

THE DISCIPLESHIP EVANGELISM PROGRAM

LEVEL 1

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to thank the Charis Bible College graduating class of 1999 for helping to produce this material to make discipleship available to everyone. My deep appreciation goes to Andrew Wommack for his vision of equipping the Saints. A special thanks goes to Dr. Loran Lewis who has helped me learn to disciple others by asking questions. I want to thank Arnold Hoffman for his continued support and encouragement of this project. I want to thank my fellow laborers in Christ, Rocky Forry, Joe Rose, Steve Klepatz, Gene Hall, Janette Light, and Danika Gravelle who have taken this material and proven it to work through a hands-on ministry in the field. I want to thank Richard and Betsy Shepherd for their insight and counsel throughout this project. I want to thank Satoshi Yamamoto for lending his artistic talents to our design. I want to thank my wife, Wendy, for believing in the work that we are doing. I want to give a special, special thanks to Doris Stoll for picking up the mantle; without her help this project would have never been completed in a timely fashion. I want to thank all of you who are not mentioned by name, but who have contributed to this project. May your eternal rewards be great.

Don Krow

THE DISCIPLESHIP EVANGELISM PROGRAM

TEACHERS

ANDREW WOMMACK

Since founding Andrew Wommack Ministries, Inc. in 1978, Andrew has continued to present great truths from God's Word with simplicity and clarity, through the revelation knowledge and anointing given to him from the Lord. Wherever he travels, his powerful emphasis on the Word of God continues to set people free from sin and self-righteousness, with signs and wonders following. Andrew was a pastor of three churches, and he continues to fulfill God's calling on his life by teaching the body of Christ the "good news" of our relationship in Jesus Christ.

DON KROW

Don joined Andrew in ministry in 1975. He ministered in New Mexico, Texas, and Oklahoma before coming on staff full-time in 1988 as an Associate Minister of Andrew Wommack Ministries. In 1994 he became an instructor at Charis Bible College in Colorado Springs, Colorado. The last ten years Don has spent in weekly evangelism outreaches. The Discipleship Evangelism Program was developed after five years of outreaches to help others in reaching out and discipling those turning to Christ. Don spends much time sharing with local churches and others his concept of discipleship that has been proven to work.

USING THE DISCIPLESHIP EVANGELISM PROGRAM

The Discipleship Evangelism Program is a 48-lesson discipleship tool that was developed out of a five-year weekly effort to reach the lost. It has been proven to work and is user-friendly. It supplies the necessary tools for anyone with the desire to disciple another person. It can be effectively used in cell groups, Bible studies, reaching the lost, Sunday school, new believers class, mid-week church services, altar call follow-up, evangelistic crusade follow-up, outreaches in the mission field, prison ministries, Bible schools, and to develop church growth as well as to disciple your neighbors and friends.

There are three levels to this program:

Level 1 is designed to explain the biblical truths of Christ and Him crucified—to bring a person into an understanding of God’s great love for them that was displayed at the cross. Level 1 brings a person into repentance, the new birth, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and water baptism. All of this is done without preaching at a person but by asking them questions to bring them to the Bible for the answers. This program is designed to assist people in understanding the Bible for themselves.

Level 2 contains foundational truths of Scripture such as renewing the mind, how to meditate on God’s Word, the importance of the local church, the authority of the believer, God’s plan for marriage, God’s kind of love, and many more.

Level 3 is designed to assist a person in learning to disciple others. It contains a Training Program that will help a person discover the how-tos of discipling others. It may be used for a training class in their local church and in discovering how to reach and disciple the lost. This level is designed to bring the “disciplee” to the place of becoming a “discipler.” What has been learned from a hands-on ministry of reaching others will be taught at this level.

It is our desire to supply as many discipling tools as possible to assist one in reaching out and discipling others. In a normal local church, a congregation of 200 may only have five to ten people with teaching gifts in that entire congregation. As a result, five or ten people may reach out to disciple, but the majority of the people become benchwarmers in our local congregations. As a result of this need, we are supplying discipleship tools for various individuals who do not necessarily have teaching gifts. On any mechanical job, to effectively get the job done, you must have a screwdriver, a crescent wrench, a voltage meter, a pair of pliers, and other tools to make sure you are able to accomplish the task. Each part of the discipleship program is designed to be one tool. No one tool is better than the others, so it is our goal to supply as many tools so a majority of the body of Christ can reach out, evangelize, disciple, and teach others.

The following is a list of the tools we provide and how each tool fits into the program:

Introducing the Subject: Each subject for study is being introduced by Andrew Wommack or Don Krow. These few pages are to be read out loud to the person or persons being disciplined. A discussion may follow. Continue by asking the questions from the Teacher's Guide or Detailed Teacher's Guide.

Outlines: Discipleship Evangelism outlines are meant to be copied on a copy machine and distributed to each individual that you are discipling. They are to be handed out prior to playing the accompanying lesson in the audio or video version. These outlines supply a structure of the material that either Andrew Wommack or Don Krow is teaching. By supplying this outline, the person being disciplined can look at the Scriptures and the main points that these lessons are bringing out as they listen to the lessons the CDs or are watching the DVD version.

Teacher's Guide: The Teacher's Guide is a list of questions that will create a dialog between the teacher and the person being disciplined. They are questions that will assist people in discovering for themselves what the Bible is really saying. These questions will create a dialog of about 45 minutes between the teacher and the people you are discipling. We find that the Teacher's Guide is used most effectively with individuals who the scriptures declare are "apt to teach" (1 Timothy 3:2).

On a few of our Teacher's Guides we have supplied an Optional Teacher's Guide. This will allow the person teaching to choose the course of questions to ask. For instance, we realize that there is a great diversity of understanding concerning the subject of water baptism. By supplying the Optional Teacher's Guide, the person teaching is allowed to ask questions that may be more appropriate for the given situation. Let me restate that only a few lessons supply an Optional Teacher's Guide.

An Optional Teacher's Guide may also be supplied by using the questions from the Detailed Teacher's Guide in the same manner as you would use the regular Teacher's Guide. This will give you more options and questions to ask.

Detailed Teacher's Guide: The Detailed Teacher's Guide was developed to help people teach who do not have strong teaching gifts. Instead of using only the five or ten people out of a congregation who have teaching gifts, the Detailed Teacher's Guide allows all the members within the body to reach out and disciple another individual. This method has been used effectively to allow every person to evangelize and disciple others. It has already been proven in over 229 nations of the world. With this approach, a person is allowed to stay on track and bring out the main points of the lesson by simply reading and asking questions. With this approach, a paragraph or section that is numbered is read out loud by the teacher or even by the person being disciplined. At this point, a corresponding question is asked and discussed. The teacher continues to read each paragraph out loud and ask the corresponding questions. A normal Detailed Teacher's Guide will create a discipleship lesson of around 45 minutes. The Detailed Teacher's Guide is an effective tool in the United States as well as in other countries where electricity is not available and DVDs, and CDs cannot be played. In these countries, a person has more quality time to spend with the person being disciplined.

Discipleship Questions and Answer Key: Each lesson has a new set of questions with an answer key developed by Danika Gravelle. This new section is currently being used in the penitentiary system of the United States. These questions allow people to study during the week to give hours of meditation in the Scriptures and to prepare for the weekly studies in the regular Discipleship Evangelism Program. An Answer Key has been provided so that you may compare your answers.

Additional Information: Some lessons contain more in the Additional Information section than others. The Additional Information is designed to be used like a Sunday school teacher's quarterly. In most Sunday schools, a regular quarterly is given to the people. A detailed teacher's quarterly is given to the teachers to supply them with additional information and examples. The Additional Information is designed to give the teacher additional information and examples that pertain to the subject or lesson being taught. In this way, if a person being disciplined asks a question that may not be in the lesson, the teacher is not thrown off by not knowing how to answer the question. Additional Information supplies the teacher with information that makes them very familiar with the subject being taught.

Trainer Video Lessons: The Trainer Video lessons are designed to assist the person that wants to teach the discipleship lessons. They are also tools that may be utilized by the leadership within the local church. As the leaders understand the principles that are contained on the Trainer Video lessons, they will be able to become trainers in their local congregations. The trainers will then be able to give additional insight into the dos and don'ts of teaching and help train those who want to utilize the discipleship lessons. We advise everyone to study the Trainer Video lessons to get the real heart and understanding of how to use this discipleship program.

DVD and CD Lessons: Each lesson is designed to be played on either a CD player, or a DVD player. Each lesson contains ten to twelve minutes of concentrated teaching on various biblical subjects. An outline is supplied to pass out to those being disciplined so they can follow along as they listen to the presentation. After the lesson is played, questions and a dialog follow that take people to the Bible to discover the answers. With this method of teaching, we help others discover for themselves what the Bible says. Our textbook is the Bible. Our prayer is that people will be helped, encouraged, and spiritually strengthened through these lessons.

If you have any questions concerning this program, write to:

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LEVEL 1

THE DISCIPLESHIP EVANGELISM PROGRAM

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LESSON	LEVEL 1 - TITLE OF LESSON	PAGE
	How to Use the Discipleship Lessons	1
1	Eternal Life	3
2	Salvation by Grace	16
3	Righteousness by Grace	28
4	Relationship with God	41
5	Nature of God	60
6	Repentance	78
7	Commitment	96
8	Water Baptism	112
9	Identity in Christ 1	129
10	Identity in Christ 2	140
11	What Happens When a Christian Sins	155
12	Integrity of God's Word	170
13	God's Not Guilty	184
14	The Power of a Spirit Filled Life	198
15	How to Receive the Holy Spirit	214
16	The Benefits of Speaking in Tongues	229

HOW TO USE THE DISCIPLESHIP LESSONS

Don Krow

There are three manuals (48 lessons) in the Disciple Evangelism program. Many people have these materials but don't know how to use them. Discipleship Evangelism tools are just that—tools. Suppose I want to install a new water pump in my car and someone says, "I know how to put a water pump in; I'll put it in for you." When they ask for my wrenches to take the old one off, I say, "I don't have any wrenches; just take it off with your fingers." They look at me and say, "I can't fix it if you don't give me a tool."

Many times ministers tell people they need to go preach the gospel and make disciples. As a person in the church, I want to say, "But how? Show me. Give me an example. Lead me." So Discipleship Evangelism is a "how to" tool. It isn't the only tool—there are others in the world today—but it is a tool. We are creating as many tools as we can, as rapidly as possible, to help people disciple the nations. Because we have new Discipleship Evangelism tools coming out on an ongoing basis, we encourage you to check back with us from time to time.

Since you have the Discipleship Evangelism program, I would like to tell you how it works. First you have a video, DVD, CD, or cassette that presents in ten minutes or less a message that introduces the subject you are to talk about. For example, if you are going to disciple a person about repentance, you listen to the video, DVD, CD, or cassette tape. After hearing or seeing the introduction, you turn it off and go into your Teacher's Guide.

In the manual, there is a transcript of the presentation, so you can read the actual message. The reason that is so important is that if you are in a third world nation where there is no electricity and can't use DVDs, CDs, videos, or cassette tapes, you can actually disciple by reading the introduction of the material about repentance, eternal life, identity in Christ, or whatever lesson you are on in your Bible study group or with the person you are discipling. There is an outline of the audio you can copy and pass out. As the teacher is talking, you can follow the audio of this presentation.

Following that is a Teacher's Guide, which is what you would use to disciple—one on one or in a cell group. This guide is most effective if you have a teaching gift. It will direct you to the scriptures so you can ask a question from them: "By the way, John, would you read Ephesians 1:22-23 aloud. Sally, would you read it from the different translation you have. If someone else has a different translation, please read it from that."

Read the scripture out loud and then go to the question that is asked here. Ask the question and it will cause an interactive Bible study to take place. They will hold up their hands and say, "Ephesians 1:22-23 says such and such ..." which brings about discussion so it isn't just a one-man monologue, like a sermon. This causes interaction in your group, or one on one, when you are discipling. The Teacher's Guide gives you questions to ask, plus the answers, and takes them directly to the scriptures. Having them read the scriptures aloud causes them to discover the answers for themselves.

The next part is a Detailed Teachers' Guide for those who don't have a strong teaching gift. You can read the material on the subject in this guide. There is a number before each paragraph or section. Then you go to the bottom of the page and ask the question. This will keep you on track so you don't get off the subject. You can read the paragraph, go to the bottom of the page, ask the question, read the next paragraph, go the bottom of the page, ask the question, and you will be able to stay on the subject you are trying to talk about and disciple.

Something we have just put in our updated Discipleship Evangelism manuals are Discipleship Questions in the Navigator style. This was developed after a friend of mine went into the jails and penitentiaries where the inmates have a lot of time, but don't have the audios or videos. The questions were designed to allow people to study during the week, work through them, and look in the Bible for the answers. It is a self-discipling tool that is new to our current program. A Discipleship Answer Key is provided to check your answers.

Then we have additional information for the teacher. Many Sunday Schools have quarterlies for students plus a teacher's quarterly that gives additional information. The teacher needs to have more information than the students, and that's what this is. If you read the additional information by Andrew Wommack or Don Krow, chances are when somebody raises their hand and says, "I thought this and this and this," you will know how to answer because you have studied the additional information.

For a limited time we will also have a tape by Jill Reese on how to bring Discipleship Evangelism into your local church. She has been working with local churches, training the leadership and the body of Christ to disciple. If you are interested in bringing Discipleship Evangelism into your local church contact us at DKM, 10065 Sun Ridge Circle, Rogers, AR 72756, or our website delessons.org.

We have new products available. One is Discipleship Evangelism Bible Lessons, Volume 1, that is so simple anyone can use it. We are using it in the penitentiary system in the United States as well as third world nations. Coming soon is Discipling Through Galatians, Discipling Through Romans, and Discipleship Evangelism Bible Lessons, Volume 2. You can call or write us about when these new discipling materials will be available.

I hope this has helped you understand how to use the product you have in your hand a little bit better. God bless you.

Don Krow
Director, Discipleship Evangelism

ETERNAL LIFE

Andrew Wommack

John 3:16 is one of the most familiar, though often misunderstood and misapplied, passages in the Bible: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Traditionally, this verse has been used to teach that Jesus came and died for our sins so we wouldn’t perish, which is where the emphasis has been placed; but it really says that the purpose of his coming to earth and dying for us was so that we could have everlasting life. It is true that our sins were a barrier between us and everlasting life, and it is true that Jesus died for our sins so that if we believe on him we will not perish, but there is much more to it than that. The real message of the Gospel is that God wanted to give us everlasting life.

In John 17:2-3, the night before His crucifixion Jesus prayed concerning himself, “As thou hast given him power [authority] over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” This says that everlasting life is knowing God, the only true Father, and knowing Jesus Christ whom He has sent.

Many people think everlasting life is living forever, and it is true that every person does live forever; it is a misconception to think that when a person dies he ceases to exist. The spirit and the soul go back to God and the body decays in the grave, but the truth is that every person who has ever lived on earth will continue to live in spirit form. To say that eternal life is living forever is not the whole truth; John 17:2-3 makes it very clear that eternal life is not given to everyone. Some say eternal life is living forever in heaven versus living forever in hell, but that is not what this passage is saying.

John 3:36 says, “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth [obeyeth] not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.” This says that everlasting life can be a present tense possession, not something that will take place in the future but a present reality. In 1 John 5:13 it says, “These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God: that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.” Notice that it says you have eternal life, a present tense possession.

The Scriptures reveal, therefore, that eternal life is not just living forever or living forever in heaven versus living forever in hell, but it is exactly what Jesus said in John 17:3: knowing God and Jesus Christ. It is more than intellectual knowledge. This word know is used throughout Scripture to describe the most intimate, personal relationship one can have, e.g. Genesis 4:1 says that Adam knew his wife Eve and, she conceived and had a son. It is referring to the sexual relationship between a man and a woman . . . intimacy. So when this says that eternal life is knowing the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent, it means that eternal life is having intimacy, personal relationship, with God.

Couple that with John 3:16 and this says that God loved you and me so much that He gave His only begotten Son so we would not perish but have intimacy, closeness, personal relationship with God Almighty. That has not always been the message we have heard.

Often you hear, “Repent or else! Turn or Burn! Either you repent, or go to hell!” There are many people who are drawn to the Lord because of fear, so they confess Jesus out of desperation because they don’t want to go to hell. If the only benefit of salvation was having our sins forgiven in order to escape hell, it would be more than we deserve. It would still be goodness on God’s part worth preaching and sharing with people, but these scriptures reveal that there is much more to salvation than just getting your sins forgiven.

If a person’s only motivation for coming to the Lord is to get his sins forgiven so he won’t perish, if that is what his faith is released for, he may be born again and have a ticket to heaven, but he will miss out on the real purpose of salvation. The real purpose is not missing hell or even living forever in heaven, as great as that will be. The real purpose of salvation is to have intimacy, a personal relationship with God. There are multitudes of people who have cried out to God to forgive their sins, but their goal has never been intimacy with God.

By not explaining the real purpose of salvation, we do a disservice to the Gospel. When we present it as something that deals only with spiritual things, which will take place and benefit us in eternity, we are also doing a disservice to people. There are many who live in a literal present hell on earth: depressed, living in poverty, dealing with strife, rejection, hurt, and failed marriages, just trying to keep their heads above water. When salvation is presented as dealing only with the future, many will put off the decision to accept Jesus because they are too busy trying to survive today.

The truth is that Jesus came to affect our eternal destiny so we can live forever in heaven in blessing instead of in the punishment and the curse of hell, but He also came to deliver us from this present evil world. Jesus came to give you intimacy and personal relationship with God the Father today (Galatians 1:4).

The first-century church had a concept of this that I believe our modern-day church has lost. We can see this in many writings, but also in history. I was in Rome when I was 18 years old and went to the Circus Maximus and the Coliseum where Christians were thrown to the lions and burned at the stake. Other Christians then buried the dead in the walls of the catacombs to prevent the Romans from defacing their graves and wrote inscriptions on the walls where they buried them. One inscription which was translated into five or six languages, said in English, “Here lie my wife and my six-month old daughter, who gave their lives today for the glory of Jesus Christ in the Circus Maximus!” It was written like something the man was proud of, something for which he was glorifying God. I didn’t sense grief in what he wrote . . . there was no despondency.

These Christians had a quality of relationship with God so dynamic that there are actual accounts of Romans jumping out of the stands and running into the arena to join them, knowing they would be put to death as well. They would confess this Jesus that the Christians had died for because they saw such joy on their faces. Nero, the emperor of Rome, literally stuck his fingers in his ears and said, “Why must these Christians sing as they die?” There was such grace, such joy, that there are accounts of the Christians actually fighting over who would go first to be martyred. I say this to point out that there was a quality of relationship with God, which was the true intent of Christianity that sometimes we miss today.

Jesus didn't come only to forgive you of your sins, as wonderful as that would be. Sin is the barrier that stands between you and intimacy with God, and Jesus came to bring you into close personal relationship with Him. Jesus loves you and wants to know you personally. He wants to give you a quality of life that is greater than anything you could obtain from any other source. Jesus said it this way in John 10:10, "The thief [speaking of Satan] cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." God wants to give you eternal life. He wants to give you abundant life.

I believe that you need and want that. God died not only to forgive your sins, but to bring you into close, personal relationship with Himself. If you don't know the Lord, you need to know Him for that purpose. If you have already been born again, you need to go beyond just getting your sins forgiven and enter into everlasting life with the Father. God bless you as you consider that today.

ETERNAL LIFE (Outline)

1. The Purpose for the Gospel is Eternal Life.
 - A. Jesus came to give eternal life. John 3:16: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”
 - B. Sins were a barrier.
2. Everlasting life is knowing God. John 17:3: “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.”
 - A. Everlasting life is not just missing hell.
 - B. Everlasting life is not just going to heaven.
3. Knowing God is an intimate relationship.

This intimacy is similar to that found in the marriage relationship: Genesis 4:1 says “And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD.”
4. Eternal life is available now. 1 John 5:13: “These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.”

Galatians 1:4: “Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:”

John 3:36: “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”

Quality relationship with mankind is God’s goal.

ETERNAL LIFE (Teacher's Guide)

1. According to John 3:16-17, what was the purpose of God sending Jesus into the world?

To save the world, giving all who believe everlasting life by removing sin's penalty.

2. Explain "know" in the biblical usage of Genesis 4:1.

"Know" means to have an intimate relationship with a person—the sexual union in marriage.

According to John 17:3, what is eternal (everlasting) life?

Eternal life is knowing God and Jesus Christ.

3. According to 1 John 5:11-13, when does eternal or everlasting life begin?

At the time of belief . . . NOW!

4. According to John 10:10, what kind of life did Jesus come to give us?

Abundant life! Explain in your own words the quality or attributes of an abundant life.

The thief comes to kill, steal, and destroy. What does Jesus do that is the opposite of this?

He gives us life for death, and restores what has been destroyed.

Many think salvation is just the forgiveness of sins. The word "saved" in the Greek is "sozo" and means "to save, heal, cure, preserve, keep safe and sound, rescue from danger or destruction, deliver. Sozo saves from physical death by healing, and from spiritual death by forgiving sin and its effects. Sozo in primitive cultures is translated simply, 'to give new life' and 'to cause to have a new heart'" (SFLB p. 1525). This is abundant life!

5. Do you believe that God sent His Son Jesus into the world to die for the sins of the world, thereby giving us who believe eternal/everlasting life?

Yes.

6. Is it clear to you that eternal/everlasting life is not only a length of time (eternity) but a quality and quantity of life?

Yes.

ETERNAL LIFE (Detailed Teacher's Guide)

Note: The following information may be read out loud (a numbered section at a time) with the person(s) being discipled. After each numbered section is read, pause and ask the question(s) that correspond to the paragraph(s) and then discuss them.

¹The Bible states in John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life."

Most people focus on the part of this verse that promises we won't perish. Although it's certainly a wonderful promise, it is not the focus of this verse. The primary purpose of Jesus coming to this earth was not forgiveness of sins but to give us eternal life.

²Sin separated us from God so Jesus dealt with sin. However, His payment for sin was just a step toward His ultimate purpose of reconciling man to God. If someone believes that Jesus died for his sins but doesn't go on to enter into the close fellowship with God that Jesus made available, then he is missing eternal life.

³Eternal life is not a length of life but rather a quality of life. Eternal life is intimacy with the Father and Jesus (John 17:3). Many people have been done a disservice in being told that Jesus came to forgive their sins, period. If that was all He did, it would have been wonderful and much more than we deserved—but much less than what He actually accomplished.

⁴Today, take full advantage of your salvation and go beyond the basic forgiveness of your sins into intimacy with Almighty God.

¹ According to John 3:16, the real message of the gospel is that God wants you to have what? Eternal Life.

² (a) According to John 17:3, eternal life is what? Knowing God and Jesus Christ.

(b) How is the word "know" used in scripture according to Genesis 4:1? Of a close intimate relationship and union.

(c) When the Bible says eternal life is "knowing" the only true God and Jesus Christ, it is saying what? Eternal life is having an intimate and personal relationship with God.

³ Jesus came to give us intimacy and a personal relationship with Himself. How does Ephesians 5:31-32 show this? He uses marriage to illustrate the kind of personal relationship He wants with us.

⁴ How does Romans 5:6-8 show God's love for us? God's love was demonstrated to us while we were sinful and going our own way.

ETERNAL LIFE

(Discipleship Questions)

Read John 3:16-17 out loud.

1. What was God's motive for sending Christ into the world?
2. What two things were accomplished by God sending Jesus into the world?
 - A.
 - B.
3. God sent Jesus into the world to _____.
 - A. condemn us
 - B. save us

Read John 3:19 out loud.

4. What is the biblical definition for "condemnation"?

Read Romans 8:1 out loud.

5. If you are in Christ Jesus, having accepted Him as your Savior, how much condemnation (shame and guilt) are you to have?
6. If Christ isn't condemning you, who is (besides yourself)?

Read Genesis 4:1 out loud.

7. Explain the word "know" in this passage. In what context is it used?

Read John 17:3 out loud.

8. What is eternal life?
9. Read this passage again, and when you come to the word "know thee," replace it with "have a personal intimate relationship with."

10. How does reading this passage with this new understanding change the way you have thought about “eternal life”?

11. Read 1 John 5:11 out loud.

Does it say that

A. God will give us eternal life

B. Might give us eternal life

C. Has given us eternal life

12. Is this a past present future condition? (circle one)

13. Where is this eternal life according to verse 11?

Read 1 John 5:12.

14. What must you have to have life?

Read 1 John 5:13.

15. What two reasons did John give as to why he wrote these things to those who believe in the name of Jesus?

A.

B.

16. What is the condition of the eternal life we have? Past Present Future

Read John 10:10 out loud.

17. What is Satan’s purpose in coming?

18. Why did Jesus come?

19. What kind of life did He provide for us?

A. mediocre

B. dismal

C. abundant

20. Describe what abundant life looks like to you?

21. Are you living an abundant life now? _____
What would you need to do to begin walking in the abundant life Jesus provided for you?
22. Do you believe that God sent His Son Jesus into the world to die for the sins of the world, thereby giving us who believe eternal/everlasting life?
23. Is it clear to you that eternal/everlasting life is not only a length of time (eternity) but also a quality of life right here, right now?

Read Romans 10:9 (NKJV).

24. If you _____ with your _____ the Lord Jesus
And _____ in your _____ that God has
raised Him from the _____, you will be _____.
25. This says that you _____.
A. might be saved
B. it's a gamble you would be saved
C. WILL be saved
- Read Romans 10:13 out loud.
26. Who is it that calls on the name of Jesus will be saved?
27. Do you believe, regardless of what you have done in your life, that if you were to call upon the name of Jesus right now that you would be saved?
28. Is that amazing love or what?!!!
- .

ETERNAL LIFE
(Discipleship Answer Key)

1. Love
2. A. We should not perish
B. But have eternal life
3. B. Save us
4. Light has come into the world, but
Man loves darkness rather than light.
5. None
6. The devil
7. Sexual intimacy, a deep level of relationship
8. To know God and Jesus Christ
9. "And this is eternal life, that they may have a
personal relationship with You, the only true
God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent."
10. How does reading this passage with this
new understanding change the way you
have thought about "eternal life"?
11. C. Has given us eternal life
12. Past
13. In Jesus Christ
14. The Son of God, Jesus
15. A. That we may know we already have
eternal life
B. To continue to believe in Jesus
16. Present
17. Kill, steal, and destroy
18. Give us life
19. C. abundant
20. Describe what abundant life looks like to you?
21. Are you living an abundant life now? _____
What would you need to do to begin walking
in the abundant life Jesus brought you?
22. Do you believe that God sent His Son Jesus
into the world to die for the sins of the world,
thereby giving us who believe eternal/everlast-
ing life?
23. Is it clear to you that eternal/everlasting life is
not only a length of time (eternity), but also a
quality of life, right here, right now?
24. Confess – mouth – believe – heart- dead –
saved
25. C. WILL be saved
26. Whoever
27. Do you believe, regardless of what you have
done in your life, that if you were to call upon
the name of Jesus right now that you would be
saved?
28. Is that amazing love or what?!!!

ETERNAL LIFE

by Andrew Wommack
(Additional Information)

One of the most familiar passages of Scripture is John 3:16. It seems like everybody seems to know that verse at a young age, yet I believe it has really been misunderstood and misapplied. John 3:16 says, “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life” (KJV).

Traditionally, this scripture has been used to teach that Jesus came and died for our sins so that we wouldn’t perish. As true as this is, this verse is saying that the real purpose of Jesus coming to this earth and dying for us is so that we could have everlasting life. It just so happened that our sins were a barrier that stood between us and this everlasting life.

It is true that Jesus did die for our sins, and it is true that if we believe on Jesus, we will not perish, but there is much more to the Gospel than that. The real message of the gospel is that God wants to give you everlasting life. Now let me explain that.

The night before His crucifixion, Jesus was praying, and He said this in John 17:2-3: “As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.”

This says that everlasting life is knowing the Father, the only true God and knowing Jesus Christ, whom He has sent. That’s what everlasting life is. Many people think that everlasting life is living forever. Well, every person lives forever. It’s a misconception to think that when a person dies he ceases to exist. The spirit and the soul go back to God. The body decays in the grave. The truth is, every person who has ever lived on the face of the earth will continue to live in spirit form. So to say that eternal life is living forever is not the whole truth—everybody lives forever. This verse makes it very clear that eternal life is not given to everyone.

Some people would say, “Eternal life is living forever in heaven versus living forever in hell,” but that’s not what this verse is talking about. In John 3:36, it says, “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.” Right there it says that everlasting life can be a present tense position—a possession. It is not something that’s going to take place in the future, but something that is a reality right now. 1 John 5:13 says, “These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have [present tense] eternal life.”

The Scriptures reveal that eternal life isn’t just living forever, and it’s not just living forever in heaven or hell. Eternal life is just what Jesus said in John 17:3—to know God and Jesus Christ. It’s more than an intellectual knowledge. This word “KNOW” is used throughout Scripture to describe the most intimate, personal relationship that you can have. For instance, in Genesis 4:1, the scripture says that Adam “knew” his wife, Eve, and she conceived and had a son. It’s talking about the sexual relationship between a man and a woman—intimacy. So when the Scripture says that eternal life is

“knowing” the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent, what it means is that eternal life is having intimacy—a personal relationship with God.

Now include this with John 3:16, and this verse says that God loved you and me so much that He gave His only begotten Son so that we would not perish but have intimacy, closeness, and a personal relationship with God Almighty. This has not always been the message that we’ve heard. Often you hear, “Repent or else; turn or burn; either repent or you will go to hell.” There are many people who are drawn to the Lord out of fear of going to hell. They confess the Lord out of desperation because they do not want to go to hell.

Now let me say this: If the only benefit of salvation is getting your sins forgiven so you will not go to hell, then that would be more than you deserve. It would still be goodness on God’s part and still worth preaching and sharing with people, but the Scriptures reveal that there is much more to salvation than just getting your sins forgiven. If all a person does is come to the Lord to get his sins forgiven so that he will not perish, and that is his only motivation, he may be born again and have a ticket to heaven, but he will miss out on the real purpose of salvation.

The real purpose of salvation is not missing hell. The real purpose of salvation is not living forever in heaven, as great as that will be. The real purpose of salvation is to have intimacy—a personal relationship with the Lord God. There are multitudes of people who have cried out to God for the forgiveness of their sins but have never had intimacy with God as a goal.

By not explaining the real purpose of salvation, we are doing a disservice to the gospel. When we present salvation as something that deals with just spiritual things that will only benefit us in the future, in eternity, we are not helping people. There are some people who are living in such a literal hell right now on earth. Many are depressed, living in poverty, dealing with strife, rejection, hurt, and failed marriages. People are just trying to survive day to day. They are just trying to keep their heads above water. By making salvation something that deals only with the future, many people will put off that decision because they are too busy just trying to survive today.

The truth is that Jesus not only came to affect our eternal destinies so that we can live forever in heaven in blessing instead of the punishment and the curse of hell, but Jesus also came to deliver us from this present evil world (Galatians 1:4). Jesus came to give you intimacy and a personal relationship with God the Father today.

The first-century church had a concept of this that I believe our modern-day church has lost. We can see it in many writings, and also in history. I went to Rome when I was 18 years old. I remember going to the Circus Maximus and to the Coliseum where they threw Christians to the lions and burned them at the stake. I remember reading an inscription on a wall in the catacombs. The Christians had to bury their dead in the walls of the catacombs because the Romans would deface their graves. They would bring their dead back and put them in the walls. This inscription had been translated into about five or six languages. I read it in English, and it said, “Here lies my wife and six-month old daughter who gave their lives today for the glory of Jesus Christ in the Circus Maximus.” It was written like something this man was proud of, something he was glorifying God for. You didn’t sense grief in what he wrote. There wasn’t despondency.

These people had a quality of relationship with God that was so dynamic that there were actual accounts of Romans jumping out of the stands and running out in the arena, knowing that they were going to be put to death. They would confess this Jesus that the Christians had died for because they saw such joy on their faces. Nero stuck his fingers in his ears and said, “Why must these Christians sing as they die?” There was such a grace, such a joy, that there are accounts of Christians actually fighting over who got to go first to be martyred. I am telling you this to point out that there was a quality of relationship with God that I believe was the true intent of Christianity that we sometimes miss today.

Jesus didn’t come only to forgive you of your sins, as wonderful as that may be. Sin was just a barrier that stood between you and intimacy with God. Jesus came to bring you back into close, personal relationship with Him. Jesus loves you. Jesus wants to know you personally. Jesus wants to give you a quality of life that is greater than anything you could obtain through any other source.

Jesus put it this way in John 10:10: “The thief [speaking of Satan] cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.” God wants to give you eternal life. God wants to give you abundant life, and I believe that you need that today—that you want that. Christ died not only to forgive your sins, but to bring you close to Him. If you don’t know the Lord, you need to know Him for that purpose. If you’ve already been born again, you need to go beyond just getting your sins forgiven and enter into everlasting life with the Father.

SALVATION BY GRACE

Don Krow

Jesus many times used parables, which were stories that illustrated spiritual truths. Luke 18:9-14 begins, “And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others.” Jesus was targeting a certain audience: those who trusted that they were righteous and automatically despised and looked down on everyone else. He told this parable to these people who trusted in the things they did. We would call them self-righteous, which is what Jesus was speaking about when He said they looked down on everyone else saying, “I am better than you!”

In verse 10 He says, “Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.” We would say in modern language that they went to the church to pray, and one was a Pharisee. A Pharisee was a very religious person. The word actually means “separated one,” someone who was so religious that in a sense he would say, “Don’t defile me! Don’t get close to me. I’m not like other men! I am better than everyone else!” The other man Jesus mentioned was a publican. Publicans were tax collectors and were known to be very evil, sinful people who cheated and defrauded. They collected taxes by any means they could, stuck a lot of the money in their pockets, and gave some of it to the Roman government so they were not looked upon favorably by their peers.

The story continues in verse 11, “The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not like other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican .” I want you to notice that. Who was he praying to? He was actually praying to himself even though he was saying, “God,” and using the right words. God was not acknowledging his prayer, and we’ll see later why that was so. Notice that he prayed, “God, I thank you I am not like other men are.” This Pharisee, this religious man, said, “I am not like other men. I am not sinful. I am not an extortioner, not unjust, not an adulterer, and I am not like this publican right here who came to pray.” You see, he despised and looked down on others because he thought he was better.

In verse 12 the Pharisee said, “I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.” He was saying, “Notice what I do!” Do you know what it means to fast? It actually means to go without food. He also gave money to the church. He was one of those people who say, “Don’t bother me! I live a good life! I give to charity! I give money down at the church!”

Then we come to the tax collector in verse 13. “And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.” Notice his body language: “standing afar off.” He didn’t even go all the way to the church. He was so ashamed of his life and the things that he had done that he stood afar off and wouldn’t even look up, wouldn’t lift his eyes to heaven, but smote his breast. When the Bible talks of smiting their breasts in the Old Testament, many times they also tore their garments, which was a way of saying, “I am sorry, God, for what I have done!” It was a sign of repentance, a contrite heart and a broken spirit which God would not despise. This tax collector, sinful man that he was, cried out to God and prayed, “God be merciful to me, I am a sinner!”

Verse 14 says, “I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.” The publican went home justified, declared righteous before God, in right-standing with God, forgiven by God. Why was he forgiven? Why did he go to his home in right-standing before God and not the religious Pharisee? It was because the Pharisee exalted himself saying, “I am better than other people! I am not sinful! I am not like other men,” while the tax collector knew he had no standing before God, nothing he could offer Him. He was a sinful person. The Bible says Jesus didn’t come to save righteous people but sinners, and we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God. This tax collector humbled himself and found forgiveness and pardon.

We’re talking about salvation by grace. Grace is a wonderful word, and I am going to give you an accepted definition of what it means, but grace means much more. In the Greek language in which the New Testament was written, grace is the word *charis*. An accepted definition is this: grace is the free, unmerited favor of God toward people who don’t deserve it. This tax collector didn’t deserve anything from God, but he found God’s favor because he humbled himself. There is another word in the Greek, *charisma*, which is *charis* with the suffix *ma* on the end. It means a specific manifestation or form of God’s grace, and this tax collector found justification, right-standing, before God as a gift.

Romans 5:17 says, “they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.” God offers you and me right-standing before Him as a gift and, according to our passage, the tax collector found that gift of justification, that gift of righteousness that only comes through Jesus Christ. The Bible says in John 1:17, “For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” This grace is only offered to one kind of person—those who humble themselves and know they have no standing before God, who cry for God’s mercy. These people will find God’s mercy and pardon.

James 4:6 and 1 Peter 5:5 quote Proverbs 3:34: “Surely he scorneth the scorners; but he giveth grace unto the lowly.” God resisted the man who was self-righteous and thought that he was better than everyone else, but He gives grace to people who will humble themselves and say, “I need a saviour. I need the forgiveness, the pardon, the righteousness, the right-standing that God offers.”

In his book, *The Grace Awakening*, Charles Swindoll says this about being justified: “Justification is the sovereign act of God, whereby God declares righteous the believing sinner, even though he is in a sinning state.” God is willing to declare a sinful person in right-standing with Himself when that person puts his faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of his sins.

Donald Barnhouse said this about justification: “God credits a man perfect even at the moment when he is ungodly in himself. This is justification.” Friend, today the Gospel means “good news.” When you received your newspaper this morning, you didn’t get a prophecy. The paper isn’t reporting things that are going to happen, but things that have already taken place. The Gospel means “good news.” God has reported something that has already taken place in Jesus Christ, who died for our personal sins. He was buried and He rose again, and for anyone who will humble himself, reach out, and cry from his heart like the tax collector did, “God be merciful to me, I’m a sinner,” God will meet them there. Pardon is available. Forgiveness is available. Justification is available—just as if you had never sinned.

May God bless you as you consider these truths we’ve brought you today from God’s Word.

SALVATION BY GRACE (Outline)

Luke 18:9-14: “And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: ¹⁰Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. ¹¹The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican, ¹²I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. ¹³And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. ¹⁴ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.”

GRACE is the Greek word “Charis” and means “the free, unmerited, undeserved favor of God” given to those who actually deserve the opposite.

“Charisma” is translated by the word “gift” or “free gift” especially emphasizing that it is of grace. “Charisma” is “a specific form or manifestation of God’s grace.”

The tax collector found righteousness (right-standing with God) offered to him as a manifestation of God’s grace.

Grace is offered only through the person of Jesus Christ (John 1:17).

Grace is received only by the humble. James 4:6 and 1 Peter 5:5 both quote Proverbs 3:34 saying, “God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.”

Charles Swindoll states in his book, *The Grace Awakening*: “Justification is the sovereign act of God whereby He declares righteous the believing sinner—while he is still in a sinning state.”

Donald Barnhouse once stated: “God credits [Abraham] a man to be perfect even at a moment when he is ungodly in himself. This is justification.”

The word “Gospel” means “good news.” When you get your newspaper in the morning you are not getting the early morning prophecy. It is reporting the news—something that has already happened.

The Gospel is the good news that Christ has already taken care of the sin problem. We will find the same mercy and grace as the tax collector did in Jesus’ day if we will humble ourselves and trust Jesus Christ for our forgiveness (the price for our forgiveness has already been paid).

SALVATION BY GRACE (Teacher's Guide)

1. Turn to Romans 5:17, and please read the verse out loud.

What kind of righteousness does God offer you and me according to this verse?

The gift of righteousness. (Right-standing with God)
2. What does the word "gift" mean?

It is free, unmerited, and cannot be earned.
3. If I bought you some groceries as a gift and then asked you to give me \$23.50, would that be a gift?

NO!
4. Read out loud Luke 18:9-14 (pausing and explaining each verse).

A. Which of these two men was justified, declared righteous before God?

The tax collector.

B. Why?

He humbled himself and cried for God's mercy.
5. If you right now got on your knees and cried out to God from your heart, "God be merciful to me, a sinner," would God treat you the same way He treated the tax collector?

YES!

NOTE: If the person answers "YES" the lesson has been understood correctly. If the person answers in any other way, the lesson needs to be given again until the person understands.

SALVATION BY GRACE (Detailed Teacher's Guide)

Note: The following information may be read out loud (a numbered section at a time) with the person(s) being disciplined. After each numbered section is read, pause and ask the question(s) that correspond to the paragraph(s), and then discuss them.

¹ “For if by one man’s offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:17).

Although this is a long and somewhat elaborate verse, we will only try to deal with one aspect of this verse, that is, righteousness, a right relationship, a right-standing with God that is offered to us as a gift.

The dictionary defines a “gift” as “something that is bestowed voluntarily and without compensation” (AH Dict.).

If you bought your wife some flowers and then asked her to pay you \$19.95, would that be a gift?

If you bought your children bicycles for Christmas and then asked them to begin making payments in January, would that be a gift? Of course not!

A gift is free to those receiving it, although it does cost the person who purchased it. The gift of righteousness is free to those who will receive it, but it did cost God the death of His Son to offer it.

² In Luke, chapter 18, Jesus spoke a parable to a group of self-righteous people. This is what He said, “And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others” (Luke 18:9).

¹ (a) According to Romans 5:17, what kind of righteousness does God offer us?
(b) What does the word “gift” mean?

² (a) What is a parable?
(b) Who did Jesus direct this parable to? (Luke 18:9).
(c) People who are self-righteous always reveal an attitude towards others. According to Luke 18:9, what is that attitude?

³ “Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican” (Luke 18:10).

In Jesus’ day the publican (tax collector) was considered a very ungodly and evil person. The tax collectors worked for the Roman government and were usually considered traitors by their own countrymen. The taxes that they collected were by means of pressure, scheming, and cheating. They were considered by others as wicked, evil people.

⁴ “The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican” (Luke 18:11).

⁵ “I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess” (Luke 18:12).

⁶ Notice the body language of this publican. “And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner” (Luke 18:13).

⁷ “I tell you, this man went down to his house justified [declared right before God, just as if he had never sinned, acquitted of his sins, declared innocent before God] rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted” (Luke 18:14).

³ (a) According to Luke 18:10 two people went to pray, in modern language where did they go to pray?

(b) Who were these people? (v.10).

(c) What is a Pharisee?

(d) What is a publican?

⁴ (a) According to the King James version, who did the Pharisee pray with?

(b) What was the Pharisee’s prayer?

⁵ (a) Do you know what fasting means?

(b) Do you know what it means to give tithes?

(c) Who was he giving his tithes to?

⁶ (a) Where was the publican standing? Why?

(b) What was his facial expression?

(c) Why was he hitting himself?

(d) What was this tax collector’s prayer?

⁷ (a) According to verse 14, which one of these men was declared righteous before God when he went to his home?

(b) Why? Because he humbled himself.

(c) Did God forgive this tax collector?

(d) If you got down on your knees right now and cried out to God from your heart, “God be merciful to me a sinner,” would God treat you the same way He treated the tax collector?

SALVATION BY GRACE (Discipleship Questions)

Read Ephesians 2:8-9

1. "By _____ you have been saved through _____."
2. Was this something you achieved on your own? _____
3. "It is the _____ of God, NOT of _____."
4. Why did God make grace a gift and not of works (verse 9)?
5. What is a gift?
6. If you bought your kids a bicycle for Christmas and then asked them to begin making payments after the New Year, would it still be a gift?
7. Do we have to do anything to "earn" a gift?
8. Do we have to do anything to keep a gift?
9. Did it cost the person giving the gift anything?

Read John 3:16

10. What did it cost God in order to give us this free gift of salvation (everlasting life)?

11. Read Ephesians 2:4-5

Why would God go through such extremes to see us come to everlasting life?

Do you realize that God loves you so much that He sacrificed His Only Begotten Son for you so that you might live? _____ Does that make you feel extremely special? Amen!

Definitions:

Righteousness: right-standing with God

Gift: free and unmerited, something that cannot be earned by works.

Grace: Greek word "Charis" = free, unmerited, undeserved favor of God.

Faith: rightly appropriating what God has given to us by grace; trusting what God has said is true and walking forward in His promises.

Salvation (saved, eternal life): victory, prosperity, deliverance, health, peace, all is well, perfect rest.

Exercise: Look up every scripture on the following pages and let the Word of God lead and guide you into a scriptural understanding of God's salvation by grace.

SALVATION BY GRACE (Discipleship Answer Key)

1. Grace - faith
2. No
3. Gift - works
4. So that we would not boast
5. Something given to you by another
6. No
7. No
8. No
9. Yes
10. His Son, Jesus
11. Because of His rich mercy and great love
with which He loves us.

SALVATION BY GRACE (Additional Information)

SALVATION:

Part I

1. Is of God. Psalms 3:8, 37:39; Jeremiah 3:23
2. Is of the purpose of God. 2 Timothy 1:9
3. Is of the appointment of God. 1 Thessalonians 5:9
4. God is willing to give. 1 Timothy 2:4
5. Is by Christ. Isaiah 63:9; Ephesians 5:23
6. Is by Christ alone. Isaiah 45:21-22, 59:16; Acts 4:12
7. Announced after the fall. Genesis 3:15
8. Of Israel, predicted. Isaiah 35:4, 45:17; Zechariah 9:16,
Romans 11:26
9. Of the Gentiles, predicted. Isaiah 45:22, 49:6, 52:10
10. Revealed in the Gospel. Ephesians 1:13, 2 Timothy 1:10
11. Came to the Gentiles through the fall of the Jews. . . . Romans 11:11
12. Christ.
 - A. The Captain of - Hebrews 2:10
 - B. The Author of - Hebrews 5:9
 - C. Appointed for - Isaiah 49:6
 - D. Raised up for - Luke 1:69
 - E. Has - Zechariah 9:9
 - F. Brings, with him - Isaiah 62:11,
Luke 19:9
 - G. Mighty to effect - Isaiah 63:1,
Hebrews 7:25
 - H. Came to effect - Matthew
18:11, 1 Timothy 1:15
 - I. Died to effect - John 3:14-15,
Galatians 1:4
 - J. Exalted to give - Acts 5:31

Part II

1. Is not by works. Romans 11:6; Ephesians 2:9; 2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 3:5
2. Is of grace. Ephesians 2:5,8; 2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 2:11
3. Is of Love. Romans 5:8; 1 John 4:9-10
4. Is of mercy. Psalms 6:4; Titus 3:5
5. Is of the long-suffering of God. 2 Peter 3:15
6. Is through faith in Christ. Mark 16:16; Acts 16:31; Romans 10:9;
Ephesians 2:8; 1 Peter 1:5
7. Reconciliation to God, a pledge of. Romans 5:10
8. Is Deliverance from.
 - A. Sin - Matthew 1:21; 1 John 3:5
 - B. Uncleaness - Ezekiel 36:29
 - C. The devil - Colossians 2:15;
Hebrews 2:14-15
 - D. Wrath - Romans 5:9; 1 Thessalonians 1:10
 - E. This present evil world - Galatians 1:4
 - F. Enemies - Luke 1:71, 74
 - G. Eternal death - John 3:16-17

Part III

1. Confession of Christ necessary to. Romans 10:10
2. Regeneration necessary to. John 3:3
3. Final perseverance necessary to. Matthew 10:22
4. Described as.
 - A. Great - Hebrews 2:3
 - B. Glorious - 2 Timothy 2:10
 - C. Common - Jude 1:3
 - D. From generation to generation - Isaiah 51:8
 - E. To the uttermost - Hebrews 7:25
 - F. Eternal - Isaiah 45:17, 51:5; Hebrews 5:9

Part IV

1. Searched into and exhibited by the prophets. . 2 Peter 1:10
2. The Gospel is the power of God to. Romans 1:16; 1 Corinthians 1:18

3. Preaching the Word is the appointed means of .1 Corinthians 1:21
4. The Scriptures are able to make wise to. 2 Timothy 3:15; James 1:21
5. Now is the day of. Isaiah 49:8; 2 Corinthians 6:2
6. From sin, worked out with fear and trembling. . Philippians 2:12
7. Saints.
 - A. Chosen to - 2 Thessalonians 2:13, 2 Timothy 1:9
 - B. Appointed to obtain - I Thessalonians 5:9
 - C. Are heirs of - Hebrews 1:1
 - D. Have, through grace - Acts. 15:11
 - E. Have a token of, in their patient suffering for Christ - Philippians 1:28-29
 - F. Kept by the power of God to - 1 Peter 1:5
 - G. Beautified with - Psalms 149:4
 - H. Clothed with - Isaiah 61:10
 - I. Satisfied by - Luke 2:30
 - J. Love - Psalms 40:16
 - K. Hope for - Lamentations 3:26; Romans 8:24
 - L. Wait for - Genesis 49:18; Lamentations 3:26
 - M. Long for - Psalms 119:81, 174
 - N. Earnestly look for - Psalms 119:123
 - O. Daily approach nearer to - Romans 13:11
 - P. Receive, as the end of their faith - I Peter 1:9
 - Q. Welcome the tidings of - Isaiah 52:7, Romans 10:15
 - R. Pray to be visited with - Psalms 85:7, 106:4, 119:41
 - S. Pray for the assurance of - Psalms 35:3
 - T. Pray for a joyful sense of - Psalms 51:12
 - U. Evidence, by works - Hebrews 6:9-10
 - V. Ascribe, to God - Psalms 25:5; Isaiah 12:2
 - W. Praise God for - 1 Chronicles 16:23; Psalms 96:2
 - X. Commemorate, with thanks - Psalms 116:12
 - Y. Rejoice in - Psalms 9:14, 21:1; Isaiah 25:9
 - Z. Glory in - 1 Corinthians 1:31; Galatians 6:14
 - AA. Declare - Psalms 40:10, 71:15

Part V

1. Godly sorrow works repentance to. 2 Corinthians 7:10
2. All the earth shall see. Isaiah 52:10; Luke 3:6

3. Ministers.
 - A. Give the knowledge of - Luke 1:77
 - B. Show the way of - Acts. 16:17
 - C. Should exhort to - Ezekiel 3:18-19; Acts. 2:40
 - D. Should labor to lead others to - Romans 11:14
 - E. Should be clothed in - 2 Chronicles 6:41; Psalms 132:16
 - F. Should use self-denial to lead others to -
1 Corinthians 9:22
 - G. Should endure suffering that the elect may obtain -
2 Timothy 2:10
 - H. Are a sweet Saviour of Christ to God, in those
who obtain - 2 Corinthians 2:15

Part VI

1. The heavenly host ascribe to God. . . . Rev. 7:10, 19:1
2. Sought in Vain From.
 - A. Idols - Isaiah 45:20; Jeremiah 2:28
 - B. Earthly power - Jeremiah 3:23

Part VII

1. No escape for those who neglect. Hebrews 2:3
2. Is far off from the wicked. Psalms 119:155; Isaiah 59:11
3. Illustrated by.
 - A. A rock - Deuteronomy 32:15; 2 Samuel 22:47;
Psalms 95:1
 - B. A horn - Psalms 18:2; Luke 1:69
 - C. A tower - 2 Samuel 22:51
 - D. A helmet - Isaiah 59:17; Ephesians 6:17
 - E. A shield - 2 Samuel 22:36
 - F. A lamp - Isaiah 62:1
 - G. A cup - Psalms 116:13
 - H. Clothing - 2 Chronicles 6:41; Psalms 132:16,
149:4; Isaiah 61:10
 - I. Wells - Isaiah 12:3
 - J. Walls and bulwarks - Isaiah 26:1, 60:18
 - K. Chariots - Hebrews 3:8
 - L. A victory - 1 Corinthians 15:57

Part VIII

1. Typified. Numbers 21:4-9; John 3:14-15

Adapted from The New Topical Text Book.

RIGHTEOUSNESS BY GRACE

Don Krow

Today we are going to look at the subject of righteousness by grace. Romans 3:21-23 says, “But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference [distinction]: For all have sinned, and come [fall] short of the glory of God.”

Notice that this scripture says, “But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested.” I once asked a man, “What do you think you have to do in order to go to heaven?” He responded that he should keep the Ten Commandments, be faithful to his wife, live a moral life, plus a number of other things. I said, “Do you know what you have to do in order to go to heaven, to be in God’s presence or in His kingdom? You would have to have a righteousness that equals God’s righteousness.” He said, “I beg your pardon? There is no one who can have a righteousness that equals God’s. Only one man had such righteousness, and that was Jesus Christ!” I said, “You have the point! That is exactly right! None of us in our own selves have ever kept the law or the commandments perfectly, outwardly or inwardly, but we need a righteousness that equals God’s in order to be acceptable before Him.”

That is exactly what is said in verses 21-22, “But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested . . . even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe...” The kind of righteousness that God offers you and me is a righteousness that is “through faith in Jesus Christ,” and it’s unto all and upon all that believe. There are two kinds of righteousness—the righteousness of man and the righteousness of God. The righteousness of man is his very best behavior and the good works he does, but that can’t make you acceptable before God. You need a righteousness that equals God’s, and He is offering it to you . . . the righteousness of God that is without the law.

In the Greek, there is no definite article, which means that this text is really saying God is offering His own righteousness without law. A righteousness that is according to law is a righteousness of doing, earning, and achieving in order to be accepted before God. All the world religions today think you have to do, earn, and achieve in order for God to accept you. The word “gospel” means “good news,” and the good news of the Gospel is that God is offering His very own righteousness and acceptance to all who will believe in what Jesus Christ provided—his death on the cross for our sins, imputing to us the righteousness that equals the law. This is the righteousness of God that is apart from the law, without us doing, earning, and achieving, and it comes through faith in Jesus Christ.

Notice in verse 22 that it is the righteousness of God that is through faith in Jesus Christ unto all and upon all. Why is God offering His righteousness to everyone? “For there is no difference [no distinction]: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” You have sinned, I have sinned, and we all come short of God’s standard of perfection. Because of our sin, the greatest thing we need is acceptance, right relationship, and right-standing with God . . . and God has offered this not through the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ.

The Bible says in Philippians 3:9, “And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.” I don’t want to be found standing before God in my own righteousness. Isaiah 64:6 says, “All of our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.” It doesn’t say all of our sins are as filthy rags, but all of our righteousnesses, and in the Hebrew language in that context it refers to a menstrual cloth. That is how filthy and dirty our righteousnesses are.

The Bible tells in Hebrews 6 about the doctrine of the foundations of Christ. Just as it is necessary to lay a foundation before building a house, there are certain things in the Christian life that are foundational. The very first part of the foundation is to repent from dead works. Although I believe the Bible teaches that we need to repent from our sins, Hebrews 6 is not saying that but is saying we need to repent from our dead works.

What are dead works? They are anything we do or trust in to make us acceptable to God. We need to put all our good works in one pile, all our sins in another pile, and turn from them both to God for His mercy and forgiveness. Salvation is trusting Jesus Christ alone. In Romans 3:22 that we read earlier, He’s offering His own righteousness—the righteousness of God that comes through faith in Jesus Christ. It doesn’t come by your working, your trying, your earning, or your attempts to achieve; it comes through faith, dependence, and reliance upon the Lord Jesus Christ.

Genesis 15:6 says, regarding Abraham, “And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.” How was Abraham saved? The Bible says he believed God—believed the promise God gave him—and righteousness was imputed to his account. The Apostle Paul argued this point when the Jewish people said they were saved by their works, by what they did. He says in Romans 4:23-25, “Now it was not written for his [Abraham’s] sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.”

The fact that Abraham was declared righteous before God through his faith was not just for him alone. What we read in Romans 3:21-22 about a man being declared righteous through his faith in Jesus Christ was written also for us, anyone who will believe, trust, and rely on Jesus Christ. The Bible says that because of the payment He made on the cross when He shed His blood for our sin, righteousness (right-standing) will be imputed to any person’s account who simply believes in what Jesus has done.

Romans 5:17 says, “For if by one man’s offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.” God is offering you a gift of righteousness, a gift of right-standing before Him. A gift does cost something but not to the person who receives it. If you gave me a gift and asked me to pay for it, it wouldn’t be a gift, but it did cost you something. God made righteousness available to you and me as a gift, and this gift of righteousness, acquittal, and right-standing before God comes through faith in Jesus Christ.

May God bless you as you consider these precious truths from God’s Word, that righteousness and right-standing before God are offered to you and me . . . to anyone who will believe, trust, and rely on the Lord Jesus Christ for their salvation. God bless you.

RIGHTEOUSNESS BY GRACE (Outline)

Romans 3:21-22: “But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; ²²Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:”

We need a righteousness that equals God’s in order to be accepted before Him. Because of our sin, the greatest thing we need is acceptance, or right-standing with God.

A righteousness that is according to the law is a righteousness of doing, earning, and achieving in order to be accepted by God.

The kind of righteousness that God offers us is a righteousness not according to doing or according to law but one that is through faith in Jesus Christ’s righteousness.

God offers this righteousness to all people because all have sinned and come short of God’s standard of perfection.

Philippians 3:9: “And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.”

There are two kinds of righteousness:

1. The righteousness of man is the good works that he can do. It will not make him accepted by God.
2. The righteousness of God is God’s own righteousness. It is His acceptance of us based on our belief in what Jesus provided through His death on the cross: forgiveness of sins and imputing to us a righteousness that equals the law.

Isaiah 64:6: “But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.” Not our sin, but our righteousness, our good works, are as filthy menstrual rags.

Hebrews 6:1: “Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God.” We need to turn from our good works and our sin unto God for His mercy. Put your faith, dependence, and reliance in Jesus.

Genesis 15:6: “And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.” This Old Testament scripture describes how Abraham believed God, Who then imputed righteousness to Abraham’s account.

Romans 4:23-25: “Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; ²⁴But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; ²⁵Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.”

Righteousness will be imputed to your account also, if you believe in Jesus and what He did for you. You also have right-standing before God when you believe in Jesus.

Romans 5:17: “For if by one man’s offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.”

God offers a GIFT of righteousness (right-standing before God). It cost God the life of His Son but is made available freely to us through faith in Jesus.

RIGHTEOUSNESS BY GRACE (Teacher's Guide)

1. A. According to Romans 3:10, what does mankind need?

 Righteousness.
- B. Why? See Romans 3:23 and Ephesians 2:12.

 Because we have all sinned and failed to meet the standard of God's perfection. Also because we are without Christ, being lost, having no hope and without God in this world.
- C. Do you see why all of us need a Savior?

 Yes.
2. A. According to Titus 3:5, is the righteousness that we need, a righteousness that we can produce?

 No, not by works of righteousness that we can do.
- B. According to 2 Corinthians 5:21, what kind of righteousness do we need?

 The righteousness of God (in Christ).
- C. According to Romans 3:22, how do we receive this righteousness?

 Through faith in Jesus Christ.
3. A. According to Philippians 3:9, what is the righteousness of the law?

 A righteousness belonging to me—a works righteousness that I can produce.
- B. According to Philippians 3:9, how is the righteousness of God received?

 Through faith in Jesus Christ.

4. According to Galatians 2:21, how could we frustrate God's grace?

The word "frustrate" means "to prevent from accomplishing a purpose or fulfilling a desire; to nullify." The word "vain" means "not yielding the desired outcome; to be unsuccessful."

We could frustrate God's grace by trying to be saved by our own good works instead of trusting Christ and His death for us for our salvation.

- 5 According to Romans 5:17, the righteousness of God is received as what?

A gift.

RIGHTEOUSNESS BY GRACE (Detailed Teacher's Guide)

Note: The following information may be read out loud (a numbered section at a time) with the person(s) being discipled. After each numbered section is read, pause and ask the question(s) that correspond to the paragraph(s), and then discuss them.

¹ According to the Bible, mankind's greatest need is for righteousness, that is, to be in right-standing, or a right relationship with a holy God. WHY? According to Scripture, "all have sinned" (Romans 3:23). God sees all men as lost, without hope, and without God in this world (Ephesians 2:12). We are sinners by nature through the fall of one man, Adam. It is also true that we are sinners by practice that is, our actions and deeds also fall short of the standard of God's perfection. You cannot say, "I am basically a good person" when the Scriptures declare, "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23), and "there is none righteous, no, not one" (Romans 3:10).

Do you see that you need a personal Savior, one who will save you from your sins?

² God offers us, as a gift, the righteousness that we all so desperately need. This righteousness is not the righteousness that you can produce (Titus 3:5). Rather, it is a righteousness that equals God's righteousness (2 Corinthians 5:21). It is God's own righteousness that He offers us freely through faith in Jesus Christ (Romans 3:22).

¹ (a) According to Romans 3:10, what does mankind need?

(b) Why? See Romans 3:23 and Ephesians 2:12.

(c) Do you see why all of us need a personal Savior?

² (a) According to Titus 3:5, is the righteousness that we need a righteousness that we can produce?

(b) According to 2 Corinthians 5:21, what kind of righteousness do we need?

(c) According to Romans 3:22, how do we receive this righteousness?

³ Notice what the scripture says, “But now the righteousness of God WITHOUT THE LAW is manifested (that is, revealed)” (Romans 3:21). The first thing we notice here about God’s righteousness is that it is not derived from the law. There is no definite article in this verse; in the Greek text, this would indicate that the righteousness that God offers man is APART FROM LAW or THE PRINCIPLE OF LAW. Therefore this scripture may read, “But now the righteousness of God without law is revealed.” AND WHAT IS THE PRINCIPLE OF THE LAW? The principle of the law says that men are accepted by God by doing, achieving, or meeting certain standards. SO IF MEN ARE NOT MADE RIGHTEOUS BY THE LAW, THAT IS, BY BEING AND DOING RIGHTEOUS ACTS, THEN HOW ARE WE MADE RIGHTEOUS BEFORE A HOLY GOD? Verse 22 of Romans 3 reveals the answer when it gives a description of the kind of righteousness that God offers - it is a by faith in Jesus Christ righteousness. These five words in the Greek text are a combined adjectival phrase, which modifies the righteousness of God. In other words, this phrase describes the kind of righteousness God offers by saying, it is a through - faith - in - Jesus Christ - righteousness that makes men acceptable before God.

⁴ Are you tired of dealing with guilt? Would you like to come to the Savior to be totally righteous and have right-standing with God? The blood of Jesus was shed to provide this gift for you (Ephesians 1:7). This is what the scripture says, “This gift is from God, and it is very important to me. Because if the law could have made us right with God, then Christ died for nothing” (Galatians 2:21, The Simple English Bible).

⁵ Have you ever considered repenting from your dead works? (See Hebrews 6:1.) Dead works are the things people trust in to get them to heaven. They may involve living a good life, keeping the Ten Commandments, loving others, and attending church, etc. Can you see that none of these things will meet the standard of God’s own righteousness? It will take God’s own righteousness to get you to heaven.

The Bible says, “It is certain that death reigned over everyone as the consequence of one man’s fall (Adam), it is even more certain that one man, Jesus Christ, will cause everyone to reign in life who receives THE FREE GIFT THAT HE DOES NOT DESERVE, OF BEING MADE RIGHTEOUS” (Romans 5:17, Jerusalem Bible).

When we all stand before God we will be anything but innocent - we will be utterly guilty. Yet God in His amazing grace, offers to treat us as if we are innocent men because of the blood of Jesus shed for us (Romans 5:9).

³ (a) According to Philippians 3:9, what is the righteousness of the law?

(b) According to Philippians 3:9, how is the righteousness of God received?

⁴ According to Galatians 2:21, how could we frustrate God’s grace?

⁵ According to Romans 5:17, what is the righteousness of God received as?

RIGHTEOUSNESS BY GRACE (Discipleship Questions)

Read Romans 3:21-23

1. Is the righteousness of God in accordance with _____ apart from _____ the law? (circle one)
2. According to verse 22, how do we attain the righteousness of God?
3. Who can have this righteousness?
4. What must we do in order to attain this righteousness?
5. Why did God offer this righteousness by grace/gift? (verse 23)

Read Philippians 3:8-9

6. Works-righteousness is _____
7. Faith-righteousness is _____

Read Isaiah 64:6

Apart from God...

8. What are we all like?
9. What is our righteousness like?

Read Genesis 15:6

10. What did Abraham do in the Lord?
11. How was it credited to him?
12. Did Abraham have to perform in order to receive righteousness from God?

Read Romans 22-25

13. For whose sake was verse 22 and Genesis 1:6 written for?
14. Imputed means credited, like to an account. So what shall be “imputed to us if we believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead”?
15. What two reasons was Jesus raised from the dead?
 - A.
 - B.

Read Titus 3:5

16. Is the righteousness that we need a righteousness that we can produce?
17. According to _____ Christ saved us.
18. What two ways did this happen?
 - A.
 - B.
19. Did God give us His Holy Spirit abundantly sparingly through Christ?

Read 2 Corinthians 5:21

20. What kind of righteousness do we need?

Read Galatians 2:21

“to set aside” is also translated “frustrated”

Frustrate means to prevent from accomplishing a purpose for fulfilling a desire; to nullify.

21. How could we frustrate God’s grace?
22. If you were able to attain righteousness from your works, what would have been the purpose of Christ going to the cross?

Exercise:

Look up the following scriptures and have the Holy Spirit guide you to a deeper truth about righteousness by grace.

23. What revelation do you have about righteousness by grace after having done this study and looked up the additional scriptures?

RIGHTEOUSNESS BY GRACE (Discipleship Answer Key)

1. Apart from
2. Thru faith in Jesus
3. All who believe
4. We must believe
5. Because we have all sinned and fallen short of His glory. We need a Savior.
6. The law
7. Righteousness that is from God by faith
8. Unclean thing
9. Filthy rags
10. Believed
11. For righteousness
12. No, he just believed
13. For us
14. Righteousness
15. A. For our offenses
B. For our justification
16. No
17. His mercy
18. A. The washing of regeneration
B. The renewing of the Holy Spirit
19. Abundantly
20. God's righteousness
21. By relying on the law for righteousness
22. Vanity
23. What revelation do you have about righteousness by grace after having done this study and looked up the additional scriptures?

RIGHTEOUSNESS BY GRACE (Additional Information)

WHAT IS JUSTIFICATION?

It is a forensic term, opposed to condemnation. As regards to its nature, it is the judicial act of God, by which He pardons all the sins of those who believe in Christ, and accounts, accepts, and treats them as righteous in the eye of the law, that is as conformed to all its demands. In addition to the pardoning of sin, justification declares that all the claims of the law are satisfied in respect to the justified. It is the act of a judge and not of a sovereign. The law is not relaxed or set aside, but is declared to be fulfilled in the strictest sense; therefore, the person justified is declared to be entitled to all the advantages and rewards arising from perfect obedience to the law (Romans 5:1-10). It imputes or credits to the believer by God Himself of the perfect righteousness, active and passive, of His representative and Surety, Jesus Christ (Romans 10:3-9). Justification is not forgiveness of a man without righteousness, but a declaration that he possesses a righteousness, which perfectly and forever satisfies the law, namely, Christ's righteousness (2 Corinthians 5:21, Romans 4:6-8). The sole condition on which this righteousness is imputed or credited to the believer is faith in or on the Lord Jesus Christ. Faith is called a "condition", not because it possesses any merit, but only because it is the instrument, the only instrument by which the soul appropriates or apprehends Christ and His righteousness (Romans 1:17, 3:25-26, 4:20-22; Philippians 3:8-11, Galatians 2:16). The act of faith, which secures our justification, also secures at the same time our sanctification; thus, the doctrine of justification by faith does not lead to licentiousness (Romans 6:2-7). Good works, while not the ground, are the certain consequence of justification (Romans 6:14, 7:6).

(1897 Easton's Bible Dictionary)

RIGHTEOUSNESS IMPUTED:

PART I

1. Predicted. Isaiah 56:1, Ezekiel 16:14
2. Revealed in the Gospel. Romans 1:17
3. Is of the Lord. Isaiah 54:17
4. Described as:.
 - A. The righteousness of faith - Romans 4:13, 9:30, 10:6
 - B. The righteousness of God, without the law - Romans 3:21
 - C. The righteousness of God by faith in Christ - Romans 3:22
 - D. Christ being made righteousness to us - 1 Corinthians 1:30
 - E. Being made the righteousness of God, in Christ - 2 Corinthians 5:21

PART II

1. Christ is the End of the Law for. Romans 10:4
2. Christ called The Lord of Our Righteousness. . . . Jeremiah 23:6
3. Christ Brings in an Everlasting Righteousness. . . . Daniel 9:24
4. Is a Free Gift. Romans 5:17
5. God's Righteousness Never to be Abolished. Isaiah 5:16
6. The Promises made Through. Romans 4:13
7. Saints.
 - A. Have, on believing - Romans 4:5, 11, 24
 - B. Clothed with the robe of righteousness - Isaiah 61:10
 - C. Exalted in righteousness - Psalms 89:16
 - D. Desire to be found in - Philippians 3:9
 - E. Glory in having - Isaiah 45:24-25

PART III

1. Exhortation to Seek Righteousness. Matthew 6:33
2. The Gentiles attained to. Romans 9:30
3. Blessedness of Those who have. Romans 4:6
4. The Jews.
 - A. Ignorant of - Romans 10:3
 - B. Stumble at righteousness by faith - Romans 9:32
 - C. Submit not to - Romans 10:3

PART IV

1. Exemplified.
 - A. Abraham - Romans 4:9, 22; Galatians 3:6
 - B. Paul - Philippians 3:7-9

Adapted from The New Topical Text Book.

RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

Andrew Wommack

One of the most important things about relationship is to understand the person with whom you're going to have relationship, and that also applies to God. You need to understand the basic nature and character of God in order to have a healthy relationship with Him. Misunderstanding His character and nature is one of the reasons many people don't have a positive relationship with Him. This is exactly what happened in the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve were tempted by the serpent. They entered into temptation, ultimately disobeyed God, and plunged the whole human race into sin. This is actually a part of the temptation.

The story in Genesis 3:1-5 is familiar to most people: "Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree in the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods [God], knowing good and evil."

There is a subtle statement by Satan here that God is not really a good God . . . that He was trying to withhold something from Adam and Eve . . . that He didn't want them to reach their full potential . . . that He didn't want them to be like Himself . . . and that the reason He made the rule about not eating of the tree of life was to hinder or hurt them. In a sense, Satan came against the very nature and character of God when he maligned Him and said God did not want the best for them. The same thing is exactly what's happening to people today. Satan tells them, "If you follow God and don't experiment with all these things that are contrary to His Word, you'll never experience true happiness. Life will be boring . . . dead. The sad fact is that people experience after the fact that the drugs, alcohol, sex, rebellion, indulgence of self, success in jobs, and all the other things they tried didn't satisfy them. By the time they realize it, they've already destroyed their lives, their families, and their health.

The truth is that God is a good God, and His will for us is only good. But Satan uses the same temptations on us today that came against Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, basically implying that God is not a good God. Those who have only a little understanding of the Bible could get that impression because there are instances in the Word where He treated people in harsh, cruel ways. In Numbers 15:32-36, a man picked up sticks on the Sabbath Day and was stoned to death for failing to observe the Sabbath. That sounds harsh, but there was a purpose behind such punishments, though it's not obvious to most people in a casual reading of Scripture. Careful study reveals that Old Testament law was given to make the sin that we've committed become exceedingly sinful, as Paul says in Romans 7:13. The purpose was that people didn't realize how deadly their transgressions were and that they were an offense against God. They made the mistake of comparing among themselves and measuring their actions by what other people were doing.

If someone committed a sin and wasn't struck dead, they thought sin must not be so bad, and they lowered their standards. They had lost the true perspective on what right and wrong was. God had to bring mankind back to a plumb line, a proper standard of what right living was, so they would reject the devil and his temptations and recognize what the end result of their wrong choices would be. Then when He did that, He had to enforce the law He gave.

God did not give the Old Testament commandments for the purpose of saying, "Until you do all these things, I can't accept you or love you." That is not His nature or character. Rather, He gave them to make our sense of right and wrong more acute and to bring us back to the fact that we need a Savior. The problem has been that people thought God was demanding perfection before He could love them, which led to the attitude many have that His love for them is directly proportional to their performance. They feel that until they try to do everything exactly right, they will not be accepted by God, and that is not the message of the Bible.

There are many illustrations of this in the Word. There is an example in John 8 where a woman was taken in the very act of adultery and brought to Jesus for judgment. The people who brought her weren't really trying to get a proper judgment from him but were using the situation to entrap Him. John 8:3-7 says, "And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, They said unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not. So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.'"

They were trying to get Jesus to carry out the Old Testament commandment to stone a person taken in the act of adultery. To show they weren't sincere in trying to get a proper judgment but were trying to entrap Him, the Bible says that she was taken in the very act of adultery (which means a man had to be present), but they didn't bring the man. They brought her, knowing Jesus had been preaching that God loves us even if we have sinned and fallen short and wants to extend mercy to us. They knew the woman would solicit sympathy from Jesus. If He failed to pass the judgment prescribed in the Law, they would be able to kill Him. If He did execute the judgment and stoned her, His followers would leave Him because His message of mercy, grace, and forgiveness would be compromised.

They thought this was a no-win situation for Jesus, but He ignored them, reached down, and began writing on the ground. When they asked Him again, he got up, said the person without sin should cast the first stone, and they began to be convicted by their own consciences. Scripture doesn't tell exactly what He wrote, but I believe He was making some kind of statement. Perhaps He was writing some of their secret sins, using His supernatural ability to look into their hearts to know what they were thinking. Whatever He wrote, they were convicted by the power of the Holy Spirit that they weren't without sin, and they left.

He said to the woman in John 8:10-11, "Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go and sin no more." Jesus didn't condone her sin but told her to go and sin no more, extending mercy to her. Contrast this to the Old Testament that says the woman should have been killed and shown no mercy. Jesus was God manifested in the flesh. This same God that gave the commandment to stone a person to

death and show them no mercy turned and showed mercy to a person taken in the very act of adultery.

That appears to be contradictory, as though there are two different Gods. Will the God of the Old Testament or the God of the New Testament be the God we serve? The truth is that the Bible says Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever. God has never changed. His love for mankind has never changed. He has always sought to reconcile mankind to Himself, and the Old Testament Law with its harshness was not a true representation of Him. It was true in the sense of justice, but it didn't reveal the mercy and the heart of God. Hebrews 1:3 says that Jesus was the express image (exact representation) of the Father, a perfect manifestation of God's heart, and He shows us His real heart.

God's heart is to reconcile mankind to Himself not to judge them . . . not to impute their sins . . . not to hold their sins against them. That's the heart of God for people in the Bible and also His heart for us today. We need to understand His real heart, that "God is love" (1 John 4:8). He seeks to take away your sins and anything that would separate you from Him. He's already done it through Jesus, and He's offering you relationship today, not based on your performance but on your faith and acceptance of Jesus bearing your sins. You can have relationship with God today regardless of the failures in your life. All He asks is that you put your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. God bless you as you consider that today.

RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD (Outline)

1. People need to understand the nature of God. Relationship with someone takes understanding.
2. Satan still causes us to doubt God's character.

Genesis 3:5: "For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."

3. God is a good God.

A. God is full of mercy.

B. His will for us is only good.

John 8:3-10: "And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, ⁴They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. ⁵Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? ⁶This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not. ⁷So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. ⁸And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. ⁹And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. ¹⁰When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?"

4. The purpose of the law:

A. To show how deadly sin is (to do so, the law needed to be enforced).

B. Not to please God but to know right from wrong.

C. To show the need for a Savior.

RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD (Teacher's Guide)

1. According to Genesis 3:1-5, how did the serpent (Satan) tempt Eve?

By causing her to question the goodness of God and His Word.
2. According to Genesis 3:9-10, did God still have communication/relationship with Adam and Eve after they sinned?

Yes.
3. A. Why did God drive Adam and Eve from the garden of Eden?
See Genesis 3:22-24.

So that they would not eat of the tree of life and live forever in a fallen state.

B. Can you see that this was an act of mercy by God rather than only a punishment?

Yes!
4. A. How did God deal with the first murderer, Cain?
See Genesis 4:8-15.

He pardoned and protected him.

B. Can you see that God also dealt with Cain in mercy and grace?

Yes!
5. A. How did sin enter the world?
See Romans 5:12.

Through Adam's sin.

B. How do we receive God's grace?
See Romans 5:17.

Through Jesus Christ, as a gift.
6. Can you see from the Bible that God has desired a relationship with man from the beginning, and has continued to reach out to us in grace and mercy?

Yes!

RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

(Detailed Teacher's Guide)

Note: The following information may be read out loud (a numbered section at a time) with the person(s) being disciplined. After each numbered section is read, pause and ask the question(s) that correspond to the paragraph(s), and then discuss them.

¹ One of the most important elements of any relationship is understanding the person that you have a relationship with; that applies to God too. You have to understand the basic nature and character of God to have a healthy relationship with Him. Misunderstanding the nature and character of God is one of the reasons that many people don't have a positive relationship with the Lord.

² The truth is that God is a good God, and His will for us is only good. Satan uses the same temptations on us today that he used against Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden (Gen. 3:1-5). He's basically saying that God is not a good God. If people just have a casual understanding of the Bible, they could get this impression because there are examples in the Word where God's dealings seemed harsh and cruel. These examples of the Old Testament law were given to make sin (the sin that we had committed) become exceedingly sinful. The purpose of this was to make people aware of how deadly their transgressions were. Because of a loss of perspective of what was right and wrong, God had to bring mankind back to a plumb line, a proper standard of what right living was so that they could reject the devil, his temptations, and recognize what the end result of these wrong choices would be.

³ Although God did give us the laws (Old Testament commandments), they were not given for the purpose of qualifying us for God's love and acceptance. That's not the nature and character of God. Rather, He did this to make our sense of right and wrong become accurate and to bring us back to a sense that we need a Savior. The problem is that people thought God was demanding perfection before He could love and accept them. That is not the message of the Bible.

¹ What does Psalms 86:5 reveal about God's goodness?

² (a) According to Romans 6:23 the wages of our sins earn us what?

(b) The free gift that God offers is what?

³ (a) According to Galatians 2:21, can the righteousness that we need be derived through keeping the law?

(b) What was the true purpose of God giving the law, according to Galatians 3:24?

(c) According to Romans 10:3-4, if we go about to establish our own righteousness before God, what do we fail to do?

⁴ Jesus' willingness to forgive a woman caught in adultery seems contradictory to the Old Testament law, which demanded death for adultery. It looks like there are two different Gods. Will the God of the Old Testament or the God of the New Testament be the one that we serve? The truth is, God has never changed. His love for mankind has never changed. God has always sought to reconcile mankind unto Himself. The Old Testament law, with the harshness and punishment, was not the truest representation of God. The Bible says in Hebrews 1:3 that Jesus is the express image of the Father. That means an exact representation—a perfect display—a perfect manifestation of God's heart. Jesus showed us the real heart of God in forgiving others.

⁵ God's heart is to reconcile mankind unto Himself not to judge them or impute their sins to them. That's the heart of God for the people in the Bible, and that's also the heart of God for us today. We need to understand the real heart of God. First John 4:8 says that God is love, and God seeks to take our sins away and anything else that would separate us from Him. He's already done it through the Lord Jesus, and He's offering you a relationship today not based on good works or your performance, but on your faith and acceptance of Jesus baring your sins. You can have a relationship with God today regardless of the failures in your life. All God is asking you to do is put your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

⁴What does 2 Corinthians 5:19-21 reveal about God's desire for each of us?

⁵What does Hebrews 8:7-13 reveal that the New Covenant will do?

RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD (Discipleship Questions)

Read Genesis 3:1-5

1. In verse 1, what question did Satan ask Eve?
2. Compare Genesis 2:17 with Genesis 3:3. What one word did Eve add to what God actually said to Adam?
3. Once Satan was able to instill doubt into Eve's mind regarding the Word of God, what did she do in Genesis 3:6?

Read Genesis 3:9-10

4. After Adam and Eve sinned, did God still communicate and pursue a relationship with them?

Read Genesis 3:22-24

5. Why did God drive Adam and Eve from the garden?
6. Can you see that this was an act of mercy by God rather than only a punishment?

Read Genesis 4:8-15

7. Is Cain surprised at the way God is speaking to him? _____
8. Does it seem like they had a relationship where they talked all the time? _____
9. When Cain killed his brother, was God merciful or vengeful toward Cain?
10. In verse 14, Cain is seeing the possible consequences for his actions and worries that someone might also want to take his life. What did God do for Cain in verse 15?
11. Can you see that God also dealt with Cain graciously and mercifully just as He did with Adam and Eve?
12. Was God's nature loving or wrathful toward those who sinned against Him?

Read Romans 5:12-19

13. How did sin enter the world?
14. Who was the "one man" spoken of in this verse? _____

15. In verse 15, who was the “gift”?
16. In verse 16, 18 and 19, What was the outcome of one man’s sin (Adam)?
 - A. J_____
 - B. C_____
 - C. S_____
 - D. Dis_____
17. In the same verses as above, what was the result of One man’s gift?
 - A. G_____
 - B. J_____
 - C. Gift of r_____
 - D. E_____ (verse 21)

Read Romans 5:17

18. How do we attain God’s abundance of grace and gift of righteousness?
 - A. Buy
 - B. Earn
 - C. Receive

Read Psalm 86:5

19. For You, Lord, are _____, and ready to _____,
 And abundant in _____, to _____ who _____ upon You.

Read Romans 6:23

20. What do we really deserve if we sin?
21. By grace what does God give to us instead?

Read Galatians 3:24

22. If the purpose of the law wasn’t to earn righteousness, what was its purpose?
23. What was the result of coming to Christ?
24. How was this attained?

Read Romans 10:3

25. If we try to establish our own righteousness before God, what do we fail to do?
26. Verse 4, "For _____ is the _____ of the law of righteousness to _____ who _____."

Read 2 Corinthians 5:18-20

27. What has God given to each of us through Jesus Christ?
- A. _____ us to Himself (v 18)
- B. given us the Ministry of _____ (v 18)
- C. Did not _____ our trespasses against us (v 19)
- D. We are _____ for Christ (v 20)

Read Hebrews 8:7-13

28. In verse 10, what is the covenant God will make or His people?
29. What is the outcome of having God's laws on our minds and our hearts? (v 11)
30. How will God react to our sins and unrighteousness? (v 12)
31. In verse 13, what has happened to the first covenant, the law?

Read Hebrews 8:12, Psalm 103:12, Isaiah 55:7, Jeremiah 33:8, Micah 7:18,
1 John 1:9

32. What does God promise to do with all our sins and iniquities against Him if we would only believe?
33. What does this tell you about the character of God?
34. If sin is what keeps us from having a relationship with God, can you see that God so desires to have a relationship with you by His actions?

RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD
(Discipleship Answer Key)

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Has God indeed said | 19. Good – Forgive – Mercy – All – Call |
| 2. That they shouldn't touch it | 20. Death |
| 3. Took and ate of the tree | 21. Eternal life in Jesus |
| 4. Yes | 22. A tutor to bring us to Christ |
| 5. So they wouldn't eat from the tree of life | 23. Justification |
| 6. Yes | 24. By faith |
| 7. No | 25. Submit to God |
| 8. Yes | 26. Christ – end – everyone – believes |
| 9. Merciful | 27. A. Reconciled
B. Reconciliation
C. Impute
D. Ambassadors |
| 10. Set a mark on Cain to protect him from someone killing him. | 28. Put My laws in their minds, write them on their hearts. He will be our God, we shall be His people |
| 11. Yes | 29. We won't have need to teach one another |
| 12. Loving | 30. Merciful – remembering our sins no more |
| 13. Through one man | 31. Obsolete |
| 14. Adam | 32. Remove them, forget them, forgive them |
| 15. Jesus Christ | 33. Merciful and loving |
| 16. A. Judgment
B. Condemnation
C. Sin
D. Disobedience | 34. Yes |
| 17. A. Grace
B. Justification
C. Gift of righteousness
D. Eternal life | |
| 18. C. Receive | |

RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

By Andrew Wommack
(Additional Information)

Is God Schizophrenic?

One reason God can be so easily discredited is because people don't really know Him by His Word. The only way you can truly know anything about God is through the Bible. Everybody on the earth has an opinion about what God is like and what He will do. But the only thing He gave us to know Him—and the only source that is truly reliable—is His written Word.

There are a lot of passages in the Bible that appear to give a “schizophrenic” revelation of God. Of course, God is not schizophrenic, but that is the way it appears to some people from a casual reading of the Scriptures.

In one scripture, God commands you to be stoned to death for picking up sticks on the Sabbath day (see Numbers 15:32-35), and then in another, He forgives and does not condemn a woman caught in the very act of adultery (see John 8:3-11). Examples like that have given people a rather strange impression of who God is.

The Old Testament Is Incomplete

In the Old Testament, we see a picture of God that is incomplete. It is not incorrect; it is just incomplete. People who create their understanding of the nature of God only from the Old Testament usually do not end up with a fully accurate picture. The Old Testament is only a partial picture; it is not a perfect representation of God. Unless you understand the New Testament and are able to harmonize it with the Old Testament, you are going to end up with a misunderstanding of the love of God and the whole nature of God.

One night I had a dream that I was Joshua in the Old Testament. I was going into the Promised Land, and God had commanded me to kill everybody in all of the cities, just like He commanded Joshua. That was hard for me to do! No women, children, or anything that breathed were to be left alive. But I couldn't justify it. I was nearly to the point of saying, “God, I just can't do it.”

To make the situation worse, I discovered that one of my very best friends was in one of these cities, and I was supposed to kill him, his wife, and his kids. I woke up from the dream thinking, “God, I can't do it. God, there's no way I can do it.” I thought about the dream all morning, meditating on it and praying about it. I was thinking, “God, how could these things have happened?”

My answer was found by looking at the Old Testament through the revelation of the New Testament. God began to show me that if Jesus had lived in His human form in the Old Testament, He would not have done things the way Joshua did. That is not to say that Joshua was wrong. He was obedient to God, and God was operating in the manner He had to operate during that time period.

Still, all that God did through Joshua was not a true and complete representation of His nature. Nor was it whom God has revealed Himself to be to believers in the New Testament. And yet some people have the impression that God is a God of wrath who will wipe out anyone who gets in His way.

Under the Old Testament, you see some things being done in that manner, but that is not the whole nature of God. It is vital to know who it is we are really dealing with. If you don't know God's nature or really understand Him, then you'll never effectively walk in the blessings and the power of God.

Old Testament Judgment

In 1 Kings 21:1-24, Ahab and Jezebel are probably two of the most wicked people in history, and certainly the most corrupt king and queen of Israel. They conspired together to kill an innocent man named Naboth in order to acquire his vineyard. They had Naboth stoned to death and his body thrown into a field, where the dogs came and licked up his blood. While Ahab was walking through his new vineyard, he saw Elijah the prophet and said, "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?"

Elijah replied, "I have found thee: because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the Lord."

Then Elijah began to rebuke Ahab and said, "Thus saith the Lord, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine. The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel."

It took awhile for those prophecies to come to pass. Ahab was killed in battle, and when he was brought home, the people went to wash out his chariot. As they were washing it, the dogs came and licked up Ahab's blood (see 1 King 22:38).

As for Jezebel, when a man named Jehu became king, she was thrown out of a tower and landed on the ground by the wall. Jehu rode his chariot back and forth across her, mutilating her body. Then he went into the palace, sat down, and began to eat. Right in the middle of his meal, he said something like, "Well, she's a king's daughter, and even though she was a wicked woman, she ought to be buried."

So Jehu sent some people out to bury her, but all that was left was her head, hands, and feet. The rest of her had been eaten by dogs! (See 2 Kings 9:30-37). Elijah's awesome prophecies came to pass exactly the way he had said—so you wouldn't want to mess with Elijah, right?

In 2 Kings, chapter one, we move on to the story of Ahaziah, the son of Ahab. Ahab and Jezebel had sinned against God in such a terrible way that their lives ended. Ahaziah had seen those prophecies fulfilled, but he didn't like Elijah any more than his parents had.

Ahaziah was following in the footsteps of his parents. He wasn't seeking the one true God; he was seeking after pagan gods. When he gets sick, instead of seeking God and inquiring of Him for healing, Ahaziah sent messengers to Baalzebub, the god of Ekron.

According to 2 Kings 1:3-8, when Ahaziah's messengers were on their way to inquire of this pagan god, Elijah met them and said:

“Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that ye go to inquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron? ⁴Now therefore thus saith the Lord, Thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die. And Elijah departed.⁵And when the messengers turned back unto him, he said unto them, Why are ye now turned back? ⁶And they said unto him, There came a man up to meet us, and said unto us, Go, turn again unto the king that sent you, and say to him, Thus saith the Lord, Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that thou sendest to inquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron? therefore thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die. ⁷And he said unto them, What manner of man was he which came up to meet you, and told you these words?⁸And they answered him, He was an hairy man, and girt with a girdle of leather about his loins. And he said, It is Elijah the Tishbite.”

The king knew it was Elijah and he was seized with fear, so he sent his armies out to capture him. Verses 9 and 10 say,

“Then the king sent unto him a captain of fifty with his fifty. And he went up to him: and, behold, he sat on the top of an hill. And he spake unto him, Thou man of God, the king hath said, Come down. ¹⁰And Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, If I be a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven and consume thee and thy fifty. And there came down fire from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty.”

That’s pretty strong, isn’t it? You just didn’t “mess” with Elijah. Ahaziah sent out an army—fifty men and a captain over them—to take Elijah, but Elijah called fire down out of heaven and destroyed the king’s men. Continuing in verses 11 and 12:

“Again also he sent unto him another captain of fifty with his fifty. And he answered and said unto him, O man of God, thus hath the king said, Come down quickly. ¹²And Elijah answered and said unto them, If I be a man of God, let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And the fire of God came down from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty.”

That’s 102 men! Somebody might say, “Well, Satan must have done that.” But it says in verse 12 that it was the fire of God that came down from heaven. Elijah had access to the power of God to such a degree that he could consume people. He could kill people with the power and the anointing of God. This is similar to Revelation 11:5, where it says the two witnesses will have the power of fire coming out of their mouths, destroying anybody who stands against God.

God, in defense of Elijah, released fire from heaven and killed 102 men. Finally, the third captain and his fifty men came, but this captain was a God-fearing man. A paraphrase of what he said is, “Have mercy on me. All I’m doing is what the king told me to do.” So God told Elijah to go down with him to Ahaziah.

God protected Elijah, and he wasn’t touched by any of the king’s men. He didn’t have to call fire down out of heaven to strike anybody else. Did you know that’s not the only way Elijah could have handled the problem? This is an Old Testament example of the power, the anointing, and the wrath of

God in defense of one of His prophets.

New Testament Grace

Now let's compare this story of Elijah with Luke 9:51-53:

“And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem, ⁵²And sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him. ⁵³And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem.”

It had been commanded by God that Jerusalem be the center of worship for the Jews (see 2 Chronicles 6:6). That's where He put His temple and where the ark of the covenant was located. God had commanded His people to worship Him only in Jerusalem.

There was a time when the children of Israel rebelled against God, and He allowed the northern ten tribes to be taken into captivity by the Assyrians. The two southern tribes, Benjamin and Judah, remained undisturbed on the land because they had maintained worship in Jerusalem.

After the northern tribes were taken captive, the king of Assyria sent colonists from Assyria to inhabit the land of the northern ten tribes so the fields wouldn't go to waste. These colonists intermarried with the remnant of the ten tribes who had remained behind. The remnant of the northern tribes forsook their identity as Jews and intermarried with the Assyrian pagans, in direct disobedience to God's commandment not to marry people who did not worship Him.

Because the Assyrians didn't know the ways of God, the beasts of the field began to multiply. The Bible says in 2 Kings, chapter 17, that God sent lions among them. The people were being killed and devoured. The Promised Land that was a blessing of abundance to the Jews now began to produce beasts that were devouring the Assyrians.

Word of this situation was sent to the King of Assyria. He released some of the Israelite priests to return to the Promised Land and teach the Assyrians the ways of the God of Israel. If they pleased God, they would not be consumed by the wild animals.

The Assyrian colonists began to learn the outward practices to please God, but they didn't change their hearts. They were still pagan worshipers and they incorporated their pagan practices into the Israelite rituals. They did the necessary things to appease God and get rid of the wild animals, but it was not pure worship of God.

As a result, the northern tribes became a mixed race of people called Samaritans, which led to racial problems in Israel. The devout Jews who were living in Jerusalem hated the Samaritans who had corrupted worship. This is verified in John, chapter 4, where Jesus talks to the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well. There was a tremendous hatred involving religious and racial prejudice between the Jews and the Samaritans. The Jews would have no dealings with the Samaritans at all.

By Luke, chapter 9, Jesus had already ministered to the Samaritans. He had seen the entire city of Samaria respond to Him. They had accepted Him as Messiah. But now, when He came through their town, they would not receive Him because it looked like He was going to Jerusalem to worship

with “those hypocrites down there.” The Samaritans rejected Jesus because of racial prejudice.

To reject Jesus under those conditions was pretty serious, and His disciples, James and John, had a knee-jerk, Old Testament reaction:

“And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did” (Luke 9:54).

Certainly James and John were as justified in wanting to kill the Samaritans for their rejection of Jesus, as Elijah was justified in calling fire down out of heaven to kill the soldiers who had rejected the God of Israel in 2 Kings 1:10 and 12. This was a serious rejection of the Lord Jesus, and they were simply imitating Elijah, a great man of God.

The two disciples were taking a scriptural example, acting on the Word of God, and doing what Elijah did. Yet how did Jesus respond to His loyal, zealous disciples?

“But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. ⁵⁶For the Son of man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them” (Luke 9:55-56).

Jesus rebuked James and John for trying to do what was done under the Old Testament. He rebuked them for trying to be like Elijah, one of the most powerful men of God who ever lived under the Old Testament. Does that mean Elijah was sinning in 2 Kings, chapter 1? No, because at that time, God was dealing with man in a different way, the only way He could at the time.

Harmonizing Old and New Testaments

When people don’t look at the whole Word of God, examining the Old Testament in light of the New Testament, they generally get an Old Testament picture of God as a God of wrath, judgment, and punishment. That is a truth about God, and those who don’t accept the love and forgiveness of the Lord Jesus Christ will one day experience a terrible day of God’s judgment. But wrath and judgment are not the essential nature of God.

God’s nature is not judgment. You can’t find that in the Word of God. He does judge, and He is just and holy, but Scripture reveals to us in 1 John 4:8 that “God is love.” Love is God’s real nature. He doesn’t just have love or operate in love. God is love. Love is the true character of God.

Elijah’s actions in obedience to God were not the complete representation of the nature of God, and the Old Testament cannot give us a total revelation of God by itself. We need the New Testament to understand the fullness of God.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ¹⁴And the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth” (John 1:1,14).

“Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father”
(John 14:9).

Jesus is the walking, living Word, and when we see Him, we see the Father. So the problem many Christians are facing in knowing God is that they are seeing God through the Old Testament instead of through Jesus. They misunderstand and are confused about who God really is and the relationship He wants with them because they see Him according to the Old Testament.

In the Old Testament, God had to deal with mankind and sin in a different manner. But when Jesus came, He brought the true revelation of the Father to mankind, and He operated very differently.

I personally believe if Jesus had come to earth in His human form in Old Testament times, He would have rebuked Elijah, Joshua never would have killed every man, woman, and child in those cities in the land of Canaan, and Moses would have been rebuked for a lot of the things he did.

You may be thinking, Brother, how can you say such things? I believe it's clear in the Word of God that it never was God's desire to have to deal with mankind so firmly. That never was His real nature and character. But because we haven't known this, we have a mixed impression of God. We haven't seen Him in His fullness.

Most of us don't really recognize or understand the depth of the love, mercy, and compassion God has toward us. And this mistaken impression of God keeps us at arm's length from Him. That's why it is so important to harmonize all of the Word of God. Only then can you get a firm understanding of His true nature.

Grace Extended After the Fall

Most people's concept of God is that the moment sin entered the Garden of Eden, the wrath of God began to be released upon mankind. People believe that God was holy and man was unholy, so therefore God separated man from Himself and drove Adam and Eve from His presence because His holiness could not stand to look upon sinful flesh. But there was a period of time from Adam until Moses when God dealt with people out of love, mercy, and forgiveness instead of wrath and judgment.

Now, of course, I believe God is holy, and I know that man is sinful, but God's love is so great that He did not just expel man from His presence. As a whole, God dealt in mercy toward man, and He did not impute their sins (hold those sins against them) until the days of Moses, when the Law was given.

Sin entered the world when Adam and Eve fell to the temptation of the serpent in the Garden of Eden. Let's take a good look at how God dealt with them.

“And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: ²³Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till

the ground from whence he was taken”
(Genesis 3:22-23).

When you see the word “therefore,” you’re always supposed to look and see what it’s there for. So “therefore” means this verse is tying in with what was said previously.

“Therefore” links the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden with what was just said. What would happen if God didn’t send them out? The reason God sent Adam and Eve out of the Garden was because He didn’t want them to eat of the Tree of Life, which would mean all of mankind would live forever in their sinfulness. It was not because God couldn’t tolerate mankind.

Adam and Eve transgressed against God, but God did not expel them from His presence. The presence of God went with Adam and Eve and their descendants outside the Garden of Eden. I’m going to show you that even after Adam and Eve sinned and left the Garden, God was still walking and talking with them in the cool of the evening. He was still fellowshiping and present with sinful mankind.

The reason God sent Adam and Eve out of the Garden was because He loved them so much, He didn’t want them to partake of the Tree of Life and live forever in a body that was corrupted by sin. Sin gave Satan the opportunity to put sickness, disease, and all kinds of curses on us. Can you imagine what it would be like to live for all eternity with diseases destroying your body, yet you couldn’t die from them? It was God’s mercy that sent mankind out of the Garden and away from the Tree of Life.

For a person who knows God and accepts His provision, there is a glorious, glorified body coming that won’t be subject to the things this earthly body is subject to now in this life. There’s coming a body that’s better than Adam and Eve had before they sinned. God sent them out of the Garden because He didn’t want them to live forever in a corrupted body, subject to all of the things we are subject to because of sin. In Genesis, chapter 4, we see that God was still fellowshiping with mankind after the Fall, outside the Garden. We know that because God was talking to Cain and Abel. How did Cain and Abel know to bring a sacrifice? How did they know to bring a blood sacrifice and give the first fruits of their labor to God?

Adam and Eve didn’t have blood sacrifices explained to them in the Garden because they had no transgressions to atone for yet. The Bible doesn’t say this outright, but it’s evident to me that God was still talking with Adam and Eve and with Cain and Abel. He was talking and communicating with them because they understood about sacrifices and how to approach Him.

After Cain and Abel offered their sacrifices, Genesis 4:5 says, “But unto Cain and to his offering he [God] had not respect.” It says God did not respect Cain’s offering. How did they know God did not respect Cain’s offering?

If you and your brother came and offered a sacrifice today, how would you know which one God respected and which one God didn’t? As born-again Christians, we have a witness of God in our spirits. But Cain and Abel weren’t born-again Christians, so they didn’t have God inside them. It’s evident that God was talking to them. They were aware that God was walking, talking, and fellowshiping with them because in verse 6 it says, “The Lord said unto Cain.”

Here we have God speaking in an audible voice to Cain just the same as God did with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.

“And the Lord said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? ⁷If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him”

(Genesis 4:6-7).

God talked face-to-face with Cain and Abel. As I stated earlier, most people thought God had to separate man from His presence because man was unholy and God was so holy that there could be no fellowship. That's the concept most people have developed, but it's not proven or taught by Scripture.

When Cain saw that God respected Abel's sacrifice more than his, he was overcome with jealousy and killed Abel in anger. The Bible shows us that God spoke to Cain about it.

“And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper”
(Genesis 4:9).

Now stop and think about this. Here's the very first murderer on the face of the earth and, while he still had the blood of Abel on his hands, an audible voice from God out of heaven said, “Where is Abel, your brother?”

What would you do if you just murdered somebody, still had the murder weapon in your hand, and God spoke to you in an audible voice? You would probably die of a heart attack! You might do a lot of things, but you wouldn't just turn around and say, “I don't know where he is, God. Am I my brother's keeper?”

Do you know why Cain did that? Because he was used to talking to God. He talked to God every day. It wasn't unusual. There had to be a familiarity with the audible voice of God. God was still walking and talking with man even after sin entered the world and mankind was expelled from the Garden of Eden. He was not imputing sin or holding their trespasses against them. God was not treating them the way the Old Testament Law reveals sin should be treated. He was operating in love, mercy, and forgiveness.

Still, God showed His disapproval of Cain's killing of Abel and let Cain know what the consequences would be.

“And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand; ¹²When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth”
(Genesis 4:11-12).

Cain became fearful, and in Genesis 4:14 he said, “God, I'm going to be a vagabond, wandering throughout the earth, and everybody who finds me is going to try to kill me.” Do you know what God did? Instead of bringing judgment on the very first murderer on the face of the earth, God put a mark upon Cain and protected him.

The Nature of God

Andrew Wommack

To have a positive relationship with the Lord, we must know His nature and His real character. Is He angry because of our sin, or is He a merciful God who wants to give us His life and blessing, independent of our performance? The Scriptures actually give us two different views of God, not that He has ever changed or done anything differently. There was a period of time that, in the terminology used in the Bible, God “held men’s sins against them.”

This can be compared to raising children. When they’re very young, it isn’t possible to reason with them, to tell them why they should act properly or why they shouldn’t be selfish and take toys away from their brothers or sisters. They have to be told the rules and, if they break them, be disciplined. The rules have to be enforced even though they don’t know about God and the devil, or that they’re giving place to the devil when they are selfish. They may not understand the concepts, but they can understand that if they repeat the action, they will be punished.

In a sense, that’s what the Lord did with the Old Testament. Before people were born again, they didn’t have the spiritual perception we have under the new covenant, so He had to give laws and enforce them with punishment, sometimes even death, to deter them from sin. Because Satan was destroying people through sin, there had to be restraints placed on sin, and they had to be enforced. Although this left the false impression that God didn’t really love us because of our sin, that is not what the Word of God teaches. Romans 5:13 says, “until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed where there is no law.” “Until the law” means until the days of Moses when God gave the Ten Commandments and other ceremonial laws that applied to the Jewish nation. Up until that time, sin was in the world but wasn’t imputed. The word “impute” is a bookkeeping term: e.g., you go to the store to buy something and say, “put it on my tab.” When it is put on your tab, it is recorded and charged against your account, and the purchase is imputed to you. If they failed to impute it, that means it wasn’t recorded and held against you.

This verse is saying that until the time the Ten Commandments came, sin was not being held against people. That’s an amazing statement. Look at Genesis 3 and 4. Most people have the concept that when Adam and Eve sinned against God, because He was holy and man was now sinful, He could have nothing to do with sinful mankind. They think God drove man out of the Garden to remove him from His presence because a Holy God couldn’t have anything to do with unholy man. They further think that until we clean up our act through right actions, God once again cannot have any relationship with us.

That is contrary to the message Jesus brought. Romans 5:8 says God commended His love toward us and, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us; so the New Testament teaches that God extended his love to us while we were living in sin not after we have cleaned up our act. One of the great truths of the Gospel that will change your life is to understand that God loves you just like you are. He loves you so much that if you receive His love, you won’t want to stay as you are. You will change, but you’ll change as a byproduct of God’s love not in order to get His love.

After Adam and Eve sinned against the Lord, Genesis 3:22-23 says, “And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand,

and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.” The reason God sent man from the garden was not to banish him from His presence, but so he wouldn’t eat of the Tree of Life and live forever. I believe that was an act of mercy because He didn’t want man to live forever in a body that was subject to depression, disease, and deformities yet be unable to die. The person who knows the Lord has the promise of a glorified body and a new heaven and earth where the suffering we see in the world today will not last forever. God provided something better. He didn’t want man to live forever in a sinful state, subject to all these hurts and pains, so He sent him out of the garden.

In Genesis 4 you can see that He was still fellowshiping with man, still talking with Adam and Eve. He talked with Cain and Abel, and when they came to offer sacrifices to Him, He spoke to them in an audible voice. By their reaction we can see that they were accustomed to hearing His voice, and it didn’t scare them. When Cain killed his brother Abel, the first murderer on the earth, God’s audible voice came from heaven: “Where is your brother Abel?” Cain lied to God, seemingly without compunction. That can happen only if a person is so used to hearing the voice of God that they take it for granted and have no fear of it. All this says is that God was still fellowshiping with mankind and had not broken fellowship as is commonly believed. He was not imputing man’s sins to him.

Does that mean that he condoned their sins or that they were not wrong? No, that’s the reason He eventually gave the law. When He extended mercy instead of punishment toward the first murderer, He put a mark on his forehead and protected him. He said if anyone tried to avenge Abel’s death by killing Cain, He would avenge Cain sevenfold. Further down in Genesis 4, Cain’s great, great, great grandson killed a man in self-defense. He figured if Cain got by with murder, certainly his murder was more justifiable, and if Cain was to be avenged sevenfold, then he, Lamech, would be avenged 70 times sevenfold. God didn’t say that. Lamech was comparing himself with Cain. Because of this, people began to lose perspective on what was really right and wrong. God had to give the law to bring us back to a proper standard. He had to show us that we need a savior and we have to humble ourselves and receive forgiveness as a gift.

Sadly, religion has manipulated and controlled these things to teach that the law was given so you can keep it and thereby earn God’s forgiveness and acceptance. No! The purpose of Old Testament law was to magnify your sin to such a degree that you would despair of ever saving yourself and say, “God, if this is your standard of holiness, I can’t do it. Forgive me, have mercy on me.”

The overall nature of God has always been love. There was a period of time when He wanted to deal with people in mercy. He started holding their sins against them to show them their need, but when Jesus came, He once again removed the law and is showing us that we can be reconciled to Him without keeping the law. We can just throw ourselves on the mercy of God. That’s the good news for you today, and I pray you will understand that God loves you, that love is His nature, and it will cause you to enter into an intimate, close, personal relationship with the Lord.

THE NATURE OF GOD (Outline)

Romans 5:13, “For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.”

1. To have a positive relationship with God, we must know His nature.
2. There are two opinions of God.
 - A. God holds man’s sins against him.
 - B. God loves us just the way we are.
3. Before the law, sin was not imputed.
 - A. Sin didn’t break God’s fellowship with man.
 - B. Adam and Eve were sent from the Garden because of mercy not anger!
Genesis 3:22-23.
4. The purpose of the law was to show us sin and to show us our need for the Savior.

Most religions teach that we need to keep the law to earn God’s love.
5. God’s love hasn’t changed. He offers forgiveness as a free gift.

THE NATURE OF GOD (Teacher's Guide)

1. Read Romans 5:13. What does it mean to “impute?”

To charge to one's account, as in a debt.

2. A. According to Romans 7:7, what was the purpose of the law?

To make sin known.

- B. According to Galatians 3:24, what was the purpose of the law?

To show mankind his need of the Saviour, Jesus Christ.

3. Read John 8:1-11 aloud and explain. In this story, how did Jesus deal with the woman caught in adultery?

He did not condemn her. He showed her mercy and grace!

4. A. According to Hebrews 1:1-3, in these last days how has God spoken to us?

By His Son, Jesus Christ.

- B. How did Jesus, the Son, represent God?

He was the express, that is, perfect image or illustration, of God the Father.

5. Read aloud Ephesians 2:1-5. Can you see that God's nature is to show grace and mercy to us through Jesus Christ?

Yes.

6. If you asked Jesus Christ to forgive you and be your Savior, by putting your faith and trust only in His sacrifice as payment for your sin, would God show you His true nature of mercy and grace?

Yes! See Luke 18:9-14.

THE NATURE OF GOD (Detailed Teacher's Guide)

Note: The following information may be read out loud (a numbered section at a time) with the person(s) being disciplined. After each numbered section is read, pause and ask the question(s) that correspond to the paragraph(s), and then discuss them.

¹ To have a positive relationship with the Lord, we must know what the nature and real character of God is. Is God angry at us because of our sins, or is God merciful, wanting to give us His life and His blessing, independent of our performance?

The Scriptures give us two different opinions of God. Now, God has never changed; He has not done anything differently, but there was a time where God held man's sins against them (this is the terminology the Bible uses). I can liken this to raising children. When they are very young, you cannot sit down and reason with them, telling them all the reasons why they should act properly—why they shouldn't be selfish and take toys away from their brothers and sisters. With children, sometimes you just have to tell them what the rules are, and if they break them when they are young, you just have to spank them. You have to enforce the rules. Even though they may not know that there is a God or a devil, or that they are giving place to the devil and are operating in selfishness, they can understand that if they break the rules, they will be punished.

In a sense, that is what the Lord did with the people in the Old Testament. Before people were born again, they didn't have the spiritual perception that they do under the new covenant. The Lord had to give laws and enforce them with punishments, even unto death, to deter people from sinning. Satan was destroying man through sin. There had to be a restraint placed upon sin, and it had to be enforced, but this left a false impression that God really didn't love them because of their sins. Yet, that is not what the Word of God teaches.

¹Have you ever thought that God is angry and is just waiting to get you if you mess up?

² Most people have the idea that when Adam and Eve sinned against God, that because God was holy and man was now sinful, God could have nothing to do with sinful mankind. So He drove man out of the garden to get him out of His presence because holy God cannot deal with unholy man. Some people believe that until man cleans up his act through acting right, God cannot have any relationship with him. Yet, this is contrary to the message that Jesus brought.

The Scripture says that God commended His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8). The Scriptures teach us in the New Testament that God extended His love toward us while we were still living in sin not after we had cleaned up our act. One of the great truths of the Gospel that will change your life, is to understand that God loves you just like you are. He loves you so much that if you will receive His love, you won't stay as you are. You will change, but that change is a byproduct of God's love not a way to get God's love.

³ In Genesis 3:22-23 it says (after Adam and Eve sinned against the Lord), "And the Lord God said, Behold the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: ²³Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken." The reason God sent man out of the Garden wasn't to get man away from His presence but so he wouldn't take of the tree of life, eat of it and live forever. I believe that was an act of mercy because God didn't want man to live forever in a body that was subject to depression, sickness, disease, and deformities yet not able to die. A person who knows the Lord, has the promise of receiving a glorified body, a new heaven, and earth where things are going to be new. The suffering that we now see in the world today is not going to last forever.

⁴ The sad point is that religion has manipulated and controlled things to where it is taught that the law was given for us to keep and thereby earn God's forgiveness and acceptance, but that is not true. The law was given to magnify your sin to such a degree that you would despair of ever saving yourself so that you would say, "God, if this is what your standard of holiness is, I can't do it. Forgive me, have mercy on me." That's the purpose of the Old Testament law.

² (a) According to Romans 5:6 God's love was directed toward us when we were what? without strength (helpless).

(b) According to Romans 5:6 God's love was directed toward us when we were what? ungodly.

(c) According to Romans 5:8 God loved us while we were? sinners.

(d) According to Romans 5:10 God loved us while we were? enemies. God's love is without cause. It is not caused by anything good in us.

³ (a) According to Philippians 3:21, what is our body now called?

(b) What is it called in 1 Corinthians 15:53?

(c) What is it called in 1 Corinthians 15:44?

⁴ What does Galatians 2:16 say about trying to be saved by the law?

⁵ The overall nature of God has always been love. There was a time when He wanted to deal with people in mercy. He started holding their sins against them to show them their need for a Savior. When Jesus came, He fulfilled the law and showed us that we can be reconciled unto God without keeping the law but by throwing ourselves on the mercy of God. That's the Good News for you today, and I pray that you will understand that God loves you. That's the nature of God, and it will cause you to enter into an intimate, personal relationship with the Lord.

⁵ (a) According to Galatians 3:24, what was the real purpose of the law?

(b) How does God offer to us His righteousness today? (Romans 3:21-22 - Apart from the law and through faith in Jesus Christ).

THE NATURE OF GOD (Discipleship Questions)

Read Romans 5:13

Definition: Impute – to charge to one’s account as in a debt.

1. If there is no law, is sin charged or imputed against us?

Read Romans 7:7-8

2. Is law sin?
3. How would we have known sin?
4. In verse 8, when was sin dead?

Read Galatians 3:24-25

5. Who was the law to us?
6. What was its purpose?
7. Once we are justified by faith in Jesus Christ, do we still have the need of the “tutor”?

Read John 8:1-11

8. What was the woman caught doing?
9. Who brought the woman to Jesus?
10. What do you think their intent was by bringing her to Him?
11. In your own words, what did Jesus say to the Pharisees in verse 7?
12. For those who heard, what were they convicted by?
13. What was Jesus response toward the woman in verse 11?
14. Did Christ condemn her?
15. What was Jesus’ command toward her?
16. Do you believe that Jesus deals with you in the same manner?

17. Do you believe that if Jesus were standing before you now that He would also command you to sin no more?
18. What is your response?

Read Hebrews 1:1-3

19. How and when did God speak in times past to the fathers by the prophets?
20. Now in the last days how does God speak to us?
21. "Whom he hath appointed _____ of _____, by whom also he _____ the worlds." (verse 2)
22. In the first part of verse 3, how did Jesus represent God?
- a. _____
 - b. _____
23. How did Jesus "uphold all things?"
24. What did Jesus do after "he had by himself purged our sins"?

Read Ephesians 2:1-7

25. While we were still dead in trespasses and sin, what did God do for us?
26. Who is the prince of the power of the air?
27. How did we conduct ourselves while we were sons of disobedience?
- (BUT; a very small word that negates all that came before it in order to reveal the promise that comes after it.)
28. What is the conclusion of God's rich mercy and great love toward us? (verse 5)
29. (Verse 6) "And _____ us up together, and made us sit together in the _____ in _____."
30. What was God's purpose for raising us up? (verse 7)
- a. _____
 - b. _____

31. Read Romans 5:6-8

God's love was directed toward us while we were what?

- A. _____
- B. _____

Read Romans 5:8-11

32. God still loved us while we were still what?

33. What did we receive through Jesus Christ? (verse 11)

Read Philippians 3:20-21

34. If you are in Christ Jesus, where is your citizenship? Heaven earth hell

35. What is going to happen to your lowly body?

36. What is Jesus able to subdue to Himself?

37. What does ALL mean? _____

Read 1 Corinthians 15:53-55

38. What two things are our lowly bodies called in verse 53?

- A. _____
- B. _____

39. What is the consequence of our bodies becoming immortal and incorruptible?

40. Verse 55 "O _____, where is thy _____?
O _____, where is thy _____?"

Read Galatians 2:16

41. What does this scripture say about being saved by law?

42. What are we saved by if it is not law?

Read Romans 3:21-22

43. How does God offer to us His righteousness today?

THE NATURE OF GOD (Discipleship Answer Key)

1. No
2. No
3. Through the law
4. Apart from the law
5. Our tutor
6. To bring us to Christ
7. No
8. Adultery
9. Scribes and Pharisees
10. Accuse Him
11. He who is without sin, let him cast the first stone
12. Their own conscience
13. Where are your accusers?
14. No
15. Sin no more
16. Yes
17. Yes
18. Help me! My desire is to sin no more
19. Various times, various ways
20. Through Jesus
21. Heir – All things - Made
22. A. Being the brightness of His glory
B. Express image of His person
23. By the word of His power
24. Sat down at the right hand of God
25. Made alive
26. Devil
27. Fulfilled the lusts of our flesh and mind
children of wrath
28. Even though we were dead, He made us
alive-by grace you have been saved
29. Raised – heavenly places – Christ Jesus
30. a. Show the exceeding riches of His grace
b. In His kindness toward us in Christ
31. Ungodly without strength
32. Sinners
33. Reconciliation
34. Heaven
35. Be transformed to His glorious body
36. All things
37. Everything – not one thing left out
38. A. Corruptible
B. Mortal

- 39. Death is swallowed up in victory
- 40. Death – Sting – Hades - Victory
- 41. We cannot be saved by the law
- 42. By the faith of Christ
- 43. Through faith in Jesus Christ

NATURE OF GOD

By Andrew Wommack
(Additional Information)

You are probably asking, “Well , if Jesus is the true nature of God, just exactly what was God doing in the Old Testament?” The Word of God tells us clearly what God was doing.

“For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.”
Romans 5:13

When we use the term “Law,” we can be referring to all of the Old Testament, but the Law used in context of this scripture is more specific. When we say Law here, we are referring to the Mosaic Law, which includes the Ten Commandments, judgments, punishments, and all of the ordinances and ceremonial observances.

Romans 5:13 shows us that before the Law, or before the Law of Moses was introduced, sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed where there is no Law. The word “impute” means to take what you have done and apply it to your account, or to hold transgressions against you. In other words, sin was not being held against people until God gave the Law to Moses.

Any person who really understands the goodness of God runs straight to Him when they mess up. Yet many of us, when we get into problems, and especially if we aren’t living a godly life, run from God.

What’s the first thing that happens when we sin and our conscience convicts us that we’ve done wrong? The first thing that happens to most believers when they sin is that they start feeling guilty and condemned, and they begin avoiding God. They know they have broken God’s Law.

Usually when a believer knows they have broken the Law, they don’t want to be confronted by God. They are afraid He is going to reject them or bring some terrible punishment on them if they go near Him. So they forget their Bible study and skip their prayer time. They avoid church and the people of God because they are afraid they will be exposed.

Do you relate to what I’m sharing? Maybe you know somebody who got into sin and eventually stopped going to church, or maybe I am describing you. When you sin, you may not even think it through enough to verbalize what’s actually happening, but in your heart you’re fearful of coming before God. You’re a person, and you feel that He will find no value in your life.

Then there’s the punishment part. Most of us who are born again don’t believe God is going to send us to hell for a few sins, but we believe He will not continue to fellowship with us, protect us, or provide for us. We think there has to be some groveling in the dirt and major humiliation to get God to go easy on us. This attitude drives us from God. Where does this attitude come from?

The Law Brings Condemnation and Gives Strength to Sin

We have discussed how the Old Testament is not an exact representation of God, but it goes much deeper than that. The old covenant was an inferior covenant to the New Covenant. The whole book of Hebrews addresses this concept in detail, but here are a few scriptures to illustrate my point.

“But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. ⁷For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second”
(Hebrews 8:6-7).

“In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old, Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away”
(Hebrews 8:13).

“Jesus made a surety of a better testament.”
(Hebrews 7:22).

The Old Covenant couldn't make anything perfect, so God had to bring in something better. This is the New Covenant, which was by the shed blood of Jesus Christ. The New Covenant brought greater glory to God than the Old Covenant.

“But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: ⁸How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? ⁹For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. ¹⁰For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. ¹¹For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious”
(2 Corinthians 3:7-11).

This passage of Scripture also says that the Old Testament administers death and condemnation!

“O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? ⁵⁶The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law”
(1 Corinthians 15:55-56).

This passage of Scripture says that the Old Testament Law gave strength to sin! The truth we are seeing here is, if it hadn't been for the Old Testament Law, brought into being through Moses, sin would not have had strength to destroy us. I know this may be challenging your theology. In fact, this may just make everything tilt on the inside of you. But we need to come to grips with some truths to harmonize the Old Testament Law with New Testament grace, love, and forgiveness.

“What shall we say then? is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not

covet. ⁸But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. ⁹For without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. ¹⁰And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death” (Romans 7:7-10).

Did you know there was a period of time in your life when sin was “dead”? Then you gained the knowledge of right and wrong, and the Law came into your understanding. Sin was present before, but it wasn’t dominating or controlling you. Sin was “dead.”

Once you were confronted with the Law and saw God’s perfect, holy standard, you realized how sinful you were. Concupiscence is uncontrolled lust or desire. Did you know that the Old Testament Law actually drew uncontrolled lust or desire out of you? You heard the commandment, “Thou shalt not covet,” and you saw yourself as a covetous maniac!

The Law points to your sin, brings it to life, and condemns you for it!

“Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God” (Romans 3:19).

Have you ever felt guilty? Do you know where that came from? You got that through the Law, through the Old Testament administration. The Law makes you feel guilty. It condemns you according to 2 Corinthians 3:9 and Romans 3:19.

Condemnation is not to be confused with the conviction of the Holy Spirit, however. Thank God for the convicting power of the Holy Spirit! He’s on the inside of you and will let you know immediately if what you are thinking of doing or have done is sin or not God’s will for your life. Conviction draws you to God and leads you in His ways. Condemnation drives you away from the intimacy of God and makes you feel helpless to do anything but sin.

Most believers would agree that Satan is the author of condemnation, but one of the biggest things he uses to minister condemnation to us is the Old Testament Law. We frequently rebuke the condemnation of the devil, but sometimes condemnation comes from thoughts established in us through religion.

A recurring nightmare I had as a teenager was that I smoked one cigarette and went to hell for it. This is a pure example of how the Law condemns us, kills us, and sends us to hell.

“Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin” (Romans 3:20).

The Bible says the purpose of the Law is to give you the knowledge of sin—not knowledge of Jesus, God, forgiveness, or any doctrine that is so well expressed through the Lord Jesus Christ. The Law pointed your attention to yourself, your sin, and your unworthiness.

The Law and Faith

Now not everything from Genesis to Malachi is Law. There is also a tremendous amount of faith in the Old Testament, but you've got to look for it. This is because the Old Testament was basically an administration of Law, and the Bible says,

“So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. ¹⁰For as many as are of the works of the law are under a curse: for it is written, Cursed is the every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. ¹¹But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. ¹²And the law is not of faith” (Galatians 3:9-12).

I'm glad Paul said that instead of me! I would get in trouble with the religious crowd for saying “the law is not of faith.” Put that together with Romans 14:23, which says, Whatsoever is not of faith is sin, and you can see that a New Testament believer trying to please God by living under Old Testament Law is not in faith and is actually in sin.

Correct Use of the Law

“But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed” (Galatians 3:23).

People had been trusting themselves for salvation thinking, Well, I'm really pretty good. I haven't done anything terribly wrong in a long time, and surely I'm alright now. After the Law was given, they began to realize, “Even if I never sin again, I can't do anything to atone for my past sins.” They began to realize the hopelessness of their situation.

“But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully; ⁹Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, ¹⁰For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine” (1 Timothy 1:8-10).

There is a right purpose and use of the Law. The correct purpose of the Law is to give revelation to a person who does not see his need for God. A person who does not understand he has transgressed against God has deceived himself, and the Law can be used to show that he is not going to heaven without salvation through Jesus.

I was ministering in Houston, Texas, when a man stood up in one of my services and started yelling at me. I tried to talk to him, but he wasn't even coherent. Finally I just rebuked him and told him to sit down, and he did. After the service was over, he came up to the front and sat down in the front row. He was totally spaced out on drugs and could barely talk to me. I told him, “God loves you, and God wants to change your life. He can set you free and take you out of the bondage you're under.”

The man said, “I don't have any problem. I'm not under any bondage. Everything's cool with

me. Everything's fine." I could tell by looking at the guy that it wasn't, so I said, "Look, God Himself can come live on the inside of you and set you free."

He replied, "I am God. God's in the ceiling. God's in the cement." He regarded God as a force and concept, not as a real person. He said, "I don't have any sin. Sin is just relative."

This man had actually hardened and deceived himself to the point where he didn't even understand God's perfect standard. I had started out ministering love, trying to use the goodness of God to lead him to repentance. But the man was so deceived that his conscience was disconnected. He couldn't recognize a true standard of right and wrong.

When I saw that, I started using the law on him. I took the Word of God and I began to reveal his sin to him. I cut him from one side to the other. "You sorry scum of the earth. You think you're all right, but you're not. You don't have any power. You don't have any joy."

I began to reveal every rotten thing on the inside of him—lust, greed, covetousness, and all the other sins God hates. I used the Word of God to whittle him down and show him that he needed a Savior, that he was headed straight for hell unless God intervened in his life. And guess what? The Law cut through all his deception. The moment the Law comes, the conscience will snap back to a proper, godly standard.

I don't care how deceived a person has become or how much they think drugs are alright, free sex is alright; sin is just relative. You minister the Law to them in the right way, and I guarantee you they will see their sinfulness. The Lord will destroy all deception and cause their conscience to work properly.

Incorrect Use of the Law

The purpose of the Law was to show us our need for God. But once we correctly recognize our need for God, the Law is totally incapable of producing the relationship with Him we realize we need. This is where many people have missed it.

After becoming convicted of their sins, they start trying to get a right relationship with God by trying to keep the Law! The Old Testament Law was full of "Thou shalt not's." People interpreted them to say, "God is telling me what I've got to do to earn a relationship with Him. Now, if I'll just keep the Sabbath, if I'll honor my father and mother, if I won't murder, if I won't steal, if I won't bear false witness, and all of these things, then I'll be all right with God."

No, that wasn't what God was teaching. God didn't give the Law so you could keep it and earn your way to heaven—because nobody can keep the whole Law. Romans 3:23 says, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." No one has been capable of keeping the Law except Jesus.

God didn't give the Law so that by keeping it you could earn your way to heaven. Rather, God gave the Law to show you how hopeless you were. It was to show you how sinful you were so you would quit trusting in yourself and look to Him for salvation.

Religion preaches the Law. Religion says that unless you come to church and follow an exclusive list of rules, God's not going to answer your prayers, and you'll never get to heaven. But if that was true, none of us could have been born again because we sure weren't living right before we were born again! The Old Testament Law wasn't given so that by keeping it you could earn relationship with God. It was given to show you knowledge of your sin, condemn you, and destroy any hope of trusting yourself for salvation.

The Law Is Like a Red Flag

If you could imagine an old bull lying in a field saying, "I've been treating everybody mean. I shouldn't be this way. I shouldn't charge everybody who comes through this field, so I'm going to change. I'm not going to be mean anymore. I'm going to be loving toward everybody." So the bull just lies there in the pasture, chewing his cud and thinking he's changed. But just because he thinks he's changed doesn't mean he has. You try to walk by, and that bull is just looking at you. He doesn't charge or anything. But pull a red flag out and begin to wave it in front of his face, and suddenly that old bull nature rises up on the inside of him, and here he comes charging!

Did the red flag make the bull mean? No, all it did was draw out what was in him. If a person is deceived, it can be beneficial to draw out the negative stuff on the inside of them. If they think they are all right living a sinful life, pull out the Law and wave it in front of them.

I recall an instance when I knew something was wrong between us and some people we (Jamie and I) were with. Jamie and I had prayed, and finally the last day we were with them, we just agreed together that the problem would come to the surface so we could deal with it. Do you know what happened? A woman exploded at me and started saying I was the devil. She totally flipped out of her mind. Satan tried to kill her that day, and it was a terrible scene. But it was good that the negative stuff came out because we were able to deal with it. It was good because they had been under deception.

These friends of ours didn't understand what had been going on spiritually, but when they saw how vile that woman became towards me, they recognized something was wrong with her and not me. We countered it with ministry, and we saw all those people set free. We are tremendous friends today.

The Law was used by God in the Old Testament to show mankind his problem—sin—and to reveal the hopelessness of his situation. This is explained to us in the New Testament, and we see how God will still use the Law today if He must.

It was a terrible burden to live under the Old Testament Law, but it was the best God could offer in those days. Some people may say, "Now, wait a minute. You think God wasn't able to introduce the new covenant back then?" That's exactly what I'm saying. The Bible says that Jesus was born in the fullness of time (see Galatians 4:4.) Jesus was born just as soon as it was possible for Him to come as the Savior of the human race. Many prophecies had to be fulfilled, certain things had to take place, and God had to deal with mankind and sin in a temporary way by the Law.

Unfortunately, that temporary way has been interpreted by many people as the true representation of the way God is. They think the Law is the way God really wants to deal with mankind, but that is not true! From the moment Adam and Eve sinned, and long after mankind was expelled from the Garden of Eden, God showed His mercy towards mankind and sought for them to come to repentance only by His goodness, always pointing to the Savior who would come.

REPENTANCE

Don Krow

Some people have a misunderstanding of what repentance is. Repentance is not perfection but a change in direction. We're going to talk about the parable of the prodigal son, or the lost son. Jesus is telling a story that perfectly illustrates what it means for an individual to repent. In Luke 15:11-12 Jesus said, "And he said, A certain man had two sons: And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living."

The younger son wanted his inheritance before his father died, which is quite unusual, but his father granted the request and gave his sons their inheritance. Verse 13 says, "And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living." The younger son took all of his wealth, his part of the money his father had accumulated during in his life and given to him, went into a distant country, and wasted it in riotous living. One translation says, "partying and spending the money on prostitutes."

Verses 14-17 read, "And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land [The land became destitute and people were starving]; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine." He got a job working for a man in that country and was sent to feed the pigs. "And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks of that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him." He was so hungry, at the point of starvation that he said, "just give me the pig's food—anything," but no one gave him anything. He had squandered all of his inheritance. "And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!" One translation says, "when he came to his senses." In other words, his father's servants had more than enough food and he was dying from hunger, at the point of starvation.

He made a decision; he repented. Repentance is a change of mind, a change of heart that causes a person to turn around and move in a new direction. In verses 18-19, he said, "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants." "Just make me a slave, father. I've sinned against you, squandered your living, and sinned against God. Just make me a slave." Then he rose and went to his father. Repentance is more than just a change of attitude, a change of mind, and a change of heart. It leads a person to act on what they believe, to turn around (or return) and go in a new direction. We've all turned away from God, our Father, and from heaven, our home. The Bible says in Isaiah 53:6 that, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way" but God in His mercy took our sins and laid them on Jesus.

The story continues in verses 20-24. "And he arose, and came to his father." One night I was telling this story to a man who had never heard it before, and he just knew that when the son returned, his father would say, "Son, look what you've done. You've wasted all my wealth, all I accumulated in my life. Be one of my slaves." Most earthly fathers would probably be very angry and have an attitude like that, but notice the attitude of this father: "But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion [love came out of his heart for his son], and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him."

And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.” They began to have a party.

We’ve all turned from God, and Jesus is telling that in this story. I once told this to a man who said, “I see what Jesus is saying. If I’ll just turn to the heavenly Father for mercy and say, ‘Father, I’ve sinned against you, and I’m not worthy to be your son,’ He’ll accept me.” Our heavenly Father will have compassion, and He won’t make you a slave. He’ll restore you to full sonship with Him. God is waiting. Have you turned away? Why don’t you turn to God, your Father, and to heaven, your home today?

A while back, I was talking about repentance with a single young lady whose name was Sheri. I said, “Sheri, what if a guy fell in love with you and said, ‘I want to marry you, Sheri, to commit my life to you. I want you to be mine, for us to be one. Will you marry me?’” I asked, “What would that commitment of marriage involve on his part?” She is a very sharp, intelligent girl, so she answered, “It would involve him forsaking all others to be committed only to me.”

That is a perfect example of what it is to repent and come to God. In Acts 26:18, Jesus told the Apostle Paul that his commission was to tell people to open their eyes (their spiritual eyes) and “to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins.” When you turn to someone in marriage, it automatically involves turning from everyone else. When you turn to God in a relationship through Christ, it involves turning from Satan and his kingdom to God and His kingdom, and to receive forgiveness of your sins. It’s not perfection, but it is a change of direction. It’s turning ultimately to God and His ways, and in turning to Him, it’s turning away from Satan and his ways. May God make these truths real to you today as you consider what the Bible says about this wonderful doctrine of repentance.

REPENTANCE (Outline)

Repentance is a change of mind, a change of heart, a change of direction. It is not perfection.

Luke 15:11-24: “And he said, A certain man had two sons: ¹²And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. ¹³And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. ¹⁴And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. ¹⁵And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. ¹⁶And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. ¹⁷And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father’s have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! ¹⁸I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, ¹⁹And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. ²⁰And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. ²¹And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. ²²But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: ²³And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: ²⁴For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.”

In marriage you totally commit yourself to another individual. This automatically implies the forsaking of all others to be joined to this one.

In repentance, a person has a change of mind, a change of heart that results in him turning to God and His ways and from Satan and his ways. It is an “about face”—a new commitment.

In Acts 26:18, repentance is stated as turning from darkness to light, from Satan unto God to receive the forgiveness of their sins.

Acts 26:18: “To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.”

REPENTANCE

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO REPENT?

(Teacher's Guide)

1. According to Luke 24:46-47, what is the message that is to be proclaimed to the nations?

Jesus' death for our sins, repentance, and forgiveness of sins.

2. What does it mean to repent?

It is an "about face" to a new commitment.

It is a change of mind; it's a change of heart that results in one turning to God, from his old ways to God's ways.

It's a change of direction; it's not perfection.

It is to make a decision that changes the total direction of one's life. That decision involves turning from our old ways to commit ourselves to God and His ways.

Repentance is turning to a Person, to God through Jesus Christ (Acts 20:21; Zechariah 1:3).

Good works are the fruit of a changed heart (Acts 26:20 NASV; Matthew 7:21-23).

3. In Luke 13:1-5, what is the point that Jesus is trying to make from these verses?

That without repentance people will perish.

4. Compare 2 Peter 3:9 with Luke 13:6-9. What is the point Jesus is trying to make from these verses?

That God is long-suffering, waiting patiently for men to repent.

5. Read Luke 16:19-31. In this parable, Jesus uses the common Jewish concept of eternal punishment. What could the rich man have done to avoid this doom?

Luke 16:30 – Repent.

REPENTANCE

(Detailed Teacher's Guide)

Note: The following information may be read out loud (a numbered section at a time) with the person(s) being discipled. After each numbered section is read, pause and ask the question(s) that correspond to the paragraph(s), and then discuss them.

¹ Repentance is a gift that God grants people who want to come to Him and be saved. It is a new attitude, a change of mind, a change of heart THAT RESULTS in one turning from sin to God, and ultimately to His ways.

² In Matthew 3:8 John the Baptist said, "Bring forth fruit that is consistent with repentance [let your lives prove your change of heart]" (Amplified Bible). And the Apostle Paul said in his preaching to the Gentiles "that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds appropriate to repentance" (Acts 26:20; NASV). From these scriptures, we can see that "repentance" is "a change of heart, a change of mind" and that good works are the FRUIT of that changed heart. Vine's Expository Dictionary states that this change of mind involves both a turning from sin and a turning to God. Jesus' call to "repentance" is addressed not as in the Old Testament to a nation BUT TO THE INDIVIDUAL.

³ The early Christians' preaching linked repentance with the call to faith (Acts 20:21), the demand to be baptized (Acts 2:38), and the promise of the forgiveness of sins (Luke 24:47). In Acts 3:19 "repentance" and "conversion" are placed side by side. This shows that the two terms are related. In the call to conversion, sometimes the word "repent" is only used. At other times the word "believe" is only used. At still other times they are both used together (Acts 20:21). But both words involve a change of heart toward God (The New International Dict., Vol. 1, p. 358). This change of heart, change of mind, results in turning around to move in a completely new direction. This change of direction can be summed up by the words of Jesus, "FOLLOW ME!" (Matthew 4:19; 8:22; 9:9; 16:24; 19:21; Mark 2:14; 8:34; 10:21; Luke 5:27; 9:23, 59; 18:22; John 1:43; 10:27; 12:26; 21:19). "Follow" means: to come or go after; move behind and in the same direction; to come or go with; to accept the guidance or leadership of; to adhere to the cause or principles of; to be governed by; obey; and comply with.

¹ According to Luke 24:46-47, what is the message that is to be proclaimed to the nations?

² (a) What does it mean to repent?

(b) Good works are the fruit of a changed heart, how does Acts 26:20 prove this?

(c) Why did Jesus tell the people in Matthew 7:21-23 that He never knew them?

(d) What does this show about the lack of repentance?

³ (a) Read Luke 13:1-5. What is the point that Jesus is trying to make from these verses?

(b) Compare Luke 13:6-9 with 2 Peter 3:9. What is the point Jesus is trying to make from these verses?

⁴The prodigal son of Luke 15:11-32 is a good example of repentance. He had turned his back on his home and his father to waste his life in sinful and riotous living. Eventually he came to himself and made a decision to arise and go back to his father and home. He first had the change of heart, and then acted by carrying out his decision. He returned to his father and home, acknowledging, “Father I have sinned!”

In our sinful condition we have all turned our backs upon God, our Father and heaven, our home. We must stop and have a change of mind, a change of heart, a change of direction. This essential act is called “repentance” and is the first move we must make to be reconciled to God.

⁴(a) Read Luke 15:11-23. Which verse indicates that God is willing to restore to us full sonship (and not just make us slaves)?

(b) Read Luke 16:19-31. Jesus uses the common Jewish concept of eternal punishment. What could the rich man have done to avoid his doom? (v. 30).

REPENTANCE (Discipleship Questions)

Definition Repentance:

1. It is an “about face” to a new commitment
2. It is a change of mind
3. A change of heart that results in one turning to God; from his old ways to God’s ways.
4. A change of direction; NOT PERFECTION
5. To make a decision that changes the total direction of one’s life
6. Turning from old ways, and totally committing to God
7. Turning to a Person, to God through Jesus Christ

Read Luke 24:46-47

1. What is the message that is to be proclaimed to the nations?

Read Luke 13:1-5

2. What must one do in order not to perish?
3. Can only certain people repent, or is it available for everybody?
4. Are there worse sinners than others?

Read 2 Peter 3:9

5. How is the Lord concerning His promises?
A. _____
B. _____
6. How many is God willing to let perish?
7. What is His desire for ALL people?

Read Luke 16:19-31

8. How did the rich man treat Lazarus while they were alive?
9. When they both died, where did Lazarus go?
10. Where did the rich man go?
11. What did the rich man desire from Father Abraham? (verse 24)

12. What was Abraham's response?
13. What is fixed between heaven and hell?
14. In verse 30, why did the rich man want Lazarus to be raised from the dead to speak to his five brothers?
15. In verse 31 Abraham said that if they wouldn't believe Moses and the prophets, or the Old Testament, they wouldn't believe a man raised from the dead. Can you see how this applies to us today? _____ We must believe by faith, and receive His grace.

Read Acts 26:18

16. Although it doesn't specifically say, this verse is talking about repentance. What will happen to those who repent?
 - A. _____
 - B. _____
 - C. _____
 - D. _____
 - E. _____

Read Acts 26:20

In the last part of this verse, three things are stated that the Gentiles should do. (These are similar to what you listed from verse 18.)

17. What would you "do" that proved that you had repented?
 - A. _____
 - B. _____
 - C. _____

Read Matthew 7:21-23

18. Will everyone who says, "Lord, Lord," enter the kingdom of heaven?
19. What do you have to "do" to enter in the kingdom of heaven?
20. Those who will not enter heaven argued their case by saying they did what things?
21. What did Jesus say they practiced instead of the will of God?
22. What does this show you about the importance of true repentance vs. lip service toward God?

It is the power of the name of Jesus that will cast out demons, and do many wonders, but if you have not repented in your heart toward God, it will have all been for nothing.

Read Isaiah 55:6-7

23. What two things are you to do while the Lord may be found and while He is near?

A. _____

B. _____

24. What must the wicked do?

25. What must the unrighteous do?

26. What will God do for the man that does those things stated above?

A. _____

B. _____

Read Luke 15:7

27. What is heaven's reaction to the one who repents vs. ninety-nine who don't need to?

Read Acts 3:19

28. "_____ therefore and be _____, that your sins may be
_____, so that times of _____ may come from the
_____ of the _____."

Read 2 Corinthians 7:10

29. What produced repentance?

30. What does repentance lead to?

31. What produces death?

Read Psalm 103

32. Write down all the promises noted in this Psalm.

Do you recognize that all these promises are for those who repent?

Have you repented toward the Lord your God?

If you haven't, but would like to now, please say this prayer with a repentant heart:

Lord Jesus, I come to you as a sinner, but by Your mercy upon me, I want You to come into my heart as my Lord and Savior. I confess with my mouth that you are Jesus, the Lord, and I do believe in my heart that God raised You from the dead. I thank You for hanging on the tree for me so that I may eternally live with you. I give my life to You, in Jesus' name. Amen

REPENTANCE

(Discipleship Answer Key)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Repentance and remission of sins 2. Repent 3. Available for everybody 4. No 5. A. Not slack B. Longsuffering 6. None 7. Come to repentance 8. Poorly 9. A Place like Heaven, Abraham's bosom 10. A place of torment, hell 11. Have Lazarus dip his finger in water to cool his tongue 12. No 13. A great gulf 14. So his brothers would repent 15. Yes 16. A. Eyes will be opened
B. Turned from darkness to light
C. Turned from power of Satan to God
D. Receive forgiveness of sins
E. Receive inheritance 17. A. Repent
B. Turn to God
C. Do works benefiting repentance 18. No 19. The will of My Father in Heaven | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 20. Prophesied, cast out demons, many wonders 21. Lawlessness 22. Lip service doesn't save you 23. A. Seek Him B. Call upon Him 24. Forsake his way 25. Forsake his thoughts 26. A. Have mercy B. Pardon abundantly 27. More joy over one sinner who repents than ninety-nine who don't need to 28. Repent – Converted – Blotted out – Refreshing – Presence – Lord 29. Godly sorrow 30. Salvation 31. Sorrow of the world 32. A. Forgives all iniquities
B. Heals all diseases
C. Redeems life from destruction
D. Crowns you with loving kindness and tender mercies
E. Satisfies mouth with good things
F. Youth renewed
G. Executes righteousness and justice for oppressed
H. Makes ways known
I. Merciful and gracious
J. Slow to anger- abounds in mercy
K. Hasn't dealt with us according to our sins or punished us according to our iniquities
L. Removed sins, east to west
M. Pities us
N. Merciful from everlasting to everlasting
O. Gives strength to those who heed His word |
|--|--|

REPENTANCE

by Don Krow
(Additional Information)

Repentance is a gift that God grants people who want to come to Him and be saved. It is a new attitude, a change of mind, a change of heart THAT RESULTS in one turning from sin to God, and ultimately, to His ways.

In Matthew 3:8 John the Baptist said, “Bring forth fruit that is consistent with repentance [let your lives prove your change of heart]” (Amplified Bible). And the Apostle Paul said in his preaching to the Gentiles, “that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds appropriate to repentance,” (Acts 26:20; NASV). From these scriptures we can see that “repentance” is “a change of heart, a change of mind” and that good works are the FRUIT of that changed heart.

Vine’s Expository Dictionary states that repentance (Gk. “METANOEO”) “signifies to change one’s mind or purpose, always, in the New Testament, except in Luke 17:3, 4, of repentance from sin” (p. 952). It further states: “In the New Testament the subject chiefly has reference to repentance from sin, and this change of mind involves both a turning from sin and a turning to God. The parable of the prodigal son is an outstanding illustration of this. Christ began His ministry with a call to repentance, Matthew 4:17, but the call is addressed, not as in the Old Testament to the nation, BUT TO THE INDIVIDUAL” (p. 953).

The Expository Dictionary of Bible Words states: “The Old Testament word that expresses the biblical concept of repentance is “SUB.” This verb is found over a thousand times in the Old Testament . . . in the 164 uses of this word in a covenant context, it indicates turning from evil to God, from evil ways to God’s ways, or from God to idols. “SUB” is that commitment to a faith and way of life that involves turning from a previous way, and this is to ‘repent’ . . . repentance itself, as it is illustrated in the Old Testament, is essentially the ‘about Face’ of a new commitment.

“In the New Testament, ‘METANOEO’ and ‘METANOIA’ are used in the same way as ‘SUB’ in the Old Testament—to emphasize a change of mind and attitude. To repent is to make a decision that changes the total direction of one’s life.”

“Repentance in both the Old Testament and the New Testament provides a perspective on faith. For faith in a biblical sense is commitment, not merely ‘belief about.’ One who repents has faith, for it is faith in God that is expressed when we carry out a decision to turn from our old ways and to commit ourselves to God’s ways” (Ibid., p.522).

The New International Dictionary of N. T. Theology states: “Repentance is no longer obedience to a law but to a PERSON.” The call to repentance becomes a call to discipleship. So repentance, faith and discipleship are different aspects of the same thing.

“There are many passages in which the term ‘METANOEO’ does not appear, but in which the thought of repentance is clearly present. Examples are: ‘Unless you TURN and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven’ (Matthew 18:3). ‘So therefore, whoever of you does

not FORSAKE all that he has cannot be my disciple' (Luke 14:33). It is the spiritually poor, the little ones and the helpless, who receive the promise of the Kingdom of God (Matthew 5:3; 18:10, 14)" (Ibid., Vol. 1, p.358).

"The early Christian preaching continued the call for repentance (See Mark 6:12 and the sermons in Acts). This early preaching linked repentance with the call to faith (Acts 20:21), the demand to be baptized (Acts 2:38), the promise of the forgiveness of sins (Luke 24:47); and salvation (Acts 11:18). Conversion is turning from evil (Acts 8:22; Revelation 2:21) to God (Acts 26:20). In Acts 3:19 and Acts 26:20, 'METANOEO' (repentance) and 'EPISTREPHO' (conversion) are placed side by side. This shows that the two concepts are related. The fact that this group of words does not occur often in the Pauline writings (six times) and not at all in the Johannine (apart from Revelation), does not mean that the idea of conversion is not present.. Both Paul and John convey the idea of conversion (turning) by that of faith. Paul speaks of faith as 'being in Christ,' as the 'NEW CREATION,' as 'PUTTING ON THE NEW MAN,' as the 'DYING AND RISING OF A MAN WITH CHRIST.' The Johannine literature represents the new life in Christ as the 'NEW BIRTH,' as the passing from DEATH TO LIFE and from DARKNESS TO LIGHT" (Ibid., Vol. 1, p.359).

From these statements we see that in the call to conversion sometimes the word "repent" is only used. At other times the word "believe" is only used. Still at other times they are both used together (Acts 20:21). But both words involve a change of heart toward God. Repentance is the first response of man to the Gospel that is demanded by God. It must always accompany true faith. Without repentance, faith alone, as described in James 2, would be dead faith, that is, mental assent that cannot save.

REPENTANCE DEFINED

Again, as already stated, repentance in the New Testament denotes an inner decision, a change of heart, a change of mind. The Old Testament word denotes an outward action of turning back or turning around. By putting the two together we see that repentance involves a change of heart, a change of mind that results in a turning around to move in a completely new direction. This change of direction can be summed up by the words of Jesus: "FOLLOW ME!" (Matthew 4:19; 8:22; 9:9; 16:24; 19:21; Mark 2:14; 8:34; 10:21; Luke 5:27; 9:23,59; 18:22; John 1:43; 10:27; 12:26; 21:19). "Follow" means to come or go after; move behind and in the same direction; to come or go with; to accept the guidance or leadership of; to adhere to the cause or principles of; to be governed by; obey; and comply with.

AN EXAMPLE

The prodigal son of Luke 15:11-32 is a good example of repentance. He had turned his back on his father and his home to waste his life in sin and riotous living. Eventually he came to himself and made a decision to arise and go back to his father and home. He first had the change of heart, and then acted by carrying out his decision. He returned to his father and home acknowledging, "Father I have sinned!"

In our sinful condition we have all turned our back on God, our Father, and heaven, our home. We must stop, have a change of mind, a change of heart, and a change of direction. This essential act is called "repentance" and is the first move we must make to be reconciled to God.

REPENTANCE IS NOT AN EMOTION

Concerning Esau, Hebrews 12:17 states, “he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully WITH TEARS.” This is evidence that strong emotion is not necessarily proof of repentance. Many people, because of a strong sales approach, respond to a Gospel call but never come to the change of heart and change of mind that is necessary to receive God’s salvation. Shedding a tear sometimes indicates a person is sorry he was caught in a situation, but he may never have a change of mind about his actions.

REPENTANCE BEGINS WITH GOD

Scriptural repentance begins with God, not with man. John 6:44 states, “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.” For this reason, the supreme crisis of every human being comes at the moment of the Spirit’s drawing to repentance. When a person says, “yes” to that drawing, it will lead to saving faith. If rejected, it will leave a person to continue in his own sinful way. That’s why the scripture says, “Today if you will hear his voice, Harden not your hearts” (Hebrews 3:8). And again, “How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation” (Hebrews 2:3). Apart from God’s grace and the drawing of His Spirit, man, left to himself, is incapable of repentance.

REPENTANCE IS FROM DEAD WORKS

In Hebrews 6:1 it says that repentance is from dead works. In Acts 20:21 repentance is toward God. John Calvin once said that we must turn from our works as well as from our sins, and flee to Christ for his mercy and pardon. In Isaiah 64:6 it says that “all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.” There is no reference here to sin but only to our own righteousness as a means of trying to justify ourselves.

REPENTANCE IS MADE COMPLETE BY MAN’S RESPONSE

Although repentance is initiated by God, it is made complete by man’s response. For this reason, God’s decree is for “all men everywhere to repent” (Acts 17:30). All scripture is absolutely unanimous on this point, “except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3, 5). Consider these messages from the scriptures themselves:

REPENTANCE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and TURN FROM THEIR WICKED WAYS; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land” (2 Chronicles 7:14).

“He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but WHOSO CONFESSETH AND FORSAKETH THEM SHALL HAVE MERCY” (Proverbs 28:13).

“Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; REPENT, AND TURN YOURSELVES FROM YOUR IDOLS; AND TURN AWAY YOUR FACES FROM ALL YOUR ABOMINATIONS.” (Ezekiel 14:6).

“Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord GOD: and not that he should RETURN FROM HIS WAYS, AND LIVE? ³⁰Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord GOD. REPENT, AND TURN YOURSELVES FROM ALL YOUR TRANSGRESSIONS; so iniquity shall not be your ruin” (Ezekiel 18:23, 30).

“Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked TURN FROM HIS WAY AND LIVE: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?” (Ezekiel 33:11).

“Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and BREAK OFF THY SINS BY RIGHTEOUSNESS, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity” (Daniel 4:27).

“Therefore say thou unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; TURN YE UNTO ME, saith the LORD of hosts, and I WILL TURN UNTO YOU, saith the LORD of hosts” (Zechariah 1:3).

REPENTANCE IN THE GOSPELS

“But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸Bring forth therefore FRUITS MEET FOR REPENTANCE” (Matthew 3:7-8).

“And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow Me. And he arose, and followed him. ¹⁰And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples. ¹¹And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners? ¹²But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. ¹³But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but SINNERS TO REPENTANCE” (Matthew 9:9-13).

“And it came to pass, that, as Jesus sat at meat in his house, many publicans and sinners sat also together with Jesus and his disciples: for there were many, and they followed Him. ¹⁶And when the scribes and Pharisees saw him eat with publicans and sinners, they said unto his disciples, How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners? ¹⁷When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but SINNERS TO REPENTANCE.” (Mark 2:15-17).

“And they went out, and PREACHED THAT MEN SHOULD REPENT” (Mark 6:12).

“There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. ²And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things? ³I tell you, Nay: but, EXCEPT YE REPENT, YE SHALL ALL LIKEWISE PERISH. ⁴Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? ⁵I tell you, Nay: but, EXCEPT YE REPENT, YE SHALL ALL LIKEWISE PERISH.” (Luke 13:1-5).

“What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? ⁵And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. ⁶And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. ⁷I say unto you, that likewise JOY SHALL BE IN HEAVEN OVER ONE SINNER THAT REPENTETH, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance” (Luke 15:4-7).

“Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it? ⁹And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost. ¹⁰Likewise, I say unto you, THERE IS JOY IN THE PRESENCE OF THE ANGELS OF GOD OVER ONE SINNER THAT REPENTETH” (Luke 15:8-10).

“Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. ³⁰And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but IF ONE WENT UNTO THEM FROM THE DEAD, THEY WILL REPENT” (Luke 16:29-30).

“And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: ⁴⁷And that REPENTANCE AND REMISSION OF SINS SHOULD BE PREACHED IN HIS NAME AMONG ALL NATIONS, beginning at Jerusalem” (Luke 24:46-47).

REPENTANCE IN ACTS

“REPENT YE THEREFORE, AND BE CONVERTED, THAT YOUR SINS MAY BE BLOTTED OUT, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord” (Acts 3:19).

“The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. ³¹Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give REPENTANCE TO ISRAEL, AND FORIVENESS OF SINS” (Acts 5:30-31).

“Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. ²²REPENT THEREFORE OF THIS THY WICKEDNESS, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee” (Acts 8:21-22).

“Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God? ¹⁸When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted REPENTANCE UNTO LIFE” (Acts 11:17-18).

“Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man’s device. ³⁰And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but NOW COMMANDETH ALL MEN EVERYWHERE TO REPENT: ³¹Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead” (Acts 17:29-31).

“And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house, ²¹Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, REPENTANCE TOWARD GOD, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 20:20-21).

“Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, ¹⁸To open their eyes, and TO TURN them FROM darkness TO light, and FROM the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive FORGIVENESS OF SINS, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me. ¹⁹Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: ²⁰But showed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should REPENT AND TURN TO GOD, and do works meet for repentance” (Acts 26:17-20).

“First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and to the Gentiles also, I preached that they should REPENT AND TURN TO GOD AND PROVE THEIR REPENTANCE BY THEIR DEEDS” (Acts 26:20; NW).

REPENTANCE IN PAUL’S LETTERS

“And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? ⁴Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the GOODNESS OF GOD LEADETH THEE TO REPENTANCE? ⁵But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; ⁶Who will render to every man according to his deeds: ⁷To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: ⁸But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, ⁹Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; ¹⁰But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: ¹¹For there is no respect of persons with God” (Romans 2:3-11).

“And lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and that I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have NOT REPENTED OF THE UNCLEANNESS AND FORNICATION AND LASCIVIOUSNESS which they have committed” (2 Corinthians 12:21).

“The Lord’s message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia - your faith in God has been known everywhere. Therefore we do not need to say anything about it, for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. ⁹They tell how you TURNED TO GOD FROM IDOLS to serve the living and true God” (1 Thessalonians 1:8-9; NW).

“And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, ²⁵In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if GOD peradventure will give them REPENTANCE TO THE ACKNOWLEDGING OF THE TRUTH; ²⁶And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will” (2 Timothy 2:24-26).

“Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of REPENTANCE FROM DEAD WORKS, and of faith toward God” (Hebrews 6:1).

REPENTANCE IN PETER’S LETTERS

“The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, NOT WANTING ANY TO PERISH, BUT ALL TO COME TO REPENTANCE” (2 Peter 3:9, NRSV).

REPENTANCE IN JOHN’S LETTERS

“I have GIVEN HER TIME TO REPENT of her immorality, but she is unwilling. ²²So I will cast her on a bed of suffering, and I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely, UNLESS THEY REPENT OF THEIR WAYS” (Revelation 2:21-22, NIV).

COMMITMENT

Don Krow

Luke 14:25 says, “And there went great multitudes with Jesus, and He turned and said to them.” At this time in Jesus’ ministry there were multitudes of people who followed Him. The English language doesn’t bring this out, but in the Greek language this is called an imperfect tense. It says, “there went,” which means they began to go repeatedly and continuously. Great multitudes began to follow Jesus, perhaps because of the miracles, or because He fed them. I don’t know the reason, but great multitudes were following Him. He turned and deliberately said something to them, which appears to have caused many of them to turn and follow Him no more.

In many churches today we say, “We’re having revival, and everyone is responding. Look at the masses . . . thousands of them,” but Jesus deliberately said something that caused many to turn away. In Luke 14:26 he said, “If any man come to me [that means wants go with me, wants to accompany me, wants to follow me, this is the requirement], and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.” As I looked at that scripture I thought, “Lord you can’t mean that. What does that word “hate” mean? It probably means to love less or something like that.” As I began to study, however, I discovered how the word was used.

I want to share a few scriptures where this word “hate” was used. When Matthew 24:9 says, “ye shall be hated of all nations,” it literally means when one person hates another person. Again in Mark 13:13, “and ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake” literally means to hate another person. When used in Luke 1:71, “That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us,” it is talking about enemies and people that actually hate. This word “hate” is used in Titus 3:3 where it says “For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.”

Jesus used the strongest possible word to emphasize a point. He said unless you hate your father, your mother, your sister, your brother, even your own life, you can’t be His disciple. I want to ask you something: What is the closest relationship you will ever have on this earth? It’s your mother and father or your spouse and children, and Jesus said unless you hate them, you can’t be His disciple. What happens if your wife turns against you and divorces you, or your mother and father die? Who will stick with you then? It will be your brothers and your sisters, and He said unless you hate them, you can’t be His disciple. What is He saying?

Jesus is talking about the closest relationships we will ever have, and He’s saying, “I’m asking for commitment from you, a commitment in which I am preeminent. I want to be number one in your life, so I’m going to compare My relationship with you to the closest relationship you have on earth, and I’m using the word “hate.” Hate is a metaphor, a word of comparison, and He is saying, “My relationship with you is so important that I want it to be above all earthly things.” But there is one person you love more than your wife, your children, your mother, your father, or your sisters and brothers. Do you know who that is? It’s not God . . . it’s you. You love yourself more than you love your closest relationship.

Why are marriages breaking up? Why are people being divorced? It's because they love themselves more than they love their spouses. "You're not doing it like I want you to, so I'm getting rid of you." Jesus said, "There is one relationship I want to be number one above your own selfish life if you want to be My disciple." This is true discipleship. Jesus Christ is talking about a true commitment; He's not talking about a no-cost discipleship. He's asking us to follow Him. He's asking to be number one in our lives.

When Jesus says in Luke 14:27, "whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple," what does He mean? It probably doesn't mean much to you or me, but over 30,000 crucifixions occurred during the lifetime of Jesus, and when someone talked about bearing the cross, they knew what it meant. People were crucified outside the city; they carried their crosses to the place of execution, and then were nailed to them. Jesus said, "If you want to follow Me you must be willing to endure shame, embarrassment, reproach, rejection, persecution . . . possibly even physical death." He used the same words in Matthew 16:24 when He said to His disciples, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." The words "deny himself" mean that there are times when we have to say "no" to ourselves to refuse what our flesh wants. We have to say it's God's way not our way.

Jesus is asking for a sell-out, 100 percent commitment if you really want to follow Him. I've been married for 28 years and have three children. When I was married, I thought, "Man, this relationship is free." You know what? Salvation is free. I thought all I had to do was go down the aisle, stand before a preacher, have some witnesses, say these vows, and after that it was going to be romance!!! It was going to be a great, wonderful relationship. Do you know what I discovered 28 years ago after that fact? Do you know what it cost me for that relationship? It cost me everything!! It cost me all my wages, everything I have—my property, my name, everything—to maintain and actually walk in a marriage relationship.

Jesus is saying, "Come to Me if you labor and need rest; I am the way. Ultimately, this relationship I am offering you free—forgiveness, righteousness, everything you need—will cost you if you follow Me. Do you want to sit down and count the cost, do you really want to follow Me?" It's not just a momentary faith. It's not "I'll follow Jesus when it's convenient." No, He wants a 100 percent commitment, and He illustrates that truth in Luke 14:28, "For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he has sufficient to finish it?"

If you want to build a building and you have \$50.00, you don't say to your wife, "I'm going to build a new house for you." "How much money do we have?" "I have \$50.00 in the bank." You begin, lay a few bricks, and everybody laughs at you because you started and didn't have enough to finish. Jesus said we need to sit down and count the cost, "Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish (verses 29-30)." Jesus is asking, "Do you want to follow me, to come after Me? This is a relationship that has eternal significance . . . that demands the utmost importance in your lives. It's a relationship for the long haul." Would you like to follow Him today?

The Bible goes on to say, "Or, what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him against him with twenty thousand? (verse 31)." If you had ten thousand men and there was an army coming against you with twenty thousand men, you would need to count the cost. Can I defeat them with these ten thousand men? Will it cost me my life? Will it cost me my kingdom? "Or else, while the other is yet a

great way off, he sendeth an ambassage [delegation], and desireth conditions of peace (verse 32).” If I can’t beat this guy, if I can’t afford to do this, I need to give up and ask for conditions of peace. Then Jesus says in verse 33, “So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.” He is saying, “I want you to come and follow Me. I want an eternal relationship with you, but this is what it demands: that I be preeminent . . . that you be willing to take up the cross . . . that you be willing to suffer shame, embarrassment, rejection, and persecution for a relationship with Me.” That is a paradox, isn’t it? The Bible says that it is only in losing your life that you really find out what real life is all about. This is a hard message from the lips of Jesus Christ, but it is a message of importance.

God is a jealous God. He wants a relationship with us, but He is asking us to sit down and think about it not do something quickly that won’t last. He’s not looking for a superficial commitment or belief. He doesn’t want Jesus to be tacked onto life somewhere in the background. He is asking to be preeminent in your life. Have you ever thought of making that kind of commitment? Have you sat down and counted the cost and thought about what a commitment it is to follow Jesus?

May God bless you today as you take these truths, consider them, and apply them to your life. He loves you. He’s given His all to you through His Son’s blood on the cross, but He is asking, in return, for a relationship that is more important than all earthly relationships, and even our own fleshly desires in life. God bless you.

COMMITMENT (Outline)

Luke 14:25-26: “And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them, ²⁶If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.”

Great multitudes of people were repeatedly and continuously following Jesus. Jesus then deliberately said something that caused many of them to turn and quit following Him. Jesus used the word “hate,” as described in these other scriptures:

Matthew 24:9: “Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name’s sake.”

Mark 13:13: “And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake: but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.”

Luke 1:71: “That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us.”

Titus 3:3: “For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.”

Jesus used the strongest word He could to get His point across. He’s talking about the closest earthly relationships we have—our own family. What is Jesus saying? He is asking for a commitment, so great a commitment that He is number one in your life, preeminent. He wants us to make such a strong commitment to Him that our relationships with our closest family members will seem like hate relationships.

Jesus is using the concept of hate as a metaphor so we will understand that our relationship with Him is far above all other relationships. We naturally love ourselves more than anyone else on earth, but we must hate ourselves also, in comparison to our love for Jesus.

Jesus is talking about a true commitment, not a no-cost discipleship. He is asking us to follow Him and make Him number one in our lives.

Luke 14:27: “And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.”

Jesus is saying that we must be willing to bear shame, embarrassment, persecution, and even death if we are to follow him.

Matthew 16:24: “Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.”

You must say “no” to yourself, refuse your ways, and take God’s way. Jesus is asking for a 100 percent sellout to Him. Ultimately, your relationship with Jesus will cost you everything. You need to count the cost of relationship with Jesus.

Luke 14:28: “For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?”

You must have enough commitment to Jesus to pay the cost of the relationship, a relationship with eternal significance.

Luke 14:29-33: “Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, ³⁰Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. ³¹Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? ³²Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace. ³³So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.”

You must forsake all to be Jesus’ disciple. This demands that Jesus be preeminent in your life. This is the paradox—only in losing your life do you truly find your life.

Matthew 16:25-26: “For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. ²⁶For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?”

Have you made this commitment to Him? He has given His life for you by shedding His blood for you. He desires to be above all your earthly relationships.

COMMITMENT (Teacher's Guide)

1. What does Luke 9:57-62 teach us about commitment?

A total commitment to God is the undergirding of faith. Some say "I'll serve God as long as it's not going to be hard." The devil does make it hard sometimes. Commitment helps us get up and start in faith again.

2. According to Luke 8:13-14, why have so many one-time professions of faith fallen away?

Not taking time to be grounded in the Word of God, and having no root system, they let the cares of this world take them away from following the Lord.

3. Would you commit your life in marriage to someone who would not commit him or herself to you?

No.

4. According to James 4:4, is it possible to commit spiritual adultery against God?

Yes, you are putting the world before having a relationship with God

5. In Ezekiel 16:8, God uses the illustration of marriage to describe a relationship with His people. Whose possession does one become in this relationship?
See also 1 Corinthians 6:20 and Romans 7:4.

God's.

6. Temporal faith is not saving faith. Jesus gave several examples of a person's faith that lacked true repentance and commitment.

- A. What can we learn about commitment and faith from John 2:23-25?

God will not commit Himself to those who do not commit themselves to Him.

- B. What can we learn from Luke 8:13-14?

We can receive and remain in God's Word and not allow temptations in the form of cares, riches, and pleasures to take the place of God in our lives.

- C. What can we learn from Colossians 1:22-23?

Saving faith is a faith that continues in Christ and is not moved away.

COMMITMENT

(Detailed Teacher's Guide)

Note: The following information may be read out loud (a numbered section at a time) with the person(s) being disciplined. After each numbered section is read, pause and ask the question(s) that correspond to the paragraph(s), and then discuss them.

COMMITMENT

¹ Today, with the revelation knowledge that is flowing through the body of Christ about redemption from poverty, sin, and sickness, our commitment should be even stronger. But among many Christians, even Spirit-filled Christians, there is an attitude that says, "I'll serve God as long as it's not going to be hard." It's true that Jesus' yoke is easy and His burden is light (Matthew 11:30), but our enemy, the devil, does make it hard sometimes.

There have been times when I've been severely beaten in a round with the devil, and I've felt like quitting. It wasn't my great faith that made me get back in the ring; it was my commitment. My faith was the victory that overcame the world (1 John 5:4), but it was my commitment that made me get up and start in faith again. A total commitment to God is the undergirding of faith.

Many people have accepted the faith principles today about healing and prosperity, but they haven't been taught commitment. Therefore, they can shout with the best of them when their desires are manifested, but when the battle is on, and it doesn't look like the Word is working, they are ready to renounce the whole thing. That's because they aren't truly committed to the Lord. They may be committed to getting rich or getting healed, but they aren't committed to God.

I've heard people say, "I wouldn't serve a God who wouldn't heal me or supply my needs." Well, praise God—I would! I thank the Lord that I don't have to. The Bible says that He supplies all my needs (Philippians 4:19) and "by whose stripes ye were healed" (1 Peter 2:24). But I'd serve Him just because He is my Creator and has revealed Himself to me through Jesus. I serve God for who He is not what He gives. Praise God that He has freely given us all things through Christ (Romans 8:32), but I made a total commitment to Him before I knew He healed today and that He would prosper me. Therefore, if I don't see an immediate manifestation of the thing I am believing for, I'm not tempted to renounce the faith. My commitment is unconditional. My faith is the thing that keeps me from settling for less than God's best for me, but my commitment keeps me from wavering while faith is at work.

¹What does Luke 9:57-62 teach us about commitment?

² One night on the streets of Colorado Springs, I spoke to a man named Mike. He reluctantly let me speak to him about the person of Jesus Christ. He told me that he had turned to Jesus Christ at one time while he was in jail. Obviously, his one-time faith of long ago was not yielding any real change in his life today. Why is that such a common story in so many lives? Why have so many one-time professions of the faith fallen away?

³ How would you like it if you knew that the girl you were about to marry was going to be untrue? Would you go ahead and commit your life to that kind of relationship? I seriously doubt that you would. Why? Because the essence of “marriage” is to forsake all others and to cleave in love to the one you’ve chosen.

⁴ Jesus Christ has likened the relationship to which He has called us, to a marriage relationship (Romans 7:4). Some who have said “yes” to this relationship have remained true. Some have been unfaithful and have committed and are committing spiritual adultery (check it out for yourselves by reading James 4:4). Others have not even met the conditions to begin a relationship although they thought they had. One time the Apostle Paul asked some professing Christians, “Check up on yourselves. Are you really Christians? Do you pass the test?” (2 Corinthians 13:5, LB). Jesus said, “Not every one that has just said Lord, Lord will enter His kingdom” (Matthew 7:21-23).

⁵ So what is necessary to have a lasting relationship? In any lasting marriage relationship we must forsake our adulterous lover and cleave to our spouse. If, in this relationship, we are unloving, wrong or unfaithful, it is called a “transgression” against our “vows.” At these times, it is required that we turn, return, or turn back from that which would hinder our relationship and ask for forgiveness. This is called “repentance.” “Forgiveness” in any meaningful sense of the word presupposes guilt. Undoubtedly repentance is specified as the condition for “forgiveness.” What would you think if a man raped your daughter and said, “Please forgive me, but if I get the chance, I will do it again.” He would be asking for forgiveness while not turning from his sin and seeing it was wrong and despicable. “Repentance” involves a change of heart and a change of mind for the better. It’s a turning from Satan to God, and from sin to Jesus as the Savior and Deliverer from the penalty and power of our sins. This is not perfection; this is a change of direction. True Christians have turned to a new King and a new Kingdom for Jesus said, “No man can serve two masters” (Matthew 6:24).

² According to Luke 8:13-14, why have so many one time professions of faith fallen away?

³ Would you commit your life in marriage to someone who would not commit him or herself to you?

⁴ According to James 4:4, is it possible to commit spiritual adultery against God?

⁵ In Ezekiel 16:8 God uses the illustration of marriage to describe a relationship with His people. Whose possession does one become in this relationship? See also 1 Corinthians 6:20 and Romans 7:4.

⁶In Jesus' teachings and examples there are several instances of a faith that lacked true repentance (John 8:30-38, 44; Luke 8:13).

Let me give you just one example: "Now when He (Jesus) was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, MANY BELIEVED IN HIS NAME when they saw the signs which He did. ²⁴But JESUS DID NOT COMMIT HIMSELF TO THEM, because He knew all men, ²⁵And had no need that anyone should testify of man for HE KNEW WHAT WAS IN MAN" (John 2:23-25). Here we see many people putting some kind of mental assent or belief in Jesus, but Jesus would not commit Himself to them for He knew what was in them. In other words, the kind of faith that they had in Him was not a faith that was committed unto Him, therefore, Jesus would not commit Himself unto them. Could it be possible, my friend, that the kind of faith that you have put in Jesus is a non-committed faith that has been unwilling to go the distance? Jesus said that some people hear His Word and receive it with joy but believe only for a while, and fall away in the time of temptation (Luke 8:13). Temporal faith is not saving faith (1 Corinthians 15:2; Colossians 1:23). The Lord is longsuffering toward us, and not willing that any should perish (2 Peter 3:9). Would you be willing to turn or return to the One who loves you? "Forgiveness" is a "relationship" word, and the goal of God's forgiveness is to have a relationship with you. Are you the lost sheep in which Jesus would leave the ninety-nine just to find you (Luke 15:4-7)? He loves you that much.

⁶Temporal faith is not saving faith. Jesus gave several examples of a persons faith that lacked true repentance and commitment.

- (a) What can we learn about commitment and faith from John 2:23-25?
- (b) What can we learn from Luke 8:13-14?
- (c) What can we learn from Colossians 1:22-23?

COMMITMENT

(Discipleship Questions)

Read Luke 9:57-62

1. What does this scripture passage teach us about the level of commitment toward following Christ?
2. In verse 62, what is the plow compared to?
 - A. Your Christian walk.
 - B. A hunk of wood and metal
 - C. Farming implements
3. Can you see how “looking back” on your old life, after having come to repentance toward God, would make you double minded?
4. Do you see how this would be displeasing God?

Read Luke 8:11-15

5. What is seed?
6. What happens to the seed that falls by the wayside?
7. What happens to the seed that falls on the rock?
8. What happens to the seed that falls in the thorns?
9. Can you see why so many one-time professions of faith have fallen away?
10. According to verse 15, what must the seed have so as to not get taken away?
 - A. Good _____
 - B. _____ and _____ heart
 - C. _____ and _____ with patience

Read James 4:4-5

11. Is it possible to commit spiritual adultery with God?
12. How does the Spirit within us yearn for us?

Read Matthew 22:37

13. Being the first commandment, how much of you does God want?

14. List the four things the Lord wants you to love Him with.

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____
- D. _____

15. If you don't love God with ALL of yourself, can you see how His jealousy for you flares?

16. If you don't have your heart, soul, mind, and strength focused on God it is focused on

- A. Television
- B. The world
- C. Romance novel

Read Ezekiel 16:6-14

17. God uses the illustration of marriage to describe a relationship with His people. Whose possession does one become in this relationship?

Read 1 Corinthians 6:17-20

18. "He who is joined with the Lord is _____."

19. What is your own body according to verse 19?

20. Are you your own?

21. Since we now belong to God, what are we to do? (verse 20)

Read Romans 7:4

22. You had to become dead to the law through the body of Christ so that what could happen?

23. Who is the "Him" that we are to be married to?

Read Colossians 1:19-23

24. In whom does all the fullness dwell?

25. What things has Christ reconciled to Himself?

26. Paul wanted to make the point that "ALL THINGS" included all things on _____ and in _____.

27. What was made through the blood of His cross?

28. Whom has He now reconciled?

29. Why did Jesus reconcile you? (verse 22)

30. We will be reconciled in His sight IF we do what?

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

31. Towhom was the Gospel preached ?

Read James 1:22

32. What are you commanded to do in verse 22?

33. What are you if you are only a hearer of the Word?

34. God's first commandment is His most inclusive and important commandment (Matthew 22:37). We are commanded to love Him in this manner. If we only HEAR this commandment, what are we again?

COMMITMENT

(Discipleship Answer Key)

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Absolute surrender | 19. Temple of the Holy spirit |
| 2. A. Your Christian walk | 20. No |
| 3. Yes | 21. Glorify God in body and spirit |
| 4. Yes | 22. We could bear fruit to God |
| 5. The word of God | 23. Christ Jesus |
| 6. Devil steals word from heart | 24. Jesus |
| 7. Believe for a while, in temptation = fall away | 25. All things |
| 8. Choked with cares and riches and pleasures of life | 26. Earth – heaven |
| 9. Yes | 27. Peace |
| 10. A. Soil
B. Noble – good
C. Kept - fruitful | 28. You and me |
| 11. Yes | 29. To present you holy, blameless and above reproach |
| 12. Jealously | 30. A. Continue in the faith
B. Grounded and steadfast
C. Not moved away from the hope of the Gospel |
| 13. All | 31. Every creature under heaven |
| 14. A. Heart
B. Soul
C. Mind
D. Strength | 32. Be doers and not hearers only |
| 15. Yes | 33. Deceived |
| 16. B. The world | 34. Deceived |
| 17. God's | |
| 18. One spirit with Him | |

COMMITMENT

by Andrew Wommack
(Additional Information)

Anyone who is truly successful knows that commitment is the main reason for that success. Athletics today has become so specialized that an athlete can't play in two different sports and be the best in both. He has to totally commit himself to doing only one thing to come out on top.

Jesus taught this same principle when He said you cannot serve two masters (Matthew 6:24). Paul shared his secret of success in Philippians 3:13-14 when he said, "This one thing I do . . . I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Peter told Jesus, "Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee" (Mark 10:28). All of these scriptures teach the necessity of commitment.

In the body of Christ today, commitment is one of the most needed qualities. I see so many people who are just trying the principles of God's Word. You'll never succeed if you just try the Word. We have an enemy, the devil, who is always trying to mess things up, and does sometimes. Unless you are totally committed to the fact that God's Word is the truth, you'll back off of your faith when things begin to look contrary. You must be committed to being a doer of the Word (James 1:22) not a "tryer."

Jamie and I have had hundreds of opportunities to back off of our faith because the physical evidence looked so opposite to what we believed. But just like Peter answered Jesus in John 6:68, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life"; we burned all of our bridges behind us. There was no plan "B" or plan "C". There is no other way unto the Father but through Jesus (John 14:6) who is the Word (John 1:1). So, live or die, sink or swim, we were committed to the Word.

On March 23, 1968 I made a total commitment of my life to the Lord. I was already saved. I accepted Jesus at the age of eight, and there was a genuine change that took place in my life. I can remember being made fun of by the other kids in my third-grade class for being a Christian. I was committed to Jesus as the one who forgives my sins, but that was all I knew. However, on that Saturday night in 1968, at the age of 18, the Lord opened up my spiritual eyes and let me see that I hadn't turned the control of my life over to Him in every area. Before that time, I didn't know I was supposed to. I was a good kid. I had never said a cuss word, or smoked a cigarette, or taken a drink. But the Lord showed me that I had never let Him live through me as He desired. I wasn't totally yielded to the devil, but neither was I totally yielded to God. I saw very clearly that all my religious acts were only of my own effort, and that amounted to a big zero in God's eyes. That night I totally yielded myself to God as a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1-2) and desired for the Lord to give all the orders from then on.

That yielding took place years ago, and I can truthfully say that although I've certainly not attained it completely, the same commitment to strive toward that mark has been there. I made that commitment years before I began to hear about faith. There have been times when my faith has cracked under pressure because of my immaturity, and at those times my commitment was all that kept me in the fight.

A person who is really committed will stay in the fight even if he is losing. That has been proven a thousand times over by many Christians who didn't know their rights under the new covenant. They have suffered sickness, poverty, and many other things that they didn't have to, yet they refused to quit because they committed themselves to God regardless of the cost.

Today, with the revelation knowledge that is flowing through the body of Christ about redemption from poverty, sin, and sickness, our commitment should be even stronger. But among many Christians, even Spirit-filled Christians, there is an attitude that says, "I'll serve God as long as it's not going to be hard." It's true that Jesus' yoke is easy and His burden is light (Matt. 11:30), but our enemy, the devil, does make it hard sometimes.

There have been times when I've been beaten severely in a round with the devil, and I've felt like quitting. It wasn't my great faith that made me get back in the ring. It was my commitment. My faith was the victory that overcame the world (1 John 5:4), but it was my commitment that made me get up and start in faith again. A total commitment to God is the undergirding of faith.

Many people have accepted the faith principles today about healing and prosperity, but they haven't been taught commitment. Therefore, they can shout with the best of them when their desires are manifested, but when the battle is on, and it doesn't look like the Word is working, they are ready to renounce the whole thing. That's because they aren't truly committed to the Lord. They may be committed to getting rich or getting healed, but they aren't committed to God.

I've heard people say, "I wouldn't serve a God who wouldn't heal me or supply my needs." Well, praise God—I would! I thank the Lord that I don't have to. The Bible says that He supplies all my needs (Philippians 4:19) and "by whose stripes ye were healed" (1 Peter 2:24). But I'd serve Him just because He is my Creator and has revealed Himself to me through Jesus. I serve God for who He is not what He gives. Praise God that He has freely given us all things through Christ (Romans 8:32), but I made a total commitment to Him before I knew He healed today and that He would prosper me. Therefore, if I don't see an immediate manifestation of the thing I am believing for, I'm not tempted to renounce the faith. My commitment is unconditional. My faith is the thing that keeps me from settling for less than God's best for me, but my commitment keeps me from wavering while faith is at work.

Those of us, who were caught up in religious denominations before we received revelation of our total victory in Jesus, have a tremendously hard time overcoming that religious dogma that was crammed into us. But one thing I praise God for is that there was some teaching about commitment. I mean, what else did they have to preach? They didn't believe in healing or prosperity, and thought that the more you suffered the holier you were. So they had to preach commitment strongly to keep their members under that kind of doctrine. In some ways, many of our brothers and sisters, who haven't received the revelation of what is available to them through Jesus, exhibit more commitment than some Spirit-filled people. My brethren, these things ought not to be (James 3:10).

A person who has made a total, unconditional commitment to God, even if everything isn't going the way it should, will not wind up doing without. They will actually see their faith produce better.

In Daniel, chapter 3, we read the story about Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego who were thrown into the furnace for refusing to worship the graven image of the king. Verse 17 shows us that they not only believed that God was able to deliver them, but they knew that He would deliver them. However, verse 18 says, “But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.” They weren’t making a negative confession. People with negative confessions don’t see the deliverance power of God the way they did. They were simply expressing that they were committed enough to God that they still wouldn’t worship the image of the king if it cost them their lives. Because of their total commitment, Satan wasn’t able to hit them with fear. They wouldn’t bow regardless of the outcome. That’s commitment!

Satan can tell when a person is only committed to a point, and you can be assured he will push you to the breaking point. But when he perceives a person who is totally committed, he will flee from you. I’m not saying you won’t experience any resistance, but those who have the hardest struggles are basically those who are wavering in their commitment.

WATER BAPTISM

Don Krow

Baptism is actually not an English word. It is the Greek word “baptizo,” which was translated from the Greek language into the English language as “baptize.” Let’s do a little research on this word “baptism” to find out what it really is. Beginning in Acts 8:26, we read the story of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch: “And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert. [The Spirit of the Lord sent Philip to a desert region.] And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship, Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet. Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou redest?”

Here was a man in the desert, a eunuch who was the treasurer of Queen Candace, who had probably been in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. The Spirit of the Lord told Philip to go join himself to this man, and when he approached the chariot, he heard the man reading from a scroll, what we would know today as our Bible. He was reading aloud from the Old Testament, in the book of Isaiah. Philip ran to him and said, “Do you understand what you’re reading?” He replied, “I don’t understand a thing I’m reading. How can I unless somebody explains it to me?” And he began to read a passage from Isaiah 53.

Continuing in Acts 8:34, “And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?” He was reading from Isaiah but didn’t understand who it was talking about. Notice in verse 35: “Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.” Philip was a true evangelist. He preached to the eunuch out of the Old Testament and showed him that the Man he was reading about in Isaiah 53 was the Messiah, the Christ, who suffered for our sins. Verse 36 says, “And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?”

Notice first of all that Philip didn’t say, “This is what I want you to do.” It was the Ethiopian who, after he heard the teaching about Jesus and they had come to some water, said, “There is water—what keeps me from being baptized, Philip?” Think about this: he had come from a far distant country, and I’m sure he had a little canteen of water. Philip could have said, “Give me your canteen, and I’ll sprinkle a little water on your head,” but he didn’t. It was when they came up on a great amount of water that the eunuch asked what kept him from being baptized. Philip then basically said, “There are requirements to be baptized.” Did you know that? There are requirements.

Philip said in verse 37, “If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest.” Baptism is not for people who half-heartedly believe in Jesus but for those who have trusted Him completely with their hearts . . . who have completely, totally, and fully trusted Him for the forgiveness of their sins. Philip said if you believe with your whole heart then you may be baptized. The eunuch said, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.”

When a person is baptized, he demonstrates that he is turning. The best way to explain this is a marriage ceremony where one person commits himself to another, and that person commits herself back. In that ceremony they put on rings to signify that they belong to each other. She usually even changes her name. Baptism is much like that. It is the final act of turning to God in a public way, professing Jesus Christ before men, before God, and before all the devils of hell, saying, “I’m in it for the long haul.” It’s not identifying with the First Baptist Church, the Presbyterian Church, the Pentecostal Church, or the Assembly of God; it is identifying with Jesus Christ. Peter says in Acts 2:38, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”

When a person identifies with Jesus, they identify with His work, His redemptive acts, and all that He is. They aren’t baptized in the name of Moses or some other person and identified with them . . . they’re identifying totally with Jesus. They’re saying, “I’m taking my stand. This is it. I’m dead to the old life, raised up out of the water to walk in newness of life. I’m now totally the property of Jesus Christ.”

The Bible sets forth another requirement for baptism in Acts 2:38: “Repent and be baptized.” A person must repent and have a change of heart and mind. They must turn to God and to Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins. Trusting him completely, they must turn away from Satan and his kingdom. Baptism is for those who are serious with God. If you don’t mean business with Him, don’t be baptized; but if you believe with all your heart you may.

Those requirements for baptism automatically rule out one kind of person—an infant. I’m not trying to upset anyone who might have been baptized as a baby, but if you were, did you repent, as the Bible tells us, and turn to God with all your heart, turning from your sin? Did you believe in Jesus Christ with all your heart and trust him for the forgiveness of your sins? A baby can’t repent or believe, so if you’ve never been baptized the scriptural way, identifying not with some organization but with the Person and work of Jesus Christ, then today, repent, believe with all your heart, and reach out to Jesus for forgiveness of your sins. Publicly acknowledge your commitment to Him today through water baptism.

Some people we led to Christ a few weeks ago knocked at my door in the middle of the night after they heard the teaching on water baptism by one of my friends. They said, “We want baptism, and we want it now.” I told them I had a horse tank in my back yard that would take about an hour to fill. We filled it, took them outside, and I said, “Would you like to openly profess your faith in Jesus Christ?” Both of them turned from us, turned to God, and said, “We thank you for saving us, for bringing the Gospel into our lives, etc., etc.” We baptized them in the name of Jesus Christ. They came out of the water, and the lady told me a few days later, “I left thirty-five years of nicotine addiction, smoking two and half packs of cigarettes a day in the waters of baptism. When I came out of the water that night I was totally delivered, totally free from a thirty-five year nicotine addiction.” When she was baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, she said, “Jesus I’m identifying with you, and I am yours.” She received her deliverance that night as she acted on the Word.

Your baptism is an act of faith . . . your faith expressing itself, identifying with the personal work of Jesus Christ. May God bless you. As you consider water baptism, remember what the Bible says in Acts 2:38. It is for every one of you!!

WATER BAPTISM (Outline)

“Baptize” is not actually an English word, but a Greek word written in letters of the English alphabet.

Acts 8:26-38: “And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert. ²⁷And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship, ²⁸Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet. ²⁹Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. ³⁰And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? ³¹And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him. ³²The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: ³³In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth. ³⁴And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? ³⁵Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. ³⁶And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? ³⁷And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. ³⁸And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.”

What are the requirements of those desiring baptism?

1. Repentance: Repentance is a change of mind that results in an outward turning around to face and move in a completely new direction (Acts 2:38; 20:21; 1 Thessalonians 1:9).
2. Faith: Faith is a response to something God has done. The Gospel is responded to by faith in believing Christ died for our sins, was buried, and arose again that we might be declared righteous (1 Corinthians 15:1-3; Romans 4:25). This results in confessing Jesus is the Lord of our lives, and committing ourselves to Him as our only means of salvation (Romans 10:9-10; Matthew 1:21; Mark 16:15-16).

These requirements for baptism automatically rule out one class of persons, that is, infants. By this very nature, an infant cannot repent and cannot believe. Therefore, an infant cannot be eligible for baptism. Water baptism is a decision to forsake one’s own way for the way of Jesus Christ. The ceremony was the natural conclusion to the conversion (turning to God) experience.

WATER BAPTISM (Teacher's Guide)

1. Read and explain Acts 2:22-23, 36.

Peter is showing the need of repentance.

2. What question is being asked in Acts 2:37?

What shall we do? How can we respond?

3. What is the answer to that question according to Acts 2:38?

- A. Repent! Turn to God for His mercy and forgiveness.

According to Acts 26:18, this involves what?

A turning from Satan and his ways to God and His ways;
asking for His mercy and forgiveness (see Luke 18:13-14).

- B. Be Baptized:

- (1) The word "baptize" is the Greek word "baptizo" and means "to identify with" or "to be made one with." Water baptism means an identification with Christ.
- (2) Water baptism was a sign of allegiance to the teaching and person of Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:19).
- (3) Water baptism is a dedication to follow the Lord Jesus Christ and to become His disciple (Matthew 28:19).
- (4) Baptism is for those who have now come to a place where they have repented of their sins and believe with all their heart in the Lord Jesus Christ to save them.

"Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ [give yourself up to Him, take yourself out of your own keeping and entrust yourself into His keeping] and you will be saved, [and this applies both to] you and your household as well" (Acts 16:31, AMP).

“And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. ³³And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. ³⁴And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house” (Acts 16:32-34).

- (5) Baptism is not for those who believe half-heartedly in the Gospel.

Acts 8:36-37: “And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? ³⁷And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”

- (6) Baptism is a demonstration of faith in Jesus Christ (Mark 16:16).

Mark 16:16: “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” Those that believe in Christ with all their heart for salvation will be baptized; those that don’t, won’t be baptized.

- (7) Water baptism is a decision to forsake one’s own way for the way of Jesus Christ. The ceremony was the natural conclusion to the conversion (turning to God) experience.

- (8) It is an appeal to God for a clear conscience. It is a call upon God to wipe the conscience clean from sin. (See 1 Peter 3:21 and Acts 22:16)

4. How many people, according to Acts 2:38, were to repent (turn to God for forgiveness), and be baptized?

Every one of you!

5. According to Acts 2:38, into whose name were people baptized?

In the name of Jesus Christ.

“Baptizing them into the Name” would indicate that the baptized person was closely bound to, or became the property of, the one into whose name he was baptized (Vine’s).

Galatians 3:26-27: “For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”

6. What was the result of people repenting and coming into a union with Jesus Christ? (Acts 2:38).

The remission of their sins.

Remission = A dismissal or release of sins. "A sending away of sins" (Vine).

7. Then what does God promise you? (Acts 2:38).

The gift of the Holy Spirit.

8. Forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit is promised to whom? (Acts 2:39).

You, your children, and to all that are afar off, as many as the Lord shall call.

9. Is He calling you now?

John 6:44 - Is He drawing you?

Acts 8:22 - What should you do according to this verse?

Then what should you do according to Acts 22:16?

Call on the Lord through baptism.

God will give you what according to 1 Peter 3:21?

A clear conscience.

What should you do according to Luke 11:13?

Ask for the Holy Spirit.

WATER BAPTISM

(Detailed Teacher's Guide)

Note: The following information may be read out loud (a numbered section at a time) with the person(s) being discipled. After each numbered section is read, pause and ask the question(s) that correspond to the paragraph(s), and then discuss them.

¹ Question: I need to know, do you have to be baptized to go to heaven? I love God and was baptized when I was seven years old. I am now eighteen, and someone from a non-denominational church told me that no one can be saved and baptized at such a young age. He also said that you had to be baptized to go to heaven, but my Baptist family said that you don't. I just want to go to heaven, and I am living for God in every way that I can, but I need to know if I need to be baptized again, now that I am supposedly of an age to be baptized. Please help me. God bless and thanks.

² Salvation and the forgiveness of sins come freely as a gift through faith in Jesus Christ. Acts 10:43 states, "All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name" (NIV). Salvation comes through faith, that is, trust and reliance upon Jesus and His shed blood to give you a right-standing before God. In Acts 10:44-48 the Holy Ghost was given to the believers (confirming their salvation) before they were baptized.

³ Even though this is true, at other times it seems that the forgiveness of sins happened at the time of baptism (see Acts 2:38). This is because baptism is an expression or act of faith that was expressed at the time that a person turned to Jesus in repentance and faith (Mark 16:16). It was also a way of calling on the Lord for a clear conscience (Acts 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21).

¹ What is the question that this young man is asking?

² According to Acts 10:43, salvation comes to us how?

³ (a) Baptism was an expression of faith that usually took place at the time of salvation.

How does Acts 2:38 express this truth?

(b) How does Mark 16:16 express this truth?

(c) Baptism was a way of calling upon the Lord. How does Acts 22:16 express this truth?

(d) Baptism was a way to call upon the Lord for a clear conscience. Does 1 Peter 3:21 confirm this truth?

⁴ If you truly, from your heart, turned to Jesus at the age of seven and were baptized, God accepts your child-like faith.

Baptism does have requirements—one requirement being repentance. Did you have a change of heart, a change of mind, that resulted in turning from sin to Jesus and His forgiveness? (Acts 2:38; Acts 20:21; Acts 17:30). Did you exercise faith in Jesus as your Lord and Savior? (Mark 16:16; John 3:16; Romans 10:9-10). If not, then turn to Jesus now, repent from your sins, turn to His grace to forgive you, and seal that decision to follow Him through water baptism.

⁵ Baptism is an act that expresses one's faith in Jesus. Without that faith, the act means nothing. People who turned to Jesus as Lord and Savior were willing to express that faith and openly confess Him in this public way. People who say no to Jesus' command are showing to some extent a dead faith. Faith is dead when people are unwilling to express it (James 2:18-20). Faith alone saves, but saving faith is never alone. It is always willing to express itself. Baptism was a way of expressing that faith. Baptism is not what saves, it is Jesus. Water doesn't wash away sins, it is the blood of Jesus. But faith applies His blood to you, and sometimes that faith was expressed at the time a person was baptized (Acts 22:16). The question is, have you repented? Do you believe in Him (Jesus)? If so, why do you delay? Arise and be baptized!

⁴ (a) What are the requirements for baptism according to Acts 2:38?
(b) What are the requirements for baptism according to Mark 16:16?
(c) Can an infant repent?
(d) Can an infant believe?

⁵ Read Acts 8:30-39. What is the next step after faith in Christ that a believer should take?

Water Baptism (Discipleship Questions)

Read Acts 2:22-24, 32-33.

1. What is being described in verses 22-24?
2. In verse 23, what was Jesus “delivered by”?
A. _____
B. _____
3. Was it possible for Christ to be held by the pains of death?
4. In verse 33, where was Jesus “exalted to”?
5. What did He receive from the Father?

Read Acts 2:36-39.

6. What has God made Jesus?
7. What was the response of those who heard these words?
8. What question did they ask Peter at the end of verse 37?
9. What were Peter’s two instructions for the people?
A. _____
B. _____
10. What gift would they receive if they did?
11. To whom was this “promise” for?
12. Does that include you?

Read Acts 26:16-18.

13. What was the purpose of Christ appearing to us?
A. _____
B. _____
14. When you minister and witness to someone about Jesus Christ, their eyes [heart] is opened in order for what to happen?
A. _____
B. _____

15. Once they have turned to God what two things will they receive?

A. _____

B. _____

16. What are they sanctified by?

Read Acts 16:30-33.

17. What question was asked of Paul?

18. What was the response of what this jailer must do to be saved ?

19. In verse 33, what happened the same hour of the night for the jailer and his household?

Read Acts 8:36-37.

20. After the eyes of the eunuch's understanding of the scriptures were opened, what was his question at the end of verse 36?

21. "Then Philip said, 'If you _____ with _____ your _____, you may.'"

22. "And he answered, 'I _____ that Jesus Christ _____ the Son of God.'"

Read 1 Peter 3:21.

23. What is the antitype (or symbol) which now saves us?

24. Does this baptism remove the filth of the flesh?

25. It is actually "the answer of a _____ toward God."

Read Acts 22:16.

26. What happens when you call upon the name of the Lord?

Read Galatians 3:26-27.

27. How many of us are sons of God?

28. How is it we are sons of God?

29. In order to "put on Christ" what did we have to do?

Read Acts 10:43.

30. Whoever believes in Jesus will receive what?

Read Mark 16:16.

31. According to this verse, who will be saved?

A. _____

B. _____

To Summarize:

Read John 6:44.

32. Are you feeling drawn by the Father?
(If you are doing this study, be assured, you are!)

Read Acts 8:22.

33. Since the Lord is drawing you, according to this verse, what must you do?

Read Acts 22:16.

34. Then what should you do?

Read 1 Peter 3:21.

35. What will God give you?

Read Luke 11:13.

36. What should you ask for from your heavenly Father?

Water Baptism (Discipleship Answer Key)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Death, crucifixion, resurrection of Christ | 20. What hinders me from being baptized? |
| 2. A. Determined purpose
B. Foreknowledge of God | 21. Believe – all – heart |
| 3. No | 22. Believe – IS |
| 4. Right hand of God | 23. Baptism |
| 5. Promise of the Holy Spirit | 24. No |
| 6. Both Lord and Christ | 25. Good conscience |
| 7. Cut to the heart | 26. Sins will be washed away |
| 8. What shall we do? | 27. All |
| 9. A. Repent
B. Be baptized | 28. Faith in Christ Jesus |
| 10. Holy Spirit | 29. Get baptized |
| 11. We and our children, all who are afar off | 30. Remission of sins |
| 12. Yes | 31. A. Believes
B. Baptized |
| 13. A. Make us a minister
B. Make us a witness | 32. Yes |
| 14. A. Turn them from dark to light
B. Turn them from power of satan to God | 33. Repent and pray |
| 15. A. Forgiveness
B. Inheritance | 34. Call upon the name of the Lord
be baptized |
| 16. Faith in Christ | 35. Good conscience toward God |
| 17. What must I do to be saved? | 36. Holy Spirit |
| 18. He received the word and washed their stripes | |
| 19. They were all baptized | |

WATER BAPTISM

by Don Krow
(Additional Information)

As we come to the teaching on Christian water baptism, it is of utmost importance that we be honest with ALL scriptures, asking God to give us light, and then make a quality decision to act upon that light (James 1:22).

Because of religion, tradition, and doctrines of men that make the Word of God of none effect (Matthew 15:3, 6-8; Mark 7:8-9, 13; Colossians 2:8), such questions as these have been asked, “My grandfather wasn’t baptized. Will he go to heaven?” or “Baptism is salvation by works, isn’t it?” Such questions would never have been asked of the early New Testament church. The reason that such questions would not be valid is because all New Testament believers were immediately baptized as they put their faith in Jesus as Lord, Messiah and Savior. All the apostles and disciples immediately baptized their converts never questioning it as being a work of the law. This is also true of the apostle Paul who establishes salvation by grace through faith without works (Acts 19:4-5).

These questions have only been asked because we have not practiced New Testament Christianity. The practice of many Christians today is “believe on the Lord Jesus Christ,” and when it is convenient and we can get enough people together, we will have a baptismal service. Later on, as you grow in the Lord, there is another experience we will tell you about called the baptism of the Holy Spirit. In the early New Testament church, there was very little time between these experiences—at the most—a few days, and in most cases, not even a few hours.

Because of a lack of practicing New Testament Christianity and the practice of our own traditions, God is calling the church again to act upon the Gospel as did the early New Testament church.

Look at New Testament Christianity and then compare it to the practice of the church today: Mark 16:15-16; Acts 8:35-38; Acts 16:14-15; Acts 2:36-41; Acts 9:3-6; 17-18; 22:12-16; Acts 16:30-34; Acts 8:5, 12, 14-15; Acts 10:43-48; Acts 19:1-6. It is because of a dishonest approach to the scriptures that denominations have built churches based on one scripture, such as Acts 2:38, while others have built churches on Acts 10:43. To get the whole truth on any subject, we must acknowledge and approach all of God’s Word on that subject. Comparing scripture with scripture, we must be willing to believe and act upon God’s Word, and understanding will come.

“Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4). Men fall into heresy when they choose which scriptures they would like to believe. The word “heresy” comes from a root word that means “to take” or “choose.”

Upon examination of the word “baptize,” we find that it is not actually an English word, but a Greek word written in letters of the English alphabet. If we write out the Greek in English letters, this gives us “baptizo.” Then with a change of the “o” to an “e,” we have the word “baptize.”

In Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance, we see the primary meaning of the word “baptizo,” “to make fully wet.” Strong’s gives the meaning of the verb “bapto” as “to cover wholly with fluid, hence to dip.”

What we have here is the idea of baptism by immersion. If we do not trust the Greek as our final authority, let us go to the Scriptures themselves to settle this all important question.

Please read Matthew 3:16, Acts 8:38, and Romans 6:4. (A burial is not placing a corpse on top of the ground and sprinkling some dirt on it. It is placing it in the ground.)

As we study such words as “baptize” it will lead us to examine other subjects such as “remission.” Acts 2:38 states repentance and Christian water baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus for the remission of sins. Upon examination of the word “remission,” we also see that Acts 10:43 states that “whosoever believeth in him (Lord Jesus) shall receive remission of sins.” It is with an equal approach that we must acknowledge both of these scriptures as being God’s holy Word to us. As a study on the subject of “remission” is done, we find that there could be no remission under any circumstances “without the shedding of blood” (Hebrews 9:22). John the Baptist’s baptism of repentance could only be a temporary baptism based on the shedding of blood of bulls and goats (Hebrews 10:1,4). When the Apostle Paul had discovered that certain disciples at Ephesus had only received John’s baptism, he immediately re-baptized them with Christian water baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus (Acts 19:1-5). It is only the blood of Jesus that can give remission of sins on a permanent basis (Hebrews 10:16-19).

As an objection that Christian water baptism is “works,” we are led to examine the subject of works. The Apostle Paul establishes the fact “that a man is not justified [declared righteous] by works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ” (Galatians 2:16). But what are the works of the law? Read Philippians 3:9. The works of the law are anything that you do to establish your own righteousness before God, saying, “Lord I’ve done these righteous deeds. I deserve now to enter Your kingdom.” Read Romans 10:3-4 very carefully.

As we study the subject of “works,” we discover another kind of “work” that must be present with saving faith. It is called “a work of faith.” Read 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3 and 2 Thessalonians 1:11. John Calvin said “Faith alone saves but saving faith is not alone.” A work of faith is a corresponding action that results from faith. If I shouted, “This building is on fire,” it would produce a work of faith, an action which would cause you to get up and run out of the building. To all those who said they believed but did not get up and go out of the building, they would perish. That is what we call intellectual assent or devil’s faith (James 2:19), a faith that is dead because it has no corresponding action (James 2:17, 20, 26).

We do not receive salvation by works, but works are the test as to whether our faith is real. James gives us several examples of this.

Read James 2:16. If a person has the means to help another but says, “Go your way, we will pray for you.” The fact that he could have helped but did not indicates that he really did not care. His words were mere empty talk.

Read James 2:19. Demons’ faith brings them no comfort, only fear. This shows that true saving faith is expressed by obedience and submission to God.

Read James 2:21-23. In Genesis 15:6 Abraham believed God to give him a seed from his own bowels in which all families of the earth would be blessed. As he believed, righteousness was imputed unto him

Because of the faith in Abraham's heart (Genesis 15:6), this faith led to a work of faith or result of faith, which was offering his son Isaac upon the altar. We read in James 2:22-23 (NIV), "You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete (or perfect) by what he did. And the scripture was FULFILLED that says, Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness."

So it is with Christian water baptism. The result of faith or work of faith that was always expressed when people believed on the Lord Jesus Christ was water baptism. This was practiced immediately upon conversion. So we could say that all those who believed and were baptized have fulfilled, or completed by faith and action, the scripture which says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." Read Acts 16:30-34. Christian baptism, understood correctly, does not take away from justification by faith but actually strengthens the point. Faith is made perfect, complete, or manifest, by a work of faith, which was usually water baptism in the early New Testament church. Read 1 Peter 3:20-21. The righteous man, Noah (Genesis 7:1), became heir of the righteousness that is by faith as his faith was expressed in preparing the ark (Hebrews 11:7). Baptism is the like figure or picture of this corresponding work of faith (1 Peter 3:21). James says, "Show me thy faith without thy works [which is impossible to do] and I will show thee my faith by my works" (James 2:18). God sees saving faith in the heart of a man before it expresses itself in action (Genesis 15:6). However, God will, through instruction, show a man how to express his faith outwardly (Genesis 17:10-14, Romans 4:10-11, Genesis 22, and James 2:22), thus bringing it to maturity and proving or making manifest the perfect will of God. Water baptism was a work of faith that the apostles demanded as a distinguishing factor between saving faith and intellectual assent.

On the day of Pentecost, 3,000 souls responded to the Gospel and were baptized (Acts 2:41). If the twelve apostles baptized, and it took two minutes a person to perform the act, that would mean that each apostle baptized eight and one-half hours that day. It was commonly known and understood by believers and unbelievers that all those who put saving faith in Jesus Christ as Lord, Messiah and Savior, would immediately be baptized.

When Jesus was baptized by John, He gave the reason for this act as "to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15). Jesus was already righteous, but through this act, He fulfilled or completed the righteousness that He already had in His heart. Christian baptism is the outward act of the believer in which he fulfills or completes the inward righteousness that he has in his heart through faith in Christ's atoning death and resurrection.

Many times as I've baptized people, they say, "I'm not going to be baptized unless so and so can baptize me." Such attitudes make baptism invalid, and for this reason, the apostle Paul refrained from baptizing (1 Corinthians 1:12-15). Read Galatians 3:27. Baptism is done in the name of Jesus. There is no room here for anything less than Christ. Baptism is an identification with Christ not with man.

Through baptism the truth of the Gospel message is acted out in the life of the believer, thus bringing before the church the central theme of Christ's atonement. Each time a believer is added to the church, they themselves act out, in the ordinance of baptism, their identification by faith with Christ—first in His death and burial unto sin, and second in His resurrection to newness of life (Romans 6:3-5, Colossians 2:12).

Jesus gave a commission in Matthew 28:19 to baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. As we look at actual examples of baptism, we see that the apostles and disciples baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Baptizing in the name of Jesus fulfills the commission of Matthew 28 because in Jesus Christ “dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily” (Colossians 2:9).

It is also true that the scriptures reveal that “whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus” (Colossians 3:17). This means that when I go to work, when my wife is cooking dinner, or whatever is done, to do it in the name of Jesus. This doesn’t mean that every time I do something I have to stop and say in Jesus’ name I go to work, in Jesus’ name I cook dinner, etc.” God is not so concerned about the words we say as He is about the attitude of our hearts. So it is with baptism. God is not so concerned with the words that the preacher said over those being baptized as He is with the obedience to the commission of Christ. So in other words, the preacher may have said the words, “I baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,” but the act was done in obedience to the person of Christ. Therefore, the person was baptized in the name of Jesus regardless of the actual words spoken over the individual.

It is also true that someone can say the words “in Jesus’ Name” and actually not do the “deed in Jesus’ Name.” For example, if I were to teach a Bible study, and I began to pray: “Father, in Jesus’ name, I come before you and ask you to anoint this teaching because I have been paying my tithes, going to church every Sunday and Wednesday, giving much money to the poor. So God bless this teaching, in Jesus’ name, Amen.” Although I said, “in Jesus’ name” I did not pray in the name of Jesus. Why? Because I listed all of my righteousness as a means of God’s blessing instead of trusting Christ’s righteousness as a means of God’s blessing. I prayed IN MY NAME although I said, “in Jesus’ Name.”

This point is brought out because of the division that has come about in the body of Christ over the words the preacher used when baptizing converts.

I do believe, in accordance with the mode of Christian baptism, probably the name of the Lord Jesus Christ was used. I say this because of the actual examples of baptism in the book of Acts (Acts 2:38; 8:16; 10:48; 19:5). But, I would never tell someone to be re-baptized, or that his baptism was invalid for the reasons that have already been stated. Baptism is an identification with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. To re-baptize because of one’s objection to not pronouncing the right words over the convert seems to take away from the central truth that He (Jesus) has offered one sacrifice for sins forever (Hebrews 10:12).

What are the requirements of those desiring baptism?

1. **INSTRUCTION:** A new convert needs to receive a certain amount of teaching to enable him to understand the nature and purpose of baptism. Read Matthew 28:19-20.
2. **REPENTANCE:** Repentance is a gift that God grants people who want to come to Him and be saved. It is a new attitude, a change of mind, a change of heart that results in one turning from sin to God and, ultimately, to His ways.

In Matthew 3:8 John the Baptist said, “Bring forth fruit that is consistent with repentance [let your lives prove your change of heart]” (Amplified Bible) And the Apostle Paul said in his preaching to the Gentiles “that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds appropriate to repentance.” (Acts 26:20; NASV). From these scriptures we can see that repentance is a change of heart, a change of mind and that good works are the fruit (evidence) of that changed heart.

3. **FAITH:** Faith is responding to something God has done. The Gospel is responded to by faith in believing Christ died for our sins, was buried, and arose again so that we might be declared righteous (1 Corinthians 15:1-3, Romans 4:25). This results in making Jesus the Lord of our lives and committing ourselves to Him as the only One that can save us (Romans 10:9-10; Matthew 1:21; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 8:36-37).

These requirements for baptism automatically rule out one class of persons, and that is infants. By its very nature, an infant cannot be taught, cannot repent, and cannot believe. Therefore, an infant cannot be eligible for baptism if we are going to follow the Scriptures.

There are only two reasons people are not baptized immediately after putting faith in Jesus Christ as Lord:

1. **IGNORANCE:** The lack of proper instruction. This can be corrected in a matter of moments by going to the Scriptures.
2. **BEING CUT OFF:** That is, for example, someone in the hospital who has just put faith in Jesus as his Lord but dies without the opportunity to express that faith by water baptism. Read 1 Samuel 16:7.

The purpose of this teaching is to once again lay the foundation of the doctrine of Christ (Hebrews 6:1-2); for a house cannot stand that does not have a proper foundation. Faith in Christ is that which justifies (Acts 15:8-9), but a faith that is unwilling to be expressed is dead faith (James 2:17). Only true, living faith can make a true, living Christian.

IDENTITY IN CHRIST 1

Andrew Wommack

The Lord didn't want to just forgive our sins but to have intimate relationship with us, and as we have said, the only way to achieve that is to receive salvation by grace not by our own effort. If we had to produce it through our own goodness, we would never qualify. It is the grace of God that produces salvation, and once that happens, we become righteous in His sight.

We have dealt with Old Testament scriptures where it appeared that God was demanding perfection. The real purpose of the law isn't for us to keep it perfectly, but rather to show us how incapable we are of saving ourselves. We talked about repentance and that it means to turn from ourselves. We talked about putting faith in the Lord and making a commitment to Him. We have even ministered on water baptism, and hopefully by this time, everybody has received that.

I want to share now what takes place in the life of a believer. I'll start with 2 Corinthians 5:17-18, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us unto himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation." "If we are in Christ" is a terminology that is used over 300 times in the New Testament, always referring to a union relationship with God. Once that takes place, it says you become a new creature. Some translations actually say "a new creation," one says "a new species of being that never existed before."

This leads to a critical issue that I believe is imperative to understanding your new identity in Christ: It did not take place in the physical realm. It isn't talking about your physical body, saying that it completely changes, that your looks change. If a person was fat before they were saved, they'll still be fat afterward unless they go on a diet. It also isn't talking about your mental or emotional part—what most people consider to be the real "them." If you weren't too smart before you were saved, you won't be too smart after you're saved, but you will still have a lot of the same memories and thoughts.

There is a third part, and according to this scripture, by process of elimination, it has to be the part of us that is changed—our spirit man. A scripture that verifies this is 1 Thessalonians 5:23 where Paul is praying for the Thessalonians, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." That passage shows that we have a spirit, soul, and body. The body part is very obvious, the part of me that you see, my outward person. We all recognize that there is another part beyond that, our emotional or mental part, which Scripture calls the soul. We know that even though a person may not physically touch you, they can touch you by their words, either in a positive or negative way. Most people are in tune with the physical and soulish parts, but according to Scripture, there is another part, which is the spirit.

The spirit is the part of us that is changed and is new after salvation. It is actually the life-giving part. James 2:26 says, "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." That shows that it is the spirit that actually breathes life into our physical bodies. It is where our life comes from. In Genesis 2 when God created Adam and Eve, Adam's body was complete, but then God breathed into him the breath of life. This word "breathe" in Old Testament Hebrew was the exact same

word that we use for breath, and it is translated “spirit” in other places. God created the physical body and the soulish person of Adam, but then he breathed into him the breath of life, and he became a living soul. The spirit is the part of us that gives life.

Prior to salvation, a person making a total commitment of their life, and the Lord coming into them, the spirit within them was dead. Ephesians 2:1 says, “And you hath he quickened [made alive], who were dead in trespasses and sins.” We know we were alive before we were born again, but this is speaking spiritually. Death in the Bible doesn’t mean ceasing to exist as some people today think of it. It literally means “separation.” When a person physically dies, they don’t cease to exist. The Bible teaches that they go immediately into the presence of God or into the presence of the devil in hell. The soul and spirit continue to live, but there is a separation from the physical body, which dies and decays.

When Genesis 2:17 says, “in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die,” it didn’t mean they would die physically but spiritually, that they would become separated from God. The spirit, the part that God breathes into us, which actually gives life and motivation, became separated from God’s supernatural life . . . His holy and complete life . . . what the Bible calls “zoe” life or “life in an absolute or abundant sense.” Man then began to degenerate. They still functioned, but they were functioning independent, separated from God. That’s really what causes all the problems in our lives . . . all our emotional stress.

When a person comes to the Lord, they receive a new spirit and are born again, which is the terminology Jesus used in John 3:5. In the same way man is born physically with a spirit, soul, and body, his spirit was separated from God, functioning independently of Him. When he is born again, he receives the Spirit of Christ. Galatians 4:6 says, “And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.” God literally places his Spirit inside of us and we now have a new quality of life, a new identity, and are a totally new person in our spirit.

The rest of the Christian life is learning in our soulish, mental realm what is taking place in our spirit, beginning to think that way, changing our attitudes, thoughts, and actions accordingly. The truth is, one-third of your salvation is over when you receive Jesus Christ as your Lord. Your spirit becomes completely changed. It is the exact same spirit you will have throughout eternity. It already has love, joy, peace, and is full of the presence of God. There is no lack or inadequacy in your spirit, but you have to perceive that, which is the reason studying the Word of God is so vital to the Christian life. Jesus said in John 6:63, “It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.”

So God’s Word is Spirit; it tells us spiritual truth and reality. You can’t perceive what is taking place on the inside in your spirit through looking in a mirror, because you’re looking at your physical person. You can’t perceive it by taking an inventory of how you feel because that’s searching your soulish part. But there is a spirit part of you that, according to 2 Corinthians 5:17, was completely changed. Old things passed away and everything in it is brand new. You now have the same power, the same wisdom, the same faith, the same everything that God has, and it’s all located in your spirit. Victory in the Christian life comes through the renewing of your mind to these facts.

The Bible says that as you begin to believe this, then it begins to manifest: “According to his divine power hath given all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of

him that hath called us to glory and virtue” (2 Peter 1:3). God has already deposited those things inside of every born again believer. You are a totally brand new person, but until you get knowledge you won’t change. As long as you continue to think, “Well, I’ve never succeeded, so I guess I’ll still not succeed. Now that my sins are forgiven, maybe I won’t go to hell, but I have always been a failure.” Proverbs 23:7 says, “For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he.” If that’s the way you think, and that’s how you see yourself, that’s what you’ll continue to experience.

Victory in the Christian life comes when you are able to look into the Word which is Spirit and life, see who you are, see what God has done, and begin to believe it. Change your thinking and your actions so that you begin to plan for success instead of failure. As you do that, Proverbs 23:7, which usually is used negatively, will actually begin to be a positive Scripture. If you begin to see yourself in Christ, if you recognize your new identity in Him, then the love, joy, peace, and power that has been deposited on the inside of you will begin to manifest.

I pray this will help you and that God will open your heart to recognize what you have inside of you through Christ Jesus.

IDENTITY IN CHRIST 1

(Outline)

2 Corinthians 5:17-18: “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. ¹⁸And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation.”

In the New Testament there are many phrases describing who we are “in Christ.” There are over 300 references to our union and relationship with Christ. This new identity happens in our spirits.

According to 1 Thessalonians 5:23 you are a three-part being, “And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

1. BODY: The part you see - your flesh.
2. SOUL: Your mind, will and emotions.
3. SPIRIT: The life giving part of your being. James 2:26 says, “the body without the spirit is dead.”

Prior to salvation your spirit was dead. Ephesians 2:1: “And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.” Death in the Bible means separation from God. Before you’re born again, your spirit is separated from God.

When you’re born again you receive the spirit of Christ. John 3:3-8: “Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. ⁴Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born? ⁵Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. ⁶That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. ⁸The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.”

Galatians 4:6: “And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.” God places His spirit on the inside of you; in your spirit. This Spirit of God on the inside of you gives you a new identity, you now can identify with all that He is. You have the same quality of life that God has, with all the same power, faith, love, and wisdom. 1 Peter 1:3: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”

IDENTITY IN CHRIST 1

(Teacher's Guide)

1. A. According to 2 Corinthians 5:17, "if any man be in Christ," he is what?

 A new creation.
- B. What changes take place in a person who has become a new creation?

 Old things have passed away; behold all things have become new.
2. What part of us becomes new? See 1 Thessalonians 5:23.

 Our spirit. See also 1 Corinthians 6:17. It's not a physical change or a mental change. It is the spirit man that becomes alive.
3. Before we are born again what is the condition of our spirit in relation to God? See Ephesians 2:1,12.

 Dead in our trespasses (sin). Separated, being without God.
4. Death in the Bible means what? See James 2:26.

 Separation.
5. In the place of separation from God, what does God offer us? See Romans 6:23.

 Eternal life.
6. According to 1 John 5:11-12, how do we receive eternal life?

 By receiving God's Son.

IDENTITY IN CHRIST 1

(Detailed Teacher's Guide)

Note: The following information may be read out loud (a numbered section at a time) with the person(s) being discipled. After each numbered section is read, pause and ask the question(s) that correspond to the paragraph(s), and then discuss them.

¹ We've talked about how the Lord didn't want to just forgive our sins but that He really wanted an intimate relationship with us. We've talked about the only way to achieve that is to have salvation by grace and not by our own efforts. If we had to produce it through our own goodness, we would never qualify for it. So, it is the grace of God that has provided salvation. Once we are saved we become righteous in the sight of God.

² I want to share with you what takes place in the life of a believer. Let me start with a scripture from 2 Corinthians 5:17. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." This verse says that if we are in Christ we become a new creature. In the New Testament there are many phrases describing who we are "in Christ." There are over 300 references to our union and relationship with Christ. This new identity happens in our spirits. Some translations will actually call it "a new creation." Another says a "new species of being that never existed before."

³ When a person becomes born again, he receives the spirit of Christ. Galatians 4:6 says, "God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father." God literally places His Spirit on the inside of us and we now have a new quality of life—a new identity. In our spirits we are totally brand-new. The rest of our Christian lives we are learning what has taken place in our spirits, by renewing our minds—the soulish mental realm—to what has happened. Our spirits already have love, joy, peace, and the presence of God in them. The spirit part of you, according to 2 Corinthians 5:17, was completely changed. Old things passed away. Everything in it is brand-new.

¹ How are we saved according to Ephesians 2:4-5?

² (a) 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 says you were once what?

(b) According to 1 Corinthians 6:11 now what are you?

³ (a) When you are born again, what happened to you according to 1 Corinthians 6:17?

(b) What happened to you according to 2 Corinthians 5:17?

(c) Where does Christ dwell according to Ephesians 3:17?

(d) Where does Christ live according to Galatians 2:20?

⁴ Victory in the Christian life comes when you are able to start looking into the Word, which is spirit and life, and see who you are and what God has done. When you believe, you'll change your thinking—change your actions—and begin to plan for success instead of failure. You'll begin to see yourself differently.

⁵ When you begin to see yourself in Christ—recognizing your new identity in Christ—then the love, joy, peace, and power that has been deposited on the inside of you will begin to manifest. I pray that this will help you and that God will open up your heart to let you recognize what you have on the inside of you through Christ Jesus.

⁴ As we behold the Lord, whose image are we changed into? (2 Corinthians 3:18).

⁵ What has been deposited on the inside of you by God's Spirit? (Galatians 5:22-23).

IDENTITY IN CHRIST 1

(Additional Information)

There are actually two yous: The new, born-again you, and the old unregenerate you—the new man and the old man. You should feel good about the new man. As you begin to see who you are in Christ, that revelation should give you joy, peace, confidence, and security. But at the same time, you must recognize that the old man is not godly and cannot be trusted. It should not be propped up and improved.

See Yourself as Jesus Sees You

“Strip yourselves of your former nature—put off and discard your old unrenewed self—which characterized your previous manner of life and becomes corrupt through lusts and desires that spring from delusion; ²³And be constantly renewed in the spirit of your mind—having a fresh mental and spiritual attitude; ²⁴And put on the new nature (the regenerate self) created in God’s image, (Godlike) in true righteousness and holiness” (Ephesians 4:22-24, Amplified).

You can’t be a thief if you don’t see yourself as a thief. You can’t commit adultery if you don’t see yourself as an adulterer. You can’t be a liar if you don’t see yourself as a liar.

When we really are able to see who we are in Christ, we will see how holy and pure we have become through Jesus. This new image of ourselves will be reflected in our emotions and in our actions. That is powerful!

Imagine a woman who was a prostitute before she was born again. Suppose she really asked the Lord to save her—she truly put her faith in Him and believed she was forgiven. But imagine that she didn’t change her image of herself. If she saw herself as just a forgiven prostitute, eventually she would go back into prostitution, or at least into a promiscuous lifestyle. Why? Because it would be impossible for her to consistently operate differently from the way she saw herself.

On the other hand, suppose that same woman was not only born again, but renewed her mind. Suppose she could see herself as a new person—righteous, holy, pure, and clean. If she could get a vision of that, I guarantee, it would be reflected in her life. She would no longer stoop to that old lifestyle, because she would not want to take the great gift God had given her and put it back into that kind of situation.

Christians are failing in the area of controlling their actions and emotions because they don’t know who they are in Christ. They are looking at their physical circumstances and listening to what others are saying about their old person. They aren’t listening to what God says about the new, born-again part of them. They see themselves as failures, and it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy that Psychology and our society call low self-esteem.

Who Are You?

We have established a basic outline of the truth—there is the new you and the old you. The new you has the mind of Christ, and all the abilities of Christ. We have the picture of ourselves in Christ; now we need to finish coloring it. It's not enough to know that there is a new you. You have to have more details before you can actually see what has happened to you in your spirit.

To get an accurate mental image of your physical features, you look in a mirror or take a photograph or video of yourself. Did you know that when you do that you are using faith? It takes faith to look at a mirror, a photo, or a video and say, "That's me." How do you know for sure that the image you are seeing is really you?

Many people think that's a ridiculous question. Yet, I remember a professor I had in my first year of college who asked that very question. He was trying to get us to drop all of our preconceived ideas and come into the class with an open mind. So he took a chair, set it in front of us, and systematically tried to prove to us that the chair wasn't there.

Of course, on the surface everyone said, "Well, that's stupid; I can see it." But then he started reasoning.

"How do you know that what you're seeing is true?" he asked. "How do you know your eyes are accurately interpreting to your brain the things you're seeing? How do you know you don't have some kind of a problem that causes you to see things that aren't really there?"

He was challenging things that most people never really think about. By the time we left his class, if we had followed his line of reasoning, we couldn't prove that the chair was there after all.

That kind of reasoning is prevalent in our society today. We have challenged basic foundational principles that we should accept by faith. God's Word is truth and we ought to accept it as such. (See John 17:17).

When it comes to looking in a mirror, most of us have never challenged the validity of what we see. We are seeing a reflection that we, by faith, believe to be us but it only represents us. For instance, we don't know for sure that we have hair on the top of our head.

Now you may say, "Oh, yes I do. I've seen it in the mirror."

No, what you've seen is a reflection of the hair on your head.

"Well, I can feel it with my physical hands."

Maybe so, but you still haven't seen it. How do you know that what you feel is accurate?

One way or the other, you are taking something by faith. The same thing happens when you look at your spirit. You can't see your spirit in a mirror, so how can you accurately view your spirit?

There are some people who depend upon their senses so much, that they can't accept there is any realm of reality except what they can see, taste, hear, smell, or feel. Because they can't physically sense their spirit, they give up trying. "It's hopeless," they say. "I don't really understand spiritual things." It's because they are looking in the wrong place.

God's Mirror

"The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63).

If the words Jesus spoke are spirit and life, then the Word of God is not just a book, it's a look into the spiritual realm. It's like a spiritual mirror we use to see spiritual truth.

If we want to see if our hair is combed, we look in a mirror, trusting that the representation we see is true. In the same way, if we want to see what our spirits are like, we go to God's Word and see what God says about us, trusting that whatever He says about us is the way we are - whether we feel it or not.

We may not feel like our hair is combed, but that really has nothing to do with whether it is combed or not. Someone may be able to convince us with their words that our hair is messed up, when in truth it really is combed. So we can't go by our feelings; we have to look and see for ourselves and trust that what we see is true.

It's the same thing with the spirit man. You may have read in the Bible, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13). You may know this intellectually, but you don't feel it. So when you come up against a problem you feel like, "Oh, man, I don't have any power." But it doesn't matter what you feel if you are going by what God's Word says. The truth is that whatever God's Word says about you is spirit and it is life - it is spiritual truth.

"Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. ²³For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: ²⁴For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. ²⁵But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed" (James 1:22-25).

James talks about a man who looks in a mirror and sees his natural face, then goes his way and immediately forgets what he looks like. But James also says that anyone who looks into the perfect law of liberty (God's Word), and continues in it will be blessed.

Just as we look in a mirror to see ourselves physically, we can look into God's Word to see ourselves spiritually, as God see us.

When a person makes Jesus Christ the Lord of his life, there is a transformation that takes place on the inside. Most Christians know this in their minds, but very few of them have ever had an accurate mental picture or perception of who they really are in the spirit. Because they don't have the correct information about who they are in Christ, they can only operate in the information they do have, and they naturally act out of their old selves. They act out of their old abilities instead of their newfound abilities in Christ. This is where so many Christians miss God's best for them.

Most Christians have the desire to do the right things, but they feel unequipped. They feel that they don't have the ability. I know of many Christians who are praying for faith, power, and all kinds of spiritual gifts. The truth is, according to God's Word they already have them—all believers have them.

Now you may say, "But wait a minute, I don't have these things. I know because I don't feel them." It doesn't have anything to do with what you feel, it has to do with what you believe.

You Are a New Spirit

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."
2 Corinthians 5:17

Identifying who you really are in Christ and living in accordance with that identity is the key to the Christian life. The key to understanding who you are in Christ is recognizing that it is your spirit that was born again. It is your spirit that changed.

"I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Thessalonians 5:23

According to this Scripture, we have three parts—a spirit, a soul, and a body. Paul prayed that God would keep and preserve the Thessalonians wholly, or completely, in spirit, soul, and body.

The body is very easy to identify; it is the physical part of us. The soul is the emotional part, or what most people consider to be their real personalities. It includes our thinking processes, our feelings and our will. Then there's another part of us the Bible calls the spirit, and this is actually the most important part.

In James 2:26 the Bible tells us that as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also. The spirit is the dynamo of our whole being. It is the life-giving force within us.

IDENTITY IN CHRIST 2

Andrew Wommack

In our last lesson we discussed what it meant to be born again, that in our spirit, our heart is changed. We used 2 Corinthians 5:17, which says, “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God.” We began to see that when a person is born again, a total transformation takes place in their spirit, and the only way to know what has transpired in your spirit is through the Word of God. You can’t perceive it through external things, and you can’t perceive it through your emotions because that is in the soulish realm, but in the spirit part of you there is a total transformation.

Ephesians 4:17-18 says “This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord; that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.” This is saying to believers that we aren’t supposed to act like unbelievers, people who don’t have God in their hearts, walking only in the vanity of our minds.

Do you know God changes your heart? You don’t have to operate just from your mental ability. You can operate out of your spirit where there is an untold reservoir of God’s ability, power, and wisdom, but first of all you have to know that these things have been deposited in you. Verse 18 says if you walk in the vanity of your mind it will darken your understanding. Knowledge is talking about your mental ability, but when you start talking about what’s been placed in your heart and spirit, there is understanding, it is the supernatural wisdom of God. If you are walking in your mind, your understanding is darkened and you are alienated from the life of God, which is in you, through blindness or hardness of heart. We have to stop perceiving things based only on our mental ability, begin to understand, and let our spirits speak to us.

To repeat the scripture used in John 6:63, “the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.” God’s Word is how we perceive what has taken place in our spirit. Let me use a few scriptures which show the things that took place when a person received Jesus into their life. Ephesians 4:24 says, “put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.” When a person is born again, their spirit becomes righteous and truly holy. The Bible actually speaks of two types of righteousness.

There is a righteousness we produce through our own actions and thoughts, and you must maintain that type of righteousness in relationships with other people. If you don’t live right and do right, your boss may fire you or your spouse may divorce you, so you need to have your own self-righteousness. God, however, doesn’t deal with you based on this external righteousness.

There is also a righteousness that took place in your spirit, where God literally gave you His righteousness. In 2 Corinthians 5:21 it says that God the Father made the Son to become sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. So in your spirit there is a righteousness which goes far beyond your external righteousness, based on what you do, and is based on what God did for you. You literally received the righteousness of God, which is what this verse is talking about. You were created in righteousness and true holiness. You aren’t growing into being righteous, but in your spirit you are already

righteous. A simple definition is that you're already in right standing with God.

God is pleased with you based on the spirit, not on anything else. A verse that really makes this come alive is John 4:24, where Jesus was speaking to the woman at the well in Samaria. He said, "God is a spirit: and them that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." Again, our spirit is where the change took place. We're already created in righteousness and true holiness and are brand new creatures. According to Ephesians 2:10, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works." In your spirit you are perfect and complete. There is no sin or inadequacy. Also it says in Ephesians 1:13, "after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise."

Some of you may think, "Well, when I first believed on the Lord, I did believe I was totally forgiven and cleansed and everything was fine, but since that time I have sinned, I have failed God again." If you did, you failed in your actions and your mental and emotional part, but your spirit did not sin. It was sealed just as a woman puts fruit into a jar and then puts paraffin over it to make it airtight and keep all impurities out. God sealed you, so when you were born again you received a new spirit and, when you sin, that sin does not penetrate your spirit. You have a new identity. John 4:24 says God is a spirit, and He looks at your spirit. For you to have relationship with God, you have to fellowship with and worship Him, based on who you are in your spirit, not in your flesh.

This is really the great transformation in the Christian life; that a person has to change their identity. You have to relate to God based not on what you do in the physical realm, not what you think in your mind, but by who you are in the spirit based on what He has done for you. That's a completed work, something that does not fluctuate (change back and forth). You were created in righteousness and true holiness. That is the spirit part of you and to fellowship with God, you have to worship him in spirit and in truth. You have to stand in this identity of who you are in Christ.

Another related scripture is 1 John 4:17, "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world." This is saying that as Jesus is, so are we in this world. Some people read a Scripture like that and say, "The Bible is so hard to understand." You look at yourself, and you know you aren't like Jesus. You know you aren't acting perfectly, you still get upset and irritable, and you have times you just blow it. This isn't talking about your physical body. Your physical body isn't like Him. The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 15:44 that we now have a mortal body, but we will have to change it for an immortal body. Our corruptible body will have to become incorruptible, so the physical body is not yet changed and your soul is not completely changed.

In 1 Corinthians 13 it says that we know in part and prophesy in part, but some day we will know all things, even as also we are known. Your mind isn't completely changed, but in your spirit you're a new creature. Everything in the spirit has been changed, and as 1 John 4:17 states, "as he is so are we in the world." It didn't say so are we going to be someday in the future, but so are we in this world. Some people sing songs about when we all get to heaven, that farther along we'll know all about it, in the sweet by and by. Praise God for heaven, but one-third of your salvation is complete right now. Your spirit is as saved as it will ever be. When you get to heaven, it won't be changed again. It won't have to be refurbished. It's not going to be infused with more power, more life. You have living inside you right now God Almighty in your spirit. That is why this verse can say that as he is so are we in this world.

The only way to understand this is to know that it has to be talking about your spirit man. Romans 8:17-18 states, “And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time, are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.” Notice it didn’t say the glory which shall be revealed to us. Some people think when they get to heaven, God will suddenly change them into somebody who has victory and power and all these things. It is more accurate to say that when we get to heaven, this glory will be revealed in us; it was in us all along. If you have been born again and made Jesus Christ your Lord, you have God Almighty living on the inside of you. He didn’t come in partially—you didn’t get just a little bit of God—but in your spirit you are identical. In 1 Corinthians 6:17 it says, “But he that is joined unto the Lord, is one spirit.” The Greek for the word one used there is *heis*, which means a singular one, to the exclusion of another. In other words, it is not saying we are one in purpose or there is a unity, but that there is a singular one to the exclusion of another.

Your spirit has been recreated. It is totally new, and everything that is true of God is true of a born-again believer’s spirit. You have the same power, the same knowledge, the same joy, the same peace, the same everything. The rest of the Christian life is an education of your brain so that you begin to believe it and act accordingly. As much as you believe and act according to who you are in the spirit, you will see it manifested in your life. That’s what many Christians are missing, and what I want to leave with you today. You have a new identity. I pray God will open up your heart and show you that you are a new person, that you will get into the Word of God and begin to find out what is truly yours in Christ Jesus, believe it, act like it, and release this life of God through you.

IDENTITY IN CHRIST 2

(Outline)

Ephesians 4:17-18, 24: “This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, ¹⁸Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart. ²⁴And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.”

God changes your heart so that you don't have to operate out of just your mental ability, but you can operate out of your spirit where God's ability, power and wisdom have been deposited. You have to stop perceiving things based only on your mental ability and begin to understand and let your spirit speak to you.

Looking into and believing God's Word is how you will perceive what has taken place in your spirit. John 6:63: “It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.”

When you receive Jesus into your life, the spirit part of you becomes righteous and holy. In your spirit you are perfect and complete. You are not growing into righteousness. Ephesians 4:24: “And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.”

God gave you His righteousness which means right standing with Him. God is pleased with you based on the spirit. 2 Corinthians 5:21: “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” John 4:24: “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”

After you believed, your spirit was sealed with the Holy Spirit similar to when a woman puts paraffin on top of a jar of fruit to seal it and keep out all impurities. Sin cannot penetrate your spirit and make it unholy. Ephesians 1:13: “In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise.”

The great transformation in the Christian life is that you change your identity. God looks at you in your spirit. For you to have relationship with God, you have to fellowship with Him and worship Him based on who you are in your spirit, not in your flesh. John 4:24: “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”

What God has done for you is a completed work. It doesn't fluctuate.

If you are born again, you are identical to God in your spirit right now. Your spirit has been recreated and everything that is true of God is true of your spirit. 1 John 4:17: "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world." 1 Corinthians 6:17: "But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit."

As much as you believe and act according to who you are in the spirit, you will see it manifested in your life and the life of God in you will be released.

IDENTITY IN CHRIST 2

(Teacher's Guide)

1. The only way we can know that total transformation has taken place in our spirits is by the Word of God.

What does 1 Corinthians 6:17 say has happened to us?

Our spirits have been joined unto the Lord.

2. A. According to Ephesians 3:17, where does Christ now dwell?

In our hearts.

- B. How does this happen?

By faith.

- C. According to 1 John 5:12, who must we possess to have salvation?

The Son (Jesus Christ).

- D. What is the mystery that was hidden from ages and generations but is now made known? See Colossians 1:26-27.

Christ in you, the hope of glory.

3. According to Ephesians 4:23-24, what part of us was made righteous?

Our spirits.

4. According to 2 Corinthians 5:21, whose righteousness do we possess?

Christ's.

5. According to Ephesians 1:4, what is the standing of the believer before God?

Holy and without blame.

6. According to Ephesians 1:6, how were we accepted?

In the beloved (Jesus Christ).

IDENTITY IN CHRIST 2

(Detailed Teacher's Guide)

Note: The following information may be read out loud (a numbered section at a time) with the person(s) being discipled. After each numbered section is read, pause and ask the question(s) that correspond to the paragraph(s), and then discuss them.

¹ In our last lesson, we discussed what it meant to be born again—that in our spirits, our hearts are changed. We used 2 Corinthians 5:17 that says, “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” When a person is born again, there is a total transformation that takes place in the spirit, and the only way a person can really know what has transpired in the spirit is through the Word of God. You can't perceive it through external things. You can't perceive it just through your emotions, because that is the soulish realm. In the spirit part of you, there is a total transformation.

² Did you know that God changes your heart? You don't have to operate just out of your mental ability; you can operate out of your spirit. In your spirit there is an untold reservoir of God's ability power and wisdom, but you first have to know that it has been deposited in you.

³ Let me use a scripture to show you some things that take place when a person receives Jesus into his life. Ephesians 4:24 says “And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.” When a person is born again, the spirit part of him becomes righteous and truly holy. The Bible actually speaks of two different types of righteousness. There is a righteousness that we produce through our own actions. You must maintain that type of righteousness in relationships with other people. If you don't live right and do right, your boss may fire you, or your husband or your wife may divorce you. So, yes, you need to have your own self-righteousness. When it comes to God, He doesn't deal with you based on this external righteousness. 2 Corinthians 5:21 says that God the Father made the Son “to be sin for us . . . that we might be made the righteousness of God in him”

¹ When God says something, is it the truth? (Romans 3:4).

² What has been deposited on the inside of you according to Colossians 1:27?

³ (a) According to 2 Corinthians 6:16, you are the “what” of the living God? The temple.

(b) Where does God dwell according to this verse?

(c) How do you live the Christian life according to Galatians 2:20?

⁴ There is a righteousness that goes far beyond your external righteousness (which is based on what you do); this righteousness is based on what God did for you. You literally receive this righteousness through faith in Jesus Christ.

⁵ When you look at yourself you know you aren't like Jesus. You know you don't act perfectly. You still get upset, irritable, and have times when you just blow it. Jesus took our sin and became sin for us so that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him (2 Corinthians 5:21). If you accept the first part of this verse, that Jesus became sin for us, then you have to accept the next part, that we received His righteousness. Many Christians miss the point that we have a new identity—we have a new spirit. I pray that God will open up your heart and show you that you are a new person - that you will get into the Word of God and begin to find out what it truly means to be in Christ Jesus.

⁴ What is the Bible saying in Romans 3:22?

⁵ (a) How were you accepted before God, according to Ephesians 1:6?
(b) What are we according to Ephesians 2:10? Does God create junk?
(c) Who was Saul persecuting according to Acts 9:1?
(d) Who did Jesus say Saul was persecuting? (Acts 9:4-5).

IDENTITY IN CHRIST 1 and 2 (Discipleship Questions)

Read 2 Corinthians 5:17

1. If anyone be in Christ, he is what?
2. What happened to the old things?
3. What things have become new?

Read Ephesians 2:1-2

4. What was the condition of your spirit before you were born again, or made alive?
5. How did we walk?
 - A. _____
 - B. _____
 - C. _____
6. How did we conduct ourselves?

Read Ephesians 2:4-5

7. What is God rich in?
8. What did God do for us while we were still dead in trespasses?
9. Why did He do this for us? (verse 4b)

Read 1 Corinthians 6:9-11

10. Will the unrighteous inherit the Kingdom of God?
11. Can you relate with many of the descriptions on this list?
12. What three things are evident in your life now because of Jesus according to verse 11?
 - A. You were _____
 - B. You were _____
 - C. You were _____
13. Notice the word “were.” Is this a A. Past B. present or C. future condition?

Read 1 Corinthians 6:15, 17, 19-20

14. Who is your body a members of now?
15. "He who is joined with the Lord is _____ with Him."
16. (Verse 19) What is your body now?
17. Who resides in this temple?
18. For what were you bought?
19. In what two ways are we to glorify God?
A. _____
B. _____
20. To whom do our bodies and spirits now belong?

Read Ephesians 3:17

21. Where does Christ now dwell?
22. By what act on our part is He able to abide in our hearts?

Read Galatians 2:20

23. "I have been _____ with Christ."
24. If you no longer live, who is it that now lives in you?
25. By what do you now live the life you live in the flesh?
26. Faith in Whom?
27. What two things did Jesus do for you?
A. _____
B. _____

IDENTITY IN CHRIST 1 and 2
(Discipleship Answer Key)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. A new creation | 19. A. In body
B. And spirit |
| 2. They are gone | 20. God |
| 3. All things | 21. In my heart |
| 4. I was dead in trespasses and sin | 22. Thru faith |
| 5. A. According to the course of this world
B. According. To the prince of the power
of the air
C. In the spirit of disobedience | 23. Crucified |
| 6. In the lusts of our flesh | 24. Christ |
| 7. Mercy | 25. By faith |
| 8. Make us alive together with Christ | 26. The Son of God |
| 9. Because of His great love with which He
loved us | 27. A. Loved me
B. Gave Himself for me |
| 10. No | |
| 11. Yes | |
| 12. A. Washed
B. Sanctified
C. Justified | |
| 13. A. Past | |
| 14. Christ | |
| 15. One spirit | |
| 16. A temple | |
| 17. Holy Spirit | |
| 18. A price | |

IDENTITY IN CHRIST 2 (Additional Information)

2 Corinthians 5:17: “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”

(2 Corinthians 5:17) One of the greatest differences between the saints in the Old Testament and those in the New Testament is the indwelling presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. The victorious New Testament believer is not living for the Lord, but it is actually the risen Christ living through him. Paul described this beautifully in Galatians 2:20 when he said, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”

There are over a hundred scriptural references to the indwelling presence of the Lord in the life of a believer. Following is a list of just a few of these.

“and I will put my SPIRIT WITHIN YOU” (Ezekiel 36:27),

“Even the Spirit of truth . . . he dwelleth with you, and SHALL BE IN YOU” (John 14:17),

“and ye in me, and I IN YOU” (John 14:20),

“I IN THEM” (John 17:23),

“But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the SPIRIT OF GOD DWELL IN YOU. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” (Romans 8:9),

“And if CHRIST BE IN YOU” (Romans 8:10),

“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that THE SPIRIT OF GOD DWELLETH IN YOU?” (1 Corinthians 3:16),

“But he that is joined unto the lord is ONE SPIRIT” (1 Corinthians 6:17),

“What? know ye not that YOUR BODY IS THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY GHOST WHICH IS IN YOU, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?”
(1 Corinthians 6:19),

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but CHRIST LIVETH IN ME”
(Galatians 2:20),

“That CHRIST MAY DWELL IN YOUR HEARTS by faith” (Ephesians 3:17),

“To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is CHRIST IN YOU, THE HOPE OF GLORY” (Colossians 1:27),

“That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the HOLY GHOST WHICH DWELLETH IN US” (2 Timothy 1:14),

“But the anointing which ye have received of him ABIDETH IN YOU” (1 John 2:27),

“And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and HE IN HIM. And hereby we know that he ABIDETH IN US, by the Spirit which he hath given us.” (1 John 3:24),

“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I WILL COME IN TO HIM, and will sup with him, and he with me” (Revelation 3:20).

(2 Corinthians 5:17) The New International Version translates this passage as, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation: the old has gone, the new has come!” The new creation that Paul is speaking about is described in scripture in the following ways: The new birth (John 1:13; 3:3), the new creation (Galatians 6:15), His workmanship created in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:10), newness of life (Romans 6:4), a spiritual quickening (Ephesians 2:1, 5), a spiritual resurrection (Colossians 2:12; 3:1), a new heart and spirit (Ezekiel 36:26, and Romans 7:6), the putting on of the new man (Ephesians 4:24), the inward man (Romans 7:22), the circumcised heart (Romans 2:29), the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4), regeneration (Titus 3:5), and so forth.

The fruit of the new creation is righteousness and true holiness (Ephesians 4:24, and 1 John 2:29), being conformed to the image of God’s Son (Romans 8:29), a heart that knows God (Jeremiah 24:7, and Hebrews 8:11), God’s law written within the heart (Hebrews 8:10), a hatred of sin and a love for righteousness (1 John 3:7-10), works of faith, that is works produced as the by-product of faith (James 2:18), good fruit borne unto God (Romans 7:4), brotherly love (1 John 4:7), an active faith in Christ (1 John 5:1), and so forth.

(2 Corinthians 5:17) This is a key passage of scripture that explains many other passages of scripture. The Bible presents salvation as a life transforming experience. Change is one of the distinguishing characteristics of a true believer. Much confusion has been caused by a failure to understand that this change takes place first in the spirit first and then is reflected in the outward thoughts and actions, proportional to the way one renews his mind. This verse makes it very clear where change takes place. It describes this change as total and complete (all things become new, not just some things). Therefore this change has to take place in our born-again spirits. Why is that? If you were fat before you were saved, you will be fat after you are saved, unless you go on a weight loss program. Your body doesn’t instantly change. Also, your soulish or mental realm doesn’t instantly change. If you were uneducated before you were saved, you will be uneducated after you are saved. Begin to renew you mind. The only part of you that is left is your spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:23).

It is your spirit that is instantly changed at salvation. It is perfect (Hebrews 12:23). It cannot sin (1 John 3:9). Everything that is true of Jesus is true of your born-again spirit (1 Corinthians 6:17, Ephesians 1:3, 15-23, Colossians 2:9-10, and 1 John 4:17). Your spiritual salvation is complete. At salvation, you receive the same spirit that you will have throughout all eternity. It will not have to be changed or cleansed again. It has been sealed with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13) and is therefore sanctified and perfected forever (Hebrews 10:10,14, and 12:23).

The rest of the Christian life is not trying to obtain faith, joy, or love, and so forth, from God, but rather a release of what we already have in our spirits (Galatians 5:22-23) into our souls and bodies. Failure to understand this has caused some people to despair when they don't see sufficient change in their lives after coming to the Lord for salvation. It must be understood that the change is internal in our spirits and the outward change will take place as we renew our minds to the Word of God.

2 Corinthians 5:21: "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

(2 Corinthians 5:21) This verse says that Jesus paid all the wages of our sin. Whatever that required, Jesus paid it. The scripture does not make a major issue of how this payment for sin was accomplished, so there's no need for us to do so. It suffices to say that Jesus became what we were and suffered what we should have suffered, so that we could become what He is and experience what He has for us.

(2 Corinthians 5:21) The typical Christian has accepted the first part of this verse, but rejected the second half. Many believe Jesus bore our sin for us, but few believe He actually made us righteous. They relegate that to something that happens in the future, in eternity.

However, Paul makes the forgiveness of our sins and our becoming righteous a package deal. That is to say, if one part is true, then the other part is true. It's like a coin. Coins have two sides. You can't have only "heads," or only "tails" All coins have both. Likewise, any person who accepts that Jesus paid for his sins also has to accept that He made him righteous.

Ephesians 4:17: "This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind."

(Ephesians 4:17) Verses 17-20 describe the lifestyle of the unbeliever in an orderly progression. In this example Paul admonishes that Christ and His doctrine do not in any way reflect this kind of evil conduct. To the Ephesians he states, "But you have learned nothing like that from Christ."

Such evil conduct is the result of: (1) the vanity of the mind (v.17), that is the absence of any purpose; (2) having the understanding darkened (v.18) [purposelessness is the direct result of darkness]; (3) separation from God's life (v.18), which is spiritual death; (4) blindness or hardness of heart (v.18); (5) being past feeling (v.19), that is having no conscience; and (6) given over to lasciviousness, uncleanness and greed (v.19).

Ephesians 4:24: "And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."

(Ephesians 4:24) The Greek word that was translated "put on" in this verse is "ENDUO," which means "to sink into (clothing), put on, clothe one's self" (Thayer). This is a word picture describing the way we should wear our new born-again self on the outside, through our actions, in a way that all can see. In the same way that people see our clothes instead of our nakedness, so our new attitudes and actions should be visible to everyone, instead of our flesh—carnality.

The New International Version translates this phrase “which after God” as “created to be like God.” Today’s English Version translates this same phrase “which is created in God’s likeness.” That’s the point Paul is making. Our new man was created just like Jesus. In our spirits, we are right in this world, as Jesus is (1 John 4:17).

Notice the use of the word “created.” The believer’s righteousness and holiness are not things that he grows into. We were created that way when we were born again. This righteousness and holiness are in our new spirits, which we received from God. We are still working out this righteousness and holiness in our actions, but our born-again spirits were created that way.

By Paul specifying “true holiness,” he is implying that there is false holiness. False holiness is the good we do. While it is important to act holy in our relationships with men, we need to remember that anything other than the “true holiness” which is the gift of God, is inadequate when relating to God. God is a Spirit (John 4:24), and we must worship Him in spirit and in truth (true holiness). God sees our spirits and deals with us based on this true holiness which is in our new man.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A CHRISTIAN SINS?

Don Krow

Today we want to look at what happens when a Christian sins. The Bible tells us in 1 John 1:8-9, “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sin, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sin, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” As Christians, we will eventually stumble and we will eventually sin. The thing that makes us different from what we were when we were outside of Christ, before we were converted, is that we now have a new nature. It grieves us to sin. I don’t want to sin, I want to live a righteous life. I want to live a holy life, but what happens when I do sin? Do I need to go back and get saved again? Is that what the Bible is teaching? In that case, my Christianity in a sense is that I’m constantly going to the altar, constantly asking God to forgive my sins. I’m possibly always thinking I need to get born again, again, again, and again. What does happen when a Christian sins?

Romans 4:2 says, “For if Abraham were justified [declared righteous] by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God.” He would have something to boast about, but not before God. If salvation was based on our merit, the things we do, then we could brag. We could say, “Hey, Lord, I really appreciate what you did on the cross, but remember the things I’ve done!” So throughout eternity, we’re going to pat Jesus on the back and pat ourselves on the back for the things that we’ve done. No! God has designed salvation in such a way that there will be no boasting or glory on man’s part. The only glory and boasting will be in the Lord Jesus Christ. In Romans 3:27 it says, “Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.” Where is boasting? It is wiped out by the law of faith. In faith we trust, rely on, and cling to the Lord Jesus Christ and what he has done as the means of the forgiveness of our sins and the gift of eternal life.

What happens when a Christian sins? Romans 4:2 says that if Abraham were justified by his own actions, he would have some reason to boast, but that’s not what happened. How does the Scripture say a man is saved? by his own performance? by his own works? by the things he does? How was Abraham counted righteous or declared righteous? Was it through the things he did or didn’t do, or was it that he simply believed, trusted, and relied on God through faith? The Bible says in Romans 4:3, “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness.”

What would happen if one day I was driving down the highway, had lived a good Christian life for 25 years, and suddenly a guy ran around me really fast in his car, swerved, and I became angry and cursed him. Then because I wasn’t watching where I was going, I turned, hit a telephone pole, and was killed. Would I perish because I didn’t have time to confess my sin and say, “God, I shouldn’t have gotten angry. I shouldn’t have cursed, but I did.” Would I perish? Some people might think I would, but I want to tell you what I believe the Bible says.

What happens when a Christian sins? What holds me in position so that I wouldn't perish even if I did sin? Scripture says Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness. He was declared righteous and God put righteousness to his account through his faith—not through the actual works of his own righteousness, but because he believed God. Isn't that good news? The thing that holds me in position and keeps me from perishing, even though there are times when I fail and sin, is that Jesus bore all of my sin on the cross, and my faith in Him and His blood that was shed for me is a faith that believes His sacrifice was perfect, that he died once for all, and that the offering lasts forever.

Hebrews 10:1 says, "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect." I want to ask you a question: What couldn't the law do according to this verse? It says that it could not make the worshippers, or "the comers thereunto," perfect. The law could never make a man perfect, without defect or flaw. What else does it say here in verse 2? "For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins." Notice in verse 1 that these sacrifices were "offered year by year continually."

You see, the old covenant showed us through the very sacrifices offered over and over and over that it could not deal with sin. But the Bible says here that if a sacrifice came that could really deal with sin, it would remove the very consciousness of sin, and there was a sacrifice that came that accomplished that. Do you know what it did? Hebrews 10:14 says, "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified," which those who are set apart to God by the offering of Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary for our sin. When we put faith in Him, it says by that one offering He has perfected us . . . for how long? a week? two weeks? until the first time we sin? No, it says He's perfected forever those that are set apart to Him.

I want to go back to Romans 4:6 and show you this verse: "Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works." David of the Old Testament is saying there will be a day through a new covenant when God will impute righteousness, right standing, without man working for it. Then he said in verse 7, "Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered." This is the clincher: Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. It doesn't say He might not, sometimes He will and sometimes he won't. It says blessed is the man to whom, the Lord will not impute sin." In the Greek that's what is called an emphatic negative. It means he'll never, not ever put sin to our account. This is the good news of the New Covenant. Hebrews 10:16 says, "I will put my laws into their hearts [on their heart] and in their minds [upon their mind also] will I write them," and part of that agreement is that God says this in verse 17: "and your sins and iniquities I will remember no more."

What holds you in position, in righteousness and right standing, even though you sinned and didn't have time to confess it? It's your faith in Jesus Christ and His atoning work on your behalf. His name is Jesus and He saves people from their sins. Even though I had the car wreck, cursed, got angry, and didn't have time to confess my sin before I was killed, my faith in Jesus Christ, His salvation, and the forgiveness of my sins through Him never wavered. Therefore, I'm that man, that blessed man, to whom the Lord will not impute sin. I'm that man of whom the Bible says in Hebrews 10:14, blessed is that man—"By one sacrifice He has perfected me for ever," because I've been set apart unto Him through faith in Him.

Isn't this wonderful news? My friend, I do believe we need to confess our sins at the time we commit them, just like in any relationship. In my marriage when I do something wrong, I need to say, "Honey, I'm sorry I did that." But you know what? My relationship never changes. I am just as married before as after when I messed up or failed, but I need to clear the air. I need to confess and say, "I agree, Honey, I shouldn't have done that." There are times when I need to do that with God, but through faith in Jesus Christ and what he's done, He never held that sin against me. Jesus' blood was shed for me, and I put faith in Him.

God bless you today as these truths soak into you, as you continue this discipleship program, and as we discover these wonderful truths together.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A CHRISTIAN SINS? (Outline)

1 John 1:7-8: “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. ⁸If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”

We will stumble and commit sin as a Christian. Now that we have a new nature, it grieves us when we sin.

Romans 4:2: “For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God.”

If we could gain justification or righteousness by what we do, then we could brag, but there will be no pats on our backs in eternity. There is no glorying or boasting on man's part.

Romans 3:27: “Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.”

What Jesus has done for us cleanses us.

Romans 4:2: “For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God.”

How are you saved? By your own performance? No, you believe in God and it's accounted to you as righteousness.

Would I perish if I sinned and died immediately afterward? No, not if I am believing Jesus to keep me in a position of righteousness before God. Jesus bore all my sin on the cross. I have faith that his sacrifice was perfect.

Hebrews 10:1-2: “For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. ²For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.”

The Old Testament Law could not make us perfect, without defect or flaw. A perfect sacrifice eliminates even the consciousness of sin.

Hebrews 10:14: “For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.” Jesus was our perfect offering to God.

Romans 4:6-8: “Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, ⁷Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. ⁸Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.” In the original Greek language this is an emphatic negative—God will never not ever impute sin to us.

Hebrews 10:17: “And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.”

By my faith in Jesus Christ and His atoning sacrifice and forgiveness through Him, I’m a blessed man to whom the Lord will NOT impute sin. Just as in a marriage relationship, when one does something wrong to his mate, he confesses his sin to clear the air, yet the sin does not make him unmarried; neither does our sin change our right standing with God.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A CHRISTIAN SINS? (Teacher's Guide)

1. According to Romans 4:5, what is the only kind of person that God can justify?

An ungodly person.
2. According to Romans 4:2-3, God put something to Abraham's account (when he believed) which he did not have before. What was this?

Righteousness (right standing with God).
3. According to Romans 4:22-24, if we believe as Abraham did, what will be put to our account?

Righteousness
4. According to Romans 4:6, believers are imputed righteousness before God without what?

Without works.
5. According to Hebrews 10:14, how long are believers perfected before God?

Forever.
6. A. According to Romans 5:17, how is righteousness received?

As a gift.

B. What does the word "gift" imply?

Something freely given, without cost to the person receiving it.
7. To trust Jesus to be your personal Saviour you must trust Him to take you all the way to where?

Heaven.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A CHRISTIAN SINS? (Detailed Teacher's Guide)

Note: The following information may be read out loud (a numbered section at a time) with person(s) being disciplined. After each numbered section is read, pause and ask the question(s) that correspond to the paragraph(s), and then discuss them.

¹ Have you ever considered the type of person that God justifies, that is, declares righteous? The Scripture tells us that it is the UNGODLY. "But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who JUSTIFIES THE UNGODLY, his faith is reckoned as righteousness" (Romans 4:5; NASV).

² The context surrounding this passage speaks of the man, Abraham. Abraham did many ungodly things, such as giving his wife to another man, lying, and so forth. (see Genesis 20). But never did Abraham have to worry about where he stood before God. You see, although God may have approved or disapproved of the things that Abraham did, Abraham's acceptance before God was not based upon his performance, but rather upon his faith and trust in God. Even though Abraham was a sinner, and when he put his trust in God, God put something to his account that he did not have before, and that was righteousness.

You see, ABRAHAM WAS CREDITED AS RIGHTEOUS EVEN AT A MOMENT WHEN HE WAS UNGODLY. Justification is not the act of making righteous, but rather declaring a BELIEVER as righteous even though he is in a sinning state (1 John 1:8).

³ In Romans, chapter 4, it further states that the words "he (Abraham) was accepted as righteous" were not written for him alone. They were written also for us who are to be accepted as righteous, who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from death. He was given over to die because of our sins, and was raised to life to put us right with God (Romans 4:23-25; TEV).

Do you understand? God is willing, because of Jesus' death upon the cross, to declare you forgiven, in right standing and righteous in His sight. God does this because He wants to and can legally do so because of Jesus' death for our sins.

¹ According to Romans 4:5, what is the only kind of person that God can justify?

² (a) Complete this statement "Abraham's acceptance before God was not based upon his performance, but rather upon what?

(b) According to Romans 4:2-3, God put something to Abraham's account (when he believed) which he did not have before. What was this?

³ According to Romans 4:22-24, if we believe as Abraham did, what will be put to our account?

⁴The Bible states in Romans 4:6-8 “Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, ⁷saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. ⁸Blessed is the man to whom the Lord WILL NOT impute sin.”

The Greek word that is translated “will not” in verse 8 is what is called an emphatic negative and it means “not ever.” This is the strongest language possible that says those who receive forgiveness will not ever have their sins held against them. He didn’t just say “did not” or “does not” but “will not” implying that even future tense sins have been dealt with through the sacrificial offering of Jesus once and for all (Hebrews 10:10,14).

Most Christians have the concept that the sins that they committed before they professed faith in Christ were forgiven at salvation, but any sins that are committed after that time are not forgiven until they are confessed.

All our sins—past, present, and future—were forgiven us through the one offering of Jesus.

If we had to confess every sin committed after our born-again experience to maintain our salvation, no one would ever make it. What if we forgot to confess some sin? That puts the burden of salvation back on us.

⁵I will state it once more. Justification is not the act of being made righteous by the things that you do, but rather, it is being declared righteous because Jesus’ blood was shed for you. This gift of righteousness is yours (to those who receive it by faith) and gives you a right standing before God, even though in your daily life you still make mistakes and sin (1 John 1:8).

⁶Can you see it? Jesus wants to be your personal Savior and Lord. Have you ever considered what a savior really is? If you were drowning in the ocean and I tossed you a book on “How to Swim,” would I be your personal savior? Of course not! If I got out of a boat and showed you how to swim, would I be your personal savior? No, I would only be your example. You see, a saviour is someone who rescues you and takes you safely all the way to the shore. To trust Jesus as your personal Savior means that you must trust Him to take you safely all the way to heaven or you have not trusted Him as your Savior.

⁴(a)According to Romans 4:6, believers are imputed righteous before God without what?

(b)According to Hebrews 10:14, how long are believer’s perfected before God?

⁵(a)According to Romans 5:17, how is righteousness received?

(b)What does the word “gift” imply?

⁶To trust Jesus to be your personal Savior you must trust Him to take you all the way to where?

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A CHRISTIAN SINS? (Discipleship Questions)

Read Romans 4: 3-8

1. "Abraham _____ God and it was accounted to him for _____."
2. To him who works, the wages are counted to him as A. Debt B. Grace? (circle one)
3. Who does God justify according to verse 5:
4. Does that person work or believe? (circle one)
5. What is accounted to him as righteousness?
6. Does God impute or (charge to your account) righteousness
 - A. According to your works
 - B. Apart from your works
 - C. How nice a person you are
7. "Blessed are those whose _____."
8. "Blessed is the man _____."

Read Hebrews 10:14-18

9. For how long are believers perfected before God?
10. What is the Covenant the Lord makes with us?
 - A. (verse 16) _____
 - B. (verse 17) _____
11. Again, how long will God remember our sinful deeds?

Read Romans 5:17

12. By what two means will we reign in life through Jesus Christ?
By receiving:
 - A. _____
 - B. _____

Read 1 John 1:7-10

13. What and Who cleanses us of all our sin?

14. What are we if we say we have no sin?

15. What happens if we confess our sins?

A. _____

B. _____

16. How is it that we would make God a liar?

Read Psalm 32:5

17. What happens when we acknowledge our sins to the Lord?

Read Psalm 78:38

18. What is the Lord full of towards us?

19. What did He forgive?

Read Psalm 85:2

20. "You have _____ the iniquities of Your people;
You have _____ their sin."

Read Psalm 103:12

21. How far will the Lord remove our transgressions from us?

Read Colossians 2:13-14

22. How many of our trespasses has He forgiven?

23. Where are our trespasses now nailed?

Read Romans 8:1

24. If our sins were nailed to the cross—past, present and future—how long should we wallow in self-pity and condemnation?

Read Mark 2:5-11

25. Jesus not only healed us physically, He also did what according to this verse?
26. This made the scribes indignant. Jesus perceived this, addressed the issue at hand, and asked the scribes what question?
Verse 9 “What is easier to say, _____ or
_____.”
27. What do you think the answer is?

To say “your sins are forgiven you” is easier because there is no physical evidence.
You must go on faith that it is so.

28. What did Jesus do to prove that the paralytics sins were forgiven? (verse 11-12)

Read Romans 6:1-2, 6, 15-16

29. Shall we go ahead and sin because we know we are forgiven?
30. What is Paul’s explanation as to why we must not follow sin?

Read Romans 3:23-26

31. Who has sinned and fallen short of the glory of God?
32. Since we have all sinned, how is it we are justified freely?
33. Why did God pass over our sins that were previously committed? (verse 26)?

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A CHRISTIAN SINS?
(Discipleship Answer Key)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Believed – righteousness | 19. My iniquity |
| 2. A. Debt | 20. Forgiven
Covered all |
| 3. Those who do not work | 21. As far as the east is from the west |
| 4. Believe | 22. All |
| 5. His faith | 23. To the cross |
| 6. B. Apart from your works | 24. Never |
| 7. Lawless deed are forgiven
and whose sins are covered | 25. Forgave our sins |
| 8. To whom the lord shall not impute sin. | 26. Your sins are forgiven you or
take up your bed and walk? |
| 9. Forever | 27. Your sins are forgiven you |
| 10. a. Put my laws into their hearts and minds
b. Their sins and lawless deeds I will
I will remember no more | 28. Healed him physically |
| 11. No more | 29. Certainly not |
| 12. A. Abundance of grace
B. Gift of righteousness | 30. You will be a slave to whoever you yield
yourself and obey |
| 13. The blood of Jesus Christ | 31. All |
| 14. Deceived and without truth | 32. By His grace |
| 15. a. He is faithful to forgive us
b. Cleanse us from all unrighteousness | 33. To demonstrate His righteousness and to
justify the one who has faith in Jesus |
| 16. If we say we have not sinned | |
| 17. He forgives my sins | |
| 18. Compassion | |

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A CHRISTIAN SINS (Additional Information)

Romans 10:14: “How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?”

Paul had just conclusively proven that salvation was not according to a person's performance but according to his acceptance of God's grace by faith in Christ Jesus. This is great news! Yet this great news will not do anyone any good if they don't know it. The gospel has to be heard to release its power (Romans 1:16).

Verses 14 and 15 of Romans chapter 10 show a number of things that must happen for a person to be born again. The individual must believe, but he needs to have something or someone to believe in. Therefore, someone has to share the gospel with him. But for that to happen, others have to send the ministers to the uttermost parts of the earth. So there are three areas of responsibility for salvation. An individual has to believe, someone has to preach, and others have to send them out. Satan tries to harden a person's heart through the deceitfulness of sin (Hebrews 3:13), to the point that the gospel will not penetrate. If people are faithful to the two other responsibilities, salvation still will not occur if the individual rejects the good news.

Many times people are hungry and ripe for salvation, and still there is no one to share the good news with them. If Satan can stop people from preaching the gospel, because of a lack of preachers or a lack of people who will send them, then he can stop the individual from being saved.

As Christians we cannot take responsibility for peoples' reactions to the gospel, but we must take responsibility for preaching the gospel and giving so others can preach the gospel.

Romans 3:26-27: “To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. ²⁷Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.”

(Romans 3:26) Paul restates this amazing truth that it is the righteousness of Jesus that has been given us. We don't just have enough righteousness to slip into heaven. We have been given Jesus' righteousness. First Corinthians 1:30 says, “But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.” Jesus is my righteousness! Second Corinthians 5:21 says, “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

(Romans 3:27) Boasting, bragging, or pride about our holiness or spiritual accomplishments are sure signs that we don't understand justification by grace through faith as Paul taught in this verse. If we acknowledge that we are no better than anyone else, regardless of our conduct, and that the only way we obtained peace with God was through putting faith in what Jesus did for us, then there is no room for boasting about our achievements. It was the accomplishments of Jesus that saved us.

Pride is the root of all divisions in the church today. Therefore, the prevalence of division in the church is a painful testimony to the lack of this foundational truth of justification by grace through faith.

Notice that Paul refers to the Law of faith. Faith is governed by law, just as gravity or electricity. If we would view faith as a law, rather than something that sometimes works and other times doesn't, we would begin to get very different results.

The law of electricity has been on earth since creation. Man has observed it in such things as lightening and static electricity, but it was not until someone believed that there were laws that governed the activity of electricity that progress was made to put it to use. Likewise, none deny the existence of faith, but it is only when an individual begins to understand that there are laws that govern faith, and learns what those laws are, that faith begins to work for him.

Romans 4:1-2: "What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? ²For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God."

(Romans 4:1) The question is, "What good then were Abraham's works?" Paul answers this indirectly. Paul states what Abraham's works were not good for. They were not good enough to grant him justification in the sight of God—that came by faith. He shows that Abraham's works or efforts didn't earn him anything from God. Abraham was justified by faith for over thirteen years before he performed the act of circumcision that the Jews insisted was necessary for right standing with God.

(Romans 4:2) Our own good works will only allow us to boast if we're comparing ourselves with other people. However, in the sight of God, not one of us has anything to brag about. We have all come short of the glory of God.

Romans 4:6-8: "Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, ⁷saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. ⁸Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin."

(Romans 4:6) King David was living under the Old Covenant law. However, this scripture that Paul quoted from Psalm 32, as well as the things David wrote in Psalm 51 when repenting for his sins against Uriah and Bathsheba, show that he had a tremendous revelation of the salvation by grace through faith that was coming with the Messiah.

(Romans 4:8) The Greek word that is translated “will not” in this verse is what is called an emphatic negative and it means “not ever.” This is the strongest language possible that says that those who receive forgiveness will not ever have their sins held against them. He didn’t just say “did not” or “does not” but “will not” implying that even future tense sins have been dealt with, through the sacrificial offering of Jesus, once and for all (Hebrews 10: 10,14).

Most Christians have the concept that the sins they committed before they professed faith in Christ were forgiven at salvation, but any sins that were committed after that time are not forgiven until they are repented of and forgiveness is asked. That is not the case.

All our sins—past, present, and future—were forgiven us through the one offering of Jesus. If God can’t forgive future tense sins, then none of us can be saved because Jesus only died once, nearly 2,000 years ago, before we had committed any sins. All our sins have been forgiven.

Why then, 1 John 1:9? “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” This is not speaking of the eternal salvation of our spirit but rather the salvation of our souls (James 1:21, and 1 Peter 1:9). It’s our spirits that are born again at salvation, and sin will never be imputed to our born-again spirits. They have been sanctified and perfected forever (Hebrews 10:10,14; 12:23), and cannot sin (1 John 3:9).

However, we are still in the process of our souls being saved (James 1:21, and 1 Peter 1:9). When we sin, the devil has a legal right to bring his forms of death into our soulish area (Romans 6:16). How do we get the devil out once he has come in? We confess our sin, then God brings that forgiveness that is already a reality in our born-again spirits out into the soulish realm and the devil has no right to stay.

If we had to confess every sin committed after our born-again experience to maintain our salvation, no one would ever make it. What if we forgot to confess some sin? That puts the burden of salvation back on us.

We must remember that “God is a Spirit” (John 4:24) and we must worship Him through our new born-again spirits. Therefore, we truly are blessed because God will not hold any sin against our spirit. Our spirits are clean and pure (Ephesians 4:24, Hebrews 12:23, and 1 John 4:17) and will not change due to our performance.

INTEGRITY OF GOD'S WORD

Andrew Wommack

In our previous lessons we discussed a number of things, and hopefully, you've now made a commitment of your life to the Lord to know Him personally. The most important thing for growth in the Christian life is knowledge of God's Word and understanding of its power. When I was teaching that we have a new identity and that our spirit has been changed, I quoted John 6:63 which says that the only way you can understand the Spirit is through the Word of God. The Word is Spirit and life. God has communicated things to us in His Word that reveal His life and the change that has taken place in our hearts.

Mark 4 is a tremendous chapter about the integrity God's Word has—the power, the character, and the faith in it. There were at least ten parables taught during this one day. You have to compare Mark 4 with Matthew 13 and Luke 8 to come up with that. There were a number of parables, one of which was about the sower sowing seed. The Lord compared the Word of God to a seed, and said that you can't grow a crop without planting seed. In the same way, you can't really have God's life come into your physical realm without taking the seed of His Word and planting it in your heart so it will produce. God's Word teaches us attitudes, thoughts, etc.

In Mark 4:26-27 it says, "So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground." Remember that in verse 14 it says this seed is the Word of God. God isn't really teaching you how to be a farmer, but using a natural thing to illustrate spiritual truth. "So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how." Now, I believe that's important. It says the man doesn't really understand. He doesn't know how this is happening.

Some people say, "I just don't understand what you're talking about. How can reading the Word of God really change me and cause God's life to come alive inside me?" I don't totally understand it, but I know it works. I don't understand how you can put a tiny seed in the ground and have an entire stalk of corn come up with ears of corn on it and reproduce a hundred fold. Nobody fully understands it, but it works, and I tell you that this works. Reading God's Word and letting it begin to saturate you changes your attitude, your experience, and your perceptions.

Verse 28 says, "For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself." The earth was made to incubate seed, and to germinate and release that life. Your heart was made for the Word of God—it really was. God's Word was created to be placed in your heart. Just taking a Bible and holding it close, putting it on your coffee table, or carrying it with you doesn't have any virtue. It doesn't release power in your life. You have to take the Word, make it a seed, and plant it in your heart. When you do that, your heart is designed to bring forth fruit of itself. It will automatically change, the way things work in your life. The verse continues, "first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear." This implies that there are stages or steps to growth and maturity. People come to me all the time expressing that they're believing God for something really good, a godly thing I can agree with. But if they have never done anything, if they have never led a person to the Lord, I can guarantee they aren't going to have a television or radio ministry within the next few weeks.

You have to do things in steps. There are stages to receiving from God, and that's what this parable is illustrating. First of all you have to start, and then comes the hope, and then the faith, and then it produces results. There are always steps to victory. No one is going to go from zero to 1,000 miles per hour all at once. Though it may be a godly desire, it isn't going to work that way. This Scripture is showing that the kingdom of God is like a seed. The Word has to be planted in your heart and growth comes in stages: first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear. The next verse says, "But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come." There are stages, but eventually there will come a time of fruitfulness and maturity.

The point is made in verse 35, "And the same day when the even was come, he saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side." Jesus had been teaching them all day about the power of the Word, how the Word is like a seed, how it will release God's life into your life. He'd been teaching them this in at least ten parables, so here He gives them a test. He tells them, "Alright, here's the word—let's go to the other side." He didn't say, "let's get into the boat, go half way across the lake, and drown," but "let's go to the other side." Then He got into the boat and went to sleep. The story goes that a great storm came and filled the boat. You have to remember that this wasn't a cabin cruiser with berths below deck where Jesus was dry and didn't know what was going on. It was an open boat and Jesus was asleep, sloshing around in the water. The reason this was significant is because He knew what was going on, but He was still trying to sleep. The disciples got upset, came to Him, and said, "master don't you care that we perish?" In other words, "do something—get a pail and bail water, row, do something. You're not pulling your weight."

Many times people do the same thing with God today and say, "God, why haven't you done something?" God has done something—he's provided everything we need through the atonement of the Lord Jesus. He has produced His Word and given us all these seeds. It's our job to sow them into our hearts. It's not our job to call out, "Oh, God, why haven't you healed me?" God has healed you. "By his stripes you were healed" (1 Peter 2:24). He's given us that Scripture, and it's our job to take the seed, put it in our hearts, and meditate on it until it releases life. But the disciples wanted to wake Jesus up and say, "Why don't you do something?" He got up, rebuked the wind and the waves, they ceased, and then He turned around and said, "Why are you so fearful? How is it you have no faith?" He didn't say, "Hey, guys, I'm sorry. I should have done something." No, His part was to teach them the Word and give them promises, and it was their part to take the Word, believe the promises, and make them come to pass.

It's the same with you; God's Word is exactly that powerful in your life. It has everything in it you will ever need—prosperity, healing, deliverance, how to live in relationship with other people, how to have joy and peace. It's a total recipe for victory. God has provided everything through Jesus coming to this earth. He gave you everything it takes to succeed in every area of your life in seed form in the Word. All you have to do is take the seeds of the Word of God and plant them in your hearts through reading it, meditating on it, thinking on it, and letting it take root on the inside of you. As we do that, we will be able to stand up and stop the storms in our lives.

I believe God's best was for these disciples to take the teaching Jesus gave them that day and say, "Let's go over to the other side." They could have said, "According to everything He taught to us today, this is a promise. This is the creator of the universe who said let's go to the other side, not let's go half way and drown. They could have taken that word, mixed it with faith, and rebuked the wind and the waves. That's exactly what Jesus said: "Oh you of little faith, why did you doubt?" You know what? We need to believe God's Word.

A scripture we need to close this with and that you need to recognize is Hebrews 4:2, "but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it." God's Word will not work without being mixed with faith in your heart. It's just like a seed. Archaeologists have actually taken seeds from the Pharaohs' tombs that had lain dormant for thousands of years, and when planted and given nourishment, those seeds began to grow.

This Word has all the power in it you will ever need, but it has to be put in your heart and mixed with faith in order to release its power. If you will do that, the integrity and power of God's Word will be more than enough for anything you need. The most important thing you'll ever do in your Christian life is to regularly take in God's Word and mix it with faith so that it will release its power in your life.

INTEGRITY OF GOD'S WORD (Outline)

Mark 4:26-29, "And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; ²⁷And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. ²⁸For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. ²⁹But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come."

THE most important thing to growth in the Christian life is a knowledge of God's Word and understanding its power.

The only way you can understand the Spirit is through the Word of God. The Word is Spirit and life. John 6:63, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."

In the same way that you can't grow a crop without planting a seed, you can't have God's life transformed into your physical realm without taking the seed of God's Word and planting it in your heart. The fight is over the seed.

Mark 4:14-20, "The sower soweth the word. ¹⁵And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts. ¹⁶And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness; ¹⁷And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended. ¹⁸And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, ¹⁹And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful. ²⁰And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred."

The Bible compares the Word of God to a seed. Just as you cannot understand how a seed can produce a plant, you cannot understand how reading God's Word can change you and cause God's life to come alive in you. Mark 4:26-27, "And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; ²⁷And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how."

Reading and letting God's Word saturate you changes your attitude, your perceptions and your experience.

The earth was made to incubate, germinate and release the life of the seed, as so your heart was made for the Word of God. God's Word was created to be placed in your heart as a seed and then your heart was designed to automatically release the power of God to change the way things work in your life. Mark 4:28, "For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear."

There are steps to growth, maturity and receiving from God. You must first plant the Word. Then hope, followed by faith, will produce the victory.

God has provided everything we need through the atonement of the Lord Jesus. He produced His Word—the seed—and it's our job to take the seed, sow it in our hearts and meditate on it until it releases His life.

Mark 4:35-41, "And the same day, when the even was come, he saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side. ³⁶And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ship. And there were also with him other little ships. ³⁷And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full. ³⁸And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish? ³⁹And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. ⁴⁰And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith? ⁴¹And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

God's Word has everything you need to succeed and have victory in every area of your life. It's in seed form in the Word of God. As you read and think on these seeds, they'll take root and will be able to stop the storms in your life.

God's Word will not work without being mixed with faith in your heart. The Word has all the power you'll ever need, but it has to be put in your heart and mixed with faith for it to release its power.

The most important thing you'll ever do in your Christian life is to have a regular intake of God's Word mixed with faith.

INTEGRITY OF GOD'S WORD (Teacher's Guide)

1. A. According to John 6:63, the words of Jesus or the Word of God is what?

 Spirit and Life.

 B. According to Romans 8:6, to be spiritually minded is what?

 Life and peace.
2. According to Mark 4:14, what is the seed sown in this verse?

 The Word of God. See also Luke 8:11.
3. A. According to Mark 4:26-28, does the Word (which is the seed) produce right away?

 No, usually there are stages of growth.

 B. According to Mark 4:28, what are those stages of growth?

 First the blade, then the ear, then the grain (full corn).
4. We need to plant God's Word in our hearts and wait for it to produce (as it does in nature). How does Luke 8:15 teach this?

 The Word must be received in a honest and good heart; it must be heard, and kept (retained). It will then bring forth fruit with patience (endurance).
5. A. In Hebrews 4:2, the children of Israel heard the Word but it did not profit them. Why?

 It wasn't mixed with faith.

 B. According to James 1:25 the Word will benefit us if we do what?

 Hear it, continue in it and put it into practice (believe it).

INTEGRITY OF GOD'S WORD (Detailed Teacher's Guide)

Note: The following information may be read out loud (a numbered section at a time) with person(s) being discipled. After each numbered section is read, pause and ask the question(s) that correspond to the paragraph(s), and then discuss them.

¹ In Mark 4:26-29 Jesus used well-known truths about seeds to illustrate truths about how God's Word works, that very few people know. The first truth He taught was that God's Word has to be planted in our hearts for it to work. Just as a seed doesn't release its life until it is planted, God's Word will not set us free until we get it into our hearts. Having a Bible on our tables, in our hands, or in our heads is not sufficient. We have to commit God's Word to our hearts.

² Second, the man in Jesus' parable who sowed the seed slept and rose, day after day. This means that it takes time for a seed to germinate. You can't plant a seed one day and expect to see it grow the next day. If you dig up the seed every day to see if anything has happened, it will never grow. You must have faith that the seed is sprouting and leave it alone. Likewise, we can't just meditate on God's Word for one day and get the results we want. We can't just get into God's Word one day a week and live differently the other six days. That's like digging up the seed. The scripture has to abide in us (John 15:7).

¹ If we do not plant God's Word into our hearts, what will happen to it according to Matthew 13:19?
The wicked one will take it away so it cannot produce in our lives.

² According to Joshua 1:8 for us to do something with God's Word, how long must we meditate on it?
Day and night.

³Next, Jesus shared one of the most important truths about this parable. He said, “. . . the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how” Mark 4:27. This is an amazing statement. No one knows how a seed works. Mankind, with all its understanding has not unlocked the miracle of a seed. We can make things that look like seeds, taste like seeds, and have the same chemical elements as seeds, but if you put a man-made seed in the ground, it won’t grow. We haven’t figured out what makes these seeds release life, but that hasn’t stopped us from using them. For thousands of years, people have been planting seeds and reaping the harvest without understanding how it all works.

In a similar way, I don’t understand how God’s Word works. I can’t explain how reading God’s Word differs from other words that I read. I don’t comprehend it all, but I know it works. I’ve experienced the supernatural life that God’s Word imparts. The Bible has God’s life in it, and when planted in our hearts and left there, it releases that life. Godly change comes effortlessly when His Word is alive in our hearts, just as plants and fruits are the natural byproducts of physical seeds.

⁴This is such a simple truth that most people miss it. People are looking for some spectacular encounter with the Lord that will transform their lives instantly. Few are willing to grow. They want to microwave their miracle. Some are willing to spend hours in prayer asking for a miracle instead of planting the Word of God in their hearts, which will produce the miracle. Prayer, to the Word, is like what water and fertilizer are to a seed. It helps the Word release its life. You can water and fertilize barren soil all you want, but it won’t produce fruit. It’s the seed that has life, not the water. Likewise, prayer is not a substitute for planting God’s Word in your heart. Prayer without the Word is religion at best, and complaining at worst.

⁵Romans 12:2 gives us the key to experiencing God’s transformation in our lives. It says, “And be not conformed to this world: but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” The English word “transformed” was translated from the Greek word “Metamorphoo” from which we derive the English word “metamorphosis” describing the miraculous change of a cocoon to a butterfly. If we want to be changed in nature and appearance as drastically as a cocoon becomes a butterfly, the way we do it is by renewing our minds. Meditating on God’s Word is the primary way of accomplishing this.

³(a) God’s Word is what, according to John 6:63? Spirit & Life.

(b) God’s Word is what kind of weapon, according to Ephesians 6:17? Sword.

(c) Can a sword do damage to its enemy? Yes.

⁴When we give the proper place to God’s Word in our lives, what will happen? (Romans 8:6)

⁵As we behold the Lord through His Word, what kind of image are we changed into? (2 Corinthians 3:18)

INTEGRITY OF GOD'S WORD (Discipleship Questions)

Read 2 Timothy 3:16

1. How is scripture given?
2. Scripture is profitable for
 - A. _____
 - B. _____
 - C. _____
 - D. _____ in righteousness.

Read 2 Peter 1:20-21

3. Is the prophecy of Scripture of
 - a. For private interpretation
 - b. By inspiration of the Holy Spirit
 - c. By someone's fertile imagination?

Read Luke 21:33

4. What does Jesus say about the Word of God?

Read Luke 11:28

5. What are you if you hear the Word of God and keep it?

Read John 6:63

6. What is the Word of God? _____ and _____

Read John 1:1-5, 14

7. Who is the Word?
8. Since Jesus Christ is the foundation of our faith, can we trust Him?
9. If we can trust Jesus Christ as our Savior, can we also trust the written word of God?

Read Mark 4:14

10. What is the seed sown in these verses?
11. In verse 20, what are the conditions that must be present for the Seed, Word of God, to bear fruit in our lives?

Read Mark 4:26-28

12. Does the Word of God (which is the seed) produce right away?

13. What are the stages of growth in verse 28?

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

Read Luke 8:15

14. What must the condition of our hearts be in order to receive the Word?

A. _____ B. _____

15. Once we have heard the Word of God, what must we do with it?

A. _____ B. _____

16. How must we do these two things? With

Read Hebrews 4:2

17. Why didn't the Word of God profit the Israelites?

Read James 1:21-22

18. What must we receive with meekness?

19. What is it able to do?

20. In verse 22, what are we commanded to do?

21. If we don't follow this command, what are we?

Read James 1:25

22. What must we do for the Word to benefit us?

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

Read Romans 1:16

23. What is the gospel, or the Word of God?

Read Ephesians 6:17

24. What is the Word of God in this passage?

Read Romans 8:6

25. To be spiritually minded, to be in the Word of God, what fruit will we see in our lives?
_____ and _____.

Read Joshua 1:8

26. How long must we meditate on God's word?

Read 2 Corinthians 3:18

27. As we behold the Lord through His Word, whose image are we changed into?

Read Deuteronomy 28:1-14

28. All these blessings will come upon you if you do what (verses 1-2)?
A. _____
B. _____

The rest of Deuteronomy 28 warns you of the curses that will befall if God's commandments are not kept. Many see this as God being vengeful, but the truth is that if you don't follow God's commandments—His Word—you will subject yourself to the workings of the enemy. God cannot protect you if you are walking outside of His will.

29. Which would you rather have? Blessings Cursings
30. What must you do to receive the blessings?

INTEGRITY OF GOD'S WORD
(Discipleship Answer Key)

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. By the inspiration of God | 19. Save our souls |
| 2. A. Doctrine
B. Reproof
C. Correction
D. Instruction in righteousness | 20. Be doers of the word |
| 3. B. By inspiration of the Holy Spirit | 21. Deceived |
| 4. It will by no means pass away | 22. A. Continue in it
B. Be not a forgetful hearer
C. Be a doer |
| 5. Blessed | 23. The power of God unto Salvation |
| 6. Spirit and life | 24. Sword of the Spirit |
| 7. Jesus | 25. Life and peace |
| 8. Yes | 26. Day and night |
| 9. Yes | 27. The Lord's, from glory to glory |
| 10. Word of God | 28. A. Diligently obey the voice of God
B. Observe all His commands |
| 11. Sown on good ground and accept the word | 29. Blessings |
| 12. No | 30. Believe, love, and obey the Lord |
| 13. A. Blade
B. Head
C. Full grain in head | |
| 14. A. Noble
B. Good | |
| 15. A. Keep it
B. Bear fruit | |
| 16. Patience | |
| 17. It wasn't mixed with faith | |
| 18. The implanted word | |

INTEGRITY OF GOD'S WORD (Additional Information)

Word of God

(Hebrews 4:12) The Bible is so called because the writers of its several books were God's instruments in communicating His will to men. It is His "word," because He speaks to us in its sacred pages. Whatever the inspired writers here declare to be true and binding upon us, God declares to be true and binding. This word is infallible because it was written under the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit and is therefore free from all error of fact or doctrine or precept.

All saving knowledge is obtained from the Word of God. It is an indispensable means of salvation, and is efficacious thereunto by the gracious influence of the Holy Spirit.
(John 17:17, 2 Timothy 3:15-16, and 1 Peter 1:23)

Bible

Bible, the English form of the Greek name *Biblia*, meaning "books," is the name which in the fifth century began to be given to the entire collection of sacred books, the "Library of Divine Revelation." The name Bible was adopted by Wycliffe, and came gradually into use in our English language. The Bible consists of sixty-six different books, composed by many different writers, in three different languages, and under different circumstances. The writers were of almost every social rank—statesmen and peasants, kings, herdsmen, fishermen, priests, tax-gatherers, tentmakers; educated and uneducated, Jews and Gentiles. Most of them were unknown to each other, and they were writing at various periods during the space of about 1600 years. Yet, it is only one book dealing with only one subject in its numberless aspects and relations—the subject of man's redemption. It is divided into the Old Testament, containing thirty-nine books, and the New Testament, containing twenty-seven books. The names given to the Old in the writings of the New are as follows:

1. The Scriptures (Matthew 21:42)
2. Scripture (2 Peter 1:20)
3. The Holy Scriptures (Romans 1:2)
4. The Law (John 12:34)
5. The Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms (Luke 24:44)
6. The Law and the Prophets (Matthew 5:17)
7. The Old Covenant (2 Corinthians 3:14 RV)

There is a break of 400 years between the Old Testament and the New. The Old Testament is divided into three parts:

1. The Law (Torah), consisting of the Pentateuch, or five books of Moses.
2. The Prophets, consisting of the following books:
 - A. The former, namely; Joshua, Judges, the Books of Samuel, and the Books of Kings.
 - B. The latter, namely; the greater prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, and the twelve minor prophets.
3. The Hagiographa, or holy writings, including the rest of the books. These are ranked in three divisions:
 - A. The Psalms, Proverbs, and Job, distinguished by the Hebrew name, a word formed of the initial letters of these books, “emeth,” meaning truth.
 - B. Canticles (Song of Solomon), Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, and Esther, called the five rolls, as being written for the synagogue use on five separate rolls.
 - C. Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and 1 and 2 Chronicles.

Between the Old and the New Testament, no addition was made to the revelation God had already given. The period of New Testament revelation, extending over a century, began with the appearance of John the Baptist. The New Testament consists of the following books:

1. The historical books: the Gospels, and the Acts of the Apostles.
2. The Epistles.
3. The book of prophecy, the Revelation.

The division of the Bible into chapters and verses is altogether of human invention, designed to facilitate reference to it. The ancient Jews divided the Old Testament into certain sections for use in the synagogue service, and then at a later period, in the ninth century AD, into verses. Our modern system of chapters for all the books of the Bible was introduced by Cardinal Hugo in about the middle of the thirteenth century (he died 1263). The system of verses for the New Testament was introduced by Robert Stephanus in 1551 and generally adopted; although neither Tyndale’s nor Coverdale’s English translation of the Bible has verses. The division is not always wisely made, yet it is very useful. (Adopted from Easton’s Bible Dictionary, 1897)

GOD'S NOT GUILTY

Andrew Wommack

Today I want to share one of the most important things God has ever done in my life. It seems people automatically believe everything that happens to them is from God, that He controls everything. The reason for this is that by definition God is supreme and all-powerful, and they just assume He controls everything that happens in our lives. Even unbelievers believe it. There are many Christians who promote this doctrine, and it has become ingrained in their lives. I believe what Scripture teaches is contrary to this, and it's very important that you learn this lesson. James 1:13-17 says, "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Do not err, my brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

These verses make it very clear that God is the author of the good things. Jesus said in John 10:10, "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." If it's good, it's God; if it's bad, it's the devil. That's very simple theology. The reason this is so critical is because James 4:7 says, "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." This says we have to submit, or yield control, to God and resist the devil. The word resist means to actively fight against.

When people believe everything that happens in life is totally from God—for example, sickness, failure in business, losing a job, rebellious children, or divorce—that puts them in the position of being passive. If they really believe God is the author of a situation and is using it to punish them or change them, they would be fighting against Him if they resist. Yet, James 4:7 says to resist the devil and he will flee from you. You have to submit yourself to God. This shows that certain things are of God and certain things are of the devil. There is a force of evil in this world, and not everything that happens in your life comes from God. If you don't understand that, you will end up submitting to the devil, and actually empowering Satan.

I want to bring out a passage in Romans because it is misused so often. I've actually been to funerals where people don't know anything about God, don't go to church, and know hardly any Scripture, but they know this one. Romans 8:28 says, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." This has been interpreted to say that whatever happens in your life, God does it and works it together for good in some way. I actually was at a funeral for a young boy and girl who had been mixing alcohol and drugs, got into a car, drove too fast on a slick road, slid around a corner, hit a telephone pole, and were both killed. The preacher quoted this Scripture, "We know all things work together for good," and said God must have a purpose in doing this. God did not kill those teenagers, and in a sense you can't even say the devil did it. They did it. I'm sure the devil enticed them to rebel against the standards their parents and others had taught them, but ultimately it was their choice. They're the ones who did the dope and alcohol; they're the ones that hit the telephone pole. That was a natural thing, and God wasn't the source of it.

What does it mean when it says “we know that all things work together for good”? First of all, it didn’t say we know all things come from God and work together for good. It says all things work together for good, but puts qualifications on it: “. . . to them that love God.” This Scripture doesn’t work for a person who doesn’t love God. That is so obvious that it should go without saying, but it is amazing how people apply it toward instances like these young people who were doing drugs and alcohol and were in total rebellion against God and His principles, and say God did it. This says it only works together for good to those who love God, and to those that are the called according to his purpose.

In 1 John 3:8 it says, “For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.” God manifested himself to destroy Satan’s work. That’s His purpose, and it will only work together for good for those who love Him and are called according to His purpose, that is, those who are walking in this calling, are resisting the devil, and are out to destroy his works. Those who are resisting the devil and living for God can say that regardless of what the devil does in their lives, God can turn it around and use it for good.

In the area of healing, if someone becomes ill with an incurable disease, that’s not God. He didn’t do that to them. But if they truly love Him and resist the devil and his works (which include sickness), and if they fight against it and release their faith, then you can say that even this sickness is going to work together for good. God didn’t cause it, God didn’t ordain it, but it can work together for good when you love God and are the called according to His purpose.

It is imperative that you understand this, because Scripture says Satan loves to come as an angel of light. He loves to disguise himself. He doesn’t come at you with a pitchfork, horns, and a red union suit. Instead, he’ll disguise himself and try to make you think he’s God. If you really believe God is the author of the problems in your life, you’ll submit to them because you don’t want to resist God. If you really believe God is the author of the sickness in your life, it is inconsistent to take medicine, to go to a doctor and have them operate, or to seek some type of treatment. If you really believe God put sickness on you to teach you something, the logical thing to do is submit to it, let it run its course, and learn the full lesson you are supposed to learn.

Even in the natural people say, “No, I wouldn’t do that. You’re supposed fight against it, not just lie down and take it,” and I agree. I’m saying the same thing in the spiritual realm, as well as the physical realm, that we need to start discerning that God does not control everything in our lives. There is an enemy that comes to kill, steal, and destroy, but Jesus has come to give us life. We have to choose life and willfully recognize that God’s not guilty of everything that comes into our lives.

If God was a physical human being who did the things He is accused of, such as putting cancer, deformities, depression, sorrow, and grief on people, I guarantee there isn’t a government on earth that wouldn’t arrest, imprison, or try to stop Him. Yet we think God, who is much more merciful than any person we’ve met or imagined in our whole life, is going around striking people and doing this. There are some things that are demonic attacks and some that are natural, and not all disasters are God ordained. The insurance companies write in policies, “acts of God, such as earthquakes and pestilence.” No, God is not the author of all these things.

Someone might say, “But wait a minute, isn’t God sovereign?” The word sovereign literally means independent. For instance, the United States became a sovereign nation—became independent of Great Britain—and we set our own rules and have our own government. That doesn’t mean we’re a lawless people. Our laws govern our lifestyle, so we are not lawless—we are sovereign, we are independent. In that sense God is certainly independent. Nobody tells Him what to do. People sometimes misuse the word sovereign to mean that you never know what God is going to do, that He can’t be put in a box or contained. Certainly He’s not going to fit in our box—our little doctrines and theologies. God has bound himself by his Word. Psalm 138:2 says, “for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.” He will never violate His word. Heaven and earth are established on the integrity of God’s word, and if He ever violated His Word, they would self-destruct. God can be predicted to do exactly what His word says, so in that sense you can’t say it’s a sovereign act of God, that He just moved independent of everybody else.

God has established laws, and He doesn’t control everything in our lives. He has given us a wide range of choices. Most of the time it is us making the wrong choices, or somebody else who has a free will and causes us grief through their sovereignty. Other times it’s the devil who comes against us, but I want you to know today that God’s not guilty. He’s not the author of bad things in your life. Going back to the first verse we used in James 1:17, it says, “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights.”

Don’t submit yourself to something God doesn’t want in your life, thinking, “Well, God must control everything, because He’s God.” No, God created this earth and set down laws, and He gives you and me the choices to make. He said in Deuteronomy 30:19, “I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live.” God gave you the choice, and I pray that today you will choose life.

GOD'S NOT GUILTY

(Outline)

James 1:13-17, "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: ¹⁴But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. ¹⁵Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. ¹⁶Do not err, my beloved brethren. ¹⁷Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

God is the author of good things. If it's good it's God and if it's bad it's the devil. John 10:10, "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

If you believe everything that happens in your life is totally of God and that God for some reason is using it to try and punish or change you, it puts you in a passive position. If God is the author of it then you can't resist it or you'd be fighting against God.

There is a force of evil alive in this world and not everything that happens in your life comes from God. If you don't understand this you'll end up submitting yourself unto the devil and actually empowering him. James 4:7, "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

"All things work together for good" according to Romans 8:28. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" only for those who love God and who are the called according to His purpose which, according to 1 John 3:8, is to resist and destroy the works of the devil, "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil."

Satan loves to disguise himself and try to make you think that it's God who is the author of the problems in your life. Then you'll submit to them because you don't want to resist God.

God doesn't control everything in your life. You have to willfully recognize that God's not guilty of all that comes into your life. Some things are demonic attacks and some are natural.

"Sovereign" literally means independent—where you set your own rules and government. It does not mean you are lawless. In this sense, God is sovereign. God is independent; no one tells Him what to do.

Many people misuse the word “sovereign” to mean that you never know what God is going to do. He can’t be put in a box. It is true that He’s not going to fit into our box with our little doctrines and theology, but God has bound Himself by His Word. God will never violate His Word. God can be predicted to do exactly what His Word says. Psalm 138:2: “I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.”

God created the earth and then He set down laws and He gives you and me the choices to make. “Therefore choose life.” Deuteronomy 30:19, “I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live:”

GOD'S NOT GUILTY (Teacher's Guide)

1. A. According to James 1:13, does God cause men to be tempted by evil?

 No.
- B. According to James 1:17, where do good gifts come from?

 The Father of lights.
2. A. According to John 10:10, who is the thief?

 The devil.
- B. What are his purposes?

 To steal, kill and destroy.
- C. What is the reason Jesus came?

 To give us life more abundantly.
3. God is a good God and the devil is a bad devil. According to James 4:7, what is the result when we resist the devil?

 He will flee from us. This verse shows that some things are from God and some things are from the devil—we need to know the difference.
4. A. Does Romans 8:28 say that all things are from God?

 No.
- B. According to this verse, to what kind of people do all things work together for good?

 To them that love God.

5. A. What was the purpose that the Son of God was manifested? See 1 John 3:8.

To destroy the works of the devil.

B. Is sickness from God?

No. See Acts 10:38 and Matthew 8:16-17.

6. We need to willingly choose to believe the truth about God—that He is a good God. What does Romans 8:31 say?

If God is for us, who can be against us?

GOD'S NOT GUILTY (Detailed Teacher's Guide)

Note: The following information may be read out loud (a numbered section at a time) with person(s) being disciplined. After each numbered section is read, pause and ask the question(s) that correspond to the paragraph(s), and then discuss them.

¹ The word “sovereign” is not used in the King James Version of the Bible. It is used 303 times in the Old Testament of the New International Version, but it is always used in association with the word “LORD” and is the equivalent of the King James Version’s LORD God. Not a single one of those times is the word “sovereign” used in the manner that it has come to be used by religion in our day and time. Religion has invented a new meaning for the word “sovereign” which basically says that God controls everything. However, there is nothing in the actual definition stating this. The dictionary defines “sovereign” as “1. Paramount; supreme. 2. Having supreme reign or power. 3. Independent: a sovereign state. 4. Excellent.” None of these definitions means God controls everything.

² It is supposed that, since God is paramount or supreme, nothing can happen without His approval. But that is not what the scriptures teach. In 2 Peter 3:9, Peter said, “The Lord is . . . not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” This clearly states that it is not the Lord’s will for anyone to perish, however, some will perish. In fact, Jesus said, “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide [is] the gate, and broad [is] the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat” (Matthew 7:13). Relatively few people are saved compared to the number that are lost.

³ This is not because the Lord wills anyone to perish. He paid for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2, and 1 Timothy 4:10). People choose to perish by not choosing Jesus as their Saviour. God has a perfect plan for every person’s life (Jeremiah 29:11), but He doesn’t make us walk that path. We are free moral agents with the ability to choose. He tells us what the right choices are (Deuteronomy 30:19), BUT he doesn’t make those choices for us.

¹ How does the dictionary define the word “sovereign”?

² (a) What is God’s will according to 2 Peter 3:9? That none should perish.

(b) Does his will automatically come to pass?

³ (a) What does Revelation 22:17 say about partakers of God’s gift? Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

(b) What does John 3:16 say?

⁴ God created us to be dependent upon Him, and our independence is at the root of all our problems. As if it wasn't bad enough for a man to try and run his affairs independent of God and His standards, it has been made even worse by the religious teaching that all our problems are actually "blessings" from God. That is a faith killer. It makes people totally passive.

⁵ James 4:7 says, "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." Some things are from God and some things are from the devil. We must submit to the things that are from God and resist the things that are from the devil. The word "resist" means "to actively fight against." Saying, "Whatever will be will be," is not actively fighting against the devil. If people really believed God was the one who put sickness on them because He was trying to work some good in their lives, then they would not go to the doctor or take any medicine. That would be resisting God's plans. They should let the sickness run its course and thereby get the full benefit of God's correction. Of course, no one advocates that. That is absurd. It is even more absurd to believe that God is the one who makes people sick. Acts 10:38 says that Jesus healed all those who were oppressed OF THE DEVIL. It was not God who oppressed them with sickness. It was the devil. It's the same today.

⁴ What does John 15:5 show us about being independent from God?

⁵ (a) According to 1 John 3:8, what was the purpose of Jesus Christ coming?

To destroy the works of the devil.

(b) What was Jesus' purpose according to Acts 10:38? To do good and heal all who were oppressed of the devil.

GOD'S NOT GUILTY (Discipleship Questions)

Read James 1:12-18

1. What are you if you endure temptation?
2. What will you receive when you have been approved?
3. To whom has the Lord promised this Crown of Life?
4. Does God cause men to be tempted by evil?
5. Does God tempt anyone?
6. How are we each tempted ?
7. What happens once desire has conceived itself in you?
8. What happens when sin is full-grown?
9. How many good and perfects gifts are from God?
10. Is there any variation or shadow of turning with God?
11. Of Whose will were we brought forth by the word of truth?
12. Why did He do that?

Read James 1:19-20

13. What qualities are needed for those who persevere through trials?
A. _____
B. _____
C. _____
14. Does the wrath of man produce the righteousness of God?

Read John 10:10

15. Who is the thief?
16. What are his purposes? _____, _____, and _____
17. Why did Jesus come?

Read James 4:7-8, 10

18. What two things must you do so that the devil will flee from you?
A. _____
B. _____
19. What happens when you draw near to God?
20. What are you to do with your hands and your heart?
21. Verse 10 “_____ yourselves in the sight of the _____, and He will _____ you up.”

Read Romans 8:28

22. Are all things from God?
23. For whom do all things work together for good?

Read 1 John 3:8

24. What was the purpose that the Son of God was manifested?

Read Acts 10:38, Matthew 8:16

25. In Acts, how many did Jesus heal?
26. Who were they oppressed by?
27. Have you ever been oppressed by the devil?
28. Since Jesus healed them, do you believe that He can also heal you?
29. In Matthew, how many did Jesus heal that were sick?
30. If sickness isn't from God, who is it from?
31. Do you understand that if you have sickness in your body you can rebuke it because it isn't from God, and in fact He wants to heal you?

Read Romans 8:31

32. Write out this verse:

Read John 15:5

33. Who is the vine?

34. Who is the branch?

34. Who is the branch?

35. If we abide in Him, will we bear much or little fruit?

36. Can we do anything without Jesus?

Read 2 Peter 3:9

37. Is the Lord slack concerning His promises?

37. Is the Lord slack concerning His promises?

38. What is His attitude towards us?

39. Is He willing that any should perish?

40. What is His desire that we must all do?

This, brothers and sister's is the will of God!

Read Romans 12:9-21

41. List all the attributes we must do or not do, to behave like a Christian, or “little Christ.”

41. List all the attributes we must do or not do, to behave like a Christian, or “little Christ.”

42. With God exhorting us to do these things, can you see that they are for our own good, and for our own benefit?

GOD'S NOT GUILTY
(Discipleship Answer Key)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Blessed | 20. Cleanse your hands, and purify your heart |
| 2. A crown of life | 21. Humble – Lord – Lift |
| 3. To those who love Him | 22. No |
| 4. No | 23. For those who love God |
| 5. No | 24. To destroy the works of the devil |
| 6. When we are drawn away by our own desires | 25. All |
| 7. It gives birth to sin | 26. The devil |
| 8. It brings forth death | 27. Yes |
| 9. All | 28. Yes |
| 10. No | 29. All |
| 11. Of His own (God's) | 30. The devil |
| 12. To be the first fruits of His creatures | 31. Yes |
| 13. a. Swift to hear
b. Slow to speak
c. Slow to wrath | 32. If God is for us, who can be against us |
| 14. No | 33. Jesus |
| 15. Satan | 34. Us |
| 16. Kill, steal, destroy | 35. Much |
| 17. To give life abundantly | 36. No |
| 18. A. Submit to God
B. Resist the devil | 37. No |
| 19. He will draw near to you | 38. Longsuffering |
| | 39. No |
| | 40. Come to repentance |

GOD'S NOT GUILTY (Additional Material)

The "Goodness of God" is described as:

A perfection of God's character which He exercises towards His creatures according to their various circumstances and relations (Psalms 145:8-9, 103:8, and 1 John 4:8). Viewed generally, it is benevolence; as exercised with respect to the miseries of His creatures it is mercy, pity, compassion, and in the case of impenitent sinners, long-suffering patience; as exercised in communicating favour on the unworthy, it is grace. Goodness and justice are the several aspects of His one unchangeable, infinitely wise, and moral perfection. God is not sometimes merciful and sometimes just, but he is eternally infinitely just and merciful. God is infinitely and unchangeably good (Zephaniah 3:17) and His goodness is incomprehensible by the finite mind (Romans 11:35-36). God's goodness appears in two things, giving and forgiving.

(Adapted from Easton's Bible Dictionary, 1897)

THE POWER OF A SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE

Don Krow

Mark 16:15-16 is known as the great commission. Jesus said to his disciples, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” He is talking about going everywhere, preaching the Gospel to everyone, and those who believe and are baptized will be saved, but those who don’t will be damned. Let’s go to Acts to see how this commission was worked out through the preaching of Philip in Samaria. Acts 8:5, 12 says, “Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. . . . But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.”

The question is, were these people believers according to the great commission, according to the words of Jesus that said when a person believes and is baptized he shall be saved, and he that believes not shall be damned? Philip went to the city of Samaria and preached Jesus Christ. The people responded to his preaching concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, and through faith in Christ they were baptized, both men and women. According to the great commission, we could say these people were saved, but the question is, did they receive the Holy Spirit or the baptism of the Holy Spirit?

The Bible talks about how John baptized in water, but there would be one coming after him, the Lord Jesus Christ, who would baptize with the Holy Spirit. I can baptize a person in water, but John the Baptist said only Jesus Christ can baptize with the Holy Spirit. According to these scriptures, people believed, were saved, and were water baptized, but they had never received the Holy Spirit. Why do I say that? They hadn’t received the baptism of the Holy Spirit because Acts 8:14-17 says, “Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.”

We can see this baptism of the Holy Spirit in Acts 1:8, “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” The filling, the baptism of the Holy Spirit is to empower an individual so he might be a witness. Where? Jesus said in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost part of the earth. That’s like saying you live in Colorado Springs, and when the Holy Spirit comes on you, you’ll be a witness in Colorado Springs, and then Pueblo, and then the State of Colorado, and then to the entire world.

We can also see from the scriptures we just read that because a person has believed, been baptized, and is saved, doesn’t mean they received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit has come into their life—in John 20:22 we see that the Holy Spirit regenerated the disciples—but it was on the day of Pentecost that they were baptized with the Holy Spirit and empowered by Him. There is a difference between the quickening of the Holy Spirit in salvation and the baptism of the Holy Spirit when He comes upon an individual. There is an immersion in the Holy Spirit that comes upon individuals and empowers

them. Even though a person has been saved, has believed and been baptized, it doesn't mean they have been baptized with the Holy Spirit.

We see this again in Acts 19:1-2, "And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, we have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost." Paul said, "You believers, have you received the Holy Spirit since you believed?" They said, "We don't know anything about a Holy Spirit." Paul said, "If you weren't baptized with the Holy Spirit when you believed, what were you baptized with?" They said, "We were baptized into John's baptism." I believe Paul explained more perfectly about Christ's death, resurrection, and all these things, and they were baptized in water. Then in verses 6-7 it says, "And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came upon them; and they spake with tongues and prophesied. And all the men were about twelve."

Even though these people were disciples who believed in the Messiah who was to come, they hadn't been baptized with the Holy Spirit and didn't know anything about Him. A person can be born again, and water baptized, without having been baptized in the Holy Spirit. The baptism in the Holy Spirit is a separate and distinct experience from conversion.

There are two ways a person can receive this baptism of the Holy Spirit. In Acts 10:43 Peter was at the house of Cornelius preaching Jesus Christ to them, "That through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." Then in verses 44-48 it says, "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord." That was water baptism.

When Peter preached the Gospel, telling them to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and they believed, they were open to the Holy Spirit, to what God was doing. Then in a sovereign way through their faith He baptized them in the Holy Spirit, and they spoke in tongues and magnified God. One way to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit is directly from God Himself. The other way is found in Acts 19:6, "And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues and prophesied. And all the men were about twelve." So we see in the Scriptures that a person can receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit directly from God without anyone else around, or by people laying hands on them like the Apostle Paul did on these converts, and they received the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

A few weeks ago after we taught a lesson on the baptism of the Holy Spirit, I said to the young man we were teaching, "Do you want us to lay hands on you right now and pray that the Holy Spirit would come and be imparted to you, so that you will be filled with the Holy Spirit?" I told him there are two ways to receive: through the laying on of hands or directly from the Lord Jesus. Although I can baptize a person in water, I can't baptize them in the Holy Spirit, only Jesus can do that. But through the laying on of hands by a believer, the Holy Spirit can be imparted. Jesus uses the laying on of hands many times to impart the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

This man said, "I'll tell you what, guys, tonight after you leave, I'm going to ask Jesus to baptize me in the Holy Spirit. If I don't receive, next week when you come back, I'll ask you to lay hands on me and pray for me to be baptized with the Holy Spirit." We came back the next week, and this is what had happened. He said, "I asked Jesus to baptize me with the Holy Spirit. I just got before Him and through faith asked Him to impart to me the Holy Spirit to empower me so that I might be a witness to Him." He found himself beginning to speak words in a language he didn't know. Jesus had supernaturally baptized him in the Holy Spirit. According to Acts 2:39, the experience of being baptized with the Holy Spirit, "is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

If you have never asked Jesus to baptize you with the Holy Spirit, why don't you be really honest with Him? It's a gift. When you receive a gift, you just reach out for it, say, "I'll receive the gift," and take it in your hand. Jesus is here right now, and He wants to baptize you with the Holy Spirit. Why don't you let Him do that today? Why don't you cooperate with Him and let Him baptize you with the Holy Spirit? Don't be afraid. The Holy Spirit is a gentleman. He won't overpower you and make you do something you don't want to do, but He is there to empower you. If you have the proper heart, saying, "God, I want to worship you and witness for you. I want to be empowered, to be victorious in living the Christian life and being a witness to You," He's there to give you that today. Why don't you ask? God bless you.

THE POWER OF A SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE (Outline)

Mark 16:15-16, “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. ¹⁶He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”

Acts 8:5 and 12, “Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them.” “¹²But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.”

Were these people believers? Yes. Had they received the baptism of the Holy Spirit? Jesus is the only One to baptize in the Holy Spirit.

Acts 1:8, “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”

The purpose of the baptism in the Holy Spirit is to empower you to be a witness of Jesus Christ.

John 20:22, “And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.”

Here we see the regeneration of the disciples’ spirits. But in Acts 1:8 we see the empowerment of the disciples for preaching and witnessing of Jesus. It’s an immersion in the Holy Spirit that comes upon a person to empower him.

Acts 19:1-6, “And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, ²He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. ³And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John’s baptism. ⁴Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. ⁵When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.”

These disciples needed the Holy Spirit baptism. It is a separate and distinct experience. There are two ways to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit:

1. By a sovereign act of God - Acts 10:44, “While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.” Once these people became believers in Jesus, they were open to the Holy Spirit. God sovereignly baptized them in the Holy Spirit. This experience came directly from God.
2. By the laying on of hands - Acts 19:6, “And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.” A person already baptized in the Holy Spirit lays his hands on the one desiring to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Both of these experiences are supernatural.

Acts 2:37-41, “Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? ³⁸Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. ³⁹For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. ⁴⁰And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. ⁴¹Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.”

This promised Holy Spirit is for you—for empowerment to witness what Jesus has done for you. If you haven’t been baptized in the Holy Spirit, ask Jesus right now to do so. The Holy Spirit is a perfect gentlemen; He won’t baptize you with His power without your permission.

THE POWER OF A SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE (Teacher's Guide)

1.
 - A. According to the Mark 16:16 definition of salvation, were the people of Samaria saved?

Yes. See Acts 8:5,12.
 - B. Had they received the baptism of the Holy Spirit?

No. See Acts 8:14-16.
 - C. What about those in Acts 19:1-5, were they saved?

Yes.
 - D. Had they received the baptism of the Holy Spirit?

No. (See Acts 19:6-7).

NOTE: This shows this experience to be distinct from salvation.
2. What are the two ways to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit?
 - A. Directly from God (See Acts 2:1-4; 10:44-47).
 - B. Through the laying on of hands (See Acts 8:14-19; 9:17; 19:6).
3. When a person speaks in tongues, what is he doing?
 - A. Speaking mysteries to God (see 1 Corinthians 14:2).
 - B. His spirit is praying (see 1 Corinthians 14:14).
 - C. Giving thanks to God (see 1 Corinthians 14:16).

4. Are you willing to come to Jesus now and ask Him to baptize you in the Holy Spirit? Read Luke 11:9-13.

A. Since God is going to do His part and baptize you in the Holy Spirit, are you going to do your part and speak in tongues?

Yes.

B. When you speak in tongues, who will do the speaking, you or the Holy Spirit?

You. (See Acts 2:4).

Have the person you are discipling pray and ask Jesus to baptize them with the Holy Spirit.

THE POWER OF A SPIRIT FILLED LIFE (Detailed Teacher's Guide)

Note: The following information may be read out loud (a numbered section at a time) with the person(s) being discipled. After each numbered section is read, pause and ask the question(s) that correspond to the paragraph(s), and then discuss them.

¹ In Acts 2:4, this filling of the Holy Ghost was subsequent to their born-again experience. Paul later revealed in Romans 10:9 that a person had to confess with his mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in his heart that Jesus was raised from the dead before he could be saved. These disciples had already done this. In John 20:28, Thomas specifically confessing that Jesus was both Lord and God. No doubt all of these disciples had already been saved, yet they had not received the baptism of the Holy Ghost. This same thing was true of the people who believed on Jesus in Acts 8:12-17 and Acts 19:2-7.

² Therefore, it is possible to be saved, yet not have the baptism of the Holy Spirit that Jesus spoke of (John 7:37-39; Acts 1:4-5). Since the Holy Spirit is now given and we do not have to tarry for His coming, we can receive salvation and the baptism of the Holy Spirit at the same time, but it is not automatic. We must ask and believe (Matthew 7:7; Luke 11:13) for the baptism of the Holy Ghost just as we believed for salvation.

¹ (a) According to the Mark 16:16 definition of salvation, were the people of Samaria saved?
Yes. Acts 8:5, 12.

(b) Had they received the baptism of the Holy Spirit? No. Acts 8:14-16

(c) What about those in Acts 19:1-5, were they saved? Yes.

(d) Had they received the baptism of the Holy Spirit? No. Acts 19:6-7

NOTE: This shows this experience to be distinct from salvation.

² (a) What does Luke 11:13 say we need to do to receive the Holy Spirit?

(b) How is He received according to Galatians 3:2?

³ When a person speaks in tongues, his new born-again spirit is speaking (1 Corinthians 14:14), not his mind. Before salvation, our spirits were the part of us that was, “dead in trespasses and sins.” Therefore, until we received new spirits (2 Corinthians 5:17), the Holy Ghost could not give us this supernatural communication with the Father. However, this experience was prophesied in the Old Testament. Joel prophesied about it in Joel 2:28-29, which Peter refers to in Acts chapter 2:16-18. Isaiah spoke very specifically of speaking in tongues in Isaiah 28:11-12, and Jesus also said believers would speak with new tongues (Mark 16:17). There are two kinds of speaking in tongues, which are clearly spoken of in 1 Corinthians 13:1. They are called “the tongues of men and of angels.” The tongues of men are the known languages and the tongues of angels are heavenly languages. Most instances of speaking in tongues (Acts 8:18 [implied]; Acts 10:45-46; Acts 19:6) were evidently the heavenly languages unknown to men.

⁴ Speaking in tongues is not as many envision it. The Holy Spirit does not take possession of a person to the point that the individual has no control over what is happening.

Paul makes a special point of this in his letter to the Corinthians about how the gifts should be properly administered. He tells the Corinthians to control themselves and not speak in tongues in church unless there is an accompanying interpretation (1 Corinthians 14:27-28). He would not have told them this if they had no control over the gift.

The gift of speaking in tongues is no different than the ministry gifts listed in Ephesians 4:11. A true minister of God is also operating in a supernatural gift when he preaches or teaches. Peter was being used of the Holy Spirit just as much when he preached to this crowd as when he spoke to them in tongues. Yet no one expects him to simply open his mouth and have God supernaturally control it.

The Holy Spirit inspires and anoints a preacher, but the minister’s will is still intact, and the degree to which the Holy Spirit uses the minister is largely dependent on how much the individual yields to His control. This is how it is with speaking in tongues. The Holy Spirit gives the individual the utterance, but the individual must exercise his faith to speak (Mark 16:17) and believe that the result is inspired of God (Luke 11:9-13). Failure to understand this one truth has caused many people to ask the Lord for the gift of tongues and then wait for the Lord to supernaturally move their mouths. If nothing happens, they say that the Lord must not want them to speak in tongues or it would have happened.

This is no more true than to say that every person the Lord has called to preach is preaching or every person He has given a prophecy to has prophesied. We have to step out in faith.

³ When a person speaks in tongues, what is he doing?

1 Corinthians 14:2 Speaking mysteries to God.

1 Corinthians 14:14 His spirit is praying.

1 Corinthians 14:16 giving thanks to God.

⁴ (a) In Acts 2:4, who did the speaking in tongues?

(b) Who gave the utterance?

THE POWER OF A SPIRIT FILLED LIFE (Discipleship Questions)

Read Mark 16:16-18

1. What must you do to be saved?
2. Once you believe, what signs will follow you?

A. _____
B. _____
C. _____
D. _____
E. _____

Read Acts 8:14-17

3. In verse 14, what had Samaria received?
4. Why were Peter and John sent to them? (v15)
5. Whom had not yet fallen upon them?
6. What had they only been baptized in? The _____ of the Lord Jesus.
7. What did Peter and John do to the Samaritans in verse 17?
8. What did the people receive?
9. Can you see from these verses that you can be born again but not have the Holy Spirit?

Read Acts 19:1-5

10. What question did Paul ask the Ephesians in verse 2?
11. What was their response?
12. How did the Ephesians get baptized in Jesus' name?
13. Were the people born again at this point?
14. What did Paul then do in verse 6?
15. What came upon those whom Paul laid hands on?

16. What two things happened to those baptized in the Holy Spirit?

A. _____

B. _____

17. Do you see the distinction between being baptized in the name of Jesus and the baptism of the Holy Spirit?

Read Acts 2:1-4

18. The people were with _____ when the Holy Spirit filled the room (verses 1-2)?

19. What happened afterward?

20. Who gave them utterance to speak in tongues?

21. Did anyone lay hands on them or was it directly from God?

Read Acts 10:42-47

22. What was Peter preaching to the people?

23. What happened while Peter was still speaking?

24. Why were the Jews, or those of the circumcision, surprised?

25. What did they hear (verse 46)?

26. Had the people been baptized in water yet?

27. What did they say they had just received?

28. Do you see that there is a difference between water baptism and the baptism of the Holy Spirit?

29. Did anyone lay on hands or was this directly from God?

Read Acts 8:17

30. How did the people receive the baptism in this verse?

Read Acts 9:17

31. Did Ananias lay hands on Saul or did it come directly from God in order for Paul (Saul) to be baptized in the Holy Spirit?

Read Acts 19:6

- 32. What did Paul do so that the Holy spirit came upon the people?
- 33. In referencing the scriptures above, what two ways can you receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit?
 - A. _____
 - B. _____

Read 1 Corinthians 14:2, 4, 14

- 34. To Whom are we speaking to when we pray in tongues? (verse 2)
- 35. What are we speaking in the spirit? (verse 2)
- 36. What else happens when we speak in tongues? (verse 4)
- 37. Who is praying when you speak in tongues? (verse 14)

Read Acts 2:4

- 38. Who is giving the utterance or language?
- 39. Who is speaking it?

Read Luke 11:13

- 40. What do we need to do to receive the Holy Spirit?

Read Galatians 3:2

- 41. Do you receive the Spirit by works of the law or the hearing of faith?

THE POWER OF A SPIRIT FILLED LIFE
(Discipleship Answer Key)

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Believe and be baptized | 20. The Holy Spirit |
| 2. A. Cast out demons
B. Speak with new tongues
C. Take up serpents
D. Protected
E. Lay hands on sick and they shall recover | 21. Directly from God |
| 3. The Word of God | 22. The Gospel |
| 4. To pray they might receive Holy Spirit | 23. The Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the word |
| 5. The Holy Spirit | 24. Because the gift of Holy Spirit was poured out on Gentiles |
| 6. Name | 25. They heard them speaking with tongues |
| 7. Laid hands on them | 26. No |
| 8. The Holy Spirit | 27. The Holy Spirit |
| 9. Yes | 28. Yes |
| 10. Did you receive Holy Spirit when you believed? | 29. Directly from God |
| 11. We didn't know there was a Holy Spirit! | 30. Laying on of hands |
| 12. By hearing the Gospel | 31. Lay hands on |
| 13. Yes | 32. Laid hands on them |
| 14. Laid hands on them | 33. A. Directly from God
B. Laying on of hands |
| 15. The Holy Spirit | 34. To God |
| 16. A. Spoke in tongues
B. Prophesied | 35. Mysteries |
| 17. Yes | 36. We edify ourselves |
| 18. One accord | 37. Our spirit is praying |
| 19. They were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in tongues | 38. The Holy Spirit |
| | 39. We are |
| | 40. We need to ask |
| | 41. Hearing of faith |

THE POWER OF A SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE (Additional Information)

John 16:7: “Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.”

(John 16:7) The Greek word translated “expedient” is “sumphero,” which means “to be an advantage; profitable.” How could any situation be more advantageous or profitable than having Jesus physically with you?

When Jesus walked on this earth in His physical body, He was subject to many physical limitations. For instance, He could not always be with every one of His disciples all the time. Through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, He could. Instead of Satan getting rid of Jesus, 120 “little Christs” (that is literally what the word “Christian” means) came out of the upper room on the day of Pentecost.

Jesus had taught His disciples as no teacher ever had, yet they had very little understanding because they had not been born again yet (1 Corinthians 2:14). However, when the Holy Spirit came, He would lead them into all truth (John 14:26; 16:13) and even show them things to come (v.13).

The list of advantages of having the Holy Spirit in us as compared to having Jesus with us in His physical body, goes on and on. The advantages can all be summed up in that Jesus’ power is now complete (Matthew 28:18) and no longer confined to one physical body.

John 16:13: “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.”

(John 16:13) A guide doesn’t do everything for us but rather leads us. The Holy Spirit will lead us into all truth, but we have to follow. We have to go through the effort of studying, and trust that the Holy Spirit is leading us.

This is the fourth time Jesus emphasized the Holy Spirit as being the one to reveal the truths of God to the believer. In this instance, Jesus said the Holy Spirit would guide us into ALL truth. During this same night, Jesus said, “thy word is truth” (John 17:17). Therefore, the Holy Spirit is specifically given to give revelation knowledge of God’s Word.

Jesus had spoken of the ministry of the Holy Spirit many times before, but here He reveals that the Holy Spirit will show us things to come. Foreknowledge is one of the distinct characteristics of God alone (Isaiah 42:9; 45:11; 46:9-10; Jeremiah 1:5; Matthew 6:8; 24:36; Acts 15:18). Therefore, this is another witness to the Holy Spirit being part of the Godhead. Part of the Holy Spirit’s ministry is to make this foreknowledge available to the believer. This does not automatically operate, but every Spirit-filled believer through faith can appropriate it. This is one of the most miraculous and beneficial ministries of the Holy Spirit, but also one of the least used.

Acts 1:8: “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”

(Acts 1:8) The Greek word used for “power” is “dunamis” and denotes miraculous power, ability, might, or strength. It is the root word from which we derive our words “dynamic,” “dynamite,” and “dynamo.” This clearly speaks of the presence and anointing of the Holy Spirit as being the power source in a believer’s life.

It was this anointing power of the Holy Spirit that worked miracles in the life of Jesus (Acts 10:38). We receive the same Holy Spirit power and we can expect to see it accomplish the same miraculous works that Jesus did (John 14:12), IF WE WILL BELIEVE.

Acts 2:14-18: “But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: ¹⁵For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. ¹⁶But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; ¹⁷And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: ¹⁸And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.”

(Acts 2:14) These events on the day of Pentecost give us a good example of the purpose of the miraculous manifestations of God’s power or presence. The miraculous manifestation that accompanied the coming of the Holy Spirit acted like a bell to draw the attention of thousands of people to the disciples. The disciples then explained what was happening and preached Jesus to the people. The results were that about three thousand people were born again.

Likewise today, miracles still draw men’s attention to those having received the miracle and provide a perfect opportunity to proclaim Jesus as the one who can work miracles in their lives.

(Acts 2:16) Peter here exhibits a perception and understanding of the Scriptures that had not been characteristic of him or the other disciples before. This came as a direct result of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would lead us into all truth and teach us all things (John 14:26, 16:13), and this is exactly what was happening to Peter.

Receiving the baptism of the Holy Ghost is the single most important key to receiving revelation knowledge from God.

(Acts 2:17) This promise of the Spirit being poured out on “all flesh” is speaking of all manner of flesh or mankind. It is evident that not everyone has the Holy Spirit. Rather, this reveals that the door of salvation and the infilling of the Holy Spirit is opened unto Jew and Gentile, male and female, adult, and child.

This scripture clearly states that prophesying, seeing visions, and dreaming God-inspired dreams

are associated with the infilling of the Holy Spirit. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is the doorway into the miraculous realm of God.

This baptism of the Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost, but it was not only for these few individuals. Peter said in verse 39, “For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.” This same power is available to all believers today (Luke 11:13; Mark 16:17).

Acts 4:8: “Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel.”

(Acts 4:8) Peter had denied Jesus in front of a servant girl just a few weeks before (Mark 14:66-68; Luke 22:56-57). Now he fearlessly proclaims the Lord Jesus in front of the high priest and the council. The difference is being filled with the Holy Ghost, which Jesus said would empower them to be witnesses (Acts 1:8).

HOW TO RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT

Don Krow

We're going to talk today about how to receive the Holy Spirit. Acts 10:1 says, "There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band." This was a military rank, probably a captain over a regiment. Verse 2 continues, "A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway." He was righteous, did things that were right, feared God, gave much money to people in need, and the Bible says he prayed to God always. But we are going to find out, and it will be amazing, that even though he did things right, even though he feared God, and had a prayer life, he didn't have a personal relationship with Him though Jesus Christ.

It says in verses 3-6, "He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day [probably about three o'clock in the afternoon] an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius. And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon whose surname is Peter: He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do."

This man, although he was God-fearing, righteous as far as doing things that were right, and had a prayer life before God, was sent an angel who told him to send for Simon Peter, who would tell him what he must do. We see in Acts 10:43 exactly what Peter was instructed to tell him: "To give him all the prophets witness, that through his name [through the name of the Lord Jesus] whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." Isn't this amazing? This man who had all these things to his credit didn't have a personal relationship with God through the person of Jesus Christ. God said, "The things you're doing are great, they're wonderful, and they are a memorial before me, but I tell you what I'm going to do. I've sent an angel down to tell you to send for a man named Peter, and he will tell you what you must do. In Acts 10:43, when Peter went to Cornelius' house, he said, "whosoever believeth in him [the Lord Jesus Christ] shall receive the remission of sins."

Now look what happened here. "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word" (Acts 10:44). Cornelius was receiving as he heard of faith in Christ, and he put his faith in Christ for the remission of his sins. As soon as he did, the Holy Spirit fell upon him and all those that were in that house. It says in verse 45, "And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost." How did they know that? "For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God" (verse 46).

In the New Testament, when someone was filled with the Holy Spirit, they were empowered by Him. Acts 1:8 says, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost comes upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." There is a purpose in God filling and baptizing people in the Holy Spirit—it's to be an effective witness. They receive power to be a witness to the person and work of Jesus Christ.

As we see in this scripture (Acts 10:44-46), when the Holy Ghost fell on them, they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God.

Every time the Holy Spirit falls on an individual in the New Testament when baptizing them, a gift of the Holy Spirit manifests and gives evidence that they have received the infilling of the Spirit. In the New Testament they usually spoke in tongues or prophesied. When Simon the sorcerer saw that the Holy Spirit was given, he offered money to Peter, saying in Acts 8:19, "Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost." He saw a manifestation of the Holy Spirit, and as we go through the New Testament, that was usually speaking in tongues. Mark 16:17 says, "And these signs shall follow them that believe, In my name [the name of Jesus Christ] . . . shall they speak with new tongues." Tongues are a manifestation that a person has been baptized in the Holy Spirit.

You may have come from a denomination or some kind of religious thinking that says, "that all passed away; what is this man talking about? Doesn't the Bible say in 1 Corinthians 13 that tongues will cease, and when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part will be done away?" You know what? The Bible does say that. There will be a time when tongues will cease, when prophecy will cease, when that which is perfect will come, and when that happens these spiritual gifts (that which is in part) will pass away. But the same book that describes spiritual gifts, tells us exactly when they will pass away. In 1 Corinthians 1:7, Paul says, "So that ye come behind in no gift: waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." That's when these gifts will disappear. When the Lord Jesus Christ comes and we are made like Him. When we are complete, we won't need these spiritual gifts, but they will be in operation until then.

People used to tell me about the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and I thought, "What are these guys up to? Are they full of spiritual pride, saying they have something I don't have?" After a period of time, I got down on my knees one evening in a field in Dallas, Texas and said, "God, I don't know about all this speaking in tongues and the baptism in the Holy Spirit people are talking about, but if there's a way I can praise you, a way I can magnify you, a way I can go beyond my human English language, I want it. I can only take it so far as saying, 'God bless the missionaries out on the mission field,' but if there is a way I could praise you, be specific in prayer, and my spirit could pray, I want that." You know what? The moment I said that I started worshiping God and as I worshipped Him, the Holy Spirit gave me a language, an utterance that I didn't know or learn. That's what we're talking about.

The Bible says in Acts 2:4, "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." Who did the speaking? They did. Who gave the utterance? The Holy Spirit did. This is how to receive the Holy Spirit. Luke 11:13 says, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" All you have to do right now is ask, believe that you receive, yield yourself to God, begin to worship the Lord, and He will give you an utterance to worship and praise Him in a language you never learned. God bless you today as you take these truths, examine them, and apply them to your life.

HOW TO RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT (Outline)

Acts 10:1-6: “There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, ²A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always. ³He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius. ⁴And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. ⁵And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter: ⁶He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do.”

Even though Cornelius was a God-fearing devout man, he did not have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

In Acts 10:43-46 we see what Peter told Cornelius to do, “To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins. ⁴⁴While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. ⁴⁵And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. ⁴⁶For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God.”

Cornelius and his household heard the words of Jesus preached, faith arose in their hearts, and then they received the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Acts 1:8: “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”

The purpose of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is to empower you to be an effective witness of the person and work of Jesus Christ. Gifts of the Holy Spirit manifest to show that you have been baptized in the Holy Spirit. Most often in the New Testament, the gift of speaking in other tongues manifested.

Acts 8:13: “Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done.” Simon the Sorcerer saw manifestations of the Holy Spirit.

Mark 16:15-17: “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. ¹⁶He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. ¹⁷And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues.”

The gift of speaking in tongues is evidence that you have been baptized in the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 13:8-10: “Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. ⁹For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. ¹⁰But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.”

When will these tongues cease? 1 Corinthians 1:7 says, “So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” When Jesus comes back, we will be made perfect, so we won’t need these gifts any longer.

Acts 2:4: “And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” When you are baptized in the Holy Spirit, you speak in other tongues. The Holy Spirit gives you the utterance.

Luke 11:13: “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?” Your heavenly Father gives you the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit gives you the utterance. Ask Him for the baptism in the Holy Spirit right now.

HOW TO RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT (Teacher's Guide)

1. What are some of the ways that salvation has been described?

Being born again, conversion, believing and being baptized, having been forgiven, having received the Spirit of Christ, and eternal life.

2. How does Acts 11:15 describe this experience?

The Holy Spirit falling on someone.

3. In John 20:22 Jesus' disciples received the Holy Spirit but a few days later were actually baptized with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4). Look at and compare these facts (John 20:22; Acts 2:1-4).

Compare John 20:22 with Acts 2:1-4.

4. How does Acts 1:8 describe this work of the Holy Spirit?

As an impartation of power for service (or witness).

5. Do you believe this promise is valid for you today? (See Acts 2:38-39 and 1 Corinthians 1:7).

Yes. Read Acts 2:38-39 and 1 Corinthians 1:7—the gifts will cease at the second coming of Christ.

6. A. What does Luke 11:11-12 mean?

We give our children good things.

- B. According to Luke 11:13, if you have not received the Holy Spirit what should you now do?

Ask for the Holy Spirit.

7. A. Will you now pray and ask Jesus to baptize you with the Holy Spirit?

Yes.

- B. Will you speak and worship God in another language? According to Acts 2:4 you will speak, but the Holy Spirit will give you utterance.

Yes.

HOW TO RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT (Detailed Teacher's Guide)

Note: The following information may be read out loud (a numbered section at a time) with the person(s) being discipled. After each numbered section is read, pause and ask the question(s) that correspond to the paragraph(s), and then discuss them.

¹There are many different ways to describe the experience of being “saved” in terms that the Bible uses. For example in John 3:3 it is referred to as being “born again”; in Matthew 18:3 as “conversion”; in Mark 16:16 as “believing and being baptized”; in Colossians 2:13 as having been “forgiven” of all trespasses; in Romans 6:23 as having received “eternal life”; and in Romans 8:9 as having received “the Spirit of Christ.” Although many terms are used, they all basically mean the same thing.

²In like manner, the experience that is subsequent to and distinct from salvation is described as: “the baptism with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 1:5); being “filled with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:4); “the Holy Spirit falling on” someone (Acts 11:15); and having “received the Holy Spirit” (Acts 19:2). These are synonymous terms referring to one and the same thing.

³There are many examples in the New Testament of the difference between salvation by the quickening of the Spirit, and the baptism with the Holy Spirit. For example, in John 20:22, Jesus’ disciples received the Holy Spirit but a few days later were actually baptized with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4). The Samaritans in Acts 8:12 believed upon Christ and were baptized and saved. Yet, they were baptized with the Holy Spirit several days later (see Acts 8:16-17). In Acts 19:1-7, the Apostle Paul found several disciples who had believed upon Christ but had not received the baptism with the Holy Spirit. Verse 6 states that “when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.”

¹What are some of the ways that salvation has been described?

²How does Acts 11:15 describe this experience?

³In John 20:22, Jesus’ disciples received the Holy Spirit but a few days later were actually baptized with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4).

Look at and compare these facts (John 20:22; Acts 2:1-4).

⁴Dr. R. A. Torrey, the first president of Moody Bible Institute, wrote: “It is evident that the baptism with the Holy Spirit is an operation of the Holy Spirit distinct from and additional to His regenerating work...A man may be regenerated by the Holy Spirit and still not be baptized with the Holy Spirit. In regeneration, there is the impartation of life by the Spirit’s power, and the one who receives it is saved: in the baptism with the Holy Spirit, there is the impartation of power, and the one who receives it is fitted for service. . . (The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit, by R. A. Torrey, pgs. 174, 176).

⁵Now that you’ve received Jesus as Lord, Master, and Ruler of your life, are you willing to receive what He has for you? Do you believe this promise is valid for you today? (If not, read Acts 2:38-39 and 1 Corinthians 1:7, which state that the Holy Spirit and His gifts are all valid and in operation for us today until the second coming of Jesus Christ.) Do you need power to witness (Acts 1:8 states that you “shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you”)? Are you afraid of manifestations of the Holy Spirit such as tongues? Mark 16:17 says, “These signs shall follow them that believe . . . they shall speak with new tongues.” Do you believe this is for you? Jesus said in Luke 11:13, “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?”

⁶Will you pray and ask Jesus to do His part by baptizing you with the Holy Spirit? Will you do your part, that is, receive the Holy Spirit and speak in tongues? Acts 2:4 says, “And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Are you going to RECEIVE? Are you going to SPEAK and worship God in another language?

⁷Are you ready to receive? Then pray this prayer with me: “Father, thank you that Jesus died for all my sins and arose from the dead. I renounce Satan and all his works. I confess that Jesus Christ is my Lord, Master, and the Boss of my life. My life belongs to Him. Lord, you promised to baptize me with the Holy Spirit. I will receive power to witness and speak in new tongues. Lord baptize me now and I will speak with new tongues as you form the words for me now. In Jesus name, Amen.”

⁴How does Acts 1:8 describe this work of the Holy Spirit?

⁵Do you believe this promise is valid for you today? (See Acts 2:38-39 and 1 Corinthians 1:7).

⁶(a)What does Luke 11:11-12 mean?

(b)According to Luke 11:13, what should you now do?

⁷(a)Will you now pray and ask Jesus to baptize you with the Holy Spirit?

(b)Will you speak and worship God in another language? According to Acts 2:4 you will speak, but the Holy Spirit will give you utterance.

HOW TO RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT (Discipleship Questions)

There are many different ways to describe the experience of being “saved.” Look up the scriptures and tell what they are.

1. John 3:3
2. Matthew 18:3
3. Mark 16:16
4. Colossians 2:13
5. Romans 6:23
6. Romans 8:9

In like manner, the experience that is subsequent to and distinct from salvation is described as “the baptism of the Holy Spirit.” Look up the scriptures and tell what they are.

7. Acts 1:5
8. Acts 2:4
9. Acts 11:15
10. Acts 19:2

Read Acts 1:8

11. What happened first in this verse?
12. After they received power, then what were they to do?
13. Although the disciples walked, talked, slept, ate, laughed, and loved with Jesus, He still told them to wait to receive the Holy Spirit. Can you see how receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit is what you need to be an effect witness?

Read Acts 2:38-39

14. What two things does this verse command you to do?
A. _____
B. _____

15. After the remission of sins, what do you receive?
16. Who is the promise for?
17. Can you see from this scripture that the baptism is for “as many as the Lord God will call”?
18. Does that include us today, or was that just for that time 2000 years ago?

Read through the additional information and meditate on the scriptures given.

HOW TO RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT (Discipleship Answer Key)

1. Born again
2. Converted
3. Saved
4. Made alive
5. Gift of God = eternal life
6. Received the Spirit of God
7. Baptized with the Holy Spirit
8. Filled
9. Holy Spirit fell
10. Received
11. Receive power when Holy Spirit comes upon
you
12. Be witnesses to Christ
13. Yes
14. A. Repent
B. Be baptized
15. Gift of the Holy Spirit
16. Me and my children
17. Yes
18. Us today

HOW TO RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT (Additional Information)

ACTS 2:4

This filling of the Holy Ghost was subsequent to their born-again experience. Paul later revealed in Romans 10:9 that a person had to confess with his mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in his heart that Jesus was raised from the dead before he could be saved.

These disciples had already done this. John 20:28 specifically records Thomas kneeling before the resurrected Jesus and confessing that Jesus was both Lord and God. No doubt all of these disciples had already been saved, yet they had not received the baptism of the Holy Ghost. This same thing was true of the people who believed on Jesus in Acts 8:12,17 and Acts 19:2-7.

Therefore, it is possible to be saved yet not have the baptism of the Holy Spirit that Jesus spoke of (John 7:37-39; Acts 1:4-5). Since the Holy Spirit is now given and we do not have to tarry for His coming, we can receive salvation and the baptism of the Holy Spirit at the same time. But it is not automatic. We must ask and believe (Matthew 7:7, Luke 11:13) for the baptism of the Holy Ghost just as we believed for salvation.

Speaking in tongues is unique to the church age. This is so because when a person speaks in tongues, his new, born-again spirit is speaking (1 Corinthians 14:14), not his mind. Before salvation, our spirits were the part of us that was “dead in trespasses and sins.” Therefore, until we receive new spirits (2 Corinthians 5:17), the Holy Ghost could not give us this supernatural communication with the Father.

However, this experience was prophesied about in the Old Testament. Joel prophesied about it in Joel 2:28-29, which Peter refers to in his explanation of this miracle. Isaiah spoke very specifically of speaking in tongues in Isaiah 28:11-12, and Jesus also said believers would speak with new tongues (Mark 16:17).

The other tongues that these disciples spoke were languages other than their own, which they had never learned before. These tongues were different than the tongues that Paul was giving instructions about in 1 Corinthians 12-14, in that these were known languages.

There are two kinds of speaking in tongues, which are clearly spoken of in 1 Corinthians 13:1. They are called “the tongues of men and of angels.” The tongues of men are the known languages that the disciples spoke in here. The tongues of angels, or heavenly languages, are the tongues that all Spirit-filled believers can speak in, that Paul was speaking about in 1 Corinthians chapters 12-14.

This is the only example of believers speaking in known languages recorded in the Bible. The other instances of speaking in tongues (Acts 8:18 (Amplified); Acts 10:45-46; Acts 19:6), were evidently the heavenly languages unknown to men.

Speaking in tongues was not as people had envisioned it. The Holy Spirit did not take possession of the disciples to the point that they had no control over what was happening.

Paul makes a special point of this in his letter to the Corinthians about how the gifts should be properly administered. He tells the Corinthians to control themselves and not speak in tongues in church unless there is an accompanying interpretation (1 Corinthians 14:27-28). He would not have told them this if they had no control over the gift.

The gift of speaking in tongues is no different than the ministry gifts listed in Ephesians 4:11. A true minister of God is also operating in a supernatural gift when he preaches or teaches. Paul was being used of the Holy Spirit when he preached to this crowd as much as when he spoke to them in tongues. Yet no one expects him to simply open his mouth and have God supernaturally control it.

The Holy Spirit inspires and anoints a preacher, but the minister's will is still intact, and the degree to which the Holy Spirit uses the minister is largely dependent on how much the individual yields to His control. This is how it is with speaking in tongues. The Holy Spirit gives the individual utterance, but the individual must exercise his faith to speak (Mark 16:17) and believe that the result is inspired by God (Luke 11:9-13).

Failure to understand this one truth has caused many people to ask the Lord for the gift of tongues and then wait for the Lord to supernaturally move their mouths. If nothing happens, they say that the Lord must not want them to speak in tongues or it would have happened.

That is no more true than to say that every person the Lord has called to preach is preaching, or every person He has given a prophecy has prophesied. We have to step out in faith.

ACTS 10:2

Cornelius was a very godly man, but that was not enough. He had to believe the Gospel, and that's why the angel instructed him to send for Peter. His holiness paid him a dividend in the sense that the Lord responded and sent him someone who shared the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ with him. However, if he would have refused to believe on Jesus for the forgiveness of his sins, trusting instead in his performance to make him accepted with God, he would have split hell wide open.

ACTS 10:43

The Greek word that was translated "remission" here is "aphesis." It means: a dismissal; release; freedom; pardon; forgive; to restore to an original condition.

This word is translated "remission" nine times in the New Testament (Matthew 26:28, Mark 1:4, Luke 1:77, 3:3, 24:47, Acts 2:38, 10:43, and Hebrews 9:22, 10:18), "forgiveness" six times (Mark 3:29, Acts 5:31, 13:38, 26:18, Ephesians 1:7, and Colossians 1:14), and "deliverance" once and "liberty" once (both in Luke 4:18).

LUKE 11:13

The Holy Spirit is a gift (Acts 2:38). You cannot be good enough to earn the gift of the Holy Spirit, but you do have to ask. This is speaking of the baptism of the Holy Ghost, which is subsequent to the born-again experience.

MARK 16:17

Some people have tried to get around these verses by saying that they were not found in some of the oldest manuscripts. The only reason that people desire to explain this scripture away is because their lives don't match up with it. Instead of changing themselves, they would rather change the scripture.

We still have the same authority today that Jesus gave His disciples, to cast out devils. Speaking in tongues is still a supernatural gift for every believer who will receive it. We are still supposed to walk in victory over the devil, and if a true believer lays hands on the sick, they will recover. "Jesus Chris, the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever" (Hebrews 13:8). He gave us His power and ability. He gave us His power of attorney.

1 CORINTHIANS 1:7

In verses six and seven, Paul is expanding on his statement in verse 5. Therefore, when all three verses are taken together, we see that Paul is speaking about the Corinthians being enriched with the gifts of the Holy spirit. That is how verse six says the testimony of Christ was confirmed in them. The Lord used the supernatural manifestations of the gifts of the Spirit to confirm the word that Paul spoke (Mark 16:20).

1 CORINTHIANS 12-14

Despite their flagrant misuse of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, Paul desired the brethren to not miss out on a single one of the gifts. This makes it clear that Paul's instructions in chapters 12-14 were corrective and not restrictive. That is to say, Paul never discredited the use of any of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. He just wanted them used in a godly manner.

HOW TO RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT (Additional Information)

1. Promised by our heavenly Father.

Joel 2:28: “And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh.”

2. Jesus sent the promise of the Father.

Luke 24:49: “And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.”

3. The purpose of the baptism of the Holy Spirit—Power.

Acts 1:8: “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”

“Power”: in the Greek language means “Dunamis,” meaning “miracle power from heaven.”

4. At salvation there is an inward working of the Holy Spirit described as “a Well of Water.”

John 4:14: “But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”

5. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is an outward work of the Holy Spirit described as Rivers of Living Water.

John 7:38-39: “He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. ¹³⁹(But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)”

6. You receive a prayer language called “Praying in Tongues” or “Praying in the Spirit.”

Mark 16:17: “And these signs will follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they will speak with new tongues.”

HOW TO RECEIVE THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (Additional Information)

1. Ask and receive.

Luke 11:13: “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?”

2. Believe the Word of God from your heart the same as you did at salvation.

Romans 10:9-10: “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. ¹⁰For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

3. By faith know that the Holy Spirit is filling you with power.

Mark 11:24: “Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.”

4. Now start speaking with words (not in English or everyday language). Yield to the Holy Spirit and allow a full prayer to come forth.

Acts 2:4: “And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

5. The Holy Spirit will not make your mouth move.

1 Corinthians 14:32: “And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.”

Conclusion: The Holy Spirit is a person and will speak through you using your lips, tongue, teeth and voice, if you allow Him. When you, in faith, begin to speak in tongues, the Holy Spirit is involved in the utterance—in the words you say. This is where the supernatural comes in. You do the speaking and the Spirit will give you the utterance.

6. Some benefits of speaking in tongues:

- Jude 20: You become sensitive to the Holy Spirit.
The Holy Spirit “builds you up.”
- 1 Corinthians 14:4: You edify yourself; you “improve yourself spiritually.”
- 1 Corinthians 14:2: You are speaking to God not to man.
- Romans 8:26-27: Perfect prayer. The Holy Spirit knows exactly what
needs to be prayed.
- 1 Corinthians 2:11: The Holy Spirit knows the mind of God—to intercede
on our behalf.

7. Lead the believer in prayer:

“Dear heavenly Father, I come to you in Jesus’ name. Lord Jesus, according to your Word in Matthew 3:11, you are my baptizer. I ask you to baptize me with the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in other tongues. I receive now by faith. Thank you, Amen.”

THE BENEFITS OF SPEAKING IN TONGUES

Andrew Wommack

Today I want to share with you some of the benefits of speaking in tongues. Hopefully you've already received the baptism in the Holy Spirit, and Scripture says that you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. The purpose of all this is that God never did anything without the Holy Spirit. He created the heavens and the earth by the Spirit moving upon the waters. Jesus did no miracles until the Holy Spirit descended on Him and anointed Him. We can't be effective without the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Even after you receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit, it's not automatic. It doesn't mean the power of God flows out of you at all times.

There are things you have to do to release and manifest the power of the Holy Spirit, one of which is speaking in tongues. Jude 20-21 says, "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God." When you put this scripture with some others and research them, I believe when they say "praying in the Holy Ghost" they are talking about praying in tongues. One of the things that happened when the baptism of the Holy Spirit came was that they spoke in tongues. Acts 2:4 says that on the day of Pentecost they were filled with the Holy Ghost and spoke with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. Consistently all the way through the book of Acts there was a manifestation of God's presence when the people received the Holy Spirit.

Of course, there is much more to the Holy Spirit than speaking in tongues, but it is one of the important manifestations. One of the reasons for this is in 1 Corinthians 12 where it lists nine of the different gifts of the Holy Spirit and gives some instructions about speaking in tongues. For the sake of time, I will go over to 1 Corinthians 14:13-14 where it says, "Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he might interpret. For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful."

I've already taught that when a person is born again, they literally receive a new identity and become a totally new person in their spirit. They are completely changed. So how do you get this change out? There are a number of the ways, and one of them is that when you are praying in tongues, your spirit prays. This part of you that has the perfect wisdom, power, and faith of God is being released when you speak in tongues. When you pray in tongues, your spirit prays.

In 1 Corinthians 2:6-7, the Apostle Paul says, "Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory." Paul said he was speaking wisdom not of this world but the wisdom of God, and it came in a mystery. Put this together with Ephesians 3:3 where he said that God had revealed these mysteries to him. How is it that you get revelation, that these mysteries become alive? If you remember, he said he was speaking the hidden wisdom of God in a mystery. Put that together with 1 Corinthians 14:2, "For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries." This is the exact same terminology, by the same author, and in the same book. So he is saying here that you are speaking the hidden wisdom of God when you speak in tongues.

In 1 Corinthians 2:16, the same context of the verse we just used, it says, “. . . we have the mind of Christ.” And 1 John 2:20 says, “But ye have unction [anointing] from the Holy One and ye know all things.” This isn’t talking about your brain. You can prove by your last test score that you don’t yet know all things with your mind, but in your spirit you have the mind of Christ—you know all things. How do you make this wisdom functional in your life? One way is to start speaking in tongues, and according to 1 Corinthians 14:2 in the spirit you are speaking mysteries, the hidden wisdom of God. Then in verses 13-14, which we have already read, it says that once you speak in tongues, pray that you interpret so your understanding will become fruitful.

I can give my own personal testimony that when I received the baptism of the Holy Ghost and started speaking in tongues, it changed my life dramatically. I believe when I got born again Christ came to live inside of me and deposited everything there, but when the Holy Spirit came upon me, it started to manifest to me and other people. There are a couple things that happen. When I pray in tongues, it’s foolishness to my mind. The first year I prayed in tongues, my mind told me it was crazy, that all I was doing was wasting time. It took faith for me to pray in tongues, which is the reason Jude 20 says you build yourself up in your most holy faith. It takes you out of natural thinking and reasoning, and puts you into a supernatural realm of faith.

Another thing I experienced was that when I prayed in tongues, people I hadn’t thought of for years would come to my remembrance. I’d start praying for them, and within a day or two they would contact me and I’d find that something miraculous had happened. This happened so many times that I finally began to put these things together and realize that when I was praying tongues, I was praying with wisdom that went beyond my mental ability. My spirit that knew all things and had the mind of Christ was praying for people in ways that I could never do with my own physical understanding.

One day I was praying in tongues—as I said, it took faith for me to pray in tongues—and I was battling some thoughts like, “You could be speaking in English and doing some good instead of speaking this gibberish.” I had to deal with these thoughts and put them down, and I just kept praying. A guy I hadn’t seen for four years knocked on my door. He came in, didn’t say hello or anything, sat down, and began to cry and pour out his heart because he was having a lot of problems. I sat there thinking, “Boy, I should have been praying in English.” My next thought was, “How would I have known to pray for him when I hadn’t seen him in four years?” Finally it just dawned on me that I had been praying and God had been preparing me. I had been interceding for him in a way that I couldn’t have done if I were praying with my understanding. Suddenly, a revelation began to come to me and I told him, “I can tell you what your problem is.” I finished his story for him and gave him his answer.

You have to understand that this was back when I was in a denominational church. He didn’t know what had happened to me, I wasn’t sure, and it scared us both. But it was the power of God in manifestation, and He used it supernaturally. That is what this means: when you pray in tongues, it is your spirit praying. Your spirit has been born again, has the mind of Christ, and knows exactly what to do. It has an unction (anointing) from God so that you know all things, and there is no limitation in your spirit. If you could walk in the power and revelation of your spirit, it would transform your physical life. One way of doing that, though not the only way, is to just start speaking in tongues. Recognize and believe that when you do you’re building yourself up in your most holy faith, that your spirit is praying the hidden wisdom of God, and the perfect revelation of God is coming. Then, according to 1 Corinthians 14:13, pray that you can interpret. That doesn’t mean you have to stop praying in tongues and pray in English to interpret; it just means your understanding becomes fruitful.

If you give a message in tongues in a church service, you have to stop and interpret in English. When you're praying by yourself, what I do is pray in tongues and trust that God is giving me revelation. Sometimes my attitude just changes. I don't have a specific word, but suddenly I see things clearly and get a different perspective. It may take a week before I get the full revelation, but I believe the time spent praying in tongues and believing I interpret is a part of it.

Speaking in tongues is important for many reasons, certainly more than to prove you've received the Holy Spirit. It should be a part of everyday life. It is a way to communicate directly from your heart to the Father, bypassing your brain with its doubts and fears. It builds you up in your most holy faith and releases the hidden wisdom of God. I just pray that all of you will be able to flow in this, release your faith, and receive the full benefit of speaking in tongues.

THE BENEFITS OF SPEAKING IN TONGUES (Outline)

Acts 2:4: “And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

God never did anything without the Holy Spirit. He created the heavens and the earth by the Spirit: Genesis 1:2: “And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.” Jesus never did any miracles until the Holy Spirit descended upon Him and anointed Him. Matthew 3:16: “And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him.” And we can’t be effective without the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Acts 1:8: “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”

There are things that you can do to release the power of the Holy Spirit.

Praying in the Holy Ghost is praying in other tongues and it builds up your faith. Jude 20: “But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost”; 1 Corinthians 14:4: “He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church.”

When you pray in tongues the power in your spirit, the part of you that has the perfect wisdom, power and faith of God, is released. 1 Corinthians 14:14: “For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful.”

You speak the hidden wisdom and mysteries of God when you speak in tongues. I Corinthians 2:6-7: “Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: ⁷But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory.” I Corinthians 14:2: “For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.”

When you pray in tongues it’s foolishness to your mind. It takes faith for you to pray in tongues. It takes you out of natural reasoning and thinking and puts you into a supernatural realm of faith.

When you pray in tongues for other people you are praying for them with the wisdom of God that goes beyond your mental ability. You are praying the mind of Christ for them that goes beyond your understanding and supernatural things can happen for them.

When you're praying in tongues, it's your spirit that knows exactly what to do—it's your spirit that's praying. If you could walk in the spirit, the power and revelation that's in your spirit, it would transform your life. One way of releasing that power is by praying in tongues.

When you speak in tongues, believe that you are building up your faith. Jude 20: "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost." Believe that your spirit is praying the hidden wisdom of God and then pray that you interpret it or get the understanding. 1 Corinthians 14:13: "Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret."

Praying that you interpret doesn't mean that you have to stop praying in tongues and start praying in English, it just means that your understanding becomes fruitful. Sometimes that interpretation can mean a different attitude or perception about something.

Praying in tongues should be a part of your everyday life. It's a way to communicate with God and bypass your brain, which has all the doubts and fears in it.

THE BENEFITS OF SPEAKING IN TONGUES (Teacher's Guide)

1. According to Jude 20, what great benefit is received by praying in the spirit?
You build yourself up.
2. A. In Acts 2:4, how many people were filled with the Holy Spirit?
All of them.
B. What did they do as a result of being filled?
They spoke in tongues.
3. According to 1 Corinthians 14:14, what part of you is praying when you pray in an unknown tongue?
Your spirit is praying.
4. A. According to 1 Corinthians 14:2, who are you praying to?
God.
B. Who understands these tongues?
No man.
C. According to 1 Corinthians 14:2, your spirit is speaking what?
Mysteries.
5. According to 1 Corinthians 14:4, when you pray in tongues you do what?
Edify yourself (build yourself up).
6. A. According to 1 Corinthians 14:16, when you speak in tongues your spirit is doing what?
Blessing God.
B. You are also doing what?
Giving thanks.

THE BENEFITS OF SPEAKING IN TONGUES

(Detailed Teacher's Guide)

Note: The following information may be read out loud (a numbered section at a time) with the person(s) being discipled. After each numbered section is read, pause and ask the question(s) that correspond to the paragraph(s), and then discuss them.

¹ Many people question what is accomplished by speaking in tongues. There are four verses in 1 Corinthians chapter 14 where Paul gives us insight on this. In 1 Corinthians 14:2, Paul says we are speaking mysteries.

Paul made it clear that his revelation of the mysteries of God came through the Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:10). When we pray in tongues, our spirits are praying (1 Corinthians. 14:14) through the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4, Jude 20). Normally our understanding is unfruitful (1 Corinthians 14:14) when we pray in tongues, but we can change that by praying for the interpretation. The way this works is that as we speak in tongues and believe for the interpretation, and revelation knowledge comes. This might be insight into some truth of God that we are pondering, or godly insight into some situation that we are praying about.

² In 1 Corinthians 14:4, Paul says we edify ourselves through speaking in tongues. The word “edify” means, “the act of building . . . the promotion of spiritual growth” (W. E. Vine). Speaking in tongues builds us up (Jude 20) and promotes spiritual growth.

The Lord promised us that He would comfort us in all our tribulation (2 Corinthians 1:4) and that is specifically what the gift of speaking in tongues does for us. Later in 1 Corinthians 14:21, Paul quotes from Isaiah 28:11-12, and specifically applies those verses to speaking in tongues. Therefore, in Isaiah 28:11-12, the Lord said that speaking in tongues was refreshing and the “rest” where with you may cause the weary to rest.

Speaking in tongues is a powerful force for promoting spiritual growth and giving us refreshment and rest in trying situations.

¹ (a) What happens when we pray in tongues according to 1 Corinthians 14:14?

(b) What may we ask for according to 1 Corinthians 14:13?

² (a) According to 1 Corinthians 14:4, what do we do when we speak in tongues?

(b) What does the word “edify” mean?

³ 1 Corinthians 14:14, says our spirits are the part of us that prays in tongues. Our born-again spirits have the mind of Christ. They have all the power of Christ (Ephesians 1:18-20). Our spirits are complete (Colossians 2:9-10). Therefore, when we are praying from our spirit, we are praying with the mind of Christ, using our most holy faith (Jude 20). Too often our minds, with all their wrong thinking and unbelief, get in the way. Praying in tongues bypasses our minds and allows our spirits to have unhindered communion with the Father.

⁴ In 1 Corinthians 14:17, Paul says we are giving thanks unto God when we speak in tongues. This is a very powerful benefit of speaking in tongues. When we speak in tongues we are praising God. And since we are praying from our spirit, we don't experience the hindrances that are present when we pray from our mind. We are giving perfect praise unto God, without the limitations of human language or thought. If there were no other benefits associated with speaking in tongues, this would be more than enough reason to seek this gift.

³(a)How are we to pray according to Ephesians 6:18? In the Spirit

(b)When one prays in tongues, is he praying in the spirit? (1 Corinthians 14:14)

⁴What happens when we pray in tongues, according to 1 Corinthians 14:17?

THE BENEFITS OF SPEAKING IN TONGUES (Discipleship Questions)

1. Read Jude 20
What great benefit is received by praying in tongues?

Read Acts 2:4

2. How many people were filled with the Holy Spirit?
3. What did they do as a result of being filled?

Read 1 Corinthians 14:14, 16

4. What part of you is praying when you pray in the Holy Spirit?
5. What is your spirit doing when you pray in tongues?
6. What else are you doing?

Read 1 Corinthians 14:2, 4

7. When you are praying in tongues, Who are you praying to?
8. Does man understand these tongues?
9. What is your Spirit speaking?
10. What are you doing when you are praying in tongues?

Read Ephesians 8:18-19

11. How are we to pray according to verse 18?
12. Is utterance given to us or do we make it up?
13. How then should we open our mouths?
14. Why?

Read 1 Corinthians 1:18, 20, 25, 27

15. What is foolishness to those who are perishing?
16. What is the message of the cross to those who are being saved?
17. Verse 20, What did God do with the wisdom of the world?
18. Verse 25, "Because the _____ of God is _____ than men, and the _____ of God is _____ than men."
19. Verse 27, What two things has God chosen to put to shame the wise?
 - A. _____
 - B. _____

Speaking in tongues is foolish to the natural mind. It sounds like nonsense, and our natural minds cannot wrap around its logic. I pray that you receive revelation of 1 Corinthians so that you can receive what God has ordained as the Precious Promise.

THE BENEFITS OF SPEAKING IN TONGUES (Discipleship Answer Key)

1. You build yourself up in your most holy faith
2. All who were in the upper room
3. Spoke in tongues
4. My spirit
5. Blessing God
6. Giving thanks
7. God
8. No
9. Mysteries
10. Edifying myself
11. Perseverance and supplication
12. Given
13. Boldly
14. To make known the mystery of the gospel
15. The message of the cross
16. The power of God
17. Made it foolish
18. Foolishness – wiser – weakness - stronger
19. A. Foolish things of the world
B. Weak things of the world

THE BENEFITS OF SPEAKING IN TONGUES (Additional Information)

One of the manifestations of the Holy Spirit is speaking in tongues. It is one of the most powerful gifts that God ever gave to the church. There are a lot of reasons why speaking in tongues will set you free, but most people don't know or understand them.

The Bible says faith comes by hearing the Word of God. You must speak in tongues in faith. You have to have faith and believe that it works.

Speaking in tongues is a gift to you. Since it is a gift, this means that you can speak in tongues anytime you want. You don't have to wait for a special occasion. It's the Holy Spirit Himself that gives you the utterance to speak in this unknown language. It is so fought against because speaking in tongues is the most powerful manifestation gift of the Spirit. Because it accomplishes so much, Satan fights against it.

You can fake all kinds of things, but speaking in tongues is an action—it is something that you cannot fake. When you speak in tongues you are acting in faith, it releases a lot of power. Here are some scripture verses

1. Speaking in tongues is a spiritual gift for self edification.

1 Corinthians 14:4: "He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church. (NKJV)"

2. Speaking in tongues is a spiritual gift for communication to the church.

1 Corinthians 14:5: "I wish you all spoke with tongues, but even more that you prophesied for he who prophesies is greater than he who speaks with tongues, unless he interprets, that the church may receive edification (NKJV)."

You can ask the Holy Spirit to give you an interpretation of what you are speaking so that the church may be edified.

3. Speaking in tongues is a spiritual gift for communication with God in private worship.

1 Corinthians 14:2: "For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God. For no one understands him; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries." (NKJV).

4. Speaking in tongues is a means by which the Holy Spirit intercedes through us in prayer.

Romans 8:26: “In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express” (NIV).

5. Speaking in tongues is a spiritual gift for singing in the Spirit.

1 Corinthians 14:15: “So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind” (NIV).

6. Speaking in tongues is one of the gifts of the Spirit.

1 Corinthians 12:1: “Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant” (NIV).

7. The Apostle Paul was thankful to God for the privilege of speaking in tongues.

1 Corinthians 14:18: “I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you” (NIV).

8. The Apostle Paul desired that all would speak in tongues.

1 Corinthians 14:5: “I would like every one of you to speak in tongues” (NIV).

9. Isaiah prophetically refers to speaking with tongues as a rest.

Isaiah 28:11-12: “Very well then, with foreign lips and strange tongues God will speak to this people, to whom he said, ¹²‘This is the resting place, let the weary rest,’ and, ‘This is the place of repose,’—but they would not listen” (NIV).

Isaiah prophetically refers to speaking in tongues as “refreshing.”

10. Speaking in tongues sometimes follows as a confirmation of the Word of God when it is preached.

Mark 16:17: “And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils, they shall speak with new tongues” (KJV).

Mark 16:20: “Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it” (NIV).

1 Corinthians 13:8: “Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away” (NIV).

When is the time that tongues shall cease? They will cease at the end of this age, when “perfection comes” which is Jesus Himself. Until then, we need the Holy Spirit and His gifts in our churches. There is no indication in the scriptures that the manifestation of the Spirit through His gifts would cease at the end of the first century era. Three things will have to happen at the same time tongues cease:

1. Knowledge will have to pass away.
2. We will see face to face.
3. We will know all things as we are fully known.

The only time this will happen is at the second coming of the Lord when we will receive a glorified body. Then we will be total and complete with a renewed mind, body, soul, and spirit. Until the return of the Lord, speaking in tongues is for us today.

THE PURPOSE OF SPEAKING IN TONGUES

Many people don’t speak in tongues because they do not know what it accomplishes. They just think of it as something they do to let people know that they have received the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 14:2. You speak mysteries unto God. Your Spirit prays—That’s where the power is! When we pray in our own understanding we are limited. You pray the hidden wisdom of God when you pray in tongues. You become spiritually minded. You speak the revelation knowledge of God. We cannot receive the things of God with the carnal mind. They are received only through the Spirit by speaking in tongues.

1 Corinthians 14:4. Speaking in tongues edifies you—it builds you up and promotes spiritual growth.

Jude 20. “But you beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit” (NKJV).

Speaking in tongues is a powerful weapon against the devil. That is why he tries so hard to keep God’s children from receiving this gift.

Some people say that speaking in tongues is of the devil. If this was of the devil, why aren’t all those who follow the devil doing all manner of evil by speaking in tongues? Those who frequent bars where the environment is often filled with people who are drunk and have no ability to think clearly, do they speak in tongues? No, so this myth is only a myth.

1 Corinthians 14:39: “forbid not to speak with tongues.”

Luke 11:13: “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?” This verse refers to the baptism of the Holy Spirit that Christ promised to His followers, not the impartation of the Spirit at the new birth.

According to your faith, so be it done unto you. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is a real occurrence. It happened in the book of Acts, in every instance there was a manifestation. It is normal. Receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit is so important that the Holy Spirit will instantly begin to initiate tongues to be spoken through you.

1 Corinthians 12:31: “But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet show I unto you a more excellent way.”

The gifts and callings are without repentance.

Read Acts 2:1-4. When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each one of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit enabled them. It hasn't ended, and it will not end until Jesus comes at the second coming—at the end of the age.