



**FIRST PRINCIPLES**

**OF THE**

**GOSPEL OF CHRIST**

**EIGHTEEN LESSONS WITH CLASS QUESTIONS  
AND CHARTS**

**For Use in Classes, Small Groups, and Home Studies**

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# *First Principles of the Gospel of Christ*

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## **FIRST PRINCIPLES-- Foreword**

“**THE FIRST PRINCIPLES OF THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST**” are extremely important to any student of the Bible. One cannot begin to comprehend God’s plan to save dying man until he understands that certain truths must first be confronted before one can move toward “perfection” (Hebrews 6:1).

While perfection is an indispensable goal toward which every Christian must aspire, perfection is an impossible goal for any person who has failed to lay the foundation of the elementary principles of Christ upon which perfection must be built. To dwell *forever* upon first principles is **foolish**; to leap *beyond* first principles without giving them their rightful emphasis in God’s plan is **futile**.

These lessons are intended to stress truths that are being neglected and even denied in our time. We cannot afford to de-emphasize *any* truth that God has spoken. Man lives by every word of God (Matthew 4:4). The neglect of *any* part of the gospel cannot fail to result in disastrous consequences among the Lord’s people individually and in the Lord’s church collectively! We have *already* witnessed many departures from the perfect pattern given to us in the New Testament. We will *continue* to see hurtful practices among those professing godliness so long as the **FIRST PRINCIPLES** of the gospel are ignored!

There are subjects other than those included here that could be studied within the context of **FIRST PRINCIPLES**. Students are encouraged to study them, too. The questions that accompany each lesson are designed to call attention to salient points in the lesson. They can serve to spark discussion among class members about things that need to be discussed. The memory verses following each lesson will call attention to particular points of emphasis. Memorizing these (and other) scriptures will allow students to take some “ammunition” against error with them wherever they go.

If in any way these lessons on **FIRST PRINCIPLES** may help some of us to “contend earnestly for the faith,” the thought and effort put into their preparation will be richly rewarded.

-- The author

## ***Introduction to First Principles***

### **I. THE IMPORTANCE OF BIBLE STUDY.**

- A. God's Word is TRUTH. See John 17:17.
- B. Our eternal salvation depends on the truth. See John 8:32.
- C. Bible knowledge comes only through diligent Bible study. See 2Timothy 3:25; 2:15; 2Peter 3:18; Acts 17:11.

### **II. WE WILL STUDY "FIRST PRINCIPLES" IN THESE LESSONS.**

- A. What are "principles"? Webster's Dictionary: "A general or fundamental law, doctrine, or assumption...a primary source."
  - 1. Bible principles are fundamental truths upon which the understanding of other truths may depend.
- B. What are "first" principles? Webster: "Preceding all others in time, order, or importance."
  - 1. Our emphasis in this study is on "importance."

### **III. SOME BIBLE TEACHINGS ARE MORE IMPORTANT TO US.**

- A. While we are still "beginners" in studying the Bible.
- B. "First principles" teaching is like "*milk*" (See Hebrews 5:12,13) and is intended for "babes in Christ. See 1Peter 2:2.
- C. "Solid food" (meat) is for the mature student. See Hebrews 5:13,14.
- D. Some should study on an "elementary" level, while others can move toward "perfection" (completeness, maturity) in their study. See Hebrews 6:1-3.

### **IV. SOME BIBLE TEACHINGS ARE MORE IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND.**

- A. Facts about Jesus as the Son of God. See 1Timothy 3:16.
- B. Requirements God has given for man's salvation from sin. See Mark 16:16.
- C. God's rewards and punishments in response to man's behavior. See 2Corinthians 5:10.

## V. SOME BIBLE TEACHINGS MAY BE LESS IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND.

- A. Especially when we first begin to study the Bible.
- B. Certain portions of the Book of Revelation. E.g., Revelation 16:12-16.
- C. The times and prophecies in the latter part of Daniel. See Daniel, chapters 9-11.
- D. Answers to such questions as, “Will we know one another in heaven?”

## VI. HOW MUCH OF THE BIBLE SHOULD WE TRY TO UNDERSTAND?

- A. Ultimately-- ***all of it !!*** See Revelation 22:18,19; Acts 20:27.

## VII. THE OUTLINE FOR OUR STUDY IN THESE LESSONS:

- A. The ***NATURE OF SIN*** and how sin affects all of us [Lesson 2].
- B. God’s ***PLAN TO SAVE*** us from our sins. [Lesson 3].
- C. The ***SOURCE*** from which we can learn about God’s plan [Lesson 4].
- D. What each person ***MUST DO TO BE SAVED*** from sin [Lessons 5-10].
  - 1. ***HEARING THE GOSPEL*** [Lesson 5].
  - 2. ***BELIEVING THE GOSPEL*** [Lesson 6].
  - 3. ***REPENTING OF SINS*** [Lesson 7].
  - 4. ***CONFESSING CHRIST*** [Lesson 8].
  - 5. ***BEING BAPTIZED*** [Lesson 9].
  - 6. ***REMAINING FAITHFUL TO CHRIST*** [Lesson 10].
- E. ***THE CHURCH and WHAT IT MEANS*** to the Christian [Lessons 11,12].
  - 1. ***THE ONE CHURCH*** [Lesson 11].
  - 2. ***HOW TO GET INTO THE CHURCH*** [Lesson 12].
- F. Our ***DUTIES AS MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH*** [Lesson 13-15].
  - 1. ***THE LOCAL CHURCH*** [Lesson 13].
  - 2. The ***WORSHIP OF THE LOCAL CHURCH*** [Lesson 14].
  - 3. The ***WORK OF THE LOCAL CHURCH*** [Lesson 15].
- G. ***CHRISTIAN LIVING*** and personal **responsibility** to God [Lesson 16].
- F. ***THE HOLY SPIRIT in our lives*** today [Lesson 17].
- G. Some ***“LAST DAYS” TRUTHS AND UNTRUTHS*** [Lesson 18].

## ***SIN: WHAT IT IS and WHAT IT DOES TO US***

### **I. SIN DEFINED: “MISSING THE MARK.”**

- A. We must aim at the “target” of God’s perfection. See Matthew 5:48.
- B. We should strive to be as complete as Christians as God is complete as God-- *nothing lacking!*

### **II. ALL SIN IS “LAWLESSNESS” [1John 3:4].**

- A. Lawlessness is: “The rejection of the law of God and the substitution of the will of man...” (W.E. Vine, Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words).

### **III. ALL UNRIGHTEOUSNESS IS SIN [1John 5:17].**

- A. We *Sin* when we DO WHAT IS WRONG-- what is **forbidden** by God. See Genesis 3:17; Romans 5:12,14.
- B. We *Sin* when we FAIL TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT-- what is **required** by God. See James 4:17; 1John 3:17.
- C. **SIN** consists either of **NEGATIVE BEHAVIOR** or a lack of **POSITIVE BEHAVIOR**.
- D. We *Sin* also when we VIOLATE our CONSCIENCES in whatever we do. See Romans 14:22,23.
- E. **SIN** may be committed *deliberately* [Hebrews 10:25,26] or *ignorantly*. See Acts 3:15,17.
- F. **SIN** may be in our *thoughts* while not in our actions. See Acts 8:22; 1John 3:15.
- G. **OTHER NAMES BY WHICH SIN IS CALLED:** “Disobedience.” “error,” “wrong,” “fault,” “iniquity,” “transgression,” “ungodliness,” etc.
- H. *Consider* the many ways in which *Sin* may be committed-- no wonder the Bible says, “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” See Romans 3:23; 1John 1:8.

#### IV. SIN IS NOT:

- A. **INHERITED**. See Romans 14:12; Ezekiel 18:4.
- B. **IMAGINED**-- It is a **fact** of life. See Romans 5:12.
- C. **GUILTY FEELINGS**. Absence of bad feelings does not validate innocence. See John 16:2.
- D. **SITUATIONAL** (depending on what situation a person is in when he commits a particular act). See John 18:38; 14:6.

#### V. WHAT CAUSES MEN TO SIN?

- A. **IGNORANCE**. See Luke 23:34.
- B. **WEAKNESS OR LACK OF CAUTION**. See Galatians 6:1; 1Corinthians 10:12.
- C. **REBELLION**. See Hebrews 10:26.
  - 1. A willful disposition such as motivates “will worship.” See Colossians 2:23 [KJ, ASV].

#### VI. WHAT SIN DOES TO US:

- A. It keeps us from a **CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD**. See Isaiah 59:2.
- B. It prevents us from **ENJOYING MANY GOOD THINGS FROM GOD**. See Jeremiah 5:25.
- C. It **ENTRAPPS US** and often leads to **OTHER AND MORE SERIOUS SINS**. See Proverbs 5:22.
- D. It brings **SPRITUAL DEATH** to us-- **now and eternally!** See Ezekiel 18:4; Romans 6:23.

## **FIRST PRINCIPLES**

## **REVIEW-- Lesson 2**

1. What is the basic meaning of “sin”?
2. The book of First John provides other definitions of “sin.” What are they?
3. Give your own example(s) of sinning by doing what is wrong.
4. Give your own example(s) of sinning by failing to do what is right.
5. Give your own example(s) of sinning by violating one’s conscience.
6. Give your own example(s) of sinning by what one thinks rather than by what he does.
7. What are four popular ideas about sin that are not true?
8. Give your own example(s) of how some people would make a sin “situational.”
9. List three basic reasons why men sin in spite of sin’s awfulness.
10. What important relationships will sin destroy?
11. How can some sins lead to other and sometimes more serious sins?
12. What is the most disastrous of all the consequences of sin?

**MEMORY VERSES: Romans 6:23; John 14:6**

***SIN: What GOD Has Done About It***

**I. MAN HAS HAD OPPORTUNITY TO SIN SINCE ADAM SINNED.** See Genesis 3:1-19.

A. **SIN HAS ALWAYS BEEN THE RESULT OF MAN'S CHOICE TO SIN.** See Genesis 4:7; Joshua 24:14,15.

B. **MAN IS ACCOUNTABLE FOR HIS SINFUL CONDUCT.**

1. In keeping with God's laws to him at any given time. See Romans 5:13.

C. **GOD DOES NOT ORIGINATE SIN BUT ALLOWS MEN TO PRACTICE SIN.** See James 1:13-15; Genesis 3:3,4; Hebrews 2:14; 1John 3:8.

1. The presence of sin enables man to exercise his power of **choice** about sin.

2. It enables God to exercise His **mercy** when man repents of sin.

**II. GOD HAS ALWAYS HAD COMPLETE AND ABSOLUTE KNOWLEDGE OF MAN'S SPIRITUAL CONDITION.**

A. During the early days of man's activities on the earth. See Genesis 6:5.

B. In the time when the Jews lived under the Law of Moses. See Psalm 53:2.

C. When the Gentiles were accountable to the law of conscience. See Romans 2:11-16.

D. While Jesus (God in the flesh) lived among men in the world. See John 2:25.

E. In the last days of New Testament revelation. See 1John 3:20.

F. God's ***inerrant knowledge*** will provide a fair judgment for **all** men. See 1Corinthians 5:10.

1. God's "workload" of knowing man's actions and thoughts has vastly increased since Adam's time, but He is as efficient as ever! His knowledge is all-encompassing!

### III. GOD IS GRIEVED BECAUSE OF MAN’S SIN AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

- A. His grief over man’s sins has been coextensive with man’s wicked behavior. See Genesis 6:6; 2Peter 3:9.
- B. He takes no pleasure in the destruction of the wicked because of their sins. See Ezekiel 18:23,32.
- C. God’s **justice** dictates the necessity of a *fair* judgment for all. See Ezekiel 18:19-29; Romans 11:22.

### IV. GOD PLANNED A WAY FOR MEN TO BE FORGIVEN OF SIN.

- A. His plan was formulated even before the world began. See Ephesians 3:10,11.
- B. He planned for Christ, the “seed of woman,” to destroy **Satan’s power** to ruin man when man would choose to practice sin. See Genesis 3:15; Hebrews 2:14.
- C. This plan would require the *sacrifice* of the *life* of Jesus on earth. See Hebrews 2:9.

### V. GOD EXECUTED HIS PLAN--NOW COMPLETE FORGIVENESS IS POSSIBLE.

- A. For **all** who will accept it. See Revelation 22:17; Acts 10:43.
- B. This is God’s **one and only plan** for man’s salvation. See Hebrews 1:2; 10:26.

1. Can you think of any reasons other than the ones suggested why God allows sin to exist in the world?
2. What did God know about the spiritual condition of men before He made the decision to destroy the earth by flood? What was His *attitude* about what He knew?
3. Who besides the Father is said to “know” all men? Why is it not surprising that this is so? See Genesis 1:26,27.
4. Explain how the final judgment of all men is related to the perfect knowledge of God.
5. God’s “workload” of awareness of man’s spiritual condition has increased many times since the days of Adam and Eve. Estimate that increase (present world population divided by 2). What does that tell us about the **nature** of God?
6. When was the plan for man’s salvation devised by God? See Ephesians 1:4-6.
7. God’s plan provided for Christ to be sacrificed for how many people? Does that fact support the doctrine of *universal* salvation? Why or why not? See Acts 10:35.
8. What fundamental attitude toward God’s plan of salvation from sin does He require of us before we can take advantage of what He has planned?

## *Where Can Men Find GOD'S PLAN?*

### **I. GOD'S PLAN IS NOT FOUND IN MEN'S PLANS AND IDEAS.**

A. We cannot find our own way without God's guidance. See Jeremiah 10:23.

### **II. GOD'S PLAN IS NOT BEING REVEALED TODAY.**

A. Through angels or other heavenly messengers or means. See Galatians 1:6-9.

### **III. GOD'S PLAN IS NOT DETERMINED BY MAN'S WISHES.**

A. By *whatever* man wishes to teach about God's plan. See Matthew 15:6,9; 2John 9.

### **IV. GOD'S PLAN IS NOT CONTAINED IN "SPECIAL" REVELATIONS.**

A. All claims of messages from God *since* the New Testament are false. See Jude 3.

B. Example: The Book of Mormon-- supposedly given to Joseph Smith in 1827. This book is the basis of the Mormon Church, along with other books claimed to be inspired (The Doctrines and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints and The Pearl of Great Price). Also, ongoing "revelations" are issued by the Presidents of the church.

"We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God... We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the kingdom of God." ("The Articles of Faith," numbers 8 and 9).

"Indeed, no one, without further revelation, knows whether even one-hundredth part of the doctrines and ordinances of salvation are contained in the few books of Scripture which have descended to our times; how, then, can it be decided that they are a sufficient guide?... Who knows that even one verse of the whole Bible has escaped pollution so as to convey the same sense that it did in the original?" (Orson Pratt, Mormon "apostle")

\* Examples of *the many errors* found in The Book of Mormon:

1. Jesus was born in Jerusalem (Alma 7:10). But-- see Luke 2:4-6.
2. There were "Christians" in 73 B.C. (Alma 46:15). But-- see Acts 11:26.

\* **Contradictions are common** among the "revelations" of Mormonism:

1. Plural marriages are *condemned* in The Book of Mormon (Jacob 2:23,24).
2. Plural marriages are *condoned* in Doctrines and Covenants (132:37,38).
3. **BOTH** "inspired" books use David and Solomon for their proof!

C. Example: Science and Health-- supposedly given to Mary Baker Eddy in 1866. This book is the basis of the Church of Christ, Scientist. It teaches many things contrary to the Bible, although it claims to support the Bible as the word of God. It claims:

1. Science and Health offers us the *complete spiritual* meaning of the Bible. But see 1Timothy 3:16,17; 2Peter 1:3.
2. Heaven and hell are not real places, but states of mind. But see John 14:2.
3. Christ's atonement is insufficient for our forgiveness. But see Hebrews 10:10,14.

D. Example: "Visions" supposedly received by Ellen G. White in 1844 and later. These "visions" are the basis of the Seventh Day Adventist Church, yet they propose doctrines clearly in opposition to the New Testament. They propose:

1. Sabbath Day (Saturday) observance is for Christ's disciples today. But see Colossians 2:14-17; Acts 20:7.
2. The wicked will be annihilated, not eternally punished. But see Matthew 25:46; Jude 13.

## V. GOD'S PLAN IS NOT FOUND IN OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES.

- A. The **OLD Testament** (covenant) has been *removed* as God's PLAN for man. See Hebrews 8:7-13; Colossians 2:14.
- B. Salvation depends on the shedding of Christ's blood. See Matthew 26:28.
- C. The **NEW TESTAMENT** depends on the death of Christ on the cross. See Hebrews 9:16,17.
- D. Only through the **GOSPEL** can forgiveness be enjoyed. See Romans 1:16,17.
- E. The **NEW TESTAMENT** is a **new** and **living** way! See Hebrews 10:20.
- F. The **NEW TESTAMENT** is a *better covenant*, founded on *better promises* than the Old Testament. See Hebrews 8:6.
- G. The **NEW TESTAMENT** has made **the OLD Testament** "obsolete" (NKJV). See Hebrews 8:13.

1. Can you add to the list given in the lesson some other sources where people commonly seek the will of God?
2. Why is it deceitful for the Mormon Church to offer free Bibles or New Testaments to the public through its highly-appealing advertising campaigns?
3. How do you know that the Mormon claim that the Book of Mormon is “another Testament of Jesus Christ” (as stated in their advertising) is not true?
4. What do you think is the basic difference between the errors and contradictions of The Book of Mormon and those *alleged* to be found in the Bible?
5. Why is it foolish to depend upon “revelations” such as The Book of Mormon, Science and Health, and so-called “visions” for guidance in seeking God’s salvation for man?
6. Explain how Science and Health is in error about certain fundamental Bible teachings. Contrast its false teachings with plain statements in the Bible.
7. Also show how the “visions” of Seventh Day Adventism are wrong concerning some basic Bible doctrines.
8. Why must people be careful even as they study the Bible to learn about God’s eternal plan for saving man in the twenty-first century?
9. List some things that prove to thinking people that they must confine themselves to the New Testament of Christ if they are to learn what to do to be saved in the *present* time.
10. Be ready to explain why God’s plan of salvation is found in the *New Testament* and not in the *Old Testament*.

**MEMORY VERSES: Romans 1:16,17; Hebrews 9:16,17**

*What We Can Do About Sin:* HEARING GOD'S WORD

HEARING GOD'S WORD is the *First Step* toward salvation from sin.

I. WE MUST DO MORE THAN JUST DESIRE TO BE SAVED. See Matthew 7:21.

A. Obedience to the Gospel is the means by which men are saved. See Romans 1:16,17.

B. Souls are purified through obedience to the truth. See 1Peter 1:22,23.

C. Obedience must follow a specific form found in the Scriptures. See Romans 6:17,18.

II. WE MUST BE CAREFUL ABOUT WHAT WE HEAR AND HOW WE HEAR!

A. We must be sure that we hear the right message. See Mark 4:23,24.

1. We must hear both the Father and the Son. See Hebrews 1:1,2; Matthew 17:5.

2. We must hear *only* the message of the Gospel. See Ephesians 1:13; John 8:32.

a. The truth is found *only* in the written word. See John 17:17; 20:30,31.

3. We must hear all inspired teachers in the New Testament. See 1Corinthians 7:12, 25; 2Peter 3:15,16.

a. "Red letter" New Testament words (words of Jesus) should not discriminate against the "black letter" words of *inspired* human teachers in the Bible.

4. We must hear only the inspired teachers in the Bible. See Romans 10:13-15.

5. We must follow precisely the *pattern of sound words* revealed. See 2Timothy 1:13.

6. We should NOT hear many kinds of religious messages. Can you give examples?

**B. We must be sure that we hear in the *right way*. See Luke 8:18.**

**1. Examples of hearing God's word with the *right* attitude:**

- a. An entire city (Antioch) heard God's word eagerly. See Acts 13:44.**
- b. Cornelius and his family gladly heard instructions from an inspired apostle of Jesus Christ. See Acts 10:33.**

**2. Examples of hearing God's word with the *wrong* attitude:**

- a. Elymas the sorcerer-- opposing God's message. See Acts 13:8.**
- b. Felix the governor-- procrastinating about God's message. See Acts 24:24,25.**
- c. Agrippa the king-- almost persuaded by God's message. See Acts 25:22;  
Acts 26:28,29**

**C. What is your attitude about hearing the word of God?? See John 12:48.**

1. Why is hearing considered the “first step” toward salvation? See Romans 10:13-17.
2. How has the **application** of verses 14 and 15 (above) changed since they were first written?
3. What are the two basic things about hearing that we must be sure about?
4. Why can a person not “hear” God if he refuses to “hear” Jesus Christ?
5. How can we be certain that we are hearing the right things about obeying God? List several “safeguards” for acceptable hearing.
6. What might be some advantages and some disadvantages in studying from a “red letter” New Testament?
7. There are many people and things we must *not* listen to in our search for the truth of God. What are some of them? (You may wish to refer to Lesson 4.)
8. What are some characteristics of people who hear God in the *right* way?
9. What mistakes are made by those who hear God’s word in the *wrong* way?
10. By whom and by what will be *all* be judged for eternity? See Acts 17:31.

**MEMORY VERSES:      Matthew 7:21; Romans 10:17**

## *What We Can Do About Sin: BELIEVING*

### **BELIEVING IN JESUS IS THE *Second Step* toward salvation from sin.**

#### **I. THE IMPORTANCE OF BELIEVING:**

1. We *must* believe that Jesus is “**HE.**” See John 8:24.
  - a. Who or what is “He?”
    - (1) Some claim that Jesus was only a good teacher, a great leader, a reformer, etc.
    - (2) Jesus claimed to be much more than that:
      - (a) He claimed to be the Son of the Heavenly Father. See John 8:19.
      - (2) He claimed to be more than human. See John 8:23.
      - (3) He claimed to have been sent by the Father from heaven to earth. See John 8:18.
      - (4) He claimed to speak God’s message to the world. See See John 8:26.
      - (5) He claimed to be *always* pleasing to God. See John 8:29.
  - b. Jesus must be accepted as “Christ” and “Lord.” See Acts 16:31.
    - (1) “Christ” is the one *anointed* and *appointed* to accomplish God’s plan.
    - (2) “Lord” requires our *complete submission* to Him in *everything*. See Luke 6:46.
2. Belief in Jesus is necessary for **salvation from sin**. See Romans 10:9; 1Corinthians 1:21.
3. Belief is necessary for us to become **children of God**. See Galatians 3:26.
4. Belief (faith) allows us to enjoy **God’s grace** (favor). See Romans 5:2.
5. Belief (faith) is essential to **eternal life**. See John 3:16; 3:36.

#### **II. THE IMPORTANCE OF OBEDIENT FAITH:**

1. Faith alone *cannot* save us from sin. See James 2:24.
  - a. Article Nine of the Methodist Discipline of Faith says, “Wherefore, that we are justified by faith only is a most wholesome doctrine and very full of comfort.”

- b. Article Five of “Articles of Faith, Justification” in the Standard Manual for Baptist Churches by Edward Hiscox says: “...justification...is bestowed...solely through faith in Christ...”
2. “Devils” are saved if faith alone saves. See James 2:19.
  3. It is possible to believe “in vain” if we do not obey God. See 1Corinthians 15:2; John 12:42.
  4. Faith without works (of obedience) is dead! See James 2:26.
  5. Faith that works will “avail” (“to have strength, force or efficacy to accomplish the object in mind”-- Webster’s Dictionary). See Galatians 5:6.
  6. The presence or absence of an *obedient* faith demonstrates whether or not one has true love for Jesus Christ. See John 14:15 (ASV and RSV both translate: “...you will keep my commandments.”).

### **III. WHAT ARE THE “WORKS” THAT TRUE FAITH REQUIRES?**

1. Not *works of men* (things that *men* decide to do on their own). See Ephesians 2:8,9.
2. But-- *works of God* (things that *God* has decided for men to do). See John 6:28,29.
  - a. God prepared works for His people to pursue. See Ephesians 2:10.

### **IV. SOME BIBLE VERSES JOIN “FAITH” AND “SALVATION:”**

1. For example, see John 3:16 and Galatians 3:8.
2. Do these verse intend to *exclude* all obedience? What about repentance? Confession of Christ’s name? See Acts 17:30 and Romans 10:9,10.
3. How were faith and obedience connected in the lives of Bible “heroes”? See Hebrews chapter 11 for numerous examples.
4. What general rule governs the relationship between faith and works? See Galatians 5:6.

1. What are some things that people must believe if they really believe that He is “He”?
2. What are some things that people believe about Jesus that do *not* qualify as real “belief”?
3. What is the meaning of “Christ”? “Lord”?
4. What is the difference between “in” and “into” in Galatians 3:26,27? How do they differ in their relationship to our “obedience unto salvation”?
5. List some benefits of believing in Jesus as the Christ.
6. Give two (or more) reasons why we know that “faith only” in Jesus will *not* save.
7. Show why the guidebooks of modern denominations are in error concerning “faith only” and its relationship to salvation.
8. What is James’ analogy that includes: faith, works, the human body, and death?
9. What is the basic difference between “works of God” and “works of men”? Which kind *is* involved in man’s salvation?
10. What did Jesus designate as a “work of God”? (John 6:29) What problem does this raise for those who deny the necessity of any works by men?
11. “Belief” (or “believe”) and “faith” are used in two different ways in the Scriptures. What are they?

**MEMORY VERSES: John 8:24b; James 2:24**

***What We Can Do About Sin: REPENTING***

**REPENTING OF SIN IS THE *Third Step* toward salvation from sin.**

**I. REPENTANCE IS AN OFTEN-UNDEREMPHASIZED ACTION BY SINNERS.**

- A. It sometimes turns out to be a “forgotten step” in the “steps” to forgiveness.
- B. It certainly is the “hardest” step that one must take to be saved.

**II. REPENTANCE IS ESSENTIAL IN GOD’S PLAN OF SALVATION:**

- A. Men will perish without repentance. See Luke 13:3,5.
- B. Repentance is commanded of all men. See Acts 17:30.
- C. Repentance gives us spiritual life. See Acts 11:18.
- D. Remission of sins depends upon repentance. See Acts 2:38.
- E. Sins are blotted out by God when man repents. See Acts 3:19.

**III. WHAT IS REPENTANCE?**

- A. Basically and most simply, “A change.”
- B. Bible repentance is **not**:
  1. Resisting a temptation to do something sinful. See 1Corinthians 10:13; James 1:13-15.
  2. Stopping a sinful practice. See Isaiah 1:16,17.
  3. Hiding a sinful practice from other persons. See Psalm 69:5; Luke 12:2.
  4. Being sorry about the discovery of our sins by other people.
  5. Being sorry that other people have been hurt by our sins.

**None** of the above actions assures a spiritual change for the better in our lives. These things are often prompted by a “worldly sorrow” that has little or nothing to do with our relationship with God. See 2Corinthians 7:10.

C. Bible repentance **is**:

1. A *change in us* caused by sorrow that we have hurt **God** by violating His will. See 2Corinthians 7:9,10.
2. A *change in our feelings about sin*. We are sorry about the sins we have committed in the past. We come to understand that sin is our *enemy, not our friend*. See 1John 5:3.
3. A *change in our minds (or wills)* about wanting to commit sin in the future. We learn that sin is a poor investment. See Romans 6:23; Ezekiel 18:20.
4. A *change of behavior* in our *practice of sin*. We are determined to try hard *not to commit sin*. See Acts 26:20; Luke 13:3; Luke 3:8-14.

**Bible repentance** may be understood as: “A change of mind about sin, initiated by a godly sorrow, and resulting in a change of behavior about sin.”

**IV. REPENTANCE IS DIRECTED TOWARD GOD (Acts 20:21):**

- A. All spiritual law is from God. Hence, man’s sin violates God’s will. See Psalm 19:7.
- B. Repentance demonstrates respect for God’s law. See Nehemiah 9:28-31.

**V. THE MEANING OF REPENTANCE IS ILLUSTRATED BY:**

- A. The story of a father and his two sons. See Matthew 21:28-32.
  1. Identify the differences between the actions of these two sons. How does one show repentance? Why is the other son not a good example of repentance?
- B. The story of a Jewish tax collector. See Luke 19:1-10.

**VI. THE BLESSINGS OF REPENTANCE ARE ILLUSTRATED BY:**

- A. The people of Nineveh who were spared through repentance. See Matthew 12:4 and Jonah 3:4-10.
- B. The prodigal son who was forgiven by his father through repentance. See Luke 15:11-21.

## **VII. THE OPPORTUNITY FOR REPENTANCE IS:**

- A. Available to all who are guilty of sin. See Acts 17:30; 2Peter 3:9.
- B. Forfeited by those who choose to remain rebellious to God's mercy. See Hebrews 12:17; 6:4-6; 3:12,13.

## FIRST PRINCIPLES

## REVIEW-- Lesson 7

1. What is the *basic* meaning of “repentance”?
2. Give a *full* definition of “repentance.”
3. In what sense was it said that God “repented”? See Exodus 32:14 (KJV); Jonah 3:10 (KJV).
4. Cite at least three scriptures that prove repentance is necessary for salvation from sin.
5. How is just being sorry for our sins different from Bible repentance?
6. What **three** great changes in our lives does repentance cause?
7. Which son in Matthew 21:28-31 showed repentance? How?
8. Name some sins that *can* involve restitution and some that probably *cannot*.
9. How did repentance benefit the city of Nineveh? The prodigal son?
10. Why might it be said that repentance is the “**forgotten step**” in the plan of salvation?
11. Discuss why many believe that repentance is the “**hardest**” commandment.

**MEMORY VERSES: Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30**

## *What We Can Do About Sin: CONFESSING*

**CONFESSING is the *Third Step* toward salvation from sin.**

**I. GOD’S ETERNAL PLAN included a role for the “Word”** (the second Person in the Godhead) to become the Father’s only (directly) begotten Son. See John 1:1,14; 3:16.

**II. THE FATHER ENDORSED JESUS as His Son on the earth:**

- A. At Christ’s baptism, See Matthew 3:17.
- B. At the transfiguration of Jesus. See Matthew 17:1-5.

**III. THE FATHER INTENDS FOR ALL MEN TO ENDORSE HIS PLAN by endorsing Jesus as the Christ** (“anointed,” i.e., “chosen to be the Savior”).

- A. It is only through Christ that the Plan is carried out. See Colossians 1:14.
- B. Endorsement was required from the initial beneficiaries (apostles) of the Plan. See Matthew 16:13-18.
- C. *Every* creature is obligated to glorify the Father through the Son. See Mark 16:15; Philippians 2:9-11.

**IV. LOGIC DEMANDS CONFESSION AS A “STEP” TOWARD SALVATION.**

- A. Man should acknowledge the **source** of his blessings. See 1Thessalonians 5:18.
- B. Salvation is God’s **greatest gift** to man. See James 1:16-18.
- C. Salvation is possible **only** because of Jesus’ sacrifice. See 2Corinthians 5:18,19.
- D. **Therefore**, it is imperative for man to confess his Savior. See Luke 12:8,9.

## V. WHAT MAN MUST CONFESS “TO SALVATION.” (See Romans 10:10.)

- A. *Not just* that we are sinners and need God’s forgiveness.
  - 1. We *are* sinners and *need* His forgiveness. See Romans 3:23.
  - 2. We must *admit* to God and man that we are sinners. See 1John 1:8,9; James 5:16.
  - 3. An undeniable fact: “The way to put our sins *behind* us is to *face* them.”  
(22)
- B. *Not* that our sins have been forgiven **before** baptism into Christ. See Mark 16:16.
  - 1. A common religious confession is: “I believe that God for Christ’s sake has forgiven my sins...” as a prelude to baptism and denominational church membership.
- C. We *do* confess our belief that Jesus is *the Christ* and *the Son of God*. See Acts 8:36,37.
  - 1. This confirms our dependency on Jesus to save us and His ability to do so!
- D. We *do* confess that Jesus is the Lord of all men and all things. See Philippians 2:11.
- E. We *do* confess that Jesus has come in the flesh as the Savior. See 1John 4:2; 2John 7.

## VI. WHEN AND HOW DO WE MAKE A CONFESSION OF CHRIST?

- A. **When:** After we believe in Him as God’s only begotten in the flesh. See Acts 8:37.
- B. **When:** Before we are baptized into Christ. See Acts 8:36,37.
- C. **When:** As long as we live in God’s service. See Hebrews 11:13.  
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- D. **How:** With our tongues. See Philippians 2:10,11; Romans 14:11.
- E. **How:** With our mouths. See Romans 10:9,10.
- F. **How:** In the presence of witness(es). See 1Timothy 6:12; Acts 8:37.
- G. **How:** By the way we live before the world. See Titus 1:16.

## VII. THE CONSEQUENCES OF FAILING TO CONFESS CHRIST and to be Faithful to that Confession:

- A. Non-confessors will *not* be confessed by Christ to His Father. See Matthew 10:32,33.
- B. Non-confessors will *not* be saved from their sins. See Romans 10:9,10.

1. What role was the “Word” to fill in God’s eternal plan for man’s salvation?
2. On what two occasions did the Father endorse Jesus as His Son?
3. How does confessing Jesus as the Son endorse God’s plan of salvation?
4. Who were the *original* beneficiaries of God’s plan who were required to confess Jesus?
5. How can every creature glorify the Father in Heaven?
6. Through whom did the Father provide for man’s reconciliation to Himself? What does that fact have to do with a confession of Jesus?
7. What confession, commonly made in the religious world, is not the confession that sinners in the New Testament made before being baptized?
8. What three truths are included in man’s confession of Jesus?
9. In what ways and under what circumstances must we confess that Jesus is the Christ?
10. What two things will **not** happen in the judgment if we fail to confess Christ now?

**MEMORY VERSES: Acts 8:36,37; Romans 10:9,10**

## *What We Can Do About Sin: BEING BAPTIZED*

**BEING BAPTIZED IS THE *Fifth Step* toward salvation from sin.**

### I. WHY SHOULD PEOPLE BE BAPTIZED?

**A. For *salvation*.** See Mark 16:16 and 1Peter 3:21.

**B. For *remission of sins*.** See Acts 2:38; Acts 9:6; Acts 22:16.

**C. To “*get into*” *Christ*.** See Galatians 3:26.

1. To take the final step into Christ and salvation.

- (a) Belief is **unto** (toward) righteousness. See Romans 10:10.
- (b) Repentance is **unto** (toward) spiritual life. See Acts 11:18.
- (c) Confession is **unto** (toward) salvation. See Romans 10:10.
- (d) **But-- Baptism is INTO Christ.** See Galatians 3:27.

2. We have “*all* blessings” in Christ. See Ephesians 1:3.

- (a) Redemption is **in** Christ. See 2Timothy 2:10.
- (b) Forgiveness is **in** Christ. See Colossians 1:14.
- (c) The New Birth is **in** Christ. See 2Corinthians 5:17; John 3:5.
- (d) God’s promises are **in** Christ. See 2Corinthians 1:20.
- (e) God’s inheritance is **in** Christ. See Ephesians 1:11.
- (f) Spiritual life is **in** Christ. See 1John 5:11.

3. These blessings become available **following** baptism **into** Christ!

**D. To be added to the church by God.** See 1Corinthians 12:13 and Acts 2:47.

**E. To wear the name “*Christian*.”** See 1Corinthians 1:12,13.

1. Two things were required to justify wearing *Paul’s* name-- (1) Paul’s crucifixion for them and (2) their baptism into his name.

2. Two things are required to justify wearing *Christ’s* name-- (1) Christ’s crucifixion for us and (2) our **baptism** into His name.

**F. To imitate the obedience of EVERYONE who was converted in the New Testament!**

1. The Bible account of every conversion specifically includes obedience in baptism.

**II. WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED?**

- A. Those who can and do *believe in Christ*. See Mark 16:15,16.
- B. Those who can and do *repent of their sins*. See Acts 2:38.
- C. Those who can and do *confess their faith in Christ*. See Acts 8:36-38.
- D. Those who can and do *receive the word of God*. See Acts 2:41.
- E. Those who are *lost and need to be saved*. See Acts 2:38.
- F. **IN SPITE** of plain Bible teaching to the contrary, some make arguments such as the following to deny the necessity of baptism in God's plan of salvation:
  1. Sinners are saved by *grace and faith*, not by *works*. Baptism is a *work*, so it cannot be required for salvation. See Ephesians 2:8-10.
    - a. We are saved by *works*, not by *faith only*. See James 2:24.
    - b. Faith itself is a *work of God* to be performed by man. See John 6:28,29.
    - c. *Saving* faith prompts obedience to God's works. See Galatians 5:6; 1John 5:3.
  2. Believers are promised *eternal life*. Since belief comes before baptism, we have eternal life (salvation) before baptism. See John 3:16.
    - a. Belief in Jesus also comes before the *love of Jesus*, but we cannot be saved without loving Him. See John 8:31,42; John 14:23.
    - b. Belief **always includes obedience** to God's commands, unless the context of a passage clearly indicates that belief stands alone as one of a number of conditions of salvation, as in Mark 16:16 and James 2:24.

**III. HOW SHOULD PEOPLE BE BAPTIZED?**

- A. With *much* water. See John 3:23.
- B. By *going down into* the water. See Acts 8:38.
- C. By *being buried* with Christ. See Romans 6:4; Colossians 2:12.

#### IV. SOME THINGS TO CONSIDER ABOUT BAPTISM in the light of Bible teaching:

##### A. We are not baptized because our sins are *already* forgiven.

1. A preacher on television stated: “Baptism is not for the lost, but for the saved. It is for those who have been born again. If you’re lost when you go down into the water, you’re still lost when you come up out of the water.”
2. **But--**Romans 6:3-7 clearly teaches that **dead** (in sin) **men** are buried (in water) *just as* the **dead** body of Christ was buried. We bury the dead, not the living. Baptism *is not* like Jesus’ burial if saved (spiritually living) people are those being baptized!

##### B. We are not baptized to get into a human denomination or church. See Acts 2:38; 41,47.

##### C. We are not baptized because baptism is the “outward sign of an inward grace”

(i.e., a way to show *outwardly* that we have been saved *inwardly*). See Romans 2:28,29.

1. **But--** Such a “sign” would contradict one’s true inward condition, because sins remain unforgiven until one has been baptized. See Acts 2:38; 22:16, etc.
2. **Actually--** A changed life is the outward “sign” of an inward grace (our salvation). See Matthew 5:16; 1Peter 2:12.

##### D. Children too young to (really) believe in Christ should not be baptized.

1. Only those aware of sin and the need for forgiveness are subject to baptism.
2. “Baptism” of the spiritually immature often hinders an awareness of the need to be baptized when spiritual maturity occurs later in life.

##### E. Children who have not sinned personally should not be baptized.

##### G. Sprinkling or pouring water on people is not Bible baptism.

1. “Baptism” is by definition: an “overwhelming,” a “dipping,” a “submerging”  
Henry Thayer, Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament.

1. Why is it important for people to be baptized? Give Scriptures for your answers.
2. What do you think it means to “get into” Christ? What are some blessings that are available only to people who are in Christ?
3. Explain why only those *scripturally* baptized into Christ should wear the name “Christian.”
4. What prerequisites does the Bible place on those who are to be baptized into Christ?
5. What are some reasons you have heard for people being baptized that are not Bible reasons?
6. Explain why *Bible* baptism is not for people who are already saved from sin.
7. Should infants and little children be baptized? Why or why not? Give Scriptures.
8. Many denominational church buildings are built without baptistries, while those built by churches of Christ invariably include them. Why would there be this difference? What Bible facts about baptism show that buildings either should or should not have baptistries (as a practical matter). Give Scriptures.
9. Why would some people be “rebaptized”? Do you think it is a good thing for some to do so? Why or why not? In what sense is “rebaptism” possible and in what sense impossible?

**MEMORY VERSES: Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Romans 6:4**

*What We Can Do About Sin:* REMAINING FAITHFUL

REMAINING FAITHFUL is the *Sixth Step* toward salvation from sin.

**I. FAITHFULNESS IS COMMONLY THOUGHT to be necessary in any undertaking.**

- A. In government-- an elected official can be impeached for negligence or malfeasance.
- B. In the marketplace-- an employee can be fired for dishonest or negligent behavior.
- C. In sports-- an athlete who violates team rules can be dismissed from the team.
- D. **BUT--** In religion it is widely believed that unfaithfulness to one's commitment will not jeopardize one's prospect of eternal reward-- "once saved, always saved." *Strange!*

**II. FAITHFULNESS IN RELIGION IS A PROMINENT BIBLE TEACHING:**

- A. Under God's law in the Old Testament. See Psalm 31:23.
- B. Under God's law in the New Testament:
  - 1. Faithfulness is *required* of God's servants. See 1Corinthians 4:2; 1Peter 4:10.
  - 2. "Keeping the faith" will be rewarded with the victory crown. See 2Timothy 4:7,8.
  - 3. Faithfulness is expected regardless of the cost. See Revelation 2:10.

**III. GOD'S PROMISES ARE ALWAYS CONDITIONAL.**

- A. Matthew 11:28-30-- The Great Invitation" offers "rest on terms of "come" and "take my yoke , and "learn of me."
- B. John 3:16-- **If** we believe, we can have eternal life.
- C. Acts 2:38-- **If** we repent and are baptized, we can have remission of sins.

**IV. EVERY PROMISE INVOLVES TWO PARTIES-- the Giver and the Receiver.**

- A. Promises of salvation are given by God and must be received by men.

- B. God is *always* faithful to keep His promises. See 2Thessalonians 3:3; 2Corinthians 1:20.
- C. Every giver has the right to attach conditions (commands) to promises. See 1John 2:3.
- D. Receivers do not always meet the conditions set by givers. See 1John 1:8.
- E. A **covenant** is breached when either party defaults. Then, **no** obligation remains to the non-defaulting party. This applies to God’s covenant with man about salvation! *For Example:*

- 1. John 10:29-- The **promise**-- “No one can snatch the sheep from God’s hand.”  
The **condition**-- “Hear my voice and follow me.”
- 2. 1John 3:9-- The **promise**-- “Those born of God cannot sin.”  
The **condition**-- “His seed (the influence of God’s word [Luke 8:11]) remains in him.”
- 3. Romans 8:1-- The **promise**-- “No condemnation to those in Christ Jesus.”  
The **condition**-- “Who walk according to the Spirit.”

## V. SOME DENY OR DIMINISH THE CONDITIONALITY OF GOD’S PROMISES:

- A. The Jews considered their covenant with God to be unbreakable. See John 8:32,33.
  - 1. God had *warned* them to the contrary. See Deuteronomy 11:26-29; 27:11-15ff. Deuteronomy 30:15-20, etc.
  - 2. Their *history* should have taught them **the lesson of faithfulness**:
    - a. Obedience delivered them from death in Egypt. See Exodus 12:21,23,28.
    - b. Obedience brought success; disobedience brought failure in Caanan:
      - (1) Obedience gave them victory over Jericho. See Joshua 6:2,3ff, 20.
      - (2) Disobedience defeated them at Ai. See Joshua 7:1,4,5.
  - 3. The Jews’ disobedience negated God’s responsibilities toward them in the covenant. See John 8:34-36.
- B. Some “saved” people today deny the conditionality of God’s promises to them.
  - 1. Their conviction is based on John Calvin’s **five points** of doctrine:
    - a. **Total** hereditary depravity of man. **But**-- see Matthew 18:3; 2Timothy 3:13.
    - b. **Unconditional** election by God of the saved-- **But**-- see 2Peter 1:10.
    - c. **Limited** atonement of Christ for the chosen. **But**-- see Hebrews 2:9.
    - d. **Irresistible** grace to equip sinners for salvation. **But**-- see 2Corinthians 6:1.
    - e. **Perseverance of the saints** (ultimate salvation of every elected person and none else).

2. Some churches accept all or part of this “package.” Scripturally, Calvin’s points stand or fall together. Each one logically depends on the others for validity.
3. This doctrine of “perseverance” is also called “the impossibility of apostasy,” “the security of the believer,” “once saved, always saved,” etc.
4. It is maintained that “a child of God, once saved by the blood of Christ, *cannot* so sin as to be finally lost.” (This idea is commonly defended in public debates.)

## VI. CONSEQUENCES OF THE “IMPOSSIBILITY OF APOSTASY” DOCTRINE:

- A. It leads to extreme positions about salvation. A prominent author and debater stated publicly: “We take the position that a Christian’s sins do not damn his soul...all the churches to which he may belong, all the prayers he may pray, all the Bibles he may read, all the sermons he may practice and all the benevolent acts he may perform will not make his soul one whit safer in the sight of God, and all the sins he may commit from idolatry to murder will not endanger his soul.”
- B. It gives a *false* sense of security to those who embrace it. See Galatians 6:3; Titus 1:16.

## VII. WHAT DOES THE BIBLE TEACH ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF LOSING OUR SPIRITUAL SECURITY?

- A. Salvation is by faith (Ephesians 2:8), but faith can be abandoned. See 1Timothy 1:19; 1Timothy 4:1, 5:12. Believers can become unbelievers. See Hebrews 3:12; Jude 5.
  1. Only the obedient will have the right “ID” to get into heaven. See Revelation 22:14.
- B. The Bible **warns** us not to fall. See 1Corinthians 10:12; Hebrews 6:4-6; James 5:19,20.
  1. Why would we be warned if there were no danger?
- C. The Bible **counsels** us about how to avoid falling. See 2Peter 1:10.
  1. Why counselling if there were no problem possible?
- D. The Bible **prescribes** the remedy for falling. See 1John 1:9; Acts 8:22.
  1. Why prescribe a remedy for a “disease” that doesn’t exist?
- E. Numerous **examples** are given of those who **did fall**:
  1. Simon the sorcerer. See Acts 8:12,13,23.
  2. Ananias and Sapphira. See Acts 4:34; 5:1,4,5.
  3. Jews who murmured in the wilderness. See 1Corinthians 10:2,5,6,11.
  4. Those who tried to be saved by the Law of Moses. See Galatians 5:4.
  5. Did the Bible *lie* about some losing their salvation? **If some did, all can!**

1. Why is “remaining faithful” called the “sixth step toward salvation from sin”?
2. What are some examples of required faithfulness in everyday life? Give other similar examples of your own.
3. What importance does the New Testament place on faithfulness by the Lord’s people?
4. Explain the relationships between the giver and the receiver of a promise. How do these relationships apply to the promises concerning salvation in the New Testament?
5. Discuss the conditionality of the promises of believer security in John 10:29, 1John 3:9, and Romans 8:1.
6. How do the Jews in the Old Testament serve as a practical demonstration of the conditionality of God’s promises?
7. How does the “impossibility of apostasy” doctrine fit into the Calvinistic approach to man’s salvation? Explain how Calvin’s five points of doctrine are interdependent.
8. There are other basic consequences of this “impossibility” doctrine in addition to the two listed in the lesson. Can you add one or two more to the list?
9. Choose one of the references given for each of the five points in section VII of the lesson. Show how each passage chosen relates to “falling from grace.”
10. What is the *ultimate* lesson to be learned from the examples of those in the Bible who **did fall**?

**MEMORY VERSES: 1Corinthians 10:12; Galatians 5:4**

## *The One Church-- FACTS AND FIGURES*

### I. HOW MEN LOOK AT THE CHURCH:

- A. Membership is totally **unimportant**. We need **no** relationship with *any* church.
- B. Membership in *some* church is **beneficial** in certain ways, but it is not necessary.
- C. Membership in the Lord's church is an **essential** part of salvation.
- D. Which attitude is supported by *God's word*?

### II. HOW GOD LOOKS AT THE CHURCH:

#### A. THE FACTS ABOUT WHAT GOD THINKS OF THE CHURCH:

- 1. Jesus gave His life for the church. See Ephesians 5:25.
  - a. The price paid indicates the value of any object purchased.
  - b. If we are saved without the church, we are saved without the blood of Jesus. See 1Peter 1:18,19.
- 2. Jesus is the head of the church. See Ephesians 5:23.
  - a. We **cannot** follow the leadership of the head if we are not in the church.
  - b. We **can** function as members of the body *only* in the church.
- 3. Jesus is the Savior of the church. See Ephesians 5:23.
  - a. Therefore, the church is the *saved* people on earth. See Acts 2:47.
- 4. Jesus claims the church for Himself (as His own). See Ephesians 5:27.
  - a. Who would dare file a *counter claim* to contest His ownership?

#### B. THE FIGURES BY WHICH GOD DESCRIBES THE CHURCH:

- 1. The church is the body of Christ. See Ephesians 1:22,23.
  - a. It is the people who belong to Christ.

- b. It is His “*fullness*,” (completeness) just as He is the “*fullness*” of the Godhead. See Ephesians 1:23; Colossians 2:9.
- 2. The church is the kingdom of Christ. See Colossians 1:13.
  - a. It is the people who belong to and serve the King.
- 3. The church is the vineyard of Christ. See Matthew 20:1.
  - a. It is where work is done for the Master of the vineyard.
  - b. Work *outside* the vineyard is futile. See John 15:4,5.
- 4. The church is the bride of Christ. See Ephesians 5:23-25; 5:32; John 3:29,30.
  - a. It is the object of the **absolute** love of Christ.
  - b. It is the object of the **exclusive** love of Christ.
- 5. The church is God’s **family**.
  - a. All good and needful things are provided by the Father for His family.
  - b. Family members can communicate freely with their Father in prayer.
- 6. The church is the **temple** of God. See 1Corinthians 3:16.
  - a. It is the place where people can worship God acceptably.

**C. *THE UNIQUE RELATIONSHIP ENJOYED BY THE CHURCH:***

- 1. The church is “*in Christ*.” See 1Corinthians 1:2.
- 2. All *spiritual blessings* are in Christ. See Ephesians 1:3.
- 3. Church members are *sanctified* in Christ. See 1Corinthians 1:2.
- 4. Members are *new creatures* in Christ. See 2Corinthians 5:17; John 3:3.

**III. HOW MANY CHURCHES ARE ACCEPTABLE TO GOD?**

- A. Jesus promised to build only **ONE**. See Matthew 16:18.
- B. The *figures* (see above) of the body, kingdom, bride, and family all require a limit of **ONE**.
- C. The writers of the New Testament speak of just **ONE**. See Ephesians 4:4,5.
- D. The *saved* were added to “the” (same, one) church. See Acts 2:47.
- E. All people were baptized into *one* body (church). See 1Corinthians 12:13.

1. Today, people are baptized with **different** baptisms into **different** bodies (churches).  
E.g., Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, Catholic, Mormon, etc.
- F. There is ***no*** inspired record of any saved person **joining a denomination** (“of his/her choice”).
- G. Division is **condemned** in the New Testament. See Luke 11:17.
  1. “Denomination” means “naming from” one another, that is, dividing into parts with different names.
  2. BUT--All Christians should  *speak the **same** things, have the **same** mind about things, and exercise the **same** judgment about things!* See 1Corinthians 1:10.

1. How is the importance of the Lord's church emphasized by the fact that Christ gave His **life** for it?
2. In what *two* ways is "the body" applied to the people of God? See Ephesians 1:10, 22, 23 and 1Corinthians 12:12-27. What does each term teach about the importance of the church?
3. Compare the use of "fullness" in Ephesians 1:23 with its use in Colossians 2:9. What does this comparison tell us about the significance of the church?
4. Since the church is Christ's "bride," what are some of the advantages that it enjoys from that relationship?
5. What are some of the blessings that may be expected by the church in its role as the family of God?
6. *Two* things are called a "*temple of God*" today. What are they, and how does each one as a temple relate to the other? See 1Corinthians 3:16 and 1Corinthians 6:19,20.
7. Find in a concordance or other source some blessings that come to those who are "in Christ" (in addition to those given in the lesson).
8. Show how Ephesians 4:4,5 is exclusive in citing the Persons or things listed. What does this teach us about the "church of your choice" approach to religion?
9. Explain why the **denominational** concept of God's church is in error.
10. Why are the "joint" religious activities of different denominations in violation of Paul's prescription for **true** unity in 1Corinthians 1:10?

**MEMORY VERSES: Ephesians 1:22,23; Ephesians 4:4,5**

## *HOW People Get Into the CHURCH*

### I. PEOPLE GET INTO DENOMINATIONAL CHURCHES IN VARIOUS WAYS:

A. Almost every denomination has a procedure peculiar to itself.

1. The Baptist Church: "...The churches therefore have candidates come before them, make their statement, give their 'experience,' and then their reception is decided by a vote of the members. And while they cannot become members without baptism, yet it is the vote of the body which admits them to its fellowship on receiving baptism." (Standard Manual for Baptist Churches, Edward D. Hiscox, D.D., p.22).
2. The Methodist Church: "...when such persons offer themselves for membership, it shall be the duty of the pastor...to instruct them in the meaning of the Christian faith and the history, organization, and teaching of the Methodist Church; to explain to them the baptismal and membership vows; and to lead them to commit themselves to Jesus Christ... A member in good standing in any Christian denomination...may be received into membership by a proper certificate of transfer...and upon affirming his willingness to be loyal to the Methodist Church..." (Discipline of the Methodist Church, 1952, pp. 38,39). "The names of all baptized children within the local church shall be kept on the preparatory membership roll" (ibid., p. 44).
3. The Nazarene Church: "All persons...after having declared their experience of salvation, and their belief in the doctrines of the Church of the Nazarene...shall compose the full membership of the local church; however, only members who have reached their twelfth birthday shall be entitled to vote in annual or special church meetings" (Manual, p. 51).

B. *ALL* who get into the **Lord's church** do the same, not different, things.

1. **All** become members of the **same** church, not different churches.
2. They thus fulfill Christ's desire for the unity of His people. See John 10:16; 17:21.

## II. HOW PEOPLE GET INTO CHRIST'S CHURCH-- Facts and Illustrations:

### A. **FACTS: Plain statements from the scriptures:**

1. People are **called into it** for special blessings and responsibilities. See 1Thessalonians 2:1; Colossians 3:15.
  - a. It is not a limited call or a miraculous call.
  - b. People are called by the gospel of Christ. See 2Thessalonians 2:14; Mark 16:15.
  - c. They are "called to be saints." See 1Corinthians1:2.
  - d. People are called to inherit eternal life. See 1Timothy 6:12.
  
2. People are **added to it** as new members of the body (people) of Christ. See Acts 2:47.
  - a. Three thousand souls were added ("unto them") on Pentecost. See Acts 2:41.
  - b. "Those that were saved" (ASV) were "added to the church." (KJV), "unto them" (ASV) *day by day*. See Acts 2:47.
  - c. The number "came to be" about 5,000 men. See Acts 4:4.
  - d. "Multitudes" were "added to the Lord" (KJV; ASV). See Acts 5:14.
  - e. The number of disciples "multiplied greatly;" priests were obedient. See Acts 6:7.
  - f. All these new Christians were in the *same* church in Jerusalem. See Acts 8:1.
  
3. People are **changed into it** to become better people. See Colossians 1:13.
  - a. Members have "put off" the old man and his deeds. See Colossians 3:9.
  - b. They have "put on" the new man in the image of Christ. See Colossians 3:10.
  - c. Members are "raised" from baptism to take on new life. See Romans 6:4.
  
4. People are **born into it** as new members of God's family. See John 3:3,5.
  - a. The church is the *family of God*. See 1Timothy 3:15.
  - b. God is the Father (Hebrews 3:4); Christ is the Elder Brother (Hebrews 3:6); members are brethren (Hebrews 3:6) and equals (Matthew 23:8,9).
  - c. None are members of God's family because of their first birth but because of their second (new) birth!
  
5. People are **adopted into it** out of one family into another. See Galatians 4:4-7.
  - a. Adam was God's son (Luke 3:38) but was alienated by sin. See Isaiah 59:2.
  - b. All who sin become children of the devil because of their sin. See John 8:41-44.
  - c. Members are adopted into God's family because of His *infinite mercy*. See 2Corinthians 1:3.
  
6. People are **baptized into it** within the process of salvation. See 1Corinthians 12:13.
  - a. The church is all the saved people on earth. See Acts 2:47.
  - b. No decision about church membership is necessary for them, because God *adds* the saved to the church on His volition, not theirs. See Acts 2:47.

- c. Baptism is the final act of obedience leading to salvation from past sins. When one is *saved*, he is *added* as a member of the church.
7. These **facts** all describe the **same** process of entering the church. Only the *emphasis* is different in each description.

B. **ILLUSTRATIONS: Conversions in Acts:** (See Chart-- “Conversions in Acts”)

1. **Pentecost**-- the “birthday” of the church. See Acts 2.
2. **The Samaritans**-- See Acts 8:1-25.
3. **The Ethiopian**-- See Acts 8:26-40.
4. **Saul of Tarsus**-- See Acts 9:1-19.
5. **Cornelius and his family**-- See Acts 10:1-48.
6. **Lydia and her household**-- See Acts 16:11-15.
7. **The Philippian jailor and his family**-- See Acts 16:16-34.
8. **The Corinthians**-- See Acts 18:8

1. What are some ways in which people become members of various denominational churches?  
Answer from your personal experience or the experience of others you know.
  
2. What particular characteristic of God's "new" child is emphasized in each of these terms:
  - a. **Called into** the church?
  
  - b. **Added to** the church?
  
  - c. **Changed into** the church?
  
  - d. **Born into** the church?
  
  - e. **Adopted into** the church?.
  
3. How are all the above terms the *same* and how are they *different*?
  
4. Tell how Acts describes the "adding" of people to the Lord's church from its birthday on Pentecost (Acts 2) until it was scattered by persecution (Acts 8:1).
  
5. What change in lifestyle is demanded of people when they are "translated" ("changed") into Christ's kingdom (church)? Look at some passages that list specific things to be "put off" when people become church members. (*Clue*-- See Ephesians 4; Colossians 3; Galatians 5.)
  
6. What is the difference in emphasis between being "born into" the family of God (the church) and being "adopted" into it?

7. Questions about the principle conversions in Acts (using the chart):
- a. What did people do that is mentioned *seven* times? *One* time? *Eight* times?
  - b. What was the composite (complete) obedience that put people into the church?
  - c. What facts can we learn about baptism from the conversion of the Ethiopian in Acts 8?
  - d. When did the Holy Spirit fall on Cornelius in his conversion? See Acts 10:44; 11:15.
  - e. Was the Philippian jailor saved by “faith only”? See Isaiah 2:3; Acts 2:38; James 2:24.
  - f. What were some of the emotions experienced by those saved by obedience to the gospel?
  - g. What are some “results” of the conversions other than the “feelings” enjoyed by those who were saved?

**MEMORY VERSES: John 3:3,5; Colossians 1:13,14**

## CONVERSIONS IN ACTS

### Recorded Conversions :

<u>2:14-41</u>	<u>8:5-13</u>	<u>8:35-39</u>	<u>9:17-18</u>	<u>10:34-38</u>	<u>16:11-15</u>	<u>16:25-34</u>	<u>18:8</u>
Jews on Pentecost	Samaritans	Ethiopian Eunuch	Saul	Cornelius	Lydia	Philip- pian Jailor	Corinthians
Believed Believed vs. 36	Believed vs.12	Believed vs.36-37		Believed vs.43	Believed vs.13	Believed vs.31	vs.8
Repented vs.38			Repented (implied) vs.9			Repented (implied) vs.33	
			Confessed vs.37				
Baptized vs.18	Baptized vs.12,13	Baptized vs.38	Baptized vs.18	Baptized vs.48	Bapized vs.15	Baptized vs.33	Baptized vs.8
Saved vs.47		Rejoicing vs.39	Ate Food vs.19	Life 11:18	Faithful vs.15	Rejoiced vs.34	God's People vs.10

## *The Local Church-- What It Is and Why It Is*

### I. ALL SAVED PEOPLE ARE IN THE “UNIVERSAL” CHURCH.

- A. The “universal” church is a *spiritual* relationship of all Christians with God and with one another. See Ephesians 1:22,23.
- B. The universal church has **no organization**. It does not meet together for worship or for **any** other purpose. The Scriptures are *silent* about these matters.
- C. The universal church has **no work to do**, except as individuals serve God in a non-collective capacity. The Scriptures are also *silent* in this respect.

### II. ALL CHRISTIANS ARE TO MEET WITH OTHER CHRISTIANS.

- A. Such meetings are to enable worship and work together as a group. See Hebrews 10:25.
- B. This necessitates an aspect of the church other than the universal.
  - 1. Members must meet together to worship God as a collective activity:
    - a. Singing “one to another.” See Ephesians 5:19.
    - b. Eating the Lord’s Supper together. See 1Corinthians 11:17-34.
    - c. Giving into the church treasury. See 1Corinthians 16:1,2.
    - d. Praying together to God. See 1Corinthians 14:14-18.
    - e. Teaching from God’s word. See Acts 20:7.
  - 2. Members must meet together to exhort one another. See Hebrews 10:25.
  - 3. Members must meet together to exercise discipline. See 1Corinthians 5:4.
- C. Differences in times and locations dictate that members be divided into **local churches** so they can discharge their collective duties.

1. Probably, one congregation included all church members at first. See Acts 2:41-47.
2. Rapid growth required a plurality of churches in Jerusalem. See Acts 4:4; 6:1,7.
3. These churches were scattered by persecution and regrouped elsewhere. See Acts 8:1.
4. Local churches met in Samaria (city), Damascus, Lydda, Joppa, and Caesarea. See Acts 8:14; 9:19,32,36,38; 10:1,44,48.
5. Local churches existed throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria. See Acts 9:31.
6. An active church was organized at Antioch in Syria. See Acts 13:1-3.
7. Churches also were started in places far from Palestine. See Acts 14:23.
8. These churches were called “**the churches of Christ.**” See Romans 16:16.
9. Each group of disciples independently was a “church of Christ” **in** a city or region.
10. Today, *all* (composite) local churches contain *all* the saved, but *all* the saved are not contained in any *one* of them.

### III. MEMBERSHIP IN A PARTICULAR LOCAL CHURCH IS BY CHOICE.

- A. By the choice of the individual and by the choice of the local church. See Acts 9:26-28.
- B. However, God’s plan for each Christian’s development cannot be realized outside a local congregation, so each Christian *must choose a local church!*
- C. Membership in a local church involves the choice to assume the **responsibilities** of *worship* and *work* with other members:
  1. Teaching the truth of God’s word to one another. See 1Corinthians 14:19 (KJV).
  2. Teaching and admonishing one another in song. See Colossians 3:16.
  3. Sending out the gospel to the lost in other places. See Philippians 4:14-16.
- D. Membership in a local church involves the *choice* to share in the **benefits** provided within the local church family:
  1. Becoming the object of godly love from other members. See 2Thessalonians 1:3.
  2. Receiving support from others when facing difficulties. See 2Thessalonians 1:4; Galatians 6:2.
  3. Enjoying encouragement in all positive things. See 1Corinthians 12:25,26.

### IV. HOW A LOCAL CHURCH IS ORGANIZED.

- A. There is no organization by which local churches are tied together for any purpose
- B. A local church, when duly organized, has **elders** and **deacons**. See Acts 6:2,3; 14:23; Philippians 1:1.

1. Elders watch, oversee, tend, feed, take heed to, and rule their local congregation. See Acts 20:28; 1Peter 5:2; 1Timothy 5:17; Hebrews 13:17.
2. Deacons execute physical tasks to implement spiritual goals. See Acts 6:1-4.
  - a. Teaching is a function of their *general* responsibility as individual Christians, not their *specific* responsibility as deacons. See Acts 6:5; 8:4,5; 21:8.
3. Strict and specific **qualifications** are dictated to be met by those holding these positions of importance in local churches. See 1Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9.
4. Elders have *ruling* authority and deacons have *servicing* responsibilities ***only*** in their **own** local congregation. See 1Peter 5:1,2.

1. What are the differences between the universal church and the local church as to: (1) size; (2) work; (3) organization; (4) relationships among members?
2. Why is the local church necessary to the plan of God for the “perfection of the saints”?
3. Trace the establishment of local churches in the Book of Acts.
4. How does one become a member of a local congregation? How is this different from becoming a member of the universal church?
5. What are some things done by faithful Christians in **worship** that are done as part of a local congregation?
6. What are some things done by faithful Christians in **work** that are done as part of a local church?
7. Name some benefits enjoyed by Christians as members of a local congregation.
8. Who are the people who are “over” things in the local church? What is each one “over”?
9. What term is applied to both elders and deacons to emphasize their suitability for their positions in the local church? How many times does it appear in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1?
10. What are the main differences between the qualifications for elders and deacons?

**Optional Question:** Show in a diagram how the universal church contains *all* the saved in local churches but no local church contains all the saved in the *world*.

**MEMORY VERSES: Romans 16:16b; Galatians 6:2**

## COMMANDS-- GENERAL AND SPECIFIC

WHO--	General Command	Specific Command	More Specific Command	Most Specific Command
Noah-- Gen.6: 14-16	<b>Build a Structure</b>	<b>1. Build an Ark 2. (Build a House)</b>	<b>1. Wood 2. (Any Buiding Materials)</b>	<b>1. Gopher 2. (Oak Wood)</b>
Jews-- Exodus 12:4-11	<b>Offer an Animal</b>	<b>1. Offer a Lamb 2.(Offer a Donkey)</b>	<b>1. Male Lamb 2.(Female Lamb)</b>	<b>1. First Year 2. (Second Year)</b>
Christians-- Eph.5:19	<b>Worship</b>	<b>1. Make Music  2. (Dance, Drama, Other Acts)</b>	<b>1. Sing from Heart  2. (Play on Instru- ment[s])</b>	<b>1. Sing Psalms, Hymns,etc. 2. (Popular Songs, etc.)</b>

**Note:** Each of the above commands from God could have been given in a *general* form, as in the first column. This would have allowed using **any** detail to carry out the command. However, as the command becomes *more specific*, only the **detail(s) specified** is allowed. All other possible options (in parentheses) are **disallowed**. The command is not fully obeyed until all specified details have been implemented and all other possible options have been excluded.

## COMMANDS--REQUISITES AND EXPEDIENTS

Who--	What--	How (Required)--	How-- (Expedient/Optional)
Disciples--  Matthew 28:18-20	“Go and Teach”	1. Go  2. Teach	1. Mode: Walk, Ride, Telephone, etc. 2. Method: Sermon, Tract, etc.
Disciples--  1Cor. 11: 23-28	“This Do” (Eat Lord’s Supper)	1. Eat Bread  2. Drink Cup	1. One Piece or Several 2. One Container or Several
Disciples--  Eph. 5:19; Col.3:16	“Sing and Make Melody in Heart”	1. Sing  2. Psalms, Hymns, Spiritual Songs	1. Parts, Leader, Pitch Pipe, etc. 2. Memory or Books How Many Songs, etc.

**Note--** We have no choice about doing what is **commanded**. Both the command and any specified detail(s) for its implementation must be respected. They are **required**. However, when details are not specified for carrying out a command, any detail which is expedient may be employed in implementing the command. These details are **optional**.

## *The Local Church: WORSHIP*

### I. THERE ARE TWO BASIC KINDS OF WORSHIP: TRUE and FALSE.

A. **True Worship** is *acceptable* to God. See John 4:23,24.

1. It must be directed toward God. See Matthew 4:10.
2. It must be offered in **spirit**-- sincere and fervent, out of the heart. See Hebrews 10:21; Psalm 89:7.
3. It must be offered in **truth**-- according to Divine instructions. See John 17:17.
  - a. Authorized by the present truth (New Testament only). See 2Peter 1:12; John 1:17.

B. **False Worship** is *unacceptable* to God.

1. Vain worship accompanies false teaching. See Matthew 15:9.
  - a. Doctrine--good or bad-- impacts man's efforts to serve God.
2. Ignorant worship ignores God's concern about *how* man worships Him. See Acts 17:23
  - a. Knowledge is fundamental to appropriate worship. See 2Timothy 2:15.
3. Will worship puts **man, not God**, in control of spiritual matters. See Colossians 2:23.
  - a. Man cannot determine his own spiritual path. See Jeremiah 10:23.

### II. EARLY CHRISTIANS WORSHIPED TOGETHER IN LOCAL CHURCHES.

A. The church at Corinth "came together" on the first day of the week. See 1Corinthians 16:2.

B. Other churches also assembled for worship. See 1Corinthians 16:1; Acts 20:7.

C. Specific instructions were given to churches about proper public worship:

1. How to observe the Lord's Supper acceptably. See 1Corinthians 11:18ff.
2. How to pray and sing so as to please God. See 1Corinthians 14:15.
3. How to regulate teaching by spiritual and non-spiritual gifts. See 1Corinthians 4:4,19.
4. How to give in keeping with God's expectations. See 1Corinthians 16:1,2.

### III. THE SAME WORSHIP WAS PRACTICED IN EVERY LOCAL CHURCH.

A. Pauls' "ways in Christ" were taught in every church. See 1Corinthians 4:17.

1. Thus, church members could have the "same mind" and live by the "same rule" in everything that pertained to serving God. See 1Corinthians 1:10; Philippians 3:16.
2. All acts of worship were equally important and necessary for all Christians.

B. ***The Lord's Supper:*** See Matthew 26:26-29; 1Corinthians 11:23-26.

1. The elements of the Supper: unleavened bread and fruit of the (grape) vine.
  - a. The bread represents the *crucified body* of Christ.
  - b. The cup represents the *shed blood* of Christ. The "cup" is not the container(s) but the **contents** of the container(s). See Luke 22:17-20.
2. The frequency of observance: *every* first day of the week (Sunday). See Acts 20:7; 1Corinthians 16:1,2; Exodus 20:8 ["the" Sabbath--"the" first day--same frequency].
3. The purpose of the Supper: (a) a memorial of Christ [1Corinthians 11:24,25]; (b) a proclamation of His death and second coming [1Corinthians 11:26]; (c) a communion ("sharing") in Christ's death [1Corinthians 11:26]; (d) a source of spiritual strength for each partaker in the Supper [1Corinthians 11:26].

C. ***Prayer:*** See Acts 2:42; 12:5.

1. Requests to God should be: (a) sincere [James 5:16]; (b) through Jesus Christ [John 16:23; 1Timothy 2:5]; (c) in unison [1Corinthians 14:16]; (d) led by Christian men [1Corinthians 14:34].

D. ***Teaching:*** See Acts 2:42; Acts 20:7; 1Corinthians 14:26.

1. All teaching must be according to God's word. See Galatians 1:6-8; Matthew 15:9.
2. Teaching is done in the assembly only by men. See 1Corinthians 14:34; 1Timothy 2:12.

E. ***Giving:*** See 1Corinthians 16:1,2.

1. The purpose of giving: (a) benevolent relief for saints (only) [2Corinthians 9:12]; (b) preaching the gospel [Philippians 4:15,16]; (c) enabling every good work of the local congregation [2Corinthians 9:8].
2. The frequency of giving: every first day of the week. See 1Corinthians 16:1,2.
3. The amount to give: (a) proportionate to blessings [Luke 12:48]; (b) as prospered [1Corinthians 16:2]; (c) according to ability [2Corinthians 9:13].

F. ***Singing***: See Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 2:12.

1. Vocal music only is authorized by command and example. Instrumental music in the form of bands, pianos, organs, etc. is **unauthorized** in the church's public worship.
  - a. Every reference to music in worship is *singing*, not *playing*.
  - b. The rule of silence must be respected by worshipers. See Acts 15:24; 2Corinthians 5:7; Romans 10:17.
  - c. Additions to God's teaching about music are forbidden. See Revelation 22:18.
  - d. Study the **CHARTS**: "General and Specific" and "Commands and Expedients," pp. 53,54.
2. Participation by **every** member in singing is necessary. Choirs, solos, quartets, and other partial involvement of members is not authorized. See Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16.

1. What are the two basic kinds of music, and what is the fundamental difference between them?
2. What characteristics must acceptable worship have?
3. How many different acts of worship were included in the “public worship services” of New Testament churches? What were they?
4. Why is the church at Corinth a good resource for guidance in acceptable worship for churches today? How many of the acts of worship are discussed in 1Corinthians?
5. Do you think that the same basic guidelines for public worship would have applied both in churches with and without spiritual gifts? Why or why not?
6. What are some of the things that churches or individuals do that give the false impression that some items of worship are more important than others?
7. Why is the Catholic doctrine of “transubstantiation” (look it up in your dictionary) in error?
8. Why is it inadvisable for a brother at the Lord’s table to express his thanks for the “contents of this cup” when he gives thanks for “the cup”?
9. How do we receive spiritual strength from proper participation in the Lord’s Supper? Is such strength confined to the Supper?
10. What things should be considered carefully by the man who leads the public prayer in the assembly of the congregation?

11. What Biblical reasons underlie the restrictions placed on women in the public worship of the church? See 1Timothy 2:13,14; Genesis 3:1-6.
12. What is said about tithing in the New Testament? Does the Old Testament practice of tithing offer any lessons for Christians today?
13. How often should each member of a local church contribute into the “church treasury”? What about a member who is paid bi-weekly, monthly, etc.?
14. What are two (or more) reasons why instrumental bands are inappropriate in church worship?
15. Why is it not scriptural for churches to have their singing done by choirs, solos, and quartets?

**MEMORY VERSES:      John 4:24; Ephesians 5:19**

## *The Local Church: WORK*

### **I. GOD'S WORK IS CRUCIAL TO ALL PEOPLE:**

- A. The creation of the universe. See Genesis 1:1,31.
- B. The providential maintenance of His creation. See Matthew 5:45.
- C. The formulation of a plan for man's salvation. See Ephesians 3:9-11; John 3:16.

### **II. JESUS' WORK GAVE ABUNDANT LIFE TO RECEPTIVE PEOPLE.** See John 10:10.

- A. He actualized redemption by means of His own death. See 1Peter 1:18,19.
- B. He bestows all spiritual blessings now on His church. See Ephesians 1:3.

### **III. THE CHURCH OF CHRIST ALSO HAS IMPORTANT WORK TO DO.**

- A. Christ now functions through faithful disciples. See Philippians 1:21; 2:30.
  - 1. "Christ has no hands but our hands to do His work today,  
He has no feet but our feet to lead men in His way;  
He has no tongues but our tongues to tell men how He died,  
He has no help but our help to bring them to His side." (Annie Flint)
- B. All spiritual work is accomplished by saints working independently or by local churches working independently of one another.
  - 1. The scriptures provide **no means** for work by a confederation of churches.
  - 2. The scriptures give **no instance** of any local church working *through another church* or through *another organization of any kind*.

#### IV. LOCAL CHURCHES ARE AUTHORIZED TO WORK IN THREE AREAS ONLY:

##### A. *Preaching the gospel at home and away.* See 1Thessalonians 1:8.

1. Many male members participate in public teaching. See 1Corinthians 14:23,24.
2. Local churches support preachers to preach at home and in other places. See Philippians 4:14-16.
3. Local churches should work today as local churches worked in New Testament days.
  - a. See Chart 1: “How Local Churches Preached the Gospel”-- p.55.
4. Local churches should *not* work today in ways that local churches *did not* work in New Testament days.
  - a. See Chart 1b: “How Local Churches Preached the Gospel”-- p.55.

##### B. *Strengthening the members of the local church.* See Ephesians 4:11-16.

1. Strength comes through the word of God, not through entertainment. See Acts 20:32.
2. The “**social gospel**,” implemented through gyms, family life centers, kitchens, etc., is *outside* the scope of the work of the local church.

##### C. *Benevolent relief of the saints’ physical needs.* See Acts 6:1-6.

1. See Chart 2: “How Local Churches Helped the Needy”-- p. 55.
  - a. This chart illustrates how churches *did* the work of benevolence.
2. See Chart 2b: “How Local Churches Helped the Needy”-- p.55.
  - a. This chart illustrates how churches *did not* do the work of benevolence.

##### D. There *is* a **difference** between the work of the *local church* and the work of the *individual member* of a local church.

1. See Chart 3: “To Whom Did Churches Give Benevolence?”-- p. 56.
  - a. This chart illustrates who *were* and who *were not* the objects of benevolence.
2. See Chart 4: “The Christian’s Work--Individually and Collectively”-- p.57.
  - a. This chart illustrates the differences between the two spheres of work for which each Christian is responsible.
3. It is *untrue* that “a church can do anything that an individual member of that church can do.”
4. Local churches may be restricted in their relief of certain persons, while individual Christians may be unrestricted. See 1Timothy 5:16.
5. We must be careful to distinguish between the *authorization of local churches* and the *authorization of individual members of those churches* to engage in certain acts of benevolence. See James 1:26,27.

1. Why is it appropriate that the church should be responsible for working for the Lord?
2. By what *organization* was all the work of the church performed in the New Testament? How was the rest of the Lord's done?
3. In what three areas do New Testament churches work?
4. From the charts provided, explain the difference(s) between what is approved for churches to do in preaching the gospel and what is not approved.
5. By what means did God provide for members of local churches to be strengthened and developed for greater service to Him?
6. What fundamental mistake have churches made in their attempts to provide opportunities for spiritual strength to their members?
7. For whose physical needs was the local church responsible in New Testament days?
8. From the charts, explain what was and what was not done by local churches in their work of benevolence.
9. Show how the work and responsibilities of local churches were different from the work and responsibilities of individual Christians. (Chart 4 may be helpful.)
10. What kinds of things can an *individual Christian* do that a *local church* cannot do?

**MEMORY VERSES:           Colossians 3:17; Acts 20:32**

*Chart 1--*      **HOW LOCAL CHURCHES PREACHED THE GOSPEL**  
 (Evangelism)

<u>HOW</u>	<u>HOW NOT</u>
Church	Church
Church ..... Preacher	Church ..... Missionary Society or Preacher Church
Church	Church
Examples: Philippians 4:15,16 2Corinthians 11:8,9	Examples: ???

*Chart 2--*      **HOW LOCAL CHURCHES HELPED THE NEEDY**  
 (Benevolence)

HOW

	Church ..... in Need	Own Work ..... (Under Elders)	Orphans
Church with ..... Ability	Church ..... in Need	Own Work ..... (Under Elders)	Elderly
	Church ..... in Need	Own Work ..... (Under Elders)	Destitute

Example: Acts 11:27-30

*Chart 2b--*  
HOW NOT

	Orphan Home ..... (Under Directors)	Orphans
Church with ..... Ability	Old Folks' Home ..... (Under Directors)	Elderly
	Relief Agency ..... (Under Directors)	Destitute

Example: ???  
 (57)

Chart 3--

TO WHOM DID CHURCHES GIVE BENEVOLENCE?

**YES**

Church ..... Own Needy Members

Example: Acts 6:1-6

**YES**

Church 1 ..... (messenger)

Church 2 ..... (messenger) ..... Church 4 ..... Church 4's Needy Members

Church 3 ..... (messenger)

Example: 2Corinthians 8, 9

**YES**

Church 1 ..... Church 2 Church 2's Needy Members  
Church 3 ..... Church 3's Needy Members  
Church 4 Church 4's Needy Members

Example: Acts 11:28-30

**NO**

Church ..... Needy Non-Members

Example: ???

**YES**

Christian Individual ..... Needy Non-Members

Example: James 1:26,27; Galatians 6:10

**YES**

Christian Individual 1 Non-religious  
Christian Individual 2 ..... Organization ..... Needy Non-Members  
Christian Individual 3 (2John 9,10)



## *Life in the Church: The Christian's Commitment*

### **I. COMMITMENT IS ESSENTIAL IF WE ARE TO SERVE JESUS IN THE CHURCH.**

A. Every person must choose a commitment for his life's direction. See Joshua 24:15.

1. The right commitment to Jesus has a firm foundation of truth. See 1Timothy 1:12.
2. There is no middle ground for the uncommitted. See Matthew 12:30.

B. Commitments we make to God must be honored. See Luke 9:62; Ecclesiastes 5:5.

### **II. LIFE IN THE CHURCH IS A GROWTH PROCESS OF SELF-BETTERMENT.**

A. The Lord's church is a "better" church (Acts 7:38) with better promises. See Hebrews 8:6.

B. Church members are expected to surpass the ordinary! See Matthew 5:20.

### **III. CHRISTIANS ARE COMMITTED TO BECOME TOTALLY BETTER PERSONS:**

#### ***A. Becoming a Better Individual:***

1. By **eliminating sinful practices**. See Ephesians 4:22-5:17; Colossians 3:5-9.
2. By **developing godly attributes**. See Ephesians 4:28-5:2; Colossians 3:12-17.
  - a. Special emphasis should be given to **love** for others. See 1Corinthians 13:4-7.
3. By **giving attention to personal devotion**:
  - a. Daily study of God's word. See Acts 17:11; 2Timothy 2:15 (KJV).
  - b. Meditation on Scriptures and spiritual values. See Psalm 19:14; 1Timothy 4:13,15.
  - c. Regular and frequent prayer. See 1Thessalonians 5:17.
4. By **active participation in a faithful local congregation**:
  - a. Attend all worship services. See Hebrews 10:25.
  - b. Share in ongoing responsibilities of service. See 1Corinthians 12:6.
  - c. Take advantage of opportunities to *grow*: classes, training sessions, gospel meeting services, etc. See 1Timothy 4:15.
  - d. Submit to the rule of elders in matters of judgment. See Hebrews 13:17; 1Timothy 5:17.
    - (1) Our ability to submit to God's authority is often reflected in our willingness to respect the authority of elders in the local church.

**B. *Becoming a Better Family Member:***

1. By **honoring the marriage vows**. See Matthew 19:5,6.
2. By **being considerate of the spouse's physical needs**. See 1Corinthians 7:2-5.
3. By **filling the proper role of the husband**:
  - a. To be the head of the family. See Ephesians 5:23.
  - b. To love his wife as himself. See Ephesians 5:28.
  - c. To train the children in spiritual development. See Ephesians 6:4.
  - d. To provide for the needs of the family. See Timothy 5:8.
4. By **filling the proper role of the wife**:
  - a. To be submissive to her husband within God's laws. See Ephesians 5:22.
  - b. To be a good homemaker and "manager" of the family. See Titus 2:5.
  - c. To be the "ruler" ("manager") of the home under her husband's guidance. See 1Timothy 5:14.
    - (1) As elders "rule" under God's guidance. See Hebrews 13:17.
5. By **supporting aged parents and other needy relatives**. See 1Timothy 5:16; Mark 7:10-13.

**C. *Becoming a Better Citizen:***

1. By **obeying** the laws of society. See Romans 13:1,2.
2. By **praying** for spiritually healthy leadership in government. See 1Timothy 2:1,2.
3. By **supporting** civic efforts commensurate with the spiritual health of the community, the nation, and the world. See 1Thessalonians 5:15.
4. By **paying** all debts and taxes in an honest and timely manner. See Romans 13:6,8; Matthew 22:17-21.

**D. *Becoming a Better Community Member:***

1. By **striving** to be helpful to every neighbor. See Luke 10:30-37.
2. By **showing** a consistent example of righteous living. See Matthew 5:13-16; Romans 2:22-24.
3. By **being evangelistic** in the community at every opportunity. See Mark 16:15,16.

**E. *Becoming a Better Employee:***

1. By **giving** the best possible effort to the task at hand. See Ephesians 6:5-8.
2. By **remaining** loyal and supportive toward honorable employers. See 1Timothy 6:1.
3. By **being evangelistic** in the workplace at every opportunity. See Ephesians 4:14,15.

1. Why is it appropriate that members of the Lord's church should try to better themselves in every area of their lives?
2. Make a list of several things that Christians are obligated to "put off" (away) as they attempt to honor their commitment to the Lord.
3. Make another list of some positive attributes that should be "put on" (added) as church members work toward perfection (completeness).
4. Why do you think that study *of* the Scriptures and meditation *on* the Scriptures are listed separately as ways for Christians to improve themselves as individuals?
5. What are some of the "ongoing responsibilities" in a typical local church? Use your local congregation as an example.
6. Why is it important to the well-being of the congregation that the members yield their judgment in non-scriptural matters to the judgment of the elders?
7. How can a wife submit herself to her husband (Ephesians 5:22) and yet "rule the household" (1Timothy 5:14-- ASV, RSV)?
8. To what extent is the Christian husband to love his wife?
9. What are some of the ways in which church members can "support" their aged parents?
10. Which laws of government should a Christian obey? Give an example or two of some civic or governmental endeavors that might well be supported by Christians.
11. What are the implications of the fact that our commitment prohibits us to "owe anything"?
12. What practice should be common to both the community and the workplace?

**MEMORY VERSES: 1Thessalonians 5:17; Hebrews 10:25**

## *The Holy Spirit and Miracles*

### I. WHO OR WHAT IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?

- A. The **Holy Spirit** is a “spirit” without human form. See Luke 24:39; John 4:24.
  - 1. He is a “**holy**” spirit-- dedicated to special divine service. See Colossians 1:21,22.
- B. He is a member of the *Godhead* (“godhood”). See Colossians 2:9; Matthew 28:19.
- C. He is a Person, **not** just an influence or force without specificity or definition.
  - 1. Some [mis]translations are misleading: e.g., Romans 8:16,26 (KJV)-- “itself.”
  - 2. The Spirit possesses **personal attributes**:
    - a. He **hears** what the Father chooses to reveal to mankind. See John 16:13.
    - b. He **speaks** expressly to warn us of dangers. See 1Timothy 4:1,2.
    - c. He **bears witness** with man’s spirit about man’s salvation. See Romans 8:16.
    - d. He **is grieved** when men disobey God’s law. See Ephesians 4:30.
    - e. He **loves** all the children of God. See Romans 15:30.

### II. WHAT HAS THE HOLY SPIRIT DONE FOR MEN IN THE PAST?

- A. He participated in the **physical creation** of the world. See Genesis 1:2; Job 26:13.
- B. He maintains the earth through **natural laws**. See Genesis 8:22; Psalm 104:30.
- C. He **revealed God’s will** to mankind:
  - 1. Through the prophets. See Nehemiah 9:30; 2Peter 1:19-21.
  - 2. Through Jesus Christ. See John 3:34; 6:63.
  - 3. Through the apostles of Christ. See John 16:13; Acts 1:8.

D. He produced **miracles and spiritual gifts** to confirm God's message of salvation:

1. Through Jesus Christ, the Son of God. See Luke 4:1; John 20:30,31.
2. Through the apostles of Christ. See Galatians 3:5; Mark 16:17-20.
3. Through certain early disciples. See 1Corinthians 12:7-11; 14:22.
  - a. Gifts were received when the apostles laid hands on men. See Acts 8:13-17; 19:1-6.

E. He **baptized** ("overwhelmed") *all flesh*. See Joel 2:28-32.

1. To endow the apostles with power to spread the gospel. See Acts 1:8.
2. To validate the Gentiles' privilege to receive the gospel. See Acts 10:44,45; 11:17,18.

### III. WHAT IS THE HOLY SPIRIT DOING FOR MEN NOW?

A. He **dwells in Christians** to help us live spiritual lives. See Romans 8:9,5,6.

1. The **Spirit** dwells in us by means of God's word. See Romans 8:1,2.
2. The **Father** also dwells in us because of the word. See 1John 4:16; 5:3.
3. The **Son of God** dwells in us by faith in Him. See Ephesians 3:17.
4. There is no "personal indwelling" of the Spirit in men apart from the word.
  - a. A *person* cannot be dispersed to live within many *other persons*!

B. He **leads Christians** into faithful service to God. See Romans 8:14.

1. This is accomplished as we follow the instruction of God. See Ephesians 5:8-10,17.

C. He **expedites Christians' prayers** in heaven as our "Intercessor." See Romans 8:26,27.

D. He **enables the lost** to be saved-- **by the word of God**. See Acts 10:43.

1. The **blind** sinner is *enlightened* by the word of God. See Psalm 119:130.
2. The **ignorant** sinner *gains understanding* through God's word. See Psalm 119:104.
3. The **dead** sinner is *born to life again* by the word of God. See 1Peter 1:23.
4. The **lost** sinner is *saved* by the word of God. See James 1:21,22.
5. The **unclean** sinner is *cleansed* by God's word. See John 15:3.
6. The **impure** sinner is *purified* through the word of God. See 1Peter 1:22.
7. The **profane** sinner is *sanctified* by means of the word of God. See John 17:17.
8. The **disobedient** sinner *will be judged* by the rejected word of God. See John 12:48.

E. He **enables the saved** to make spiritual progress toward heaven--by the **word of God**.  
See 2Peter 3:18.

1. **Growth** is achieved through our desire for the word of God. See 1Peter 2:1-3.
2. **Strength** comes to us by following the word of God. See Acts 20:32.
3. **Comfort and patience** sustain us through troubled times when we trust the promises of God's word. See Romans 15:4.
4. **Completeness** for Christians is possible when our lives are totally guided by the word of God. See 2Timothy 3:16,17.

F. **The impact of the Holy Spirit on men today is channeled through His WORD!**  
See Psalm 119:172.

1. Look up “holy” in your concordance or Bible dictionary. What are some of the things that are called by that term and why is each one called “holy”?
2. In what way(s) are Jesus and the Holy Spirit **alike** as members of the “godhead”? In what way(s) are they **different**? See Colossians 2:9 and Luke 24:39.
3. Why is it unfortunate that in a few Bible passages references to the Holy Spirit were translated to read “it” instead of “he”?
4. Assurance of salvation is said to require **two witnesses**. (See Romans 8:16 and Matthew 18:16.) What is the difference between the Spirit bearing witness “with” our spirit and the Spirit bearing witness about salvation “to”our spirit? How does the Spirit bear witness?
5. Explain the parallel between the Holy Spirit’s work in creating and maintaining the physical world and His work in creating and maintaining the spiritual world of the New Testament era.
6. What was the basic reason for miracles to be performed by Jesus and His apostles? Why do we not expect miracles now? See 1Corinthians 13:10; Hebrews 2:3,4.
7. Is it possible to have the “full gospel” today without miracles? Why or why not?
8. How did the apostles receive miraculous power from the Spirit? Those other than apostles? How do Bible facts preclude miracle-working power today?
9. To what classifications of people was the baptism of the Holy Spirit promised? See Joel 2: 28-32. Has that promise been completely fulfilled? If so, when?

10. Should people today expect to be baptized with the Holy Spirit or to be moved miraculously by the Holy Spirit as a “second work of grace”?
  
11. Does the Bible teach the “indwelling” of the Holy Spirit? The “*Personal* indwelling of the Spirit”? Why is the latter concept: (1) illogical; (2) an assumption?
  
12. Give an example or two of “groanings which cannot be uttered” (Romans 8:26) that the Holy Spirit might help us with as we pray.
  
13. The **mission** of the Holy Spirit includes many operations performed for the benefit of both saved and unsaved people. What **medium** (vehicle) does the Spirit employ to accomplish these operations?
  
14. Can you think of *anything* that the Holy Spirit does today that is not done through the influence of the written word of God?
  
15. What *central lesson* is impressed on us as we learn what the Bible says about how the Holy Spirit functions in our present world?

**MEMORY VERSES:    Romans 8:14; John 12:48**

## *“End Things”-- Fact and Fiction*

### I. ALL EARTHLY THINGS WILL COME TO AN END! See 1Peter 4:7.

- A. Drastic changes have occurred (the flood) and will occur again (earth’s fiery end). See 2Peter 3:1-13.
- B. *Wise* people prepare for “end things.” *Foolish* people ignore the urgency of preparedness. See Matthew 7:21-27.
- C. Some trust in fictional rather than factual ideas about “end things.”

### II. FACTS ABOUT “END THINGS:”

- A. **Fact:** *Jesus will come back.* See John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11.
  - 1. His divinity will be acknowledged by every creature. See Philippians 2:9-11.
  - 2. He will be glorified through all believers. See 2Thessalonians 1:10.
- B. **Fact:** *Jesus will come back to judge all people.* See Romans 14:10.
  - 1. The Father has committed all judgment to the Son. See John 5:22.
  - 2. A judgment day is appointed and is certified by Jesus’ resurrection. See Acts 17:31.
    - a. No man knows when that day may be. See Matthew 24:36.
  - 3. The judgment will separate the “sheep” from the “goats.” See Matthew 25:31-33.
- C. **Fact:** *Our lives will determine how we will be judged.* See Romans 14:12.
  - 1. “The things done in the body” will determine our destiny. See 2Corinthians 5:10.
  - 2. The “Book of (our) Life” will be compared to God’s “books” (the Bible) to determine man’s eternal destination. See Revelation 20:11-13.
- D. **Fact:** *The faithful will go to **heaven**.* See Matthew 25:34-40; 2Timothy 4:6-8.
- E. **Fact:** *The unfaithful will go to **hell**.* See Matthew 25:41-46; Revelation 20:15.

F. **Fact:** *The destiny of both the faithful and the unfaithful will be eternal.* See Matthew 25:46; Hebrews 5:9; Jude 7.

### III. **FICTION** ABOUT “END THINGS:”

A. **Fiction:** *This life is all there is for man.*

1. This would be a very depressing reality. There would be no provision for “**equalizing the unequal**” of this present world. See Luke 16:25.
2. This eventuality would deny the ultimate triumph of good over evil and would validate the philosophy of “might makes right.”
  - a. Good men always repudiate such an unfair and unkind prospect.

B. **Fiction:** *Heaven is real, but hell is not.*

1. This position is a sheer rationalization by men seeking to “get something for nothing.”
2. One destination is as real as the other. See Matthew 25:46; Luke 16:19-31.
3. Hell is as awful as heaven is wonderful. See Mark 9:43-48; Revelation 21:1-22:5.

C. **Fiction:** *God’s love will prevent any suffering throughout eternity.*

1. God’s sense of **justice** requires that blessings and punishments be administered and endure **equally**. See Romans 11:22.
2. The wicked will not be annihilated in eternity but will exist as long as will the saved.

D. **Fiction:** *The wicked, after death, will have a second chance to repent.*

1. The Bible makes no reference to a later opportunity to serve God. See Hebrews 9:27.
2. Doctrines about purgatory (a form of “second chance”) appeared centuries after the Bible was completed. These teachings were subsequently corrupted into fund-raisers for an apostate church.

E. **Fiction:** *God doesn’t really mean what He says about religious disobedience or neglect.*

1. **Adam and Eve** testify to every man that this is a false conclusion. See Genesis 3:3,4,19; Romans 5:12.
2. **Nadab and Abihu** learned too late that God is serious about His demands. See Leviticus 10:1,2.
3. **Moses** suffered deep disappointment when God did not forget his diobedience. See Deuteronomy 3:23-27; 32:48-52.
4. **Uzzah** died because he did not remember God’s resolve to punish those who disregard or forget His will. See Exodus 25:14; 1Chronicles 13:7-10.

1. What lesson for our lives does Peter stress from the fact that God has promised a second great change for this world?
2. What ultimate proof has God provided to us that Jesus will serve as the final judge of all men?
3. Who knows *when* the great judgment will take place? What about “prophecies” concerning “days and times” at the end of the world?
4. What are the “books” out of which our lives will be judged by Jesus? Is there a relationship between the teachings of Revelation 20:12 and 2Timothy 2:15? If so, what might it be?
5. List some “unequal” things that need to be “equalized” by means of a righteous judgment after death. Why could it be said that, **“There *must* be a judgment”**?
6. Why do you think some people would claim that there is no life after death?
7. Which has the greater evidence: the existence of *heaven* or the existence of *hell*?
8. When one argues that God’s love would prevent any eternal suffering, his/her argument also denies something *basic* about the *nature* of God. What is it?
9. If you have access to a religious encyclopedia, church history book, or other source material, find the circumstances surrounding the development of the doctrine of purgatory (“second chance”).
10. Discuss the four Bible examples of people who learned through experience that God does mean what He says about obedience and disobedience. Can you add other examples from the Bible that teach us the same lesson?

**MEMORY VERSES: Acts 1:11; Acts 17:31**