A Tool For Personal Discipleship

A Guide for Spiritual Mentoring

"A non-denominational discipleship ministry providing discipleship lessons for spiritual growth, discipling others, and training disciplers."

www.disciplers.org
This discipleship material continues to be a work in progress, under the Holy Spirit’s guidance. We welcome comments and/or suggestions to enhance accuracy or clarity. Our desire is to make these spiritual concepts as understandable as possible for all believers, especially newer and immature believers.

I want to express my gratitude to my wife, Toni, and to our ministry co-workers, Frank & Jeannette Meitz, all of whom have provided insights and recommendations that have been so very helpful in making this ministry more effective as an instrument to promote personal discipleship and to help believers toward spiritual maturity and spiritual fruitfulness. - Art Barkley

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DTI is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization.

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Our internet website was graciously designed and is maintained by:

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www.renocomputerguy.com

Allegra Printing
5301 Longley Lane, Ste. 47 Reno, NV  89511  775-829-7768
www.allegrenovorano.com

2018 36th Printing

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Introduction to
A Tool for Personal Discipleship

Many times when a person accepts the gift of salvation, they are hungry and open to understanding how to live the victorious Christian Life – maybe saying “I’m saved, now what?”

A Tool for Personal Discipleship is intended to help believers discover the answers to the “now what?” question by stimulating conversations between a mentee and their spiritual mentor that encourage spiritual growth and walking in dependence on the Lord under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

These discipleship materials are not designed to be given to the mentee with the expectation that they will understand them on their own without personal mentoring. This is not academic material to be studied just to acquire knowledge, although having Biblical knowledge is important.

DTI emphasizes the relationship with the Lord (heart attitude) rather than behavior manipulation. The focus is on allowing God to inwardly transform a believer’s thinking which will lead to Godly conduct.

The DTI process, even for long-time believers, will help identify gaps in spiritual understanding and address spiritual needs in order to strengthen their relationship with the Holy Spirit.

The purpose and goal is spiritual maturity, spiritual fruitfulness and spiritual reproduction, and just like in the natural world, growth takes time.

A Tool for Personal Discipleship can be used:

- In one-on-one mentoring relationships
- In group study
- In training faithful believers who want to mentor others

You can download the manual at no charge, from the DTI web site – www.disciplers.org.

The Tool is divided into five sections:

1. *Introduction to A Tool For Personal Discipleship*
   - Methodology and organizational structure of the manual
2. *Mentee Assessment*
   - Diagnostic tools to help the mentor discern the spiritual maturity level of the mentee
3. *Understanding the Christian Life* (Phase 1)
   - Foundational lessons of the mentoring process
4. *Mentor Training* (Phase 2)
   - Tips and training for those who want to spiritually mentor other believers
5. *Amplified Discipleship Concepts* (Phase 3)
   - Lessons to expand understanding of the principles from Phase 1
Mission Statement

Training Disciplers to help every Christian grow to maturity and fruitfulness in Christ

We proclaim Him, warning and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone mature in Christ. I labor for this, striving with His strength that works powerfully in me. (Col. 1:28-29)

These discipleship materials are not designed to be given to the typical newer believer with the expectation that they will be able to understand them on their own, without personal mentoring.

The lessons are intended to serve as a tool to stimulate conversation between the mentee and the discipler / spiritual mentor which will, hopefully, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, help the discipler to identify and address spiritual needs and gaps in the disciple’s spiritual understanding and lead that disciple to depend on the Holy Spirit for guidance.

For more resources and videos to help you along the way go to www.disciplers.org/mentor-training
A Note from the Author

We believe there are some foundational principles that all believers, especially newer believers, need to understand. Often Biblical “knowledge” is presented to new Christians instead of Biblical “principles” to be applied in their lives and personalized instruction to help them mature more rapidly. New believers need to be quickly introduced to a life of walking in dependence on the Lord. (A manual for a car or computer may have the exact specifications and a great description, but to learn to drive a vehicle properly or operate a computer, most people will greatly benefit from individual mentoring.)

We believe it pleases God when we have the attitude of a disciple (an apprentice learner), having more concern about God making us into the most usable instrument possible in this life, and minimal interest in defending our personal viewpoints. We shouldn't have any beliefs that are not open for Him to alter. We encourage anyone reading “A Tool For Personal Discipleship” to prayerfully consider the validity of these concepts with an open mind, led by the Holy Spirit, and to give us any feedback that would help us to present Biblical truth clearly and accurately. Our passion to help believers to grow to spiritual maturity and fruitfulness in Christ is knit together with our desire to be true to Scripture.

We also believe that there are some harmful misconceptions that are prevalent in the Christian community, which are assumed to be Scriptural, primarily because only one viewpoint of a Biblical principle is presented. The neglect, or omission, of any part of the Bible (for example, the rewards ceremony of Christ) can easily convey that the concept is really not of any great significance. Various misconceptions have resulted in many unhealthy Christians who have not grown from infancy to maturity in Christ so as to become spiritual reproducers (disciplers), a goal for which God has made every provision.

Our desire is to give each newer believer (and any spiritually hungry older believer) a clear overview of the Christian life and a basic understanding of God’s objectives. We believe that the failure to clearly explain essential Biblical concepts and goals to new converts initially so they learn them early in their walk, is one of the main reasons for the lack of spiritual vitality in the Christian community. If such principles are presented early on, new believers will be saved from much unneeded frustration as they seek to understand what God wants to do in and through their lives. For most converts the first few months are critical. This is the time to take advantage of the initial disposition to learning that characterizes the normal new believer. Too often new believers are simply placed in the presence of Biblical truth and expected to somehow assimilate Biblical understanding. New believers will tend to adopt the outlook and value system of those they associate with during the formative first part of their Christian walk. It is not a surprise that many new believers come to the conclusion that Sunday services are the most important spiritual experience of the week, rather than developing a spiritual walk with God that is a 24/7 experience.

Caution: Please do not give these lessons to someone without adequate explanation. We usually tend to assume that others understand more than they actually do. If the disciple grasps and applies the concepts presented here, the energy and hours you have invested will be well worth it.

- Art Barkley
Redefining Discipleship
by Art Barkley

I think most church leaders would agree that the Body of Christ is not having the impact on the world that we would desire. There are a myriad of reasons that can be put forth as to why the Church is not more spiritually healthy.

I would like to present what I believe is the single biggest reason for the spiritual weakness that is so prevalent in the Body of Christ, and a solution to reverse the trend.

In Colossians 1:28-29, Paul states, “Him we preach and proclaim, warning and admonishing everyone and instructing everyone in all wisdom (comprehensive insight into the ways and purposes of God), that we may present every person mature (full-grown, fully initiated, complete, and perfect) in Christ (the Anointed One). For this I labor [unto weariness], striving with all the superhuman energy which He so mightily enkindles and works within me.” (Amplified Bible)

Paul’s passion was to help every believer to reach the level of spiritual maturity that God has intended. If God’s intention is for believers to become spiritually mature, then one must ask, “why are so many believers immature”?

At a seminar, I heard the following statement: “The system you have in place is perfectly designed for the results you are getting”. I would like to suggest that the Church has strayed from God’s model for spiritual growth. Let’s take a look at what the typical church model for spiritual growth looks like, and what can be changed.

The typical church has been successful in providing what we refer to as “Corporate Discipleship”, which is an essential element for healthy individual spiritual growth, as well as for healthy church growth.
However, we believe there is another element that is essential to normal healthy spiritual growth, which we refer to as “Personal Discipleship”. The following diagram depicts what a Balanced Approach might look like, consisting of both “Corporate Discipleship” AND “Personal Discipleship”.

Church leaders already know what Corporate Discipleship looks like, so let’s look at the “Personal Discipleship” model, which we also refer to as “Spiritual Parenting”. We derive the term “Spiritual Parenting” from 1st Thessalonians, which we’ll look at shortly.

Detailed Explanation of the Balanced Discipleship Approach

OVERVIEW: We believe that wherever believers gather, “Balanced” Discipleship should be practiced. In other words, both “Corporate” and “Personal” discipleship are needed for healthy spiritual growth. The two types of discipleship each have their unique roles, and they complement each other.
**A PROBLEM:** Many churches are heavily weighted towards corporate discipleship, which often has the appearance of being more “efficient.” Personal discipleship is generally more resource intensive (time, energy, finances), but we believe it is more effective for accelerating a newer believer’s spiritual development. Many church leaders would like to be available to give each believer adequate individual attention, but that is usually impractical, due to their numerous other responsibilities, and lack of time.

**IS THERE A SOLUTION?** We believe an answer is for pastors and leaders to train “faithful” believers in the church body, who in turn can disciple (spiritually parent) newer believers. We are aware that many pastors and leaders need assistance in training disciplers, and one of the goals of DTI is to provide discipleship materials and assistance in training.

In many churches, discipleship has come to mean “the presentation of biblical truth.” Thus many leaders perceive that their responsibility is to present biblical truth, with the expectation that it is then the responsibility of each believer to allow the Holy Spirit to apply those truths to their own lives. However, since most newer believers are unfamiliar with the Holy Spirit, they need someone to personally help them to understand how to cooperate with Him in their personal spiritual development.

In many churches, the idea is conveyed that to present God’s Word correctly, seminary or Bible school training is needed. Certainly Bible school or seminary training has been used by God in the spiritual development of many leaders, but is it realistic to expect the typical Christian to have such training? Does this idea not lead many believers to consider themselves to be under-qualified?

In Ephesians 4:11-16, Paul says, ... *some pastors and teachers, for the training of the saints in the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ, ... promotes the growth of the body for building up itself in love by the proper working of each individual part.*

Should it not be the goal of leaders to see that “personal discipleship” and “spiritual reproduction” are the “norm” rather than the exception? Should we not expect every believer to be in the process of being discipled, or to be actively involved in the spiritual growth of other believers?

**Corporate Discipleship:** The Corporate side of this model: Preaching, Conducting a Seminar or Small Group, Training, etc. will often be led by a believer who has the gift of teaching. Bible school or seminary training would be helpful, but not essential.

**Personal Discipleship:** The Personal side of this model: the gift of teaching is not a biblical requirement for personally discipling (spiritually parenting) another believer. How many couples would have children if they had waited until they felt “qualified?”

**THE FOUR COMPONENTS OF THE PERSONAL MODEL:** (See Lesson 2-2 for further details.)

1. **God’s Word:** “Teaching God’s Word” is an essential component common to both the Corporate and the Personal side of all discipleship. God does not want the Bible to be seen simply as an academic text, but rather as a revelation of His character. The Bible is a means by which humans can “know” Him. *This is eternal life: that they may know You,...* (John 17:3). The Holy Spirit’s guidance will always be in accordance with His Word.
2. **Commitment**: This has to do with the heart attitude of the discipler (spiritual parent) in regards to the spiritual welfare and development of the disciple. This is a commitment that goes beyond just presenting God’s word. The biblical idea of a disciple is more of an “apprentice” than just a student.

3. **Modeling**: Hopefully the biblical disciple (apprentice) will end up with the passion of the discipler. The discipler is a model to the disciple, in ways that go beyond that of a teacher and student. How do you teach patience, or faithfulness, or passion? These things are seen more than heard.

4. **Individual Attention**: We are not interested in academically presenting points 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 to a disciple. The discipler should be prayerfully available to the Holy Spirit, to be used as an instrument as He develops the newer believer and addresses the particular needs of the disciple. The material from *A Tool For Personal Discipleship* is designed with the intent of stimulating questions and conversation that will promote spiritual growth both in the discipler and the disciple. Each discipler will have unique and personal experiences that the Holy Spirit can bring to mind and use in the discipling process.

*The following diagram depicts what we believe should represent the life of a Christian, resulting in accelerated spiritual growth.*

### A Biblical Timeline of a Christian’s Life

1. Represents the “unsaved” period of time (spiritually dead to God) in a person’s life, from physical birth to spiritual birth. During this period “self-dependence” becomes a habit of everyday living, a way of life.

2. Represents the “Evangelism” stage, culminating in the event of salvation, at which time a person passes from being spiritually dead to being spiritually alive to God.

3. Represents the “Spiritual Parenting” stage, that is, the critical formative period of time in which a Christian needs to be “spiritually parented” (discipled) through the first steps of learning to increasingly live in dependence on the Holy Spirit.
Represents the process of “sanctification”. Having been personally discipled, the believer now has a basic understanding of the Master-servant relationship and the need to follow the Holy Spirit, so as to continue being led and transformed by Him.

THE ANTICIPATED RESULTS OF DISCIPLESHIP ARE:

- SPIRITUAL MATURITY
- SPIRITUAL FRUITFULNESS
- SPIRITUAL REPRODUCTION

A MEASURE OF SUCCESS IS INDICATED WHEN THE BELIEVER BEING DISCIPLED BECOMES A FUNCTIONING DISCIPLER.

Now we'll look at the concept of “Spiritual Parenting”, as illustrated in 1 Thess. 2, where the Apostle Paul portrays himself as a “spiritual parent”. We believe that God has given us a model that will serve to accelerate the spiritual growth of the typical believer.

A Biblical Model for “Discipleship”

1. THEY WERE SINGLE-MINDED IN PURPOSE
   :3-6 ... we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who examines our hearts. For we never came with flattering speech, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed — God is witness — nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, even though as apostles of Christ we might have asserted our authority.

2. THEY CARED FOR THE BELIEVERS AS A MOTHER CARES FOR HER CHILDREN
   :7-8 But we proved to be gentle among you, as a nursing MOTHER tenderly cares for her own children. Having so fond an affection for you, we were well-pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because you had become very dear to us.
2. THEY BECAME “ROLE MODELS” TO THE NEW BELIEVERS

:9-10 you recall, brethren, our labor and hardship, how working night and day so as not to be a burden to any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. You are witnesses, and so is God, how devoutly and uprightly and blamelessly we behaved toward you believers;

3. THEY GAVE INDIVIDUAL ATTENTION AND INSTRUCTION AS A FATHER

:11-12 just as you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring EACH ONE of you as a FATHER would his own children, so that you would walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

4. THE WORD OF GOD WAS AN ESSENTIAL COMPONENT OF DISCIPLESHIP

:13 For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also Performs its work in you who believe.

(1 Thessalonians 2:3-13)

A Further Description of the Preceding Model

Overview

The diagram, “A Biblical Model For Discipleship” depicts how we believe Balanced Discipleship should look in the typical believer's spiritual life, including both Personal Discipleship (“Spiritual Parenting”) and Corporate Discipleship. The two forms of discipleship are illustrated, using a time line.

Corporate Discipleship

As already mentioned, even though most churches are well acquainted with, and employ, Corporate Discipleship (represented by the dotted line over the lifespan of the believer), many church leaders would acknowledge that something is still lacking in the spiritual growth of most believers.

Personal Discipleship

In many cases “Personalized Discipleship” (Spiritual Parenting) is the missing ingredient for producing healthy spiritual growth. Each new believer has unique spiritual needs that should be addressed. Typically there is a window of opportunity for new believers, during which time they are open to biblical concepts, which can accelerate their growth toward spiritual maturity and fruitfulness. There is a parallel between the spiritual development of a believer and the development of a baby. In both cases, the initial period is a “formative” stage of their lives. We believe this is why God chose to use spiritual terminology that parallels the human experience; such as “born again”, “baby”, etc.

Too often believers are left to fend for themselves, with the apparent assumption that simply hearing biblical presentations and being in the presence of other believers will be sufficient. We believe many new Christians would have experienced much more spiritual growth had someone given them adequate personal attention when they first accepted Christ as their
Savior. New believers will often come to correct conclusions if biblical truths are clearly presented in a personal format.

New believers are usually hungry, and long for personal guidance, much like a new baby. The typical new believer is excited about having their sins forgiven and knowing that they're going to heaven. **However, that enthusiasm should not be mistaken for spiritual understanding.** New believers need clear instruction in order to understand how to recognize the Holy Spirit's involvement in their life, and how to listen to, follow and obey Him. They also need to understand how to cooperate with Him in their own spiritual development.

**Biblical Support for Personalized Discipleship (1 Thess. 2:3-13)**

In this model for Personal Discipleship, Paul clearly depicts himself as a “Spiritual Parent” (Spiritual Father and Mother), caring for spiritual children. We believe that Paul lays out a biblical perspective of how a Spiritual Parent should relate to each spiritual child, or disciple. The human parallel is intentional and unmistakable.

You may rightfully ask, if personal discipleship is so obvious, why is it not woven into the fabric of most churches? This is a logical question, and a few reasons why I believe personal discipleship has been neglected are presented below.

1) **Who is available to provide the individual attention needed by each new convert?**

**Typical Modern Church Congregation**

- **Followers** typically don't feel they are adequately qualified to disciple new believers and often believe it's the role of the Leaders.
- **Pastors / Leaders** are perceived to be trained to disciple others, but don't have the necessary time to devote individually to each new believer.
- **Pastors / Leaders** are doing their job supporting the church.
- **Followers** typically are OK with this model even though the problem leads to an anemic Church.
God in His wisdom designed the Church as a “body”, the Body of Christ, of which He is the Head. As is recorded clearly in the 1st letter to the Corintians, He placed the members of the Body in such a way that they would be interdependent, and share responsibilities and service that are initiated and directed by the Holy Spirit to accomplish His purposes. He never intended that a special category of believers (leadership) should carry the load, but rather the responsibilities of service should be spread across the Body.

And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, ... we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

Ephesians 4:11-16 (NASB)

2) Is a spiritual gift required to disciple? There is a common misconception that the average Christian cannot effectively disciple another Christian unless they are “spiritually gifted”. Is there a scriptural basis for that belief? I think not. Most Christians correctly believe that they should be available to the Lord for the purpose of being a witness to the unsaved, even though there is not a “witnessing” gift. Likewise, there is not a “discipling” gift. This misconception can be a convenient rationale to excuse the lack of discipleship, but it has no scriptural basis. Church leadership ought to convey to congregations that every Christian should be available to the Holy Spirit as a discipler (spiritual parent), just as he, or she, should be available as a witness.

3) To influence many people simultaneously is generally considered the method of choice. When incorrectly evaluated, personal one-on-one discipleship appears to be too time-consuming, energy consuming, and inefficient.

The concept we want to demonstrate is that the biblical method of multiplication is much more productive over the long term. This is very important, because the seeming short-term ineffectiveness has led many to the illusion that it really is not the best method. To be honest, many Christian leaders measure success by numbers. We believe this is one of the reasons there is such an emphasis in the Christian community to hold events and activities, which give the impression of short-term success if attendance is the measure.

Most churches experience numerical growth through the process of “addition”. The following chart illustrates a potential numerical growth, using the process of “multiplication”. Obviously the process of numerical growth through “addition” gives the illusion of short-term success, while the process of “multiplication” appears painstakingly slow. Jesus spent about 3 years with 12 disciples who probably would not have been the first choice of religious leaders. Personal discipleship is resource intensive, but over the long run results in not only greater numerical growth, but also in a greater number of believers who have a deeper relationship with the Lord.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of “CONVERTS” (1 converted each day)</th>
<th>Number of “DISCIPLES” (1 discipled each 6 months)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>To start</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>183</td>
<td>½ year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>365</td>
<td>1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>730</td>
<td>2 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,095</td>
<td>3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,460</td>
<td>4 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,190</td>
<td>6 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,920</td>
<td>8 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,650</td>
<td>10 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4,380</td>
<td>12 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The figures in the **left-hand column** represent the approximate number of *converts* that could be attained to if a Christian were able to win one person to Christ each day of the year. The figures in the **right-hand column** represent the approximate number of fruitful *disciples* that could be attained to if each Christian would be faithful during each 6 month period to disciple just one new convert to a level of spiritual maturity whereby the newer Christian could be used by the Lord in turn to disciple another convert. The figures in the right-hand column are less impressive at the beginning, but as can be seen, have a much greater long-term benefit.

*The things which you* (Timothy) *have heard from me* (Paul) *in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithfull men who will be able to teach others also.* (2 Tim. 2:2)

4) **Personal discipleship (spiritual parenting) is not promoted and modeled by the leadership in many churches** - In 1 Peter 5:1-3 leaders are told, “..., I exhort the elders among you, ..., shepherd the flock of God among you, ... nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock.”

Can Christian leaders realistically expect followers to imitate what they themselves are not **modeling**?

*Both the command to be witnesses, as well as the command to make disciples, were given to the Church at large, not just to those that were physically present at the time.* (Matthew 28:18-20 & Acts 1:8)
How Does the Typical New Believer Acquire Spiritual Understanding?

If a new believer is not instructed otherwise, he will typically appropriate the values and convictions of the Christian peers that he associates with during the formative period of his new spiritual life, just as a child will tend to adopt the values and convictions of his family and peers.

Let’s say that a new Christian is brought into association with a group of Navigators (Navigators.org), who we would rightly expect to quickly begin to challenge the believer’s former values and convictions. That believer is either going to adopt the Navigator’s values and convictions, or he will become so uncomfortable that he will seek a more “friendly” and less intrusive environment.

But what happens if there is not such a group of relatively mature mentors who will take the new believer under wing? Typically the new believer will be introduced into a congregation, where it is often assumed that “sitting under the preaching of the Word” will be sufficient to lead that new believer into a spiritually mature walk. Hopefully, the negative traits observed in the congregation do not distort the new believer’s understanding. Is that realistic? We believe it is safe to say that most new believers will be impacted more by what they “see” other believers do, than what they “hear” them say. If a particular congregation is thought to be spiritually mature, then it would be realistic to reason that the combination of “hearing” biblical truth from a pastor/teacher, together with “seeing” biblical spirituality modeled from the congregation, would be a tremendous help in the healthy spiritual growth of each new believer. Leaders need to realistically evaluate the spiritual health of the congregation, asking themselves, “Do we want new believers to become like the ‘typical’ member of this congregation?” If the answer is no, then arrangements need to be put in place to impart biblical values to new believers.

We should not expect the new believer to understand much about the Christian walk. It is only natural for new believers to be mainly concerned with doing the right things, which would indicate that their focus is on external behavior. A new believer should be able to make the assumption that if he behaves like “older” Christians, then logically he’ll be behaving in an acceptable biblical fashion, since those older Christians have “obviously” styled their behavior on biblical patterns. Right? Unfortunately, the answer is NO. Many older believers have adopted their behavior from previous older Christians who they similarly “assumed” to be spiritual. And so one generation follows the next. Unwittingly, many Christian leaders are “conveying” approval of this natural human process, by not insuring that each new believer is personally helped through the formative and critical period of the Christian walk.

While it is totally natural for new believers to begin the Christian walk focusing on “external behavior”, we believe it is God’s purpose for these believers to quickly begin to focus on living by “biblical principles”. Probably more than 90% of typical daily external behavior is not addressed specifically in the Bible. The typical Christian will not “transition” from focusing on external behavior to focusing on biblical principles, unless another Christian is
willing to put the time and energy into helping him understand God’s purposes and His process for producing spiritual growth.

**The typical new believer understands the foundational doctrine of salvation by grace through Christ. Now he wants to build on that truth, but isn’t quite sure how to go about it. Is it reasonable to simply give him a Bible and expect him to effectively grow onto spiritual maturity?**

It is possible, but we think it is the exception. Because some new believers do seem to display spiritual growth with little individual mentoring, a **false impression** is given. We are tempted to ask, “Why can’t more Christians grow like that?” Isn’t it also true that in the secular world there are those who excel without much help from others? But are they not the exception too? For instance, we can hand a **computer manual** to 100 people who have no prior computer understanding. A few will manage, with difficulty, to eventually figure things out. But the vast majority will become frustrated and decide that a computer really isn’t worth all the hassle. Many Christians, left on their own, reach the same conclusion regarding the Christian life. Which would you prefer, to be given a computer manual to learn on your own, or to have someone take the time to personally tutor you and answer your questions? We can truthfully state that the manual has **all** the knowledge you’ll need, and it is **clearly** presented. How about constructing a house? How many inexperienced men would enjoy being handed blueprints and a manual for building a house, and be expected to do a decent job? Not many.

Some might argue that the Holy Spirit alone should be the new believer’s Teacher. The biblical analogy of a new believer being likened to a “baby” carries little meaning if we don’t accept the analogous implications. Does the command to “make disciples” simply convey the idea of handing someone a Biblical Manual? Does the Holy Spirit not expect older Christians to be **available** for His use in the process of spiritual parenting, just as He wants them to be available as witnesses when He chooses to convict an unbeliever?

For additional information please see Phase 2
# Suggested Timeline for Mentoring

(Preferably one-on-one, but can be in a Corporate Setting)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase 1</th>
<th>Phase 2</th>
<th>Phase 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Mentor Training</strong></td>
<td><strong>Amplified Discipleship Concepts</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding the Christian Life</td>
<td>Mentor training with the focus on mentoring others</td>
<td>Part 1 – Overview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on the mentees personal relationship with God</td>
<td></td>
<td>Part 2 – Lordship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Length</td>
<td>2-3 months ±</td>
<td>Part 3 – Abiding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-9 months ±</td>
<td>6 months or more</td>
<td>Part 4 – Living</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Note: Time frames are estimated, not critical, and are calculated on meeting 1 - 1 ½ hour each week.

## Important:
Preference should be given to using these lessons on a one-to-one basis, although they can also be used effectively in a class setting. For most Christians the lessons will need detailed explanation.

These lessons are not designed to be simply read through like a newspaper, but rather to be personalized by the discipler, and to serve as a means to stimulate dialog and address spiritual issues that need to be understood in order for each Christian to become an effective and useful tool in His hands.
How Do I Begin?

The DTI mission statement is from Colossians 1:28-29, “We proclaim Him, warning and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone mature in Christ. I labor for this, striving with His strength that works powerfully in me.”

We endeavor to accomplish this by following Paul's example in 2 Timothy 2:2, where he wrote, “And what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, commit to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.”

We see four generations of disciplers! (Paul, Timothy, reliable men & women, others) That is why we use the term "spiritual parenting" to describe our discipleship methodology. Disciplers should have the desire to become "spiritual grandparents."

Spiritual Mentoring demands not only teaching Biblical truths, but also conveying an understanding to the mentee, that as the Holy Spirit leads, we anticipate spiritual reproduction in addition to spiritual fruitfulness (Romans 7:4). Just as infants can’t reproduce, nor can spiritual “babies”.

Therefore, we believe that every new convert should be personally discipled /mentored ("spiritually parented") as soon as possible after conversion to accelerate their Christian growth.

Our desire is the same as was Paul's: for believers to understand how to grow spiritually, to abide in fellowship with the Lord and to clearly explain the Christian life to others.

**Note:** Effective personal discipleship (spiritual mentoring), similar to raising children, can be a slow process, because it takes time for a newer believer to comprehend, internalize and then impart to others the Biblical concepts contained in these discipleship materials. The DTI team is available to help you along the way, so please don't hesitate to contact us. ([www.disciplers.org](http://www.disciplers.org))

The flowchart on the following page can help you determine, based on your “role,” how to begin using “A Tool For Personal Discipleship” and its extensive curriculum. You will find additional resources to help you along the way listed below the flowchart.

**Important:** Preference should be given to using these lessons on a one-to-one basis, although they can also be used effectively in a small group. For most newer believers, the lessons will need detailed explanation. Therefore, these lessons are not designed to simply be read through like a textbook, but rather to be personalized by the discipler, and to serve as a means to stimulate dialog and address spiritual issues that need to be understood in order for each believer to become an effective and useful tool in His hands.
## How to Begin Based on Your “Role”

Use this chart to help you determine where to “get started” using The Tool.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My Role</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Time Commitment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am a Pastor/Leader and want to better understand Biblical discipleship.</td>
<td>1. Prayerfully go through <strong>Phase 2</strong>.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| I am a Pastor/Leader and want to equip believers in my church to disciple others. | 1. Prayerfully select a small group of leaders that you consider “faithful,” and lead them through **Phase 2**.  
2. Take the same group through **Phase 1**. As you progress, most likely some will feel motivated by the Holy Spirit to start mentoring (spiritual parenting) newer (immature) believers through **Phase 1**.  
3. To assist them in discipling, have them review the guidelines found in **lesson 2-5**. | Approximately 6-9 months. |
| I am a mature believer and want to mentor a new(er) believer.           | 1. Read and carefully consider the **guidelines in Lesson 2-5**.  
2. Prayerfully go through, with the mentee, the two lessons in the **Mentee Assessment** section to help diagnose the spiritual maturity level of the believer.  
3. Begin the mentoring process using **Phase 1**. | Approximately 6-9 months. |
| I am a believer who has not been discipled and desire to better understand the Christian life. | 1. Prayerfully seek a mature believer who you respect, and who would be willing to meet with you at least once a week using **Phase 1**.  
2. If you cannot find another believer to personally mentor you, prayerfully read **5 Biblical Concepts (Mentee Assessment)**, then start through **Phase 1** on your own, writing down questions that come to mind.  
3. Hopefully a church leader or mature Christian will be able to satisfactorily answer your questions. | Approximately 3 months. |
| I have a one-time opportunity to spend with a believer, for example, on a trip or in a jail ministry, etc. | 1. Prayerfully go through the **5 Biblical Concepts (Mentee Assessment)** with the believer.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                 |
Additional Resources

- INTERNET SITE: [www.disciplers.org](http://www.disciplers.org)
  - All lessons are free.
  - View the lessons on the website or print and/or download in *PDF format*.
  - Watch the Mentor Training videos for self-teaching and to help in preparation for mentoring others.

- EQUIPPING THE SAINTS
  - DTI will consider requests to conduct workshops and conferences to help train Pastors and Leaders to equip the Saints in their congregation to become spiritual mentors.

(Printing Options)

From time to time we receive questions about different printing methods. Below are some guidelines based on user needs.

- If you are a Church Leader and will be conducting training classes or having small groups:
  - Consider printing the manuals locally.
  - Here in Reno, NV we print about 50 manuals at a time, using a local printer, who produces a spiral bound photocopied manual for approximately $15.00. (USD)

- If you are an individual and need to print just 1-2 manuals:
  - You can print the entire manual in PDF format, or just the *Phase* you presently need.
    - Print directly from the website or,
    - Download the PDF to your computer to print “on demand” as needed.
  - Some people put the printed manual in a 3-hole binder. This allows for adding note pages or other resources that you may use to help enhance the discipling process.

- Some churches have made photocopies of Phase 1, then added their own personalized cover, and assembled using plastic comb binding.
A Tool For Personal Discipleship

Mentee Assessment

These are two diagnostic tools to help you as the mentor discern the spiritual maturity level of the mentee and possible gaps in their understanding, so that you may be better prepared as you go through Phase 1 with them.

It will also help you to develop thought-provoking questions, based on where the mentee is in their “spiritual walk”.

It will help you avoid the pitfall of assuming the mentee is more spiritually mature based on observations of external behavior – especially if you are mentoring a believer who has been in the church a long time.

Note, this is an optional step.

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© Copyright 1997-2018 Art Barkley - Discipler Training Int'l, Box 61911, Reno, NV 89506; www.disciplers.org. Anyone is free to reproduce this material and distribute it, but it may not be altered or sold under any circumstances without the author's consent.
Discussion and Explanation for the Mentor

We have found that there are gaps in understanding of many Christians, gaps that are not immediately evident by just interacting with them for 1-3 hours once a week during a Sunday meeting. These gaps will only come out in intentional, deeper conversations based on Biblical truths.

While these gaps in understanding will usually become evident as you go through Phase 1, you can also discern them now, using these two tools. Then as you begin to meet using Phase 1 you can pray for wisdom in developing questions that will lead the mentee to think deeply about “What am I supposed to be doing in my Christian life and what is God’s purpose for me?”

CAUTION: this is NOT an occasion for you to preach at them!

5 BIBLICAL CONCEPTS EVERY BELIEVER NEEDS TO KNOW

- The Five Concepts covers Salvation, Lordship and Abiding, which are the critical ideas you will dig deeper on in Phase 1.
- Read the scriptures in each point (alternating with the mentee) and discuss, using open-ended questions to stimulate conversation.
- Based on the discussion, evaluate what gaps they may have and use that information as you proceed through Phase 1.
- This tool can also be used when you have only 30 minutes to an hour with someone you may never see again, such as in a prison ministry.

WHERE AM I AS A CHRISTIAN?

- Have the mentee read each of the descriptions for Groups 1-4. Then ask “Where would you place yourself on this diagram?” “Which one of these groups best describes you?” Follow up with, “Why do you think that?”
- Your response to their answer for each of the four groups could be as follows:
  Group 1. “We recognize new Christians require personal guidance in their walk with the Lord, and that’s why we are meeting.”
  Group 2. “Unfortunately, many Christians find themselves in the desert experience, not because they chose to be, but because it was never explained, that God wants you to live in your Spiritual Promised Land, not the spiritual desert, and that’s why we are meeting.”
  Group 3. “I’m glad you’ve said to the Lord in one way or another that you want Him to be in charge of your life but now we need to help you learn how to consistently abide. And that’s why we are meeting.”
  Group 4. “I’m excited that you have a hunger to know more, and it may be that you have the pieces to the puzzle illustrating the Christian life, but now it’s a matter of putting them in order so that you see the ‘big picture‘. And that’s why we are meeting.”

Throughout the mentoring process, follow the guidelines found in Lesson 2-5.
Five Biblical Concepts Every New Believer Needs to Understand

(To Help Maximize Spiritual Growth And Help Minimize Frustration!)

(Important - Underlined words/phrases may require further discussion.)

1. As my Savior – Jesus wants me to know that all my sins have been forgiven, and I now have eternal life.

   John 5:24 “I assure you: Anyone who hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life and will not come under judgment but has passed from death to life.”

   Rom. 4:7-8 How joyful are those whose lawless acts are forgiven and whose sins are covered!

   How joyful is the man the Lord will never charge with sin!

   Rom. 8:1 Therefore, no condemnation now exists for those in Christ Jesus.

   Rom. 8:16 The Spirit Himself testifies together with our spirit that we are God’s children.

   Rom. 8:31 What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us?

   Rom. 10:13 For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

   1 John 3:24 … the way we know that He remains in us is from the Spirit He has given us.

   1 John 5:11-13 And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. The one who has the Son has life. The one who doesn’t have the Son of God does not have life. I have written these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.

2. As my Lord – Jesus wants me to know that I have been bought with a price, and I am no longer my own.

   John 13:13 You call Me Teacher and Lord. This is well said, for I am.

   Romans 11:33-12:1 … For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things… Therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your spiritual worship.

   Rom. 14:7-8 For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself. If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.

   1 Cor. 6:19-20 Don’t you know that your body is a sanctuary of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought at a price. Therefore glorify God in your body.

   1 Cor. 7:22-23 … he who is called as a free man is Christ’s slave. You were bought at a price; 2 Corinthians 5:15 And He died for all so that those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for the One who died for them and was raised.

   NOTE: Point # 2 could be threatening, if it were not for the absolute truth that God loves me and will always do what is in my best interest.

   So, if God loves me, can only do what is in my best interest, and never makes mistakes, what would be a logical reason for not embracing Him as my Master?
3. I am very special and God has a marvelous, unique design for my entire life, and He wants to manage His plan for me.

Psalm 139:16  Your eyes saw me when I was formless; all my days were written in Your book and planned before a single one of them began.

Prov. 3:5-6  Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding; think about [acknowledge] Him in all your ways, and He will guide you on the right paths.

Jer. 29:11  “For I know the plans I have for you”—this is the Lord’s declaration—“plans for your welfare, not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.”

Matthew 11:28-30  (Jesus said) “Come to Me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. All of you, take up My yoke and learn from Me, because I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for yourselves. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”

Romans 8:31-32  What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He did not even spare His own Son but offered Him up for us all; how will He not also with Him grant us everything?

4. God wants me to know that the Holy Spirit alone is capable of guiding me and revealing God's plan to me.

Isa. 55:8-9  “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, and your ways are not My ways.” This is the Lord’s declaration. “For as heaven is higher than earth, so My ways are higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.”

Jer. 10:23  … a man’s way of life is not his own; no one who walks determines his own steps.

John 14:26  But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit— the Father will send Him in My name—will teach you all things and remind you of everything I have told you.

John 16:13-15  … the Spirit of truth … will guide you into all the truth…. He will glorify Me, because He will take from what is Mine and declare it to you….

1 Cor. 2:9-14  … What eye did not see and ear did not hear, and what never entered the human mind—God prepared this for those who love Him. … no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who comes from God, so that we may understand what has been freely given to us by God.

5. God wants me to know that the Holy Spirit will train me to recognize, follow and obey His guidance.

Psa. 32:8  I will instruct you and show you the way to go; with My eye on you, I will give counsel.

Luke 9:23-24  Then He said to them all, “If anyone wants to come with Me, he must deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow Me.”

John 10:27  (Jesus said) “My sheep hear My voice, I know them, and they follow Me.”

John 12:24-26  (Jesus said) “… If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me. Where I am, there My servant also will be.”

Rom. 11:36-12:2  … Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.
Where Am I As A Christian?

GROUP #1
I am a new believer. As a “little child” in the “family” of God, I need a spiritual mentor to walk alongside of me to answer questions and help me understand how to listen and follow the Lord and grow spiritually.

As a new Christian I have a learner’s disposition making this the ideal time to spiritually mentor me; otherwise I may learn to adapt my behavior to match what other Christians are doing.

The danger is I may end up defeated, living in the “spiritual desert”. (Group #2)

GROUP #2
As a Christian, I have been living defeated, in a desert experience. This is often characterized by ongoing spiritual symptoms such as lack of peace, worry, anger, irritability, unbelief, addictive behavior, a critical attitude, a sense of defeat, disobedience, complaining and dissatisfaction.

My attitude has been that God is there to help me with my plans, rather than my fitting into His plans for my life. I rely more on my own understanding and wisdom, rather than relying on God’s character.

Will God allow a crisis in my life to humble me, so that I will be willing to acknowledge His authority and Lordship over my life?

GROUP #3
I have acknowledged His Lordship over my life, but my Christian growth seems to have plateaued, and I often find the Christian life difficult and unfulfilling.

GROUP #4
I have acknowledged His Lordship over my life but hunger to know more about abiding in Christ and spiritually mentoring others.
A Tool for Personal Discipleship

PHASE 1

UNDERSTANDING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE
PHASE 1 CURRICULUM  
“Understanding the Christian Life”

Most believers would greatly benefit from having a personal Spiritual Mentor during this phase but the material can also be used in a class (corporate) setting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson #</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-1</td>
<td>Abbreviated Overview of the “Normal” Christian Life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>Knowing God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>Salvation Principles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-4</td>
<td>The Spiritual Anatomy of a Christian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>How I Received My Human Nature &amp; God’s Divine Nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-6</td>
<td>How to Relate to the Holy Spirit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-7</td>
<td>The Normal Progressive Development of a Christian (Lordship and Surrender)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-8</td>
<td>Review of the Two Natures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-9</td>
<td>“Abiding” Principles to Help Me Maintain Continual Fellowship with The Lord</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-10</td>
<td>Verses and Illustrations Related to “Abiding”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-11</td>
<td>Abiding Today, The Present, This Moment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-12</td>
<td>Living Daily In (or out of) Fellowship with The Lord</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-13</td>
<td>The 3 Major Phases of the Normal Healthy Christian Life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-14</td>
<td>Hardships, Suffering and God’s Sovereignty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-15</td>
<td>Making Right Choices, Discerning God’s Will</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-16</td>
<td>Christian Maturity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes to the Mentee: It’s important to make a 16-Lesson commitment – there will always be unexpected illnesses and/or circumstances, but if possible, honor this pledge - just between you and the Lord.

Estimate meeting weekly for 6-9 months for 1-1/2 hrs.

Carefully read the weekly assignment **before** each session and write down questions to discuss with your spiritual mentor.
Abbreviated Overview of the “Normal” Christian Life

Imagine the Christian Life as the Boxtop of a “Jigsaw Puzzle” and portions of Biblical truth are presented as “pieces of the puzzle.”

GOAL = SPIRITUAL MATURITY, FRUITFULNESS and SPIRITUAL REPRODUCTION - that we may bear fruit for God (Rom. 7:4)

1. Before Christ
   - Bondage / Slavery

2. The unsaved build on sand.
   - (Matt. 7:21-27)

3. “Spiritual Parenting”
   - Believing God / Faith (trust)

4. Tree
   - Sapling
   - Seedling
   - Child
   - Adolescen

5. Rewards Ceremony
   - For Believers
   - No punishment
   - 2 Cor. 5:9-10
   - Judgment of believers for rewards, and loss of rewards!

6. The Holy Spirit builds with gold, silver, precious stones - worthy of eternal rewards
   - 1 Cor. 3:10-15

7. Eternal existence without God (Hell)
   - Rev. 20:11-15

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Abbreviated Overview of the “Normal” Christian Life

Explanation of the “Jigsaw Puzzle” Diagram

The main purpose of this lesson is to understand a practical overview of the Normal Christian Life. As I acquire Biblical concepts and knowledge I want **mentally to connect** the pieces to God’s overall plan for my life.

Consider a **jigsaw puzzle**. Imagine trying to fit together the pieces of a puzzle without being able to refer to the picture **boxtop**. It is much less frustrating when the boxtop picture is available **for reference**.

The second diagram (on the next page), the “Abbreviated Overview”, is like the **puzzle boxtop**, while the **pieces** represent bits of Biblical knowledge.

Typically, I accumulate information from the Bible, friends, books, sermons, podcasts, conversations, etc. I may have difficulty knowing how this new information fits into my everyday life here on earth, or worse yet, I may arrive at wrong conclusions which can distort my understanding of God and the Christian life.

Some newer Christians become frustrated and return to their secular life style. Some may focus only on behaving correctly and develop a list of “do’s and don’ts”. Others may **compartmentalize** their life, resulting in a perceived “spiritual life” separate from a “secular life”. They may attempt to live an acceptable spiritual life before others, while at the same time concluding that Biblical principles somehow don’t apply to their secular everyday life.

My response should be to view the various components of my everyday life as **a unit**, and involve God in every aspect of my life.

*My goal is to understand how to integrate Biblical knowledge into my daily relationship with God and others, and to protect me from falling into the common practice of simply archiving Biblical information.*

*As I grow, I will become increasingly more aware of my need to walk continually before the Lord (24/7), seeking His approval, and less dependent on the need for approval from others.*

Growth
Abbreviated Overview of the “Normal” Christian Life

1. Before Christ
   Bondage / Slavery

2. The unsaved
   build on sand.
   (Matt. 7:21-27)

3. Salvation
   Believing God / Faith (trust)

4. “Spiritual Parenting”
   1 Thess. 2:3-13
   - Seedling
   - Sapling
   - Adult
   - Adolescent
   - Child

5. GOAL = SPIRITUAL MATURITY, FRUITFULNESS and SPIRITUAL REPRODUCTION
   - in order that we might bear fruit for God.
   (Rom. 7:4)

6. The Holy Spirit builds with gold, silver, precious stones - worthy of eternal rewards
   1 Cor. 3:10-15

7. The Tribunal of Christ
   for rewards, and loss of rewards!
   The Rewards Ceremony
   For Believers
   No punishment
   2 Cor. 5:9-10

   Rewards based on what I, by faith, allow the Holy Spirit to do through my life (His fruit)

   I can build a temporal structure of wood, hay and stubble.
   1 Cor. 3:10-15

   Jesus - our Rock and Foundation

   Judgment of unbelievers
   Eternal existence without God (Hell)

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Jigsaw Puzzle “Boxtop” Guide

Discuss the explanations below for each component of the jigsaw puzzle “boxtop”, all of which will be covered later in more detail in the following lessons.

1. **Birth to Rebirth** – We should each be able to easily identify ourselves as having gone through this period, alienated from God, living in spiritual darkness, and without hope.

If a person rejects Christ and dies during this period, that person who has built their house upon the sand without a foundation, will go to the judgment of unbelievers to spend eternity separated from God. It is important to understand that this judgment has nothing to do with believers, only unbelievers.

Matt. 7:24-27 *(Jesus said)* “Therefore, everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them will be like a sensible man who built his house on the rock. The rain fell, the rivers rose, and the winds blew and pounded that house. Yet it didn’t collapse, because its foundation was on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of Mine and doesn’t act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. The rain fell, the rivers rose, the winds blew and pounded that house, and it collapsed. And its collapse was great!”

Rev. 20:11-15 *(The apostle John wrote)* “Then I saw a great white throne and One seated on it. Earth and heaven fled from His presence, and no place was found for them. I also saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life, and the dead were judged according to their works by what was written in the books. Then the sea gave up its dead, and Death and Hades gave up their dead; all were judged according to their works. Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And anyone not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.”

2. **The Cross** – This event is by far the most important happening in my life. From God’s perspective I have passed from “death” (without His life) to “life” (the Lord indwelling), from hopelessness to hopefulness.

John 5:24 “I assure you: Anyone who hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life and will not come under judgment but has passed from death to life.”

3. **The New Life** – It is important that I understand the event of salvation is the entrance into a new life with God, prepared by Him to completely meet my every need as I fit into His design. I am introduced to the concept of fitting into God’s plan for my time here on earth, which is but a small part of His eternal plan for me. Two Biblical analogies can illustrate my Christian life: that of a plant growing from a seedling to a tree, and that of a human growing from a baby to an adult. Again, the event of salvation is just the beginning of the new life of learning to walk with God. During this period of time it is very important for a new believer to be discipled (“spiritually parented” / mentored”).
1 Thessalonians 2:7-13  … we were gentle among you, as a nursing mother nurtures her own children. We cared so much for you that we were pleased to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us. … like a father with his own children, we encouraged, comforted, and implored each one of you to walk worthy of God, who calls you into His own kingdom and glory. This is why we constantly thank God, because when you received the message about God that you heard from us, you welcomed it not as a human message, but as it truly is, the message of God, which also works effectively in you believers.

The Intended Objective (Goal) – Just as I would expect a healthy sapling to grow into a fruit-bearing tree, and a healthy infant to grow into an adult and become a parent, so God’s intention is to make of a healthy spiritual infant a spiritually mature and fruitful Christian.

God’s Foundation and My Building Options – God has laid a Foundation, Jesus Christ, which represents my salvation. This is equally true for all believers. However, each of us individually has a choice as to how we will build on that Foundation. The buildings represent the use of my resources (time, energy, possessions) during my physical life here on earth. If I allow the Holy Spirit, as the Master Building Contractor, to use my resources, He will use those building materials to create for me an eternal structure of gold, silver and precious stones. That which I deny Him use of will produce a structure of wood, hay and stubble.

1 Cor. 3:10-15  (Paul wrote) According to God’s grace that was given to me, I have laid a foundation as a skilled master builder, and another builds on it. But each one must be careful how he builds on it. For no one can lay any other foundation than what has been laid down. That foundation is Jesus Christ. If anyone builds on that foundation with gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay, or straw, each one’s work will become obvious, for the day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire; the fire will test the quality of each one’s work. If anyone’s work that he has built survives, he will receive a reward. If anyone’s work is burned up, it will be lost, but he will be saved: yet it will be like an escape through fire.

These verses speak of a future rewards ceremony called The Tribunal of Christ (or The Judgment Seat of Christ) at which time each believer will individually appear before Jesus Christ, so that each may be repaid for what he has done in the body, whether good or worthless. For what he/she has allowed the Holy Spirit to do through their life while living here on earth.

There should be no fear of punishment at this event, although I need to be aware of the potential for loss of eternal rewards, since all that is wood, hay and stubble will be turned into worthless ashes. It is important to note that no unbeliever will be present at this event.

2 Cor. 5:9-10  Therefore, whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to be pleasing to Him. For we must all appear before the tribunal of Christ, so that each may be repaid for what he has done in the body, whether good or worthless.

Matt. 6:20-21  But collect for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves don’t break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.
Knowing God

God desires for me to grow in my understanding of Him. From birth until I received Christ as my Savior, I formed habits of worldly understanding.

Now He wants to gradually transform my understanding of Him so that I increasingly view life from His perspective. A godly perspective produces godly behavior. It does not please God if I simply attempt to change my outward behavior without allowing Him to transform my inward thinking.

If I want my relationship with God to grow, I need to make conscious choices to seek Him wholeheartedly, in much the same way that a marriage relationship needs to be nurtured.

In order not to hinder God’s work in and through me, I need to maintain an open, honest and teachable attitude towards Him. Since He alone really knows me, my role is to willingly allow Him to make the appropriate changes in my understanding. Jesus is the visible picture of God’s character, and the One in whose image God will mold me, as I allow Him.

God desires for me to know Him intimately, in a way that goes beyond mere knowledge “about” Him.

Godly behavior is the natural outcome of His continuing inward transformation of my convictions and values

1 Sam. 16:7... Man does not see what the Lord sees, for man sees what is visible, but the Lord sees the heart. ”

1. My attitude

   a. God desires for me to grow in my understanding of Him, to know His heart.

   Jer. 9:23-24  This is what the Lord says: The wise man must not boast in his wisdom; the strong man must not boast in his strength; the wealthy man must not boast in his wealth. But the one who boasts should boast in this, that he understands and knows Me,…

   John 17:3  (Jesus said) This is eternal life: that they may know You, the only true God, and the One You have sent—Jesus Christ.

   Rom. 12:2  ...do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God. (see also 2 Cor. 3:18)

   Eph. 3:16-19  ... that you, being rooted and firmly established in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the length and width, height and depth of God’s love, and to know the Messiah’s love that surpasses knowledge, so you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

The highest goal of learning is to know God!
How Do I Grow into His Perspective?

God desires for me to grow in my understanding of Him. In Romans 12:2 God tells me that He wants to transform my thinking so that I increasingly think more like Him. That change will result in an attitude adjustment resulting (over time) in behavior that is acceptable to Him.

Use the following three steps to understand this critical process.

Read from the BOTTOM to the TOP beginning with Romans 12:2, then move UP to Box #1.

1. **Mind**
   - Thinking

2. **Attitude**
   - Values
   - Convictions

3. **Behavior**
   - Conduct
   - Actions

As I am abiding in the Holy Spirit, my transformed perspective will produce behavior that is pleasing to Him.

I need to make conscious choices to seek Him wholeheartedly in my daily spiritual walk.

I need to maintain an open, honest and teachable attitude towards Him.

I willingly choose to allow Him to make the appropriate changes in my understanding.

God wants to gradually transform my understanding of Him so that I increasingly view life from His perspective.

Romans 12:2  *Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.*
b. In order to grow I need to actively pursue a closer relationship with Him.

Psa. 63:1  *(David wrote)* God,… I *eagerly* seek You. I *thirst* for You….

Prov. 2:1-5  *(Solomon wrote)* My son, if you *accept* my words and *store up* my commands within you, *listening closely* to wisdom and *directing* your heart to understanding; furthermore, if you *call out* to insight and *lift* your voice to understanding, if you *seek* it like silver and *search* for it like hidden treasure, *then* you will *understand* the fear of the Lord and *discover* the knowledge of God.

Matt. 7:7-8  “**Keep asking**, and it will be given to you. **Keep searching**, and you will find. **Keep knocking**, and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks *receives*, and the one who searches *finds*, and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.”

1 Peter 2:2-3  Like newborn infants, *desire* the pure spiritual milk, *so that* you may *grow* by it for your salvation, since you have tasted that the Lord is good.

2. God’s Word

**Truth does not originate from me, or from any other human, but only from God himself. Therefore, all “perceived truth” must be compared to, and verified by, God’s word – the Bible.**

a. One way God transforms me is through His Word. His Word is trustworthy.

Psa. 119:89  Lord, Your word is *forever*; it is firmly fixed in heaven. *(see also 1 Peter 1:25)*

Matt. 24:35  *(Jesus said)* Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words *will never pass away*.

John 14:6  Jesus told him, “*I am* the way, the truth, and the life….”

John 17:17  *(Jesus said)* Sanctify them by the truth; *Your word is truth*. *(See also Psa. 119:160)*

Rom. 15:4  For whatever was written in the past was written *for our instruction*, so that we may have hope through endurance and through the encouragement from the Scriptures.

Eph. 4:21  … *the truth is in Jesus*.

2 Tim. 3:16-17  All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for *teaching*, for *rebuking*, for *correcting*, for *training* in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

1 John 5:6  …And the Spirit is the One who testifies, because *the Spirit is the truth*.

b. God’s Word should become as essential as food in my daily life.

Deut. 6:5-9  “…These words that I am giving you today are to be *in your heart*. Repeat them to your children. *Talk about* them *when you sit* in your house and *when you walk* along the road, *when you lie down* and *when you get up*. … *Write them* on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.” *(See also Deut. 11:18-21)*

Job 23:12  *(Job said)* “I have not departed from the commands of His lips; I have *treasured* the words of His mouth *more than* my daily food.”

Psa. 119:16  I will delight in Your statutes; *I will not forget* Your word.

Psa. 119:103  How sweet Your word is to my taste—*sweeter* than honey in my mouth.

Matt. 4:4  *But He (Jesus)* answered, “*It is written*: Man must not live on bread alone but on *every* word that comes from the mouth of God.”
c. **Memorization and meditation** on His Word will help me grow.

Psa. 1:1-3  How happy is the man who ... his delight is in the LORD’s instruction, and he **meditates on it day and night**. He is like a tree planted beside streams of water that bears its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.
Psa. 119:11  I have treasured Your word **in my heart** so that I may not sin against You.
Psa. 119:97  How I love Your instruction! It is my meditation **all day long**.
Psa. 145:5  **I will speak of Your splendor and glorious majesty and Your wonderful works.**
Prov. 22:17-18  Listen closely, pay attention to the words of the wise, and apply your mind to my knowledge. For it is pleasing if you **keep them within you and if they are constantly on your lips**.
Col. 3:16  **Let the message about the Messiah dwell richly among you, teaching and admonishing** one another in all wisdom, and singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, with gratitude in your hearts to God.

**Suggestions:**
- Record a Bible verse with your phone and play back as you drive or do chores.
- Write a verse on a card and tape it where it is visible or write it on your mirror with a dry erase marker.
- Meditate on that verse during the day.

d. **God’s Word is like a light shining into my life, disclosing the secrets of my heart and helping me to see myself as God sees me.**

Psa. 119:105  **Your word is a lamp for my feet and a light on my path.**
Psa. 119:130  **The revelation of Your words brings light and gives understanding to the inexperienced.**
Rom. 10:17  So faith comes **from what is heard**, and what is heard comes through the message about Christ.
Heb. 4:12-13  ... For the word of God is living and effective ... It is able to judge the ideas and thoughts of the heart. ... all things are naked and exposed to the eyes of Him to whom we must give an account.

e. **God alone gives understanding of His Word. Even though some portions may appear difficult to understand, as I am honest and open to Him, He will reveal His Word to me as I have need.**

Deut. 29:29  The hidden things belong to the LORD our God, but **the revealed things** belong to us and our children forever, so that we may follow all the words of this law.
Luke 24:45  Then He (Jesus) **opened their minds** to understand the Scriptures.
1 Cor. 2:12-14  ... Now we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who comes from God, **so that we may understand** what has been freely given to us by God. We also speak these things, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those **taught by the Spirit**, explaining spiritual things to spiritual people. But the unbeliever does not welcome what comes from God’s Spirit, because it is foolishness to him; **he is not able to understand it** ...
2 Pet. 3:15-16  **(Peter wrote)** ... our dear brother Paul has written to you according to the wisdom given to him. He speaks about these things in all his letters in which there are some matters that are **hard to understand**...
3. Prayer - conversing with God

I should think of Prayer as an intimate conversation with my Creator and Master, who is majestic in His creation and control of the universe, while at the same time so loving and caring that He wants to be involved in the most minute details of my life.

I should approach God with a reverent awe, always conscious of the fact that His accessibility is only due to the merit of His Son, not a result of any goodness on my part. I should count it an extreme privilege to approach the God of all creation.

As in any conversation, **listening is a major component**. Occasionally my time with God will consist mostly or entirely of contemplating and **listening to Him** as He speaks to my heart or reveals to me something new. He wants me to look to Him with expectation.

One way of honoring God and giving Him His rightful recognition in my heart is by actively seeking and accepting His priorities. This will necessitate forming the habit of not giving Him the leftovers of my time, energy and possessions, but rather offering Him the best of my resources.

**a. Conversation with God will be enhanced by a heart preparation, an honest assessment of my priorities, and an awareness of His majesty.**

Psa. 5:3  At daybreak, LORD, You hear my voice; at daybreak I plead my case to You and **watch expectantly**.

Psa. 37:7  **Be silent** before the LORD and **wait expectantly** for Him.…

Psa. 119:147  I rise before dawn and cry out for help; I **put my hope** in Your word.

Prov. 3:5-6  Trust in the Lord all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in **all your ways acknowledge Him**, and He shall direct your paths. (NKJV)

Isa. 50:4  … He awakens Me each morning; He awakens My ear to listen like those being instructed.

Matt. 6:31-34  “So don’t worry, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear?’ … your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But **seek first** the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and **all** these things will be provided for you. Therefore don’t worry about tomorrow, because tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”

Luke 10:38-42  … He (Jesus) entered a village, and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home. She had a sister named Mary, who also **sat at the Lord’s feet** and was **listening** to what He said. But Martha was distracted by her many tasks, and she came up and asked, “Lord, don’t You care that my sister has left me to serve alone? So tell her to give me a hand.” The Lord answered her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset about many things, but **one** thing is necessary. Mary has made **the right choice**, and it will not be taken away from her.”

Eph. 2:18  For **through Him (Jesus) we both** have **access by one Spirit to the Father**.

Col. 3:2-3  **Set your minds on what is above**, not on what is on the earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with the Messiah in God.

Heb. 4:15-16  For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tested in every way as we are, yet without sin. **Therefore let us approach the throne of grace** with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us at the proper time.

1 Peter 5:6-7  **Humble yourselves**, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that He may exalt you at the proper time, **casting all your care on Him**, because He cares about you.
b. **Prayer includes adoration, thanksgiving (gratitude), and praise.**

Psa. 145:2-3 *(David wrote)* I will praise You every day; **I will honor Your name forever and ever.** Yahweh is great and is highly praised; His greatness is unsearchable.
Psa. 146:1-2  Hallelujah! My soul, praise the LORD. I will praise the LORD all my life; **I will sing to my God as long as I live.**
Daniel 6:10  … Daniel … went into his house. The windows in its upper room opened toward Jerusalem, and three times a day he got down on his knees, prayed, and **gave thanks** to his God, just as he had done before.
Eph. 5:19-20  Speaking to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and **making music from your heart to the Lord, giving thanks** always for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.
Phil. 4:6-7  Don’t worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition **with thanksgiving,** let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses every thought, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.
Col. 4:2-4  Devote yourselves to prayer; stay alert in it **with thanksgiving** …
1 Thess. 5:16-18  Rejoice always! Pray constantly. Give thanks **in everything,** for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.

c. **Prayer includes confession, reconciliation and forgiveness of others.**

Psa. 32:5  Then **I acknowledged** my sin to You and did **not conceal** my iniquity. I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,” and You took away the guilt of my sin. *(See Psa. 66:18)*
Prov. 28:13  The one who conceals his sins will not prosper, but whoever **confesses** and **renounces** them will find mercy.
Matt. 5:23-24  So if you are offering your gift on the altar, and there you remember that your brother has something **against you,** leave your gift there in front of the altar. **First go and be reconciled** with your brother, and then come and offer your gift.
Mark 11:25  And whenever you stand praying, **if you have anything against anyone,** **forgive** him, so that your Father in heaven will also forgive you your wrongdoing.
Rom. 12:18  **If possible,** on **your part,** live at peace with **everyone.**
1 John 1:9-10  If we **confess** our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say, “We don’t have any sin,” we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us."

d. **Prayer includes supplications, requests for my personal needs.**

Prov. 2:6  For the LORD gives **wisdom:** from His mouth come **knowledge** and **understanding.**
Matt. 6:5-8  … But when you pray, go into your private room, shut your door, and pray to your Father who is **in secret.** And your Father who sees in secret will reward you…. because your Father knows the things you need **before** you ask Him.
Matt. 6:25-34  … “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and **all** these things will be provided for you…”
James 1:5  Now if any of you lacks wisdom, he should **ask** God, who gives to all **generously** and without criticizing, and it will be given to him.
e. Prayer – Battle in “The Secret Place

But when you pray, go into your private room, shut your door, and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. —Matthew 6:6

Jesus did not say, "Dream about your Father who is in the secret place," but He said, "...pray to your Father who is in the secret place..." Prayer is an effort of the will. After we have entered our secret place and shut the door, the most difficult thing to do is to pray. We cannot seem to get our minds into good working order, and the first thing we have to fight is wandering thoughts. The great battle in private prayer is overcoming this problem of our idle and wandering thinking. We have to learn to discipline our minds and concentrate on willful, deliberate prayer.

We must have a specially selected place for prayer, but once we get there this plague of wandering thoughts begins, as we begin to think to ourselves, "This needs to be done, and I have to do that today." Jesus says to "shut your door." Having a secret stillness before God means deliberately shutting the door on our emotions and remembering Him. God is in secret, and He sees us from "the secret place"—He does not see us as other people do, or as we see ourselves. When we truly live in "the secret place," it becomes impossible for us to doubt God. We become more sure of Him than of anyone or anything else. Enter into "the secret place," and you will find that God was right in the middle of your everyday circumstances all the time. Get into the habit of dealing with God about everything. Unless you learn to open the door of your life completely and let God in from your first waking moment of each new day, you will be working on the wrong level throughout the day. But if you will swing the door of your life fully open and "pray to your Father who is in the secret place," every public thing in your life will be marked with the lasting imprint of the presence of God.

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Suggestion: To minimize distractions when you meet alone with the Lord, have a notepad handy to write down any thoughts that you may need to act upon later.

f. Prayer includes intercession, requests for the needs of others.

2 Cor. 1:8-11 (Paul wrote of his afflictions in Asia) ... we even despaired of life....God ...He has delivered us from such a terrible death,... that He will deliver us again while you join in helping us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gift that came to us through the prayers of many.

Eph. 6:18-20 (Paul wrote) Pray at all times in the Spirit with every prayer and request, and stay alert in this with all perseverance and intercession for all the saints. Pray also for me, that the message may be given to me when I open my mouth to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel. For this I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I might be bold enough in Him to speak as I should.

Col. 4:12 (Paul wrote of Epaphras) ... always contending for you in his prayers, so that you can stand mature and fully assured in everything God wills.
g. **Prayer is continual, anytime, but should also include, as possible, regular daily special times set apart. It pleases God when I seek His direction for appropriate times and places.**

Psa. 55:17  I complain and groan **morning, noon, and night**, and He hears my voice.
Psa. 119:62  I rise at **midnight** to thank You for Your righteous judgments.
Psa. 119:164  I praise You **seven times a day** for Your righteous judgments.
Daniel 6:10  ... Daniel ... **three times a day** he got down on his knees, prayed, and gave thanks to His God, just as he had done before.
Rom. 12:12  Rejoice in hope; be patient in affliction; be **persistent** in prayer.
1 Thess. 5:17  Pray **constantly**.

**Note on 1 Thess. 5:17**  “Continual prayer is not prayer that prevails without any interruption, but prayer that continues whenever possible. Paul was speaking of maintaining continuous fellowship with God as much as possible in the midst of daily living in which concentration is frequently broken.” (Walvoord, John F., and Zuck, Roy B., *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Scripture Press Publications, Inc.) 1983, 1985.)

h. **Our Daily Bread**  (September 19, 2004)

**Informing God**

We cannot tell God anything He doesn't already know. When we pray, we simply put into words what He's been aware of all along.

That doesn't make prayer unnecessary; rather, it encourages us to pray. We find relief in talking to Someone who knows us and our situation fully. It's a comfort to know that God's response arises not from information we give Him, but from His perfect knowledge of our circumstances. He knows all conditions—past, present, future—that bear on our well-being.

"Your Father knows," Jesus said in Matthew 6:8. He knows our thoughts, our intentions, our desires. He is intimately acquainted with all our ways (Psalm 139:3). He knows the anguish of our heart, the strain of continual frustration, the enemies inside and outside that war against our souls.

So, can we presume to dictate the time and terms of our deliverance from trials or adversity? Can we say our way is better, more likely to develop our soul? No, we cannot teach God anything. He alone knows the way to bring us to glory. Out of all possible paths, He has chosen the best, the route most adapted to who we are and what He has in store for us.

We cannot teach God knowledge, but we can love and trust Him. That's all He asks of us.
—David Roper

*The answer God may choose for me Is sure to be the best, So may I always thankful be, And in His goodness rest.* —D. De Haan

**God knows the end from the beginning, so we can trust Him with everything between.**

4. I must make it a priority to gather together with other believers on a regular basis, for teaching, prayer, Bible study, accountability and encouragement.

As I ask God, He will lead me to or confirm the Church body where I can be used by Him in service to others and participate with other believers in the fellowship that I need, continuing to learn and grow through teaching, praying and worshipping together.

CONCLUSION: As I trust God, I can always be assured of His love, knowing He will only act toward me in my best interest, even though at times it may not appear that way. For Him to do otherwise would be contrary to His character.

Yet I am always with You; You hold my right hand. You guide me with Your counsel, and afterward You will take me up in glory. Who do I have in heaven but You? And I desire nothing on earth but You. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart, my portion forever.

(Psalm 73:23-26)
Salvation Principles

Like physical birth, spiritual birth is the entrance into a new life. The purpose of this lesson is to explain some things that happen to a believer at conversion. Obviously there are other principles and truths that can be added.

1. Mercy & Grace

“Mercy” = When I am not given what I deserve.
“Grace” = When I am given what I don’t deserve.

Illustration of Speeding Ticket -
“Good fortune” - if you’re not caught.
“Justice” - if you’re caught and given a ticket.
“Mercy” - if you’re caught, but not given a ticket.
“Grace” - if you’re caught, given a ticket, but the officer pays the fine.

2. The Apostle Paul describes what I was like before God saved me, and what God has done for me. (discuss terminology as needed.)

Rom. 3:10-12  As it is written: There is no one righteous, not even one. There is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God. All have turned away; all alike have become useless. There is no one who does what is good, not even one.

Rom. 5:6-10  For while we were still helpless, at the appointed moment, Christ died for the ungodly…. But God proves His own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us! Much more then, since we have now been declared righteous by His blood, we will be saved through Him from wrath. For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, then how much more, having been reconciled, will we be saved by His life!

Eph. 2:1-9  And you were dead in your trespasses and sins in which you previously walked according to the ways of this world, according to the ruler who exercises authority over the lower heavens, the spirit now working in the disobedient. We too all previously lived among them in our fleshly desires, carrying out the inclinations of our flesh and thoughts, and we were by nature children under wrath as the others were also. But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love that He had for us, made us alive with the Messiah even though we were dead in trespasses. You are saved by grace! Together with Christ Jesus He also raised us up and seated us in the heavens, so that in the coming ages He might display the immeasurable riches of His grace through His kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God’s gift—not from works, so that no one can boast.

Eph. 2:12  At that time you were without the Messiah, … without hope and without God in the world.

Eph. 4:17-19  … darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God, …

NOTE: God does not judge us “on the curve”. We tend to evaluate ourselves as compared to others, whereas God compares us to Himself."
3. God’s principle of substitution

a. God’s grace was evident even when Adam and Eve first disobeyed Him.

Genesis 2:15-17  The LORD God took the man and placed him in the garden of Eden to work it and watch over it. And the LORD God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree of the garden, but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for on the day you eat from it, you will certainly die.”

2:25  Both the man and his wife were naked, yet felt no shame.

Genesis 3:

:6-7  Then the woman saw that the tree was good for food and delightful to look at, and that it was desirable for obtaining wisdom. So she took some of its fruit and ate it; she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

:8-12  Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and they hid themselves from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. So the Lord God called out to the man and said to him, “Where are you?” And he said, “I heard You in the garden and I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid.” Then He asked, “Who told you that you were naked? Did you eat from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?” Then the man replied, “The woman You gave to be with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate.”

:13  So the Lord God asked the woman, “What is this you have done?” And the woman said, “It was the serpent. He deceived me, and I ate.”

:20  Adam named his wife Eve because she was the mother of all the living.

:21-24  The Lord God made clothing out of skins for Adam and his wife, and He clothed them. The Lord God said, “Since man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil, he must not reach out, take from the tree of life, eat, and live forever.” So the Lord God sent him away from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. He drove man out and stationed the cherubim and the flaming, whirling sword east of the garden of Eden to guard the way to the tree of life.

Adam & Eve were given one commandment, which they disobeyed. Then they tried to make themselves acceptable to God - represented by the fig leaf cover-up. They each blamed someone else. They got what they deserved - Justice. Then God gave them what they didn’t deserve - Grace - represented by His animal substitute. An innocent animal’s life was sacrificed as a result of their sin. This animal sacrifice was a representation of the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross for the sin of the entire human race.

b. The Passover - another picture of Christ’s substitutionary sacrifice.

Exodus 12:1  The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt:

:12-13  I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night and strike every firstborn male in the land of Egypt, both man and beast. I am Yahweh; I will execute judgments against all the gods of Egypt. The blood on the houses where you are staying will be a distinguishing mark for you; when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No plague will be among you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.
Then Moses summoned all the elders of Israel and said to them, “Go, select an animal from the flock according to your families, and slaughter the Passover animal. Take a cluster of hyssop, dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and brush the lintel and the two doorposts with some of the blood in the basin. None of you may go out the door of his house until morning.”

“When the LORD passes through to strike Egypt and sees the blood on the lintel and the two doorposts, He will pass over the door and not let the destroyer enter your houses to strike you.”

“Keep this command permanently as a statute for you and your descendants. When you enter the land that the LORD will give you as He promised, you are to observe this ritual. When your children ask you, ‘What does this ritual mean to you?’ you are to reply, ‘It is the Passover sacrifice to the LORD, for He passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt when He struck the Egyptians and spared our homes.’” So the people bowed down and worshiped.

Now at midnight the LORD struck every firstborn male in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the prisoner who was in the dungeon, and every firstborn of the livestock. During the night Pharaoh got up, he along with all his officials and all the Egyptians, and there was a loud wailing throughout Egypt because there wasn’t a house without someone dead.

John 1:29 The next day John (the Baptist) saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Here is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”

1 Cor. 5:7 … for Christ our Passover has been sacrificed.

The Israelites were in slavery to the Egyptians. A lamb was killed as a substitute. Wherever there was blood the inhabitants of the house were spared from God’s judgment. When the Lord saw blood on a doorpost, He could say, “Judgment has already been here”.

(Illustration: One of the safest places during a forest fire is where the fire has already burned).

c. Jesus Christ's sacrifice as our “Substitute” was God’s plan for our salvation.

Isaiah 53:4-6 Yet He Himself bore our sicknesses, and He carried our pains…. But He was pierced because of our transgressions, crushed because of our iniquities; punishment for our peace was on Him, and we are healed by His wounds. We all went astray like sheep; we all have turned to our own way; and the LORD has punished Him for the iniquity of us all.

2 Cor. 5:21 For our sake He made Christ [virtually] to be sin Who knew no sin, so that in and through Him we might become [endued with, viewed as being in, and examples of] the righteousness of God [what we ought to be, approved and acceptable and in right relationship with Him, by His goodness]. (Amplified New Testament)

Gal. 3:13 Christ purchased our freedom [redeeming us] from the curse (doom) of the Law [and its condemnation] by [Himself] becoming a curse for us, for it is written [in the Scriptures], Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree (is crucified); (Amplified New Testament)

1 Peter 3:18 For Christ [the Messiah Himself] died for sins once for all, the Righteous for the unrighteous (the Just for the unjust, the Innocent for the guilty), that He might bring us to God. In His human body He was put to death, but He was made alive in the spirit, (Amplified New Testament)
4. I have been saved by His love, not because I am deserving.

John 6:37 (Jesus said) Everyone the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will never cast out.
John 6:44 (Jesus said) No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him, and I will raise him up on the last day.
Rom. 3:10-12 as it is written: …There is … no one who seeks God….
Rom. 4:4-8 Now to the one who works, pay is not considered as a gift, but as something owed. But to the one who does not work, but believes on Him who declares the ungodly to be righteous, his faith is credited for righteousness. Likewise, David also speaks of the blessing of the man God credits righteousness to apart from works: How joyful are those whose lawless acts are forgiven and whose sins are covered! How joyful is the man the Lord will never charge with sin!
Eph. 1:3-8 Praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavens. For He chose us in Him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless in His sight. In love He predestined us to be adopted through Jesus Christ for Himself, according to His favor and will, to the praise of His glorious grace that He favored us with in the Beloved. We have redemption in Him through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace that He lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding.
Titus 3:3-8 For we too were once foolish, disobedient, deceived, enslaved by various passions and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, detesting one another. But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us—not by works of righteousness that we had done, but according to His mercy, through the washing of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit. He poured out this Spirit on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that having been justified by His grace, we may become heirs with the hope of eternal life. This saying is trustworthy.…

5. What is the difference between “religion” and “Christianity”?

“Religion” worldwide teaches that there is something you can do to make yourself acceptable before God. “True Christianity” teaches that only what Christ has done on your behalf makes you acceptable before God.

John 14:6 Jesus told him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”
Acts 4:12 “There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to people, and we must be saved by it.”

6. Jesus gave an overview of salvation. (John 5:24 - a great verse to memorize) (Jesus said) “I assure you: Anyone who hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life and will not come under judgment but has passed from death to life.”

Eternal life is not an object, but rather an endless quality of existence with God.
**The Spiritual Anatomy of a Christian**

1. **Mankind is a unique creation of God, set apart from the rest of His creation.** People alone have been given a “spirit”, through which they can know God.

   *Then the Lord God formed the man out of the dust from the ground and breathed the breath of life into his nostrils, and the man became a living being.*

   Genesis 2:7

   - **spirit** - God awareness. We interact with God through our spirit.
   - **soul** - self awareness. We have personality, reasoning, emotions, mind, will, etc.
   - **body** - world awareness. We interact with the physical world through our body senses.

   **1 Thess. 5:23** Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely. And may your [spirit], [soul], and [body] be kept sound and blameless for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

   **Rom. 8:16** The Spirit Himself testifies together with our [spirit] that we are God’s children.

   **1 Cor. 14:15** (Paul wrote) … I will pray with the [spirit], and I will also pray with my understanding. I will sing with the [spirit], and I will also sing with my understanding.

2. **The entire animal kingdom was created by God.** (Gen 1:20-25) However, the animal kingdom is limited in scope, and without a “spirit”. (In Genesis 2:7, God breathed into man alone His “breath of life.”)

   **God cares for all animals as part of His creation** (See Psalm 147:9, Matthew 6:26-30)

   - **soul** - varying degrees of instinctive personality, emotions, mind, will, etc.
   - **body** - world awareness. Animals interact with the physical world through their body senses.
How I Received My Human Nature & God’s Divine Nature

1. GOD
   God’s Character as defined by Scripture
   Perfect, Holy, Sovereign, Loving, Faithful, Can do no wrong, Cannot lie, Totally trustworthy, Just, Never changes

2. Satan’s strategy is to distort God’s character
   (Satan is a liar by nature – John 8:44)

3. Adam / Eve
   spirit
   soul
   body
   possessions

4. Gen. 3:6
go to gain wisdom (understanding)
good for food (body)
pleasing to eye (possess)

5. (Problem of humanity)
   Adam & Eve chose to seek to satisfy their “perceived” needs independent of God

6. Sinful Human Nature (Natural)

7. Jesus (2nd Adam)
   Holy Spirit
   spirit
   soul
   body
   possessions

   test God (understanding)
   make bread (body)
   kingdoms (possess)

9. Jesus chose to be “dependent on God”

10. God’s Sinless Divine Nature (Spiritual)

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How I Received My Human Nature and God’s Divine Nature - Guide

The main purpose of this lesson is to help clarify the events which have led to my present condition as a believer having two natures. A number of foundational Biblical principles will be introduced which should help me to more easily understand other truths as they are presented in subsequent lessons.

1. The Character of God --- It is important to understand the significance of Biblical terms that describe His attributes. His attributes will be reinforced, as I allow the Holy Spirit to speak to me through His written Word.

IMPORTANT: The main purpose of presenting the attributes of God’s character is to demonstrate how reasonable it is to trust Him. As an unbeliever I was accustomed to trusting in myself, but as a believer I need to form the habit of trusting God in my daily decisions. I must reason out that if God’s character is as portrayed in the Bible, then it is very logical to trust Him completely, and very illogical not to trust Him. There is no reasonable logic for not yielding to Him.

A major reason for distrusting God is my tendency to impute to God my character. If God were like me then it would be quite reasonable to distrust Him.

A Sampling of Verses Related to God’s Character

Take some time now to read (aloud if possible) the following verses on God’s character.

GOD IS LOVE

| 1 John 4:16  | … God is love… |
| Rom. 5:8     | God proves His own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us! |
| John 3:16    | “For God loved the world in this way: He gave His One and Only Son…” |
| 1 John 3:16  | This is how we have come to know love: He laid down His life for us. … |

GOD IS SOVEREIGN

| Job 34:14-15  | If He put His mind to it and withdrew the spirit and breath He gave, every living thing would perish together and mankind would return to the dust. |
| Prov. 21:30  | No wisdom, no understanding, and no counsel will prevail against the LORD. |
| Isa. 46:11   | … Yes, I have spoken; so I will also bring it about. I have planned it; I will also do it. |
| Dan. 4:35    | All the inhabitants of the earth are counted as nothing, and He does what He wants with the army of heaven and the inhabitants of the earth. There is no one who can hold back His hand or say to Him, “What have You done?” |
| Acts 4:24    | … they all raised their voices to God and said, “Master, You are the One who made the heaven, the earth, and the sea, and everything in them.” |
GOD IS RIGHTEOUS, HOLY AND PURE. HE CANNOT LIE, HE CAN DO NO WRONG

Deut. 32:3-4  Declare the greatness of our God! The Rock—His work is perfect; all His ways are entirely just. A faithful God, without prejudice, He is righteous and true.
Lev. 19:2  “Speak to the entire Israelite community and tell them: Be holy because I, Yahweh your God, am holy.”
Job 34:10  It is impossible for God to do wrong, and for the Almighty to act unjustly.
Psa. 18:30  God—His way is perfect; the word of the LORD is pure.
Isa. 57:15  For the High and Exalted One who lives forever, whose name is Holy …
Hab. 1:13  Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; …
Luke 1:49  Because the Mighty One has done great things for me, and His name is holy.
Rom. 3:25-26  God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of His blood—to be received by faith. … He did it to demonstrate His righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus. (NIV)

GOD IS PERFECT

Deut. 32:3-4  Declare the greatness of our God! The Rock—His work is perfect; the word of the LORD is pure; …
2 Sam. 22:31  God—His way is perfect; the word of the LORD is pure; …
Matt. 5:48  … your heavenly Father is perfect.

GOD NEVER CHANGES

Psa. 102:25-27  Long ago You established the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands. They will perish, but You will endure; all of them will wear out like clothing. You will change them like a garment, and they will pass away. But You are the same, and Your years will never end.
Malachi 3:6  “Because I, Yahweh, have not changed, …”
James 1:17  Every generous act and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights; with Him there is no variation or shadow cast by turning.

GOD IS FAITHFUL, TOTALLY TRUSTWORTHY AND DEPENDABLE

Deut. 32:3-4  Declare the greatness of our God! … A faithful God; …
Psa. 33:18-21  Now the eye of the LORD is on those who fear Him—those who depend on His faithful love to deliver them from death and to keep them alive in famine. We wait for Yahweh; He is our help and shield. For our hearts rejoice in Him because we trust in His holy name.
Psa. 34:4-8  I (David) sought the LORD, and He answered me and delivered me from all my fears. … This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him and saved him from all his troubles. The Angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear Him, and rescues them. Taste and see that the LORD is good. How happy is the man who takes refuge in Him!
Psa. 36:5  LORD, Your faithful love reaches to heaven, Your faithfulness to the clouds.
Psa. 86:15  But You, Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger and rich in faithful love and truth.
Jer. 29:11 “For I know the plans I have for you”—this is the LORD’s declaration—“plans for your welfare, not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.”

Rom. 8:28 We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God: those who are called according to His purpose.

1 Cor. 10:13 No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to humanity. God is faithful, and He will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation He will also provide a way of escape so that you are able to bear it.

1 Thess. 5:24 He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it.

2 Tim. 2:13 If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself.

1 Peter 4:19 So those who suffer according to God’s will should, while doing what is good, entrust themselves to a faithful Creator.

Satan’s strategy --- is to persuade me that God is not trustworthy, by undermining my confidence in God’s character. Example: In Genesis 3:1-5 he sought to instill doubt, insinuating that God is a liar, suggesting that God did not have their best interest at heart, and implying that He was withholding that which in some way would be good for them. If God did not love them, how then could He be trusted?

Gen. 3:1-5 Now the serpent was the most cunning of all the wild animals that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You can’t eat from any tree in the garden’?” The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat the fruit from the trees in the garden. But about the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden, God said, ‘You must not eat it or touch it, or you will die.’ “No! You will not die,” the serpent said to the woman. “In fact, God knows that when you eat it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

When Adam and Eve were created they were made perfect, as was all creation. They were complete and totally satisfied, not lacking in any way. Everything they did was in total harmony with God’s character. Death did not exist before that time.

Rom. 5:12 … just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, in this way death spread to all men, because all sinned.

1 Cor. 15:21-22 For since death came through a man, … in Adam all die, …

Adam and Eve believed Satan’s lie about God’s character and ate the fruit, choosing to pursue self-satisfaction “independent” of God. The choice to live independent from God was evident in three areas:

1. The human understanding (desirable for obtaining wisdom)
2. The appetites of the body (good for food), and
3. Possessions (delightful to look at).

(Temptations also fall into one of these three areas.) It is important to see this “predisposition toward independence” as the “root” problem of humanity and one of the driving forces behind the global and individual resistance to God.
Gen. 3:6 Then the woman saw that the tree was **good for food** and **delightful to look at**, and that it was **desirable for obtaining wisdom**. So she took some of its fruit and ate it; she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

Every person born into the **human race** inherits the sinful human nature (**pictured as a dark tree**) of Adam, **through their biological father**. Consequently, every human is born with a **disposition of resistance** toward God.

Gen. 5:3  … Adam … fathered a son **in his likeness**, according to his **image**, Gal. 5:16-23  … For the **flesh desires what is against the Spirit**,…

Jesus was born into the human race, but **without a sinful human father**. As the **second Adam**, He was born with the same **sinless** human nature that Adam had before he fell. The righteous character of Jesus, as seen in His life, is what God had originally intended for Adam.

1 Cor. 15:45-46  … The first man Adam became a living being; the **last Adam** became a **life-giving Spirit**,…

Rom. 5:19  For just as through one man’s disobedience the many were made **sinners**, so also through the one man’s obedience the many will be made **righteous**.

Jesus was tempted in the **same three areas** as Adam, but Jesus chose to entrust Himself into God’s care instead of believing Satan’s enticement to seek to live independent of God.

**Upon believing**, I as a new believer was born into the **spiritual race**, and received the divine nature **in the Person of the Holy Spirit**. **Important**: The sinful human nature can **never** be improved. (See Gal. 5:17 below.)

John 3:3, 6 Jesus replied, I assure you: Unless someone is **born again**, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Whatever is **born of the flesh** is flesh, and whatever is **born of the Spirit** is spirit.

Rom. 7:14-25 For I know that **nothing good lives in me**, that is, **in my flesh**. So I discover this principle: When I want to do what is good, **evil is with me**. For **in my inner self** I joyfully agree with God’s law. But I see a different law **in the parts of my body**, waging war against the law of **my mind** and taking me prisoner to the law of sin **in the parts of my body**. So then, **with my mind I myself** am a slave to the law of God, but **with my flesh**, to the law of sin.

Gal. 5:16-23 I say then, walk **by the Spirit** and you will not carry out the **desire of the flesh**. For the flesh desires what is against the Spirit, and the Spirit desires what is against the flesh; these are **opposed to each other**. Now **the works of the flesh** are obvious: sexual immorality, moral impurity, promiscuity, idolatry, sorcery, hatreds, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambitions, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and anything similar. But **the fruit of the Spirit** is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, gentleness, self-control.
How to Relate to the Holy Spirit

Note: During this lesson, discuss the consequences of not understanding each concept. For example, what would be the typical result of not thinking of the Holy Spirit as a Person? How was Jesus limited by a physical body, but the Holy Spirit is “omnipresent”?

1. I should interact with the Holy Spirit as a person, for He is God himself. I should not think of Him as just an “inspiration”, a “presence” or an “influence”, without personality.

Acts 5:3-4 … Then Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the proceeds from the field? Wasn’t it yours while you possessed it? And after it was sold, wasn’t it at your disposal? Why is it that you planned this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God!”

1 Cor. 2:10-11 … the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man that is in him? In the same way, no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.

2 Cor. 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. (see also Phil. 2:1)

Eph. 4:30 And don’t grieve God’s Holy Spirit. You were sealed by Him for the day of redemption.

Job 33:4 The Spirit of God has made me…

The Holy Spirit is a Person. He is not an influence, or a force, or an inspiration, but God Himself. He is like a best Friend, yet so much more. My relationship with Him is in many ways to be similar to a good spousal relationship. What are the implications of such a relationship? Respect? Communication? Interaction? Nurturing? How would I treat a “force”?

2. He lives in me, His temple. He owns me (whether I believe it or not). His ownership does not become true after I believe it.

1 Cor. 3:16 Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? (NKJV)

1 Cor. 6:19-20 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s. (NKJV)

God’s ownership of me is a factual truth, which is not dependent on my acknowledgment of it. I do not bestow ownership, I can only acknowledge and act upon what He states to be already true. What are the implications of ownership? What rights or authority are generally understood to be conveyed by ownership?

New believers will typically not be resistant to this truth, because they don’t have preconceived ideas of God’s expectations. In contrast, older believers tend to accept this truth intellectually, but be resistant to the implications.
3. He is the seal (deposit, guarantee, evidence) that I am God’s child.

Rom. 8:9, 14-16 … if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. … All those led by God’s Spirit are God’s sons…. The Spirit Himself testifies together with our spirit that we are God’s children.

2 Cor. 1:21-22 Now it is God who strengthens us, with you, in Christ and has anointed us. He has also sealed us and given us the Spirit as a down payment in our hearts. (See also 2 Cor. 5:5)

Gal. 4:6 And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts,…

Eph. 1:13-14 When you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and when you believed in Him, you were also sealed with the promised Holy Spirit. He is the down payment (pledge, guarantee, deposit) of our inheritance,…

1 John 3:24 … And the way we know that He remains in us is from the Spirit. He has given us. (See 1 John 4:13)

The Holy Spirit is God’s evidence of my salvation. I should actively seek after the Holy Spirit and be open to His guidance and instruction. As a disciple I should grow increasingly more dependent on the Holy Spirit and increasingly less dependent on a discipler (mentor). I should increasingly recognize the Holy Spirit’s promptings in my everyday life.

4. He has a plan for every day of my life. He wants me to learn to follow and obey Him. He does not expect to follow my plan.

Psalm 139:16 Your eyes saw me when I was formless; all my days were written in Your book and planned before a single one of them began.

Jer. 10:23 I know, Lord, that a man’s way of life is not his own; no one who walks determines his own steps.

Jer. 29:11 “For I know the plans I have for you”—this is the Lord’s declaration—“plans for your welfare, not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.”

John 14:16-17 (Jesus said) And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Counselor to be with you forever.…. 

John 14:26 But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit—the Father will send Him in My name—will teach you all things and remind you of everything I have told you.

John 16:13-15 When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all the truth. For He will not speak on His own, but He will speak whatever He hears. He will also declare to you what is to come. He will glorify Me, because He will take from what is Mine and declare it to you…. 

1 Cor. 2:9-14 But as it is written: What eye did not see and ear did not hear, and what never entered the human mind—God prepared this for those who love Him. Now God has revealed these things to us by the Spirit…. Now we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who comes from God, so that we may understand what has been freely given to us by God…. 

I need to fit into God’s plan for my life. God wants me to follow Him, He does not want me to view Him as my Servant, fitting into my plans and assisting me whenever I determine I need His help. I should feel free to make tentative daily and future plans, while always being mindful that He may want to change my plans.
5. He intercedes to the Father for me and teaches me to pray.

Rom. 8:26-27 In the same way the Spirit also joins to help in our weakness, because we do not know what to pray for as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with unspoken groanings... He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

Eph. 2:18 For through Him (Jesus) we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.

Eph. 6:17-18 ... Pray at all times in the Spirit with every prayer and request, and stay alert in this with all perseverance and intercession for all the saints.

Jude 20 But you, dear friends,... pray in the Holy Spirit.

I need to maintain a continual active communication with the Lord, through conversational prayer, reading and studying the Word, listening to teachings, etc.

6. He baptized me into the universal body of Christ, with all true believers (refers to “spiritual” baptism, not to water baptism).

Matt. 3:11 (John the Baptist said) “I baptize you with water for repentance, but the One who is coming after me is more powerful than I. ... He Himself will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.”

1 Cor. 12:12-13 For as the body is one and has many parts, and all the parts of that body, though many, are one body—so also is Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

I need to understand my oneness with all members of the universal Body of Christ, the one and only true Church, bonded together by the Holy Spirit. There are some doctrinal and cultural differences between Christians that should not create divisions or resentments.

NOTE: Water baptism for a Christian speaks of “identification with” Christ. While water baptism has no merit before God for salvation, it is to be taken seriously as an outward witness of what He has already done inwardly in my life. I am expressing to others that I have died with Christ and died to myself, and that I want to live a new life in obedience to Him and through the power of the Holy Spirit who dwells within me. (Matt. 28:19; Acts 8:36-38; Acts 10:47-48; Gal 2:20; Col 3:3; ) Recommendation: talk with your Pastor if you have questions on baptism.

7. He wants to use me to testify about Jesus to unbelievers.

Mark 13:11 So when they arrest you and hand you over, don’t worry beforehand what you will say. On the contrary, whatever is given to you in that hour—say it. For it isn’t you speaking, but the Holy Spirit. (See also Matt. 10:19 / Luke 12:11)

John 15:26 “When the Counselor comes, the One I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father—He will testify about Me.”

John 16:8-11 “When He (the Holy Spirit) comes, He will convict the world about sin, righteousness, and judgment.”

Acts 1:8 “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

God desires to use me to attract unbelievers to a believing faith in Jesus Christ. This should be through spoken words as well as the example of my life yielded to Him.

St. Francis of Asissi is quoted as saying – “preach the gospel – and if necessary use words.”
8. He wants to use the spiritual gift(s) He has given me for others.

Mark 9:35 … He … said to them, “If anyone wants to be first, he must be last of all and servant of all.”

Rom. 12:4-8 Now as we have many parts in one body, and all the parts do not have the same function, in the same way we who are many are one body in Christ and individually members of one another. According to the grace given to us, we have different gifts: If prophecy, use it according to the standard of one’s faith; if service, in service; if teaching, in teaching; if exhorting, in exhortation; giving, with generosity; leading, with diligence; showing mercy, with cheerfulness.

1 Cor. 12:4, 7-11 Now there are different gifts, but the same Spirit. … the Spirit is given to each person to produce what is beneficial:… But one and the same Spirit is active in all these, distributing to each person as He wills.

Phil. 2:3-4 Do nothing out of rivalry or conceit, but in humility consider others as more important than yourselves. Everyone should look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

1 Peter 4:10-11 Based on the gift each one has received, use it to serve others, as good managers of the varied grace of God. If anyone speaks, it should be as one who speaks God’s words; if anyone serves, it should be from the strength God provides, so that God may be glorified through Jesus Christ in everything. To Him belong the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen.

Each disciple is unique in the plan and purposes of God. He wants to produce interaction and involvement between believers. (Jesus said, “By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” John 13:35) He wants to minister to other believers through me. He doesn’t want me to simply focus on how others can meet my needs.

How am I investing my resources (time, energy, possessions) in other believers to help them toward spiritual maturity and fruitfulness (spiritual reproduction)?

Important: In the physical human body each member functions to serve the body, not the body to serve the members.

9. He alone can produce spiritual life in and through me.

John 6:63 (Jesus said) “The Spirit is the One who gives life. The flesh doesn’t help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.”

2 Cor. 3:6 … the letter kills, but the Spirit produces life.

Eccl. 3:14 I know that all God does will last forever; there is no adding to it or taking from it. God works so that people will be in awe of Him.

Anything of eternal value must have its origin in the Holy Spirit. I am, and will continue to be, tempted to rely on myself until I leave this body. I need to be aware of this tendency, and not think of it as abnormal.
The Normal Progressive Development of a Christian  
(Lordship and Surrender)

This diagram presents the Lordship decision as an event, which preferably takes place at conversion, followed by the growth process in which God's perspective of life is increasingly becoming my perspective.

This circle represents me as an unbeliever.

Through the conviction of the Holy Spirit, I must recognize my hopelessness, and make a "decision" to call out to the Lord for forgiveness and salvation.

As a new believer I receive eternal life (an event) and the Lord begins to dwell in me as the Person of the Holy Spirit. During this phase it is natural for me to be focused on “external behavior.”

This graphic represents my understanding about life, values, etc. that has been acquired from birth to conversion as a result of the influence and learning from my parents, peers, media, culture, etc. That understanding (my worldview) does not disappear at salvation. I now need to learn to walk with the Holy Spirit as a habit. The function of discipleship is to facilitate that process.

Note: Much of this understanding is contrary to God, but He alone can correctly manage the process of transformation.

Note: X = Understanding that is contrary to God  
O = Understanding that is not necessarily contrary to God.

In order for spiritual growth to continue, I need to come to an agreement with the Lord as to who is best capable of managing the growth process. Preferably this takes place at conversion, but often is not understood and accepted until later, unfortunately.

Typically, there are three motivators that will help me make the decision to surrender and accept the Biblical Master-servant relationship. They are: 1) Persecution, 2) Crisis, and 3) Personal discipleship.

This graphic represents me, having made the decision to yield up my independence, and have acknowledged His rightful Lordship of Christ over my life. I understand that God alone is capable of overseeing my life.
CONSIDER: Surrender consists of two parts.

1. First I make the Lordship decision to surrender my will (an acknowledgment of His ownership of my life and the obvious implications of the Master-servant relationship.)

2. This decision is then followed by the daily process of yielding up areas of my understanding. The Holy Spirit seeks my cooperation in allowing Him to transform me into an increasingly mature and fruitful Christian.

CONSIDER: A one-time surrender of the “will” precedes a progressive yielding up of “behavior.”

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from Oswald Chambers

“True surrender is not simply surrender of our external life but surrender of our will - and once that is done, surrender is complete. The greatest crisis we ever face is the surrender of our will. Yet God never forces a person’s will into surrender, and He never begs. He patiently waits until that person willingly yields to Him. And once that battle has been fought, it never needs to be fought again.”

Jesus says, "If you want to be My disciple, you must give up your right to yourself to Me."

“And after you surrender - then what? Your entire life should be characterized by an eagerness to maintain unbroken fellowship and oneness with God.”

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CONSIDER: “Inward transformation” will produce “outward behavior changes.”

To make a wild horse useful, there are 2 steps:

1) Break the horse’s will useful
2) Train him to be useful

Metamorphosis is a natural example of inward transformation

Life Cycle Of a Butterfly

THE GROWTH PROCESS: As I allow Him, God will use His Word and circumstances to gradually illuminate areas of my understanding that He wants to alter. This process is called “Sanctification” (Rom. 12:1-2; Eph. 4:22-24) “Spiritual growth” is the process in which God’s perspective of life is increasingly becoming my perspective. God does not want me to be a mindless robot, but rather a servant companion who increasingly enjoys fellowship with Him.

“As a Christian is transformed in his mind and is made more like Christ, he comes to approve and desire God’s will, not his own will for his life. Then he discovers that God’s will is what is good for him, and that it pleases God, and is complete in every way. It is all he needs. But only by being renewed spiritually can a believer ascertain, do, and enjoy the will of God.” (Walvoord, John F., and Zuck, Roy B., The Bible Knowledge Commentary, (Wheaton, Illinois: Scripture Press Publications, Inc.) 1983, 1985.

Note: The G’s represent areas of my understanding that God has changed to His perspective.
The Abnormal Progressive Development of a Christian
(The Common Misconception of “Progressive” Surrender)

What is the important difference between this diagram and the previous one depicting the Normal Christian life?

The Lordship decision is missing from this Christian’s life, resulting in a perceived partnership relationship with the Lord, with the goal that “one day God will have 100% control of my life”. This diagram represents the abnormal development of a Christian.

This view of the Christian life usually results from a lack of personal spiritual mentoring and/or an unwillingness to surrender their will to His Lordship.

CONSIDER: If I view my relationship with God as depicted here, a critical error is to attribute to God, authority (Lordship) over only certain designated parts of my life, as if He had not bought all of me.

CONSIDER: If “Lordship” is presented as incremental surrender of my behavior, then I can conclude that the logical evidence of my “total surrender” (Lordship) is when I am totally obedient.

If I am in charge of this process, it can lead to cycles of frustration and discouragement, since I never see myself as being totally obedient.

CONSIDER: Since tithes and offerings are “God’s share,” doesn’t that imply that I have the right to manage the rest of my material wealth? (Read Malachi 3:7-10; 2 Cor 9:7-9; Mark 12:41-44; Proverbs 3:9-10; Matthew 6:19-33; 1 Tim 6:6-10; 17-19).

If “my time” at church on Sunday, reading my Bible daily, praying, etc. is understood to be God’s part (spiritual), doesn’t that imply that I have the right to manage the remaining hours in my day?
Additional Problems Associated with Progressive Surrender:

1. It tends to result in my asking, “will God take advantage of me?” such as:
   
a. “What will He ask me to do that I can’t do, or don’t want to do?”
   b. “What will He keep me from doing that I want to do?”
   c. “What will He take away that I hold dear?”
   d. “Will God fail me if I entrust ‘this’ to Him?”

2. I view myself as being in charge of the process of spiritual growth, making the determination as to what can and should be yielded up to the Lord. In other words, I set down the rules and limits. This perception is typically based on pride, an inflated view of my own discernment and capabilities, and a distorted understanding of God’s character. (If needed, review the Scripture verses related to “God’s Character” in Lesson 1-5.)

CONSIDER: There is no reasonable logic for rejecting His yoke of Lordship. A lack of acceptance is typically based on: 1) a fear of the unknown, 2) an unwillingness to relinquish perceived control, 3) an unwillingness to leave a comfort zone, or 4) an over-estimation of my own capabilities to determine and manage my future.

Jesus said: “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” (Matthew11:28-30 NIV)

Jesus did not say, “learn about Me, and if you like how I do things, then take My yoke!”

CONSIDER: The real question: Is God trustworthy? If God were like you or me, we would have good reason to be fearful. Ask: Does God love me? If God’s character is as described in the Bible, and if He promises to do only that which is in my best interest, what do I have to fear?

Did He design me? Did He give me life? Does He maintain my very existence? Who besides God knows what will really satisfy me? Does He alone know what is best for me? Does He alone know how to shape my life and use me for His eternal purposes?

CONSIDER: God’s ownership of me is a factual truth, which is not dependent on my acknowledgment of it. I do not bestow ownership. I can only acknowledge and act upon what He states to be already true. New believers will typically not be resistant to this truth, because they don’t have preconceived ideas of God’s expectations. In contrast, older believers tend to accept this truth intellectually, but be resistant to the implications.

What are the implications of ownership? What rights or authority are generally understood to be conveyed by ownership? Do I acknowledge that I live in a spiritual “kingdom”, not a spiritual democracy? What is the difference?

Don’t you know that your body is a sanctuary of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought at a price. Therefore glorify God in your body.

If God’s intention is to harm or mistreat me, do I honestly think He needs to wait for my permission?
**Analogy: The Rooms of Your “House”**

Does Jesus have access to all the rooms of my house?

*A story of two believers…*

When Jesus knocked at the front door of their hearts (Rev. 3:20) and asked permission to enter, both of these persons gladly received Him, realizing that His absence had been the reason for the emptiness they had always sensed *(the Salvation decision).*

As new believers each was overjoyed that Jesus was in their house and that their sins were forgiven. Each had a new happiness and an assurance of going to heaven. Jesus was allowed to occupy the “Guest Room” – which was always kept clean and presentable for visitors – and He was also allowed to reside in the “spiritual” room – where the believer went to church services, prayed and read the Bible.

But one day soon Jesus asked each of them for permission to make some changes in other areas of their houses, such as adopting new management procedures, rearranging items, throwing out worthless things, and bringing in some new items.

Jesus asked for access to every “room”. **Each believer had a different response.**


### Salvation decision ONLY

The believer in the house on the left was reluctant to grant Jesus’ request on the grounds that he was not yet prepared for major changes. However, he would thoughtfully consider any suggestions, and might allow some minor changes that wouldn’t seriously disrupt his lifestyle and future plans.

Jesus informed him that He (Jesus) is the only One who is really capable of making the correct decisions as to the above changes, since He alone knows what is needed to make the house into a suitable dwelling for God, one that would be usable for His eternal purposes. Jesus clearly explained His good intentions, even guaranteeing that the believer would be more than totally satisfied with the finished product.

**The believer replied that while the offer sounded very attractive, he considered himself to be a good judge of the appropriateness and non-disruptive pace of any changes, based on his past experience.** He expressed his appreciation for Jesus’ presence and blessings, and his desire to make the Guest Room as comfortable as possible for Him.

He assured Jesus that as time went on, he would certainly give Him access to other rooms.

“Jesus, I’m thankful You live in my house! I’m really happy to know that I can count on You to be there whenever I find circumstances too difficult to manage on my own.”

While making the Lordship decision gives the Lord access to all the rooms in my house, He alone decides what needs to be changed. The Holy Spirit will manage these changes as He determines best. This is part of the continuing growth process.

**WHAT ROOMS ARE IN MY HOUSE?** Can I trust God with ALL the rooms? I should prayerfully consider which “rooms” I have given Jesus access to – **after all, He owns “my house.”**

Note: Use the “Rooms of Your House” blank diagram on the next page to complete your own “personal inventory”.

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### Salvation AND Lordship decisions

The believer in the house on the right was also reluctant to grant Jesus’ request on the grounds that he was not yet prepared for major changes. However, he was aware that he had been **bought at a great price and therefore Jesus was the rightful Owner.**

He reasoned, “If Jesus owns me, how can I deny Him access to every room of His house?” (the Lordship decision to acknowledge Jesus as **Master of his life**).

The believer was somewhat apprehensive, as he didn’t understand how this decision would impact his future. **But he reasoned that since Jesus had done so much for him already, it seemed logical that He was trustworthy to continue doing what was in his best interest.**

“Jesus, I certainly don’t know what You have planned for my life, and to be honest I have some fears, but I do understand that You own me, and that I cannot possibly make the best decisions for my life since I don’t know what You want to make of me, nor what is involved in that process. I’m thankful that You do know, and I want to trust You alone to make the necessary changes. Thank you for letting me be part of Your plans. Wow!”

Don’t you know that your body is a sanctuary of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought at a price. Therefore glorify God in your body. (1 Cor. 6:19-20)

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**Upon viewing the finished product, nobody will ever regret having made the decision to choose Him as the Master of their life.**
What Rooms are in MY House?

Use this “Rooms of Your House” blank diagram to complete your personal inventory.

WHAT ROOMS ARE IN MY HOUSE? Can I trust God with ALL the rooms?

I need to think carefully and prayerfully if Jesus has access to my entire house – after all, He owns it! Are the doors open or closed to all the rooms? Is there a “closet” in one room that I deny Him access to?

I need to pray honestly and sincerely about giving Jesus access to ALL areas of my life.
Review of Our Two Natures

This lesson builds on the discussion of my two natures introduced in lesson 1-5. Understanding how my two natures interact will lay the groundwork for studying abiding in the next several lessons.

1. The following three diagrams depict three spiritual conditions.

Diagram A portrays Adam as God intended (before he sinned) and Jesus while He was on earth (never sinned). Jesus was called the second Adam, because Jesus, a life-giving Spirit, was God’s plan for saving mankind due to Adam’s sin. (1 Cor. 15:45-49).

Diagram B depicts the unbeliever who was born as a descendent of Adam and is dead spiritually, represented by the dark circle in the middle, indicating the spirit without God. The dark tree represents the corrupted human nature, and the chain extending from the tree illustrates this person is in bondage to the sinful nature.

As an unbeliever, my sin nature is a barrier that separates me from God. God's purpose for showing us sin is so we recognize it, acknowledge it before Him, and let Him forgive it so that He can make us into the image of His Son. He continually woos and calls the unbeliever to come to Him.

Adam made the decision to sin against God and fulfill his perceived needs independent of God. Jesus chose to remain dependent on God and not sin. Because we are from the race of Adam and because Adam sinned, everybody who was born in the lineage of Adam is like Diagram B.

Adam (before he sinned) and Jesus - while He was on earth

All behavior was in total harmony with God's character, totally pleasing to God.

The sinless human nature, totally compatible with God.

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Gen 1:27  So God created man in His own image; …
Gen 2:7  Then the Lord God … breathed the breath of life into his nostrils, and the man became a living being. (only said of man)
Gen 1:31  God saw all that He had made, and it was very good… (no imperfections, nothing lacking)
Rom 5:14  … He (Adam) is a prototype of the Coming One.
1 Cor 15:45  … The first man Adam became a living being; the last Adam (Jesus) became a life-giving Spirit.
Phil 2:5-7  … Christ Jesus, … emptied Himself by assuming the form of a slave, taking on the likeness of men.
Heb 4:15  (Jesus) … One who has been tested in every way as we are, yet without sin.
Diagram C depicts me as a believer who has put my faith in Christ as my Savior, and in that moment the Holy Spirit came into my life and resides in my spirit. While the Holy Spirit resides in me, so does the sinful nature, which is not improved, changed or renovated and on its own cannot produce fruit that is acceptable and pleasing to God. However, as I walk in the Spirit, I will not carry out the desires of my flesh or sinful human nature.

Rom 3:23  For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.
Rom 3:10-12  … There is no one righteous, not even one, … there is no one who seeks God. … There is no one who does what is good, not even one.
1 Cor 15:22  For as in Adam all die,…
Eph 2:12  … without hope and without God in the world.

Thought: God can only accept that which is perfect (100%, without blemish). Nothing that originates from the human nature has that quality. The unbeliever is devoid of His life. Only God alone can produce anything of eternal value.

All that is not motivated by the Holy Spirit is temporal, without His life and not rewardable (wood, hay, stubble).
2. God uses trees and plants to contrast the two natures.


Jer. 17:7-8 The man who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence indeed is the Lord, is blessed. He will be like a tree planted by water: it sends its roots out toward a stream, it doesn’t fear when heat comes, and its foliage remains green. It will not worry in a year of drought or cease producing fruit.

Psa. 1:3 He (a righteous man) is like a tree planted beside streams of water that bears its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.

Matt. 7:17-18 In the same way, every good tree produces good fruit, … A good tree can’t produce bad fruit; …

Gal. 5:22-23 … But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, gentleness, self-control. Against such things there is no law.

2 Pet. 1:4 … He has given us very great and precious promises, so that through them you may share in the divine nature….

… walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. (Galatians 5:16)

The corrupted sinful human nature from the 1st Adam

Jer. 17:5-6 This is what the Lord says: The man who trusts in mankind, who makes human flesh his strength and turns his heart from the Lord is cursed. He will be like a juniper in the Arabah; he cannot see when good comes but dwells in the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land where no one lives.

Matt 7:17-18 … but a bad tree produces bad fruit. … neither can a bad tree produce good fruit.

Gal. 5:19-21 For the flesh desires what is against the Spirit, … Now the works of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, moral impurity, promiscuity, idolatry, sorcery, hatreds, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambitions, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and anything similar….

3. James compares the human nature to a “salt water” spring and the divine nature of the Holy Spirit to a spring of “living water.”

James 3:9-12 … Praising and cursing come out of the same mouth. My brothers, these things should not be this way. Does a spring pour out sweet and bitter water from the same opening? Can a fig tree produce olives, my brothers, or a grapevine produce figs? Neither can a saltwater spring yield fresh water.

John 7:37-39 … Jesus stood up and cried out, “If anyone is thirsty, he should come to Me and drink! The one who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, will have streams of living water flow from deep within him.” He said this about the Spirit… (See John 4:13-14)
4. In Romans, Paul contrasts how we were before salvation, and how we are now as believers.

NOTE: In the following verses, “death” refers to “absence of life”, that is, devoid of life originating from God. (for example, a salt water spring).

a. As an unbeliever I was dominated by my sinful nature, which resides in my physical body.

Rom 7:5 For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions operated through the law in every part of us and bore fruit for death (absence of life).

b. Now, as a believer, I have been freed from bondage to the sinful nature.

Rom 7:6 But now we have been released from the law, since we have died to what held us, so that we may serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old letter of the law.

c. From God’s perspective I have “died to” (freed from) the sinful nature, and have been joined to Christ.

Rom 6:18, 22 …and having been liberated from sin, you became enslaved to righteousness. … you have been liberated from sin and have become enslaved to God, you have your fruit, which results in sanctification—and the end is eternal life!

Rom 7:4 … you also were put to death in relation to the law through the crucified body of the Messiah, so that you may belong to another—to Him who was raised from the dead—that we may bear fruit for God.

The fact is, Christians died to sin. The Greek past tense for “died” suggests a specific point when the action occurred, at salvation. Death, whether physical or spiritual, means separation, not extinction (Rom. 6:6-7, 14). Death to sin is separation from sin’s power, not the extinction of sin.

Being dead to sin means being “set free from sin” (Rom. 6:18, 22 above). That being true, Paul asked, “How can they live in it any longer?” Obviously believers cannot live in sin if they died to it.”

Abiding
Maintaining Continual Fellowship with the Lord

Introduction

“To Abide” simply refers to the moment-by-moment experience of walking in harmony (communion, fellowship) with the Holy Spirit; that is, without any “unresolved offenses” that are disrupting that communion.

The two diagrams below represent a snapshot of the same believer at two different points in time.

Condition of “Abiding”
The normal Christian Life
“walking in the Spirit”

All that I allow the Holy Spirit to do through me is eternal and rewardable at the Tribunal of Christ (judgment seat) (gold, silver, precious stones). I Cor. 3:10-15

Condition of “Not Abiding”
Having unresolved issues(s) with the Holy Spirit
“walking in the flesh”

All that is not motivated by the Holy Spirit is temporal, without His life and not rewardable. (wood, hay, stubble.) I Cor. 3:10-15

NOTE: the circular dotted line represents the “conditional” aspect of abiding.

Explanation of the Conditional Aspect of Abiding: Although I am a believer, I still have the sinful human nature and I can choose at any given moment to remove myself from fellowship with the Holy Spirit by allowing an unresolved issue(s) to come between the Holy Spirit and me.

While the Holy Spirit does not change, my relationship with Him is “conditional” upon my choosing to walk in harmony with the Holy Spirit rather than walk in the flesh.
Abiding Principles

1. Why is it so important for me to abide?
   a. God is looking for available vessels (instruments). God has eternal purposes that He wants to complete in and through my life. While I am abiding in fellowship, the Holy Spirit is free to produce His fruit through me as a usable vessel (conduit).

      At any given moment I can allow myself to become unusable through my unwillingness to remain in fellowship with Him. I should picture myself as an instrument, a vessel, a water glass, etc. A vessel’s main function is to be available and usable by its owner, not to perform on its own. Is God as the Potter free to use me at any moment as He chooses? (Rom. 6:13,19; 2 Cor. 4:6-7; 2 Tim 2:20-21)

   b. We tend to focus on performance, but this lesson is not about doing, but rather about being. What I do is a result of what I am being. What is the function of a branch? To be, or to do? (Jesus said) “I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains (abides) in Me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without Me.” (John 15:5) … For the mouth speaks from the overflow of the heart. (Matt. 12:34)

   c. It will help to look at this lesson as if it were entitled “How To Live In Continual Harmony With My Spouse or Close Friend,” because this is the clearest model God designed and gave us. Examining the husband - wife model (or a close friendship) will give me many insights into my relationship with the Lord.

2. It may help to think of abiding as having three dimensions:

   **Width** could refer to the “daily” aspect of abiding. I should view my relationship of abiding in fellowship with the Lord as only encompassing “TODAY.” Yesterday’s issues should have already been dealt with, and I need to believe God’s promises that His grace will take care of tomorrow’s issues, when they become “today’s” issues. (discussed further in Lesson 1-11)

   a. The Lord promises to meet my “daily” needs.

      Matt. 6:8-11 … Give us this day our daily bread.
      Exodus 16:4-30 Then the Lord said to Moses, “Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a day’s portion every day,” … he who had gathered much had no excess, and he who had gathered little had no lack;…
      Psalm 68:19 Blessed be the Lord, who daily bears our burden,…

   b. Jesus said to take up my cross daily, anything greater can be overwhelming.

      Luke 9:23 … If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.
c. Thoughts to consider.

I must pursue the habit of keeping “short accounts” with the Holy Spirit, in other words, to consciously choose to acknowledge (confess) quickly any unresolved conflict when I have offended Him. The missionary Hudson Taylor stated, “We should never be conscious of not abiding in Christ” (Hudson Taylor’s Spiritual Secret). The same holds true for fellowship with my spouse, or a close friend. We are told in Eph. 4:26-27: ... do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity. Paul stated in Acts. 24:16: ... I also do my best to maintain always a blameless conscience both before God and before men.

Important: The Holy Spirit alone determines when I am being held accountable for offending Him, not me. Likewise, listening to the offended spouse (or friend) is usually the quickest first step to restoring fellowship.

During the time I am walking out of fellowship with the Holy Spirit I am forfeiting His intended blessings (eternal fruit), and will probably reap unintended consequences. Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption (worthless fruit),... Gal. 6:7-8

God promises to meet my needs (Matt. 6:19-21, 25-34). Being prudent and responsible toward the future is appropriate. But if I allow that “concern” to negatively affect my relationship with the Lord, then “worry and anxiety” can easily become sin. He wants His peace to reign in my heart. Anxiety in a man’s heart weighs it down,… Prov. 12:25 (see also Col. 3:15)

Height could refer to “an open line of vertical communication” between God and me. I should jealously guard our fellowship by monitoring our communication moment by moment, being vigilant not to allow anything to disrupt it. I need to form the habit of not just waiting to check in from time to time at my personal convenience. It is a 24-hour per day, 7-day per week relationship.

a. Thoughts to consider.

I am told to pray continually. Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus. (1 Thess. 5:16-18) “Continual” prayer is not necessarily conversation without any interruptions, but prayer that continues whenever possible. The adverb for “continually” was used in Greek to describe a hacking cough. Paul was speaking of maintaining continuous fellowship with God as much as possible in the midst of daily living in which concentration is frequently broken. (Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.)

The husband-wife (or other close) relationship will also deteriorate unless it is consciously nurtured. (Ephesians 5:25-32)

Caution: Busyness can easily be a trap, causing me to neglect the Lord. Both the Holy Spirit and my spouse or close friend will be offended if I carelessly disregard or ignore them. Neglect often conveys unimportance. If I will ask Him, the Holy Spirit will always be faithful to reveal to me any unresolved problems between us. I should never allow what I am doing to become more important than my fellowship with Him.

Depth could refer to my deepening relationship with the Lord, getting to know Him, as in a marriage or close friendship. The concept of “spiritual growth” and the “maturing process” imply that there are things presently in my life that are displeasing to God. Even though the Lord is aware of those displeasing aspects of my character, He only holds me accountable for those issues that He wants to deal with today as He matures me.
a. Illustration.
If I look at the air in a room, it looks relatively pure (my perspective). If a ray of light appears, many dust particles would suddenly be visible (God’s perspective). Even though my sinful human nature is totally corrupted and unholy as compared to His holiness, He sees me “in Christ,” and He only holds me accountable for the issues (dust particles) that He is presently bringing to my attention. The dust particles existed, even though I was not yet conscious of their existence. My responsibility is to be attentive to the Holy Spirit so that He can easily show me what areas of my understanding and/or behavior He wants to change. He will never burden me with more than I can handle.

God deals with me according to my maturity level (just as good parents do with their children) and my willingness to learn from Him. He has not dealt with us according to our sins,… He is mindful that we are but dust. (Psa. 103:10, 14)

b. As I allow Him, God prunes me so that I will bear more eternal fruit.
God’s process of making my life more fruitful is described as “pruning.” … every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. (John 15:2) Pruning is usually not enjoyable, but always results in more fruitfulness if I allow God to finish His project. An area of my life that appears to me to be beneficial or harmless, may from God’s perspective be distracting or harmful, and a hindrance to what He wants to do in my life. God determines what needs to be pruned. My responsibility is to be teachable and attentive to Him, careful not to allow my “good” things to rob me of God’s “best.” (e.g. Martha – Luke 10:38-42)

c. Caution: I should not be surprised by the sinfulness of my human nature.
As I grow spiritually, I will increasingly see my human nature as God sees it. Flaws become more visible as they are more exposed to light. The closer I am to God the more repulsive my human nature will become to me. (Everything exposed by the light is made clear,… Eph. 5:13)

3. How do I know if I am not abiding – or out of fellowship with the Holy Spirit? I should ask Him if there are any unresolved issues between us.
Even though I am walking in fellowship with the Lord and have no unresolved issues, not all that I do is motivated by Him, or is even pleasing to Him. As I allow Him to grow and mature me, He will increasingly have more freedom to bear His fruit.

If I find myself out of fellowship with the Holy Spirit, it is by my choice. I do not need to be out of fellowship with the Lord any longer than I choose to be. Restoration to the condition of abiding fellowship will take place immediately upon confession of the offense(s) for which the Holy Spirit is holding me accountable.

How can I know if I’m out of fellowship with the Holy Spirit?
Usually symptoms indicate an ailing body. Similarly look for on-going spiritual symptoms of the sinful nature, such as:

- stumbling
- impatience
- frustration
- dissatisfaction
- worry
- striving
- lack of peace
- sense of defeat
- complaining
- anxiety
- anger
- irritability
- addictive behavior
- critical or judgmental attitude
- other on-going symptoms?
4. Common misconceptions about the condition of abiding.

a. Misconception: As a believer I can keep myself in the condition of abiding through my own efforts. Reality: At salvation I was put into the conditional state of abiding fellowship with the Lord as a result of what Jesus did on the cross, not because I deserve it. My goal should be to please Him, and be sensitive to Him so that any issues He brings to my attention do not remain unresolved. Those unresolved issues can disrupt my fellowship with Him, just as in human relationships.

b. Misconception: God’s greatest concern about my sin is the degree to which it falls short of His standard of righteousness, and “avoiding sin” should be the primary focus of my Christian walk. Reality: God is most concerned with the disruption sin causes in His continual abiding fellowship (communion) with me, and that it consequently hinders Him from accomplishing His purposes in and through me. The writer of Hebrews tells us: ... let us lay aside every weight and the sin that so easily ensnares us. Let us run with endurance the race that lies before us, keeping our eyes on Jesus,... (Heb. 12:1-2)

c. Misconception: The condition of abiding is somehow “attained to.” Reality: Abiding is the birthright of every child of God; it is not about achieving a certain level of maturity. Does a child have to earn the privilege of being in fellowship with their parents? God has made provision for every Christian to live consistently in harmony with Him without extended periods of being out of fellowship.

d. Misconception: Abiding is restricted by my lack of knowledge, past experiences, or personal limitations. Reality: What hinders God from blessing and using me as He desires is only my choice(s) and unwillingness to acknowledge and confess unresolved issue(s). The Biblical “normal” Christian life is one of habitually abiding; not to abide is abnormal. (2 Peter 1:3-4)

e. Misconception: Since my natural tendency is to categorize or classify “acts of behavior” and build mental lists of “do’s and don’ts,” it is easier to follow “my list” of perceived expectations. Reality: As the Holy Spirit leads me moment by moment, I will increasingly form the habit of carefully looking at each choice, judging or discerning if it is pleasing to Him. What I tend to consider “insignificant” may be very significant to Him. It will help me to consider “sin” as “anything that is displeasing to God.”

Example: Do you think reading the Bible can ever be sinful? Imagine you are resting on a riverbank reading your Bible. You notice a child struggling against the current, being swept downriver. You faithfully continue reading. Suddenly, a mother appears frantically asking if you’ve seen her child. You tell her that you would have saved the child if you hadn’t been reading God’s Word. Imagine her response (and God’s)! This example may seem extreme, but it illustrates the danger of categorizing acts of behavior because what God deems “correct” today may be “incorrect” in a similar situation tomorrow.

John 5:30  (Jesus said)  … I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.
2 Cor. 5:9 Therefore we also have as our ambition, ... to be pleasing to Him.
Eph. 5:8-10 ... walk as children of Light ... trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.
Romans 14:23 ... whatever is not from faith is sin.
Verses and Illustrations Related to “Abiding”

1. As I am abiding I am depicted as a fruit-bearing branch on a tree.

John 15:1-6  
(Jesus said) “I am the true vine, and My Father is the vineyard keeper. Every branch in Me that does not produce fruit He removes, and He prunes every branch that produces fruit so that it will produce more fruit. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in Me, and I in you. Just as a branch is unable to produce fruit by itself unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in Me. I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in Me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without Me. If anyone does not remain in Me, he is thrown aside like a branch and he withers. They gather them, throw them into the fire, and they are burned.” (Note: see Lesson 3-10 for a more detailed explanation of John 15)

:7-11  “If you remain in Me and My words remain in you, ask whatever you want and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this: that you produce much fruit and prove to be My disciples. As the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you. Remain in My love. If you keep My commands you will remain in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commands and remain in His love. I have spoken these things to you so that My joy may be in you and your joy may be complete.”

:12-16  “This is My command: Love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, that someone would lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you slaves anymore, because a slave doesn’t know what his master is doing. I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything I have heard from My Father. You did not choose Me, but I chose you. I appointed you that you should go out and produce fruit and that your fruit should remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in My name, He will give you.”

Galatians 5:22-23  But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, gentleness, self-control. Against such things there is no law.

Does the branch produce the fruit, or is the branch simply a conduit (instrument, vessel) through which the life of the Vine flows?
2. a. As I am abiding I am depicted as a vessel, an instrument.

2 Tim. 2:20-21  Now in a large house there are not only gold and silver bowls, but also those of wood and clay, some for honorable use, some for dishonorable. So if anyone purifies himself from anything dishonorable, he will be a special instrument, set apart, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work.

A faucet with “living” water can be a useful illustration. Although the water pressure is always constant, the “on-off” feature has to be maintained in the “On” position for the water to freely flow. During the time I am not in abiding fellowship with the Lord the on-off feature is in the “Off” position.

b. As I am abiding, I allow God’s “living water” to flow through me as through a container or a serving vessel. (see also Ezek. 47:1-12)

Jer. 2:13  “For My people have committed a double evil: They have abandoned Me, the fountain of living water, and dug cisterns for themselves, cracked cisterns that cannot hold water.”… (see also Jer. 17:13)

John 4:14  (Jesus said) “But whoever drinks from the water that I will give him will never get thirsty again—ever! In fact, the water I will give him will become a well of water springing up within him for eternal life.”

John 7:37-39  On the last and most important day of the festival, Jesus stood up and cried out, “If anyone is thirsty, he should come to Me and drink! The one who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, will have streams of living water flow from deep within him.” He said this about the Spirit. Those who believed in Jesus were going to receive the Spirit, for the Spirit had not yet been received because Jesus had not yet been glorified.

James 3:8-12  But no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. We praise our Lord and Father with it, and we curse men who are made in God’s likeness with it. Praising and cursing come out of the same mouth. My brothers, these things should not be this way. Does a spring pour out sweet and bitter water from the same opening? Can a fig tree produce olives, my brothers, or a grapevine produce figs? Neither can a saltwater spring yield fresh water.
3. **a. As I am abiding, I am depicted as a conduit or vessel through which God’s light is able to shine.**

   The *electricity* represents **GOD’S LIFE** flowing through me.
   The *bulb* represents **ME** as a Christian
   The *light* that is given off represents **the Fruit of the Holy Spirit**

   As I remain in harmony (communion) with the Holy Spirit (**connected, light switch “On”**), I am allowing His life (**electricity**) to increasingly flow through me (**bulb**), which He will then use to influence and attract others (**light**).

   Matt 5:14-16  *(Jesus said)* **“You are the light of the world.** A city situated on a hill cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and puts it under a basket, but rather on a lampstand, and it gives light for all who are in the house. In the same way, **let** your light shine before men, so that they may see your good works and **give glory to your Father** in heaven.”

   2 Cor 4:6-7  **For God who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,”** has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of God’s glory in the face of Jesus Christ. Now we have this treasure in clay jars, so that this extraordinary power may be **from God and not from us**.

   Phil. 2:15  …so that you may be blameless and pure, children of God who are faultless in a crooked and perverted generation, among whom **you shine like stars in the world**.

   **b. As I am abiding, I am walking in the light of God’s presence.**

   1John 1:5-10  **Now this is the message we have heard from Him and declare to you:** God is light, and there is absolutely no darkness in Him. If we say, “We have fellowship with Him,” yet we walk in darkness, we are lying and are not practicing the truth. But if we **walk in the light** as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say, “We have no sin,” we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say, “We don’t have any sin,” we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

   1 John 2:8-11  **Yet I am writing you a new command, which is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining.** The one who says he is in the light but hates his brother is in the darkness until now. The one who loves his brother remains in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him. But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness, walks in the darkness, and doesn’t know where he’s going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

   John 8:12  **Then Jesus spoke to them again:** “I am the light of the world. Anyone who follows Me will never walk in the darkness but **will have the light of life.”**
4. God has designed the on-going healthy harmony (communion) between a Christian husband and wife to be a picture of the on-going harmony (communion) between the Lord and a Christian.

One of the purposes of a God-centered Christian marriage is meant to be a demonstration to others of how He can bring about a consistent harmonious relationship between two unique individuals that are surrendered to Him.

If I am in doubt as to how I should relate to the Lord, I can ask myself, "how should I relate to a spouse (or to a close friend)?"

Eph. 5:21-33 …submitting to one another in the fear of Christ. Wives, submit to your own husbands as to the Lord, for the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church. He is the Savior of the body. Now as the church submits to Christ, so wives are to submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her to make her holy, cleansing her with the washing of water by the word. He did this to present the church to Himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or anything like that, but holy and blameless. In the same way, husbands are to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hates his own flesh but provides and cares for it, just as Christ does for the church, since we are members of His body. For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. This mystery is profound, but I am talking about Christ and the church. To sum up, each one of you is to love his wife as himself, and the wife is to respect her husband. (see also John 17:11, 21-22 and Galatians 3:28)

Gen. 2:24 This is why a man leaves his father and mother and bonds with his wife, and they become one flesh.

1 Cor. 6:17 But anyone joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him.

Col. 3:18-19 Wives, be submissive to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and don’t be bitter toward them.

1 Peter 2:18 – 3:7 Household slaves, submit with all fear to your masters, not only to the good and gentle but also to the cruel. For it brings favor if, mindful of God’s will, someone endures grief from suffering unjustly. For what credit is there if you sin and are punished, and you endure it? But when you do what is good and suffer, if you endure it, this brings favor with God. For you were called to this, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in His steps. He did not commit sin, and no deceit was found in His mouth; when He was reviled, He did not revile in return; when He was suffering, He did not threaten but entrusted Himself to the One who judges justly…. In the same way, wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands…. Husbands, in the same way, live with your wives with an understanding of their weaker nature yet showing them honor as coheirs of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.

Marriage consists of an event (a ceremony, a covenant), followed by a process. The ceremony represents a relinquishment of my right to make independent decisions, in favor of being joined (yoked together) with another. The marriage process is designed to be a growing relationship, learning to live and walk in harmony with a spouse. This process represents the manner in which a Christian learns to live and walk in harmony with the Lord. (See also Malachi 2:14)
God wants me to be free from the burden of “unresolved issues” of the PAST or the FUTURE, allowing Him freedom to produce His fruit through my life.

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<tr>
<th>PAST</th>
<th>PRESENT</th>
<th>FUTURE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do I need to resolve issues from my past?</td>
<td>“Am I in fellowship with (“abiding with”) the Lord at this moment?”</td>
<td>Do I have worries about the future disrupting my fellowship with the Lord?</td>
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<td>Do I need to forgive or reconcile with someone, or confess a wrong to someone?</td>
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<td>Do I need to acknowledge my worry or anxiety as sin?</td>
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<td>Do I need to make restitution for harm done? (physical, financial, etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do I need to confess any sins to the Lord?</td>
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**IF NOT, WHY NOT?**

1. Issues related to others - in the past, or at this moment.

   a. If I think I can maintain good fellowship with God, and at the same time disregard relationships with others, I am deceiving myself.

   1 John 2:9-11 The one who says he is in the light but hates (see note) his brother is in the darkness until now. The one who loves his brother remains in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him. But the one who hates (see note) his brother is in the darkness, walks in the darkness, and doesn’t know where he’s going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

   1 John 4:20-21 If anyone says, “I love God,” yet hates (see note) his brother, he is a liar. For the person who does not love his brother he has seen cannot love the God he has not seen. And we have this command from Him: The one who loves God must also love his brother.

   **NOTE:** “Love” is a choice “to do what is best for someone.” That is not necessarily the same as “doing what is pleasing to someone” (see also Heb. 12:6,11). I do not have to “feel affectionate” toward someone, but I do have to “love” them. In this context, don’t equate “hate” to “hostility” or “intense dislike”, but rather as “not doing what is in someone’s best interest.” (the absence of love or not loving).

   b. My unwillingness to forgive someone can limit my availability and usefulness to God, and can thus affect His fruit through my life.

   Mark 11:25 And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven will also forgive you your wrongdoing.

   Col. 3:12-13 Therefore, God’s chosen ones, holy and loved, put on heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, accepting one another and forgiving one another if anyone has a complaint against another. Just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you must also forgive.
c. Does the Holy Spirit want me to apologize to someone I have offended? It is my responsibility to pursue restoration of fellowship.

Matt. 5:23-24 So if you are offering your gift on the altar, and there you remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

d. Does the Holy Spirit want me to pursue reconciliation with someone who has offended me? It is my responsibility to pursue restoration of fellowship.

Matt. 18:15 If your brother sins against you, go and rebuke him in private. If he listens to you, you have won your brother.

e. Does the Holy Spirit want me to make restitution to someone to whom I have caused loss? (Repay a debt? A loan? Taxes owed?)

Num. 5:5-7 The LORD spoke ... When a man or woman commits any sin against another, that person acts unfaithfully toward the LORD and is guilty. The person is to confess the sin he has committed. He is to pay full compensation, ... to the individual he has wronged.
Rom. 13:8 Do not owe anyone anything, except to love one another, ...

f. I am not responsible for someone else's unwillingness to love or forgive me, but God does hold me accountable for loving and forgiving others.

Rom. 12:10 Show family affection to one another with brotherly love. Outdo one another in showing honor.
Rom. 12:16-18 ... Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Try to do what is honorable in everyone's eyes. If possible, on your part, live at peace with everyone.
Rom. 12:20-21 But If your enemy is hungry, feed him. If he is thirsty, give him something to drink.... Do not be conquered by evil, but conquer evil with good.
Phil. 2:1-4 ... Everyone should look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

NOTE: Remember – “Love” is a choice “to do what is in someone’s best interest.”

2. Personal issues - just between the Lord and me.

a. Is there an unresolved personal issue(s) that the Holy Spirit wants me to acknowledge and confess to Him?

1 John 1:9-10 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say, “We don’t have any sin,” we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.
b. Important points to contemplate:

1) **Accountability** - Most Christians subconsciously reason that God leaves it up to them to determine when there is a problem between them and God that needs to be resolved. That is wrong! I am not the one who decides for what I am being held accountable. The Holy Spirit alone makes that determination. In a parent-child relationship, the parent’s responsibility is to explain to the child the nature of the problem. The child’s responsibility is to attentively listen and respond.

2) **Disagreements** - Newlyweds often have many differing opinions. Hopefully, as they nurture their relationship, many of those differences will diminish. Some will not. Some differences of opinion will remain until death. That is okay; we are each designed with a unique personality, and we should respect that difference in others. Do I really want everyone to think as I do? My goal should be to live in harmony (fellowship) with others, not to pressure everyone to hold my views. That is true of my spouse and my children as well as others.

I need to ask myself: Am I bothered by my spouse’s (or friend’s) behavior, or views, because it’s not the way “I” do things, or the way “I” think? Does God say their behavior or view is displeasing (sin) to Him? If I am bothered or offended by another’s beliefs or behavior, yet God does not say it is sin, then I may need to examine my own heart. Maybe I’m judgmental. Maybe God is trying to show me an area He wants to change in my life. It is perfectly normal to hold different opinions and yet maintain mutual respect and fellowship.

3) **Growth** - Having no unresolved issues for which I am being held accountable does not mean that everything I am now doing is pleasing to God. What does the concept of growth mean? We grow to something and from something. As we grow physically, we are advancing from a level of weakness to a level of increased physical capability. Likewise, as we grow spiritually, we are advancing from a level of reliance on self to a level of increasing reliance on God.

I need to understand that spiritual strength is not what I can do, but rather what God is able to do through me. There is only one thing that hinders the Lord from using my life, unconfessed sin (anything that displeases the Lord) for which He is holding me accountable. The term “growth” implies then that there are things in my life today that are displeasing to the Lord, hence the need “to grow.” Thankfully He does not hold me accountable for all that displeases Him. In fact, I am not even aware of all that He would like to change. If I am growing spiritually, I will become increasingly more sensitive to His voice. He wants me to learn to hear His whisper without having to shout at me.

Consider this age-appropriate growth example: My 6-month old baby messes in his diaper. Am I shocked? Do I scold him or spank him? Do I find it pleasing that he ruined his diaper? Of course not! I know that he does not yet understand. However, if he does the same thing when he is 6 years old, it will be quite different. That is the same way the Holy Spirit trains me, except that He is more patient and gentle than we tend to be.

Again, what I need to remember is that the Holy Spirit is the only One who is able to determine what is displeasing to Him. He is not waiting for me to make those determinations. Do you expect your baby to tell you the rules by which he will live in harmony with you? That would be ridiculous. Neither does the Holy Spirit expect me to tell Him what is acceptable!
3. Issues related to the future. God does not want me to be weighed down by either the past or the future.

a. It is good to be “concerned” about the future, but concern can become worry, and worry can become anxiety. I need to be careful to not allow those emotions to become a pretext for not trusting in God’s care for me.

   | CONCERN | WORRY | ANXIETY | PANIC |

b. It is okay to be concerned (wise, prudent) and to plan and prepare for the future. Paul’s “concern” for the welfare of the believers was correct.

2 Cor. 11:28-29 (Paul said) … there is the daily pressure on me: my care for all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn with indignation?

Prov. 10:5  The son who gathers during summer is prudent; the son who sleeps during harvest is disgraceful.

c. But I am told to “not worry” about the future. I should not regard that instruction as just a “suggestion.” Worry and anxiety about the future can be the evidence of an unwillingness to trust God, and can become sinful.

Matt. 6:31-34  So don’t worry, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear?’ … your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you. Therefore don’t worry about tomorrow, because tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Phil. 4:6 Don’t worry about anything,…

d. I can count on the Lord to faithfully and lovingly take care of my need.

Phil. 4:6-7 Don’t worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses every thought, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

1 Peter 5:6-7 Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your care on Him, because He cares about you.

e. I am told to “follow” Him, even though it is always tempting to “lead.” He wants me to allow Him to be intimately involved in all my future plans.

Prov. 3:5-6  Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. (NKJV)

Luke 9:23-24  Then He said to them all, “If anyone wants to come with Me, he must deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow Me….”

James 4:13-17  Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will travel to such and such a city and spend a year there and do business and make a profit.” You don’t even know what tomorrow will bring … Instead, you should say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.”
Living Daily In (or out of) Fellowship with The Lord

King David is a classic example of living out of fellowship for about a 9-month period. (2 Sam. 11:1-5, 12:1-14)

The “Normal Christian Life” - As I abide in fellowship with the Holy Spirit, He produces His fruit. (eternal and rewardable)

As I live out of fellowship with the Holy Spirit, I can only produce fruit that is temporal and unrewardable.

The Holy Spirit is present—but is hindered from producing His fruit through this believer’s life.

The sinful human nature is dominating this believer’s life.

The sinful human nature is incapable of producing “perfect” eternal fruit.

Only the Holy Spirit is capable of producing “perfect” eternal fruit.
Living Daily In (or out of) Fellowship with the Lord

This lesson is an overview of concepts previously covered. This lesson should help me understand my continual interaction with my two competing natures, and how that impacts my daily abiding relationship with the Lord.

After Salvation there are two paths for the new believer. Note that both of these paths represent believers.

1. One line gradually goes upward and into the "spiritual Promised Land." This upper path represents a believer who sees the Lord as his Master, that is, the One who oversees and manages his life.

2. The lower path leads into a “spiritual desert.” This lower path represents the believer who, either out of ignorance or choice, has not acknowledged the Lordship of Christ over his life.

Before salvation, I was an unbeliever, bound to the sinful human nature (represented by the chain around the darkened tree).

At the cross I was delivered from the "penalty" of sin (represented by the “broken chain” around the darkened tree). During this life, from the cross until death, I am being delivered from the "power" of sin. And at physical death I will be delivered from the "presence" of sin.

At the moment of salvation, I was freed from the mastery of the sinful human nature, and received the Holy Spirit, Who indwells the believer from that time forward. I started the Christian life abiding in fellowship with the Holy Spirit, and choose to take one of two paths: (#4 or #5/6)

It is important to note that while the believer has been set free from bondage to the sinful human nature, the sinful nature does not cease to exist and will continue in me until physical death occurs, at which time I will be freed from the presence of the sinful nature.

Upon believing, I was born into the spiritual race, and received God’s divine nature in the Person of the Holy Spirit. I am no longer bound to the sinful nature, although it is still present. Paul wrote: For we know that our old self was crucified with Him, ... so that we may no longer be enslaved to sin, since a person who has died is freed from sin’s claims. (Romans 6:6-7)

The unbeliever has no option but to be mastered or dominated by the sinful nature, producing only flawed fruit. However, the believer is only dominated by the sinful nature by choice.
The lower wandering line represents the "abnormal" Christian life. If not spiritually mentored and instructed on **how to follow the Holy Spirit**, many believers find themselves modeling their behavior after other believers, rather than following the leading of the Holy Spirit. The typical result is that the believer will at some specific time ignore or discount the leading of the Holy Spirit, choosing rather to follow the example of peers.

As a result of spiritual ignorance, or by willful disobedience, if I am unwilling to allow the Holy Spirit to manage my life, I will find myself in a “desert” experience – never quite being able to gain victory over the pull of the sinful nature.

These believers typically see God as their **"Junior Partner,"** rather than their Master. They conclude that "He is always there when they can't cope and **they determine** He is needed to deliver them out of circumstances." They typically consider their own goals and aspirations to be of greater importance than those of God. They desire for God to fit into **their** plans, rather than fitting into **His** plan. Their lives are characterized by a **disposition of self-dependence.** (As illustrated by King Saul – see Lesson 3-3)

Note that the Holy Spirit (His presence is represented by the dotted line just above the wavy line) is constantly wooing the believer to yield to Christ as Lord and Master of his life. The Holy Spirit is not the dominant force in this believer’s life. As a consequence He doesn’t have the freedom to produce His fruit through the believer, who is **forfeiting God’s intended fruitful Christian life.**

The solid line at the bottom represents the dominance of the sinful human nature. This believer typically relies on his own understanding to make decisions. By not allowing the Lord to rule in his life, the human nature is allowed to rule. Submission to the human nature will cause problems for the believer, and hopefully he will become so dissatisfied and frustrated (usually through a crisis) that he will finally make a decision to acknowledge Christ's Lordship over his life.

These believers are described in the parable of **The Sower** (Matthew 13 & Luke 8) as being **distracted, not maturing,** resulting in **not bearing eternal rewardable fruit,** until they choose to acknowledge His authority over their life, and begin to “abide.” Although saved, they can potentially lose all rewards. **If anyone’s work is burned up, it will be lost, but he will be saved; yet it will be like an escape through fire.** (1 Cor. 3:15)

To believers that have habitually lived in a desert experience, often for years, the thought of consistently abiding in fellowship with the Lord seems unrealistic and "super spiritual." Such a biblical relationship with the Lord is often perceived as idealistic and beyond the attainment of the average believer. The simple truth is that it is not a matter of attaining to, but rather by faith taking advantage of what God has already made provision for.

If a believer simply understands the need to let the Lord manage his life (Lordship) and learns how to consistently abide in harmony, he will experience God's designed normal Christian life. It's not something you "attain to," it is yours through spiritual birth. **Every Christian has a right to live in the spiritual Promised Land.** For many believers this desert experience could have been avoided, or significantly shortened, had they been personally mentored (“spiritually parented,” “personally discipled”) when they first believed in Christ.
The short parallel lines, located at the fork in the believer's life, represent the "spiritual Jordan river" and the believer's choice to acknowledge His Lordship and enter the "spiritual Promised Land." This indicates the “event” in the believer’s life to “choose” to let the Lord control and manage his life.

This is not a decision to “try my best,” or to “behave better in my own strength,” but rather a decision to surrender my “will,” accept His yoke, and allow Him to live His life through me.

(Jesus said) “Come to Me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. All of you, take up My yoke and learn from Me, because I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for yourselves For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” (Mat. 11:28-30)

(Paul wrote) ... and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. (Gal. 2:20)

Once the believer makes the Lordship decision, then the normal Christian life is one of consistently “abiding in fellowship (harmony)” with the Lord.

The solid line at the top represents the time in which the believer is in fellowship with the Holy Spirit (“walking in the Spirit”). The presence of the sinful nature in the spiritual believer is represented by a dashed line.

Notice that there are breaks in the line, which represent periods of time during which the believer is out of fellowship (not abiding) with the Holy Spirit.

The third dip depicts the example of King David. When King David climbed up to the roof of his house he may or may not have been in fellowship with the Lord. When he chose to commit adultery and murder, he was clearly out of fellowship. He remained out of fellowship with the Lord for approximately a nine-month period. Fellowship was not restored until just before the baby was born, when David was confronted by the prophet Nathan. As soon as David confessed his sin to the Lord he was immediately restored, even for murder and adultery. Yes, he suffered consequences through the rest of his life, but as far as God's forgiveness was concerned, he was immediately forgiven and restored into fellowship. Being restored into fellowship does not mean that there are no consequences, but it does mean that there is complete forgiveness.

As shown above, the acceptance of Christ's Lordship over one's life is no guarantee of continual unbroken spiritual fellowship. Abiding fellowship is conditional. At any time the believer may allow his fellowship with the Holy Spirit to be disrupted, and find himself "walking in the flesh" (submitted to the sinful nature). At any given moment we are either submitted to the Holy Spirit or we are submitted to the sinful nature. We are either "walking in the Spirit" or "walking in the flesh."

God has made provision for every believer to consistently "walk in the Spirit" (the "normal" Christian life). A believer may excuse sin using the pretext of "that's just the way I am," or cite verses from Romans 7, where Paul describes his struggle with the sinful nature. It should be noted however that Paul's spiritual life was better characterized by Romans 8. Certainly every believer will be out of fellowship with the Holy Spirit at times, but such periods should be the exception, not the rule. And those times of being out of fellowship (walking in the flesh, dominated by the sinful nature) should diminish in both frequency and duration as the believer matures.
The Holy Spirit will produce His fruit as we abide in Christ. Our part is not to strive to produce fruit. Or worry about it. Our part is to abide in fellowship with Him, and the fruit will come naturally. The Holy Spirit will only produce good fruit. I should not assume that everything I do while I am abiding is pleasing to God. He will only hold me accountable according to my maturity level, just as loving parents train their children. For they disciplined us for a short time based on what seemed good to them, but He does it for our benefit, so that we can share His holiness. (Heb. 12:10)

During periods when we are out of fellowship (when we're not abiding) the Holy Spirit is not free to produce His fruit through our lives. The Spirit is the One who gives life. The flesh doesn't help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life. (John 6:63)

God wants to reward every believer. He is preparing eternal rewards that cannot be compared with the things of this world. Jesus commanded us to lay up treasure for ourselves in heaven, not here on earth. The treasures in heaven are so wonderful, they will make everything in this world that we're familiar with pale in comparison. Each believer has to decide if he wants to lay up eternal treasures in heaven or temporary treasures here on earth. Jesus said: But collect for yourselves treasures in heaven. ... For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (Matt. 6:20-21)

1 Cor. 3:10-15 speaks of potential "loss" at the Rewards Ceremony for believers. It is important to distinguish between "loss" and "punishment." Loss is not punishment. Consider a graduation ceremony as an example. You may go to a graduation where you receive a diploma. Others may receive accolades and awards in addition to their diploma. Because you only received a diploma it would not be correct to view yourself as being "punished." Those who have received special awards were honored because of their priority decisions. You could also have received special awards had you not chosen to forfeit them in favor of other priorities that you considered to be more important.

The believer who is walking in the flesh can do "good" things (from the human perspective), just as an unbeliever can. Anything, however small, that is motivated by the Holy Spirit is eternal and rewardable. Anything, regardless of outward appearance, that is not motivated by the Holy Spirit is flawed, less than perfect, and of no eternal or rewardable value.

Paul warns us: If I speak human or angelic languages but do not have love, I am a sounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith so that I can move mountains but do not have love, I am nothing. And if I donate all my goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body in order to boast but do not have love, I gain nothing. (1 Cor. 13:1-3)

Only that which is produced by the Holy Spirit is perfect and can enter into eternity. Only the Holy Spirit can produce perfect fruit. It is not what I do "for" God that is important, but rather what I allow the Holy Spirit to produce through me. (see Eccl. 3:14)

The issue is not one of fruit or no fruit that we have to be concerned about. What we need to be concerned about is where does the fruit originate. As we abide in harmony with the Holy Spirit, He will bear His fruit through our life. It's as simple as that!

(Jesus said) “I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in Me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without Me.” (John 15:5)
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The 3 Major Phases of the Normal Healthy Christian Life

**Salvation (Decision)**

John 5:24
I assure you: Anyone who hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life and will not come under judgment but has passed from death to life.

1 John 5:13
I have written these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.

**Lordship (Decision)**

Matt. 11:28-30 (Jesus said) … take up My yoke and learn from Me, because I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for yourselves. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.

Heb. 3:19, 4:11 … they (Israelites) were unable to enter because of unbelief. Let us then make every effort to enter that rest,…

1 Cor. 7:23 … he who is called as a free man is Christ’s slave. You were bought at a price.…

**Abiding In Christ (Process)**

The goal is “continual” fellowship, To be a “usable” vessel (instrument)

John 15:1-17 …and He prunes every branch that produces fruit so that it will produce more fruit. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in Me, and I in you. Just as a branch is unable to produce fruit by itself unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in Me.

1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.

Rom. 6:13 … do not offer any parts of it to sin as weapons for unrighteousness. But as those who are alive from the dead, offer yourselves to God, and all the parts of yourselves to God as weapons for righteousness.

2 Tim. 2:21 So if anyone purifies himself from anything dishonorable, he will be a special instrument, set apart, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work.

**As I Abide, God Increasingly Produces His Fruit Through Me**

Eternal spiritual fruit is whatever the Holy Spirit produces through my life

The Holy Spirit is producing His fruit through me
Gal. 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, gentleness, self-control. Against such things there is no law.

John 15:5 … The one who remains in Me and I in him produces much fruit,… (see also Rom. 7:4)

John 15:16 … I chose you. I appointed you that you should go out and produce fruit and that your fruit should remain,…

God is glorifying Himself through me
John 15:8 My Father is glorified by this: that you produce much fruit.…

He is maturing me
John 15:2 … and He prunes every branch that produces fruit so that it will produce more fruit.

He is using my spiritual gift(s)
1 Cor. 12:4-11 … A demonstration of the Spirit is given to each person to produce what is beneficial;…

He is preparing eternal rewards for me
2 Cor. 4:17 … producing for us an absolutely incomparable eternal weight of glory.

He is attracting others to Himself through me
Acts 1:8 (Jesus said) … you will be My witnesses;…
The following true story about “Vera”, illustrates the 3 Major Phases of the Christian life

1) Even though a Lordship decision should be made at conversion, sometimes it is not made until years later.

2) A true surrender of the will is followed by changes in behavior. (review lesson 1-7, if needed)

(This testimony is segmented to better demonstrate the major phases of the Christian life.)

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<th>2 Lordship (Decision)</th>
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**Christ as “Savior”**

Vera recalls her conversion in a little church in Kansas: "When the invitation to receive Christ as Savior was given, I knew I should go forward. But my feet seemed glued to the floor. Finally on the last verse of 'Almost Persuaded,' I went and made my confession of faith."

**Christ as “Lord”**

(After some years of wandering)

Vera relates. "I had been married several years when the Lord got my attention." "At home one day, I came under deep conviction, and knew I had to ask Jesus to be the Lord of my life."

**Abiding In Christ**

(Changed behavior brought about by the Holy Spirit’s transforming power)

"Changes came that I can't explain, except that I know it was the Lord's work in me."

Vera contacted people she felt she might have wronged and apologized to them. She developed a hunger for Bible study. "As a child I'd learned John 3:16 and Psalm 23, but I hadn't been interested in learning anything else," she confesses. "Now I wanted to learn everything."

To further her search for understanding of God's Word, she tuned in to Gospel programs on her radio. And she began to make prayer a part of her daily routine. **Through the years**, as she helped with farming and raising their son, Vera continued to study the Bible and maintain her prayer regimen. When Vera and her husband decided to retire, they moved and joined a Bible-teaching church, where Vera was soon recognized for her Bible knowledge and her faithfulness in prayer.

She didn't plan it, nor is her intercession organized, yet through telephone or personal visits she has encouraged many lives. Seekers have been counseled as Vera shares spiritual truths from a lifetime relationship with the Lord.

The source of this story is unknown.
Hardships, Suffering and God’s Sovereignty

Jesus clearly tells me that I cannot be His disciple unless I make the commitment to follow Him. Quite regularly, as I follow Him, He will allow me to encounter circumstances that I will perceive as unpleasant and often beyond my human ability to cope.

The purpose of this lesson is to help me understand the process in which every circumstance, even those that appear insignificant, whether good or bad, pass through God’s permissive will. He uses every circumstance in His process of transforming me into a holy and useful vessel through which He can accomplish His eternal purposes. In other words, I may not know in my lifetime on earth why He allowed a given circumstance.

A Christian who does not understand the significance of God’s sovereign control over all circumstances will typically respond with complaining, blaming, self-pity, anger or bitterness, because these events may appear to be random. It pleases God when I choose to cooperate with Him by acknowledging to Him my acceptance of what He allows, and seek His direction for the appropriate and godly response, as well as for any lessons He may want me to learn.

1. Is God in absolute control over all that happens in the universe and on earth? Does there exist some person or force that can somehow affect God’s sovereign power? Does He always do what is right? Can God do wrong? Can He make mistakes? Is He totally trustworthy?

Deut 32:4 The Rock—His work is perfect; all His ways are entirely just. A faithful God, without prejudice, He is righteous and true.
Ps 18:30 God—His way is perfect; the word of the Lord is pure;…
Prov 21:30 No wisdom, no understanding, and no counsel will prevail against the Lord.
Job 34:12-16 Indeed, it is true that God does not act wickedly and the Almighty does not pervert justice;…
Isa 46:11 … Yes, I have spoken; so I will also bring it about. I have planned it; I will also do it.
Dan 4:35 (King Nebuchadnezzar spoke) All the inhabitants of the earth are counted as nothing, and He does what He wants with the army of heaven and the inhabitants of the earth. There is no one who can hold back His hand or say to Him, “What have You done?”

2. Is God in absolute control over all the circumstances and details of my life? (Read and contemplate Psalm 139.)

Acts 17:25 … He Himself gives everyone life and breath and all things.
Job 34:14-15 If He put His mind to it and withdrew the spirit and breath He gave, every living thing would perish together and mankind would return to the dust.
Jer 1:5 I chose you before I formed you in the womb;…
Jer 10:23 I know, Lord, that a man’s way of life is not his own; no one who walks determines his own steps.
Jer 29:11 “For I know the plans I have for you”—this is the Lord’s declaration—“plans for your welfare, not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.”
Matt 6:25-27,34 “This is why I tell you: Don’t worry about your life, what you will eat or
what you will drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Isn’t life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the sky: They don’t sow or reap or gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Aren’t you worth more than they? Can any of you add a single cubit to his height by worrying? Therefore don’t worry about tomorrow, because tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”

Rom 8:28  We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God: those who are called according to His purpose.

1 Cor 10:13  No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to humanity. God is faithful, and He will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation He will also provide a way of escape so that you are able to bear it.

3. The Bible tells me that I should consider hardships and suffering a normal part of my Christian life here on earth.

I should not assume that experiencing hardships and suffering is an indication of God’s displeasure. Nor can I assume that His blessings always imply my faithfulness. He is a loving God, and loves me even when I grieve Him.

Note: Consider hardships and sufferings [difficulties] as “anything that I personally find unpleasant.” We all understand physical suffering as undesirable. However, because of our diverse personalities, we may have different reactions to difficulties. In other words, one person may watch or participate in a sporting event or other activity and find it exhilarating, while another would view it as a totally unpleasant experience.

a. Here is one example of a believer who was suffering poverty from the world’s perspective, but was rich before God. She was not being punished but was temporarily poor so God could make her eternally rich.

Mark 12:41-44  Sitting across from the temple treasury, He (Jesus) watched how the crowd dropped money into the treasury. Many rich people were putting in large sums. And a poor widow came and dropped in two tiny coins worth very little. Summoning His disciples, He said to them, “I assure you: This poor widow has put in more than all those giving to the temple treasury. For they all gave out of their surplus, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she possessed—all she had to live on.”

b. The apostle Paul did not view hardships as something unusual. In fact, this long list of hardships happened while Paul was in the center of God’s will, seeking to please Him as His servant.

Acts 9:15-16  (God said of Paul) “… this man is My chosen instrument to take My name to Gentiles, kings, and the Israelites. I will show him how much he must suffer for My name!”

2 Cor 6:4-10  (Paul wrote) But as God’s ministers, we commend ourselves in everything: by great endurance, by afflictions, by hardship, by difficulties, by beatings, by imprisonments, by riots, by labors, by sleepless nights, by times of hunger, by purity, by
knowledge, by patience, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love, by the message of truth, by the power of God; through weapons of righteousness on the right hand and the left, through glory and dishonor, through slander and good report; as deceivers yet true; as unknown yet recognized; as dying and look—we live; as being disciplined yet not killed; as grieving yet always rejoicing; as poor yet enriching many; as having nothing yet possessing everything.

2 Cor 11:23-27 … with far more labors, many more imprisonments, far worse beatings, near death many times. Five times I received 39 lashes from Jews. Three times I was beaten with rods by the Romans. Once I was stoned by my enemies. Three times I was shipwrecked. I have spent a night and a day in the open sea. On frequent journeys, I faced dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my own people, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the open country, dangers on the sea, and dangers among false brothers; labor and hardship, many sleepless nights, hunger and thirst, often without food, cold, and lacking clothing.

Phil 3:7-11 … I also consider everything to be a loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. Because of Him I have suffered the loss of all things and consider them filth,…

Phil 4:11-13 I don’t say this out of need, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know both how to have a little, and I know how to have a lot. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being content—whether well fed or hungry, whether in abundance or in need. I am able to do all things through Him who strengthens me.

2 Cor 1:7-9 And our hope for you is firm, because we know that as you share in the sufferings, so you will share in the comfort. For we don’t want you to be unaware, brothers, of our affliction that took place in Asia: we were completely overwhelmed—beyond our strength—so that we even despaired of life. Indeed, we personally had a death sentence within ourselves, so that we would not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead.

c. Neither did the other apostles find hardships and suffering to be unusual.

Acts 5:40-41 After they (Jewish leaders) called in the apostles and had them flogged, they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus and released them. Then they went out from the presence of the Sanhedrin, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to be dishonored on behalf of the Name.  

1 Cor 4:9-13 For I think God has displayed us, the apostles, in last place, like men condemned to die: We have become a spectacle to the world and to angels and to men. We are fools for Christ,… We are weak, … we are dishonored! Up to the present hour we are both hungry and thirsty; we are poorly clothed, roughly treated, homeless; we labor, working with our own hands. When we are reviled, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure it; when we are slandered, we respond graciously. Even now, we are like the world’s garbage, like the dirt everyone scrapes off their sandals.

Rev 1:9 I, John, your … partner in the tribulation, kingdom, and endurance that are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of God’s word and the testimony about Jesus.
d. Neither should I find it unusual when I encounter hardships and suffering.

John 15:18-21 \(\text{Jesus said}\) “… because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of it, the world hates you. Remember the word I spoke to you: ‘A slave is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will also keep yours. But they will do all these things to you on account of My name, because they don’t know the One who sent Me.”

John 16:33 “I have told you these things so that in Me you may have peace. You will have suffering in this world. Be courageous! I have conquered the world.”

Acts 14:22 “It is necessary to pass through many troubles on our way into the kingdom of God.”

Phil 1:29 For it has been given to you on Christ’s behalf not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for Him.

2 Tim 1:8 … share in suffering for the gospel, relying on the power of God.

2 Tim 3:12 In fact, all those who want to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

1 Peter 4:12-16 Dear friends, don’t be surprised when the fiery ordeal comes among you to test you as if something unusual were happening to you. Instead, rejoice as you share in the sufferings of the Messiah, so that you may also rejoice with great joy at the revelation of His glory. If you are ridiculed for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you…. But if anyone suffers as a “Christian,” he should not be ashamed but should glorify God in having that name.

1 Peter 5:10 Now the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ Jesus, will personally restore, establish, strengthen, and support you after you have suffered a little.

Rom 8:35-39 Who can separate us from the love of Christ? Can affliction or anguish or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword… No, in all these things we are more than victorious through Him who loved us.

4. God typically allows suffering for one or more of the following:
   a. To build character into my life
   b. As a consequence of my own disobedience, neglect or carelessness
   c. To be “cast on the Lord” and not rely on myself
   d. To help me understand the needs of others
   e. To use my life to be a blessing to others

a. God uses hardships and suffering to build character into my life and to shape me into a usable and holy vessel. He alone knows what influences and circumstances will best enable Him to bless me and use me for the purposes that He has designed for my remaining time here on earth.

Rom 5:3-4 … we also rejoice in our afflictions, because we know that affliction produces endurance, endurance produces proven character, and proven character produces hope.

James 1:2-4 Consider it a great joy, my brothers, whenever you experience various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. But endurance must do its complete work, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking nothing.

Heb 5:8-9 (speaking of Jesus) Though He was God’s Son, He learned obedience through what He suffered….
1 Peter 4:12-16 Dear friends, don’t be surprised when the fiery ordeal comes among you to test you as if something unusual were happening to you.…

b. I may suffer the consequences of my own disobedience, neglect or carelessness. Even then, God is faithful and loving and may use my situation as a teaching experience to discipline me. For example, if I am careless with my diet, I may as a result experience physical discomfort or suffering.

1 Cor 11:27-34 (Paul wrote) Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy way will be guilty of sin against the body and blood of the Lord.… For whoever eats and drinks without recognizing the body, eats and drinks judgment on himself. This is why many are sick and ill among you, and many have fallen asleep. If we were properly evaluating ourselves, we would not be judged, but when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord, so that we may not be condemned with the world. Therefore, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for one another. If anyone is hungry, he should eat at home, so that when you gather together you will not come under judgment.…

Heb 12:6-11 for the Lord disciplines the one He loves and punishes every son He receives. Endure suffering as discipline: God is dealing with you as sons. For what son is there that a father does not discipline? …, we had natural fathers discipline us, and we respected them. Shouldn’t we submit even more to the Father of spirits and live? For they disciplined us for a short time based on what seemed good to them, but He does it for our benefit, so that we can share His holiness. No discipline seems enjoyable at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it yields the fruit of peace and righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

c. Sometimes God allows me to suffer, so I learn to depend on His faithfulness, power, and sufficiency, and not on myself, (Proverbs 3:5-6) and recognize my personal weaknesses. (If you are never in a battle, you can’t experience a victory.)

2 Cor 1:8-9 (Paul wrote) For we don’t want you to be unaware, brothers, of our affliction that took place in Asia: we were completely overwhelmed—beyond our strength—so that we even despaired of life. Indeed, we personally had a death sentence within ourselves, so that we would not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead.

2 Cor 12:7-10 … a thorn in the flesh was given to me, (Paul), a messenger of Satan to torment me so I would not exalt myself. Concerning this, I pleaded with the Lord three times to take it away from me. But He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Therefore, I will most gladly boast all the more about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may reside in me. So I take pleasure in weaknesses, insults, catastrophes, persecutions, and in pressures, because of Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong.
d. Sometimes God uses suffering to help me identify with the suffering of others in order to be able, with sincere compassion to be helpful to them.

2 Cor 1:3-5  (Paul wrote) … God of all comfort. He comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any kind of affliction, through the comfort we ourselves receive from God. For as the sufferings of Christ overflow to us, so through Christ our comfort also overflows.

Heb 2:10, 17-18  … it was entirely appropriate that God … should make the source (Jesus) of their salvation perfect through sufferings. Therefore, He had to be like His brothers in every way, so that He could become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God…. For since He Himself was tested and has suffered, He is able to help those who are tested.

1 Peter 5:9-10  (Peter wrote) Resist him (the devil) and be firm in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are being experienced by your fellow believers throughout the world. Now the God of all grace… will personally restore, establish, strengthen, and support you after you have suffered a little.

e. Sometimes God allows me to pass through hardships in order for Him to shine through my life in a greater way so that others see Him through me. (A light is most visible and significant in the darkness.)

Matt 5:14-16  (Jesus said) “You are the light of the world…. let your light shine before men, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.”

John 9:1-3  As He was passing by, He saw a man blind from birth. His disciples questioned Him: “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” “Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” Jesus answered. “This came about so that God’s works might be displayed in him.”

Acts 16:22-34  Then the mob joined in the attack against them (Paul & Silas), and the chief magistrates stripped off their clothes and ordered them to be beaten with rods. After they had inflicted many blows on them, they threw them in jail, ordering the jailer to keep them securely guarded. Receiving such an order, he put them into the inner prison and secured their feet in the stocks. About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the jail were shaken, and immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone’s chains came loose. When the jailer woke up and saw the doors of the prison open, he drew his sword and was going to kill himself, since he thought the prisoners had escaped. But Paul called out in a loud voice, “Don’t harm yourself, because all of us are here!” Then the jailer called for lights, rushed in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. Then he escorted them out and said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” So they said, “Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.” Then they spoke the message of the Lord to him along with everyone in his house. He took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds. Right away he and all his family were baptized. He brought them into his house, set a meal before them, and rejoiced because he had believed God with his entire household.
5. God will sometimes request that I release to Him things I hold dear [at times even things that appear “good” to me], so He can replace them with His “best”, which will have eternal benefits for me and others (e.g. contentment, material possessions, friendships, health, etc.).

Matthew 5:11-12  (Jesus said) “You are blessed when they insult and persecute you and falsely say every kind of evil against you because of Me. Be glad and rejoice, because your reward is great in heaven. For that is how they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

Acts 4:32-35 Now the large group of those who believed were of one heart and mind, and no one said that any of his possessions was his own, but instead they held everything in common.... all those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles’ feet. This was then distributed for each person’s basic needs.

Rom 8:17-18  (Paul wrote) … seeing that we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is going to be revealed to us.

Heb 11:17-19 By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac....

1 Peter 1:6-7 You rejoice in this, though now for a short time you have had to struggle in various trials so that the genuineness of your faith—more valuable than gold, which perishes refined by fire—may result in praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

6. My responses to His designed circumstances are an indicator of my willingness to accept what He has planned for me and to entrust myself into His care.

a. Jesus showed me by example what my attitude and response should be.

Matt 26:51-53  … one of those with Jesus reached out his hand and drew his sword. He struck the high priest’s slave and cut off his ear. Then Jesus told him, “Put your sword back in its place .... Or do you think that I cannot call on My Father, and He will provide Me at once with more than 12 legions of angels?”

John 19:9-11  (Pilate) said to Jesus, .... “Where are You from?” But Jesus did not give him an answer. So Pilate said to Him, “You’re not talking to me? Don’t You know that I have the authority to release You and the authority to crucify You?” “You would have no authority over Me at all,” Jesus answered him, “if it hadn’t been given you from above....”

Heb 12:2  …keeping our eyes on Jesus, the source and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that lay before Him endured a cross and despised the shame and has sat down at the right hand of God’s throne.

1 Peter 2:19-23 For it brings favor if, mindful of God’s will, someone endures grief from suffering unjustly.... But when you do what is good and suffer, if you endure it, this brings favor with God. For you were called to this, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in His steps. He did not commit sin, and no deceit was found in His mouth; when He was reviled, He did not revile in return; when He was suffering, He did not threaten but entrusted Himself to the One who judges justly.
b. The apostle Paul chose to entrust himself into God’s loving care.

Acts 20:22-24  … I (Paul) am on my way to Jerusalem, bound in my spirit, not knowing what I will encounter there, except that in town after town the Holy Spirit testifies to me that chains and afflictions are waiting for me. But I count my life of no value to myself, so that I may finish my course and the ministry I received from the Lord Jesus,…
2 Cor 12:7-10  … He (God) said to me (Paul), “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Therefore, I will most gladly boast all the more about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may reside in me. So I take pleasure in weaknesses, insults, catastrophes, persecutions, and in pressures, because of Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong.
Phil 4:12  I (Paul) know both how to have a little, and I know how to have a lot. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being content—whether well fed or hungry, whether in abundance or in need.

c. Consider Job’s response to losing almost all he possessed (Job 1:1-19), including his children, and then his physical health (Job 2:1-8). Job’s response pleased God.

Job 1:20-22  Then Job stood up, tore his robe, and shaved his head. He fell to the ground and worshiped, saying: Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked I will leave this life. The LORD gives, and the LORD takes away. Praise the name of Yahweh. Throughout all this Job did not sin or blame God for anything.
Job 2:10  … “Should we accept only good from God and not adversity?” Throughout all this Job did not sin in what he said.

d. Consider Joseph’s response to the hardships that God allowed.
• His jealous brothers hated him and sold him into slavery to foreign traders, who took him to Egypt (Gen. 37:3-36).
• Then he was falsely accused of attempted rape and innocently suffered in prison (Gen. 39:1-40:23 and Psa. 105:17-19).

In these verses, Joseph spoke of God’s faithfulness and sovereignty to his brothers.

Gen 41:52  … “God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction.”
Gen 45:5  And now don’t be worried or angry with yourselves for selling me here, because God sent me ahead of you to preserve life.
Gen 45:8  Therefore it was not you who sent me here, but God.
Gen 50:15, 19-20  When Joseph’s brothers saw that their father was dead, they said to one another, “If Joseph is holding a grudge against us, he will certainly repay us for all the suffering we caused him.”… But Joseph said to them, “Don’t be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You planned evil against me; God planned it for good to bring about the present result—the survival of many people.”
7. Our Daily Bread (March 21, 2005) – A Bumpy Road

When people tell me life is hard, I always reply, "Of course it is." I find that answer more satisfying than anything else I can say. Writer Charles Williams said, "The world is painful in any case; but it is quite unbearable if anybody gives us the idea that we are meant to be liking it."

The path by which God takes us often seems to lead away from what we perceive as our good, causing us to believe we've missed a turn and taken the wrong road. That's because most of us have been taught to believe that if we're on the right track God's goodness will always translate into a life free of trouble.

But that's a pipe dream far removed from the biblical perspective. God's love often leads us down roads where earthly comforts fail us. Paul said, "To you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake" (Philippians 1:29). When we come to the end of all our dark valleys, we'll understand that every circumstance has been allowed for our ultimate good.

"No other route would have been as safe and as certain as the one by which we came," Bible teacher F. B. Meyer said. "If only we could see the path as God has always seen it, we would have selected it as well." —David Roper

If some darker lot be good,
Lord, teach us to endure
The sorrow, pain, or solitude
That makes the spirit pure. —Irons

No trial would cause us to despair if we knew God's reason for allowing it.

FOR FURTHER STUDY Go to http://www.rbc.org/rtb/4rsn/
"10 Reasons To Believe In A God Who Allows Suffering"


8. Wisdom from Oswald Chambers – The Surrendered Life

We are not fundamentally free; external circumstances are not in our hands, they are in God’s hands, the one thing in which we are free is in our personal relationship to God. We are not responsible for the circumstances we are in, but we are responsible for the way we allow those circumstances to affect us; we can either allow them to get on top of us, or we can allow them to transform us into what God wants us to be.
CONCLUSION: God is worthy of my trust. I can always count on Him to do what is in my best interest.

When I stand before Him in heaven, and understand what He was doing in my life here on earth, I will have no regrets for the times when I trusted Him fully.

He does not desire for me to look at hardships with solemn resignation, neither to pursue suffering for its own sake, but rather with childlike faith to accept what comes from a Father who loves me beyond human understanding.

I Peter 4:19  So those who suffer according to God’s will should, while doing what is good, entrust themselves to a faithful Creator

Psalm 33:18-21  Now the eye of the Lord is on those who fear Him—those who depend on His faithful love to deliver them from death and to keep them alive in famine. We wait for Yahweh; He is our help and shield. For our hearts rejoice in Him because we trust in His holy name.

Psalm 34:4-8  I (David) sought the Lord, and He answered me and delivered me from all my fears…. This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him and saved him from all his troubles. The Angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear Him, and rescues them. Taste and see that the Lord is good. How happy is the man who takes refuge in Him!

Rom 8:31-32  What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He did not even spare His own Son but offered Him up for us all; how will He not also with Him grant us everything?

1 Thess 5:16-18  Rejoice always! Pray constantly. Give thanks in everything, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.
Making Right Choices, Discerning God’s Will

I can look at making choices as a pyramid. As a believer, God has intended **goals** for me, and as I make decisions, certain **prerequisites** need to be in place. My **attitude** should be surrendered to Him and then **criteria** help me to discern His will.

**Read from the bottom to the top** for an overview of this lesson. Detailed discussion follows for each tier.

**MAKING RIGHT CHOICES**

3. Circumstances.
2. The Peace of God.
1. The Word of God.

**CRITERIA – FOUR FACTORS**

4. I am willingness to exercise faith.
3. I maintain an openness to be changed by Him.
2. I Prayerfully seek His will for me.
1. I desire to allow God to fulfill His will in my life.

**A SURRENDERED ATTITUDE**

2. I need to believe that God is sovereign and perfectly able to carry out His purpose and plan for my life.
1. I need to believe that God has a personal and individualized plan and purpose for my life, and He wants to reveal it to me.

**PREREQUISITES**

3. God wants me to be willing to let Him use me in His plan, resulting in my being blessed both here on earth as well as eternally in heaven.
2. God loves every person in the world, and He wants to use me in His plan to reach unbelievers with the good news of salvation and to bring believers to maturity in Christ.
1. God's desire for me is to love Him (demonstrated by my willingness to trust in His character and to surrender and obey Him), to grow in my understanding of how to please Him, and to allow the Holy Spirit to transform me into His likeness.

**GOD’S GOALS**
"God will always give the very best to those who leave the choice with Him"

1. God's goals for my life serve as foundational guidelines:
   a. God's desire for me is to love Him (demonstrated by my willingness to trust in His character and to surrender and obey Him), to grow in my understanding of how to please Him, and to allow the Holy Spirit to transform me into His likeness.
   b. God loves every person in the world, and He wants to use me in His plan to reach unbelievers with the good news of salvation and to bring believers to maturity in Christ.
   c. God wants me to be willing to let Him use me in His plan, resulting in my being blessed both here on earth as well as eternally in heaven.

2. Prerequisites for understanding God's will.
   a. I need to believe that God has His tailor made plan for my life.

   Psalm 139:16  Your eyes saw me when I was formless; all my days were written in Your book and planned before a single one of them began.
   Proverbs 16:9  A man’s heart plans his way, but the LORD determines his steps.
   Proverbs 20:24  A man’s steps are determined by the LORD, so how can anyone understand his own way?
   Jeremiah 10:23  … a man’s way of life is not his own; no one who walks determines his own steps.
   Acts 13:36  For David, after serving his own generation in God’s plan, fell asleep (died), was buried with his fathers, and decayed.

   b. God wants me to know His will for me, He doesn't want to hide it from me. He may not give me as much evidence as I want, but He gives me enough to intelligently follow Him by faith.

   Romans 12:1-2  Therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.
   Ephesians 5:17  So don’t be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is.
   Colossians 1:9-10  … since the day we heard this, we haven’t stopped praying for you. We are asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, so that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him, bearing fruit in every good work and growing in the knowledge of God.
c. God is sovereign and perfectly able to carry out His will.

Ecclesiastes 3:14  I know that all God does will last forever; there is no adding to it or taking from it. God works so that people will be in awe of Him.

Proverbs 19:21 Many plans are in a man’s heart, but the LORD’s decree will prevail.

Isaiah 46:9-10  … I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and no one is like Me. I declare the end from the beginning, and from long ago what is not yet done, saying: My plan will take place, and I will do all My will.

Daniel 4:35  All the inhabitants of the earth are counted as nothing, and He does what He wants with the army of heaven and the inhabitants of the earth. There is no one who can hold back His hand or say to Him, “What have You done?”

Acts 17:25  Neither is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives everyone life and breath and all things.

d. I must honestly want to know His will for my life, and prayerfully seek it.

Jeremiah 29:13  You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart.

Proverbs 2:1-6  My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you, listening closely to wisdom and directing your heart to understanding; furthermore, if you call out to insight and lift your voice to understanding, if you seek it like silver and search for it like hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the LORD and discover the knowledge of God. For the LORD gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding.

James 1:5-8  Now if any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives to all generously and without criticizing, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith without doubting. For the doubter is like the surging sea, driven and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. An indecisive man is unstable in all his ways.

e. Choices that have eternal rewards (that is, motivated by the Holy Spirit) always require a measure of faith, and include a perception of risk.

Someone has said, “Don’t ask if something is possible, but rather ask, ‘Is it God's will?’ because if it is God's will, He will make it possible”.

2 Cor 4:16-18  … we do not give up…. For our momentary light affliction is producing for us an absolutely incomparable eternal weight of glory. So we do not focus on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

Gal 3:11  … the righteous will live by faith.

Heb 11:6  … without faith it is impossible to please God…

1 Peter 1:6-7  … now for a short time you have had to struggle in various trials so that the genuineness of your faith—more valuable than gold, which perishes though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.
f. Choices based on faith may result in sacrifice and/or suffering. There is a price for obedience to His will. Trials ought not to be viewed as an enemy.

Luke 21:1-4  He looked up and saw the rich dropping their offerings into the temple treasury. He also saw a poor widow dropping in two tiny coins. “I tell you the truth,” He said. “This poor widow has put in more than all of them. For all these people have put in gifts out of their surplus, but she out of her poverty has put in all she had to live on.”

Heb 5:8  Though He was God’s Son, He learned obedience through what He suffered.

James 1:2-4  Consider it a great joy, my brothers, whenever you experience various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. But endurance must do its complete work, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking nothing.

g. I need to choose to humble myself before God with a submissive attitude, "allowing" Him to teach me and change my priorities, as He deems best.

Psalm 25:9  He leads the humble in what is right and teaches them His way.
Psalm 32:8-9  I will instruct you and show you the way to go; with My eye on you, I will give counsel. Do not be like a horse or mule, without understanding, that must be controlled with bit and bridle or else it will not come near you.

Acts 13:22  … He raised up David as their king and testified about him: ‘I have found David the son of Jesse, a man loyal to Me, who will carry out all My will.’

3. Four factors to consider in making right choices:

1. THE WORD OF GOD: Does the Bible say something specific about the matter, or present principles related to it?

Psalm 119:105  Your word is a lamp for my feet and a light on my path.
2 Timothy 3:16-17  All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.
1 Thess 5:16-18  Rejoice always! Pray constantly. Give thanks in everything, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.
1 Thess 4:3-5  For this is God’s will, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality, so that each of you knows how to control his own body in sanctification and honor, not with lustful desires, like the Gentiles who don’t know God.
Hebrews 4:12  For the word of God is living and effective and sharper than any double-edged sword, penetrating as far as the separation of soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It is able to judge the ideas and thoughts of the heart.
2. THE PEACE OF GOD: Do I have God's peace?

Galatians 5:22-23  But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, **peace**, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, gentleness, self-control. Against such things there is no law.

Colossians 3:15  And let the peace of the Messiah, … **control your hearts** (that is: “act as an umpire”). Be thankful.

Philippians 4:6-7  **Don’t worry about anything**, but in **everything**, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the **peace of God**, which surpasses every thought, will **guard your hearts and minds** in Christ Jesus.

<<<CAUTION>>> "Feelings" and "desires" may be deceptive. My natural tendency is not to follow His direction, but rather to be independent. Be honest with yourself! It is often helpful to ask yourself (and God), “Would this be pleasing to God?”

Proverbs 16:2  **All a man’s ways seem right to him**, but the LORD evaluates the motives.

Proverbs 28:26  **The one who trusts in himself is a fool**, but one who walks in wisdom will be safe.

Jeremiah 17:9  **The heart** is more deceitful than anything else, and **incurable**—who can understand it?

Galatians 5:17  For the flesh desires what is against the Spirit, and the Spirit desires what is against the flesh; **these are opposed** to each other, so that you don’t do what you want.

<<<CAUTION>>> I need to confess any known sin.

Psalm 66:18  If I had been aware of malice in my heart, the Lord would not have listened.

Proverbs 28:9  Anyone who turns his ear away from hearing the law—**even his prayer is detestable**.

Proverbs 28:13  **The one who conceals his sins will not prosper**, but whoever confesses and renounces them will find mercy.

James 4:3  You ask and don’t receive because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your evil desires.

1 John 1:5-10  Now this is the message we have heard from Him and declare to you: God is light, and **there is absolutely no darkness in Him**. If we say, “We have fellowship with Him,” yet we walk in darkness, we are lying and are not practicing the truth. But if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. **If we say, “We have no sin,” we are deceiving ourselves**, and the truth is not in us. **If we confess our sins**, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say, “We don’t have any sin,” we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.”
3. CIRCUMSTANCES: There is really only "One Circumstance" and that is God. Are circumstances suitable? Are doors opening? Or closing? Finances? (Caution: If not used carefully, credit cards (and/or credit) can be a hindrance to God's freedom to use finances as an instrument to guide me.)

<<<<CAUTION>>>> Are the obstacles (problems) a "Trial" or "Direction?" The path of least resistance may not be God's will. Difficulties or suffering do not necessarily prove that I am not in the center of God's will any more than material and comfort blessings prove that I am in the center of His will.

2 Corinthians 1:8-9 (Paul) … we were completely overwhelmed—beyond our strength—so that we even despaired of life. Indeed, we personally had a death sentence within ourselves, so that we would not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead.

2 Corinthians 11:24-28 (Paul, in the center of God’s will) Five times I received 39 lashes from Jews. Three times I was beaten with rods by the Romans. Once I was stoned by my enemies. Three times I was shipwrecked. I have spent a night and a day in the open sea. On frequent journeys, I faced dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my own people, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the open country, dangers on the sea, and dangers among false brothers; labor and hardship, many sleepless nights, hunger and thirst, often without food, cold, and lacking clothing. Not to mention other things, there is the daily pressure on me: my care for all the churches.

4. SPIRITUAL COUNSEL: I should seek godly and wise counsel. (My spouse may also "balance" me.)

Proverbs 1:5 A wise man will listen and increase his learning, and a discerning man will obtain guidance.
Proverbs 12:15 A fool’s way is right in his own eyes, but whoever listens to counsel is wise.
Proverbs 15:22 Plans fail when there is no counsel, but with many advisers they succeed.
Proverbs 19:20 Listen to counsel and receive instruction so that you may be wise later in life.

<<<<CAUTION>>>> Counsel can be wrong.

Job 2:9 His (Job’s) wife said to him, “Do you still retain your integrity? Curse God and die!”
Job 42:7 … He (The LORD) said to Eliphaz the Temanite: “I am angry with you and your two friends, for you have not spoken the truth about Me, as My servant Job has.”
(See also: 1 Kings 13:1-26)
4. Two different methods for making choices:

   a. “Active” - Unless otherwise directed I cautiously move ahead in what honestly appears to be the best direction, consciously trusting God to confirm or to restrain, by either opening or shutting doors.

   (You can't steer a parked car, or a boat that's tied to the dock.)

   Note: This is usually the way we seek a spouse or a job, buy a house or a car; that is, things we desire.

Psalm 37:23-24  A man’s steps are established by the LORD, and He takes pleasure in his way. Though he falls, he will not be overwhelmed, because the LORD holds his hand.

Proverbs 3:5-6  Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. (NKJV)

Isaiah 30:21  … and whenever you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear this command behind you: “This is the way. Walk in it.”

Acts 16:6-10  They (Paul and team) went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia and were prevented by the Holy Spirit from speaking the message in Asia. When they came to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them. So, bypassing Mysia, they came down to Troas. During the night a vision appeared to Paul: A Macedonian man was standing and pleading with him, “Cross over to Macedonia and help us!” After he had seen the vision, we immediately made efforts to set out for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to evangelize them.

b. “Passive” - I wait for God to do something “special” to confirm His guidance.

   I can often find myself using this method regarding things I may not desire to do. I am told to “wait” on the Lord, but I need to be careful that I don’t use that as an excuse not to move forward in obedience, especially if I already understand what I should do, but am reluctant to trust.

   We need to be honest with ourselves. Someone has said, “God will give us enough evidence to act upon, but usually not enough to convince”.

Exodus 14:14  The LORD will fight for you; you must be quiet.

Psalm 27:14  Wait for the LORD; be strong and courageous. Wait for the LORD.

Psalm 37:7  Be silent before the LORD and wait expectantly for Him;…

5. A couple of basic questions to ask myself:

   ➢ If I could choose one course for my life would it be one of my choosing or one of God's selection?

   ➢ Do I prefer to know God's plan and purpose for my daily life while I'm still here on earth and am able to act upon it, or would I rather wait until I stand before Christ at the judgment of believers? (2 Cor. 5:10) It seems reasonable that each of us is going to become aware of His purpose and plan for our life, either here on earth -- or there.
Christian Maturity – A Summary

*My level of spiritual maturity is the degree to which God’s perspective of life has become my perspective.*

1. **What does Growth in Spiritual Maturity refer to?**

Growing in Spiritual Maturity refers to the process in which the Holy Spirit transforms my spiritual understanding (values, priorities) in order to increase the flow of His life (His Living Water) through me. As more of His life is free to flow through me, there will be an ever-increasing measure of His spiritual fruit in my life.

**ABIDING FELLOWSHIP** with the Holy Spirit has to do with whether or not His life is able to flow through me at any given moment.

**SPIRITUAL MATURITY** has to do with how much of His life is able to flow through me at any given moment (in the context of abiding fellowship with the Holy Spirit).

2. **Spiritual Maturity does not necessarily speak of how much Biblical knowledge I possess, but rather of how willing I have been to allow the Holy Spirit to transform my understanding of Him, and of life.**

   Jeremiah 9:23-24 … But the one who boasts should boast in this, that he understands and knows Me…. This is the LORD’s declaration.
   John 17:3 This is eternal life: that they may know You….
   Rom. 12:2 Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.
   2 Peter 1:5-8 For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with goodness, goodness with knowledge, knowledge with self-control, self-control with endurance, endurance with godliness, godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they will keep you from being useless or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.
   Col. 1:10 … that you may walk … bearing fruit in every good work and growing in the knowledge of God.
   2 Peter 3:17-18 Therefore, dear friends, … be on your guard, so that you are not led away by the error of lawless people and fall from your own stability. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ….
3. **I can limit the flow of His life through me by focusing on my perceived personal capabilities or limitations.**

My natural tendency is to limit God according to my personal understanding of Him and how He acts. As He trains me, He will speak to me about different areas of my understanding that are restricting the free flow of His life in and through me. I need to continually maintain the attitude of a disciple (an apprentice learner), a child (eager to listen and believe), so as to minimize the time that the Holy Spirit has to expend teaching me in any given area of understanding. I need to consciously allow Him access to any area of my life, aware that He will never make any changes except what is in my eternal best interest.

*Look at how we limit the Lord by only remembering what we have allowed Him to do for us in the past. We say, "I always failed there, and I always will." Consequently, we don't ask for what we want. Instead, we think, "It is ridiculous to ask God to do this." If it is an impossibility, it is the very thing for which we have to ask.* (Taken from My Utmost for His Highest by Oswald Chambers – Feb. 29 (c) 1935 by Dodd Mead & Co., renewed (c) 1963 by the Oswald Chambers Publications Assn., Ltd., and is used by permission of Discovery House Publishers, Box 3566, Grand Rapids MI 49501. All rights reserved.)

As I grow spiritually, my focus will shift from my capabilities to His capabilities.

CAUTION: It is an unyielding “strength to resist” that hinders God, not weakness.

2 Cor. 12:9-10 *(Jesus told Paul)* “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Therefore, I will most gladly boast all the more about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may reside in me…. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

4. **Spiritual growth (learning process) should continue until I move on to heaven.**

A trap that awaits me as I grow is the illusion that I will somehow arrive at a spiritual plateau after which spiritual growth will continue with minimal discomfort. God wants to exercise my faith and increase my understanding of how He thinks and acts, in order for me to increasingly think like Him, and to bear more eternal fruit. Even though every step of faith involves a “perceived” risk, I can rest in the assurance that I am never out of God’s sovereign oversight and care, and He will never allow me to suffer beyond His sufficient provision of grace to sustain me. The process will continue until I leave this earth and step into God’s presence. Growing believers find that their life is a constant warfare. There are no plateaus, just “rest stops.” Be aware of a tendency to be complacent and satisfied with your level of spiritual growth. We resist change.

Romans 5:3-5 … but we also rejoice in our afflictions, because we know that affliction produces endurance, endurance produces proven character, and proven character produces hope. This hope will not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

1 Cor. 10:13 No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to humanity. God is faithful, and He will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation He will also provide a way of escape so that you are able to bear it.

James 1:2-4 Consider it a great joy, my brothers, whenever you experience various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. But endurance must do its complete work, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking nothing.
5. Biblical illustrations of the maturing process:

a. Rivers of Living Water: A **trickle** becomes a **stream**, which becomes a **river**.

John 7:38-39 (*Jesus said*) “The one who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, will have **streams** of living water flow from deep within him.” He said this about **the Spirit**… (See also John 4:14)

As I live in abiding fellowship with the Holy Spirit His “Living Water” is **free to flow** through my life. The **volume** of His Living Water that is able to flow depends on my spiritual maturity.

b. A Branch on a Vine: A **twig** becomes a **branch**. Obviously, as the **branch** grows (matures), more fruit can be produced through it.

John 15:1-2, 8, 16 (*Jesus said*) “I am the true vine, and My Father is the vineyard keeper. … and He prunes every branch that produces fruit so that it will produce **more** fruit. My Father is glorified by this: that you produce **much** fruit and prove to be My disciples. You did not choose Me, but I chose you. I appointed you that you should go out and **produce fruit** and that your fruit should remain,…”

Romans 7:4 (*Paul wrote*) … you also were put to death in relation to the law through the crucified body of the Messiah, so that you may belong to another—to Him who was raised from the dead—that we may bear fruit for **God**.

c. The Growth / Maturing Process: An **infant** (baby, child) becomes an **adolescent**, who becomes an **adult**.

**Characteristics of an infant / baby:** (1) **hungry**, (2) **dependent on others**, (3) **self-centered**.

**Stages of growth:** The immature Christian tends to focus on **self** needs, then as they grow, the needs of **others** become the focus, and as they mature, **God Himself** becomes the main focus.

Psalm 73:25 *Whom have I in heaven but You? And besides You, I desire **nothing** on earth.*

- Infants / Babies / Children:

1 Cor. 13:11 (*Paul writes*) When I was a **child**, I **spoke** like a child, I **thought** like a child, I **reasoned** like a child.…

1 Peter 2:2 Like newborn **infants**, desire the pure spiritual **milk**, so that you may **grow** by it for your salvation,…

1 John 2:12-14 I am writing to you, little **children**, because your **sins have been forgiven** because of Jesus’ name…. I have written to you, **children**, because you have come to know the Father.

1 Thess. 2:7 Although we could have been a burden as Christ’s apostles, instead we were gentle among you, as a nursing mother nurtures her own **children**.

1 Cor. 3:1-3 Brothers, I was not able to speak to you as spiritual people but as **people of the flesh**, as **babies** in Christ. I gave you **milk** to drink, not solid food, because you were **not yet ready** for it. In fact, you are still not ready, because you are still **fleshy**…. 

Heb. 5:12-13 Although by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the basic principles of God’s revelation again. You need **milk**, not solid food. Now everyone who lives on **milk** is **inexperienced** with the message about righteousness, because he is an **infant**.

1 Cor. 14:20 Brothers, **don’t be childish** in your thinking, but **be infants** in regard to evil and adult in your thinking.
Young Adults:

1 John 2:14 (John writes) … I have written to you, young men, because you are strong. God’s word remains in you, and you have had victory over the evil one.

Adults:

1 Cor. 13:11 (Paul writes) … When I became a man, I put aside childish things. 1 Cor. 14:20 Brothers, don’t be childish in your thinking, but be infants in regard to evil and adult in your thinking. Hebrews 5:14 But solid food is for the mature—for those whose senses have been trained to distinguish between good and evil. 1 John 2:13-14 (John writes) I am writing to you, fathers, because you have come to know the One who is from the beginning.…

All Believers (the Church):

Col. 1:28-29 We proclaim Him, warning and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone mature in Christ. I labor for this, striving with His strength that works powerfully in me. Eph. 4:11-15 And He personally gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, for the training of the saints in the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ, until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of God’s Son, growing into a mature man with a stature measured by Christ’s fullness. Then we will no longer be little children, tossed by the waves and blown around by every wind of teaching, by human cunning with cleverness in the techniques of deceit. But speaking the truth in love, let us grow in every way into Him who is the head—Christ. Rom. 8:29 For those He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son.

The Spiritual Growth of Jesus: (Note: His spiritual growth had nothing to do with sin. He was never disobedient or less than perfect.)

Luke 2:40 The boy grew up and became strong, filled with wisdom, and God’s grace was on Him. Luke 2:42, 46-52 When He was 12 years old, they (Joseph and Mary) found Him in the temple complex sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. And all those who heard Him were astounded at His understanding and His answers…. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and with people. Heb. 2:10 It was entirely appropriate that God, … should make the source of their salvation perfect through sufferings. Heb. 5:8-9 Though He was God’s Son, He learned obedience through what He suffered. After He was perfected, He became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey Him.

Congratulations on your continuing choice to grow in the Lord! However, Phase 1 is not the end of your spiritual growth but only a stepping stone to even more.

Prayerfully consider who the Lord would have you mentor / disciple and go through Phase I with that believer. To assist you, review the guidelines found in lesson 2-5.
A Tool for Personal Discipleship

PHASE 2

MENTOR TRAINING


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PHASE 2 DISCIPLESHIP CURRICULUM

“Mentor Training”

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**NOTE:** Phase 2 is an attempt to define “Biblical Discipleship” and to present a logical case for incorporating “Personal Discipleship” as an essential component of the Body life of every Christian congregation.
10 Reasons Why We Believe Personal Discipleship (Spiritual Parenting) is Needed, in Addition to Corporate Discipleship

1. The generally accepted definition of “discipleship” is distorted.
   Generally speaking, in the Christian community the term “discipleship” has become synonymous with “teaching”. Thus anyone who “teaches” is thought by many to be fulfilling the mandate to “make disciples”. Biblical discipleship carries the thought of a deeper interaction between the discipler and the believer being discipled than that of simply teaching. While teaching is a crucial component of the discipleship process, discipleship needs to be understood to comprise other essential components as well. The typical practice of group teaching requires little or no interaction, since many times one person spends an entire session speaking, while others spend the entire session listening. We would not want to imply that there always has to be a dialog between the speaker and listeners. However, for a believer to mature as a disciple (apprentice), he must be given opportunities to express and discuss unique needs and understanding. In other words, discipleship needs to be redefined to include the idea of “spiritual parenting”, “spiritual tutoring” or “spiritual mentoring”. The apostle Paul’s example of Biblical discipleship, as described in Lesson 2-2, should be compared with the current typical pattern of church practice.

2. There is an attempt to develop “teachers” rather than “disciplers”.
   A by-product of the common misconception of how to define Biblical discipleship (point 1. above) is a tendency to focus special attention on believers who seem to have a “gift” for teaching. Since teaching is a gift of the Spirit, we must conclude that most believers will not have the gift of teaching. But “discipling” is not a gift. Therefore, while we should only expect a few believers to become teachers, almost all believers should be seen as potential disciplers. If asked, very few believers would say their gift is teaching. Let’s be generous and say that 10% of believers are gifted in teaching. Then how are the other 90% supposed to minister? Many believers if asked would respond by saying their gift is “to serve”, which can mean anything from serving meals at a homeless shelter to painting a widow’s house to innumerable other means of “serving”. By no means do we want to imply that these “services” are not good things. Hopefully it will be seen that we need to redefine “discipleship”. God designed a system of multiplication whereby humans have populated the earth. We think it is sad and unusual if a married couple is incapable of having children, yet there is little surprise in most churches when typical believers are not parenting spiritual children (making disciples). *Rom. 12:4-8, 1 Cor. 12:28-29, James 3:1

3. To influence many people simultaneously is generally considered the method of choice. Personal one-on-one discipleship appears to be too time-consuming, energy consuming, and inefficient.
   The concept we want to demonstrate is that the Biblical method of multiplication is much more productive over the long term. This is very important, because the seeming short-term ineffectiveness of personal discipleship has led many to the illusion that it really is not the best method. To be honest, many Christian leaders measure success by numbers. We believe this is one of the reasons there is such an emphasis in the Christian community to hold events and activities, which give the impression of short-term success if attendance is the measure.
### Church Growth through Spiritual Multiplication
*(rather than “addition”)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of “CONVERTS” (1 converted each day)</th>
<th>Number of “DISCIPLES” (1 discipled each 6 months)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>To start</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>183</td>
<td>½ year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>365</td>
<td>1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>548</td>
<td>1½ years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>730</td>
<td>2 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>913</td>
<td>2½ years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,095</td>
<td>3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,278</td>
<td>3½ years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,460</td>
<td>4 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,643</td>
<td>4½ years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,825</td>
<td>5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,190</td>
<td>6 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,555</td>
<td>7 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,920</td>
<td>8 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,285</td>
<td>9 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,650</td>
<td>10 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4,015</td>
<td>11 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4,380</strong></td>
<td><strong>12 years</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>16,777,216</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The figures in the **left-hand column** represent the number of converts that could be attained if a Christian were able to win one person to Christ each and every day of the year.

The figures in the **right-hand column** represent the number of fruitful disciples that could be attained, if each Christian were faithful during each 6 month period to mentor just one new convert to a level of spiritual maturity whereby that Christian could be used by the Lord to in turn mentor another convert. The figures in the right-hand column are less impressive at the beginning, because growth takes time but as can be seen, has a much greater long-term benefit.

(2 Tim. 2:2) And what you *(Timothy)* have heard from me *(Paul)* in the presence of many witnesses, commit to **faithful men** who will be able to teach **others** also.
4. Most believers consider themselves inadequately trained, or ungifted

**The Problem:**

*A Typical Modern Church Congregation*

- **Followers** typically don’t feel they are adequately *qualified* to disciple new believers and often believe *it’s the role of the Leaders*.
- **Pastors / Leaders** are perceived to be trained to disciple others, but don’t have the necessary *time* to devote individually to each new believer.
- **Pastors / Leaders** are doing their job supporting the church.
- **Followers** typically are OK with this model even though the problem leads to an anemic Church.

**The Solution:**

*Implement a Better Model*

---

“And He personally gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, for the training of the saints in the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ, until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of God’s Son, growing into a mature man with a stature measured by Christ’s fullness. Then we will no longer be little children, tossed by the waves and blown around by every wind of teaching, by human cunning with cleverness in the techniques of deceit. But speaking the truth in love, let us grow in every way into Him who is the head—Christ. From Him the whole body, fitted and knit together by every supporting ligament, promotes the growth of the body for building up itself in love by the proper working of each individual part.”

Ephesians 4:11-16

- The role of Church Leaders is to “equip the saints” to disciple / spiritually mentor others. This can be done in corporate training sessions and modeled in one-in-one relationships.
- The role of the “saints” / followers is to have a surrendered attitude and a learner’s disposition to be trained to mentor others.
- The result should be personal discipleship / one-on-one mentoring is the norm rather than the exception. The expectation is that every believer is in the process of being mentored or mentoring others.
- The ultimate goal is spiritual maturity, spiritual fruitfulness, and spiritual reproduction, which leads to church growth through multiplication.
Is a Spiritual Gift Required to Disciple?

**MISCONCEPTION:** There is a common misconception that the average Christian cannot effectively mentor another Christian unless they are “spiritually gifted”. Is there a scriptural basis for that belief? We think not.

Most Christians correctly believe that they should be available to the Lord for the purpose of being a witness to the unsaved, even though there is not a “witnessing” gift. Likewise, there is not a “discipling” gift.

This misconception can be a convenient rationale to excuse the lack of discipleship, but it has no scriptural basis. Church leadership ought to convey to congregations that every Christian should be available to the Holy Spirit as a witness and a spiritual mentor.

- **God has not intended for every believer to be gifted as an “evangelist”**.
  
  Eph. 4:11 And He personally gave … some evangelists,…

- **But God has intended for every believer to be available to Him as a “witness” (not a spiritual gift.)**

  Matt. 5:16 In the same way, let your light shine before men, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.
  
  Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be My witnesses …
  
  1 Peter 3:15 but honor the Messiah as Lord in your hearts. Always be ready to give a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you.

- **God has not intended for every believer to be gifted as a “teacher”**.

  Eph. 4:11 And He personally gave … some pastors and teachers
  
  Rom. 12:6-8 According to the grace given to us, we have different gifts: … if teaching, in teaching;…

- **But God has intended for every believer to be available to Him as a “discipler” (that is, a “spiritual parent”), not a spiritual gift.**

  1 Thess. 2:7-13 … instead we were gentle among you, as a nursing mother nurtures her own children. … like a father with his own children, we encouraged, comforted, and implored each one of you …
  
  John 12:24-26 I assure you: Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains by itself. But if it dies, it produces a large crop.…
  
  Matt. 28:18-20 (Command to the Church) Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations,

  Both the command to be witnesses, as well as the command to make disciples, were given to the Church at large, not just to those that were physically present at the time.

  (Matthew 28:18-20 & Acts 1:8)
5. The practice of mentoring, or spiritual parenting, is not being modeled by many older believers. The typical newer believer will imitate older believers who they look up to, or with whom they associate. Thus every believer is a role model for other believers, even if they don’t want to be.

6. “Personal discipleship” (“spiritual parenting”) is not promoted and modeled by the leadership in many churches. In 1 Peter 5:1-3 leaders are told, … I exhort the elders among you: Shepherd God’s flock among you, … not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. Not just tell people what to do, but rather, show them what to do. Can Christian leaders realistically expect followers to imitate what they themselves are not modeling (by example)?

7. There is an assumption by many that the appropriation of biblical knowledge by itself will lead to spiritual maturity. (This will be covered in greater detail in Lesson 2-2)

8. The church community typically focuses on making converts rather than making disciples. Jesus, in giving us the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20), said to go into all the world and make disciples, not just converts. This then brings up the need to distinguish between a “disciple” and a “non-disciple”. We believe it is true to say that not all believers are disciples, from the Biblical standpoint. What then is a proper definition of the term “disciple?” We believe it will help us to consider a disciple to be an apprentice. (See Luke 6:40) (See also Lesson 2-4)

9. Many believers are reluctant to make a commitment that they perceive may interfere with or limit their lifestyle or plans.

10. Biblical truth is often presented in isolated (topical) form, without a good understanding of how it fits into the Christian life as a whole. This leads to the believer’s life becoming compartmentalized. Imagine you’re watching a Power Point presentation of a “project”, a “medical procedure”, or someone’s “family vacation.” You would normally expect the presentation to begin with an “objective”, or an “overview”, and then proceed in a progressive and sequential manner.

But what if the order of the presentation was “random?” The presenter would be able to explain each individual picture, but would generally have difficulty presenting a progressive narrative. The more complicated the material, and the greater the unfamiliarity of the viewer, the more difficult it would be to try to make sense out of the presentation.

Many times the Christian life is presented in a similar random order. Thus the newer believer may have a difficult time trying to fit the isolated pieces together in a sensible way. That is why we recommend that the mentoring relationship begin with a visual overview, Lesson 1-1, followed by a progressive and systematic presentation of living the “Normal Christian Life”, the balance of Phase 1.
It is helpful to progressively present concepts in the order in which they are typically needed by the new Christian.

(Read from bottom to top)

- Jesus - My Rock and Foundation
- A Simple Overview of the Christian Life
- What Happened at Salvation?
- The Character of God, and Why I Now Have Two Natures?
- The Holy Spirit - My New Guide
- The Lordship Decision
- How to Abide in Christ
- Christian Living
- Rewards Ceremony
- Mentoring Others

Note: The above sequence is meant to serve as a “guide”, not as a strict order of presentation.

CAUTION: Lesson 2-1 is not intended to promote a critical, or judgmental attitude, but rather to identify areas of spiritual need, in order to prayerfully seek God’s solutions.
What Is Personal Discipleship?

**A PARTIAL TRUTH:**
To most Christians the term “Discipleship” simply equates to “presenting Biblical truth”.

**MORE ACCURATELY:**
We believe the concept of “Spiritual Parenting” more accurately reflects the Biblical meaning of discipleship.

**A Biblical Model for “Spiritual Parenting”**
1 Thessalonians 2:3-13 includes all the components of spiritual parenting.

(From Paul, with Silas and Timothy)

**THEY WERE SINGLE-MINDED IN PURPOSE**
:3-6 … so we speak, **not to please men, but rather God**, who examines our hearts. For we never used flattering speech, as you know, or had greedy motives—God is our witness—and **we didn’t seek glory from people**, either from you or from others. Although we could have been a burden as Christ’s apostles,…

**1. THEY CARED FOR THE BELIEVERS AS A MOTHER CARES FOR HER CHILDREN**
:7-8 … instead **we were gentle** among you, **as a nursing MOTHER nurtures** her own children. **We cared so much for you** that we were pleased to share with you not only the gospel of God but also **our own lives**, because **you had become dear to us**.

**2. THEY BECAME “ROLE MODELS” TO THE NEW BELIEVERS**
:9-10 For you remember **our labor** and **hardship**, brothers. **Working night and day** so that we would not burden any of you, we preached God’s gospel to you. **You are witnesses**, and so is God, of how **devoutly, righteously, and blamelessly we conducted ourselves** with you believers.

**3. THEY GAVE INDIVIDUAL ATTENTION AND INSTRUCTION AS A FATHER**
:11-12 As you know, **like a FATHER** with his own children, we **encouraged, comforted**, and **implored EACH ONE** of you to walk worthy of God, who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

**4. THE WORD OF GOD WAS AN ESSENTIAL COMPONENT OF DISCIPLESHIP**
:13 This is why we constantly thank God, because when you received the message about God that you heard from us, you welcomed it not as a human message, but as it truly is, **the message of God**, which also **works effectively in you believers**.
Paul's concern for the believers went beyond that of just “a teacher.” He was committed to their spiritual welfare and growth.

2 Cor. 11:28-29 … there is the daily pressure on me: my care for all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn with indignation?

2 Cor. 2:4 For I wrote to you with many tears out of an extremely troubled and anguished heart—not that you should be hurt, but that you should know the abundant love I have for you.

2 Cor. 12:15 I will most gladly spend and be spent for you.…

Col. 1:28-29 … so that we may present everyone mature in Christ. I labor for this, striving with His strength that works powerfully in me.

2 Tim. 2:10 … I endure all things for the elect:…

A goal of the discipler should be to help the disciple (apprentice learner) to mature, function, be fruitful, and to spiritually reproduce. The benefits to the discipler are secondary.

A discipler is a “model” (real, transparent) for the disciple. The goal is for the disciple to emulate the convictions and passion of the discipler.

1 Cor. 4:15-16 (Paul to the Corinthian believers) For you can have 10,000 instructors in Christ, but you can’t have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel. Therefore I urge you to imitate me.

1 Cor. 11:1 Imitate me, as I also imitate Christ.

Phil. 3:17 (Paul to the Philippians) Join in imitating me, brothers, and observe those who live according to the example you have in us.

Phil. 4:9 Do what you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

1 Thess. 1:6-7 (Paul to the Thessalonian believers) And you became imitators of us and of the Lord when, in spite of severe persecution, you welcomed the message with joy from the Holy Spirit. As a result, you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia.

2 Thess. 3:7-9 For you yourselves know how you must imitate us. We were not irresponsible among you; … to make ourselves an example to you so that you would imitate us.

Heb. 13:7 Remember your leaders who have spoken God’s word to you. As you carefully observe the outcome of their lives, imitate their faith.

1 Tim. 4:12 (Paul to Timothy) … you should be an example to the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.

2 Tim. 3:10-11 But you have followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, and endurance, along with the persecutions and sufferings …

Titus 2:7-8 (Paul to Titus) … Make yourself an example of good works with integrity and dignity in your teaching. Your message is to be sound beyond reproach, so that the opponent will be ashamed, having nothing bad to say about us.

Luke 6:40 (Jesus said) A disciple (apprentice) is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher.
A newborn child requires an extra amount of individual attention. As the child matures guidance can increasingly take place in a group setting. Since each child is unique, it should be expected that both group and personal attention would be needed on the road to maturity.

When you bring a newborn baby home from the hospital, you don't just set them down and say, "Welcome to the family, Johnny. Make yourself at home. The towels are in the hall closet upstairs, the pantry is right here, the can opener is in this drawer. No crying after 10 p.m. If you have any questions there are lots of people in the family who would love to help you so don't be afraid to ask." You laugh and say that is ridiculous, but that is what usually happens to new Christians. Someone gets saved and starts going to church services, but never gets much personal attention. We devote 18 years to raising our children, but don't even spend six months helping a new Christian get started in understanding the spiritual world. As a result, many people have been Christians for many years, but have not grown very much. Hebrews 5:12 refers to this phenomenon. So, new believers need someone to give them guidance and help them grow.

(Above excerpt from http://bible.org/seriespage/stewardship-god’s-truth-through-discipleship)

“Until others learn to draw on the life of the Lord Jesus directly, they will have to draw on His life through you. You must literally be their source of supply, until they learn to take their nourishment from God.” (Taken from My Utmost for His Highest by Oswald Chambers – Feb. 9 (c) 1935 by Dodd Mead & Co., renewed (c) 1963 by the Oswald Chambers Publications Assn., Ltd., and is used by permission of Discovery House Publishers, Box 3566, Grand Rapids MI 49501. All rights reserved.)

Notice what Paul states in 1 Thess. 2:7 “… we were gentle among you, as a nursing mother nurtures her own children.”

Some believe that a new Christian is not in need of individual special attention. If the Holy Spirit had not led Paul to include the idea of nursing it could be argued that this Scripture was referring to spiritual toddlers or even older spiritual children. But one must honestly ask, “How soon after birth does a typical baby need to be nursed?” When a baby nurses, as Oswald Chambers has correctly expressed, it is drawing nourishment through its mother. This would normally be expected to continue until which time it is weaned.

Paul recognized that each believer is unique and needs individual attention.

Acts 20:31 (Paul to the elders of the church at Ephesus.) Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for three years I did not stop warning each one of you with tears.

Col. 1:28-29 We proclaim Him, warning and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone mature in Christ. I labor for this, striving with His strength that works powerfully in me.

1 Thess. 2:11-12 As you know, like a father with his own children, we encouraged, comforted, and implored each one of you …

Jesus commanded us to make “disciples,” not just converts. In the Christian community there are many immature “converts,” but very few disciples. (See also Lesson 2-4)
Biblical truth is an essential component of Biblical discipleship.

A. A Christian cannot be spiritually mature without Biblical understanding, but a Christian may have much Biblical knowledge and yet not be spiritually mature.

1 Cor. 8:1-2  … Knowledge inflates with pride, but love builds up. If anyone thinks he knows anything, he does not yet know it as he ought to know it.
Eph. 4:11-16  … for the training of the saints in the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ, until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of God’s Son, growing into a mature man with a stature measured by Christ’s fullness. Then we will no longer be little children,…
Col. 1:28-29  We proclaim Him, warning and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone mature in Christ.
1 Thess. 2:13  This is why we constantly thank God, because when you received the message about God that you heard from us, you welcomed it not as a human message, but as it truly is, the message of God, which also works effectively in you believers.

B. There are inherent problems with the commonly held belief that “presenting Biblical knowledge” equates to discipleship, and that the other components are “optional.” If the other components are not given proper importance in the nurturing process, the Christian being mentored will typically have a difficult time growing to a reproductive spiritual maturity.

1. If Biblical knowledge by itself were the key to spirituality, we should have the most spiritual generation of Christians in history. Christian Book Stores are filled with books on every Biblical subject imaginable.

2. To propose that Biblical knowledge alone is the key to spirituality is akin to saying that “food” alone is the most important need of a child. Undeniably food is essential, but would it be accurate to convey to potential parents that love, commitment, nurturing, modeling, personal attention, etc., are somehow optional? Has God given us the process of raising a physical child as a model for raising a spiritual child? If so, should I not then ask, “How would a physical infant fare if left to tend for itself as the typical new spiritual child is?”

3. Most Christians would agree that as the Holy Spirit draws unbelievers to Himself, He typically uses Christians somewhere in the birthing process. How can the same Christians then conclude that their primary involvement in the new baby Christian’s growth is mostly limited to setting spiritual food on the table, and that the Holy Spirit now prefers to work alone in the other areas where the new believer needs help to grow?

To love to teach is good, but to love those you teach is better!

To know the Bible is good, but to intimately know and understand the One who the Bible reveals is better! (Jer. 9:23-24; John 17:3)
Thoughts on How New Believers Grow Spiritually

How Does A New Believer Acquire Spiritual Understanding?

If a new believer is not instructed otherwise, he will typically appropriate the values and convictions of the Christians that he associates with during the formative first period of his new spiritual life, just as a child will tend to adopt the values and convictions of his family and peers.

Let’s say that a new Christian is introduced to a group of Navigators (Navigators.org), who we would rightly expect to immediately begin to challenge the believer’s former values and convictions (their worldview). That believer is either going to adopt the Navigator’s values and convictions, or he will become so uncomfortable that he will seek a more “friendly” and less intrusive environment.

But what happens if there is not such a group of mature mentors who will take the new believer under wing? Typically the newer believer will be introduced into a congregation, where it is often assumed that “sitting under the preaching of the Word” will be sufficient to lead that new believer into a spiritually mature walk.

It is hoped that the negative traits observed in the congregation do not distort the new believer’s understanding. Is that realistic? We believe it is safe to say that most new believers will be impacted more by what they “see” other believers do, than what they “hear” them say. If it can be said that a particular congregation is more spiritually mature, then it would be realistic to reason that the combination of “hearing” Biblical truth from a pastor/teacher, together with “seeing” Biblical spirituality modeled from the congregation, would be a tremendous help in the healthy spiritual growth of that new believer.

Leaders need to realistically evaluate the spiritual health of the congregation, asking themselves, “Do we want a new believer to become like the ‘typical’ member of our congregation?” If the answer is no, then measures need to be implemented to impart Biblical values to new believers.

Example – Modeling affects how newer believers interpret the Bible. A one-day workshop was taught on Discipleship and the Christian life. A lady attended, and later that evening shared with her husband some of the spiritual concepts that had been discussed. The next day the husband mentioned that after his wife had talked with him, he had taken another look at the Great Commission in Matt. 28:18-20. He had always interpreted it as saying, “go and make converts”, but now realized that it indeed said, “go and make disciples.”

He was surprised that he hadn’t been reading it correctly. Why had this happened? We believe what is emphasized or de-emphasized (for instance, by omission or neglect) will bias the listener’s interpretation of the Bible (especially an impressionable newer believer) as to what has Biblical importance. This Christian man had read the word “disciples”, but in reality the term had little significance, since what he was “hearing” and seeing “modeled” around him conveyed to him that what was really important was “making converts.” In his mind the term “disciple” simply came to mean “convert” as a result of the definition presented to him by what he “heard” and “saw.”

Ideally, we should be able to place new believers into a congregation and have healthy spiritual growth with Biblical values and convictions. Shouldn’t a new believer have the “right” to assume that older Christians have Biblical values and convictions? Are you satisfied with the spiritual values and convictions of your congregation? In many cases the answer would be “no.”

When a newer believer is simply placed in the congregation without personal mentoring, that believer will naturally feel “free to adopt” the spiritual values and convictions of that congregation. We shouldn’t expect otherwise. Would I expect my child to acquire acceptable values and convictions if I
allow him or her to associate with children whose values and convictions are unacceptable, yet I don’t object? By not saying anything to the contrary, I conveying to my child that their association meets my approval.

We should not expect the newer believer to understand much about the Christian walk. It is only natural for newer believers to be mainly concerned with doing the right things, which means their focus is on external behavior. As stated previously, a newer believer should be able to make the assumption that if he behaves like “older” Christians, then logically he’ll be behaving in an acceptable Biblical fashion, since those older Christians have “obviously” styled their behavior on Biblical patterns. Right? NOT!

Unfortunately, many older Christians have adopted their behavior from previous older Christians who they “assumed” to be spiritual. And so one generation follows the next. Unwittingly, many Christian leaders are conveying approval of this natural human process, by not insuring that each new believer is personally helped through the formative and critical period of the Christian walk.

While it is totally natural for new believers to begin their Christian walk focusing on external behavior, we believe it is God’s purpose for those believers to quickly begin to focus on living by Biblical principles. Probably more than 90% of typical daily external behavior is not addressed specifically in the Bible. The typical Christian will not transition from focusing on external behavior to focusing on Biblical principles, unless another Christian is willing to put the time and energy into helping them to understand God’s purposes and His process for producing spiritual growth.

Let’s look at several examples of adopting “external behavior” patterns:

How does a new believer evaluate the spiritually acceptable car to drive? Clearly it is not a question addressed specifically in a Bible verse. While the Bible doesn’t say, “thou shalt not drive a car valued at more than $45,000”, most Christians wouldn’t feel comfortable driving to Sunday church in a Rolls Royce. But who can find a verse that says it’s wrong? A new believer walking through the church parking lot cannot avoid noticing that most affluent believers drive more expensive vehicles and less affluent believers tend to drive less expensive vehicles. Imagine that, just like the “real” world!

How about spiritually acceptable houses? Same as for cars. Most believers choose their houses, using the same principles as unbelievers do. Unless a new believer is personally instructed as to Biblical values, why should we think they’ll come to any other conclusion than, “it must be okay, since older, wiser Christians have made that determination. They know the Bible better than I do. I’m just a new believer, what do I know?”

How about spiritually acceptable eating behaviors? How obese is obese? Is it 19% over normal? How about 20% over normal? Who decides what is "normal"? If there are so many overweight believers (just like in the world), then obviously the new believer has to assume that Bible verses referring to obesity were really meant for believers in a different era, since the subject is not addressed in most congregations.

What about smoking, drinking alcohol, wasting time, excessive working, neglect of spouses and family, financial investment in possessions, the stock market, etc.? And the list goes on. If the new believer is allowed to continue focusing on outward external behavior, rather than on Biblical principles, there is a high probability that the believer will grow into a “self-dependent” and “worldly-minded” Christian, practicing an externally acceptable spiritual life on the one hand (acceptable to Christian peers), while at the same time pursuing worldly goals of possessions, pleasures, power and popularity (to the extent they’re not offensive to Christian peers).
What do we mean by the terms “self-dependent” and “carnal?”

In the Bible we see a contrast between “spiritual believers” and “self-dependent (carnal) believers.” In Proverbs 3:5-6, ‘Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.’ (NKJV)

We also need to distinguish between “disposition” and “acts of behavior”. What we “do” is an expression of what we “are.” One of the best examples is the contrast between King David and King Saul (see also Lesson 3-3). King David was described by God as a “spiritual man” (referring to the disposition of his heart). Acts 13:22 – ‘After removing him [king Saul], He raised up David as their king and testified about him: ‘I have found David the son of Jesse, a man loyal to Me, who will carry out all My will.’

But nobody would suggest that David's behavior was pleasing to God when he committed adultery and murder. On the other hand, King Saul’s heart disposition was characterized by a pattern of “self-dependence.” As a result, when faced with decisions related to behavior, King Saul consistently “leaned on his own human understanding”, rather than walking by faith in God’s leading. It is important to note that Spiritual believers do not always trust God in every situation (see Paul in 2 Cor. 1:8-9 and 12:7), and “self-dependent” (“carnal”) believers often call upon the Lord in times of distress and crisis.

Another example is the clear contrast between Joshua and Caleb and the other ten Israelite tribal leaders (see also Lesson 3-4). All were sent by God to survey the Promised Land. All twelve men saw the same things, but only two men, Joshua and Caleb, had a “faithful” heart disposition that led them to trust God’s promise. The other ten had a disposition of trusting in their own human reasoning, which led them to forfeit God’s intended blessings. In Joshua 14:7-8, Caleb relates, ‘I was 40 years old when Moses the Lord’s servant sent me from Kadesh-Barnea to scout the land, and I brought back an honest report (according to my convictions - NIV). My brothers who went with me caused the people’s hearts to melt with fear, but I remained loyal to the Lord my God (wholeheartedly – NIV).’

In Numbers 14:24, God says of Caleb, ‘… since My servant Caleb has a different spirit and has followed Me completely, I will bring him into the land where he has gone,…’

In these discipleship materials, we use the term “spiritual” to describe believers who have chosen to acknowledge God as the One who can best oversee and manage their lives, and who view themselves as “servants of God their Master” (Lordship). We use the terms “self-dependent” and “carnal” to describe believers who have either willingly, or ignorantly, not chosen to acknowledge and accept the authority and Lordship of Christ over their life. Unfortunately, we believe the Biblical concept of “self-dependence” would characterize about 70-80% of believers found in the American evangelical Christian community.

Again, we need to be careful to apply the terms “spiritual” and “self-dependent” (carnal) to “heart attitude” (disposition) rather than to “external behavior”. If we convey to others that the terms “spiritual” or “self-dependent” refer mainly to external behavior, then we will be unconsciously promoting the misconception of focusing on external behavior, rather than the Biblical concept of focusing on the “internal transformation,” from which external behavior is derived.

Romans 12:1-2 Therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.

Matthew 12:34 … For the mouth speaks from the overflow of the heart.
Hasn’t God designed congregational meetings for the “equipping” of the saints so that He can use each saint to impact the lives of other people?

And He personally gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, for the training of the saints in the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ, until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of God’s Son, growing into a mature man with a stature measured by Christ’s fullness. Then we will no longer be little children, tossed by the waves and blown around by every wind of teaching, by human cunning with cleverness in the techniques of deceit. But speaking the truth in love, let us grow in every way into Him who is the head—Christ. From Him the whole body, fitted and knit together by every supporting ligament, promotes the growth of the body for building up itself in love by the proper working of each individual part.

Ephesians 4:11-16

Why is it that many children of believers become resistant to the values of their parents?

We suspect that in many cases what the child sees modeled in the home has more impact than what the child is told. In other words, a parent will typically make declarations of Biblical values and convictions, but the child will not adopt those same stated values and convictions unless there is a consistency in the everyday living out of those stated values.

If I tell my child about the importance of living for eternity, but then demonstrate by my life that this temporary life on earth is of greater importance, which will they believe, my words or my life? It is relatively easy for a Christian to portray a consistent spiritual life to those with whom they only have short periods of contact each week, but it is very difficult to hide the real life values and convictions from children who are continually watching, and imitating.

The newer believer understands the foundational doctrine of salvation by grace through Christ. Now he wants to build on that truth, but isn’t quite sure how to go about it. Is it reasonable to simply give him a Bible and expect him to effectively grow to spiritual maturity?

It is possible, but we think it is the exception, because some new believers do seem to grow spiritually with little individual mentoring. This can give a false impression.

We are tempted to ask, “Why can’t more Christians grow like that?” In the secular world there are those who excel without much help from others, but they are the exception. For instance, we can hand a computer manual to 100 people who have no prior computer understanding. A few will manage, with difficulty, to eventually figure things out. But the vast majority will become frustrated and decide that a computer really isn’t worth all the hassle.

Many Christians, left on their own, reach the same conclusion regarding the Christian life. Which would you prefer, to be given a computer manual to learn on your own, or to have someone take the time to personally tutor you through the beginning phases and answer your questions? We could truthfully state that the manual has all the knowledge you’ll need, and it is clearly presented. How about building a house on a foundation? How many inexperienced men would want to be handed just the blueprints and manual for building a house, and be expected to do a decent job? Not many.
Some might argue that the Holy Spirit alone should be the new believer’s Teacher. The Biblical analogy of a new believer being like a “baby” (1 Thess. 2:3-13) carries little meaning if we don’t accept the analogous implications.

Does the command to “make disciples” simply convey the idea of handing someone a Biblical manual? Does the Holy Spirit expect older Christians to be available for His use in the process of spiritual parenting, just as He wants them to be available as witnesses when He chooses to convict an unbeliever?

Perhaps one guide for measuring the true spirituality of a congregation would be the level of conviction that an unbeliever experiences while in the presence of the believers. Should 1 Cor. 14:24-25 lead us to believe that if the congregation is truly spiritual and an unbeliever happens to enter, that the unbeliever should feel uncomfortable? “But if all are prophesying and some unbeliever or uninformed person comes in, he is convicted by all and is judged by all. The secrets of his heart will be revealed, and as a result he will fall facedown and worship God, proclaiming, “God is really among you.”

In a spiritually healthy congregation should spiritual reproduction be observable and measurable? Shouldn’t spiritual parenting (spiritual mentoring) be the norm, rather than the exception?
**Parable of the Sower (One interpretation)**

Matthew 13:3-8, 18-23 & Luke 8:4-8, 12-15

Lk. 8:4 ... He (Jesus) said in a parable:

Lk. 8:11 This is the meaning of the parable: **The seed is the word of God.**

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<tr>
<th>UNBELIEVERS</th>
<th><strong>“ALONG THE PATH”</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>GRP. 1</strong></td>
<td>Lk. 8:5 A sower went out to sow his seed. As he was sowing, some fell <strong>along the path</strong>; it was trampled on, and the <strong>birds</strong> of the sky ate it up.</td>
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<td>Lk. 8:12 The seed along the path are those who have heard and then <strong>the Devil</strong> comes and <strong>takes away the word from their hearts</strong>, so that they may not believe and be saved.</td>
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<td><strong>NOTE:</strong> Obviously “unsaved” people who have <strong>rejected</strong> the message of salvation.</td>
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<tr>
<th>UNBELIEVERS</th>
<th><strong>“ON ROCKY GROUND”</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>GRP. 2</strong></td>
<td>Mt. 13:5-6 Others fell <strong>on rocky ground</strong>, where there wasn’t much soil, and they sprang up quickly since the <strong>soil wasn’t deep</strong>. But when the sun came up they were scorched, and since they <strong>had no root</strong>, they <strong>withered</strong>. (Lk. 8:6 ... <strong>lacked moisture</strong>)</td>
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<td>Mt. 13:20-21 And the one sown on rocky ground—this is <strong>one who hears the word</strong> and <strong>immediately receives it with joy</strong>. Yet he has <strong>no root</strong> in himself, but is short-lived. When pressure or persecution comes because of the word, <strong>immediately he stumbles</strong>.</td>
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<td><strong>NOTE:</strong> It appears that these people “intellectually” accept the message of salvation, but then reject the implications of a relationship with God, once they realize that it is not what they had originally anticipated. (Perhaps John 6:60-66 is an example?)</td>
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<th>BELIEVERS</th>
<th><strong>“AMONG THORNS”</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>GRP. 3</strong></td>
<td>Lk. 8:7 Other seed fell <strong>among thorns</strong>; the thorns sprang up with it and <strong>choked</strong> it.</td>
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<td>Lk. 8:14 As for the seed that fell among thorns, these are the ones who, when they have heard, go on their way and are <strong>choked with worries, riches, and pleasures</strong> of life, and <strong>produce no mature fruit</strong>. (Mt. 13:22 making it <strong>unfruitful</strong>).</td>
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<td><strong>NOTE:</strong> These people evidently receive Christ as Savior, but either through lack of understanding or willingly, <strong>some do not acknowledge</strong> His lordship over their life, while <strong>others simply allow the distractions of this world to choke off the Holy Spirit’s fruit</strong>, thereby forfeiting the associated blessings and rewards that God had intended for them.</td>
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<tr>
<th>BELIEVERS</th>
<th><strong>“ON GOOD GROUND”</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>GRP. 4</strong></td>
<td>Mt. 13:8 Still others fell <strong>on good ground</strong> and <strong>produced a crop</strong>: some 100, some 60, and some 30 times what was sown.</td>
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<td>Mt. 13:23 But the one sown on the good ground—this is one who hears and <strong>understands</strong> the word, <strong>who does bear fruit</strong> and yields: some 100, some 60, some 30 times what was sown.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>NOTE:</strong> These people are saved, <strong>have acknowledged</strong> His lordship over their life, and are to varying degrees <strong>allowing the Holy Spirit to produce His fruit through their life</strong>, resulting in blessings here on earth and rewards at the Judgment Seat of Christ.</td>
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* Note: If personal discipleship were the common church practice, we believe the number of believers in Group #3 would be greatly diminished, and the amount in Group #4 would be greatly increased.
The **Common Perspective of Christian Congregations**

**Vs. the Biblical Perspective**

*(Spiritual Maturity is Typically Graded “on the Curve”)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common perspective</th>
<th>Biblical perspective</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>“Spiritual”</strong></td>
<td><strong>“Spiritual”</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>These Christians appear to have wholeheartedly acknowledged His Lordship over their lives, have a healthy growing relationship with the Lord, and seem to be bearing spiritual fruit.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>“Acceptable”</strong></td>
<td><strong>“Self-dependent”</strong>(carnal)</td>
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<td>These Christians don’t exhibit excessive negative outward behavior. These Christians may regularly attend church services, give financially, and be involved in other Christian activities. They will quickly acknowledge God’s presence in their lives, but do not exhibit much passion for the Lord, or understanding of wholehearted surrender to His Lordship.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>“Self-dependent”</strong>(carnal)</td>
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<tr>
<td>These Christians tend to exhibit questionable negative outward behavior, such as on-going marriage, relational or financial problems, addictions, etc. They may or may not regularly attend church services, or consistently give financially. They may be involved in some Christian activities. They will quickly acknowledge God’s presence in their lives. Counseling is often seen as the recommended recourse. Their salvation may be in doubt.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>“Unsaved”</strong></td>
<td><strong>“Unsaved”</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>These individuals are usually recognized as being unsaved.</td>
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Typical Discipled and Undiscipled Believers

Typical “Discipled” Believer

- Increasing dependence on God (Master-servant)
- Increasing God-reliance (Faith walk)
- Focus on inward transformation (producing Godly behavior)

“It’s about God!” (“dog attitude”)

Typical “Undiscipled” Believer

- God is my “Junior” Partner (up to 49% control)
- God is my “Co-pilot” (God is on standby)
- Focus on behavior modification
- Self-dependent

“It’s about me!” (“cat attitude”)

I (Paul) planted. Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. Now the one planting and the one watering are one in purpose, and each will receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are God’s coworkers. You are God’s field, God’s building. 

(1 Corinthians 3:6-9)
Lesson Guide

Typical Discipled and Undiscipled Believers

**Note for discipler:** The purpose of this lesson is to present the **typical** results that can be expected when a new believer is given personalized individual attention during the critical formative development period of their Christian life, and the **typical** results that can be expected if the new believer is not given the needed attention during that time. Obviously there are those who grow and have a reasonable fruitful spiritual life in spite of having received little personal attention – but they are the exception.

1. **Physical Birth to Spiritual Rebirth**

2. **Evangelism phase** – This represents the period of time during which the Holy Spirit is revealing to the unbeliever his lost condition before a holy God. Generally, the Holy Spirit will use a combination of His Word and a believer(s) circumstances as instruments to draw the unbeliever to Himself.

   **John 12:32** (Jesus said) “As for Me, if I am lifted up from the earth I will draw all people to Myself.”

   **John 16:8** “When He (the Holy Spirit) comes, He will convict the world about sin, righteousness, and judgment.”

3. **The Cross** – This event is the most important single event in a human’s life. The person has passed from “death” (separated from God) to “life” (in which the Lord indwells the believer).

   **John 5:24** (Jesus said) “I assure you: Anyone who hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life and will not come under judgment but has passed from death to life.”

4. **Discipleship phase (Spiritual Parenting)** – (For a biblical model of discipleship, see 1 Thess. 2:3-13 in Lesson 2-2) – The typical new believer will never be more open to being personally mentored than at this stage of their Christian life. Hence there is a window of opportunity in which the believer’s worldview can be greatly impacted. As can be attested to by many experienced believers, the personal attention and guidance given to the new Christian during this period can have a huge influence on later spiritual development. Conversely, many Christians who have not had the needed personal spiritual guidance early on in their Christian life will lament having had to go through much avoidable confusion, struggles and fruitlessness.
Discipled believer – The new Christian who receives personal attention and guidance in their new walk with the Lord will typically find the transition to a Master-servant relationship relatively natural. At this stage the issue of who will manage the direction of their life will not be overly threatening to them, as they become increasingly aware of His love and care. As the Lord oversees this process of growth we would typically expect the new believer to be filled with anticipation, not dread, as he begins to witness God’s sovereign involvement in his life.

The believer who understands and yields to His lordship will increasingly perceive the Lord as the One around whom their life revolves, in contrast to the believer who still thinks that “it’s all about me!”! It has been suggested that most dogs display a loyalty to their master in a way that could serve as a model for believers, in that they tend to understand their role as submissive and obedient servants. They typically don’t expect to be served by their master.

Undiscipled believer – If a new believer is not given adequate personal attention and guidance during this important first phase, but is simply placed into corporate settings with other Christians, they can usually be expected to display spiritual traits that are characteristic of the peers with whom they associate. Left on their own they will typically adopt a lifestyle in which they will attempt to balance their spiritual and secular lives in an acceptable way, resulting in a compartmentalization of their life, as they strive to rationalize and reconcile values and behavior that they recognize are not compatible with the Bible. This of course is the product of unsuccessfully attempting to manage the direction of their own life and spiritual development.

Many older Christians honestly yearn for a closer relationship with God, but have never had that relationship clearly explained to them. Many incorrectly conclude that God simply wants them to do their best, or that the Christian life is just too difficult for them to clearly understand.

A distorted “partnership” mentality is often the outcome of a failure to receive proper biblical guidance as to what the normal Christian life should look like. It has been suggested that a cat could represent these believers who have not yet yielded to His Lordship, in that the typical cat tends to display an attitude of indifference, unsubmitness and independence.

Rewards Ceremony – The Tribunal of Christ should not be seen as a threat, but rather as a motivator for allowing the Lord to manage the direction and spiritual development of one’s life, which will result in a maximizing of fruitfulness. If the Holy Spirit is allowed to manage the spiritual construction in a Christian’s life, He will produce the best possible eternal outcome.

“The system you have in place is perfectly designed for the results you are getting.”

(from a Man In The Mirror seminar – 2004)
What Is a Biblical Disciple?

1. **To many Christians the term “disciple” speaks of a believer who exhibits an acceptable level of observable Christian behavior.**
   Since one’s behavior is a product of one’s convictions, values, and worldview we believe being a “disciple” should more accurately be understood to reflect a believer’s disposition and relationship with the Lord. In this lesson we seek to focus on a disciple’s heart attitude, rather than just what a disciple “does.”
   
   … *Man does not see what the LORD sees, for man sees what is visible, but the LORD sees the heart.*”
   
   (1 Sam. 16:7)

   **Godly Behavior is an Outcome of Godly Convictions**

2. **The pivotal issue that a disciple has dealt with is that of Christ's lordship over their life.**
   In other words, the believer has considered the claims of Christ, and has concluded that the best workable relationship is for the Lord to be in charge of his entire life. One of Christ’s claims is that of ownership (having authority over that which is owned).

   1 Cor. 6:19-20  Don’t you know that your body is a sanctuarty of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought at a price. Therefore glorify God in your body.
   1 Cor. 7:23  You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men.

   God’s **ownership** of the Christian is a factual truth, which is not dependent on the believer’s acknowledgment of it. I do not bestow ownership. I can only acknowledge and act upon what He states to be already true. New believers will typically not be resistant to this truth, because they don’t have preconceived ideas of God’s expectations. In contrast, older believers tend to accept this truth intellectually, but be resistant to the implications. What are the **implications** of ownership? What rights or authority is generally understood to be conveyed by ownership? Doesn’t an owner have the right to do whatever he wants with his property?

   **He Owns Me (Whether I Believe It or Not).**
   **His Ownership is Not Dependent on My Acceptance**

   It (being a disciple) involved personal allegiance to Him, expressed in following Him and giving Him an exclusive loyalty. In at least some cases it meant literal abandonment of home, business ties and possessions, but in every case readiness to put the claims of Jesus first, whatever the cost, was demanded. Such an attitude went well beyond the normal pupil-teacher relationship and gave the word ‘disciple’ a new sense. (The New Bible Dictionary)
Every Disciple is a Convert,  
But Not Every Convert is a Biblical Disciple

3. A Biblical disciple has reconciled Christ’s command for His followers to accept a Master-servant relationship with Him.

Luke 14:25-33  Now great crowds were traveling with Him. So He turned and said to them: “If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his own father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, and **even his own life**—he **cannot be My disciple**. Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. … In the same way, therefore, **everyone who does not say good-bye to all his possessions cannot be My disciple**.

(see NOTE below.)

Rom. 6:19 … so now offer them as **slaves** to righteousness, which results in sanctification.

1 Cor. 7:22 … he who is called as a free man is **Christ’s slave**.

1 Peter 2:16 As **God’s slaves**, live as free people, but don’t use your freedom as a way to conceal evil.

**NOTE ON LUKE 14:25-33** The stress here is on the priority of love (compare Matt. 10:37) “The person who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; the person who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.”

One’s loyalty to Jesus must come before his loyalty to his family or even to life itself. Indeed, those who did follow Jesus against their families’ desires were probably thought of as hating their families. (Walvoord, John F., and Zuck, Roy B., *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, (Wheaton, Ill: Scripture Press Pub., Inc.)

4. **A disciple of Jesus is more than just a student, they are an apprentice.**

Unfortunately, many in the Western Hemisphere have adopted the secular **teacher-student** method for growing believers. There are significant factors that would seem to favor this approach, such as busyness and perceived efficiency. However, what appears to be most efficient is not necessarily what is most effective.

The **teacher-disciple** model demands a greater commitment and much more personal attention, but we believe it is the Biblical method modeled by Jesus Himself, and the model that will result in the greatest individual spiritual growth and impact on the world.

**A Student** – Typically the goal of a student is to learn knowledge (information), that is, to learn **what the teacher knows**. The student may not even respect or like his teacher.

**A Disciple** – A disciple on the other hand is a student who has the goal of becoming **like his teacher**. This model requires personal interaction, and a personal commitment by the teacher (mentor, spiritual parent) on behalf of the apprentice learner.

**A Student Wants To Know What the Teacher Knows,  
A Disciple Wants To Become Like the Teacher**
Luke 6:40  (Jesus said) “A disciple (apprentice learner) is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher.”
Matthew 10:24-25  (Jesus said) “A disciple is not above his teacher, or a slave above his master. It is enough for a disciple to become like his teacher and a slave like his master.”

| All Disciples are Students, But Not All Students are Disciples |

5. A disciple has a desire to know God, not just know “about” Him.

Jer. 9:23-24  This is what the LORD says: … But the one who boasts should boast in this, that he understands and knows Me—that I am Yahweh, showing faithful love, justice, and righteousness on the earth, for I delight in these things. This is the LORD’s declaration.
Luke 10:38-42  … He (Jesus) entered a village, and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home. She had a sister named Mary, who also sat at the Lord’s feet and was listening to what He said. But Martha was distracted by her many tasks, and she came up and asked, “Lord, don’t You care that my sister has left me to serve alone? So tell her to give me a hand.” The Lord answered her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset about many things, but one thing is necessary. Mary has made the right choice, and it will not be taken away from her.”
John 17:3  This is eternal life: that they may know You, the only true God, and the One You have sent—Jesus Christ.
Romans 12:2  Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.

6. A disciple has the attitude of one who follows the Lord, not one who “leads” the Lord.

Luke 5:10-11  … “Don’t be afraid,” Jesus told Simon. “From now on you will be catching people!” Then they brought the boats to land, left everything, and followed Him.
Luke 9:23-24  Then He said to them all, “If anyone wants to come with Me, he must deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life because of Me will save it.”
John 12:24-26  “I assure you: Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains by itself. But if it dies, it produces a large crop. The one who loves his life will lose it, and the one who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me. Where I am, there My servant also will be. If anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him.”
7. What has been described in the previous points should not imply that a disciple of Jesus is super spiritual or beyond the capacity to sin. Although the disciple's acceptance of Christ's yoke gives the Holy Spirit the freedom to mold them, they still have the capacity to disobey, and can submit to the sinful human nature for varying lengths of time.

The fact that the disciple has made the choice to acknowledge the lordship of Christ over their life has set the general direction of their Christian life. The everyday application of assimilated convictions will depend on the disciple's continual willingness to yield up areas of their life to His authority. The battle has been won, but there are many skirmishes. Because being a disciple has more to do with one's disposition than with behavior, even a wholehearted disciple can find themselves in a quagmire of defeat if they do not understand how to consistently abide in fellowship with the Lord.

One of the responsibilities of Church leadership is to convey to the congregation that each believer should aspire to be used by the Holy Spirit as a “witness,” and also as a “discipler” (spiritual parent)

One characteristic that is typically evident in the life of a disciple of Jesus is a discernible “passion for the Lord”

"... He (God) raised up David as their king and testified about him:

‘I have found David the son of Jesse,
a man loyal to Me, who will carry out all My will.’

(Acts 13:22)
Guidelines for Mentoring Others

1. What is the purpose of discipling? (See lesson 2-2)

Every person is born with a predisposition toward independence from God. That disposition tends to strengthen as the child grows into an adult. If the person accepts His gift of salvation, then God begins a process of inward transformation (sanctification). The pace and depth of that transformation process is affected by the understanding and openness of the new Christian. The intent of discipleship (mentoring, “spiritual parenting”) is to help the new Christian to understand what God is doing, in order to significantly influence and accelerate that process.

Romans 12:1-2 ... brothers, by the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.

Colossians 1:28-29 (Paul wrote) We proclaim Him, warning and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone mature in Christ. I labor for this, striving with His strength that works powerfully in me.

2. Targeting (Seeking God’s choices as to whom I should mentor)

A. If I want to be an effective spiritual mentor (discipler), I need to prayerfully seek God’s wisdom for discernment as to who will benefit from my investment of time, energy and possessions. Jesus let His Father make the decision.

Luke 6:12-16 ... He went out to the mountain to pray and spent all night in prayer to God. When daylight came, He summoned His disciples, and He chose 12 of them—He also named them apostles.

Sadly, many “older” Christians, especially those who have found a comfortable and acceptable Christian lifestyle, are not overly interested in being mentored on toward spiritual maturity, fruitfulness and reproduction. As I prayerfully consider mentoring another Christian, I should look for the characteristics in Point 3. If they are not evident, then I prayerfully look to the Lord for His confirmation, or to provide me someone else who does have a hunger to grow spiritually. There are Christians who would love to have someone like me take them under my “wing” to help them grow.

Caution: Trying to disciple a disinterested person will usually lead to frustration!

Important If I spend my limited time with a disinterested person, I may be neglecting someone else who sincerely wants to grow. Timing is important. Someone not interested today may be interested in the future.

B. When praying about discipling, what characteristics should I look for in other Christians?

1. New believers Since they are now as little children in the kingdom, they tend to be spiritually hungry, and need someone to walk alongside of them.

2. Christians who have been living in a desert experience (often for years), who through a God orchestrated crisis have found themselves humbled and are finally willing to acknowledge that He can manage their life better than they can. (His Lordship)

3. Christians who have obviously accepted His Lordship over their life, want to walk with Him, but have either stagnated (or plateaued) in their Christian growth or don’t understand how to consistently abide in fellowship with the Lord.
Target Groups for Mentoring

GROUP # 1
New believers? Since they are now depicted as little children in the “family” of God, they need someone to walk alongside of them to answer their questions and help them to understand how to follow the Lord and grow spiritually.

GROUP # 2
Christians, who are living defeated lives, in a “desert” experience. (This is often characterized by ongoing spiritual symptoms such as lack of peace, worry, anger, irritability, unbelief, addictive behavior, anxiety, critical or judgemental attitude, sense of defeat, disobedience, complaining and dissatisfaction.)

GROUP # 3
Christians who have acknowledged His Lordship over their life, want to walk with Him but their growth has stagnated, because they don’t know how to constistantly abide in Christ.

This is usually the most effective “window of opportunity” for spiritually mentoring or personal discipleship.

Typically, the new believer begins the Christian life with a learner’s disposition.

If this period of hunger and openness (“first love”) to personal discipleship is not taken advantage of, many new Christians will adapt their behavior to match the lifestyle being modeled by other “older” believers.

Is that what we want?
3. What characteristics should I look for in a disciple-to-be?

1. **A spiritual hunger.** Are they hungering and seeking after God? (Jesus said) *those who hunger and thirst for righteousness are blessed, for they will be filled.* (Matt. 5:6)

2. **A teachable attitude.** Do they have an openness to Him? Do they see themselves as a learner? As an apprentice?

3. **A reliability (dependability).** Do they want to **apply** His truth to their life? Is spiritual growth a **priority in their life**? (Paul told Timothy) *And what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, commit to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.* (2 Tim. 2:2)

   **Caution:** It is not good if they think they’re doing you a favor.


   **NOTE:** Normally, men should disciple men and women should disciple women.

   - Ideally, arrange to meet at least **once each week for about 1½ hours or so.** The time can vary depending on their spiritual hunger, assimilation of Biblical concepts, and maturity level.
   - Plan on spending at least **3 to 9 months** with a mentee, meeting regularly.
   - The purpose of the meetings is to explain Biblical truth and principles, and to give the mentee opportunities to **ask** questions, **share** spiritual struggles, and **discuss** related topics.
   - It is important that I am a thoughtful **listener.** It’s the best way to identify gaps in their spiritual understanding.
   - **Be flexible** enough to allow the Holy Spirit to change the direction of the study or conversation, yet **orderly** enough so time is not squandered on less significant matters.
   - Go through the material **at the mentee’s pace.**
   - Encourage the mentee to look to the Lord to apply Biblical principles to their ever day life.
   - As the mentee grows, encourage them, as opportunities arise to clearly explain these Biblical principles to others. As the Holy Spirit leads, the mentee should start mentoring another person, with your assistance.

   **NOTE:** We don’t want to imply that the DTI lessons are the only valid ones. Christians have been discipled over the centuries using different methods. But, the **nurturing** aspect of one-on-one mentoring is crucial. If I expect to see spiritual maturity, spiritual fruitfulness and spiritual reproduction in the mentee’s life these DTI **concepts** need to be integrated into their everyday life.

   - **B.** Seek to convey **Biblical principles** to live by, not just to impart Biblical knowledge. The “spiritual parenting” model of discipleship should include commitment, modeling and individual attention in addition to teaching God’s Word.
   - **C.** Let the mentee know that I am **available** throughout the week. I should regularly monitor their spiritual growth even after our formal discipleship time is completed.
   - **D.** Regularly **pray for** the disciple, and **with** the disciple.
   - **E.** Remember I am a **role model** for my mentee. I should tell them about my **spiritual growth** when appropriate, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
   - **F.** My goal is to lead them into **dependence on the Holy Spirit**, and independence from me. I should expect the typical Christian, if correctly mentored, to become a “spiritual reproducer”.

   *The Disciple Won’t Care How Much You Know, Until They Know How Much You Care!*

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   **2-5**
Essentials for Discipling
(Role descriptions)

The discipler needs to count on the HOLY SPIRIT to:

1. **Orchestrate encounters** with others who need to be mentored.
2. **Create spiritual hunger** in the person to be mentored.
3. **Guide** the discipleship process.
4. **Give wisdom**, **discernment**, and **clarity** to your mentee.

The DISCIPLER is responsible to:

1. **Pray** and look to the Lord with **expectation**.
2. Continue in fellowship (**abide**) with the Holy Spirit.
3. **Study** the Word and **seek** to be prepared as a usable vessel. (2 Tim. 2:15)
4. Be **available** to be used as that vessel by the Holy Spirit.
5. **Cooperate** with the Holy Spirit as a partner in **His** work.

The MATERIAL that is used should:

1. Emphasize the mentee’s need to be looking to the Lord to reveal Himself through His Word, the Bible.
2. **Progressively** address the **needs** of the mentee in an intentional and systematic method, as in building a house. (Review Lesson 2-1, Point 10)
3. Focus the mentee’s attention on their **transformative relationship with the Lord**, rather than on external behavior manipulation. (Review Lesson 1-2, Point 1)

**In the human physical realm there are three OBSTACLES TO REPRODUCTION:**

1. Physical immaturity,
2. A health problem, and
3. A lack of physical intimacy.

**Dawson Trotman, founder of the Navigators (navigators.org), has suggested that the same three obstacles can hinder spiritual reproduction.**

1. **Spiritual immaturity** – Due to being a newer Christian, or due to a lack of spiritual growth.
2. **Spiritual health problems** – Due to unresolved issues between the Christian and the Lord, and/or a lack of correct spiritual understanding.
3. **Lack of spiritual intimacy** – Due to busyness and/or other activities or things that infringe on their intimacy with the Lord.
Recommendations for Effective Discipleship

A disciple has the goal of becoming like the teacher.

(Jesus said) A disciple (apprentice learner) is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher. (Luke 6:40)

1. For the newer believer there is usually a significant emphasis toward behavior manipulation. Therefore, we should focus the believer’s attention on his relationship with the Lord, since inward transformation will produce the behavior that pleases the Lord. Our goal is for the mentee to learn to habitually seek God’s approval, rather than man’s approval. (Rom. 12:1-2) (John 12:42-43)

2. As a spiritual baby, every new believer should be given personalized individual attention during the critical formative period of their new life with the Lord. CAUTION: Be careful to not interpret the new believer’s enthusiasm as an accurate indicator of spiritual well being, since this initial openness and hunger has a tendency to fade if not developed during this window of opportunity.

3. Biblical training should be orderly and progressive in nature, rather than random. Due to the new believer’s unfamiliarity with the Christian life, random information tends to be archived rather than applied. It is also very easy for the newer believer to unknowingly have gaps in their understanding of essential concepts. (Illustration: What are the steps in building a new house?) (1 Cor. 3:10-15)

4. Disciples should be treated as apprentices, rather than as students simply seeking Biblical knowledge. As in any purposeful apprenticeship, there is a need for a significant amount of committed time and energy. Individual training is slower but tends to be deeper.

5. One-on-one training (spiritual mentoring / parenting) should be balanced with corporate training, just as in any normal family. Neither one should be considered optional. One weakness of corporate settings is many times there is no requirement for serious interaction or dialog that addresses the individual spiritual needs of the disciple.

6. Serious consideration should be given to the inclusion of the following major components of personal discipleship, namely: 1) Commitment, 2) Modeling, 3) Individual Attention, and 4) Teaching. Use 1 Thess. 2:3-13 as a model for personal mentoring as it incorporates the major components of “spiritual parenting / mentoring”.

7. Every believer should be seen as a potential mentor, and trained toward that end. There is no special spiritual gift for discipling, just as there is no special gift for witnessing. The command to make disciples was given to the universal church, not to just a few specially trained or gifted individuals. If human couples raised offspring at the same ratio as Christians spiritually parent new believers, the human race would probably be considered an endangered species!

8. At a minimum, the disciple should understand and be able to explain to others an Overview of the Christian life, as well as the concepts of “lordship”, “sanctification”, “abiding” (walking in the Spirit), “the Rewards Ceremony”, etc.

9. The spiritual health of a Christian church should not be measured primarily by the activity of its leadership. A better indicator is the spiritual reproduction and growth that is occurring as a result of the main body of believers being equipped for the work of service. One should ask, “If the leader(s) were removed, would the body of believers be spiritually mature enough to continue to grow and spiritually reproduce?” (Eph. 4:11-16)

A Measure of Success is Indicated When the Believer You Are Discipling is Functioning as a Discipler.

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1. Our desire is to present the concept of discipleship as a commitment to “spiritually parent” a disciple-in-the-making, in contrast to the prevalent idea that discipleship is simply a “transfer of Biblical knowledge” that takes place, usually in a classroom or group setting. We believe that group meetings do play an important part in healthy Christian growth, but they cannot take the place of personal one-on-one mentoring, which includes individualized teaching, modeling, encouragement, exhortation, etc. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of corporate meetings such as in a classroom setting, or a small accountability group and the advantages and disadvantages of one-on-one meetings?

2. Discuss the importance of each of the four major components of personal discipleship. Why is the initial period in a new Christian’s life so important for spiritual development?

3. If we see new believers as “spiritual babies” in Christ, then it seems logical to look at the characteristics of a typical human baby. There are at least three notable traits:
   1) They’re hungry
   2) They’re dependent on others
   3) They are self-centered.
   Are these characteristics also true of the typical new believer?

4. Often new believers are not presented with essential spiritual concepts because there is a fear of overwhelming them with too much complex Biblical information, concluding that the Christian life can really only be understood by advanced believers. None of the spiritual concepts presented in this discipleship curriculum are overwhelming if clearly explained. However, if left to their own, many newer Christians will conclude that God’s provision for a healthy Christian life is totally dependent on their outward obedient behavior and/or Biblical understanding. That is overwhelming.

5. Some reasons why many Christians are reluctant to make a commitment to mentoring a new believer are:
   (1) I don’t feel adequate
   (2) That’s not my gift
   (3) I don’t have enough Biblical understanding
   (4) I don’t want to be a hypocrite
   (5) I’m too busy, over committed; etc.
   These reasons are usually based on one’s appraisal of personal capabilities, rather than faith in God’s capabilities. Many such Christians would greatly benefit from being trained as disciplers. How many Christian parents would have kids if they had waited until they felt their parenting skills were adequate? Have any of these reasons affected you either in the past or present? If so, has God given you victory, or are you presently seeing God’s victory in your life?

6. How have you been personally impacted by the modeling of other Christians? Has it had a positive or negative impact on your life?
7. The excitement commonly observed in a new Christian’s life is often mistakenly taken to indicate a measure of spiritual understanding. They hear that they are “new creatures in Christ,” yet soon find themselves with temptations similar to what they experienced as unbelievers. Is it any wonder that so many Christians find themselves living like unbelievers after a few months of trying to live the “new” life that seems to be expected of them? Many continue to attend church services, and may be involved in Christian events and programs, but inwardly are defeated and struggling, “doing their best!” Does this resemble your personal experience in any way?

8. Personal discipleship serves to acquaint the newer believer with the general goals that God has for their life and with the process by which God typically accomplishes spiritual growth. Because each Christian is unique, only the Holy Spirit can be in charge of the spiritual growth process. Through personal discipleship, our intent is to shorten the time required for the newer believer to learn how to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in the process of spiritual growth. What do you believe should be the anticipated spiritual results of healthy discipleship? Why?

9. Ideally every new Christian should be individually mentored in order to help them in the transition from self-reliance to an increasing God-reliance, as clearly contrasted in Proverbs 3:5-6. Sadly, older Christians, who have not yet acknowledged His Lordship, will often have an increasing measure of resistance to changes, since they typically will have become accustomed to a somewhat manageable Christian lifestyle.

Persecution and crisis are instruments that God uses to accelerate the transition to God-reliance. We need to be alert for Christians who have recently passed through a crisis and are now ready to acknowledge His Lordship over their life. It is the Holy Spirit’s job to coordinate crisis, and my responsibility to be available to Him when He wants to use me in the life of another who is responding to Him.

10. If someone were to ask you to describe a “biblical disciple”, how would you respond?

11. Do you believe that you know what spiritual gift(s) you have been given by the Holy Spirit? If so, how have you drawn this conclusion? Is it from observing the Lord’s involvement in your life? How has He been using you to spiritually benefit others? Has anyone else commented to you regarding your spiritual engiftedness? (See also Lesson 1-6, pt. 8)

*Jesus did not tell us to go into all the world and just make “converts,” He told us to go and make “disciples.” (See Matthew 28:18-20)*

*Every believer should be seen as a potential witness, as well as a potential discipler (“spiritual parent”).*
## Phase 3 Discipleship Curriculum

**“Amplified Discipleship Concepts”**

| Lesson 3-1 | A Summarized Review of the Christian Life |
| Lesson 3-2 | Understanding the Predispositions of My Human Nature |
| Lesson 3-3 | How the Christian Community Is Divided into Two Camps |
| Lesson 3-4 | The Israelite Journey as an Analogy to My Christian Journey |
| Lesson 3-5 | Verses and Principles related to the concept of Lordship |
| Lesson 3-6 | The 3 Areas Of My Life that Need to Be Surrendered |
| Lesson 3-7 | Discussion Points related to Salvation, the Two Natures, and Lordship |
| Lesson 3-8 | A Deeper Look at My Two Natures |
| Lesson 3-9 | Joshua 7 - Abiding, Confession of Sin and Restoration to Fellowship |
| Lesson 3-10 | John 15 - The Vine and the Branches (Verse by Verse) |
| Lesson 3-11 | The Son is our Model for Continual Abiding |
| Lesson 3-12 | Diagram and Verses of the Christian as a Temple of God |
| Lesson 3-13 | The Tribunal of Christ |
| Lesson 3-14 | A Theological study on (The Bema) or the Tribunal of Christ |
| Lesson 3-15 | Discussion Points related to Abiding and The Bema Seat |
The Christian Life Summarized

1. **Salvation is more than just being saved from Hell**

God has a much greater purpose for my life here on earth and into eternity.

(John 10:10) *(Jesus said)* … I have come so that they may have life and have it *in abundance.*

(1 Cor. 2:9) But as it is written: What eye did not see and ear did not hear, and what never entered the human mind—*God prepared this for those who love Him.*

2. **Man is a unique creation of God**

God set man apart and put His spirit into him. (Genesis 2:7) Then the LORD God formed the man out of the dust from the ground and breathed the breath of life into his nostrils, and the man became a living being.

Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely, and may your *spirit, soul, and body* be kept sound and blameless for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

(1 Thess. 5:23)

*spirit* - *God* awareness. We interact with God through our spirit.

*soul* - *Self* awareness. Personality, reasoning, emotions, mind, will, understanding.

*body* - *World* awareness. We interact with the physical world through our physical body senses.

The entire animal kingdom was created by God. However, the animal kingdom is limited in scope, and without a “spirit”. (In Genesis 2:7, God breathed into man alone His “breath of life.”)

3. **The problem started with Adam and Eve**

God gave a commandment (a law), which they disobeyed. As a result of their disobedience, sin and death entered into the world. (Romans 5:12) *Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, in this way death spread to all men, because all sinned.*

The Bible describes God as: Loving, Perfect, Sovereign, Faithful, Holy, Just, Merciful, Forgiving. He can do no wrong. He cannot lie. He never changes. **He is totally trustworthy.**

Satan portrays God as someone who cannot be trusted, nor counted on to do what is in my best interest. Satan’s *lie* is that I can obtain peace, happiness, satisfaction, joy and lasting pleasure *independent of* God. (the “root” problem of humanity)
The joy and peace that God intends for me is **only possible in companionship with Him**.

(John 14:27) *(Jesus said)* “… My peace I give to you. **I do not give to you as the world gives…**”

(Romans 14:17) for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.

### 4. Not everything an unbeliever does is evil

An unbeliever can do many good things from man’s perspective. The problem is that man cannot do good that measures up to God’s perfection.

All that man does is **blemished, distorted, and falls short. God cannot accept “my best.”**

Their works (fruits) have no life (eternal), are less than perfect, and cannot please God. Even their good deeds are **temporary, only for this life.**

Eph. 4:18 They are **darkened in their understanding, excluded** from the life of God.

Rom. 3:23 For **all** have sinned and **fall short** …

Rom. 3:10-12 … There is **no one** righteous, **not even one**. … there is **no one** who seeks God. … There is **no one** who does what is good,…

Rom. 8:7-8 For the mind-set of the flesh is **hostile to God** because it does not submit itself to God’s law, for it is **unable to do so**. Those who are in the flesh **cannot please God**.

My human nature can only produce **artificial** fruit. It may look good, but it has **no life**. How much nourishment would I get from eating a piece of artificial fruit? Would it be satisfying?

### 5. Salvation

An unbeliever comes to the conclusion (after enough pressure) that things are hopeless and cries out to God. *(Romans 10:13)* **For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.**

Salvation is **just the beginning** of the Christian life. “Eternal life” is **not an object**; it is God’s life, without end.
6. At salvation I receive the Holy Spirit and a new life with God

At salvation I was put into this position of fellowship with Him, by virtue of Jesus’ righteousness, not through my own merits.

(1 Cor. 1:30) But it is from Him that you are in Christ Jesus, who became … for us—our righteousness.

**THE HOLY SPIRIT IS A PERSON!**

1 Cor. 6:19-20 Don’t you know that your body is a sanctuary of the Holy Spirit …

John 16:13 (Jesus said) When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all the truth …

Romans 8:16 The Spirit Himself testifies together with our spirit that we are God’s children.

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**Before** (as an unbeliever), I was a guilty sinner before a holy Judge. **Now** (as a believer), I am a child of the Father, cared for by a divine Person, the Holy Spirit.

Note: The circular “dotted line” represents the “conditional” aspect (of abiding).

7. There is good news and bad news!

**Bad News! My human nature has not been changed:** it still cannot produce perfect fruit.

(John 6:63) The Spirit is the One who gives life. The flesh doesn’t help at all. …

**Good News!** It doesn’t matter that my old sinful human nature has not been changed, because God has given me a new nature. His divine nature in the Person of the Holy Spirit.

(2 Peter 1:3-4) His divine power has given us everything required for life and godliness through the knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness. By these He has given us very great and precious promises, so that through them you may share in the divine nature.

**MY HUMAN NATURE WAS NOT CHANGED WHEN I BECAME A CHRISTIAN!**

= Same sinful human nature, not the least bit improved, still incapable of producing acceptable fruit.

(Gal. 3:3) … After beginning with the Spirit, are you now going to be made complete by the flesh?

(Gal. 5:17) For the flesh desires what is against the Spirit, and the Spirit desires what is against the flesh; these are opposed to each other,…

**THE LAW EXPOSES THE CHARACTER OF MY HUMAN NATURE.**

(Rom. 3:19-20) … because the knowledge of sin comes through the law.

My human nature is pictured as a salty spring, unable to support human life:

(James 3:11-12) Does a spring pour out sweet and bitter water from the same opening? Can a fig tree produce olives, my brothers, or a grapevine produce figs? Neither can a saltwater spring yield fresh water.

Imagine the Law as a sign by a water hole in the desert;

“**WARNING! This water is contaminated and unhealthy to drink.**”
8. More good news and more bad news

**Good News** = The Holy Spirit is **permanent**. He will **never** leave me. (John 14:16) … the Father, … will give you another Counselor to be with you **forever**.

*(Note: The Holy Spirit helps me to understand and follow Him. He should not be regarded as a Servant who waits for me to command Him.)*

**Bad News** = My human nature will not leave me until I physically die. All humans have the **same** sinful human nature.

9. Abiding in fellowship with the Lord

The condition of **living in fellowship** with Him is called **ABIDING**. **Everyone starts the Christian life here**.

**Illustration of Abiding**: If I hold a small object and you let go of it, the force of gravity overcomes the object and it immediately falls. Think of gravity as a representation of the way in which my human nature repels me away from God and towards sin. Now I place that object on my open palm. Because the power of my hand is greater than the force of gravity, the object can safely “rest” on my palm. The object does not fall, even though the force of gravity has not diminished.

The Holy Spirit can be represented by my hand, and I can be represented by the object. For as ever long **as I desire** I can confidently “rest” in Him, that is, I can continually experience **His** power over my sinful nature.

This is a place of **rest**. This is the condition of a **branch** on a tree. (John 15) (Matthew 11:28-30) “Come to Me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you **rest**. All of you, take up My yoke and learn from Me, because I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find **rest** for yourselves. For My yoke is **easy** and My burden is **light**.”

10. Should I expect to live a sinless life?

I should continue to think of gravity as a picture of the way in which my sinful nature attracts me to fall. Do I go through the day expecting to physically fall? Of course not. Although I must always remain alert, I should not “expect” to be dominated by the sinful nature.

(1 John 1:9, 2:1) … My little children, I am writing you these things so that you may not sin. But **if** anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ the Righteous One. (Gal. 5:16) I say then, walk by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.

11. What is the Holy Spirit doing as I abide in fellowship with Him?

- **He is increasingly producing His fruit through my life.**
  
  Gal. 5:22-23 But **the fruit of the Spirit** is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, **gentleness**, **self-control**. Against such things there is no law. John 15:5 … “The one who remains in Me and I in him produces **much fruit**…”

- **He glorifies the Father through me.**
  
  John 15:8 “My Father is glorified **by this**: that you produce **much fruit** …”

- **He is causing me to grow in spiritual maturity.**
  
  John 15:2 … and **He prunes** every branch that produces fruit **so that it will produce more fruit**.
  
  Rom. 12:2 … but **be transformed by the renewing of your mind**, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.
He causes me to experience His joy.
John 15:11 “I have spoken these things to you so that My joy may be in you and your joy may be complete.”

He is producing an eternal inheritance for me.
John 15:16 … I chose you. I appointed you that you should go out and produce fruit and that your fruit should remain….
2 Cor. 4:17 For our momentary light affliction is producing for us an absolutely incomparable eternal weight of glory.

He is attracting others to Himself through my life.
Acts 1:8 (Jesus said) But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

12. Living in abiding fellowship is “conditional”.

I still have the sinful human nature, and God will not take away my right to choose. At any moment I can choose to remove myself from the condition of “rest” (abiding), and allow my human nature to reign as my master.

Going back to the hand illustration; if I am not resting on the hand it is because I have chosen to remove myself. This has nothing to do with the issue of salvation, but rather with the fruitfulness of my life here on earth.

The Christian husband - wife relationship is meant to be a model for abiding fellowship.

(Eph. 5:31-32) … a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. This mystery is profound, but I am talking about Christ and the church.

(Eph. 4:30) And don’t grieve (offend) God’s Holy Spirit....

As a Christian I have that living water ready to flow through my life. But when I am out of abiding fellowship, the tap is turned off. Jesus said in John 7:38-39 “The one who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, will have streams of living water flow from deep within him.” He said this about the Spirit....”

13. As a Christian, I can live unreconciled with the Holy Spirit

If I choose to submit to the sinful nature I will find myself here, but I do not have to stay here!

I do not need to be out of fellowship with the Holy Spirit any longer than I choose to be.

Restoration to the position of abiding fellowship will take place immediately upon confession of the offense(s) for which the Holy Spirit is holding me accountable.

Note: The circular “dotted line” represents the “conditional” aspect of abiding.
How can I know if I am out of fellowship (not abiding)? Usually symptoms indicate an ailing body. Similarly I should look for “on-going” spiritual symptoms of the sinful nature, such as:

- stumbling
- impatience
- frustration
- dissatisfation
- worry

- striving
- lack of peace
- sense of defeat
- complaining
- anxiety

- anger
- irritability
- addictive behavior
- critical or judgmental attitude
- other on-going symptoms?

**IMPORTANT:** In a healthy family the oversight of parent-child harmony is the responsibility of the parents, not the children. In the same way, the Holy Spirit oversees my abiding harmony with Him, and I need to be continuously sensitive to His promptings, since my judgment is often flawed.

14. **Why do some Christians live unreconciled with the Holy Spirit?**

Some are unwilling to give Him authority over their lives. Do I think of myself as walking side by side with the Lord, but **I am in charge (that is, He’s my Partner?)**? Is He just there to help me when I think I have a need? Or do I see Him as my Master, the One I follow as His servant? That is **Lordship!**

He doesn’t ask me to design my future and let Him fit in at my convenience. It is the other way around. **He has a personalized plan and He desires for me to fit into it, if I am willing.**

Some see God as the Divine 911. They call upon Him when things get out of hand. (Is God my co-pilot in case I get lost?) **Do I want God, or just His blessings?**

Some think that God’s greatest priority is **to make me happy here on earth**! As a matter of fact He does want my happiness, but not just temporary. God wants to give me lasting satisfaction. If left on my own I will usually accept temporary satisfaction. Because God loves me and wants what is best for me, **He will not let me be content with less** than what He has planned for me, in companionship with Him. **My happiness is a by-product** of living in fellowship with Him. God loves me so much that He will only let me experience His true joy as I abide in fellowship with Him.

Who knows what will best satisfy me, me or God? I come into the Christian life with a perceived mental list of what is good and what is bad, what makes me happy and what doesn’t. **I need to unlearn** many habits and misconceptions that I brought into the Christian life, and some I’ve learned since I became a Christian. As a Christian I cannot expect God to fit into my program. He has **better** things, things that can only be experienced through trusting Him.

(Romans 12:1-2) **Therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind,** so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.

Can I do “**good**” spiritual deeds while living out of fellowship with the Holy Spirit? Absolutely! I can attend church services, read my Bible, pray, give money, etc. **Doing good things is no guarantee** that I am abiding in Christ.

Paul warns us in 1 Corinthians 13:1-3  **If I speak human or angelic languages but do not have love,** I am a sounding gong or a clanging cymbal. **If I have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith so that I can move mountains but do not have love, I am nothing.** And if I donate all my goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body in order to boast but do not have love, **I gain nothing.**
15. **How to identify “Unresolved Issues”**

Often, being overcome by sin is a symptom of a problem. There is a good chance that the most troublesome areas for me are symptoms and not the root problem. That is, He will not allow me to abide in fellowship with Him and have victory in one area of my life while I am consciously allowing disobedience and defeat in another area.

**What is keeping me from abiding in fellowship?**

- **Unforgiveness?**
  Mark 11:25  …if you have anything against anyone, forgive him,…

- **Unreconciled relationships?**
  Matthew 18:15  “If your brother sins against you, go and rebuke him in private. If he listens to you, you have won your brother.”
  Matthew 5:23-24  ... First go and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

- **Restitution?**
  Numbers 5:5-7  … When a man or woman commits any sin against another, that person acts unfaithfully toward the LORD and is guilty. The person is to confess the sin he has committed. He is to pay full compensation, add a fifth of its value to it, and give it to the individual he has wronged.

- **Unconfessed sin?** (Consider “sin” to be “anything that is displeasing to the Lord.”)
  Proverbs 28:13  The one who conceals his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them will find mercy. 
  1 John 1:9-10  If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say, “We don’t have any sin,” we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

16. **Need for restoration**

Yes, it is true that sin is an offence against God’s holiness. However, the greatest effect that my sin has on my relationship with God is that it disrupts my abiding fellowship with Him, and hinders Him from blessing and using me. God cannot bear His good fruit in my life while I am choosing to allow my human nature to reign.

(John 15:4-5)  *(Jesus said)*  “Remain in Me, and I in you. Just as a branch is unable to produce fruit by itself unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in Me. I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in Me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without Me.”

**Only what is motivated by the Holy Spirit has eternal value.**

**King David** is an example of a believer living out of fellowship for about nine months. (2 Samuel 11:1 - 12:25)

God’s desire is for me to be restored to abiding fellowship quickly. The Holy Spirit wants to reveal to me whatever disrupted my fellowship. I only need to be honest with Him and to acknowledge whatever He shows me. I must ask the Lord to show me in what way(s) I have offended Him.
Understanding the **Predispositions** of my Human Nature

(*Identifying the enemy, will help me to increasingly depend less on self.*)

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At birth my mind was like an empty blackboard

God's presence

INDEPENDENCE FROM GOD

- **Works** (Doing, behavior)
- **Knowledge** (My own understanding)
- **Possessions** (What I have) (Jer. 9:23-24)

Slaves of the sinful nature, (dead - in relation to God)

If I do not understand the unchanged tendencies of my old nature, I will most likely have the same problem that the Galatians had – trusting in their own goodness and works, even as believers. (...*Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now going to be made complete by the flesh?* Galatians 3:1-3).

I am freed from the power of the sinful nature, alive to God (dead - in relation to the sinful nature)

Now the sinful nature is like a “DEPOSED DICTATOR” (Powerless, yet continually “claiming” to have authority).
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God does not force me, but as I choose to be teachable, He will use His Word and other means to gradually illuminate areas of my understanding that He wants to alter. (“Sanctification”) John 17:17; Romans 12:1-2; Ephesians 4:22-24

Sanctification results in increasingly more Spiritual fruit

My worldview does not disappear at salvation

My learning process. (From family, peers, social media, TV, the world culture, teachers, Satan, etc.)

At birth my mind was like an empty blackboard
The Christian Community Is Divided into Two Different Camps

**THE "NORMAL" CHRISTIAN LIFE** (God is my "Master")

This on-going process includes: "Abiding", "Pruning", "Sanctification", Learning what is pleasing to Him. (Focus tends to be on "inward transformation")

* A Lordship decision, not a casual choice

I have consciously chosen to accept His authority (His yoke) over my life

God

---

me

---

Goal: Spiritual Maturity and Fruitfulness

My contentment in this life is a by-product of a healthy ongoing relationship with God

"But the one sown on the good ground—this is one who hears and understands the word, who does bear fruit and yields: some 100, some 60, some 30 times what was sown." Matthew 13:23

**King David** is an Old Testament example

**THE "ABNORMAL" CHRISTIAN LIFE** (God is my "Partner")

A Divided Loyalty

Jesus said, "No one can be a slave of two masters, ..." Matt. 6:24

70 – 80% of American Christians?

"I give God a reasonable part of my life and hopefully that satisfies His expectations." (Focus tends to be on "external behavior.")

God

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me

Hopeful harmony with God

Goal: My Happiness in this life

"God blesses (helps) me as I seek to satisfy my aspirations and fulfill my goals in life." (I hope for His blessings on my terms)

As for the seed that fell among thorns, these are the ones who, when they have heard, go on their way and are choked with worries, riches, and pleasures of life, and produce no mature fruit." Luke 8:14, Matt. 13:22

**King Saul** is an Old Testament example
Lesson Guide

The Purpose of This Lesson Is:

- To present the concept that there are two camps within the Christian community.
- To contrast a “spiritual” disposition with a “self-dependent” disposition (see Proverbs 3:5-6).
- To change the focus of attention from “outward behavior” to “inward transformation”.

1. The objective of this lesson is to lay a foundation for the concept of the Christian community being divided into two camps. The main difference between the two, is that of a disposition (acknowledgement of) toward the authority (Lordship) of Jesus in a Christian’s life.

2. Most Christians perceive that there is a divided authority, with God governing in some areas while the Christian has authority over other areas, and that it is the Christian’s right, or privilege, to decide over which areas God should exercise authority. The problem arises because Jesus stated clearly that there can only be one master in a Christian’s life. (Matt. 6:24)

3. As a believer unless I am taught otherwise, my natural tendency is for me to assume authority over my life, while granting to God authority over limited “spiritual” areas.

4. Many churches and Christians convey to new believers that the relinquishing of authority over their life (accepting His yoke) is a long process rather than a one-time conscious choice. The problem with presenting Lordship as a process is that it results in the Christian, often unknowingly, assuming that their own priorities have a rightful place of supremacy over God’s priorities. There is a long-term daily aspect of surrender, just as marriage partners need to daily reinforce their initial vows.

5. During the spiritual mentoring process, the mentor needs to discern how the mentee (apprentice) perceives God’s authority over his/her life. Christians who have acknowledged Christ’s Lordship over their life will often be able to identify the approximate time and circumstances surrounding that event. The reason for this is that the choice to accept His rightful authority (His yoke) is not a casual decision.

6. As a Christian I need to understand that God’s stated ownership is an absolute, which is not at all dependent on my acceptance or acknowledgment of it. An acceptance or acknowledgment of what God says is truth simply removes a major obstacle to Him using and blessing me in the way He desires. To reject His Lordship is to usurp authority that is not mine. Jesus asked, “Why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and don’t do the things I say?” (Luke 6:46).

7. If I, as a Christian try to serve two masters (God and myself), I have a divided loyalty (double minded), attempting to satisfy God while at the same time perceiving God as someone who will help me achieve my goals and aspirations in this life.

8. King Saul is an Old Testament example of a believer who was unwilling to surrender his will to God, but rather chose to rely on his human understanding (self-dependence). In stark contrast King David is an example of a believer who accepted God’s authority over his life. Obviously David was guilty of grave sins, yet God testifies of his disposition of submission in Acts 13:22.

King Saul’s sins may not outwardly seem as grievous to man, yet God’s disapproval is very evident, due to Saul’s unwillingness to accept His authority.

**KING SAUL’S PROBLEM WAS ONE OF THE WILL (LORDSHIP), WHILE KING DAVID’S WAS ONE OF BEHAVIOR.**

9. I will either perceive myself as a servant to God, or I will perceive God as my helper/partner.

NOTE: Maturity has to be factored in also. **A CHRISTIAN MAY BE SPIRITUAL, YET IMMATURE.**
Both kings were chosen by God, and God’s presence was evident in both of them. Each was disobedient to God and each was confronted by a prophet of God. Their responses to God’s spokesmen, Samuel and Nathan, reveal their distinct heart dispositions towards God. Man tends to look at outward appearance (easier to be misled), but God looks at the heart attitude (and is never misled). “... Man does not see what the Lord sees, for man sees what is visible, but the Lord sees the heart.” (1 Sam. 16:7)

1. King Saul was chosen by God, and the Holy Spirit was evidenced in his life.

   (1 Sam. 9-10 and 28:19)

1 Samuel 9:17  When Samuel saw Saul, the LORD told him, “Here is the man I told you about; he will rule over My people.”
1 Samuel 10:6-7  (Samuel said) The Spirit of the LORD will control you, you will prophesy with them, and you will be transformed into a different person. When these signs have happened to you, do whatever your circumstances require because God is with you.
1 Samuel 10:9-10 When Saul turned around to leave Samuel, God changed his heart, and all the signs came about that day. When Saul and his attendant arrived at Gibeah, a group of prophets met him. Then the Spirit of God took control of him, and he prophesied along with them.

2. King Saul’s outward appearance was very attractive and acceptable to the people.

1 Samuel 9:2  He had a son named Saul, an impressive young man. There was no one more impressive among the Israelites than he. He stood a head taller than anyone else.
1 Samuel 10:22–24 … he stood a head taller than anyone else. Samuel said to all the people, “Do you see the one the LORD has chosen? There is no one like him among the entire population.” …

3. King Saul was given a simple command: to wait for Samuel to come to offer the sacrifice to God.

1 Samuel 10:8  (Samuel said) “Afterward, go ahead of me to Gilgal. I will come to you to offer burnt offerings and to sacrifice fellowship offerings. Wait seven days until I come to you and show you what to do.”

Note: On the seventh day, the day Samuel was to arrive, Saul decided he could wait no longer and unlawfully took on himself the priestly responsibility of offering community sacrifice. (See Lev. 6:8-13)

1 Samuel 13:8–14
8  He waited seven days for the appointed time that Samuel had set, but Samuel didn’t come to Gilgal, and the troops were deserting him.
9  So Saul said, “Bring me the burnt offering and the fellowship offerings.” Then he offered the burnt offering.
10  Just as he finished offering the burnt offering, Samuel arrived. So Saul went out to greet him, and Samuel asked, “What have you done?” Saul answered, “When I saw that the troops were deserting me and you didn’t come within the appointed days and the Philistines were gathering at Michmash,”
11  I thought: The Philistines will now descend on me at Gilgal, and I haven’t sought the LORD’s favor. So I forced myself to offer the burnt offering.”
13 Samuel said to Saul, “You have been foolish. You have not kept the command which the LORD your God gave you. It was at this time that the LORD would have permanently established your reign over Israel,”

14 “but now your reign will not endure. The LORD has found a man loyal to Him, and the LORD has appointed him as ruler over His people, because you have not done what the LORD commanded.”

4. King Saul was given another command, but disobeyed again and was confronted by Samuel. (1 Sam. 15:1-35)

:1-3 Samuel told Saul, …“This is what the LORD of Hosts says, … Now go and attack the Amalekites and completely destroy everything they have. Do not spare them. Kill men and women, children and infants, oxen and sheep, camels and donkeys.”

:4-7 … Saul came to the city of Amalek and set up an ambush in the wadi…. Saul struck down the Amalekites.

a. Saul once again chose to follow his own reasoning rather than follow instructions that didn’t seem to concur with his human understanding.

:8-9 He captured Agag king of Amalek alive, but he completely destroyed all the rest of the people with the sword. Saul and the troops spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, cattle, and choice animals, as well as the young rams and the best of everything else. They were not willing to destroy them, but they did destroy all the worthless and unwanted things.

Question? What was wrong with Saul’s reasoning?

b. Saul was more concerned about the approval of men than the approval of God.

:10-12 Then the word of the LORD came to Samuel, … “Saul … has not carried out My instructions.” … Early in the morning Samuel got up to confront Saul, but it was reported to Samuel, “Saul went to Carmel where he set up a monument for himself. Then he turned around and went down to Gilgal.”

Question? What is the purpose of a monument? Why was he not repentive and responsive to the Lord?

c. When confronted by Samuel, Saul defends his reasoning.

:13-15 When Samuel came to him, Saul said, “May the LORD bless you. I have carried out the LORD’s instructions.” Samuel replied, “Then what is this sound of sheep and cattle I hear?” Saul answered, “The troops brought them from the Amalekites and spared the best sheep and cattle in order to offer a sacrifice to the LORD your God, but the rest we destroyed.”

:16-19 “Stop!” exclaimed Samuel. “Let me tell you what the LORD said to me last night.” “Tell me,” he replied. Samuel continued, “Although you once considered yourself unimportant, have you not become the leader of the tribes of Israel? The LORD anointed you king over Israel and then sent you on a mission and said: ‘Go and completely destroy the sinful Amalekites. Fight against them until you have annihilated them.’ So why didn’t you obey the LORD? Why did you rush on the plunder and do what was evil in the LORD’s sight?”

:20-21 “But I did obey the LORD!” Saul answered. “I went on the mission the LORD gave me: I brought back Agag, king of Amalek, and I completely destroyed the Amalekites. The troops
took sheep and cattle from the plunder—the best of what was set apart for destruction—to sacrifice to the LORD your God at Gilgal.”

:22-23 Then Samuel said: “Does the LORD take pleasure in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the LORD? Look: to obey is better than sacrifice, to pay attention is better than the fat of rams. For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and defiance is like wickedness and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He has rejected you as king.”

**Question?** What are the flaws in Saul’s reasoning? How does God describe Saul’s attitude?

d. Saul finally acknowledges his sin, but is still focused on men’s approval, rather than God’s approval.

:24-25 Saul answered Samuel, “I have sinned. I have transgressed the LORD’s command and your words. Because I was afraid of the people, I obeyed them. Now therefore, please forgive my sin and return with me so I can worship the LORD.”

:26-29 Samuel replied to Saul, “I will not return with you. Because you rejected the word of the LORD, the LORD has rejected you from being king over Israel.” When Samuel turned to go, Saul grabbed the hem of his robe, and it tore. Samuel said to him, “The LORD has torn the kingship of Israel away from you today and has given it to your neighbor who is better than you…”

:30-35 Saul said, “I have sinned. Please honor me now before the elders of my people and before Israel. Come back with me so I can bow in worship to the LORD your God.” Then Samuel went back, following Saul, and Saul bowed down to the LORD… Samuel went to Ramah.

e. God tells us why Saul died.

1 Chronicles 10:13-14 Saul died for his unfaithfulness to the LORD because he did not keep the LORD’s word. He even consulted a medium for guidance, but he did not inquire of the LORD. So the LORD put him to death and turned the kingdom over to David son of Jesse. …

King David – A Spiritual Believer
(King David reigned for 40 years – 2 Sam. 5:4-5)

1. King David was chosen by God, prepared by God, and blessed by God. David was a “spiritual” believer, who had a passion for the Lord.

1 Sam. 16:1 The LORD said to Samuel, “How long are you going to mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and go. I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem because I have selected a king from his sons.”

1 Sam. 16:13 So Samuel took the horn of oil, anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and the Spirit of the LORD took control of David from that day forward…

1 Sam. 16:18 One of the young men answered, “I have seen a son of Jesse of Bethlehem who knows how to play the lyre. He is also a valiant man, a warrior, eloquent, handsome, and the LORD is with him.”

1 Sam. 18:14 … and (David) continued to be successful in all his activities because the LORD was with him.
Psalm 34:1–14  (David wrote) I will praise the LORD at all times; His praise will always be on my lips. I will boast in the LORD; the humble will hear and be glad. Proclaim Yahweh’s greatness with me; let us exalt His name together. ... Taste and see that the LORD is good. How happy is the man who takes refuge in Him! You who are His holy ones, fear Yahweh, ... Come, children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD.

Psalm 63:1–8  (David wrote) God, You are my God; I eagerly seek You. I thirst for You; my body faints for You in a land that is dry, desolate, and without water. So I gaze on You in the sanctuary to see Your strength and Your glory. My lips will glorify You because Your faithful love is better than life. So I will praise You as long as I live; at Your name, I will lift up my hands. You satisfy me as with rich food; my mouth will praise You with joyful lips. When I think of You as I lie on my bed, I meditate on You during the night watches because You are my helper; I will rejoice in the shadow of Your wings. I follow close to You; Your right hand holds on to me.

2. However, David offended God and lived out of fellowship with Him for a period of months. (2 Samuel 11) (See also another example: 2 Sam. 24)

2 Samuel 11:1-27
:1 In the spring when kings march out to war, ... David remained in Jerusalem.
:2–5 One evening David got up from his bed and strolled around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing—a very beautiful woman. So David sent someone to inquire about her, and he reported, “This is Bathsheba, daughter of Eliam and wife of Uriah the Hittite.” David sent messengers to get her, and when she came to him, he slept with her. ...

:6–13 David sent orders to Joab: “Send me Uriah the Hittite.” When Uriah came to him, ... he said to Uriah, “Go down to your house and wash your feet.” So Uriah left the palace, and a gift from the king followed him. But Uriah ... did not go down to his house. ... So Uriah stayed in Jerusalem that day and the next. Then David invited Uriah to eat and drink with him, and David got him drunk. ...

:14–25 The next morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it with Uriah. In the letter he wrote: Put Uriah at the front of the fiercest fighting, then withdraw from him so that he is struck down and dies. ... Uriah the Hittite also died. Joab sent someone to report to David all the details of the battle. ... The messenger reported to David, “... Your servant Uriah the Hittite is also dead.” David told the messenger, “Say this to Joab: ‘... the sword devours all alike.’

:26–27 ... David had her brought to his house. She became his wife and bore him a son. However, the LORD considered what David had done to be evil.

a. As Samuel had confronted Saul, the prophet Nathan confronted David.

2 Samuel 12:1–4  So the LORD sent Nathan to David. When he arrived, he said to him: “There were two men in a certain city, one rich and the other poor. The rich man had a large number of sheep and cattle, but the poor man had nothing except one small ewe lamb that he had bought. He raised it, and it grew up, living with him and his children. It shared his meager food and drank from his cup; it slept in his arms, and it was like a daughter to him. Now a traveler came to the rich man, but the rich man could not bring himself to take one of his own sheep or cattle to prepare for the traveler who had come to him. Instead, he took the poor man’s lamb and prepared it for his guest.”

:5–6 David was infuriated with the man and said to Nathan: “As the LORD lives, the man who did this deserves to die!”
7–12 Nathan replied to David, “You are the man! This is what the LORD God of Israel says: ‘I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. I gave your master’s house to you and your master’s wives into your arms, and I gave you the house of Israel and Judah, and if that was not enough, I would have given you even more. Why then have you despised the command of the LORD by doing what I consider evil? You struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and took his wife as your own wife—you murdered him with the Ammonite’s sword. Now therefore, the sword will never leave your house because you despised Me and took the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your own wife.’ “This is what the LORD says, ‘I am going to bring disaster on you from your own family: I will take your wives and give them to another before your very eyes, and he will sleep with them publicly. You acted in secret, but I will do this before all Israel and in broad daylight.’”

b. But unlike Saul, David immediately accepted full blame for his sin, and was immediately forgiven. (Also see Psalm 51)

12:13 David responded to Nathan, “I have sinned against the LORD.” Then Nathan replied to David, “The LORD has taken away your sin; you will not die.”
12:14 However, because you treated the LORD with such contempt in this matter, the son born to you will die.”

3. David’s forgiveness by God was complete.

12:24 Then David comforted his wife Bathsheba; he went and slept with her. She gave birth to a son and named him Solomon. The LORD loved him, …

(Note: God chose Solomon to build His temple. Solomon was used by God to write some portions of Scripture. Solomon is also listed in the genealogy of Jesus.)

God’s testimony about David (after his death).

1 Kings 14:8 … My servant David, who kept My commands and followed Me with all of his heart, doing only what is right in My eyes.
Acts 13:22 … He raised up David as their king and testified about him: ‘I have found David the son of Jesse, a man loyal to Me, who will carry out all My will.’

4. Discussion:

Both Saul and David were believers. One had not surrendered his will (Lordship) to the Lord, and sinned; the other had surrendered his will to the Lord, but also sinned.

As a trait of life, Saul sought the approval of other people, while as a trait of life, David sought the approval of God.

In a poll, (court of public opinion) whose sin would people consider more grievous? Why?

Whose sin did the Lord consider more grievous? Why? What were the consequences of their sins?

“Self-dependence” (self-reliant, carnal) does not mean everything I do is wrong (before people), and “spiritual” does not mean everything I do is right (before God).

Someone has said, “Character is what you are when no one else is around.”
(When there’s only God and you.)
“The Israelite Journey as an Analogy to My Christian Journey”

Lesson Guide

**NOTE:** The mentor should carefully read this Guide before meeting with the mentee.

1. The main purpose of this lesson is to acquaint me with the journey of the Israelites from their enslavement in Egypt to the conquest of Canaan (through the book of Joshua). The Israelite journey should serve as an illustration and model to help me better understand my personal relationship with God.

   1 Cor. 10:11 Now these things happened to them as examples, and they were written as a warning to us, on whom the ends of the ages have come.

2. I should focus on the Israelites, that is, on their disposition towards God and God’s perspective of them. As a result of having understood Lesson 3-3, I should begin on my own to draw parallels (and contrasts) with my personal life and that of other Christians.

3. This overview will emphasize the events, attitudes and principles that will serve to illustrate in subsequent lessons characteristics of my life and my attitude towards God.

4. As needed, discuss the enslavement of the Israelites in Egypt.

5. Regarding Exodus 3:7-8a--A detail often overlooked in the episode of the burning bush, is what God revealed to Moses about His intended dealing with the Israelites. He had a two-step plan for them. The **first** step was to take them **OUT OF** Egypt. The **second** step was to take them directly **INTO** the Promised Land, the chosen place of His blessings. **It was never God’s intention for them to forfeit His blessings in Canaan and consequently spend a fruitless time in the desert.**

   Discuss the parallels between God’s deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt (their enslavement) and God’s deliverance of me from what I was enslaved to, before I became a believer. Am I wandering in a spiritual desert, or am I living in my Spiritual Promised Land?

6. In Exodus 12, the Passover event (Point 2) note the emphasis of the substitutionary principle discussed in Lesson 1-3.

7. As needed, discuss the crossing of the Red Sea and the giving of the Law (10 Commandments).

8. God’s dealing with the Israelites at the Jordan River and their attitude towards Him is very significant. As I read Numbers 13 and 14, (Point 5, page 151) emphasize God’s desire for the Israelites to trust His promises about His good intentions and plans for them in Canaan, the special destination where He wanted to bless them. It needs to be understood from the Scriptures that God only wanted to bless His children, the Israelites. There is no evidence of any wrongdoing on God’s part, yet the Israelites, as believers, still refused to consider Him trustworthy. Their unwillingness to trust in His character was based on illogical human reasoning. (Prov. 3:5-6) Are there parallels in this episode to my Christian journey?
Overview of the Israelite Journey

“He Brought Us Out In Order To Bring Us in, To Give Us The Land…” (Deut. 6:23)

1. Ex. 1-10  Ex. 14:1-15:21  Ex. 19-20
   Ex. 12:40  1 Cor. 10:1-2  Gen. 15:1-21
   Heb. 11:28  Heb 11:29  Num. 13-14

2. Passover
   Believing God / Faith (trust)
   Submission principle
   Deliverance from judgment
   Decision, Memorable event

3. River Jordan
   Step of faith (trust) in Him
   Surrender of their “will”
   Submission to His authority
   Renouncing their self-dependence
   Memorable event, a Decision

4. Exodus
   Bondage / Slavery (430 years)
   Deliverance Event

5. Law
   Commander of the LORD’s army

6. 1st group in Desert (40 years) (self-dependent believers)
   Their reliance was on human sight and understanding (followed cloud and fire)
   God gave them the cravings of their hearts, He took care of all their temporal needs (manna, etc.),
   but they forfeited the blessings that God had prepared for them in His chosen place.
   Characterized by Unbelief, Disobedience, Fruitlessness, Complaining, Dissatisfaction
   God did not abandon them.

7. 2nd group in Promised Land (Canaan)
   Faith (trust) walk
   Daily “Process” of sanctification
   Victorious, Fruitful, Satisfying, Rest

8. Rewards
   Ceremony for Believers
   Rewards, or loss
   Judgment of believers for rewards, or loss of rewards!
Verses Related To the Israelite Journey

1. The Israelites had been in bondage in Egypt for about 400 years, when God spoke to Moses at the burning bush and revealed to him His two-step plan.

Exodus 3:7–8  Then the LORD said, “I have observed the misery of My people in Egypt, and have heard them crying out because of their oppressors, and I know about their sufferings. I have come down to rescue them from the power of the Egyptians and to bring them from that land to a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey ...

Ezekiel 20:5-6  Say to them: This is what the Lord GOD says: On the day I chose Israel, I swore an oath to the descendants of Jacob’s house and made Myself known to them in the land of Egypt. I swore to them, saying: I am Yahweh your God. On that day I swore to them that I would bring them out of the land of Egypt into a land I had searched out for them, a land flowing with milk and honey, the most beautiful of all lands.

2. God sent judgments against the Egyptians. The last one was the “Passover.”

Exodus 12:21-23  Then Moses summoned all the elders of Israel and said to them, “Go, select an animal from the flock according to your families, and slaughter the Passover animal. Take a cluster of hyssop, dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and brush the lintel and the two doorposts with some of the blood in the basin. None of you may go out the door of his house until morning. When the LORD passes through to strike Egypt and sees the blood on the lintel and the two doorposts, He will pass over the door and not let the destroyer enter your houses to strike you.”

Exodus 12:29-31  Now at midnight the LORD struck every firstborn male in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the prisoner who was in the dungeon, and every firstborn of the livestock. During the night Pharaoh got up, he along with all his officials and all the Egyptians, and there was a loud wailing throughout Egypt because there wasn’t a house without someone dead. He summoned Moses and Aaron during the night and said, “Get up, leave my people, both you and the Israelites, and go, worship Yahweh as you have asked.”

3. God divided the Red Sea and delivered Israel from Pharaoh’s army.

Exodus 14:21-28  
:21-22  Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. The LORD drove the sea back with a powerful east wind all that night and turned the sea into dry land. So the waters were divided, and the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with the waters like a wall to them on their right and their left.

:23-25  The Egyptians set out in pursuit—all Pharaoh’s horses, his chariots, and his horsemen—and went into the sea after them. Then during the morning watch, the LORD looked down on the Egyptian forces from the pillar of fire and cloud, and threw them into confusion. He caused their chariot wheels to swerve and made them drive with difficulty. “Let’s get away from Israel,” the Egyptians said, “because Yahweh is fighting for them against Egypt!”

:26-28  Then the LORD said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand over the sea so that the waters may come back on the Egyptians, on their chariots and horsemen.” So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at daybreak the sea returned to its normal depth. While the Egyptians were trying to escape from it, the LORD threw them into the sea. The waters came back and...
covered the chariots and horsemen, the entire army of Pharaoh, that had gone after them into the sea. None of them survived.


Exodus 19:18-20 Mount Sinai was completely enveloped in smoke because the Lord came down on it in fire. Its smoke went up like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain shook violently. As the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke and God answered him in the thunder.…

Exodus 24:12 The Lord said to Moses, “Come up to Me on the mountain and stay there so that I may give you the stone tablets with the law and commandments I have written for their instruction.”

5. The Israelites arrived at the River Jordan, where they had to make a decision. Was God trustworthy? Would He take care of them? Could they believe His promises, or was the risk too great?

Twelve men, one from each tribe of Israel, were graciously given a preview of Canaan by God.

Numbers 13 (See also Deut. 1:20-25)

:1-2 The LORD spoke to Moses: “Send men to scout out the land of Canaan I am giving to the Israelites. Send one man who is a leader among them from each of their ancestral tribes.”

:23 When they came to the Valley of Eshcol, they cut down a branch with a single cluster of grapes, which was carried on a pole by two men. They also took some pomegranates and figs.

:25-29 At the end of 40 days …They brought back a report for them and the whole community, and they showed them the fruit of the land. They reported to Moses: “We went into the land where you sent us. Indeed it is flowing with milk and honey, and here is some of its fruit. However, the people living in the land are strong, and the cities are large and fortified.…”

:30 Then Caleb … said, “We must go up and take possession of the land …”

:31-33 But the men who had gone up with him responded, “We can’t go up against the people because they are stronger than we are!” So they gave a negative report to the Israelites about the land: … “The land we passed through to explore is one that devours its inhabitants, and all the people we saw in it are men of great size.…”

Numbers 14

:1-4 (an illogical argument, built on groundless human reasoning) Then the whole community broke into loud cries, and the people wept that night. All the Israelites complained about
Moses and Aaron, and the whole community told them, “If only we had died in the land of Egypt, or if only we had died in this wilderness! Why is the LORD bringing us into this land to die by the sword? Our wives and little children will become plunder. Wouldn’t it be better for us to go back to Egypt?” So they said to one another, “Let’s appoint a leader and go back to Egypt.”

(a logical argument, based on faith in God’s promises) … Joshua … and Caleb … tore their clothes and said to the entire Israelite community: “The land we passed through and explored is an extremely good land. If the LORD is pleased with us, He will bring us into this land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and give it to us. Only don’t rebel against the LORD, and don’t be afraid of the people of the land, for we will devour them. Their protection has been removed from them, and the LORD is with us. Don’t be afraid of them!”

While the whole community threatened to stone them, the glory of the LORD appeared to all the Israelites at the tent of meeting. The LORD said to Moses, “How long will these people despise Me? How long will they not trust in Me despite all the signs I have performed among them? I will strike them with a plague and destroy them.…”

But Moses replied to the LORD, “The Egyptians will hear about it, for by Your strength You brought up this people from them. They will tell it to the inhabitants of this land. They have heard that You, LORD, are among these people, … If You kill this people with a single blow, the nations that have heard of Your fame will declare, ‘Since the LORD wasn’t able to bring this people into the land He swore to give them, He has slaughtered them in the wilderness.’”

“So now, may my Lord’s power be magnified … Please pardon the wrongdoing of this people, in keeping with the greatness of Your faithful love, just as You have forgiven them from Egypt until now.”

The LORD responded, “I have pardoned them … Yet as surely as I live and as the whole earth is filled with the LORD’s glory, none of the men who have seen My glory and the signs I performed in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tested Me these 10 times and did not obey Me, will ever see the land I swore to give their fathers. None of those who have despised Me will see it. But since My servant Caleb has a different spirit and has followed Me completely, I will bring him into the land where he has gone, and his descendants will inherit it.”

Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron: “How long must I endure this evil community that keeps complaining about Me? I have heard the Israelites’ complaints that they make against Me.” Tell them: “As surely as I live, this is the LORD’s declaration, I will do to you exactly as I heard you say. Your corpses will fall in this wilderness—all of you who were registered in the census, the entire number of you 20 years old or more — because you have complained about Me. I swear that none of you will enter the land I promised to settle you in, except Caleb …and … Joshua … I will bring your children whom you said would become plunder into the land you rejected, and they will enjoy it. But as for you, your corpses will fall in this wilderness. Your children will be shepherds in the wilderness for 40 years and bear the penalty for your acts of unfaithfulness until all your corpses lie scattered in the wilderness. You will bear the consequences of your sins 40 years based on the number of the 40 days that you scouted the land, a year for each day.…”

So the men Moses sent to scout out the land, and who returned and incited the entire community to complain about him by spreading a negative report about the land—those men who spread the negative report about the land were struck down by the LORD. Only Joshua … and Caleb … remained alive of those men who went to scout out the land. When Moses reported these words to all the Israelites, the people were overcome with grief. They got up early the next morning and went up the ridge of the hill country, saying, “Let’s go to the place the LORD promised, for we were wrong.”
But Moses responded, “Why are you going against the LORD’s command? It won’t succeed. Don’t go, because **the LORD is not among you** and **you will be defeated** by your enemies. The Amalekites and Canaanites are right in front of you, and you will fall by the sword…” **But they dared to go** up the ridge of the hill country, even though the ark of the LORD’s covenant and Moses did not leave the camp. Then the Amalekites and Canaanites who lived in that part of the hill country came down, attacked them, and routed them as far as Hormah.

6. **The following passages express God's perspective of the Israelites, and the Israelite's perspective of God.**

   a. Nehemiah relates God’s faithfulness and the Israelites’ self-dependent disposition (carnality).

   Nehemiah 9:7-21

   :7-12 You are Yahweh, the God who chose Abram … You found his heart faithful in Your sight, and made a **covenant** with him to **give the land** of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Jebusites, and Girgashites—to **give it to his descendants. You have kept Your promise, for You are righteous.** You saw the oppression of our ancestors in Egypt and heard their cry at the Red Sea. **You performed signs and wonders against Pharaoh,** all his officials, and all the people of his land, for You knew how arrogantly they treated our ancestors. You made a name for Yourself that endures to this day. **You divided the sea** before them, and they crossed through it on dry ground. **You hurled their pursuers into the depths** like a stone into churning waters. You led them with a **pillar of cloud by day,** and with a **pillar of fire by night,** to illuminate the way they should go.

   :13-15 You came down on Mount Sinai, and **spoke to them from heaven…. You provided bread from heaven** for their hunger; **You brought them water from the rock** for their thirst. **You told them to go in and possess the land** You had sworn to give them.

   :16-21 But our ancestors acted arrogantly; they became stiff-necked and did not listen to Your commands. **They refused to listen and did not remember** Your wonders You performed among them. They became stiff-necked and appointed a leader **to return to their slavery** in Egypt. But You are a forgiving God, gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in faithful love, and You did not abandon them. Even after they had cast an image of a calf for themselves and said, “This is your God who brought you out of Egypt,” and they had **committed terrible blasphemies. You did not abandon them** in the wilderness because of Your great compassion. During the day the pillar of cloud never turned away from them, guiding them on their journey. And during the night the pillar of fire illuminated the way they should go. **You sent Your good Spirit to instruct them. You did not withhold Your manna** from their mouths, and You gave them water for their thirst. You provided for them in the wilderness 40 years and **they lacked nothing. Their clothes did not wear out, and their feet did not swell.**

   b. The Psalmists relate God's faithfulness and the Israelites' self-dependent disposition (carnality).

   Psalm 78:12–43

   :12-16 **He worked wonders in the sight of their fathers** in the land of Egypt, ... **He split the sea** and brought them across; … **He led them** with a cloud by day and with a fiery light throughout the night. **He split rocks** in the wilderness and gave them drink as abundant as the depths. **He brought streams out of the stone** and made water flow down like rivers.
But they continued to sin against Him, rebelling in the desert against the Most High. They deliberately tested God, demanding the food they craved. They spoke against God, saying, “Is God able to provide food in the wilderness?”

“Look! He struck the rock and water gushed out; torrents overflowed. But can He also provide bread or furnish meat for His people?” Therefore, the LORD heard and became furious; then fire broke out against Jacob, and anger flared up against Israel because they did not believe God or rely on His salvation. He gave a command to the clouds above and opened the doors of heaven. He rained manna for them to eat; He gave them grain from heaven. People ate the bread of angels. He sent them an abundant supply of food.

He made the east wind blow in the skies and drove the south wind by His might. He rained meat on them like dust, and winged birds like the sand of the seas. He made them fall in His camp, all around His tent. They ate and were completely satisfied, for He gave them what they craved. Before they had satisfied their desire, while the food was still in their mouths, God’s anger flared up against them, and He killed some of their best men. He struck down Israel’s choice young men.

Despite all this, they kept sinning and did not believe His wonderful works. He made their days end in futility, their years in sudden disaster. When He killed some of them, the rest began to seek Him; they repented and searched for God. They remembered that God was their rock, the Most High God, their Redeemer. But they deceived Him with their mouths, they lied to Him with their tongues, their hearts were insincere toward Him, and they were unfaithful to His covenant.

Yet He was compassionate; He atoned for their guilt and did not destroy them. He often turned His anger aside and did not unleash all His wrath. He remembered that they were only flesh, a wind that passes and does not return. How often they rebelled against Him in the wilderness and grieved Him in the desert. They constantly tested God and provoked the Holy One of Israel. They did not remember His power shown on the day He redeemed them from the foe, when He performed His miraculous signs in Egypt and His wonders in the region of Zoan.

Psalm 81:10-16 “I am Yahweh your God, who brought you up from the land of Egypt. Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.” “But My people did not listen to Me; Israel did not obey Me. So I gave them over to their stubborn hearts to follow their own plans. If only My people would listen to Me and Israel would follow My ways, I would quickly subdue their enemies and turn My hand against their foes.” But He would feed Israel with the best wheat. “I would satisfy you with honey from the rock.”

Psalm 105:36-45 … Then He brought Israel out with silver and gold, and no one among His tribes stumbled. Egypt was glad when they left, for the dread of Israel had fallen on them. He spread
a cloud as a covering and gave a fire to light up the night. They asked, and He brought quail and satisfied them with bread from heaven. He opened a rock, and water gushed out; it flowed like a stream in the desert. For He remembered His holy promise to Abraham His servant. He brought His people out with rejoicing, His chosen ones with shouts of joy. He gave them the lands of the nations, and they inherited what other peoples had worked for.…. 

Psalm 106:7-27

:7-12 Our fathers in Egypt did not grasp the significance of Your wonderful works or remember Your many acts of faithful love; instead, they rebelled by the sea—the Red Sea. Yet He saved them because of His name, to make His power known. He rebuked the Red Sea, and it dried up; He led them through the depths as through a desert. He saved them from the hand of the adversary; He redeemed them from the hand of the enemy. Water covered their foes; not one of them remained. Then they believed His promises and sang His praise.

:13-18 They soon forgot His works and would not wait for His counsel. They were seized with craving in the wilderness and tested God in the desert. He gave them what they asked for, but sent a wasting disease among them.…. 

:19-20 At Horeb they made a calf and worshiped the cast metal image. They exchanged their glory for the image of a grass-eating ox.

:21-23 They forgot God their Savior, who did great things in Egypt, wonderful works in the land of Ham, awe-inspiring acts at the Red Sea. So He said He would have destroyed them—if Moses His chosen one had not stood before Him in the breach to turn His wrath away from destroying them.

:24-27 They despised the pleasant land and did not believe His promise. They grumbled in their tents and did not listen to the LORD’s voice. So He raised His hand against them with an oath that He would make them fall in the desert and would disperse their descendants among the nations, scattering them throughout the lands.

c. Isaiah relates God’s faithfulness.

Isaiah 63:11-14 Then He remembered the days of the past, the days of Moses and his people. Where is He who brought them out of the sea with the shepherds of His flock? Where is He who put His Holy Spirit among the flock? He sent His glorious arm to be at Moses’ right hand, divided the waters before them to obtain eternal fame for Himself, and led them through the depths like a horse in the wilderness, so that they did not stumble. Like cattle that go down into the valley, the Spirit of the LORD gave them rest. You led Your people this way to make a glorious name for Yourself.

d. Stephen relates God’s faithfulness and the Israelites’ self-dependent disposition (carnality).

Acts 7:36-44 This man led them out and performed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, at the Red Sea, and in the wilderness 40 years…. He received living oracles to give to us. Our ancestors were unwilling to obey him, but pushed him away, and in their hearts turned back to Egypt!…. “Our ancestors had the tabernacle of the testimony in the wilderness, …

e. Paul relates God’s faithfulness and the Israelites’ self-dependent disposition (carnality).

1 Cor. 10:1-5 Now I want you to know, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from a
spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ. But God was not pleased with most of them, for they were struck down in the wilderness.

7. The Second Group Of Israelites Chose To Enter Into Canaan.

a. God had made a covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob, promising to give the chosen land of Canaan to them and their descendants forever.

Genesis 12:1-9
:1-3 The LORD said to Abram: “Go out from your land, your relatives, and your father’s house to the land that I will show you....”
:7-9 Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, “I will give this land to your offspring.”

Gen. 13:14-18 … the LORD said to Abram, “Look from the place where you are. Look north and south, east and west, for I will give you and your offspring forever all the land that you see.... Get up and walk around the land, through its length and width, for I will give it to you.” …

Gen. 17:1-8 When Abram was 99 years old, the LORD appeared to him, “... I will establish My covenant between Me and you, and I will multiply you greatly.” “... I will keep My covenant between Me and you, and your future offspring throughout their generations, as an everlasting covenant to be your God and the God of your offspring after you. And to you and your future offspring I will give the land where you are residing—all the land of Canaan—as an eternal possession....”

Gen. 26:1-6 The LORD appeared to him (Isaac) and said, “... stay in this land as a foreigner, and I will be with you and bless you. For I will give all these lands to you and your offspring, and I will confirm the oath that I swore to your father Abraham. ... I will give your offspring all these lands....”

Gen. 28:10-22 Jacob ... reached a certain place and spent the night there ... And he dreamed: A stairway was set on the ground with its top reaching heaven, and God’s angels were going up and down on it. Yahweh was standing there beside him, saying, “I am Yahweh, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your offspring the land that you are now sleeping on....” When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he said, “Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it.” He was afraid and said, “What an awesome place this is! This is none other than the house of God. This is the gate of heaven.” ... and named the place Bethel.

Gen. 35:9-15
:9-11 God appeared to Jacob again ... and He blessed him. God said to him: “Your name is Jacob; you will no longer be named Jacob, but your name will be Israel.” So He named him Israel....
I will give to you the land that I gave to Abraham and Isaac. And I will give the land to your future descendants.…

b. Moses reminded them of where they had been and where they were going. Deut. 8:1-10 (See also Deut. 2:7)

:1-6 …“Your clothing did not wear out, and your feet did not swell these 40 years. Keep in mind that the LORD your God has been disciplining you just as a man disciplines his son. So keep the commands of the LORD your God by walking in His ways and fearing Him.

:7-10 For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land, a land with streams of water, springs, and deep water sources, flowing in both valleys and hills; a land of wheat, barley, vines, figs, and pomegranates; a land of olive oil and honey; a land where you will eat food without shortage, where you will lack nothing; a land whose rocks are iron and from whose hills you will mine copper. When you eat and are full, you will praise the LORD your God for the good land He has given you.

Deut. 11:10-12 “For the land you are entering to possess is not like the land of Egypt, from which you have come, where you sowed your seed and irrigated by hand as in a vegetable garden. But the land you are entering to possess is a land of mountains and valleys, watered by rain from the sky. It is a land the LORD your God cares for. He is always watching over it from the beginning to the end of the year.”

c. From the beginning they needed to rely on God, not on self. This was an important step of faith.

Joshua 3:13-16 “When the feet of the priests who carry the ark of the LORD, the Lord of all the earth, come to rest in the Jordan’s waters, its waters will be cut off. The water flowing downstream will stand up in a mass.” When the people broke camp to cross the Jordan, the priests carried the ark of the covenant ahead of the people. Now the Jordan overflows its banks throughout the harvest season. But as soon as the priests carrying the ark reached the Jordan, their feet touched the water at its edge and the water flowing downstream stood still, rising up in a mass … and the people crossed opposite Jericho.

d. The crossing was memorialized. (Symbolic)

Joshua 4:1-9 (See also 4:19-24)

:1-4 After the entire nation had finished crossing the Jordan, the LORD spoke to Joshua: “Choose 12 men from the people, one man for each tribe, and command them: Take 12 stones from this place in the middle of the Jordan where the priests are standing, carry them with you, and set them down at the place where you spend the night.”

:5-7 “… so that this will be a sign among you. In the future, when your children ask you, ‘What do these stones mean to you?’ you should tell them, ‘The waters of the Jordan were cut off in front of the ark of the LORD’s covenant. When it crossed the Jordan, the Jordan’s waters were cut off.’ Therefore these stones will always be a memorial for the Israelites.”

:8-9 The Israelites did just as Joshua had commanded them. The 12 men took stones … They carried them to the camp and set them down there. Joshua also set up 12 stones in the middle of the Jordan where the priests who carried the ark of the covenant were standing. The stones are there to this day.

e. God re-instituted circumcision, and the Passover was celebrated.

Joshua 5:2-9 At that time the LORD said to Joshua, “Make flint knives and circumcise the Israelite men again.” So Joshua made flint knives and circumcised the Israelite men.... This is the
reason Joshua circumcised them: All the people who came out of Egypt who were males—all the men of war—had died in the wilderness along the way after they had come out of Egypt. Though all the people who came out were circumcised, none of the people born in the wilderness along the way were circumcised after they had come out of Egypt. For the Israelites wandered in the wilderness 40 years until all the nation’s men of war who came out of Egypt had died off because they did not obey the LORD. So the LORD vowed never to let them see the land He had sworn to their fathers to give us, a land flowing with milk and honey. Joshua raised up their sons in their place; it was these he circumcised. They were still uncircumcised, since they had not been circumcised along the way. After the entire nation had been circumcised, they stayed where they were in the camp until they recovered. The LORD then said to Joshua, “Today I have rolled away the disgrace of Egypt from you.” Therefore, that place is called Gilgal to this day.

Joshua 5:10 While the Israelites camped at Gilgal on the plains of Jericho, they kept the Passover on the evening of the fourteenth day of the month.

f. The pillar of fire and the pillar of cloud were no longer mentioned once they entered the Promised Land. It was now a “faith” walk, not a “sight” walk.

g. They immediately began receiving God’s prepared blessings.

Joshua 5:11-12  The day after Passover they ate unleavened bread and roasted grain from the produce of the land. And the day after they ate from the produce of the land, the manna ceased. Since there was no more manna for the Israelites, they ate from the crops of the land of Canaan that year.

Exodus 16:35  The Israelites ate manna for 40 years, until they came to an inhabited land. They ate manna until they reached the border of the land of Canaan.

h. God had already prepared the way for them.

Joshua 2:8-11  (Rahab told the two spies) … “I know that the LORD has given you this land and that the terror of you has fallen on us, and everyone who lives in the land is panicking because of you. For we have heard how the LORD dried up the waters of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to … the two Amorite kings you completely destroyed across the Jordan. When we heard this, we lost heart, and everyone’s courage failed because of you, for the LORD your God is God in heaven above and on earth below.”

Exodus 15:14-16  When the peoples hear, they will shudder; anguish will seize the inhabitants of Philistia. … the inhabitants of Canaan will panic; and terror and dread will fall on them.

i. Why did God want to destroy the inhabitants of Canaan?

Deut. 9:4–6  … the LORD will drive out these nations before you because of their wickedness. You are not going to take possession of their land because of your righteousness or your integrity….

Deut. 18:9-12  “When you enter the land the LORD your God is giving you, do not imitate the detestable customs of those nations. No one among you is to make his son or daughter pass through the fire, practice divination, tell fortunes, interpret omens, practice sorcery, cast spells, consult a medium or a familiar spirit, or inquire of the dead. Everyone who does these things is detestable to the LORD, and the LORD your God is driving out the nations before you because of these detestable things.
Ezra 9:10-12 … the commands You gave through Your servants the prophets, saying: “The land you are entering to possess is an impure land. The surrounding peoples have filled it from end to end with their uncleanness by their impurity and detestable practices. …”

j. They met the Commander of the Lord’s army, who was there to direct and fight their battles.

Joshua 5:13-15 When Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in His hand. Joshua approached Him and asked, “Are You for us or for our enemies?” “Neither,” He replied. “I have now come as commander of the LORD’s army.” Then Joshua bowed with his face to the ground in worship and asked Him, “What does my Lord want to say to His servant?” The commander of the LORD’s army said to Joshua, “Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy.” And Joshua did so.

Deut. 20:3-4 (Moses had given God’s promise to Israel) … ‘Listen, Israel: Today you are about to engage in battle with your enemies. Do not be cowardly. Do not be afraid, alarmed, or terrified because of them. For the LORD your God is the One who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies to give you victory.’

Acts 7:45 … the nations that God drove out before our fathers, …

Acts 13:19 then after destroying seven nations in the land of Canaan, He gave their land to them as an inheritance.

Note: the conquest of Canaan took about 7 years.

k. Some years later, after having conquered the land of Canaan, the 2nd group of Israelites testified of God’s faithfulness and blessings - what He had originally intended for the 1st group.

Joshua 21:44-45 The LORD gave them rest on every side according to all He had sworn to their fathers. None of their enemies were able to stand against them, for the LORD handed over all their enemies to them. None of the good promises the LORD had made to the house of Israel failed. Everything was fulfilled.

Joshua 23:14 … you know with all your heart and all your soul that none of the good promises the LORD your God made to you has failed. Everything was fulfilled for you; not one promise has failed.

Joshua 23:3 …and you have seen for yourselves everything the LORD your God did to all these nations on your account, because it was the LORD your God who was fighting for you.
Overview Of The Christian Journey

1. Salvation
   Believing God / Faith (trust)
   Deliverance from judgment
   Decision, Memorable event

2. Law
   Exposes and condemns the works (fruit) of the flesh

3. Baptism (water)
   Symbolizes deliverance Event

4. Lordship
   Step of faith (trust) in Him
   Acknowledgment of His ownership
   Renouncing my self-dependence
   Surrender of my “will”
   Acceptance of His “yoke”
   Decision, Memorable event

5. Spiritually Maturing
   Christian Life
   Faith (trust) walk
   “Process” of sanctification
   Daily surrender of “behavior”
   “Abiding” fellowship with Him
   Fruitfulness in His “rest”
   “Where God reveals Himself”

6. Christian Life as a Desert Experience
   (Self-dependent believers)
   A sight walk, reliance on human understanding
   Characterized by Unbelief, Disobedience, Fruitlessness, Complaining, Dissatisfaction
   God continues to meet my temporal needs, and does not abandon me

7. Rewards Ceremony for Believers
   Rewards, and loss
   No punishment

8. Physical Death
   Judgment of believers for rewards, and loss of rewards!
   Rewards based on what I, by faith, have allowed the Holy Spirit to do through my life

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N. T. VERSES RELATED TO THE CHRISTIAN JOURNEY

1. God’s call to enter the place of His blessing (the Spiritual Promised Land) is still valid for me today.

Hebrews 3:16–4:1  For who heard and rebelled? Wasn’t it really all who came out of Egypt under Moses? And who was He provoked with for 40 years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? And who did He swear to that they would not enter His rest, if not those who disobeyed? So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief. Therefore, while the promise to enter His rest remains, let us fear that none of you should miss it.

Hebrews 4:9–11  Therefore, a Sabbath rest remains for God’s people. For the person who has entered His rest has rested from his own works, just as God did from His. Let us then make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall into the same pattern of disobedience.

Note: While some hymn writers have used Canaan (the Promised Land) as a type of heaven, that analogy is hardly warranted by Scripture.

2. The following verses from the letter to the Hebrews provide a New Testament perspective of the Old Testament example of the Israelites. (These Scripture portions can be read at the disciple’s convenience.)

Hebrews 3:1–19

:1–6  Therefore, holy brothers and companions in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession; He was faithful to the One who appointed Him, just as Moses was in all God’s household. For Jesus is considered worthy of more glory than Moses, just as the builder has more honor than the house. Now every house is built by someone, but the One who built everything is God. Moses was faithful as a servant in all God’s household, as a testimony to what would be said in the future. But Christ was faithful as a Son over His household. And we are that household if we hold on to the courage and the confidence of our hope.

:7–11  Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, on the day of testing in the wilderness, where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, and saw My works for 40 years. Therefore I was provoked with that generation and said, “They always go astray in their hearts, and they have not known My ways.” So I swore in My anger, “They will not enter My rest.”

:12–15  Watch out, brothers, so that there won’t be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart that departs from the living God. But encourage each other daily, while it is still called today, so that none of you is hardened by sin’s deception. For we have become companions of the Messiah if we hold firmly until the end the reality that we had at the start. As it is said: Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.

:16–19  For who heard and rebelled? Wasn’t it really all who came out of Egypt under Moses? And who was He provoked with for 40 years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? And who did He swear to that they would not enter His rest, if not those who disobeyed? So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief.
Hebrews 4:1-11

:1-5 Therefore, while the promise to enter His rest remains, let us fear that none of you should miss it. For we also have received the good news just as they did; but the message they heard did not benefit them, since they were not united with those who heard it in faith (for we who have believed enter the rest), in keeping with what He has said: So I swore in My anger, they will not enter My rest. And yet His works have been finished since the foundation of the world, for somewhere He has spoken about the seventh day in this way: And on the seventh day God rested from all His works. Again, in that passage He says, “they will never enter My rest.”

:6-8 Since it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly received the good news did not enter because of disobedience, again, He specifies a certain day—today—speaking through David after such a long time, as previously stated: Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts. For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day.

:9-11 Therefore, a Sabbath rest remains for God’s people. For the person who has entered His rest has rested from his own works, just as God did from His. Let us then make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall into the same pattern of disobedience.

Hebrews 4:12-16

:12-13 For the word of God is living and effective and sharper than any double-edged sword, penetrating as far as the separation of soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It is able to judge the ideas and thoughts of the heart. No creature is hidden from Him, but all things are naked and exposed to the eyes of Him to whom we must give an account.

:14-16 Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens—Jesus the Son of God—let us hold fast to the confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tested in every way as we are, yet without sin. Therefore let us approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us at the proper time.

Hebrews 5:1-14

:1-3 For every high priest taken from men is appointed in service to God for the people, to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. He is able to deal gently with those who are ignorant and are going astray, since he is also subject to weakness. Because of this, he must make a sin offering for himself as well as for the people.

:4-11 No one takes this honor on himself; instead, a person is called by God, just as Aaron was. In the same way, the Messiah did not exalt Himself to become a high priest, but the One who said to Him, You are My Son; today I have become Your Father, also said in another passage, You are a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek. During His earthly life, He offered prayers and
appeals with loud cries and tears to the One who was able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His reverence. Though He was God’s Son, He learned obedience through what He suffered. After He was perfected, He became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey Him, and He was declared by God a high priest in the order of Melchizedek. We have a great deal to say about this, and it’s difficult to explain, since you have become too lazy to understand.

Hebrews 5:12 – 6:12  (referring to spiritual growth from immaturity to maturity and fruitfulness.)

5:12-14  Although by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the basic principles of God’s revelation again. You need milk, not solid food. Now everyone who lives on milk is inexperienced with the message about righteousness, because he is an infant. But solid food is for the mature—for those whose senses have been trained to distinguish between good and evil.

6:1-6  Therefore, leaving the elementary message about the Messiah, let us go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, faith in God, teaching about ritual washings, laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. And we will do this if God permits. For it is impossible to renew to repentance those who were once enlightened, who tasted the heavenly gift, became companions with the Holy Spirit, tasted God’s good word and the powers of the coming age, and who have fallen away, because, to their own harm, they are recrucifying the Son of God and holding Him up to contempt.

6:7–12  For ground that has drunk the rain that has often fallen on it and that produces vegetation useful to those it is cultivated for receives a blessing from God. But if it produces thorns and thistles, it is worthless and about to be cursed, and will be burned at the end. Even though we are speaking this way, dear friends, in your case we are confident of the better things connected with salvation. For God is not unjust; He will not forget your work and the love you showed for His name when you served the saints—and you continue to serve them. Now we want each of you to demonstrate the same diligence for the final realization of your hope, so that you won’t become lazy but will be imitators of those who inherit the promises through faith and perseverance.

3. As a believer I am warned to not follow the Israelite’s example.

1 Cor. 10:1-14

:1-5  Now I want you to know, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from a spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ. But God was not pleased with most of them, for they were struck down in the wilderness.

:6-10  Now these things became examples for us, so that we will not desire evil things as they did. Don’t become idolaters as some of them were; as it is written, the people sat down to eat and drink, and got up to play. Let us not commit sexual immorality as some of them did, and in a single day 23,000 people fell dead. Let us not test Christ as some of them did and were destroyed by snakes. Nor should we complain as some of them did, and were killed by the destroyer.

:11  Now these things happened to them as examples, and they were written as a warning to us, on whom the ends of the ages have come.
Summary of the Characteristics of the Two Groups

CHARACTERISTICS OF A “PROMISED LAND” EXPERIENCE
Heb. 4:9-11 Therefore, a Sabbath rest remains for God’s people. For the person who has entered His rest has rested from his own works, just as God did from His. Let us then make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall into the same pattern of disobedience.

Joshua 21:44-45 The LORD gave them rest on every side ... None of their enemies were able to stand against them, for the LORD handed over all their enemies to them. None of the good promises the LORD had made to the house of Israel failed. Everything was fulfilled.

Matt. 11:28-30 “Come to Me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. All of you, take up My yoke and learn from Me, because I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for yourselves. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”

Eph. 5:31-32 … a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. This mystery is profound, but I am talking about Christ and the church.

Matt. 13:23 “But the one sown on the good ground—this is one who hears and understands the word, who does bear fruit and yields: some 100, some 60, some 30 times what was sown.”

CHARACTERISTICS OF A “DESERT” EXPERIENCE
1 Cor. 10:11 Now these things happened to them as examples, and they were written as a warning to us, on whom the ends of the ages have come.

Heb. 3:19-4:1 … So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief. Therefore, while the promise to enter His rest remains, let us fear that none of you should miss it.

Luke 8:14, Matt. 13:22 … these are the ones who, when they have heard, go on their way and are choked with worries, riches, and pleasures of life, and produce no mature fruit.

1 Cor. 3:15 If anyone’s work is burned up, it will be lost, but he will be saved; yet it will be like an escape through fire.
“Lordship”

This lesson focuses on the scriptural concept of "Lordship." By this point in the discipleship process I have made a decision to acknowledge His lordship over my life, and recognize Christ as my Master.

This lesson will help to reinforce and provide further understanding of that decision.

1. I belong to God because He created me. (Doesn’t the Creator have absolute authority over His creation?)

   Deut. 10:14  The heavens… belong to the LORD your God, as does the earth and everything in it.
   Psalm 100:3  … He made us, and we are His—His people…
   Jer. 10:23  …a man’s way of life is not his own; no one who walks determines his own steps.
   Rom. 14:7-8  For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself. If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.

2. He bought me. He redeemed me. He owns me. (A statement of fact)

   1 Cor. 6:19-20  Don’t you know that your body is a sanctuary of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought at a price. Therefore glorify God in your body.
   2 Cor. 5:15  And He died for all so that those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for the One who died for them and was raised.

3. The title “Lord” implies a Master – servant relationship.

   Matthew 22:37-38  He said to him, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and most important command.”
   John 13:13  (Jesus said) “You call Me Teacher and Lord. This is well said, for I am.”
   Luke 6:46  (Jesus said) “Why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and don’t do the things I say?”
   John 14:21,23  (Jesus said) “The one who has My commands and keeps them is the one who loves Me…” Jesus answered, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word.”
4. **He is my Master, and I should view myself as His servant (slave).**

Matthew 10:24-25  \(\text{Jesus said}\) “A disciple is not above his teacher, or a slave above his master. It is enough for a disciple to become like his teacher and a slave like his master…”

Matthew 20:26-28 \(\text{Jesus said}\) “…whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life—a ransom for many.”

Romans 1:1  Paul, a slave of Christ Jesus,…

1 Cor. 7:22-23  Likewise he who is called as a free man is Christ’s slave. You were bought at a price;…

Phil. 2:5-8 **Make your own attitude** that of Christ Jesus, who, existing in the form of God, did not consider equality with God as something to be used for His own advantage. Instead He emptied Himself by assuming the form of a slave, taking on the likeness of men. And when He had come as a man in His external form, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death even to death on a cross.

2 Tim. 2:4  No one serving as a soldier gets entangled in the concerns of civilian life; he seeks to please the recruiter.

1 Peter 2:16  As God’s slaves, live as free people, but don’t use your freedom as a way to conceal evil.


5. **God expects those things I value to be yielded to His Lordship.**

Matthew 10:37-39  \(\text{Jesus said}\) “The person who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; the person who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And whoever doesn’t take up his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me. Anyone finding his life will lose it, and anyone losing his life because of Me will find it.”

Matthew 19:29-30  \(\text{Jesus said}\) “And everyone who has left houses, brothers or sisters, father or mother, children, or fields because of My name will receive 100 times more and will inherit eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last first.”

Luke 5:10-11  … James and John, … Simon … Then they brought the boats to land, left everything, and followed Him.  \(\text{see also Luke 5:27-28}\)

6. **Jesus appeals to me to put my head in His yoke. (Yielding my independence and perceived rights to Him.)**

Matthew 11:28-30  “Come to Me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. All of you, take up My yoke and learn from Me, because I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for yourselves. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”

**“Beware of refusing to go to the funeral of your own independence.”**

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7. **God wants me to offer my body to Him.**

Romans 6:13,18-19  … For just as you offered the parts of yourselves as slaves to moral impurity, and to greater and greater lawlessness, so now offer them as slaves to righteousness, which results in sanctification.

Romans 11:33-36, 12:1-2  …For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things.… Therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.

8. **God has to be more important than my very life.**

Luke 14:26-33  *(Jesus said)*  “If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his own father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, and even his own life—he cannot be My disciple. Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. For which of you, wanting to build a tower, doesn’t first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, after he has laid the foundation and cannot finish it, all the onlookers will begin to make fun of him, saying, ‘This man started to build and wasn’t able to finish. “Or what king, going to war against another king, will not first sit down and decide if he is able with 10,000 to oppose the one who comes against him with 20,000? If not, while the other is still far off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. In the same way, therefore, every one of you who does not say good-bye to all his possessions cannot be My disciple.”

Luke 9:23-24  Then He said to them all, “If anyone wants to come with Me, he must deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life because of Me will save it.”

John 12:24-26  *(Jesus said)*  “I assure you: Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains by itself. But if it dies, it produces a large crop. The one who loves his life will lose it, and the one who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me. Where I am, there My servant also will be;…”

Acts 20:24  “(Paul) But I count my life of no value to myself, so that I may finish my course and the ministry I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of God’s grace.”

Acts 21:13  …Then Paul replied, “… For I am ready not only to be bound but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.”

Rev. 12:11  They conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they did not love their lives in the face of death.

NOTE ON LUKE 14:26-33  The stress here is on the priority of love (cf. Matt. 10:37. The person who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; the person who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me).

One’s loyalty to Jesus must come before his loyalty to his family or even to life itself. Indeed, those who did follow Jesus against their families’ desires were probably thought of as hating their families.  *(Walvoord, John F., and Zuck, Roy B., *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Scripture Press Publications, Inc.) 1983, 1985.)*
If God loves me, can only do what is in my best interest, and never makes mistakes, what would be a logical reason for not embracing Him as Master?

When it’s clearly explained, I will view Lordship as “good news,” as evidence of God’s love for me.

Unfortunately, many older believers who have never had Lordship clearly explained to them, upon hearing it, tend to perceive it as “bad news,” equating it to “bondage.”
Summary of “Lordship” Principles

God has a great and beautiful plan for my entire life. Am I willing to yield my personal rights to Him and give Him permission to orchestrate my life to His perfect ends?

1. FACTS:
   a. God says that as a Christian I have been bought (redeemed) from slavery to sin by the blood of His Son. That purchase has given Him legal ownership of my entire life. That He now owns me is an absolute fact that does not depend on my acknowledgment or acceptance of it.

   1 Cor. 6:19-20 Don’t you know that your body is a sanctuary of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought at a price. Therefore glorify God in your body.

   1 Peter 1:18-19 For you know that you were redeemed from your empty way of life inherited from the fathers, not with perishable things like silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without defect or blemish.

   b. Salvation - speaks of a Foundation, Jesus Christ, upon which construction will take place.

   Lordship - The quality and duration of that construction depend on whom I choose as the architect and contractor. When I give the Lord permission, allowing Him to manage my life, He will build a beautiful eternal house of gold, silver and precious stones on that foundation. That house will survive The Tribunal of Christ. However, if I am unwilling to let Him manage the construction, I will be building a temporary house of wood, hay and straw which will only last for the duration of my life here on earth, and will become ashes at The Tribunal of Christ.

Daily Walk in Fellowship - My “building materials” that are available to the Holy Spirit fall into three categories:
1. My “time”
2. My “energy”
3. My “possessions” (both tangible and intangible possessions.)

The Lord has given me free will, which means that I have the privilege of moment by moment allowing Him to use those resources that He has granted me. But I am also free at any moment to deny Him use of any or all of those resources (building materials), during which time I will be using those same resources to build myself a temporary structure for this life here on earth. The Lord will not force me to let Him use my resources, even though He always has my best interest at heart.

1 Cor. 3:10-15 According to God’s grace that was given to me, I have laid a foundation as a skilled master builder, and another builds on it. But each one must be careful how he builds on it. For no one can lay any other foundation than what has been laid down. That foundation is Jesus Christ. If anyone builds on that foundation with gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay, or straw, each one’s work will become obvious, for the day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire; the fire will test the quality of each one’s work. If anyone’s work that he has built
survives, he will receive a reward. If anyone’s work is burned up, it will be lost, but he will be saved; yet it will be like an escape through fire.

Psalm 127:1 Unless the Lord builds a house, its builders labor over it in vain;…

Eccl. 3:14 I know that all God does will last forever;…

c. Before I became a Christian, I was enslaved by my human nature (inherited from Adam). I always resisted God and was not able to please Him. That same human nature still resides in me as a Christian. It is not the least bit improved. God did not repair my rebellious human nature, but rather He gave me a new divine nature in the Person of the Holy Spirit.

Mat. 7:17-18 In the same way, every good tree produces good fruit, but a bad tree produces bad fruit. A good tree can’t produce bad fruit; neither can a bad tree produce good fruit.

Gal. 3:1-3 You foolish Galatians! Who has hypnotized you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was vividly portrayed as crucified? I only want to learn this from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now going to be made complete by the flesh?

Gal. 5:17 For the flesh desires what is against the Spirit, and the Spirit desires what is against the flesh; these are opposed to each other, so that you don’t do what you want.

d. I should accept a role as a “disciple” (apprentice learner), allowing the Holy Spirit “access” to every area of my being.

From infancy I began to accumulate ideas and concepts about life, my worldview. When I became a Christian that worldview did not disappear, but rather has remained in my mind much like written material on a whiteboard. Some of those ideas and concepts will be in harmony with God, others will not. Only the Holy Spirit knows what needs to be changed in my thinking. That is why I need to give the Holy Spirit “access” to my “mental whiteboard”, my mind and be open to whatever changes He determines best. Yielding up that authority to Him speaks of “Lordship,” after which the process of the renewing of my mind will allow me to increasingly view life from His perspective.

Caution: If I intentionally (or through ignorance) am unwilling to acknowledge His authority over my mind (understanding) I will very likely adopt a perceived list of “Do’s” and “Don’ts”. That list would typically include what seems to be acceptable Christian behavior, based on the average spiritual expectations as modeled by older Christians I interact with. The danger is that fellowship with the Holy Spirit will be severely threatened when He speaks to me about areas of my thinking or behavior that are outside these arbitrary parameters. The result is often a recurring cycle of disobedience, frustration, repentance and brokenness. This will continue until my will is surrendered.

Romans 12:2 Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.

Luke 6:40 A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher.

2. ILLUSTRATIONS AND TERMINOLOGY THAT DESCRIBE LORDSHIP.

a. Relinquishing my independence - as in a wedding ceremony (Marriage "Covenant").

Marriage consists of an event (a wedding ceremony), followed by a process. The wedding ceremony represents a relinquishment of my right to make independent decisions, in favor of being joined (yoked) with another. The marriage process is designed to be a growing relationship,
learning to live and walk in harmony with a spouse. This process represents the manner in which I learn to live and walk in harmony with the Holy Spirit.

Eph. 5:32 This mystery is profound, but I am talking about Christ and the church.

b. Acknowledgment of His ownership of my life.
A conscious agreement with what God states to be true.

c. An acceptance of His yoke (an event), followed by learning from Him (a process of learning to walk in harmony with Him). A relinquishment of my right to live and make decisions independently.

Matthew 11:28-30 “Come to Me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. All of you, take up My yoke and learn from Me, because I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for yourselves. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”

Note: Older Christians who have not yet acknowledged His Lordship tend to be threatened by the Master-servant relationship, imagining that it borders on “bondage.” As a Christian I need to understand that the God-ordained Master-servant relationship is intended to be liberating.

d. Entering His rest (as pictured in the O.T. Israelites).
At the burning bush, God laid out to Moses His original purpose for the Israelites.
Ex. 3:7-8 Then the LORD said, “I have observed the misery of My people in Egypt,… I have come down to rescue them from the power of the Egyptians and to bring them from that land to a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey,…

The 1st group was unwilling to accept God’s plan. (Num. 13:1-2, 23-33, 14:1-11, 19-24)
The 2nd group was willing to entrust themselves into God’s care. (Josh. 21:44-45, 23:14)

Warning for me: Rom. 15:4 For whatever was written in the past was written for our instruction, so that we may have hope through endurance and through the encouragement from the Scriptures. (see also Heb. 4:9-11)

e. A wild mustang.
A wild mustang could be used to depict Lordship - The goal is to end up with an animal that is available, trained and useful to its owner (Master). But first the mustang’s will (his resistance to another’s authority) must be broken. Upon acceptance of another’s authority over it, the mustang is not yet considered to be the least bit trained, or useful. However, it now has a mindset (disposition, attitude) that will allow it to begin the process of being trained (transformed), which will over time produce an animal that is useful to its owner. Until the will (mindset, disposition) is changed the animal can never be trained.

Psa. 32:9 Do not be like a horse or mule, without understanding, that must be controlled with bit and bridle or else it will not come near you.

f. Car illustration
Imagine an auto which could represent my life. I am sitting in the driver’s seat, while Jesus sits in the passenger seat. Because God allows me to hold the steering wheel, I may erroneously conclude that God is simply seated at my side, ready to help whenever I determine I have a need. Hence the
bumper sticker, “God is my co-Pilot”. Even though I may acknowledge that Jesus is holding the “title” to the auto, there is a fear of relinquishing control of the steering wheel.

The Lord doesn’t want to be in my life as a co-Pilot, He wants to be in charge and direct the course of my life. “Lordship” is really an issue of “control”, and it is sad that so many believers are unwilling to let God have control of the steering wheel, because they’re afraid of where He might take them. If given control, God will always do what is in my best interest. God wants me to learn to keep my hands on the steering wheel, while actively and voluntarily relying on the Lord to provide directions.

9. Illustration of Two Doors
What do I as a believer have to face when I look at the future?

Shortly after becoming a Christian I come to a fork in the road where I see a door, through which I can visualize the future. I see goals and material belongings that would seem to satisfy my needs and desires in this life, at least based on my previous experience. Those goals and material belongings don’t appear to be unacceptably evil. In fact I’ve seen many Christians seeking after the same things. Using my God-given skills and intellect, those things appear to be obtainable, especially now that I can count on God to assist me when needed.

It seems reasonable that if God delivered me from unhappiness when He saved me, my happiness would now be one of His priorities.

But wait, I see through another door. It is as though there is a sign beyond the entrance with a message from Jesus saying, “Come follow Me, I have a better plan prepared for you.” He seems to want me to trust Him alone to give me fulfillment and satisfaction in this life and beyond. He seems to be telling me that the things I’ve seen through the other door only give temporary satisfaction for this life, but what He has prepared for me has eternal value.

Since I can’t visualize anything He seems to be promising, how does He expect me to make a sensible evaluation? Does He really expect me to just trust Him on blind faith? That doesn’t seem very reasonable since I’m just a new Christian and don’t have much faith yet. Maybe further along I’ll understand better, when I have more faith.

3. MY LIFE CAN BE CATEGORIZED INTO THREE AREAS

There are THREE AREAS over which His Lordship needs to be considered; over my possessions; over my body; and over my understanding. Why three areas? Because a failure to yield to His authority over these three areas can keep me from going on to maturity in Christ to bear eternal fruit.

Luke 8:14  As for the seed that fell among thorns, these are the ones who, when they have heard, go on their way and are choked with worries, riches, and pleasures of life, and produce no mature fruit. (Matthew 13:22 ... unfruitful)

4. IS GOD TOTALLY GOOD?

• Can He be totally counted on?
• What does the Bible say about God’s character?
• What does the evil one say about God’s character?
• Just as a typical small child recognizes the authority of a parent, I easily understand that God ought to be in charge.
• Is there a logical reason to not entrust myself totally to His authority? At The Tribunal of Christ what excuse could I offer for not doing so?
• If God has already given me what was most valuable to Him, how can I ever conclude that He would deny me that which is of so much less value?

(Rom. 8:32) He did not even spare His own Son but offered Him up for us all; how will He not also with Him grant us everything?

Many older believers tend to equate Lordship to “bondage,” while most new believers will equate Lordship to “freedom” (if it is clearly and correctly explained).

5. Our Daily Bread

Surrender

In the early 1940s, the president of Dallas Seminary, Lewis Sperry Chafer, gave a very brief banquet speech. Introduced after a long program, he announced his subject:

"The Reasonableness of Fully Surrendering Our Lives To God."

Then, because of the lateness of the hour, he gave only the three points of his message.

Reason 1: God is all-wise and knows better than anyone else what is best for my life.
Reason 2: He is almighty and has the power to accomplish what is best for me.
Reason 3: God loves me more than anyone else does.

Chafer concluded, "Therefore the most logical thing I can do is surrender my life to God. What more can I say? What more need I say?"

The apostle Paul had the same conviction. He knew that prison and hardship awaited him in Jerusalem, but he also knew that God wanted him to go (Acts 20:22-23). Even his sorrowing friends wisely concluded, "The will of the Lord be done" (21:14). They knew that Paul was right.

No matter what happens, when we do God's will we're in the safest place in all the world. The Lord is all-wise, almighty, and all-loving. Doesn't it make sense to surrender your life to Him? –HVL

All to Jesus I surrender,
All to Him I freely give;
I will ever love and trust Him,
In His presence daily live. --Van de Venter

Surrender means victory when we surrender to God.

The Three Areas of My Life That Need To Be Surrendered
(Yielding My Independence and Acknowledging His Lordship)

God is absolutely sovereign over my every circumstance.

No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to humanity. **God** is faithful, and He **will not allow** you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation He **will also provide** a way of escape so that you are able to bear it. (1 Cor. 10:13)

We know that **all** things work together for the good of those who love God: those who are called according to His purpose. (Rom. 8:28)

... the One who is born of God keeps him, and **the evil one does not touch him**. (1 Jn. 5:18)

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**MY “POSSESSIONS”**

In the same way, therefore, every one of you who does not say good-bye to **all his possessions** cannot be My disciple. (Lk. 14:33)

Then Peter said, “Look, we have **left what we had** and **followed You**.” (Lk. 18:28)

... one’s life is not in the abundance of his possessions.” (Lk. 12:15)

**MY “BODY”**

And **do not offer any parts of it to sin** as weapons for unrighteousness. But ... **offer yourselves** to God, and all the parts of yourselves to God as weapons for righteousness. ... For **just as** you offered the parts of yourselves as slaves to moral impurity, and to greater and greater lawlessness, so **now offer them as slaves** to righteousness, which results in sanctification. (Rom. 6:13, 19) (See Rom. 12:1-2)

**MY “UNDERSTANDING”**

Make your own attitude that of Christ Jesus, ... He ... by assuming the form of a **slave**, taking on the likeness of men. (Phil. 2:5-8)

I know, Lord, that a **man’s way of life is not his own**; no one who walks determines his own steps. (Jer. 10:23)

... **take up My yoke** and learn from Me,... (Matt. 11:28-30)
God Was at Work in 3 Areas of Job’s Life

(The story of Job is often presented with an emphasis on “suffering and patience.”
We believe the greater lesson is one of “how God molds His children.”)

1. Job was a man who had a passion for God.
   Job 1:1 There was a man in the country of Uz named Job. He was a man of perfect integrity, who feared God and turned away from evil.
   Job 23:12 (Job said) … I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my daily food.

2. God had tremendously blessed Job.
   Job 1:2-3 He had seven sons and three daughters. His estate included 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, 500 female donkeys, and a very large number of servants. Job was the greatest man among all the people of the east.

3. God had a hedge (fence) of protection around Job and all that pertained to Job. This hedge represents God’s sovereignty, against which the enemy is powerless. This same hedge surrounds every believer.
   Job 1:8-10a Then the LORD said to Satan, “Have you considered My servant Job? No one else on earth is like him, a man of perfect integrity, who fears God and turns away from evil.” Satan answered the LORD, “Does Job fear God for nothing? Haven’t You placed a hedge around him, his household, and everything he owns?”
   Illustration: There are tribes in Africa who traditionally built a hedge (zareba) around their village to protect themselves and their livestock from marauding predators. 1 Peter 5:8 implores us: Be serious! Be alert! Your adversary the Devil is prowling around like a roaring lion, looking for anyone he can devour.

4. In order for Satan to afflict Job (even in the area of “possessions”), he had to be granted permission by God.
   Job 1:10b-12 “You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But stretch out Your hand and strike everything he owns, and he will surely curse You to Your face.” “Very well,” the LORD told Satan, “everything he owns is in your power. However, you must not lay a hand on Job himself.” So Satan left the LORD’s presence.
   NOTE: The enemy, Satan, had no power, nor right in himself, to afflict Job (or any believer). He only had power over Job to the degree granted to him by God. Satan has been allowed by God to exert power and influence in this present world, but only to the degree that it accomplishes God’s purposes. It is comforting to know that God’s absolute sovereignty and dominion over all His creation has never been, and will never be, the least bit compromised.
   Prov. 21:30 No wisdom, no understanding, and no counsel will prevail against the LORD.
   Dan. 4:35 All the inhabitants of the earth are counted as nothing, and He does what He wants with the army of heaven and the inhabitants of the earth. There is no one who can hold back His hand or say to Him, “What have You done?”
5. God granted Satan permission to enter through the hedge and afflict Job in the area of “possessions,” but He ordered Satan to not go into the next area, that of “the body.”

Job 1:12-19

:12 “Very well,” the LORD told Satan, “everything he owns is in your power. However, you must not lay a hand on Job himself.” So Satan left the LORD’s presence.

:13-15 One day when Job’s sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother’s house, a messenger came to Job and reported: “While the oxen were plowing and the donkeys grazing nearby, the Sabeans swooped down and took them away. They struck down the servants with the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you!”

:16 He was still speaking when another messenger came and reported: “A lightning storm struck from heaven. It burned up the sheep and the servants and devoured them, and I alone have escaped to tell you!”

:17 That messenger was still speaking when yet another came and reported: “The Chaldeans formed three bands, made a raid on the camels, and took them away. They struck down the servants with the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you!”

:18-19 He was still speaking when another messenger came and reported: “Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother’s house. Suddenly a powerful wind swept in from the desert and struck the four corners of the house. It collapsed on the young people so that they died, and I alone have escaped to tell you!”

6. Even though Job was crushed, overwhelmed and bewildered by the happenings, Job had long before acknowledged that God is the rightful sovereign Lord over all creation, including all that God had given him. His response was the evidence of that conviction.

Job 1:20-22 Then Job stood up, tore his robe, and shaved his head. He fell to the ground and worshiped, saying: Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked I will leave this life. The LORD gives, and the LORD takes away. Praise the name of Yahweh. Throughout all this Job did not sin or blame God for anything.
7. Having lost the battle in the area of “possessions,” Satan returned to request permission to afflict Job in the area of the “body.” God granted Satan permission to enter into the area of the “physical body,” but ordered him to not go further, into the area of the “understanding” and the soul.

Job 2:1-7

:1-5 One day the sons of God came again to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came with them to present himself before the LORD. The LORD asked Satan, “Where have you come from?” “From roaming through the earth,” Satan answered Him, “and walking around on it.” Then the LORD said to Satan, “Have you considered My servant Job? No one else on earth is like him, a man of perfect integrity, who fears God and turns away from evil. He still retains his integrity, even though you incited Me against him, to destroy him without just cause.” “Skin for skin!” Satan answered the LORD. “A man will give up everything he owns in exchange for his life. But stretch out Your hand and strike his flesh and bones, and he will surely curse You to Your face.”

:6 “Very well,” the LORD told Satan, “he is in your power; only spare his life.”

:7 So Satan left the LORD’s presence and infected Job with terrible boils from the sole of his foot to the top of his head.

8. Job was once again dismayed and bewildered by the happenings. But as with his possessions, Job had long before concluded that God is the rightful sovereign Lord over all creation, including his body. And again his response was the evidence of that conviction.

Job 2:8-10 Then Job took a piece of broken pottery to scrape himself while he sat among the ashes. His wife said to him, “Do you still retain your integrity? Curse God and die!” “You speak as a foolish woman speaks,” he told her. “Should we accept only good from God and not adversity?” Throughout all this Job did not sin in what he said.

For the next 29 chapters (chapters 3-31) Job defends himself against the accusations of his three friends.

9. God wanted to focus Job’s attention on an error he had in the area of his “understanding.” He uses Elihu, a young man who has been listening to the debate, to expose Job’s spiritual pride (chapters 32-37), after which He spoke directly to Job.

Job 32:2-3 Then Elihu … became angry. He was angry at Job because he had justified himself rather than God. He was also angry at Job’s three friends because they had failed to refute him and yet had condemned him.

Job 33:8-12 (Elihu to Job) … I have heard these very words: “I am pure, without transgression; I am clean and have no guilt. But He finds reasons to oppose me; He regards me as His enemy. He puts my feet in the stocks; He stands watch over all my paths.” But I tell you that you are wrong in this matter, since God is greater than man.

Job 33:32 (Elihu to Job) But if you have something to say, answer me; speak, for I would like to justify you.

Job 34:5-6 (Elihu continued) For Job has declared, “I am righteous, yet God has deprived me of justice. Would I lie about my case? My wound is incurable, though I am without transgression.”
34:12 (Elihu) Indeed, it is true that God does not act wickedly and the Almighty does not pervert justice.

34:17-18 (Elihu) Could one who hates justice govern the world? Will you condemn the mighty Righteous One?

34:35-37 (Elihu) "Job speaks without knowledge; his words are without insight."...

NOTE: The way in which Elihu gently and humbly pointed out Job's error is a worthy example of Galatians 6:1-2, where the Lord instructs us: Brothers, if someone is caught in any wrongdoing, you who are spiritual should restore such a person with a gentle spirit, watching out for yourselves so you also won't be tempted. Carry one another's burdens; in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. (Gal. 6:1-2)

10. God then corrected Job directly (chapters 38-41).

Job 38:1-4 Then the LORD answered Job from the whirlwind. He said: Who is this who obscures My counsel with ignorant words?...

Job 40:1-2 The LORD answered Job: Will the one who contends with the Almighty correct Him? Let him who argues with God give an answer.

Job 40:8 (God said to Job) Would you really challenge My justice? Would you declare Me guilty to justify yourself?

11. Job acknowledged his error to God and repented.

Job 42:1-6 Then Job replied to the LORD: I know that You can do anything and no plan of Yours can be thwarted. You asked, “Who is this who conceals My counsel with ignorance?” Surely I spoke about things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know. You said, “Listen now, and I will speak. When I question you, you will inform Me.” I had heard rumors about You, but now my eyes have seen You. Therefore I take back my words and repent in dust and ashes.
12. God rebuked the three accusers, and restored Job.

Job 42:7-8  ...He (the LORD) said to Eliphaz the Temanite: “I am angry with you and your two friends, for you have not spoken the truth about Me, as My servant Job has. Now take seven bulls and seven rams, go to My servant Job, and offer a burnt offering for yourselves. Then My servant Job will pray for you. I will surely accept his prayer and not deal with you as your folly deserves. For you have not spoken the truth about Me, as My servant Job has.”

Job 42:9-12  ... After Job had prayed for his friends, the LORD restored his prosperity and doubled his previous possessions. All his brothers, sisters, and former acquaintances came to his house and dined with him in his house. They sympathized with him and comforted him concerning all the adversity the LORD had brought on him. Each one gave him a qesitah (a unit of monetary value) and a gold earring. So the LORD blessed the last part of Job’s life more than the first.…

Note: For more Scriptures on “Suffering” see Lesson 1-14
### 3 Areas of Temptations, Trials, Tribulations and Surrender

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<td><strong>To Yield to His Oversight and Management “Lordship”</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Note:</strong> Advertisements typically target areas in Rows 1, 2 or 3, with the purpose of producing dissatisfaction.</td>
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Discussion Points Related to Salvation, our Two Natures and Lordship

1. Contrast the substitutionary principle of salvation with the common inclination toward merit-based salvation. I need to clearly understand that salvation is not earned, nor kept through my human effort so that I do not reason like the Galatian Christians. You foolish Galatians! Who has hypnotized you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was vividly portrayed as crucified? I only want to learn this from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now going to be made complete by the flesh? (Gal. 3:1-3)

2. Discuss the “event” of salvation (my “new birth”) as being just the “first step” in my spiritual walk with God, just as physical birth is the first step in the human experience of progressing from childhood to adult maturity. Many Christians emphasize the event of salvation (and obviously it isn’t optional), but then fail to emphasize the importance of the Christian’s life between the experience of salvation and the departure from this body.

I should not view my daily life as being a difficult and frustrating struggle with sin, to be endured until I am finally delivered through death (an unpleasant, but necessary experience) into heaven. Although I want to experience a consistently victorious life, I should not reason that only “very spiritual” believers are able to achieve that goal. God has provided me everything I need to live the abundant life.

3. Discuss the importance of understanding God’s character as it pertains to His trustworthiness. Then discuss the enemy’s strategy of undermining and distorting God’s character in my mind by portraying Him as One who cannot always be counted on to do what is best for me as I follow Him.

How does the enemy utilize my human nature’s propensity toward independence from God to promote distrust in Him, even though the Bible continually reinforces God’s character as loving, perfect, faithful and absolutely worthy of my trust? How do I reconcile this tension?

4. Discuss how I, as a believer came to have within me two natures which are in direct opposition to one another. Also discuss how my human nature is not the least bit improved at conversion, in contrast to the common perception that the Holy Spirit’s presence somehow raises the human nature to a new level of goodness. I need to realize that I have the same potential for committing sins after being saved as before. My human nature is beyond repair. God’s only provision for a victorious life is through the Divine Nature in the Person of the Holy Spirit.

5. Discuss the need to view the Holy Spirit as a Person, God Himself, in contrast to the idea that He is something less, such as an “inspiration” or an “influential force” for good in my life. He should be recognized as a constant Overseer and Companion, and a Person with whom there needs to be continual communication and interaction, as I would have with a spouse or a close friend.

He has a daily plan for my life and wants me to learn to follow Him and fit into His plans, contrary to the commonly held belief that He is always by my side, but is really only needed for those difficult times when I determine through my human understanding that I can’t cope alone. (my Divine 911)
6. Discuss Christ’s “ownership” of me as a truth that does not in any way depend upon my acknowledgment or acceptance of it. I need to clearly understand from the very beginning that surrender does not imply I’m giving up something to God, because it is already His. He has bought me and therefore to do anything less than unconditionally yield myself to Him is to usurp authority over that which is not mine. He is rightfully my Lord and I need to acknowledge and accept it. He should not be presented as One who will “become” my Lord sometime in the future. A refusal to acknowledge God’s stated truth will result in forfeiture of blessings both here on earth and at the Rewards Ceremony.

7. Discuss the concept of Lordship as a “decision” (event), a submission of my will to His authority. It will be followed by a process (abiding, sanctification, spiritual growth). This event is represented by the decision of the second group of Israelites to cross the Jordan River into God’s chosen place of blessing and fruitfulness (Canaan), where they learned to follow God in the process of conquering the land.

The husband – wife marriage ceremony (Marriage “Covenant”) is also an event of commitment (“relinquishment of independence”) followed by the marriage process (“learning to live together in harmonious fellowship”). This perspective is in contrast to the prevalent misconception that Lordship is a goal that is attained as a result of a “process” of surrender and obedience. “True surrender is not simply surrender of our external life but surrender of our will -- and once that is done, surrender is complete. The greatest crisis we ever face is the surrender of our will. Yet God never forces a person's will into surrender, and He never begs. He patiently waits until that person willingly yields to Him. And once that battle has been fought, it never needs to be fought again. Jesus says, “If you want to be My disciple, you must give up your right to yourself to Me.” And after you surrender -- then what? Your entire life should be characterized by an eagerness to maintain unbroken fellowship and oneness with God.” (Taken from My Utmost for His Highest by Oswald Chambers – Sep. 13. (c) 1935 by Dodd Mead & Co., renewed (c) 1963 by the Oswald Chambers Publications Assn., Ltd., and is used by permission of Discovery House Publishers, Box 3566, Grand Rapids MI 49501. All rights reserved.)

8. Discuss the concept of me fitting into one of two camps. One camp represents the Israelites who entered into Canaan, and the other camp (probably 80% or more of Christians) is represented by the first group of Israelites who refused to believe God and entrust themselves into His care. They did not consider God trustworthy. As a result they found themselves in a desert experience where God faithfully took care of all their temporal needs, but they were not fruitful from God’s eternal perspective.

9. Discuss the two aspects of surrender, which present an obvious opportunity for confusion. There is an initial surrender of the will to His authority which is an event, followed by the process of surrendering those areas of my understanding and behavior that He wants to change and/or prune to mold me into a more useful and fruitful vessel. (A wild horse’s will must first be broken, after which the training process can follow.) The “yoke” referred to in Matthew 11:28-30 speaks of “the relinquishment of my independence to Him” (event), followed by a process of learning to walk in harmonious fellowship with Him, “getting to know Him” (“sanctification”).

10. Discuss how many Christians mistakenly equate Lordship to a surrender of external behavior. This misconception typically results in a Christian repeatedly committing to total surrender and obedience, only to be soon disappointed by the lack of anticipated purity and godliness. It is then easy to conclude that such struggles with the human nature must be due to insincerity, lack of understanding, or lack of commitment on their part. Many Christians repeat this process throughout the years.
A Deeper Look at My Two Natures

1. The Following Diagrams Depict Four Spiritual Conditions.

- **A**
  - Adam - before he sinned (Jesus - while on earth)
  - The sinless human nature, totally compatible with God.
  - All behavior was in total harmony with God's character, totally pleasing to God.

- **B**
  - All unbelievers
  - Their works (fruit) have no life (eternal), are imperfect (flawed), and unacceptable to God.

- **C**
  - The condition of “abiding” in fellowship with the Holy Spirit. ("Walking in the Holy Spirit")
  - Human Nature is still present and corrupted, but powerless.
  - All that I allow the Holy Spirit to do through me is eternal and rewarding at the judgment seat of Christ (gold, silver, precious stones).
  - Note: The circular “dotted line” represents the “conditional” aspect.

- **D**
  - The condition of “not abiding”, having an unresolved issue with the Holy Spirit. ("Walking in the flesh")
  - All that is not motivated by the Holy Spirit is temporal, without His life and not rewarding (wood, hay, stubble).
2. **My human nature is sinful, independent, and beyond repair.**

   Jer 17:9  The heart is more deceitful than anything else, and incurable,…
   John 6:63  The Spirit is the One who gives life. The flesh doesn't help at all,…
   Rom 3:10-12  As it is written: There is no one righteous, not even one. … there is no one who seeks God. … All alike have become useless. There is no one who does what is good, not even one.
   Rom 7:18  For I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my flesh,…
   Rom 8:8  Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.
   Gal 5:17  For the flesh desires what is against the Spirit; and the Spirit desires what is against the flesh; these are opposed to each other, so that you don’t do what you want.

3. **I can attempt to improve my outward behavior (behavior manipulation), but God focuses my attention on the root problem - my sinful human nature. My outward behavior is simply the evidence of the real problem.**

   Matt 5:21-22  (Jesus said)... “You have heard that it was said to our ancestors, Do not murder, and whoever murders will be subject to judgment. But I tell you, everyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment.”
   5:27-28  “You have heard that it was said, Do not commit adultery. But I tell you, everyone who looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”
   Matt 15:19  For from the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, sexual immoralities, thefts, false testimonies, blasphemies.

4. **The purpose of the Law is to make evident the sinfulness of my human nature, in order to persuade me not to rely on it, but rather on the Holy Spirit.**

   You foolish Galatians! Who has hypnotized you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was vividly portrayed as crucified? I only want to learn this from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now going to be made complete by the flesh?
   Rom 3:19-20  Now we know that whatever the law says speaks to those who are subject to the law, so that every mouth may be shut and the whole world may become subject to God’s judgment. For no one will be justified in His sight by the works of the law, because the knowledge of sin comes through the law. (See also Heb. 7:18-19)
   Rom 5:20  The law came along to multiply the trespass,…
   Gal 5:22-23  But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, gentleness, self-control. Against such things there is no law.
   Rom 4:15  For the law produces wrath. And where there is no law, there is no transgression.
   Rom 5:13  … sin is not charged to a person’s account when there is no law.
   Rom 10:4  For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

**Note:** The Law could be pictured as a sign beside a salty spring in the desert, “**WARNING! THIS WATER IS CONTAMINATED AND UNHEALTHY TO DRINK.**”

Salt-water “looks like” fresh water, but it is unable to support human life.
In Romans, Chapters 7 - 8, Paul presents the hopelessness of my human nature and God’s perfect solution.

a. God never intended the Law to be a means by which I could make my sinful nature acceptable to Him, but rather He used the Law to demonstrate how “totally unacceptable” my sinful nature is.

Rom 7:7-13  ... I would not have known sin if it were not for the law. For example, I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, Do not covet.... So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and just and good. Therefore, did what is good cause my death? Absolutely not! On the contrary, sin, in order to be recognized as sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that through the commandment, sin might become sinful beyond measure.

b. Paul experienced what every Christian needs to learn, that my sinful nature is not the least bit improved since I became a Christian. No matter how I try, I cannot make it conform to God’s character.

Rom 7:14-16  For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am made out of flesh, sold into sin’s power. For I do not understand what I am doing, because I do not practice what I want to do, but I do what I hate. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree with the law that it is good.

c. Paul became aware that the sinful nature cannot be changed. It no longer represented his real desires, but what other option did he have?

Rom 7:17-24  So now I am no longer the one doing it, but it is sin living in me. For I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my flesh. For the desire to do what is good is with me, but there is no ability to do it. For I do not do the good that I want to do, but I practice the evil that I do not want to do. Now if I do what I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but it is the sin that lives in me. So I discover this principle: When I want to do what is good, evil is with me. For in my inner self I joyfully agree with God’s law. But I see a different law in the parts of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and taking me prisoner to the law of sin in the parts of my body. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this dying body?

d. God’s solution for the hopelessness of my sinful human nature was not to repair or overhaul my old nature, but to provide a new nature that is totally compatible with His character. Paul did not reside in Rom. 7, nor should I.

Rom 7:25  I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with my mind I myself am a slave to the law of God, but with my flesh, to the law of sin.

Rom 8:1-4  Therefore, no condemnation now exists for those in Christ Jesus, because the Spirit’s law of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. What the law could not do since it was limited by the flesh, God did. He condemned sin in the flesh by sending His own Son in flesh like ours under sin’s domain, and as a sin offering, in order that the law’s requirement would be accomplished in us who do not
walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.
Rom 8:5-8  For those who live according to the flesh think about the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, about the things of the Spirit. For the mind-set of the flesh is death (absence of life), but the mind-set of the Spirit is life and peace. For the mind-set of the flesh is hostile to God because it does not submit itself to God’s law, for it is unable to do so. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.
Gal 2:19-20  For through the law I have died to the law, so that I might live for God. I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.

Illustration: The Law of Gravity illustrates how my Human Nature continually attracts me away from God. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit,... (Gal. 5:17).

My sinful nature influences me spiritually similar to the way gravity influences my physical body.

I am always aware of gravity and am continually making adjustments so as not to be overcome by it. If I trip or fall I don’t have to stay down. No baby begins the physical life walking.
**My Christian Life is Not Just “Avoiding” Bad Behavior, but Rather Walking in the Spirit. (Eph. 4 & 5)**

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<tr>
<th>OLD SELF</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>4:14-15</strong></td>
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<td>… no longer be little children, …</td>
<td><strong>BUT</strong> speaking the truth in love, <em>let us grow</em> in every way into Him who is the head …</td>
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<td><strong>4:17-24</strong></td>
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<td>… You should no longer walk as the Gentiles walk, … You took off your former way of life, the old self …</td>
<td><strong>AND</strong> … <em>being renewed</em> in the spirit of your minds; you <strong>put on the new self</strong>, the one created according to God’s likeness in righteousness and purity of the truth.</td>
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<td><strong>4:25</strong></td>
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<td>… Since you put away lying, …</td>
<td>… <strong>Speak the truth</strong>, each one to his neighbor,</td>
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<td><strong>4:28</strong></td>
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<td>The thief must no longer steal.</td>
<td><strong>BUT</strong> he must <strong>do honest work</strong>, … so that he has something to share …</td>
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<td><strong>4:29</strong></td>
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<td>No foul language is to come from your mouth, (silent?)</td>
<td><strong>BUT</strong> … <em>only what is good for building up</em> …</td>
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<td><strong>4:31-32</strong></td>
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<td>All bitterness, anger and wrath, shouting and slander must be removed from you, along with all malice.</td>
<td>… And <strong>be kind and compassionate</strong> to one another, <strong>forgiving</strong> one another, just as God also forgave you in Christ.</td>
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<td><strong>5:3-4</strong></td>
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<td>But sexual immorality and any impurity or greed should not even be heard of among you. … Coarse and foolish talking or crude joking are not suitable, …</td>
<td><strong>BUT</strong> … <strong>giving thanks</strong>, (as a habit)</td>
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<td><strong>5:7-10</strong></td>
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<td>… do not become their partners. For you were once darkness, …</td>
<td><strong>BUT</strong> … <strong>Walk as children of light</strong> … <strong>discerning what is pleasing to the Lord</strong>.</td>
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<td><strong>5:11-13</strong></td>
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<td>Don’t participate in the fruitless works of darkness, …</td>
<td><strong>BUT</strong> <strong>INSTEAD</strong> … <strong>expose them</strong>, … Everything exposed by the light is made clear.</td>
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<td><strong>5:15-16</strong></td>
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<td>… (walk) … not as unwise people</td>
<td><strong>BUT</strong> <em>as wise—making the most of the time</em>, because the days are evil.</td>
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<td><strong>5:17</strong></td>
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<td>…So don’t be foolish,</td>
<td><strong>BUT</strong> <strong>understand what the Lord’s will is</strong>.</td>
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<td><strong>5:18-21</strong></td>
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<td>And don’t get drunk with wine, which leads to reckless actions,</td>
<td><strong>BUT</strong> <strong>be filled by the Spirit</strong>: speaking to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and <strong>making music from your heart to the Lord</strong>, <strong>giving thanks always</strong> for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another in the fear of Christ.</td>
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..., **walk by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.** (Gal. 5:16)
Abiding, Confession of Sin and Restoration to Fellowship
as Illustrated in Joshua 7

SETTING: The second group of Israelites, under the leadership of Joshua, had just entered Canaan (the Promised Land), after having spent 40 years in the desert because of the unbelief of the first group of Israelites. They were faced with the challenge of learning to walk in daily dependence on the Lord as He gave them victory over their enemies, the inhabitants of Canaan. (The conquest of Canaan took about 7 years)

PROBLEM: There is a prevalent misconception that I can somehow be yielded to the Holy Spirit and the Human Nature simultaneously (as long as I’m “trying my best”). I need to understand that God interacts with me as a “whole” person, in the same way I would interact with my spouse, or with a close friend. That is, He will not allow me to abide in fellowship with Him and have victory in one area of my life while I am consciously allowing disobedience and defeat in another area.

CAUTION: A troublesome area of defeat in my life will often be the result of an unrelated and less obvious unresolved conflict in another area.

IMPORTANT: In this illustration, corporate Israel represents me as a Christian.

1. God assured Israel of victory in the Promised Land. However, Israel needed to learn that His guarantee of victory was conditional on their “abiding” in fellowship (communion) with Him. In the same way, He assures me of victory in my Christian walk - conditional on my remaining (“abiding”) in fellowship with Him.

1:3,5 “I have given you every place where the sole of your foot treads, just as I promised Moses. No one will be able to stand against you as long as you live. I will be with you, just as I was with Moses. I will not leave you or forsake you.”

6:2 The LORD said to Joshua, “Look, I have handed Jericho … over to you.”

2. At Jericho, the Lord gave clear instructions. They were accountable to obey what they understood.

6:17-19 (The Lord said) “But the city and everything in it are set apart to the LORD. ... all the silver and gold, and the articles of bronze and iron, are dedicated to the LORD and must go into the LORD’s treasury.”

6:21,24 They completely destroyed everything in the city … but they put the silver and gold and the articles of bronze and iron into the treasury of the LORD’s house.

They “assumed” that they had obeyed the Lord.

3. But there was disobedience that disrupted their fellowship with God, removing them from God’s provision for victory and rendering them defenseless.

(One small piece of dirt or a drop of poison, in a glass of water pollutes the whole. 1 Cor. 5:6 says: “Don’t you know that a little yeast permeates the whole batch of dough?”

What I deem “insignificant” may be very significant to the Lord.)
7:1 The Israelites, however, were unfaithful … Achan, … took some of what was set apart, and the LORD’s anger burned against the Israelites.

Although only one man was involved, God held the entire nation (corporately) accountable. At first glance this may appear “unfair” to some. But this is how we relate to a spouse, and to others. If I were to steal something, would just my “hand” be sent to jail? One of God’s purposes for this illustration was to teach Israel (and me) this principle. (read also Joshua 22:20)

4. They seemed to feel quite confident at this time, and there is no indication that they “consulted” the Lord before proceeding. Evidently they felt they were “on a roll.” (read also Joshua 9:14)

7:2-3 Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, … and told them, “Go up and scout the land.” So the men went up and scouted Ai. After returning to Joshua they reported to him, “Don’t send all the people, but send about 2,000 or 3,000 men to attack Ai. Since the people of Ai are so few, don’t wear out all our people there.”

They appeared unaware that they were now defenseless, and functioning in their own strength.

5. When they confronted the enemy in their own strength they found themselves defeated.

7:4-5 So about 3,000 men went up there, but they fled from the men of Ai. The men of Ai struck down about 36 of them and chased them. … As a result, the people’s hearts melted and became like water.

It would be easy to conclude that God’s promises (see point 1) had failed.

6. They were very discouraged and at a loss to understand why this had happened. They “assumed” they had obeyed the Lord. They were ready to give up.

7:6-9 Then Joshua tore his clothes and fell before the ark of the LORD with his face to the ground until evening, as did the elders of Israel; they all put dust on their heads. “Oh, Lord GOD,” Joshua said, “why did You ever bring these people across the Jordan to hand us over to the Amorites for our destruction? If only we had been content to remain on the other side of the Jordan! What can I say, Lord, now that Israel has turned its back and run from its enemies? When the Canaanites and all who live in the land hear about this, they will surround us and wipe out our name from the earth. Then what will You do about Your great name?”

7. God now had their attention. He wanted to reveal an “unresolved issue” to them. My tendency is to not associate the “symptom” with the root problem. Israel viewed Ai as the problem, but God viewed Ai as a symptom. Achan was the problem. They were defeated at Ai only because the source of their strength had been disrupted, leaving them defenseless.

7:10-11 The LORD then said to Joshua, “Stand up! Why are you on the ground? Israel has sinned. They have violated My covenant that I appointed for them. They have taken some of what was set apart. They have stolen, deceived, …”

Notice again, God uses “they” because He held the entire nation accountable for one man’s sin.
8. God wanted Israel to understand that victory over their enemies originated from Him alone and was **conditional** upon their **continual** abiding fellowship with Him. While out of fellowship with Him they were defenseless. As am I when I “allow” disobedience to disrupt my fellowship with the Lord. John 15:4-5 states: … *you can do nothing without Me.*

7:12a **This is why the Israelites cannot stand against their enemies**…

1% unresolved sin in my life can leave me 100% out of fellowship with the Lord. That doesn’t mean I’m 100% sinful, just that I am now functioning in union with my sinful nature (“walking in the flesh”), until I am willing to be restored.

9. In order to be **restored** to “abiding fellowship” with God they would need to **repent** and **acknowledge** the sin for which God was holding them accountable. Otherwise they could not count on God’s strength, but rather would be standing against their enemies **in their own strength**.

7:12b-13 … I will **no longer** be with you **unless** you remove from you what is set apart. “Go and consecrate the people. Tell them to **consecrate themselves** for tomorrow, for this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: There are things that are set apart among you, Israel. **You will not be able to stand** against your enemies **until** you remove what is set apart.”

**Note:** While refusal to enter His Spiritual Promised Land does result in a defeated and unfruitful life, simply being in His Spiritual Promised Land does not guarantee a victorious and fruitful life, because His victories and fruitfulness are **conditional on abiding.**

10. They needed to honestly examine themselves to be sure that nothing was left unresolved. The sin that disrupted their fellowship with the Lord was identified and laid out before the Lord. Biblical “confession” carries the idea of “repentance” (putting to death). (See also 1 John 1:5-10)

7:14-19 In the morning you must present yourselves tribe by tribe. … The one who is caught with the things set apart must be **burned**, along with everything he has, … Joshua got up early the next morning. He had Israel come forward tribe by tribe, … and Achan … of the tribe of Judah, was selected. So Joshua said to Achan, “My son, give glory to the LORD, the God of Israel, and **make a confession to Him**. I urge you, **tell** me what you have done. **Don’t hide anything** from me.”

7:20,21,23 Achan replied to Joshua, “It is true. **I have sinned against the LORD**, the God of Israel. **This is what I did**: When I saw among the spoils a beautiful cloak from Babylon, 200 silver shekels, and a bar of gold weighing 50 shekels, I coveted them and took them. You can see for yourself. They are concealed in the ground inside my tent, with the money under the cloak.” They took the things from inside the tent, brought them to Joshua and all the Israelites, and **spread them out in the LORD’s presence.**

7:24-26a Then Joshua and all Israel with him took Achan, … the silver, the cloak, and the bar of gold, his sons and daughters, his ox, donkey, and sheep, his tent, and all that he had, and brought them up to the Valley of Achor. … So **all Israel stoned them** to death. They **burned their bodies**….
11. Their fellowship with the Lord was immediately and completely restored and they were once again “abiding” in fellowship with Him. Because they were abiding, they could once again experience and enjoy His blessing and victory.

7:26b-8:1 ... the LORD turned from His burning anger ... The LORD said to Joshua, “Do not be afraid or discouraged. Take the whole military force with you and go attack Ai. Look, I have handed over to you the king of Ai, his people, city, and land.”

Notice that God reinstates the original promises and encouragement (from Joshua 1:3,5).

12. God gave them different instructions in regard to the next confrontation. What God deemed to be sin in Jericho was not sin at Ai. If Achan had waited for God’s timing, what he did would not have displeased God. (Even doing a “good” thing at the wrong time may be sin).

8:2 Treat Ai and its king as you did Jericho and its king; you may plunder its spoil and livestock for yourselves....

13. The Israelites were reminded to not forget the lesson they had learned in Joshua 7.

22:20 “Wasn’t Achan … unfaithful regarding what was set apart for destruction, bringing wrath on the entire community of Israel? He was not the only one who perished because of his sin.”

PRINCIPLES TO BE LEARNED:

1) If I find myself defeated and cannot seem to get victory in an area of my life, perhaps I am struggling with a “symptom”, rather than the “problem”. Ask God for discernment to distinguish the difference. (Refer to Lesson 1-9, page 46)

2) God will not allow me to experience His joy, peace, victory and blessings while I am unwilling to resolve an issue for which the Holy Spirit is presently holding me accountable. It is the Holy Spirit alone who determines when I am responsible for disrupting that fellowship (when I’m not “abiding”). Caution: What He deems to be significant may be “insignificant” to me, (for example, pride, unforgiveness, neglect, complaining, etc.).

3) God may hold me accountable for something “today” which He didn’t hold me accountable for yesterday”. Even though the Lord is aware of these displeasing aspects of my character, the “good news” is He only holds me accountable for those issues (dust particles) that He wants me to deal with today as He matures me. This represents my Growth process and is the same way we deal with our children.

4) I will never get to the place in my spiritual life where I don’t have to pay attention to His leading.

“Sanctification”

I will drive them out little by little ahead of you until you have become numerous and take possession of the land.
(Ex. 23:30)
**John 15 - The Vine and the Branches**  
(Verse by Verse)

These are notes taken from a teaching by E.G. von Trutzschler ("pastor Von") at a New Tribes Mission annual conference in Bolivia (and I've added some notes - Art Barkley)

1. **I am the true Vine, and My Father is the Vineyard Keeper.**  
The implication here is that there are "untrue" vines. Those who entrust their lives to Christ are of the "true" Vine. God the Father is the Gardener, Jesus is the Vine, we are the branches. The Vinedresser (or Gardener) speaks of God's sovereignty, ownership, care and protection. God has a hedge around us.

   **Job 1:10** Haven’t You placed a hedge around him, his household, and everything he owns? …

2. **Every branch in Me that does not produce fruit He removes (or lifts up), and He prunes every branch that produces fruit so that it will produce more fruit.**

   “in Me” speaks of salvation (he is referring to those who are Christians). I’m not “in Christ” because of bearing fruit. I don’t earn salvation by my fruit; I produce fruit because I am abiding in Christ. Can I be saved by my own righteousness or faithfulness?

   **Ec. 7:20** There is certainly no righteous man on the earth who does good and never sins.

   As a Christian I may or may not bear eternal fruit (as determined by God). “Cuts off / breaks off” refers to divine discipline. God reacts, perhaps removing me to another place (perhaps to heaven).

   **1 Cor. 5:5** turn that one over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the Day of the Lord. (See also 2 Cor. 2:5-8)
   **1 Cor. 11:30** This is why many are sick and ill among you, and many have fallen asleep. (died)
   **1 Cor. 3:15** If anyone’s work is burned up, it will be lost, but he will be saved; yet it will be like an escape through fire.

   “bears / produces fruit” Fruit is the character of Christ being produced in me by the work of God. What does a natural fruit do? It satisfies, brings pleasure.

   **Gal. 5:22-23** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, gentleness, self-control. Against such things there is no law.
Pruning speaks of removing parts that, from God’s perspective, are a hindrance to what He wants to accomplish in and through my life. Their harmful character may or may not be obvious to me; for example, parasitic plants. Who but God can decide what has value? All pruning hurts for awhile. The bottom line is: Can I trust Him? Trials reveal my character.

Heb. 12:4-11 … they (parents) disciplined us, … but He does it for our benefit, so that we can share His holiness. No discipline seems enjoyable at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it yields the fruit of peace and righteousness to those who have been trained by it. Rom. 5:3-4 … but we also rejoice in our afflictions, because we know that affliction produces endurance, endurance produces proven character, and proven character produces hope.

3. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you.
You are clean because of what He has accomplished; “clean” is an appropriate reminder of salvation. The disciples were clean; Judas was unclean. Clean relates to "union," whereas washing relates to "communion." My feet get dirty as I walk daily in this world.

John 13:10-11 “One who has bathed,” Jesus told him, “doesn’t need to wash anything except his feet, but he is completely clean. You are clean, but not all of you.” For He knew who would betray Him. This is why He said, “You are not all clean.”

4. Remain (abide) in Me, and I in you. Just as a branch is unable to produce fruit by itself unless it remains (abides) on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain (abides) in Me.

“Abide” does not speak of salvation, but "fellowship"; it is not union, but "communion." Union depends on God, communion depends on me. (as in a marriage relationship) Abide/remain (used 64 times by the apostle John) means "to dwell, continue, tarry, endure," "to continue in communion/fellowship without unresolved conflicts."

Scofield on “abiding” – “Having no sin unjudged and unconfessed, no interest into which He is not brought, no life He cannot share. The abiding one takes his burdens to Him, draws wisdom, life, and strength from Him. It is not unceasing consciousness of these things, and of Him, but that nothing is allowed in the life which separates from Him.” (pp. 1136-37).

Can continual communion be maintained? Is God unreasonable? On page 164 of “Hudson Taylor’s Spiritual Secret” we read, “We should never be conscious of not abiding in Christ.” (If I have a thorn in my foot, or a particle in my eye, do I ignore it, or pretend it doesn’t exist?) Only unacknowledged sin can break fellowship. Confession immediately restores fellowship. Jesus calls me to a "rest" (see Matt. 11:28-30). Not a "striving to" rest, but rather a vigilance, sensitivity to anything that would disturb that relationship. If I am "honestly" doing what I believe to be pleasing to Him, I can trust Him to show me otherwise.

Illustration: An object held in my open hand does not strive, yet is not overcome by gravity. If the object represents me as a soul, then gravity would be like the sinful nature in my body, and the hand would be like the Holy Spirit.

Isaiah 30:20-21 The Lord will give you meager bread and water during oppression, but your Teacher will not hide Himself any longer. Your eyes will see your Teacher, and whenever you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear this command behind you: “This is the way. Walk in it.”
Walking in the light speaks of **communion**. Am I aware of darkness? Darkness speaks of sin. This is dangerous! My eyes can adjust (to the darkness) if I’m not careful.

1 John 1:7  **But if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.**

God uses His Word to train me.

Heb. 5:13-14  **Now everyone who lives on milk is inexperienced with the message about righteousness, because he is an infant. But solid food is for the mature—** for those whose **senses have been trained** **to distinguish between good and evil.**

We're all at different levels in our Christian growth - child, adolescent, adult. He alone knows where I am, and deals with me accordingly. He doesn't expect me to act beyond my age.

Communion is **conditional**. His promise is conditional on **my** choices, like so many other promises He makes. The choice to abide/remain indicates that my natural tendency is one of "not abiding/remaining."

**5. I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in Me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without Me.**

The natural, absolute result of being connected is that I **will** bear fruit! Fruit comes from "just being healthy." There is no reason to compare myself to others.

2 Cor. 10:12  **… But in measuring themselves by themselves and comparing themselves to themselves, they lack understanding.**

We have different gifts, just as there are different types of natural fruit. People are looking for fruit that satisfies, they want "**good**" fruit. **Activity** is not necessarily "good fruit." **Nothing** has no eternal value, and no eternal reward. I can do plenty in the flesh.

1 Cor. 13:1-3  **If I speak human or angelic languages but do not have love, I am a sounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith so that I can move mountains but do not have love, I am nothing. And if I donate all my goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body in order to boast but do not have love, I gain nothing.**

John 6:63  **The Spirit is the One who gives life. The flesh doesn’t help at all.**

**6. If anyone does not remain (abide) in Me, he is thrown aside like a branch and he withers. They gather them, throw them into the fire, and they are burned.**

Jesus wasn't attempting to "keep" Himself in union with the Father (see v. 10). This verse speaks of my testimony before the world, **not salvation** (see v. 2). God sees my faith (invisible to men), but men see my works (visible to men) – see v. 8.

John 13:35  **(Jesus said) By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”**

James 2:14-26  **… For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.**

God was held in contempt by the world due to king David’s sin (see 2 Sam. 12:14). A healthy branch is fixed, but flexible (manageable, pliable, teachable, moldable). A dead branch is brittle, hard, self-willed, unbendable, unmoldable,unteachable.
:7. If you remain in Me and My words remain in you, ask whatever you want and it will be done for you.

I should align myself with Him. I'll learn to think like Him. God is not a "name it and claim it" wishing well. He wants to change my desires - the things I would wish for.

Amos 3:3  Do two walk together unless they have agreed to do so? (NIV)
Psalm 37:4  Take delight in the LORD, and He will give you your heart’s desires.

:8. My Father is glorified by this: that you produce much fruit and prove to be My disciples.

Frustration and failure are unpleasant, but are used by God to draw me closer to Himself. I am a light in the darkness. There is no competition like in the secular world; God gets the glory. There are no politics in an organism. There is no room for selfish ambitions in my work.

Matt. 5:14-16 “You are the light of the world. … let your light shine before men, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.
John 7:18 The one who speaks for himself seeks his own glory. But He who seeks the glory of the One who sent Him is true, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.
Gal. 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, gentleness, self-control. Against such things there is no law.

:9. As the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you. Remain (abide) in My love.

“as” is important. He loves me in the same way the Father loves Him. I see the Father's love and care for His Son. Jesus entrusted Himself completely into that care.

1 Peter 2:21-23 For you were called to this, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in His steps. He did not commit sin, and no deceit was found in His mouth; when He was reviled, He did not revile in return; when He was suffering, He did not threaten but entrusted Himself to the One who judges justly.

:10. If you keep My commands you will remain (abide) in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commands and remain (abide) in His love.

I am called to entrust myself completely into His hands.

Rom. 12:1-2 Therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.


Gal. 5:16-17 I say then, walk by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh desires what is against the Spirit, and the Spirit desires what is against the flesh; these are opposed to each other, so that you don’t do what you want.

I am given but one command relating to others = Love one another (v.12)

Gal. 5:14 For the entire law is fulfilled in one statement: Love your neighbor as yourself.
There is danger in omission, that is not obeying/not doing what I believe to be right. Just as “darkness” is “the absence of light.”

James 4:17  So it is a sin for the person who knows to do what is good and doesn’t do it.

:11.I have spoken these things to you so that My joy may be in you and your joy may be complete.
An appropriate time to speak of "joy?"

Heb. 12:2  …keeping our eyes on Jesus, the source and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that lay before Him endured a cross and despised the shame and has sat down at the right hand of God’s throne.

I must abide/remain, and then I will bear fruit, and then experience God's joy. Not just joy, but rather "Jesus’ joy" in full measure!

John 17:13  (Jesus said) Now I am coming to You, and I speak these things in the world so that they may have My joy completed in them.

:12. This is My command: Love one another as I have loved you.
Fruit is for others (fruit of the Spirit). Love is a choice; it is choosing to give another's welfare and interests the same importance as my own. “as” puts it within the realm of our possibility.

Matt. 23:11  The greatest among you will be your servant.
Phil. 2:3-4  Do nothing out of rivalry or conceit, but in humility consider others as more important than yourselves. Everyone should look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

:13. No one has greater love than this, that someone would lay down his life for his friends.
It is an "attitude" of willingness.

Matt. 20:26  … whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant.
John 10:15-18  “as the Father knows Me, and I know the Father. I lay down My life for the sheep. … This is why the Father loves Me, because I am laying down My life so I may take it up again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down on My own. I have the right to lay it down, and I have the right to take it up again. I have received this command from My Father.”
Phil. 2:3-8  … Make your own attitude that of Christ Jesus,…

:14. You are My friends if you do what I command you.
A friend is one who yields his allegiance to another. Partners together with Christ.

I Cor. 3:6-9  … then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. Now the one planting and the one watering are one in purpose, and each will receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are God's coworkers,…
I do not call you slaves anymore, because a slave doesn’t know what his master is doing. I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything I have heard from My Father. A friend knows the Master's business.

Eph. 5:17  So don’t be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is.

You did not choose Me, but I chose you. I appointed you that you should go out and produce fruit and that your fruit should remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in My name, He will give you.

Chose/Election - Who knows why? No one is better than another. We can only be grateful.

John 6:44  (Jesus said)  “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him,…”
John 12:32  (Jesus said)  “As for Me, if I am lifted up from the earth I will draw all people to Myself.”
John 6:65  (Jesus said)  “… no one can come to Me unless it is granted to him by the Father.”
Rom. 3:11 …there is no one who seeks God.

The fruit that the Holy Spirit produces through me as I abide has eternal value.

2 Cor. 4:17  For our momentary light affliction is producing for us an absolutely incomparable eternal weight of glory.

This is what I command you: Love one another.

One command encompasses all. As I abide in fellowship with the Holy Spirit, He will draw others to Himself through the love for others that He will manifest through my life.

John 13:35  By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

REVIEW: Results of abiding/remaining in continual fellowship:

- I will be pruned/disciplined/corrected to make me more fruitful.
- The Holy Spirit will draw others to Himself as I allow His love to touch them.
- I will be communicating/praying and seeing His answers.
- God will be glorified through my life.
- I will be experiencing His joy.
- I will be bearing fruit that has eternal benefits.
The Son is our Model for “Continual Abiding”

1. The Son was the perfect “Branch” of God. (Old Testament prophecies.)

- Isa. 4:2 On that day the Branch of the LORD will be beautiful and glorious…
- Isa. 11:1-5 Then a shoot will grow from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots will bear fruit…. (See also Rom. 15:12)
- Jer. 23:5-6 “The days are coming”—this is the LORD’s declaration—“when I will raise up a Righteous Branch of David. He will reign wisely as king and administer justice and righteousness in the land.”
- Jer. 33:15 In those days and at that time I will cause a Righteous Branch to sprout up for David, and He will administer justice and righteousness in the land.
- Zech. 3:8 “Listen, Joshua … I am about to bring My servant, the Branch.”
- Zech. 6:12-13 … This is what the LORD of Hosts says: Here is a man whose name is Branch; He will branch out from His place and build the LORD’s temple….

2. As a branch the Son was not the source of what He said or did, He was a usable vessel, constantly available to the Father.

- Deuteronomy 18:18 I (God) will raise up for them a prophet like you (Moses) from among their brothers. I will put My words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him.
- John 3:32 (John the Baptist said) He testifies to what He has seen and heard…. 5:19 … “I assure you: The Son is not able to do anything on His own, but only what He sees the Father doing.” … 5:30 “I can do nothing on My own. I judge only as I hear, and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.” 7:16 Jesus answered them, “My teaching isn’t Mine but is from the One who sent Me.” 8:16 And if I do judge, My judgment is true, because I am not alone, but I and the Father who sent Me judge together. 8:26 “… what I have heard from Him—these things I tell the world.” 8:28 … Jesus said … I do nothing on My own. But just as the Father taught Me, I say these things. 8:38 I speak what I have seen in the presence of the Father…. 12:49-50 “For I have not spoken on My own, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me a command as to what I should say and what I should speak. I know that His command is eternal life. So the things that I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me.” 14:24 … The word that you hear is not Mine but is from the Father who sent Me. 14:31 … that the world may know that I love the Father. Just as the Father commanded Me, so I do…. 15:15 … I have made known to you everything I have heard from My Father. 17:8 (Jesus to His Father) … because the words that You gave Me, I have given them…. Phil. 2:5-7 … Christ Jesus, who, existing in the form of God, … emptied Himself by assuming the form of a slave….
3. The Son is the visible manifestation of the invisible God.

John 1:14  The Word became flesh and took up residence among us. We observed His glory, the glory as the One and Only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.
10:37-38  “If I am not doing My Father’s works, don’t believe Me. But if I am doing them and you don’t believe Me, believe the works. This way you will know and understand that the Father is in Me and I in the Father.”
12:44-45  Then Jesus cried out, “The one who believes in Me believes not in Me, but in Him who sent Me. And the one who sees Me sees Him who sent Me.”
14:9  (Jesus said to Philip) The one who has seen Me has seen the Father…
14:10-11 … The words I speak to you I do not speak on My own. The Father who lives in Me does His works. Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me. Otherwise, believe because of the works themselves.
Isa. 9:6  For a child will be born for us, a son will be given to us, … He will be named … Mighty God, Eternal Father…
2 Cor. 4:4  … Christ, who is the image of God.
Col. 1:15  He is the image of the invisible God…
Heb. 1:3  The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact expression of His nature…

4. The Son did not seek to please people to win their praise, but sought only to please His Father.

Matt. 26:36-44  Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, … Going a little farther, He fell facedown and prayed, “My Father! If it is possible, let this cup pass from Me. Yet not as I will, but as You will.” … Again, a second time, He went away and prayed, “My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, Your will be done.” … He went away again and prayed a third time, saying the same thing once more.
John 4:34  “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to finish His work,” Jesus told them.”
5:30  “I can do nothing on My own. I judge only as I hear, and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.”
5:41  “I do not accept glory from men.”
6:38  For I have come down from heaven, not to do My will, but the will of Him who sent Me.
7:18  The one who speaks for himself seeks his own glory. But He who seeks the glory of the One who sent Him is true, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.
8:29  “The One who sent Me is with Me. He has not left Me alone, because I always do what pleases Him.”
8:50  I do not seek My glory; the One who seeks it also judges.
8:54  “If I glorify Myself,” Jesus answered, “My glory is nothing. My Father— … He is the One who glorifies Me.”
12:27-28  “Now My soul is troubled. What should I say—Father, save Me from this hour? But that is why I came to this hour. Father, glorify Your name!” …
5. The Son totally entrusted Himself into His Father's care. He knew His Father was sovereign and totally trustworthy.

Matt. 26:39  … He fell facedown and prayed, “My Father! If it is possible, let this cup pass from Me. Yet not as I will, but as You will.”
John 7:28  … I have not come on My own, but the One who sent Me is true.…
19:10-11  So Pilate said to Him, “You’re not talking to me? Don’t You know that I have the authority to release You and the authority to crucify You?” “You would have no authority over Me at all,” Jesus answered him, “if it hadn’t been given you from above.” …
Phil. 2:8  He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death—even to death on a cross.
Heb. 5:8-9  Though He was God’s Son, He learned obedience through what He suffered. After He was perfected, He became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey Him.
1 Pet. 2:21-23  … when He was reviled, He did not revile in return; when He was suffering, He did not threaten but entrusted Himself to the One who judges justly.

6. God wants me to have that same “abiding” relationship with Him.

John 14:12  “I assure you: The one who believes in Me will also do the works that I do. And he will do even greater works than these, because I am going to the Father.”
15:5  “I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in Me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without Me.”
17:3  (Jesus prayed to His Father) This is eternal life: that they may know You, the only true God, and the One You have sent—Jesus Christ.
17:14  … they are not of the world, as I am not of the world.
17:18  As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.
17:23  I am in them and You are in Me. May they be made completely one, so the world may know You have sent Me and have loved them as You have loved Me.
17:26  I made Your name known to them and will make it known, so the love You have loved Me with may be in them and I may be in them.
20:21  Jesus said to them again, “ … As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.”
Matt. 10:40  “The one who welcomes you welcomes Me, and the one who welcomes Me welcomes Him who sent Me.”
Rom. 8:29  For those He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brothers.
2 Cor. 3:18  We all, with unveiled faces, are looking as in a mirror at the glory of the Lord and are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory;…
Phil. 2:5-7  Make your own attitude that of Christ Jesus, who, existing in the form of God, did not consider equality with God as something to be used for His own advantage. Instead He emptied Himself by assuming the form of a slave.…
1 Pet. 2:21-23  For you were called to this, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in His steps.…
1 John 2:6  The one who says he remains in Him should walk just as He walked.
Abiding in His Temple

"Walking in Fellowship with the Holy Spirit"
"Abiding in Christ"
"Walking in His Light"

Illustration – Imagine a reflection in a calm lake. Sin acts like a pebble that is dropped into the water and distorts the reflection.

Illustration – Sin is like dirt in an otherwise glass of pure clean water. Sin is “anything that displeases God.”

I need to stay alert for on-going symptoms of being out of fellowship, such as:
Stumbling, Impatience, Anxiety,
Lack of peace, Sense of defeat,
Dissatisfaction, Striving, Complaining,
Worry, Frustration, Anger, Irritability

"Out of Fellowship with the Holy Spirit"
"Allowing the Human Nature to Reign"
"Walking in Spiritual Darkness"

Expect only wood, hay and stubble

The Holy Spirit is producing his fruit

Illustration – Sin is like dirt in an otherwise glass of pure clean water. Sin is “anything that displeases God.”
Verses Related to the Temple Presentation

1. Jesus was a temple of God on earth, and so is each true believer.

John 2:19-21 Jesus answered, “Destroy this sanctuary, and I will raise it up in three days.”
Therefore the Jews said, “This sanctuary took 46 years to build, and will You raise it up in three days?” But He was speaking about the sanctuary of His body.
1 Cor. 3:16 Don’t you yourselves know that you are God’s sanctuary and that the Spirit of God lives in you?
1 Cor. 6:19-20 Don’t you know that your body is a sanctuary of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought at a price. Therefore glorify God in your body.
2 Cor. 6:16 … For we are the sanctuary of the living God, as God said: I will dwell among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be My people.

2. God dwells in every Christian as His temple. Now every believer, as a priest, can enter His presence and commune with Him. (See also Ex. 30:6-8)

Matt. 27:50-51 Jesus shouted again with a loud voice and gave up His spirit. Suddenly, the curtain of the sanctuary was split in two from top to bottom;…
Eph. 2:18-22 … you are … fellow citizens with the saints, and members of God’s household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus Himself as the cornerstone. The whole building, being put together by Him, grows into a holy sanctuary in the Lord. You also are being built together for God’s dwelling in the Spirit.
Heb. 9:1-7 … For a tabernacle was set up, and in the first room, which is called the holy place, were the lampstand, the table, and the presentation loaves. Behind the second curtain, the tabernacle was called the most holy place. It contained the gold altar of incense and the ark of the covenant, covered with gold on all sides, in which there was a gold jar containing the manna, Aaron’s staff that budded, and the tablets of the covenant. The cherubim of glory were above it overshadowing the mercy seat. It is not possible to speak about these things in detail right now. With these things set up this way, the priests enter the first room repeatedly, performing their ministry. But the high priest alone enters the second room, and he does that only once a year, and never without blood, which he offers for himself and for the sins of the people committed in ignorance.
Heb. 10:19-22 Therefore, brothers, since we have boldness to enter the sanctuary through the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way He has opened for us through the curtain (that is, His flesh), and since we have a great high priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed in pure water.
Heb 13:10,15,16 We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle do not have a right to eat. Therefore, through Him let us continually offer up to God a sacrifice of praise, that is, the fruit of our lips that confess His name. Don’t neglect to do what is good and to share, for God is pleased with such sacrifices.
1 Peter 2:5,9 … you yourselves, as living stones, are being built into a spiritual house for a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His possession, so that you may proclaim the praises of the One who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.
3. His “fruit” should be produced in / through me.

Rom. 8:6  For the mind-set of the flesh is death [“absence of life”], but the mind-set of the Spirit is **life** and **peace**.
Rom. 14:17  for the kingdom of God is … **righteousness**, **peace**, and **joy** in the Holy Spirit.
Gal. 5:22-23  But the **fruit of the Spirit** is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, gentleness, self-control. Against such things there is no law.

4. His “light” should shine through me.

Matt. 5:14-16  “You are the light of the world. A city situated on a hill cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and puts it under a basket, but rather on a lampstand, and it gives light for all who are in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

2 Cor. 4:6-11  For God who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” has **shone in our hearts** to give the light of the knowledge of God’s glory in the face of Jesus Christ. Now we have **this treasure in clay jars**, so that this extraordinary power may be from God and not from us…. We always carry the death of Jesus in our body, so that the **life of Jesus** may also be revealed in our body. For we who live are always given over to death because of Jesus, so that Jesus’ life may also be **revealed in our mortal flesh**.

Eph. 5:8-13  For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as **children of light** — for the **fruit of the light** results in all goodness, righteousness, and truth—discerning what is pleasing to the Lord.

1 John 2:8-11  ... The one who says he is in the light but hates his brother is in the darkness until now. The one who loves his brother **remains in the light**, and there is no cause for stumbling in him. But the one who hates his brother walks in the darkness, and doesn’t know where he’s going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

5. His “living water” should flow through me. (see also Ezek. 47:1-12)

Jer. 2:13  (God, referring to Himself) … **Me, the fountain of living water,…**
John 7:37-38  On the last and most important day of the festival, Jesus stood up and cried out, “If anyone is thirsty, he should come to Me and drink! The one who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, **will have streams of living water flow from deep within him.**”
James 3:8-12  … but no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. We praise our Lord and Father with it, and we curse men who are made in God’s likeness with it. Praising and cursing come out of the same mouth. My brothers, these things should not be this way. Does a spring pour out **sweet** and **bitter water** from the same opening? Can a fig tree produce olives, my brothers, or a grapevine produce figs? **Neither can a saltwater spring yield fresh water.**

6. A glimpse of the heavenly city.

Rev. 21:10, 22  He (angel) then carried me (John) away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. I did not see a sanctuary in it, because the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its sanctuary.
Rewards (and Loss of) Ceremony for Believers
(Also referred to as the Judgment Seat of Christ,
The Tribunal of Christ or The Bema Seat)

The Tribunal of Christ has **nothing to do with salvation, nor with punishment** - that was all taken care of at the cross. Nor does it have to do with what I as a Christian can do for God. God does not need anything I can do. Rewards will be based on the **fruit that I have allowed the Holy Spirit to produce** through my life here on earth, as I by faith in His promises, have abided in fellowship with Him. I cannot compare heavenly rewards with earthly rewards, but I need to understand that they will somehow affect the quality of my life in eternity. A Christian should not conclude that the Rewards Ceremony is unimportant because there is no associated punishment. If God says it’s important, it is!

1. **Every Christian is going to appear at the Tribunal of Christ.**

   **Rom. 14:10-12** But you, why do you criticize your brother? Or you, why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before the tribunal of God. For it is written: As I live, says the Lord, every knee will bow to Me, and every tongue will give praise to God. So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God.

   **2 Cor. 5:9-10** (Paul wrote) Therefore, whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to be pleasing to Him. For we must all appear before the tribunal of Christ, so that each may be repaid for what he has done in the body, whether good or worthless.

   **2 Tim. 4:7-8** (Paul wrote) I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. There is reserved for me in the future the **crown of righteousness**, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on that day, and not only to me, but to all those who have loved His appearing.

   **Rev. 22:12** (Jesus said) “Look! I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me to repay each person according to what he has done.”

2. **What will be the nature of the Tribunal of Christ?**

   **1 Cor. 3:8-15** (Paul wrote) Now the one planting and the one watering are one in purpose, and each will receive his own reward according to his own labor… I have laid a foundation as a skilled master builder, and another builds on it. But each one must be careful how he builds on it. For no one can lay any other foundation than what has been laid down. That foundation is Jesus Christ. If anyone builds on that foundation with gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay, or straw, each one’s work will become obvious, for the day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire; the fire will test the quality of each one’s work. If anyone’s work that he has built survives, he will receive a reward. If anyone’s work is burned up, it will be lost, [see note below] but he will be saved; yet it will be like an escape through fire.

   **1 Cor. 4:5** … before the Lord comes, who will both bring to light what is hidden in darkness and reveal the intentions of the hearts. And then praise will come to each one from God.

   (NOTE: “loss” refers to the forfeiture of God’s intended rewards for the believer.)
3. **When will the Tribunal of Christ take place?**

Matt. 16:27 *(Jesus said)* “For the Son of Man is going to come with His angels in the glory of His Father, and then He will reward each according to what he has done.”

Luke 14:13-14 *(Jesus said)* “On the contrary, when you host a banquet, invite those who are poor, maimed, lame, or blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.”

1 Peter 5:1-4 *(Peter wrote)* … I exhort the elders … Shepherd God’s flock … And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

Rev. 11:18 The nations were angry, but Your wrath has come. The time has come for the dead to be judged and to give the reward to Your servants the prophets, to the saints, and to those who fear Your name,…

4. **There will be no punishment for a believer.**

John 5:24 “I assure you: Anyone who hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life and will not come under judgment but has passed from death to life.”

Rom. 4:8 How joyful is the man the Lord will never charge with sin!

Rom. 8:1 Therefore, no condemnation now exists for those in Christ Jesus.

Heb. 10:14 For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are sanctified.

Heb. 10:17-18 He adds: I will never again remember their sins and their lawless acts.…

Rev. 21:4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will no longer exist; grief, crying, and pain will exist no longer, because the previous things have passed away.

5. **But each one needs to be aware of the potential for “loss” of rewards.**

**Loss is not punishment.** *(See also Lesson 3-14, pages 202-214)*

John 15:16 *(Jesus said)* “I chose you. I appointed you that you should go out and produce fruit and that your fruit should remain,…”

1 Cor. 3:14-15 … If anyone’s work is burned up, it will be lost, but he will be saved;…

1 Cor. 9:24-27 Don’t you know that the runners in a stadium all race, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way to win the prize. Now everyone who competes exercises self-control in everything. However, they do it to receive a crown that will fade away, but we a crown that will never fade away. Therefore I do not run like one who runs aimlessly or box like one beating the air. Instead, I discipline my body and bring it under strict control, so that after preaching to others, I myself will not be disqualified.

Gal. 6:9 So we must not get tired of doing good, for we will reap at the proper time if we don’t give up.

2 Tim. 2:5 Also, if anyone competes as an athlete, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules.

2 John 1:8 Watch yourselves so you don’t lose what we have worked for, but that you may receive a full reward.

Rev. 3:11-12 *(Jesus said)* “I am coming quickly. Hold on to what you have, so that no one takes your crown….”
6. For what will believers be rewarded? These are but a sampling of fruit that we should expect to see, as the Holy Spirit is allowed to work.

1 Sam. 26:23 May the LORD repay every man for his righteousness and his loyalty….

Prov. 19:17 Kindness to the poor is a loan to the LORD, and He will give a reward to the lender.

Matt. 5:11-12 “You are blessed when they insult and persecute you and falsely say every kind of evil against you because of Me. Be glad and rejoice, because your reward is great in heaven….”

Matt. 5:44-46 (Jesus said) “But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, … For if you love those who love you, what reward will you have? Don’t even the tax collectors do the same?”

Luke 6:35 “But love your enemies, do what is good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is gracious to the ungrateful and evil.”

Matt. 10:42 “And whoever gives just a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is a disciple—I assure you: He will never lose his reward!”

Matt. 19:27-30 Then Peter responded to Him, “Look, we have left everything and followed You. So what will there be for us?” Jesus said to them, … “And everyone who has left houses, brothers or sisters, father or mother, children, or fields because of My name will receive 100 times more and will inherit eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last first.”

Rom. 8:17-18 … heirs of God and coheirs with Christ—seeing that we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is going to be revealed to us.

Eph. 6:5-8 Slaves [employees?], obey your human masters with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ. Don’t work only while being watched, in order to please men, but as slaves of Christ, do God’s will from your heart. Serve with a good attitude, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that whatever good each one does, slave or free, he will receive this back from the Lord.

Col. 3:22-24 Slaves [employees?], obey your human masters in everything. Don’t work only while being watched, in order to please men, but work wholeheartedly, fearing the Lord. Whatever you do, do it enthusiastically, as something done for the Lord and not for men, knowing that you will receive the reward of an inheritance from the Lord. You serve the Lord Christ.

Phil. 4:1 (Paul wrote) So then, my brothers, you are dearly loved and longed for—my joy and crown. In this manner stand firm in the Lord, dear friends.

1 Thess. 2:19-20 For who is our hope or joy or crown of boasting in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming? Is it not you? For you are our glory and joy!

James 1:12 A man who endures trials is blessed, because when he passes the test he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love Him.

Rev. 2:10 Don’t be afraid of what you are about to suffer. Look, the Devil is about to throw some of you into prison to test you, and you will have affliction for 10 days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

“But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven” (Matthew 6:20) - is not a “suggestion.”
7. **We should seek “eternal” rewards, not rewards of an “earthly” nature.**

Matt. 6:1-6 “Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of people, to be seen by them. Otherwise, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. … But when you give to the poor, don’t let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. Whenever you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites, because they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by people. I assure you: They’ve got their reward! But when you pray, go into your private room, shut your door, and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”

Matt. 6:16-21 “… “Don’t collect for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal. But collect for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves don’t break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

Luke 14:12-14 “… “When you give a lunch or a dinner, don’t invite your friends, your brothers, your relatives, or your rich neighbors, because they might invite you back, and you would be repaid. On the contrary, when you host a banquet, invite those who are poor, maimed, lame, or blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.”

John 5:44 How can you believe? While accepting glory from one another, you don’t seek the glory that comes from the only God.

John 12:42-43 Nevertheless, many did believe in Him even among the rulers, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, so they would not be banned from the synagogue. For they loved praise from men more than praise from God.

2 Cor. 4:17-18 For our momentary light affliction is producing for us an absolutely incomparable eternal weight of glory. So we do not focus on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

Phil. 3:7-16 … I also consider everything to be a loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. Because of Him I have suffered the loss of all things and consider them filth. … Forgetting what is behind and reaching forward to what is ahead, I pursue as my goal the prize promised by God’s heavenly call in Christ Jesus. Therefore, all who are mature should think this way….

Col. 3:1-3 So if you have been raised with the Messiah, seek what is above, where the Messiah is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on what is above, not on what is on the earth….

1 Tim. 4:8 for the training of the body has a limited benefit, but godliness is beneficial in every way, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.

1 Tim. 6:17-19 Instruct those who are rich in the present age not to be arrogant or to set their hope on the uncertainty of wealth, but on God, who richly provides us with all things to enjoy. Instruct them to do what is good, to be rich in good works, to be generous, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good reserve for the age to come, so that they may take hold of life that is real.

1 Peter 1:17 And if you address as Father the One who judges impartially based on each one’s work, you are to conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your temporary residence.

“for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” (Matthew 6:21)
8. **His rewards are eternal (forever.)** (Note: Daniel references may refer just to Old Testament saints.)

Dan. 7:18 … the holy ones of the Most High will receive the kingdom and possess it forever …
Dan. 7:27 ‘The kingdom, dominion, and greatness of the kingdoms under all of heaven will be given to the people, the holy ones of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will serve and obey Him.’

1 Cor. 9:24-27 … Now everyone who competes exercises self-control in everything. However, they do it to receive a crown that will fade away, but we a crown that will never fade away.

2 Cor. 4:17-18 For our momentary light affliction is producing for us an absolutely incomparable eternal weight of glory. So we do not focus on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

1 Pet. 1:3-7 Praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. According to His great mercy, He has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and into an inheritance that is imperishable, uncorrupted, and unfading, kept in heaven for you. You are being protected by God’s power through faith for a salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. You rejoice in this, though now for a short time you have had to struggle in various trials so that the genuineness of your faith — more valuable than gold, which perishes though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

9. **Although much religious activity appears spiritual, only that which is motivated by the Holy Spirit will be rewarded.** (the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. Gal. 5:22-23)

Ecclesiastes 3:14 I know that all God does will last forever; there is no adding to it or taking from it.…

John 15:5 “I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in Me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without Me.”

1 Cor. 13:1-3 If I speak human or angelic languages but do not have love, I am a sounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith so that I can move mountains but do not have love, I am nothing. And if I donate all my goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body in order to boast but do not have love, I gain nothing.

Gal. 6:7-10 Don’t be deceived: God is not mocked. For whatever a man sows he will also reap, because the one who sows to his flesh will reap corruption from the flesh, but the one who sows to the Spirit will reap eternal life.…

1 John 4:16-17 … God is love, and the one who remains in love remains in God, and God remains in him. In this, love is perfected with us so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment, for we are as He is in this world.

(NOTE: “nothing” refers to that which does not have eternal value as determined by God.)
10. Old Testament believers will also be rewarded.

**Hebrews 11**

:1-2 Now faith is the reality of what is hoped for, the proof of what is not seen. For our ancestors won God’s approval by it.

:8-11 By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed and went out to a place he was going to receive as an inheritance. He went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he stayed as a foreigner in the land of promise, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, coheirs of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose architect and builder is God. By faith even Sarah herself, when she was unable to have children, received power to conceive offspring, even though she was past the age, since she considered that the One who had promised was faithful.

:13-16 These all died in faith without having received the promises, but they saw them from a distance, greeted them, and confessed that they were foreigners and temporary residents on the earth. Now those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. If they were thinking about where they came from, they would have had an opportunity to return. But they now desire a better place—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.

:24-27 By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter and chose to suffer with the people of God rather than to enjoy the short-lived pleasure of sin. For he considered the reproach because of the Messiah to be greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, since his attention was on the reward. By faith he left Egypt behind, not being afraid of the king’s anger, for Moses persevered as one who sees Him who is invisible.

:32-40 … Women received their dead—they were raised to life again. Some men were tortured, not accepting release, so that they might gain a better resurrection, and others experienced mockings and scourgings, as well as bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawed in two, they died by the sword, they wandered about in sheepskins, in goatskins, destitute, afflicted, and mistreated. … All these were approved through their faith, but they did not receive what was promised, since God had provided something better for us, so that they would not be made perfect without us.

Now without faith it is impossible to please God, for the one who draws near to Him must believe that He exists and rewards those who seek Him. Hebrews 11:6

- We each have three resources:
  - Time, Energy, and Possessions.
- As I allow the Holy Spirit freedom to manage and use my resources, He is building for me eternal rewards, using gold, silver and precious stones.
- As I deny the Holy Spirit use of my resources, I am using those resources to build for myself a temporary investment of wood, hay and straw.
The Doctrine of Rewards  (From www.Bible.Org)
The Judgment Seat of Christ, The Tribunal of Christ or The Bema Seat

(bold and underline added for emphasis by Art Barkley)

One of the prominent doctrines of the New Testament is the Doctrine of Rewards and the Judgment Seat of Christ. It is a doctrine often ignored or, when taught, is misrepresented because of the term "judgment" that is used in translating the Greek text.

Commenting on this Samuel Hoyt writes: Within the church today there exists considerable confusion and debate regarding the exact nature of the examination at the judgment seat of Christ. The expression "the judgment seat of Christ" in the English Bible has tended to cause some to draw the wrong conclusion about the nature and purpose of this evaluation. A common misconception which arises from this English translation is that God will mete out a just retribution for sins in the believer's life, and some measure of retributive punishment for sins will result (Bibliotheca Sacra, Article by Samuel Hoyt).

As it will be shown below, though it is tremendously serious with eternal ramifications, the judgment seat of Christ is not a place and time when the Lord will mete out punishment for sins committed by the child of God. Rather, it is a place where rewards will be given or lost depending on how one has used his or her life for the Lord.

(Added Note: Maybe better stated, “Rewards will be based on the fruit that I have “allowed” the Holy Spirit to produce through my life, as I by faith in His promises, have abided in fellowship with Him.” – Art Barkley)

In 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20, the Apostle Paul drew courage and was motivated by the fact of rewards at the return of the Lord for the church which he mentions in every chapter in this epistle and becomes the primary subject of 2 Thessalonians. The Lord's return and what this means not only to the world but to us individually is a very prominent subject of the New Testament.

It is significant that among the final words of Revelation, the last book of the Bible, we find these words of the Lord: “Look! I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me to repay each person according to what he has done.” (Rev. 22:12)

While salvation is a gift, there are rewards given for faithfulness in the Christian life and loss of rewards for unfaithfulness. Rewards become one of the great motives of the Christian's life or should. But we need to understand the nature of these rewards to understand the nature of the motivation. Some people are troubled by the doctrine of rewards because this seems to suggest "merit" instead of "grace," and because, it is pointed out, we should only serve the Lord out of love and for God's glory.

Of course we should serve the Lord out of love and for God's glory, and understanding the nature of rewards will help us do that. But the fact still remains that the Bible promises us rewards. God gives us salvation. It is a gift through faith, but He rewards us for good works. God graciously supplies the means by which we may serve Him. Indeed, He works in us both to will and to do as we volitionally appropriate His grace (Phil. 2:12-13), but the decision to serve, and the diligence employed in doing so, are our responsibility and our contribution and God sees this as rewardable. Compare the following passages:
1 Cor. 15:10  But by God’s grace I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not ineffectual. However, I worked more than any of them, yet not I, but God’s grace that was with me.

Col. 1:29  I labor for this, striving with His strength that works powerfully in me.

Key Verses:  Rom. 14:10-11; 1 Cor. 3:11-15; 2 Cor. 5:9-10; 1 John 2:28; Rev. 3:11-12.

The Meaning of The Judgment (Bema) Seat

Both Romans 14:10 and 2 Corinthians 5:10 speak of the "judgment seat." This is a translation of one Greek word, the word bema. While bema is used in the gospels and Acts of the raised platform where a Roman magistrate or ruler sat to make decisions and pass sentence (Matt. 27:19; John 19:13), its use in the epistles by Paul, because of his many allusions to the Greek athletic contests, is more in keeping with its original use among the Greeks.

This word was taken from Isthmian games where the contestants would compete for the prize under the careful scrutiny of judges who would make sure that every rule of the contest was obeyed (cf. 2 Tim. 2:5).

The victor of a given event who participated according the rules was led by the judge to the platform called the bema. There the laurel wreath was placed on his head as a symbol of victory (cf. 1 Cor. 9:24-25).

In all of these passages, "Paul was picturing the believer as a competitor in a spiritual contest. As the victorious Grecian athlete appeared before the bema to receive his perishable award, so the Christian will appear before Christ's bema to receive his imperishable award. The judge at the bema bestowed rewards to the victors. He did not whip the losers" (Samuel Hoyt, "The Judgment Seat of Christ in Theological Perspective," Part 1, Bibliotheca Sacra, p. 37, January-March, 1980, Electronic Media). We might add, neither did he sentence them to hard labor.

In other words, it is a reward seat and portrays a time of rewards or loss of rewards following examination, but it is not a time of punishment where believers are judged for their sins. Such would be inconsistent with the finished work of Christ on the Cross because He totally paid the penalty for our sins. Chafer and Walvoord have an excellent word on this view:

With reference to sin, Scripture teaches that the child of God under grace shall not come into judgment (John 3:18; 5:24; 6:37; Rom. 5:1; 8:1; 1 Cor. 11:32); in his standing before God, and on the ground that the penalty for all sin -- past, present, and future (Col. 2:13) -- has been borne by Christ as the perfect Substitute, the believer is not only placed beyond condemnation, but being in Christ is accepted in the perfection of Christ (1 Cor. 1:30; Eph. 1:6; Col. 2:10; Heb. 10:14) and loved of God as Christ is loved (John 17:23). (Lewis Sperry Chafer, Major Bible Themes: 52 Vital Doctrines of the Scripture Simplified and Explained, John F. Walvoord: Zondervan, 1974, p. 282.)

John 5:24  “I assure you: Anyone who hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life and will not come under judgment but has passed from death to life.”

Rom. 8:1  Therefore, no condemnation now exists for those in Christ Jesus.

Again, Chafer writes concerning the bema, "It cannot be too strongly emphasized that the judgment is unrelated to the problem of sin, that it is more for the bestowing of rewards than the rejection of failure." (Lewis Sperry Chafer, Systematic Theology, vol. 4 [Dallas Seminary Press, 1948], p. 406.)
The Time of The Bema

This event will occur immediately following the rapture or resurrection of the church after it is caught up to be with the Lord in the air as described in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

Arguments or Reasons in Support of This View:

In Luke 14:12-14, reward is associated with the resurrection and the rapture is when the church is resurrected.

In Revelation 19:8, when the Lord returns with His bride at the end of the tribulation, she is seen already rewarded. Her reward is described as fine linen, the righteous acts of the saints--undoubtedly the result of rewards.

In 2 Timothy 4:8 and 1 Corinthians 4:5, rewards are associated with "that day" and with the Lord's coming. Again, for the church this means the event of 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

So the order of events will be:
1. the rapture which includes our glorification or resurrection bodies
2. exaltation into the heavens with the Lord
3. examination before the bema
4. compensation or rewards.

The Place of The Bema

It will occur somewhere in the heavenlies in the presence of the Lord. This is evident from 1 Thessalonians 4:17; Revelation 4:2 and 19:8.

The Participants at The Bema

All the passages dealing with the bema or rewards are addressed to believers or pertain to believers of the church (Rom. 14:10-12; 1 Cor. 3:12f; 2 Cor. 5:9f; 1 John 2:28; 1 Thess. 2:19-20; 1 Tim. 6:18-19; Tit. 2:12-14 [note the emphasis on good works].

The resurrection program and thus the reward of Old Testament saints occurs after the tribulation, after church age saints are already seen in heaven and rewarded and returning with the Lord to judge the earth (cf. Rev. 19:8 with Dan. 12:1-2; Matt. 24).

All believers, regardless of their spiritual state, will be raptured and will stand before the bema to give an account of their lives and will either receive rewards or lose rewards. Some believe in a partial rapture theory which says that only those in fellowship with the Lord will be raptured as a form of punishment for their sin. As mentioned above, this is not only contrary to the finished work of Christ who once and for all paid the penalty for our sins, but it is contrary to the teaching of 1 Thessalonians 5:8-11. For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with Him.

The context suggests that Paul has in mind the return of Christ for the church—the rapture (1 Thess. 4:13-18). The rapture is the means of our deliverance from the wrath he discusses in chapter 5:1-3.
Further, the words "awake or asleep" of verse 10 refer to a spiritual or moral condition, not whether one is alive or dead when Christ returns as in 4:13-14. This is clear from both the context of 5:4-8 and by the fact he changed the words he used for sleep. He used the Greek *katheudo* in 5:10 rather than *koimao*, the word he used metaphorically in 4:13-14 of physical death. Though *katheudo* was used of physical sleep and even death, it was also commonly used of spiritual apathy or carnal indifference to spiritual matters, and this is clearly the context of chapter 5. The point, then, is this: Because of the perfect and finished nature of Christ's death (note the words "who died for us" of verse 10), whether we are spiritually alert or not, we will live together with Him through the rapture to face the examination of the *bema*.

**The Examiner or Judge at The Bema**

This is none other than the Lord Jesus who is even now examining our lives and will bring to light the true nature of our walk and works when we stand before Him at the *Bema* (Rev. 1-2; 1 Cor. 4:5f; 2 Cor. 5:10; 1 John 2:28). In Romans 14:10 the apostle called this examining time the *Bema of God* while in 2 Corinthians 5:10 he called it the *Bema of Christ*. The Point: Jesus, who is God, is our Examiner and Rewarder.

**The Purpose and Basis of The Bema**

The purpose and the basis is the most critical issue of all and brings us face to face with the practical aspects of the Bema. Some crucial questions are: Why are we brought before the Bema? Is it only for rewards or their loss? Will any punishment be meted out? Will there be great sorrow? What's the basis on which the Bema is conducted? Is it sin, good works, or just what?

**The Problem:** Within the church, there exists a good deal of confusion and disagreement concerning the exact nature of the Bema. The use of the term "judgment seat" in most translations, ignorance of the historical and cultural background concerning the Bema, and foggy theology regarding the finished work of Christ have all contributed to several common misconceptions which, in one way or another, see God as giving out just retribution to believers for sin, or at least for our unconfessed sin.

**Three Views of the Bema:**

1) For a summary of three major views, let me quote Samuel L. Hoyt from Bibliotheca Sacra. Some Bible teachers view the judgment seat as a place of intense sorrow, a place of terror, and a place where Christ displays all the believer's sins (or at least those unconfessed) before the entire resurrected and raptured church. Some go even further by stating that Christians must experience some sort of suffering for their sins at the time of this examination.

2) At the other end of the spectrum another group, which holds to the same eschatological chronology, views this event as an awards ceremony. Awards are handed out to every Christian. The result of this judgment will be that each Christian will be grateful for the reward which he receives, and he will have little or no shame.

3) Other Bible teachers espouse a mediating position. They maintain the seriousness of the examination and yet emphasize the commendation aspect of the judgment seat. They emphasize the importance and necessity of faithful living today but reject any thought of forensic punishment at the *bema*. Emphasis is placed on the fact that each Christian must give an account of his life before the omniscient and holy Christ. All that was done through the
energy of the flesh will be regarded as worthless for reward, while all that was done in the power of the Holy Spirit will be graciously rewarded. Those who hold this view believe that the Christian will stand glorified before Christ without his old sin nature. He will, likewise, be without guilt because he has been declared righteous. There will be no need for forensic punishment, for Christ has forever borne all of God's wrath toward the believer's sins (Hoyt, pp. 32-33)

This last view (#3) I believe to be the one that is in accord with Scripture. Reasons for this will be set forth and developed as we study the nature, purpose, and basis for the Bema. But for now, lest we draw some wrong conclusions, we need to be ever mindful that God's Word clearly teaches there are specific and very serious consequences, both temporal and eternal, for sin or disobedience. Though we will not be judged in the sense of punished for sin at the Bema since the Lord has born that for us, we must never take sin lightly because there are many consequences.

### The Present Consequences of Sin or Disobedience

While the following is not exhaustive, it demonstrates that sin in the life of a believer is not a small issue.

1. **Loss of fellowship with the Lord.** Known sin in one's life causes a loss of intimate fellowship with the Lord with the consequent loss of His joy and peace (Ps. 32:3-4).

2. **Divine Discipline From the Lord Here in Time.** We should not think of discipline as punishment. Discipline from God is the gracious work of a Father to train and develop His children. Sometimes this comes in the form of various kinds of testing, trials, failure, and predicaments which He uses to correct us, to train us, and if we have been going our own stubborn way, to increase our misery. The goal, however, is always to bring us back to Him (Heb. 12:5-11). If the believer remains unrepentant, this can lead to the sin unto death as with Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5), and some of the believers at Corinth who were failing to confess their sin and get right with the Lord (1 Cor. 11:28f; cf. also 1 John 5:16-17).

3. **Loss of Power and Production.** When we fail to deal with our sinful ways through honest confession, we grieve the Holy Spirit and quench His power in our lives. This means that rather than operating by faith in God's provision, we end up operating in the energy of the flesh. We turn to our personal bag of tricks by which we seek to handle life (Gal. 3:1-5; 5:5-1-5; Jer. 2:12-13). This results in the works of the flesh and their fruitless consequences (Gal. 5:19-21, 26). Without the abiding life, the life of faith and obedience to the Savior, we can do nothing (John 15:1-7).

4. **Loss of Opportunities.** When we are in charge of our lives rather than the Lord, we become insensitive to people and opportunities of ministry--we lack vision. Carnal believers have no vision other than their own personal agendas and selfish goals (cf. Jn. 4:34f).

5. **Loss of Desire and Motivation for Service.** Carnal believers are occupied and controlled by their own self-centered desires (Gal. 5:16f). Perhaps this is a good place to discuss the concept of selfishness and rewards, for some see an appeal to rewards as selfish and therefore carnal.

Zane Hodges has some good thoughts on this concept: Scripture does not teach us to be uninterested in our own happiness or well-being. The very desire to escape eternal damnation is a legitimate and urgent self-interest. The instinct to preserve our lives is the same. Nor are pleasure and enjoyment illegitimate experiences. When God put Adam and Eve in the garden, He furnished them with “every tree pleasing in appearance and good for food,…” (Gen. 2:9).
They could enjoy themselves freely provided they abstained from eating from the one forbidden tree. Similarly, Paul tells rich people that "God, who richly provides us with all things to enjoy." (1 Tim. 6:17: italics added).

**Selfishness** ought not to be defined simply as the pursuit of our own self-interest. Instead, it should be defined as the pursuit of our self-interest in our own way, rather than in God's way. Since "love" is a preeminent virtue in Christianity, true selfishness often involves a pursuit of self-interest that violates the law of love (Hodges, Journal of the Grace Evang. Society, Autumn, 1991, p. 7).

Self-interest in God's way is legitimate. Self-centeredness or selfishness is preoccupation with self at the expense of others and God's will in one’s life. When Adam and Eve chose to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they acted in self-centered independence which was idolatry and sin. When they enjoyed each other and the fruit trees and blessings of the garden, they acted in their self-interest but they did so in dependence on and in obedience to the Lord.

(6) **Broken relationships and disharmony.** Carnality causes broken relationships and pain to those around us - our families, friends, associates, and co-workers in the body of Christ (Gal. 5:15; Heb. 12:15b).

(7) **Loss of Physical Health and Vitality.** Of course all sickness, weakness, or suffering is not a product of sin, but it can be and often is (1 Cor. 11:29-30; 1 John 5:16-17; Prov. 17:22; 14:30).

(8) **Loss of Rewards at the Bema.** 1 Cor. 3:13-15: … each one’s work will become obvious, for the day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire; the fire will test the quality of each one’s work. If anyone’s work that he has built survives, he will receive a reward. If anyone’s work is burned up, it will be lost, but he will be saved; yet it will be like an escape through fire.

**The Purpose of The Bema**

It is not punitive. It is not to judge believers for sin of any kind, confessed or unconfessed. Scripture teaches that for the believer God's justice has already been fully and forever satisfied at the Cross in relation to the believer's sins. If God were to punish the believer judicially for his sins for which Christ has already rendered payment, He would be requiring two payments for sin and would therefore be unjust. Such a concept (punishment for sin) erroneously disparages the all-sufficiency of Christ's death on the cross" (Hoyt, pp. 33-34). Christ paid the penalty for the believer's pre- and post-conversion sins. The believer will forfeit rewards which he could have received, but he will not be punished in the judicial sense of "paying" for his sins."

Scripture teaches that all sins, both confessed and unconfessed, have been forgiven and taken care of by the work of Christ on the Cross so the Christian will never face those sins again at the judgment.

**Key Scriptures:** The following verses demonstrate the basic principle of the complete and finished nature of Christ's Work:

- Hebrews 10:14 For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are sanctified.
- Romans 5:19 For just as through one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, so also through the one man’s obedience the many will be made righteous.
- Colossians 2:10 and you have been filled by Him, who is the head over every ruler and authority.
These verses state the complete results or conclusion:

Hebrews 8:12  "For I will be merciful to their wrongdoing, and I will never again remember their sins."

Hebrews 10:17-18  "I will never again remember their sins and their lawless acts. Now where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer an offering for sin."

Isaiah 44:22  "I have swept away your transgressions like a cloud, and your sins like a mist..."

Psalm 103:12  As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.

Micah 7:19  He will again have compassion on us He will vanquish our iniquities. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.

Isaiah 38:17  "Indeed, it was for my own welfare that I had such great bitterness; but Your love has delivered me from the Pit of destruction, for You have thrown all my sins behind Your back."

These verses show we cannot come into judgment. Why? Because Christ has borne our judgment by being made a curse in our place:

Romans 5:1  Therefore, since we have been declared righteous by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 8:1  Therefore, no condemnation now exists for those in Christ Jesus.

John 3:18  "Anyone who believes in Him is not condemned, but anyone who does not believe is already condemned, because he has not believed in the name of the One and Only Son of God."

John 5:24  "I assure you: Anyone who hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life and will not come under judgment but has passed from death to life."

Question: Then why do we have to confess sin in this life? And why does God judge believers for unconfessed sin as with Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5 and some of the believers in Corinth in 1 Cor. 11:28f?

Answer: Because this is a completely different matter.

(1) Unconfessed sin relates to fellowship in this life, not one's relationship or standing with God. Unconfessed sin stands as a barrier to fellowship with the Lord and His control over one's life. As Amos 3:3 says, "can two walk together unless they be agreed?" Obviously the answer is no. Confession means we agree with God concerning our sin and want to get back under God's control. "Daily forgiveness of those who are within the family of God is distinguished from judicial and positional forgiveness which was applied forensically to all of a person's sins the moment he believed in the Lord Jesus Christ" (Hoyt, p. 38). We need to distinguish between fellowship forgiveness and legal or forensic forgiveness that justifies us and gives us a standing before God through Christ.

Key Scriptures: Heb. 12:5f and 1 Cor. 11:28-32.

These passages explain the nature of God's judgment of believers in this life. It is discipline designed to train and bring believers back to a walk with God. They teach us the basic cause of discipline is failure to examine and confess known sins because they hinder our fellowship with God. "Condemned along with the world" in 1 Cor. 11:32 most likely refers to the judgment of Rom. 1:24f, moral degeneration and the gradual breakdown in the moral fiber of men when they turn away from God. The same thing happens in the life of believers, but God brings discipline to stop the process.
(2) God does not judge us for our sin in the sense of making us pay the penalty for that sin. Scripture teaches that Christ's death was all-sufficient, completely satisfying God's wrath toward sin in the believer. The question of sin in regard to God's justice has been forever satisfied in the mind of God by the all-sufficient sacrifice of His Son. The penalty for the believer's sins has been fully paid for by Christ, the believer's substitute. The Christian has been in court, condemned, sentenced, and executed in his substitute, Jesus Christ. God cannot exact payment for sins twice since payment has been fully and forever paid. The believer is seen by the Father as clothed in the righteousness of Christ. God can therefore find no cause for accusing the Christian judicially any more than He can find cause for accusing Jesus Christ. Therefore, at the judgment seat of Christ forensic punishment will not be meted out for the believer's sins (Hoyt, p. 38) Rather, God disciplines us as a father disciplines his sons to bring us back into fellowship that we might be conformed to His Son. It is a family matter.

The Positive Aspects of The Bema

1) To evaluate the quality of every believer's work whether it is good or bad, i.e., acceptable and thus worthy of rewards, or unacceptable, to be rejected and unworthy of rewards. Actually an evaluation is going on every day by the Lord (cf. Rev. 2-3).

2) To destroy and remove unacceptable production portrayed in the symbols of wood, hay, and stubble. All sinful deeds, thoughts, and motives, as well as all good deeds done in the energy of the flesh will be consumed like wood, hay, and stubble before a fire because they are unworthy of reward. Why? This will be answered as we consider the basis on which rewards are given or lost.

3) To reward the believer for all the good he or she has done as portrayed by the symbols of gold, silver, and precious stones, that which is valuable and can stand the test of fire without being consumed.

Scriptures:

1 Cor. 3:13-15 ... each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is to be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. If any man's work which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire.

"Evident" is phaneros which means "known, plain, visible, revealed as to its nature." "The day" refers to a day well known and refers to the day of the bema after the rapture of the church. "Declare it" is deloo which means "to make evident, clear." "Be revealed" is apokalupto and means "to unveil." "Test" is dokimazo and means "to test for the sake of approval." "The quality" is hopoion, a correlative and qualitative pronoun meaning "of what sort or kind."

1 Cor. 4:5 Therefore don't judge anything prematurely, before the Lord comes, who will both bring to light what is hidden in darkness and reveal the intentions of the hearts. And then praise will come to each one from God.

"Bring to light" is photizo, "to bring to light, make visible." "Disclose" is phaneroo, "to manifest, reveal." The issue should be extremely clear from these two verses: The Lord will evaluate the quality and nature of every person's work. Compare also:

2 Cor. 5:10 For we must all appear before the tribunal of Christ, so that each may be repaid for what he has done in the body, whether good or worthless.

Rev. 22:12 “Look! I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me to repay each person according to what he has done.”
The Negative Aspects of The Bema

There are a number of passages that refer to the negative aspects of the Bema which need to be mentioned and explained. In these passages we read such things as "give account of himself," "suffer loss," "shrink away from Him in shame," and "recompense for his deeds . . . whether good or bad." Will believers experience shame, grief, remorse at the Bema? If so, how do we reconcile this with passages like Revelation 7:17, "God will wipe away every tear from their eyes", and Revelation 21:4, "He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will no longer exist; grief, crying, and pain will exist no longer, because the previous things have passed away.", or with Isaiah 65:17, "For I will create a new heaven and a new earth; the past events will not be remembered or come to mind."

The negative effects involve the following:

The loss suffered in 1 Corinthians 3:15 refers to the loss of rewards, not salvation as the verse goes on to make clear. Please note that the clause "he shall suffer loss" would be better rendered "it (the reward) shall be forfeited."

The disqualification mentioned in 1 Corinthians 9:27 means disqualified from rewards, not loss of salvation. This is clear from the context and the analogy to the Greek athletic games.

The "recompense" (NASB) or the "receive back" (KJV) of 2 Corinthians 5:10 refers to the dispensing of rewards or their loss. The verb used is komizo and means "to carry off safe," "to carry off as booty." In the middle voice as here, it meant "to bear for oneself" (Abott-Smith, A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament, p. 252), or "to receive back what is one's own" (Rienecker, p. 468). Compare Matthew 25:27 and Ephesians 6:8.

That dispensing of rewards is in view is also evident from the Greek words in 2 Corinthians 5:10 translated "good" (agathos--valuable like good fruit) and "bad" (phaulos--unacceptable like rotten or spoiled fruit) (flawed, imperfect – Art). The idea is not good in the sense of righteousness versus bad in the sense of evil or sinfulness. For those ideas Paul would have most likely used kalos, "good," and kakos, "evil." For good works, those valuable like good fruit, we will receive back rewards, but for bad works, those rotten and worthless, we will receive no rewards or the loss of rewards.

Illustration: This is no more a punishment than when a student turns in a worthless assignment and receives an F or a D. His poor work results in a just grade or recompense. This is what his work deserves. There used to be a sign in the registrar's office at Dallas Seminary which read, "Salvation is by grace. . . Graduation is by works."

1 John 2:28 This verse undoubtedly refers to the Bema and shows there will be both boldness as a result of abiding, and shame before the Lord as a result of failing to abide.

"And now little children." John is writing to believers. This is his term of endearment for his readers as born again people.

"Abide in Him." "Abide" is a synonym for fellowship which is the subject of the book (1:3-7). It means to remain in Him from the standpoint of drawing on His life as the source of ours and then to obey Him out of that relationship of dependence. This is the basis of rewards or the cause of their loss, the abiding, Christ dependent life.

"So that" points us to the purpose, the return of the Savior and what it will mean.
"When He appears." Two things. (1) The "when" points to the immanency of the return of the Lord. It is literally "if He appears." The conditional clause does not question the reality of Christ's coming, only the time of it and thereby points to its immanency. (2) "Appears" refers to the rapture which leads quickly into the Bema.

"We may have confidence." "Confidence" is parresia and means "courage, boldness to speak."

Point: Though none of us are perfect or ever will be, still, faithfulness to abide and obey the Lord will give confidence of rewards.

"And not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming (presence)." Please note several things here.

1. The verb is what we call in Greek an aorist subjunctive, and with the basic meaning of this verb, the grammar points to a future act, but not a continuous state. This in no way suggests a permanent condition.

2. The voice of the verb is passive. The subject receives the action, that is, he is made to feel shame. But how?

3. There are two views:
   a. The non-abiding believer is made to feel shame by the Lord, i.e., the Lord puts him to shame. This would be somewhat punitive and does not fit the concept of the Bema nor the promises of the Lord that we will not come into judgment.
   b. The non-abiding believer is made to feel shame by the revelatory nature of the event caused by his own awareness and realization of what his own failure and sin has caused him in terms of the loss of rewards and loss of glory to the Lord. But this will only be momentary or short lived at best in view of passages like Revelation 7:17; 21:4 and Isaiah 65:17.

Hoyt has a good summary of what this passage is talking about and involves: The Bible suggests that there will be shame at the judgment seat of Christ to a greater or lesser degree, depending on the measure of unfaithfulness of each individual believer. Therefore it should be each believer's impelling desire to be well-pleasing to the Lord in all things. Although Christians apparently will reflect on this earthly life with some regret, they will also realize what is ahead for them in the heavenly life. This latter realization will be the source of boundless joy.

English strikes a proper balance on this subject: Joy will indeed be the predominant emotion of life with the Lord; but I suspect that, when our works are made manifest at the tribunal, some grief will be mixed with the joy, and we shall know shame as we suffer loss. But we shall rejoice also as we realize that the rewards given will be another example of the grace of our Lord; for at best we are unprofitable servants" (E. Schuyler English, "The Church at the Tribunal," in Prophetic Truth Unfolding Today [Fleming H. Revell, 1968], p. 29)

The elements of remorse, regret, and shame cannot be avoided in an examination of the judgment seat of Christ. But this sorrow must be somewhat relative because even for the finest of Christians there will be some things worthy of unceasing remorse in the light of God's unapproachable holiness. This would mean that the finest of Christians could be sorrowful throughout eternity. However, this is not the picture that the New Testament gives of heaven. The overwhelming emotion is joyfulness and gratefulness. Although there is undeniably some measure of remorse or regret, this is not the overriding emotion to be experienced throughout the eternal state.
The emotional condition of the redeemed is that of complete and unending happiness. Emotion proceeds from the realization of facts in personal experience. Hope will at last become reality for all those who are delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God (Rom. 8:18-25). Elimination of the curse, pain and death will also remove sorrow, tears and crying. (Rev. 21:4)

The judgment seat of Christ might be compared to a commencement ceremony. At graduation there is some measure of disappointment and remorse that one did not do better and work harder. However, at such an event the overwhelming emotion is joy, not remorse. The graduates do not leave the auditorium weeping because they did not earn better grades. Rather, they are thankful that they have been graduated, and they are grateful for what they did achieve. To overdo the sorrow aspect of the judgment seat of Christ is to make heaven hell. To underdo the sorrow aspect is to make faithfulness inconsequential. (Samuel Hoyt, "The Judgment Seat of Christ in Theological Perspective," Part 2, p. 131, Bibliotheca Sacra, Electronic Media).

The Nature of the Rewards

What are they and how are they described in Scripture? They are described in terms of generalities. What we know about rewards is given in terms that are more general than specific. These are:

- **The Promise of Crowns** This seems to be used as a symbol of victory, authority and responsibility.
- **The Promise of Accolades or Commendations** This is seen in those passages where a reward is administered in the form of something like "well done thou good and faithful servant . . ." (cf. Matt. 25:21; Lk. 19:17; 1 Cor. 4:5b).
- **The Promises to Overcomers** These could refer to special blessing of rewards to those believers who overcome special trials and tests rather than a general promise to all believers. (See Rev. 2:7; 2:11, 17, 26; etc).

Some Analogies to Consider

**A Thanksgiving Dinner** At a Thanksgiving dinner, each person eats a different amount, but each is satisfied. After our glorification, there will be no sinful nature to produce envy, or jealousy, or resentment, or feelings of dissatisfaction. We will each be enthralled with God and our glorified state.

**A Bat Boy at the World Series** Any young man who loves baseball would probably be thrilled to be a bat boy in the world series, but he would not be jealous or resentful because he was not one of the stars of the game. He would just be delighted to be there and do what he was doing.

**A Graduate at Commencement** All the graduates are there and excited about graduating, yet at the time of rewards, some sorrow might be experienced, but it is quickly overcome by the joy of the event.
Our Spiritual Gifts  Our rewards may be likened to our spiritual gifts. Our rewards seem to be primarily a matter of responsibility and maybe opportunities, but they will not be like badges or medals we wear as in the military. Remember that all of our crowns will be cast at the feet of Christ, for only He is worthy (Rev. 4:10-11). Also, Matthew 25:21, 23 and Luke 19:17-19 show us our rewards consist of authority over either many things or many cities. They may include galaxies of the universe. All believers will live in the millennium and in eternity with the Lord. Some will reign with Him, but, because of loss of rewards, evidently some will not.

In Scripture, the church is viewed as the heavenly kingdom and a universal priesthood. This may indicate something of our authority. We may rule over galaxies, celestial bodies, the heavens, and definitely over angels, and the world (cf. 1 Cor. 6:2-3; 4:8)

Israel is the earthly kingdom and will undoubtedly have authority over portions and sections of the millennial kingdom and the eternal kingdom as emphasized in Matt. 25:21; Lk. 19:17-19; and Dan. 7:18, 22, 27.

The Crowns of The New Testament

The Words Used For Crowns

Stephanos. This was the victors crown, the wreath given to the victorious athlete before the judge at the Bema. It is the word used of the crowns promised to believers for faithfulness in the Christian life.

Diadem. This was the royal crown, the crown of a king. It is used of the seven diadems of the Beast in Revelation 12:3 and 13:1. But, to stress that Christ is King of kings, this word is also used of the many diadems the Lord will wear at His return (Rev. 19:12).

The Principle  The Lord Jesus is the Victor, and our victory is really His victory which is appropriated by faith. Crowns are given as rewards for faithfulness to appropriate God's grace and Christ's victory in the Christian life. They remind us of our responsibility to abide in the vine.

The Crowns and Their Significance

The Crown of Thorns (Matt. 27:29; Mk. 15:17; Jn. 19:2, 5) speaks of Christ's work on the cross and stands for His victory over sin, Satan, and death.

The Incorruptible Crown (1 Cor. 9:25). Two things: (a) This describes all the crowns. It contrasts our crowns with the temporal and temporary treasure of this life. (b) It is also a special crown given for faithfulness in running the race and exercising self-control in order to serve the Lord and finish the race.

The Crown of Exultation or Rejoicing (1 Thess. 2:19; Phil. 4:1). This crown is a reward given for witnessing, follow-up, and ministry to others. In one sense, the Thessalonians will be Paul's crown, and the effect at the Bema and throughout eternity will be rejoicing or exultation over their presence in heaven. But what did Paul mean by this? In view of his use of "crown" (stephanos, the victor's wreath) in other places, and the fact believers will cast their crowns before the Lord (Rev. 4:10), Paul may also have in mind a personal crown or reward that he will receive because of their presence at the return of the Lord. Though, in this passage the apostle does not say he would receive a crown, this is suggested, if not here certainly in other passages. Though some of them were not living as they should, looking ahead and seeing them in glory brought joy and would bring great rejoicing.
The Crown of Life (Jam. 1:12; Rev. 2:10). This crown is given for enduring testings (trials) and temptation. The crown is not eternal life which is a gift through faith in Christ alone, (Jn. 4:10; Rom. 3:24; 5:15-17; 6:23; Eph. 2:8), but a reward for enduring trials and overcoming temptation.

The Crown of Righteousness (2 Tim. 4:8). This crown is a reward given for faithfulness to use our gifts and opportunities in the service of the Lord and for loving His appearing. Note that these two things go together. To love His appearing is to live in the light of it.

The Crown of Glory (1 Pet. 5:4). This crown is a reward promised to Elders for faithfulness in the discharge of their responsibilities in shepherding the people.

The Casting of Crowns (Rev. 4:10-11). Because Christ alone is worthy and because we can only be fruitful when we abide in Him allowing His life to fills ours, we will all cast our crowns before Him in recognition that all we have done is by His grace.

The Many Crowns or Diadems (Rev. 19:12). The crowns of royalty which stand for Jesus Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords who alone has the right to rule and judge the world.

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By J. Hampton Keathley III  http://bible.org/article/doctrine-rewards-judgment-seat-bema-christ

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Discussion Points Part III
Abiding and the Tribunal of Christ

1. Discuss the moment by moment experience of “abiding” in fellowship with the Holy Spirit as my birthright, in contrast to a fellowship that is presumably attained to through obedience. If I want to experience the continual flow of the Holy Spirit’s life, I must come to understand that God is concerned about sin because sin disrupts fellowship, and disrupted fellowship obstructs His blessings and my usefulness.

Is my tendency is to focus on obedience to a perceived list of “dos and don’ts,” as if the obedience were the end-goal? Oswald Chambers rightly states, “Freshness does not come from obedience, but from the Holy Spirit; obedience keeps us in the light as God is in the light.”

In other words, my “doing” should be the natural by-product of my “being.” The principle of abiding focuses on my relationship with the Holy Spirit, out of which His fruit is naturally produced.

2. Many Christians find themselves habitually living in a Romans 7 experience, and some would point at the apostle Paul to prove that he too had the same “struggles.” We believe, every Christian must come to recognize their human nature as hopeless (the Law in Romans 7 serves this purpose). Paul did pass through Romans 7, as will every Christian, but he resided in Romans 8. Has God not made the same provision for me?

3. Discuss how God wants me to seek “His” eternal rewards, in contrast to the often-held belief that to seek rewards is somehow unspiritual, and at the very least a wrong motive. If I have as my goal to be satisfied with worldly desires, i.e. material things, praise, pleasures, etc., then it is wrong to have the same desire for eternal rewards?

But I am commanded to seek His eternal rewards, which are not of a worldly nature, i.e. they cannot be measured by my physical senses and understanding. I cannot comprehend them beforehand, anymore than a person blind from birth could comprehend “color.”

His nature is to be the Blesser and Rewarder who always desires to give me the very best to those who will believe Him and trust in His character. He has chosen to bless me into eternity with rewards because of His goodness and grace, not because of our goodness or merit. (Heb. 11:6)

4. Discuss the need to focus my attention on eternal values (regarding myself as a stranger and alien here on earth), in contrast to the common understanding that it is perfectly fine with God if His children pursue the comforts, pleasures and material benefits during this short physical existence. The pursuit of these things is a hindrance that can cause me to not mature. (Read - Luke 8:14, Col. 3:1-3)

5. Discuss how the quality of my life in eternity will somehow be affected by my willingness (by faith) to let the Holy Spirit make me into a useful instrument through which He can produce His fruit and accomplish His purposes here on earth.

The idea that I can “do things for God” reinforces the misconception that God is in heaven with a checklist, keeping track of things “I” do for him. I should quickly acknowledge that God has need of nothing I have to offer.
Then what does God expect of me? “The Spirit is the One who gives life. The flesh doesn’t help at all.” (John 6:63) Does that mean I can do nothing? Unfortunately I can do lots of things (see 1 Cor. 13:1-3). The question is, does what I do have eternal value (His life)? If what I do is motivated by the Holy Spirit it does have His life, but if it originates from me (through my human understanding) it only has temporal value for this time on earth.

6. Discuss how I can allow the Holy Spirit to use the resources He has given me. I have varying degrees of three resources:

1. **Time**
2. **Energy**
3. **Possessions**

God has given me control over the choices to allow the Holy Spirit to use those resources for His purposes, or I can choose to deny Him use of those resources. As I allow the Holy Spirit use of those resources (building materials – see 1 Cor. 3:10-15) He will build for me an eternal structure of gold, silver and precious stones. As I deny Him use of those resources, I am building for myself a temporary structure of wood, hay and stubble.

Is it not in my best interest to understand this early in my Christian walk, rather than years later?
Art Barkley and his wife Toni served as tribal missionaries in Bolivia for about 20 years with New Tribes Mission. That’s where much of the groundwork for this discipleship material was set.

Art shares:

“Over the years one of the things that bothered me was watching many believers who had obviously accepted the Lord, were excited about their new Christian life, but who within a few months would be found involved with the things that they were involved with as unbelievers.”

“During times in the U.S., we would observe a similar pattern. Believers who had enthusiasm and excitement at the beginning of their new life with the Lord, way too often, after a few months, when outside of a Christian setting, could hardly be recognized as followers of Christ.”

“I often felt there was something missing in the equation, but for years I couldn’t figure out what it was.”

“Another thing that bothered me was the common perception on the part of many believers that the Christian life is too difficult to understand and live out. I have thought many times; if God designed salvation to be so simple that anybody could easily receive it, would He then design the Christian life to be so difficult to understand and live out?”

Then in 1990, God orchestrated circumstances in such a way that Art and Toni could not permanently return to Bolivia. He provided for Art to serve as an Associate Pastor at Reno Christian Fellowship for 7½ years. It was during this period that God led Art to start developing ‘A Tool for Personal Discipleship’, a work still in progress.

The purpose of this discipleship material is to provide believers who have a passion for the Lord, with a Tool to use under the direction of the Holy Spirit, to help other believers to grow and experience the joy of the Normal Christian Life. We have heard many believers lament, “I would like to be used by the Lord to help other believers to grow spiritually, but I don’t know what to teach.” This Tool is designed to help address that need.

In subsequent years, Art has been involved to varying degrees in the personal discipleship of hundreds of men. He and Toni have seen God change lives and count it a privilege to have a small part in God’s plan to grow and use believers through Personal Discipleship.

Art Barkley is President of Discipler Training International, and his wife Toni is involved in spiritual counseling and discipling women.