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Christianity For Today
A Life Changing Six Week Study Program
Living a Christian Life in Today's World

Groups Setting Leaders Guide And Workbook

Robbie L. Rogers

Introduction

“What’s wrong with what’s already going on in Church circle today,” some of you are saying? “It’s just another program.” Others say. *That’s true, but let’s look at a few things.*

Did you know Americans have created a pick and chose religion, or believers vs the belongers. Many people feel their faith is private and just between them and God and not to be influenced by others. However, only 7 out of 100 people in the U.S. say Jesus affected their life. Yet, 80% of Americans say they are Christians. Of that 80%, 50% don’t even know who gave the sermon on the mount.

What about our younger generation? One third of American teenage Christians don’t know what Easter is all about. Half of all Christians do not even have a basic understanding of what Christianity really is. Seventy percent have unclear ideas as to God’s saving grace and to that of being saved.

Consequently a whole army of people are on the sidelines waiting to be revitalized. We Christians are too often afraid of the “E-word.” Could it be that we don’t evangelize because we know little about what we ought to know in order to share with others what our belief is?

Christians scored the lowest of those who say religion is the most important thing in their life; half of them seldom, if ever, read their Bible. We need to close the gap between beliefs and actions; though our leaders and the laity are much divided in such matters, this can be turned around by much prayer and study.

Why will this course be successful? I can’t fully answer that. Our approach is nothing essentially new if you look at the outlines and program, yet we believe Holy Spirit will bless the efforts wherever they are done.

Christianity For Today is ecumenical. It stresses nothing but scriptures, no dogma, no denomination, only straight forward biblical truths. We especially encourage those who are on the edge of a commitment to a church or God or those who attend church sporadically to take this course.

Notes and Keys

**Who needs
Christianity For
Today?**

We need to evangelize at home. We must find that special way to reach our unchurched Christians and boast our own enthusiasm.

**You can judge
Christianity For Today
by its fruit**

**YOU HAVE A
RESPONSIBILITY
TO OTHERS**

Questions and Answers Concerning Christianity For Today

**ARE YOU
ANGRY AT GOD,
OR JUST
CURIOUS
ABOUT WHAT
IT'S ALL
ABOUT??**

Y'all Come! That old southern phrase speaks volumes about hospitality, doesn't? And, it's in like manner that we invite you to "come." *We're not trying to get you to join a church nor are we putting on a show, after all you're invited to be a part of our family, or community or believers.* It's what we Christians ought to do, explore questions that churched and unchurched people have concerning religion.

This course is a series of sessions that intended to assist a devout or novice Christian or someone who is angry at the Church or God, or in short anyone who wishes to find answers concerning Christianity. As an added bonus we believe it will help newcomers in becoming equipped to do any specific work of ministry they wish to do at home, at work, in the world, and in the church.

Anyone can take the course we are offering, whether you are affiliated with a church or not, it doesn't matter. The course, designed primarily for non-churchgoers and those who have recently become Christians, runs six consecutive weeks. The only charge is for the workbooks.

All parts of the *Christianity For Today* course should produce a wonderful life changing experience for all who participate, bar none. It answers and clarifies the basics of our Christian faith and puts us on firm ground as we travel on our journey with the Lord. No one will laugh or argue with you to prove a point, *it is forbidden*. Nevertheless, some might yell at God. If that's what it takes to clear the air, we encourage it.

Have you ever been to a great service or heard a great sermon and tried to tell someone about it? That's the problem we have about this course, it's hard to convey what we feel concerning how much it might help you if you participate. It costs us a great deal to produce this course both in time and money; consequently we ask for you to be committed to it each week.

Most of all, *Christianity For Today* is ecumenical. It stresses nothing but scriptures, only straight forward biblical truths. There are six sessions which address such topics as:

Notes and Keys

**You Can Yell at
God; But
It is Forbidden
to Laugh at
Someone's
Question.**

Be Committed

**No One Will Force
You To Speak or
Read Out Loud If you
Do Not Wish To**

Session One: *Is Christianity really relevant Today or Just Some Club? What is so Special About Jesus?*

Session Two: *Why Read the Bible? What's Faith Got to do With It? What's the Big Deal About Praying?*

Session Three: *Does God Really Hear Me and Why? How Can I know God Cares About Me? Does God Really Guide Me and How Do I Know?*

Session Four: *What is the Holy Spirit and? What are the Gifts of Holy Spirit? Come on Does God Really Heal?*

Session Five: *How can I Change, I've Lost Hope? So What's Next?*

Session Six: *How Can I Spread the Good News to Others? What's Right and What's Wrong with the Church Today?*

"Go into the world and preach the Gospel to all people."

**NOTHING BUT SCRIPTURES,
NO DOGMA,
NO DENOMINATION,
ONLY STRAIGHT FORWARD**

The course normally uses group discussions, usually 8-12 people. You are strongly encouraged to establish a start and end time and do so promptly. Basically we hope each group will choose what is to be discussed though teachings are provided. It's a great way to get in on some highly spirited conversation concerning Christianity.

We want to stress that the course is non-denominational and no one should force anyone to speak or become anything different than they want to be. You are free to just listen if that's what you want to do. But, if you ask a question, your peers will be encouraged to join in the answering. Leaders are encouraged only to help and insure a strict rule of anything said in the room is private and can not be shared about or disclosed to anyone, period.

Christianity For Today has two purposes: the first is to bring people into a relationship with Jesus Christ, the second is to introduce the course to those who are called to evangelism so they can become leaders or helpers with subsequent courses. In doing so this course provides you with an opportunity to become involved in Christ's commission to all of His people: Don't miss this opportunity to change your life - forever!

LEADERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO ONLY HELP THE DISCUSSION STAY ON TRACK AND RIGHT FOR THE NEEDS OF THE GROUP.

Christianity For Today Training

Notes and Keys

First of all I thank God for all of you who are reading this. You will truly be blessed by your efforts. You are the salt of the earth. The fact that you are reading this proves you are serious in your efforts to do God’s work at your Church.

The three scriptures on the right personify this course, Christianity For Today. There are many other scriptures that do likewise, but I chose these for our purposes.

Small group evangelism provides the greatest opportunity to minister to those who need it the most. In doing so we should avoid: 1) Extremes 2) Doing nothing 3) Doing the same thing other churches are doing because they are successful. 4) Instead we should always do what God leads us to do and seek His success formula.

Thirty percent of all Denomination attendees have disappeared in the last 30 years. That means essentially the church has lost at least 30 percent of its fold, please hold on to that fact.

A young man wanted to play the piano. He sought out a great teacher. At his first lesson the instructor had him sit and watch him expertly play each piece. Each time the “teaching” sessions were the same. After 40 lessons the teacher announced it was time for his first recital. The student who wanted so much to play the piano failed miserably. “What a shame,” the teacher said. “All those lessons and he didn’t learn a thing.” *Unfortunately this is the way most churches teach discipleship.*

We are hoping Christianity for Today will change that aspect in many churches including your own as it is taught and fully implemented.

“To the elders among you (that means leaders), I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ’s sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, serving as overseers--not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.” I Peter 5:1-4

“...you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.” I Peter 2:9

“For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in him, may have eternal life; and I myself shall lift him up on that last day.” John 6:40

“Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you the reason for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence.” 1 Peter 3:15

“And if it with great difficulty that the righteous man be saved, what will become of the godless man and sinner?”
1 Peter 4:18

“...he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:” Ephesians 4:11,12

"Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.” Matthew 7:24,25

After reading those scriptures I think we can be safe in saying: NO ONE IS CALLED TO DO NOTHING. Instead, everyone who calls Him Lord is called to be part of spreading the news in some manner. And in that same vein, leadership at Your Church should be everyone's potential! Leader's are supposed to train up new leaders. That of course means *leaders must step aside in some fashion in order for the next to come into their own.* At Your Church everyone ought be either a leader of an intern on the way to leadership. This is what Christ taught, is it not?

Yes, your Church is a great church with a great calling. And many of you have been at it for a long time. However, we believe God is calling us all, as leaders of our Church, to do something additional to what has been done in the past. Something that maybe we should have already been doing.

Over 20 years ago God told me we could only take the church as far as each congregation was willing to go. Through His grace and guidance up to this point we certainly have blessed and fed the multitudes that came to our midst. Yet, we are bursting at the seam with outreach potential. I believe God is saying, now is the time for the Church to reach full potential. And we can do our part if we are willing. Today we have an opportunity to do some things we were not able to do before. However to do so, we must do our part to teach and led the congregation, so they will follow, seeing through our actions what we too see.

Your Church has many great ongoing ministries, yet, generally they are supported by a few dedicated people, many of are approaching the burned out condition. How much longer can the few bear the burden? As we grow, the percentages of active people is not changing. We need to get the laity more fully involved. Please do not misunderstand, most of you are not the problem, nor is it necessarily the congregation as a whole. Yet, within each of us lies the solution.

Much of our normal church evangelism is centered around our Sunday School and the Sunday worship services. There we have dedicated and mature Christian leaders who feel the calling of the Lord. In this course we strive to reach especially toward those

"Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?"
Luke 6:46

NO ONE IS CALLED TO DO NOTHING

LOOK WHAT THEY HAVE DONE TO OUR CHURCH NATIONALLY!

We need to PRAY, PRAY, GET ON OUR FACE PRAYER, *not just naming but spelling out specifics.* Praying not only for our leadership at Your Church but for better, more righteous, leaders for our nation and our national church.

who are given a calling for those on the periphery of what ministry is currently being done. We hope to challenge each of you to join these efforts and in doing so to do the best you can to display an attitude of: 1) One who is saved 2) A Servant 3) A Spirit filled person, manifesting the Fruits of the Spirit 4) Always sensitive to the needs of others, never wounding, instead doing your best to bring their hurting into a place of healing.

No matter what, we all have baggage, smoking, gambling, pornography, drugs, sexual problems, etc. No one escapes this world without being wounded by Satan and his forces. With that in mind I believe *Holy Spirit is even now brooding over the Bride* of Christ, the Church. He is getting the Church ready for the greatest revival the world has ever known. This revival will primarily take place inside Churches like ours so the Church, the people, will be ready for the bridegroom.

God is continuing to build His Church, so all ministries should strive for growth through the power of the Holy Spirit; being peaceful, sharing, inspiring covenant relationships; caring, meeting needs both physical and spiritual, loving and showing concern, compassion, being task and service oriented; ministering, bearing one another's burdens, *giving blessings because blessings were given*, visiting, giving support and recovery.

We believe Christianity for Today is a new way to reach people, creating an ongoing outreach that will extend far beyond our ability to comprehend. With that in mind, all ministries and programs should meet the basic criteria for meeting a new convert's needs at Church, at home, and in the community.

LEADERSHIP SHOULD BE EVERYONE'S POTENTIAL at your Church. We must get the laity, people, more involved in what it ought to be about, and the pastors and staff what they ought to be about. Meaning, most of the burdens could be laid squarely on the shoulders of many, *instead of the few* who often now do the work. We are too good at perpetuating the 80/20 Rule. *We need to turn that upside-down making it 80 percent of the people doing the work of ministry and let the 20 percent be those learning how to minister.*

I am sure many of you will attest to the fact that... sometimes we need a break... a breather from heavy duties. This wide-open course will go a long way toward implementing this. The course is not difficult or arduous in fact it borders on what most churches have in place in their ministries now. Yet the course encompasses bringing new people into ministry, fully informed and capable, people who will step forward to do their part, taking their commission from Jesus seriously.

Look at Luke 15:1-7. *“Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the*

**WE ALL HAVE
BAGGAGE**

Scriptures say we do not have because we do not ask.

**WE NEED TO
BE EMBOLDEN
TO ASK FOR
THE DESIRES
OF OUR HEART
PRAYING DAILY
FOR MIRACLES.**

**JESUS WANTS US
TO WORK HARD AT
REALIZING AND
HELPING IN WAYS
WE CAN TO
FURTHER HIS
THEN AND NOW**

ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.' I tell you that in that same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over the ninety-nine righteous persons who don't need to repent."

Jesus wants us to realize His mission then and now, through us, is to save the lost. *He wants us to realize how much each lost soul means to Him.* He wants us to see the distance we must also be willing to go to do the same in His name, as He has commanded us to do. He has shown how infinite our value is to Him, and bids us to show the world they too can come and rest in His ever abiding love and care. *We must not forget this.* *If we do, are we any different than the slave who was forgiven, and while basking in that forgiveness, neglected to do the same for another? Blessing others because we have been blessed, it's our job... Jesus gave it to us.* To bring in the lost fold, *and all the heavens rejoice each time we do.*

Please pray. It is above all else your greatest part in Christianity for Today. Without being bathed in prayer this course is just another program destined to fail. Give Holy Spirit room to work in your life and in this program, *it is essential.* When you pray, give it all to the Lord, praying for both the leaders and your people, the ones who you are to guide. It is easy to become complacent, figuring God will take care of us anyway. Even go through the rooms when you set them up, pray as you touch each chair that understanding will come to those who sit in it. Don't forget your chapel praying in the Spirit for those who will attend and for yourself. Consecrate your battle ground for that is what it is.

There are four purposes for Christianity for Today. 1) Ministry 2) Lead people to Christ 3) Bring people into Body of Christ 4) Make people into Leaders in the Church. Please make this paramount in your mind concerning what you do in the small group setting: We are called to step aside, turning conversations back to them, guiding them to where Holy Spirit can let them come to their own conclusions.

Please, please, always ask: What notes did you take and are willing to share with the group what you wrote down, and give them ample time to share. Wait them out, let the silence be deafening. When a question is asked say to the group, "What do you think?" Always ask about specific areas you feel Holy Spirit is leading you to; but, don't teach, never teach. It does not matter that you are an expert and know your subject well enough to lead in a teaching moment, their notes are extremely important to that end.

*"You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit-- fruit that will last."*John 15:14-16

PRAY!

**IT IS ABOVE ALL ELSE
YOUR GREATEST PART IN
CHRISTIANITY FOR
TODAY
AND YOUR BEST
WEAPON AGAINST
SATAN**

**WHEN WAS THE
LAST TIME YOU
WEPT WHILE YOU
PRAYED FOR THE
LOST SOULS, OR
YOUR COUNTRY OR
YOUR CHURCH?**

Yet, we weep for those in pain and suffering that we are close to. Is it because we distance ourselves from these aspects?

It is through this mutual or shared thought system that any meaningful personal decision will emerge. Don't jump in and answer, when there is silence they will talk, let them speak, encourage them.

If you feel the topic is beginning to fragment, inject scripture to bring them full circle, back to the word of God concerning the subject. Watch if they are beginning to get off topic, a little is okay, yet, keep the conversation on target as well as you can and still keep good comradery. Our method for leading Small Groups is "***Don't Teach instead Guide. Listen, Let Holy Spirit Do His Work.***" Let Holy Spirit have His way.

Each course segment should be immersed in prayer and fasting. *Every effort should be made to keep it organized, yet simple and straight forward, the participants need it.*

When done in a group setting Christianity For Today requires only 6 weeks of your time (about 1 hour per day plus the get-together group time). However, it will add new life to you and to each ministry at your Church, giving you a *lifetime worth of good memories* and feelings, not-to-mention the knowledge that you helped in your own way to further the Great Commission that Jesus commanded us to be part of, that of saving those who do not know the truth.

We believe while you participate in this course just your involvement alone will raise up leaders like no other program I know of, and I have been involved with lay ministry for over 40-years. **Christianity For Today** will provide numerous roles in leadership appropriate for persons with differing gifts, not just those of teaching and exhortation. When a heavy area comes up, and it will, remember don't argue about your view point trying to impress them into what you believe. Be a good listener and a question asker. If needed tell them you don't know but you will find out the answer or ask them to check with their pastors. You are not supposed to have all the answers; don't intimate that you do. Remember the phrase, "*Well, what do you think*".

Keep the discussion going, almost never answering questions instead ask them what they think, of course if pinned down by the group and it will surely happen be prepared to answer them in brevity. Yet, ask them first: "What do you feel? What does that say to you? What do you think that means?". *Helper please note, you too are a leader.* If we say Christianity for Today leaders, that includes you too. The only distinction is in overall leadership of the group. Make sure there is no question as to who is in charge during the group sessions. Please don't make any distinctions within your group as to who is a helper and who is a participant. They will figure it out on their own as the weeks go by; but don't make it a secret either. It's okay when the second leader is identified so when needed the helper can take over and there won't be any problems within the group.

**DON'T TEACH,
GUIDE, AND
LISTEN, LET
HOLY SPIRIT
HAVE HIS WAY**

**Display the Fruits
of the Spirit,
especially
self-control**

Be sure you have read the talk for each segment as it was printed, knowing each person who presents a talk is free to change areas when they feel led to, so always take notes yourself when things appear changed being ready to lead the group accordingly. Above all, be filled with Holy Spirit and the love of Jesus, displaying the power of God to those who Christ gave us to minister to. Display only the Fruits of the Spirit, self-control being a biggy here. And, especially push no agenda, doing so might allow you to win a skirmish but loose the war. Let Holy Spirit move, if you do everybody wins, except Satan.

**CREATE A
CLIMATE OF
ACCEPTANCE**

Create a climate of acceptance. Most people who are unsure of their beliefs or are angry at the church are reluctant to voice their feelings because they are fearful of what others might think. Make sure all participants know each comment is appreciated. If however something is said that needs correction do so lovingly and respectfully; do not allow the group to be lead astray. Nevertheless do not attack or condemn the person, simply lead them to the truth by asking them such things as, "What lead you to this conclusion?" Discourage the group from believing you to be the authority, let them see you as a facilitator instead, just a member of the group. Actively listen to what is being said and who said it, trying to discern why they are thinking the way the do and carefully form any question that might lead them to the truth. Do not force anyone to talk, when the time comes they will. Do not take sides, encourage each person to think the issue through carefully. Do not allow one person to monopolize the discussion including yourself.

**YOU ARE A
PASTOR OF A
FLOCK**

**Do Not Take
Sides in a
Discussion.**

Remember you are a pastor of a flock; like the Good Shepard do not allow your flesh to speak to your flock. Your flock can sense where you are coming from. Flesh conveys fears, wrong motives, your own areas of problems and inequities, it destroys while Holy Spirit heals. Only Holy Spirit can bring fullness where brokenness existed.

Over thirty years ago God gave me something you too can depend on when dealing with sometimes difficult people and situations. It was when I was caught up in the throws of raising teenagers. Display God's Luck in dealing with any person. If you will do this no matter what their age is you will do your best. I am talking about luck spelled: **L-OVE** of God; **U-NDERSTANDING** of God; **C-OMPASSION** of God; **K-NOWLEDGE** of God.

Always use God's LUCK
L-OVE of God
U-NDERSTANDING of God
C-OMPASSION of God
K-NOWLEDGE of God
In dealing with anyone

Always steer participants toward small group fellowships when they are formed and available. Consider starting one yourself, ask your pastors about it. It is the vision of this program and one that became the church shortly after Christ was resurrected. Such small groups allow disciplining of those who attend to emerge from the program to reach out to others. Please give this your prayerful consideration.

Christianity For Today Session One Teaching

PRAY: Lord God, we thank You that You are here,... as we are gathered in Your Name,... seeking answers,... seeking truth,... lead us to that higher rock, ... Your True Wisdom,... for we are sometimes fearful of the things we face.

Come Holy Spirit, inhabit our minds,... bodies, and souls,... that we may in Your Guidance find completeness. Grant us some new vision of Your Truth;... and give us the strength we will need to live it according to Your Wishes. AMEN

Essentials

First of all establish to the group that you are not a professional Christian... not a paid staff person. You are what is commonly called a Lay Person... in other words... one

First of all I am not a professional Christian... not a paid staff person. I am what is commonly called a Lay Person... in other words... one of you. I don't get paid a nickel for my services for this course nor does anyone who is putting it on. We are no different than you, and as such we all have different experiences and can learn from each other. Furthermore, no one will try to change your mind concerning what you believe. We leave such matters up to God. Yet please be rest assured we are all devout Christians. We believe in the Bible in its entirety. So please respect our beliefs and know we will respect yours. Also, this is not an attempt to bring you into the membership of particular church or a denomination; yet, our hope is in helping to bring you into God's Kingdom and to His living Church,

Okay that being said, we attempt to use the old joke about planting grass with the "green side up". That made planting grass simple; so tonight we hope to do the same for you about Christianity, make it simple, just keep saying to yourself when it seems complicated, "green side up".

Is Christianity Really Relevant Today? What the question really means is: *Does Christianity matter in today's world? Or more explicitly, how can anything that happened over 2,000 years ago have any thing to do with me today?* And usually and underlying question: *Why do I have to attend Church?* Or you might be asking, just what is the Church all about?

Fact: it is undeniable that throughout all history mankind sought and worshiped a higher being. All of us were created to seek a relationship with God.

Fact: Christianity is not really a religion but a way of life; and, the Church is not buildings at all, it is the people.

Bernard Levin wrote: *Countries like ours are full of people*

Notes and Keys

Keep It Simple

Church is Not a Building, It Is the People

Is Christianity Really Relevant Today?

who have all the material comforts they desire, yet we lead lives of quiet desperation, understanding nothing but the fact that there is a hole inside of us that no matter how much food and drink we pour into it, how many expensive cars and TVs and how many well balanced children and loyal friends we parade around we still ache, and that ache requires God.

You can have everything in the world and still be bitter and lonely without a relationship with God; and, *Christianity brings that into fruition making you into a fellow heir to the Kingdom of God through becoming adopted as Christ's brother.* As an added bonus you get many, many blessings here on earth and in heaven afterward with a life of eternity with God.

Let there be no mistake even if you do not choose God through His Son Jesus Christ you will live eternally, it's just you will eternally not be in a such a nice place, instead you will find yourself completely devoid of God's presence and His Blessings. Hell is such a place. God gives us this choice.

Have you tried to pick up signals on a TV with only rabbit ears for an antenna, especially if you live too far way to pick up a significant signal? That's a good example of trying to be a good Christian without attending and participating in church activities; so yes, *Christianity is very relevant on a personal level.*

When Jesus comes back for the Church He is not seeking buildings; He is coming to claim people who follow His teachings, His way of life. Man, unfortunately, has a tendency to create organizations in which they feel comfortable. Sometimes what I feel comfortable with, you do not and vice versa. Add to the situation, bureaucracy, and you multiply the problem since such organizations tend to support themselves rather than what they were originally formed for.

Christianity is absolutely true, those of us who are here to present this program to you tonight are living witnesses to its truth. We have tested it from all aspects of life. You too can examine Christianity by reading many books written by experts, that are available; but it is important to listen to the people who are willing to share what being a Christian really means in their life. John Bunyan was imprisoned in the seventeenth century England for preaching the Gospel. During his 12 years in prison he wrote the classic *Pilgrim's Progress*, a book constantly reprinted even today. His book is responsible for bringing thousands and thousands of people to Christ. Would he sacrifice so much of his life for just a foible, an untrue story... I think not. Since Christianity actually is true, *it is of vital importance today*, in the same manner that it was in all the yesterdays combined.

When the church first existed it was simply called, "The Way". People banded together, supporting each other, because to separate from what was then the norm meant you lost your family

You Already Have
Eternal Life... It's
Just Where You
Are Going To
Spend It That Is
The Question

**God Gives Us
A Choice,
We have To
Choose The
Right One**

Christianity
Is Vitally
Important
Today!

who are blessed by My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave Me food, I was thirsty and you gave Me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed Me, I was naked and you clothed Me, I was sick and you visited Me, I was in prison and you came to Me.' Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? And when did we see You a stranger and welcome You, or naked and clothe You? And when did we see You sick or in prison and visit You?' And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these My brothers, you did it to Me.'

"Then He will say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave Me no food, I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome Me, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.' Then they also will answer, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?' Then He will answer them, saying, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." Matthew 25:31-46

So who is this God who demands so much of us; how do we learn more about Him? ***Read the Bible***, it's a manual for living in today's world and for getting to know who God is. Sure it is ancient history yet it holds the key to knowing God; what He is all about and how much He loves us. Yes it has parts that are hard to understand, but when you were going to school you studied to pass a test; well the test is for the prize of eternity with God and He wants you to pass it free of charge.

"No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." Matthew 6:24

"Scripture is undeniably clear that all who possess the indwelling life of the Risen Lord comprise the real Church. The natural implication of this glorious truth is that the church is a family whose members are joined together, connected, and inseparably related by Devine Life. One cannot join the church. If you are in Christ you are joined already and that by birth (rebirth)." Frank A. Viola

If you were part of the first century Christian Church you did not need to jump through religious hoops. You learned how to be a Christian by being disciplined by your brothers and sisters in the

***No Man Can
Serve Two
Masters***

***"By this they shall
know you are My
disciples, that you
love one another."
(John 13:35)***

Lord. You became mature as a Christian by being part of an active and alive group of people who were held together by a common desire to serve the Lord and preserve "The Way".

We all have done substantial damage to Christ's Church. We all have much to repent from. Even if a church has fabulous praise music and terrific speakers and great evangelic programs but is not a close family of believers who willingly pull their load and lovingly help others learn to do the same, they cannot be truly a Biblical Church. *Loving one another must be of paramount importance* to the church or they are straying from the Bible's teachings. We believe Jesus is waiting and watching for this to happen so He can come and find His true Bride. If we belong to Christ then we belong to each other.

What is so special about Jesus and why do we need Him?

Some believe Christianity requires blind faith. It does require faith, *but faith based on historic evidence.*

FACT: Two Roman historians Tacitus and Suetonius along with a Jewish historian Josephus, around 37 AD mention Jesus and His people in their writings.

FACT: The entire history of the Roman Empire is based on only 68 copies of manuscripts written from 900-1,100 years later. While 24,300 copies of manuscripts of the New Testament which were compiled only 130-350 years later exist.

Jesus was fully man. He had a body. He became tired and hungry. He had human experiences, was tempted, learned, worked, and obeyed his parents. Some people say He was only a human, or a good moral teacher, not divine. What evidence is there that Jesus was what Christians say He was? He said, ***"I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."*** (John 14:6) This means only through having a relationship with Jesus can we truly encounter God in His fullness.

Jesus said, ***"I am the bread of life."*** (John 6:35) He also said, ***"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."*** (John 8:12) In John 11:25, 26 Jesus says, ***"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in Me will never die."*** He claimed He had authority to forgive sins saying, ***"Son, your sins are forgiven."*** (Mark 2:5) In Matthew 25:31-32 Jesus claimed He would judge the world.

What if your teacher or pastor said, "You will all appear before me on Judgement Day and I will decide your eternity. Everything depends on how you treated me in the past." That would be preposterous you say, no one would be stupid enough to say that. Especially, no one would follow him. Jesus made such direct claims by answering a question in Mark 14:61-64, ***"Are you***

What's So Special About Jesus?

What Would a Total Absence of God Be Like?

"Because you have seen Me, you have believed: blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe."
(John 20:29)

often feel is filled with a personal and loving relationship with God. Wealthy or successful people often talk about feeling lonely or empty even when in a room full of people, as if a deep chunk is missing in their life. At one time in our life we all try to fill that emptiness in various ways. Aristotle Onassis, one of the richest men in the world said, "Millions in wealth do not always add up to what a man needs out of life." We try money, drugs, sex, alcohol, career, music, sports, hard work, and power. Although they offer instant gratification we are still left with a hollow feeling.

Even the closest relationship we can have can not always satisfy that deep emptiness. Scripture tells us the reason for that emptiness is that we turned our backs on God. Jesus said, He is the only one who can satisfy that yearning: He is the only way we can regain that closeness to God we unconsciously desire. Without Him it is impossible to be restored to God. *Through Jesus, and with a personal relationship with Him, we are saved. "He has also set eternity in the hearts of men."* (Ecclesiastes 3:11)

It was once said, "Man cannot live without meaning." And with that in mind, sooner or later we all ask, "What is the meaning of life?" "What am I doing here?" "Is there any purpose in my life?" Until we find a true relationship with God through Jesus we will never find complete answers to such questions or find true meaning for much of anything. Things may provide a passing fancy, but it will not last. Only a true relationship with our creator will suffice.

As a young person, we usually do not think much about death, it seems to be a long way away; in doing so we fail to face much of what is in fact reality. The fact is we all begin the dying process the moment we are born. Let's face it most people don't want to die. We want to survive beyond death. We are like the man who said his goal was to live eternally. Then he said, "So far so good". Actually your eternal life starts when you accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior.

Jesus said, "*What comes out of a man is what makes him 'unclean.'* For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and make a man 'unclean.'" Mark 7:20-23

Our greatest need is forgiveness, to be absolved. As a man with an illness needs treatment, we inherently need forgiveness from God to escape death as result of our sins. In Jesus we find such forgiveness. His death on the cross paid for our sins, enabling us to have a right relationship with God.

Okay if Jesus is such a great person and God is such a loving God Why did Jesus have to die? The New Testament tells

Until we find a true relationship with God through Jesus we will never find complete answers to questions that matter to us, nor find true meaning for much of anything.

So why not try Jesus?

us He died for our sins. ***“All have sinned and fall short of the Glory of God.”*** (Romans 6:23) I don’t need this Christianity, I’m happy as I am: I’ve always been a good person, you may be saying; *compared to regular society that may be true.* God, however, uses a different measuring stick, Jesus, His Boy. In measuring up to Jesus, we all fall short. What if everything you ever did wrong was displayed before your friends and family, or to the people in your church? We all would fail the test of righteousness. “Ah ha,” you say. “But, Jesus died for our sins.” Yes! You got the point!

James 2:10 indicates that *if we break any of God’s laws we are guilty of breaking them all.* John 8:34, tells us *anyone who sins is a slave to sin.* Obviously we all fall short with respect to sin, and it is that same sinful nature that keeps us from having a right relationship with God. We all deserve to be punished for our sins.

In ***Miracle on the River Kwai***, by Earnest Gordon, tells a story which took place during WWII in a POW camp, a Japanese guard became very angry when a shovel used in a work project came up missing. He asked for the return of the shovel; when it was not the entire camp was threatened. If the guilty party did not step forward the guard would kill everyone. One man stepped forward to take the blame. While silently standing at attention the man was clubbed to death. Later that night the tools were counted again , they found no shovels missing. Yet the man went forward as a substitute to save the others. Like that man, Jesus stepped forward to take the punishment of our sins.

Paul tells us ***“the wages of sin is death.”*** (Romans 6:23); The death he is speaking of concerns not only a physical death, but spiritual death. The good news of Christianity is that God loves us and does not leave us in the mess we make. He came to earth, in the person of Jesus Christ to die for our sins instead of us, a substitute. (II Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:13); Our true redemption comes by way of Jesus Christ. (Romans 3:24); Jesus by way of the cross paid the ransom price. (Mark 10:45); We are free from the power of sin since Jesus sets us free. (John 8:36) Not that we won’t sin again, *for we will,* yet, the hold sin has over us is broken, *now we can have true fellowship with God!*

In the Old Testament, a scape goat was used, the sinner laid hands on the goat confessing sins, and sent the goat into the wilderness. However, Hebrews 10:4 says that it was, ***“impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.”*** Christ alone is able, and He did it freely, out of both love for us and that of His love for God.

PRAY: Lord God, You aught us to come to with all our trials, tribulations, joys and sorrows. Be with us as we grow closer to you, help us become more like You would have us be, we want to do you proud. Amen

Okay, let’s gather around, laying hands and praying for each others needs. *And, please remember: What is said inside the groups, stays inside the groups.*

Give Him a chance. You have nothing to lose and everything to gain.

He will not disappoint you! He loves you and said, “would that all be saved.”

Christianity For Today Session Two Teaching

PRAY: Lord God, Heavenly Father, you made the heavens and earth, that you even take thought of us is awesome indeed. Yet, you promised you have known us since before we were in our mother’s womb. Show us oh Lord, your wisdom, we ask this in humble adoration. Speak to us and help us find in an ever deepening relationship with you, both now and forever. Amen.

Notes an Keys

WHY should I read the Bible; most of it is about people 2,000 years ago anyway and I have a hard time understanding parts of it?

When you were going to school did you understand all the curriculum that was presented to you at first, or did you have to study hard, fearful of not passing? Since you became Christian have you done the same? With God the life you lead is your daily and even final exam.

“Man shall not live by bread alone” He must have peanut butter. Is that the right quote? Okay then, what is the right quote? How do we know what is right? Read Math 4:1-4 In this verse Jesus is quoting scripture to Satan. We too should do the same when we are confronted with evil in our life, confront Satan with scripture.

Ecclesiastes was written by King Solomon, the richest, most powerful, and the wisest man who ever lived. He said it all boils down to: nothing on earth is worth doing, nothing is lasting, nothing will bring you joy, except that it be done according to and through God.

Sitting in the pew won’t get it I promise you!
CHRISTIANITY, ought to be classified as a verb. Read the Bible and pray, in doing so you will receive the Word of God, which is more powerful than any epic novel that you might want to read; it’s GOD’S LOVE LETTER TO ALL OF MANKIND, which is speaking to each of us PERSONALLY.

“The Bible is alive, it speaks to me. It has feet. It runs after me. It loves me from cradle to grave,” so said Martin Luther and me. God knew me before I was born. I believe that. WHY? it’s in the book, the Bible. Jeremiah 1:5, Isaiah 44:24 and Job 10:11 says the same thing. You were fearfully made. Don’t let Satan or anybody else put you down. I myself struggle with this; I am my worst enemy. I try though, and someday I will be victorious.

**WHY
Should I
Read the
Bible?**

**CHRISTIANITY
Ought to**

**The Bible is
Alive!**

**Read Each Book
In The Bible
Separately**

In the Bible, God gave us a complete library, many do not know that. While the Bible is one book, it nevertheless contains 66 books, written by many authors, yet all guided by God through the Holy Spirit. In order to properly study the Bible you must look at it this way, as a library of books.

THE BIBLE IS A LIBRARY NOT JUST A BOOK

Some people say I don't want a rule book like the Bible! Nevertheless, how can you gain freedom unless you know the rules? The entire western civilization with respect to the courts and our moral standard is based on the Bible and what Jesus' taught.

Don't Give Up If You Get Confused

The Old Testament is arranged in sections: Law, History, Poetry, Major Prophets and Minor Prophets. The New Testament is sectioned: Gospels, History, Letters from Paul, General Letters and Prophecy.

What's Faith Got To Do With It?

Please don't try to read the Bible as one book, you'll get lost. Read each book separately, refer back and forth, they agree with one another.

This is the most important book on the face of the earth. The Bible contains the history of thousands of generations of people falling in and out of love with God and of God loving them in spite of their situations. What you will never find is any part which says God never did anything, but, love his people. Through it all God ran after them. And He continues to do so today for you!

Don't give up if you get confused in reading the Bible, ask God to reveal what He has for you. Even the disciples were sometimes confused. Biblical passages were written by kings, scholars, philosophers, fishermen, poets, statesmen, historians, and doctors, in different types of literature, in history, poetry, prophecy, apocalyptic-writings, and letters.

Okay, what's Faith Got to do with it? When we do research we must exercise faith, depending on what others did before us. We accept some work as right or we will drive ourselves crazy examining details already proven.

Many of us depend on a sort of osmosis attempt of learning in our lives. We have said I'm through with school, letting the world teach us. In doing so you're saying to God, "I can handle this job all by myself. I'll let you know when I need you." If that describes your knowledge and your closeness to God then hang onto your hat as you begin truly begin allowing Holy Spirit to disclose them to you, you are in for the JOY-ride of your life. You will learn how to become a more complete and successful person, a Christian. Instead of being fed to the lions. you will be triumphant.

As you read, mark your bible, study it, like your life depended on it, for it does not your eternal life though, for that is a gift from God; but, your new life does, the here and now, the Kingdom of God on earth.

Don't Say I am Finished

When you're finished don't say I finally finished; now I won't have to do that again. Each time you read any passage from the Bible you will receive a new insight and the Bible brings to us an ever abiding faith enabling us to be more like Him. It brings Joy and peace in the midst of a storm. It gives you new guidance.

Many hundreds of thousands have died so the Bible can be read today. Why would people all over the world risk their life and limb to possess such a book; because it is not just a book? What is so important about the it? The creator of the universe, gave us a vehicle to know and understand Him. IMAGINE THE PERSON YOU ADMIRE THE MOST. Now imagine they are giving you not only a biography, but the history of ALL their people, the mistakes they made, and on top of that, they reveal what they and their people personally believe, and know to be true. Wouldn't you want to read such a book to find out what their secrets were, their ways of doing what impresses you.

IT IS WISE TO START WITH A REALISTIC GOAL FOR BIBLE READING. Don't be too overambitious, set aside say seven minutes everyday, to start with, then build. I suggest you START WITH THE GOSPELS: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Then STUDY ROMANS 12-15 AND I CORINTHIANS 13 & 14, they will expand your knowledge of what being a Christian is all about what God expects of us. If you're reading a version that's hard for you to read, get one that suits you.

Start by picking the time, place and amount of reading you plan to do, asking God to speak to you through the passages you read. As you read ask yourself what the passages mean. Compare different translations if needed to clarify them. Who wrote it. Who first read it? If you have a commentary, what does it say? How does it apply to you, your family, work, neighbors and the society around you? Then put what you learn to practice in your life, family and community.

What are some of the words, topics, names, locations of where it happened. Check it out take notes, even making an outline and memorizing meaningful scripture. Like you did in school, write papers, make a journal everyday. It'll do you good to look back on it.

Read it with an open mind letting God reveal Himself to you. Your revelation from God. See how it fits with other passages. Notice the purpose, pondering in quiet prayer what it means, study the background, the who, where, why of it. Learn its theme, the parts that are special to you. Ask how God's will is expressed through what you have now learned. How can you carry this throughout the rest of your life?

And, remember the bible was not given to increase our knowledge, but to increase our knowing of God, and to change our

**WHY WOULD
PEOPLE ALL OVER
THE WORLD RISK
THEIR LIFE TO
POSSESS A BIBLE?**

**START WITH
A REALISTIC
GOAL**

**Make A
Daily
Journal**

**Ask God to
Speak to You
Through what
You Are
Reading**

lives, becoming more useful to His purposes. That of helping to save those who do not know Him, taking them too into eternal life.

One day Jesus will come back for His willing servants, to establish a new heaven and earth. Then those who are in Christ will “be with the Lord forever” (Revelation 21:1) We will see Jesus face to face (I Corinthians 13:12); and, given glorious painless resurrection bodies (I Corinthians 15), and be transformed into the mortal likeness of Jesus Christ (I John 3:2).

“Are you saved brother,” was a catch phrase when I was growing up, professing to be a Baptist, a Christian in defense I always answered in the affirmative, “Yes!” But, I really was not. I only used the term as a vaccination against the question, and a badge to use at Church. I was baptized and taught Sunday school and did Christian things, but had no or little faith.

I thought some of the scriptures were little more than fairy tails, until I decided to Give Christ a try. Then all the pieces that I thought was an un-fixable puzzle fell into place. I then without a shadow of doubt knew the God who created everything loved me and did all the things the scripture told of.

The vengeful God I had grown accustomed to walking away from suddenly became the Loving God who had been chasing after me for 27 years. Now I know where I will be spending eternity. I will spend it with Him. You too can have new life, a life full of the promises from God. A Life full of Faith!

What’s the Big Deal About Praying?

In the same vein how do we communicate?

“Well, it’s sort of like talking,” you say.

Yes, but it’s much more. It means to exchange ideas or messages.

The world continuously sends messages into outer space, listening for aliens to reply; it hears none. That’s not communication. It’s like talking to a rock or a hardheaded obstinate child, you get nothing in return for your side of the conversation.

HOW EFFECTIVE ARE YOU AT COMMUNICATION? Are you a listener or someone waiting to jump in, not listening to what others say, you’re busy remembering what it is YOU want to say and miss the point of what they just said.

HOW ABOUT YOUR COMMUNICATION WITH GOD?

Prayer is my favorite subject. It boggles my mind the completeness of it. We can’t fully grasp what we are capable of doing when we pray. WE CAN EFFECT THE ENTIRE CREATION IN BOTH SPIRITUAL AND PHYSICAL REALMS. What power He has reserved for us. What love He shows in that He would allow us to do or be such creatures.

What’s the Big Deal About Praying?

HOW EFFECTIVE ARE YOU AT COMMUNICATION?

Through Prayer You can Effect the Entire Creation

90% of Americans Profess to Pray

“Satan laughs at our words. Mocks at our toil; but, trembles when we pray,” the old saying goes.

The Gallup Polls say, 90% of Americans profess to pray. Yet, what kind of prayers do they say?

Even with Christians, mostly we do all the talking, hoping God is listening. Does He always? Usually, but, a ridiculous one-way conversation with anyone does not work effectively you have to listen for an answer. Unfortunately sometimes our conversations with God disclose only one thing we want our needs met and “THAT’S-ALL-FOLKS!” It points out our spiritual lacking doesn’t it?

Don’t Do
All the
Talking...
Listen!

What would have happened if the disciples had done all the talking, instead of learning from Jesus. What about when we went to school, or to professional seminars or training sessions. If we have any concern about learning we choose to listen more than talk, or else we learn little.

Matthew 6:6 “When you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father who is unseen.”

FIRST AND FOREMOST get yourself a REGULAR SCHEDULED PRAYER AND STUDY TIME you decide when that is and keep it, making an appointment with God.

Keep
It
Simple

He will be there make sure you are. Pause a moment to collect your thoughts, getting your mind on Jesus and how He saved you from a sure death, accepting you as His brother and fellow heir to His throne.

If a song flashes in your mind sing it, simply begin to thank God for sending His Son that you may get to know Him. Then chat with God about it. IT’S EASY DON’T MAKE IT COMPLICATED.

Then keep that prayer attitude throughout the day.

In your prayer life you want a relationship between you and God to develop, not a ritual. It’s sort of like plugging a power tool into the socket; or, pouring gasoline in the automobile. Without it we fail to go very far.

It’s a Two-way
Communication

Remember you are in vertical conversation, a two-way communication with the Creator of the universe. Treat your prayer for what it is and not what it isn’t. Jesus said in Matthew 6:9 “Pray then this way.” He gave us the Lord’s Prayer. He didn’t say, always pray this prayer and that’s all, though we often offer it up when we say our prayers and worship Him. The Lord’s Prayer or any PRAYER is not a required prayer to communicate with God the Lord’s Prayer is a guideline, one prayer to study to learn how He prayed.

Yet, sometimes even a so called MATURE Christian must look for the response in order to find it. What does it mean to be a mature Christian? I am not sure, because none of us are really ever to the point of crossing the finish line, maturity keeps moving doesn’t it? Yet, I think you are mature when you finally reach a

pont that you trust God in all things, and stop blaming and getting angry at Him.

Ya ever noticed how the spelling of MATURE and manure are similar. Did you ever think that sometimes a little manure can make us mature? JESUS TOLD US ABOUT THE TREE THAT WAS NOT PRODUCING FRUIT. The Master ordered it cut down, but the man tending the garden pleaded saying he would fertilize and dig around the roots one more time. If the Master would give it one more chance.

Yet we get angry when God plops a load of manure on us. We still don't get it do we? How small we are to think we know God's will about everything. Did you ever get angry at God when He worked around your roots?

"No?"

Well how about the time when you didn't get the little red wagon, the healing, the promotion, the ministry or something else you wanted badly. The Master gardner, potter, stone-cutter or whatever you needed at the time, is always at work! We must DEVELOP FAITH that He knows what He is doing.

He wants us to come and talk with Him, like Adam and Eve. God yearns for that relationship with you and me.

REMEMBER PRAYER IS GOD'S SECOND GREATEST GIFT! THINK ABOUT IT BEFORE YOU PRAY. YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO COMMUNICATE WITH GOD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST AND THE HOLY SPIRIT. UNITED WITH THEM AS FRIENDS, YOU ARE COMING INTO THE HOLY COURTS OF GOD.

Pray against a wandering mind, be quiet, at peace, be humble and forthright, admitting you are not worthy to come into His presence except through His mercy and Jesus Christ, who is always with you. GOD'S OFFICE NEVER PRECLUDES OUR ENTRANCE INTO HIS CHAMBER. HE IS ALWAYS READY TO HEAR. You needn't ask for permission though, He has given you that right. Listen and wait until your heart tells you to speak.

Jack Kennedy was the first president to have little children in the White House for a long time. Little John John would burst into the President's office on occasion with a problem, sometimes crying. President Kennedy immediately became Daddy and scooped him up, consoled him and walked out of the office with him in his arms. No matter what you felt about Kennedy, he gave us a picture of what it is to call on God.

As a child of God, listen for His answers, His guidance, His leading in your heart. If you are confused concerning this, talk to a strong Christian who has YOUR best interests at heart you trust. Ask them about hearing God and understanding His direction for YOUR life.

**PRAYER IS
GOD'S
SECOND
GREATEST**

**GOD'S OFFICE
NEVER PRECLUDES
OUR ENTRANCE INTO
HIS CHAMBER. HE
IS ALWAYS
READY TO**

PRAY TO THE CREATOR OF THE HEAVENS ABOVE, through the cleansing blood of Christ. Let there be no mistake to whom you are praying, you are communicating with the whole trinity. Your loving very own Father the Creator of everything, including counterfeit gods. He is more than just awake He listens to us as we pray, knowing what we are and what we shall become, even the hairs on our head.

There are many types of prayer. We will give you five building blocks that you can rely on for your prayer life: ADORATION, CONFESSION, THANKSGIVING, INTERCESSION, AND PETITION.

First let's talk about ADORATION, a very important part of our prayer life, often called worship. Praise God for His: goodness, patience, love, wisdom, power, greatness, holiness, glory, grace, peace, and so on. (Heb 13:15; Pslm 34:1-3), by way of singing (Pslm 47:6; 92:1,2), dancing (Pslm 149:3), lifting holy hands (Pslm 63:4, 134:2), musical instruments (Pslm 81:1-3; 150), and rejoicing. Praising God is truly an art form few of use except in church. Scriptures abound about praising God, rejoice over what He has done. Yet we often spend more time on other ways of communication; the GIMME part.

Through the help of the Holy Spirit, ask for His help in everything. Yield your entire life, your body, your being to God. Establish the Holy Spirit as your constant companion, the Breath of God. In humble supplication and prayer without ceasing ask the Holy Spirit to help you, Jesus promised you He would.

The second type is CONFESSION, or repentance, (Pslm 66:18; John 1:9). Prayerfully tell God, your Father, in your own words you are sorry for what you did and are not worthy to speak to Him except through His saving Grace and Jesus Christ.

STAND ON HIS WORD; Jesus is the same today as He was yesterday. He said no matter how we transgressed, if we repent and believe in Him we will be heard by God. Name whatever transgressions you might have committed, and be forgiven

The third type prayer is THANKSGIVING (Philpns 4:6; 1 Thes 5:18), thank God for your many blessings: material, physical, spiritual, people, grace, guidance, wealth, family, job, community, church, house, answer to prayers, etc.

Fourth is INTERCESSION sometimes called Supplication, (James 5:14-20; 1 Tim 2:1). Many times we place our prayer life in an "EMERGENCY ONLY" case releasing great amounts only when we find ourselves surrounded by the fires of life. This is the type prayer we use to pray for others. Visualize them healed, saved.

The Fifth type is PETITION (Heb 4:15,16; Jhn 15:7). This is sometimes called the GIMME prayer, for we often turn it into such instead of what it should be. Lift up your plans, hopes, directions,

**ADORATION
CONFESSION
THANKSGIVING
INTERCESSION
PETITION**

**Stand Firm
On God's
Word!**

needs, problems, and pains. Climb into His lap, ask for a vision for your life. Pray for or about any new or specific tasks He might have for you. Tell Him what you feel. That you are stepping out in faith believing that you heard from Him. Ask Him to correct your steps, knowing this will sometimes require Him to break new ground in your life. Rest assured He will work your roots tenderly. Overcome fear, tell Him you need Him to intervene. Ask for courage that you may conquer and claim victory.

Too often WE WANT GOD TO SAY: first do this, then do that, and if you do then this will happen. God was not then and usually is not willing to give us explicit directions. I sought God's voice, he answered, but I wanted other answers. As I said before, the answer is PUT GOD FIRST IN EVERYTHING IN YOUR LIFE, EVERYTHING ELSE WILL FALL INTO PLACE. Try it it's God's promise not some false god or modern new age guru.

ASK FOR YOUR NEEDS, not greeds. Submerge yourself in His presence, accept His loving compassion. IF YOU NEED TO, CRY!

(TAKE THE FIRST FOUR STEPS TOWARD INNER HEALING).

I. REVIEW YOUR PROBLEMS, describing what the enemy has done, what hurts, what brought you down. FREE YOURSELF FROM BURDEN Whether job, family, husband, wife, children, finances, or otherwise tell your Father.

Remember God already knows what's wrong, through the Holy Spirit (who searches all things, even the depths of God)..it is you who need to talk about it.. not Him.

II. TELL HIM ABOUT YOUR BITTERNESS, DO NOT JUSTIFY THEM. If vengeance is needed God will handle it, if you try YOU might be damaged.

III. CONFESS YOUR INABILITY TO STAND ALONE. Tell Him of your need for Him, of your trials, that you need His strength, that you can't make it without Him.

IV. ASK FOR HIS HELP, FOR HIS PROTECTION, for Him to intervene. He wants our permission, especially if it is an area you have previously claimed, "HELP ME LORD." is a key for you, not Him. He can make rocks sing, however He wants you to choose the way to TRUE LIFE.

REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE when you leave God's Court (your prayer time, or inner closet), feed on His manna, the word of God. You are a child of God, a fellow heir to the kingdom, ACT LIKE IT! You will not be defeated. GOD WILL NOT BE MOCKED.

MAKE PRAYER THE FIRST THING ON YOUR LIST for the day and devote yourself to communicating with Him all day long.

**PUT GOD FIRST IN
EVERYTHING IN
YOUR LIFE,
EVERYTHING
ELSE WILL FALL
INTO PLACE**

**IF YOU
NEED TO,
CRY!**

Review the Problem
Tell Him Your Bitterness
Confess You Need Him
Ask for His Help!
Remember Who You Are!

**GOD WILL
NOT BE
MOCKED**

Col 4:12 “Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving.” Meaning to persevere in a constant mind set of prayer. At all times keeping the Father in your CONSCIOUS DECISION MAKING.

PRAYER IS THE PURIFICATION PROCESS OF YOUR WALK IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE, and God is not finished with you yet. There are no shortcuts nor substitutes when it comes to communication with your Lord. Try to pray with a definite purpose otherwise you will soon end up using mundane trivia or babble risking losing a blessing.

SAVOR IT, YOUR PRAYER LIFE, writing your prayers in a journal recording your walk with Him as He takes you on the journey of you life.

LET’S CLOSE WITH A PRAYER: Oh Lord God, in the name of the strong Deliverer, our only Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, lead us to that higher rock, for we are sometimes fearful of the things we face. As you did with Moses and the Israelites, Lord God, part the waters of our frustrations, the roots of our temptations and stress. Allow us and our people to pass through on dry land, unhindered by worldly deeds, forgiven, releasing the flood after our Passover, destroying such hindrances and frustrations that we confess openly to you, gently remind us of the burdens we keep in secret, until we are finally capable of eager service to you in all things. AMEN

Okay, let’s gather around, laying hands and praying for each others needs. And, please remember: What is said inside the groups, stays inside the groups.

Christianity For Today Session Three

PRAY: Lord God, we want to believe, help our unbelief. Help us to see as you see and do as you do, not only to and for ourselves but for our fellow strugglers in life. Help us to be a better person when it comes to having patience as we know you has patience with us. Amen

Notes and Keys

Does God Really Hear Me? I wish I could give you a great and grand method or formula for hearing God, but I can't. I too have difficulty in knowing for sure. Oh sure I can receive a revelation through God's word, and most often, teachings and writings from God, which is a lot. I'm not complaining mind you. It's the part about hearing God as to His Will about something, like a new job, or the course you should travel when on a perilous journey or how to chose which job to accept.

Does God Really Hear Me?

God's word teaches us that everything we do that is not done in faith is in fact done in sin. That's where I have trouble. *I fear I'm in there leading instead listening to God.* Do you know what I mean?

DO YOU HEAR GOD?

The better question might be how do you hear God? I recently read you must, diverse or empty yourself from the world and its influences before you can hear God properly. I've done that and received things that seem to come from god, but how do I know they are truly from God? Sure you can test them, but if you are in the right ball park, in your life, aren't you liable to put your two cents in instead of letting God have His way?

Scripture says seek and you shall find, knock and it will be opened to you. The word seek means to go and search, to take great pains to find, to strive for. I've often done that and I'm sure you have too. I've even said I'm staying right here until I hear from you God. However, sometimes God has spoken previously, giving His leading but we have ignored Him. We in our ignorance must not remain tied to the dock unless God so demand it of us. Instead we must move out in faith after asking God for an answer, relying on God to direct us along the way. This is true, even if we find ourselves upon the rocks, we must learn to have faith that God put us there.

The number one ingredient to hearing God or knowing His will for our life is always going to be prayer. We spoke about this

last week and need to touch on it this week because of its importance. In your prayer life especially, open your heart to the Holy Spirit, allow Him to be your helper. *Jesus promised Holy Spirit would be!*

Allow Holy Spirit To Be Your helper

Eliminate the day to day distractions during your prayer time if you are seriously asking. Get rid of music, clocks ticking, what ever distracts you. Turn the lights off if need be.

Don't pray on the fly about the things you are truly seeking God's will. Don't be impatient with hearing, God has had patience with you. Whenever you pray, go to your room, close the door, and pray in private. Don't allow Satan to intervene, demand in the name of Jesus that Satan and his detractions be gone from your room.

Allow for silence, take your Bible and paper to write on. Be still, become the child, *trusting completely, be conscious of who you are waiting for, God is the supreme power of the universe, your Father, Your friend.*

God has patience with you!

Let Him in your room, invite Him. Tell Him how important He is and what He has to say about the subject you are asking. After having asked for His presence, know that He is there with you.

Let the Holy Spirit possess you and your thoughts. Become aware of the gifts given to you at Baptism: Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Fortitude, Knowledge, Piety, and Fear of the Lord; these are just a few of the gifts we'll go into more of that later on as we progress. Become dependent on them no matter where you are, especially in prayer.

Wisdom enable us to know how to use the gifts. Understanding enlightens us, removes confusion. Counsel enables us to know how to listen and act on His prompting. Fortitude gives us discipline, strength, and faith to do what we must. Knowledge allows us to see as God sees. Piety helps us to learn to love being in the presence of God. Fear enables us to love the Lord so much that we fear not doing His will.

We Must Train Ourselves In His Ways

Hearing God is one of the most important things we can do as Christians. Jesus promises, we will, so we must train ourselves.

I remember reading about a man who heard God say stop! He pulled over to the side of the road. Afterward he came to a terrible wreck. There were many deaths. The man asked God why didn't he stop them too. God answered him, saying He had, they didn't listen.

I have heard of many instances where things like this has happened, and I'm sure we could all say the same thing about instances when we have truly heard God.

It is said that Feeling is the voice of the body, Reason is the voice of the soul or mind, and Conscience is the voice of the spirit.

John 16:13,14 Jesus says, "When He, the Spirit of truth comes, he shall receive mine, and shall show it unto you. He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said to you."

How do we hear God? Only you and God know the answer to that question. But if you do not listen, how will you ever know?

There are *Four Christian keys that can help us hear God and allow Him to direct our lives in a more disciplined Christian way, helping us to obtain a Godly successful living.* 1) God has a plan that includes our best interests at heart! And that we should, 2) Put God first in everything we do! Establishing the Holy Spirit as our constant companion, 3) Yielding to God through the Holy Spirit and Christ, persevering in faith always! And then simply learning to, 4) "Follow Christ, sharing the good news in love to all God places before you!"

**4 Keys:
God Has A Plan
Put God First
Yield to God**

I often harp on knowing the character of God, and having faith in His ways no matter what happens. *Sometimes that is our only solitude, nowing that God knows more than we do, knowing His ways, His will, His ways will always be worked out.*

**Know The
Character
of God!**

Asking why does God allow bad things to happen is like asking why God doesn't just make us do the right thing at the right time. *It's a sure bet that between Satan and us we have messed up God's creation immensely.* That is not to say, we have messed up God's plan or the prophesied happenings for the future, nor the outcome, that will never happen. *God's plan, and its purposes will be worked out, no matter whether we plead or beg, it will happen. The apostasy will come.* We in our most infinitive wisdom, like that of Peter's will not change it.

In the meantime, through all our travails *we can have life abundantly here on earth* That is not to say, everything will be perfect as a spoiled child. *We all must suffer certain circumstances, some more than others.* Some will be given more to deal with than others in both blessings and difficult ways.

***Does God
Really Have
a Plan For
My Life?***

What is the purpose of life, this difficult to answer. Nonetheless, we have been asking ourselves that question for thousands of years. The truth is we do not have to understand all things, we only have to have faith that God does!

Does God Really Have a Plan For My Life? Have you ever looked and listened to God's creation? The sounds of it? The wind blowing through the trees! A leaf falling to the soil has a sound and serves to feed the whole creation. The myriads of birds singing plant seeds for the forest. Life is beautiful and we are blessed beyond measure!

"But, what about the fact I don't hear God telling me every turn I ought to make," you say? "What about all the trouble I see?"

How often you have prayed, Oh God show me the way and I will do it! Abraham started out not knowing which way to go. Only that he should go, for God commanded it!

Did you ever wonder how often he might have shown us if we would have only taken the first step? If you were a boat, a sleek beautiful boat, designed and crafted by the best hand, by the master builder of boats, how well would you ply the seas if you remained tied to the dock saying, "Oh Lord if I only knew your will for me in my life I would truly sail the seas."

If you can't muster up enough courage to take the first step, pushing away from the dock and heading out of the port how will you serve the master builder?

Yes, God has a plan; but you must take the *first step!* He has a plan from beginning to end! But, *Does it include us? You bet it does! You are God's accepted child!* He has known you from the time you were formed in your mothers womb! Just as he has known the foundations of the creation, He has known you!

**YOU Must
Take The
First Step**

Jeremiah 1:5-10, *"I knew you before I formed you in your mother's womb. Before you were born I set you apart and appointed you as my spokesman to the world. O Sovereign Lord," I said, "I can't speak for you! I'm too young!" "Don't say that," the Lord replied, "for you must go wherever I send you and say whatever I tell you. And don't be afraid of the people, for I will be with you and take care of you. I, the Lord, have spoken!" Then the Lord touched my mouth and said, "See, I have put my words in your mouth! Today I appoint you to stand up against nations and kingdoms. You are to uproot some and tear them down, to destroy and overthrow them. You are to build others up and plant them."*

***Does God
Really Care
About Me?***

Can you fully grasp it? He has been telling us this for years. He will not be mocked! Will He then fail to guide us? Of course not; He promises to care!

"Look at the lilies and how they grow. They don't work or make their clothing, yet Solomon in all his glory was not dressed as beautifully as they are. And if God cares so wonderfully for flowers that are here today and gone tomorrow, won't he more surely care for you? You have so little faith! And don't worry about food—what to eat and drink. Don't worry whether God will provide it for you. These things dominate the thoughts of most people, but your Father already knows your needs. He will give you all you need from day to day if you make the Kingdom of God your primary concern. "So don't be afraid, little flock. For it gives your Father great happiness to give you the Kingdom." Luke 12:27-32

HOW DOES GOD GUIDE US!??? God promises to guide us; His will is found easiest in His word, please read it daily. it gives us clear guidelines as to how He wants us to live. "He calls His own sheep by name, His sheep follow Him because they know his voice." John 10:3,4 "I have good plans for you, not plans to hurt you. I will give you hope and a good future." Jeremiah 29:11

**HOW DOES
GOD GUIDE
US!???**

When faced with major decisions we need to find out what God's particular will is. Allow Holy Spirit to help you, that is His job.

God speaks to us when we pray. If it is a major situation, seek out mature Christians for help, avoiding simply circumstances and feelings instead walking in faith. Learn His voice. Trust God, but test your feelings. Your feelings can lead you astray. Learn to trust and depend on Him and He will take care of you.

Truly, by seeking God's will, asking Him to intervene on your behalf, and through prayer and scripture reading, God will guide you continually, it is His job, and He is in control.

**Seek
God's
Will**

Remember, God's guidance will not take you into areas that contradict the scriptures, and do not take an isolated statement and use it as a direction, but look at the whole context, the chapters before and after, therein you'll find the truth. Satan also knows how to quote scripture and He will try to get you confused by twisting God's word into something it is not. Therefore learn the Character of God.

Where are we, where we are going? where are we supposed to be going? What are we supposed to do when we get there? We must make decisions in life; about relationships, marriage, children, use of time, jobs, homes, money, holidays, possessions, our giving, they all are *very big things in our life*. It is important that we come to the right conclusion. Sometimes we make plans that seem God's will, *plunging headlong without asking God. It seemed right at the time*, now we're not sure what He will say.

Do not let your disobedience separate you from YOUR God.

**Don't Let
Disobedience
Separate You From
YOUR God!**

Like it says in Psalm 25:14, God confides in those who fear Him. We need that attitude of humility and fear. *Yet, Not the fear you run from, the fear you run to.* the power that stands between the very molecules of the air we breathe and the ones that hold this podium and that of our own body together. *That's the power we can now abide in.*

Yet to me, *it's not the fear of such awesome power, but, the fear of losing His presence in my life, that covering amidst the storms of life*, those blessings that bring *peace that passes understanding.*

I have a little tattered New Testament, it has been with me in many serious and joyful times, hunting, in my garden, in foreign nations, on the ocean, in aircraft of many sizes. It has been sopping wet from the rain and the sweat of hard labor. Through it all it gave me what I sought, God's living word.

How do we know the will of God and how does He guide us? As I have been attempting to show you, God's general will is revealed in scripture, the Bible discloses the truth. *Some try to bend it.* But, Jesus Christ is the living Word, and He is a strong and unbendable truth.

God will not lead us to anything contrary to scripture. Do not ask what He already answered. From the scriptures we know full well certain things are against God's will. **THE KEY WORD IS TO TRUST GOD, IN ALL THINGS!** *Get GOD involved!!* Unless you trust God, He may leave you to your own devices!!!

He will not allow you to walk away from areas you need to deal with until you do. Do not depend on letting the Bible fall open, hoping to find answers. While it often works, *let His guidance come from a regular and methodical Bible study and prayer life.* God will show you scriptures that leap from the pages, *the first true steps in gaining wisdom and understanding. and to that of hearing God's voice.*

We most often think of Moses when we think of God guiding someone. Can you imagine what it was like to be Moses? Several times he asked God to put him out of his misery. *Who could blame him? Imagine that many people complaining.* He spent *forty years with the pestering bunch, wandering around in the desert, eating nothing but bread off the ground and an occasional bird.* What a change for the Jewish diet. And on top of that. *every day a million people would come up to him and ask "Are we there yet?"*

But, we have even more than the Israelites had. When Jesus left He sent a compelling Holy Spirit to help guide us. In John 10 and Acts 16, Jesus tells us His sheep know His voice and He will lead them. That's us folks.

God most often guides us when we pray *Ask God to speak to you.* It is mysterious indeed, *to hear God speak.* Some claim He will not others claim He speaks in loud audible voices. Mostly God's voice is *perceived.* When He answers you share it. Never hide your blessings. *After a while you too will know His voice.* If you profess to be His, He *will* guide you. Still, even if you don't yet know His voice, the Holy Spirit does and He is your helper.

Sometimes I too am perplexed, I hear nothing, *or, His voice in me is easily drowned out by my own reasoning.* That's the way God made us, allowing our will to overrule His. Sometimes the

**God Will Not
Lead You Into
Anything
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**TRUST
GOD!**

**Do Not Allow
Your Will to
Over Ride
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answer comes through a good thought, a strong impression or feelings; *but they all need tested*. Does the answer bear fruit, is it found in love? Does it bring strength to your soul and to those around you. Does it encourage and comfort you? Does it edify you and your church? Does it bring the peace of God that surpasses all else?

God often gives us a strong desire to do something, working on your will to act according to His purposes. *This can be an imagined fear* for many. Did you know that fear is the antitheses of faith, it keeps you from turning your life completely over to Christ. "Next thing y'a know I'll be a *missionary in darkest Africa*," they say. They think of a worst idea and assume God will send them there. It's not likely to happen, though if it has been in *your heart* it might.

Don't misinterpret butterflies in your tummy as a lack of God's peace (*or, fear*). Sometimes Holy Spirit gives us a Holy excitement when we are about to testify or do works He called us to do. Test it out with scripture, you will find peace in your heart.

When you seek guidance, listen for God's side. Don't be like some *people so adamant about following God that they very rarely make decisions*. God's promises for guidance were not given to stop us from thinking; *nor reading His word* concerning countless daily issues. We should relinquish our human attitudes. *not our minds*.

**When You Seek
Guidance Listen
For His Side**

His guidance is personal. When we open up to His Spirit He communicates in our understanding. If you are confused, *Counsel with the saints!* Ask someone who knows the Bible better than you, someone impartial who has your best interest at heart. Yet the decision is ultimately between you and God

**Be Careful
About
Open Doors**

James 3:17 says: *"The wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable,. gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering without hypocrisy, and the seed who fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace."*

God often uses circumstances; but be here careful, not putting too much weight in them. Misguided prayers are fraught with that of asking God to open and close doors. While this sometimes works, and maybe more often than not; it in itself is dangerous and can lead you straight to sin.

Do not accept an open door as being His direction because it's open; sometimes we need to persevere in spite of the circumstances, developing the strength to force a door open in faith. *Sometimes doors opening too easily are temptations rather than opportunities*.

Be wary, the adversary prowls about like a lion seeking those to destroy. God knows your whole person, Satan doesn't but he

his way by legalism instead of following God's ways. The New Testament, or New Covenant writings, shows God's compassion and mercy, giving us His ways written in our hearts, through Holy Spirit. Like Carrying food on your back for a long journey, as you consume it, your burden becomes lighter and you gain new strength. So too is the way in which God's Word leads us on and we find strength untold.

Now through Christ's great sacrifice, we are able to receive Holy Spirit and His many blessing, Gifts. With such spiritual gifts we can do all things. It says in Joel 2:28, 29 "I will pour out My Spirit on all people, your sons will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days."

Jesus was completely filled with the Spirit and promises the same for us today. He is the same today as He was yesterday. No matter what you have done or said, all you need to do is repent, accept that Jesus was who He said He was, the Son of God, and that He died for your sins, asking for His forgiveness; when you do that you will receive His forgiveness and be changed forever.

What Does Holy Spirit Do? In the Old Testament, Holy Spirit anointed and fell on various individuals. Moses expressed his wish (Nu. 11:29) that the Spirit would fall on ALL God's people. **Isaiah 11:2** "And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of WISDOM and UNDERSTANDING, the spirit of COUNSEL and might, the spirit of KNOWLEDGE and of the FEAR OF THE LORD;" Here we see six gifts are prophesied for Christ. **Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Might, Knowledge, and Fear of the Lord.** Great attributes for a leader, RIGHT? Don't we wish our leaders were that well equipped? Pray for them that they may!

Again in Isaiah 11 verse 3-5 we find out how the gifts might effect us, producing spiritual **fruits**. Christ died, was resurrected and returned to the right hand of God for many reasons, one being to fulfill a promise that requires that we receive two supreme gifts, Salvation and His Holy Spirit. Our salvation brings to us the GIFT of Eternal Life. Holy Spirit bestows or imparts upon us **PART OF HIMSELF, HIS ABILITIES, AND HIS MINISTRIES in the form of spiritual gifts** just as He wills. However, some will get more than others.

Yeah, you say, the old adage "Them that's got, get" applies.

This is true, but in the same manner of the parable of the talents more is given to those who prove themselves to God. Yet, God never makes anyone greater or lessor in His eyes and you cup will forever be overflowing with blessings from God.

What Does Holy Spirit Do?

What Are Gifts of Holy Spirit?

SPIRITUAL GIFTS ARE GOD’S PERFECT ORDER. *Spiritual gifts are not the same as natural God-given gifts, intelligence and judgements, those natural talents or abilities that help us do whatever it is that we have learned to do, as they say in the “natural.” We are wrong if we believe our natural gifts AUTOMATICALLY become our spiritual gifts. THEY MAY IN FACT BECOME ENHANCED, developed, or blessed in wonderful ways because of our new relationship with Christ, YET God has a purpose we cannot necessarily see and our natural talents may not play a significant part in what we are to be about.*

So, God, through Holy Spirit, adds His unique, Devine gifts to us all, in the ways that He knows is right and true, that we might accomplish His purposes, NOT OURS. in the order and quantity he sees fit. Consequently, we do not own a Spiritual Gift or earn them, lest we be proud, they are the property of Holy Spirit, to give in the way He sees fit, for the purposes of God.

*However always desire more of His Gifts. Like a well used sponge or scrubbing cloth needs re-wetted again and again after continual use. We too can become hardhearted and abrasive to others without re-submitting ourselves to God. Seek after the gifts, **receive your full inheritance**. Paul reminded Timothy (IITim 1:6-18) to rekindle his gift. Though the Samaritans were Baptized in the name of Jesus Christ Peter and John prayed that they receive Holy Spirit also (Acts8:14-17). Sometimes we in our fleshly strength can hinder God’s efforts so always be willing, telling Him so.*

We all are given these endowments but they must be used or they wither and die. By exercising our gifts, they grow strong. It’s called walking in faith. He give us a full complement of ALL HIS GIFTS. Some gifts, however, are only evident when He wants to use them in us. Some are strongly evident, to be used powerfully in the Church. Others receive quiet gifts for ministries seldom seen. Yet to each of us we are given the potential to do great things.

When confronted with a task seemingly too great, the gift lying dormant is made evident, and we are used in a mighty way. There are many gifts but we will talk about the seven sometimes called, MOTIVATIONAL GIFTS, listed in Romans CH 12.

***PROPHECY, MINISTRY, TEACHING, EXHORTING (OR AN ENCOURAGER), CONTRIBUTOR TO NEEDS (OR A GIVER), LEADERSHIP, AND THAT OF MERCY.** These are given that you may serve others. IN-OTHER-WORDS, HE BLESSES US THAT WE MAY BLESS OTHERS. I recommend you to read, study, inwardly digest all of Romans chapters 12,13,14,& 15. They explain our calling as a Christian.*

Does Holy Spirit motivate you when you are confronted with a situation that requires one or more of these gifts, and you

**SPIRITUAL
GIFTS ARE
GOD’S
PERFECT ORDER**

**Receive
YOUR Full
Inheritance**

**He Bless Us
That We May
Bless Others In
Like Manner**

step out in faith and obedience? Are you led to minister spiritually. When doing so do you immediately speak the truth, providing the action that comes from His mercy. Do you stay close to the Lord in your time of ministry, obeying Him in your responses? If so you have been **MOTIVATED**, and are exercising **SPIRITUAL GIFTS**.

In Romans 12 verse 9-21, we see the effects of the gifts, **FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT**. If you do not have fruits, you do not have the gifts. **Ephesians 4:11-12** lists five more gifts, often called **GIFTS TO THE WHOLE CHURCH: APOSTLES, PROPHETS, EVANGELISTS, PASTORS, AND TEACHERS**. These are primary areas of ministry in the church. If you attempt to force such gifts within yourself, you might become like an apple tree straining to produce a watermelon. Yet, if Holy Spirit leads you, you are assured success in His eyes, that's what counts. Man's ideas of success often strongly disagree with God's. If we attempt to minister according to our flesh, or natural gifts, We can never be sure whether we are in fact producing fruit that places treasures in heaven, or spoils, rotten fruit from the flesh. Only through seeking Christ's ways and following Holy Spirit's leading can we completely please God.

WHY DO WE EVEN HAVE SUCH GIFTS? I found as many as 10 different reasons spelled out in the scriptures: (1) For the equipping or perfecting the Saints (us too), (2) For the Common Good, or work of the ministry, (3) For the Encouragement or Edification of the body of Christ. (4) For unity in the faith. (5) For the sure knowledge of the Son of God. (6) That the Kingdom of God may be advanced, bringing as many as are willing (7) That we not be carried about with every wind of change, or by the cunningness and craftiness of man. (8) That we may speak the truth in love.(9) That we may grow into His likeness (10) And to glorify God.

No spiritual gift should point to or edify the one who manifest or has the gift, BUT TO GOD. We must treat **these Gifts** as pearls of great price; cherish them as does any good servant, realizing many people depend on our use of them.

Jesus told his disciples to be filled with the power from on high: (Matt. 28:19; Mk. 16:17-18; Lk. 24:47; Acts 1:8) That they might evangelize, Baptizing in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; cast out demons; heal the sick; speak with new tongues. These are manifestations **OF THE HOLY SPIRIT'S MINISTRY**.

If we possessed all the brilliance or strength in the world and do not live lovingly, we will be nothing at all. In I corn 14 we are told to desire spiritual gifts. **But be careful not to seek things of spirit for the wrong motives, settling for things which confuse**

**GIFTS
TO THE
WHOLE
CHURCH**

**Why Do We
Even Have
Such Gifts?**

**No Spiritual Gift
Should Edify a
Person, Only God**

**Do Not Seek
The Gifts For
Wrong Motives**

and disrupt the church. God does not author confusion, but peace.

*There is a third group of gifts sometimes called the **Specific Circumstances Gifts**. 1 Corinthians chapter 12:1 names: **WISDOM, KNOWLEDGE, FAITH, HEALING, MIRACULOUS POWERS, PROPHECY, DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN SPIRITS, SPEAKING IN DIFFERENT KINDS OF TONGUES, AND THE INTERPRETATION OF TONGUES**. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and He gives them to each one, just as he determines.*

Let's talk about distinguishing between spirits or Discernment. This is of the utmost importance in spiritual warfare and in our daily walk. Read James 3:17,18; John 16:13; and 1 Corinthians 2:11-16. In John 10 & Acts 16 Jesus tell us how His sheep will know His voice. We must be careful. Discerning whether you or someone else has a spiritual gift can sometimes be difficult. Read 1 John 4:1-6, it gives us concrete areas to examine concerning discernment. Also examine: does what they, or you, say and do bear fruit? In Love, do they bring strength to your soul and others? Do they encourage, edify and bring peace to the body? We must never boast of the gifts He gives us. They are awesome indeed, but not ours and only to be used by Him when He uses us.

DOES GOD HEAL TODAY?

DOES GOD HEAL TODAY? *When you see or hear of God healing someone miraculously, you are getting a small glimpse of what it is to be like in heaven when the final redemption of our bodies take place, it's exciting to think about, no more suffering or pain.*

For some of us that is a biggie, right?

Each person could tell a story about a person who was healed. Sometimes they are instantaneous, however, sometimes we are not privileged in see in it in our life. That's a cope out some say. God only heals who He will and that's the end of it. Read Roman 8:22,23, and 1 Corinthians 15:50-54

*In our early walk, and sometimes even now if we admit it, we doubt God concerning prayers to heal. Not that we necessarily doubt His ability; but maybe the one we are praying for; or our own sinful nature; or something in the past, maybe causing a blockage. **Anyway you look at it, it is doubt** that God will truly answer our prayers for any given thing. **Rather than expecting it as we should, we are frequently taken by surprise** when it happen as we prayed for it. That sign at the back of the chapel was not placed there so we can see it on the way out **by accident**. We need to **firmly** get those words **implanted on our hearts, EXPECT A MIRACLE!***

EXPECT A MIRACLE!

*Sometimes we catch ourselves **almost intentionally avoiding a person that we know** is sick or in need of healing. When we are face to face, we are fearful of asking, "You and I*

Should I expect God to heal today? In fact if I do not expect God to heal today, then I am saying to God, you don't care about my situation; I virtually can't depend on you."

If you are around me much, you will often hear me extol the virtues of learning God's character. If you know Him, you know Jesus and Holy Spirit, and no one can draw you aside.

The Greek word that means "I save" also means "I heal." To say "Jesus saves" is to say "He heals!" There in lies faith. In knowing who you are dealing with, and standing in faith that what He says is true, He does not lie.

In II Kings 5 we are told the story of Naaman the great warrior who had leprosy. He raged with anger when Elisha sent word for him to wash in the Jordon River seven times. It was not what Naaman expected and he would have gone away unhealed if not for the wise council of his trusted servants. As he washed in obedience, against his better judgement, his skin became like that of a baby's. We are not so different than Naaman. We too, try to put God in a box, expecting Him to do as we want and on our own time schedule?

Ajay Gohill, a young Hindu, born in Kenya, contracted erythrodermic psoriasis, a chronic skin disease that dropped his weight from 160 to 105 pounds. He was treated all over the world in major hospitals. After spending eighty percent of his family's wealth the only difference was that he had a liver disease from strong drugs. He was so horrible to look at he lost his wife and children. As he lay in hospital bed he wanted to die. Finally he cried out to a God he was not sure existed, saying, "God if you are watching me let me die, I am sorry if I have done something wrong." He opened a Bible he found Psalm 38. Every verse leaped from the pages and he prayed for God to heal him, falling asleep. The next morning was different, he felt joyful, like a new man, even his body looked different. He like Naaman took a bath. Astounded he called for the nurses to come, his skin had lifted off in the water. He told the nurses God was healing him. When he emerged from the water he was like Naaman. He had skin like a baby. He was totally healed. Since then he has been reunited with his family, but says the inner healing that took place was far greater than the physical healing. Today, he lives as a servant, for Jesus.

Inner healing, if you feel condemnation, look to where it is coming from. Only Satan condemns; Holy Spirit Convicts; there is a big difference. One brings the possibility of life and healing, that has no ending. The other death and unholy shame, an eternal death that has no ending.

I want to talk a little about the flesh here. "For the mind

**Should I expect
God To Heal
Today?**

**The Greek Word
For Save Also
Means Heal!**

**True Inner
Healing Only
Comes From
God**

set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace. Because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the Law of God, for it is NOT ABLE TO DO SO.” You and I, as Christians, are aliens to the world, and prisoners in the flesh. If you leave here with nothing more I want you to take this key with you. Your flesh wants to hold your spirit captive. That is the part of our body that is sinful in nature. If you listen to your flesh as though it is telling you the truth, you are being deceived. Satan is in charge of the flesh if you allow him to and he is the deceiver you are listening to. Lift up your shield of faith. Reject those fiery darts and recognize where they are coming from. They come from the power of darkness. The wrong side of the tracks within you.

From of Jesus’ teachings in Mark 1:15 and many other places in the New Testament we know God’s Kingdom, the rule of God, is not only for the future but is for here and now, where we are, and His Character is involved wanting to heal our affirmatives, wanting us to succeed in what we are suppose to be about, doing His will.

Lets face it, God is in the normal business of healing. Essentially twenty-five percent of the scriptures in the New Testament deal with the healings that Jesus did; and, He commissioned His disciples to do the same. Heal the sick and spread the Good News. First he commissioned the twelve, the seventy and twelve, and now us, each of you here fall under the same commission, if you have given yourself over to Christ, allowing Him to be the Lord and savior of your life.

No where in the Bible does it say healing was confined to a particular time, instead Jesus teaches us these are the signs of the coming of the Kingdom of God. We should make it a regular expectation in our prayer life, expecting miracles, not standing in wonderment when it happens.

Tonight we are gathered for a multi purpose. As a servant of God, duly commissioned, accept your position in faith, the position He died on the cross to save you for, bringing you in as adopted heirs into the Kingdom of God. If you have not given yourself over to Christ, ask one of your team members to pray for you or come forward, we will pray with you. If you have a particular need that you are burdened with do the same. Only do not go away from here with a need not met. This is your night to come fully into the Kingdom of God in a triumphant manner.

Now how do you pray for one another for it is your duty? Whether they are in front of you or thousands of miles away, during you prayer ask God for a picture or a word concerning that person, what is needed for them.

**If You Feel
Condemned
Look to Where it
is Coming From**

**DO NOT BE
DECEIVED!**

**Do His Will,
Not Yours, Only
Then Will You
Receive All The
Blessing He has
Reserved For You!**

**He Died On
The Cross
For Us All!**

Ask the person, if possible, some of the same questions:

1.) What needs do they have. What is wrong. Why do they want prayers. 2.) What has caused this condition? 3.) How should I pray? 4.) After prayer, how do they feel now? Reassure them or continue to pray for them. 5.) Be persistent, advise them to do the same.

Now, let us pray. Lord God, our father of Lord Jesus Christ we come to you joyfully accepting our place as servants of the most high, that we may do you bidding here on earth, that others might be drawn into your kingdom and not lost. Help us oh Lord to have the heart of love for those who you place before us, that we may reflect your love, given to us at great cost and pain. Help us Lord God to continue on in fellowship and in worship with you that we might continually hear, "Well done good and faithful servant, go into the joy of your Master." Amen

Okay, let's gather around laying hands and praying for each others needs. And remember: What is said inside stays inside.

Christianity For Today Session Five Teaching

Let us pray: Lord God you have brought us thus far, help us to continue on your pathways. Help us oh God to seek the changes you desire in our lives that we may soon realize we are new creatures, born again, created anew with a clean heart, seeking Holiness instead of worldly gain. Amen

How Can I Change? I read several months ago where someone famous used the expression, "Courage out of ignorance." It sounded good, like a real truism. Another one I heard concerning having children in the first place always seemed true, "It seemed like the right thing to do at the time." I've often thought about these statements, deciding I could place myself into both categories. Maybe not such a good thing.

People often wonder how I can do so many different things, well the truth is out, the reason is ignorance; I don't know any better than to try, and usually that's all God wants from us isn't it.

Well when you're driving the interstate highways like I used to do so often you have long periods of time to think. I thought about myself and the above statements, and the ignorance of things. Now being ignorant is not often a very good thing. According to Webster, ignorant, means destitute of knowledge, comprehension, education, or simply uninformed. I decided that to ignore something was different than being ignorant, but according to Webster it isn't.

Let's look at Faith which is not ignorance. And we should never pretend the enemy or a problem doesn't exist, ignoring the problem, instead we must face it head on. Only victory, never ignorance makes us a winner. Conversely, courage out of ignorance is fake courage, and must be corrected by God. Yet, courage out of faith gives us truth and life. Have you been denying problems, ignoring them, putting them aside, believing them conquered?

I read a supposedly true story about a Christian who died on the operating table twice. He remembered his experience. He walked on a field full of blazing flowers, thinking how he would like to pick some to carry with him, he looked down and his hands were already full, then he saw in the distance an even prettier hill, thinking how nice it would be to be there, he suddenly found he was. The writer did not talk about what struck me like a ton of bricks. In

Notes and Keys

How Can I Change?

Courage From Faith Brings Truth and Life

always Gratitude.

When you loose your cool and chose hate, jealousy, malice, envy, greed, fear, pride, guilt, and any other feeling or action over the will of God you lose much more than the mere curse word you said; or the ill look or contempt you blessed someone with. You lost for that moment your place in the vineyards, your ministry, your rewards, the imperishable service of the Master, and only He can give it back. He will, if you only ask, but ask you must ask for His forgiveness.

As a LOVING WILLING SERVANT TRUSTING GOD, we should give thanks in all things, because we know who the Father is and believe He has our best interests at heart. As such the Beatitudes give us essentially a code of ethics for the Christian, contrasting Kingdom values against the world's.

You know, I fully believe a SECRET in LIFE LIES IN BEING GRATEFUL for what God has given us, happy no matter what the circumstances are, knowing and being ready to answer those who ask why we have such hope. Isn't that what it is all about? We can be this way **Psalm 32:8** "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you." Or this. **Psalm 32:9** "Be not like a horse or a mule, without understanding, which must be curbed with bit and bridle, or it will not stay near you."

YOU HAVE EVERYTHING TO GAIN BY BEING THE GRATEFUL SERVANT, WITH FULL GRATITUDE FOR WHAT YOU HAVE, BEING SECURE IN YOUR PLACE IN THE VINEYARDS, NO MATTER WHERE IT IS, UNTIL HE LEADS YOU ELSEWHERE.

A word of caution here: Many people end up getting their priorities mixed up when seeking what ministry or the place in the vineyards they should be about. Then too, many preachers and churches confuse the issue by being over exuberant concerning churchly things, trying to often shame you into service to the church. God doesn't want you to do things in His vineyards because you have to; He wants you to do things out of love, because you want to.

Your **priorities** are **1)** To get to know God, fellowshiping with Him by prayer and the reading of His word; your new life manual. Making God first in your life. **2)** Your wife or husband; your helper in this world is your second priority. **3)** Your children; your disciples, your family beyond your mate. **4)** Your place in the vineyards, your ministry; the job you do nine-five that earns you money, certainly not necessarily things you do at the church. **5)** The church, not the buildings, not the organization, not the pastors, the people, the congregation, fellowshiping with them, the people

Be Grateful No Matter The Circumstances

As A Loving Servant Trust God

What Are Your Priorities?

like yourself, singing songs and praising God, discipling others and being disciplined.

Don't let people confuse you about these things, too often they have an agenda which is mostly of their own making not God's. Be careful, know you place and hang on to it, God will be please with you if you do.

So What's Next?

So What's Next? *Good and God; evil and Devil; the difference is only one letter. Behind the power of Good lies Goodness, or God Himself. Behind our evil desires and temptation lies worldly evil personified, the devil.*

Satan, is a fallen angel (Isaiah 14:12-23). Paul tells us in Ephesians 6:11, 12, "stand guard against the devil' schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms."

The devil only tempts those wishing to lead a sinless life, the others already belong to him: he has no need to tempt them. Evil often reigns supreme in the world: evil regimes, institutional torture, violence, murder, brutal rape, large-scale drug trafficking, terrorist atrocities, sexual and physical abuse of children, occult activity, satanic rituals and many more. Who is behind this? None other than Satan, or the effects there of.

The ultimate aim of Satan is to destroy every human (John 10:10). He will, if allowed by us, lead us to the path of destruction; and he tries to prevent, through all manner of deception, anyone from coming to a belief in Christ. "The god of the age, the devil, has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God." II Corinthians 4:4

All of us have something to hide, Things we are ashamed of. Things we do not want others to know; even our closest of friends or spouses. We each put up barriers to protect ourselves, saying you can only come so far then, "Keep Out!"

Temptation is not sin. The devil sometimes puts thoughts into our minds that we know is wrong. We have a choice to accept or reject them. If we accept it we are one step away from sin. By rejecting it we do as Jesus did. He was "tempted in every way, just as we are, yet was without sin, Hebrews 4:15

**Temptation
Is Not Sin,
Acting On It Is!**

Satan accuses, "Look at what you did! You say you are a Christian. You can't be. What a terrible thing to think. You are no good. Who could love such an evil despicable person like you."

So you say, "Oh no! I can't be a Christian. I'm not good enough. I've blown it so it doesn't matter anymore. I may as well go ahead and do it since I've already failed."

Satan's tactics are accusation, condemnation and deception making the temptation pathway to sin easy, and righteous thinking

We can no longer be backbiters, rather we must become encouragers, building up, constantly loving others. We should be thankful in all things and full of joy. How can we do all these things, only through Holy Spirit and Christ! We must most especially take on new standards that deal with sexual purity, and morality.

God warns us about going outside the boundaries He sets up for us. There is no such things as casual sex. Every act of sexual intercourse involves a "one flesh" union (I Corinthians 6:13-20). When a union is broken, people get hurt. Such breaking apart causes brokenness, a ripping of flesh that was joined together. It leaves life long scars.

Romans 12:2 says, "be transformed." God does not ask us to leave the Good life behind, but He does expect us to throw out our rubbish. For if we include these things in our life we are trying to serve two masters, loving one and hating the other. Like the bag lady who lived and died on the street. Upon investigation it was found she was rich. She owned a large home and had a wealthy inheritance. But she liked her life the way it was and never claimed her inheritance. So too are we if we remain in the world and continue to live in its clutches.

As Christian we inherit for more than we can imagine. However, to enjoy them we must leave the rubbish of our life behind, hating what is evil. In doing so we gain far more than we left. We are urged by Paul in Romans 12:13-21 to be in generous harmony, be hospitable, forgiving, empathetic, living in peace, which draws us deeper into the family of God, where good is not overcome by evil.

How can we be these things? By accepting Christ as our Lord and Savior, we become pleasing to God. We should give Him all our time, allowing Him to establish the priorities in life. Therein lies a greater freedom that we could imagine.

Set aside time to be alone with Him and other Christians, encourage one another. Offer your ambitions to the Lord. Nothing is wrong with wanting to be successful, just become successful in the way of the Lord, then you will find happiness. The world is full of so-called successful and greedy people who are miserable.

Jesus says in Matthew 6:33, to seek Him and all the things we believe we should be about will come about. We need to give Him our ears, that we might hear what we should hear. Give Him our mouth, the tongue is powerful enough to destroy or to bring love, give him you words. Give Him your hands, let them do no sexually immoral acts, or murderous deeds. Finally give Him your whole body as a living sacrifice. Jesus, however did not come to make our life easy but to make us great.

Be Transformed!

Seek Him First

Set Aside Time For Him!

God loves us and wants us to make the very best of our life. He wants to entrust to us, His power, and His will for our life so we can, “test and approve what God’s will is, His good, pleasing and perfect will.” Romans 12:2.

Some will insist on running their own life anyway. Many so-called Christians do. What they are saying is, “I don’t trust you God.” I can handle this all by myself. I’ll let you know when I want something, other than that, leave me alone. I’ll do alright by myself. Be careful. Left to our own devices is not a good place to be. The little sacrifices God asks us to make are nothing to what we will gain in following His will.

God will grant you the desires of YOUR Heart, He will not leave you alone. Jesus, God’s only Son, endured terrible pain and suffering. So, it is absurd to not trust him. “He who did not spare His only Son, but gave Him up for us all, how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things.” Romans 8:32.

**He Will Not
Leave You
Alone!**

Let us pray: Thank you Lord God for your loving guidance and patience. Help us to become diligent in our ways. Show us new an hidden things in the days to come that we might grow stronger in your way. Amen

Okay, let’s gather around laying hands and praying for each others needs. And remember: What is said inside stays inside.

Christianity For Today Session Six Teaching

Let us pray: Lord God, We are nearing the end of our journey of learning during this course, teach us anew. Make in us a willingness to not only serve you but place within our hearts a desire and a hunger to bring others into your kingdom of righteousness now and forever. Amen

HOW CAN SPREAD THE GOOD NEWS TO OTHERS ABOUT OUR CHRISTIAN FAITH OUR NEW LIFE? *There’s a million reasons, but I’ll give you several. The main reason why we should testify is it is A COMMANDMENT FROM JESUS. GO appears in the Bible 1,514 times, 233 times in the New Testament, and 54 times in Matthew alone. JESUS TELLS US TO GO TO THE LOST SHEEP. He tells us to go and TELL, Go and INVITE ALL you meet, then he says Go and MAKE DISCIPLES.*

In fact Jesus’ last words in Matthew 28:18-20 says, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

*Then there is 1 Timothy 4:6 “**If you put these things before the brothers, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, being trained in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine that you have followed.**”*

So, in fact we are all called to live an exemplary life, so that others will ask why we have the hope, the faith in us. But, did you realize we were all led to Christ by someone. Whether they played a major part in our actual conversion or not, they played an integral part. Plus, many, many unknown people planted seeds in our life along the way. The real TRUTH IS SOMEONE WITNESSED TO YOU or you wouldn’t be here now. Don’t we owe the same to others? WE DIDN’T JUST WANDER INTO THE CHURCH AND SAY “CAN YOU SAVE ME BROTHER?”

Religion won’t do it. The building programs won’t do it. The preacher can’t do it. Though the pastor, hymns, building and religion can carry you along the way, somewhere in the past, your starting point, God placed someone in your path. Someone who made the difference you needed at the time. A WILLING SEED SPREADER. THAT’S WHAT WE’RE CALLED TO DO SPREAD SEEDS.

Notes and Keys

**The Truth Is
Someone
First Witnessed
To You!**

**Just Be Willing
To Spread Seeds**

and they don't. If we appreciate the good news of the Gospel we should be bursting to tell others, how about you?

Ephesians 3:14-21 says, "So I bow in prayer before the Father from whom every family in heaven and on earth gets its true name. I ask the Father in his great glory to give you the power to be strong inwardly through His Spirit. I pray that Christ will live in your hearts by faith and that your life will be strong in love and be built on love. And I pray that you and all God's holy people will have the power to understand the greatness of Christ's love - how wide and how long and how high and how deep that love is. Christ's love is greater than anyone can ever know, but I pray that you will be able to know that love. Then you can be filled with the fullness of God. With God's power working in us, God can do much, much more than anything we can ask or imagine. To Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus for all time, forever and ever. Amen."

"Okay, you got me, how do I go about telling others," you say?

That's why I shared the stories with you. It can give you some ideas; But first, we want to warn you about two aspects concerning telling others. FIRST, being so excited that you want to tell everyone, blurting out words without planing or letting Holy Spirit have His way. There was a term used by many, "Don't pull me down your well", which was apropos.

You've seen cartoons where people get hit over the head with a Bible, they resent it. Remember that picture, it'll keep you from making a similar mistake.

So, How Can I Spread the Good News to Others?

Remember God blesses us so we can bless others! Contrary to popular belief, our faith isn't a private matter. Why is it we are perfectly willing to stand up and make a fool of ourselves at a football game, yelling and jumping up and down when our team did something great?

Well I want to ask you similar question. When you went to such a great game and your team won do you remember how great you felt when you left the stadium do you feel that same way when you leave church ASK GOD WHY NOT? You should feel some of that same exuberance, ready to go out and tell the world, or anybody that will listen, what a great thing that happened in your church in your life, how excited you are to have witnessed it.

If you do not feel that way ASK GOD why are you so willing to share about the great game but not about your church, or Christ in your life, or about Christ in your family's life. Think

**How Can I Spread
The Good News
To Others?**

**He WILL Give
You The Words**

**What Good Is
What You Believe
If It Does Not
Make A Difference?**

about it.. WHAT GOOD IS YOUR RELIGION UNLESS IT MAKES A DIFFERENT? You must be sensitive of the needs of others, where they are, listen to what they are saying. Let Holy Spirit give you both the words and insight of how to help the person before you speak.. HE WILL GLADLY LEAD YOU, PROVIDING WHAT THEY NEED NOT WHAT YOU WANT THEM TO HAVE. ABOVE ALL REMEMBER YOU ARE ONLY A SEED SPREADER; only God can grow the seeds sown. Don't take it personally if it seems you failed. You are spreading GOD'S WORD AND IT WILL NOT GO OUT VOID, WITHOUT ACCOMPLISHING ITS TASK.

We are called to teach society, not condemn it, to bring about healings not division. We are called to get involved. If we speak out about the decay of moral standards we must also offer the way of changing it, the reason for our personal testimony.

JESUS SAYS, WE ARE TO BE LIGHTS. We know about a lighthouse. But what about each of us? Jesus says we become this light by doing good deeds. At work people notice whether we display a continuity of genuine love and concern towards them.

The things Christians say and do are heavily scrutinized. They watch our honesty, truthfulness, hard work, reliability, or our lack of the same or gossip or backbiting criticisms. Even our driving habits, and what we do when they salute with hand gesture. Let there be no mistake, we influence hundreds of lives without a word being spoken. Are you a good influence, or a closet Christian, waiting bashfully to discover what the other person thinks before venturing a word that might disclose what you stand for?

Be who God has called you to be and do it well! Live out your Christian life in the most appropriate way God leads you to, that you may bring those assigned to you to the Lord. We are not all called to be a Mother Teresa, only that we should play the part He gives us. IF WE DO THIS WE SERVE GOD, NO GREATER, OR NO LESS THAN SHE DID.

Never argue with anyone, far from it, you will drive away more in arguing than you ever will by listening and in all gentleness ministering to the needs of others. Millions of people have objections to Christianity. Often questions come up about all the rules and the confusion between different denominations. Work out the answers to common questions so you are prepared. If they ask specific questions that you truly know the answer to, do so. But avoid direct confrontation unless so directed by Holy Spirit, LEST YOU DO MORE DAMAGE THAN GOOD. Every mature Christian has horror stories about trying to argue someone into the Kingdom of God. It usually is not what God wants us to be about.

"COME AND YOU WILL SEE," communicating the good news to those outside the faith. Invite others to join you in worship, a

Play The Part He Gives Us, Be A Light!

Listen With All Gentleness While Ministering To The Needs Of Others

fellowship meeting, Bible study. If you are a new Christian sometimes this is the most effective way, yet always inject your own personal testimony regardless to how new you are to the Lord. It will have the most impact.

Albert McMakin a nondescript farmer was instrumental in bring literally hundreds of thousands of people from all walks of life across the globe Christ. In 1934 he filled his truck with people for a revival meeting. There was one young man that Albert especially wanted to go, yet the young man was more interested in girls; Albert asked him to drive the truck, suggesting he bring along several of his girl friends and they could use the truck during the meeting. To the young man's chagrin his girl friends wanted to go to the meeting. Reluctantly he went too, he had nothing else to do. However, during the meeting he found himself having thoughts he never had before. He volunteered to drive Albert's truck again, and again, until one night he too went forward and gave his life to Christ. The young friend Albert McMakin invited was Billy Graham. We can't all be a Billy Graham; but, WE CAN ALL BE LIKE ALBERT MAKIN AND BRING OUR FRIENDS TO JESUS.

You are GOD'S EMISSARY. Remember it is God who grows the seeds you plant. Tell a story of what happened to you, when God met a need that was critical, a healing, a joy, a triumph, SOMETHING YOU FEEL HOLY SPIRIT HAS REMINDED YOU OF WHEN YOU ARE SHARING CHRIST TO SOMEONE.

Tell them why you believe in Jesus Christ, what your life was like before you accepted Christ as your Lord and Savior, what caused you to change your attitude and turn your life around, tell where you were when this all happened, tell what difference Jesus has made in your whole life since you were saved. TELL HOW THROUGH PRAYER, THROUGH THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT, THROUGH THE CHANGES HE MADE IN YOUR LIFE, YOU HAVE CHANGED. Sometimes we see a lot of God's power displayed, yet at many churches little is seen. INVITE PEOPLE TO COME AND SEE, talk about what is happening here. LET THEM KNOW GOD IS THE SAME TODAY AS HE WAS YESTERDAY. Invite them to a Christianity for Today course. TELL THEM HOW MUCH IT MEANT TO YOU.

Pray in the spirit while you are witnessing or giving your testimony, allowing Him to interject things from your past, scripture, things you are amazed you say as you say them, things that come from a region deep within your soul.

Prayer is the most important element, DON'T FORGET IT, if you do you will recognize what you have done when you walk away. A TESTIMONY, OR WITNESS, FROM THE FLESH IS MOSTLY FLAT AND INEFFECTIVE.

Be God's Emissary!

1 + 1 = Many!

Tell How You Have Changed

God Is The Same Today As He Was Yesterday!
