrews

7:25)? "Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them."

- E. What role does Christ hold exclusively (1 Timothy 2:5)? "For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."
- F. When Jesus was going to leave, what did He promise He would do (John 14:3)? ________

and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you

may be also."

VI. APPLICATION

When some people are confronted with the reality of who Christ is, they realize they have made a terrible error in what they have believed or how they have lived. They are deeply convicted in their hearts. Consider the example of the men in Jerusalem, whose eyes were opened to the truth.

"Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?" $-A_{CTS 2:37}$

What can you do?

- ► Acknowledge that you have sinned and are not acceptable to God.
- ▶ Repent and call upon the name of Jesus to save you.
- ► Seek forgiveness through His blood shed for you.
- ► Acknowledge that He is the rightful ruler in your life.
- ► Thank God for His love and grace.

O I have repented of my sins and called upon the name of Jesus Christ, believing in Him as Lord and Savior.

O I have not received Christ, but I am still earnestly seeking.



THE WORK OF CHRIST

THE OBJECTIVES OF LESSON 5

- 1. To explain man's need for a Savior.
- 2. To show the cost of Christ's work.
- 3. To show the provision of Christ's work.
- 4. To present the resurrected Christ.
- 5. To offer a call to repentance.

THE CLASS PLAN FOR LESSON 5

- 1. Discuss sin and the reality of man's depravity.
- 2. Emphasize the need and predetermined plan of Christ's substitutionary death.
- 3. Discuss the crucifixion and the judgment of God.
- 4. Discuss the resurrection and the provision of Christ's work on the cross.

COMMON QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 5

Why did Christ have to die? Couldn't He save the world without dying?

How do I know that *all* of my sins were paid for on the cross?

SUGGESTED TEACHING OUTLINE FOR LESSON 5

1. Warm-up

The lesson centers around the cost that Christ paid on the cross for our sins. This is seen in His utter humiliation, even to the point of death on the cross (Philippians 2:8). Christ's dying on the cross is the crowning act of love of His earthly ministry, and it is the focal point of all of Scripture. Therefore, you will want to spend time looking at the crucifixion and the events surrounding the cross—God forsaking His own Son, crushing Him for our sin. The majesty of Christ shines in His humility on the cross and His victory over death. However, before discussing the work of Christ on the cross, it is important to understand the sinful and hopeless condition of all mankind.

2. Man's need for Christ's work (section I)

The lesson opens up describing man's need of salvation. It presents man as hopelessly lost and enslaved to sin.

A. The condition of man-totally depraved

Start by having your students read Romans 3:10–12. Ask them to read their responses to I, A. Discuss the following phrases:

► None righteous

- No one is right before God
- God's standard is perfection—Matthew 5:48
- All of man's deeds are as filthy rags to God—Isaiah 64:6

► None who understands

- Unredeemed man has no spiritual capacity to understand God
- Men are darkened in their understanding—Ephesians 4:17–18

None who seeks God

- Men do not seek God because of their hard hearts
- Men only seek God in response to God seeking them—John 6:44
- ► All have turned aside
 - Ask, Who have men turned aside from? Answer: God.
 - Note: Unrighteous men, who do not seek God and do not understand spiritual things, will turn aside and go their own way, apart from God (Isaiah 53:6).
- ► Become useless
 - Ask, What does it mean to be useless?
 - Spiritually dead—Ephesians 2:1
- ► None who does good
 - Worthless for any good deed—Titus 1:16

Total depravity does not mean that man is void of any quality pleasing to man or that every person is as bad as he or she can be. However, it does mean that every part of man is tainted by sin (motives, actions, desires, etc.). Therefore, men are slaves to sin, totally separated from God, and in a condition in which it is impossible to please God.

B. The consequence of man's condition

Questions I, B through I, E detail the consequence of man's state of depravity—namely, that man is enslaved to sin and at enmity with God.

Ask the students for their response to question I, B. This opens a discussion on sin, which is important to discuss since there would be no need for the cross if it were not for sin.

- ► **Definition:** Sin is anything contrary to God in thought, in word, or in deed.
 - In thought—Matthew 5:28
 - In word or speech—Colossians 3:8
 - In deed
 - Sins of commission: breaking God's law (1 John 3:4)
 - Sins of omission: not doing what you know is right (James 4:17)
- ► Enslaved to sin: Ask the students, *What does it mean to be enslaved to sin*? Discuss the awful reality that each person is born a slave to sin.

Review lesson #5, sections II, B through II, E. Emphasize that unsaved people fall under the judgment of God. This is summarized in the list at the end of section I. Have the students look up the verses in the list and discuss each one.

Transition to Christ's work on the cross, Romans 5:6: "For while **we were still helpless**, at the right time **Christ died** for the ungodly."

3. The work of Christ

In considering the sacrifice of Christ on the cross, it is important to discuss:

- ► The need for a blood sacrifice
- Christ's humiliation
- ► The crucifixion and events around the crucifixion
- ► The judgment of God at the cross

A. The need for a blood sacrifice (sections II, C and II, D)

"Why did Jesus have to die? Couldn't He save the world without suffering and dying?" God declared that death is required to appease sin. This is seen in the sacrificial system, where God required the killing of Passover lambs as a sin offering. It is also seen in God's verdict that the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). Christ's death on the cross takes the place of our spiritual death by making atonement for our sins.

- ► Forgiveness requires the shedding of blood (Hebrews 9:22).
- ► God had set the requirement that the shedding of blood is required for the atonement of sin (Leviticus 17:11).

B. Christ's humiliation (sections II, A and II, B)

Review sections II, A and II, B with the students. Review the discussion on the *kenosis* (emptying) from last week. Discuss the fact that in order to be the perfect sacrifice for sin and mediator between God and man, Jesus had to be both God and sinless man. Moreover, in the greatest act of humility, Christ had to set aside His glory and independent authority and take on the form of a bond-servant (Philippians 2:8), being despised and forsaken of men.

C. The crucifixion

When covering section II, the subject of the crucifixion is opened for discussion. It is important to read the main passages that cover the crucifixion and discuss the events around the crucifixion.

- ► The agony before His crucifixion—Luke 22:41–44
- ► His arrest—Matthew 26:50–58
- ► His trial—Matthew 26:59–8
- ▶ Before Pilate—Matthew 27:11–26
- ► His scourging—Matthew 27:27–31
- ► His crucifixion—Matthew 27:32–37
- ► His last words—John 19:26–30

Events that took place at His death included supernatural darkness, earthquakes, resurrections, and the tearing of the veil in the temple isolating the Holy of Holies (Matthew 27:45–53). The tearing of the veil demonstrated that access to God was now open to all men. Discuss these events with the class.

D. The judgment of God at the cross (sections II, E and II, F)

To understand the full burden of Christ bearing the sins of all who would believe, it is imperative to understand that God's justice required that the full punishment for all the sins committed be cast upon Christ. As Christ bore the sins of man, He became sin, and the Father executed His judgment on Him rather than on each individual sinner.

But even more profound is that God abandoned the Son at the time of Christ's sin-bearing. **Note**, during the crucifixion is the only time that Christ addresses God as "My God" and not as "Father." This is the mystery of mysteries, as the Father forsakes the Son, leaving Him utterly alone to bear our sins in His body on the cross. This separation between the Father and the Son was a *relational* separation, where the intimate fellowship between the Father and the Son was broken. The Son could never be separated from the *essence* of the Trinity, for then the Triune God would cease to be. Christ remained God; the Trinity remained unbroken. Nevertheless, in a way our minds cannot fully comprehend, God the Father forsook God the Son, as He laid upon Christ the iniquity of us all, abandoning Him to bear His Father's righteous wrath against the sins of His people.

These truths need to be discussed as you cover sections II, E and II, F.

- ▶ Christ bore our sin, became sin on our behalf—2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:24
- ► Our iniquities fell upon Christ—Isaiah 53:6 (II, F)

In some way and by some means, in the secrets of divine sovereignty and omnipotence, the God-Man was separated from God for a brief time at Calvary, as the furious wrath of the Father was poured out on the sinless Son, who in matchless grace became sin for those who believe in Him.¹

-John MacArthur

- ► God was pleased to crush the Son as a guilt offering—Isaiah 53:10
- ► Christ was forsaken by the Father—Matthew 27:46 (II, E). Note: Forsaken: to leave behind; to abandon; to desert.

Ask: Why did God the Father abandon the Son? Answer: Christ had become sin.

The judgment of God upon Christ at the cross demonstrates God's immense love for His children (1 John 4:10), as well as being the only means by which they may be forgiven.

4. The provisions of Christ's work (section III)

The lesson does a good job of describing what Jesus' sacrifice accomplished for those who believe. Review the verses in section III, A through F.

A. Reconciled to God

Review Romans 5:10, focusing on the fact that believers have been "reconciled to God." To "reconcile" carries the idea of bringing again into harmony, or bringing into agreement with. Being reconciled to God means we now have peace with God.

Ask: How do you respond personally to the message that, in Christ, you are reconciled with God?

B. Jesus Christ: the answer to all man's problems concerning salvation

Use the chart at the end of section III to help the class visualize the extent of what Christ provided by His work on the cross. Ask, *For each of the Scripture verses listed in the column "The Solution in Christ," what would be a three- or four-word summary that parallels the statements in the column "Man's Problem"*?

To put it as simply as I can put it, if Christ is not my substitute, then I still occupy the place of a condemned sinner. If my sins and my guilt are not transferred to Him, and He does not take them, then they remain with me. If He did not deal with my sins, then I must deal with them. If He did not bear my penalty, then I must bear it. There is no other possibility. It is either Him or me.

Some have suggested, by the way, that it is immoral to teach the doctrine of substitution. Some theologians have suggested that it is immoral to teach that God in human flesh took on sin and bore my sin and your sin. But it is not immoral because you are not pushing something on God that He wouldn't want. You are not tainting His holiness—not at all. The truth of the matter is that in the process of salvation, mark this, God is not transferring penalty from one man guilty to another man innocent. No, He is bearing the sin Himself, for Jesus was God in human flesh.

— John MacArthur

5. The motive for Christ's work (section IV)

Christ's giving of Himself to the point of death to save men demonstrates God's great love and mercy. When reviewing section IV, ask the students to give their response to question IV, C.

6. The resolution and continuation of Christ's work (section V)

Remember to cover the resurrection. You do not want to leave Christ on the cross.

As crucial as the death of Jesus on the cross is for our salvation, the process did not end there. Explain how, without the resurrection, Christ's life, sinlessness, and sacrifice would all be meaningless. Having a dead Messiah saves nobody.

- ► The power of the resurrection over death—Romans 1:4 (V, A)
- ► The necessity of the resurrection—1 Corinthians 15:13–12 (V, C)

Discuss the idea of "firstfruits" as highlighted in section V, C.

Discuss the position of Christ as *Intercessor* and *Mediator* (sections V, D and V, E). Discuss the purpose of Christ mediating for us, before the Father, as our Great High Priest (Hebrews 4:14).

7. Application (section VI)

There is always the possibility that there are people in your class who have never personally responded to the gospel. Say, *The end of the lesson challenges each of us as to whether we have repented and called on the name of the Lord, believing in Him as Lord and Savior.*

Then ask, What does true repentance look like? and What does it mean to believe in Him as Lord?

SALVATION



- 1. Download message #6, "Exchanging Living Death for Dying Life," from www.gty.org/fof.
- 2. Use your notebook to take notes on the message.
- 3. Work through the questions and tasks on the following pages.

Memorize Ephesians 2:8–10

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

✤ John Edie, the nineteenth-century Scottish preacher, said, "Men without Christ are death walking. The beauties of holiness do not attract man in his moral insensibility, nor do the miseries of Hell deter him." You can talk about heaven to him, he's not interested. You can talk about hell to him, he's not afraid.

Now this kind of man doesn't need renewal, this kind of man doesn't need repair, this kind of man doesn't need restoration, resuscitation; this kind of man needs resurrection. He needs life, because he's dead.

— John MacArthur

How is Christ's redeeming work applied to man? How do we know whether someone is a Christian? God has decreed or ordained a plan of salvation that He has revealed to us in the Bible. In this lesson, we will learn how He saves those who believe.

I. GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY IN SALVATION

A. God's sovereign plan of salvation

1. Read Romans 8:29–30, and write out the progression of how God brings someone to salvation:

foreknew	
predestined	
predestined	
called	
	predestined predestined called called justified justified

2. Read Ephesians 1:4–6 and answer the following:

a. What has been God's plan since before the foundation of the world (verse 4)?

"That we would be holy and blameless before Him."

b. What is the purpose of His plan of salvation (verse 6)?"to the praise and glory of His grace."

Grace is "God's free and sovereign act of love and mercy in granting salvation through the death and resurrection of Jesus, apart from anything men are or can do, and of His sustaining that salvation to glorification."¹ — JOHN MACARTHUR

¹ Quote from The MacArthur New Testament Commentary series, *Galatians* (Moody), © 1987 by John MacArthur.

B. God implements His plan of salvation

God's Decree to Reveal His Plan

"The mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past, but now is manifested . . . according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith." — Romans 16:25-26

1. What is man's spiritual condition before conversion (Ephesians 2:1)?

dead in trespasses and sin

2. What does God (the Holy Spirit) do concerning sin (John 16:8)?

"He . . . will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment."

3. What is needed before someone can know the truth (2 Timothy 2:25)?

Repentance

- 4. Who grants it? ____ God
- 5. Read John 1:12–13. Who grants us the right to become children of God (verse 12)?

God

Notice that this right or privilege is not granted to us because of:

- ► Our birth ("of blood")
- ► Our own efforts ("will of the flesh")
- ► Our own volition ("will of man")
- 6. Who causes growth in a believer (1 Corinthians 3:6)? _____. God was causing the growth."
- 7. Who will cause the resurrection to occur (1 Corinthians 6:14)? *"God* has not only raised the Lord, but will also raise us up through His power."

C. God culminates His plan

1. Look again at Romans 8:29. Into whose image will we be ultimately conformed?

The image of His Son (Jesus Christ)

2. What is going to happen to every believer (Philippians 3:20–21)?

We will be transformed into conformity with the body of Christ's glory.

3. What is Christ's desire for those who are His (John 17:24)? <u>"I desire that they also, whom You have</u>

given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me."

II. CONVERSION

Numbers 21:5–9 records how the children of Israel sinned against God, and so God sent deadly snakes that bit them and caused death. The people realized their sin and asked to be delivered. God instructed Moses to put a fiery bronze serpent on a pole, and when someone was bit, they could look on it and be saved. In a way that illustrates conversion; however, instead of a serpent on a pole, we have the Son of God on a cross.

A. Conviction of sin

- 1. What has God given people to reveal their sinfulness (Romans 3:20)? <u>"Through *the Law* comes the</u> knowledge of sin."
- 2. When the people realized the mistake they made in crucifying Christ, how did they feel in their hearts
- (Acts 2:36–37)? "Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the

rest of the apostles, 'Brethren, what shall we do?'"

B. Repentance from sin

1. Why did the tax collector cry out to God in the temple (Luke 18:13)?

He knew he was a sinner.

salvation

2. Read 2 Corinthians 7:9–10.

a. What does godly sorrow over sin produce (verse 10)? ______ repentance

b. What does it lead to (verse 10)?

Repentance means turning away from sin and turning to God.

C. Turning to Christ

When people who had been bitten by a deadly serpent looked at the serpent on the pole, they were exercising faith in what God said.

1. What promise is given to those who call upon the name of the Lord (Romans 10:13)?

"Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved."

- 2. Read Romans 10:8–10. Faith is required for salvation.
 - a. What must you confess (verse 9)? _____'Jesus as Lord."
 - b. What must you believe (verse 9)? _____ "Believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead."

Faith means trusting in, clinging to, or embracing Jesus Christ, who is the object of our faith.

D. Becoming slaves to righteousness

- 1. Read Romans 8:1–2.
 - a. For the believer in Christ, what is the penalty for sin (verse 1)?

"There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."

b. From what is the believer free (verse 2)? _____ "the law of sin" _____ and ____"death"

2. When freed from sin, what does a believer become (Romans 6:18)?

"slaves of righteousness."

3. What benefit results (Romans 6:22)?

"sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life."

Sanctification is the process of being conformed to the image of Jesus Christ.

III. EVIDENCE OF SALVATION

Three important evidences of a true believer are: *faith* that works, *love* that labors, and *hope* that endures (1 Thessalonians 1:3–4).

A. Faith that works

- 1. What reveals genuine faith?
 - a. James 2:18 _____ one's works
 - b. 1 Peter 1:6–7 _______ trials; tested by fire

- 2. For what did God prepare believers (Ephesians 2:10)? _____good works
- 3. Titus 3:8 says that those who have believed in God should do what? Why?
 - "engage in good deeds. These things are good and profitable for men."

B. Love that labors

1. Besides faith, what else does God take note of in the believer (Hebrews 6:10)?

"your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in

still ministering to the saints."

2. What is the source of love in the life of a believer (Romans 5:5)?

"The love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit."

3. What is true of a person who is born of God (1 John 4:7-8)?

"Beloved, let us *love one another*, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and

knows God."

4. How does a true believer show love (1 John 3:18–19)?

"Let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth."

C. Hope that endures

1. Who did Jesus say will be saved (Matthew 10:22)?

"It is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved."

2. What gives us our motivation to endure (1 Timothy 4:10)?

"We have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior."

- 3. Describe the hope that a Christian has.
 - a. Galatians 5:5 "the hope of righteousness."
 - b. 1 Thessalonians 5:8 "the hope of salvation."

c. Titus 3:7 _____ "the hope of eternal life."

D. The three that abide

What three things did Paul notice about the Colossians (Colossians 1:4-5)?

1	their faith in Christ
2	their love for all the saints
3	their trust in the hope laid up for them in heaven

IV. APPLICATION

God is sovereign in salvation. The believer is not called to salvation because of his own worthiness but because of God's purpose and grace (Ephesians 1:3–14).

A. Realizing that God has chosen you for salvation, how should you respond (Ephesians 1:4)?

"We would be holy and blameless before Him."

B. How are you exhorted to live (Romans 6:12-13)?

"Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, and do not go on

presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves

to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God."

The true believer will be convicted of sin and turn from it. He will be willing to submit to God and follow Christ. A true believer will exhibit:

- ► A faith that works
- ► A love that labors
- ► A hope that endures

Those three qualities are present in every true believer and shape the direction of his life.

Read Psalm 116:16–17. Starting today, what application can you make?

(Answers will vary)



SALVATION

The Objectives of Lesson 6

- 1. To explain that a person's salvation is a sovereign work of God.
- 2. To understand conversion and its evidences.
- 3. To challenge the students as to their own salvation.

THE CLASS PLAN FOR LESSON 6

- 1. Review the depravity of man.
- 2. Discuss the sovereignty of God in salvation.
- 3. Discuss man's responsibility in salvation.
- 4. Review the conversion process and the evidence of genuine salvation.

COMMON QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 6

If God is sovereign in salvation, then why is man still responsible?

How do I know if I am a Christian?

SUGGESTED TEACHING OUTLINE FOR LESSON 6

1. Warm-up

Check on the class members' success in keeping up with the homework assignments. Ask, *How have you been enjoying the messages from the Web site, and how have you used them in preparing for these sessions?*

2. God's sovereignty in salvation (section I)

A primary purpose of this lesson is to view salvation as a sovereign work of God. However, to understand that salvation is solely a work of God requires an understanding that man has no capacity to save himself. Therefore, before launching into a discussion on God's sovereignty in salvation, it is important to review the depravity of man covered in the previous lesson.

A. The depravity of man

- ► God's indictment of man—Romans 3:10–12
 - None righteous
 - None who understands

- None who seeks God
- All have turned aside
- Useless
- None who does good
- ► The fallen nature of unsaved men
 - Alienated from God—Colossians 1:21–22
 - Spiritually dead—Ephesians 2:1–5
 - Helpless to save themselves—Romans 5:6

Transition to God's sovereignty: Because of the depravity of man, man on his own could never, and would never, find God. *God must seek man out*. This leads the students to recognize that salvation is totally a work of God, which you will stress in this lesson. Stress it in such a way as to create the response in the students of thanksgiving (if they are saved), or of prayer for salvation (if they are not).

B. God's sovereign plan of salvation (section I, A)

When looking at God's sovereignty in salvation, you need to discuss the progression of how God brings a person to salvation (i.e., the process of salvation). Moreover, you need to discuss this process of salvation in light of God's foreknowledge and God's purposes. Finally, you need to address man's responsibility in light of God's sovereign choice.

1. The process of salvation—Romans 8:29-30 (section I, A, 1)

Take time to work through the answers to the blanks under Romans 8:29–30. This passage is talking about the process, or the plan, of salvation in a way that stresses God's sovereignty and direction. Notice the five links in the chain: foreknew, predestined, called, justified, and glorified. These words may be new to students so make sure you help them understand what each term means.

In reviewing the Romans passage:

- ► Ask, What phrase is repeated four times? Answer: "He also."
- ► Ask, *What is important about this phrase?* Answer: The chain is unbreakable; once the process is begun, it will come to completion. Those whom God has called to salvation will respond and they will be glorified with Him in heaven. This is a promise of the security of our salvation.
- ► Ask, *What is the tense of these four actions?* Answer: Each is in the past tense. This is important because the salvation of a believer is written in eternity past with God.
- ► Ask, *Who is carrying out each of the four actions?* Answer: God.
- ► Ask, *Why is this important?* Answer: Salvation is a work of God and God alone. Stress that repentant faith is the first step we take in response to God calling us; and even our faith is a gift from God (2 Peter 1:1).

2. The foreknowledge of God—1 Peter 1:1-2

Take students to 1 Peter 1:1–2 and look at the word "foreknowledge." It comes from the Greek word *proginosko*, which is a cognate of the Greek preposition *pro* (beforehand) and *ginosko* (to know in an intimate way). Often, new believers may think that foreknowledge merely means "knowing something beforehand," as if our lives were a movie and God already knows the ending. Explain that this word is much deeper than that. It implies an intimate knowledge of the details of our lives because God is sovereign over our lives. It is more than just knowing what will happen; it is planning it before we were born.

Note: Many people try to explain God's choice of some for salvation by holding that due to His foreknowledge He looked down the corridor of time and saw who would believe. However, this is not biblical. It assumes that man has the capacity to seek God and believe on his own. This violates the fact that unregenerate man is totally depraved, spiritually dead, and would never seek God. This view also undermines the sovereignty and grace of God in salvation.

In His omniscience God is certainly able to look to the end of history and beyond and know in advance the minutest detail of the most insignificant occurrences. But it is both unbiblical and illogical to argue from that truth that the Lord simply looked ahead to see who would believe and then chose those particular individuals for salvation.

If that were true, salvation not only would begin with man's faith but would make God obligated to grant it. In such a scheme, God's initiative would be eliminated and His grace would be vitiated.¹ —John MacArthur

3. The purpose of God in choosing some for salvation (section I, A, 2b)

Have one of the students read Ephesians 1:4-6 and discuss the following points:

- ▶ He chose so He may receive praise and glory for His grace—Ephesians 1:6
- ► He chose according to His purposes (also see 2 Timothy 1:9)

Note: And who are we to argue that His choice is unfair (Romans 9:14–23)?

4. Man's responsibility in salvation (supplement to the lesson)

Even though God is sovereign in choosing those who are to be saved, man is still responsible for his sin and rejection of Christ. These are two truths that create tension within us. Namely, that in light of God's sovereign choice of some for salvation:

- ▶ God offers an open call—John 3:16; Romans 10:11–13
- ▶ Man is responsible for his unbelief—John 3:18
- ► Man is held responsible for not obeying the gospel—2 Thessalonians 1:8–9
- ▶ Man is not saved because he is unwilling to come—Matthew 23:37; John 5:39–40

Note: God's sovereignty and man's responsibility are seen side by side in Luke 22:22. God determined that Judas would betray Christ and yet Judas is held responsible.

¹ Quote from The MacArthur New Testament Commentary series: Romans 1-8 (Moody), © 1999 by John MacArthur.

From eternity past, God's Word invariably has accomplished His divine goal, which has always included His loving and gracious desire that no human being would perish but that "all [would] come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9).

That wondrous truth is a balance to the great emphasis Paul has been placing on God's sovereignty (see, e.g., Romans 9:6–26). Although the two truths seem mutually exclusive to our finite minds, God's sovereign choice of every person who is saved is, in His infinite mind, perfectly consistent with His promise that whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed.² – JOHN MACARTHUR

C. God implementing and culminating His plan of salvation (sections I, B and I, C)

This section deals with God carrying out His plan of salvation. Walk the class through the following steps of salvation. Note that each step involves God's initiative. God initiates, God implements, and God culminates His plan:

- ► God calls one to salvation—Romans 8:29–30
- ► God draws one to Himself—John 6:44
- ► The Holy Spirit convicts one of sin—John 16:8–9
- ► God grants repentance—2 Timothy 2:25; Acts 11:18
- ► God gives one the faith to believe—2 Peter 1:1; Philippians 1:29; Ephesians 2:8-9
- ► God justifies the believer—Romans 4:25–5:1
- ► The Holy Spirit washes and regenerates—Titus 3:5
- ► God promises to glorify—Romans 8:30; Philippians 3:20–21

Stress that every aspect of a person's salvation is a work of God.

D. Man's part in salvation

Man's part in the salvation process is only to respond to the calling of God.

The only thing a person can do that will have any part in salvation is to exercise faith in what Jesus Christ has done for him.

When we accept the finished work of Christ on our behalf, we act by the faith supplied by God's grace. That is the supreme act of human faith, the act which, though it is ours, is primarily God's, His gift to us out of His grace. When a person chokes or drowns and stops breathing, there is nothing he can do. If he ever breathes again it will be because someone else starts him breathing. A person who is spiritually dead cannot even make a decision of faith unless God first breathes into him the breath of spiritual life. Faith is simply breathing the breath that God's grace supplies. Yet, the paradox is that we must exercise it and bear the responsibility if we do not (cf. John 5:40).³ —John MacArthur

² Quote from The MacArthur New Testament Commentary series: *Romans 9–16* (Moody), © 1999 by John MacArthur. ³ Quote from The MacArthur New Testament Commentary series: *Ephesians* (Moody), © 1986 by John MacArthur. Transition: Note that from man's point of view, salvation will be accompanied by a brokenness over sin (Luke 18:13) and a confession of Christ as Lord (Romans 10:9–10). This leads us to a discussion on true conversion and the marks of a true believer.

3. Conversion (section II)

Conversion begins when God initiates the calling or drawing of one unto Himself (John 6:44). This drawing is similar to that of a net (John 21:6) as one is drawn by inward power and divine impulse. God reaches out and draws men to Himself according to His good pleasure. He does this, of course, through the preaching of the gospel or the reading of His Word, and the conviction of sin through the Holy Spirit.

Ask, What is the difference between the outward call of the gospel, which many might hear, and the inward call of the gospel, which the Lord uses to convert people? Answer: Many may hear the gospel message, but only a few will respond to the conviction of the message upon their hearts as God draws them to Himself.

Internalizing the gospel message begins with conviction and recognition that the gospel's diagnosis of our spiritual condition is true. True conversion involves a conviction and brokenness over one's sin before a holy God and is accompanied by a desire to repent, turn from one's sin, and follow Christ. To drive these points home, review sections II, A through II, C of the lesson, and discuss the nature of true conviction of sin, repentance, and faith.

A. The nature of true conviction of sin and repentance (sections II, A through II, C)

True repentance is much more than having bad feelings over one's sin. True repentance involves a change of mind, regret for sin, and ultimately "turning from sin to God."

- ► True repentance involves a *godly sorrow* over sin—review section II, B.
- ▶ True repentance involves turning to Christ and confessing Him as Lord—review section II, C.

B. The nature of true saving faith (end of section II, C)

Faith means trusting in, clinging to, or embracing Jesus Christ, who is the object of our faith. As will be seen in section III of this lesson, true faith is marked by good works (James 2:19).

C. The results of true conversion (section II, D)

True conversion results in one being lifted from the burden of being a slave of sin (John 8:34) and becoming a slave of righteousness (Romans 6:18). Discuss this important truth with the class.

Note: Cover the fact that this does not mean that Christians will not sin. Christians will continue to sin; it is a struggle of the sinful flesh against the Christian's new nature (Romans 7:15–25). However, a Christian will not desire to sin and will not enjoy it. The distinguishing mark is the fight against sin. Does the person love Christ and hate sin?

4. Evidence of salvation (section III)

This section is meant to challenge the students as to the validity of their salvation. True salvation is never void of true faith, love, and hope. Review this section, noting that:

► True *faith* will always be marked by good works and will be tested by trials.

- ► True *love* will be manifested in good deeds toward others.
- ► True *hope* will endure to the end.

5. Application (section IV)

A. The security of salvation

Conclude the lesson by looking back at Romans 8:29–30 and having the students reflect on the truth that their salvation is a sovereign work of God and as such is secure:

- ▶ Protected by the power of God—1 Peter 1:3–5
- ► God will finish what He began—Philippians 1:6
- ► You can know that you have eternal life—1 John 5:13
- ▶ Nothing can separate you from God—Romans 8:38–39

Your salvation is not yours to lose:

- ► God predestined you to be saved.
- ► God has called and drawn you to Himself.
- ► God has convicted you of your sin.
- ► God has given you the faith to believe.
- ► God has granted you repentance.
- ► God has justified you.
- ► God has sealed you with the Holy Spirit (next lesson).
- ► God has made you a new creation.
- ► God promises to glorify you.

Point: A true believer in Christ cannot lose his or her salvation.

B. Our response

By this point in the class, we pray there has been established a real atmosphere of openness. Invite the students to share their response to Psalm 116:16–17.

We cannot understand God's choosing us for salvation but can only thank Him for "His Grace, which is freely bestowed on us in the Beloved" (Eph 1:6). We can only believe and be forever grateful that we were called "by the grace of Christ" (Gal. 1:6) and that "the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable" (Rom. 11:29).⁴

–John MacArthur

100 ⁴ Quote from The MacArthur New Testament Commentary series: *Romans 1–8* (Moody), © 1999 by John MacArthur.



THE PERSON AND MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Prepare for Your Assignment

- 1. Download message #7, "Be Filled with the Spirit," from www.gty.org/fof.
- 2. Use your notebook to take notes on the message.
- 3. Work through the questions and tasks on the following pages.

Memorize John 14:16

I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever.

The Holy Spirit is God. The Bible identifies Him as one of three Persons existing as one God—that is, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. In this lesson, we will study who the Holy Spirit is and what His presence and ministry are in the believer's life.

I. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS A PERSON

A. Recognized as a person

Personal pronouns such as "He" or "Him" are used to refer to the Holy Spirit rather than "it." List the number of times "He" or "Him" is used in John 14:17 to refer to the Holy Spirit.

2 (NASB), 4 (ESV), 5 (NIV), 4 (NKJV)

B. Attributes of personality

1. Intellect. He possesses the ability to know and understand reality.

- a. Romans 8:27: The Holy Spirit has a _____ mind.
- b. 1 Corinthians 2:10: The Holy Spirit searches <u>all</u> things, even the depths of God.
- c. 1 Corinthians 2:11: The Holy Spirit knows <u>the</u> thoughts of God.
- **2. Emotion**. He possesses the ability to experience emotion.

Record the emotion attributed to the Holy Spirit in Ephesians 4:30. ______ grief

3. Volition. He possesses the ability to determine or act decisively.

List the decision or judgment in which the Holy Spirit demonstrates His attribute of volition.

- a. 1 Corinthians 12:7, 11 ____as He wills
- b. Acts 13:2 setting apart Barnabas and Saul for

specific work and ministry

II. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS GOD

A. Attributes

The Holy Spirit: Attributes of Deity			
Omniscient	All-knowing	Isaiah 40:13–14	
Omnipresent	Present everywhere	Psalm 139:7	
Eternal	Without beginning or end	Hebrews 9:14	
Truth	Veracity; integrity	1 John 5:7; John 16:13	

B. Statements of deity

1. Write the key statement that shows that the Holy Spirit is God (2 Corinthians 3:17).

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"The Lord is Spirit."
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2. According to Acts 5:3–4, lying to the Holy Spirit is the same thing as lying to _____ God

III. THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

- A. According to Psalm 104:30, the Holy Spirit is active in _____ creation
- B. Second Peter 1:20–21 tells us that the Holy Spirit was also active in _____ prophecy; the inspiration of

the Scriptures

The Holy Spirit Bears Witne	ess of Christ	
Attests that Jesus is the Christ	John 15:26	
Will disclose or reveal Christ	John 16:14	
Will not speak of Himself	John 16:13	

IV. The Ministry of the Holy Spirit in Salvation

One of the most important areas of the Spirit's work is with respect to God's plan of salvation.

A. What special work does the Holy Spirit do (John 16:7–8)?

convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment

B. By whom are sinners born into God's kingdom (John 3:5–8)? _____ the Holy Spirit

- C. What work does the Spirit do when a person is saved?
 - 1. Titus 3:5–6 _____ regeneration and renewing
 - 2. 1 Corinthians 12:13 _____ "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body."

The baptism by the Spirit occurs only once—at the time of salvation.

D. How does the Holy Spirit guarantee a believer's salvation (Ephesians 1:13–14)?

"In Him you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also

believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our

inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory."

The Sealing of the Holy Spirit¹

A seal was an ancient device, usually a signet ring or cylinder seal engraved with the owner's name or with a particular design. It was used to seal goods, demonstrate ownership, attest a document's authenticity, or impress an early form of a trademark.

A seal indicates ownership and security. It is the guarantee of future blessings. The presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives is God's promise of our inheritance in the future! What a wonderful assurance.

V. THE MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE BELIEVER'S LIFE

A. What is the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the believer (Romans 8:9)?

"the Spirit of God dwells in you."

B. Is it possible to be a Christian and not be indwelled by the Holy Spirit? ______ No

C. What is another ministry of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer (1 Corinthians 2:12–13)?

He teaches us the things of God.

¹ Description of a seal taken from *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, Volume 5, ed. Merrill C. Tenney, © 1975, 1976 by The Zondervan Corporation. Used by permission.

D. What exhortations are given to all believers in regard to the Spirit?

- 1. Ephesians 4:30 _____ "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God."
- 2. 1 Thessalonians 5:19 <u>"Do not quench</u> the Spirit."
- 3. Ephesians 5:18 _____ "Be filled with the Spirit."

Being Filled with the Holy Spirit

To be filled with the Spirit is to be under His total domination and control. . . . To be filled with the Spirit involves confession of sin, surrender of will, intellect, body, time, talent, possessions, and desires. It requires the death of selfishness and the slaying of self-will. . . . To be filled with God's Spirit is to be filled with His Word. And as we are filled with God's Word, it controls our thinking and action.² – John MacArthur

E. How does a Christian keep from sinning (Galatians 5:16)?

walk by the Spirit

F. When a believer is filled with the Holy Spirit, he will exhibit the fruit of the Spirit. Read Galatians 5:22–23 and list these qualities below:

1	love	6	goodness	
2	јоу	7	faithfulness	
3	peace	8	gentleness	
4	patience	9	self-control	
5.	kindness			

Are you exhibiting those qualities in your life?

VI. APPLICATION

In 1 Corinthians 6:19–20, the apostle Paul writes: "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body."

A. What significance does that have for you?

(Answers will vary)

B. What do you need to do to glorify God in your body?

(Answers will vary)



THE PERSON AND MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

THE OBJECTIVES OF LESSON 7

- 1. To impress upon the student that the Holy Spirit is a person.
- 2. To give the student an understanding of the essential deity of the Holy Spirit.
- 3. To explain the Trinity.
- 4. To give an overview of the role of the Spirit in the Christian's life.

THE CLASS PLAN FOR LESSON 7

- 1. Survey the biblical evidence for the personhood of the Holy Spirit.
- 2. Briefly look at the deity of the Holy Spirit and introduce the doctrine of the Trinity.
- 3. Look at the ministry of the Holy Spirit, including the sealing, baptism, and the filling of the Holy Spirit.

Note: Defer questions about spiritual gifts to lesson #10.

COMMON QUESTIONS FROM LESSON 7

How can three distinct persons be one God?

What is the difference between the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the filling of the Holy Spirit?

Note: Spirit of grace—Hebrews 10:29; the Father is called the God of all grace (1 Peter 5:10).

SUGGESTED TEACHING OUTLINE FOR LESSON 7

1. Warm-up

Use your notes from listening to the message on the Holy Spirit to get a sense of what the students are retaining from the recorded message. Ask, *What insights from this lesson's online message did you find particularly compelling?*

2. Transition into the lesson

In this lesson we will first look at the Holy Spirit as the third person of the Trinity. He is a separate person from God the Father and the Son, and yet fully God. Second, we will look at the ministry of the Holy Spirit in creation, in the inspiration of Scripture, and in the salvation process. Finally, we will end with a discussion about the difference between the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the filling of the Holy Spirit.

First, let us look at the Holy Spirit as the third person of the Trinity.

3. The Holy Spirit is a person (section I)

People do not have a problem understanding the Holy Spirit is God, since the Holy Spirit is referred to as the Spirit of God (Matthew 3:16). However, they do have difficulty understanding that the Holy Spirit is a person. Therefore, it is important to stress that the Holy Spirit is an independent person, not an emanation or a force.

A. The Holy Spirit is an independent person, separate from the Father and the Son.

Have your students read John 14:26 (not in the lesson) and make the observation that there are *three separate persons* mentioned—the Holy Spirit, the Father, and Christ.

Review the memory verse, John 14:16, and note that the Holy Spirit is referred to as another helper, *separate from Christ and the Father*, also mentioned in the verse.

Ask the students for their answer to I, A. Ask, *What is the significance that the Holy Spirit is referred to as "He" or "Him" and not as "It"*?

B. The Holy Spirit possesses attributes of a person.

Discuss I, B, noting that the Holy Spirit possesses a *mind* with the ability to think, *emotion* and can be grieved, and a *will* demonstrated in His decision making.

C. The Holy Spirit can be responded to (supplement to the lesson).

As a person the Holy Spirit can be:

- ► Obeyed—Acts 10:19–21
- ► Resisted—Acts 7:51
- ► Lied to—Acts 5:3
- ► Insulted—Hebrews 10:29
- ► Grieved—Ephesians 4:30
- ▶ Blasphemed—Mark 3:28–29

D. The Holy Spirit demonstrates the actions of a person (supplement to the lesson).

- ► Speaks—Acts 8:29
- ► Teaches—John 14:26
- ► Distributes spiritual gifts—1 Corinthians 12:11
- ► Convicts the world of sin—John 16:8
- ► Searches—1 Corinthians 2:10
- ► Testifies—John 15:26
- ► Guides and directs—Acts 16:6–7

4. The Holy Spirit is God (section II).

As mentioned above, students normally do not have an issue with the Holy Spirit being God; however, it is good to cover this information as an introduction to the Trinity.

A. Attributes of deity (section II, A)

Take some time to compare the attributes of the Holy Spirit with the attributes of God (lesson #3) and of Jesus Christ (lesson #4).

B. Statements of deity (section II, B)

Make note of the comparison in Acts 5:3–4 that lying to the Holy Spirit is the same as lying to God.

C. Divine titles (supplement to the lesson)

It is also helpful to note that the Holy Spirit is referenced with titles reserved for God.

- ► Spirit of truth—1 John 5:6
- Spirit of life—Romans 8:2
 Note: Jesus is called the truth and the life (John 14:6).
- Living water—John 7:38–39
 Note: Jesus is called the living bread (John 6:51); the Father is called the living Father (John 6:57).
- Spirit of glory—1 Peter 4:14
 Note: Jesus is called the Lord of glory (1 Corinthians 2:8); the Father is called the Father of glory (Ephesians 1:17).
- ► Holy Spirit—Matthew 1:18 (and hundreds of other times) Note: Holiness is the most repeated attribute of God.

5. The Trinity (supplement to the lesson)

At this point the deity of the Father (lesson #3), the Son (lesson #4), and the Holy Spirit (this lesson) have been taught. Also, in lesson #3 it was clearly pointed out that there is only one God. This lesson has also taught that the Holy Spirit is an independent person, as are the Father and the Son.

Therefore, even though the word Trinity is not found in the Bible, pulling together what we have learned about God, the doctrine of the Trinity is clearly taught in the Bible: *There is one living and true God eternally existing in three Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. They are co-equal, co-eternal, and consubstantial (of the same essence), and therefore, each deserves the same worship and obedience.*

A. Review of key passages

- ► There is only one God—Isaiah 43:10; 45:22
- ▶ Yet God refers to Himself in the plural as *Us* and *Our*—Genesis 1:26a; 3:22
- ► The Father is God—John 6:27
- ▶ Christ is God—Titus 2:13; John 1:1, 14; 8:58
- ► The Holy Spirit is God—Acts 5:3–4
- ► The three are distinct from each other

- ► At the baptism of Christ—Mark 1:10–11
- ► Trinitarian statements—2 Corinthians 13:14; 1 Peter 1:2; 1 Corinthians 12:4–6; Matthew 28:19

B. Different functions within the Trinity

God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are equal in essence yet different in function:

God the Father	From whom all revelation proceeds; the One who foreknew our salvation and demonstrated His love for us by giving His only Son.
God the Son	The incarnated God who gave Himself as a sacrifice for sin and now intercedes and mediates between the Father and man.
God the Spirit	Indwells the believer and works to sanctify the believer through the illumination of the Word of God.

6. The work of the Holy Spirit (section III)

The last sections of the lesson dwell on the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit. This section looks at the work of the Spirit in creation, in the giving of Scripture, and in witnessing to the person and work of Jesus Christ. The work of the Holy Spirit in the inspiration of Scripture was covered in lesson #1, and the Holy Spirit's role in salvation will be expanded in the next section. Therefore, in this section you need only dwell on the Holy Spirit's role in creation:

- ► The Spirit was active in creation—Psalm 104:29–30; Genesis 1:1–2
- ► The Spirit was active in the virgin birth—Luke 1:35

7. The ministry of the Holy Spirit in salvation (section IV)

This section deals with the active role the Holy Spirit plays within the process of salvation. You should explain each of these activities. Most are covered in the lesson, as noted. You should give special attention to the indwelling, the baptism, and the sealing of the Holy Spirit.

A. The involvement of the Holy Spirit in salvation

- ► Conviction of sin—John 16:7–8 (section IV, A)
- ► Acknowledgment of Christ as Lord—1 Corinthians 12:3
- ► Regeneration—Titus 3:5–6 (section IV, C, 1)
- ► Indwells the believer—Romans 8:9 (section V, A); also 1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19; 2 Corinthians 6:16
- ► Baptism of the Holy Spirit—1 Corinthians 12:13 (section IV, C, 2)
- ► Sealing of the Holy Spirit—Ephesians 1:13–14 (section IV, D); also 2 Corinthians 1:21–22
- ► Sanctification—1 Peter 1:2

B. The baptism of the Holy Spirit

There is much confusion over the *baptism* of the Holy Spirit and the *filling* of the Holy Spirit. Many times the two are confused as being the same. They are not. Therefore, you need to distinguish between the two.

Note: The filling of the Holy Spirit is covered in the next section of this lesson.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit:

- ► Happens once at the time of conversion—Ephesians 4:4–6
- ▶ Places the believer into the body of Christ—1 Corinthians 12:13
- ► Involves the receiving of the Holy Spirit as a seal and a promise—Ephesians 1:13–14

To baptize literally means to "dip" or "to be immersed into." In this case it means to be immersed into Jesus Christ, which literally means to be united with Jesus Christ. As a result, Christians fall under the leadership of Jesus Christ and are put into the place of privilege and blessing from God.

It is important to teach students:

- ► There is never a command to be indwelt by the Holy Spirit.
- ► There is never a command to be sealed by the Holy Spirit.
- ► There is never a command to be baptized by the Holy Spirit.

Baptism in the Spirit is something God does, not man! However, we are commanded by God to be filled with the Spirit—Ephesians 5:18. (This will be discussed in the next section.)

C. The sealing of the Holy Spirit

Many have not been introduced to what the sealing of the Holy Spirit is. You need to explain that the sealing of the Holy Spirit is the same as the giving of the Holy Spirit at the time of salvation. The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life is evidence that he belongs to God. Make sure to cover the definition of the sealing of the Holy Spirit at the end of section IV, D.

8. The ministry of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life (section V)

The final section of the lesson deals with the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the Christian's life in the area of teaching or illuminating the Scriptures, and in guiding the Christian as he submits himself to the Spirit's control. The attention in this section should be spent on discussing the filling of the Holy Spirit, which has been misunderstood by many.

A. The Filling of the Spirit (sections V, D through V, F)

We have already seen what the *filling of the Spirit* is not:

- ► It is not—being baptized by the Holy Spirit.
- ► It is not—being indwelt by or receiving the Holy Spirit.
- ► It is not—being sealed or secured by the Holy Spirit.

Being filled by the Holy Spirit is also not some emotional experience; rather, it is *a giving over to the Spirit's control.*

Have the students read Ephesians 5:17–19 (section V, D) and note the following:

- We are commanded to be filled with the Spirit.
- ► The command is in the present tense—being kept filled; moment by moment.
- ► The dominant meaning of "being filled" is to "be controlled by" or to "be carried along by" the Spirit—like a stick is carried along by a stream of water.
- ► It is compared to being drunk—or under the influence of.

B. How is one filled with the Spirit?

Review the quote by John MacArthur at the end of section V, D, on "Being Filled with the Holy Spirit."

Being filled with the Spirit involves the confession of sin and the saturation of oneself with the Word of God. This is in harmony with the fact that *walking in the Spirit* and *being in sin* are in opposition to each other (Galatians 5:16–17) and with the fact that God has given us His revealed will in the Scriptures.

Compare Ephesians 5:18–22 and Colossians 3:16–18, noting that they are parallel passages. The only difference is that Ephesians begins with the command, "Be filled with the Spirit," and Colossians begins with the command, "Let the Word of Christ richly dwell within you." However, the results are the same. Therefore, <u>being filled with the Word of God yields the same results as being filled with the Spirit.</u>

End this section with a quote from John MacArthur:

To be filled with the Spirit is to live in the consciousness of the personal presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, as if we were standing next to Him, and to let His mind dominate our life. It is to fill ourselves with God's Word, so that His thoughts will be our thoughts, His standards our standards, His work our work, and His will our will. **Christ consciousness leads to Christ likeness.**¹

-John MacArthur

9. Application (section VI)

The application is very practical. The lesson asks the students to reflect on the fact that their bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19–20). Discuss their responses.

Also, reflect back on the fruits of the Spirit in section V, E. Ask the class to examine themselves as to whether they see these fruits in their lives.

¹ Quote from The MacArthur New Testament Commentary series: *Ephesians* (Moody), © 1986 by John MacArthur.





PRAYER AND THE BELIEVER

Prepare for Your Assignment

- 1. Download message #8, "Praying Unceasingly," from www.gty.org/fof.
- 2. Use your notebook to take notes on the message.
- 3. Work through the questions and tasks on the following pages.

Memorize Philippians 4:6-7

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. The purpose of prayer is to express our submission to the sovereignty of God and our trust in His faithfulness. Prayer is the means by which we express all that is in our hearts to our loving and wise heavenly Father. Prayer is not to give God information, because God knows everything. Prayer brings us into reverent communion with God, worshiping Him and acknowledging Him as the giver of all things.

I. THE NATURE OF PRAYER

- A. For the believer, prayer is a learning experience that must be developed into a spiritual discipline.
 - 1. In Luke 11:1, what did the disciples ask of Jesus?

"Teach us to pray."

- 2. Read Romans 8:26.
- a. According to the apostle Paul, who assists us in our
- prayers? The Holy Spirit: "we do not know how to pray

as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us

with groanings too deep for words."

b. In light of that, what should we do when we are not sure

what to pray for? Pray and express our uncertainty to

God and trust the Spirit to intercede for us.

- B. Prayer is communication with God. Scripture tells us that God is very interested in our personal struggles.
 - 1. What does Psalm 34:15 say about the Lord? His

eyes are "toward the righteous and His ears are open to

their cry."

2. What did David bring before God in prayer (Psalm

142:2)? his complaints; his troubles

- 3. How are we encouraged to approach God (Hebrews 4:16)? <u>"Let us draw near *with confidence* to the</u> throne of grace."
- 4. Though we have the privilege of access, what caution does Ecclesiastes 5:2 advise? <u>"Do not be</u> hasty in word or impulsive in thought...let your words be few."
- 5. What comfort does 1 Peter 5:6–7 offer believers? <u>"casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares</u> for you."
- C. Prayer is effective. It can change situations—and people. We are encouraged to pray expecting results.
 - 1. For whom did the church pray in Acts 12:5? Peter, who was in prison
 - 2. How did God answer their prayers (Acts 12:7)? <u>"An angel of the Lord suddenly appeared and a light shone in the cell; and he struck Peter's side and woke him up, saying, 'Get up quickly.' And his chains fell off his hands."</u>
 - 3. Besides answers, what else does God grant to those who pray (Philippians 4:6–7)?

"the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension."

"The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much." –JAMES 5:16

II. THE PRACTICE OF PRAYER

A. Throughout the Bible, God encourages and commands believers to persevere in prayer.

- 1. In Luke 18:1, the disciples were taught that they should always pray and not <u>lose heart</u>.
- 2. What is God's will for believers in Christ Jesus (1 Thessalonians 5:17)?

They should pray without ceasing.

3. When should believers pray (Ephesians 6:18)? _____at all times

B. In the Bible, you will discover many guidelines to help you develop the practice of prayer.

1. In this parable in Luke 11, what did Jesus teach His disciples to expect if they persisted in prayer (Luke 11:5–10)? <u>"Everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks,</u>

it will be opened." (that their prayers would be answered)

♦ We can start to understand praying without ceasing by looking at the life of our Lord Himself since He did that. He was obviously in constant communion with the Father. And we see Him in Scripture rising up early to pray. We see Him spending all night in prayer. It must have been an unending and nonstop communion between Himself and the Father. Hebrews tells us that He offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears. That is a fascinating insight. There was an intensity in the prayers of Jesus that is utterly unique, that is utterly amazing. When He prayed on a number of occasions, there was a great agonizing. And we can assume that even though the Scripture does not chronicle for us all the details of all of His praying, it had much of the same kind of intensity as those prayers that we do see and have revealed to us in the text. When the Bible tells us that He went to the Mount of Olives and prayed all night, there was no doubt an intensity in that kind of praying that we know very little about, if anything.

— John MacArthur

2. What does Jesus teach as a requirement for answered prayer (John 15:7)?

"If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for

you."

3. According to 1 John 5:14, what is our confidence as we pray?

"if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us."

Jesus' Pattern for Prayer: Matthew 6:9–13		
	Pray to God Our Father who is in heaven	
	Exalt Him, saying Hallowed be Your name	
	Submit to Him, praying Your kingdom come, Your will be done	
	Look to Him, seeking Our daily bread (sustenance)	
	Confess to Him, pleading Forgive us our debts (sins)	
	Depend on Him, asking Do not lead us into temptation	
	Trust in Him, requesting Deliver us from evil	

C. Look up the following verses and list some of the hindrances to answered prayer.

- 1. Psalm 66:18 _____ "If I regard wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear."
- 2. James 4:3 "You ask with *wrong motives*, so that you may spend it on your pleasures."
- 3. Isaiah 59:1–2 <u>"Your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins</u>

have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear."

Four Important Areas of Prayer	
Adoration	Reflect on God Himself. Praise Him for His attributes, His majesty, and His gift of Christ.
Confession	Admit to God that you have sinned. Be honest and humble. Remember, He knows you and loves you.
Thanksgiving	Tell God how grateful you are for everything He has given you, even the unpleasant things. Your thankfulness will help you see His purposes.
Supplication	Make specific requests. Pray first for others and then for yourself.
Notice	that the first letters of these four words form the word "ACTS."
You ca	n use this acronym as a guide to maintain balance as you pray.

III. THE STRUGGLE OF PRAYER

- A. Prayer can be hard work, but that should not keep us from praying, even when it requires sacrifice.
 - 1. How long did Jesus pray before He selected the 12 apostles (Luke 6:12)?

He spent the whole night in prayer.

2. Describe the intensity of Jesus as He prayed in anticipation of the cross (Luke 22:44).

"Being in agony He was praying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling

down upon the ground."

3. What should believers be careful to do when we devote ourselves to prayer (Colossians 4:2)?

Keep alert; have an attitude of thanksgiving.

B. Even when we are frustrated or discouraged, we can still approach God in prayer.

1. Why was David discouraged in Psalm 13:1–2? He thought God had forgotten him.

2. What was David's complaint in Psalm 22:2? <u>"O my God, I cry by day, but You do not answer;</u> and by night, but I have no rest." (David thought God had forsaken him.)

C. Prayer is governed by God's sovereignty, and His purpose determines His answer to our prayers. 1. Read 2 Corinthians 12:7–9.

- a. What did Paul pray for? _____that God would remove his "thorn in the flesh"
- b. How many times did he pray for it? ______three
- c. Did he receive what he asked for? Why or why not? No. God said, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness."
- 2. Read Mark 14:35-36.
 - a. What did Jesus ask of the Father concerning His "hour" of suffering?

That God would "remove this cup" from Him

b. But what was He willing to do? _____His Father's will

IV. APPLICATION

Compose a simple prayer, following the ACTS model on page 62.

(Answers will vary)

Surrender your requests to God's wise and loving plan, acknowledging your willingness to receive His answer with thankfulness.



THE OBJECTIVES OF LESSON 8

- 1. To explain the purposes of prayer with the goal of exhorting the student to spend time in prayer.
- 2. To practically teach the student how to pray.

THE CLASS PLAN FOR LESSON 8

- 1. Review the nature and purpose.
- 2. Discuss the conditions of answered prayer.
- 3. Practically, cover how to pray and what to pray for.
- 4. Review the challenges of prayer.

COMMON QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 8

Since God is sovereign and all things have been decreed by Him, and since God is omniscient and knows all things, then why pray?

What does praying without ceasing look like in a believer's life?

SUGGESTED TEACHING OUTLINE FOR LESSON 8

1. Warm-up

Realize that talking to each other in your class may take on a very different tone when you suggest that it's time to include God in the conversation. Admit right from the start that it's often easier to talk about prayer than to actually pray. Suggest that by the end of the session you hope people will be ready to participate in a heartfelt time of talking together with God.

2. The nature of prayer (section I)

Start by discussing the introductory paragraph at the beginning of the lesson. Focus on the unique role that prayer plays in developing intimacy with God. Explain how prayer tunes our soul to be receptive to His will through His Word. Also discuss the purpose of prayer and that prayer is not an option.

A. The purpose of prayer

▶ Prayer brings glory to God—John 14:13

Although nothing benefits a believer more than prayer, the purpose in praying must first of all be for the sake of God, not self. Prayer is, above all, an opportunity for God to manifest His goodness and glory.¹

-John MacArthur

▶ Prayer aligns our will with God's will—Luke 22:42; Matthew 6:10

118 ¹ Quote from The MacArthur New Testament Commentary series: *Matthew 1–7* (Moody), © 1985 by John MacArthur.

When we pray "*Thy will be done*," we are praying first of all that God's will become our will. Second, we are praying that His will prevail all over the "*earth as it* (does) *in heaven*."²

–John MacArthur

- ▶ Prayer brings peace—Philippians 4:6–7
- ▶ We pray to confess sin—1 John 1:9
- ► We pray to cast our burdens upon God—1 Peter 5:6–7 (section I, B)
- ▶ Prayer is powerful—James 5:16–18 (end of section I, C)

Question: *Why pray if God is sovereign and all things have been decreed by Him?* Answer: God not only ordains the ends (the results) but also the means (the methods), and one of the means that He ordains is prayer. By praying, we are not changing God's mind as much as we are aligning ourselves with His will. By praying, we are being used by God to bring about His will in the world. Beyond that, it also gives Him glory by demonstrating our dependence on Him.

B. Prayer is not an option.

- Jesus prayed; He is our example—Matthew 14:23; Luke 5:16; 6:12
- We are commanded to pray at all times—1 Thessalonians 5:17; Ephesians 6:18 (section II, A)

To pray at all times is to live in continual God consciousness, where everything we see and experience becomes a kind of prayer, lived in deep awareness of and surrender to our heavenly Father.³

-John MacArthur

3. The practice of prayer (section II)

In this section you will cover both conditions for answered prayer and then practically how to pray. We will see that one needs to pray consistent with the will of God, which includes the confession of sin.

A. Conditions for answered prayer

There are conditions if one's prayers are to be answered. First, one must abide in Christ and pray according to His will. Second, one must not be harboring sin; one must have confessed all sin and turned from it (1 John 1:9).

1. You must abide in Christ and His words must abide in you—John 15:7 (section II, B, 2)

- ▶ Those who abide in Christ are those who confess Christ as Lord—1 John 4:15
- ▶ Being obedient and committed to the Word of God—1 John 3:22

Note: God is under no obligation to answer the prayers of the unsaved.

² Quote from The MacArthur New Testament Commentary series: *Matthew 1–7* (Moody), © 1985 by John MacArthur. ³ Quote from The MacArthur New Testament Commentary series: *Ephesians* (Moody), © 1986 by John MacArthur.

- 2. You must pray according to the will of God—1 John 5:14 (section II, B, 3)
 - ▶ Pray for that which is consistent with the will of God as revealed in the Bible.
 - ▶ Pray asking in His name, consistent with who He is—John 14:13–14
 - ▶ Pray for that which brings God glory—John 14:13
 - ▶ Pray to align your will with God's will—Matthew 6:10

To pray in Jesus' name is to pray consistent with who He is, with the goal of bringing Him glory. It is to follow the pattern of His model prayer. "Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10), and His example of humble submission to the Father's will when He prayed in Gethsemane, "Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will but Yours be done" (Luke 22:42). The goal of prayer is not to gratify our selfish desires (cf. James 4:3), but to align

our wills with God's purposes.⁴

-John MacArthur

3. Hindrances to answered prayer (section II, C)

- ► Sin—Psalm 66:18
- ► Wrong motives—James 4:3
- ► Lack of faith—James 1:5–8

B. How to Pray

This is a very practical section of the lesson. Adequate attention should be given to the chart called "Jesus' Pattern for Prayer" and the chart on the ACTS acrostic for prayer (both in section II).

1. General guidelines of prayer

- Pray to the Father; through Christ; in the power of the Spirit—Matthew 6:9; Romans 1:8; Ephesians 2:17–18
- ► If you do not know what to pray for, ask the Holy Spirit to intercede—Romans 8:26 (section I, A, 2)
- ▶ Prayer needs to be intimate communion with God—Matthew 6:6
- ► Do not use meaningless repetition—Matthew 6:7-8
- ► Do not be hasty; let your words be few—Ecclesiastes 5:2 (section I, B, 4)
- 2. Jesus Christ's pattern for prayer (end of section II, B)

Giving your students a framework for their prayers is important. When the disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray, that is exactly what Jesus did. He gave them the *disciples' prayer*, sometimes referred to as the *Lord's Prayer*.

Note: The disciples' prayer was not meant to be memorized to be prayed; but to be memorized as a framework for our prayers. This is clear from the outset, when Christ states in Matthew 6:9a, "*Pray, then, in this way*..."

Review the structure of the prayer, using the information in the chart as a guideline.

As you walk the student through the prayer, note key points such as:

- ► *Our Father*—Ask, *Why is the word "our" important?* Answer: God is the Father of all Christians. What is best for you might not be best for the whole church. Pray for the family's good, not for just yourself. Ask, *What can we learn from the word "Father"?* Answer: Intimacy with God, we are His children; respect; authority; settles the matter of obedience, etc.
- ► *Hallowed be Your name*—Ask, *What does "hallowed" mean?* Answer: set apart; holy. We are to revere God. We are to praise Him. Ask, *What other attributes can you think of to praise God for?* Recount God's attributes at the start of your prayers; it will set the stage for the rest of your prayer. Recall God's attributes from lesson #3.
- ► *Your kingdom come*—Pray for God's kingdom to come. Pray in anticipation and hope of the second coming of Christ when He will reign in glory. Pray for the salvation of souls who will inhabit the kingdom.
- ► *Your will be done*—Ask, *Who's will?* Answer: God's will. Pray for God's will to be done. Pray that your will aligns with His will. Pray for those things that are consistent with God's revealed will.
- ► *Give us this day our daily bread*—This is a petition for one's needs or necessities. Recognize that God is your provider. Remember He cares for you and wants to supply your needs.
- ► *Forgive us our debts*—Ask, *What are debts?* Answer: sins. This is a prayer of confession. Confess your sins to God (1 John 1:9).
- ► **Do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil**—This is having a heart desire not to sin. It is recognizing that we are weak and inadequate to deal with sin. It is one's desire to submit to God and resist the temptations of the devil (James 4:7).
- ► *For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever*—Note, these words are not found in the most reliable manuscripts. However, they do exalt our all-powerful God, ending the prayer on a note of praise.
- 3. ACTS Acrostic for Prayer

To conclude this section, review the chart, "Four Important Areas of Prayer," at the end of section II of the lesson.

4. The struggle of prayer (section III)

Prayer can be hard work, and sometimes discouraging, as brought out by section III of the lesson.

A. Prayer can be discouraging (section III, B).

Spend some time talking about David's discouragement as he prayed to God. Have the students read their responses to section III, B and then turn to Psalm 22:1–28, one of David's prayers. Note the progression in David's prayer:

- ▶ verses 1–2 David is discouraged and wonders why God does not answer.
- ► verses 3–6 David recognizes God and remembers God's past faithfulness. As David considers God, he is humbled.
- ▶ verses 7–18 David pours out his burdens upon the Lord.
- ▶ verses 19–21 David calls on God for help and asks for assistance.
- ▶ verses 22–24 David is moved to praise God for he knows that God cares.
- ▶ verses 25–28 David is lifted up.

We learn that when we are discouraged, we need to recognize God as our help, remembering how He has cared for us in the past. We need to cast our burdens upon Him. This leads us to encouragement and praise.

B. Answers to prayer (section III, C)

1. Prayer and the sovereignty of God

Prayers are governed by God's sovereignty and His purposes. Discuss the following examples with the students:

- ► Sometimes prayers are answered immediately—Isaiah 65:24
- ► Sometimes answers are delayed—Luke 18:7
- ▶ But we are exhorted to be persistent—Luke 18:1 (section II, A, 1)
- ► Sometimes answers are different than what is asked for—2 Corinthians 12:7-9 (section III, C, 1)
- 2. Claiming from God

This is a huge movement today; namely, claiming from God one's petitions. Discuss this in light of:

- ► The *sovereignty of God* (just discussed)
- ▶ Praying *according to God's will*, or aligning our will with the will of God
- ► The ultimate purpose of prayer, which is to bring God glory

5. Application (section IV)

Exhort the students to memorize the disciples' prayer and use it as a framework for their own prayers. Exhort them to start their prayers with recognition and praise of God, reflecting upon His attributes, before moving to confession, thanksgiving, and petition.



THE CHURCH: FELLOWSHIP AND WORSHIP

Prepare for Your Assignment

- 1. Download message #9, "The Body of Christ," from www.gty.org/fof.
- 2. Use your notebook to take notes on the message.
- 3. Work through the questions and tasks on the following pages.

Memorize Hebrews 10:24–25

And let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

I. THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH

"The Church is not a physical building, but a group of believers; not a denomination, sect, or association, but a spiritual Body. The Church is not an organization, but a communion, a fellowship that includes believers."1 — JOHN MACARTHUR

A. Read Colossians 1:18 and Ephesians 5:23.

1. What is Christ's position in the church? <u>He is the</u>

head of the body (church).

2. How is the church described? As His body

B. At what cost did Christ purchase the church (Acts

20:28)? His own blood

C. How does a person become a member of the body of Christ?

1. Colossians 3:15: We are <u>called</u> into the body.

2. 1 Corinthians 12:13: We are <u>baptized</u> into the body.

II. THE LOCAL CHURCH

The New Testament describes how believers came together in small groups to worship Christ, receive instruction from the Scriptures, meet one another's needs, pray, and evangelize.

A. The local church illustrated

1. Where did the believers meet before they had church buildings (Romans 16:5; 1 Corinthians 16:19)?

in houses

2. On what day of the week did they meet (Acts 20:7)?

the first day of the week

¹ Quote taken from *Body Dynamics* by John MacArthur, © 1982 by Scripture Press. Used by permission.

3. List four things to which the early church was devoted (Acts 2:42):

a.teachingc.breaking of breadb.fellowshipd.prayer

B. The local church organized

1. Gifted men

According to Ephesians 4:11–12, God gave four types of gifted men to the church. List them:

apostles	evangelists
prophets	pastors/teachers

God gave these gifted men to the church to equip the saints for what purposes (verse 12)?

"Equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ."

2. Elders/overseers

The qualifications of an elder or overseer are stated in 1 Timothy 3:1–7 and Titus 1:6–9.

- a. What are the two major responsibilities of an elder (1 Peter 5:1–2)?
 - (1) <u>"Shepherd the flock"</u>
 - (2) Exercise oversight
- b. What is the responsibility of believers to the elders (Hebrews 13:17)?

"Obey your leaders and submit to them,

Why? _____for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this

with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you."

3. Deacons

The word *deacon* means "servant." The deacons are to minister to the needs of the flock under the direction of the elders of the church. The qualifications of deacons are stated in 1 Timothy 3:8–13.

- 4. Members of the body
 - a. What does Hebrews 10:25 warn believers not to neglect?

assembling together

b. Hebrews 13:7 instructs us concerning those who teach us God's Word. What should be our response? (Select the correct answer.)

- O We should encourage others to come and hear them.
- O We should not hope to have the kind of faith they have.
- \otimes We should observe their godly lives and follow their example of faith.
- c. How should we act toward other members of the body (1 Corinthians 12:25)? <u>"There may be no</u> division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another."
- 5. How should those who are appointed to preach and teach be supported?
 - a. 1 Corinthians 9:14 "The Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel."
 - b. Galatians 6:6 <u>"The one who is taught the word is to share all good things with the one who</u>

teaches him."

III. FELLOWSHIP

The Bible uses the Greek word *koinonia* to describe fellowship within the body of Christ. That word means "participation with others in a common purpose." The Latin equivalent is *communion*, pointing to the communion that is shared with other believers as well as with God.

A. Unity within the church

1. What is God's desire for every local church (1 Corinthians 1:10)?

unity in the faith

2. Read Ephesians 4:2–3.

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What will promote unity (verse 2)? _____ "Humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for
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one another in love."

What is our responsibility (verse 3)? "Being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

3. Read Philippians 2:1–4. What is the key to maintaining unity within the body (verse 3)?

"Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more

important than yourselves."

B. Fellowship with God and with other believers

Scripture is clear that the believer enjoys fellowship with:

- 1. God the Father (1 John 1:3)
- 2. God the Son (1 John 1:3)

3. The Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 13:14)

4. Other believers (1 John 1:7)

However, with whom is true fellowship not possible (2 Corinthians 6:14–15)? Unbelievers

C. Fellowhip involves ministering to other believers.

- 1. Fellowship within the body of Christ involves sharing in each other's lives. According to each verse below, how should Christians minister to one another?
 - Romans 14:19 "Building up of one another."
 - ► Galatians 5:13 _____ "Serve one another."
 - ► Galatians 6:2 _____Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ."
 - ► James 5:16 _____ "Confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another."
- 2. What has God given to each Christian to help him or her minister to others within the church

(1 Peter 4:10–11)? _____a special gift

IV. WORSHIP

The English word *worship* originally was spelled "worthship," meaning to acknowledge the worth of someone or something. We worship when we give honor to God for who He is. Worship acknowledges God's person, nature, attributes, and works. It stems from a grateful heart and renders adoration, devotion, and submission to God.

A. God seeks genuine worshipers.

Read John 4:23–24. How are we to worship God (verse 24)? _____ in spirit and in truth

If we are to worship God in truth (not in error), we must seek to know Him by learning about His attributes and actions.

B. We worship God because only He is worthy of our highest devotion.

Read Revelation 4:10-11 and answer the following questions.

- 1. What is God worthy to receive? ____glory, honor, and power
- 2. Why? Because God created all things

C. Worshiping God involves praise.

How did the psalmist say God should be worshiped (Psalm 66:4)? ______ "All the earth will worship You, and

will sing praises to You; they will sing praises to Your name."

D. Worshiping God involves reverence.

1. What did Moses do when he worshiped God (Exodus 34:8)?

He bowed "low toward the earth."

- 2. How is reverence for God revealed in the following verses?
 - a. Exodus 34:8 ____bowing the head

b. Luke 7:1–7 _____in humility; unworthiness before Him

c. Revelation 1:17 _____falling at His feet

"O come, let us sing for joy to the Lord, let us shout joyfully to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving, let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms. For the Lord is a great God and a great King above all gods, in whose hand are the depths of the earth, the peaks of the mountains are His also. The sea is His, for it was He who made it, and His hands formed the dry land. Come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker." —PSALM 95:1-6

V. ORDINANCES OF THE CHURCH

THE ORDINANCE OF BAPTISM

Baptism was instituted by our Lord and practiced by early believers. As explained in the Scriptures, baptism was a declaration of the believer's identification with Jesus Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. Clearly, baptism was practiced by the early church, and therefore, we believe this ordinance should be practiced by the church today.

WHY BAPTIZE?

We baptize because:

- ▶ Baptism was commanded by our Lord—Matthew 28:19
- ▶ Baptism was practiced by the early church—Acts 2:41; 8:26–39; 10:44–48; 16:31–33; 18:8

WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED?

In the Scriptures we find examples of disciples (or followers) of Christ, believers, and those who had received the Holy Spirit being baptized:

- ► Disciples (or followers of Christ)—Matthew 28:19
- ▶ Believers—Acts 2:41; 8:30–38; 16:33–34
- ► Those who have received the Holy Spirit—Acts 10:44-48

Therefore, we conclude that those who have personally confessed Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord (i.e., Christians) should be baptized.

WHAT DOES BAPTISM MEAN?

Baptism is a declaration of the believer's identification with Christ:

- ► Identification with Christ in His death—Romans 6:3
- ► Identification with Christ in His burial—Romans 6:4a
- ► Identification with Christ in His resurrection—Romans 6:4b

Baptism is an acknowledgment "that our old self was crucified with Him" (Romans 6:6) and a profession that henceforth we "might walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4b).

HOW SHOULD WE BAPTIZE?

We believe that a person should be baptized by being fully immersed in water:

- ► The word *baptism* was transliterated from the word *baptizo*, meaning to "make fully whelmed; to dip or to sink."
- ► Baptism took place where there was *much water*—John 3:23
- ▶ When they baptized, they went *down into the water* (Acts 8:38) and *came up from the water* (Matthew 3:16).

Also, when baptizing by immersion, the picture of going down into the water and coming up out of the water symbolizes the believer's identification with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection.

Have you confessed Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior?

Have you been baptized as a believer?

THE ORDINANCE OF COMMUNION		
The Lord's Supper, or Communion, is one of two ordinances given to the church by Jesus Christ (the other being baptism). The Lord's Supper is an act of remembrance of Christ's death.		
Read 1 Corinthians 11:23–26 and fill in the blanks below.		
1. The bread is in remembrance of His body		
2. The cup is in remembrance of His blood		
3. Every time you partake in Communion, you proclaim the Lord's death (1 Corinthians 11:26). In light of that truth, what is the warning stated in 1 Corinthians 11:27–30?		
"Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner,		
shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. But a man must examine himself,		
and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks,		
eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly. For this reason		
many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep."		

VI. APPLICATION

A. Are you a member of the body of Christ?

B. Are you a member of a local assembly of Christians?

C. What have you learned from this study to improve your worship of God?



THE CHURCH: FELLOWSHIP AND WORSHIP

The Objectives of Lesson 9

- 1. To understand the difference between the *universal church* and the *local church*.
- 2 To give the student a set of guidelines of what to look for when selecting a church.
- 3. To exhort the student to participate and minister within the church.
- 4. To understand worship within the church, including Communion.

THE CLASS PLAN FOR LESSON 9

- 1. Clarify the relationship between Christ and His church.
- 2. Clarify the difference between the *universal church* and the *local church*.
- 3. Review the biblical guidelines for church organization.
- 4. Look at true fellowship and worship within the church.

COMMON QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 9

What are the biblical guidelines when selecting a church?

What is the purpose of the church?

SUGGESTED TEACHING OUTLINE FOR LESSON 9

1. Warm-up

Begin with a sharing time asking the group members to share their experiences in the body of Christ. Ask, What have been some circumstances in your life when you have thought, "Now this is how the body of Christ is supposed to be"? What did that experience highlight for you about the body of Christ?

2. The church universal (section I)

Ask the class, *What do you think is the difference between the universal church and the local church?* Answer: The universal church is the body of all believers, referred to as the body of Christ. The local church is a smaller group of believers that come together to worship, fellowship, receive teaching from the Bible, and evangelize in a local area.

As you discuss the nature of the universal church, consider the following concepts: The church of Jesus Christ is not an organization; it is an organism. It is not a building with offices; it is a fellowship that includes all believers. The church is not a program of various activities; it is the body that has individual growth. The church should not be focused on administration, but should be ministry focused. The church is people: living and loving, learning and laboring, leading and following, together for the glory of Jesus Christ who is the head.

Review section I of the lesson, ask the students to read their responses to the questions in section I, A. This should lead to a discussion about the body of Christ and the close relationships within the body:

A. The church is seen as the body of Christ

- ► Christ is the head—Ephesians 5:23 (section I, A, 1)
- ► The body is made up of those called by God—1 Corinthians 3:15 (section I, C, 1)
- ► Christ baptizes the believer with the Holy Spirit and places them into the body of Christ— 1 Corinthians 12:13 (section I, C, 2); also see Luke 3:16; John 1:33
- ► Each believer has a unique function within the body—1 Corinthians 12:12–27

Discuss the importance of each believer ministering within the church in order for the body to function as God intended.

B. The church is seen as a family (supplement to the lesson).

- ▶ We are all children of God—John 1:12
- ▶ We are all brothers and sisters—1 Corinthians 7:15
- ► God is our Father; Christ is our brother—Hebrews 2:11

Discuss the closeness of family and the father-son/daughter relationship. Discuss the care and provision of the father for his family. Also talk about respect and obedience due the Father. This is one picture of the universal church.

Ask, Have you ever experienced closeness and unity with other believers whom you had just met?

3. The local church (section II)

As previously mentioned, the local church is a smaller group of believers that come together to worship, fellowship, receive teaching from the Bible, and evangelize in a local area. The model of the local church is formed by looking at the priorities and structure of the early church during the time of the apostles.

A. Priorities of the early church

Review with your students the answers to question II, A, 3. Talk about the importance of each of these areas:

1. Teaching

The early church was devoted to the apostles' teaching:

- ► The teaching of God's Word is vital to the growth of all believers—1 Peter 2:2
- ► God gave the church gifted pastors/teachers for the equipping of the saints—Ephesians 4:11– 12 (section II, B, 1)

2. Fellowship

The early church body was involved in each other's lives, ministering to one another in a bond of unity. (This will be developed in the next section of the lesson.)

3. Communion (also referred to as the breaking of bread)

The early church never lost sight of Christ's sacrifice. (Communion will be covered at the end of this lesson.)

4. Prayer

When the early church met, its members were devoted to praying together and praying for one another (James 5:16). This is the heart of the church: recognizing God as the head and provider and aligning the direction of the church with the will of God.

Ask, How do these essential components of the early church compare to the typical life in a local church today? What, if anything, is missing or downplayed?

B. Structure of the early church

This section looks at the responsibilities of both leadership and the members of the church.

1. Gifted men given to the church

Have the students read their response to question II, B, regarding the gifted men given to the church. The following may be used to supplement the information about these specially gifted men. (However, spiritual giftedness will be covered in lesson #10.)

- ► apostles—An apostle is literally "one sent on a mission." In a strict sense this means the Twelve (Mark 3:16–19), plus Paul who was also called an apostle when he was uniquely set apart to bring the gospel to the Gentiles (Galatians 1:15–17). The qualifications of an apostle included being chosen directly by Christ (Mark 3:13) and having seen the resurrected Christ (Acts 1:22–24). Therefore, there is no possibility for anyone to be an apostle in the church today. However, in a wider sense, "apostle" can also refer to some who were not members of the Twelve and Paul, but nonetheless were "sent on a mission." They include Barnabas (Acts 14:4), Silas and Timothy (1 Timothy 2:6), and others (Romans 16:7; 2 Corinthians 8:23; Philippians 2:25).
- ▶ prophets—A prophet either foretells or "forth tells" the truths of God to God's people. The purpose of the prophets, like the apostles, was to lay the foundation of divine truth upon which the church would be built (Eph. 2:20). Upon the completion of the N.T., the office of prophet ceased.
- evangelists—An evangelist is a person particularly gifted in proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ. Evangelism is something that all Christians should be doing, but some are more gifted at it than others.
- ► **pastors/teachers**—A pastor is one who shepherds, cares for, and protects God's people. Teaching is the primary function of pastors. The job of pastor/teacher is to faithfully preach the Word of God (2 Tim. 4:2-4).

The purpose of why God gave these gifted men to the church is important to cover. Have the students read Ephesians 4:11–12. Discuss the answer to the question in section II, B, 1, b, noting the following important points:

- ► The gifted men are to equip the saints for the *work of service*.
- ► Ask, *Who are the saints?* Answer: all believers; the members of the church.

- ► Ask, *Why are we being equipped*? Answer: To do the *work of the service* to the building up of the body of Christ.
- ► Ask, *Who is responsible to build up the body of Christ?* Answer: The saints, not the pastors of the church.

Ask, When you looked for a church, did you look for a church in which you could best serve and use your spiritual giftedness?

Ask, Are you looking at this class as an opportunity to become better equipped so you can serve more effectively in the church?

2. Office of elder/overseer (section II, B, 2)

As an introduction to elder rule, review the following passages:

- ► Elders were appointed in every church—Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5
- ► Elders are to rule—1 Timothy 5:17
- ► Elders are to oversee and shepherd—1 Peter 5:1–2 (section II, B, 2, a)
- ► The members are to obey and submit to their leaders—Hebrews 13:17
- ► The qualifications of elders are stated in 1 Timothy 3:1–7 and Titus 1:6–9

3. Office of deacon (section II, B, 3)

Deacons were those who served the needs of the church, under the direction of the elders.

- ▶ The office and qualification of deacons are stated in 1 Timothy 3:8–13.
- ► An example of men selected to serve—Acts 6:2-4

Note: You may want to give out the qualifications of elder and deacon as a handout.

4. Members of the body (section II, B, 4)

Church membership should be stressed here. It is not enough to show up at church on Sundays, but as Christians, we are called to be faithfully part of a local church so that we can minister our spiritual giftedness for the growth of the body. Discuss the responsibility of membership, and explain the process of becoming a member at your particular church.

Ask, *What does a good church look like? How do I choose one?* Answer: Give the class some criteria for choosing a church. The church should be focused on Scripture, teaching sound doctrine, be evangelistic, be loving, and promote worship in the believers' lives. The elders should be godly and qualified, and they should not tolerate immorality. Make the students aware of the wrong reasons to choose a church, which include music style, programs offered, service times, and other preference issues.

4. Fellowship (section III)

True fellowship is founded on the common ground of the gospel. All Christians are sinners saved by the grace of God. We have all been purified by Christ's blood. In response, we all love Christ and have given our lives over to Him. We share a common purpose: namely, to glorify God and to build up His church. This common bond results in a true love for the brethren in Christ (1 Peter 1:22–23).

A. Unity within the church

The exhortation of Scripture is always to preserve the unity of the church. Ask your students for their answers to the questions in section III and then discuss these important points.

- ▶ No divisions; be of the same mind—1 Corinthians 1:10; 12:25 (section III, A and II, B, 4, c)
- ► Promote unity with humility and gentleness—Ephesians 4:2–3 (section III, B)
- ► Be humble; see others as more important than yourself—Philippians 2:1–4 (section III, C)

B. No true fellowship with unbelievers

True fellowship cannot be enjoyed with unbelievers. This is brought out in 2 Corinthians 6:14–15 (section III, B). Many of your students have friendships with unbelievers. This can be a wonderful opportunity for evangelism. However, it must be made clear that true fellowship can only be enjoyed with other believers.

Ask, *Why is it that true fellowship cannot be enjoyed with those who do not believe in Christ?* Answer: True fellowship is based in our love for God because He saved us out of complete darkness. Our desires are not the same as those of unbelievers. Our desires are to honor God and to bring Him glory through all that we do. The common ground at the foot of the cross is not shared with unbelievers. This does not mean that we sever all relationships with our unbelieving friends. On the contrary, use these relationships to show them Christ through your life and words. Share the gospel with them. But the deep fellowship and love that we enjoy with the Father, the Son, and other believers can never be enjoyed with unbelievers.

C. Ministering to others within the church

You should always have a view of serving and ministering to others within the church. Review your students' responses to the "One anothers" in question III, C. Discuss each one. Here are a few more "One anothers" to supplement the list in the lesson:

- ► Love one another—Mark 9:50
- ► Give preference to one another—Romans 12:10
- ► Admonish one another—Romans 15:5
- ► Comfort one another—1 Thessalonians 4:18
- ▶ Encourage and build up one another—1 Thessalonians 5:11
- ► Have fellowship with one another—1 John 1:7

In summary, the church should not be just a group of people who meet together on Sundays. Rather, the church should be a closely-knit-together group of people who share their lives with one another freely.

5. Worship (section IV)

Close communion with God through prayer and a fuller understanding of God through the teaching of the Scriptures should drive the Christian to worship God.

Definition of Worship: To ascribe worth or value; the word translated "worship" is derived from the ancient practice of bowing oneself to the ground in reverence (Exodus 34:8).

A. Worship belongs to God alone.

- ► Our God is a jealous God and is not willing to share His worship with any other—Exodus 20:4-6; Isaiah 42:8 (supplement to the lesson)
- ► God is worthy to receive worship because He is the creator of all things—Revelation 4:10–11 (section IV, B)

As such, Christians should have nothing in their lives that rivals God in adoration and worship. Challenge the students to examine any areas in their lives where worship is not given toward God alone. Ask, *What aspects of your life do you need to guard against because they tend to compete for the attention that God alone deserves*?

B. True worship

God wants our worship to be true. This means that we must be worshiping in truth and worshiping from the heart:

- Don't just worship with your lips; God wants worship from the heart—Matthew 15:8-9 (supplement to the lesson)
- ▶ Worship God in truth—John 4:23–24 (section IV, A)

Discuss these two truths with your students.

Note: To worship God in truth, one must seek to know Him by learning about His attributes and actions.

The worst deed committed in the universe is failure to give God honor, or glory. Above everything else, God is to be glorified. To glorify God is to exalt Him, to recognize Him as supremely worthy of honor, and to acknowledge His divine attributes.¹

-John MacArthur

Building upon the true worship of God, section IV, C talks about worshiping God in song.

Ask, How important is it to take part in singing praises to God during the worship portion of the Sunday service? Are we singing from our heart? Are we truly praising God with our lips?

¹ Quote from The MacArthur New Testament Commentary series: Romans 1-8 (Moody), © 1999 by John MacArthur.

C. Worshiping God with our lives (supplement to the lesson)

Worship should not be isolated to Sundays only. A Christian should strive to give God glory through his or her everyday life. When Christians act in a manner that is worthy of the God who called us, God's glory is reflected back to Him through our acts of devotion (1 Corinthians 10:31; John 14:13).

6. Ordinances of the church (section V)

There are two ordinances that Christ established for His church: baptism and Communion. Communion is sometimes referred to as the Lord's Supper.

A. Baptism

Discuss the information in the lesson and exhort the students, who are believers and have not been baptized, to be baptized.

B. Communion

1. Communion is an ordinance, not a sacrament.

Due to confusion with the sacraments of the Catholic Church, it is important to help the students understand the difference between an ordinance and a sacrament.

- ► An ordinance pictures an event without imparting any grace or merit to the one participating in the ordinance. In the case of Communion, it is in remembrance of Christ's death. The taking of Communion does not in any way add merit to one's salvation before God. Salvation is solely by the grace of God (Ephesians 2:8–9).
- ► A sacrament is something that a person does outwardly, but an inward spiritual grace is bestowed. Biblically this view violates salvation by grace alone, since a person is performing an action that adds merit to his position before God.
- 2. The ordinance of Communion

Communion was initiated at the last true Passover-Matthew 26:19, 26-29

Ask, *What was the Passover*? Answer: Give a brief overview of Passover and stress that this was the one time, every year, when the Passover lamb was slain.

Note: Jesus was to die on Passover as the true Passover Lamb.

Ask, *When Jesus implemented Communion, He took bread. Was this bread Christ's flesh?* Answer: No, Christ was with them.

Ask, *When Jesus implemented Communion, He took a cup of wine. Was this Christ's blood?* Answer: No, it was the fruit of the vine (verse 29) and again Christ was alive, with them.

Note: The celebration of the Passover was transformed into the Lord's Supper, or Communion, to celebrate the sacrifice of the true Passover Lamb, namely, Christ.

Review 1 Corinthians 11:23–26 at the end of section V of the lesson, and discuss the ordinance of Communion.

3. The warning in taking Communion

Ask a student to give the warning stated in 1 Corinthians 11:27–30. Then ask the class and discuss, *Why is it important to do a self-examination every time one takes Communion?*

7. Application (section VI)

Challenge each student as to whether they have committed themselves to Christ and His church:

- ► Are they part of the body of Christ—the family of God?
- ► Are they a part of a local church, and are they ministering within the church?
- ► Have they been baptized?

Challenge each student about being a part of a church fellowship group where they can minister their gifts and be ministered to.

Ask the students to share their thoughts on the last question in the lesson, *What have you learned from this study to improve your worship of God?*





SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Prepare for Your Assignment

- 1. Download message #10, "Miracles, Healing, and Tongues," from www.gty.org/fof.
- 2. Use your notebook to take notes on the message.
- 3. Work through the questions and tasks on the following pages.

Memorize 1 Corinthians 12:7

But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

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God gives spiritual gifts to believers for the purpose of ministry within the church. The English term comes from two Greek words, charismata and pneumatika. The root of charismata is charis, which means "grace" and speaks of something undeserved or unearned. The second word, pneumatika, means "spirituals," or things given by the Spirit of God. In this lesson, you will look at various spiritual gifts and how they should be used in the body of Christ.

I. THE NATURE OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

A. Who is the source of spiritual giftedness?

- 1. 1 Corinthians 12:11 _____ the Holy Spirit
- God 2. 1 Corinthians 12:28 ____

B. Who possesses spiritual giftedness (1 Peter 4:10)?

every believer

C. What is the purpose of spiritual gifts?

for the common good 1. 1 Corinthians 12:4-7

2. 1 Corinthians 14:12 _____for the edification of the church

3. 1 Peter 4:10–11 _____ to serve one another

II. THE PROVISION OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

A. Spiritual gifts are referred to in Scripture. List them below:

1. Romans 12:6-8

prophecy	exhortation	mercy
service	giving	teaching
leading		

2. 1 Corinthians 12:8-10

_	wisdom	healing	distinguishing of spirits
_	knowledge	effecting of miracles	various kinds of tongues
_	faith	prophecy	interpretation of tongues
3. 1 Corinthians 12:28b (second half of verse)			
_	healing	administrations	miracles
_	helps	various kinds of tongues	-

B. Understanding the gifts-temporary gifts

For a better understanding of how the spiritual gifts function, we have classified the gifts into two categories: temporary (special) and permanent.

The Holy Spirit gave temporary gifts to confirm the testimony of the apostles and prophets. These gifts were prevalent in the early church but ceased to be evident as the church became established.

1. Miracles

This gift is the ability to do "wonders" and "signs." Christ performed many miracles, as recorded in Scripture. Paul used this gift to affirm his apostleship, as described in 2 Corinthians 12:12.

2. Healing

Peter had this gift (see Acts 3:6–8; 5:15–16), which affirmed his message and helped to establish the foundation for the church.

3. Tongues and interpretation of tongues

This gift is manifested by the speaking of a language unknown to the speaker (see Acts 2:1–11). This gift had to be accompanied by the gift of interpretation (1 Corinthians 14:27–28).

C. Understanding the gifts-permanent gifts

The Holy Spirit gave gifts for the building up of the church. These were prevalent in the early church and still are in the church today.

1. Prophecy

To prophesy is to preach or to tell forth or declare the Scripture. Prophecy does not necessarily mean to foretell the future.

2. Teaching

This gift is the ability to teach the Word of God and help the hearers to understand the Scriptures as the author intended.

3. Faith

This gift is a consistent, enabling faith that truly believes God in the face of overwhelming obstacles and human impossibilities, and for great things. John MacArthur calls this the "gift of prayer" because the gift is primarily expressed toward God through prayer.

4. Wisdom

This is the ability to apply wisdom, gained from spiritual insight, to believers; knowing what is right and what is wrong, applied knowledge.

5. Knowledge

This is an understanding of the facts of Scripture. From the human perspective, it is scholarship or the ability to know the truths of Scripture both broadly and deeply.

6. Discernment

Discernment is the ability to tell which things are from the Spirit and which are not, distinguishing truth from error. This gift serves as protection for the church.

7. Mercy

This is the ability to show deep compassion to those who have spiritual, physical, or emotional needs.

8. Exhortation

Exhortation is the ability to encourage and motivate. A person with this gift can come alongside another to comfort him with love, to encourage him to a deeper spiritual commitment and growth, or to exhort him to action. This is the gift that qualifies people to exercise a counseling ministry in the body.

9. Giving

This gift is a direct reference to the material ministry of giving food, clothes, money, houses, etc., in response to the needs of the church.

10. Administration/Leadership

This gift is the ability to oversee the flock. This gift should be exhibited by pastors and elders, as well as leaders of missionary societies, youth ministries, evangelistic associations, etc.

11. Helps

This gift is the ability to aid in a time of need or bear one another's burdens as the situation arises.

12. Service

The gift of service is working for the body of Christ in areas of physical ministry, such as serving food or performing maintenance.

III. THE EXERCISE OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

A. State the principle(s) expressed in Romans 12:6-8.

"Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them

accordingly; if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; if service, in his serving; or he who

teaches, in his teaching; or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who

leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness."

Exercise your gift.

B. Read 1 Corinthians 13:1–7 and answer the following questions:

1. How can your gifts be abused and without benefit (verses 1–3)?

"If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy

gong or a clanging symbol. If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all

knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.

And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do

not have love, it profits me nothing."

If your gift is not exercised in love

2. Since your spiritual giftedness is to be exercised in love, what are some guidelines that will ensure the profitability of your gifts?

List 15 guidelines (verses 4–7).

a.	patience
b.	kindness
с.	no jealousy
d	no bragging
e.	no arrogance

f. _____no rudeness (acting unbecomingly)

g. _____ not insisting on one's own way

h. not irritable or resentful (provoked)

i. _____ not taking account of wrongs

i. not rejoicing in unrighteousness

k. rejoicing with the truth

1. bears all things

m. believes all things

n. hopes all things

o. ____ endures all things

C. First Corinthians 12 reveals the importance of each spiritual gift within the body of Christ. According to 1 Corinthians 12:25, what should your attitude be in the use of your spiritual giftedness?

"No division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another."

D. Read Ephesians 4:11–16. What causes the growth of the body of Christ (verse 16)?

"The proper working of each individual part causes the growth of the body."

IV. APPLICATION

Discovery of Your Giftedness		
Each member of the body is commanded to minister in many of the gifted areas, whether he possesses that particular gift or not. For example, all Christians are to function in the following areas:		
Faith		
Wisdom James 1:5		
Knowledge 2 Timothy 2:15		
Exhortation Hebrews 10:25		
Giving		
Care for one another (helps) 1 Corinthians 12:25		

The Bible does not explicitly explain how to determine one's spiritual giftedness. However, you can begin by being obedient in the areas mentioned above. Look for open doors, and pray for opportunities to serve. Seek the counsel of other believers; they may be more aware of your gifts than you are.

In order to discover your giftedness in the body and in submission to the elders of your church, in what areas would you be willing to serve?

1	(Answers will vary)
2	
3	

Each of us needs to exercise his or her giftedness in ministry for the common good of the church.

"As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." -1 Peter 4:10



SPIRITUAL GIFTS

THE OBJECTIVES OF LESSON 10

- 1. To give the students an understanding of both the nature and purpose of spiritual giftedness.
- 2. To see the difference between the permanent gifts and the sign gifts.
- 3. To exhort the students to step out and minister their giftedness to the body of Christ.

THE CLASS PLAN FOR LESSON 10

- 1. Clarify what we mean by spiritual gifts.
- 2. Survey the source, purpose, and scope of spiritual gifts.
- 3. Exhort the students to exercise their giftedness.

COMMON QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 10

How are spiritual gifts different from natural abilities or talents?

Are the gifts of healings and tongues active today?

How do I know my spiritual gift?

SUGGESTED TEACHING OUTLINE FOR LESSON 10

1. Warm-up

Realize that group members may have a variety of experiences and understanding on the nature and use of spiritual gifts. The recorded message should defuse any strong reactions and clear the air for a serious look at what the Bible says about spiritual gifts.

Have one of the students read the lesson introductory paragraph and discuss the definition of spiritual gifts. People are sometimes confused over the difference between spiritual gifts and natural abilities and talents. Both originate from God; however, talents are natural abilities shared by both believers and nonbelievers. Spiritual gifts are given by the Holy Spirit only to those who are believers in Jesus Christ. They are capacities for spiritual service; therefore, a new believer may find a desire and ability to serve in a way he had never imagined before he was saved.

2. The nature of spiritual gifts (section I)

A. The giving of spiritual gifts

Discuss that at the moment of salvation, a unique spiritual giftedness is given to each Christian by the Holy Spirit for the purpose of building up the church.

1. All Christians have been given a special gift.

Read 1 Peter 4:10–11, "As each one has received a special gift, ... "

Note that "each one" (that is, every Christian) has received a special gift. Ask, *If each Christian has received a special gift, then when did he or she receive it?* Answer: at the time of salvation.

Note the article: "a" spiritual gift. Ask, *What is the significance of the article "a"*? Answer: The gift is *singular*. It is a single gift, or better seen as *giftedness*.

2. The uniqueness of each Christian's giftedness

It is best to see your giftedness as a mixture of several of the gifts. Your gift is like a painting. The painter, or in this case the Holy Spirit, selects from a palette of gifts and paints your giftedness to perfectly equip you for your God-given ministry.

A believer's gifts can be an overlapping combination, taken in different proportions from the categories of gifts. . . . It is best to see a person's gift as a unique blend of the categories of giftedness, granted to that individual in connection with his or her traits and experiences and the needs of the church. Each believer becomes as unique spiritually as his fingerprints are physically.¹

-John MacArthur

Example: One good example is the analogy of a football team. If you had to paint a quarterback, he would have to be quick and able to throw. The receiver must be fast and able to catch. How about a kicker? Each player is uniquely gifted for his position. What would happen if the quarterback did not show up and the kicker had to fill in for him?

In the same way, the church is made up of many members. Each is uniquely gifted for different ministries within the church. To follow the example of the football team, all Christians need to be in the game and to be doing that for which they have been uniquely gifted. Review the analogy of the church as a body (1 Corinthians 12:14, 17–19) and exhort your students to become involved in ministry.

B. The purpose of spiritual giftedness (section I, C)

It is important to look at the purpose of spiritual gifts. Discuss that the purpose of the spiritual gifts is for ministering to one another, to the building up of the body of Christ.

- ► For the common good of the church (1 Corinthians 12:7)
- ► For the edification of the church (1 Corinthians 14:12)
- ► Used to serve one another (1 Peter 4:10).

As John MacArthur writes, "God gives His gifts to us for others."²

¹ Quote from The MacArthur New Testament Commentary series: *1 Corinthians* (Moody), © 1984 by John MacArthur. ² Quote from The MacArthur New Testament Commentary series: *1–3 John* (Moody), © 2007 by John MacArthur.

3. The provision of spiritual gifts (section II)

A. The number of spiritual gifts

Some people disagree on the number of spiritual gifts, because God did not give a rigid or precise list. So be careful not to overdefine the gifts—the Bible is not that specific. For example, God appointed gifted people for the church mentioned in Ephesians 4:11, namely, apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. Some include these gifted men in the list of gifts, since they are listed alongside the gifts in 1 Corinthians 12:28. However:

- Appointed means to set in place; it indicates an official appointment to an office (cf. John 15:16; 2 Timothy 1:11).
- ▶ You clearly do not receive the gift of *apostle*, it is an appointment.

Of course, these gifted men were most likely strong in spiritual gifts such as knowledge, teaching, and leadership.

B. Categories of spiritual gifts

The lesson divides the spiritual gifts into two major categories: the *permanent gifts* and the *temporary gifts*. This was done to separate the gifts into ones that are still active today, and others that existed only at the time of the early church.

1. The permanent gifts

Recall that the purpose of the spiritual gifts is to build up the church. Review each of the gifts listed in the lesson and discuss their meaning with the students.

Note: One permanent gift, about which there is confusion, is the gift of prophecy. Many people believe that this gift only means to foretell the future. It does mean this; however, the word prophecy strictly means to "tell forth." Today, with the completion of Scripture, the *foretelling* part of the gift has ceased. Today, a person with the gift of prophecy "tells forth" God's Word from the Scriptures.

2. The temporary gifts

There are many who believe that the *temporary gifts* listed in this lesson are still active today. Gifts such as healing and tongues are prominent in the charismatic movement. However, it can be shown that the original purpose for the *temporary gifts* no longer exists today. It can also be shown that the way the *temporary gifts* are manifested today does not match the way these gifts were manifested at the time of the early church. Based on these two facts, we believe the *temporary gifts* are no longer active today.

Let us examine each of the temporary gifts to see their original purpose and the way in which they were manifested at the time of the early church.

Healing and Miracles

a. The purpose of healing and miracles:

- ► To confirm the gospel message—Hebrews 2:3-4
- ► To confirm the apostles—Acts 5:12; 2 Corinthians 12:12

- ► To confirm Paul—Romans 15:18–19
- ► To confirm the message and the messenger—Acts 4:29–30

b. The purpose of healing and miracles is no longer required today:

- Since we have the completed Scriptures, the message no longer needs to be validated as from God.
- ► The office of apostle has passed away; therefore, these gifts are no longer required to attest to their authority.
- c. The usage of the gift of healing at the time of the early church:
 - ► Healing was instantaneous—Mark 1:42
 - ▶ Healing was complete and permanent—Matthew 14:36
 - ► Healed blindness, paralysis, etc.—Acts 3:7; 8:5–7; Matthew 10:1
 - Healing was unconditional (it did not depend upon the faith of the one being healed) —John 9:25
- d. The manifestation of the gift of healing today does not match that of the early church. None of the faith healers today heal instantaneously, completely, permanently, and unconditionally. Moreover, the healers of today do not heal blindness, paralysis, or similar conditions.

Therefore, we do not believe the gifts of healing and miracles are active today.

Some students may come from charismatic backgrounds and may not be open to receiving this truth. Stress that God still heals today but through answered prayer. Also note that the apostles were able to drive out sickness from entire cities. If someone had the true gift of healing today, they would be in hospitals healing every form of sickness.

Tongues and the Interpretation of Tongues

- a. The purpose of tongues and the interpretation of tongues:
 - ► A sign to unbelieving Jews—1 Corinthians14:21–22
 - ► Attested to the salvation of the Gentiles—Acts 10:47; 11:15–18
 - ► To give a word from God to edify the church—1 Corinthians 14:26–28
- b. The purpose of tongues and the interpretation of tongues is no longer required today:
 - The usage of tongues as a sign to the Jews, to confirm the acceptance of the Gentiles into the church, is no longer required today.
 - Since we have the completed and sufficient Scriptures (2 Timothy 3:16–17), a word from God, by way of tongues and the interpretation of tongues, is no longer needed.
- c. The usage of tongues and the interpretation of tongues at the time of the early church:
 - ► Tongues were known languages—Acts 2:4–11

- ► Tongues were to be regulated: one, two, or at the most three, and each in turn, and with interpretation—1 Corinthians 14:26–28, 40
- d. The manifestation of tongues and the interpretation of tongues today do not match that of the early church. What is seen today as tongues, at the forefront of the charismatic movement, is uncontrolled. Today, what is seen as tongues is unintelligible and done by many, all at the same time (in contrast to 1 Corinthians 14:26–28).

Note: Some people within the charismatic movement believe that the baptism of the Holy Spirit must be accompanied by speaking in tongues as a sign of true salvation. To get a better grasp on this issue, refer back to lesson *#*7, *The Person and Ministry of the Holy Spirit*, where the baptism of the Holy Spirit was covered. It is clear that all Christians have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit at the time of salvation (Romans 8:9). However, it is also clear that not all Christians spoke in tongues (1 Corinthians 12:28–30).

4. The exercise of spiritual gifts (section III)

A. Exhortation to be involved in ministry

Discuss your students' answers to question III, A, which exhorts all Christians to be exercising their giftedness. Tie this in with their answer to III, D, in which the growth of the church is dependent upon all its members ministering together. Exhort your students to become involved in ministry.

B. Finding your giftedness

Remember that giftedness is a blend of the various gifts. Your student needs to find the ministry that God has gifted him for. This can best be determined by stepping into ministry and allowing God to be the guide. One should pray for guidance from God, be immersed in His Word, confess sin, then follow the desires of his heart.

C. Ministering your gift in love

Review your students' answers to questions III, B and III, C. Emphasize the way Paul interrupted his discussion of spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 12 and 14 with his chapter on the crucial nature of love, chapter 13. Ask, *In what ways does the presence or absence of love affect the exercise of spiritual gifts in the body of Christ*?

- ► We will not seek our own benefit; we will seek the benefit of others in the church.
- ▶ We will not cause any divisions in the body; we will work toward unity in the church.
- ► We will seek to care for others.

5. Application (section IV)

A. Recap the important points learned

- Every Christian has been uniquely gifted by God for ministry.
- ► We received our giftedness at the time of salvation.
- Our giftedness is a blend of the various spiritual gifts.

- We are exhorted to employ our gift in serving others, for the purpose of building up the body of Christ.
- ► Our gifts are useless if not exercised in love.
- ► If we do not exercise our giftedness, the growth of the church will be hindered.

B. Exhort your students to be involved in ministry

End by reading 1 Peter 4:10, quoted at the end of the lesson.





EVANGELISM AND THE BELIEVER

Prepare for Your Assignment

- 1. Download message #11, "Fishing for Men," from www.gty.org/fof.
- 2. Use your notebook to take notes on the message.
- 3. Work through the questions and tasks on the following pages.

Memorize 1 Peter 3:15

But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence. The word *evangelism* brings many thoughts to mind. Some people think of tents and famous speakers; others envision weekly "visitation" and the terror of "witnessing." This lesson will introduce the biblical concept of evangelism and the role the believer plays.

I. THE CALL TO EVANGELISM

A. According to Mark 16:15, what were the disciples to do?

"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all

creation."

- B. What are the three aspects of making disciples, according to Matthew 28:19–20?
 - 1. _____ go make disciples
 - 2. _____ baptize them
 - 3. teach them

C. What did Jesus say should be proclaimed to all the nations (Luke 24:46–47)?

"Repentance for forgiveness of sins would be

proclaimed in His name to all the nations."

D. What was Paul to tell all people (Acts 22:15)?

He would be a witness for Christ to all men of what he

had seen and heard.

First John 4 tells us that we only love God because He first loved us. And John 3:16 tells us that "God so loved the world, that He gave." The greatest work in the heart of God, the greatest concern in the mind of God, is evangelism. Winning the lost is God's great concern. It is also Christ's great concern. Luke 19:10 says, "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." The work of winning the lost is God's concern and Christ's concern, and also the greatest concern of the Holy Spirit, for it is the Holy Spirit who comes, according to John 16, to convict men of sin and righteousness and of judgment. It is the Holy Spirit who comes upon the church, and after we have received the Holy Spirit, we are made witnesses, Jesus said, unto Him, "in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth." The great concern of God is evangelism. The great concern of the Spirit is evangelism, saving the lost.

— John MacArthur

II. THE GOOD NEWS OF EVANGELISM: THE GOSPEL

A. According to 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, what is the good news that Paul preached?

- 1. Christ died for our sins.
- 2. He was buried.
- 3. He was raised on the third day.

B. Of what did Paul say he was not ashamed (Romans 1:16)? _____ the gospel

C. Why? "It is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes."

III. THE ESSENTIALS OF EVANGELISM

A. What must someone believe about Jesus Christ for salvation?

- 1. John 1:1 ___Jesus is God.
- 2. John 14:6 _____Jesus is the way, truth, and life, the only way to God.
- 3. Acts 4:12 Jesus is the only way of salvation.

B. The following are key verses in sharing the gospel message. Look up each verse and briefly summarize the main point.

- 1. Romans 3:23 "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."
- 2. Romans 6:23 "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."
- 3. Romans 5:8 _____God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ

died for us."

- 4. 1 Peter 2:24 <u>"He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live</u> to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed."
- 5. Romans 10:9 <u>"If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God</u> raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."
- 6. John 1:12 <u>"As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to</u> those who believe in His name."

Most people do not understand these truths:	
Man cannot save himself Mark 10:26–27	
God is holy and righteous, and He hates sin Psalm 5:4–5	
Jesus Christ is God Colossians 2:9	
Christ's death on the cross was for our sins 1 Peter 3:18	
Christ offers heaven as a free gift of God Romans 6:23	

IV. STRATEGY FOR EVANGELISM

A. Witness by your life

1. What kind of life should we live, and how should we appear to the world (Philippians 2:14–15)?

"Do all things without grumbling or disputing; so that you will prove yourselves to be *blameless and*

innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation,

among whom you appear as lights in the world."

Others will see your Redeemer through your redeemed life.

2. Read Matthew 5:16.	
a. What do people notice that makes a Christian's life shine?	good works
b. What will be the result? Goo	gets the glory.

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3. According to Colossians 4:6, how should you speak to others?

"Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt."

B. Pray

1. As Paul prayed for others, what was on his heart (Romans 10:1)?

their salvation

2. For what requests did Paul ask the Colossians to pray (Colossians 4:3-4)?

"That God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ

... that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak."

3. When speaking the Word of God to others, especially in threatening situations, what should we ask God to give us (Acts 4:29)?

confidence

"First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men.... This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."

—1 ТІМОТНУ 2:1, 3-4

C. Use God's Word

1. What will God's Word do (Hebrews 4:12)?

"The word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as

far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and

intentions of the heart."

2. How did Paul use Scripture in witnessing (Acts 17:2–3)?

"He reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and giving evidence."

3. What are the Scriptures able to do (2 Timothy 3:15)?

"Give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

We must be ready to speak of Christ in any situation. We must know the essentials of the gospel. We must have confidence in God and His Word.

"Always being ready to make a defense . . . to give an account for the hope that is in you."

-1 Peter 3:15

Then pray and look for opportunities!

V. APPLICATION

List several people whom you want to reach for Christ. Pray regularly for those people, and prepare for the opportunity to share the Word of God with them. Allow God to do His convicting work, and trust Him.

1	(Answers will vary)
2.	
3.	
4	
5	

Remember, exemplify Christlikeness.

Witness to people with your life, and your message will be more clearly understood!



EVANGELISM AND THE BELIEVER

THE OBJECTIVES OF LESSON 11

- 1. To motivate the students to have a heart for the lost.
- 2. To help the students overcome the barriers that keep them from evangelizing.
- 3. To help the students understand their responsibility and equip them for the task.

THE CLASS PLAN FOR LESSON 11

- 1. Review the call to evangelism.
- 2. Discuss hindrances to evangelism and how to overcome them.
- 3. Teach the essentials of the gospel message.
- 4. Discuss key things to remember when witnessing.

COMMON QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 11

How can I overcome the fear of evangelizing?

What are the essentials of the gospel message?

SUGGESTED TEACHING OUTLINE FOR LESSON 11

1. Warm-up

Common Question: "How can I overcome the fear of evangelizing?" It is difficult for many Christians to witness. Many have a fear of people. They fear both rejection and persecution. Sometimes they are more concerned with their own priorities than with helping others. Also, the gospel itself is foolishness and offensive to non-Christians, and thus some people are hesitant to share it. So how do Christians get motivated to share their faith? It starts by having a heart for the lost.

Have your students read Matthew 7:13–14. Discuss the two gates mentioned in the passage:

- ► The small gate—leading to life; the way is narrow and there are few who find it.
- ► The wide gate—leading to destruction (hell); the way is broad and many have entered it.

Ask your students to think about the people they know—their friends, neighbors, and coworkers. Ask, *What path are they on? Have you shared the gospel with them?*

It remains that most people in this world are dying without Jesus and are spending an eternity in hell due to their sin. We need to develop a love for the lost like that of Christ and Paul:

- ► Christ had a heart for the lost; it was His purpose in coming (Luke 19:10) and He wept over a city that had rejected Him (Luke 19:41–42).
- ▶ Paul had a heart for the lost; he expended himself for their souls (2 Corinthians 12:15).

Application question: Ask yourself, "Do I have a heart for the lost?"

2. The call to evangelism (sections I and II)

A. The call to witness is a command.

Discuss your students' responses to questions I, A and I, B. Show the students that the command to evangelize is repeated at the end of all four Gospels, and is also Jesus' last words on earth in Acts 1. This is the mission that every Christian should be partaking in.

B. The gospel is a sacred trust.

Have your students read 1 Thessalonians 2:4 and ask, *How did Paul view the gospel?* Answer: It was entrusted to him. Ask and discuss, *What does it means to have the gospel entrusted to you?*

No one of us . . . can be exempted from the work of spreading the gospel because we are engaged in some other work. Good as it is, though it may be very intimately connected to the kingdom of Christ, yet it does not exonerate us from the work of endeavoring to bring sinners to Christ.

There is nothing whatsoever in the whole world compass of Scripture to excuse any mouth from speaking for Jesus when the heart is really acquainted with His salvation. . . . We are all called to make Jesus known if we know Him....Let us trust in the divine energy of the Holy Ghost, and speak the truth in reliance upon His might.¹

CHARLES SPURGEON

C. Hindrances to witnessing

In a general sense, Christians are left on earth after their salvation to glorify God. In a specific sense, the main way we glorify God is through evangelism. This is our God-given task.

Ask, So, if we are under divine orders to share the gospel, why do we hesitate?

Discuss the possible answers:

- ► Intimidation; afraid of failing
- ▶ Peer pressure; afraid of not being accepted; being called religious
- ► Ignorance of the gospel message

Help the students work through these hindrances by discussing that the gospel entrusted to us is powerful, and that it is God, through the convicting power of the Holy Spirit, who saves people.

1. We do not need to be intimidated.

It is not man's words that are the power of evangelism, but rather the Spirit who gives the gospel its power.

- ► The gospel is powerful—Romans 1:16 (section II, B)
- ► Exhortation: Paul was not ashamed of the gospel because it is the power of God
- ▶ Pray for boldness to speak with confidence—Acts 4:29 (section IV, B, 3)

¹ Quote from *Grace Today*, Grace Community Church Publication, April 1995.

2. It is God who converts men's souls.

It is God who converts men's souls, not the messenger. It is our job to give the message, but it is not our job to convince the person of the gospel. This is the job of the Holy Spirit.

The power that is in the gospel does not lie in the eloquence of the preacher, otherwise men would be the converters of souls, nor does it lie in the preacher's learning, otherwise it would consist in the wisdom of men. We might preach until our tongues rotted, till we would exhaust our lungs and die, but never a soul would be converted unless the Holy Spirit be with the word of God to give it power to convert the soul.²

CHARLES SPURGEON

3. We need to know the message.

It is our responsibility to always be "ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you" (1 Peter 3:15, memory verse).

This transitions to section II of the lesson.

3. The Good News of evangelism: the gospel (section II)

Common question: "What are the essentials of the gospel message?" Does a person have to understand every nuance of the Christian faith in order to be saved? Obviously not; so what does a person have to understand?

As a minimum, a person must:

- ► See themselves as sinful before a holy God.
- ► Understand they are in need of a Savior to save them from their sins.
- ► Understand that God, through the sacrifice of Christ, is the only means of salvation.

Read and discuss your students' answers to question II, A (1 Corinthians 15:3–4):

- ► Discuss the good news that Paul preached.
- ► Note the phrase "for our sins" in verse 3. This is substitutionary atonement, the idea that Jesus paid for our sins so that we could be forgiven of them. This is an appropriate place in class to again review the basics of the gospel message to make sure everyone in the class understands it.

4. The essentials of evangelism (section III)

In an age that assumes the absence of absolutes, it is crucial to emphasize that the gospel is exclusive. It demands acceptance or rejection. Delay or refusal to decide is the same as rejection. If there was another way for people to be saved, God would not have sent His Son to die on the cross.

A. The basics of the gospel message

Have the students read through their answers to all the questions in section III. Make sure that all the essential elements of the gospel are understood.

158 ² Quote from The MacArthur New Testament Commentary series: *1 Corinthians* (Moody), © 1984 by John MacArthur.

B. Most things people do not understand concerning the gospel

The chart "Most people do not understand these truths" deserves special attention. Ask, *How do these verses teach or clarify the points that people overlook in thinking about their relationship with God?* Perhaps you could assign each verse to one person and invite that person to present his or her conclusions to the rest of the group.

5. Strategy for evangelism (section IV)

A. Witness by your life

Even though the outcome of evangelism is completely dependent on God, there is still a great sense in which our lives must match our message. God has called Christians to live in such a way as to display light in our lives (Matthew 5:14–16). Christians should be "blameless" and "above reproach" (Philippians 2:14–15).

Ask, *Why is the witness of our lives so important?* Answer: Our lives will either earn people's respect so that we can be heard, or we will look like hypocrites (which may be one of the worst things an unbeliever can say about a Christian).

Note: *Every Christian is a witness for Christ, all the time*. The question is:

- ► Do you reflect godliness, bringing glory to God?
- ► Or, if people knew you were a Christian, would you dishonor Christ?

B. Pray

Review this section with your class. Stress the importance of praying for opportunities to share the gospel (Colossians 4:3–4) and that God will open the hearts of those to whom you are witnessing (Ephesians 1:18).

C. Use the Word of God

Section IV, C emphasizes the use of God's Word in evangelistic conversations. Ask, *Why is it important to use Scripture when presenting the gospel, rather than just explaining the main points of the gospel?* Answer: It is God's Word that is able to pierce the soul, to judge man's thoughts. The Holy Spirit uses the Word of God to convict a person of his sin and need for a Savior.

6. Application (section V)

Give the group some time to consider and expand the lists they made of people they want to reach for Christ. Encourage the group to pray for each other as God gives them opportunities to participate in His work of drawing people into the kingdom.



OBEDIENCE



Prepare for Your Assignment

- 1. Download message #12, "Love and Obedience," from www.gty.org/fof.
- 2. Use your notebook to take notes on the message.
- 3. Work through the questions and tasks on the following pages.

Memorize 1 John 2:3-4

By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

♦ We are called, I believe, to love the Lord Jesus Christ, to love Him with a whole soul, whole heart, whole mind, and whole strength kind of love. And we would say we do! But I look at our society; I look at the church, and I don't see that same kind of devotion, that same kind of commitment, that same kind of abandonment to the priorities that are the divine priorities. I see us diffused into a myriad of options, giving equal weight or even greater weight to some of the passing things in favor of some of the eternal things.

— John MacArthur

Obedience is the expected response of a Christian to his Lord. But obedience is more than following a set of rules. In this lesson, we will study what it means to be obedient, areas of obedience, and some results of obedience.

I. THE CALL TO OBEDIENCE

"As obedient children . . . like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior." —1 PETER 1:14–15

A. The Call to Obey God's Commands

1. In John 14:15, Jesus said, "If you love Me, you will

keep My	commandments	
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2. What is expected of those who hear God's Word (James

1:22)? _____ to be doers of the Word

B. The Call to Follow Christ

С.

1. What is required of a person who follows Jesus (Luke 9:23)?

a.	deny self	
b.	daily take up the cross	

follow Christ

2. How did Jesus set the example for us when suffering for His obedience to God (1 Peter 2:20–23)?

"who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in

His mouth; and while being reviled, He did not revile in

return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept

entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously."

C. The Call to Submission

"Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?" — Romans 6:16

How should we present ourselves to God (Romans 12:1)?

as a "living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God."

This is our spiritual act of worship.

II. OBEDIENCE MARKS A TRUE BELIEVER

A. Look at 1 John 2:3–4 (the memory verse).

1. What does obeying the Word of God demonstrate?

that we have come to know Him

2. What does continuous disobedience to the Word of God indicate?

that we don't know God and the truth is not in us

B. What characterizes the true believer as one who will enter the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 7:21)?

Doing the will of the Father

"But whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him." -1 John 2:5

III. EXAMPLES OF DISOBEDIENCE

- A. Read 1 Samuel 15:16–23. Instead of being completely obedient to God's command, King Saul substituted his own way of worship and excused his disobedience.
 - 1. What was Samuel's reply? How did he compare obedience and sacrifice (verse 22)?

"Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams."

2. To what are stubbornness and rebellion compared (verse 23)?

"For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry."

3. What did Saul's disobedience cost him (verse 23)?

He was rejected as king.

B. Consider Zechariah 7:8-14.

1. How did the people react to God's instruction (verses 11–12)?

"They refused to pay attention and turned a stubborn shoulder and stopped their ears from hearing.

They made their hearts like flint so that they could not hear the law and the words which the Lord

of hosts had sent by His Spirit through the former prophets."

2. How did it affect their prayers (verse 13)?

"'so they called and I would not listen,' says the Lord of hosts."

3. What was the result (verse 14)?

"[The Lord] scattered them with a storm wind among all the nations whom they have not known.

Thus the land is desolated behind them so that no one went back and forth, for they made the

pleasant land desolate."

IV. EXAMPLES OF OBEDIENCE

The Old Testament contains numerous examples of obedience. Notice the Old Testament heroes of faith and obedience listed in Hebrews 11.

A. Abraham's obedience

- 1. What were two of Abraham's great acts of obedience?
 - a. Genesis 12:1–4; Hebrews 11:8 _____ He left his home for an unknown place.

b. Genesis 22:1–12 _____ He was willing to sacrifice his son Isaac as God commanded him to.

- 2. Because Abraham obeyed God, what three things did God promise to Abraham's son (Genesis 26:2-5)?
 - a. His descendants would be multiplied "as the stars of heaven."
 - b. His descendants would be given "all these lands."
 - c. Through his descendants all the nations would be blessed.

B. Christ's example of obedience

1. What was Christ's primary concern on earth (John 4:34)?

He wanted "to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work."

2. Even when facing the cross, what was Christ's attitude (Luke 22:42)?

"Yet not My will but Yours be done."

3. To what extent was Jesus willing to be obedient (Philippians 2:8)?

"He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."

V. THE PROMISE AND BLESSINGS OF OBEDIENCE

A. List some blessings that are promised to us if we obey God's commandments.

- 1. John 15:10 We will abide in His love.
- 2. John 15:14 ____ We will be His friends.
- 3.1 John 3:22 _____ We will receive what we ask of Him.

B. To what does Jesus compare the life of a person who hears and obeys His Word (Matthew

7:24–27)? to the wise man who built his house on the rock

VI. AREAS OF OBEDIENCE

A. What are all Christians to be taught concerning Christ's commands (Matthew 28:20)?

to observe all He commanded us

B. Read each verse below. Fill in who is to be obedient to whom and why.

1. Colossians 3:20

a. Who? _	children	To whom?	parents	
b. Why? _		"This is ple	asing to the Lord."	
2. Ephesians	5:22-24			
a. Who? _	wives	To whom?	their own husbands	
b. Why? _	Because the husband	is the head of the v	vife (as Christ is the heac	of the church)
				(Note Ephesians 5:25–32.)

a. Who?	slaves	To whom?	earthly masters
b. Why?	(nowing that whateve	r good thing you d	o you will receive back from the Lord
. Hebrews 13:	17		
a. Who?	Christians	To whom?	leaders
b. Why?	They watch	over your souls ar	nd someday will give account for them.
. Romans 13:	L		
. Romans 13: a. Who?	every person	To whom?	governing authorities

C. What should a wife do if her husband is an unbeliever (1 Peter 3:1)?

"Wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word,

they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives."

D. What if a servant (or employee) has an "impossible" employer? What should that servant or employee do (1 Peter 2:18–19)?

"Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle,

but also to those who are unreasonable. For this finds favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a

person bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly."

VII. OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD OBEDIENCE

We must remember that all our good works apart from faith are like a filthy garment (Isaiah 64:6). Obedience without genuine faith avails nothing. Our obedience must grow out of a heart of sincere faith toward God.

- A. What was the basis of all Abraham's obedience (Hebrews 11:8)? ________
- B. Read the parable of the two sons (Matthew 21:28-32). Which son had the better attitude? Why?

the one who obeyed

C. Using Peter as our example, how should we respond when God's Word seems contrary to our own judgment (Luke 5:4–7)?

We should do what He says.

D. Read Ephesians 6:6. 1. How should we view ourselves in relation to Christ?	as His slaves
2. What should be our attitude in doing the will of God?	doing the will of God from the heart

"So you too, when you do all the things which are commanded you, say, 'We are unworthy slaves; we have done only that which we ought to have done."—Luke 17:10

VIII. APPLICATION

A. What does it mean to "present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God" (Romans 12:1)?

(Answers will vary)

B. What have you learned about the consequences of disobedience?

(Answers will vary)

C. In what areas of your life does God want greater obedience?

(Answers will vary)



OBEDIENCE

THE OBJECTIVES OF LESSON 12

- 1. To understand why obedience is central to a growing relationship with Christ.
- 2. To help the student understand that obedience is not following a list of *Dos and Don'ts*, but rather it is knowing and serving Christ from the heart.

THE CLASS PLAN FOR LESSON 12

- 1. Discuss obedience from the heart.
- 2. Discuss the call to obedience and how we should view ourselves as slaves of Christ.
- 3. Discuss the desire to obey as a mark of true salvation.
- 4. Encourage an examination of personal attitudes about obedience.

COMMON QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 12

How can I become more obedient?

What does it mean to deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Christ?

SUGGESTED TEACHING OUTLINE FOR LESSON 12

1. Warm-up

This is the first of two lessons that bring to a close this series. It clearly raises the issue of moving beyond learning about the *Fundamentals of the Faith* to living by faith. For this reason, it may be helpful to begin by discussing the impact of this lesson's recorded message. Ask, *What connections do you see between what John spoke about in his message and the earlier lessons we have studied in this series? How do love and obedience form an unbreakable pair of responses?*

A. Obedience from the heart

Obedience, flowing from a thankful heart, is an underlying theme of this lesson. Our love for Christ is the basis for our willingness to deny ourselves and follow Christ. This is where the lesson begins in section I and is touched upon again in section II, where our love for God is reflected in our obedience to His Word. Section VII returns to this theme, where an attitude of doing God's will from the heart is seen in Ephesians 6:6. Emphasize that the main application of this lesson on obedience should be the response of a grateful heart that delights in God and in the Scriptures. Obeying God to earn favor or to pay God back for salvation is not true obedience and is spiritually dangerous.

B. An internal law

Related to obedience flowing from the heart is the truth that Christians have God's law written in their hearts (Hebrews 8:10). Christians are no longer under the Old Covenant, in which the law was primarily external, but we are under the New Covenant, in which the law is internal.

Since Christians are freed from the slavery of the law, and thus made slaves to God (Romans 6:22), we are freed to serve God with love and joy (1 John 4:19) and not under compulsion. Love sums up the Christian's motivation for obedience (Matthew 22:37–40)!

2. The call to obedience (section I)

A. The call to obey (section I, A, 1)

Section I begins with a call to obedience as a response of our love for God. Discuss what it means to love God with "all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind" (Matthew 22:37–40). To delight in God and to love Him *is* obedience.

B. The call to follow Christ (section I, B, 1)

Discuss what it means to *deny oneself* and to *take up your cross daily*. Tie this into section I, C, Romans 12:1, where Christians are exhorted to offer their lives to God.

Note: When talking about *denying oneself*, the issue of obedience can easily veer into legalism and self-righteousness. Rather than making a list of dos and don'ts, stress that the Christian needs to give his heart to God and seek after the things above (Colossians 2:20–3:2).

C. How can I become more obedient?

The call to obedience always exposes our shortcomings. One of the principal ways obedience is encouraged is by taking your thoughts captive. Think about Christlikeness and holiness (1 Peter 1:15–16). Dwell on things that are noble, pure, and good (Philippians 4:8). This is what the Bible means when it commands us to set our minds on things above (Colossians 3:1–2). The more we read and the more we pray, the more we learn about God. The more we learn about Him, the more we love Him, and the more we love Him, the more we obey Him.

D. It is a struggle, we will fail

All of us will fall short in our obedience to God (James 3:2). Paul knew this struggle all too well (Romans 7:15–19). But like Paul, a Christian should pursue obedience by denying himself (Luke 9:23) and offering his life to God (Romans 12:1).

3. Obedience marks a true believer (section II)

As noted at the end of section II, a person's love for God is a mark of true salvation (1 John 2:5; 4:8) but moreover, it is a mark of knowing Christ.

Have the students reflect on the memory verse and note that the reference to knowing Christ is repeated twice. Discuss what it means to know Christ.

Note: Those who know Christ will love Him and obey His Word. This is a relationship: knowing Christ as our Lord.

Real faith, saving faith, is all of me (mind, emotions, and will) embracing all of Him (Savior, Advocate, Provider, Sustainer, Counselor, and Lord God). Those who have such faith will love Christ (Romans 8:28; 1 Cor. 16:22; 1 John 4:19).¹

-John MacArthur

Obedience must come from a joyful heart that flows from our love for Christ. We obey because we want to, not because we have to.

4. Examples of disobedience and obedience (sections III and IV)

An underlying assumption behind much of our casual approach to obedience has to do with the lie that it's possible to disobey without experiencing consequences. Much of our culture today represents a concerted approach to practicing lifestyles that deny the reality of consequences. People are genuinely shocked when their behavior actually produces the obvious sicknesses, poverty, and tragedies that follow such reckless actions. We end up believing we should not only be able to make any choice we desire, but we should also be able to determine any result that pleases us. Ask, *What are some external evidences or consequences of disobedient behavior (Romans 1:26–27)? Does anyone ever really get away with sin? Explain.*

5. The promise and blessings of obedience (section V)

On the other hand, if one is obedient, then God promises blessing. This discussion naturally follows the previous section. Discuss each of the promises in this section.

6. Areas of obedience (section VI)

With the promises and blessing of obedience in mind, this section brings to light typical relationships that each of us faces in our daily lives.

Ask, Looking at these relationships, it becomes obvious that obedience isn't always easy. What does God expect when obedience is difficult? Answer: Obey anyway!

In these relationships, sometimes we fit into the role of the one who is to be obeyed (parents, husbands, bosses). It is helpful to remind ourselves that we are similarly accountable to God in the way that we wield our authority over others; we can make it difficult for those who are accountable to God to obey us. Ask, *How can parents make it difficult for their children to obey (Colossians 3:21)? How can husbands make it difficult for wives to obey (Colossians 3:19)?*

7. Our attitude toward obedience (section VII)

This section returns to the theme laid out at the start: that every Christian should desire to obey God (Psalm 40:8). We should want to submit ourselves to Christ's lordship, viewing ourselves as obedient slaves of Christ (Ephesians 6:6).

8. Application (section VIII)

The lesson application question challenges the students to write out what it means to "present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God" (Romans 12:1). Ask if some of the students would like to share what they wrote as a response.

¹ Quote taken from *Faith Works* by John MacArthur.

Ending exhortation: End the lesson by asking the students to look at their lives for areas where they are being disobedient and challenge them to repent and conform their lives to what the Scriptures command. Exhort them to holiness: "But like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy'" (1 Peter 1:15–16).



GOD'S WILL AND GUIDANCE

Prepare for Your Assignment

- 1. Download message #13, "Knowing and Doing God's Will," from www.gty.org/fof.
- 2. Use your notebook to take notes on the message.
- 3. Work through the questions and tasks on the following pages.

Memorize Ephesians 5:17

So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

God is sovereign and has a purpose for all of His creation. He has a plan or "will" for each of us, though we often make His will more difficult to respond to than it really is. In this lesson we will explore God's will and how we are guided into it.

I. GOD'S WILL

The Bible portrays two aspects of God's will: sovereign will and commanded will. In God's sovereignty, He has a plan that covers all aspects of creation and time. He also has a commanded will that He legislates to His people.

A. The meaning of God's will

1. God's sovereign will

God's sovereign will involves His ultimate, complete control over everything. Nothing happens that is not in God's plan. History is really the unfolding of God's purposes, which happen exactly as He planned.

Look up each of the following verses, and write out the key thought about God's sovereign will.

a. Isaiah 14:24 "Surely, just as I have intended so it has

happened, and just as I have planned so it will

stand."

counsel of His will."

"I am God, and there is no one like Me . . . 'My purpose will be established, and I will accomplish all My good pleasure." —Isaiah 46:9-10

b. Ephesians 1:11b "who works all things after the

2. God's commanded will

God's commanded will is revealed throughout the Bible as laws or principles. It is that aspect of His will to which men are held accountable.

a. According to the Great Commission (Matthew 28:20), what are new believers to be taught?

all that He commanded them

b. God gave two great commandments. List them below.

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Matthew 22:37 _____You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and
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with all your mind."

Matthew 22:39 ____You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

B. The nature of God's will

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God's sovereign will and commanded will are better understood in light of their respective characteristics.

SOVEREIGN WILL	COMMANDED WILL
1. Secret; known only to God except as revealed through history or revelation	1. Revealed in the Bible
2. Cannot be resisted or thwarted	2. Can be resisted or disobeyed
3. Encompasses both good and evil (sin)	3. Involves only that which is good and holy
4. Comprehensive; controls all aspects of life, time, and history	4. Specific; provides principles for living
5. The believer is not commanded to know or discover what God has not revealed	5. Believers are exhorted to know, understand, and obey all that God has revealed

Study the table above. Test your understanding of God's sovereign will and His commanded will.

Write out the part of the verse that conveys God's will.

Check the appropriate box.

	Sovereign Will	Commanded Will
1. Philippians 2:13	\otimes	0
"it is God who is at wo	rk in you, both to will and to work for His	good pleasure."
2. 1 Thessalonians 4	3 O	\otimes
"For this is the will of	God, your sanctification; that is, that you a	bstain from sexual immorality."
3. 2 Corinthians 6:1	4 O	\otimes
"Do not be bound tog	ether with unbelievers."	
4. Matthew 7:21	0	\otimes
"he who does the will	of My Father who is in heaven."	
5. Philippians 1:6	\otimes	0
"He who began a goo	l work in you will perfect it until the day o	f Christ Jesus."
6. Jeremiah 29:11	\otimes	0
"'l know the plans tha	l have for you,' declares the Lord."	

C. Response to God's will

- 1. How should we respond to God's sovereign will?
 - a. Proverbs 3:5–6 _____ "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own

understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight."

b. 1 Peter 4:19 "Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their

souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right."

c. James 4:13–15 _____ "If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that."

2. How should we respond to God's commanded will?
a. Ephesians 5:17"do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is."
b. Deuteronomy 29:29 "observe all the words of this law."
c. Deuteronomy 11:1"keep His charge, His statutes, His ordinances, and His commandments."
Cod Instanton We Ohor
God Instructs; We Obey
"Good and upright is the Lord; therefore He instructs sinners in the way. He leads the humble in justice, and He teaches the humble His way. All the paths of the Lord are lovingkindness and truth to those

who keep His covenant and His testimonies." —PSALM 25:8-10

II. GUIDANCE

Because of His great love, God has predestined, called, justified, and will glorify all believers. He also guides us.

A. Meaning of guidance

Guidance is God's active role in our lives, accomplishing His purposes.

Note the following words used in the Bible to describe guidance. Write down how the verse conveys the meaning of each word.

- 1. *Lead* (to shepherd; to bear or carry)
 - a. Psalm 78:52 "But He led forth His own people like sheep and guided them in the wilderness like a

flock."

b. Psalm 139:24 _____ "lead me in the everlasting way."

2. Guide (to show; to help understand)

a. Psalm 23:3 _____ "He guides me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake."

- b. Psalm 73:24 "With Your counsel You will guide me."
- 3. *Direct* (to establish or prepare; to make straight)
 - a. Proverbs 16:9 ____ "The mind of man plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps."
 - b. 2 Thessalonians 3:5 _____May the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the

steadfastness of Christ."

B. The nature of guidance

The chart below outlines ways that God guides people directly and indirectly.

Direct Guidance	Indirect Guidance
1. Spoken revelation from God	1. God's Word
2. Visions	2. Conscience or conviction
3. Dreams	3. Providence (circumstances controlled by God)
4. Prophet/apostle speaking for God	4. Wisdom and counsel

Direct guidance was experienced during the Old Testament and early New Testament time periods. Today, we see God guiding indirectly. The Holy Spirit is active in all areas of indirect guidance as part of His ministry in the believer.

1. Guidance through God's Word

How does the psalmist describe God's Word (Psalm 119:105)?

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."

2. Guidance through conviction

How was Paul stimulated to action in Athens (Acts 17:16)?

"His spirit was being provoked within him as he was observing the city full of idols."

3. Guidance through God's providence

What can the believer be confident about regardless of the circumstances (Romans 8:28)?

"God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God."

4. Guidance through God-given wisdom

Read Proverbs 2:1–11. What four things will wisdom allow you to discern (verse 9)?

(1)_	righteousness	
(2)_	justice	
(3)_	equity	
(4)_	every good course	
What is the result of seeking counsel (Proverbs 13:10)? wisdom		

III. APPLICATION

A. List one area in which you are wrestling with a decision.

(Answers will vary)

B. Does this issue involve:

- O God's sovereign will?
- O God's commanded will?
- O I don't know which one.

C. What should your response be if it involves:

- 1. God's sovereign will (Proverbs 3:5-6)?
- 2. God's commanded will (John 15:10)?
- 3. You are unsure (James 1:5)?

What action are you going to take?

(Answers will vary)



THE OBJECTIVE OF LESSON 13

- 1. To see the difference between the *sovereign* and *commanded* (revealed) will of God.
- 2. To learn how to discern the will of the Lord in our lives.

THE CLASS PLAN FOR LESSON 13

- 1. Discuss and differentiate God's sovereign will and His commanded will.
- 2. Discuss practical guidelines to help the students discern the will of the Lord in their lives.

COMMON QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 13

Can I know God's sovereign will?

How do I discern God's will in normal daily decisions?

SUGGESTED TEACHING OUTLINE FOR LESSON 13

1. Warm-up

Congratulate the members of your class for being faithful to finish the course. Use Colossians 1:9–14 and make it your prayer for the group as they end this *Fundamentals of the Faith* study and continue in their walk with the Lord.

2. God's will (section I)

The lesson discusses two aspects of God's will: His sovereign will and His commanded (or revealed) will. God also has a will of desire that is not developed in the lesson, but will be covered in these notes for completeness of your discussion.

A. God's sovereign will

As you discuss this section on God's sovereign will, emphasize that God accomplishes all that He purposes (Isaiah 14:24; 46:9–10). Nothing is by chance:

- ► Bring the class's remembrance back to lesson #6 on salvation and how God "predestined" all who would be saved—Romans 8:29–30
- ► Discuss that Christ going to the cross was predetermined—Acts 2:22–23
- ► Discuss that governments are established by God—Romans 13:1

Ask, *How do you view history*? Answer: History is His story unfolding. History is watching God's plan in action.

Ask, Do we live our lives with the view that everything that happens in history has already been written by *God*?

Common Question: "Can I know God's sovereign will?" Often, people will try to discern God's sovereign will in a situation, but this is impossible to know for certain. An example is helpful. Before marriage, a person cannot say that it is the sovereign will of God for him to marry a particular girl. But, after they are married, he can say this with certainty, because it came to pass. Everything that happens is part of God's sovereign will. Before something takes place, however, it is impossible to discern what the sovereign will of the Lord is.

Fortunately, there are guidelines to help us align our will with God's sovereign will. These guidelines will be covered in the sections below.

B. God's will of desire (supplement to the lesson)

God's will of desire is consistent with His sovereign will but is not always fulfilled. For example:

- ► Jesus desired Jerusalem to come to Him, but they were unwilling—Matthew 23:37
- ► God desires all men to be saved, but all will not be saved—1 Timothy 2:3-4
- ► Christ desires all to come to Him, and they do not—Matthew 11:28–29
- ► God desires that Christians be obedient and sanctified, but we fail—1 Thessalonians 4:3

God desires, but we are still responsible to obey and align our wills with His.

C. God's commanded will

God's commanded will is also part of God's desired will. Unfortunately, we often fail to obey God's commands. As section I, A, 2 states, God's commands are revealed throughout the pages of Scripture as laws or principles.

Can we know God's commanded will? Absolutely; Christians can be filled with "the knowledge" of God's will (Colossians 1:9). To be "filled" literally means to be completely filled, or totally controlled.

Having the knowledge of God's Word control our minds is the key to righteous living. What controls your thoughts will control your behavior. Self-control is a result of mind-control, which is dependent on knowledge. Knowledge of God's Word will lead to all spiritual wisdom and understanding.¹

-John MacArthur

Note: This section ties directly back to the previous lesson on obedience. Recap some of the main points from the previous lesson as both a review and an exhortation.

To conclude this section, briefly discuss the chart and exercise, under I, B, making sure the students are not confusing God's sovereign will with His commanded will.

¹ Quote from The MacArthur New Testament Commentary series: *Colossians and Philemon* (Moody), © 1992 by John MacArthur.

D. Our response to God's will (section I, C)

This section looks at our response to both God's sovereign will and God's commanded will. This is an important portion of the lesson and needs to be expanded upon.

1. Our response to God's sovereign will

The lesson focuses on the truth that we need to trust God in situations when we do not have clear direction, or in situations when we are undergoing trials. The students need to understand that trials should be expected and are given by God for our testing:

- ► The Lord tests the righteous—Psalm 11:5
- ► Testing reveals your true heart—Deuteronomy 8:2
- ► Do not be surprised when you are tested—1 Peter 4:12

Our response needs to be one of entrusting our souls to God, as brought out in the lesson verse, 1 Peter 4:19.

2. Our response to God's commanded will

The section emphasizes that we need to know and obey God's commanded will (Ephesians 5:17; Deuteronomy 11:1; 29:29). Being obedient to all that God has revealed in His Word is the beginning of aligning our will with His will. However, this implies that we have immersed ourselves into the Scriptures to determine what the will of the Lord is.

E. Guidelines to discerning God's will in everyday decisions

A valid question is, "How can I know God's will in the choice of a career, or who I should marry?" The answer to this question is to be faithful to God's will as revealed in the Bible, and then follow the guidance of Psalm 37:4, "Delight yourself in the LORD; and He will give you the desires of your heart."

Delighting ourselves in the Lord includes loving Him with a heart of obedience. This leads to the question, "What are key areas that are clearly revealed in Scripture as God's will?" The following is a partial list (note, each has been covered in an *FOF* lesson):

- ▶ Be saved—1 Timothy 2:4 (lessons 5 and 6)
- ► Be Spirit filled—Ephesians 5:18 (lesson 7)
- ▶ Be submissive to authorities—1 Peter 2:13–15 (lesson 13)
- ▶ Be willing to suffer for His sake—1 Peter 3:17–18 (lesson 13)
- ▶ Be sanctified—1 Thessalonians 4:3 (lessons 7 and 12)
- ► Be self-sacrificing—Romans 12:1–2 (lesson 9)

Discuss each of these with the class. This will give them practical direction on aligning their will with God's revealed will. During this discussion, it is profitable to recall a quote from lesson #7, on being filled with the Spirit:

To be filled with the Spirit is to live in the consciousness of the personal presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, as if we were standing next to Him, and to let His mind dominate our life. It is to fill ourselves with God's Word, so that His thoughts will be our thoughts, His standards our standards, His work our work, and His will our will. Christ consciousness leads to Christ likeness.²

-John MacArthur

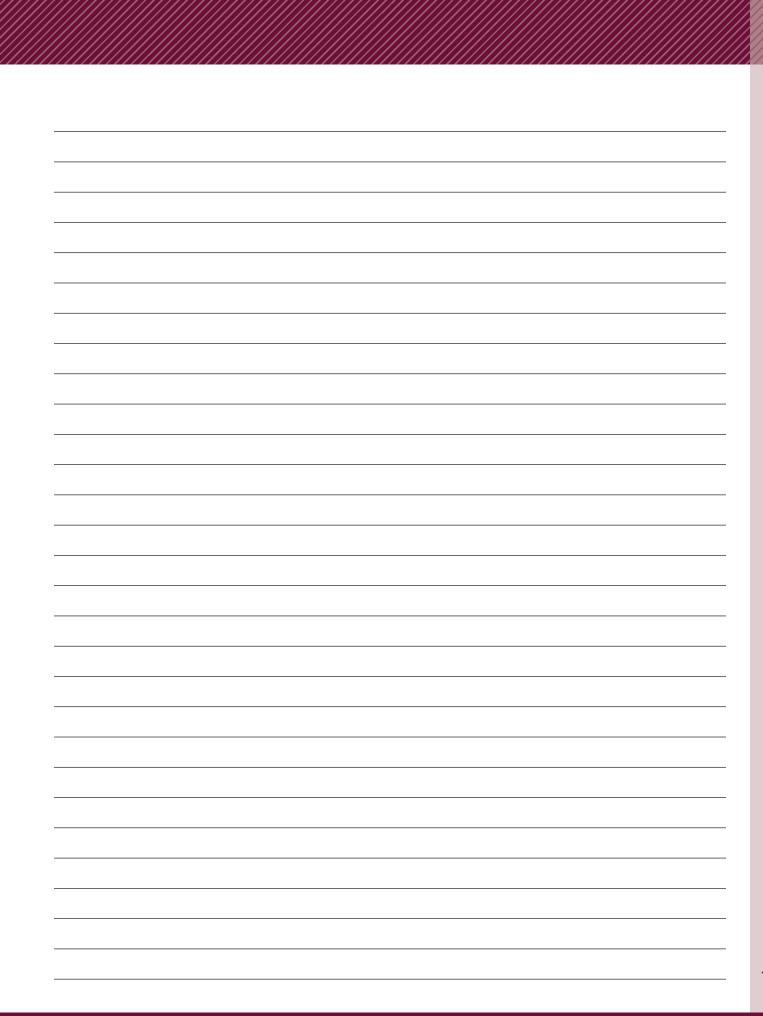
Exhortation: If all of the items in the list above are in place, then follow the desires of your heart (Psalm 37:4), and trust God for the outcome (Proverbs 3:5–6).

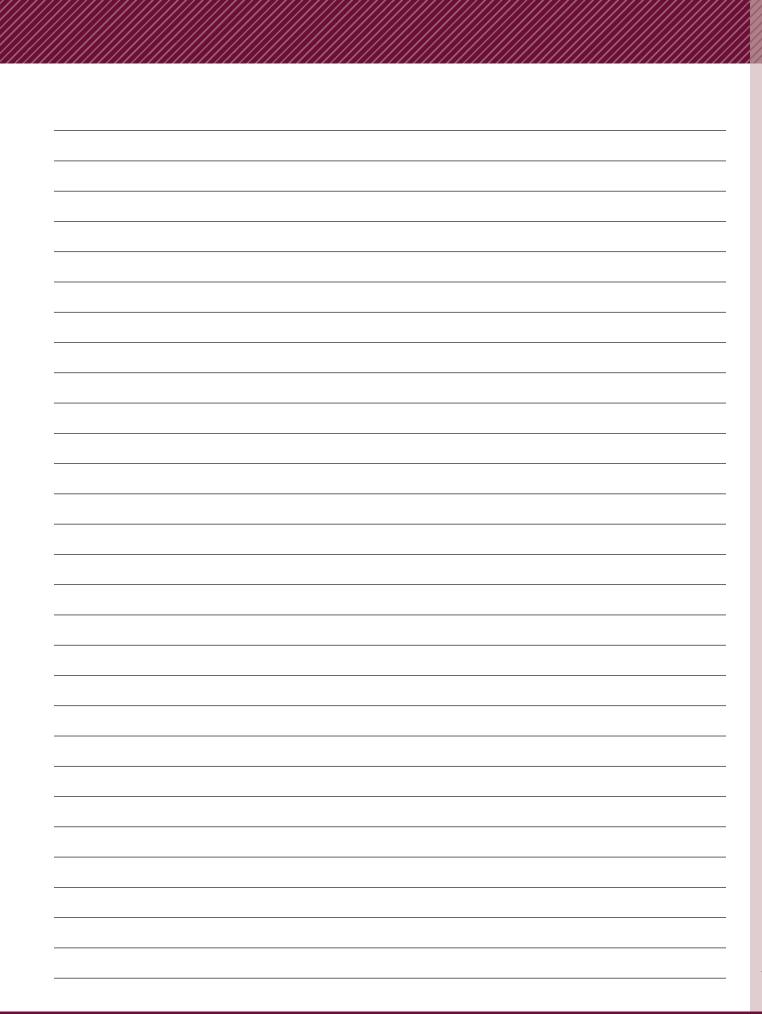
3. Guidance (section II)

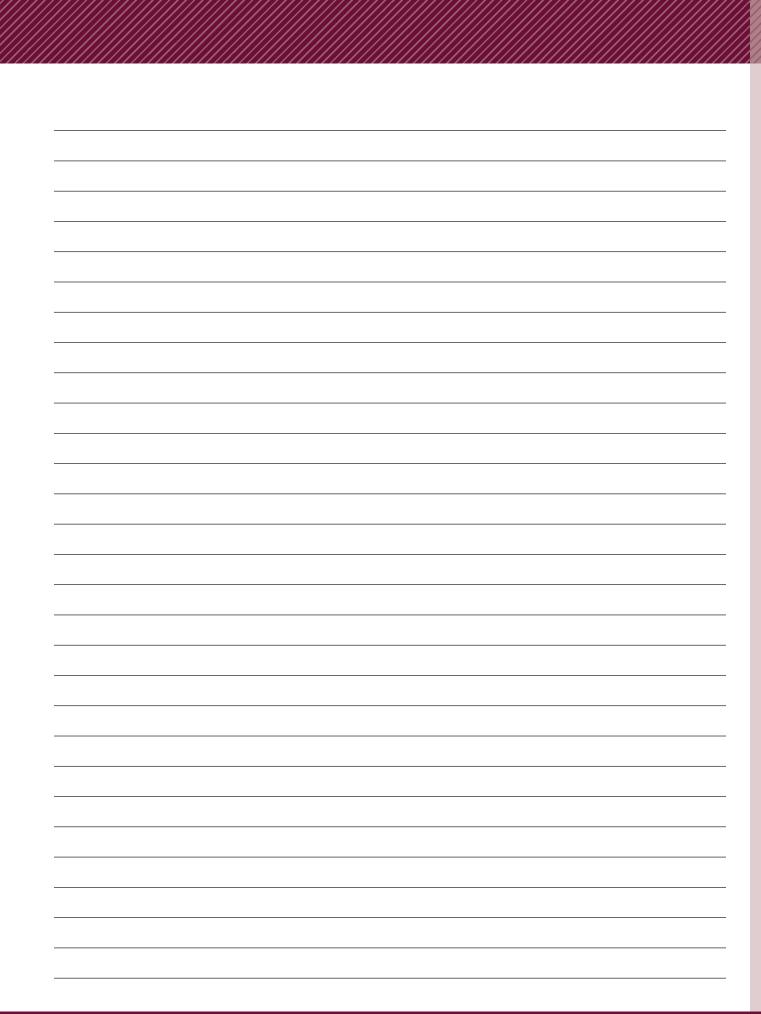
As mentioned in the previous section, we need to be immersed in, and obedient to, God's Word so we are in a position for the Holy Spirit to guide us (Ephesians 5:18). This section describes some of the ways in which God does the guiding. God guides through His Word, through the conviction of the Holy Spirit, through providence, and through godly counsel. This section ends by exhorting the student to pray for wisdom and to seek godly counsel when making decisions. Discuss each of these areas with your class.

4. Application (section III)

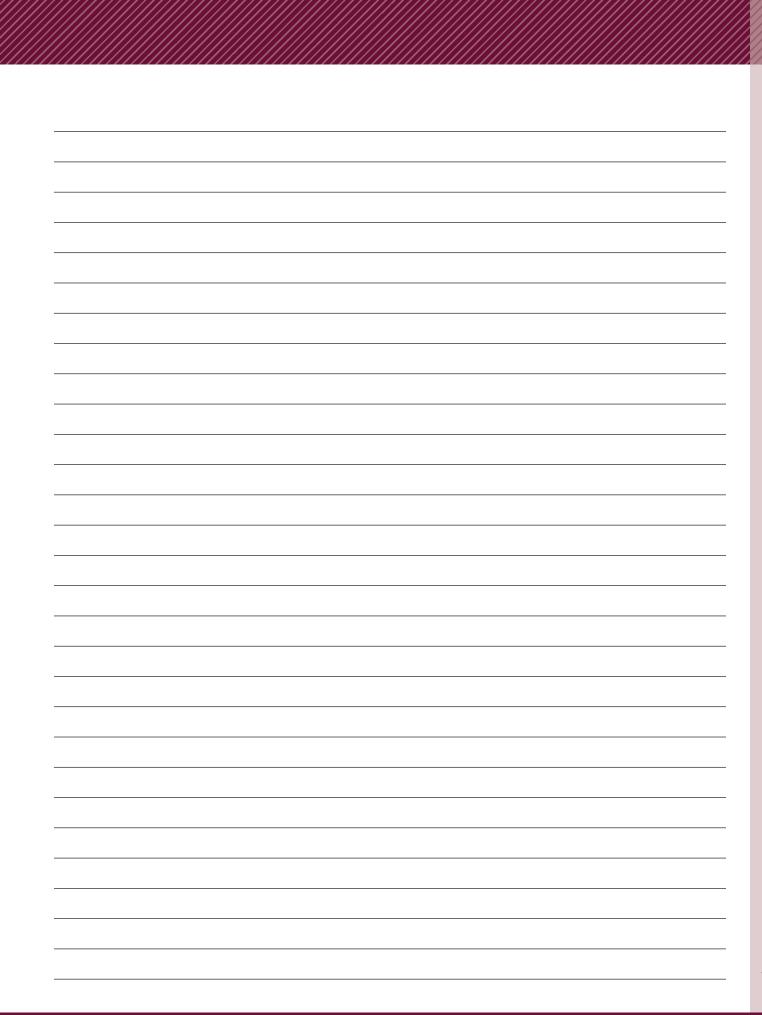
This lesson, and this course, closes with a valuable opportunity to step out in faith, trusting God to guide. Let them know that you will consider it an honor to hear from them in the future, to answer other questions they may have, and to hear about how God has directed their lives.



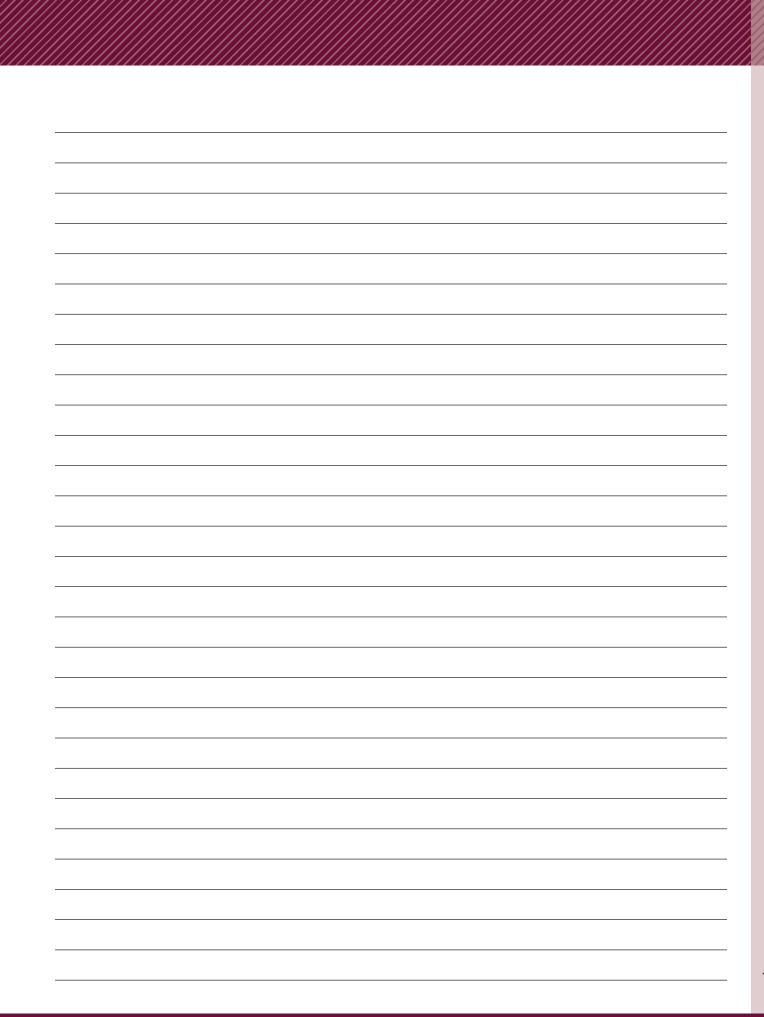


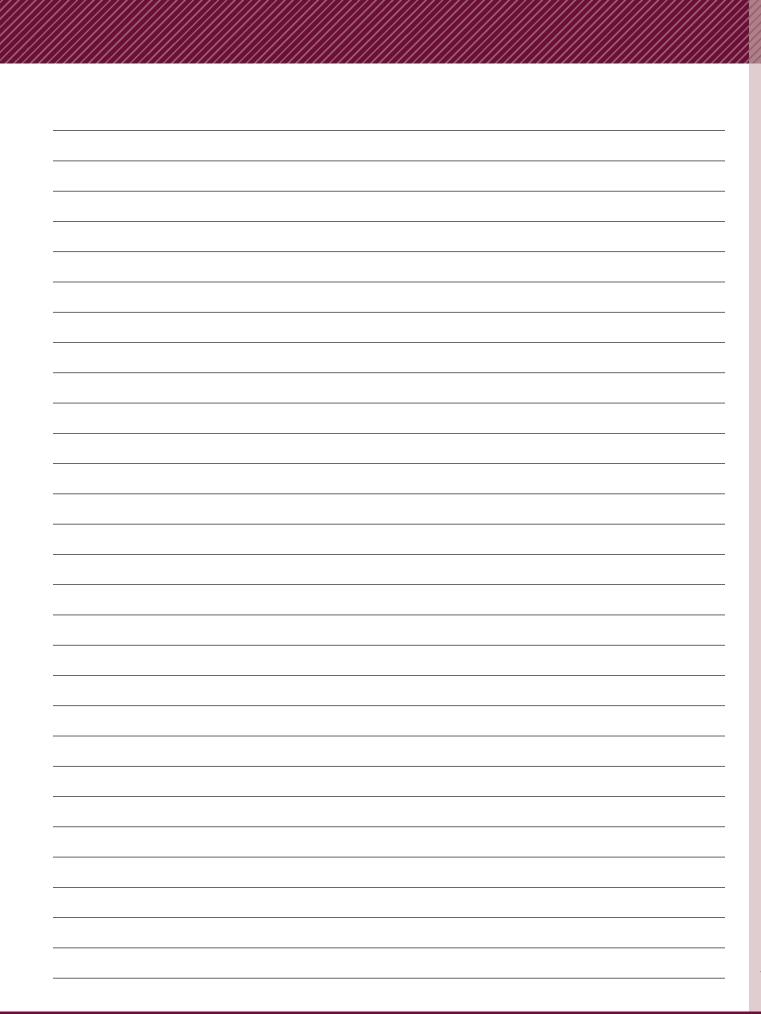


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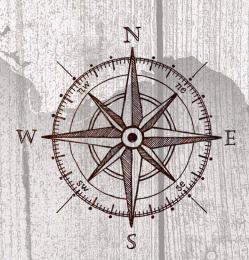


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