

Discipleship Training Manual
Mount Gilead Baptist Church
The Rev. Dr. David D. Mitchell
Senior Pastor

ABOUT THE COURSE

The Deacons Ministry teaches new members how to become Disciples of Christ. The Director of Christian Education, Deacon Deborah MacDonald leads and coordinates this ministry effort.

1. There are eight to twelve lessons in this course and three lessons will be taught every Saturday morning from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Lunch will be served from 12:00 to 12:45, and the afternoon session will begin at 1:00 p.m. It is important to be on time for class. Instructors may ask those who are tardy to repeat the class.
2. You are to take the classes in sequence beginning with Lesson One. However, under certain circumstances the Senior Pastor can upon your request make special arrangements regarding the sequence in which classes are taken.
3. In the case where there are extenuating circumstances preventing a candidate from attending a class other arrangements will be made at the convenience of the teacher and the discipleship candidate.
4. Our goal is for your new disciples to complete the training within 2 months. If you attend classes consistently, focus and commit, you will complete the course successfully and in a timely manner. However, if you do not complete the training there will be a delay in receiving the right-hand-of-fellowship and becoming an official member of Mount Gilead. Please be encouraged to complete all the necessary lessons of the course.

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Written originally as one book, these two books describe the return of the Jewish exiles after more than a half-century of bondage in Babylon, and the subsequent restoration of Jerusalem, its temple and its walls. Ezra and Nehemiah are of special importance, since they contain nearly all of the direct information known of the post-Exilic period of Hebrew history.	Error! Bookmark not defined.
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**LESSON ONE:
INTRODUCTION/THE BAPTIST FAITH**

Your decision to become a member of Mount Gilead Baptist Church is an important one, and we rejoice with you in it. As believers, we are designed to be part of a local fellowship of the body of Christ. This local fellowship is your new church family, Mount Gilead Baptist Church. Indeed, it is a fellowship that is intensely involved in the activities of Jesus Christ, and is located in the vibrant community of Durham, North Carolina. We rejoice that God is building His church and are delighted to have you as a co-laborer in the ministry of Christ.

It is our desire to provide all of our members the opportunity to gain a basic understanding of the word of God and the meaning of the Christian faith, and equip them with the spiritual tools to demonstrate Christianity and make its practical principles applicable to their lives. Our vision is for all members to become disciples, accept the Bible as the word of God and its teachings as the principles to get totally involved in every aspect of the life of the body of Christ. We expect new members to seek the knowledge of God through Bible study, Sunday School, and other educational ministries

to mature into strong disciples with a thorough understanding of the biblical perspective of worship and prayer, personal and corporate prosperity, the power of the Holy Spirit, the development of spiritual gifts. Indeed, this spiritual knowledge will enable disciples to become centered in the core and the fundamental teachings of Christ. Our church is a diverse group with people from all walks of life. We have an urgent desire to do more than merely assure ourselves of our conversion; we must fulfill our calling in this present age in our service to our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ. We must also provide a certain level of training so those joining Mount Gilead Baptist Church will become strong disciples in our faith and will connect with Christ and continue to grow in His grace, knowledge, and spiritual wisdom. Therefore, there is a need for an adequate New Discipleship Training to keep us all on common ground, and moving toward all of the above goals.

It is my hope, as your pastor, that through this Discipleship Training you will catch “the vision” of what we are all about at Mount Gilead. This is a great church because of the spirit of its people, the power of the Holy Spirit, and our commitment to Christ and this church community. Mount Gilead is a dynamic, warm, caring Bible-believing, evangelistic church whose members are forward looking and positive. We expect God to do great things in our midst as we pursue and live out our vision, which is “a place where people connect with God’s power.” Indeed, I will discuss our vision in more detail later. There is no doubt that God will add new souls to our church family as he did in His Church in the book of Acts, but I believe that we must make our vision a lifestyle and continue to walk in total obedience to the Holy Spirit and the word of God. As spiritual growth continues and we complete the implementation of phases I through 3 of the vision, our prayer is that we would never move away from our first priority in life – to love Jesus with all our hearts and to share Him with the whole world connecting people to His power. Later in this manual, there will be a more thorough discussion of our Senior Pastor and our vision.

The Right Hand of Fellowship

After completing these sessions of study, if you are a candidate for baptism, you will be baptized, and then receive the “Right Hand of Fellowship,” which is the formal welcoming celebration ceremony.

After receiving the “Right Hand of Fellowship” you are invited and encouraged to get involved and work in this ministry; there are many opportunities available to you here at Mount Gilead and there are countless ways in which you can serve Christ. Please know that there are many ministries in which you can provide life-transforming service with spiritual meaning to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. In fact, the Senior Pastor, the Rev. Dr. David D. Mitchell and his team of capable and stellar leaders will help you find your place of service. Welcome aboard! We love you and God does too!

These training sessions must be completed before full membership privileges are granted, and for you to consummate your commitment to Christ to be a witness for Him as

recorded in Acts 1:4-8. The only way you can be an effective witness is to become centered in Christ and learn the word of God, and we stand ready to help you grow and mature in Christ.

ABOUT THE COURSE

Mount Gilead Baptist Church

5. There are eight to twelve lessons in this course and three lessons will be taught every Saturday morning from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Lunch will be served from 12:00 to 12:45, and the afternoon session will begin at 1:00 p.m. It is important to be on time for class. Instructors may ask those who are tardy to repeat the class.
6. You are to take the classes in sequence beginning with Lesson One. However, under certain circumstances the Senior Pastor can upon your request make special arrangements regarding the sequence in which classes are taken.
7. In the case where there are extenuating circumstances preventing a candidate from attending a class other arrangements will be made at the convenience of the teacher and the discipleship candidate.
8. Our goal is for your new disciples to complete the training within 2 months. If you attend classes consistently, focus and commit, you will complete the course successfully and in a timely manner. However, if you do not complete the training there will be a delay in receiving the right-hand-of-fellowship and becoming an official member of Mount Gilead. Please be encouraged to complete all the necessary lessons of the course.
5. The discipleship candidate must bring this Manual and a Bible to each class. If the new disciple candidate does not have a Bible, one will be provided.

BAPTIST POLITY AND BELIEFS

BAPTISTS BELIEVE that God is revealed as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

BAPTISTS BELIEVE that there are several important things to our relationship with God: study the Bible—the living Word of God, pray consistently, and practice our faith daily. God speaks to us through His word and the Holy Spirit, and we speak to Him through prayer and the practice of our faith.

BAPTISTS BELIEVE the Bible is the ultimate authority in matters of faith – not by-laws, constitutions, councils, priests, traditions, prelates or popes. The Bible is the sole authority and the Holy Spirit is in charge of the church, and we must have the Holy Spirit to lead us in all things of Christ.

BAPTISTS BELIEVE the local congregation is the only visible form of the Church. The autonomy for governing must rest in each church.

BAPTISTS BELIEVE that the Lord's Supper and Baptism are the only two ordinances commanded by Christ for His followers; we also practice and believe in the laying on of hands to pray for the sick and the spiritually weak. James 5: 13-16 gives us direction on prayer.

BAPTISTS BELIEVE in being baptized by total immersion. It is seen as an act of obedience to Christ by example and word.

BAPTISTS BELIEVE that every man and woman has a deep conviction and the ability to enter into a direct relationship with God through Christ, and that this is a personal relationship needing no outside mediation or formation.

BAPTISTS BELIEVE that Faith (confidence in Christ) comes by choosing to accept Christ and it develops through the study of the word, hearing the gospel, prayer, and the practice of our daily faith.

BAPTISTS BELIEVE that the church of Christ should not be impaired by the power of the state or subject to the state; there should be a complete separation of church and state; Christ is the head of the church.

BAPTISTS BELIEVE that their church should be a mission church

1. To win converts to Christ, you must be a witness for Christ
2. To aid persons who need better understanding of living for Christ
3. To attempt to change unjust conditions and oppressive structures
4. To go throughout the world to make disciples for Christ
5. To maintain a visible spiritual presence in the community and to always keep a ministry that is relevant in the life of our community.

BAPTISTS BELIEVE that Christians are God's stewards, and must be faithful in their stewardship. They serve Him with their tithes and their whole hearts, minds, and souls.

A HISTORY OF THE BAPTIST FAITH

Baptists of America trace their roots back to the Church of England. In 1602, John Smyth, along with his followers, revolted against the established Church. Smyth was not a Baptist but became a Puritan, dissenting from the established Church of England. In 1606, he was in Gainsborough where he became an associate of a group of Separatists, which included several people who later became the leaders of the Pilgrims of Plymouth – John Robinson, William Brewster, William Bradford, and another Separatist, Thomas Helwys.

They all fled to Holland in 1607, but Smyth and Helwys were not yet Baptist. They became Baptist in 1609 when Smyth baptized himself (by pouring) and then baptized Helwys and about 40 others (by pouring). Smyth and Helwys had a falling out soon and Smyth withdrew. He intended to join the Mennonites, but never did and died in August 1612 without membership in any organized church.

Helwys led a band of Baptists back to England in 1611, where he established the first Baptist church on English soil at Spitalfield. Helwys was to be imprisoned in 1612, where he died in 1616. By 1624, there were at least five General Baptist churches in England.

In the 1630's a second kind of Baptist who had a different origin than Smyth and Helwys originated. This second kind was Particular Baptist and they grew out of a moderate Separatist movement from the Church of England. The Particular Baptist adopted immersion as the proper form as early as 1640-1641 whereas the General Baptists did not adopt immersion until the 1660's. In 1644, several Particular Baptist churches issued a joint statement of new faith, the First London Confession, which specified that baptism should be applied to believers only and by "dipping or plunging the whole body under water..." The Particular Baptists came to constitute the great majority of Baptists in England and America. Roger Williams was a Particular Baptist, but his church (after he left) soon became a General Baptist church. It did not return to the Particular fold until about 1770.

When persecution in England became too great because of religious beliefs, some of the group eventually found their way to the New World and settled in Massachusetts. Roger Williams, a leading spirit in this group, was eventually banned because of his attack upon the laws of the colony, which sought to enforce religious conformity. Rather than being deported back to England, he fled to what is now Providence, Rhode Island, where he and his followers established a small colony. Williams, along with his followers, joined with others to form a new church, the First Baptist Church in America.

Our Baptist Heritage

Mt. Gilead Baptist Church shares with 43 million Baptists around the world a common tradition that was established in 1602. This tradition has emphasized the Lordship and atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ, believer's baptism, the competency of all believers to be in a relationship with Christ, and to interpret scripture. Indeed, this common tradition has focused on the importance of the local church, the assurance of freedom in worship and opinion, and the need for Christians to be witnesses for Christ within society. Being Baptist is not our religion — we are Christians and followers of Christ first and always. However, we identify with the established Baptist traditions because they represent and express our understanding of how to live out our Christian faith.

If you study Baptist history, you will often find the emphases of the tradition summed up as the "four basic freedoms":

Bible Freedom: The Bible, under the lordship of Christ, must be central in the lives of His followers, who are obligated to study and follow the scriptures. (2 Timothy 3:16)

Soul Freedom: Every person has the right and responsibility to make decisions about his/her relationship with God. (Acts 17:26-30; Romans 10:8-15)

Church Freedom: Local churches are free to determine their membership and their leadership. They may ordain anyone, male or female, they consider gifted for ministry.

Local churches are not subject to the dictates of any other organization, state or national. (Acts 6:1-6; Romans 16:1, 2; 1 Timothy 3:1-13)

Religious Freedom: We affirm the historic right to freedom of religion and freedom for religion. Caesar is not Christ, and Christ is not Caesar. (Matthew 22:15-21)

Many sources also include two more basic "freedoms" that Baptists claim as part of their understanding of God's intent for the Church:

Believer's Baptism: We believe that only those persons who have made a conscious commitment to Jesus Christ should be baptized. This baptism, which we believe should be by immersion, does not produce salvation, but instead is the believer's response to the gracious gift of God. It signifies that we have accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and are ready to covenant with a local community of faith. (Acts 2:38; 16:30-33)

Priesthood of Believers: Every person has the right and responsibility to deal with God directly and personally, without intervention by any other party. (1 Peter 2:5, 9)

LESSON TWO: GETTING TO KNOW YOUR BIBLE

The Bible contains sixty-six books, written by forty authors, covering a period of approximately sixteen hundred years, 1500 B.C. to 100 A.D. The authors were kings and princes, poets and philosophers, prophets and statesmen. Some were learned in all the arts of the times and others were unschooled fishermen. Other books soon became outdated, but the Bible has remained relevant for centuries. It is God's written revelation of His will to men. **Its central theme is salvation through Jesus Christ.**

The word Bible comes from the Greek word biblos, which means "books." The two major divisions of the Bible are the Old Testament and the New Testament. The word Testament means "covenant" or "agreement." The Old Testament is the covenant God made with humanity about salvation and it is God's revelations in history before Christ. The New Testament records when God revealed Himself in history in human form (Jesus) and solves the sin problem that separated Him from humanity; Christ establishes the church and commands His church to continue His work in history.

In the Old Testament, we find the covenant of **law**. In the New Testament, we find the covenant of **grace**, which came through Jesus Christ. One led to the other (Galatians 3:17-25). The word "grace" means, unmerited favor, unearned and undeserved. Christ gives us undeserved favor and reunites us in a relationship with God the Father. The God who creates is the God who saves. The God who creates all things is the God who dies on the cross and wins the victory. The Old commences what the New completes. The Old Testament begins

with God (Genesis 1:1). The New Testament begins with Christ (Matthew 1:1). From Adam to Abraham we have the history of the human race. From Abraham to Christ we have the history of the chosen race. From Christ we have the history of the church.

The Bible is the inspired word of God. God reveals Himself in human history and His word continues to teach us about His love, power, mercy, and grace. The Bible is God's record in history in the lives of the human race.

2 Timothy 3:16 “All scripture derives directly from God through the Holy Spirit, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” (KJV)

2 Peter 1:21 “For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: But holy men of God spake as they were **moved** by the Holy Ghost.” (KJV)

Throughout the centuries many translations have been made of the Holy Scriptures into languages common to the people of the world. The first of these was the Septuagint Version, made by about seventy scholars at Alexandria, Egypt, around 250 B.C. The translation was into Greek, the common language of the countries around the Mediterranean Sea.

In 1611 A.D. the King James Version of the Bible was released. It was the work of about fifty scholars appointed by King James 1. It is also known as the Authorized Version. The King James Version is noted for its beautiful cadence and its prose harmonies.

While this study manual is keyed to the King James Version, it is highly recommended that you also use other translations in your studies. Your instructor will assist you in recommending other translations. The New International Version (NIV), completed in 1973, is a popular and good translation.

PRONOUNCING BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

Become familiar with the Bible. Be able to pronounce the names of the books and to find them. This takes practice and comes with using your Bible regularly.

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis (Gin-na-sees)

Exodus (x-o-dust)

Leviticus (La-vit-te-cus)

Numbers (Num-bers)

Deuteronomy (Du-ta-ron-no-mee)

Joshua (Ja-shoe-wa)

Judges (Jud-jez)

Ruth (Rooth)

I and II Samuel (Sam-you-wal)

I and II Kings (Kings)

I and II Chronicles (Cron-ne-culs)

Ezra (Ez-ra)

Nehemiah (Na-a-my-yah)
Esther (Es-ster)
Job (Jobe)
Psalms (Salms)
Proverbs (Pra-verbs)
Ecclesiastes (E-cle-ze-ass-tees)
Songs of Solomon (Songs of Sau-lo-mon)
Isaiah (I-za-yah)
Jeremiah (Ger-ra-mi-yah)
Lamentations (Lam-en-ta-shenz)
Ezekiel (E-zee-ke-yal)
Daniel (Dan-yal)
Hosea (Ho-za-yah)
Joel (Joe-wul)
Amos (A-mus)
Obadiah (O-ba-di-yah)
Jonah (Jo-nah)
Micah (Mi-ka)
Nahum (Nay-hume)
Habakkuk (Ha-bac-ka)
Zephaniah (Ze-fa-ni-yah)
Haggai (Ha-gy)
Zechariah (Zac-ka-ri-yah)
Malachi (Mal-la-ki)

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew (Mat-thew)
Mark (Mark)
Luke (Loo-k)
John (John)
Acts (Ax)
Romans (Ro-muns)
I and II Corinthians (Ca-rin-thi-yans)
Galatians (Gal-lay-shuns)
Ephesians (E-fe-shuns)
Philipians (Fi-lip-pe-yans)
Colossians (Ka-las-shuns)
I and II Thessalonians (The-sa-lo-ne-yans)
I and II Timothy (Ti-mo-thee)
Titus (Ti-tus)
Philemon (Fi-le-mun)
Hebrews (He-brewws)
James (James)
I and II Peter (Pee-ter)
I, II, and III John (John)
Jude (Jood)
Revelation (Re-ve-la-shun)

The Pentateuch

Genesis

The word "genesis" implies "generation" or "origin" and comes from the Greek translation of Genesis 2:4. It is an appropriate title for the first book of the Bible, which contains the record of the origin of the universe, the human race, family life, nations, sin, redemption, etc. The first 11 chapters, which deal with primeval or pre-Patriarchal times, present the antecedents of Hebrew history from Adam to Abraham. The remaining chapters (12-50) are concerned with God's dealings with the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and Jacob's son Joseph, all "fathers" of the people whom God has chosen to carry out His plan for the redemption of humankind. The book closes with these "chosen people" in Egypt.

Exodus

"Exodus" means "going out" or "departure." While it refers to one of the most important events of the book, the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt, other highly significant events are also found here, such as the oppression of the chosen people in Egypt, the flight and call of Moses, and God's covenant with the nation Israel at Sinai—an experience climaxed by His giving of the moral law (Ten Commandments) through Moses to the people. A code of secular laws is also included, and the latter part of the book contains an elaborate description of the sacred Ark of the Covenant and its (tabernacle), God's place of dwelling among His people.

Leviticus

This book was so named because it primarily focuses on the laws of service and worship and their special importance to the Tribe of Levi. It has been aptly called "the Handbook of the Priests." Many basic precepts of the New Testament are foreshadowed in this book, such as the seriousness of sin in God's sight, the necessity of atonement for sin, the holiness of God, and the necessity of a mediator between God and man.

Numbers

The name of this book originated from the two numberings of the people depicted in it: the first at Sinai in the second year of the Exodus and another on the plains of Moab opposite Jericho in the 40th year. A better title is the one given by the Hebrews themselves, *Banidhbar* ("In the Wilderness"), for it describes the locale of the major events of the book. In all these events, the writer sees the guiding hand of God, sustaining, delivering, and keeping covenant with His people, as He prepares them for entrance into the land promised first to Abraham (Gen. 12:1ff).

Deuteronomy

The final book of the Pentateuch derives its English name from the Greek work *deuteronomion*, meaning the "second law," or the "law repeated." Deuteronomy is essentially Moses' farewell address(es) to a new generation in which he summons them to hear the law of God, to be instructed in the application of its principles to the new circumstances awaiting them, and to renew intelligently the covenant God had made with their fathers—a covenant that must be faithfully observed as the condition of God's blessings upon them in the Promised Land.

The Historical Books

Joshua

This book serves as the connecting link between the Pentateuch and the later historical books; its name is derived from the principal character, Joshua. Chapters 1 to 23 describe the conquest

of the land and its division among the tribes of Israel. In the final chapters (23-24), Joshua, somewhat after the fashion of Moses, exhorts the people in a series of farewell addresses "to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses," and solemnly challenges them to the renewal of their covenant commitment to God.

Judges

Named after the "Judges of Israel," the heroic leaders whose deeds it records, this book covers a period of time from the death of Joshua to the birth of Samuel, an era often called "the dark ages" of Hebrew history. Here is a story, on the human side, of disobedience and disaster, and on the divine side, of direction and deliverance. Of the 13 judges named, only 3 are well known: Deborah, Gideon, and Samson.

Ruth

The Book of Ruth offers a striking contrast to the Book of Judges, but its story is associated with the same period. In Judges, national sin and corruption portray a dark picture. The story of Ruth the Moabitess and her loyalty and devotion to Naomi, her Hebrew mother-in-law, presents the reader with a picture of the nobler side of Hebrew life in the days of the judges.

I and II Samuel

These books were named after Samuel, not only because he is the principal figure in the first part, but also because he anointed the two other principal characters, Saul and David. Originally a single book which was divided when translated into Greek, the books of Samuel cover a period of time in Israel's history from the birth of Samuel to the close of the reign of David. First Samuel presents the transition from Israel's judges to the monarchy. Second Samuel deals almost exclusively with the history of David and presents a vivid picture of the theocratic monarchy in which the king represents God's rule over the people.

I and II Kings

These books are the sequel to I and II Samuel and should be read as a continuation of the history of the Hebrew nation contained in the former work. Originally one book, I and II Kings relate the history of Israel from the last days of David to the destruction of the northern kingdom, Israel, in 721 B.C., and to the fall of the southern kingdom, Judah, in 586 B.C. This is the period of Israel's glory, division, decline, and fall.

I and II Chronicles

In the Hebrew canon, these books formed a single volume called "Things of the days" (i.e., annals). The translators of the Greek Septuagint Version gave them the title, *Parakipomena*, meaning, "things left over," implying their use as a supplement to Samuel and Kings. Jerome (c. A.D. 340-420) called them "a chronicle of the whole and sacred history" from Adam to Cyrus (538 B.C.), hence their English name. Actually, Chronicles is a summary of Hebrew history that duplicates much of Samuel and Kings.

Ezra and Nehemiah

Written originally as one book, these two books describe the return of the Jewish exiles after more than a half-century of bondage in Babylon, and the subsequent restoration of Jerusalem, its temple and its walls. Ezra and Nehemiah are of special importance, since they contain nearly all of the direct information known of the post-Exilic period of Hebrew history.

Esther

The Book of Esther, in the form of a short story similar to the Book of Ruth, has its setting in the palace of Shushan, or Susa, one of the three capitals of the Persian Empire. The story gives us a vivid picture of the Jews in exile, of the hostility of their non-Jewish enemies in Persia, and of

how Esther became the queen of Ahasuerus (Xerxes), subsequently risking her life in order to save her people, the Jews, from total destruction. God's providential care of His people is magnified throughout, though the word "God" never appears in the book.

The Poetical Books

Job

Named for Job, its chief character, the book deals with an ageless question, one that is puzzling to every generation—the problem of human suffering, particularly the affliction of the righteous. The reader is given an account of the sufferings of the pious patriarch Job, of the argument between Job and his friends as to the cause of his sufferings, and finally, of the solution to his difficulty. The book's principal aim is to refute the popular view that all suffering is the result of sin committed by the sufferer.

Psalms

Psalms is a *collection* of 150 psalms whose Hebrew name is "The Book of Praise." Authors of individual psalms include David, Solomon, Moses, Asaph, and others who are anonymous. The variety and unity of Psalms have given this book a unique place in the devotional life of the individual and the church. Almost every aspect of man's relation to God is depicted in these poems: simple trust, the sense of sin, appeals to a higher power in time of trouble, and the conviction that the world is in the hands of a loving God.

Proverbs

This book is a compendium of proverb collections. Although Solomon inspired the development of the book, its entire content did not derive from him. A proverb is a short, pithy saying with practical implications. The ones included here cover a variety of subjects including chastity, control of the tongue, laziness, knowledge, relations with others, and justice. Perhaps above everything else there is the reiterated assertion that the source of true wisdom is "the fear of the Lord."

Ecclesiastes

In English, the title means "preacher." Traditionally held to have been written by Solomon, the author's purpose is to prove the vanity of everything "under the sun." This truth is first announced a fact, then proved from the "preacher's" experience and observations. Finally, the author shows that the fullness of life is found only in the recognition of things "above the sun," which are spiritual things.

The Song of Solomon

This book, the only one in the Bible that has love for its sole theme, is a collection of marriage songs. The Song is didactic and moral in its purpose, and has traditionally been interpreted as showing God's love for His chosen people and Christ's love for His bride, the church.

The Four Major Prophets

Isaiah

This book, as is true of all the prophetic books, derives its name from the prophet whose messages it records. The message of the book is twofold: judgment upon Judah for her sins (1-

39), and comfort and hope for an exiled people (40-66). In these messages of encouragement are found some of the most graphic portrayals of the Messiah in the Old Testament.

Jeremiah

Jeremiah was God's spokesman during the decline and fall of the southern kingdom, Judah. Among the prophets, there was no more difficult task than that of standing alone for God in the midst of the apostasy of his own people, and no one bared his soul to the reader as did Jeremiah. Although Jeremiah announced the coming destruction of Judah, he looked beyond this judgment to a day when religion, no longer national, would be individual and spiritual. This new kind of religion would result from God's "new covenant" with His people.

Lamentations

Entitled in most English versions *The Lamentations of Jeremiah*, this book is placed immediately after Jeremiah in the *Septuagint*, *Vulgate* and *English Bible*. In the Hebrew text, it is found among the "Writings." The book is composed of five poems, lamenting the siege and destruction of Jerusalem (586 B.C.). The poet also makes sincere confession of sin on behalf of the people and leaders, acknowledges complete submission to the will of God, and finally prays that God will once again smile upon His people and restore them to their homeland.

Ezekiel

Ezekiel was carried into exile in Babylon, where he received his call and exercised his prophetic ministry. His dual role of prophet-priest and his position as "watchman" over his people make Ezekiel unique among the prophets and may account for the uniqueness of his message and his methods of delivery. The book contains 48 chapters, divided at the halfway point by the fall of Jerusalem. Ezekiel's prophecies before this event are chiefly messages of condemnation upon Judah for her sin; following the city's fall, the prophet speaks to helpless people of the hope and certainty of restoration to their homeland and of worship again in the Temple.

Daniel

This book is traditionally considered to be the work of the prophet Daniel, who lived in exile in Babylon during the 6th century B.C. In a series of events and visions, the author presents a view of history in which God rules and prevails over men and nations to achieve ultimate victory for the "saints" of God.

The Twelve Minor Prophets

Hosea

Sometimes called the "Prophet of Divine Love," Hosea was a native of Israel and was called to be God's spokesman during that kingdom's darkest hour. The apostasy of his own people was enough to break Hosea's heart, but he also bore a heavy cross in his own life—his wife had proved unfaithful. In this bitter experience, Hosea came to fathom God's love for his erring children and pleads with his people to repent and avail themselves of God's divine compassion and a love that will not let Israel go.

Joel

Traditionally called the "Prophet of Pentecost," since his prophecy of the outpouring of the Spirit (2:28ff.) is quoted by Peter (Acts 2:16) as being fulfilled at Pentecost, Joel was the kind of man who could see the eternal in the temporal. The occasion of his message was a devastating locust plague, which he interpreted as foreboding the Day of the Lord when God would act directly to punish His people for their sins. Joel calls upon the people of Judah to repent, promising that repentance will bring God's blessings, material and spiritual.

Amos

Among the "writing" prophets, Amos was the first of a new school, for, like Elijah and John the Baptist, he denounced sin with rustic boldness. A shepherd and native of Judah, he was called by God to prophesy to the northern kingdom of Israel during the reign of Jeroboam II (786-746 B.C.). Sparing no one, the prophet fearlessly announced the impending judgment of God. Although the dominant note of the book is judgment, the final words promise the restoration of a righteous remnant.

Obadiah

This shortest of the prophetic books, containing only 21 verses, is a scathing denunciation of the Edomites, descendants of Esau, who from the beginning had been hostile to Israel. Its message is primarily one of destruction and doom for Edom. The latter part of the prophecy is concerned with the Day of the Lord when God's judgment will be upon other nations as well as Edom and concludes with the promise that the kingdom shall be the Lord's.

Jonah

The Old Testament counterpart of John 3:16, this book declares the universality of God's love embracing even pagan nations. Its authorship and historicity are disputed. If one is willing to accept the miraculous, there is no compelling reason to deny its historicity. There is a strong possibility that the book is about Jonah and not *by* him. The author relates how Jonah refused God's call to preach to the people of Nineveh, his punishment for this disobedience, his ready response to a second summons, and his bitter complaint at God's sparing the city following her repentance. Christ Himself alludes to Jonah when speaking of His own death and resurrection (Matt. 12:39, 16:4; Luke 11:29-32).

Micah

The Prophet Micah was a younger contemporary of Isaiah and spoke at a time when conditions in Judah paralleled those in the northern kingdom of Israel during Amos' day. Micah's messages are strikingly similar to those of Amos: many of the same sins are denounced and the same rugged, direct, indignant, and convincing language is used. While announcing God's certain judgment upon sin, he also spoke of a sure deliverance to come through the Messiah whose place of birth he predicts.

Nahum

This book is a vivid prediction of the approaching downfall of Nineveh, the capital city of Assyria, one of the most warlike of the ancient heathen nations. Of the Prophet Nahum, whose name means "consolation" or "comfort," little is known. His purpose was to comfort his people, long harassed by Assyria, with the promise that this cruel and oppressing people would soon meet destruction at God's hand.

Habakkuk

While this book is true prophecy, its method is quite different from the other writings of the prophets. Dramatically constructed in the form of dialogue, this book contains the prophet's complaints (questions) and God's replies to them. In God's answers, Habakkuk discovers the doorway leading from questioning to affirmation, through which he enters into a faith that enables him to affirm, "I will rejoice in the Lord... God, the Lord, is my strength."

Zephaniah

This book, though brief, is comprehensive, embracing the two great themes of prophetic teaching: judgment and salvation—both extending to all nations. In some great catastrophe of his

day, perhaps the Scythian invasion (c. 626 B.C.), Zephaniah sees God's terrible judgment upon the nations, including Judah. He exhorts the people to repent and assures them that God will dwell in the midst of a righteous remnant following repentance.

Haggai

This book, the first among the writings of the post-Exilic prophets, consists of four prophecies delivered within the space of 4 months, some 15 years after the return of the first exiles to Jerusalem. Work on the second Temple began shortly after the exiles' arrival, but had been delayed for almost two decades. Haggai comes forward with a series of timely and vigorous messages challenging the people to respond wholeheartedly to a noble task—rebuilding the House of God.

Zechariah

Sometimes called the "Apocalypse of the Old Testament," this book contains the messages of the prophet Zechariah, a contemporary of Haggai. The first eight chapters are primarily concerned with the rebuilding of the Temple, although the language used is highly symbolic. Chapters 9 to 14 deal with "last things," the "end time." Many messianic references are found, and the writer foresees the Day of the Lord when Israel will be restored, the nations judged, and God's kingdom triumphant.

Malachi

The name of the last book of the Old Testament and of the prophet whose oracles it contains. Malachi (from Hebrew meaning "my messenger") is an invaluable source concerning the Judean Jews during the Persian period. Two themes are predominant: the sin and apostasy of Israel (1-2); and the coming judgment upon the faithless, with blessings promised for those who repent (3-4). The growing messianic expectation in the Old Testament is apparent in Malachi through the announcement of God's "messenger of the covenant," by whose coming Israel will be purified and judged; and of the return of the prophet Elijah who will proclaim the Day of the Lord.

The Gospels

Matthew

From at least the 2nd century A.D., the gospel of Matthew has been ascribed to Matthew—the publican, tax collector, and disciple. It is the most complete account of Jesus' teachings and was written to convince the writer's Jewish audience that Jesus was the Messiah descended from David, the One promised by the Old Testament prophets. It is peculiarly the gospel for Israel. The most significant teaching passages are the Sermon on the Mount (5-7) and the parable sections (especially Chapter 13).

Mark

The gospel of Mark, the shortest, is also held by most to be the first of the gospels to be written. A tradition dating from the 2nd century ascribes this book to John Mark, a companion of Peter and also of Paul and Barnabas in their missionary endeavors. The preaching of Peter may well have been the source of most of Mark's material. Mark accounts for the ministry of Jesus from His baptism to His ascension. Most commentaries agree that Mark's purpose was neither biographical nor historical, but theological: to present Jesus as the Christ, the mighty worker rather than great teacher. Hence, Mark makes fewer references to the Parables and discourses, but meticulously records each of Jesus' "mighty works" as evidence of His divine power. Mark contains 20 specific miracles and alludes to others. Biblical scholars generally agree that Mark wrote his gospel in Rome for the gentiles.

Luke

There is almost universal agreement that Luke, the "beloved physician" (Col. 4:14) who accompanied Paul on his missionary travels, was the author of the third gospel. Luke wrote to present Jesus as the Universal Savior, the compassionate healer and teacher. His careful historical approach is revealed in the preface, which states that the author has traced "all things from the very first." Unlike Mark, this author includes an account of the virgin birth, and unlike Matthew, he extensively describes the Perea ministry (Chapters 9-18).

John

The gospel of John endeavors to explain the mystery of the Person of Christ by the use of the term "logos" (word) and was written to confirm Christians in the belief that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God. Its purpose is evangelical and is so stated in 20:31. John not only records events as do the other gospels but also uniquely interprets the events by giving them spiritual meaning. The author makes significant use of such words as light, water, me, love, and bread. Traditionally the author of this gospel is considered to have been John, the Beloved Disciple.

History

Acts

Addressed to a certain Theophilus, about whom nothing is known (1:1), the Book of Acts records the early history of the Apostolic Church. Beginning with the ascension of Jesus to heaven, it traces the growth of Christianity in Palestine and its spread to Syria, Asia Minor, Greece, and eventually to Rome. The leading figure in the first chapters is Peter, who delivered the stirring sermon on the day of Pentecost (2).

The greater part of the book, however, is devoted to the experiences of Paul and his companions during their missionary endeavors. The Book of Acts provides a useful background for the study of the Pauline Epistles. The introduction (1:1) gives evidence that Luke was the author.

Epistles (The Letters)

Romans

This letter, the first in canonical order, but not the first of Paul's Epistles, is the longest and most influential of all the apostle's writings. Writing to Christians in Rome who he hoped to visit soon, Paul presents to them his mature convictions concerning the Christian faith: the universality of sin, the impotence of the law as a means of salvation, the nature of God's saving act in Christ, and its appropriation by faith. The letter closes with spiritual advice and some personal remarks.

I Corinthians

This letter discusses doctrinal and ethical problems that were disturbing the Corinthian church, and presents a picture of the life of a particular local congregation in New Testament times. Writing from Ephesus, where he spent at least three years, Paul addresses the Corinthian church concerning the significance of the new Me in Christ, which should be demonstrated in the fellowship within the church. He advises them regarding spiritual gifts (12), Christian love (13), and the meaning of the resurrection (15).

II Corinthians

Often called "the hard letter," this is an intensely personal letter. It recounts the hardships Paul has endured in the service of Christ (10-13). The apostle regards the Corinthians as his children in Christ.

Galatians

Paul's letter addressed to the churches in Galatia is the great letter on Christian freedom; in it, Paul attacks the Christians who wished to exalt the law. Galatians' emphasis is similar to the theme of Paul's letter to the Romans. The doctrinal section, as is typical of the Pauline format, is followed by an intensely practical section in chapters five and six.

Ephesians

The Ephesians letter is one of Paul's four "Imprisonment Letters"—Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon being the others. Although addressed to the church in Ephesus, this letter is generally believed to have been a circular discussing the believers' exalted position through Christ, the church as the body of Christ, her relationship to God, and practical implications of the Gospel.

Philippians

In this letter, which is a message of joy, Paul expresses his gratitude for the Philippians' love and material assistance. The Epistle is uniquely significant because of its presentation of the humility of Jesus. Its practicality is also evident in Paul's advice to Euodia and Syntyche.

Colossians

The Colossian letter is well known for its doctrine as well as for its brevity. In the letter, Paul insists upon the Lordship of Christ. Colossians has come under recent scrutiny because of its references, implied or actual, to incipient Gnosticism, a growing heresy in the church.

I and II Thessalonians

These letters constitute what is probably the earliest writing of the Apostle Paul. They were written in A.D. 51-52, soon after the founding of the Thessalonian church, and give Paul's answer to some basic problems disturbing the Christians of Thessalonica. The major contributions are eschatological, investigating especially the events preceding and accompanying the return of Christ. The concern of Paul for his followers is apparent throughout.

I and II Timothy

Along with the letter to Titus, these writings are defined as "pastoral epistles," which approach the material from the perspective of the minister, not of the church. The letters to Timothy discuss such matters as the duties and qualifications of church officers, the inspirations of Scripture, the treatment of widows, and the expectation of a future reward.

Titus

This is a personal letter written by the Apostle Paul to a young minister he had left in Crete. Like the Timothy correspondence, the letter to Titus is practical and discusses the everyday problems confronted by a young minister. This letter was probably written between the first and the second letters to Timothy.

Philemon

This shortest of all of Paul's letters was addressed to Philemon (although two other persons are included in the salutation). Paul entreats Philemon, the master of Onesimus, a runaway slave, to receive him back as a brother in Christ (16, 17). This very personal letter reveals not only the concern of the apostle for a converted slave but also a practical demonstration of brotherhood in Christ, "where there is neither bond (slave) nor free." (Gal 3:28)

Hebrews

Although tradition ascribed Hebrews to Paul, it is now generally believed to have been written by someone other than the apostle, but certainly someone who was acquainted with Paul's teaching. The Epistle portrays Jesus, who performed the perfect sacrifice for the sins of the world, as the great High Priest of the line of Melchizedek (Gen. 14). The Bible's only definition of faith occurs in this Epistle (Chap. 11) and is followed by the "great line of splendor" of the men of faith.

James

The author of this letter introduces himself as "James, a servant of God and the Lord Jesus Christ". Four men in the New Testament bore this name but the writer of this Epistle is usually identified as James, the leader of the church in Jerusalem. The letter is addressed to "the twelve tribes, which are scattered abroad," and is the most Jewish in style and form of any of the New Testament books. It is not a treatise on Christian theology but rather a practical letter dealing with Christian ethics. James insists that works, not words, are the mark of a disciple.

I Peter

The author describes himself as "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ," and there is no overriding reason to doubt the truth of his claim, although the beautiful Greek style employed has led some scholars to believe that Peter may have dictated the letter to an associate (probably a secretary). The contents breathe the spirit of Peter. His speeches recorded in Acts indicate a similar attitude toward persecution and suffering. The letter here reflects a time of suffering and trial. No doubt, the widespread persecution of the Christians by the Roman authorities was the "fiery trial" described (4:12). The writer admonishes his readers to a life of purity and godly living, and exhorts them to steadfastness and faithfulness.

II Peter

This letter was a reminder to the readers of the truth of the Gospel, a response against the attacks of false teachers who would pervert it. The author urges his hearers to remain steadfast even amidst persecution and reminds them that the Lord will keep His promises. He speaks of the "day of the Lord" (*parousia*) and of the necessity of keeping themselves "without spot and blameless" (3:14)

The Epistles Of John

Three Johannine Epistles—I, II and III John—are included in the New Testament collection. These Epistles should probably be dated A.D. 90-95. John, the author of the Fourth Gospel, addresses the first one to an unidentified group. I John 5:13 indicates that the author writes in order that this group might know the certainty of eternal Me. II John is addressed to an elect lady, either a church or perhaps a woman. III John is addressed to Gaius, a man commended for his hospitality.

Jude

The author of this short letter warns his readers against the dangers of apostasy, and points to the faithlessness of the Israelites as a reminder of God's judgment. Surrounded as his readers were by moral corruption and apostacizing influences, the author urges them to "contend for the faith" (3), and in a closing benediction he commends them to the One "who is able to keep you from falling" (24). Both the similarity of this letter to II Peter and Jude's use of non-Biblical sources (9, 14, 15) have been the subject of much discussion.

Prophetical Book

Revelation

This last book of the Bible identifies itself as "the revelation of Jesus Christ," and its author is designated "his servant John" who was exiled to the Greek island of Patmos because of his faith. Traditionally, John is identified as the author of the Fourth Gospel. Addressed to seven historical churches in Asia Minor, the Book of Revelation was written to warn against spiritual indifference and to elicit courage under persecution. Because of the extensive use of symbolism and picturesque imagery, its interpretation has posed many problems for the student of the Bible. While recognizing the historical situation (Roman persecution) that elicited this writing, many interpreters look upon it as a prophecy depicting events that were to take place at the end of the age. The ultimate victory of Christ is the dominant theme of this book.

WHEN TO READ WHAT

- ✓ When in sorrow, read John 14
- ✓ When men fail you, read Psalm 27
- ✓ When you have sinned, read Psalm 51
- ✓ When you worry, read Matthew 6:19-34
- ✓ When you are in danger, read Psalm 91
- ✓ When you have the blues, read Psalm 34
- ✓ When God seems far away, read Psalm 139
- ✓ When you are discouraged, read Isaiah 40
- ✓ When you want to be fruitful, read John 15
- ✓ When doubt comes upon you, read John 7:17
- ✓ When you are lonely or fearful, read Psalm 23
- ✓ When you forget your blessings, read Psalm 103
- ✓ For Jesus' idea of a Christian, read Matthew 5
- ✓ For James' idea of religion, read James 1:19-27
- ✓ When your faith needs stirring, read Hebrews 11
- ✓ When you feel down and out, read Romans 8:31-39
- ✓ When the world seems bigger than God, read Psalm 90
- ✓ When you want rest and peace, read Matthew 11:25-30
- ✓ When you want Christian assurance, read Romans 8:1-30
- ✓ For Paul's secret of happiness, read Colossians 3:12-17
- ✓ For Paul's idea of Christianity, read II Corinthians 5:15-19
- ✓ For Paul's rules on how to get along with men, read Romans 12

SOME THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE BIBLE

1. Behind and beneath the Bible, above and beyond the Bible, is the God of the Bible, which means that God is directly responsible for the Bible, Jesus is the word, and the Bible is the written word.
2. The Bible is God's written revelation of His will to men.
3. The Bible's central theme is salvation through Jesus Christ.
4. The Bible contains 66 books.
5. The Old Testament was written mostly in Hebrew with a few passages in Aramaic.
6. The word Bible comes from the Greek word biblos, which means "books."
7. The word testament, means "covenant" or "agreement".
8. The Old Testament is the covenant God made with man about his salvation before Christ came.
9. The New Testament is God entering in human history in the person of Christ to give His people the gift of salvation.
10. In the Old Testament, we find the covenant of **law**.
11. In the New Testament, we find the covenant of **grace**, which came through Jesus Christ.
12. From Adam to Christ we have the history of the chosen race.
13. From Christ we have the history of the church.
14. Number of verses – 31,302.
15. Number of words – 775,693.
16. The longest Psalm – Psalm 119

17. The shortest Psalm – Psalm 117
18. Ezra 7:21 – contains all the letters of the alphabet except “J”.
19. The longest verse – Esther 8:9
20. The shortest verse – John 11:35.
21. The longest book in the Old Testament – Psalms
22. The longest book in the New Testament – Luke
23. The Bible is about: God, man, sin, redemption, justification, sanctification, and glorification.
24. In two words, The New Testament is about – **Grace & Glory**.
25. In one word, The New Testament is about – **Jesus**.

Lesson Three

Connecting to God’s Word

X. The Power of the Word

When we learn the Word of God and get it in our spiritual bones, which is our mind, heart, soul, and spirit its power will take complete charge of us. This is what I call living by the power of the Word. The apostle Paul referred to this spiritual dynamic as walking in the spirit in Galatians 5: 16-18. Living by the power of the Word is including when God’s Word in every aspect of your life. It is important that we rely on the Word for mind power, relationship power, family power, faith power, spiritual power, healing power, and for blessings, prosperity, and protection. It is crucially important to our lives that we recognize and acknowledge the sovereignty of the scripture. The Bible is the written Word that comes directly from the heart of God. The Word has power because it is God. John 1:1 says, ‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.’ Despite what popular culture teaches and promotes, and what the media would try to have you believe, God’s Word is the final authority. The Word speaks for God and God has the answers to every problem, and the power to change any situation.

A. The Word of God:

1. The Word of God is:

- a. Not a group of words without meaning; they have power, purpose, mission, and meaning
- b. A person who breathes and lives in His sayings.
 - (i) John 1:1, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God.”

- (ii) John 1:14, “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father . . .)”
- (iii) The word is God and it is Christ!

2. The Word of God – “The Book that Endures Forever”

- a. Psalm 119:89
- b. Isaiah 40:8
- c. Matthew 5:18-19
- d. Matthew 24:35
- e. 1 Peter 1:25

3. The Word of God is Spiritual Food

- a. Deuteronomy 8:3 - (quote of Jesus to the devil) “Man shall not live by natural bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God doth man live (Matthew 4:4)
- b. Job 23:12 - “... I have esteemed the words of his (God) mouth more than my necessary food.”
- c. Psalm 119:103 - Jeremiah 15:16, 1 Peter 2:2

4. The Word of God is divinely inspired

- a. Jeremiah 36:2 – God tells the prophet to write his words that He has spoken.
- b. 2 Timothy 3:16 – “All scripture is given by inspiration of God.”
- c. 2 Peter 1:21 – “For the prophecy came not by the will of man, but Holy men of God as they were inspired (moved on) by the Holy Ghost.”

5. The Word of God is mighty

- a. Jeremiah 5:14, “a devouring fire”
- b. Ezekiel 37:1-7, “a life giving force”

- c. Romans 1:16, “a saving power”
 - d. Ephesians 6:17, “a defensive weapon”
 - e. Hebrews 4:12, “a probing instrument”
6. The Word of God is a blessing
- a. Joshua 1:18
 - b. Psalm 19:11
 - c. Matthew 7:24
 - d. Luke 11:28
7. The Word of God cleanses
- a. Psalm 119:9 says, “Wherewithal (how) shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to thy word.”
 - b. John 15:3 “Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.”
- A. The Purpose of the Word of God is:
- 1. To show us the divinity of Jesus and his purpose in coming (John 20:31).
 - 2. To give hope to man (Romans 15:4).
 - 3. To study and live by; a road map to get to the Father and be able to explain Him, His love and all our rights in Him.

Lesson Four

How to Study the Word

XI. How to Study the Word

Approach the Bible with utmost reverence, faith, and most of all, the spirit of obedience. To know and understand your Bible is one of the most important aspects of your development as a Christian; the Word is the key to unlocking the mystery of life, growing in Christ, and getting a crystal clear understanding of your Christian faith. The Bible is how you nurture your mind, develop your spirit, and learn to obey Christ.

A. The Importance of Study and Meditation

1. The digestive tract brings food, minerals, and vitamins into the physical body. The body needs the digestive tract to receive, grow, and be nurtured. In fact, what the digestive tract is to the physical body, meditation is to the spiritual body. The word “meditates” means to “roll over and over and over in thought.” Make a habit of engaging the word in this manner and you will certainly connect with the Word.
2. So let us eat the Word (by studying) and digest the Word (by meditation). Then the strength of the Word, which has been eaten and digested, will give us strength to grow up in Him and in all things to radiate His glory and His image.
3. Get so much Word in you, become so full of the Word that when the devil puts the pressure on you the only thing that he will squeeze out of you will be the Word.
4. Deuteronomy 17:19, Isaiah 34:16, John 5:39, Acts 17:11, Romans 15:4

B. The Word of God is incorruptible seed.

1. John gives us clarity on how Christ gives us life. The Word is life; the Life is in the seed. John 1: 4 says, “In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.” When the Word is planted in our souls it will produce life in us. To understand the Word as life it is significant and necessary to understand the Word from the perspective of John 1. In the gospel, the Greek word for life is Zoe and the verb to live or to have life is (zen). You need Zoë to do (Zen), which is to say that we live or have life in Christ; Christ came to give us life. For John life is the opposite of destruction and condemnation, and you get life through Christ. According to John, God sent His Son to give us life and those who believe (who accept Him with confidence) in Him should not perish but have eternal life (3:16). The writer means that those to whom Jesus gives life will never perish (10:28), but the Word (Christ) is the seed that grows when it falls on the fertile soil of faith, which is in our heart. It is through our faith in Jesus that we get life. This means that Jesus gives us security (hope and power) in this life and in the life to come. Until we accept Jesus and take Him as our savior we cannot live at all. The person who lives a Christless life will exist, but she/he does not know what life is. Jesus is the one person who can make life worth living, but we must have faith in Him (confidence in his death, sacrifice, and victory). It takes faith to walk a life with such power.

2. John 12:24, Psalm 126:6
3. Mark 4:14 (parable of the Sower of Seed) Some fell by the wayside, some on stony ground, and some on good ground.
4. 2 Corinthians 9:10, The Word is the seed to plant in your life in every area of need, so you can reap the harvest that God has for you. Plant the Word in your life, in your situation, and see the harvest produced.

B. Study Techniques

1. First, make the Bible your final authority in every area of your life from how you raise your children and conduct your marriage or business to how you handle your finances. God's way is perfect (Psalm 18:30) and when you seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, or His way of doing and being right, all the other things you need will be given to you (Matthew 6:33, AMP). Therefore, you have nothing to fear from obeying what it commands—it is all for your benefit.
2. Second, purchase a Bible that is easy for you to understand. To find the version that best suits your needs, take a familiar scripture, such as John 3:16, and read it in other versions, such as the New King James Version (NKJV), New International Version (NIV), New American Standard (NAS) and The Living Bible (TLB).
3. Third, pick up a Strong's Exhaustive Concordance or go to web sites such as Biblegateway.com or blueletterBible.com to locate all the scriptures regarding specific subjects. The Concordance will help to use key words to locate scriptures that will give you a deeper understanding of the text. You can also study by reading the New Testament. Begin with the letters of John, then move on to the gospels. The letters of John give insight into God's love and delve into how the "faith system" works, while the gospels tell of the life and works of Jesus from the perspective of four different writers. The rest of the New Testament is comprised of letters to Christians, instructing us in how to live godly lives. It is very important to keep each area of the Bible in its historical contexts in order to get a deeper spiritual understanding of the primary message, and to connect to the central theological and doctrinal issues. For example, Paul's letter to the Corinthian Church addresses division, carnal mindedness, and immorality. The Book of Acts was written by Luke in order to commend the Christian faith to Theophilus, and to point out how the power of the Holy Spirit worked to establish the Christian Church. Luke was a doctor and doctors in the ancient days were often slaves. Some scholars believe that Luke was Theophilus' doctor who was

responsible for his complete healing and that Theophilus repaid Luke by giving him his freedom. Indeed, Luke writes this letter to Theophilus to witness to him and to express his gratitude for his freedom. He wants to share with Theophilus the most precious gift that he could give him, which was the story of Jesus and His resurrection victory. Why am I giving you this background? When studying the Word it is important to remain aware and true to the contextual background in order to get a deeper spiritual understanding of the text. Detailed consideration of the Biblical context will teach us that one of the reasons Luke writes Acts is to commend Christianity to the Roman government, and to point out that Christianity was for all people because Christ's victory was for all people. His chief purpose in writing Acts was to do what the words of Christ in Acts 1:8 declared, which are as follows: "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." It is important that Christian churches never forget that the New Testament church as presented in the Book of Acts is the model for Christian churches to follow, and that the Holy Spirit is the power and heavenly force that guarantees the continuity of biblical history. Moreover, the Holy Spirit is the power that enables the disciples to function as witnesses. The book of Acts has been called the Acts of the Holy Spirit, because only the Holy Spirit can make persons into witnesses. (1:4, 8) The Holy Spirit remains the power that shapes, builds, and empowers the Christian church to do the work of Christ. When studying the Word it is essential to research the biblical context in every book of the Bible in order to remain true to it, and to let the Holy Spirit teach you. In fact, to understand the Word and to discover the truths of any biblical scripture it is necessary that you must first seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit, thoroughly research the purpose of the text from the historical, spiritual, theological perspectives, and read other important scriptures that will enhance your understanding and make the text crystal clear.

4. Fourth, when studying the Word of God, be sure to read and study each scripture in its proper context. That may mean taking a few moments to study the entire chapter in which the verse is contained, to research the social history of the book or to cross-reference the scripture you are studying with others like it in other books of the Bible. Another way to ensure a correct interpretation is to apply the "Law of First Mention." It simply states that the first mention, or occurrence, of a subject in scriptures establishes an unchangeable pattern. In other words, a word or phrase will mean the same thing in Revelation as it does in Genesis, but be careful because words are used differently in different times in history because of language and other cultural factors. Need help with word definitions?

Use a Bible dictionary such as Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words. Don't forget to remain true to the context. For example, the context in Genesis is different than the context in Acts or the gospels so it is important that you do your exegetical work with spiritual integrity and do not try to make the Bible say what you want it to say.

5. Fifth, as you study the Word, always remember to pray for God to open your heart so that you can clearly understand what is written on the page (Ephesians 1:17, 18) and apply it to your life. A closed heart and mind will hinder your growth and the word will fall on hard ground. Daily Bible study is a powerful strategy that will enrich your mind and empower you to succeed in every endeavor.

C. Additional Study Tools:

- a. A daily Bible reading plan
- b. Daily devotionals
- c. Daily confessions
- d. Practical "How to" articles
- e. Listen to Dr. Mitchell's messages

LESSON FIVE: THE CONVERSION EXPERIENCE

When a person is converted from a life of sin into the Christian faith, he/she is turned from sin toward Jesus Christ. During the act of turning away, you are engaged in repentance of sins. At the same time, you are learning to have faith in God. It does not matter if a person goes to church regularly, or if he/she prays and reads the scripture everyday; one cannot receive a divine pardon without the forsaking of one's sins. One must come to the point where one actually turns from wrong, and stops doing the work of sin. Unless this happens, one will only remain in the ranks of non-professing sinners.

Many people are aware of their lost condition of sin, but are unwilling to confess to the Lord as the Bible requires. God requires this confession; likewise, when we come to God for pardon of sins we have committed against Him, in order that we may be reconciled to Him, we must also confess to our fellowmen the sins we have committed against them.

As a new member of the church, you become a member of the family of God. This family desires to share its responsibilities with the new convert. It is the duty of the church to help you understand the conversion experience and to help you learn and grow into the ways of God. We are to comfort you and share with you in difficult times and to encourage you to live a Christ-like life.

Your responsibility is to love and share in the life of the church with your whole heart, mind, and soul. You are to show a Christian spirit in thought and action as you grow in spirit. Pray for your church, its leadership, and its mission and give lovingly of your tithe and time.

In meeting the foregoing conditions, the sweet peace and joy that can only be shared by Christians can come into your life.

SALVATION

I. Facts about Salvation

Q. Why do men need to be saved?

A. Because men cannot save themselves.

“For we all have _____ and come short of the glory of God.”(Romans 3:23)

Q. What does the scripture say about the righteousness of man?

A. No man is righteous in and of himself.

“As it is written: There is _____ righteous, no, not one. (Romans 3:10)

Q. What is sin?

A. Sin is the transgression of the laws of God.

“Whosoever committeth sin _____ also the law: for sin is the _____ of the law. (1 John 3:4)

Q. What is the origin of sin?

**A. The first recorded origin of sin took place in heaven.
The second took place in Eden.**

“Sin initially took place in _____ when Lucifer became overzealous to be equal with God. (Isaiah 14:12-14)

“The origin of sin took place on _____ and because of that action, all became sinners.” (Genesis 3:1)

Q. What are the wages of sin?

A. Death.

*“For the wages of sin is _____; but the gift of God is _____
_____ through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 6:23)*

Q. How did sin enter into the world?

A. Through Adam’s disobedience to God.

*“Wherefore, as by one, man, sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so
_____ passed upon all men, for all that have sinned.” (Romans 5:12)*

Q. Who will have their part in the lake of fire because of sin?

A. All who do not follow the will of God.

*“But the _____, and _____ and the _____ and _____,
and, _____, and _____, and _____ and all _____
_____, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and
brimstone: which is the second death. (Revelation 21:8)*

Q. Who can be saved?

A. All who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and accept him as Savior.

*“But as _____ as received Him, to them gave He _____ to become the
sons of God, even to them that believe on His name. Which were born, not of _____,
nor of the will of the _____, nor of the will of _____, but of God.
(John 1:12-13).*

Q. What does a person have to do to receive the everlasting life?

A. Believe in Jesus Christ.

*“He that _____ on the _____, hath everlasting life: and he that
believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.(John 3:36)*

Q. What must I do to be saved?

A. Accept the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior.

*That if thou shalt _____ with thy _____ the Lord Jesus and shalt
_____ in thine heart, that God has raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be
saved. For with the _____ man believeth unto righteousness; and with the
mouth _____ is made unto salvation. (Romans 10:9-10)*

Q. What did Jesus say about eternal life?

A. All who believe in Him would not perish.

*“Verily, Verily, I say unto you, he that hearth my Word, and _____ on Him that
sent me, hath everlasting life and shall not come into judgment; but is passed from
death unto life.” (John 5:24)*

What happens to you when you are saved?

A. You are:

Forgiven (*Colossians 1:14; Romans 4:5-8*)

Justified (*1 Corinthians 5:21; Romans 4:5*)

Accepted by God (*Ephesians 1:6*)

Sealed (*Ephesians 1:13; 1 Corinthians 6:11*)

Complete (*Colossians 2:9-10*)

A Member of God's Family (*John 1:12-13*)

Q. What would God do if we confess our sins?

A. He will forgive our sins.

"If we are _____ to confess our sins, He will be _____ and _____ to forgive our sins." (1 John 1:9)

SALVATION

[Concerning God's Provision]

Q. How did Christ provide for us?

A. He gave His life on Calvary for remission of our sins.

- *And Jesus said unto him, "This day is _____ come to this house, for so much as He also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man is come to _____ and to _____ that which was lost."* (Luke 19:9,10)
- *"And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: For he shall _____ His people from their _____."* (Matthew 1:21)
- *"For Christ also hath once _____ for sins, the _____ for the _____, but _____ by the spirit."* (1 Peter 3:18).
- *"But God commendeth His _____ toward us, in that, while we were yet _____, Christ _____ for _____."* (Romans 5:8)
- *"For God so _____ loved the world, that He _____ His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not _____ but have everlasting _____."* (John 3:16)
- *"All we like _____ have gone _____; we have turned everyone to His _____ way; and the Lord hath laid on _____ the iniquity of us all."* (Isaiah 53:6)

[Concerning Our Response]

Knowing that Christ has accomplished all of the work needed for the sinner's salvation by sacrificing Himself at Calvary:

Q. What three (3) things must one do to experience salvation?

- A. One must first repent. Repent means to literally "to turn around". It is to turn away from your wrong actions, attitudes, and decisions. Real repentance is to change one's ways.**

"_____ ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out...." (Acts 3:19A)

Second, one must believe the *Gospel (Good News)*, or *the testimony* of God concerning the person and work of Christ.

"He that _____ on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself: He that believeth not God hath made Him a liar; he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son." (1 John 5:10)

Third, one must accept the Lord Jesus the Christ, by a definite act of his/her will as his/her own personal savior and henceforth own Him as the Supreme Lord of his/her life.

"That if thou shalt _____ with thy _____, the Lord Jesus, and shalt _____ in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be _____. For with the _____ man _____ unto _____; And with the _____ confession is made unto _____." (Romans 10:9,10)

SALVATION

[Concerning Grace]

The Word of God teaches us that we are saved by grace through faith, not of works lest any man should boast. When Paul writes to the church at Ephesus he says to them:

"For grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God not of work, lest of any man should boast."

The biblical account records the word grace more than 160 times. The New Testament records grace at least 128 times.

- God is spoken of as "The God of all grace" (1 Peter 5:10)
- Christ is described as being "Full of Grace" (John 1:14)
- The Holy Spirit is called "Spirit of Grace" (Hebrews 10:29)

Q. What is grace?

- A. Grace is the unmerited favor of God. Grace is God showing nothing but love and mercy, when we deserve nothing but wrath and judgment.**

Q. What is a good example of grace?

- A. Jesus The Christ, The Son of God.**

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish, but shall have everlasting life.” (John 3:16)

“But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinner, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8).

THE ASSURANCE OF SALVATION

The Assurance of Salvation is for every child of God. Too many Christians are under a cloud of doubt (unnecessarily) because of not leaning on the sure Word of God. The moment we accept Jesus as Lord and Personal Savior, we are declared righteous, justified by faith in the sight of God.

The word “**Justified**” means that we are seen as though we had not sinned in the sight of God. Having received Christ as our personal savior, our salvation is secured and anchored in Christ. Keep in mind that the Bible is God’s Word. It is absolutely true and you can trust and rely on it.

CONFIDENCE IN MY SALVATION

God’s Word tells me that I am saved and that through my faith (confidence in Christ’s death and victory) I can receive it.

“He hath that believeth on the Son _____ everlasting life.” (John 3:36)

“That if thou shalt confess with thou mouth the Lord Jesus and shalt _____ in thine heart, that God hath raised him from the dead _____ shalt be _____.” (Romans 10:9)

“These things have I written unto you that _____ on the name on the Son of God; That ye may _____ that ye _____ eternal life, and that ye may _____ on the name of God.” (1 John 5:13)

Romans 4:3 “For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.” What did Abraham do? He believed God. Believing God accounted to him what? Righteousness. Do you believe God? Then you are what?

Righteousness means being in right standing with God.

Listen to how James puts it. “And the scripture was fulfilled which says, Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.” (James 2:23)

My desire to do God's will and new love for brethren tells me that I am saved and I am secure in Him.

"For sin shall not have _____ over you: For ye not under the _____ but under _____." (Romans 6:14)

"Now unto Him that is able to keep you from _____ and present you _____ before the presence of His _____ with exceeding joy...." (Jude 1:24)

"For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be _____ to _____ us from the _____ of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:38, 39)

One final observation : When Satan comes to you and tries to make you doubt your salvation, turn to Acts 16:31, John 1:12, John 3:36, John 5:24 or Romans 10:9.

LESSON SIX: WATER BAPTISM ITS MEANING AND IMPORTANCE

Baptism by immersion has been a distinct feature of the Baptist practice since the development of the Baptists in Europe. In fact, the method of baptism was not generally settled among Baptists until the 1640's. Until then, some Baptists "dipped" (immersed), some Baptists "poured" (pouring water over the believers). The distinctive feature of Baptists was not how they did it, but to whom. Believer's Baptism was what made the Baptists distinctive. Water Baptism is an outward sign of an inward work; it gives testimony of a changed life.

I. WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Jesus was baptized by John to fulfill the scripture and left us an example to follow.
(Matthew 3:13-17)

"...Suffer it to be now: for thus it becometh us to _____ all _____..." (Matthew 3:15)

A. Jesus commanded his followers to be baptized.

"...and teach all nations, _____ them in the name of the _____, and of the _____, and of the _____." (Matthew 28:19)

B. I have the promise of the gift of the Holy Ghost.

"...Repent, and be _____ everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the _____ of the _____." (Acts 2:38)

C. An act of my obedience.

“If ye love me, keep my _____.” (John 14:15)

I am now a follower of Christ; it is my privilege to follow the Lord in being _____ in water.

D. *“He that believeth and is _____ shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”* (Mark 16:16)

II. WHAT IS ITS SIGNIFICANCE?

A. *“Therefore we are buried with him by _____ into _____; that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in _____ of _____.”*(Romans 6:4)

B. It is a testimony of my love and obedience to the Lord before my fellow believers and my unsaved friends and family.

C. *“For as many of you have been _____ into Christ have put on Chrst.”* (Galatians 3:27)

III. MODE OR METHOD OF BAPTISM

A. “Baptize” means to dip, immerse, and be covered by water.

B. *“Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.”*
(Colossians 2:12)

C. Immersion in water baptism typifies the death and resurrection of our Lord. One goes completely under the waters of baptism, an act on one’s part to bury one’s old life and self and come up in newness in one’s life with Christ.

If you were to plant a seed, would you sprinkle dirt on it and expect the seed to grow? Would you pour a little dirt on the seed and expect a plant? Or, would you completely cover (bury) the seed? Now, if we are to be “buried with him in baptism”, how much water is sufficient?

How could Jesus come “straightway out of the water” (Matt. 3:16) if water had been sprinkled or poured on him? Why does Acts 8:38 record: *“And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him”*? Why didn’t they use drinking water carried on such trails if sprinkling or pouring was enough to be “buried with him in baptism”?

IV. IN WHAT NAME ARE WE BAPTIZED?

We are baptized in the name of the Triune God.

“...baptizing them in the name of the _____, and of the _____ and of the _____.” (Matthew 28:19)

The Trinity is difficult to explain satisfactorily to our natural mind. Yet, we know it is true. For example, John 1:1,2 records: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the Beginning with God.*”

The Trinity is one in spirit; yet, separate too – three in one. It’s three manifestations of one essence; God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. He’s all of that all of the time. When we see Him operating in one office, He holds the other offices also at the same time.

*The grace of the Lord **Jesus Christ**, and the love of **God**, and the communion of the **Holy Ghost**, be with you all.*” (II Corinthians 13:14)

V. WHAT IS THE PREREQUISITE FOR BAPTISM?

*“And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; **what doth hinder me to be baptized?** And Philip said, **If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest.** And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: they went down both into water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.”* (Acts 8:36-38)

*“Then they that **gladly received his word were baptized:** and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.”* (Acts 2:41)

The ones who were baptized were the ones who received the word.

Three things happen in this verse: (1) They received His Word (2) They were baptized, and (3) They were added to the church. We therefore do not baptize babies because they obviously cannot receive His Word.

Baptism is the wedding ring of salvation. The wedding ring does not make you married, but it symbolizes the fact that you are married.

LESSON SEVEN:
HOLY COMMUNION—
THE LORD’S SUPPER

Q. What is the meaning of communion?

A. The word “communion” means sharing, possession in common, and intimate spiritual relationship.

Q. Why do we have communion?

A. Christ commanded and instituted it. He partook with His disciples what we call the Last Supper.

“with desire I have _____ to eat this _____ with you before I suffer.” (Luke 22:15)

Q. Why did He break the bread?

A. He broke the bread signifying that His body was to be broken.

“And He took bread, and gave thanks and _____ it, and gave unto them saying, this is My _____ which is _____ for you: This do in _____ of Me.” (Luke 22:19)

Q. Why did He pour the wine?

A. He poured the wine signifying His shed blood.

“Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This _____ is the New Testament in My _____ which is _____ for _____.” (Luke 22:20)

Q. Why do I need the Lord’s Supper?

A. Because it reminds me of my relationship with Christ. It also affords me a time of self-examination.

“Wherefore whosoever shall _____ this _____, and _____ this cup of the Lord, _____, shall be _____ of the _____ and _____ of the Lord. But let a man _____ himself, and so let him _____ of that bread, and _____ of that cup.” (Cor. 11:27-28)

I need the Lord's Supper to remind me of the New Covenant.

“And to _____ the Mediator of the _____....”
(Hebrews 12:24)

Q. Who is worthy to take the Lord's Supper?

A. No one! No one is worthy in and of him/herself to have communion with Jesus. We are to examine ourselves, not our neighbors, and discern the Lord's body; that is, see it for what it really is and what it means to us.
(see 1 Corinthians 11: 20-22)

What effect does the Lord's Supper have on me?

- A. It reminds me not only of my justification, but also of my present sustenance in my new life and a pledge of future glory and blessedness.**
B. By faith I am a member of Christ's body.

“For we are members of His _____ of His _____ and of His _____.”
(Ephesians 5:30)

NAMES FOR THE REMEMBRANCE

- **The Lord's Table** (1 Corinthians 10:21)
- **The Communion** (1 Corinthians 10:16)
- **The Breaking Bread** (Acts 2:42, 46; 20:4, 1 Corinthians 10:16)
- **The Lord's Supper** (1 Corinthians 11:20)

**LESSON EIGHT:
PRAYER**

Prayer is the most essential element in the life of a Christian. Prayer to the Christian is like water to a fish; they cannot exist without it.

Q. What is prayer?

A. *Prayer is my spiritual lifeline. Jesus Christ is my mediator and high priest. Through Him I have direct access to God. Simply, it is the privilege of talking with God, thanking Him, and fellowshiping with Him. Prayer is the spiritual process by which we are nurtured spiritually and emotionally.*

“For these are one _____ and one _____ between God and men, the man _____.” (1 Timothy 2:5)

Q. What does prayer give me an opportunity to do?

A. To nurture my relationship with God, thank Him, and give Him the praise, honor, and the glory.

"...ask, and it shall be _____ you; seek and ye shall _____; knock and it shall be _____ unto you." (Luke 11:9)

Q. What should I pray about?

A. Christians should pray about everything.

"Be careful for nothing; (don't be worried about anything) but in _____ by _____ and supplication with thanksgiving let your _____ be made known unto God." (Philippians 4:6)

Q. Why should I pray?

A. It is a form of worship, a way we give adoration and thanksgiving to our God. As a child of God, it is my privilege to go directly to God with not only my needs, but with my thanksgiving.

"God is a spirit; and they that _____ Him must worship Him in _____ and in _____." (John 4:24)

Q. What does prayer do for me?

A. FIRST: It develops a habit of close fellowship with God.

SECOND: It secures me, strengthens me, and gives me personal guidance.

THIRD: It preserves me from evil.

FOURTH: It brings forgiveness.

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to _____ us our sins." (1 John 1:9)

Beginning from Genesis to Revelation with the exclusion of the Psalms, which forms a prayer book of its own, the Bible records 650 definite prayers, of which 450 have recorded answers.

Listed below are a few of the different kinds of prayer:

- **Sinner's Prayer**

"Who will have _____ men to be _____ and to come unto the _____ of the _____." (1 Timothy 2:4)

- **Prayer for Help in Times of Trouble**

“Be not far from _____; for _____ is near; for there is none to help.”
(Psalm 22:11)

“But when he (Peter) saw the wind _____, and that he was _____ in the waves he was _____; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord _____ me.” (Matthew 14:30)

- **Prayer of Thanksgiving**

“Giving _____ always for all things unto _____ and the Father in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.” (Ephesians 5:20)

“In everything give thanks...” (1 Thessalonians 5:18)

- **Intercessory Prayer**

“Christ prayed for His disciples.” (John 17)

“Abraham prayed for the righteous in Sodom, the wicked city.” (Genesis 18:20-32)

- **Long Prayers**

“But when ye pray us not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.” (Matthew 6:7)

- **Insincere Prayers**

“If I regard _____ in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.” (Psalm 66:18)

“Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask _____, that ye may _____ it upon your _____.” (James 4:3)

- **Private Prayers**

“But thou, when thou _____, enter thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, _____ to thy Father which is in _____; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall _____ thee openly.” (Matthew 6:6)

- **Unspoken Prayers**

“...she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her _____ was not _____ ...” God knows the thoughts and intents of the heart. (1 Samuel 1:13)

Q. How often should I pray?

A. Christians should pray daily.

Q. How do I begin my prayer?

- 1 I will address my prayer to my Heavenly Father with respect and a proper title, even as Jesus set the example for me. Some titles might be: Our Father, My Heavenly Father, Dear Heavenly Father, Gracious Father in Heaven, Our Loving God, or Dear God.

Q. What should my prayer include?

A. When you pray, your prayer should include:

- Praise and adoration – Example: Psalms.
- Thanksgiving (an outpouring of gratitude to God because of his grace, mercy, and loving kindness) – Example: Psalm 103
- Communion – Example: Luke 6:12, 1 John 1:3
- Confession of sins and wrongs – Example: Psalm 51
- Petitions (plea for personal help) – Example: Matthew 6:4-15, Philippians 4:6
- Intercession (petition on behalf of others) – Example: Romans 9:1-2, Romans 10:1
- Submission – Example: Luke 22:42

Q. How can my prayers be successful?

A. Your prayer can be successful when it is:

- Asked in faith (Hebrews 11:6; Matthew 17:20; Mark 11:23-24)
- Asked in the name of Jesus (John 14:13, 15:16)
- Asked under the power of the Holy Spirit (Jude 20)
- When sin is confessed (Psalm 66:18; Isaiah 59:1-2)
- With a forgiving heart (Mark 11: 25-26)
- When my prayer is kept in the will of God (John 5:14-15)

Q. How do I close my prayer?

A. In the name of Jesus.

“And whatsoever ye ask in my _____, that will I _____, that the _____ may be _____ in the Son.” (John 14:13)

LESSON NINE: THE CHURCH AND ITS COVENANT

A Covenant: is an agreement between two or more people. In the Bible, the word of God is often used to characterize the relationship with God. It is used in the Septuagint, (which is the translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek) it is a Hebrew word meaning a covenant or agreement. It is often used in the Bible to mean a promise (Galatians 3: 17). The word covenant is the same as Testament. Therefore, when we study the Old Testament of the Bible we are studying the old agreement between God and mankind. The New Testament tells of a new agreement God made with man. If we believe in our hearts that we are hopeless sinners and trust in and follow Christ, God will adopt us as His children.

Church Covenants: are agreements between members of the body of Christ; they are based on the love ethic and principles of Christ as preached in the Sermon on the Mountain. Since the Bible clearly points out that salvation is the result of grace and not of works, many Christians began to take certain liberties. Early church leaders felt it necessary for the healthy growth of the church to agree on certain ethics, moral conduct, discipline, and procedures for all church members. Thus, all church members would understand what the church required of them.

III. The Meaning of Covenant

“The new covenant was cut between God and Jesus; it cannot be broken. Because of Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection, the covenant has been extended to you. By making you a joint heir with Him, Jesus allows you to share in His covenant relationship with the Father.” Through Jesus Christ we are able to enter into a relationship with the Father. In other words, the only way to gain access to the Father is through Christ, and through our faith in Christ we enter into a covenant relationship with the Father.

A. What is a Covenant?

1. A covenant is a promise between two or more parties to carry out the terms agreed upon. Christians must be promise keepers and remain obedient to the Word. (Act 5: 30-32) The Holy Spirit gives us the power to remain in a covenant relationship with the Father.
2. It is one of the most powerful agreements known to mankind.
 - a. A blood covenant is a type of covenant that can only be broken by death.
 - b. The covenant guarantees that the promise made will be fulfilled. A covenant with God can be used as the foundation for your faith.

- c. God uses covenants to show men that He will do His part, so that we can do our part.

3. The Covenant Between God and Man

- a. In Genesis 12:1-3, God made some awesome promises to Abraham. He promised to:
 - (i) Make Abraham a great nation.
 - (ii) Bless him.
 - (iii) Make his name great.
 - (iv) Make him a blessing to others.
 - (v) Bless those who blessed him and curse those who cursed him.
 - (vi) Bless all families of the earth through his seed.
- b. After God made these promises, Abraham still had concerns. God used covenant as a way of assuring Abraham that what He had promised would come to pass (Genesis 15:2, 8). So God made a covenant with Abraham by:
 - (i) Reciting the promises (Genesis 15:13-16).
 - (ii) Confirming the covenant in blood by walking through the blood, and reciting the promises again (Genesis 15:17-21).
 - (iii) Keeping His part of the covenant (Hebrews 11:17-19).
- c. God cut a covenant with Abraham, who was a shadow of His Son Jesus, who later came into the earth.
 - (i) Everything begins with God's Word (His written promises).
 - (ii) You must rely upon God's Word for everything you do in life.
 - (iii) In His covenant with Abraham, God promised that His Word is true.
 - (iv) Abraham's covenant with God was tested so that God could prove to him that He would not break His promises (Genesis 22:1-18).
 - (v) God instructed Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac.
 - (vi) The sacrifice of Isaac was to take place on the same mountain where Jesus would be crucified.
 - (vii) Abraham was so confident in God's promises that he envisioned God raising Isaac from the dead after the sacrifice.

- (viii) Because of Abraham's obedience, God first revealed Himself as Jehovah Jireh, by providing a ram as a substitute for Isaac.
 - (ix) Jesus is your substitute; you don't have to die for your sins.
- d. As Abraham's covenant partner, God promised that whatever He asked Abraham to do, He would also do.
- (i) God never breaks His covenants.
 - (ii) Because God asked Abraham for his only son, God gave to us His only Son.
 - (iii) When Jesus said on the cross, "It is finished," He was referring to the Abrahamic covenant.
- e. God promised Abraham that his seed would be blessed and that through his seed all nations of the earth would also be blessed (Galatians 14-17).
- (i) Jesus is the seed (verse 14, AMP).
 - (ii) The promises of God belong to all descendants of Abraham (Galatians 3:13-16).
 - (iii) You also possess the promises of God by right of inheritance through Jesus (Galatians 3:29).

4. The New Covenant

D. The Cup, Sacrifice and Blood are all Elements of the Covenant for our salvation.

- a. Jesus prayed in the garden of Gethsemane, ". . . let this cup be passed from me" (Matthew 26:39).
- (i) "Jesus, being in agony, prayed more earnestly, and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground" (Luke 22:44).
 - (ii) Jesus was both the priest and the sacrifice, which made His sacrifice legal.
- b. God entered a covenant with Jesus to save us
- (i) The agreement was that when Jesus stepped out of life and into death, after three days and three nights, God would bring Him back to life and He would assume His original position in the Trinity.
 - (ii) Jesus died both a spiritual and physical death.

- (iii) His separation from God began while He was alive on the cross—when He took the sins of the world upon Himself.
- c. Jesus entered Hell based on His covenant with God (Acts 2:24, 31 and 1 Peter 3: 18-19).
 - (i) Death, hell, and corruption could not hold Him there.
 - (ii) He took back the keys to death, preached to the spirits in hell, and robbed the grave of its victory.
- d. Jesus made it possible for you to partake of the covenant He has with the Father.
 - (i) Jesus makes the difference.
 - (ii) When you become born again, you can be who He says you can be and you can have what He says you can have (1 Corinthians 1:29; Romans 8:17).
- e. Jesus is the Christ (the Anointed One), the Son of God; and when you believe and accept Him as such you will gain life through His name (John 20:31).
 - (i) Everything you need is available to you through Jesus (Romans 5:1; Romans 6:23; Romans 11:36; Ephesians 2:7).
 - (ii) You have authority over the power of demonic forces (Luke 10:19). What gives the authority over evil forces is the fact that Christ has won the victory over Satan, which means you can stand against evil with the victory of Christ.
 - (iii) You cannot stand against the enemy in your own power (Ephesians 6:10). You use the power of Christ to fight him.
 - (iv) A law enforcement officer does not operate in his own authority, but in the authority delegated to him by government.
 - (v) You are nothing without Jesus; your authority is through Him.

B. Covenant is a Two-Fold Agreement

1. In a covenant, each party has a responsibility to do his/her part.

2. One party not performing his/her part of the covenant releases the other party from the obligation of fulfilling his/her part of the agreement. Inversely, when one party fulfills his/her part, the other party is also obligated to do the same.

C. Your Part of the Covenant Agreement:

1. You must accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior (Romans 10:9, 10).
2. You must walk upright before God, thereby perfecting Holiness (Genesis 17:1, Psalm 15:1-5).
3. You must walk in love and not selfishness (Galatians 5:13-23).
4. You must pray and believe that you will be blessed (Mark 11:24).
5. You must be a witness for Christ throughout the world and produce fruit as a good steward in Christ (Acts 1: 4-8 and Matthew 25: 31-46).
6. You must pay tithes and give offerings (Malachi 3:6-8).
7. You must hear and obey God when He speaks to you (John 2:2-5).

D. God's Part of the Covenant Agreement:

1. To give you His Holy Spirit and the power to do ministry (Acts 1: 4-8).
2. To give you the mind of Christ (Acts 1:24; Romans 8: 26-30; Romans 12: 16 and verses 1-2).
3. The power and the anointing of Christ to do and see greater things (John 1: 50-51).
4. To make you one with God through reconciliation (II Corinthians 5:17-19).
5. To save you from eternal damnation (Mark 16:16).
6. To cleanse you of all sins (Hebrews 10:15-18).
7. To save you from the Great Tribulation that will occur in the last days (Revelations 3:10).
8. To declare you righteous (Romans 3:21-26).
9. To heal you of all sicknesses and disease (Isaiah 53:5).

10. To give you the power to get wealth (Deuteronomy 8:18, Psalm 112:1-3).
11. To give you wisdom (Psalm 37:6; Psalm 112:4).
12. To strengthen you in prayer and encouragement to pray (Philippians 4:6-7, Philippians 1: 19, and James 5: 13-17).
13. To deliver you from your troubles and your enemies (Psalm 34:17-22).
14. To guide you continually (Isaiah 58:11).

E. Conclusion

1. What happens when you do not keep your part of the covenant (Deuteronomy 28:15-19)?
2. When you keep your part of the covenant, you will experience days of heaven on earth (Deuteronomy 28:1-14).

CHURCH DISCIPLESHIP

Church Discipleship: involves a commitment of its disciples to be identified and involved with a local body of believers who have made the decision to worship together in a certain place under the authority of Jesus Christ. This authority is delegated to the local pastor, who has the responsibility for the care and upkeep of all aspects of the church.

Church Discipleship: discipleship is the commitment to follow Christ in obedience (Acts 5: 32), it to be a witness (Acts 1: 4-8), the disciple takes responsibility for Christ's mission in the world (Luke 4: 18), the disciple do the things that Christ did through the Holy Spirit (John 1: 50); discipleship is a divinely established, spiritual connection and fellowship between Christ and His people and the same spiritual bond among the people within the fellowship/Body of Christ. By joining together, disciples agree to function in harmony with other believers under His designated structure of authority in accordance with the Bible. This relationship is called a covenant. When a person becomes a member, he/she enters into this covenant, and grows in Christ.

Christian Living

Each disciple is expected to do all within his/her power to promote goodwill and harmony within the body of Christ. Disciples should always carry themselves in a manner that displays Christian love (1 Corinthians 8:9; 1 Thessalonians). They should strive to live a moral, righteous, and holy life, so others may be won to Christ. (Matthew 5:16)

TERMS OF THE FELLOWSHIP COVENANT

The Accountability of Disciples

All Disciples: are responsible for pursuing godliness through the application of scriptures in their daily lives. It is the responsibility of the church to assist the believer in achieving this goal as well as hold the disciple accountable through the process of church discipline when she/he refuses to submit her/himself to biblical authority. (Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 6:1-8; 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15)

The Responsibility of Disciples

To Grow: Each disciple is responsible for his or her own personal spiritual growth. Disciples should regularly expose themselves to the Word of God so the spirit of God can produce the process of spiritual maturity in their lives.

To Serve: All disciples are responsible for being good stewards with their time and talents. They should use their abilities and time to serve the congregation and community in the local church. This is accomplished by taking part in the various ministries of the church. Are you good at ministering, evangelism, singing, office procedures, organizing, or teaching? There are no limits to how a disciple can become involved. While it is helpful to be versatile, it is more effective to focus on certain areas of church ministry. (1 Corinthians 12:12-27)

To Give: Each disciple is responsible for sharing one's resources with the Lord and his church to further the ministry of the church. This is accomplished by giving a minimum of 10% (tithe) of the total (gross) of one's income.

The Pastors: are worthy of more support from the disciples in the church; the blessings to the people and church flow through effective God-sent leadership, the vision, and the Holy Spirit; the Holy Spirit gets the results. Support pastoral leadership and the vision God has given through your discipleship. Every child of God may be sure that he/she will not lose through support of God's true ministers. He will supply your needs according to His riches in glory by Jesus Christ. No Christian is too poor to help and he/she who is blessed by the preaching of the gospel is indebted God and His preacher and should do what is necessary to support the pastor through stewardship—yourself, substance (pay his debt), and service (ministry).

Remember Them That Have Rule Over You

The World: so easily forgets that it is sweet when Christians obey the scripture in remembering their Pastor. Pastors want to be remembered and you sin against God if you do not think often of him and help bear his burdens. Love him for his works sake. (Hebrews 13:7)

As a disciple of Mount Gilead Baptist Church, I agree with the responsibilities and requirements of this covenant and will practice and perform all pertaining thereto. In those areas where I fall short, I will pray to God for strength. I am willing to allow the Holy Spirit to make the change in my life.

Signature

Date

LESSON TEN:

TITHING AND STEWARDSHIP

Every Christian needs to know the standard for giving to the Lord's work. Those who do not know the standard of giving according to the Word will give haphazardly and spasmodically, which means being guided only by emotions. The standard is to be found only in the Holy Bible. All scripture is given by the inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

Christians are instructed by the Word of God to give 10% of your income to the church.

Q. What is tithing?

A. The word "tithing" means a tenth--one tenth of the annual produce of one's land or its equivalent in money.

Abraham gave tithes of all he had. (Genesis 14:20)

The children of Israel brought tithes of all things. "...and the tithing of all things brought they in abundantly." (2 Chronicles 31:5)

Q. To whom does all of my money and other possessions belong?

A. All that we have belongs to God.

"For we brought _____ into this world, and its certain we can carry nothing out."
(1 Timothy 6:7)

"The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the _____ of hosts" (Haggai 2:8)

"The _____ is the Lord's and the _____ thereof; the world, and they that _____ therein." (Psalm 24:1)

Q. When do I bring my tithes?

A. We should bring our tithes on the first day of the week.

"Bring ye all the tithes into the _____, that there may be meat in mine house...."
(Malachi 3:10)

The storehouse is God's house, the local church, where you attend, where you receive your spiritual food. The work of the local church is carried out with the tithes and offerings given by God's people.

"...And He saw a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites. And He said, of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all: For all these I have of their abundance cast unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living she had." (Luke 21:2-4)

Q. What should be my attitude in giving?

A. You should first prepare to give God a tenth and do it with a willing and loving spirit.

“Every man according as he purposeth in his _____, so let him give; not _____, or of _____; for God _____ a cheerful giver.” (2 Corinthians 9:7)

I will purpose to give my tithe.

I will set it aside to give before spending for anything else.

Giving to God’s work must come first.

Q. What is the relationship between giving and receiving?

A. There is a direct connection between giving and receiving. The more you give, the more God gives to you.

“He which soweth _____ shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth _____ shall reap also bountifully.” (2 Corinthians 9:6)

“I have shewed you all things, how that so laboring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said it, It is more _____ to give than to _____.” (Acts 20:35)

Q. Does God want us to prosper?

A. Yes! Christ said that He came that you might have life and have it more abundantly.

“...Which hath pleasure in the _____ of his _____.” (Psalm 35:27)

“...It is He that _____ thee power to get _____.” (Deuteronomy 8:18)

Money in itself is not evil.

It is the love of money and what it is spent for that brings trouble.

You must also be sure that you earn your money ethically.

“For the _____ of money is the root of all _____: Which while some coveted after, they have erred from the _____, and pierced themselves through with many _____.” (1 Timothy 6:10)

THE BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE ON TITHING

I. Tithing (and Directed Giving)

The Bible teaches us that all fully committed Christians are tithers. Giving the tithe is one way we connect with God’s power, and allow His power to flow in our lives. If you believe in the ministry of Christ in the world you will without question tithe in order to provide His Church with the resources to share His word throughout the world. If you love the Lord fully and are committed to His ministry you will give your tithe to His Church. A pastor asserted that, “it is okay to expect God to move on

your behalf. The tithe connects you to His promises of total life prosperity . . . You are entitled to walk in the freedom of God’s manifested abundance today.” In fact, the word teaches us in Malachi 3:10 “. . .if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it.” The image of heaven that permeates our hearts is that heaven is a place of abundance, blessings, and complete uninterrupted joy and happiness; we do not imagine heaven as being a place where there are famines, scarcity, droughts, lack of blessings, and economic problems. Indeed, our spiritual understanding of heaven is that of a place where everything is perfect. We believe that it will be perfect because evil does not exist there. We hold to the firm belief that only God and His glory, power, and divinity will dominate the entire environment of heaven. The Malachi text uses the words, “windows of heaven” to indicate that through our obedience to God as tithers blessings will be opened up in our lives and will flow directly from God into our lives. Indeed, the phrase “windows of heaven” means that there is an unlimited supply of blessings designated for us, but they are contingent upon our obedience to God in tithing. Obey God and He will overwhelm our lives with blessings since He has an unlimited supply of blessings. The phrase “windows of heaven” indicates the place (heaven) where there is an unlimited supply of blessings waiting to enter the lives of obedient Christians.

True discipleship cannot be attained without tithing. In fact, tithing connects you to God in a special closeness; it essentially means that you have total trust in God. The Bible teaches us through the life of Abraham and others that tithing connects us to the blessings of God. When you tithe you demonstrate total faith and trust in God, but the person who does not tithe has not reached the point where he/she can put total faith and trust in God. Throughout the Gospels Jesus often said to those who came to Him looking for His blessings, “your faith has made you well.” The tithe connects you to the promises of God. Indeed, the tithe connects you to the very power, purpose, and mission of Christ in the world and the kingdom of God now and forever.

The tithe will bring the blessings of God into our lives, but the spiritual power in us that led us to give our tithes includes our faith in God, trust in His love, and confidence in His word; we obey God because we believe in His promise. Unfortunately, those who refuse to tithe do not totally believe in God’s promise as written in the word and exemplified in the life and death of Christ on the cross. If you do not have faith and trust in God you should not expect to be connected to the blessings of God. Jesus stated that you are either for Him or against Him. To tithe means that you are for Christ and His Kingdom work, but failing to tithe means that you do not fully support and believe in His work. Giving your tithe connects you to Christ and His blessings at a deeper spiritual level. He is the Vine and we are the branches, and we will never have the windows of heaven opened up to us until we connect with the Christ—the Vine as written in John 15.

B. Tithing Established You in God's Blessing

1. A "blessing" is an empowerment (or God-given ability) that when used according to God's purpose will lead to total life prosperity. It is a gift from God to do the things of Christ. When Christ empowers you with a blessing you then have the God-given ability to bless others.
2. God blesses us to bless others with our gifts (finances and abilities and through our spiritual gifts). In fact, the primary way in which we know God is through His giving. The very acts of creation of the world and humanity are acts of giving. We were created through God's giving. Christ is the most precious gift; He is God in the flesh giving us salvation, healing, deliverance, liberation, and eternal victory.
3. Abraham, the father of faith, sets the example of how we must become established in the blessings of God. Abraham had to change his mindset to receive God's blessings. To become a consistent tither we must develop the mindset of Abraham; he is our example.
 - a. In Genesis 12:1-3 in the Amplified Bible, God dealt with Abraham's way of thinking. God told Abraham to get away from his relatives because they negatively influenced his mindset. True disciples need to develop the mindset of Christ. God is a giver; I believe that God introduced Himself to us through His giving. We need the mindset of giving to be like God. When we become givers we are on our way to being like Christ.
 - b. If your mindset is wrong, your motives will also be wrong. Even if you read the Word, your traditions can make the Word of God of no effect (*Matthew 15:6; Mark 7:13*).
 - c. Because the blessing was on Abraham, he overflowed in riches (*Genesis 13:2*).
 - d. Abraham was very rich; the blessing on his life caused physical riches to manifest.
 - e. Although God rewarded Abraham for turning away from his old ways, Abraham's obedience was not solely responsible for his becoming permanently established in the blessing.
 - f. There was something else that Abraham did that took him from the *promise* of being blessed to being *established* in that promise.

C. Tithing Establishes You in God's Promises

1. The step that established Abraham in God's promises was tithing (*Genesis* 14:18-23).
2. The concept of tithing had to have been revealed by God, since the law had not yet been established.
3. Abraham tithed when he gave Melchizedek 10 percent of all the spoils of war.
 - a. Melchizedek was the High Priest of the Most High God. *Hebrews* 7:1-7 gives a biographical sketch of Melchizedek.
 - b. *Hebrews* 7:3 says of Melchizedek, "without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God . . ."
 - c. Jesus existed from the beginning. That is why God said in *Genesis* 1:26, "Let us make man in our image . . ."
 - d. When he paid the tithe, Abraham went from just having the promise of being blessed to being established in that promise. It was only when he paid the tithe that other aspects of Abraham's blessing began to appear.
4. Tithing is not the same as giving an offering.
5. The tithe is a systematic release of a tenth of all of your gross income to God.
6. The tithe is a special portion of your increase that God has reserved for Himself (*Leviticus* 27:30).
 - a. This portion does not belong to you; it belongs to God and must be returned to Him. Since it is not yours, it does not constitute a part of your standard giving.
 - b. Tithing is your responsibility. If you want a harvest, you must give above the tithe.
 - c. Tithes are the seeds that you owe, while offerings are the seeds that you sow (see below).

7. There is a law of tithing, but the practice of tithing existed before the Law of Moses was established.
 - a. Jacob practiced tithing.
 - b. God told Jacob he would be blessed, but Jacob didn't become established in that blessing until he made a vow at Bethel to pay his tithe (Genesis 28:19-22).
 - c. The vow that Jacob made was so powerful that God referred to Himself as "the God of Bethel" in recognition of Jacob's vow (Genesis 31:13).
 - d. After the promise was established, God instructed Jacob to return to his father's land.
 - e. As a result of obedience, God speaks to the tither and gives clear instructions for living.
8. Tithing is not just an Old Testament requirement (*Romans 15:4*).
 - a. The things that were written in the past were written for your learning so that through them, you can expect to receive the promises in your life.
 - b. The promises of God confirm what He intends for us to have as His children.
 - c. The birth of Jesus did not abolish the practice of tithing.
 - d. Jesus is your High Priest today, just as He was Abraham's High Priest during biblical times.
 - e. In *Matthew 23:23*, Jesus established tithing as a New Testament practice.
 - f. In scripture, Jesus instructs us to tithe, in addition to observing the "weightier" matters, such as walking in love.
9. Tithing opens the windows of heaven and gives heaven full access to your life. Tithing proves your confidence and trust in God and brings you to a spiritual place of protection, blessings, and abundance.
 - a. When you tithe, the windows of heaven open and God pours out His blessings (anointing and empowerment) on you.

- b. In *Zechariah* 10:1, God promises to give “rain.”
 - (i) In this Scripture, *rain* refers to the anointing.
 - (ii) The rain of anointing opens the door to abundance; God releases this rain through the windows of Heaven.
- c. Tithing is divine insurance. When you tithe, God will rebuke the devourer and prevent him from destroying anything in your life (*Malachi* 3:11).
 - (i) If you experience frequent car breakdowns, loss, or sickness, the devourer could be at work in your life.

10. The tithe assures believers that the windows of heaven are open over their lives (*Malachi* 3:10).

- a. Jesus operates in the Spirit of the Lord. These attributes are outlined in *Isaiah* 11:1, 2.
- b. The Spirit of the Lord that was on Jesus was the spirit of wisdom and the spirit of power.
- c. The Spirit of the Lord that was on Jesus is on you in the same way (*1 Corinthians* 1:24).
- d. *Wisdom* is the ability of God that enables people to know what to do when we are uncertain or need guidance.
- e. *Power* is the ability to do the work that wisdom reveals.

D. First Fruit Offerings Bring Honor to God (*Proverbs* 3:9, AMP).

1. The Bible teaches that a first fruit offering can only be presented to the priest (*Leviticus* 23:9-21; *2 Chronicles* 31:4, 5).
2. The difference between the tithe and the first fruit is that the tithe is always the tenth regardless of its condition, while the first fruit is always the first one of the best fruit (*Leviticus* 27:24-27, 30-33).
3. You dishonor the first fruit when you question whether to give it.
4. Giving an offering does not guarantee that God will honor it.
 - a. Cain and Abel each gave God an offering, but God did not honor Cain’s offering (*Genesis* 4:1-7).

- b. Cain's offering did not honor God because it did not cost him anything. Abel, on the other hand, gave the *first* of the *best* of his flock.

E. Offerings Activate the Law of Seedtime and Harvest

1. God established the law of seedtime and harvest to ensure that when we sow, we will receive a plentiful harvest (*Genesis* 8:22; *2 Corinthians* 9:6).
2. *You can be blessed by sowing into the life of someone God has blessed (Luke 6:38, 2 Corinthians 9:10-15, AMP). Mary was blessed for the oil to bless our Lord prior to His burial (Matthew 26: 6-13). The spirit of giving and sowing work together in the law of seedtime and harvest (Act 20: 35)*
3. Investigate where you will "invest." Make sure you are donating money to an organization or person that is considered "good ground." Check for evidence of godly character and integrity (*1 Samuel* 16:7).
4. Give cheerfully (*2 Corinthians* 9:7; *2 Corinthians* 8:7-12; 15, 16, AMP).

F. Alms are Gifts Prompted by Love to Help the Needy

1. When giving alms, always be led by the Holy Spirit about where to give (*2 Corinthians* 8:2-6, AMP; *Luke* 12:33).
 - a. Alms are gifts that express compassion toward those in need.
 - b. You must not boast or brag about your giving or your reward will be measured by the praise of men, not the blessings from God (*Matthew* 6:1).

JESUS AND TITHING

Q. What does Jesus say about tithing?

A. Jesus' primary and definitive statement on tithing is,

“woe to you, teachers of the _____ and the _____, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spice mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more _____ matters of the law: _____, mercy and _____ and _____. You should have practiced the _____, without neglecting the former.” (Matthew 23:23 NIV)

To Jesus tithing was a given. It was automatic and it was understood that it was to be done. The people were already doing it so that's why He didn't tell them to do so.

You don't tell somebody to do something they are already doing. Jesus wanted them to be full service believers and to know that tithing is only the starting point; then come the offerings and actions.

Tithe and serve. Tithe and obey. Tithe and live right. Tithe and study the Word. Tithe and pray. Tithe and love. Submit and commit to tithing but do not omit the other important matters. Will you commit to being a tither to God's work through Mount Gilead Baptist Church?

I WILL COMMIT TO BECOMING A TITHER TO GOD'S WORK

Signature

Date

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CONCERNING STEWARDSHIP

Q. What is a steward?

A. A steward is one who handles the property or affairs of another.
(Luke 16:1)

Q. What is biblical stewardship?

A. Biblical stewardship is the acknowledgment of God's ownership; the acceptance of our trusteeship, and the administration of the same according to the will of God. (1 Corinthians 4:1, 2 and 1 Timothy 6:20)

Q. What about stewardship and tithing?

A. Stewardship includes the whole of our personalities, powers and possessions; tithing means payment of 1/10th of our income in acknowledgment of our stewardship. Stewardship goes beyond tithing. (1 Corinthians 6:20)

Principles of Stewardship

- God is creator, owner, and giver of all things (Genesis 1:1; Psalm 24:1)
- All that we are and have, we receive as a trust (1 Corinthians 4:7; James 1:17)
- We must acknowledge our stewardship by devoting a portion to the Lord's work (Leviticus 27:30, 32)
- We must render a final account (Romans 14:12)

Check as True or False the following statements against 1 Corinthians 16:12

- _____ We should give only when the cause appeals to us.
- _____ We should have a regular system of giving.
- _____ We should depend on bake sales, suppers, etc., to support the church.
- _____ Everyone should give the same amount.
- _____ The amount we give should depend on our prosperity.
- _____ Every one should pay dues to the church like those paid in clubs or lodges.
- _____ People on fixed incomes should not tithe.
- _____ We should deduct current expenses before we pay tithes.

WHEN THE HEART IS RIGHT, WHAT IS OUR RESPONSE TO TITHING?

1. Tithing is a joy and not a burden.
2. Tithing brings the satisfaction of living for Him and others.
3. Tithing expresses love for God and moves us to praise Him for life.
4. Tithing opens the way to spiritual blessings.
5. Tithing places God in His rightful position – first in mind and life.

6. Tithing puts you in a position where God can truly bless you.
7. Tithing makes one a proper steward not just for 10%, but following Jesus demands a 100% commitment (Luke 18: 18-23). *Therefore, one must be responsible to God for all that His purpose for your life demands, which means all the money, gifts, talents, and resources that He has blessed and entrusted in your possession. In fact, everything we own belongs to God. Tithing demonstrates one's confidence (faith) in God and His word.*
8. *Tithing is an act of faith; it means that you have confidence in Christ. When you have faith (confidence) in God you may not be able to see how you can afford to tithe, but because you have confidence in God and His promise to "pour out blessings" upon you, you obey and do as His word demands. Instead of saying that you can't afford to tithe, because you have confidence in Christ and are obedient to the Word, you will say that you can't afford not to tithe.*

LESSON ELEVEN: GETTING OUT OF FINANCIAL DEBT

By Jesse V. Bottoms, Jr.

Haggai 1:6 "Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes."

This lesson is designed to help you identify and sew up the holes in your financial bag. While it is true that all of us would like to have more income, the truth of the matter is that we may not be properly managing the income that we do have. We are a people who are addicted to debt. When we pay off one thing we go and charge another. Well, this is about to change for you. You are about to take charge of your finances and be in control.

1. Stop using credit cards immediately!

Credit cards are the "black hole" where a lot of believers' money goes. Interest rates are as high as 24%. Visa, Master Charge, Sears, Discover, Wards and others are making big bucks off you.

2. The first thing that I want to do is change your thinking.

Madison Avenue has programmed us to think like consumers. You as a child of God must see yourself not as a consumer, but as a steward. The word consume means "to use up" and the word steward means to "manage." What are you, a user or a manager?

3. DEBT ADDICTION:

Addiction of any kind is horrible. They leave their victims powerless and enslaved. The scourge of alcohol, tobacco and drug addiction makes the news headlines and cause great concern.

The psychologist Brenda Schaffer talks about Love Addiction. That's when people just have to be in a relationship. They get out of one today and in another one tomorrow. They jump "out of the pot and into the frying pan."

We have to structure programs to deal with those who are addicted to drugs, alcohol and tobacco. Yet, one of the greatest addictions that many people have is debt. Indeed, the United States of America, our own government, is struggling to get control of its deficit spending.

The key to our survival and prosperity as individuals is being debt free. Free at last, free at last, just how free are we?

I can create my abundance by properly handling what God gives me to meet my needs. I can do it by identifying and sewing up the holes in my bag.

1 Satan's Mission Statement and Jesus' Mission Statement:

are ironically found in the same verse of scripture, John 10:10 *"The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."*

Satan's purpose is to steal, kill and destroy. Jesus' mission is to give you abundant life. He wants you to love Him and love His word and follow His directions.

Philippians 4:19 *"But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Jesus Christ."*

Psalms 37:4 *"Delight thyself also in the LORD, and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart."*

You can create your own abundance by properly handling what God has provided for your needs and from your abundance secure your own desires. It's pleasing to God when the believer lives in abundance, when you have handled your moneys properly and have given God the required tithe.

3 John 1:2 *"Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." (KJV)*

4. THINK DIFFERENTLY

Romans 12: 2 *"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."*

We must conform our thinking to Christ with regards to giving, money, debt, and stewardship. We must understand that money has a mission, which is to be used to carryout the will of God. Not only must we think differently concerning debt and stewardship, but also we must incorporate this biblical principle in our total life. The following are examples of practical ways to do so:

- A. Consumer – To consume is to use up; don't just think in terms of being a consumer, but an innovative producer. We are called to produce fruit.
- B. Steward – A steward is one who manages; we are called to manage well so we can do more for God.
- C. Mortgage – Mortus= death & Gage = pledge or grip; pay it off as soon as you can and be debt free.
- D. Savings – Aggressive savings while in debt can be counterproductive; learn to make money work for you and learn to make debt work for you as well. Many credit card companies give

reward points based on the total accumulative monthly debt acquired on your monthly credit card bill. You can pay your total balance each month and save the points to get a free flight and hotels for your next vacation. In fact, you can plan your vacation as you pay your monthly credit card bill, and let the credit card company pay for your next vacation in full. You can take advantage of credit card reward programs and benefits. This is certainly a way to save for a vacation. There are many ways to save. Do not get in debt just to get reward points for a vacation, but use your credit card debt to work in your favor.

- E. Credit Card Trap—Use the credit card for your mission and never give it power over you
- F. Rent-A-Center – Furniture rent to own; stay away from such deals.
- G. Renting or Leasing A Lifestyle; this is the worse way to think; change your thinking
- H. The first two principles in Steven Covey’s book “The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People” is to be **PROACTIVE** and to **BEGIN WITH THE END IN MIND**. **Proverbs 16: “The mind of man plans his way, but the LORD directs his steps.”** (NAS); if you are not planning five years ahead—you are not paying attention to the word of God.
- I. Instant Gratification; have patience. Patience means that you are focused and determined.
- J. Using cash is not against the law
 - 1. Get rid of debt
 - 2. Live on cash; you can use credit cards, but learn to pay them off; do not get in the habit of paying interest on credit cards.
 - 3. Invest and build wealth; there are many ways to build wealth. Think prosperity and incorporate it in the way you think and live your life.

1 Timothy 6:10 *“For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*

Love of money – (5365) **Philarguria** – covetousness, the desire for having more, connects with Mark 7:22 with sins of the flesh and Colossians 3:5 and Ephesians 5:3 – It’s the longings of the creature who has forsaken God trying to fill itself with the lower objects of nature. Don’t let money destroy your relationship with God; be obedient (Acts 5: 32).

SOME THINGS TO DO FOR DEBT-FREE AND PROPEROUS LIVING

- A. Prepare a budget (begin with the end in mind)
- B. Plan purchases
- C. Don’t borrow unnecessarily – Proverbs 22:26-29
- D. Don’t cosign – Proverbs 22:26-29
- E. Lend but don’t borrow – Deuteronomy 28:12-44 (be careful who you lend to and never borrow because it puts you in debt; there are a few exceptions such as a home loan)
- F. Don’t be in debt to any man – Romans 13:8; Proverbs 17:18; 22:29
- G. You can’t serve two masters. If you are in debt, you serve money –Proverbs 22:7; Luke 16:13
- H. Pay all your debts – Psalms 37:21; Ecclesiastes 5:4-5; Proverbs 6:1-5
- I. Pray about spending your money
- J. Pray before you go to the mall and at the mall
- K. Learn to resist salespeople
- L. We shall prosper if we live in obedience – Psalm 1:3
- M. Don’t purchase your wants until you have paid off your debts. – Proverbs 6:1-5

Things You Can Do to Free Up Some Money

- A. Stop smoking, that's about \$75 per month right there.
- B. Eat out less often.
- C. Stop impulse buying.
- D. Shop with coupons.
- E. Skip lunch every Thursday, you can stand it.
- F. Drive a less expensive car.
- G. Have nails done less often.
- H. Stretch your hair appointments.
- I. Buy basic TV cable service
- J. Stop playing the numbers
- K. Bring lunch to work
- L. Cut down on the telephone bill
- M. Others – Share suggestions that work for you with the rest of your congregation.

Be Out of Debt in Faith

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Make up your mind now to get out of debt and stay out of debt. Teach these principles to everyone you know and especially to the children. Also, teach our children that it does not make sense to pay \$100.00 for an \$8.00 pair of sneakers just because it has a certain label or someone's name on them.

LESSON TWELVE: FAITH

IV. Faith

The Bible teaches us that faith is the substance of things hoped for and evidence of things unseen. This means that faith brings the unseen into reality in our lives. Our faith is in Jesus Christ and it has its life in Christ and in the Word of God. Faith needs Christ because Christ is the source of power that faith uses to produce blessings in our lives. To say that one has faith in Christ is saying that one has confidence in Him as the Son of God, the word made flesh, Savior of the world, the resurrection and the life, and the victory. If one believes these things about Christ, he/she has faith, which is confidence that He is really the Son of God and the Savior of the world. We must never forget that “faith” cannot bring hope, blessings, healing, and power in our lives without Christ; we must have total confidence in Christ in order to receive His blessings. Christian disciples must have confidence (faith) in Christ as the sole power able to make a difference in our lives. This means that confidence in Christ is the spiritual assurance that launches one’s faith.

A. What is Faith?

1. Faith is the practical expression of confidence in God and His Word.
 - a. Faith is an action motivated by the Word of God.
 - b. The faith we have is living faith. It’s not just you living it; faith should be alive and working on the inside of you.
 - c. The Bible defines faith as “*the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen . . .*” (Hebrews 11:1).
 - d. The evidence or the results of your faith may not be immediately visible at the time, but you can see that evidence and you have confidence in that evidence.
2. Faith is the opposite of fear.
 - a. They both work similarly although they produce contrasting results.
 - b. Whatever you have faith in will come to pass and whatever you fear will also come to pass. So make sure you stay in faith, not fear.

B. Biblical Examples of Faith

1. If you say you are doing something *by faith*, and there is evidence of what you are doing, then your faith is apparent.
2. So when God tells you to do something in the Bible, and you say “I have faith in His Word,” then your obedience to that Word will make your faith obvious.
 - a. Blind Bartimaeus took off the coat identifying him as a blind man, as an expression of his faith (Mark 10:46-52).
 - b. Abraham went to a strange land that God told him of; this was an expression of his faith (Genesis 12:1-4).
 - c. Noah built an ark as an expression of his faith (Genesis 6:13, 14).
 - d. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego declared that God was able to deliver them from the fiery furnace; this was an expression of their faith (Daniel 3:16-18). These men had total confidence in God who had the power to deliver them; faith gets its power from God.

C. Faith versus Belief

1. Belief should never be by itself; it should always be accompanied by some type of expression.
 - a. Faith is acting out on what you believe.
 - b. The God-kind of faith is acting out on the Word of God that you believe.
2. Here is an example of belief with no faith:

A deacon's car breaks down on his way to church. There is a heat wave and the deacon, who is 75 years old, has to walk 3 miles to church in a 3—piece suit. By the time the deacon arrives at the church, he is dehydrated. He collapses on a pew and the choir members and the other deacons rush to his aid.

One deacon is holding a 1-gallon jug of ice-cold water. The deacon looks at the water and says, “I believe that if I drink this water, I will be saved from death.”

The other deacons agree with him. The deacon repeats himself and the choir joins in with songs and dancing, singing aloud, "If the deacon drinks the water, we believe everything's gonna be alright." In the midst of the singing and dancing, the deacon dies. Although he believed the water could save him from death, he never opened the 1-gallon jug and drank the water.

D. Confidence and Faith

- 1. Faith is a practical expression of your confidence.*
 - a. When you have confidence in the Word (the Bible), live by it and govern your life according to the Word because you have confidence that it represents God; and you live by it because you trust in God.*
 - b. When your faith is at work, there will be an expression of it in your actions and the words that you speak. You speak its power into your life and your words will manifest in your life in a positive manner.*
 - c. Your faith can always be detected in your actions and in the words you speak. If you speak negativity into your life your words will produce negative results.*
- 2. "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and (he also must believe) that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Hebrews 11:6).*

Your confidence (or faith) in the Word of God enables you to be an effective disciple, but without it you cannot become one. You cannot do anything for God without having complete faith (confidence) in Him; when you demonstrate your faith you will get a great recompense of reward. Now, replace the word *faith* with the word *confidence* in Hebrews 11:6.

- 3. You cannot have faith without confidence; your faith demonstrates confidence in Christ. Faith is dead without works (action) James 2: 14-17.*
 - a. Faith comes by hearing the word and this includes spending time in the word.*
 - b. Confidence has to be developed; it has to be cultivated.*

- c. You have to spend time reading God's Word daily to have confidence in it.
 - d. Fear is having confidence in the words of Satan.
 - e. Therefore, if you have more confidence in Satan's words than you do in God's Word, you will be rewarded according to what you fear (Job 3:25, 26).
 - f. Staying in God's Word and building confidence in it will keep you out of fear.
4. The more time you spend away from the Word the less effective you will be.
- a. If you neglect the Word, you will act based on what you've seen others do.
 - b. Doing something just because you saw someone else do it is NOT faith. It's just high expectations based on the wrong information.

E. Steps Toward Developing and Building Faith (confidence)/Applying Your Faith:

1. Get It. The only way to obtain faith is by hearing the Word of God (Romans 10:14-17).
2. Say It. You must speak the Word of God to experience the results of your faith (Mark 11:23, Romans 10:9, 10).
3. Receive It. Whenever you ask God for something in prayer, believe that you receive it and you shall have it (Matthew 21:22).
4. Do It. Faith without works (or an expression of confidence in God's word) is dead (James 2:17, 18).
5. Tell It. Share your testimony with others. Doing so positions you to becoming an overcomer (Revelation 12:11).

LESSON THIRTEEN: SOUL WINNING

XII. Soul Winning—The Witnesses' Responsibility

“I am a firm believer that God did not save you just for you. In other words, your new life in Christ has a purpose—to be a witness, or testimony, of the blessing that comes from living for God. You are expected to share Jesus with unbelievers . . . However, you are not expected to ‘share Jesus’ in your own strength . . . You have been empowered by the Holy Spirit, who gives you the ability to be an effective witness.” (Acts 1:8) The Church of Christ is made of responsible witnesses. These are strong men and women (disciples) of faith to whom the Holy Spirit has given power to first start witnessing in Jerusalem, then in all of Judea, and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. What I find most interesting in this text is that the work of Christ could not begin until the church had received power. When power is received the disciples of Christ are then ready to be witnesses for Christ in Jerusalem, (your own community), Judea (the community very close to your community), Samaria (these are other nations), and to the end of the earth (to preach Christ globally). To be a witness you must believe, follow the instructions of Christ, and after you obey Christ you will receive His power and He will make you a witness (Acts 1: 4). A witness is a believer who works diligently to build the church of Christ. The witnesses' responsibility is to build the body of Christ. Christ has not only given you the authority to build the church, but He has given you His spiritual power to do the work of Christ. Authority without power cannot get the job done, but with both you can bring other persons into the family of Christ, speak prophetic words of healing, prosperity, and power into their lives, and use God's power to fight evil in people and social and political institutions. You need both to do ministry. We must first win the soul spiritually, but often you have to liberate people from oppressive social, economic, and political situations in order to get to hear the Word. Do whatever it takes, but be an effective witness.

A. God's Ability and Authority

- God has given the believer the ability to be a soul winner.
 - a. The Holy Ghost gives us the power to be witnesses (Acts 1:8; Luke 24:49).
 - b. The name of Jesus gives us the authority (Mark 16:15-20).
 - c. The Word gives us the knowledge (John 8:31, 32).
- It is Every Believer's Responsibility.

- a. Soul winning, the ministry of reconciliation, is the primary ministry of all believers regardless of what office he/she is called to (2 Corinthians 5:17-20).
- b. The Great Commission was given for this reason (Matthew 28:19, 20).

B. How to Win Souls

- In order to be an effective soul winner, you must be a good witness.
- Witnessing is not only what you say but also the life you live.
 - a. Not every believer is a good witness (2 Timothy 2:20, 21).
 - b. How you live must line up with what you say (Matthew 5:16).
 - c. Be a doer, not a hearer only of the Word (James 1:22).

C. Six Reasons for Being a Soul Winner:

- Jesus was a soul winner. He is our example.
- The harvest is great, but the laborers are few. While there are greater numbers of people saved today, not all are willing to share in the work.
- *The Great Commission.* Jesus gave us the commandment to go and preach the gospel (Mark 16:15-20; Matthew 28:20).
- It is useless to learn the mechanics of soul winning (how to) without the dynamics (the Holy Spirit and a willingness) to do the work.
- Unfulfilled prophecies concerning Christ's return: when the work is done, then and only then will Christ return.
- To reconcile the lost to Christ—the ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18).

D. Five Steps to Complete Salvation – To lead someone to the Lord a person must:

- Recognize and admit that they are sinners (Psalm 51:5).

- Repent of their sins (1 John 1:9).
- Confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior (Romans 10:9, 10).

“Father in the name of Jesus, I recognize and admit that I am a sinner. I repent of my sins and I make a 180 degree turn away from sin to you by changing my heart, mind, and direction. I confess with my mouth that Jesus is Lord, and I believe in my heart that You raised Him from the dead. I invite You to come into my life, Lord Jesus, and I thank You that I am saved.” Amen.

- Receive baptism by water (Matthew 3:6) and the baptism in the Holy Ghost. (Acts 2:3, 4, 38; Acts 8:14-17). We need to have the Holy Ghost to get results and to do what Christ calls us to do. The Bible teaches that evidence of the Holy Spirit is seen through obedience of the word (Acts 5: 32).

Pray, read, and obey the Word of God daily (1 John 5:3).

Mount Gilead Baptist Church The Vision for Ministry

“A place where people connect with God’s power”

We believe Mount Gilead is a place where people connect with God and make a permanent connection with the balm that has the power to heal His people, which the Biblical Gilead did not have. Mount Gilead is simply a place where people are making a Christ connection and exploding with His power; they are making connections with the explosive power of God and are experiencing it and being empowered in every aspect of their lives. We believe that His power permeates us with spiritual excitement and inspiration and compels us to use it to draw others to Mount Gilead. Making connection with God can take place in worship, the preaching and teaching of the word, praying, and when our members make people feel at home, loved, and special when they step in the door; love that heals is alive at Mount Gilead. We believe that making a permanent connection with God is an opportunity that every person must seek and we want to make sure that every person gets connected to the power. Make your Christ connection at Mount Gilead and His power will bring personal blessings, prosperity, family stability, and healing into your life and minister to your hurts and fears, and give you power to meet your needs. We believe that through your Christ connection you will receive power that will empower your family, community, and church, and connect you to the only power that will give you global reach to help bring people to Christ and change His world one person at a time.

Our Mission: John 12: 32

Mount Gilead Baptist Church’s mission is winning disciples to Christ and connecting them to His power through a Biblically-based, Christ-centered ministry, and through prayer, evangelism, inspirational worship, community development, and the spiritual formation of positive thinking. Our mission seeks practical ways to lift Christ up, develop people’s faith, and connect them to His power that will sustain and bless them.

Christ-centered

We have received our identity in Christ, which means that Christ is at the core of everything that we do. Our motto is based on John 12: 32, “if I be lifted up I will draw all men unto me.” We believe that we are called to lift up Christ and He is the power that draws people to Him. We believe that to be Christ-centered our actions must project Christ in order to inspire others to make a spiritual connection with Christ.

Biblically-based

We believe the Bible is the infallible word of God. We believe that God used people throughout history to write His values, principles, thoughts, and actions, and to give spiritual insight into His ways, intents, and plans for all humanity. God reveals Himself to humanity through the Bible, which is His inspired word. Mount Gilead believes in following the word of God to get spiritual understanding, proclaim its faith, follow its direction, and develop its ministries. (2 Timothy 3: 16)

Evangelism

We believe that our primary purpose is to lift up Christ in order to draw others into the body of Christ. Getting a connection with Christ gives us the power to draw others; evangelism is drawing others to Christ with His power. We fully accept the mandate of Christ, which is “Go ye therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you...” (Matthew 28: 19-20)

Inspirational

We believe that throughout Mount Gilead Baptist Church the spirit that we embody must be inspirational in order to attract others. We must look and act like we are connected to Christ and His power. Therefore, we must project His spirit and power so people around us will want what we have inside of us and want to be a part of our worship.

Prayer

We believe that prayer brings power into our lives; it is a principle that we must practice in order to get God’s power and a value that mature Christians must keep part of their life. Prayer is the only way to continually seek God’s guidance and to remain connected to Him, receive spiritual power, and get direction.

Ministries that will connect people to Christ and His power:

1. The Prayer Ministry - We want to establish a structured prayer ministry that will make and keep prayer an intimate part of our daily lives. The Prayer Team must develop a strategic plan that structures such a prayer ministry. Prayer is the first step in accomplishing our mission and realizing our vision. We must establish a Prayer Team that will be committed to staying connected to God through prayer.
2. Mount Gilead Praise Team - We must develop a music ministry that changes the paradigm and prepares us for worship. In other words, the Praise Team will set the tone for worship by singing inspiring and uplifting praise songs that give God the honor, praise, and glory.
3. The Durham Boys Choir - This is a ministry that will bring spiritual structure into the lives of young men at Mount Gilead and throughout Durham. The Minister of Music will work with the Senior Pastor to establish and implement this ministry by networking with key community institutions.
4. MTG Youths Rapping for Christ - This ministry will take place in a week-long summer camp that teaches young people how to rap for Christ.
5. Establish an official Mount Gilead Mass Choir.
6. Evangelism Ministry - Evangelism is the heart and soul of church growth.

7. Child Care - This ministry will give parents the opportunity to attend worship services with the assurance that their children are being cared for at that time.
8. Sunday School – Sunday School is the soul of Christian Education in the church. It is a strategic factor that determines church growth, and we want our Sunday School Ministry to be one where adults and youths are getting connected to Christ and His power through the word. The Sunday School Ministry must develop a sound strategic plan that will connect with our vision and accomplish its objectives.
9. Welcoming and Hospitality Ministry - Must embody our vision and make all persons feel welcomed, accepted, and part of the Mount Gilead family as soon as they step in the door. This ministry must recruit enthusiastic greeters to carry out this ministry.
10. Public Relations and Advertising - This ministry will give Mount Gilead city and state-wide visibility promoting our vision and mission, and etching a positive impression on the minds of the people of North Carolina. This is crucial to ministry effectiveness.
11. Internet Ministry - This ministry will develop a website that promotes our vision and mission, and functions as a tool of evangelism. This ministry will ultimately implement Live Online services and sell CDs and DVDs of all services, Bible Studies, and special events.
12. Technology Ministry Team - Maintain and upgrade the church's technological resources, including computers, internet access, media equipment, and supplies. Another goal will be to install a small message screen in the sanctuary for posting urgent messages to the audience without interrupting services.
13. New Discipleship Class - This class has already been established and will be held every time we have new members. It will be on Saturday from 10:00 am until 3:00 pm or Sunday prior to the worship service. The Rev. Marie K. Tapp is the teacher.
14. Missionary Ministry – The Missionary Ministry will undergo training so the average member will understand what his/her spiritual and ministerial responsibilities are to Christ. The ministry will develop a strategic plan that connects with the vision and mission.
15. The Saints' Closet/Holy Clothes – This will be a missionary ministry initiative that will be named after Mrs. Prince's daughter and her clothes will be used to establish it.

16. Stewardship Ministry - Stewardship is the muscle that is essential in carrying out the vision. Stewardship is the provision that God has given us to carry out His vision and ministry. We must develop a strategic plan that teaches the Biblical principles of stewardship and connects the stewardship ministry to our vision.
17. Capital Building Ministry - Mount Gilead will outgrow its present facility and will need to build a new sanctuary and fellowship hall. We must proactively move towards this goal by being faithful to our vision of connecting people to Christ.
18. Tutorial Ministry - The Tutorial Ministry will recruit retired teachers and other qualified educators and mentors to tutor students after school.
19. Youth Jobs Ministry - This is a ministry that will be developed to assist youths with obtaining jobs. It will be established by networking and developing partnerships with organizations, businesses, individuals, and the Interdenominational Ministers Alliance.
20. College Bound Ministry - This ministry will take our youth on tours of colleges/universities to spur their interest in pursuing a higher education and to reach a decision on a suitable college/university for them.
21. Youth Bible Study - The Youth Bible Study will be designed to connect our youth to biblically-based principles and values that will give them a deep spiritual understanding of their faith and arm them with power to deal with social challenges and personal issues.
22. Youth Explosion - The Annual Youth Revival will use creative and innovative spiritual methods to connect young people to Christ.
23. Women's Ministry - This ministry will connect women to God and His power through fellowship, conferences, and family-oriented ministries.
24. TV/Radio Ministry - This ministry will teach and preach the word to save souls and connect people to Christ. The goal is to establish the Christ Connection program on the Word Channel and a radio talk show called "Where Citizens Call to Discuss Issues."
25. Prison Head Start Ministry - This will be a prison ministry that helps former inmates transition from prison to the community.
26. Health Ministry - We must develop a Health Ministry that educates Mount Gilead on a plethora of health concerns. The goal is to promote healthy eating, exercise,

healthy lifestyles, being proactive about one's own health, and getting necessary health screenings. Maintaining optimal health is the goal.

27. Faith and Family Fest -2013

28. Community Reinvestment Ministry - We believe that as Mount Gilead Baptist Church grows in people and financial resources we must tithe and give back to the community. This ministry will use our tithes to establish a reinvestment ministry that will provide support to various causes in the community.

29. Mt. Gilead Baptist Church Credit Union - The (jobs for members)

(THE FOLLOWING # #30-35 ARE NOT IN THE STRATEGIC PLAN)

30. Deacons' Ministry – The Deacons' Ministry will continue to function as servant leaders who are the pastor's partners and armor bearers in ministry.

31. Ministry to Veterans and Military Personnel—The Men in Action will sponsor an annual service that will celebrate and give special tribute to veterans, active duty service members, and their family members. The goal is to make this a city-wide effort and win the support of governmental officials.

32. Ministry to Senior Citizens —This ministry will focus special attention on the needs and issues of senior citizens.

33. Marriage Retreat.

34. Develop Mount Gilead Pride

35. Singles Retreat