



# Discipler's Guide

*Go therefore and make disciples...*



## Overview

This manual was developed by the leaders at The Bible Church of Owasso for the purpose of helping those in our church to engage with others in one-on-one and small-group discipleship. It is our conviction that maturing Christians are capable and called to take an active part in helping other Christians grow in their faith (Romans 15:14, 1 Thessalonians 5:14, Hebrews 10:24-25). We also recognize that many Christians are uncertain exactly what that would look like, and would be greatly aided by a plan for helping another Christian along. As pastors and teachers, this is our role to *equip the saints for the work of the ministry* (Ephesians 4:11-13).

This manual is designed to give the discipler a general plan to use as a guide in a discipleship relationship. Its intended audience is the discipler (and not intended as a workbook for the disciple). But, efforts were made to provide teaching elements, illustrations, Scripture references, and resources that would be directly transferable to the disciple.

The manual is divided into two main sections...

- *Foundational Concepts* – those basic elements of the Christian faith upon which our daily life is built (The Gospel, The Bible, and Personal Worship).
- *Building Blocks* are core areas in which all Christians must learn to walk by faith and grow in Christian knowledge and obedience.

While it is certainly possible to jump to any one section to help a disciple grow, it is our experience that the discipler should spend time working through the *Foundational Concepts* with the disciple before (or possibly in conjunction with) tackling a particular *Building Block* area. Sometimes it is the case that when there is difficulty or lack of growth in a particular area of the Christian life, the reality is that the root of the problem can be traced to a misunderstanding or a neglect of one or more of the foundational issues.

## Basic Assumptions

In the preparation of this manual, some basic assumptions about the discipleship process were made. It will be helpful for you to understand these assumptions, and so we have listed them here...

- A. The Christian life is made up of a set of core truths and practices common to all believers, and growth and success in our walk with Christ is a continual and individual growth in these basic areas of Christian teaching and the particulars that stem from them (Colossians 1:9-12).
- B. The discipler is neither a personal authority nor a drill sergeant, but a friend and fellow pilgrim who is exposing the disciple to the teachings of Christ (which themselves carry authority), and working together with the disciple to encourage and assist with the application of these truths to life.
- C. Spiritual Growth is not a mechanistic venture. While certain disciplines and certain truths have been given and modeled in the Scriptures, ultimately it is God's Spirit that causes spiritual growth (1 Corinthians 3:5-7). The discipler is encouraged to exercise a combination of bold directness and gentle patience in the process, seeing himself as merely a tool in God's hands and not the actual "Worker" himself.
- D. The assumption in this Manual is that the disciple has already embraced the gospel message and professed faith in Christ. For one who has not yet professed Christ, other resources would be more well-suited to bring the gospel to bear on the life (such as an *Exploring Christianity* Study or an ongoing discussion about the Gospel message itself).
- E. Though elements would be the same, there would be slight differences of emphasis when dealing with a new believer as opposed to a growing believer, and thus the introductory section titled, "For New Christians."



# Contents

## *For New Christians*

### *Foundational Concepts*

1. The Gospel
2. The Bible
3. Personal Worship

### *Building Blocks*

4. The Church
5. Personal Holiness
6. Sharing the Good News
7. The Heart of a Christian
8. Relationships
9. Living as a Steward

### *Appendices*

- A. Doctrinal Statement
- B. How to Make Spiritual Changes



# For New Christians

## Synopsis

If you have put your faith in Christ alone for the forgiveness of your sins you are a "New Creation" (2 Corinthians 5:17). Jesus referred to those who embraced Him as Savior and Lord a "disciple", meaning a learner and follower who has a desire to know and honor Him in all of life. "Discipleship" then is the process of learning how to follow your Savior. The Christian Life isn't all that complicated. There are just a few things you need to know and a few things you need to do – but these things will profoundly shape your entire life and God Himself will help you understand and follow His instructions. Like learning any new thing, spending time with a mentor who is a little further down the road than you are will make a big difference over the next few months. Make it a priority to meet regularly with them to work through the basic principles that are laid out in God's Word.

## Core Truths

### Who am I?

While all of life seems new and many questions about this new life are common, the first and more important question to answer is this – "Am I really a Christian?"

Here is what the Bible says about how one comes to be a Christian...

- a. You become a follower of Jesus by placing your absolute faith in Jesus Christ alone as your Savior and Lord and repenting from your sins. It is acknowledging that His death on the cross bore the wrath of God for you, and purchased the forgiveness of your sins against God. This reconciliation with God is a free gift by God's grace, not earned by any good works that you might do (Ephesians 2:8-9, 1 Corinthians 15:2-8, Galatians 2:16). True faith/belief is more than knowing the facts of Jesus' message or believing them to be true. It is a complete trust in and reliance upon the finished work of Christ to pay the price for our sin.
- b. Repentance is agreeing with God that we are sinners, that our sin is bad and a sincere commitment to forsake it. Repentance and faith are connected in the kind of response that God calls for in all those whom He saves (Acts 20:21, Acts 3:19, 2 Corinthians 7:10)
- c. You will notice that the Bible says often (such as Ephesians 2:9, Titus 3:5) that people don't and can't earn God's grace by doing good things; rather they do good things and their lives change because of the grace God working inside of them. There is a huge difference between these two things. Good deeds, actions and attitudes, are rightly called "fruit" of the new life God has planted in those who receive Christ (Luke 6:43-45). The changed life comes first, and then the fruit appears, not vice-versa. A good way to determine if you are really a Christian is to see if your desires, attitudes, and actions have and are changing in a way that reflects the Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23, 2 Corinthians 13:5-6, James 2:18-19).
- d. The following is a helpful picture of what the Christian life looks like and what it takes to steer your new life in the right direction.

# The Wheel® Illustration<sup>1</sup>

## The Hub:

### **Christ the Center**

(2 Cor 5:17, Gal 2:20)

The key to living the Christian life is to keep Jesus Christ as the center and Lord of all we do. Just as the driving force in a wheel comes from the hub, so the Christian relies totally on Jesus Christ for everything.

## The Vertical Dimension:

Relating to God

### **The Word**

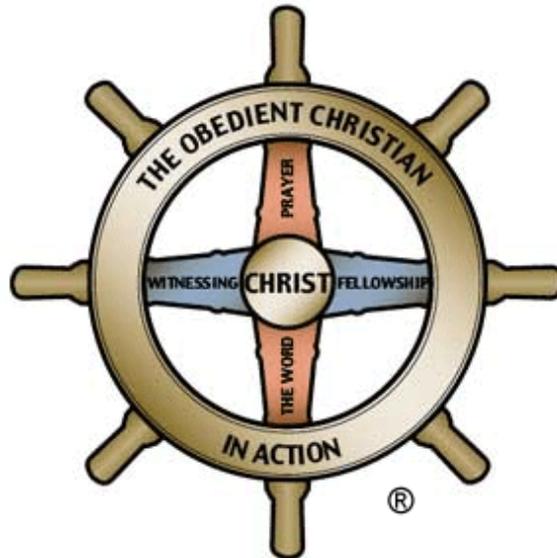
(2 Tim 3:16, Josh 1:8)

The Bible is our spiritual food as well as our sword for spiritual battle. It is the foundational spoke for effective Christian living.

### **Prayer**

(John 15:7, Phil 4:6,7)

Prayer is sharing your heart with God as a loving Father who cares about your concerns. Prayer unleashes the power of God in your personal battles and in the lives of those for whom you pray.



## The Rim:

### **Obedience**

(Rom 12:1, John 14:21)

The rim represents the Christian responding to Christ's lordship through wholehearted, day-to-day obedience to Him.

## The Horizontal Dimension:

Relating to Others

### **Witnessing**

(Matt 4:19, Rom 1:16)

The natural overflow of your new life in Christ will be sharing with others how they can have this life also.

### **Fellowship**

(Matt 18:20, Heb 10:24-25)

God has directed Christians to build each other up through interdependence and loving relationship with each other.

## Where do I start?

New believers in Christ are given many gifts from God, one of which is a hunger to know God better. A great place to start for new believers is to set aside some time every day to pray (talk honestly to God) and read God's Word (the Bible). Start with the Gospel of John, write down questions and observations that you can discuss with the mature Christian who has agreed to mentor you along.

<sup>1</sup> The Wheel® Illustration was developed by the Navigators Ministry.

### What if I feel discouraged?

You will probably experience feelings of discouragement and doubt if you don't right away see your new life living up to what the Bible describes. Do not be overwhelmed, many changes take time. The Bible also speaks of what is called "spiritual warfare" (Ephesians 6:12, 1 Timothy 4:1), in which demons imperceptibly seek to discourage and draw away God's children. These discouragements and temptations to go back to the old ways will come from the world around you and even from within your own heart.

You need to remember that your new relationship with Christ is marvelous work of God! And since God has promised to complete the work He began in you (Phil 1:6), though the temptations to quit are often strong, ultimately they no longer have real power over you (1 John 4:4). Strongly trust the promises of God that you are learning and talk about things you are experiencing with your mentor. James 4:7 encourages us to, "*Submit to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*" In this spiritual battle God has ALL the power, and will gladly give it to those who ask of Him (1 Corinthians 10:13, James 4:6).

### Why do I feel bad about certain things I have always done?

God's Spirit now lives within you and uses the Bible to open your eyes to what honors Christ and what does not in your life. If God's Word says that some things are not befitting a child of God, then His Spirit will let you know, as He changes you from the inside out. One of the first things you will recognize is that that you might feel guilt about things that you haven't felt guilty about in the past. This very well may be God's Spirit bringing conviction of sin and godly sorrow to your heart, and this is a true gift (2 Corinthians 7:9-11).

As this happens, it is important to not ignore this work of conviction in your heart (2 Thessalonians 5:19), but rather begin to obey His direction, and asking God for forgiveness and for help to "put off" that action, attitude, or speech, and to "put on" Christ-like behaviors (see Colossians 3:1-1-17). This may be new to you, but know that God won't let you be tempted beyond what you can handle (1 Corinthians 10:13).

As you daily fight against the old sinful ways, remember the good news that brought you into God's family. Doing good things doesn't make God accept you. A Christian is accepted by God because of Jesus' work to make a full and complete payment for all your sins on the cross and then to give you new life (Colossians 2:13-14). Christians then do good things out of gratitude for God loves for us in Christ (Romans 5:6-8, 1 John 4:9-11).

### **Core Resources**

*Welcome to the Family*, by John MacArthur  
*5 Things Every Christian Needs to Grow*, by R.C. Sproul

### **For Further Study**

*Spiritual Bootcamp*, by John MacArthur  
Continue working through this *Discipleship Manual* with your mentor

# Foundational Concepts

As with any building project, in the Christian life it is important to lay a proper foundation (1 Corinthians 3:9-11). As we continually grow as Christians, we are constantly needing to return to our basic foundations, to ensure that they are solid, AND that all we are doing is resting squarely on them (1 Peter 2:4-8, 2 Peter 1:10-15). We believe these to be The Gospel Truths, The Scripture, and one's own Personal Worship of God.

As you begin to disciple a fellow believer, in eagerness to jump into a needed area of growth, it is tempting to bypass these Foundational Concepts, assuming that such elementary things are surely in place. We believe it is essential to at the very least spend time clarifying that there is a basic understanding and application of these foundational truths in the life of the disciple. Any doubts, distrust, or inconsistency in these areas will surely lead to unnecessary struggle or plain error in the life.

Each disciple must understand and be continually reminded that our whole life and faith is defined by the Gospel, our every instruction and wisdom comes from God's Word, and our vitality and strength and perspective is drawn down daily through the discipline of Personal Worship.

While these things are not the sum total of the Christian life, they are in fact the foundation upon which the whole Christian life is built. A defect here cannot help but lead to error (legalism, hypocrisy, dead orthodoxy, consumer Christianity, outright apostasy). And on the way, there will be great amounts of frustration, confusion, and discouragement.

We encourage you to impress upon the disciple the essential nature of these truths, and that time spent on them is far from wasted or unnecessary.

# I. The Gospel

## Synopsis

The Gospel message is the foundational truth & building block of the Christian faith and life. It not only brings one *into* a right relationship with God, but also directs *every* facet of the Christian life... all worship, obedience, relationships, service, etc. is rooted in and driven by the Gospel truths.

Paul tells the Colossians, *just as you have received Christ Jesus, so walk in Him...* The same truths that bring us save our soul from God's rightful punishment on our sins, are the very truths that draw us into daily worship and righteous living. Properly understanding and embracing the Gospel brings an absolute clarity and cohesiveness to Christianity. Get the Gospel wrong, and you won't get anything else right. Get the Gospel right, and everything else will begin to fall into place.

## Core Truths

### 1. God

The Gospel begins with God, frankly because everything begins with God. If there is not true biblical understanding of the person and priority of God in all things, then the full understanding Good News of Jesus Christ will seem irrelevant, irrational, or even irritating to the natural human sensibilities. God is certainly a vast subject and worthy of a lifetime of pursuit and worship, and yet there are 3 essential truths about God that are bound up in the Gospel message.

#### a. God is Creator

Read Genesis 1 – the Scriptures speak for themselves. God existed & God created, therefore we are, all things are.

There are several important implications of God being Creator, that the Scriptures immediately begin to bring out...

- God is Ruler (Gen 2:15-17, see also Psalm 103:19, Isaiah 45:5-10, Acts 17:24-27)
- God is Judge (Gen 3:17-19, see also Psalm 9:7-8, 1 Corinthians 5:9-10, John 5:25-29)
- God is Owner (Psalm 24:1, Col 1:16-17)

#### b. God is Holy

Meaning that there is none other like Him. He is completely different and separate from anything in His creation, and there is no other transcendent power in existence like God.

Read Isaiah 6:1-5, 40:18-25, 46:9-10.

His holiness / separateness from His creation also means that He is completely separate from sin (Num 23:19, James 1:13), cannot endure sin and wickedness (Psalm 11:4-7, Habakkuk 1:13), nor will He allow wickedness in His presence (1 Cor 6:9-10).

#### c. God is perfectly righteous and merciful

God's holiness results in His perfect righteousness in all His ways and dealings. He always does what is right (Deut 32:3-4, Dan 4:37, see also Gen 18:25). Therefore His character requires that He execute righteous punishment on all sin and transgression of His law (Psa 75:8).

But at the same time, His character is perfectly compassionate and merciful (Exod 34:6-7), and desires to show mercy, even upon the wicked (Ezek 33:11, 2 Peter 3:9). But because of the perfection of His character, His mercy must be shown in perfect harmony with His justice – not either/or, but both/and.

## 2. Us

The Gospel speaks very clearly about mankind. It defines for us our position and responsibility before God. The Scripture makes 3 facts crystal clear with respect to our relationship to God.

### a. All people are Accountable

This has already been established by the fact that God is Creator, Ruler, and Judge, but see also Rom 3:19, Heb 4:12-13.

### b. All people are Sinful

When our first parents rebelled against God, one of the consequences is that they cast the entire human race under the curse of sin. Not just that we have to live with the consequences of what they did, but that each one of us continue to sin in the same self-willed ways that they did.

See Romans 3:10-18, 3:23, 5:12, Ecclesiastes 7:20, Psalm 143:2, Isaiah 53:6, Jeremiah 17:9

Sin breaks relationship with God (not like an impersonal traffic ticket – Isaiah 59:2). Adam & Eve did die that day. Their body kept functioning for a little while longer, but their relationship with God (the giver and sustainer of life) was severed. Not so much because of the act, but the heart behind their act. Rejection / Rebellion / Self-will / Self-legislation

*It is not as if Adam and Eve were trying very hard to keep God's command and just missed the bullseye by a few degrees. No, in fact, they were shooting in the opposite direction! They had goals and desires that were categorically opposed to what God desired for them, and so they sinned.<sup>2</sup>*

The effect of sin is far worse than merely a guilty conscience or feeling distant from God. It has eternal consequences as well...

### c. All people are Hopeless

Not only is the punishment for sin eternal death (Rom 6:23, Rev 20:10-15), but God's standard for entering His presence is unattainably high (Matt 5:48, Micah 6:6-8).

God's Word says that our good works cannot save us... (Eph 2:8-9, Titus 3:5)

This leaves us all in a hopeless state without the gracious intervention of God (Romans 5:6, 8:6-8, Eph 2:1-3).

---

<sup>2</sup> Greg Gilbert, *What is the Gospel?*, 50.

### 3. Christ

God's "good news" is bound up in the person and work of His Son, Jesus Christ.

#### a. Who Jesus Is

- The Son of God, yet also fully God – John 1:1,14, 10:29-30, Mark 2:5-11
- Fully Man – Luke 1:34-35, Phil 2:5-7, Heb 2:14
- Your only Mediator – 1 Tim 2:5-6, John 14:6, Acts 4:12
- Your only Judge – John 5:22, Acts 10:42

#### b. What Jesus Did

- Lived a perfect life to satisfy God's standard – Heb 4:15
- Died for sinners – Isa 53:6, Luke 23:33-46, 1 Pet 2:24, 1 John 4:10
  - i. As a substitute – 2 Corinthians 5:21, Galatians 3:13-14, 1 Peter 3:18, Hebrews 9:27-28
  - ii. As a propitiation ("a sacrifice that satisfies") – Mark 10:45, Romans 3:25, 5:8-9, Hebrews 2:17
- Resurrected from the dead – Luke 24:1-6
- Ascended into Heaven and Will Return to Judge/Rule all mankind – Acts 1:9-11, 17:31

### 4. Your Response

The consistent, concise, and complete answer in Scripture as to how we must respond to Jesus is this...  
*Believe and Repent* – Mark 1:15, Acts 2:38, Acts 20:17-21

#### a. *Believe* – place your absolute faith / trust in Jesus' person and in His saving work.

In His person, that He truly is the Son of God (Rom 1:1-5), the only Savior (1 Tim 2:5-6), the ultimate and final revelation of God (John 1:14-18, Heb 1:1-3), and the ultimate Lord of every person (John 5:24-29, Acts 17:30-31).

In His work, by the absolute embracing of and reliance on the truth that Jesus' death on the cross is the only means one can have his sins forgiven and have a right standing with God (Acts 4:12).

- Not a fanciful self-deception (like one would "believe" in Santa Claus)
- Not a strong confidence despite lack of evidence
- Not a mystical power conjured up within

But rather...

- Absolute Reliance on something trustworthy that leads to life-altering action – Rom 4:18-21
- Christian faith is based on the reliability of God's Word, specifically His promise to "justify the ungodly" who puts his reliance for salvation solely on the finished work of Christ – Rom 4:4-5, Gal 2:16
- A faith that acknowledges one's own inability to save himself by good works (Eph 2:8-9)

b. *Repent – a heartfelt sorrow for sin, a renouncing of it, and a sincere commitment to forsake it and walk in obedience to Christ.*<sup>3</sup>

- Not merely a change of mind about Jesus
- Not full perfection or freedom from temptation to sin

But rather...

- A changing of allegiances – acknowledging that our sinfulness is the cause of our separation from God, so a drastic turning from sin to God (Acts 3:19, 26:20, 1 Thess 1:9)
- No longer living at peace with your sins, but actually hating and fighting against your own sins in a desire to honor / please Jesus Christ – Mark 9:43-48
- It is merely the outworking of a true “belief” in who Jesus is (Savior and Lord)
- True repentance unto salvation does not mean that one needs to “clean one’s life up before he can be saved, rather that true turning to God will show itself in “deeds appropriate to repentance” (Acts 26:20, Luke 6:44)

## 5. Gospel Benefits

As one responds to Jesus in Faith and Repentance, God’s gracious promises are unleashed and flood one’s life with innumerable blessings. These blessings lay the foundation for an entirely new kind of relationship with God, and must continually shape the thinking of the Christian as he seeks to live out his new life, *no longer for himself, but for the One who died and rose again on his behalf* (2 Corinthians 5:16).

- a. Justification – a right standing before God (Romans 5:1, 8:28) – the implication is that God is no longer angry with me, not because I have been a good boy, but because He has already punished His Son in my place. The legal requirements against me have been satisfied and I am free from guilt – forever! Even when I go back and sin again in the old ways, I am forever declared free from punishment for my sins (1 John 1:9).
- b. Forgiveness – complete and final release from my debt. (Colossians 1:13-14, 2:13-14, Ephesians 1:7). Rather than making me pay for the damages done, He has paid my bill, and set me free from any bondage of trying to work off my debt. I can now look Him square in the eye without shame, for I am completely released.
- c. Imputed Righteousness – Christ’s righteous deeds written in our account (2 Corinthians 5:21) – far beyond just being “guilt-free” in God’s eyes, when He looks at me now, He sees all of the perfect righteousness of the life of His Son, with whom He is “well-pleased.” God does not just tolerate me in His presence, but gladly embraces me and cherishes and delights in me.
- d. Adoption – we become children of God, fellow-heirs with Christ (John 1:12, Romans 8:14-17) – on this basis we have confidence to request of Him not only our needs (Matthew 6:31-33), but also to expect from Him “good gifts” that accord with His very nature (James 1:17).
- e. New Life – not just eternal life, but a whole new life in the here and now (John 10:10, 2 Cor 5:17). He has given us His Spirit to live inside, to guide us into a wise and joyful life. Even though we experience the pain and suffering in the midst of a broken world, we have tremendous hope and expectation of a full release from our pain and an eternal reward beyond comparison (Romans

---

<sup>3</sup> Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* – see also 2 Cor 7:8-12

8:18-25, 1 Peter 1:13).

- f. Eternal Security – Because our salvation is God’s gift, freely bestowed on us at His choice, what He began, He will complete. We need not live in fear or uncertainty about our eternal destiny, but can rest on the sure promise of God that our salvation and reconciliation cannot be undone (John 6:38-40, 10:27-30, Romans 8:29-30, Ephesians 1:13-14, 1 Peter 1:3-5, 1 John 5:11-13).
- g. Freedom from enslavement to sin (Romans 6:8-23) – though prior to God’s intervention in our life, we were slaves of sin, Jesus’ death broke that bondage and we now have freedom from the enslaving passions that led us to rebel against God (Titus 3:3-8). Though we still are tempted to go back to the old ways, we can now look to Jesus for power to overcome and resist that temptation (1 Corinthians 10:13, James 4:6-7)

How glorious and life-transforming these truths are!!!

### Core Actions

1. Embrace Jesus and the Gospel message as your own
2. Remind yourself regularly of all that Jesus has purchased for you
3. Live out the implications of this Gospel in your daily life

### Gospel Scriptures

- Isaiah 53
- John 3
- Acts 10:34-48
- Acts 17:22-34
- Romans 1-8
- Eph 2:1-10
- Col 2:8-15
- Titus 2:11-3:7
- 1 Peter 1:3-12
- Rev 21-22

### Core Resources

- *What is the Gospel?*, by Greg Gilbert
- *The Gospel Primer*, by Milton Vincent
- *Today’s Gospel*, by Walter Chantry
- *How the Gospel Brings Us All the Way Home*, by Derek Thomas

### For Deeper Study

- *The Gospel According to Jesus*, by John MacArthur
- *Tell the Truth*, by Will Metzger

## II. The Bible

### Synopsis

The Bible is the only written communication of God to man. The Bible is God revealing Himself so that man can know God, know our sinful condition before God, know what God has done to redeem man from that sinful condition, and how redeemed man can live in fellowship with God.

### Core Truths

#### 1. What it is

The Bible is one communication of God containing 66 different books, composed by over 40 authors, during a span of around 1500 years, written in 3 separate languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek), utilizing various genres. Following is a broad overview of the Bible's layout.

- Genesis-Deuteronomy (History/Law)
- Joshua- Esther (History)
- Job-Song of Solomon (Wisdom/Poetry)
- Isaiah-Malachi (Prophecy)
- Matthew-Acts (History)
- Romans-Philemon (Letters of Paul to Churches and Individuals)
- Hebrews to Jude (General Letters)
- Revelation (Prophecy)

#### 2. Genres

The Bible contains many different styles of writing (called genres). The writer of a particular portion wrote for a particular purpose, for use by a historical group of people. Understanding the Bible as it was originally written aids in our proper interpretation of any given portion. So, understanding what style of writing in which it was originally composed helps us understand it properly. Not infrequently, different genres are used in a single book of the Bible (e.g., you may find poetry in a book that is primarily prophetic in nature). Following is a brief description of the primary genres in the Bible.

- History – God's account of His dealings with the world, particularly with regard to the salvation of His people.
- Law – God's revelation of His standards given to govern our relationship with Him and with the people around us.
- Wisdom-Poetry – A collection of valuable insights about godliness given to help us develop Christ-like character necessary for wise living in this world.
- Prophecy – God's revelation of future events (and in many cases the fulfillment). Prophecy is given to warn and/or comfort the readers, thereby producing right living before God.
- Letters – Literature that teaches or explains; most often the letters are concerned with interpreting the significance of events in terms of doctrine, exhortation and application.

### 3. Themes

The Bible's main theme is God's ultimate glory displayed in his dealings with mankind. Subthemes include:

- God's supreme rule,
- Man's sinfulness,
- God's calling & use of chosen individuals as His instruments in this world,
- The promise and coming of a Savior (Jesus) to redeem those God would save,
- A final recognition of Jesus Christ as Lord over all,
- The promise of a final culmination in which the wicked are eternally judged and the redeemed eternally blessed, to the praise of God's perfect righteousness and grace.

### 4. Purpose

God's purpose for the Scripture is to reveal Himself to mankind and show the way in which man can be restored to fellowship with Him. Therefore, the Bible is absolutely necessary for knowing God, knowing the gospel, and knowing God's will. It is then the duty of every Christian to regularly and diligently search the Scriptures to understand their meaning and apply its truths.. This meaning is best discovered through the use of a literal, grammatical, historical method of interpretation under the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. Though there is only one true interpretation for a given passage, there may be many faithful applications to life's varied circumstances.

### 5. Relevance

Since the Bible comprises the only authoritative and inerrant rule of salvation and a life pleasing to God, it is an entirely accurate and sufficient communication of God to mankind, and is the measure by which all men will be judged on the last day. The Bible's relevance is naturally established when considering all that God Himself has said that the Scriptures are and do...

- Reveal the laws, statutes, and judgments of God (Deuteronomy 4:5; Exodus24:3 – 4).
- Record the prophecies of God (2 Peter 1:19 – 21).
- Reveal Christ (John 5:39; Acts 10:43).
- Are full and Sufficient (Luke 16:29 – 31).
- Are an unerring Guide (Proverbs 6:23; 2 Peter 1:19).
- Are able to make one wise unto salvation (Psalm 19:7; 2 Timothy 3:15).
- Are profitable for both doctrine and life practice (2 Timothy 3:16 – 17; Romans 15:4).
- Words are pure (Psalm 12:6, 119:140; Proverbs 30:5).
- Words are true (Psalm 119:60; John 17:17).
- Words are perfect and make wise the simple (Psalm 19:7).
- Produce obedience (Deuteronomy 17:19 – 20).
- Cleanse the heart and ways (John 15:3; Ephesians 5:26; Psalm 119:9).
- Keep us from destructive paths (Psalm 17:4, 19:11).
- Builds us up in the faith (Acts 20:32).
- We err without them (Matthew 22:29; Acts 13:27).
- All things should be tried by them (Isaiah 8:20; Acts 17:11).

## 6. Key Characteristics

The following descriptive terms help us understand the character of God's Word.

- **Inspiration** – 2 Timothy 3:16 To say that the Bible is inspired means that God, by the Holy Spirit, breathed out His words in such a way that the individual authors of the Bible actually wrote down the exact words God meant to be recorded, even while the authors wrote in their own style and used their own vocabulary to write what they thought was important to their readers. Inspiration means that the Bible is the very Word of God.
- **Infallible** – the original manuscripts, breathed out by God and written by men, are of such character that they cannot fail to accomplish its purpose and claims (Isa. 55:10-11). Conversely, the Bible cannot lead anyone astray. Infallibility is foundational to the authority of the Bible (2 Peter 1:16-21)
- **Authoritative** – To say the Bible is authoritative means that God, as the author of Scripture, purposes to direct the belief and behavior of his people through the revealed truth set forth in it. Therefore, all our ideas about God and His purposes should be measured, tested and, where necessary, corrected and enlarged, by the Bible. Scripture, therefore, is the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions of any kind should, and will be, tried.
- **Inerrant** – To say the Bible is inerrant means it is totally without error in the original writings. Everything it asserts explicitly or implicitly, on any subject, is true in the sense intended by its authors. Its inerrancy is derived from God's truthfulness and authorship of the Bible.
- **Sufficient** – The sufficiency of Scripture means that God, in our union with Christ, has given us everything that is necessary for living and for godliness. God's word contains all that is needed. By corollary, we do not need man's theories and solutions. There is no moral situation which can arise for which the Bible is not adequate and sufficient to inform and direct us.
- **Understandable** – The Bible is a plain book. The Bible can be understood by people through the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, and that people need to search the Scripture and judge for themselves what it means.
- **Necessary** – the Bible is necessary for salvation and a life set apart to God (sanctification). It alone contains the message of salvation and contains the means by which God conforms His children to Christlikeness.

### Core Scriptures

Psalm 19:7-11  
Matt 4:4  
John 17:17  
2 Tim 3:14-17

Heb 4:12-13  
2 Pet 1:2-7  
2 Peter 1:20-21  
Matt 5:17-18

## Core Actions

In order to spiritually profit from the Bible, you should make plans to know the Bible by: <sup>4</sup>

1. Hearing it – preached, taught, Bible on digital audio, participating in group Bible studies,
2. Reading it – daily, all of it over time following a plan, repeatedly, prayerfully, expectantly
3. Studying it – in order to grow in faith and discipline, one must carefully study God’s Words (John 17:17, Romans 10:17, 1 Timothy 4:13-16, Ezra 7:10). Here is a suggested pattern for how to profitably engage in a study of a particular portion of God’s Word.
  - Petition – Pray for understanding
  - Observation – What is God saying by what is written here? (Don’t think mystically or ‘what is God saying to me?’, but simply, ‘what is being said?’)
  - Interpretation – What does God mean for me to know, believe, think, or do by having written these words? (i.e., what is significant about these words)?
  - Correlation – Does my interpretation fit with the immediate context and with rest of God's Word?
  - Application – What specific ways might I apply what God’s Word says in my life?
4. Memorizing it – learn specific verses word perfect as an aid in your spiritual growth (Psalm 119:9-11)
  - Use repetition or other mnemonic devices
  - Strive for word for word accuracy
  - Also memorize the reference (chapter and verse number)
  - Memorize verses that are meaningful / helpful to you <sup>5</sup>
5. Meditating on it – keep God’s Word on your mind constantly (Joshua 1:8)
  - Call specific passages to mind and ponder their meaning and truth (whether you have memorized them or not).
  - Repeat the text aloud while thinking about it, considering each word's importance to the whole understanding.
  - Then consider how the truth of it should impact your life, thinking, and belief.

---

<sup>4</sup> For further help on knowing the Bible, see Foundational Concept III – Personal Worship

<sup>5</sup> *The Topical Memory System* by the Navigators is collection of good verses to begin with...

## Key Resources

*What Does God Want of Us Anyway?* – Mark Dever

*30 Days to Understanding the Bible* – Max Anders

*How to Get the Most from God's Word* – John MacArthur

10 Different Bible Reading Plans - <http://www.esv.org/resources/reading-plans-devotions/>

*MacArthur Study Bible*

*ESV Study Bible*

## For Further Study

*The Canon of the Scripture* – F. F. Bruce

*The Word of God in English* – Leland Ryken

The Chicago Statement of Biblical Inerrancy - <http://www.bible-researcher.com/chicago1.html>

### III. Personal Worship

#### Synopsis

The personal communion and response of the individual believer toward the Lord is a foundation on which our Christian life is to be built. The Scriptures call all believers to gather regularly with the church for collective worship, teaching, and fellowship. In addition, every facet of our life is to be seen as an expression of our worship of Christ. But each of these are no substitute for and are actually dependent upon each believer spending regular time in “personal worship.”

This is a special time set aside to spiritually commune with and worship God. This is a time in which we cease other activities and relate with God in a very personal way through His Word and prayer (referred to by some as a “quiet time”). Through personal worship we receive instruction, spiritual refreshment, and have an opportunity to personally express our dependence and devotion to our Lord.

#### Core Truth: Personal Worship

The Christian life is more than an entrance to a club or the receiving of a gift. It is the entrance into a reconciled personal relationship with the eternal God. As in any healthy relationship, there must be personal interaction and communication between the two parties. Our relationship with God is unique in that it is both intensely personal (Psalm 139, Romans 8:14-17, Hebrews 4:14-16), and yet the One we are relating with is the supreme ruler of the universe (Psalm 103:19, 115:3). Therefore the proper way to relate with Him can always be termed “worship” – a sense of reverential awe and ascribing great worth to.

There are two primary ways in which we individually and personally relate with God in an ongoing way that expresses our worship – attentively reading His Word & humbly praising / petitioning Him for what He alone can do. Both of these activities are a vital and essential foundation of our relationship with Him.

#### Core Truth: Time in His Word

Times of Personal worship must center around God’s Word, the Bible. It is our sure revelation from God and is our only source of truth (2 Timothy 3:16; John 17:17). All that God would teach and relay to us is mediated through the Bible (2 Peter 1:2-4). Review again through the listing in the previous section on **The Bible** of all that God’s Word is and does for us.

When you understand that God’s Word provides all of that and much more, doesn’t it stand to reason that you would want to saturate your mind with it as much as possible? Real truth is found nowhere else. That is why we are to read God’s Word (Deuteronomy 17:9; Isaiah 34:16), know God’s Word (2 Timothy 3:15), and receive God’s Word for what it is – the actual words of our Lord (1 Thessalonians 2:13).

As believers we must recognize that it is only through the power of God Spirit working inside of our mind and heart that we can truly understand God’s Word and know how to apply it to our lives (Luke 24:45; John 16:13; 1 Corinthians 2:10-14).

Therefore as we spend time in God's Word, it should be with a prayerful sort of dependence and expectation that God's Spirit will enlighten our mind to both the meaning of a portion of Scripture and its appropriate application to our own lives. It is in this internal ministry of God's spirit that the Word of God can be said to be *"living, active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart."* (Hebrews 4:12)

### **Core Action: Reading the Word**

Time should be set aside each day to carefully read God's Word. The length of the reading or the amount of time spent is not the most important thing – but rather that you are investing in your relationship with God by listening to Him through reading His Word.

Beyond just thoughtful reading of God's Word, our times of personal worship are enhanced by three activities in God's Word...

1. Meditation – thoughtful reflection on the true meaning of a Scripture and consideration of its application. It is often in these times of reflection that our hearts are lifted in praise to God, brought to conviction of sin in our life, our hearts are motivated toward new areas of service, or wisdom is gained on living life according to God's design – Joshua 1:8.
2. Memorization – committing a portion of Scripture to memory, so that it might be useful for future meditation, continually instruct and equip our service, as a weapon against temptation, readily available to instruct others, or to inform spontaneous times of worship and praise – Psalm 119:9-11
3. Careful Study – to dig deep into the meaning and proper interpretation of an individual passage or larger portion of Scripture. While being cautious not to turn your set-aside times of personal worship into an academic exercise, a deeper time of study can bring out previously hidden truths or connections that serve to heighten ones understanding and appreciation and worship of God.

### **Core Action: Application**

Regardless of the time, type, or amount of reading, meditation, and study you engage in each day, if you are not making some personal response to what God has said through His Spirit/Word, then you are just engaging in an academic exercise, not in Personal Worship.

As you read and meditate, consider how the truths you are reading intersect with your life and thinking, and consider the appropriate response. Look for habits that you need to change, thinking that needs to be adjusted, speech that needs to be altered, sins that need to be confessed and forsaken, actions that need to be started, praises that need to be offered, thanksgiving that needs to be spoken, relationships that need to be mended, etc., etc.

Personal Worship involves God's Word being welcomed and incorporated into real life on an ongoing basis, otherwise we are deluding ourselves into thinking we are responding rightly to God (James 1:21-25; Matthew 7:24-27). Once you have an area in mind that needs to be applied, think of a concrete way to put that into action right away, and then make a plan to do it (Matthew 21:28-31).

## Core Truth: Time in Prayer

If time in the Word is where God speaks to us, then it is through prayer that we directly speak to God. It humbles us, shows us our dependence on Him, and reminds us that ultimately only His will is done in our lives on this earth. The Lord Jesus himself taught us how to pray (Matthew 6:5-15, Luke 11:1-13, Luke 18:1-8), and we see many prayers recorded in Scripture, and they range from the profound requests, to confessions of sin, to simple cries of dependence (1 Kings 8:22-53; 2 Kings 19:14-19; Nehemiah 1:4-11; Daniel 9:3-19; Jonah 2:1-10; Luke 1:46-55; Acts 4:24-31; Ephesians 3:14-21; Colossians 1:9-12; as well as many Psalms such as, Psalm 13, 26, etc.)

Regardless of the content of your prayers, God invites us to talk to Him in a personal, sincere, reverential, honest, and unscripted way. Our prayers are driven by the knowledge of our reconciled relationship with God through Jesus Christ (Hebrews 4:14-16), God's gracious and fatherly care for those in Christ (Romans 8:14-17, 31-32; James 1:17), and our tremendous spiritual and material need of His constant provision (Matthew 6:25-34; James 4:13-16).

## Core Action: A Plan for Prayer

From what the Scripture teaches about prayer, we can perceive the most appropriate and effective way to express ourselves to God. Here is a possible plan prepared by Mike Riccardi. While every time of personal worship need not reflect every element here, our overall communication with God ought to incorporate these elements.<sup>6</sup>

### Drawing Near & Confession

- Come before your Father in the name of Jesus Christ, on the basis of the work He's done in the Gospel.
- Acknowledge your dependence upon the Holy Spirit even in your prayers ([Rom 8:26-27](#)).
- Pray that the Father would receive this time as worship from a heart gladdened by His glorious grace.
- Confess your sin in light of God's holiness. Ask for forgiveness on the basis of Christ's shed blood on the Cross ([Matt 6:12](#); [Heb 10:19-23](#)).

---

<sup>6</sup> John Piper writes in *Desiring God*, "Unless I'm badly mistaken, one of the main reasons so many of God's children don't have a significant life of prayer is not so much that we don't want to, but that we don't plan to. If you want to take a four-week vacation, you don't just get up one summer morning and say, "Hey, let's go today!" You won't have anything ready. You won't know where to go. Nothing has been planned. But that is how many of us treat prayer. We get up day after day and realize that significant times of prayer should be a part of our life, but nothing's ever ready. We don't know where to go. Nothing has been planned. No time. No place. No procedure.

And we all know that the opposite of planning is not a wonderful flow of deep, spontaneous experiences in prayer. The opposite of planning is the rut. If you don't plan a vacation, you will probably stay home and watch TV. The natural, unplanned flow of spiritual life sinks to the lowest ebb of vitality. There is a race to be run and a fight to be fought. If you want renewal in your life of prayer, you must plan to see it."

## Praise & Thanksgiving

Spend time simply delighting in all that God is for you in Christ. Meditate on the beauty of His numerous perfections and His wondrous deeds throughout the ages. Ascribe to the Lord the glory due His name ([Ps 96:7–9](#)), and honor Him as God by giving thanks to Him ([Rom 1:21](#)) for all His good and perfect gifts ([Jas 1:17](#)). Express these concrete thoughts verbally or in your heart to God.

## God-Centered Petitions

- Pray for God’s name to be glorified above all things by all peoples ([Matt 6:9](#)).
- Pray for His kingdom to increase through the ministry of the Church ([Matt 6:10a](#)).
- Pray for His kingdom to come in its fullness ([Matt 6:10a](#); [Rev 22:20](#)). That is, pray for His second coming and the establishment of His consummated reign upon the earth.
- Pray for His will to be done on earth as it is in heaven ([Matt 6:10b](#)); namely, without hesitation and full of joyful zeal.

## Personal Petitions

- Pray for growth in grace and godliness ([2Pet 3:18](#)). Be specific with your particular needs for growth.
- Battle in prayer against specific sins. Engage in the work of mortification ([Rom 8:12–13](#)).
- Pray for opportunities of personal ministry, that your light would shine before men to the glory of your Father ([Matt 5:16](#)).
- Pray for God to provide (and to continue to provide) for your daily necessities ([Matt 6:11](#)): for food, shelter, employment, etc.
- Pray for freedom from temptation ([Matt 6:13](#)), and, when temptation comes, strength to endure it without falling ([1Cor 10:12–13](#)).
- Pray for the strength to persevere and endure in trials ([Jas 1:2–4](#)), whether they be present or future, or both.

## Intercessory Prayer

Pray for the requests of particular circles of friends and family. This may involve keeping a prayer list and referring to it as you’re praying. You can pray for different circles on different days.

## Conclude

- Thank God for the time spent with Him and for His gracious revelation of Himself in His Word.
- Express your trust in Him to grant the things you’ve prayed for according to His sovereign, wise, and good will, and according to the glory of His name.
- Pray again for strength and grace to glorify Him and serve people in His name throughout your day.

## Core Action: Other Approaches

There is no one “right” way to spend time in personal worship – for it is just that “personal.” But having a guide is good for most folk. Here is another option for personal worship that incorporates time in the Word and time in prayer. Here is what you might do.

- Scripture Prayers: Choose a passage of Scripture to meditate on and pray through. It could be the passage of Scripture you are reading for the day, or it could be the main text and the supplemental texts of your pastor’s sermon from the previous Sunday. You might also pray through a Psalm each day. Regardless of the passage, really pray these texts into your soul. This is not reading merely for exposure or content. This is reading to see and know and worship God. This could be a change up for your time in Bible reading, and should be a small enough passage that you can pray through it in the time you have allotted for personal worship.
- A simple acronym can help guide your daily time of Personal Worship – SOAR (Isaiah 40:31)
  - S – Sit down – find a quiet place to open God’s Word to thoughtfully hear from Him
  - O – Observe – what is being said in this portion of Scripture, and seek to rightly understand it
  - A – Apply – consider how some particular truth(s) apply to your current thinking or life
  - R – Respond – pray for help to begin to put that application into action from the moment you leave your chair

## Core Scriptures

- Psalm 19
- Psalm 119
- Matthew 6
- James 1:17-25
- Rom 12:1-2
- Romans 6:11-14
- Luke 18:1-14
- Mark 1:35
- Joshua 1:8
- Psalm 1:1-3

## Core Resources

*Lord Teach me to Pray* – John MacArthur

*A Call to Spiritual Reformation: Priorities from Paul and his Prayers* – D.A. Carson

## For Further Study

*An Exposition on Prayer in the Bible* – James Rosscup

# Building Blocks

Beyond just the foundations of our relationship with Christ, there are numerous other important areas upon which our life in Christ is built. In working with a disciple through these specific areas, you are not only helping them in these specific skills, but also teaching them the process of spiritual growth. Ultimately you want them to take the disciplines and practices and thought processes used in these areas of growth, and apply them for themselves in the many other areas in which the Lord would have them grow. These areas have been chosen for this guide because they represent some of the core areas of the Christian life, and help the disciple see the comprehensive effects that Christ's Lordship will have on them.

## IV. The Church

### Synopsis

The Church is not a building, nor an institution. It is a group of people. Not just any people, but ones “called out” by God to be His own “assembly.” More specifically the Bible uses the word “church” (Greek: *ekklesia*) to describe those who have been drawn by God to repent from their sins and place their trust and allegiance in His Son Jesus, and thus become part of “The Church.”

The church is not just an organization that benefits its members (like getting in on AARP discounts once you turn 50). The church has been called by God to have a unique position and purpose in this world. It is therefore it is essential for every Christian to understand the church and his/her role in it.

### Core Truths

#### History of the Church

God has been “calling out” people to be His own from the beginning of the human race. One day all of God’s chosen ones will join with Him in heaven for eternity. But prior to that time, He has chosen various ways to gather and organize His people throughout the history of mankind. Prior to the coming of Jesus and the establishment of the Church, God was uniquely using the physical descendants of Abraham (Jews) as His representatives and guardians of His revealed truth to mankind (the Scriptures) – Ex 19:5-6.

God still called people from all nations to Himself, but as He did, they were to be joined in with the Jewish family. The Jews were for a time governed by the heads of the family (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, etc), later individual deliverers like Moses, Joshua, Gideon, and Samuel, and then later by Kings (David, Solomon, Hezekiah, etc). All the while God also used prophets and priests to teach and lead His people into how they should relate with Him.

But after the coming of Christ, all that changed. God formed a new kind of “assembly” – the Church. This new gathering of God’s people had not been revealed by God previously (Eph 3:1-6, 5:32), and it replaced the Jewish nation as the guardians of God’s revelation and as His representatives in this world (Eph 2:20, 1 Tim 3:14-15, 1 Pet 2:9-10). The Church was fully inaugurated 50 days after Jesus’ death and resurrection, as He sent His Spirit to personally dwell inside each member of the church (John 14:26, 15:26, 16:7,13; Acts 2). Jesus 12 disciples formed the nucleus and initial leadership of the Church, which quickly grew to include both Jews and Gentiles (see Acts 2-14).

The very same basic “assembly” continues today, though it has expanded throughout the generations and across the globe, and will continue on until Jesus returns to suddenly snatch His church from the world (1 Thess 4:13-18, 1 Cor 15:50-58).

#### Make-up of the Church

The church is made up of those who have responded to the call of the Gospel to become followers of Jesus Christ by placing their trust in His death alone for the forgiveness of sins, and having repented of their sins. All who have come to Christ belong to the “universal Church” – made up of all true believers

of every age.

It is also proper to speak of the “local church” – which is a biblically orderly assembly of disciples of Jesus that regularly gather together in Christ’s name. These local bodies are the primary mechanism through which God is doing His work in the world. Many of the writings of the New Testament were letters written to individual local churches (Colossians, Corinthians, Romans, etc). It is the universal assumption of the New Testament writers that every born again believer would associate together with a local church. The regular gathering of any local church will consist of both true disciples and those who profess Christ, but have not truly embraced Him, and thus have not been regenerated by God or filled with the Holy Spirit of God (Matt 7:13-27, 13:24-30,36-43; Acts 20:29-30; 1 John 2:19, 4:1-6).

### Purpose of the Church

- Toward God – To worship and serve God through expressing our praise of His glorious grace (Eph 1:3-14), the exaltation of His Son (Eph 1:22, Phil 3:3), the proclamation of His Word (2 Tim 4:1-2), and the living of holy lives (Titus 2:11-14) by the power of His Spirit (Eph 5:15-21).
- Toward the World – To serve as witnesses of Christ (Acts 1:8), ambassadors of God’s gospel truth (2 Cor 5:18-20), the pillar and support of the truth (1 Tim 3:15), and our lives shining as a light in a dark place (Matt 5:14-16, Eph 5:7-14).
- Toward Itself – To exhibit and preserve unity in Christ (Eph 4:1-6), mutually work together to fulfill the above two purposes, as well as build itself up to be constantly nurturing each member and be growing as a whole (Eph 4:7-16) by the use of unique and divinely given spiritual abilities (Rom 12:1-12, 1 Peter 4:7-11).

### Practices of the Church

The following are some of the main ways in which the church accomplishes its purposes...

- Corporate Worship of God
  - ✓ Singing (Col 3:16)
  - ✓ Scripture Reading (1 Tim 4:13)
  - ✓ Administer Ordinances – Baptism (Matt 28:19) & the Lord’s Supper (1 Cor 11:23-34)
  - ✓ Personal / Corporate Obedience (Rom 12:1-2)
- Preaching / Teaching (1 Tim 4:16, 2 Tim 4:1-4)
- Serving in the Body (Eph 4:12, 1 Pet 4:11)
- Leading (1 Peter 5:1-3)
- Evangelizing and Sending out Evangelists (Acts 2:4-11, 4:31, 13:1-3, Phil 4:15-18)
- Helping one another with tangible needs (2 Cor 8:1-9; 1 John 3:14-18)
- Displaying Christ’s Compassion to the world (Matt 5:16)
- Disciplining straying members (Matt 18:12-20, Gal 6:1-2)
- Guarding the truth (2 Tim 1:13-14, 1 Tim 3:15)
- Gathering / Encouraging (Heb 10:23-25)

## Core Scriptures

- Matthew 16:13-28
- Acts 2, 4:23-37
- Ephesians 2
- Ephesians 4
- 1 Cor 12:12-27
- 1 Thess 5:12-28
- Galatians 6:1-11
- 1 Timothy 2-5
- Heb 10:19-25, 13:15-19
- Revelation 2-3
- 1 Peter 1-2
- 1 John 3:13-4:6

## Core Actions

Every Christian is to engage in active fellowship in the local church in the following ways...

- Being baptized in water (Acts 2:41, 8:35-36)
- Participate in the regular Corporate Worship (Heb 10:23-25, 13:15)
- Partaking of the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:42; 1 Cor 11:23-34)
- Give financial offerings to the Lord through the local church (1 Cor 9:3-14, 1 Tim 5:17-18)
- Assist some ministry of the church according to need and ability (Rom 12:3-8, 1 Peter 4:10-11)
- Maintain a life of holiness in accordance with the Scripture (Eph 5:1-21)
- Submit to the oversight of the elders & deacons and the loving correction of fellow members (Heb 13:17, 1 Cor 5)
- Strive to maintain within the local and universal Body a spirit of unity that is grounded in the Gospel and the Scriptures (Eph 4:1-6, James 3:13-4:12)
- Grow in one's own understanding of the Scriptures in order to participate in "guarding the truth" (2 Tim 2:1-2; 2 Peter 3:17-18)

## Core Resources

- *What is a Healthy Church?*, by Mark Dever
- *Life in the Body of Christ*, by Curtis Thomas
- *What is a Healthy Church Member?*, by Thabiti Anyabwile

## For Further Study

- *The Deliberate Church*, by Mark Dever
- *The Church in God's Program*, by Robert Saucy
- *The Master's Plan for the Church*, by John MacArthur
- [www.9marks.org](http://www.9marks.org)

## V. Personal Holiness

### Synopsis

When the Bible speaks of being “holy” it means being and living as one “set apart” for God.<sup>7</sup> Being set apart, one would expect that the life of a Christian would appear different than that of a non-Christian. Being set apart will drive the mindset for a life lived in obedience to Christ’s commands and calling. When striving to live a life set apart, a Christian must deal with his remaining natural desires to sin – these desires come from our unredeemed humanness, that the Bible calls “the flesh.” Not simply referring to our physical bodies, but that inward part of man that is easily attacked by temptation and susceptible to sin. It functions apart from God and seeks to satisfy its own desires. Personal holiness involves saying ‘no’ to the flesh, self, and its desires, and saying ‘yes’ to the leading of God’s Spirit to conform our lives to Jesus’ example and teaching as seen in the Bible.

### Core Truths

#### 1. Put off sin

We are called to put off the old ways of life, turning from the sin (and any particular sins) that you have held onto (Romans 6:15-19, Ephesians 4:22, Colossians 3:29, 1 Peter 2:11-12).

#### 2. Put on Christ

Due to the pervasive nature of fleshly desires, as you are putting off sinful ways, you must replace them with something else. For lasting change and turning from your sin to occur, you are called to “put on the new man” / “put on the Lord Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 4:24 / Romans 13:14). This “new man” yields to the work of God’s Spirit within you to conform you into the image of Christ (Romans 12:1-3, Colossians 3:10).

For a believer in Christ to continue to live in the old sinful habits and patterns is incompatible with their new position in Christ (Romans 8:12-13, 1 John 3:6, 9).

This process of “putting off sin / putting on Christ” is rightly called by many “progressive sanctification,” for it is the continual growth in holiness over time. This continued growth is assumed by New Testament (1 Corinthians 6:9-11, Ephesians 2:19-21, 2 Thessalonians 1:3), and we are urged to pursue it (2 Corinthians 7:1, Hebrews 12:14, 2 Peter 3:18)).

“Putting on Christ” comes as you engage in some basic Spiritual Disciplines: reading scripture, hearing the word, praying, regular fellowship with believers, memorizing scripture, and purposefully “putting on” Christ-like attitudes and thought patterns (Col. 3:12-14).<sup>8</sup>

#### 3. Repentance/Confession/Forgiveness

---

<sup>7</sup> Often Bible passages will use the term “sanctify” or “sanctification” to describe our being dedicated to God’s purposes.

<sup>8</sup> See section entitled “Personal Worship”

Whether coming to faith as a believer or living the ongoing life as a believer, the same Gospel truths apply...

- We must acknowledge our sinful state and sins against a Holy God (Psalms 51:1-4; Acts 2:38, 3:26, 26:18, Matthew 4:17, 9:14, Mark 1:4-5)
- We must have a heartfelt sorrow for our sin (Matthew 11:20-21; 2 Corinthians 7:10), and a willingness to turn from it (Col 3:17).
- We must humbly express to Him our need for His forgiveness (Matthew 6:12, 1 John 1:9, Acts 8:22), knowing that God is willing and ready to forgive those who come to Him (Psalm 86:5)

### Core Scriptures

Romans 13:14  
Colossians 3:17  
Ephesians 4:17-32  
Romans 8:13  
Colossians 3:5

Colossians 3:12-14  
Romans 6:1-14  
Romans 6:22  
Romans 7:15

### Core Actions

#### 1. Yield to the Holy Spirit, not the flesh

The continual process of personal holiness can only be accomplished through the work of God's Spirit in the life of a believer in Christ. A believer is the only one with the power to truly live a life pleasing to God by killing (mortify) their sins. If the Spirit resides in a person there will be a radical change, because believers have been given the power through the Spirit to overcome the desires of the flesh (Romans 8:1-13, 1 Corinthians 10:13, Philippians 4:13).

To put to death the misdeeds of the body means to regard as dead the power of sin in your body. When we regard sin's appeal as dead and lifeless, we can ignore temptation when it comes (Romans 8:13).

As we continue to yield to God's Spirit and experience victory over sin in choosing to walk God's path, we will become more sensitive to sin and grow to hate it even more. This process continues until our death or Jesus returns (Romans 7:24, 8:18-25).

#### 2. Don't obey the flesh

We have choices, either to live for sin and please ourselves, or live by the Spirit and please God. Deny self or deny God? The path of God leads to righteousness; the path of living for ourselves leads to death (Romans 6:16, 20-22).

We are to search our hearts, identify sinful patterns, and then stop doing those sinful things (Ephesians 4:28.) We are to go and leave our life of sin (John 8:11). A lack of self discipline in this battle is actually a lack of obedience, and threatens to forfeit our heavenly reward (1 Corinthians

9:24-27).

### 3. Stop feeding the flesh

We feed things that you want to become stronger. To kill something, you stop feeding it, you starve it. As Christians, we are called to stop feeding our flesh, and instead clothe ourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature (Romans 13:14). To help us do that we need to avoid situations that open the door to gratifying sinful desires (Proverbs 7). We are fooling ourselves if we think that we can continually go along with lawless men and act like they won't have any effect on us (1 Corinthians 15:33, Ephesians 5:3-16, 2 Peter 2:7-8).

Rather, we are to pray that the Lord will guard us from the temptations of the evil one (Matthew 6:13), flee from specific temptations (1 Corinthians 6:18, 10:14, 1 Timothy 6:11), and pursue holiness (2 Timothy 2:22).

### 4. Reckon yourselves to be dead unto sin

We are to reckon ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive to God (Romans 6:11), and therefore not let sin reign in our mortal bodies, like it did before we came to Christ (Romans 6:12). This doesn't mean that we have died to sin's temptations. But we have died to the penalty of sin and to sin's dominion, its influence, power, and control over us (Romans 6:14), and are now to "reckon" that to be true of us and live a life "set apart" for Christ.

#### **Key Resources**

*Changed into His Image*, by Jim Berg

*The Doctrine of Repentance*, by Thomas Watson

*The Enemy Within*, by Kris Lundgaard

#### **For Further Study**

*Pursuit of Holiness*, by Jerry Bridges

## VI. Evangelism

### Synopsis

Evangelism is speaking for God to man, telling them the bad news of their sin and resulting alienation from God; explaining the good news that God has made a way for them to be reconciled to Him, and calling them to repent of sin and to believe the gospel.

Simply, evangelism is telling people how to be saved from God (His wrath), in order to live for God for all eternity.

### Core Truths

#### What is Evangelism?

Evangelism is an act of our obedience whereby we tell others about the gospel (good news) of Jesus Christ; that He died for the sins of His people; that He was buried; that He was raised from the dead; that He is Lord of His church and the world; that people must believe the truth of that message before it can have any effect on their souls and their relationship with God (Rom. 3:1–31; 10:9–10; 1 Cor. 15:1–4; Gal. 2:16–21).

Evangelism is often a process, and not an event. For example, we might be involved in evangelism in crusades, open-air preaching, door-to-door visitation, evangelistic Bible studies, contacts in public places. The most obvious opportunities involve our children, grandchildren, family, friends, co-workers and neighbors. There is no one right mechanism for evangelism. What matters most is the content of the evangelistic message.

Evangelism's message must include the deity of Christ, His incarnation, His sinless nature, His substitutionary death for sinners to avert the eternal wrath of God, His bodily resurrection, our embracing of Christ and His message through repentance and faith.

God saves sinners by the gospel (Rom 1:16-17; Gal 1:3-4) and only by the gospel of Christ (Gal 1:6-9; Acts 4:12). The gospel reconciles God to sinners and sinners to God (Col 1:19-23). Sinners cannot be saved without hearing this message (Rom 10:13-17). God has given us the ministry of reconciliation. God speaks to sinners through our message (Luke 10:16; 2 Cor 5:17-21). Therefore, we must obey our calling to spread the good news of Christ, and we must be sure to get that message right (Gal 1:9).

#### The Message of Evangelism

##### The Bad News:

- How can a man be in the right before God? (Job 9:2)
- God made men upright, but they fell into sin, and turned away from God (Eccl 7:29; Isaiah 53:6)
- As a result of the fall, all mankind is now born sinful (Ps 51:5; Eph 2:3)
- In this condition, they are unrighteous before God (Rom 3:10-12)
- As a result of their condition, they commit sin (Rom 3:13-17)
- The heart of the problem is their heart; they do not fear God (Rom 3:18)
- God has been offended by our sin and is angry (Rom 2:5, 8)

- God is holy and just and will punish our sin (Gal 3:13; Exod 34:7b)
- The wages of sin is death: eternal separation from God and suffering His wrath forever (Mark 9:47-48; Rom 6:23)
- No amount of “good” works can save, because there is no one who does good (Rom 3:10-12). God’s standard is perfection (Matt 5:48) and no man has ever achieved it (Rom 3:23; Jam 2:10). As a result, no man can save himself. He cannot please God (Rom 8:7-8).

#### The Good News:

- God is gracious and merciful and willing to forgive (Exod 34:6-7a; Eph 2:4-5); He has established the means by which the offense of our sin can be removed from before God. That message is the gospel. God’s justice and righteous wrath toward sin was satisfied by the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ on the cross. (Rom 3:25-26; 5:9).
- Jesus is God (Tit 2:13) who became man for the express purpose of dying for sin (Phil 2:5-8). He lived a perfect, sinless life in order to be a perfect sacrifice for sin. His death was substitutionary (1 Pet 3:18). He died in the place of sinners (not for Himself) to satisfy God’s justice and wrath toward sin, so that sinners could be reconciled to God (Rom 3:25-26; 5:9; Col 1:15-23). His resurrection proves that He is God and that His death was sufficient to satisfy man’s greatest need and God’s demands.
- This gospel satisfies the sinner’s need of forgiveness and it satisfies God’s righteous justice for those sinners who could never atone for their own sin.
- A sinner can only be right before God by acknowledging his offense toward Him; understanding that only by Jesus’ death can his soul be saved from the wrath of Go; by turning from sin and calling on the name of Lord to be saved (Rom 10:9-10, 13); by believing the promise of God that He will forgive sin and declare the sinner righteous as a gift (Rom 3:21-24), committing His life to kingship of Christ.
- When a sinner believes the gospel, God removes the offense of his sin (Col 2:13-14), declares the sinner righteous (Rom 3:24), reconciles Himself to the sinner and the sinner to Him (Col 1:21-22), transfers him from the kingdom of Satan to the kingdom of Jesus (Col 1:13; Acts 26:20), adopts him as His child (Gal 4:4-7), and then sanctifies him to be like Jesus (Rom 8:28-29), by obeying all that He commands (Matt 28:19), and promises to bring him to his final state of righteousness (1 John 3:1-3)
- If a man refuses to believe this message, the wrath of God continues to abide on him (John 3:36) and he will bear the penalty of hell, a place where the eternal wrath of God will be poured out on those who refuse to believe this gracious gospel (Matt 25:41; 2 Thess 1:7-9)

#### Core Scriptures

1 Cor 15:1-4  
 Col 1:15-23  
 Rom 3:1-31  
 2 Cor 5:17-21  
 Rom 10:13-17  
 Rom 10:9-10, 13  
 2 Cor 4:3-6

#### Core Actions

Be Ready to Communicate the Gospel

- Look up the verses and think about this message. Seek to understand it deeply.
- Practice speaking this message until you are able to communicate it clearly.
- Find another person who will learn and practice it with you. This is very helpful.
- Make a list of people you know need the gospel. Pray for them regularly.
- Pray for opportunities and boldness to speak this glorious gospel to others.
- Speak with compassion, care, concern for their soul
- Make a list of possible opportunities for evangelism (family, friends, neighbors, contractors, cashiers, etc.) in order to be ready when opportunities arise.
- Live a holy life as a testimony of God's grace in your life through the gospel.
- Study hell and its horrors
- Study the condition of the unsaved (spiritually lost, blind, helpless, alienated, dead, etc.)
- Study the glories of salvation (forgiven, redeemed, justified, reconciled, adopted, etc.)

#### Speak for Christ as His Ambassador

- Develop a shorter way to introduce the gospel such as "Do you know that God has made a way for sinners to be forgiven and reconciled to Him?" Ask if they want to know more. "Can I tell you what God has done in my life?"
- Seek to converse with the person in a dialogue, not just communicate facts in a monologue. Try to discern if they are interested, and understand the message.
- Promote self-reflection by asking questions about their condition, their response to Bible truth about sin, judgment, death, Jesus, God and more.
- Use the Bible and have the person read the Bible text in order to promote self-reflection.
- Listen carefully to their answers. What are they thinking? What do they need to hear?
- Don't try to force or coerce decisions. God must convert the heart or it is not true salvation.
- After you have explained the message, ask your hearer what he will do with what he just heard? Do you need Jesus as your hope of being reconciled to God? He died to rescue and reconcile sinners. He invites you to call upon Him in faith to save you.
- Remember salvation cannot occur without knowing the facts of the gospel. So, work at communicating the gospel clearly. But facts are not enough; salvation is knowing Jesus. You are seeking to introduce them to a person. We are proclaiming the glories of Him who called us out of darkness in His marvelous light (1 Pet 2:9)

#### After Presenting the Gospel

- If they say "no", respect their decision. Remember that we cannot expect a spiritually blind (2 Cor 4:4) or dead person (Eph 2:1-3) to respond to the gospel. You might give them a good gospel tract and plead with them to keep it, so that they have the gospel available to hear later. God may later use that gospel to give them life and grant repentance and faith.
- If they are non-responsive ("not yet" or "I'm not sure"), respect their answer and affirm they should think carefully about Christ's call on their life. But also remind them that we stand on the edge of eternity, not knowing when we will pass from this life. It will be too late to respond then (Heb 9:27). It is good to leave them gospel materials and ask them to keep it. God may use it later to give life and grant repentance and faith. Or, find a time when you can talk again of these things.
- If they respond positively to the gospel ("calling on the name of the Lord to be saved"), encourage them to express their response to God Himself in prayer.<sup>9</sup> You can give thanks for

---

<sup>9</sup> Remember that there are positive responses that are not true conversions (Mark 4:5-7). Be careful not to give false assurance of salvation. That is the Spirit's work (Rom 8:9-17).

what God is doing in his life, then reaffirm that God will give that true assurance as he begins to live the Christian life. Invite him to church and help him understand the next steps in the Christian life (baptism and obedience to Jesus' commands). Offer to help him grow in that understanding.

### **Core Resources**

*The Gospel and Personal Evangelism*, by Mark Dever

Matthias Media – Tracts (2 Ways to Live), booklets, and other resources (Explaining Christianity / Exploring Christianity)

2011 Truth Matters Conference (The gospel and communicating it)

<http://www.gty.org/resources/Sermon-Series/317>

Examples of brief gospel messages when more explanation is not possible

<http://www.9marks.org/ejournal/pastors-and-theologians-forum-explaining-gospel>

### **For Further Study**

*Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* – J.I. Packer

*Tell the Truth* – Will Metzger

## VII. The Heart of a Christian

### Synopsis

When a person embraces Jesus Christ, not only is a great exchange made (Jesus takes our sin, and our sinful account is credited with Christ's righteous deeds) that gives him a right standing with God, but also a great transformation begins. The believer is given a new heart, out of which flows a whole new life. A progressive change begins from the inside out, and will have a dramatic effect on how one lives. This new "heart", together with the "fruit" it produces, is one of the tell-tale signs that one has truly been born again.

### Core Truths

#### The Heart

The Scripture speaks of the "heart" as the seat of one's desires, emotions, will, intellect, etc. It is the determining factor for one's outward actions (Mark 7:20-23), and is that immaterial part of us that either communes with or rebels against God. In many cases it is virtually synonymous with "mind, soul, spirit, person, etc." (Prov 4:23, 1 Samuel 16:7, 1 Chron 28:9, Jer 17:10, Psalm 51:10, Romans 10:10, Eph 6:6). It is our "heart" that is naturally corrupt and needs to be redeemed and transformed.

#### Regeneration

One of the provisions of Christ to those who embrace Him as Savior and Lord is that they are "born again" (John 3:3-8). This fulfills in part the Old Testament promise of God's New Covenant, when He would give His people a "new heart," one that would finally be able to and eager to obey Him (Jeremiah 32:39-40, Ezekiel 36:25-27). This promise being fulfilled in Christ (Luke 22:20), Jesus gives to His followers a new heart (2 Cor 5:17). This enables the believer to live an entirely different kind of life. Not just in outwardly right living, but a dramatic reorientation of attitudes, desires, and thoughts (in some areas instantaneously, but most often progressively over time as our hearts and minds are renewed by attentiveness to God's Word – see previous section on Personal Holiness).

#### Love for God & Neighbor

One of the characteristics of a believer's new heart (that will be immediately present, but also must be cultivated), is a love for God and a love for other people. This love constitutes the essence of God's law for mankind (Matthew 22:34-40).

This love will show itself in an initiating, self-sacrificing desire to seek the best for another, rather than yourself, irrespective of whether or not the person is deserving of it (Luke 10:25-37, Rom 5:6-8, Philippians 2:3-8, 1 John 4:10-11).

Obviously, this love is not just something that solely resides in the heart, but works its way out our attitudes and actions on a regular basis (Colossians 3:12-14, 1 John 3:16-18, 4:19-21, 5:1-3).

#### Fruit of the Spirit

Love will not be the only "fruit" of a new heart. The Apostle Paul teaches in Galatians 5:22-25 that love

merely tops the list of a new set of attitudes that flow from a new heart...

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control...*

These kind of changes in the heart that come about as we “walk by the Spirit” – meaning to willingly and purposefully align our heart attitudes and desires and behaviors with those of Christ (whose Spirit lives within us. We know Christ’s attitudes and desires, because they are recorded in teaching and example in the pages of the New Testament.

The presence of these attitudes and actions in one’s life are good evidence that one in fact “*belongs to Christ*”/ “*lives by the Spirit*”, and is actively “walking in the Spirit” by continuously “*crucifying the flesh with its passions and desires.*” (v. 24-25).

### Perfection vs. Presence?

Believers are not to expect perfection in these two fundamental areas, but rather to expect an ongoing struggle both in loving God/neighbor, and in consistently bearing the fruit of the Spirit. This is simply a reality of living in a sinful world and with a heart that is still susceptible to temptation (Rom 7:14-8:25). As struggles arise, we can look in faith to God for grace and help in the battle (1 Corinthians 10:13, Hebrews 4:14-16).

But, if a consistent and growing presence of loving God/neighbor and the fruit of the Spirit are not evident in a person’s life, they should have grave concern that their hearts have not truly been regenerated, or that they are spurning God’s appointed means for spiritual growth (see section on Personal Worship). In either case, they should carefully evaluate their life and heart (2 Corinthians 13:5), seeking help from a trusted Christian friend in humbly bringing their life under Jesus’ lordship.

### **Core Scriptures**

- Matthew 22:34-40
- Mark 7:14-23
- 2 Corinthians 5:14-17
- Philippians 2:3-8
- Romans 6:8-14
- 1 Corinthians 13:1-7
- Galatians 5:13-25
- 1 John 3:10-18, 4:7-21
- Colossians 3:1-17

### **Core Actions**

- Read the above passages, meditating on their implications
- Begin to look for ways in which you could act in a loving way to those in your life – then look for the first opportunity to do it.
- Carefully consider each attitude from Galatians 5:22-23. Are there any ways or times when your heart or life does not demonstrate that fruit? Pray for grace to change, and begin to seek small ways to daily “put on the Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom 13:14) in that area.

### **For Further Study**

- *Changed Into His Image*, by Jim Berg

## VIII. Relationships

### Synopsis

God created people with the capacity and the expectation to be in relationships with other persons and demonstrate love for them. God Himself is relational in His nature. Since we are created in the image and likeness of God, we too are relational beings. God is the greatest guide and example for what it means to initiate and maintain relationships. We are to be imitators of God in our relationships with others (Eph 5:1).

### Core Truths

God's relationship with us, and our relationships with others, are governed by three principles:

- Commitment: I will be faithful and loyal to that person
- Love: I will choose to act for the benefit of that person
- Law: I will be governed by the truth of God flowing from the righteousness nature of God in my relationship with that person

In order for any relationship to function the way God intended, we must base our decisions and conduct in those relationships based on these three principles. God glorifies himself in His relationship with us based on these principles. We glorify God in our relationships with others by following these same principles. The Bible must inform and teach us how to think about people, speak to them, and do for them.

Love is at the core of relationships according to God's Word. Galatians 5:14 says "For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Relationships are to be governed by love, not simply a subjective or emotional experience. Love is modeled after the examples of God's love (for example, John 3:16), and Jesus' love (John 15:12-13).

The New Testament highlights the action of love in relationships by the repeated use of the phrase "one another." God teaches us what love looks like through commands contained in the use of this phrase (note: the definition and fullness of love is not limited to this phrase). Because these phrases reflect God's character, we please and glorify God when we love and relate to others in the following ways:

- contribute to one another's needs (Rom 12:13)
- spur one another on to love and good deeds (Heb 10:24)
- love one another (John 13:34-35; Rom 13:8; 1 Pet 1:22; 1 John 3:11, 23; 4:7-12)
- be devoted to one another in brotherly love (Rom 12:10; 1 Pet 3:8)
- give preference to one another in honor (Rom 12:10)
- accept one another (Rom 15:17)
- admonish one another (Rom 15:14; Col 3:16; 1 Thess 5:14)
- be united with one another (Rom 12:16; 1 Cor 1:10; 1 Pet 3:8)
- serve one another through love (Gal 5:13; 1 Pet 4:10)
- show forbearance to one another in love (Eph 4:2)
- be kind to one another (Eph 4:32; 1 Pet 3:8)

- be tender-hearted to one another (Eph 4:32)
- forgive one another (Eph 4:32; Col 3:13)
- speak to one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs (Eph 5:19)
- teach one another (Col 3:16)
- encourage one another (1 Thess 5:11, 14; Heb 3:13; 10:25)
- build one another up (1 Thess 5:11)
- help one another (1 Thess 5:14)
- be patient with one another (1 Thess 5:14)
- be hospitable to one another (Rom 12:13; 1 Pet 4:9)
- be sympathetic toward one another (Rom 12:15; 1 Pet 3:8)
- restore one another (Gal 6:1)
- bear one another's burdens (Gal 6:2)
- be humble toward one another (Phil 2:3; 1 Pet 3:8; 5:5)
- look out for one another's interests (Phil 2:4)

Jesus states in a broad, sweeping way the definition of love in Matthew 7:12 *"In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets."* We have many different people relationships in our lifetimes. Here is a partial list for which Scripture contains explicit and implicit relational direction:

- Husband/wife
- Parent/child
- Church leaders/lay members
- Employer/employee
- Neighbor/neighbor
- Believer/unbeliever
- Friends
- Enemies

The Scripture gives clarity and wisdom with regard to all these relationships and more. Relationships are for God's glory (1 Cor 10:31) and for our sanctification as we function together in obedience to Christ.

### Core Scriptures

Matt 22:35-40  
 John 15:1-17  
 Romans 12:9-21  
 1 Cor 13:1-8  
 Gal 5:13-6:10

Eph 4:1-6:9  
 1 John 3:14-24  
 1 John 4:7-21  
 Proverbs

### Core Actions

- The first obvious action we should consider is examining my present thinking and lifestyle in our varying relationships. Is our life characterized by the kinds of thinking, words and behavior that are reflected by the “one-anothers?”
- We should study the key action words that define love. What does it mean to be “sympathetic” to one another? What does it mean to “admonish”? We should also study God’s love for us in order to understand the example we are to imitate.
- Develop the habit of studying the wisdom of Proverbs to govern relationships. Much is revealed about how we should think, speak and act in our various relationships.

#### **For Further Study**

- *Relationships: A Mess Worth Making* by Paul Tripp and Tim Lane

## IX. Stewardship

### Synopsis

A steward is one who manages, maintains, and makes the most of all God has entrusted to him for the furtherance of His interests, as he looks forward to future reward having served faithfully in that role. Jesus often spoke about stewardship in His parables and makes clear that we have been given responsibilities to use what has been given to us for the purposes of furthering His kingdom.

### Core Truths

#### 1. Our Perspective

Everything we have is from God (1 Cor 4:7). That includes our body, our mind, our tongue, our time, money and possessions, relationships, gifts and talents, the grace of God, and more. All that we have belongs to God (Ps 24:1; Col 1:16) and we are called to be stewards of all these gifts in furtherance of God's interests (1 Cor 4:1-7; Col 3:23-24).

#### 2. Our Body

With regard to our body we should get proper sleep and exercise, choose a proper diet, and not carelessly abuse or overwork it. It is through the body that we conduct most of our work for the Lord. A well-cared for body will pay many dividends. We must also guard against an overemphasis on the body to the detriment of our spiritual life. Paul said bodily discipline is of profit, but pursuit of godliness is more profitable (1 Tim 4:7-8).

#### 3. Our Mind

With regard to our mind (the immaterial part of us), we must guard what goes into it and give care to instructing it wisely. We are to love God with all our mind (Matt 22: 37). We must renew our minds in God's truth (Rom 12:2). This will always begin and end with the Bible, whose author is God. We should read other theologically sound books by human authors, but not at the exclusion of the Bible, and always in subjection to the Bible. How we instruct our minds will determine whether we live a more or less fruitful life.

#### 4. Our Tongue

We must steward our tongues for the glory of God and the benefit of others. This means we must examine what we say with our tongues and evaluate whether we are using them for God's intended purpose. We are to edify others with our tongues and not tear them down (Eph 4:29). We are to speak from the wisdom and grace God gives for His glory (1 Pet 4:10-11). We must guard against setting forests aflame with our tongues (Jam 3:5-8). Proverbs overflows with wisdom about use of our tongue.

## 5. Our Time

Time is also a gift from God which we must redeem and use wisely (Eph 5:15-17). As stewards of time, we use it for the obligations God has given us, and for investing our lives in others. We need time with the Lord, time with others and time for personal growth and recreation. We should seek the Lord for help understanding the proper, balanced use of time.

## 6. Our Stuff

Money and Possessions are gifts of God. We must not perceive that money and possessions make us secure (Prov 11:4, 28; 1 Tim 6:17). God is the source of our security. We must guard against the love of money and the desire to be rich (1 Tim 6:9-10). We must learn to be content with having our needs met (1 Tim 6:8), knowing that God has promised to meet those needs (Phil 4:19; Matt 6:25-34). Yet, God gives us the ability to make wealth (Deut 8:12).

Like all other gifts, the money and possessions given to us by God are meant to be used for His glory, the good of others, and our enjoyment (2 Cor 9:6; 1 Tim 6:17-19). We should strive to be rich toward God (Luke 12:21), and rich toward those in need (1 John 3:17). We should have a plan for giving to the Lord and others (2 Cor 9:7). There is no command to give a specific amount or percentage. Rather, we are to give as the Lord has prospered us (2 Cor 8:12) and look for ways to give more (2 Cor 9:8-12). The question to ask is how much can I give, not how much must I give? The reason: God loves generous givers (2 Cor 9:7)!

## 7. Our Relationships

God has also employed us as stewards of relationships into which God calls us. Parents are stewards of the children God gives them (Eph 6:1-4). Employers are stewards of the employees entrusted to them. We are stewards of relationships with unbelievers, members of the local church, neighbors and more. We are to conduct ourselves in relationships with others in ways that God has instructed us. The Scripture has many exhortations to practice the "one-anothers". For example, we are to love, care for, encourage, pray for, build up, and admonish one another (and many more). The one-another commands help us understand how we are stewards of relationships.

## 8. Our Spiritual Gifts

God has given each believer spiritual gifts to serve the local church (1 Cor 12:7, 11, 18). God equips us with these gifts and then puts us to work for the purpose of building up the church in love (Eph 4:16). This giftedness takes the form of serving and/or speaking to one another (1 Pet 4:10-11). As with all other stewardship, using our giftedness is to be done for the glory of God (1 Pet 4:11) and for the common good of His church (1 Cor 12:7). The motive and power for using this giftedness is love (1 Cor 13:1-8).

## 9. God's Grace

In an ultimate sense, we are stewards of God's grace to others. Paul knew that he was given God's grace so that he could serve and bless others (Eph 3:2,8). He says that God's grace has been given to all believers to serve and bless others (Eph 4:7). God has called us with a holy (set apart for God) calling, and gives us the grace we need to accomplish the purpose for which He calls us to serve Him. We are all called to be stewards of God's grace to others (1 Pet 4:10).

## Core Scriptures

Luke 14:35-48  
Matt 25:14-46  
Luke 16:10-13  
1 Tim 6:6-19  
Luke 12:13-34  
2 Cor 8-9  
1 Cor 12-13

## Core Actions

- Develop a Bible reading and memory plan to renew your mind in God's truth
- Develop a time schedule to spend with your wife and your children to talk to, encourage, and live together.
- Develop a specific time schedule to get appropriate exercise, sleep, and meals.
- Develop a plan for giving to the Lord's church. Set aside an extra amount by which you can bless others in need. Work together as a family to find ways to increase your giving each year, if possible.
- Find specific ways to serve in the church in order to be a good steward of the giftedness God has given you to build up the family of God.

## Core Resources

*Don't Waste Your Life* – John Piper  
*The Treasure Principle* – Randy Alcorn  
Navigator's *Topical Memory System* (an excellent Bible Memory Plan)  
"Avoiding Burnout" by JD Grear (web article)  
[http://www.churchleaders.com/outreach-missions/outreach-missions-blogs/158672-jd\\_grear\\_avoiding\\_burnout\\_part\\_2.html](http://www.churchleaders.com/outreach-missions/outreach-missions-blogs/158672-jd_grear_avoiding_burnout_part_2.html) (A good summary of time stewardship)  
Time Management Worksheet (included)

## For Further Study

*Money, Possessions and Eternity* – Randy Alcorn

## Doctrinal Statement

Below is The Bible Church of Owasso's Doctrinal Statement. This can be used as a reference tool during discussion of various topics, or as a tool for study with the disciple. Because of the what it is, the material represents condensed, factual statements of the main theological teachings of the Bible. It should be read and discussed carefully and thoughtfully, with appropriate attention given to the footnoted Scriptures.