

You Are A CHRISTIAN



A Course of Study for the New Child of God

Gene Taylor

Preface

As He commissioned His disciples to go to all the world with the message of salvation, Jesus told them: “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ‘Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age’” (Matthew 28:18-20) [Emphasis mine—GT].

Those individuals who believed the message of the gospel and gave obedience to it became disciples of Christ. They were to be taught to observe all things Jesus commanded. You see, the church’s responsibility to the great commission given by Jesus does not end with baptism. It is not enough to baptize a person and then let him flounder about on his own trying to survive as a Christian. Jesus expects his fellow Christians to teach him what he needs to know.

A great number of those who become disciples, though, go back to the world because they have been abandoned by their brethren. We think the worst of those who neglect or abandon a child in the physical realm. Should we think any more of those who would abandon spiritual babes?

New converts are much like tender young plants which need special care. In order to survive and grow, such plants need watering, feeding, protection from extremes like heat and cold, etc. In short, they need constant, gentle care. Similarly, babes in Christ require special attention if they are to survive and then “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18).

New Christians need to be grounded in the faith. They need to develop a foundation upon which they can live faithful lives in the face of temptation, adversity, hypocrisy and other perils along the way to heaven.

This study guide has been prepared to help those who are new in the faith to understand some basic concepts necessary to living successfully as a Christian. As new Christians, their lives are dramatically changing and this study has been developed to help them learn about and cope with those changes.

The new convert may study this book independently but it is best if he studies it with a person more mature in the faith. By studying with a mature Christian he can get answers to the normal questions which arise and can draw from the experiences and wisdom of one who has been in Christ for a long period of time and has become knowledgeable of the will of God.

It is hoped that this guide will reduce the spiritual mortality rate among converts to Christ and that it will help the new Christian fulfill the desire of the apostle Peter and the will of the Lord by making his “calling and election sure” (2 Peter 1:10).

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Introduction

At the end of the first gospel sermon ever preached, those who obeyed that gospel “gladly received his word” (Acts 2:41). This is what you did when you became a Christian.

TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN

You heard the word of God (Romans 10:17).

You believed in Christ as the Son of God (John 8:24; Mark 16:16).

You repented of your sins (Acts 2:38).

You confessed faith in Christ as the Son of God (Rom. 10:9-10).

You were baptized for the remission of your sins (Acts 2:38).

You have been added by the Lord to His church (Acts 2:47).

You Are a Christian! (Acts 11:26)

You must be asking yourself, “Now that I am a Christian, what am I to be like and what am I to do?” The Bible answers these questions. In this study we will go to it for those answers and others which you will need to live as a Christian.

As a Christian you are a child of God (1 John 3:1) but you are just a babe—a babe in Christ (1 Peter 2:1-2). But you are not to remain a spiritual babe, you are to grow (2 Peter 3:18). You grow spiritually by feeding upon the word of God (Acts 20:32). Therefore, you must develop a spiritual appetite so that you will hunger and thirst after righteousness so you can grow as you should (Matthew 5:6).

In 2 Peter 1:5-11 the apostle Peter tells of the necessity and nature of such growth “But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith **virtue**, to virtue **knowledge**, to knowledge **self control**, to self control **perseverance**, to perseverance **godliness**, to godliness **brotherly kindness**, and to brotherly kindness **love**. For if **these things are yours and abound**, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to **make your calling and election sure**, for if you do these things **you will never stumble**; for so an **entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom** of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (All emphasis mine—GT).

In order to grow as you should, those items mentioned in the above text must be added to your faith, i.e., they must be incorporated into your life as a Christian. If you are going to be able to add them to your life, you need to know what they are and why you need them.

"Virtue" is the determination to do right. "Knowledge" is knowledge of the word of God because it is the only source which can tell you what is right. "Self control" is the application of that knowledge in your life using it to govern your thoughts and actions. "Perseverance" is remaining steadfast to the Lord and His cause. "Godliness" is being like God, as He would have you to be. "Brotherly kindness" is tender affection toward brethren in Christ. "Love" is devotion to God, Christ and your fellow man which is expressed in obedience to God and service to man.

If you are to be fruitful in your service to Christ, these things must abound in your life. If you lack them, you are blind as to what your life in Christ should be. Therefore, you need to make a diligent effort to add them to your faith and to begin your development to maturity in Jesus. Such growth will make your salvation sure, will keep you from stumbling and will grant you entrance into the eternal kingdom of the Son.

This study is designed to help you begin that growth process. In it you will be studying the Scriptures so that you can start growing to be a faithful, dedicated and happy Christian.

Chapter One: What You Must Realize As a Christian

You Must Realize You Are Now a Child of God

"Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!"

Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him" (1 John 3:1).

You are in a new relationship. Through Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son, we are able to be in God's family—children in His house (1 Timothy 3:15). Since you are now one of His children, God expects you to think and act in a manner which will not bring shame to Him or the rest of His family. For example, in Matthew 5:43-45 you are told to love as God loves, even your enemies, so that "you may be sons of your Father in heaven." In loving as God loves, you show yourself to be one of His children.

In Romans 8:17, the apostle Paul states that as a child of God you are an heir of God and a joint heir with Christ. You share in all spiritual blessings (Ephesians 1:3). For this reason, the apostle Peter urges you and all other children of God to "conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear" (1 Peter 1:17). That means that you are to live with reverent respect for God your heavenly Father and conduct yourself at all times as one of His children should.

You Must Realize You Are a New Creation

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

As a new Christian you have now have new **goals**, new **responsibilities**, new **attitudes**, new **outlooks** and new **standards**. You are no longer to live as the rest of the world lives. You are to be different because you are to become more and more like Jesus Christ. Romans 6:4 says, "Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." You are not to be conformed to the world—its standards, conduct, etc., rather you are to be transformed into one who is in the likeness of Christ (Romans 12:1-2).

You are to abstain from "all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking" (1 Peter 2:1). Instead of giving yourself to those things, you should recognize that as a spiritual newborn in Christ (John 3:3-5), you must long for the "pure milk of the word" so that you can grow into a mature child of God (1 Peter 2:2) in the image of Christ, striving to live without sin.

According to Ephesians 5:27, Jesus cleansed the church, His body of believers, so "that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish." As a member of that church because of your obedience to the gospel (Acts 2:47), you must no longer live as you did before but live in accordance with the will of God as a new creation in Christ.

You Must Realize You Are Not Your Own

"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" (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

By becoming a Christian, you now belong to the Lord. He has bought you with a price. He shed His precious blood to purchase you from sin (Acts 20:28; Matthew 26:28; Ephesians 1:7). In reality, then, as a Christian you no longer run your life—Christ does.

Everything you do must be done "in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Colossians 3:17), i.e., you must do that which Christ would have you to do. You must allow Him to rule in your heart and let His will be that which determines your actions and thoughts. You cannot do something you want to do if it is forbidden by the Bible. You must follow the example of Jesus in this. When He lived on earth as a man, He was ruled by the will of the Father. He said, "For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me" (John 6:38). You and all other Christians must "humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God" (1 Peter 5:6). The will of God must always be more important to you than your own will.

You Must Realize You Need to Focus on Spiritual Things and Make Going to Heaven Your Primary Concern

"If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory" (Colossians 3:1-4).

Philippians 4:8 instructs you to think on things that are true, noble, just, pure, lovely, and of good report. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said that His disciples should "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness" (Matthew 6:33). Do not be as the people who are presented in the Parable of the Sower as "those who received the seed among the thorns" (Matthew 13:22). They allowed the "cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches" to "choke the word" from them and they became unfruitful. Jesus solemnly warned in John 15:1-8 in the figure of the vine and branches that those disciples who fail to abide in Him and become unfruitful will be cast out, thrown into the fire, and burned (v. 6).

Questions

1. According to the apostle Paul in Romans 8:16-17, what is the Christian because he is a child of God?
2. What does the apostle Peter admonish Christians to do in 1 Peter 1:17?
3. In 1 Peter 2:1-2, what is the Christian urged to lay aside?

4. Why, according to Ephesians 5:27, did Christ cleanse the church?
5. As a Christian, can you do something that you want to do even though it is forbidden by the Bible? (See Colossians 3:17) Explain your answer.
6. Whose will is more important, yours or God's? (See John 6:38 and 1 Peter 5:6) Explain your answer.
7. On what, according to Philippians 4:8, is the Christian to think? Define each term.
8. What does Matthew 6:33 say that the Christian is to seek first?
9. According to Matthew 13:22, what chokes one's interest in religion? How?

Chapter Two: The Problems You Have Solved

When we say you have solved the following problems, please do not misunderstand. Just because you became a Christian does not mean you will not have any problems. There are challenges ahead of you. There will be problems that you will have to face. Jesus never promised a life free from problems, suffering and trials.

Also, when we speak of solving the “guilt problem,” for example, that does not mean you will never sin again. The Bible teaches that even though we are Christians that sometimes we stumble and fall (1 John 1:7-10). What it means is that now, as a Christian, you have free access to God’s forgiveness through Jesus Christ. You no longer live under the dark cloud of sin.

SOLVED: The Problem of Guilt

God has forgiven your sins. Your past does not have to burden you now. You can be comforted by the words of the apostle Paul as he wrote in Romans 8:1, “There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.”

When you were baptized, you were baptized “into Christ” (Galatians 3:27). In Him is forgiveness of sins, redemption through His blood (Ephesians 1:7). Revelation 1:5 states that it is by the blood of Christ that you have been washed from your sins. Your baptism into Him caused your sins to be washed away (Acts 22:16) because you were baptized into His death (Romans 6:3) where He shed His blood, laying down His life to save sinful mankind (John 15:13). Being baptized into the likeness of Christ’s death (Romans 6:4), you spiritually contacted His cleansing blood and were freed from the guilt of your sins. Being freed from sin’s guilt, you were also freed from its wages. Romans 6:23 says that the wages of sin is “death,” eternal separation from God in the lake of fire (Revelation 21:8).

SOLVED: The Problem of a Purposeless Life

Now you can know where you are going. You know that your life has meaning and purpose. You are out of the rut of “going nowhere” and are on the road to heaven.

Many people struggle to find the meaning of life. They wonder what life is about and why they are living. The Christian has the answers to those questions. He knows that he is to be living his life for God. Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 reveals that one is to “Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man’s all. For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil.” A person can only find true fulfillment and have genuine success in life by seeking God and the will of God. No matter what else may happen to you in life, if you remain faithful to God and continue living in accordance with His will, you will be successful.

SOLVED: The Problem of Fear

Life’s uncertainties make many people live with fear from day to day. On the other hand, while his life is not without problems, the faithful child of God really has nothing to fear. He

can live without fear because he has the Lord's help in all things. In Hebrews 13:5 God tells the Christian, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." Thus as a Christian, you can firmly state, "The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?" (Hebrews 13:6). You do not even have to fear death.

SOLVED: The Problem of Loneliness

No matter where you may be, you are never alone. In times of adversity, grief, suffering and isolation, you will always have a companion with you.

As we saw earlier, God has stated in Hebrews 13:5 that He will never forsake you. As long as you are faithful to Him, He will be faithful to you. He will protect you and care for you. James 4:8 instructs you to "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you."

In addition to the companionship of God, you have the friendship and fellowship of your fellow Christians. God has commanded His children to encourage, strengthen and edify one another: "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works" (Hebrews 10:23-24). Christians are to be a comfort to one another (1 Thessalonians 4:18).

SOLVED: The Problem of Death

Death is common to all (Hebrews 9:27). It is an appointment all must keep. Most people live dreading its approach. For the Christian, though, even death is something that can be faced without fear. You will never have to fear it because Jesus overcame it for you and for all who will follow Him. Jesus "abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2 Timothy 1:10). Hebrews 2:14-15 says that Christ destroyed the one who had power over death: "Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power over death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Because Christ was victorious over death, He grants victory over it to His followers (1 Corinthians 15:54-58). As long as you faithfully follow Jesus, you, along with the Psalmist can state, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me" (Psalm 23:4). As a matter of fact, the Bible states that Christians are actually blessed in death: "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on. 'Yes,' says the Spirit, 'that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them.'"

Questions

1. According to the following passages, by what is one cleansed from his sins?
 - a. Ephesians 1:7.
 - b. Revelation 1:5.
 - c. John 15:3.

2. When one is freed from the guilt of sin, he is also freed from its wages? According to Romans 6:23, what is the wages of sin?
3. As seen in Ecclesiastes 12:13-14, what is the real purpose of life?
4. What does Philippians 3:12-14 say is to be the goal of every Christian?
5. Who, according to Hebrews 13:6, is the Christian's helper who allows him to be able to live without fear?
6. Should the Christian even fear death? (See Hebrews 2:14-15; Psalms 23:4) Explain your answer.
7. Who, according to Hebrews 13:5-6, will always be with the Christian?
8. What do the following passages teach that brethren in Christ are to do for one another?
 - a. Hebrews 10:24-25.
 - b. 1 Thessalonians 4:18.
9. Who does Hebrews 9:27 say must face death?
10. According to Revelation 14:13, who is blessed in death?

Chapter Three: Relationships and Responsibilities

How to View Your Family

The Bible places great emphasis on the family. In the very beginning of time when God created Adam and Eve, He established the family as the unit in which mankind was to live and function. All of us, whether as parents or children, have great responsibilities to our families but our highest loyalty must be to God and our relationship to Him in the church, the family of God (1 Timothy 3:15). Jesus said, in Matthew 10:37, "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me."

This does not mean that you are not to be a responsible family member. The Bible clearly states the responsibilities of spouses, parents and children in the home. Husbands are told to love their wives as Christ loved the church (Ephesians 5:25) and to treat them with honor and respect (1 Peter 3:7). 1 Timothy 5:8 says that "if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever." Wives are to submit to their husbands (Ephesians 5:22) and to love their husbands and their children (Titus 2:4). Children are instructed to "obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise" (Ephesians 6:1-2). Parents are to bring their children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4).

How to View the Government

Civil governments have been established by God so that we might live orderly lives (Romans 13:1). Therefore, Christians must be subject to governing authorities including such things as paying one's taxes (Matthew 22:21). To resist them is to resist God (Romans 13:2). The only time a Christian can lawfully disobey the governments of men is when obedience to their laws would cause him to sin against God. The law of God always takes precedence over the laws of men. The apostle Peter, along with the other apostles, said, "We ought to obey God rather than men."

How to View Brethren in Christ

When one obeys the gospel, he is added to the church (Acts 2:47). As a member of the church, he is a child of God (Galatians 3:26-27). He, therefore, sustains a relationship to all others who are in Christ. When you were baptized you gained a new family. As a child of God you have brothers and sisters all over the world. Several passages in Scripture reveal what your attitude toward your brothers and sisters in Christ ought to be.

- **1 Peter 1:22.** "Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart."
- **1 John 3:17-18.** "But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth."

● **James 2:14-17.** “What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,’ but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, ‘You have faith, and I have works.’ Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.”

● **1 John 4:20.** “If someone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?”

How to View Enemies and Those Who Misuse You

The Christian’s attitude toward others is to be different from the attitude of the worldly. He is not to hate, misuse or take advantage of others. Rather, he is to view them and act toward them as God does. In Matthew 5:43-48, in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.” You should never seek vengeance against anyone for vengeance belongs to the Lord” (Romans 12:19).

Questions

1. Who, according to Matthew 10:37, is the Christian to love more—Jesus or family? Explain your answer.

2. What does 1 Timothy 5:8 say is the Christian’s responsibility toward those in his family? What is included in this responsibility?

3. According to Ephesians 6:1-4:
 - a. What is a child’s responsibility toward his parents?
 - b. What is the parents’ responsibility toward their children?

4. According to Romans 13:1, what is the Christian’s duty toward government or “higher powers?”

5. Citing the example of Acts 4:18-19, if the law of God and the laws of men conflict, which should the Christian always obey? Explain your answer.
6. Should a Christian pay taxes? (See Matthew 22:21) Explain your answer.
7. What does the apostle Peter say, in 1 Peter 1:22, is to be the Christian's attitude toward his brethren in Christ?
8. How, according to 1 John 3:17-18, are Christians to love their brethren? Explain how this is done.
9. As seen in James 2:14-17, how is the Christian to manifest his faith in relation to his brethren?
10. Who does 1 John 4:20 say that the Christian cannot love if he does not love his brother? Why is that the case?
11. What did Jesus say, in Matthew 5:43-48, is to be the Christian's attitude toward his enemies?
12. According to Romans 12:19, to whom does vengeance belong? Why?

Chapter Four: The Bible

The world is full of many books but only one is from heaven. It is the Bible, the inspired word of God.

The Bible is really not just one book. Rather, it is a collection of 66 books—39 Old Testament books and 27 New Testament books. They were written by approximately 40 writers over a period of some 1600 years.

The men who penned the Bible wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21). They did not write in words of human wisdom but words divinely taught (1 Corinthians 2:13).

The Old Testament Books and Their Divisions

Five Books of Law

● **Genesis.** The word means “beginning.” It relates the account of creation (chs. 1-2); the fall of man and its consequences (chs. 3-5); the flood, God’s judgment on man and man’s new beginning (chs. 6-11); and the beginning of the Jewish nation: Abraham (chs. 12-25), Isaac and Jacob (chs. 25-36), and Joseph (chs. 37-50).

● **Exodus.** The word means “departure” or “an exit.” It is so named because of the principal event recorded in it—the departure of the Israelites from Egypt. It relates the conditions of the Israelites’ slavery (ch. 1); the birth, education and call of Moses (chs. 2-4); the ten plagues upon the Egyptians (chs. 5-11); the Passover and the miraculous deliverance of the Israelites (chs. 12-15); the establishment of the Law at Mt. Sinai (chs. 16-34); and the building of the Tabernacle (chs. 35-40).

● **Leviticus.** It is so named because it contains the laws that pertain to the Levitical priests. It gives the priest’s qualifications and duties and relates the laws of the sacrifices and offerings, feast days, morals, cleanliness, foods, vows, etc.

● **Numbers.** This book’s name reflects the two censuses which were taken of Israel (chs. 1-4 and ch. 26), one at the beginning of the wilderness wanderings and the other at the end of the forty years of wandering. It reveals the organization of Israel (chs. 1-10); the wanderings in the wilderness (chs. 10-21); and instructions and preparations for entering the land of Canaan (chs. 22-36).

● **Deuteronomy.** The name of the book means “second law” (cf. 5:1-3; 12:32). Moses reviews the history of the past generation of Israel (chs. 1-3); admonishes the current generation to obey (ch. 4); repeats the law (chs. 5-11); gives some new regulations for living in Canaan (chs. 12-28); and commissions Joshua to take his place for the book records the death of Moses and his burial by God (chs. 29-34).

Twelve Books of History

● **Joshua.** This book bears the name of its leading character. Under Joshua the Israelites crossed the Jordan River (chs. 1-4); defeated the Canaanite nations (chs. 5-12); and divided the land among the tribes of Israel (chs. 13-22). The last two chapters contain the farewell address and death of Joshua (chs. 23-24).

● **Judges.** This book relates the history of Israel under God's government by persons known as judges. Beginning with Joshua and ending with Samuel, there were sixteen judges in all. This book reveals the history of thirteen of them: Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar, Deborah (with the help of Barak), Gideon, Abimelech, Tola, Jair, Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, Abdon, and Samson. The book tells how that on six occasions during the period of the judges Israel fell away, was oppressed, repented and was delivered.

● **Ruth.** This book is a beautiful love story of life among the Jews. Naomi and her husband and two sons journey to Moab where the two sons marry. After the three men die, Naomi returns to Bethlehem bring Ruth, one of her daughters-in-law, with her (cf. 1:16-18) where Ruth marries Boaz which causes her to become the grandmother of David through whose lineage Jesus was born.

● **1 and 2 Samuel.** These two books tell of the change in Israel's government from judges to kings. Eli and Samuel were the last two judges. The people wanted a king (cf. 1 Samuel 8). The reigns of the first two kings of Israel, Saul and David, are contained in these books.

● **1 and 2 Kings.** These two books take up where 2 Samuel ends. They give the history of the reign of Solomon, the folly of Rehoboam and how it divided Israel, and the history of the divided kingdoms up to their captivities.

● **1 and 2 Chronicles.** These books parallel 2 Samuel and 1 and 2 Kings. The first nine chapters of I Chronicles give genealogies from Adam to the end of the Babylonian captivity. The remainder of the books sets forth a panoramic view of history as it pertains to the tribe of Judah.

● **Ezra.** Ezra was a priest and scribe. This book is a record of the return of the Jews to Jerusalem from their Babylonian captivity, the rebuilding of the Temple, and the restoration of worship to God (cf. Ezra 7:10; Nehemiah 8:1-3).

● **Nehemiah.** The contents of Nehemiah and Ezra overlap but this book more specifically relates the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem, a task which was accomplished in 52 days (cf. 6:15). The secret of their success is found in 4:6 and 16:23.

● **Esther.** This book bears the name of a Jewish maiden. She became queen of the Persian empire and Mordecai, her uncle, became prime minister which probably paved the way for the work of Nehemiah and Ezra. Although the name of God does not appear in this book, it, more than any other book in the Bible, demonstrates the providence of God.

Five Books of Poetry

● **Job.** The central theme of this book is the problem of suffering. Job was a "perfect and upright man" (1:8; 2:3) whom God allowed Satan to tempt by taking away all he had and afflicting him with extreme physical suffering (1:9-19; 2:4-8). In all of this, Job did not sin (1:22; 2:10). Following an exchange of speeches between Job and his three friends—Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar—which takes up most of the book (chs. 4-31) and the dissertation of Elihu, a young man who had been listening (chs. 32-37), God answers Job and vindicates him (chs. 38-41). Job's possessions, family and health was restored (ch. 42).

● **Psalms.** This book is a collection of 150 poems and songs by David, the sons of Korah, Asaph, Solomon and others which were used in the worship to God. David wrote about half of them.

● **Proverbs.** "A proverb is a short, pithy, axiomatic saying, the life of which is antithesis or comparison" (Halley's Bible Handbook, p. 269). This book is a collection of about 900 proverbs on such topics as temperance, righteousness, justice, purity, wisdom, prudence, industry, sin, etc. Most of them were written by Solomon.

● **Ecclesiastes.** The name of this book means “preacher” or “teacher.” Although the author is not named, the internal evidence points rather definitely to Solomon (1:1,12). He tried everything seeking happiness but all was “vanity.” The word “vanity” occurs 37 times. His conclusion: “Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole of man” (12:13).

● **Song of Solomon.** This book is a love song between a man and a woman, highly figurative in its language.

Five Major Prophets

● **Isaiah.** He is known as the Messianic prophet. God has a remnant and it has a glorious future.

● **Jeremiah.** He is known as the weeping prophet. Jerusalem’s sin, doom and future glory.

● **Lamentations.** Jeremiah is author. It is a funeral dirge over the desolation of Jerusalem.

● **Ezekiel.** This book tells of the fall of Jerusalem, its restoration and a glorious future.

● **Daniel.** Written while the Jews were in Babylonian captivity, this book tells of the four world-wide empires and God’s everlasting kingdom.

Twelve Minor Prophets

● **Hosea.** The prophecy of this book states that apostate Israel is to be cast off and other nations to be called in.

● **Joel.** This book is a vision of the gospel age and the ingathering of the nations.

● **Amos.** This book announces the apostacy and wickedness of Israel and its certain doom but reveals the future glory of David’s kingdom.

● **Obadiah.** This book prophesies that the nation of Edom shall utterly perish.

● **Jonah.** This book chronicles an errand of mercy to Nineveh by its title character.

● **Micah.** In this book, the impending fall of Israel and Judah is prophesied. It also speaks of the Messiah to be born at Bethlehem and His universal reign.

● **Nahum.** This book declares the doom of Nineveh, the capital of the nation of Assyria.

● **Habakkuk.** This book gives assurance of the ultimate triumph for the children of God.

● **Zephaniah.** This book declares the great day of God is coming. The people of God are to then be called by a new name.

● **Haggai.** This book encourages the rebuilding of the Temple after the Babylonian captivity. It forecasts the more glorious Temple in the future.

● **Zechariah.** Also encouraging the rebuilding of the Temple, this book contains visions of the coming Messiah and His universal kingdom.

● **Malachi.** The book is the final Old Testament message to a disobedient nation.

The New Testament Books and Their Divisions

Four Gospels

● **Matthew.** This book on the life of Christ quotes from the Old Testament frequently and seemed to have Jewish readers in mind. It focuses on the “kingdom of heaven.”

● **Mark.** This book seems to have been written primarily for Gentile readers. It presents Jesus as the tireless servant of God and man. It records more what Jesus did rather than what He said.

● **Luke.** Written to Theophilus, most likely a high Roman official, this book presents Jesus as the Son of Man whose heart was full of compassion for the sick, sinful and poor.

- **John.** The last of the gospels written, this book emphasizes the deity of Jesus. Its purpose is stated in 20:30-31.

One Book of History

- **Acts.** Written by Luke, this book seems to be a continuation of his gospel. It records the early history of the church especially the work of both Peter and Paul. It serves as a “blue-print” for conversion to Christ.

Twenty-One Epistles

- **Romans.** Written by the apostle Paul from Corinth during the winter of 57-58, the general theme of this book is salvation by the gospel of Christ (1:16).

- **1 Corinthians.** Written from Ephesus in the spring of 57, this letter by Paul was sent to the church at Corinth to correct several problems and sins including factions, immorality, lawsuits, eating meat sacrificed to idols, abusing the Lord’s Supper, marriage, and disorderly conduct in worship assemblies.

- **2 Corinthians.** Paul wrote this epistle from somewhere in Macedonia during the summer or fall of 57 to defend his apostleship, set forth the glory of his ministry and the long martyrdom of his life.

- **Galatians.** Paul wrote to Galatia in 57 because Judaizing teachers had come there teaching that a Christian must also be circumcised and keep the Old Law.

- **Ephesians.** Sometimes called “The Church Epistle,” written by Paul from Rome in 62, this letter sets forth the grandeur and glory of the church, the body of Christ.

- **Philippians.** This epistle, written from Rome in 62, is Paul’s letter of thanksgiving to a church that had supported his work for 11 years everywhere he went.

- **Colossians.** Written from Rome in 62, as Ephesians had exalted the church, this letter by Paul exalts Christ setting forth His deity and all-sufficiency.

- **1 Thessalonians.** This epistle was written by Paul most likely from Corinth in 52 just a few months after the establishment of the church in Thessalonica in order to correct a false idea concerning the second coming of Christ.

- **2 Thessalonians.** Paul wrote this letter just a few weeks after 1 Thessalonians. Its chief subject is also the second coming of Christ.

- **1 Timothy.** Written by Paul from Macedonia about 64, this letter instructs a young preacher how to “conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God.” It contains the qualifications of elders and deacons and several warnings against false teachers.

- **2 Timothy.** This letter, written by Paul from Rome probably about 67, is his farewell to this young man who had been his “son” in the faith and coworker in the gospel for many years. It was written just before Paul’s death.

- **Titus.** Paul wrote this letter to another young preacher who was a coworker in the gospel with him. This epistle is very similar to 1 Timothy and was probably written about the same time.

- **Philemon.** Written from Rome in 62, this is the only purely personal letter of the apostle Paul. It was written to a brother in Christ who was the owner of a runaway slave whom Paul had converted and was returning to his master. Paul intercedes for the slave and asks Philemon to receive him as a brother.

● **Hebrews.** Though authorship of this epistle is questioned, it was most likely written by Paul. This book has two central themes: the lack of faith of the Jewish people and the change of the Law and the priesthood.

● **James.** Of the four men named “James” who were prominent in the New Testament, most scholars believe this book was written by the eldest brother of Jesus who was an elder in the church at Jerusalem. Written from Jerusalem in 61, it addressed Jewish Christians who were scattered abroad. It contrasts practical religion with mere profession.

● **1 Peter.** Written by the apostle Peter from Babylon about 64 to the churches in Asia Minor, this book is a letter of encouragement to Christians about to face great persecution.

● **2 Peter.** From Babylon about 65, this was Peter’s second epistle to the same people. It warns against apostasy and false teachers and describes the destruction of the universe at the second coming of Christ.

● **1 John.** This is the first of the epistles of the apostle John. All of them were probably written from Ephesus about 90. This epistle emphasizes the deity of Christ. It instructs Christians to walk in the light, not love the world, love one another and beware of the antichrist and false prophets.

● **2 John.** This book is a letter to the elect lady warning against false teachers and instructing her and her children to abide in the teaching of Christ.

● **3 John.** This epistle is a personal letter to Gaius commending him for his hospitality and rebuking Diotrophes for his love of pre-eminence.

● **Jude.** This book, from beginning to end, is a warning against false teachers. Jude identifies himself as a brother of James who was a brother of Jesus, therefore, Jude was a brother of Jesus.

One Book of Prophecy

● **Revelation.** Written by the apostle John from Ephesus about 95, it is message of victory to those saints who faithfully endure.

The Inspiration of the Bible

All the writers of the Bible were men of different circumstances. Often, they never knew one another. Yet, writing on the same general theme, **the salvation of man**, they wrote with no contradictions or errors. How was this possible?

2 Peter 1:21 says, “knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.” The Holy Spirit, according to 1 Corinthians 2:9-13, searched out the deep things in the mind of God and, in turn, revealed them to those men who wrote them down. According to Matthew 10:20, it was the Spirit of the Father who spoke through the apostles and other inspired writers.

In Galatians 1:11-12, the apostle Paul said he received the things that he taught from heaven: “But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ.” Therefore, he could affirm, as he did in 1 Corinthians 14:37, that the things that he wrote were not his own ideas but “the commandments of the Lord.”

The Bible's Promises to Man

- **Psalm 119:130.** "The entrance of Your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple."
- **Psalm 119:105.** "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."
- **Psalm 19:7-10.** "The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; the statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether."
- **James 1:21.** "Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls."
- **John 17:17.** "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth."
- **1 Peter 1:25.** "But the word of the Lord endures forever." Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you."
- **John 12:48.** "He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day."

What Makes the Bible Different

The Bible is **inspired of God** (2 Timothy 3:16), i.e., it is God's message to us just as if He were standing before us and speaking to us face-to-face. Since it is from God, it is **authoritative** (1 Corinthians 14:37; John 10:35). It is the **complete** revelation from God to man. Its completeness is seen in that it was delivered for all men for all time (Jude 3), that it thoroughly supplies man with all he needs to accomplish those things God would have him to do (2 Timothy 3:16-17), and that it contains all things that pertain to life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3). Since it was given to us by God to serve as our complete standard and guide, we must obey its commands and follow its precepts.

Questions

1. Name the five Old Testament books of law. Summarize, very briefly, the contents of each.
2. Name the twelve Old Testament books of history. Summarize, very briefly, the contents of each.
3. Name the five Old Testament books of poetry. Summarize, very briefly, the contents of each.

4. Name the five major prophets of the Old Testament. Summarize, very briefly, the contents of each.
5. Name the twelve minor prophets of the Old Testament. Summarize, very briefly, the contents of each.
6. Name the five New Testament books of history. Summarize, very briefly, the contents of each.
7. Name the twenty-one New Testament epistles. Summarize, very briefly, the contents of each.
8. Name the one New Testament book of prophecy. Summarize, very briefly, the contents of each.
9. Who does 2 Peter 1:21 say caused the writers of the Bible to be moved to author their books?
10. How, according to 1 Corinthians 2:9-13, did the Holy Spirit know what message to reveal to the inspired writers?
11. Who does Matthew 10:20 say was speaking in the apostles and other inspired writers?
12. According to 1 Corinthians 14:37, who words were the inspired writers really writing when they penned their books?
13. "The entrance of Your words gives _____ ." (Psalm 119:130a)
14. "It gives _____ to the simple." (Psalm 119:130b)
15. "Your word is a _____ to my feet, And a _____ to my path." (Psalm 119:105)
16. "The law of the Lord is...more to be desired...than _____. ." (Psalm 19:7-10)
17. "Receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to _____ your souls." (James 1:21)
18. " _____ them by Your truth. Your word is truth." (John 17:17)
19. "But the word of the Lord _____ ." (1 Peter 1:25)
20. "The word that I have spoken will _____ him in the last day." (John 12:48)

Chapter Five: How the Bible Teaches

If you are going to understand how the Bible teaches, you will need to understand authority in religion—what it is, why it is needed, how it is expressed and how it is established. You see, all authority in religion resides with God and He has expressed it to us in His word, the Bible, telling us what He wants us to do and how He wants us to live.

If you are going to live a life which will please God, you must consider what His will for you is. You must, therefore, understand how that will is expressed to us in the inspired Scriptures determining how those Scriptures, the Bible, teach us.

The Old Testament Is No Authority for Us Today

The Old Testament has no authority today. Since it served its purpose (Galatians 3:24-27) and was fulfilled by Jesus Christ (Matthew 5:17), it was taken out of the way (Colossians 2:14).

Hebrews 7:12 states that it was necessary to change the law in order to change the priesthood. For Jesus to serve as our high priest, the Old Law had to be taken away for only members of the tribe of Levi could be priests under it. Jesus was of the tribe of Judah. Verse 18 of Hebrews 7 says the Old Law had to be taken away because of its “weakness and unprofitableness.” It was never intended to serve throughout all time.

Galatians 3:19 says it was only to be in force “till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made.” That “Seed” is identified for us as “Christ” (Galatians 3:16). Jesus came and fulfilled the Law (Matthew 5:17).

No person should seek to justify any religious practices by the Old Law today. If one does, he is “estranged from Christ” and “fallen from grace” (Galatians 5:4).

You might ask, then, “Why do we still have the Old Testament in our Bibles?” That is a good question. As with all questions that pertain to matters of faith, the Bible has the answer to it. The following passages supply it.

● **John 5:39.** “You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.” Jesus is the speaker in this passage. The “Scriptures” He is referring to are those of the Old Testament since the New Testament had not yet been written. Therefore, we can learn about Jesus from the Old Testament Scriptures because they “testify” of Him.

● **Romans 15:4.** “For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.” According to this text, the Old Testament Scriptures were “written for our learning.” We can learn many valuable lessons and gain much valuable information by reading the Old Testament.

● **1 Corinthians 10:11.** “Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the ages have come.” The Old Testament examples of the sins of the children of Israel are given to warn us from falling prey to the same iniquity that caused them to displease God.

The New Testament Is Our Authority Today

The New Testament is our authority today because it contains the words of Christ (John 12:48; Hebrews 1:1-2), the one who has **all authority** (Matthew 28:18; Ephesians 1:22-23). Jesus is God's exclusive spokesman today (Hebrews 1:1-2). His words are to endure as long as this earth endures (Matthew 24:35; cf. Jude 3). Whatever we do spiritually, therefore, must be done in His "name" (Colossians 3:17), i.e., by His authority. All must be done according to His will, the New Testament.

Since the New Testament Scriptures contain all things that pertain to life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3), we need nothing more than the body of teaching they contain. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 relates that the Scriptures thoroughly furnish the child of God in every good work he is to do. The New Testament Scriptures supply us with everything we need to be righteous before our God and to do all things that He would have us do.

How the New Testament Instructs

The authority of Christ is expressed in the doctrine of Christ (2 John 9). The doctrine of Christ is the perfect, complete revelation of God's will in the gospel, the New Testament (Hebrews 1:1-2). We must neither add to it nor take from it (2 John 9; 1 Corinthians 4:6; Revelation 22:18-19). We are not to substitute anything in place of it. We cannot rebel against it without incurring the wrath of God (Matthew 15:7-9; 1 Peter 4:11).

Christ's authority teaches us in three ways: direct command or statement, approved example and necessary inference or implication.

- **Direct command or statement.** This is a direct statement of something that must or must not be done. Acts 2:38 is an example of this type of teaching. The command or statement can either be **specific** (Ephesians 5:19) or **general** (Matthew 28:19). Specific commands exclude all things not specified. General commands include everything that is necessary to carry out the general command.

- **Approved example or precedent.** By this we mean the example of the New Testament church and its practices under the guidance of the apostles (Philippians 4:9). The apostles taught and applied what they had received from the Lord (1 Corinthians 11:1). We do not follow every example, though, for many of them are purely incidental.

- **Necessary inference or implication.** A necessary inference or implication is something that, though not expressly stated or specifically exemplified, is **necessarily implied** or inferred

The Establishment of Authority Illustrated by the Lord's Supper

Command: 1 Corinthians 11:26

Observance: "This do in remembrance of Me"

Example: Acts 20:7

Time of Observance: "Upon the first day of the week"

Necessary Inference or Implication: Acts 20:7

Frequency of Observance: Every first day of the week

by the clear import and meaning of the language used. A good illustration of this type of teaching is Hebrews 10:25. This passage commands Christians to assemble. While it does not specifically mention a place to assemble, we must **necessarily infer** that we cannot assemble without some place at which to meet.

Questions

1. What does Hebrews 7:12 say necessitated changing God's law?
2. According to Galatians 3:19, to what point in time was the Old Covenant to serve?
3. What does Hebrews 7:18 say as to why the Old Law was taken away?
4. Who does Matthew 5:17 say fulfilled the Old Law?
5. What is said in Galatians 5:4 of the person who tries to justify his religious practices by the Old Law today?
6. According to the following passages, what do we still have the Old Testament in our Bibles?
 - a. John 5:39.
 - b. Romans 15:4.
 - c. 1 Corinthians 10:11.
7. What does 2 Peter 1:3 say that the New Testament contains?
8. What, according to 2 Timothy 3:16-17, does the New Testament do for the Christian?
9. "And whatever you do in word or deed, do _____ in the _____ of the Lord _____. _____." (Colossians 3:17)

Chapter Six: Local Church Membership

The word “church” can refer to the church universal (Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 5:23), the whole body of baptized believers, or to a local body of Christians (Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 1:2).

When you were baptized into Christ (Romans 6:3-4), He added you to His church (Acts 2:41,47). This refers to the church universal, the body of all the saved who belong to Christ (Ephesians 2:16; 4:4; 1:22-23). On the other hand, such expressions in Scripture as “the church of God which is at Corinth” (1 Corinthians 1:2) refer to a local church, a congregation of those who belong to the Lord in a particular locality who have banded together to work and worship collectively in those things God would have them to do. The Christian, while added to the universal church by the Lord, joins himself to the local church like the apostle Paul did with the church in Jerusalem in Acts 9:26.

Every Christian needs to be identified with a local church. When a child of God moves from one locality to another, he should seek out a faithful group of the Lord’s people and identify with them.

The local church is the only collective functioning unit revealed in the New Testament. The church universal has no organization with which it can function. Nor are there any structural ties between local churches. Each local congregation is an independent, autonomous, i.e., self-governing, group.

God has designated that when there are qualified men to serve, each local church should be organized with elders, deacons and members (Philippians 1:1). The qualifications for elders are found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. The deacons’ qualifications are found in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. Elders are to tend the church (1 Peter 5:2) and rule over it (Hebrew 13:17) by exercising oversight (1 Peter 5:2), to watch out for the souls placed in their charge (Hebrews 13:17), to admonish the unruly (1 Peter 5:1-2) and be an example to all (1 Peter 5:2). Deacons are special servants who attend to those things the church needs and the elders direct them to accomplish. If there are no qualified men in a congregation who can serve in these offices, a local church may exist and function by using such an expedient as a business meeting—a meeting of the men of the congregation which determines the course of action the church will follow in accomplishing the work of the Lord.

The ONE Church (Ephesians 4:4)

The Universal Body of the Saved



The LOCAL Church

A Group of Christians in a Given Locality Banded Together for the Purpose of Work and Worship. It Is Made Up of Elders, Deacons and Members
(Philippians 1:1)

The Christian's Responsibilities to Members of the Church

As a member of the church the Christian is a part of the family of God (1 Timothy 3:15). Being a family member carries responsibilities. As a part of the universal church one has responsibilities to all Christians world-wide. Being a member of a local church, though, he sustains peculiar responsibilities to those who are his fellow-members in that local body. It is like being a part of the physical family. When one is born he becomes a part of a large family with aunts, uncles, cousins, etc., to whom he has responsibilities. But he also is part of a nuclear family of mother, father, sisters and brothers to whom he has obligations over and above those he has to the rest of his relatives.

Some of the Christian's Responsibilities to Other Members of the Church

- Love (1 Peter 1:22)
- Edify (Ephesians 4:16)
- Encourage (Hebrews 10:24)
- Teach and Admonish (Colossians 3:16)
- Bear Burdens (Galatians 6:2)
- Comfort (1 Thessalonians 4:18)
- Forgive (Ephesians 4:32; Matthew 6:14-15)
- Work Together (Philippians 1:27)

Questions

1. What is the organizational makeup of the local church? (See Philippians 1:1)
2. According to 1 Peter 5:1-2, what are elders to do?
3. In light of Hebrews 13:17, what is the responsibility of members to the elders?
4. Is there Scriptural authority for any collective organization larger than the local church? Explain your answer.

Chapter Seven: Worship of the Church

Worship means to make obeisance or do reverence to. It suggests an action being performed indicative of the worshiper's reverence for the one being worshiped. It is an attitude of reverence and piety. It is a means by which the Christian can express his love and devotion to God.

True worshipers, the only kind the Lord desires to have worship Him, are those "who worship Him...in spirit and truth" (John 4:24). To worship "in spirit" is to have a proper attitude of respect and reverence for God as the action of worship is performed. To worship "in truth" is to follow God's instructions given in the Bible, in particular the New Testament, as to how He is to be worshiped. These two, spirit and truth, make one's worship acceptable because **if one has true reverence for God he will necessarily follow God's instructions as to how he is to worship Him**. To disregard the instructions of God, therefore, is to manifest a lack of reverence for Him.

Worship Authorized

Man has never been left to his own thoughts as to how he should worship God. God has always given him instructions as to what He wanted from him. There are many examples in Scripture of what happens when people choose to disregard God's instructions. Consider the accounts of Cain and Abel (Genesis 4:1-7) and Nadab and Abihu (Leviticus 10:1-3). Abel's sacrifice was accepted because he offered it "by faith" (Hebrews 11:4), he acted in accordance with the instructions of God because faith comes by hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17). Cain's sacrifice was rejected because he did not heed God's commands. Nadab and Abihu, Israelite priests, had been instructed to use a certain fire to burn the incense that was offered to God. They chose to use a "strange fire," one which God had not commanded. God caused that fire to come forth and consume them.

How does God want us to express our devotion for Him? In other words, what is to be included in the worship we offer God today?

The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper commemorates the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ upon the cross for the sins of mankind (1 Corinthians 11:23-26). The elements of the Supper are unleavened bread and fruit of the vine (Matthew 26:26-27). The bread symbolizes the body of Christ. The fruit of the vine signifies His blood. The Christian is to partake of the Supper, in accordance with the example of the early church, every first day of the week (Acts 20:7).

Singing

Christians are to sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs (Ephesians 5:19). They sing as part of their worship in order to praise God and to edify one another (Colossians 3:16).

Prayer

According to 1 Timothy 2:1-8, there are several things for which a Christian should pray: "Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time, for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle—I am speaking the truth in Christ and not lying—a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth. I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting." The apostle Paul urged the child of God to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

Giving

Every Christian is commanded to give as he has prospered upon the first day of the week (1 Corinthian 16:1-2). According to 2 Corinthians 9:6-7, he is to purpose in his heart and give cheerfully, not grudgingly or of necessity, realizing the great blessings that God has showered upon him.

Instruction from the Word of God

The early saints engaged in the study of God's word in their worship assemblies (Acts 20:7). Giving and receiving instruction in the word of God accomplishes the dual purpose of glorifying God and edifying His children.

If one is going to teach, he must "speak as the oracles of God" (1 Peter 4:11). That means that his teaching must agree with the word of God in all things. Including the doctrines of men in one's teaching makes his worship vain (Matthew 15:9).

The attitude of those listening to the word of God preached today should be the same as that of the Bereans when they listened to the apostle Paul preach the gospel of Christ to them (Acts 17:10-11). They were "noble" or "fair-minded" (NKJV). They listened attentively to the things Paul had to say about Jesus. Then they went to the Scriptures to see whether or not the things he was saying were so. Every listener must use the word of God to test the teachings of those he is hearing. Every listener must demand the truth of the word of God from all speakers and teachers. Jesus said, "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). One must never settle for any teaching other than the truth of the gospel. To do so brings the curse of heaven upon you (Galatians 1:6-9): "If anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed."

The following chart lists a number of responsibilities that both teachers and listeners have in respect to the word of God.

Responsibilities to the Word of God

Responsibilities of a Teacher

Proclaim the “whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27)
Not teach to tickle “itching ears” (2 Timothy 4:1-4)
Apply the word equally to all (1 Timothy 5:21)
Take heed to himself and his teaching (1 Timothy 4:16)

Responsibilities of Hearers

Have a good and honest heart (Luke 8:15)
Allow the word to “prick” the heart (Acts 2:37)
Gladly receive the word (Acts 2:40)
Receive the word with meekness (James 1:21)
Be discerning (Acts 17:11)
Be eager to hear (Matthew 5:6; Acts 10:33)
Desire to hear and know all the word (Acts 10:33)
Desire only the word of God (Matthew 15:9)

Questions

1. What does the Lord’s Supper commemorate? (See 1 Corinthians 11:23-26)
2. From Matthew 26:26-27, what are the elements of the Lord’s Supper?
3. Using the example found in Acts 20:7:
 - a. When is one to partake of the Lord’s Supper?
 - b. How often is one to partake of the Lord’s Supper?
4. According to Ephesians 5:19, what kind of music is to be used in worship?
5. What, considering Colossians 3:16, are some reasons to sing?

6. Citing the teaching of 1 Timothy 2:1-8, for what should a Christian pray?
7. How often, according to 1 Thessalonians 5:17, should a Christian pray? What does that mean?
8. When is the Christian to give? (See 1 Corinthians 16:1-2)
9. Based on the teaching of 2 Corinthians 9:6-7, how is the Christian to give?
10. If one is going to teach, what does 1 Peter 4:11 say he should teach? Define your answer.
11. According to Matthew 15:9, what doctrines, if included in worship, make that worship vain?
12. What attitude was commended in those who listened to the apostle Paul's preaching in Acts 17:10-11? Should we have that same attitude today? Explain your answer.

Chapter Eight: Work of the Church

The local church, those called out into God's service in a definite locality who have banded together for work and worship (1 Corinthians 1:2; Acts 15:22; Romans 16:16), has work God has given it to do. God established the local church as the collective medium through which Christians are to work. In the New Testament the local congregation is presented as the only collective, organic structure to accomplish the mission of Christ. Preachers were sent out by local churches (Acts 13:1-3) who in turn reported back to them. Charity to needy Christians was accomplished (Acts 11:29-30) by the local congregations.

The Work Given by the Lord to a Local Church

The New Testament authorizes three areas in which the local church is to accomplish work for the Lord and His cause.

- **Evangelism: Preaching the gospel to the lost** (1 Thessalonians 1:8). Since mankind is lost in sin (Romans 3:23) and the gospel is the only power to save them (Romans 1:16), God wants the gospel preached to all mankind (Mark 16:15; 1 Corinthians 1:21). He has given this obligation to the church (Ephesians 3:10-11). Philippians 2:16 says the church is to hold forth the word of life.
- **Edification: Strengthening the members of the body of Christ** (Hebrews 10:24-25). The church is to develop its own spiritual strength by edification (Ephesians 4:16). It is to ground and stabilize itself in order to prevent false teachers with their erroneous doctrine from leading it astray (Colossians 2:6-7). By the church faithfully teaching and applying the truth, its members will be perfected to do the work of ministry (service) and the building up of the body of Christ (evangelism) (Ephesians 4:11-12).

● **Benevolence: Taking care of the needy of the church** (Acts 6:1-6; Romans 15:25-27). It can be clearly seen from Scripture that when a need arose among the people of God, the church rallied to their aid. Brethren were concerned for one another and demonstrated their love by giving to help satisfy their material needs. Though the church has responsibilities in this area, this work is limited. General benevolence, relief to all humanity from the church treasury, is unauthorized. It would also be an impossible task for trying to accomplish it would quickly exhaust all of the churches' treasuries.

What the Work of the Church is Not

- **The work of another local church.** The elders are only to oversee the flock of God which is **among them** (1 Peter 5:2).
- **Recreation.** It is not the work of the church to entertain the young or the old. The provision of recreation is left up to the individual and the home.
- **Business.** The church has no authority to engage in business enterprises. Its finances are to come from the free-will contributions of its members.
- **Politics.** The church is not to seek to run the government.
- **All activities** which are not clearly authorized in the New Testament. Everything done must be done "in the name of," i.e., by the authority of Jesus Christ (Colossians 3:17).

The Work of the Church is Plentiful

There are to be no useless or functionless members in a local church. Every member, no matter what their situation or level of maturity in Christ, is to be active (1 Corinthians 12:14-16). Let it be known to the brethren or elders, if your local church has them, that you are willing to work.

Attitudes Needed in the Work of the Lord

- **A willing mind** (2 Corinthians 8:12). “For if there is first a willing mind, it is accepted according to what one has, and not according to what he does not have.”
- **Humility** (James 4:10). “Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.”
- **Lowliness of mind esteeming others better than self** (Philippians 2:3). “Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.”
- **Seeking the kingdom of God first** (Matthew 6:33). “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”
- **Earnestly contending for the faith** (Jude 3). “Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.”

The Rewards of Work for the Lord

- **The reward is certain** (1 Corinthians 15:58). No labor done for the Lord is ever in vain.
- **Joy** in the knowledge of saving the lost and pleasing God.
- **Fellowship** with decent, God-fearing people who are trying to do right and seeking the best for you (1 John 1:7).
- **A crown of life.** “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing” (2 Timothy 4:7-8).
- **Heaven!** (1 Peter 1:3-4). The Lord has promised eternal rest for those who labor for Him while they are here upon the earth (Hebrews 4:9-10).

Fill in the Blanks

1. 2 Corinthians 8:12. “For if there is a _____, it is accepted according to what one has, and not according to what he does not have.”
2. James 4:10. “_____ yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.”
3. Philippians 2:3. “Let nothing be done through _____ or _____, but in _____ let each esteem others better than himself.”

4. Matthew 6:33. "But seek _____ the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."

5. Jude 3. "Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to _____
_____ which was once for all delivered to the saints."

Chapter Nine: Attendance at Assemblies of the Church

Why You Should Attend Every Service of the Local Church

- The Lord has commanded it. "And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching." (Hebrews 10:24-25)
- Your Savior, Jesus Christ, is there in a special way (Matthew 18:20). Though He is with the Christian at all times, His promise is to be in the midst of His disciples when they have gathered in His name.
- Do you have the right to think it is the responsibility of other members but not your responsibility? God is not partial (Acts 10:34-35), therefore, He does not require of one of His children what he does not require of all.
- Ask yourself this question **frequently**, "What kind of church would this be if everyone in it were just like me?" Would the Lord be pleased if everyone attended sporadically?
- It is the will of Christ that members of the church edify or build up one another (Ephesians 4:16). One of the ways in which they do that is by coming together for worship. When Christians do not assemble as they should, they discourage one another and show indifference to each other by failing to be where they can exhort and admonish. Lack of attendance to assemblies shows that the person is putting the church and spiritual matters second in his life.
- You need to be where spiritual food is being provided so that you may grow spiritually (1 Peter 2:1-2).
- You need, along with others, to be showing in a public way your thanksgiving to God for His blessings (Ephesians 5:20).
- You will be able to give back to the Lord as you have prospered on the day He has appointed for you to give (1 Corinthians 16:1-2).
- Christ commands you to remember Him in the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:24). If He said, "this do" and you do not do it, you are in rebellion against His authority.
- You will be showing the world you believe the Lord's promise to come again and you will be proclaiming that belief to all by partaking of the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:26).

If You Fail to Attend Regularly

- **You sin!** Knowing that you ought to do a thing but failing to do it is clearly a sin (James 4:17).
 - Others have to take on extra work—the work that you ought to be doing (Galatians 6:4-5).
 - You are creating a problem and a burden which keeps faithful Christians from the work of seeking those outside of Christ. How much better it is when you and others can spend time and effort in bringing the lost to the Lord.
 - It sets a bad example and could lead others to commit sin.
 - It hinders the teaching of those in sin and error. Some only see the church **through you** (Colossians 4:5).

The Action of the Church Toward Those Who Do Not Faithfully Worship

"Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly" (1 Thessalonians 5:14). Those who are not attending its services and supporting its work must be warned by the local church. Romans 16:17 says, "Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them." A brother who walks disorderly must be withdrawn from (2 Thessalonians 3:6) so that he might be ashamed of his sins (2 Thessalonians 3:14).

Those who are spiritual should seek to restore such an erring brother all the while realizing that they could fall in the same way (Galatians 6:1).

Questions

1. What action is commended in the following passages?
 - a. 1 Thessalonians 5:14.
 - b. Romans 16:17.
2. What, according to 2 Thessalonians 3:6, is to be done to a brother who walks disorderly?
3. What does 2 Thessalonians 3:14 say is one of the purposes of discipline?
4. According to Galatians 6:1, what should brethren seek to do with an erring brother?

Chapter Ten: Teaching Others

Now that you have obeyed the gospel of Christ and are a faithful member of a local church, you need to be impressed with the great opportunity and responsibility you have to teach another person the word of truth that you have learned. God wants all people to be saved and come to a knowledge of truth (1 Timothy 2:4). How will that happen? Since it is by the preaching and teaching of the gospel, God's power unto salvation (Romans 1:16), that people are saved (1 Corinthians 1:21), Christ wants **all** of His disciples to be teaching it to others (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; 2 Timothy 2:2).

Why You Should Teach Others

- You are a Christian. You have been created in Christ Jesus for good works (Titus 2:14). As a matter of fact, you are to be "zealous" for them. If you are not accomplishing them, of what value are you to the Lord? Every Christian is expected to bear fruit (John 15:1-6).
- One of the greatest joys a Christian can have is that of teaching and converting another person (3 John 4).
- You will be following the example of Jesus. He loved people (John 15:13). One of the ways He showed that great love was by personally teaching men and women the truth (Luke 19:10).
- Christ commanded it in the great commission given in Matthew 28:18-20. Those who have been taught and baptized are, in turn, to teach others.
- You will be following the example of the first century Christians who "went everywhere preaching the word" (Acts 8:4). Not even persecution stopped them from reaching out to those in need of Christ.
- You will be considered a faithful Christian because faithful children of God are to teach others (2 Timothy 2:2).
- Self-preservation. Teaching others is vital to your growth and development as a child of God (Hebrews 5:12-14). By constantly teaching others you maintain an interest in spiritual things.
- You can increase the teaching power of your local congregation. Though members might differ as to knowledge and/or ability, all should be actively teaching (1 Corinthians 12:12-27). At the present time, though, you may feel your knowledge is too limited and that you cannot possibly teach someone else. If you knew enough to become a Christian, you know enough to tell others what you did and why you did it.
- It is the greatest work in the world—saving a soul (Matthew 16:26). Nothing else you can do lasts forever. Your efforts in teaching others can have an eternal impact on their lives and yours.

What Attitudes Do You Need?

- You need to follow the "golden rule." It is found in Matthew 7:12: "Whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them."

- You need to be gentle when teaching others. 2 Timothy 2:24-25: “And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth.”
- You must speak the truth in love. Ephesians 4:15: “But, speaking the truth in love.”
- You must be ready to give an answer to any who would ask about the hope within you. 1 Peter 3:15: “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.”
- You should walk in wisdom and know how to answer every person. Colossians 4:5-6: “Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time. Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.”

Who Can You Teach?

Prospects abound. They are all around you every day. You need to heed the instruction Jesus gave to His disciples in John 4:35 and “lift up your eyes.” Below is a very small list of some who need the gospel.

Those You Can Teach

Immediate family

Relatives

Neighbors

Fellow-workers

Fellow-students

Members of clubs or other organizations of
which you are a member

Anyone who is not a Christian!

Questions

1. What great principle is taught in Matthew 7:12?
2. What attitudes are opposed and what attitudes are encouraged in 2 Timothy 2:24-25?
3. How, according to Ephesians 4:15, must you speak to others?
4. What does 1 Peter 3:15 say you must be ready to do? How are you to do it?
5. From Colossians 4:5-6, about what do you need to be seriously concerned?

Review Test

1. What are some of the blessings of being a “child of God?”
2. Since the Christian is a new creature in Christ, what things are new for him?
3. As a Christian, who owns you and what did he pay for you?
4. Tell how being a Christian has solved the following problems for you.
 - a. Guilt.
 - b. A purposeless life.
 - c. Fear.
 - d. Loneliness.
 - e. Death.
5. How are you to view your family in relationship to Christ? How are you to view your work or occupation in relationship to Him?
6. What is the universal church? What is a local church?
7. Using Hebrews 13:7,17; 1 Peter 5:3 and 1 Timothy 5:17, describe the attitude the Christian should have toward elders in the church.
8. What are the five expressions of worship?
9. Give at least three reasons why you should attend every service of the church.

10. What happens when you fail to attend the assemblies of the church regularly?
11. What areas of work has God given to the church?
12. Why is neither recreation nor business the work of the church?
13. Give at least 3 reasons why you should be teaching others now.
14. What are the three ways of establishing Scriptural authority?
15. Why was the Old Law taken out of the way? Of what value today is the Old Testament?
16. Who possesses all authority in religion today? Where is that authority expressed?
17. What does the expression “in the name of” that is found in Colossians 3:17 mean?
18. What is the organizational structure of the local church?
19. What are some responsibilities the Christian has to other members of the church?
20. What are some rewards for serving the Lord?

“So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.”(Acts 20:32)