

Living the New Life

By Byron Fike

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Lesson 1: A New Gift—Grace

God's Greatest Gift

The only way anyone can live in relationship to God is by means of God's grace. Grace is God's gift to you, enabling your sins to be forgiven and your life to be transformed into the image of Jesus. You accepted God's grace when you were baptized into Jesus' death and resurrection. Now you are called to walk in God's grace.

A Sinful Woman, a Pharisee, and a Story

Read Luke 7:36-50. What are the basic attitude differences toward Jesus between Simon and the woman?

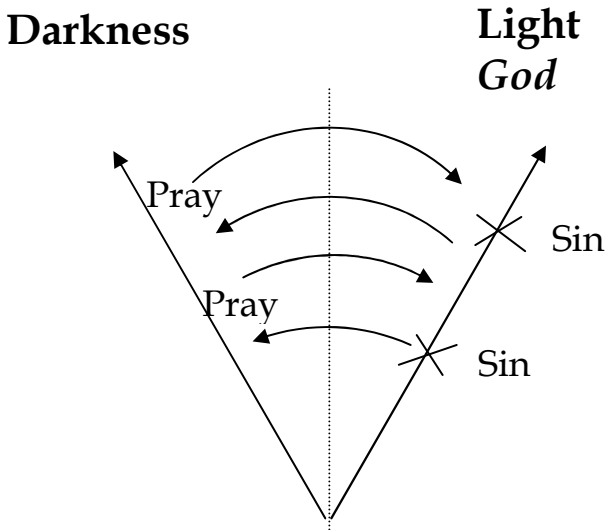
What is the point of the story Jesus told?

How does forgiveness of sins cause one to love?

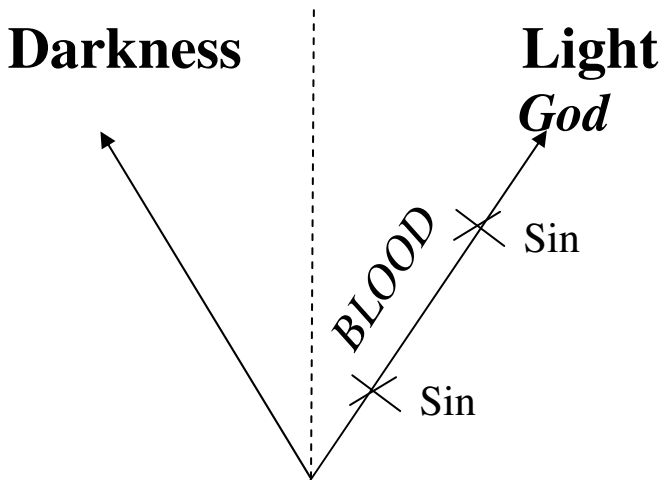
Walking in the Light

Read 1 John 1:5-2:2. Walking in the light means living a life that agrees with how God has taught you to live. Walking in the darkness means living in rebellion to God. One walking in the light is seeking to serve God. One walking in the darkness is only concerned about serving self. Sin destroys one's relationship to God. The good news is that, even though one walking in the light still sins, those sins are forgiven because of Jesus' death on the cross. Thus, one walking in the light remains in relationship to God in spite of sin!

Consider the following *incorrect* view of what happens when one walking in the light sins.



Sin does not throw you from the light to the darkness until you pray and convince God to take you back. Your sin hurts God because he wants you to live differently. The blood of Jesus, however, continues to wash away your sins so that you can continue to have fellowship with God. In this way your eternal salvation is assured!



Grace Brings Transformation

God's goodness to us, by means of his grace, is not an excuse for sin. It is a powerful motivation to live the new life. Consider the following illustration from marriage. When a couple gets married, they both want to have a strong, growing relationship with each other. However, each will fail the other in many ways. What holds a marriage together is mercy and grace. *Mercy* means not treating one's partner the way they deserve to be treated. *Grace* means giving one's partner what they don't deserve—forgiveness. Suppose the man says something insensitive to his wife. Her feelings are terribly hurt, and she is crushed at what was said. However, she tells her husband that she forgives him, and she will not hold this against him. Has she just given him permission to continue to say insulting things? Of course not. She is giving him an opportunity to change and grow. If the husband's attitude is, *That's great, now I can insult her all I want!*, his marriage will soon be over. If his attitude is, *Thank you, I don't want to hurt you*, their relationship will grow stronger.

Living in God's Grace

Read Titus 3:3-8 and answer the following questions. Verse three is a description of one's life before following Christ. **What elements in this**

list describe your former life?

According to verses 4-7, what has saved you from your sins?

What are you now to devote yourself to doing according to verse 8?

What should I do when I sin?

1. Confess your sin to God. Be honest about what has happened. Don't try to minimize it or justify it. Agree with God that what you did, said or thought was wrong.
2. Thank God for his grace and forgiveness. Ask him to change you from the inside out. Know for certain that your sins are forgiven.
3. Correct the wrong, inasmuch as possible. If you have hurt someone, apologize. If you have stolen something, return it.
4. Change your behavior. Stay away from situations where you are tempted to sin. Seek help from a mature Christian.

Lesson 2: A New Way of Thinking

Inside Out

God is more interested in *who you are* than in *what you do*. God knows that who you are always finds expression in what you do. Therefore, he changes people from the inside out. Actions grow out of attitudes. Jesus summarized the attitudes of one who lives in God's kingdom (one living in the kingdom has God ruling over his life) in a series of eight statements we call the beatitudes. **Read the beatitudes in Matthew 5:3-12.**

The True Path to Happiness

Each beatitude begins with the word "blessed." Being blessed is the deepest and richest form of joy. It is a happiness that is not dependent upon the situations and circumstances around one. It is a happiness that nobody can take away from you. But the path to such blessedness is the exact opposite of how the world (those outside of Christ) says one should live.

God's Way vs. the World's Way

Consider the following contrast between what God considers of great value and what the world values.

<i>Beatitude</i>	<i>Meaning</i>	<i>World's View</i>
Poor in Spirit	Humble. One who sees his desperate need for God. He knows that he is unable to be spiritual in and of himself.	Prideful. Self-sufficient. Never admits that one needs anything.
Mourning	Sorrow for sin. Deeply regrets sinful behaviors and actions.	Regrets the consequences of sin but not the sin itself. Covers up sin and justifies it.
Meekness	Surrenders one's life to God's control. Doesn't seek revenge or	Stands up for one's rights. Insists on having one's own way.

<i>Beatitude</i>	<i>Meaning</i>	<i>World's View</i>
	retaliation.	
Hungering and Thirsting for Righteousness	Deeply desires to know God and do his will.	Deeply desires to be happy.
Merciful	Treats others in the same way God has treated him. Forgives, loves, and serves others.	Treats others the way one thinks they deserve to be treated.
Pure in Heart	Undivided loyalty. One is pure in motives, thoughts, desires, and actions.	Impure motives, thoughts, and desires.
Peacemaker	Desires to make peace even when not responsible for the difficulty.	Concerned more about winning an argument and being considered right.
Persecuted for Righteousness	Natural result of following Jesus.	Does whatever it takes to not stand out as different. Conforms to the world's standards.

Read the following passages and describe the attitudes exhibited or attitudes the writer is urging the readers to have. Do they exhibit the attitudes of the kingdom of God or the world? How do you know?

1. Poor in Spirit (Luke 15:11-32)

2. Mourning (Luke 22:54-62)

3. Meekness (Matt. 26:36-46)

4. Hungering and Thirsting for Righteousness (Luke 18:18-30)

5. Merciful (John 8:1-11)

6. Pure in Heart (Matt. 23:1-12, 25-28)

7. Peacemaker (Matt. 5:43-48)

8. Persecuted for Righteousness (1 Peter 4:12-16)

Continually Changing

The beatitudes do not come naturally. It is natural to be prideful and judgmental and insist on having your way. When you repent of these things, Jesus changes you from the inside out so that you become like him. This is a lifelong process and is never complete.

The beatitudes build upon one another. The beginning place is always realizing how much you need God and how unlike him you are. As you grow in your faith, God will continue to expose parts of your life that are in

need of changing. That is his call to you to go back to the beginning, realize your need for him, mourn over your sinfulness, surrender control of your life to him all over again, and be eager to do his will. You will soon see evidence of his work in your life as you exhibit mercy to people you formerly would have held resentments against or as you resist a sexual temptation because in your heart you don't want to be the kind of person who commits sexual sin. As you see these changes, rejoice! You are becoming more like Christ.

Lesson 3: A New Relationship (1)--Prayer

Prayer: A Definition

One of God's greatest gifts to his children is the ability to converse with him. He wants you to talk with him. He is not as concerned that you use the "right" words or assume a particular physical posture or how long your prayer lasts as he is that you *talk to him*. Through prayer you come to know God more intimately as you express your desires, fears, failures, hopes, dreams, needs, etc. As you express yourself to God in prayer, he shapes you ever so patiently into the image of Jesus by refining your priorities and adjusting your character. *Prayer is talking to God as God*. God is not your "buddy"; he is your Creator, Redeemer, Lord, and Friend. Be honest and open in all your communication with him. Be humble and willing to submit to him in everything. **Read Philippians 4:6-7 and make note of some of the blessings that come through prayer.**

Different Types of Prayer

Beside each of the various types of prayer listed below, read the scriptures which give directions or examples. Write a brief description of each type of prayer.

Adoration and Praise (Psalm 8:1-9)

Thanksgiving (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18; 1 Timothy 1:12-17)

Confession (1 John 1:9; Psalms 32:1-11)

Praying for Others (James 5:16-20; Ephesians 1:15-19; Matthew 9:37-38)

Praying for Yourself (Philippians 4:6; James 1:5; Matthew 26:36-44)

The Model Prayer

Read Matthew 6:9-15. This is sometimes called the "Lord's Prayer." It was given by Jesus to serve as a model for us to follow in praying to him. This model prayer helps us to recognize our need for God and depend upon him. **Pray right now using the following outline. Record your thoughts in the space provided when you finish.**

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

Father, I need you to rule my life. I recognize you as the only one who is holy. I surrender my life to your will.

"Give us today our daily bread."

Father, I need you to provide my needs: emotional, physical, spiritual, and mental. I look to you today to give me what I need.

"Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors."

Father, I need the forgiveness that you have made possible by the blood of Jesus. Teach me how to forgive those who have sinned against me just as you forgive me.

"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."

Father, I need your guidance. Keep my eyes open to Satan's traps. Keep my feet from sin.

Record your thoughts on what you have just prayed.

Read Matthew 6:14-15. Why is our relationship to God and our prayer life so closely related to how we treat others?

Answers to Prayer

Read Matthew 7:7-11 and record God's promise to answer our prayers. What is Jesus promising?

Every wise parent listens carefully to his children's requests and answers them in the way they think is best. The parent considers what the child is asking for as well as the motives in asking. The parent also considers how to answer the request in the best interest of the child and others. Every good parent wants to give good gifts to their children and enjoys being able to give. In a similar way, God enjoys giving us what we need, as well as giving us some things simply for our enjoyment. His answers are always in keeping with his will and what he knows is best for us. Because of this, God answers our prayers in different ways. Below are four ways God answers our prayers:

1. Slow

Sometimes God knows it is not yet time to answer our specific prayer. Some things need to happen for the answer to be even more meaningful or helpful. Christians have been praying for the return of Jesus for 2,000 years. We know he is coming, but for some reason he has not come back yet. Continue to be persistent in prayer, but learn to be patient.

Read Luke 18:1-8 for an illustration of this. *When God is slow in answering, we accept the answer by demonstrating patience.*

2. No

Sometimes God knows it is best not to answer a specific prayer. When he does this, he always gives us what we need, but it may not be exactly what we want at the time. **Read Deuteronomy 3:23-29 and see a time**

when Moses was told "no" in answer to prayer. *When God answers "no," we accept the answer by demonstrating trust.*

3. *Grow*

Sometimes God knows we need to grow more in our faith or learn some things before he answers our specific prayer. **Read 1 Peter 3:7 for an example of how one's prayers can be hindered.** *When God answers "grow," we accept the answer by demonstrating discipline.*

4. *Go!*

Sometimes God gives us exactly what we ask. **Read Acts 4:23-31 for an example of a prayer answered "go."** *When God answers "go," we accept the answer by demonstrating faithfulness and thanksgiving.*

Lesson 4: A New Relationship (2)--Bible Study

What is Scripture?

The word Bible comes from the Greek word, *biblia*, which means "books." The Bible is a collection of 66 ancient books which have been preserved for us by God. These books are sacred writings, or Scripture.

Read 2 Peter 1:20-21 and record the origin of Scripture.

Read 2 Timothy 3:14-17 and answer the following questions. What are some of the benefits of studying the Scriptures?

What does it mean that Scripture is "God-breathed" or "inspired"?

Briefly discuss how Scripture is useful in each of the following categories mentioned in Timothy: teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness.

The Objective of Bible Study

The Bible is our most trusted authority for understanding the nature, character, person, and will of God. Rightly interpreted, the Bible is God's Word for our lives. The objective of Bible study is not simply to know the Bible (as helpful as that can be) but to know God. **Read John 5:39-40. Why did their diligent study of the Scripture not help them know God?**

How can you ensure that your Bible study will help you know God?

Psalm 119 is the longest chapter in the Bible. It is one person's reflection on the beauty, wonder, and power of God's will expressed in Scripture. **Read the following verses and record the benefits and blessings of knowing God's Word.**

Psalm 119:9-11

Psalm 119:65-72

Psalm 119:89-96

Psalm 119:97-104

Psalm 119:105, 130

Bible Study Tools

The single most important tool you will use in studying the Bible is an English translation. The Bible was originally written in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. Today there are many English translations available to choose from, and each was written with a particular audience in mind. The most popular translation today is the *New International Version* (NIV) which was written for the average American reader. There are many other good translations as well. In 2005, a revised version of the NIV was published called Today's New International Version of TNIV.

Three other tools may be helpful in Bible study. These are a

concordance, a Bible dictionary, and commentaries. Most study Bibles will have a small sampling of each of these tools.

1. A *concordance* gives a listing of verses in the Bible where you can find a particular word.
2. A *Bible dictionary* gives meanings of words, location of places, and can help identify biblical people.
3. A *Bible commentary* gives someone's interpretation of what the Bible means. Commentaries can be helpful, but be aware that they are simply one person's interpretation. Heed the example of the Bereans in Acts 17:11.

Ask Questions When You Study

Some basic questions can help you in understanding your Bible better.

Read the little letter of Philemon and answer the following questions.

Who wrote the letter?

To whom is the letter addressed?

What is the author thankful for concerning the recipient?

What is the author praying for concerning the recipient?

What is the subject of the letter?

What does the author want the recipient to do? What motivation does the author want the recipient to have in doing this?

What would be a relevant application of the message of this little book to your life?

Lesson 5: A New Relationship (3)--Worship

What is Worship?

Worship is the appropriate response of created beings to their Creator. This would include reverence, adoration, submission, and obedience. It is an attitude that is expressed verbally, mentally, and physically. The word "worship" is used in the New Testament to portray at least two concepts.

Broadly speaking, the surrender of one's whole life to God is worship.

Read Romans 12:1-2. How is worship described in these verses?

In a more narrow sense, worship involves an encounter with God. Read John 4:19-24. Jesus makes a contrast between "present worship" and "coming worship." Presently, as the woman's question indicated, the primary concern was the *proper place* to worship. Jesus said in the future what will matter is not *where* one worships but *how*. The "how" of worship is intricately connected to *who one worships*. Coming to know God as he really is determines how one worships. Since God is spirit, worship is spiritual, or, as Jesus said, "in spirit and truth."

Worship takes place when you take the time to *recognize God's holiness* and *respond in reverence*. It is not limited to a certain time and place such as Sunday mornings from 10:30 to noon at a church building. One needs to worship daily. Then, when the whole church gathers for corporate worship, we bring our worship with us to join other worshippers in honoring and praising our God.

Read the following examples of people worshiping. What caused these people to worship?

Matthew 14:25-33

John 9:35-38 (You may want to read all of chapter nine to get the whole story.)

Read Acts 13:1-2. How does worship open the door for the works of service?

Worship is Not an Option

Human beings are made to worship. Therefore, we will worship something. That is why the opposite of worship of God is idolatry. An idol is anything that is seen as the essence of life and is loved, honored, and cherished as such. We can make an idol of most anything: our occupations, our possessions, even our recreational activities. As human beings, we have a choice of what we will worship, but we will worship something. **Read Romans 1:18-25. How can one worship and serve created things?**

In Ephesians 5:5 Paul calls greed idolatry. How is this so?

How to Worship

1. *Recognize the nature and holiness of God.* This is where all true worship begins. Reflect on his majesty and splendor. God's wonder expressed in nature can be a good place to begin. There are also a great many scriptures that can help one become conscious of God's holiness. **Read Psalm 95:1-7** as an example. As you reflect on God's nature, be very conscious of his nearness to you. **Read Isaiah 40:25-26.** *God's holiness is beyond description.* **Now read Isaiah 40:27-31.** *God's nearness is beyond comprehension.* This is the beginning place of worship. As you contemplate these two realities, you begin to worship.

2. *Acknowledge Him as your God.* The word "worship" is the combination of two words--"worth" and "ship" In worship we *declare God's worth.* Worship is not simply a mood or feeling; it is a declaration, a response to God's glorious nature and character. For those whose worship is recorded in the Bible, their worship was often expressed in physical ways including kneeling (1 Kings 8:54; Ephesians 3:14), bowing (Psalm 95:6; Philippians 2:9-10), lifting their hands (Psalm 63:4; 1 Timothy 2:8), and falling prostrate on the ground (1 Kings 18:38; Matthew 26:39). In acknowledging God, you may want to use the words of Scripture or hymns to express yourself. It is also helpful at times to use contemporary Christian songs as an aid to worship.

3. *Use prayer, singing, and meditation as avenues to worship God. Praise God by proclaiming his marvelous identity. Thank him by recognizing his wonderful works. Confess your sin to him by acknowledging your failures. Celebrate before God by expressing your joy. Re-commit to serving him in every area of your life.*

Corporate Worship

Each of us makes an individual decision to worship and serve God, but we do not remain in isolation from one another. God has designed his church as a family, a community of believers. Worship begins in individual hearts, but it finds its greatest expression as believers join together to praise their creator. This is the beauty of worship assemblies.

Lesson 6: A New Relationship (4)--Lord's Supper

What is the Lord's Supper?

The Lord's Supper was instituted by Jesus at a Passover meal. The Passover was an annual celebration of the Israelites to remember the deliverance God had provided for them by bringing them out of Egyptian slavery and making them into a nation. Jesus builds on this epoch event and uses the wine and bread to proclaim the deliverance God was bringing for all people through the death and resurrection of his son.

Read Matthew 26:17-30. What did Jesus say was the meaning of the bread and the cup?

The Meaning of the Lord's Supper is in the Gospel

The Gospel (or good news) is the proclamation of Jesus centered in his death and resurrection. **Read the following scriptures and record how God made Jesus' death and resurrection good news for us.**

Romans 3:21-25

Romans 5:6-11

Four Directions of the Cross

The cross of Jesus is the center of the Gospel message. As we eat the bread and drink the cup, we can use the four directions the cross points to guide our meditation.



One Arm of the Cross Points Backward--Remembering

The Lord's Supper is a memorial. Read Isaiah 53:4-6 and 1 Corinthians 11:23-25. What are we to remember?

One Arm of the Cross Points Upward—Thanksgiving

The word "Eucharist" comes from a Greek word meaning thanksgiving ("cup of thanksgiving," 1 Corinthians 10:16). As we take the Lord's Supper, we give thanks for the new life we have in Christ.

Read 2 Corinthians 5:17-19 and make a short list of personal thanksgivings for what God has done for you in Christ.

One Arm of the Cross Points Inward—Communing

The Lord's Supper is also a communion. Jesus is present when we take the bread and the cup. His sacrifice for sin continually empowers us to be reflections of his nature to those around us. We also reaffirm our desire to live in communion with God every day and turn from sin to serve him only. **Read 1 Corinthians 10:14-17.** Jesus does not continually suffer and die every time we take the Lord's Supper. Scripture makes it clear that Jesus died "once for all" (see Romans 6:10; Hebrews 7:27; 9:12, 26; 10:2, 10; 1 Peter 3:18). As we take the Supper, we share in that historic event and draw on its power to live out our identity as children of God.

When we share in the one loaf, it also becomes a sign of our unity as a body of believers. The Lord's Supper focuses our attention on the common link that binds us together in communion with one another—the death and resurrection of our Lord. When Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, it was in the context of eating a meal. The early Christians at Corinth observed the Supper in the same way. **With this in mind, read 1 Corinthians 11:20-22, 33-34 and talk about how taking the Lord's Supper together should affect our relationships with one another in the church?**

One Arm of the Cross Points Forward—Anticipating

In the Lord's Supper, we not only look at the past and the present, we also look to the future ("until he comes," 1 Corinthians 11:26). We are reminded that, because of Jesus' death and resurrection, all the power of evil has been destroyed. We have no fear of death, and sin has no power over us. We anticipate taking part in the great banquet God will give in the kingdom of heaven. **Read 1 Corinthians 15:54-57 concerning the victory we have in Jesus and Matthew 8:11 regarding the feast waiting for us in heaven.**

When Do We Take the Lord's Supper?

The Lord's Supper was instituted on a Thursday evening. Jesus gave no express command about when to eat the Supper, he simply said, "Do this in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19, 1 Corinthians 11:24, 25). We do know that the early Christians were devoted to the "breaking of bread," which is another way of speaking about the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:42). **Read Acts 20:7.** It quickly became the custom of the early church to take the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week. Since Jesus rose from the dead on this day, it is a very appropriate time to celebrate what he has done for us. We take the Lord's Supper every Sunday following their example.

Lesson 7: A New Guide--The Holy Spirit

The Gift of the Holy Spirit

Read Acts 2:38. The gift of the Holy Spirit is the Holy Spirit as a gift! As a follower of Jesus Christ, God has come to live inside of you by means of his Spirit (see also John 14:23). He is now working to transform you from the inside out. This lesson will cover in a general way some of the blessings that are ours because of God's Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit Guides Us

Read Romans 8:1-17 and underline each time the Holy Spirit is mentioned. What kind of guidance does the Spirit provide?

What are some of the contrasts the author makes between being led by the "sinful nature" and being led by the "Spirit of God"?

The Holy Spirit Empowers Us

Read Paul's two prayers for the Ephesian Christians in Ephesians 1:17-23 and 3:14-21. What do these texts say about the power at work within us?

The Holy Spirit empowers us to live the life God has called us to live. When we came to Christ, we were in desperate need. God has met our need by giving us forgiveness of sins through the death and resurrection of Jesus. By that same death and resurrection, God also gave us new life and the power to live the new life. "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

God didn't just give us a list of instructions and tell us to do the best we can. He gave us the model of his son to imitate (Ephesians 5:1-2) and also the power to be like his son. In spite of our best efforts, none of us will follow Jesus perfectly (never forget the first lesson of this booklet on God's grace). However, by following the leading of God's Spirit, we will grow in our imitation of Jesus. We become more and more like him as we continually confess and repent of sin and learn to follow the Spirit's guidance. This is growth in spiritual maturity.

The Holy Spirit Produces Fruit in Us

How the Holy Spirit works in us can be compared to a fruit tree. **Read Galatians 5:16-26.** Again, Paul is contrasting the work of the Spirit and the work of the "flesh" or "sinful nature." **Make a list of the nine qualities he lists as "fruit of the Spirit."**

These are what the Spirit is working to produce in your life. **What do you think it means to "crucify the sinful nature" in 5:24?**

One way to test whether or not something is from God is to ask if it will produce the "fruit of the Spirit" in your life or the "acts of the sinful nature." If something is leading you to drunkenness, for example, you can be sure it is not from God (5:21). In the same way, you can be sure that God will not lead you to become selfish (5:20). If, on the other hand, you discover that you are becoming more loving, more joyful, more self controlled--that is good evidence that God is at work in your life. *The "fruit of the Spirit" is not produced by trying but by trusting.* The Spirit works best when we are continually surrendering our lives to his control. When you see something in your life that is not from God, it is a call to crucify the sinful nature and fall in line with the Spirit. Confess your sin to God and call on him to change your heart.

The Holy Spirit Can Be Grieved

Read Ephesians 4:30. It hurts the Holy Spirit of God when we do not follow his leading and guidance. In context Paul gives very specific examples of how we grieve God's Spirit. **Read Ephesians 4:22-32.** **What are some specific ways we grieve the Spirit?**

Read Ephesians 5:18. **What do you think it means to be filled with the Spirit?**

Read Jude 1:20. **What do you think it means to pray in the Holy Spirit?**

Lesson 8: A New Family--Fellowship

Your New Family

Read Mark 3:31-35. Who does Jesus say is his family?

Another name for the church is the “family of God.” God is our father, and we are all brothers and sisters. Some are more mature in their faith, and others are so young in their walk with God they are considered babies (see 1 Peter 2:2). Some are weak in their faith, and others are much stronger. Even though there is much diversity in the family, we all are to work together to help one another grow to become more like Christ.

Because we all have a personal relationship with God as our Father, Jesus as our Savior, and the Holy Spirit as our guide, we also have a unique relationship with each other. The phrase “one another” is used frequently in the New Testament encouraging us to treat our fellow believers properly. **Read the following texts and record their instruction as to how we should treat one another.**

John 13:34-35

Galatians 5:13

Galatians 6:2

Ephesians 4:32

James 5:16

Fellowship

Fellowship simply means sharing in one another's lives. **Read in Acts 2:42 how these new Christians devoted themselves to the fellowship. What do you think that means?**

For centuries Christians have found it to be important to meet together. **Read Acts 2:46-47 and record some of the occasions the early believers met together.**

Read Hebrews 10:19-25. Why do you think the author places so much stress on his readers meeting together?

We Need Each Other

God never called Christians to be Lone Rangers who do everything themselves. He called us to live and work in a family of fellow believers. Not all relationships in the family will be the same. You will usually find yourself with three broad categories of relationships.

1. Those more spiritually mature than you
2. Those at about your same level of maturity
3. Those weaker or younger in faith

One way to look at these three levels of relationship are to use the New Testament characters Paul, Barnabas, and Timothy.

Paul: The Mentor

The Apostle Paul wrote thirteen books of the New Testament and planted many churches. He was in a position to give teaching, correction, and training to many people. Someone who plays this role in your life would be someone who is “down the road a ways” from where you are spiritually. He (or she) is someone you look up to and want to imitate because you see the reflection of Jesus in them. This is someone you can talk to about problems you are experiencing or questions you have. This is someone who can teach you many things.

Think for a moment and write down one or two persons who could play a mentoring role in your life.

Barnabas: The Brother

As we mentioned earlier in this lesson, we are all brothers and sisters of one another. The Barnabas relationship is a special kind of brother. He (or she) is an encourager. **Read Acts 4:36-37 and record how Barnabas got his name.**

When one reads of Barnabas in Scripture, he is seemingly always coming alongside another person to help them in their Christian walk. **Read Acts 9:26-27; 11:20-26 for some examples.** Barnabas and Paul worked side by side establishing many churches. **Write down the names of some brothers (or sisters) with whom you can be mutual encouraging.**

Timothy: The Student

Timothy was a young man who joined Paul as he traveled planting churches (Acts 16:1). He became indispensable to Paul and was often sent by him to help struggling congregations. Two letters in the New Testament bear his name because they were written to give him instructions as he worked with the church in Ephesus.

The Timothy relationship is someone who is spiritually younger than you.

It is someone you can reach out to, encourage, and help to grow in the Lord. **Write down the name of someone you know that you could form this kind of relationship with.**

All of these relationships take time. **Write down a simple plan that will help you get started in making these relationships a priority.**

Lesson 9: A New Attitude--Money

Warnings Concerning Riches

Worship of money is idolatry. When we place our trust, confidence, and security in the accumulation of wealth and possessions, we are putting money in the place of God. This is one of the greatest temptations we face as Christians. **Read Matthew 6:19-24 and 1 Timothy 6:6-10.** **What are some of the warnings concerning riches?**

Money is Not the Problem

Properly seen, wealth is a blessing from the Lord. **Read Proverbs 10:22 and 22:4.** There are many examples of God blessing people with considerable wealth. Consider Abraham (Genesis 24:1), Isaac (Genesis 26:12-14), Job (Job 42:10), and Solomon (1 Kings 3:13). *Possessing money and goods is not the problem; the problem is when money and goods possess you!* Your attitude towards wealth is what makes your possessions either an idol or a means of serving God.

The Example of the Nation of Israel

God established the nation of Israel to live by his blessings. God wanted Israel to trust him and keep his laws by faith. If they would be faithful to everything God commanded, he promised them tremendous blessings. **Read Deuteronomy 28:1-14. Summarize how God wanted to bless Israel.**

God's laws required Israel to trust him enough to not make an idol out of

their wealth and means of acquiring wealth. Consider the following laws God gave Israel.

Israel was to give two tithes:

1. The *priestly tithe* was a tenth of everything each individual Israelite had acquired during a given year. It was given to the priests who worked at the tabernacle for their support (Leviticus 27:30-33; Numbers 18:20-32).

2. The *festival tithe* was a tenth of everything left after the first tithe. It was to provide food for the landowner and his family during the festivals of the Lord (Deuteronomy 14:22-27). The *poor tithe*, sometimes called the third tithe, was a special use of the festival tithe. Every third year it was to provide festival meals for the poor (Deuteronomy 14:28-29).

Those who failed to give their tithes were said to be robbing God (Malachi 3:8-12).

Periods of rest:

Sabbath--One day every week no work could be done (Deuteronomy 5:12-15).

Sabbatical Year--One year out of every seven, the land was to be left unseeded and the vineyards unpruned, all debts were to be canceled, and all slaves were set free (Deuteronomy 15:1-18).

Year of Jubilee--Every fiftieth year, all property returned to its original clan, and there was to be no sowing for one year (Leviticus 25:8-55).

Required gifts:

Law of Gleanings required the Israelite to leave the corners of his field unharvested, and his vineyard was to be picked only once so that the poor would have something to gather (Leviticus 19:9-10; Deuteronomy 24:19-22).

Law of First Fruits required the "firstborn of every womb" to be given to God. Animals and grains were sacrificed or given to the Levites. Children were redeemed by a payment of money (Exodus 13:11-16; Deuteronomy 26:1-11).

Suppose an Israelite farmer produced 6,000 bushels in a year. By God's law his giving would look something like this:

Law of Gleanings	- 100
First Fruits	- 150
Priestly tithe	- 600
Festival tithe	- 600
Total tithes and gifts =	1,450
Owner has left over =	4,550

**Read Deuteronomy 14:22-23. What should Israel learn by giving?
How would following God's laws on giving cause this to happen?**

Giving under Grace Not Law

Things once required by law are now motivated by God's grace. Law can make people give. Grace teaches us to give as we have received. Jesus said, "Freely you have received, freely give" (Matthew 10:8). God has given generously to us; therefore, we give generously.

The longest section on financial giving in the New Testament is found in 2 Corinthians 8-9. Because of a famine in Jerusalem, the Apostle Paul organized a relief effort. He began collecting money from the mission churches he had started to be taken to Jerusalem to help reduce their suffering. The Corinthian church had been encouraged to join this effort by setting aside money every Sunday which would then be taken to Jerusalem at a later time (1 Corinthians 16:1-2). In 2 Corinthians, Paul urges them to continue to give. **Read 2 Corinthians 8:1-9 and 9:6-15. What was to be their motivation in giving?**

How does giving show Christ-likeness?

Following Jesus in regard to our wealth makes us radically different from those around us. We are taught by our culture that money is power and the more one has the better off one is. Giving, if done at all, comes from the overflow. Jesus, on the other hand, teaches us to give generously. This kind of giving is not just to come from our excess but from money we could use to (theoretically, at least) make our lives more comfortable and secure here on earth. It comes from a heart that trusts God for security rather than wealth. It comes from a heart that is not trying to make heaven on earth. *In a very real sense, what we give here on earth is building an eternal reward in heaven* (Luke 12:33-34). What we use here on earth for ourselves will all too quickly be gone.

Spend some time in prayer asking God to give you the faith to be a generous giver with the wealth he has given you.

Lesson 10: A New Message

The New Has Come!

In this series of lessons, we have studied how God, in his mercy, has given you a new life. His gift of grace, through the death of his son, has brought you this newness. As you continue to follow him, your thinking will change, which will produce changes in your attitudes and actions. Your relationship with God will continually develop as you grow in your prayer life, Bible study, worship, and participation in the Lord's Supper. You have been given direction for life by your new guide, the Holy Spirit. You have also been given a new family, the church, through which you receive encouragement and learn to give to others. As you continue to grow in your faith, you develop a new attitude toward money and possessions. All of these things and more combine to give you a new message to share with others.

Read 2 Corinthians 5:17-21. What does it mean to be reconciled? What is the function of an ambassador? How does all this relate to the message God has given you?

What Do I Say?

Thinking about telling the gospel to others can often bring a sense of panic. The overriding question is often, "What do I say?" **Read Mark 5:1-20. What was the message the man was to share with his family? What impact might that message have on them?**

People would be interested in what this man had to say because of the dramatic change that had occurred in his life. When people saw the change, they would be very open to hear what had happened. It is important that the new message you have to share with others is communicated in your life as well as with your words. As you continue to submit to the lordship of Jesus, your life continues to change, giving you

more of a story to share with others. The old adage, “Actions speak louder than words,” is correct. People need to see what God has done in your life. This often raises questions such as, “What has happened to you?” or “Why have you changed?” These sometimes give you an excellent opportunity to tell what Jesus has done.

Read the following scriptures and record the testimony these individuals had concerning what God had done in their lives:

Zacchaeus--Luke 19:1-9

Peter--John 13:37-38; 18:15-18, 25-27; 21:15-19

Sorcerers--Acts 19:18-20

Paul--1 Timothy 1:12-16

Your Personal Testimony

Not everyone has a dramatic story to tell about their former life (as might a sorcerer or persecutor of Christians) and how Jesus dramatically changed them. Nonetheless, everyone who has been saved by God's grace has a testimony of God's goodness toward them. What has God done in your life? Has he given you hope when you were hopeless? Did he give you meaning and purpose for living? Did he rescue you from a life of emptiness and shallow relationships? What has changed in your life by God's grace? What has changed internally in your attitudes? What has changed externally in your actions? How has your thinking changed? Has God taught you a different way to look at problems or a different way to look at people? **Write down some of the things the Lord has done for you.**

Jesus is the Answer

I once saw a sign that read, "Jesus is the answer; now what's the question?" The question is phrased in numerous ways. *Where can I find peace? What is the meaning of life? Where is purpose for living? How can I be set free from worry? What is solid and secure in life?* In a world of pain and confusion, many are aware of their need for something beyond themselves and what they can provide for themselves. Others, burdened with a load of guilt and sin, are desperately seeking help. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). Jesus is what our world needs.

Jesus' Mission

Read the following passages and record what each one says concerning why Jesus came to earth.

Matthew 9:9-13

Luke 4:16-21

Luke 19:10

John 10:7-10

Jesus' Commission

Commission--"An assignment one is sent to carry out."

Read Matthew 28:16-20. What is the mission?